The Future North

Economic History Essay about the Paso del Norte Region





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Luis Eduardo Ibáñez Hernández

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In the heart of the vast Chihuahuan Desert, where the horizon meets hope and perseverance, beats a city with a vibrant history. This book, commemorating the 40th anniversary of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez (DECJ), takes us on a journey through time, exploring how the business community of our beloved city has forged a destiny of progress and resilience. More than four centuries ago, this region became a natural passage for brave explorers and adventurers searching for a better life in the northern lands. Since then, it has been a source of attraction for people searching for progress. Despite difficulties imposed by the nature of the area, the region's people, with ingenuity and will, have managed to transform the environment into a prosperous region.

In these more than four centuries, historical events of national and world character have left their mark on our city. Its very name, Ciudad Juárez, is testimony to the loyalty and patriotism of its people who gave their all to preserve the values on which this nation was founded when El Paso del Norte became the capital of the Republic.

Throughout these centuries, the people of Juárez have faced natural, political, and historical circumstances, and based on ingenuity, effort, and an enterprising spirit, we have turned this region into a powerful productive hub at a global level. It has been the work of entire families who, through generations, have excelled in agricultural, livestock, mining, commercial, service, and industrial activities. This has kept this city and this region faithful and proud of its history but with a vision for the future.

Some of these families came to the region from the beginning; others have been joining over time. They all work with the same commitment and gratitude towards the city that has allowed them to grow. My family and I are no exception, as we have also found in Ciudad Juárez a place to prosper and contribute to our community development.

Forty years ago, a group of businesspeople decided to found an organization that would help them face the city's challenges together. That is how Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez was born. Throughout its history, the organization has boosted the most sensitive issues for the citizens of Juárez, from investment attraction and infrastructure creation to training and human capital development.

This book, written to commemorate this anniversary, narrates our city's rich history and honors the achievements of the people who have participated in the organization since its founding.

I feel fortunate to chair the organization's Board of Directors at this important stage in its history. I invite readers to immerse themselves in these pages and discover how, despite challenges and adversity, Juárez has emerged as a symbol of strength and progress. May this book serve as a testament to our past, a celebration of our present, and a guide for our future. In the spirit of collaboration and development that characterizes DECJ, let us continue to work together to build an even brighter and more prosperous tomorrow for Ciudad Juárez and its people.



Cristina Touché Lozano
Chairwoman of the Board
2023 - 2025

This book has two main objectives: the first is analyzing the economic history of Ciudad Juárez for almost two hundred years. The second is to briefly and selectively review the work of the Juárez business leaders who have headed Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez in its 40 years of life. Each objective is divided into two main parts.

To conduct the first objective, in the first section of the book we set out to read and interpret the main graduate theses, journalistic chronicles, and published works on the Paso del Norte Region (PNR), a region comprised of Doña Ana County, New Mexico; El Paso County, Texas; and the Municipality of Ciudad Juárez. The information is supported by interviews with scholars and businesspeople. It is also viewed from the present and the efforts of Juárez business leaders.

In the bibliography and the list of people consulted, the reader will find rich and varied information sources to broaden and detail their knowledge of an exciting and vast subject.

The information is presented based on the recovery of the three traditional economic sectors (agriculture and livestock, commerce and services, and industry), using as examples some of the companies that have left their mark on the PNR. We comment on events from around 1880 until 1965, when we identify an important change of course, especially for Ciudad Juárez.

We also propose geographic and political frameworks for analysis and recognize some historical junctures that set differentiated behaviors and stages in the local companies. The complex political interdependence of the PNR with the federal authorities of México and the United States, with the state authorities of Chihuahua, Texas, and New Mexico, and with the three municipalities or counties already mentioned makes it necessary to take a bird's-eye view of the recorded events.

Therefore, we offer some explanations as to the whys and wherefores of the types of businesses adopted and the reasons for their changes in the different stages. Apart from interpreting the economic dynamics of the PNR, the first part of the book is also offered as a representative mosaic of the region's great entrepreneurial vitality and as a humble tribute to its managers.

The second part of the book begins with the federal programs that refocused the efforts of the Juárez elites but also those of El Paso, especially since the start of the Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program). We highlight the work of two generations of businesspeople who managed to join forces to radically change the economic and geographic vocation of the PNR, turning it into a global development pole.

In this sense, the 40-year history of the Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez organization reflects the vision and culture of previous leaderships. At the same time, we offer examples of how the current leaders strengthen and project that vision and culture with even broader and more challenging goals, derived from the complicated social situation that the PNR has experienced in the last quarter of a century.

The reactions to recent challenges form a catalog of good business and social practices that go beyond the economic sphere, some of which have been implemented in other regions because of their achievements. Although detailed plans are not sketched, as this is not the document's purpose, the activities described give a glimpse of where the PNR is heading and, as a result, the economic dynamics of the hemisphere.

The manufacturing powerhouse that extends into the PNR is a launching pad for other developments of greater scope and wealth. I thank Cristina Touché Lozano and the Board of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez for allowing me to gauge and appreciate one of the most notable examples of the future of the West.

Luis Eduardo Ibáñez Hernández


Damasco
"Felicidades
a toda la gente
que está orgullosa
de ser como es."
Juan Gabriel
CLUB15
RESTAURANTE BAR







1

Paso del Norte Coordinates

Interpretive Essay

PART I

The PNR has been viewed from different perspectives, which have described it as an anomalous, dependent, or immoral area or event. We see it as a process shaped by historical turning points that, although not unique, have given it different opportunities for economic and social development.

We begin by saying that the point of view of this economic history essay approaches the perspective of businesspeople belonging to the Paso del Norte Region (which we will abbreviate as PNR from now on). It refers to the point of view of the Ciudad Juárez businesspeople. It is an interpretive essay on the economic history of the PNR. From this approach, the ideas expressed in this text link to other social, political, or cultural aspects. Thus, the paper is not conceived as an economic history of the PNR but, as an essay or historical interpretation.

The Paso del Norte Region.

The PNR, we repeat, is the area that extends from Doña Ana County, New Mexico to the county seat of Guadalupe, Chihuahua; and passes through the towns of Mesilla and Las Cruces, New Mexico; it also, and very importantly, includes the cities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

In English, what we call the Paso del Norte Region is called the Borderplex. As such, it has been studied by scholars such as Martín González de la Vara, Oscar J. Martínez, and Belinda Román, some of whose approaches to the economic development of the PNR cover the period from 1840 until shortly after the Mexican Revolution.

Of all this historical geographic space, we will focus our point of view on Ciudad Juárez, where we will also concentrate greater comments, due to its unprecedented population density and the promising size of its economy.

The historical essay briefly summarizes two hundred years and discusses facts recorded in the sixteenth century, including the voyage made by Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Esteban Dorantes through these lands around 1530. The essay concludes in 1965 and forms the first part of the book. Why do we set the date of 1965 as a historical fact?

In 1965, the Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program) was created, which, we believe, marks a historic turning point in the economic activity of Ciudad Juárez, whose unprecedented manufacturing trajectory will have an impact on several Mexican regions during the following decades. From then on, Ciudad Juárez gradually ceased to be a periphery and became an economic center.

Center & Periphery.

The PNR has been a political-economic periphery of the Viceroyalty, the Mexican Republic, and the United States of America, since many of the



1. Map of the Paso del Norte Region.

decisions that have affected it throughout history have been made in other centers such as the cities of Chihuahua and México City, Washington D. C., Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Austin, Texas.

It takes two federal entities and three state capitals for two large counties (Doña Ana and El Paso), plus a municipality (Ciudad Juárez), to achieve joint economic development projects. This political circumstance is unique along the entire U.S.-México border and explains the complexity and time required for the essential lobbying and paperwork.

Conversely, the fact that many of its official authorities are outside its perimeters generates general decision-making that forces the PNR to make efforts to interpret them. In this sense, the PNR's local and regional visions are conditioned by these centers of power, although they are not necessarily determined or fatal.

If we look at the map of North America, we will understand that population density is not an advantage for the PNR. In any case, the transit status of this northern area, its crossroads, its transportation network, and even its climate and, more recently, its people, constitute advantages, but these positive qualities need to be enhanced with smart initiatives and a continuous desire for progress and modernization.

The Intergovernmental Fiscal Agreements.

It is well known that the Mexican federal fiscal political system provides very few resources to municipalities and provides them with few opportunities to collect taxes, compared to the fiscal system that operates in the cities and counties of the U.S. federal system.

El Paso, Texas, as a Texan city and county, and as a border of the most powerful country in the world, has had its own means of self-financing and also receives resources that have allowed it to deploy an infrastructure of urban services and security forces that distinguish it from Doña Ana and, above all, from Ciudad Juárez and make it economically attractive enough within the American Southwest.

On the contrary, Ciudad Juárez has had to seek extraordinary monetary resources from the capitals of Chihuahua and México since its inception. Additionally, in recent decades, there has been a fiscal imbalance between what Ciudad Juárez paid in taxes and what it received in state and federal contributions.

This fiscal situation has prompted various civic movements in Ciudad Juárez, such as that of former Mayor Francisco Villarreal in the 1990s. The efforts of Juárez businesspeople Alejandra de la Vega and Juan Carlos Sapién, who emerged in more recent years, led to trust formations and changes in tax laws, as will be seen below.



Francisco Villarreal Torres.

The Stages of War.

The lack of monetary income was a constant in México after its independence from Spain in 1821. The centralist regimes from 1835 to 1846 wanted to make political decisions and collect taxes from the nation's capital, which led the Mexicans of Texas and the Euro-American settlers there to secede from México in 1836.

Then, in 1848, México lost vast territories that it did not control and barely inhabited to the United States, which, as a developing military and economic power, gradually managed to dominate these geographic areas, but did not fully inhabit them. Among those areas was precisely the PNR. Then, México participated in a civil war between 1857 and 1861, which, a few years later, gave rise to the French invasion between 1864 and 1867. The

PNR was not the permanent scene of these wars, but it did suffer from the political and social instability derived from all these violent events.

The Revolution, World Wars and Drug Trafficking.

Between 1880 and 1911, the PNR enjoyed relative social peace and great economic development. During that time, the laying of rails and forming the free zone regime were allowed. Several historians, mentioned above, focus their studies on this historical period and describe it as a golden or boom period.

However, the Mexican Revolution (1911-18) dismantled Ciudad Juárez's emerging industrial plant, destroyed several of its best buildings, halted commercial growth, and encouraged trafficking. On the other hand, armed confrontations reduced its population and encouraged temporary and permanent emigration to the United States.

By comparison and with many caveats, the drug war in the 20th and 21st centuries was also very harmful to Ciudad Juárez in terms of talent emigration, the interruption of its growing commerce and manufacturing development, and the practice of social participation.

On the other hand, World War II meant for Ciudad Juárez the beginning of an important economic growth period and political friendship with El Paso, which lasted until 2001, just when Islamic terrorism shook New York. Consequently, the United States placed conditions on U.S. trade and, as a result, affected the local economy.

Juarense and Chihuahuan Patriotism.

In Spanish, the word *patria* (homeland) is related to the terms paternity and patrimony. In this sense, wealth and inherited authority are the origins of patriotism in both the economic and political spheres. Nationalism is a broader and, also, more diffuse concept. Several events in history placed PNR at the center of decisions.

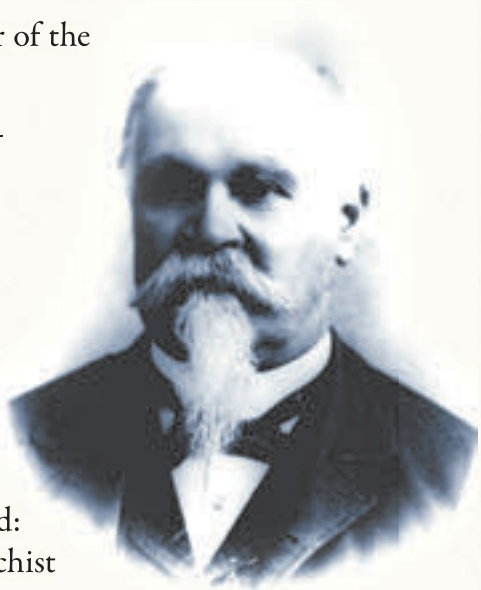
First, the priest Ramón Ortiz inaugurated patriotism in 1849 with the repatriation of New Mexicans to La Mesilla after the war of 1848. Then, in 1865, the PNR became a world political center when Benito Juárez established the Mexican presidential headquarters there and strengthened his patriotic military reserve.

Distinguished Juarenses such as Mariano Samaniego and Inocente Ochoa also received land as compensation for their services to México, for

protecting President Benito Juárez and intervening in favor of the liberals in their fight against the conservatives.

This way, the next Juarenses would remain loyal to México and would not seek to annex as a nation or region to the United States or form another country, as others tried to do with the integration of the Republic of the Río Grande (1840) or the Republic of the Sierra Madre (1855).

In 1909, with the meeting of Presidents Taft and Díaz, the PNR received unprecedented attention that demonstrated its potential for the near future. Even in 1911, with the takeover of Ciudad Juárez by the revolutionaries, the PNR became a melting pot, where world interests converged: European and North American; and national: with anarchist and revolutionary activists.



Mariano Samaniego.

Texan Expansion & Civil War.

After México's internal political problems during the 19th century, it was the United States' turn. Then, the hemispheric power was engaged in its Civil War between 1861 and 1865, an event that –some historians believe– prevented them from extending their border further south at the expense of Mexican territory.

Some historians say that the Euro-Americans of the northeast –the Yankees– were wary of the growth of Texas and the Confederates in the southwest and, therefore, managed to prevent the Texan territorial expansion. They limited their political territorial growth, but not their commercial dynamics. When the successive wars ended, the economic map was different.

At the end of the 19th century, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Royal Road of the Interior), which connected México City with San Luis, Missouri, passing through Santa Fe, New México, was replaced by the route from Monterrey, Nuevo León, which connects with Dallas, Texas. With these changes, the PNR lost customers and routes, but only temporarily, as we will see below.

Texas & the United States.

The PNR was not part of Texas before 1848. It had been part of Nueva Vizcaya and New Mexico. With the incorporation of Texas into the United States, El Paso received attention from the political capitals of Austin,

Texas, and Washington, D.C., through the founding of Fort Bliss in 1849 and El Paso County in 1850.

Fort Bliss was a key part of a national fortification plan to defend the territory from possible attacks by European powers and Apache forays. It also served to support the pioneers in the colonization of the great American West. El Paso received, then, a new military purpose, in addition to the commercial one it had had for centuries.

In later times, Fort Bliss and its detachments accounted for one-third of El Paso's economic revenue, especially during certain wartime periods when military contingents increased. Today, Fort Bliss contributes 25% of El Paso's current revenue.

In the early 20th century, the nightly entertainment of Americans – and many soldiers– moved from El Paso to Ciudad Juárez. While both cities benefited economically, they also inaugurated a highly contested form of economic cooperation, which eventually faded to near extinction.

Mexican Political Traditions.

Porfirio Díaz, who governed México between 1876 and 1910, decided to keep the political leaders of the distant northern states close to him to try to minimally control the country. For this reason, the Porfirian federal government decreed the northern border cities as a free zone for the period from 1885 to 1906, even against the opinion of some U.S. businesspeople and politicians.

If Benito Juárez had given land to the border townspeople to obtain their loyalty, Porfirio Díaz granted them commercial advantages for the same reasons. Sometime later, when there was no longer a risk of separatism, Ciudad Juárez was politically important due to the bilateral alliance relationship that was established between México and the United States.

This political custom was observed starting in the 1940s, amid World War II. René Mascareñas and Alfonso Arronte created the Asociacion Civica (Civic Association), which was opposed to the official party and, therefore, to the political center in México City. Then, Mascareñas was suddenly invited to the mayor's office by the president of the republic himself.

A few years later, Antonio J. Bermúdez, the Juárez leader with the highest political relations at the national level, headed important commercial and industrial development projects for Ciudad Juárez, by managing extraordinary monetary resources and federal tax exemptions.



Porfirio Díaz and Benito Juárez.

We consider that the above historical data show a political custom. In the absence of robust means of collection, Mexican municipalities have followed a path of first proposing and then negotiating favorable conditions with the federal authority for economic investment flow, all within a delicate balance woven differently in each era.

Chihuahua & Paso del Norte.

Although it was founded 50 years after the PNR, Real de Minas de Chihuahua (Mining town of Chihuahua) was in the state's geographic center, which allowed it to orbit the regional economy –including the PNR. In 1824, it was named the capital of the new State of Chihuahua. Thus, in addition to the original mining wealth, geographic and, later, political advantages were added to give it a strategic position.

The PNR was a major supplier of cattle, ore, and lumber from the entire State of Chihuahua and northern México to the voracious U.S. market via the railroad built in 1882. Chihuahua collected and shipped the material, Ciudad Juárez delivered and exported it, and El Paso transformed and marketed it to the interior of the United States.

Since the 19th century, livestock and mining have been important exports. In the early 20th century, cotton and timber were included. Recently, these historical products have been joined by dried fruits and vegetables. But unlike the rest of the historical goods with origins in the State of Chihuahua, at the end of the 20th century, most of the light manufacturing products are from the State of Chihuahua.



One Peso bill.



1893: General Luis Terrazas acquired the Arcos Betancourt land to build the Banco Minero Chihuahuense (Chihuahua Mining Bank) headquarters.

Ciudad Juárez benefited less than Chihuahua and El Paso from this historic trade in Chihuahuense and Mexican raw materials. However, Juarenses were associated with Chihuahuenses in the capital. Mariano Samaniego was governor of the northern state and Inocente Ochoa was a founding partner of the legendary Banco Minero.

In recent decades of the 21st century, Ciudad Juárez has been strengthening its economic position with Chihuahua and other northern economic cities, thanks to light manufacturing. Thus, the border town has become an industrial center, while remaining a commercial crossroads for goods from other Mexican and U.S. manufacturing centers.

Banco Minero Chihuahuense.





Santa Fe of New Mexico.

Santa Fe was an obligated passageway for Viceroyalty and international commerce for two centuries. It connected México City with the North American city of St. Louis, Missouri, in a long lane that still flowed towards the end of the 19th century. But Santa Fe became somewhat isolated later when the PNR became a more important regional node.

Doña Ana, in southern New Mexico, consolidated its ancestral economic vocation. From the second half of the 19th century to date, it has importantly developed the primary sector, unlike El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, which, on separate occasions, changed their productive profile towards commerce, services, and industry.

El "Paso" (The "Pass") as a Vocation.

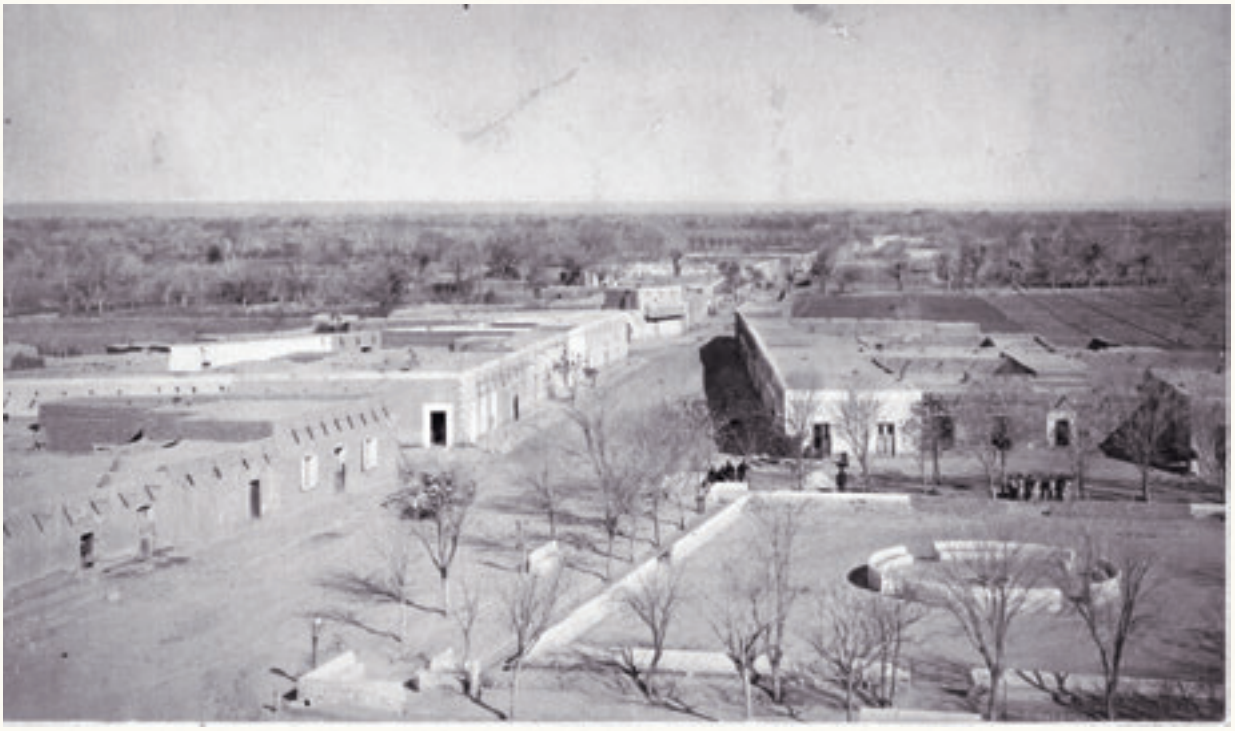
Originally, the Paso del Norte was established by the viceregal authorities as a "pass" or transit of a royal route, so various missions that are still standing were established in its territory: Guadalupe, San Lorenzo, Ysleta, and Senecú. However, the area did not have the wealth of the *reales de minas* (mining towns) or granaries, such as the region of Parral or the State of California.

Being a pass –and not a destination– marked for decades the economic development of the PNR, above all, it defined the face and role of



Guadalupe de los Mansos en el Paso del río del Norte Mission.

Two federal agencies and three state capitals are required for two large counties, and one municipality (Ciudad Juárez), to achieve joint economic development projects.



El Paso Del Norte-Juárez, 1882.

New Mexico map showing the location of Doña Ana County.
Photo Source: https://donaanasphere.com/historical-background/



Ciudad Juárez. However, this condition has been transformed since 1965, with the unprecedented arrival of light manufacturing. This statement is our main thesis and, therefore, we will repeat it throughout the essay.

The condition and vocation to be erected as a pass, stop, and rest of the PNR, within the south-north route, began to run from México to Santa Fe in 1610, which was driven by the mythical search for the seven cities of Cibola, which possessed large amounts of gold and silver. However, such a belief was a mirage, although it served to bring the PNR into existence.

This condition of commercial pass was reinforced by a new route that ran east-west, from New Orleans and San Antonio to California. This crossing was inaugurated in 1849, by the forty-niners, with the discovery of gold and then oil deposits at the end of the 19th century, which attracted migrants from all over the world, especially Europeans.

Neither gold nor silver were to be found in the PNR, but the road leading to the precious metals passed through it. Thus, the PNR shaped an identity of "shelter" or temporary shelter for goods and people, from its early days and continues to this day. For this reason, the PNR has a high commercial and labor-added value worldwide.

The Río Grande as a Gift.

The PNR is located on an eastward detour of the Río Grande or Río Bravo. It rises in Colorado, divides New Mexico in half, and bends eastward right at the geographic boundary of the United States and México. To cross it, the pass between the Franklin Mountains and the Sierra de Juárez (Juárez Mountain range), which is a portion of bedrock between sand and mud, was regularly used.

The Río Grande is an obstacle and, at the same time, a gift. It allowed the natives and missionaries to live in that area for centuries by virtue of the irrigation to the products of the land. For example, wine was one of the first fruits to fulfill the Catholic Eucharistic rite.

For this reason, the Guadalupe Mission of the Manso Indians was founded there, in 1659, almost fifty years after the settlement of Santa Fe. In other areas of North America, the mountain ranges or the deserts prevented easy crossing and transit, since there were almost no towns, although fierce Apaches, annoyed to see their ancient lands invaded, did cross it.

The Border as a Risk.

Porfirio Diaz saw the border as a risk, between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. For this reason, he used to say his nostalgic phrase: "Poor México, far from God and close to the United States." He thought of the threats of U.S. expansionism and truly feared that México would disappear. Such a risk ceased to be imminent in the middle of the 20th century.

Other real risks have been the use of Ciudad Juárez as a center of operations for *enganchadores* (recruiters) and migrants as a recruitment platform. Drug trafficking has also acted in the same way, including the ominous name of the Juárez Cartel. Both phenomena have affected the normal economic dynamics of Ciudad Juárez.

The Border as an Opportunity.

In 1964, Tito, the Yugoslav Marshal, visited México and asked President Adolfo Lopez Mateos what his main problem was. He replied that his great conflict was the 3,000 kilometers of border with the United States. Then, Tito answered: "What I would give to have a few meters of the border with the United States."

Since the 19th century, some merchants and travelers have settled on both banks of the Río Grande and established paired warehouses, predecessors of the modern twin plants. All these traders took advantage of the in-bond legislation, which allowed for the regulations set by the federal governments of México and the United States.

Since then, a way of doing business has been generated, favorable to the Chihuahua border, which today shows a clear economic performance. Undoubtedly, the commercial experience of the PNR is a century and a half ahead of what, by 1994, was the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

From the Promised Land to the Land of Opportunity.

The PNR was a crossroads to the promised land of Cíbola and, from about 1880, was a coveted gateway to a possible better life. Migration has not stopped since the 19th century; at times, it goes down but increases over time.

The asymmetry in the political and economic development of the United States and México, beginning in the 19th century, has shaped a growing tendency to take risks in search of a new life on the other side.



The Rio Grande or Rio Bravo is born in Colorado, divides New Mexico in half, and bends eastward at the geographic boundary of the United States and México.
Photo Source: Wikipedia.

Today, the dramatic scenes of Venezuelan migrants are reminiscent of the experiences of the Chinese in another historical era and all of them evoke the suffering of Mexicans coming from the center of the country.

Most Mexican migrants entered the most thriving economic centers of the American Union: California, Texas, and Illinois. Since the United States is a land made up mainly of migrants, how can the aspiration of Latin Americans to seek better conditions be stopped? Even more so when the United States continues to demand labor hands and minds.

Both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez resent the policies of the U.S. and Mexican federal governments, as well as the State of Texas. These three powers mandate the detention of migrants and, unfortunately, also delay the trailer loads of manufactured goods that the market itself requires.

At times, these three governments provide economic resources to the municipal governments of both neighboring cities to address the migratory flow, but they always fall short of the volume of crossings and the multitude of problems they generate: family, health, human trafficking, and illegal trafficking in the hands of organized crime.

Beginning in 1970, with the establishment of manufacturing industries, migrants began to stay in Ciudad Juárez, which became a land of opportunity and a point of arrival. Even though Ciudad Juárez has hosted an important flow of migrants, it must be recognized that most of them continue seeking to enter the United States.



The USMCA is a free trade agreement between Canada, the United States, and México.

From Floating Population to Local Rootedness.

After the pacification of the PNR around 1880, migration became more dynamic. The new wave of U.S. industrialization, the laying of several railroads, and the California gold rush attracted Mexican talent. At the end of the 19th century, *compañias enganchadoras* (labor contracting companies) were created to recruit employees to work in the United States.

There were times of temporary migrations that came and went legally, but that model was abandoned. One of the consequences of this flow is that today the United States is the country with the second largest number of Spanish speakers in the world, only after México.

Before the Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program), which began in 1965, the strong dynamics of migration resulted in a floating population with few roots. Migrants stayed

in Ciudad Juárez just as long as it took them to get hired under a new *enganche* (contract/employment).

In the meantime, these travelers were surviving in pallet houses, hotels, or modest dwellings. So, who buys a house that they will not live in permanently? And who builds new housing for temporary guests on a tight budget?

However, since approximately 1970, many immigrants have become permanent residents of Ciudad Juárez. The housing boom for workers, since then, modifies the above reasoning. Ciudad Juárez has the highest rate of national economic activity. There are more than enough new houses and the working sector residents invest a significant percentage to improve their homes, according to data from the study Asi estamos Juárez 2024.

Energy & Infrastructure.

The PNR, as a binational complex, has shared problems and solutions in water, electricity, and gas services; it has overcome anomalies in transportation and communication across both sides of the Río Grande and to the various economic and population points in México, the United States, and the world.

One of the first aspects that the settlers of the PNR took care of was the crossing of the Río Grande, even before the territorial division between the two countries. During the 19th century, structures were erected for people's transit between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, although they collapsed due to the impetuous passage of the Río Grande's floods.

Some historians date the construction of the first wooden bridge at Juárez and Santa Fe streets to 1800. Since then, the installation of successive bridges has reflected the economic development of the PNR and neighboring economies.

Bridges & Border Economic Development.

In 1882, the international bridge was built at Lerdo and Stanton Avenues in El Paso, right in the middle of the construction of the Central Mexican Railroad, which connected Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. This bridge represented the modernity of the development of the PNR. This construction was the first pedestrian and vehicular crossing, where a mule-drawn carriage, owned by the El Paso Street Railway, traveled.

Then, in 1888, a concession was granted to restore and operate the



International Bridge between the United States and México.

original Paso del Norte Bridge at Juárez and Santa Fe Streets, which was authorized by President Porfirio Díaz. By then, there were already two zones in Ciudad Juárez, which were even divided by a wall in later years, in charge of the mayor's office.

Business Partnership & Institutional Cooperation.

It is interesting to note that the Mexican and Euro-American business leaders of the PNR invested in a transportation company around 1901. That investment was to operate an electric tramway to cross the bridge at Lerdo and Stanton Streets.

The transportation company partners were Joséph Magoffin (the Chihuahuan), Zacarías White, Anson Mills, Inocente Ochoa, and Mariano Samaniego, who were people who had lived for many years on the border and had done business on both sides of the Río Grande, beyond the political territorial division. In 1926, the bridge structure called *de La Amistad*, located at Lerdo and Stanton Streets, was renovated with steel and concrete materials. This restructuring occurred amid the Prohibition period for the production and sale of alcohol and at a time when there were numerous migratory movements on the border.

In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, a private businessman obtained the concession to build a bridge to join the towns of Ysleta, Texas, and Zaragoza, Chihuahua. At the time, this border area was dedicated to

cotton farming. This new passage would facilitate large-scale binational trade.

Ten years later, in 1949, the Córdova Bridge was built to link El Paso with the island of the same name. The construction of this urban infrastructure work was due to the constant crossing of raw materials and labor, a situation that had been generated by the natural overflow of the Río Grande River.

With the Programa Nacional Fronterizo or PRONAF (National Border Program) of 1965, avenues and cultural and commercial facilities were developed in Ciudad Juárez. This new city zone became a modern pole. Its boom was crowned with the return of the land of El Chamizal in 1967, which officially became Mexican property.

The unusual event of the return caused Ciudad Juárez to have a large recreational park. This period marked a change of course in the border's economic development since, in 1965, PRONAF was launched, which made Ciudad Juárez take off towards other dimensions.

New Mexico & Chihuahua.

In 1993, the border crossing to the State of New Mexico was opened through the town of San Jerónimo, Chihuahua, and the New Mexican town of Santa Teresa. This new gateway oriented travelers and traders to an old neighborhood that had been relatively unexplored. The potential scope of this access is promising today. However, the planning is still incipient for now and the population density of Santa Teresa is much lower than that of El Paso.

However, alternate rail lines and private hangars coexist in this international transit zone with brand-new industrial buildings. Just in 2024, a quarantine station was inaugurated with large inspection yards and a smart auction building. Also, the section linking the Chihuahua highway with Santa Teresa is about to be widened with hydraulic concrete.

The San Jerónimo port is linked to the northwest of Ciudad Juárez by a single asphalt road built recently. This stretch of road leads to the ANAPRA area, which is a bordering neighborhood whose strategic location has not yet been exploited.

On the other hand, urban development on the western side of the Sierra de Juárez (Juárez Mountain range) remains latent. The owners and binational authorities of the PNR have not defined the scope of their ur-

Crossroads San Jerónimo Santa Teresa.



Existing crossing.



New paths.
Source: https://coderjuarez.org

ban expansion. Consensus also needs to be obtained from Chihuahua and New Mexican leaders inland.

New Mexico has distinguished itself by a tempered economic trajectory, in comparison with the North American States of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Texas. This state has been, at the same time: a reservation for native peoples, a haven for New Mexicans, a nuclear stronghold; and nowadays, it is a happy retreat for Euro-Americans.

New Options.

In 1999, leaders from Ciudad Juárez, such as José Luis Gutiérrez, and El Paso, promoted the express line, a special lane for bicultural citizens who come and go daily for work and family reasons. This new international lane has allowed the PNR to become a single city again, albeit only for some of the area's residents.

In 2016, the bridge linking the border towns of Guadalupe, Chihuahua; and Tornillo, Texas, was inaugurated as part of the growth in the number of freight vehicles crossing the Mexican-American border. This new eastern passage is open to new freight and is away from the urban sprawl of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso.

Unfortunately, from 2001 to date, México lost control of migratory traffic in its territory. As a result, the Texas state government decided to tighten surveillance, thus slowing down the already bulky cargo vehicle crossings. The excessive immigration issue has become dramatic for the PNR and is a matter of debate in this year's 2024 presidential election.

Trains, Roads, & Airports.

The multiple laying of railroad tracks in 1880 made El Paso a major crossing point, both north-south and east-west. Consequently, the location of the ASARCO Company as a mining processing center and the import of lumber, beef, and cotton caused the Mexican railroad trade to favor El Paso more.

Until 2024, there was no highway from Ciudad Juárez to Ojinaga, leading to the mining area of the State of Coahuila and Monterrey. To reach these two northern states, one must make a long detour through La Laguna. As a result, the crossing makes the freight more expensive due to the low population density of intermediate cities.

Neither was a branch highway deployed to take domestic and international travelers from Ciudad Juárez to Cananea and the other border cities of Sonora, which would have given Ciudad Juárez Economic Advantages.

Instead, what did bring great transportation and communications benefits was the train route to the Sierra Tarahumara within the State of Chihuahua, similar to the tracks that exist between El Paso and Tucson and between El Paso and Eagle Pass, linking and projecting south Texas.



El Paso Municipal Airport, Texas.

The same defect mentioned in the previous paragraph was reproduced when the highways and roads were built in the State of Chihuahua. As a result, the road from Ciudad Juárez barely reaches the Valley, but does not reach Ojinaga, nor does it have a direct route to Palomas, Chihuahua; nor does it connect with Agua Prieta, Sonora. The road network is designed from and for the center of the country, which reflects the perspective of the federal fiscal system.

There is no point in talking comparatively about the quality of Texas highways or the U.S. feeder road network. To travel overland from La Laguna to California, the best way is to go up to El Paso and from there to the Pacific Ocean.

On another note, both airports, Ciudad Juárez (1925) and El Paso (1928) took off just three years apart. However, in 1938, a Líneas Áereas Mineras flight coming from México City requested to land in El Paso, because the polo field, next to the *Hippodrome* that served as a runway in Ciudad Juárez, was in poor condition.

Even in 2024, Chihuahua's main airports still fail to offer the size and planning that their passenger and cargo density demands. The COVID-19 pandemic only further weakened its air connectivity.

New People & The Border.

People always talk about the human quality of the people of Ciudad Juárez, who are more open and show fewer cultural filters than their neighbors in other towns in the State of Chihuahua. On the other hand, others attribute certain disadvantages to the people of Juárez, such as social uprooting. We believe this is due to different phenomena that have arisen over time.

The first factor is social mobility. With the manufacturing boom, industrious people arrived in Ciudad Juárez looking for an opportunity to get ahead, which they did not have in their place of origin. These were people from Durango, Laguna, Potosí, and Veracruz, to mention the best-known regional groups.

In addition to this productive attitude, there is a second factor: the fact that immigrants are welcome. Juarenses are open to outsiders, due to the long history of the city of Chihuahua as a shelter for migrants and border tourism. Thus, the newcomer manifests a grateful attitude towards border citizens.

In the case of the manufacturing sector, we identified a third favorable factor for the people of Juárez. It is the prompt management of Fernando Borreguero and other promoters who spoke with labor leaders such as Fidel Velázquez and different local representatives, so that together they avoided negative labor climates, as in fact happened in other border cities.

In later years, PNR business leaders, such as Federico Barrio, Héctor Gutiérrez, and Carlos Murguía, created institutions such as the Southwest Manufacturing Association, Fondo Unido, CONREDES, and the Programa de Competitividad Laboral to improve the work climate that gives human and economic value to the border.



Fernando Borreguero.

Civic Maturity.

Ciudad Juárez was a national center for democracy promotion, like Tijuana and other neighboring cities. The emergence of democracy was due, in part, to the individual freedom generated by manufacturing employment. Suddenly, employees and manual workers in the Juárez region felt free by virtue of their work and voted in elections without union commitments.

A new civility emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, which paralleled the industrial boom. But then came the violence and the social fabric weakened. The leadership of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez (DECJ) has persistently continued to weave social capital. However, the corporate fabric density thinned, although not irretrievably.

In the 21st century, political scientists' work on Ciudad Juárez, such as that of Héctor Padilla, point to the need to strengthen leadership and the community network. For this reason, DECJ presidents and board members, such as Miguel Fernández, have refocused their efforts on this aspect in recent decades, through Plan Estratégico de Ciudad Juárez.

Violence & Community Resilience.

The supposed social uprooting of the people of Juárez seems to have been left behind, as we can see in the study Así estamos Juárez 2024. Thus, certain popular outlying neighborhoods of Ciudad Juárez already show positive opinions in surveys and their dwellings reflect efforts of self-construction for home additions and physical improvements.

Sixty years of manufacturing employment have prompted a shift from a provisional logic and nightlife entertainment to a perspective of consolidating quality of life expectations. On the contrary, the cyclical violence of the last decades has caused the abandonment of entire neighborhoods and the projection of a certain conservatism due to security issues.

In the upper middle classes, we see how Ciudad Juárez has been a place for the emergence of outstanding trajectories of entrepreneurs and executives, both local and from other locations in México, who have integrated with border families to shape the economic and social development of a prominent community.

A glance at Plan Estratégico de Ciudad Juárez shows the habit of a civic democracy that extends to the management practices, for example, of the Mesa de Seguridad (a security board), which was coordinated by board members and former presidents of DECJ such as César Ochoa Reyes, Alejandra de la Vega, and Jorge Contreras Fornelli; in addition to Mario Dena Torres, among others.

Rapid Growth Versus Quality Urbanization.

Guadalupe Santiago and Lourdes Ampudia describe in their theses the historical trajectory of Juárez's urban sprawl from the 19th to the 20th century. The urban dynamics of Ciudad Juárez are like those of other cities such as Chihuahua, according to Oscar Chávez. However, in all three cases, they point out the differentiating role of federal, state, and local elites.

In Ciudad Juárez, as in other cities, first came capital, then came labor, and, later, authority took control. The railroads divided many Mexican cities into two zones and the national needs for economic investment and formal employment outweighed any local urban and economic development plans.

Ciudad Juárez grew at an accelerated pace in the last sixty years, as did Tijuana, triggered by manufacturing employment. Authors such as Carlos González Herrera even proposed creating a federal compensation fund to provide urban infrastructure to a community that instantly became a shelter for Mexican citizens from all over the country.

Some authors say that the urban configuration of Tijuana is more disorderly than Ciudad Juárez due to its capricious orography. However, people are only looking for their own interests. Thus, Juárez leaders, mostly related to industry, see urban planning as a pending chapter of the city.

New Generations & Alternatives.

Because of this limited situation in Ciudad Juárez, DECJ leaders have insisted on managing projects such as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Museo La Rodadora (Museum) or have supported cultural and urban development assets such as the Museo de la Revolución en la Frontera Norte (Museum of the Revolution on the North Border) the Consejo del Parque Central (Parque Central Board) or the Plan de Recuperación del Centro de la Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Downtown Recovery Plan).

Additionally, businesspeople have suggested constructing multiservice vertical housing, to serve the new generations of border residents who delay getting married and having a family, but who are promisingly looking to acquire residential properties. The first construction project of this type of housing is Cantabria, of the Fernández family, but it is followed



La Rodadora features interactive art, science, technology, and regional culture exhibits.

by three more complexes with investments from businesspeople from the cities of Torreón and Chihuahua.

The idea is to offer housing close to the laborers' workplaces. All of them would be equipped with public services already installed (electricity, water, telephone, gas, transportation, cleaning, etc.); likewise, various commercial establishments, schools, entertainment, and daily businesses would be in the same housing area.



Digital Economy & Environmental Improvement.

This type of real estate would be more accessible to city networks. For this reason, they would save time in terms of transportation and domestic operations for the residents of Juárez who would live in these modern housing complexes. This would densify an urban area that has become very extended and, therefore, expensive for public service provision.

An overall quality of life strategy is the innovations of digital economy leaders such as Ricardo Mora, Omar Saucedo, and Fernando Alba,



who pave the virtual highways that scale business performance and link the people of Juárez with the supply and demand of options. These three innovative leaders could be called DECJ drivers.

Another option for Ciudad Juárez is the massive use of bicycles. Cynthia López de la Fuente, current DECJ director, was recognized in 2021 by the Dutch organization BYCS, with the appointment of Juárez Bicycle Mayor for promoting cycling rights. Other forms of non-motorized coexistence point to greater community strength.


Woody's


milan
Wendy's
ECONO
Cafecal


ADUANA FRONTERIZ

2

Stages of Economic Development: Junctures & Adjustments

Economic and social exchanges between the two sides of the Río Grande have been varied and complex for two centuries. In short, such exchanges have been formalized in a couple of regimes: a) closed or protectionist and b) free zone or free trade...

Economic and social exchanges between the two sides of the Río Grande have been varied and complex for two centuries. In short, such exchanges have been formalized in a couple of regimes: a) closed or protectionist and b) free zone or free trade. In the first case, ideologies such as nationalism and religion have been used, and in the second, material and market needs have prevailed.

We can speak of seven stages that become eras, as they leave their mark. They are differentiated periods, ranging from twenty to thirty years, and arise from historical, political, military, national, and international junctures, all of which reconfigure the economic dynamics of the border in the flourishing PNR.

For example, from 1824 to 1857, the market course established by the old Camino Real de Tierra Adentro still prevailed in that border zone. It was the first stage, which operated well enough, even a few years after the Mexican-American War. However, the commercial exchanges faced serious difficulties during the period of the Apache forays –for example, those of 1831– and due to adverse weather conditions.

The second stage (1857-1880) after the civil wars broke out in both countries: the War of Reform in México (1857-1861); the Civil War in the United States (1861-1865); and the French Invasion in México (1862-1867). Then, we add the Apache Wars in both Texas and Chihuahua, whose surrender occurred between 1875 and 1880. In other words, there were more than twenty years of instability in which there was trade and smuggling on the border.

Then came a third stage of economic boom, which took place between 1880 and 1911.

It developed just between the date of the laying of the railroads and the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, during which the Free Zone appeared (1885 to 1906). These were thirty years of growth on both banks. However, trade was characterized by its imbalance, with a galloping development on the U.S. side and a lagging development on the Mexican side.

After the interruption of the Mexican Revolution, came a fourth stage of suspicion and criticism, marked by Prohibition and the U.S. Crash. The negative effects of both historical events lasted for more than twenty years in México and the United States, from 1918 to 1939. The period was characterized by the relocation of the nightlife and entertainment industries to the Mexican side.

A fifth stage was opened with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. This time, the international relationship was marked by friendship and civilized cooperation. This period ended in 1964.

In particular, the United States massively attracted Mexican labor and raw materials. It also triggered the development of local industry in México, characterized by being protected, nationalistic, and compatible with the supply of materials for large-scale manufacturing in the powerful North American country.

The sixth stage began with the Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program) of 1965. Commercial and labor operations responded to the need of the United States to grow at a lower cost through the relocation of economic production processes and the use of labor but in Mexican territory.

All these actions led to the reformulation of a moderate nationalism in both countries. This stage lasted until 1994, until the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed. From 1994 to 2024, we face a stage of medium cooperation between the two North American nations. This most recent period stems from the expansion of the manufacturing model to other regions of México and the world, which slowed the runaway pace that was unleashed in Ciudad Juárez.

This stage also includes the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 and the economic and financial crises in the United States between 2003 and 2008, as well as the drug war in México. It also includes the negative effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such phenomena have limited the growth of free trade throughout the PNR.



The United States needed to grow at a lower cost, and using Mexican labor.







3

Mining, Agriculture & Livestock Sector

...The PNR has had to reinvent its commercial route, competing with the following routes: 1) the eastern route, which starts in México City, passes through Monterrey, and goes up to Dallas; 2) the western route, which runs from Guadalajara to Baja California and California.

The City on the Camino Real.

One of the great transformations that the PNR has undergone is its conformation into a large binational urban center. This city development hub gives it a strategic position in the center of North America and serves as a global industrial supplier with a well-recognized and appreciated human quality.

It is interesting to note that in 1816, the region had only 8,000 inhabitants! Two hundred years later, there are approximately 2.5 million border residents. With this number of people, the PNR is the largest human complex among cities such as Dallas, to the east; Monterrey, to the southeast; and Los Angeles, to the west.

We can say that its development has gone against the grain of the two North American economic hubs mentioned in the previous paragraph. The PNR has had to reinvent its commercial route, competing with the following routes: 1) the eastern route, which starts in México City, passes through Monterrey, and goes up to Dallas; 2) the western route, which runs from Guadalajara to Baja California and California.

The Mining Wealth of the Region.

Mining wealth was the magnet for colonizing the New Hispanic lands, which later became part of North America. We have also said that the PNR did not have mineral wealth. However, political will made the PNR the mineral processing center for New Mexico, Arizona, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango by the end of the 19th century.

Later, the various companies born at the end of the 19th century were incorporated into the ASARCO mining company, which processed the materials extracted from the mines like no other industrial center on the American continent.Between 1885 and 1911, 90% of the products that passed through the Juárez customs were minerals, especially silver and its byproducts. For this reason, the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) was born in 1914 as a School of Mines, and its students are called Miners. The business figures were significant in the mining field, even after the devaluation of silver in 1905.

In the last twenty years of the 19th century, Smeltertown developed on the north side of the Río Grande, employing close to a thousand workers in various trades. These workers had their own stores and houses and operated on the fringes of the development of the booming city of El Paso. Years later, the village was integrated into the urban sprawl of El Paso.



Between 1885 and 1911, 90% of the products passing through the Juárez customs were minerals, especially silver and its by products.

For a little more than a century, ASARCO was a reference for its efficiency and economic productivity, until the 1920s, when the Chihuahua and San Luis Potosi plants –also owned by ASARCO– opened and shared the refining volumes of Mexican metals with El Paso.

ASARCO in El Paso was a flagship for most of the 20th century. By 1999, however, it had to permanently shut down its operations. The El Pasoans appealed to the federal environmental agency, which determined that the company was polluting the PNR's air and water. As can be seen, times change and so do companies.

For the past one hundred years, metal processing has been conducted by W Silver Recycling, based in El Paso. This complex applies to the environmentally friendly concept of recycling ferrous and non-ferrous metals and plastics. The plant is a leader in the reusable materials sector in the western hemisphere and has branches in the southwestern United States and northern México.



Photograph of the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) in 1975.
Photo Source: El Paso Museum of History.

Dry & Extreme Weather.

Another important aspect that makes the difference between the States of California and most of the Texas territory before the PNR has to do with the weather. In our region, temperatures are drier and warmer than in Los Angeles or San Antonio, comparatively. But they are not higher than Phoenix or colder than Denver, which has its advantages.

With that weather, the agricultural economy was the source of the settlers' well-being in the 19th century, when México gained independence from Spain in 1821. Beginning in 1848, after the Mexican-American War, the farmers of the Río Grande lived off their crops, both for their own consumption and to sell to their neighbors to the north.

From the second half of the 19th century until the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, some large farmers such as the Angsteins, Ketelsen, and Degetau drilled wells on their land for their crops. Gradually, however,

they abandoned the idea of large-scale agricultural production, given the intermittent water supply in the PNR.

Crops in the different towns along the Río Grande suffered from the weather changes. Valentín Fuentes García recalls in his memoirs that his father, Valentín Fuentes Varela I, stated that, at the end of the 19th century, there were seven years in a row when the water flow was practically extinct.

Thus, some years it rained, others it did not, in the Chihuahua border region, or it rained, but it was late. Faced with the regular lack of water, producers fought for irrigation. In 1906 an international treaty was signed whereby the Juárez Valley would receive seventy-four million cubic meters for agricultural use annually. Historians point to this as a bad negotiation by México.



One of the publications of agricultural engineer Rómulo Escobar.

The Escobar brothers calculated the portion of water and land that each producer in the Juárez Valley required to support a family of six and proposed the appropriate crops to plant on that land. Later, in 1915, the Elephant Butte Dam was built north of Las Cruces to manage the water flow.

The Fruit & Wine Garden.

For many years, since the middle of the 18th century, the PNR has been recognized for the generosity of its fruit trees and the wine produced there. Famous foreign officials and travelers such as Agustín de Escudero, Alexander von Humboldt, and Phillippe Ronde, wrote about it in their famous historical accounts.

In the late 19th century, New Mexico produced more than one million gallons of wine annually. Today, the town of Anthony is home to the Wine Festival, which highlights more than fifty brands of diverse grape varieties for every palate. Since 1991, the New Mexico Wine & Grape Growers Association has been producing grapevines on a large scale, the cultivation of which dates back almost five centuries.

In Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, viticulture was put aside due to the urban sprawl growth and the modification of economic activities. Only a few initiatives, such as that of the Fuentes family, have recently taken up viticulture on a large scale, and it is to be expected that this noble activity will soon bear its first fruits.

Agricultural Universities.

As early as 1888, New Mexico State University (NMSU) was founded in Las Cruces. Previously, it was called the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. To date, the Aggies are a hemispheric reference in the noble agricultural and livestock disciplines.

The founding of NMSU was followed by the opening of the Escuela Superior de Agricultura Hermanos Escobar (ESAHE) in 1906, which for decades was a nationally recognized center of instruction in primary sector disciplines, renowned for its performance. However, eighty-six years later, ESAHE closed its doors.

Chiles & Salsas.

Around the same time (1913), chile cultivation became a hallmark of agriculture in southern New Mexico once it developed a milder variety of its own at NMSU. Today, Hatch is considered the chile capital of the world and is located on the Río Grande banks and a few miles north of Doña Ana County.

The Old El Paso firm's website states that in 1917 The Mountain Pass Canning Company was incorporated in the State of New Mexico,



Escuela Superior de Agricultura Hermanos Escobar ESAHE (School of Agriculture).

from where it moved to El Paso in 1938. Since then, it has been known for packaging traditional Mexican foods like beans, tortilla chips, and salsas.

In this industry, the Deándar family, originally from Camargo, Chihuahua, has excelled in packaging chiles of different varieties and tastes, through the Indel Food Products company. Their business processes crop from the States of Chihuahua and Sinaloa. Like other companies, it has a distribution company in El Paso to serve the U.S. market.

Border Cotton.

From the 1920s to the 1960s, agriculture experienced another boom, once cotton, or white gold, took over the Juárez Valley. And in the 1940s, dairy cattle breeding took off, which, unlike cotton, persists in Ciudad Juárez. But we will talk about this dairy sector in the section on industrial development. Here we will review notes on cotton.

In the PNR, growers began experimenting with cotton cultivation around 1899. In 1922, the plantations took on a commercial dimension with the request of Anderson Clayton to the Fronteras ranch, to cultivate agricultural products. Then, in 1934, the Distrito de Riego 9 (Irrigation District 9) was formed, which extended from Ciudad Juárez to the town of Guadalupe.

Cotton was a prodigal plant that changed labor in the border region, thanks to its higher profitability per hectare. For forty years, between the 1920s and the 1960s, it was a product that was exported very well due to its quality and gave rise to the founding of important industries in Ciudad Juárez, as described in a separate chapter.

The quality of Chihuahua cotton reached global standards during a good part of the 20th century. Nowadays, the market has lost its taste for polluting synthetic fibers, and this has given cotton a new value. Nevertheless, the land once used to harvest the fibrous plant has given way to manufacturing plant installation in Ciudad Juárez, as will be seen below.

Livestock.

With the installation of the railroad tracks from Chihuahua to Ciudad Juárez in 1882, the various haciendas of Luis Terrazas and other large cattle ranchers found an unprecedented way to ship cattle to the United States. Thus, by 1908, a packing house was established in El Paso, which allowed the processing of cattle herds and other meats.



Livestock production, like agricultural production, increased according to the abundance of rainfall or decreased due to quarantine decrees such as that of 1903. Also, livestock activity temporarily disappeared due to the Mexican Revolution, whose large contingents consumed a good part of the bovine livestock.

On the other hand, businessman Joséph Peyton immigrated to El Paso in 1899 to recover from his tuberculosis in that region. The man started a simple meat business in 1909, which he later turned into a large packing house. He received cattle from all over the southwestern United States and turned the meat market into an especially important industry.

Peyton operated in El Chamizal for more than 50 years, from 1915 until the park became part of México in 1967, due to the binational treaty of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Adolfo López Mateos, initiated in 1961. For this reason, Peyton, along with other businesspeople, was relocated and compensated by the U.S. government in 1967.

In 1942, Ciudad Juárez obtained the concession to establish a quarantine station. In 1948, two packing houses were opened with cattle

such as the one hauled by the Bustillos family since 1958, among other breeders, which had been raised in the northwest quadrant of Chihuahua, between the Namiquipa and Ascensión municipalities, and Casas Grandes and Villa Ahumada.

In 1966, a packing house was founded by Ricardo Iglesias Stell, who was a DECJ promoter in its early years. Today, this company operates under the Noble Foods brand, which processes a variety of popular products and has a presence in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and La Laguna.

In recent years, the Vaquero Trade company, owned by Álvaro Bustillos Fuentes, has transformed the regional livestock market under a beef futures sales model. With this work plan, it places more cattle in the market than any other company in the industry.

In 2024, the Union Ganadera Regional de Chihuahua (Chihuahua Regional Livestock Union) recognized Valentín Fuentes Varela III, a Juárez native, as rancher of the year. Founder of Grupo Imperial, which specializes in gas distribution and tank manufacturing, Fuentes Varela III has also successfully invested in cattle breeding.



Valentín Fuentes Varela III.

Also in 2024, Eugenio Baeza Fares' packing house Bafar announced a storage and distribution center opening for its processed products in El Paso. His successful company is headquartered in the city of Chihuahua and has a large commercial presence throughout México.

Pecans & Tree Nuts.

We read in Esteban Herrera's article on the NMSU website that, in 1913, Fabián García introduced pecan nut crops to the La Mesilla Valley. We also read that, in 1930, U.S. businessman Deane Stahmann planted four hundred acres to give the sector commercial status.

To appreciate its cultivation, it is necessary to feel the freshness emitted by the pecan trees planted at the edge of the old road, known as Oñate Trail, which connects the towns of Vado and La Mesilla. Doña Ana County is a state and national leader since its production generates the highest value in the pecan sector nationwide.

In Roberto Baca's account, we learned that starting in the 1950s of the 20th century, several Chihuahua producers began to plant pecan trees in various areas of the state. This variety of pecan trees is not native to



Pecan Grove located on the Don Juan de Oñate road, between El Paso, Texas, and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Chihuahua. However, these nut trees adapted well to the weather in these regions, and, little by little, farmers became aware of the pecan's nutritional value and high profitability.

The development of pecan trees spans from Ciudad Jiménez to New Mexico, passing through the region of Nuevo Casas Grandes and Chihuahua. This 'dry gold' has become a recent agricultural focus and a significant source of wealth for the PNR.

Juárez's La Nogalera.

About three decades ago, Eduardo Rodríguez emerged as a major pecan nut producer in the State of Chihuahua. The son of a pecan tree grower from Ciudad Jiménez, he finished his studies at UTEP. After graduating, his father asked him to sell his pecan crop in the United States. Then,



Worker at Grupo La Nogalera in Ciudad Juárez.

Rodríguez placed the merchandise properly, thanks to his knowledge of the language and his candid dealings with some of the merchants in El Paso.

Rodríguez then moved on to brokering and distributing pecans in Chihuahua and other Mexican states. He then had to move from Ciudad Jiménez to Ciudad Juárez to pack the product in the border region. The same buyers in the United States asked to be in the PNR to facilitate packing.

Today, Juárez's La Nogalera is the company that sells the most pecan nut products in the world. The processes include selling the nut shelled or in other presentations based on gastronomic treatments. Thus, the PNR ratifies its strategic position in national and international trade and demonstrates its skilled labor and logistical capacity.



Various transportation companies.

Like the above company, the Vallina family's ACCEL group started operations a few years ago in El Paso, with a plant dedicated to different tree nut varieties. Its industrial and commercial operations are conducted through the Azar Nuts company. Particularly, the plant processes, packages, and distributes goods in the snack industry for the U.S. market.

Distribution Centers in El Paso Texas.

With these examples of agriculture and livestock companies, the strategic position of the PNR is ratified as a producer, processor, and marketer of agricultural and livestock products. The PNR's role as a historic international port is strengthened by its capacity and experience in the storage, processing, packaging, and marketing of agriculture and livestock products at the hemispheric and global levels.







4

Tourism & Border Trade

The border location of Ciudad Juárez and the strategic geographic position of El Paso, thanks to its railroad branches, led businesspeople from El Paso to program visits and tourist packages to El Paso. One of the main attractions in these plans was Ciudad Juárez, according to the U.S. promoters themselves.

Growth from 1880 to 1911.

The Free Zone and Free Trade have generated economic growth for the PNR. For example, from 1880 to 1911, tens of thousands of people migrated to the border region, attracted by the jobs created by the laying of railroads and the installation of mining industries. Franklin –the old and first name of El Paso– experienced an economic boom, as did other large towns in East Texas and California.

The railroad brought to EI Paso, plenty of cattle and tons of mining material for refining. And, of course, it also attracted workers from various parts of both countries. From the north came consumer goods and technology, which completed the supply of agricultural products that were once grown in the valley surrounding the town, from Doña Ana County to the municipality of Guadalupe.

Food & Beverage.

The cattle companies in El Paso began their boom in 1882 before the refinery expanded in 1887 and the ironworks was erected as a major working center in 1900. At the same time, the breweries, ice plants, and distilleries made their appearance between 1886 and 1889, on the north side, although they were also located south of the Río Grande. In 1896, a meat processor began operating in Ciudad Juárez.

Almost immediately, the beverage and entertainment sector exploded, bringing in customers who had just arrived at the PNR. Most of them were single, betting money on games of chance and cockfights. They also consumed beer and liquor and enjoyed bullfights. The former residents of the PNR promoted the popular shows and also the theaters and casinos, which date back to 1881 and 1882.

Entertainment in the PNR.

We will now briefly discuss the various amusement and entertainment businesses that became famous between 1880 and 1960. These types of businesses emerged in both border towns of the PNR but, since 1920, they settled mainly in Ciudad Juárez.

Liquor Production.

Historical accounts refer to liquor production since a long time ago in the PNR, although the distilleries in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez formally

appeared in 1899, at the height of the immigration boom. The old wine-making vocation of the Chihuahua border region gradually shifted from wine production to liquor distillation in both cities.

There were also sporadic customers arriving from outside the PNR. It happened that the migrants' trajectory was long, as they traveled from the eastern U.S. states to California and from central México to the different states of the U.S. and vice versa. Such long journeys obliged the travelers to take an entertaining break halfway along the way, that is, in the PNR territories.

Role & Business Distribution Between El Paso & Ciudad Juárez.

As the years went by and the labor flow increased, between 1880 and 1910, the inhabitants of El Paso and some political leaders –mainly Texans and Americans, although there were also Chihuahuenses and Mexicans– thought that liquor consumption, as well as certain types of entertainment, should be regulated, as we will see below.

With El Paso's industrial boom, alcohol consumption by some newcomers reached a certain peak. Logically, the lack of local roots of temporary immigrants caused social behavior to get a little out of control, according to chroniclers of the time, such as Anson Mills himself.

Liquor was often linked to gambling and prostitution in the border region. All of this led to disorder and arrests, which prompted drastic measures as a result. El Paso was temporarily known as a violent place, which was barely mitigated by the very swift marshal Dallas Stoudenmire, who served as an authority by 1881.

Liquor.

First, there were restrictions on hours and entertainment and, later, express prohibitions for nighttime entertainment sectors. The process of control measures was gradual. El Paso gradually delegated the production and mass consumption of liquor to Ciudad Juárez and, from 1920 onwards, whiskey distilleries were located there, according to authors such as Rutilio García Pereyra.

The relocation of the first whiskey distillery from Kentucky to Ciudad Juárez is recorded. In 1921, Spanish businessman Julián Gómez Sánz promoted the production and sale of bourbon through the D. M. Distillery Company, whose best-known brand was Straight American.

Journalistic chronicles record that the prominent leader Antonio J. Bermúdez, distilled whiskey since 1927, under the brand Waterfill & Frazier, among other branches that he developed during the decades of the 20s to 40s, before assuming essential functions in public administration. We will discuss Bermúdez's role in the PNR later on.



Ciudad Juárez Lobby Café.

Casinos and cantinas were also relocated in Ciudad Juárez, logically, using liquor as a hook item that attracted residents and passengers from the United States. Likewise, other branches of nightlife entertainment took root in Ciudad Juárez.

In Ciudad Juárez, however, there was another, more upscale class of entertainment. Bullfighting, horse racing, and theatrical performances maintained an elevated and equally successful status. Some cabarets attracted performers of hemispheric renown, and the clientele enjoyed another level of experience. The Ciudad Juárez Chamber of Commerce has recently held twenty-four editions of the International Tequila –lately Sotol– and Maríachi Festival during August and September. The most recent editions of the fairs have been held in the Plaza de la Mexicanidad, during dates close to the national holidays.

Beer.

Beer was another product developed in the late 19th century with the mining boom. It occurred on both sides of the Río Grande. In the early 1880s, several stores were already selling beer in El Paso, according to Bill Lockhart's accounts, more than fifteen years before the 1896 establishment of the Compañía Cervecera de Ciudad Juárez, according to José Mario Sánchez.



Poster advertising Cervecería Cruz Blanca.

Businesspeople from the El Paso Brewing Association, who had founded a brewery in 1904, joined forces with industrialists from Juárez, just in the years 1918 and 1930 when the Prohibition of alcohol consumption in the United States emerged. Thus, Ciudad Juárez consolidated its local and foreign entertainment profile thanks to the business alliance between PNR businesspeople.

With the outbreak of the revolution, this binational capital brewery had to close its doors, only to reopen them in 1922, under the administration of the Fernández family. In 1933, its stills delivered the Chihuahua brand beer to the local market, with the already-known Cruz Blanca beer. Later, in the 1970s, the bottling plant was sold to Cervecería Cuauhtémoc de Monterrey.

Revolution, Fort Bliss, & War.

Wars left their mark on the PNR, as the border became a conducive place for the trade of authorized, or illegal and dangerous goods. Political conspiracies such as that of Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, the Mexican Revolution, or World War I, for example, generated illegal or at least risky crossings across the border.

As mentioned at the beginning, the historical condition of the PNR as a pass or crossing point attracted a great deal of human wealth. However, the border region also encouraged dangerous traffic from those who had no permanence in the region or commitment to the community and/or who only wanted to spend some time for entertainment on their way to other cities.

The lyrics of the Mexican song La Cucaracha allude to the need to consume drugs in times of war when soldiers cannot sleep at the risk of dying from enemy bullets or when they require painkillers once they are victims of painful wounds. Here is the following fragment: "*La cucaracha, la cucaracha/ ya no puede caminar/ porque no tiene, porque le falta/ marihuana que fumar* (The cockroach, the cockroach/ can no longer walk/ because it doesn't have, because it lacks/ marijuana to smoke.)."

Some historians even suggest that the U.S. government unofficially requested México to produce cannabis for military use during World War II. What was indeed a fact was the presence of a larger detachment of soldiers at Fort Bliss, Texas, during the war, a fact that increased the demand for liquor and drugs in Ciudad Juárez compounds.

Likewise, the sex trade of those who spent extended periods away from home completed a triad of illegal and transient consumption. For several decades, Ciudad Juárez emerged as the main supplier of merchandise that flowed under ambiguous regulations of social tolerance.

Although México was not a major participant in the two world wars, Ciudad Juárez paid the costs of military action deployed elsewhere in the world. In this area, as in that of mass migration (which we will discuss later), there has been no equal compensation of resources by the Mexican and U.S. governments.

Trade.

Soon, the binational settlement was home to important commercial houses with European origins. The powerful house of Ketelsen and Degetau, located in the city of Chihuahua, founded a branch in El Paso in 1884, but they had already had a curio store there since 1881. Then, in 1885, another emblematic store, La Popular, was launched.

Such commercial firms were followed by the Krakauer, Zork, and Moye stores in 1886. These businesses were remembered by some historians because they supplied explosives to the profitable mines of the Chihuahua highlands, but also to the different revolutionary sides after 1910.

In 1896, El Paso saw the birth of a tobacco trade and a lumber supplier for construction. By 1897 there was a Mexican handicrafts store in El Paso; in 1899, La Casa Blanca opened, which, along with the Kress commercial store that was established in 1907, formed the district of the great El Paso stores that supplied the entire northern Mexican market, beyond the PNR itself.

Many new products that were being manufactured in various agricultural and industrial centers were arriving in El Paso. This new merchandise arrived via the various iron roads that crisscrossed the United States. On the other hand, México lacked a comparable industry, and Ciudad Juárez barely manufactured flour, beer, and liquor, but not cement, furniture, clothing, or even moderately manufactured utensils.



The Kress Building, another work by architect Henry Trost.



Banking.

The banking sector became present in 1880 with the inauguration of the Banco Minero of Inocente Ochoa, an important border businessman. The banking firm was quickly controlled by Chihuahua capital headed by the Creel and Terrazas families, as well as by Euro-American investors such as Müller, Markt, Sisniega, Mac Manus, and others.

With the railroad, First National and State National banks arrived in El Paso in 1881. Wells Fargo opened in 1885. In addition to these institutions, large businesspeople and companies operated as lenders on

both sides of the Río Grande, such as Ketelsen and Degetau and Inocente Ochoa himself.

A branch of El Paso National Bank was established in Ciudad Juárez between 1891 and 1893. In 1894, the Banco de Comercio started. Both banks provided services to the local mining and railroad workers. Around 1905, the City National Bank opened its doors in El Paso and, in Ciudad Juárez, a banco Hipotecario (Mortgage Bank) started in 1909.

It is worth mentioning the founding, after the Mexican Revolution, of Banco Mercantil de Chihuahua, a company that brought together capital from the people of Juárez around 1925, headed by Tomas Fernández Blanco and under the management of Rafael Vallina García. The firm would strengthen and expand beyond Chihuahua with Mexican partners until the expropriation of 1982.



Banco Minero de Chihuahua.

Utilities & Urbanization.

The incursion of the Ferrocarril Central (Central Railroad) in 1884 and the Tramway in 1885 was accompanied by the subsequent works of canalization of the Río Grande in 1887. All these urban infrastructure works preceded the creation of the Junta de Mejoras in 1888. At the same time, the old Paso del Norte was elevated to the rank of city and baptized with the surname of the former president Benito Juárez that same year of 1888.

At the same time, a regulation was drafted to govern the shows, which were growing at the pace of the demand of new inhabitants of the PNR and especially of El Paso.

Between 1881 and 1888, El Paso registered two real estate companies. Their managers saw land prices rise and land uses change. In 1885, farmers north of the Río Grande opened the first wells in the face of water shortages. In 1893, Fort Bliss had to relocate further north of the river due to the growth of the El Paso urban sprawl.

Electricity and gas brought light to El Paso in 1888. Thus, the Texan city grew with services that, thanks to the association of businesspeople from both shores, it began to share with the neighboring city. Thus, lighting service arrived in Ciudad Juárez in 1899, while water began to be pumped in 1904, and its regular supply was possible in 1908.

In 1904, a planning effort for the urban development of Ciudad Juárez was conducted with the support of Enrique Creel's Chihuahua State government, which saw the wealth and opportunities of the border city growing. Thus, the legal boundaries were defined, and incentives and compensations were established to make possible the layout of streets in the city of Juárez.

However, some research shows that, from the early years of the 20th century, the urbanization of the border city lagged, while the population increased. By 1910, a cement plant began operating in El Paso, the same year that Chihuahua capital planned to found another one in Ciudad Juárez, which was stopped by the revolution.

Architecture in El Paso & Ciudad Juárez.

For many years Smeltertown was a village apart from the urban developments in El Paso. Its lands were integrated by different ranches of previous and new inhabitants, where the pioneers competed against the old landowners for the possession of the space and economic investments.

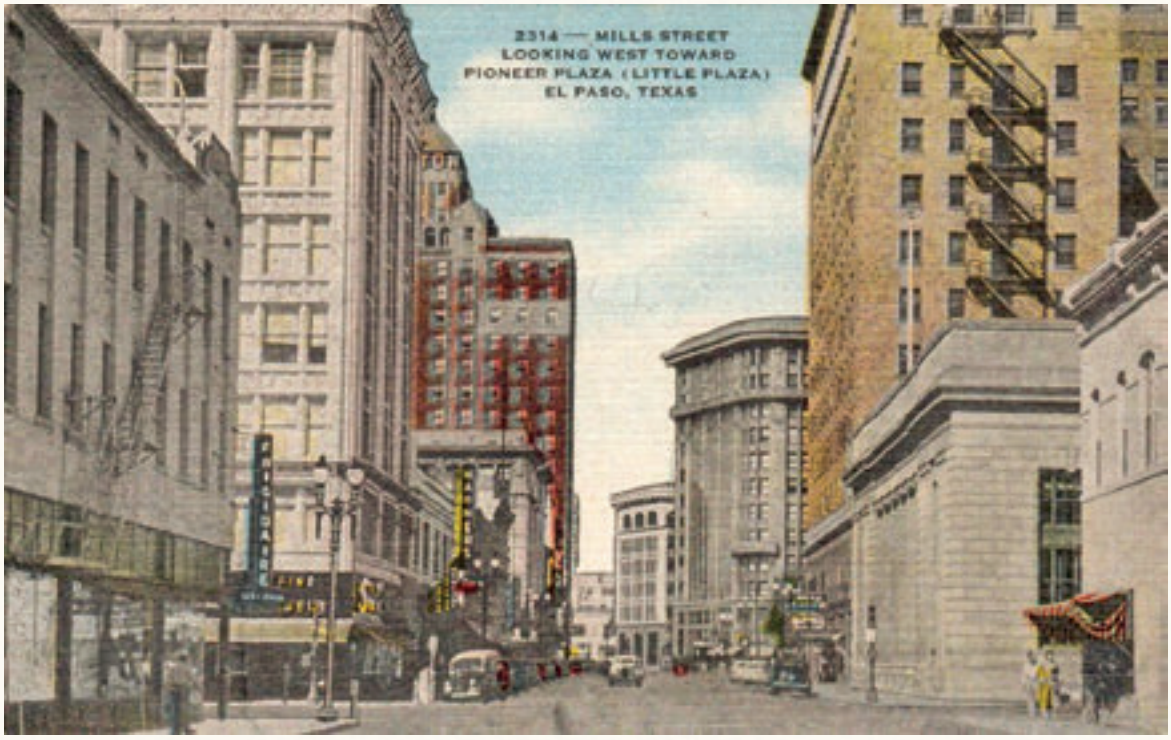
González de la Vara observes a division between mossbacks and liberals or between old and new owners in El Paso. Interestingly, these political and economic polarizations are going to extend into the 21st century, under new social and historical circumstances and new generations of politicians and businesspeople, as described in the book Who Rules El Paso?

Some researchers point out that Ciudad Juárez lost some of its best buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, compared to Chihuahua and especially El Paso, a city that did have at the time –and which have been preserved to date– with buildings of architectural styles that, although diverse, show a more harmonious air.

Dozens of properties were erected and designed by the Trost brothers beginning in 1906. Among these urban properties were the International Museum of Art, the Abdou and Anson Mills buildings, the La Popular store, the Plaza Hotel, and New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

Three iconic buildings of the tourist activity in the nineteenth century in Ciudad Juárez were built with wood in its first edition: the Plaza de Toros (bullring), the Teatro Juárez (a theatre), and the Hipódromo (racetrack). Such works reflect the market for construction materials for entertainment events that would be a constant in the border city for a century.

Buildings of a range of styles were erected in Ciudad Juárez between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Two



Trost buildings on Mills Street. Photo Source: El Paso Museum of History. www.digie.org

of them stand out for being the work of architect King. The first is the Antigua Aduana (old customs house), which was inaugurated in 1889; the second is the Teatro Juárez by Espiridión Provencio, which dates from 1904 and was lost during the years of the Mexican Revolution.

Another important building was the Plaza de Toros Pani or Samaniego, which was erected in 1903. The bullring exhibited a Spanish Mudejar style façade, an artistic profile that was also present in the Alhambra Theater in El Paso, built in 1914. Other structurally robust buildings were the discreet 1905 Mercado Luis Terrazas (market) and the 1909 Hipódromo Jockey Club (racetrack), which had a Frenchified façade.

Unfortunately, the varied architectural imprint of Ciudad Juárez was lost in comparison to the more uniform artistic stamp displayed by the Trost family in El Paso. The peculiar style of the Juárez buildings would only partially recover until years later.

Currently, the effort of businesspeople from Ciudad Juárez, headed by DECJ, has been to rescue and rehabilitate the downtown area of Ciudad Juárez. The work of these businesspeople not only represents a historical or architectural effort but also projects a civic culture and a work to restore the social identity of the people of Juárez.



Plaza Hotel, formerly known as the Hilton Hotel.



Plaza de Toros Pani or Samaniego (bullfighting arena).

After the Revolution.

The PNR, with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, to a certain extent, reprised the war era it experienced in the 1960s. Likewise, the United States participated in the last two years of World War I, from 1916-1918. These two war events led to an area of arms smuggling, espionage services, and uncontrolled migration.

At the end of that stage, trade took on different nuances in the PNR. One of them was the prohibition to produce and sell liquor, first in Texas in 1818 and later throughout the United States in 1920. As a result, the local liquor and amusement businesses relocated to Ciudad Juárez.

Wrestling, gambling, and bullfighting, which had been a reality north of the river for years, were forced to relocate to the southern zone, due to their predilection for alcohol consumption. Other random or temporary entertainment activities, such as cabarets or cockfighting, also reinforced Ciudad Juárez's nighttime and random tourist economy.

The Entrepreneurial Society of El Pasoans and Juarenses.

Despite the relocation to Ciudad Juárez, many remaining investors were Euro-American. Among those businesses was the Bar Mint owned by British businessman Harry Mitchell. Perhaps because of this, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce publicized visits and events south of the border.

The minutes of the Camara de Comercio de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Chamber of Commerce) in the 1930s refer to invitations from its

counterpart in El Paso. In official prospectuses, they focused on promoting events and attending binational meetings, as well as their interest in constructing a new highway from Ciudad Juárez to the Mexican capital.

Samalayuca represented a challenge, first to lay the railroad tracks and then to lay the highway. Thus, the Juárez farmers helped tame the dunes to secure the asphalt road during the time of Mayor Alberto Almeida in the late 1920s, according to Valentín Fuentes García in his memoirs. The border location of Ciudad Juárez and the strategic geographic position of El Paso, thanks to its railroad branches, led businesspeople from El Paso to program visits and tourist packages to El Paso. One of the main attractions in these plans was Ciudad Juárez, according to the U.S. promoters themselves. The travelers' journey from different points in the U.S. included a ten-day stop in El Paso, which meant that many of these tourists invested their time and money in Ciudad Juárez.

Years later, in 1950, on the centennial of the founding of El Paso, the tourist promotions did not miss the opportunity to "sell" Ciudad Juárez as an attraction of its own. The same happened in 1967, when the El Pasoans promoted attendance to the Ciudad Juárez Fair, due to the boom of the Puente Libre and the new Ciudad Juárez urbanization.

Restrictions on Free Trade.

In general, cross-border trade has been beneficial to El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. However, some restrictions have been imposed throughout history. One of the first limitations was that the Juárez Free Zone was considered an advantageous measure by traders from El Paso, so it suffered continuous adjustments. Its validity began in 1885 and was losing its extension until it ended in 1906.

Under Prohibition (1918-1930), a proposal was made to drastically reduce the service hours on the border bridges, to force the American tourists to return early to El Paso. That way, visitors would not spend more money in Ciudad Juárez, or fall into vice.

Various Christian spokespersons in El Paso adduced moral reasons for applying such legal restrictions. Also, some Catholics, such as the Villista Silvestre Terrazas –a distinguished Mexican journalist who had settled in El Paso after the Mexican Revolution– proposed such measures, although he was not entirely opposed to alcohol consumption.

In the mid-1960s, José Hernández Valenzuela and Mark T. Miles



Hole-in-the-Wall, an oasis between El Paso and México.

–prominent representatives of the Border Cities Association– showed figures and statistics that denoted a mutual economic benefit for El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. Both advocated opening border trade, just when the U.S. authorities drastically limited the individual import allowance from $500 to $100.

The PNR's Tourist Orbit.

Wrestling and boxing also added to the almost exclusive entertainment offer in Ciudad Juárez. Starting in 1926, the Coliseo Juárez was built, with the exhibition of the famous puncher Jack Dempsey. The billboard included wrestling matches, a sporting first for Ciudad Juárez, which had been inaugurated around 1908, according to José Mario Sánchez.

The casinos in Juárez were reconditioned with creative shows for the foreign clientele, who expected to learn about Mexican culture, in addition to having fun according to their tastes. In this field, some investors from other Mexican cities competed with those from the PNR to obtain the necessary permits through public auctions.

Local artists alternated with those from other cities, Mexican and American. In the 1920s there were foxtrot ballads by authors such as Arturo Tolentino and waltzes by Francisco Moure, who wrote the famous song Julia to dedicate it to a young box-office girl at the Teatro Colón in El Paso, according to some versions.

On the other hand, Francisco El Charro Avitia sang *rancheras*, hanging around bars and nightclubs in Juárez, while Germán Valdés, Tin Tan, spread samples of mixed border culture with his peculiar performances. Born in 1915, both entertainers emerged in the 1930s before gaining fame in México City.

The production of Alberto Aguilera, Juan Gabriel, four decades later was different. More sentimental and contemporary, he remains in the taste of the Spanish-speaking public. His unique artistic style does not reflect the harshness and/or ranchera joy, nor the irony of bicultural social differentiation, but the open expression of successes and failures in love.

Cinema.

In 1919, the firm Calderón y Salas Porras began a long and ascending trajectory with the opening of the Colón Theater in El Paso, which is still standing today. Some historians note that the three main investors owned six movie theaters in El Paso. In total, they owned a circuit of approximately thirty movie theaters, called Alcázar, which extended throughout the State of Chihuahua.





The Colón Theater and the Plaza Theatre.

El Paso was a business center for Calderón and Salas Porras, who produced and distributed materials in Los Angeles and México City. Many of these artistic products were related to Hispanic and Mexican culture, which was even reproduced on the facades of their theaters, such as that of the Cine Azteca (1929) in Chihuahua City.

For example, the prototypical film El Indio Yaqui, shown in 1926, alluded to the virtues of native Mexican race. Additionally, its positive attributes were related to members of the ruling class: the Mexican presidents from Sonora, who governed the country during the 1920s.

By 1920, another chain of movie theaters alternated in the border city of Juárez, owned by businessman Juan Alarcón. This business called "Compañía Internacional de Diversiones" managed the Eureka, Rex, and Hidalgo movie theaters in El Paso, plus the Alcázar and the Anáhuac in Ciudad Juárez.

On the other hand, the Plaza Theater of El Paso, still in operation, which shows a neocolonial style, was inaugurated in 1930 by businessman Louis Dent. Thus, the PNR completed a broad offer at the time, with all these cinematographic properties available to hold, in addition to popular, artistic, and social events.

To date, the large building of the Cine Plaza from Circuito Alcázar, in downtown Ciudad Juárez, survives as one of the last and most exquisite venues, built in 1947. The building has three floors and a vast capacity for about three thousand people. It was the first theater to have air conditioning.

Ciudad Juárez & Las Vegas.

With all these singers, you can gauge the prominent level of production and cultural evolution of Ciudad Juárez. Additionally, you can enjoy the Juárez gastronomic complexity by enjoying the burrito, a resource that ensures take-out food, and by drinking the border margaritas, a fusion of the strong tequila flavor and lemon with the sweet taste of orange and sugar.

There are many opinions about the glamour of Ciudad Juárez in the 1920s and 1930s, which lasted until the 1960s. For that reason, some consider the border city a precedent for the shows developed in Las Vegas, Nevada, which were created years later by New Yorker Benjamin Siegel and Russian Meyer Lansky.

In the 80s and 90s, with the rise of the manufacturing industry, Ciudad Juárez saw the birth of countless discotheques on the banks of

the Río Grande. Among them, Chihuahua Charlie's and Electric-Q stood out. Inhabitants not only from the PNR but also from inland flocked to these places. The discotheques emitted the last nocturnal gleam of Juarense vitality before the social decomposition suffered by the violence of organized crime.

Cabarets & Ballrooms.

World War II once again opened the key to nightlife tourism for the military clientele in Ciudad Juárez. Around 25,000 soldiers stationed at Fort Bliss crowded the border city's entertainment venues every weekend. Bars and casinos took on new life.

With the end of the war (1945) and for several years thereafter, there was a halo of optimism that ushered in another era of prosperity on the Chihuahuan border. Thus, the United States and México saw their economies grow solidly. In México, there was talk of Stabilizing Development with a 6% growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a measured inflation rate of 3% per year.

The 1940s and 1950s attracted more migrants than any other era, under the hope of binational labor recruitment programs. The United States lent money to México to jump-start its industry. Additionally, in 1954, México devalued the peso against the dollar and that produced extra liquidity of resources.

Francisco (Lay) Yepo recalled the beginnings of elegant salons in Ciudad Juárez, which offered shows, dinner, music, and dancing for couples of good tastes. For example, La Fiesta by Pablo Montalvo. It was an eclectic, neo-colonial, and Mexica-style venue, where the American singer Frank Sinatra and the Spanish Los Churumbeles attended.

Other ballrooms welcomed María Felix and Jorge Negrete, a couple in vogue. The ballrooms Azul, Plata, and Olimpo belonged to the same period of economic prosperity. The end of World War II and the optimism of the people reflected in their pockets were accompanied by the music of the great orchestras.

The night light was combined with the whirlwind appointments of famous Americans who came to Ciudad Juárez just to get divorced. Among them were Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, who was represented by Aureliano González Vargas, a lawyer who would offer his international experience years later, in services for light manufacturing companies.

The Presence of Ciudad Juárez in the United States and México.

In 1946, Antonio J. Bermúdez promoted a meeting in his home that was attended by the President of the Republic Miguel Alemán Valdés, and other important local figures. With this event, the prominent Juarense leader inaugurated a lobbying route that, fifteen years later, would open another stage in Ciudad Juárez's economy. Bermúdez had previously been president of the Chamber of Commerce (1927-1929), then the only business organization of its kind, and was also mayor of Ciudad Juárez (1942-1943). Later (1946), he was senator for Chihuahua.

Along the same route, in the mid-1950s, René Mascareñas promoted the First International Industry and Commerce Exposition in Ciudad Juárez, which was an enormous effort to attract the business and political sectors of the southern United States and northern México.

The goal was to position Ciudad Juárez as a strategic regional business center. Mascareñas was president of the Chamber of Commerce (1954-1956) and, right after that, mayor of Ciudad Juárez (1956-1959).

In such an international exposition, the businessperson and politician from Ciudad Juárez sold the idea that Ciudad Juárez represented a sound investment for businesspeople from Dallas and Houston, Monterrey, Guadalajara, and México City. Of course, El Paso also assumed the role of host at those important trade shows.

The exhibition of products, machinery, and equipment lasted several days. The unprecedented nature of the event caused expectations and, undoubtedly, placed the city on the economic map of the hemisphere, although there was no lack of incidents with federal authorities. The trade show attracted figures from both countries, at a time when Mexican nationalism was in the air in business.

At the time, the United States saw no harm in México developing its economy, if it served as its exclusive supplier of raw materials for its powerful productive system. At the time, the United States was part of a strong international supply chain, whose products were sold in Europe.

Health.

In the article entitled Hôtel Dieu, a General Hospital, we learn that: the numerous business and industrial railroad interests, as well as the large area of commercially taxable territory and an outstanding climate, make El Paso a strategic pole for offering medical services on a national level.



Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Businessmen's predictions, –the article continues–, forecast that El Paso will be the metropolis of the Southwest for three main reasons: first, it has seven railroad networks; second, it has 20,000 inhabitants; and third, it houses the headquarters of the mining and ranching sectors located in towns hundreds of miles around. Furthermore, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez have opera houses and other attractions that serve as convalescent homes for patients.

As we have seen in other sections, the warm dry weather of the PNR appears as a comparative economic advantage in comparison to other Mexican and U.S. towns. This positive factor of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez favors liquor distillation, the healing of the sick, and would help the later emergence of the manufacturing of factory components.

In the health sector, the weather was key for El Paso to receive capital and talent. Among them, the figure of Dr. Mariano Samaniego from Sonora, a surgeon who graduated in 1859 from a university in París, stands out. This physician joined the medical staff of the city of El Paso as a clear forerunner of many Mexican physicians who were to build the health system of the PNR.

Some historical accounts indicate that several hospitals like those mentioned above were built in El Paso. Also, an interesting clinic for

hydropathy was built around 1896. In 1891, on the other hand, a Health Campaign had already been organized in Ciudad Juárez, coinciding with the First Sanitary Code issued in México.

In 1903, the neighboring town of Cloudcroft innovated the area of pediatrics. Additionally, Providence Hospital would start in 1900 and Baldwin Hospital in 1907. As we will see in another section, El Paso strengthened the health sector from its beginnings, which continued to be current and truly relevant throughout the PNR until the 21st century.

Health & Migration.

In 1915, professional work began modestly at the El Paso County General Hospital. By 1963, the institution built a building that was renamed Thomason Hospital and was redirected to serve the military. As of 2017, it was reconverted into the University Medical Center of El Paso. At the time, its facilities were made possible, thanks to the voluntary contribution of the El Pasoans. For this reason, it was established as a non-profit hospital.

In 1916, cases of typhus appeared in central México, an event that led to inhumane hygienic measures at the El Paso border. Such preventive actions provoked accidents and notorious social demonstrations. For example, worker Carmelita Torres spoke out against the campaign in 1917. Between 1929 and 1964, improper disinfectants were applied and there were scenes of xenophobic intolerance.

However, these arbitrary acts committed by the U.S. authorities were converted into immigration requirements that had to be met at the Mexican border. These new measures contributed to the development of specialized medical offices in Ciudad Juárez.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, numerous Mexican physicians moved to Ciudad Juárez, and some were even able to establish clinics in El Paso until medical practice for foreigners was restricted. Thus, in the late 1930s, Dr. Manuel Beltrán del Río, originally from Camargo, Chihuahua, screened applicants for immigration permits with special x-ray equipment brought from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

At the time it was important to rule out traces of tuberculosis and there was a lack of appropriate medicine to cure the disease. Later, Dr. Jorge Contreras Zamora, originally from Puebla, moved to Ciudad Juárez in the early 1950s. Afterwards, this physician performed several blood tests between 1952 and 1979, which were authorized specifically by the U.S. Consulate.

Currently and for some years now, Roberto Assael, a pulmonologist from the capital, has been performing the necessary health procedures for immigration matters for 35 years. Juan Carlos Sapién de Anda, businessman of the sector and former president of DECJ, commented that the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juárez is currently among the ten largest in the world and, therefore, the volume of foreign patients is remarkably high.

In 1943, the Red Cross facilities were established in Ciudad Juárez. In 1945, the Dr. Gustavo Baz Clinic was created, which used tezontle Stone (volcanic rock) in its construction. In 1948, the Hospital General (General Hospital) opened, which gathered federal, state, and City Hall resources. A year later, the Centro Médico de Especialidades (Specialty Medical Center) was opened, which was the first of its kind in the state. At the time, there were also public Health Centers A, B, and C.

The Biomedical Cluster.

According to academic studies, the quality services provided in Ciudad Juárez currently represent savings between 65 and 95% compared to those provided in the United States. For this reason, the Medical Tourism cluster is important in border cities such as Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, a city that also stands out in this area.

Furthermore, this circumstance has boosted the creation of binational instrument and equipment industries in the present century. The companies have grouped in the Clúster Biomédico (Biomedical Cluster), inaugurated during the presidency of Benito Fernández as the head of DECJ. In the business block, important businesspeople from Juárez and El Paso, such as Julio Chiu Olivares, with SEISA Medical, and Carlos Murguía Chávez, from Rexmed Health, among other companies, participate.

Based in El Paso, SEISA is present on four continents and employs 2,500 people. Among the equipment manufactured by SEISA are orthopedic and implant devices, devices for ophthalmic, urological, cardiology, and nutrition operations, as well as for therapy.

In El Paso, investments in the medical field have resulted in the creation of the School of Nursing, which is promoted by the Gayle and Woody Hunt Foundation. At the same time, Paul Foster contributed the necessary resources for the construction and operation of the Texas Tech School of Medicine, based in El Paso.

Chain Stores.

For decades, downtown El Paso was the best reference for wholesale and retail shoppers in northern México. Thus, La Casa Blanca, La Popular, Kress, and other stores offered unique products that projected the image of the New York department stores featured in movies such as Miracle on 34th Street and Breakfast at Tiffany's.

By 1962, commercial development in El Paso led to the establishment of the Bassett Center, whose title inherited that of the Tower of the same name, an iconic El Paso building named in honor of businessman Oscar Bassett. Graphics from the 1960s show a huge vacant space gradually urbanized by the freeway and Montana Avenue.

In the same decade, the Programa Nacional Fronterizo (National Border Program) or PRONAF promoted the urbanization of Las Américas Avenue and Franklin Avenue in Ciudad Juárez, where hotels, museums, craft stores, and supermarkets were developed. Ciudad Juárez's population growth, which in the 1960s surpassed El Paso for the first time, demanded new commercial centers.

Alberto Wilson in his thesis proposes that the Ciudad Juárez PRONAF motivated Mayor Judson Williams of El Paso to modify his urban plans and reinvest in the development of the city's east side. Businessmen Bermúdez and Mascareñas had already had their sights set on the east side of Ciudad Juárez since the 1950s. They had managed new urbanization projects that were later followed up on the U.S. side.

Del Río.

The history of the Del Río supermarket chain began in the early 1930s with the arrival in Ciudad Juárez of Spanish businessman Artemio de la Vega Berdayes. This visionary businessman took on the challenge of successfully distributing liquor and groceries on the border for a México City company.

By 1937, de la Vega had already developed the retail concept and the name Supermercados Del Río. The stores were boosted in 1950 by the distribution in Ciudad Juárez of Carta Blanca beer from Cervecería Cuauhtémoc brewery, headquartered in Monterrey. From an initial market share of only 3%, the bubbly beverage grew exponentially in Juárez's taste and sales.

In 1969, Federico de la Vega Matthews and Fernando Borreguero Allard formed Almacenes Distribuidores de la Frontera (ADF). In the 1970s, all company branches took on the format of convenience stores and, later, boasted façades that were defined by a California style.

In 1996, Alejandra and Guadalupe de la Vega Arizpe innovated the commercial sector by developing the Superettes. This new format offered the public more products for specific tastes according to the consumer movement in certain parts of Ciudad Juárez.

Both commercial concepts, Del Río, and Superettes, have a total of three hundred stores in various cities in the State of Chihuahua, although most of them are in Ciudad Juárez.

Coloso & S-Mart.

The commercial history of the Muñoz family began in 1935 with Jesús Muñoz y La Unión, a store located in El Paso. Several decades later, some chronicles note that Enrique Muñoz created the Plaza Coloso concept in Ciudad Juárez around 1969, with three branches under the self-service model. People still remember the escalators and the wide range of products available.

In 1971, it became possible to sell imported merchandise in Ciudad Juárez with the opening of the hook item concept. Thus, Enrique Muñoz opened a supermarket in 1975, which was the maximum point of sales per square meter, as it was said.

Likewise, in 1976, the Mares, Cantú, and Murguía families started the first mall in Ciudad Juárez: the famous Río Grande on the main avenues of Triunfo de la República and López Mateos, which was a true bellwether in the regional market of the northern border.

Just in 1974, the famous Cielo Vista Mall opened its doors in the border and northern Mexican commerce, like Bassett's, but with a renewed offer of brands that soon surpassed its predecessor. The growth in manufacturing and population employment was noticeable in the four companies mentioned above.

Going back to the Coloso Company, the supermarket scheme had prevailed over the plaza, which had been in vogue for many years. In 1993, the new S-Mart concept was created, in self-service mode and with longer opening hours, which were gradually extended to 24 hours a day.

S-Mart had sprouted with Mexican capital, but in 2000, in alliance with the U.S. company Larroc Inc., it decided to expand into the capital



O. T. Bassett Tower, art deco construction in El Paso.

of Chihuahua and then into the states of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, following to a certain extent the course of the Río Grande.

In terms of the type of services, S-Mart is located between the hypermarket model of brands such as Soriana and Walmart and the convenience store model promoted by Del Río and Superettes. The commercial chains in Ciudad Juárez have differentiated themselves by products and services, according to volume and customer segment.

In 1988, Sunland Park Mall opened its doors on the west side of El Paso, with an intermittent offering over the course of thirty-five years. In 2013, The Fountains at Farah, a kind of open-air mall next to Cielo Vista, opened its doors. Years later, Outlet shopping complexes opened on the far west side, near the port of Santa Teresa and Las Cruces.

Bullfighting & Sports.

From the first years of coexistence between the settlers of the two banks of the Río Grande, there was great expectation for bullfights. Thus, bullfighting festivals and cockfights were organized in El Paso during the 19th century. Likewise, Mexican curio and/or handicraft stores appeared in the Texan city, which was still culturally Mexican.

The taste for bullfighting was soon to include European American matadors and not only those of Mexican or Spanish origin. Some historians mention the Irish bullfighter Carleton Bass and the Frenchman Pierre Cazenave, for their participation in the St. Louis, Missouri World's Fair, in 1904. On the other hand, the minutes of the Cámara de Comercio de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Chamber of Commerce) mention the Anglo-American Sidney Franklin in 1930.

The first bullring built with wood in Ciudad Juárez, located in the area where the "Mercado Luis Terrazas" (later "Mercado Cuauhtémoc") was located, was replaced by the "Plaza Samaniego" in 1903. When the latter was consumed by a fire, it was replaced by two bullfighting arenas: the Plaza Alberto Balderas, which still exists, and the Monumental, which would close in 2005.

In recent dates of the XXI century, the municipal authority has seen the possibility of resuming bullfighting in the border town, which is a typical Juárez spectacle, popular, family-oriented, touristic, and with a strong historical identity.



Mercado Cuauhtémoc. Public Market, Ciudad Juárez.



Juárez Baseball Stadium.

Baseball & Soccer.

High-level baseball in Ciudad Juárez dates to 1936 when the legendary Indios team formed the state league with other Chihuahua cities. Later, this team formed a binational circuit with Texas and Arizona in 1952, the year in which they were champions. Five years later, the Indios competed in the Liga Central Mexicana (Central Mexican League) from 1957 to 1958.

The most recognized performance of Juárez baseball took place in 1973, when Federico de la Vega promoted the Indios de Juárez franchise in the Mexican Baseball League, in which he obtained outstanding results, such as being champion in 1982. In that professional club, world figures that are still remembered today, such as coach José "Zacatillo" Guerrero and Mexican pitcher Teodoro Higuera, shined.

From the successful baseball chapter, businessman Federico de la Vega ventured into the second division of Mexican soccer and acquired the Cobras team for Ciudad Juárez in 1988. At the time, the people of Juárez were already showing a more inclined interest in this national sport. The result was impressive, as Cobras was crowned champion that same year and was promoted to the maximum soccer circuit.

After the Cobras club had an up-and-down performance in the Mexican top and second level divisions, it folded in 2005; however, its wake was taken up by the Indios de Ciudad Juárez in 2008, which participated in four tournaments at that level, but, unfortunately, they were relegated to the second level division in 2012.

It took another three years for the border to have another sports team at the highest level. From 2015 to date, the new team Bravos de Ciudad Juárez has developed, now under the leadership of Alejandra de la Vega, who has joined the support of several important businesspeople, some of them from the United States, to actively participate in border sports promotion.

Star Sports Group.

In both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, according to Juan Carlos Talavera, some company heads have taken on sports as a fundamental axis to generate identity and roots. At the same time, they seek to support a better quality of life in the social and family environment in the PNR. The Mountain Star Sports Group, headed by Alejandra de la Vega and Paul Foster, is a clear example of this civic commitment. The deployment of joint business efforts today includes the management of baseball and soccer teams on both sides of the border, which compete in different leagues and levels. Thus, a pool of players has been formed to strengthen the most demanding circuits in the 21st century. In particular, the Ciudad Juárez Bravos and the El Paso Chihuahuas won their respective tournaments, the former in 2015 and the latter in 2016.

In 2014, investment was made in the construction of a baseball and soccer stadium in downtown El Paso. Thus, Southwest University Park joined the restoration projects of other historic buildings in this Texan city to create a pleasant space for welcoming entire families of fans.

Transportation.

An obligatory chapter in the border economy has been public and foreign transport, due to its remoteness from the large Mexican cities. In particular, the history of Transportes Chihuahuenses began in 1937 with commuter routes from Ciudad Juárez to Samalayuca, from the integration of a cooperative headed by Maclovio Portillo and Ezequiel Campos.

Over time, the bus routes were gradually extended as a function of the asphalt laying of the Pan-American Highway, inaugurated in 1945. Beginning that year, Portillo y Campos' company partnered with other firms in the interior of the country to secure routes from Ciudad Juárez to México's capital. Among the company's new associates were Salvador Nassri, Gustavo Dávila, Franco, and Genaro Valdez.

In the freight transportation industry, companies such as Fletes Sotelo and Fletes México, owned by the Gómez family, developed in the

1980s. Both lines transported heavy merchandise from Ciudad Juárez and other borders to the cities of central and western México, using fleets of tractor-trailers, and containers of several thousand units.

Car Distribution.

Along with the development of several sectors, Ciudad Juárez has seen a significant expansion of car dealerships. Currently, businessman Antonio Moisés, in his capacity as president of the Asociacion Mexicana de Distribuidores de Automóviles or AMDA (Mexican Association of Car Dealers) in the State of Chihuahua, foresees the arrival of five more brands to the border city.

In this regard, we briefly comment on Xavier Jacobo Touché Hernández's path as a businessman. He is the descendant of a merchant family who immigrated from the Middle East at the beginning of the 20th century and settled in the city of Chihuahua. The young businessman moved to Ciudad Juárez in his youth to develop his career in the private business sector.

Touché began to develop in the branches related to automotive services and accessories. Later, his business vision led him to become an important car dealer, through the TOXA firm and with the philosophy of doing things right the first time.

Cristina Touché Lozano currently heads TOXA and is also president of DECJ. The entrepreneur is distinguished by her bicultural background. She has also become the second woman to lead a visionary organization, characterized by its focus on topics beyond business.

In the 21st century, Cristina has integrated the know-how inherited from the Touché and Lozano families. They have turned their business leadership towards fund management and civic and social commitment programs. As a result, Cristina now serves as President of DECJ, at a time when the quality of life of the people of Juárez is at the center of her activities.

It is interesting to note that Cristina Touché has overseen a key project for the Juarense community, which is promoted by DECJ's leadership before the state authorities. It is a plan focused on the implementation of an efficient public urban mobility system, which took shape in the operation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which only started in May 2024.

About the Burrito & Tacos.

Ciudad Juárez is recognized as the birthplace of the famous burrito, a food typical of the migrant or traveler who must carry food. In this case, it is a tortilla that serves as the pack animal (*"burro"*)[1] and is a traditional food. The large-sized wheat tortillas –formerly called *"rochacas"*– are different from those made from corn, which are small and closer to the tradition of central México. In this commercial segment, Ciudad Juárez has developed some important chains that have crossed the border in recent decades and have placed the Juarense dish in the taste of Americans. Also, such businesses are in Asian and European cities. Some well-known firms are Aquimichú –which reminds us of Ventura Romero's song[2], Crisóstomo, and El Padrino, although specialized restaurants are abundant throughout Ciudad Juárez.

On the other hand, the taste for the Mexican taco has been the success of companies from Juárez such as Tacotote by Pacífico Heras and his brothers. The firm has managed to set up several branches in Nuevo Laredo, El Paso, and Torreón, in addition to those in Ciudad Juárez. Originally from Sinaloa, the Heras brothers have established themselves on the border with a typical popular and quality product.

Prime Beef Cuts.

Prime beef cuts are the pride of the PNR, the entire northern region of México, and the southern United States. They have established themselves as a simple but highly consumed dish, whose classifications acquire diverse values and prices comparable to species such as salmon, lobster, or caviar since cuts are prepared according to their breed, their parts, and even the exceptional care given to the cattle during breeding.

GA GREAT AMERICAN HOSPITALITY

In this segment, the Orozco family has stood out with a chain of border houses under the Great American Steak House label. They are in El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and even Chihuahua. The successful chain includes recipes originating in Texas, such as cabbage seasoned with creamed pineapple, beans with a semi-sweet touch, and ribs with barbecue dressing.

Such establishments target a higher end of the consumer market amid elegant decor. The business group integrates some essential aspects

[1] "Burro" in English means donkey, and "burrito" literally means small donkey.
[2] "Aquimichú" is a Mexican traditional song about a "burrita," a female donkey.

of the offerings of U.S. restaurants Applebee's and Wendy's, both in the PNR and in other Mexican cities.

Another segment is that of Mexican recipes, in which Barrigas stands out for its traditional gastronomy. With several branches, Carlos Murguía keeps border and tricolor cuisine alive.

The Hotel Industry.

Ciudad Juárez has a long and extensive hotel history in its various stages. Like other segments such as the restaurant industry, it offers rooms for different budgets, whether for travelers, migrants, or executives, always within a binational concept of efficient treatment.

Hotels such as the Plaza Continental, the San Antonio, or Silvia's were home to Mexican presidents and famous artists in the past. In El Paso, we remember the beautiful buildings that were designed by Trost for the Plaza and Cortez hotels, as well as the elegant and monumental Paso del Norte, which was recently renovated.

In recent decades, major national and international chains have been located in Ciudad Juárez. Among the list are the well-known Posadas, Lucerna, Camino Real, Colonial, Cedros, María Bonita, Sheraton, Ibis, Hilton, Krystal, Marriot, Windham, and Holiday Inn.

In this essay, we review the example of María Bonita, a company that currently has three hotels, two are in Ciudad Juárez, and another one was recently inaugurated in the city of Chihuahua.

This business is distinguished by its Juarense origin and cultural proposal, which shines in its neo-royal architecture; its fine decoration of patios, courtyards, and novo-Hispanic haciendas; and its ample Mexican gastronomic menu. All these hotels recover an ideal face from other times when the homeland had a more defined cultural identity.

In the 21st century, businessman Carlos Riquelme Canales undertook a productive national and international promotion campaign, just when the image of Ciudad Juárez was deteriorating due to difficult circumstances. This audacious businessman contributed to relaunching the border city as a hospitable place that offers quality services for tourists and visitors. Riquelme served at the time as president of DECJ, as well as of the Asociación de Hoteles y Moteles de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Hotel and Motel Association).







5

From Nationalist Industrialization to Global Manufacturing

...These economic groups considered that México could generate its own national industries to limit or eliminate the use of imports. The nationalization of foreign companies in the 1920s and 1930s was a first step in this direction. The federal government expropriated businesses in the electricity, oil, forestry, mining, and agricultural industries.

Like the chapter on commerce, we take up only a few examples that seem important to us in this fifth part of the book. Far from conducting a complete inventory, we review the trajectory of some Chihuahua factories that have been important and that stand out in the memory of Ciudad Juárez.The historical moment.

The period from 1939 to 1965 had similar economic characteristics throughout México. It was a movement fostered by the new elites that emerged from the Mexican revolution, who believed that the federal government should play a guiding and promoting role in economic development. The historical moment coincided with the beginning of World War II.

Likewise, these economic groups considered that México could generate its own national industries to limit or eliminate the use of imports. The nationalization of foreign companies in the 1920s and 1930s was a first step in this direction. The federal government expropriated businesses in the electricity, oil, forestry, mining, and agricultural industries.

Then, industrial policies were put into practice in México, that is, industrial development was planned, and a budget was foreseen to finance it. Respectively, the governments of President Manuel Avila Camacho (1940-1946) and Governor Fernando Foglio Miramontes (1944-1950) triggered the industrialization movement in México and the State of Chihuahua.

As part of this great process, businesspeople founded the Camara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformacion, or CNIT, later known as CANACINTRA (National Chamber of the Transformation Industry). This organization was focused on bringing together the new and small nationalist industrialists that were to emerge at that time. In 1946, Ciudad Juárez started the constitution of the local branch of the CNIT.

Opportunities & Business Ventures.

Then, they took advantage of the loans that the United States made available to México during World War II, even though they sought to create factories and products that were purely national. In Ciudad Juárez, U.S. businesspeople sold or transferred to Mexicans some livestock, forestry, and commercial enterprises.

The North American giant lent money to the Mexican government during the 1940s for two main reasons: to provide raw materials for its own manufacturing processes and to keep it away from possible German influence in the difficult and complex environment of World War II.

Industrialization was going to require more than a few elements to be successful in México. Several factors had to be considered: market, raw materials, competition, quality, price, transportation, technology, talent, and financing. Let us briefly examine some of these aspects.

Market & Competition.

First, the existence of a strong market for the consumption of processed goods, which are inherently more expensive than primary goods, was important. The PNR had been growing thanks to the increase in Mexican migrants moving to the United States. As a result, Ciudad Juárez was growing a lot and quickly. In theory, there was a demand, however, in practice, a high percentage of the likely consumers were not fixed but intermittent and, on top of that, had little purchasing power.

On the other hand, the historic commercial relationship between the two sides of the Río Grande remained a natural inertia. Juárez consumers bought in El Paso because there were products there; secondly, the merchandise was more varied and sold at affordable prices. In short, there is no more expensive merchandise than that which does not exist, and this situation prevailed in Juárez in the 1940s.

Raw Materials & Transportation.

The border had not moved; it was still far from the most important supply centers in the country: Guadalajara, Monterrey, Torreon, and even the city of Chihuahua. This essential factor made the purchase of raw materials for processing more expensive for the entire industrial process. Besides, raw materials were not flowing into México, which was in a recovery stage.

Additionally, export and import inconsistencies continued to appear. Normally raw materials were cheaper in El Paso than in Mexican cities. However, its importation became a puzzle for the Juarense businessperson. It was practically impossible to bring products into México for processing. Likewise, it was difficult to export merchandise to the United States after it had been transformed in the country.

Talent & Technology.

Other fundamental elements of the industrial sector during the 1940s consisted of technology implementation and the hiring or collaboration of skilled labor and minds. Machine operation, even of an electric furnace

to produce iron, required minimally trained personnel, so technicians had to be brought in from abroad.

In México, machinery was introduced for industrial processes from abroad. Glass, cement, or steel manufacturing was possible due to introducing foreign equipment into the country. It was therefore necessary to invest capital before expecting products and returns that were not immediate. These results occurred just after several stages of work and investment.

Therefore, the industries developed in the State of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez were of average technology. Logically, successful businesses were related to the primary sectors that were nearby or in areas within the State of Chihuahua. For example, the cotton, timber, milk, wheat, and meat industries emerged, as well as some branches with local roots, such as distilleries and beer brewing.

Funding.

By 1934, México had already created the Nacional Financiera and, in 1935, the Banco Nacional de Credito Ejidal. On paper, there were enough economic resources; in practice, it was necessary to move nimbly through the federal bureaucracy to obtain them. Businesspeople had to go to Chihuahua and México City to obtain the necessary support.

Only some old Chihuahua families who had saved in pre-revolutionary times had the resources for the new industrialization process. Among other families, we can mention the Escobar, Sanders, Zaragoza, Fuentes, Bermúdez, Murguía, or Fernández; in addition to the newcomers such as the Álvarez and Gómez families.

Energy.

As early as the 1940s, Antonio J. Bermúdez's businesses had diversified from liquor distilling to gasoline distribution and transportation to real estate. By the end of the 1950s, Ciudad Juárez had caught up with El Paso in population density and became a major economic development center, even though it had not yet developed many key features of its urban infrastructure.

In the 1940s, the Fuentes and Zaragoza families began their ventures in the dairy and gas industries, which, unlike electricity and oil, which were monopolized by the government, allowed private investment in this sector. According to those in the know, Miguel Zaragoza Fuentes began by transferring tanks (acquired in El Paso) onto a cart, to sell in Ciudad Juárez.

Many years earlier, in 1908, Thomas J. Jones, George F. Goodnlow, and George D. Flory had already founded Juárez Gas Company. Later, in 1930, Gloria Aguirre, Jesús Silva, and Manuel Mendiola became owners of the company at a time when México was promoting the process of nationalizing companies and foreign capital.

In 1947, the Fuentes family started a modest gas station that became the Gas Supremo company in 1956. It gradually absorbed other companies until it formed the Gas Comercial de Juárez business four years later. In 1965, the International Gas of El Paso company was able to transport merchandise through U.S. routes.

In 1998, a new company derived from the Zeta (gas) Group was developed. It was the Tanques de Acero del Bravo factory, which specialized in manufacturing tanks and metal fittings. The containers were produced by precise cutting and welding with high-tech equipment, according to the strict use of the goods.

Timber.

President Porfirio Díaz granted railroad builders the exploitation of timber for delivering railroad ties in 1882. By 1909, with the laying of the Northwest Railroad from Ciudad Madera, the Juárez yards receiving products, mostly destined for export, were strengthened. Only a little of such merchandise was destined for consumption in Ciudad Juárez.

Investor Emma Murguía Valdez de Cantú stood out in the lumber industry during the 1940s. Around 1942, she started a business selling





Noroeste de México Railroad Company and the Kansas City, México and Orient Railway.

wood chips that, over the years, became an important lumber company that produced transformed goods. She and her brother Alfonso were entrepreneurs who supplied wood parts to the construction industry in the border town.

Pablo Cuarón Galindo told us how his father, Pablo Cuarón Véjar, became one of the timber traders in Ciudad Juárez. This businessman took advantage of the slow withdrawal of some U.S. investors from the timber market to buy their business in Ciudad Juárez.

Furniture & Moldings.

In the 1950s, Pedro and José Iglesias opened a furniture factory in Ciudad Juárez that had 2,000 carpenters and exported merchandise abroad. Around the same time, the Chihuahua Group established a molding plant in that border town. Leopoldo Villarreal Walton also explored this manufacturing industry in the 1960s.

Other timber traders such as the Spaniard Luis Blanco with a plant in Nuevo Casas Grandes were there. José Mario Sánchez, timber businessman, and local historian, said that the lumber section of the company Bosques de Chihuahua and the Ferrocarril Noroeste supplied this industrial sector of Ciudad Juárez with remarkable results. In 1965, Leopoldo Villarreal Walton capitalized on the maquiladora's novel tax system to export wood moldings, with the advice of notary Humberto Lara Leos. Villarreal emerged as a pioneer in the maquiladora industry in the State of Chihuahua. Previous manufacturing experience allowed him to successfully venture into this innovative concept.

NORTEXPORT.

In the 1970s, the Juárez lumber mills that exported to the United States were doing well. They continued to do so until the mid-1980s, through the NORTEXPORT consortium, which had offices in Chihuahua, Ciudad Juárez, and El Paso, and specialized in placing various moderately processed products in the neighboring market.

NORTEXPORT's catalog includes fine frames by Cody Art, carved wooden doors by Capistrano Artisans, and different moldings for closets, blinds, living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms by the firms Maderas Selectas y Molduras, Molduras de Pino and Madereria del Valle. Also, Artesanias El Patio, made of wood, glass, quarry, and blacksmithing.

The Furniture Export Industry After NAFTA.

An outstanding company in recent years is Sofa Master, owned by Jorge Contreras Fornelli and his family, which has been dedicated to manufacturing furniture for export to date. This furniture plant went through two stages in its trajectory, which were set apart by the harsh monetary crisis that shook México in the 1990s.

Today, Sofa Master reflects the lumber expertise that Ciudad Juárez has deployed for more than a hundred years. This business was strengthened in recent years by the family's second generation of industrialists and was recognized in 2016 for having produced the furniture that Pope Francis used during his visit to the border.

Denim, Oil, & Mattresses.

The cotton fiber industry was another manufacturing sector that developed on the Chihuahuan border. Most cotton was simply packed and sent to the export market without further processing. In fact, the seed was barely separated from the fiber and leaves, as it involved a slow and cumbersome manual process.

In this context, Eduardo Sanders, with origins in Parral, focused on reusing the oleaginous seed to produce oil, which added value to the sec-





Río Bravo Company.

tor. Additionally, Tomás Álvarez and his descendants, originally from Ciudad Camargo, moved to Ciudad Juárez to transform the textile sector.

The Álvarez family had a history of operating the Compañía Río Bravo since 1925. The factory produced the best denim in México, it was said, with the advantage of operating on electric power from El Paso and processing cotton from the Juárez Valley, which has the highest quality worldwide, second only to Egypt.



Fábricas de aceite de algodón, S.A. company (distributing cooking oil, soap, etc.)

La Imperial.

Around 1934, the operation of a mattress factory was registered, derived from the cotton boom in Ciudad Juárez. The industrialist was Rafael Veloz, and the company was called La Imperial, which was promoted at the 1953 Cotton Fair, an event held periodically on the border. Veloz had succeeded in taking advantage of the local raw material to create a product that was only purchased in El Paso. In the beginning, the production of Veloz's successful enterprise was handmade. Embroidery was done by hand, to decorate; the basting, which is to say, the needle punches to fix the mattresses, was placed by hand. Only a Singer machine and a cotton stuffing device completed the handmade manufacturing process.

Of course, the mattresses had a good price and quality, since, as the years went by, La Imperial improved its processes and was able to produce more volume, so that it was able to place its merchandise in the markets of the States of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California.

Farah & the Clothing Empire.

The textile industry had one of the longest and most important chapters in El Paso with the arrival of Mansur and Ana Farah, two Lebanese immigrants from Canada. From 1920 until the end of the 20th century, both immigrants produced several types of clothing: workwear, dress, military, fashion, and collectibles. Their company was called Farah.

As it grew, the factory occupied more and more space in the urban sprawl of El Paso, thanks to the timely integration of James and William Farah. These two family descendants took over the administrative control of the business after Mansur died in 1937. The company also deployed an extensive Mexican workforce.

From manufacturing for large international firms, Farah became its own brand, supplying merchandise to around nine thousand stores and

weaving thirty million garments annually in plants in El Paso and San Antonio and another one in Belgium. Changes in the fabric market and financial crises affected its dynamics, but not its existence.

By 1972, a strike forced the company to recognize the formation of a union and, as a result, the El Paso plant had to close. Until the end of the 20th century, however, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez operated partial processes of the legendary brand.



La Popular Bottling Company. Photo Source: Andrés Padilla.

The Bottling Companies, La Popular.

It is known that one of the first bottling plants in Ciudad Juárez was founded by Francisco Cardenas Martínez and Manuel Dieguez in 1905. The factory was called La Popular, and it bottled ginger ale-flavored soft drinks, which consisted of sparkling water, ginger, lemon, and sugar.

This pioneering bottling company also produced the well-known orange flavor, through the famous Orange Crush soft drink. After the death of its two founders, it was managed by Manuel Dieguez's widow and daughters. According to the chronicles, it continued its activities until the 1960s, when strong competition from other brands became present in the PNR.

The Fernández Family, the Brewery, & Soft Drinks.

Since the 19th century, some beer bottling and ice factories had been installed on both sides of the Chihuahua border, which had been financed

by several businesspeople from the border region. Since then, the Spanish businessman Tomás Fernández Blanco began his productive activities in the PNR.

Having started in Valle de Allende, Chihuahua, he later moved to Camargo; and, at the time of the Mexican Revolution, he had to relocate to El Paso, Texas. However, Fernández Blanco's business continued to focus on Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua.

From there he deployed his efforts to reactivate the Cervecería Cruz Blanca during the 1920s and later founded a soft drink bottling plant in Ciudad Juárez in 1932, just during the U.S. economic crisis that also affected El Paso, due to the stock market crash of 1929.



Cervecería Cruz Blanca (brewery).

Later, "Fernández Blanco e Hijos" expanded with the production of Coca Cola in 1936. Thus, both products, beer, and soft drinks, marched together until the 1970s. Later, the heirs decided to sell the brewery to businesspeople from Monterrey and focused on soft drinks, through a new company formed with capital from several families from the Mexican border states.

Today, the industrial heritage of the Fernández family bottling company has been maintained through the formation of Novamex, which has focused on the successful production and marketing of Mexican and Latin American soft drinks in the United States.

Likewise, and through another soft drink company, they have developed a growing presence in the Latin American market. Thus, the Fernández Iturriza brothers have reaffirmed the prestige and productivity of the sector for more than one hundred years.

SKY, La Favorita.

Another Ciudad Juárez soft drink brand was SKY, also known as La Favorita. It was founded in the early 1920s by Luis Olague. In its best days, in the early 1980s, about ninety operators bottled up to 3,000 cases a day to distribute soft drinks to numerous stores in the border city.

SKY was an alternative to the soft cola drinks of the big international brands because it marketed bottles with orange, grape, strawberry, pineapple, apple, grapefruit, and root beer flavors. SKY, as well as some large transnational beverage bottlers, were pressured by the consolidation of the sector into a few companies around 2012.

At the time, competition became fierce and unfair, as bottles mysteriously broke and disappeared. As a result, glass production became scarce, and the absence of manufacturing patents forced bottlers to concentrate their factories on fewer players.

Water House.

A novel bottling project is that of Water House, a large drinking water dispenser that emerged over the last twenty years and has made a network of water refilling points possible. The water dispensers are strategically located throughout Ciudad Juárez and twenty other cities in northern, central-western, and southeastern México.

Developed with purification technologies and processes, Water House resolved to optimize the typical plastic bottles by promoting the alternative refillable container. At the same time, the company reduces sanitary risks during the sales process since the automatic dispensers operate seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day.

Currently, the services of Borboton and Water House Solutions complement each other through two essential implementations: 1) self-service at strategic vending points in the cities; 2) merchandise distribution through establishing supply systems for companies, according to their needs and conditions.

With these strategies, innovation joins recycling, as well as cleanliness and service close to homes and at a better price.

Dairy.

The Escobar family, a prestigious and well-established family in Ciudad Juárez, started the dairy business in 1926, as a productive activity derived from the professional practices of the Escuela Superior de Agricultura founded in 1906. Only four years later, in 1936, Pedro Zaragoza would start selling milk with only ten cows.

Across the Río Grande, the Price family had started a long history of dairy packaging. Their business started with a couple of cows for home consumption and then grew into the most important brand in the region, owning farms and plants in the States of Texas and New Mexico. Unlike other brands, Price milk has remained in the market until 2024.

In 1960, the Lecheria Escobar was one of the industries that formed the largest part of the Chihuahua border manufacturing sector. In 1971, Leche Zaragoza grew to Delicias, on a 600-hectare ranch that was once the

largest in Latin America, and in 1990, the Zaragoza Fuentes brothers acquired a bottling plant in Chihuahua.

Earlier, in the 1980s, Lechería Escobar developed the Lucerna brand. Later, the company would venture into the national markets, which led it to compete with the main Mexican companies, in alliance with other Juarense companies in the industry. At the beginning of the 21st century, Lucerna became the third leading producer and distributor of dairy in México.

Residential, Industrial, & Commercial Construction.

In the forties and fifties, when Ciudad Juárez experienced the first great demand for construction materials due to population growth, Ladrillera Juárez S. A., owned by René Mascareñas, was created to produce "*tabique*," a solid material different from the traditional adobe and also different from the well-known concrete block. In the sixties and seventies, Productos de Barro Industrializados specialized in exporting quality *tabique* with six million pieces per year.

The Bermúdez family's Constructora y Urbanizadora Nacional S.A. (CUNSA) also dates to the 1950s and has continued to accompany the export manufacturing industry development for the last four decades.In this space, we refer to the experience of several El Paso companies specializing in different construction branches. The Hunt family stands out among other firms such as Marcus, Rogers, and Malooly. The Hunt family began supplying coal to El Paso homes in the 1920s, before forming the construction company in 1947.

From building distribution centers, schools, and markets in the fifties, they went on to build military housing in New Mexico in the sixties. In 1972, it became a national public company, contracting tens of thousands of housing and commercial units of various kinds, growing in several states of the Union, in addition to establishing bases in Hawaii, London, and Tokyo.

In 1972, President Luis Echeverria inaugurated the Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores or INFONAVIT (National Workers' Housing Fund Institute), so this sector received significant institutional financial support. In this dynamic sector, Jaime Bermúdez Cuarón and David Arelle Sergeant stood out as leading builders, among other important businesspeople.



That same year, 1972, Arelle founded Condak in Ciudad Juárez. Twenty years later, this business expanded to other locations; in 1995, he entered a partnership with the international Pulte Corporation, once the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began. This alliance allowed Condak to build housing under an agreement with the automaker General Motors in seven Mexican cities.

In the same sector, around 1980, Enrique Terrazas Torres founded RUBA in Ciudad Juárez, from where it grew towards the interior of the State of Chihuahua. Later, housing construction expanded to the main cities in northern México. Forty-four years later, it is the leading popular housing firm in the country.

Another outstanding firm in the same sector is BRASA Desarrollos, founded in 1940. It was dedicated to constructing buildings for multiple uses and extended its field to the construction of industrial buildings with the manufacturing boom. In 2000, BRASA moved into housing construction, first in Ciudad Juárez and then in Chihuahua City and Mexicali.

Today, housing developments are accompanied by amenities and parks that distinguish them from traditional urbanizations. Additionally, the commercial complexes deployed in Ciudad Juárez tend to improve the city's scenery and landscape, an example of what this border city can be.

In this sector, some Juarense firms are planning to establish several complexes including commercial, hotel, and restaurant uses, combined with housing. In the same sector, there is also talk about building four flagship towers, some of which may have up to thirty levels in various parts of the great city of Juárez.



Plaza Cantabria hosts different gastronomic options.

The first complex of this style is Cantabria, which already stands out in its first stage on Triunfo de la República and El Charro avenues in Ciudad Juárez. The complexes are called to resize Juárez's urban landscape and to forge good quality city coexistence, integrating the advantages that economic development has generated in the last decades.

Distilleries.

Distilleries in Ciudad Juárez date back to the 19th century and originate from the viceroyalty and generous wine production on the banks of the Río Grande. In more recent times, historians date the establishment of distilleries on both borderlines to 1889. From 1920, Ciudad Juárez concentrated on the whiskey production industry, as described elsewhere.



Waterfill & Frazier Whiskey.

Some specialized articles point out that, in the 1920s, U.S. investment in Ciudad Juárez was close to one million dollars and that liquor production tripled concerning the volume generated in Kentucky, the original U.S. bourbon whiskey producer.

In the 1920s, labeling the spirit produced in México as whiskey or bourbon was possible. Thus, Kentucky businessmen Levy and McKey granted the franchise to Spaniard Julian Gomez Sanz, a Ciudad Juárez resident. In 1924, Gomez founded D. M. Distillery Company, the most successful business in the industry.

Additionally, businesswoman Mary Dowling, also a Kentucky native, moved Waterfill & Frazier, her distillery, to Ciudad Juárez and produced the D. W. Distillery label. The operation was possible through a partnership with Antonio J. Bermúdez in 1927. The whiskey factory's fame has transcended into the recent 21st century.



Cinco Tragos Sotol. Photo Source: Casa La Sotolera.

Around 1965, the United States established the denomination of origin of bourbon and then limited the legal quantities of Juárez merchandise entering the United States. The liquor industry saw its trajectory undermined, after more than thirty years in which Ciudad Juárez was a leading supplier in the U.S. market.

In recent years, the de Leon sisters have ventured into the distillation of sotol, a spirit from Chihuahua, through the creation of the Cinco Tragos brand. This product is filtered in the Samalayuca region, with which the Leon family joins the state trend of producing liquors from the land.

Packing Houses.

A brief recounting of the meat processing field brings us back to the history of Peyton Packing Co. of El Paso. For five decades, this company operated on the current Chamizal Park grounds. Despite its success in slaughtering and processing cattle, the packing plant faced several obstacles that led to its relocation.

First, the residents of the city of El Paso began to feel the environmental impact on the air, and, like the metal refinery company, they questioned the healthy coexistence of the city with this packing house. At the time, El Paso was growing eastward, inexorably. A second and ephemeral obstacle had to do with labor issues that complicated the normal activity rhythm.

However, the strongest blow was due to the bilateral negotiation between the Mexican and U.S. governments, which resulted in the return of land, which the Río Grande waterway disaster had temporarily ceded to the United States.

Such international agreements were carried out during the years 1961 to 1967. Because of the pact, all U.S. companies located on that border island were removed and subsequently compensated by the U.S. government. Among them was Peyton Packing Co.

Between 1947 and 1948, two packing houses were opened in Ciudad Juárez and, by 1966, Ricardo Iglesias Stell opened his Empacadora Iglesias to produce sausage. This Juárez businessman was no less than the promoter of the founding of DECJ in 1983, the year in which his plant was already a state-recognized company. Today, Noble Foods is present in Chihuahua City and Torreón, in addition to Ciudad Juárez.

Currently, his descendants sell various products in stores in north-central México. He sells Mexican salami, mortadella, paprika, ham, sausage, *chorizo* (ground pork seasoned with a blend of spices), *chicharron* (fried pork rinds), and *cueritos* (cooked pork rinds, marinated in vinegar), as well as hamburger patties.

In this market segment, American Beef consolidated its position in the distribution of hamburger meat to the main U.S. chains. Bafar, which has expanded its presence throughout México, has just announced the inauguration this year of a Distribution and Logistics Center in El Paso.

Boots.

Another memorable chapter of manufacturing in El Paso is undoubtedly Tony Lama and his legendary boots. Originally from Italy, this businessman joined the Fort Bliss military companies as a shoemaker in the early 20th century. In 1911, now released from service and married to Esther Fernández, he began repairing and manufacturing cowboy footwear.

By 1930, Lama's microenterprise was already dedicated exclusively to manufacturing boots for stores in the southeastern United States. This cowboy footwear business coverage continued to grow steadily, leading him to create more industrial production lines.



Tony Lama's first store and factory. Source: www.tonylama.com

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman received a pair of boots from Bert Lama, Tony's son, which were trimmed with gold and silver. This prized gift became a major event and massive publicity for the Lama family business. From forty pairs produced in 1933, the factory was delivering, by 1950, more than 3,000 pairs a day for mass sale in the United States.

The commercial boom of the boots continued until the 1980s, due to the urban cowboy craze, which was portrayed in the film Urban Cowboy by American actor John Travolta. However, the factory struggled with union conflicts. In 1990, it was acquired by Justin, another legendary brand with origins in North Texas.

General Comments.

The first stage of industrialization in Juárez, between the 1920s and 1960s, prepared the sectors and businesspeople for the second stage of light manufacturing. For this reason, some families that started in these decades were able to branch out years later. They had successfully traversed a difficult historical stretch and emerged from it knowing they could surpass what they had done.

Among other lessons learned, it was clear that Ciudad Juárez should partner, rather than compete with El Paso and other U.S. cities and take advantage of the border. The various lessons learned led new generations to define clear projects and lobby with federal authorities to achieve a framework that radically transformed Ciudad Juárez.


Flujo
Flujo
Flujo
L3


LINEA 41
Flujo
Flujo
L-6


FOXCONN

6

The Light Manufacturing Industry

PART II

The Juarense labor world is globally recognized in the 21st century... Interestingly, the promoter group contemplated from the beginning, providing alternative employment for women, for which the clothing industry was very favorable. For this reason, when the first maquiladoras were installed in Ciudad Juárez in 1966, young women were the first to obtain employment.

The history of the commercial and industrial transformation of Ciudad Juárez began decades before the formal establishment of the Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program) in 1965. This plan emerged as the great factor that marked the economic renaissance of the border city. This way, the Juárez emporium has been transformed from a mere place of passage to a place of destination.

We must note actors and events in this process of economic development that the now hemispheric maquiladora node is undergoing. The first element is the nationalist industrialization movement in Ciudad Juárez between the thirties and sixties of the 20th century, which we reviewed previously since it signifies the first broad expansion of industrial culture and various manufacturing sectors of the border business community.

Antonio J. Bermúdez.

A second aspect to highlight is the great leadership of Antonio J. Bermúdez, who had a business career that led him to get to know the different sectors of the Ciudad Juárez economy. He was a whiskey distiller, a transporter, and a gasoline distributor at various stages of his life. Consequently, he presided over the local Chamber of Commerce.He was mayor of Ciudad Juárez for two years during World War II. He then served as state treasurer but was promoted to the senate a few months after taking office. He barely occupied his seat, since President Miguel Alemán Valdés appointed him director of PEMEX (1946-52), where he was ratified by Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-8).

With this brilliant political career, he managed extra monetary and institutional resources to invest in the Juarense community.



Antonio J. Bermúdez.

The Right Sponsor at the Right Time.

In 1945, then-candidate Miguel Alemán Valdés had visited Ciudad Juárez. Antonio J. Bermúdez organized a meeting for him at his house with the presence of the city's notables, in his role as member and state treasurer of the PRI, the official hegemonic political party at the time. Bermúdez, then, had fulfilled the tasks and rituals necessary to be a man loyal to the Mexican political system.

From 1946 to 1958, as director of PEMEX, he was responsible for the growth of the state-owned company during the country's modernization, driven by agreements between México and the United States. The tac-

it pact consisted of México supplying the neighboring country with oil, among other things, and labor in exchange for financing to promote national development.

Geopolitics.

In the post-war period, México continued to serve as an economic (though not always political) partner of the United States. President John F. Kennedy announced in 1960 his program of economic initiative and investment for the Americas, to bring the entire hemisphere closer to Washington's interests and with the goal of México's continued support.

Establishing an economic-political order known as the Post-War and/or Cold War forced many countries to ally themselves with one of the two powerful political-economic blocks that took shape between 1945 and 1989. For its national security and economic interests, México promoted programs and negotiated joint growth models with its powerful neighbor.

Among these programs, México promoted the Programa Nacional Fronterizo or PRONAF (National Border Program), initiated in 1961 and, among these initiatives, the binational signing of the Programa de Industrializacion Fronteriza or PIF (Border Industrialization Program) was agreed with the United States in 1965.

In that context, Antonio J. Bermúdez had been a pre-candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in 1957 and could have been elected governor of the State of Chihuahua. However, President Adolfo López Mateos commissioned the Juárez leader to deploy the Programa Nacional Fronterizo (National Border Program) to alleviate the long economic and social lag of the Mexican cities bordering the United States. Thus, Ciudad Juárez had a great promoter in the country's capital.

Programa Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF).

PRONAF (1961) was an unprecedented federal monetary investment distributed along the dividing line between México and the United States. The largest amounts were applied to Ciudad Juárez because at the time it was the most populated border city in México –today Tijuana is larger. The idea was to beautify the so-called "Gates of México" and offer the United States trade and tourism with patriotic and cultural features.

PRONAF did not represent a great commercial success, although it did relaunch Ciudad Juárez as a prosperous city and launched an economic model different from the one that had endured in the twentieth century.



The idea was to beautify the so-called "Gates of México" and offer the United States trade and tourism with patriotic and cultural features.

Such a development paradigm focused on nightlife tourism and random entertainment that did not solve the underlying problem: the absence of productive work for hundreds of thousands of floating migrants in Ciudad Juárez.

Global & Hemispheric Economy.

In the 1960s, the United States reduced its product supply to Europe because the old continent was beginning to generate its own industry and needed fewer American supplies. This meant that the once valuable Mexican *braceros* were now less in demand and, as a result, the border was closed to temporary legal migration in 1964. Ciudad Juárez had a problem and a wonderful opportunity. In the 1960s, a new generation of Juárez residents who had studied in the United States, México, and Monterrey came into play. Their parents had created businesses and factories in the 1940s. By the 1960s, those businesses did not have high growth expectations. As a result, some plants (such as those from the cotton, iron, and textile industries) were closed or relocated to the interior of the State of Chihuahua.

So, something different had to be done.

New Juárez Leadership.

Fernando Borreguero Allard, Jaime Bermúdez Cuarón, and Alfonso Murguía Valdez set out to find an alternative economic development for Ciudad Juárez. They learned about the manufacturing model in Hong Kong and turned to consultant Richard Bolin, who in 1964 provided them with a study that proposed installing in the border town light industry in transit (in bond), without chimneys, and which employed massive unskilled labor.

The project struck epic notes for its complexity. For example, in a 2006 interview, consultant Richard Bolin of the Flagstaff Institute and John Christman, an executive of the American Chamber of Commerce, recalled that, in 1960, a survey of the 40 CEOs of the largest U.S. assemblers showed that none of them were willing to move part of their processes to México.



Alfonso Murguía Valdez.

On the other hand, players such as Alfonso Murguía Valdez and historians such as Samuel Schmidt, refer that the development of the aforementioned industrial model was a real ordeal since it was difficult to convince federal officials to exempt border companies from taxes to establish foreign manufacturing processes on Mexican soil.

Alfonso Murguía, the only living leader of those Juarense businesspeople, explains that modifying the fiscal and administrative regulations of the time, as well as changing the point of view of the officials, was not easy, even though Antonio J. Bermúdez partially financed and enthusiastically advised the projects of the group of young Juarense businesspeople.



Parque Industrial Bermúdez (industrial park) inauguration in 1968. Photo Source: Grupo Bermúdez.

Other Important Players.

It is important to remember other players in the start-up of the industrial model with the laying of the first stone of the pioneer park called Antonio J. Bermúdez, in 1968. The Bermúdez Group's website mentions, in addition to the three leaders: Antonio Ortíz Mena, Tomás Fernández Campos, Hilario Gabilondo, Miguel Zaragoza Viscarra, Ignacio Tinocu, Ruby Miller, Manuel Garza, Jorge Jensen, Roberto Maesa, Reginaldo Sanders and Bruce Evans.

The official full name of the Programa de Industrializacion Fronteriza (Border Industrialization Program) was Programa para el Aprovechamiento de la Mano de Obra Sobrante a lo Largo de la Frontera Norte con Estados Unidos (Program for the Utilization of Surplus Labor along the Northern Border with the United States). The elements included in the above long title represented the objectives of the Mexican federal government.

At the time, the United States still needed cheap labor to grow and compete with other economies in the world, although it now required it to work within México rather than in its own territory.

Female Labor & Union Action.

Businessman Antonio J. Bermúdez, in a radio interview in the early 1970s, spoke of the importance of Juárez women having their own means of economic livelihood and, therefore, independence. In that sense, Ciudad Juárez broke new ground in the Mexican labor world.

Interestingly, the promoter group contemplated from the beginning, providing alternative employment for women, for which the clothing industry was very favorable. For this reason, when the first maquiladoras were installed in Ciudad Juárez in 1966, young women were the first to obtain employment. Men did so later, in the 1970s.

Before his death in 1970, Fernando Borreguero had sought out union leader Fidel Velázquez to explain to him the advantages of the new Maquiladora and Manufacturing Export Industry (IMMEX) model. In this sense, it is interesting to note that the labor leadership in Ciudad Juárez was more inclined to IMMEX than in other border cities.

The Juarense labor world is globally recognized in the 21st century. The formation of the Asociación de Maquilas A. C. or AMAC (Maquiladora Association) in 1974 and the Southwest Maquila (now Manufacturing) Association in the mid-90s promoted the creation of inter-institutional



organizations such as the Consejo Regional para el Desarrollo de la Educacion y Sustentabilidad or CONREDES (Regional Board for the Development of Education and Sustainability) and Fondo Unido (United Fund).

Nowadays, these last two organizations show the human and labor quality of the people of Juárez, which is a transcendent and ample asset and a competitive advantage at a global level. In particular, businessman Federico Barrio Terrazas was an important promoter for forming these two maquiladora organizations in Ciudad Juárez.

From Maquila to Manufacturing.

In 1972, the first industrial park formally began with the RCA Victor factory, which produced television sets. This American company represented a technological leap compared to the maquiladoras of the mid-1960s. An author who reviews the stages of progress of IMMEX is Eduardo Padilla in AMAC's 50th anniversary edition.

Ten years later, in 1982, plants dedicated to the auto parts and harness assembly arrived, which put another step up the border industrial ladder. This date also marks a strong devaluation of the peso and, at the same time, the expansion of the IMMEX model to the interior of the State, in which the Bermúdez Group played a leading role.

The Maquiladora Association & Other Organizations.

By 1974, the very first IMMEXs in Ciudad Juárez found it necessary to unite to share positive experiences and help each other in the face of problems. For example, the businesses addressed common labor conflicts. Those initial problems arose in the wake of the U.S. economic recession, which forced Juárez companies to downsize and close factories.

AMAC had started as a specialized section of the Camara Nacional de la Industria de Transformacion or CANACINTRA (National Chamber of the Transformation Industry). Due to its economic growth, AMAC took on another dimension of work. Later, several organizations like those in Chihuahua were created in other Mexican cities. In 1983, the Consejo Nacional de Industria Maquiladora de Exportacion (National Board of the Maquiladora Export Industry), today known as INDEX, was formed.

In 1986, the Asociacion Mexicana de Parques Industriales Privados or AMPIP (Mexican Association of Private Industrial Parks) was established under the impetus of the Bermúdez Group and other border developers.

This new business organization brought together industrial park owners, investment fund partners, trusts, and suppliers specializing in supplies for manufacturing complexes nationwide.

Fostering Industrial Growth from Chihuahua.

In 1973, the Chihuahua Group, led by Eloy S. Vallina, formed a new organization called Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Chihuahua A. C. or DESEC (Economic Development of the State of Chihuahua A. C.), under Richard Bolin's counsel. A key goal of the association was to industrialize the entire State of Chihuahua. Chihuahua leaders Jaime Bermúdez, Alfonso Murguía, and Ricardo Iglesias accompanied the Chihuahuenses in the process of attracting foreign economic investment to the state.

In 1976, with the support of Grupo Bermúdez, DESEC organized the first IMMEX Supply Show at the Club Campestre de Ciudad Juárez. Likewise, the three industrialists attended the monthly meetings held in the state capital and participated in the promotional tours to the United States. These joint activities were maintained for ten years between Juárez and Chihuahua businesspeople.

The Origins of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez.

In the 1980s, the Juarense IMMEX model began to expand throughout the State of Chihuahua and spread to other regions of México such as La Laguna and the State of Yucatán. The Bermúdez Group oversaw this development. Likewise, Lintel company deployed its technology and monetary investment in the States of Guanajuato, Querétaro, and San Luis Potosí.

Just in that year of 1984, the foundation of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez (DECJ) was registered, which integrated the experience of twenty years. Again Richard Bolin, from the Instituto Flagstaff, came with Jaime Bermúdez to update the IMMEX model, just two decades after the American had delivered the first development project in 1964.

Well-paying Jobs and Talent Development Amid a Crisis.

The combination of low-cost labor was integrated with the technology of international industrial circuits. Both advantages meant that the country's inflation and unemployment between 1982 and 1995 were not felt so drastically on the border. As a result, Ciudad Juárez became the fifth most populated city in México at the end of the 20th century.

Another major step was registered in 1994 when the Delphi company arrived requesting design engineers. Thus, the new technology professionals focused on designing and manufacturing original models for large automakers. Little by little, numerous executives from Juárez occupied global management positions, as in the case of Héctor Gutiérrez, after having climbed different areas and management levels in different industries.

ExpoMaquila.

DECJ's best-known work program was organizing ExpoMaquila. This event was a key event for DECJ. This exhibition was oriented to the development of local suppliers to supply merchandise and services for the various processes and supplies required by the IMMEX companies, in addition to labor and workforce.

Many researchers believe that little progress has been made in the maquiladora supply field. On the other hand, executives Manuel Alderete and Miguel Ángel Calderón think differently and have even followed the trail of the Juarense companies created in those 50 years and found somewhat unknown wealth.

Alderete and Calderón highlight the emergence of workshops and high-precision machining plants for manufacturing, replacement, and maintenance of state-of-the-art parts for the large IMMEX network. They also find embedded systems, remote steering, automation, laser cutting, control systems, and other applications that are in various areas of the state.

Metalworking Clusters.

It is likely that in the State of Chihuahua, there were close to five hundred metal metalworking units around the year 2000, including, for example, ironworks and foundries from Parral, focused on mining. However, most of them appeared in the market, thanks to IMMEX supply. Most of these industrial companies emerged in Ciudad Juárez and others in the city of Chihuahua, where there are currently three distinct industry clusters.

Unfortunately, many of these industrial units have suffered from extortion in recent years, a plague that has halted the favorable growth of this productive area. In most cases, these factories do not form a single recognized guild, and their level of technological sophistication varies greatly.

IMMEX Suppliers.

On the other hand, we can list several business branches that supply IMMEX: 1) personnel and merchandise transportation companies; 2) legal and accounting firms, specializing in international trade; 3) food factories and industrial canteens; and 4) housing construction companies; shelter consortiums with services of all kinds.

In many of these economic sectors, Ciudad Juárez ranks first nationally in terms of volume and quality during the 21st century. The firms of Bryan, González Vargas and González Baz, EC Rubio, Baker & Mackenzie, and others stand out. All these firms together set the standard in the industrial sector for their capacity and size in the facilitation of consulting and business formalization processes.



The medical equipment manufacturing industry has grown along with the automotive and electrical industries.

Medical Equipment Manufacturing.

One sector that has developed significantly in Ciudad Juárez has been the medical equipment manufacturing sector. It has grown along with the automotive and electrical sectors. The medical equipment industry has

emerged because the border became, from the beginning, a place identified as a center for medical attention, first in El Paso and later in Ciudad Juárez.

We are not discussing here only the quality medical services and first-world facilities that both border cities currently have. Rather, we point out that these two towns have true state-of-the-art industrial developments which include research, design, prototypes, and original patents. The binational Biomedical Cluster stands out as the best example of this quality and complexity of services.

Southwest Maquila and Fondo Unido.

On the other hand, a conglomerate of major industrial brands founded the Southwest Maquila organization, now renamed Southwest Manufacturing in the mid-1990s. Together, these firms excel in employment volume and technology and have been located on the border for several decades. The group gravitates to the IMMEX sector and beyond.

It aspires to share improvement experiences in Mexican work environments with those of origin in the U.S. manufacturing culture. In this case, it is the United Way or the Fondo Unido project. Southwest Maquila gave an unusual boost to this solidarity fund in Ciudad Juárez, although the idea had already been implemented in manufacturing plants in the country's center.

The Fondo Unido mechanism is based on the voluntary contribution of a plant's employees, from the newly recruited operator to the general manager. The idea is to cooperate voluntarily with portions of one's salary to finance social causes. The priority categories can be identified on each company's website. Education and health stand out as priority targets for manufacturing solidarity.

Manufacturing Resilience.

Light manufacturing will celebrate 60 years of productive activities in 2025. It has been developing in Ciudad Juárez as a stable sector, comparatively speaking, which has generated almost uninterrupted population growth since then, a phenomenon that, in turn, generates roots and, with time, identity. We do not overlook the labor and recessionary problems caused by global economic failures, all of which have slowed the long and beneficial productive progress in the border city. But light manufacturing companies in Ciudad Juárez are still operating and growing robustly and vibrantly.



The light manufacturing industry will celebrate 60 years of productive activities next year.

The Industry That Stays & the Industry That Has Left.

A brief commentary on the industrial history of the PNR is worthwhile as a summary for the analysis of company managers and academics interested in learning the secrets of medium and long-term economic trends.

We see, fundamentally, that the PNR has had to abandon industrial branches that brought brilliance for almost a century. It has left the mining area, which emerged for several decades; the textile industry, which lasted for a little less than a century; and the brewing industry, which was replaced by soft drink bottling.

Of the sectors that remain active in both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, in addition to the successful malls and flexible commercial chains, we can mention dairy production, meat processing, cement, construction, hydrocarbons, and beverages. The health sector stands out because it has been thriving for more than 130 years.

Today, Ciudad Juárez and El Paso form the third largest light manufacturing cities in North America. It is sometimes overlooked that 25% of the jobs in El Paso are derived from Juárez's manufacturing activity. We wish it a longer life, because today the PNR incubates technological and innovation solutions that will give consistency and volume to this manufacturing sector.







Forty Years of DECJ

FIRST STAGE

...businesspeople on the Chihuahuan border were determined to attract foreign economic investment, which meant the inflow of foreign currency to Mexico and the creation of numerous jobs for Mexican citizens who were increasingly settling in Ciudad Juarez. Mexico was then spared from a dramatic rise in inflation. Despite this economic problem, the Chihuahuan border overcame the adverse economic circumstances.

Jaime Bermúdez Cuarón (1984-1987)

Jaime Bermúdez was the top Mexican industrial leader in the Industrias Maquilera y Manufacturera de Exportacion or IMMEX (Maquiladora and Manufacturing Export Industries), during the first twenty years, between 1965 and 1985, when plants were established in Ciudad Juárez, the State of Chihuahua, and other Mexican states.

To him, we owe achievements and innovations such as opening channels to attract investors, the innovation of modern industrial parks, and the creation of the Asociación Mexicana de Parques Industriales Privados or AMPIP (Mexican Association of Private Industrial Parks).

He distinguished himself for being the founder of Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Chihuahua A. C. or DESEC (Economic Development of the State of Chihuahua) and an assiduous advisor on business matters, alongside Alfonso Murguía Valdez and Ricardo Iglesias Stell. Of course, Jaime Bermúdez served as the first president of DECJ, during a historic period when México's economy was faltering, and Ciudad Juárez's economy was expanding steadily.



Jaime Bermúdez Cuarón.

In 1982, the Mexican economy was compromised by excessive public spending and unmanageable federal government debt. President José López Portillo devalued the peso against the dollar and expropriated the banks of Mexican businesspeople, including four from Chihuahua. This created great distrust in the private sector and financial uncertainty.

Despite this economic conflict, businesspeople on the Chihuahuan border were determined to attract foreign economic investment, which meant the inflow of foreign currency to México and the creation of numerous jobs for Mexican citizens who were increasingly settling in Ciudad Juárez. México was then spared from a dramatic rise in inflation.

Even with this economic problem, the Chihuahuan border overcame the adverse economic circumstances.

Ciudad Juárez lacked the necessary labor force to cover the job supply represented by the manufacturing industries in the early 1980s. For this

reason, starting in 1983, Jaime Bermúdez deployed efforts outside the border to develop industrial parks in other Chihuahua cities such as Nuevo Casas Grandes, Delicias, Camargo, Cuauhtémoc, and Ojinaga, promoting business partnerships with investors in each of these five cities.

On the other hand, DECJ's associates decided to hold an event, later known as ExpoMaquila, which lasted for three decades. This industrial show consisted of gathering in one place the demand for services and products of the growing network of manufacturing industries. This way, local and national suppliers' offer was promoted, so that more Mexican companies could develop.

In its first edition in 1984, DECJ invited supplier companies from different Mexican states, to connect them with the Ciudad Juárez manufacturing industries. Commercial transactions were then conducted between the two parties.

The start of ExpoMaquila was robust, and since that same year, 1984, there was an additional event. In 1985, two more exhibitions were organized. After that date and with the first experiences gained, it was decided to hold only one annual event to concentrate efforts and strengthen the business and supply exercise.

In 1986, Jaime Bermúdez accepted to run for the Ciudad Juárez municipal presidency and was elected for the three-year term. For that reason, he was relieved of the DECJ presidency by Federico de la Vega Matthews, the renowned border businessman in the commercial sector who had made an outstanding career in the business world.

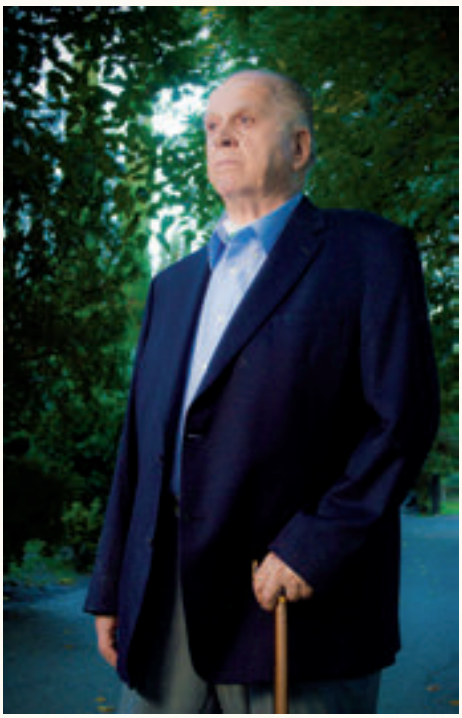
Federico de la Vega Matthews (1987-1990)

Federico de la Vega was a great Juarense business leader. He emerged from the commercial sector, as previously mentioned. Between the 1990s and until he died in 2015, he was a great reference of the business community in Ciudad Juárez to other groups in the private sector in Chihuahua and nationally. He stood out for being a voice well-heard at the federal level.The opinion of this businessman was decisive in the support of the surcharge on the payroll tax given by the border business community to the creation of the Fondo Social del Empresariado Chihuahua or FOSECH (Social Fund of the Chihuahua Business Community). He was also part of a group of great businesspeople such as Federico Terrazas Torres and Salvador Corral Piñón, who outlined the Grupo Visión at the state level around the year 2000. In particular, the opinions of these three Chihua-

huan businesspeople were considered by the most important business organizations in the State of Chihuahua.

In an interview the same year of his departure, de la Vega expressed that Ciudad Juárez had developed its character by overcoming various obstacles, such as the geographical distance from the center of the country, fiscal limitations, and the overflowing increase in violence due to organized crime. He was also a philanthropist in health, along with his wife Guadalupe Arizpe de la Maza. He also promoted sports and education at the Juárez border.

The exhibition held from November 11 to 14, 1986 was the fifth edition of ExpoMaquila. It was subtitled: "Exporte a México, Muestra de Insumos y Servicios para la Industria Maquiladora" (Export to México, Supply and Service Show for the Maquiladora Industry). The event organizers considered that this meeting between industries and potential suppliers led to the creation of a more formal fair.



Federico de la Vega Matthews.

Between 1986 and 1989, the industrial exhibitions took place inside the buildings of the plants that were to be inaugurated in Ciudad Juárez. During those three years, Federico de la Vega oversaw them. For example, the Philips manufacturing company hosted one of the first versions of ExpoMaquila at its facilities in the Parque Industrial Omega, according to DECJ officials.

In 1987, there was another devaluation of the peso against the dollar. Despite this fact, foreign investment promotion in Ciudad Juárez and other cities in the State of Chihuahua confirmed that the light manufacturing model represented many advantages for job generation because it was linked to the U.S. market.

In those years of the eighties, Federico de la Vega appealed to the creativity of his work team for the design and successful development of the event, which was DECJ's main, but not its only goal. Such aspiration of celebrity for ExpoMaquila was formulated through the Comisión de Promoción de Inversiones (Investment Promotion Commission), which was one of the fundamental commissions during those first years of work. Thus, from 1990 to 2007, the Muestra de Insumos y Servicios (Supply and Services Show) had already been established annually in other venues in Ciudad Juárez. Over time, it continued to be popularly referred to as ExpoMaquila even though its dimensions were expanding and it also inte-



CIBELES
CENTRO DE EVENTOS

grated various activities. The supply shows were promoted to consolidate the manufacturing industry in Ciudad Juárez, since in the seventies there was economic growth, but the expansion suddenly stopped due to the difficulties of the U.S. market. It was even thought that the model was not sustainable in the long term and, therefore, resuming the investment promotion was necessary.

On the other hand, since the first exhibition organized by DESEC and Grupo Bermúdez was mentioned in 1976, it was already mentioned that only 2% of local suppliers were in the State of Chihuahua. Moreover, Chihuahua's businesspeople postulated that a much higher percentage was needed. In the end, that necessary percentage was increased, but not in the expected proportion.

In short, Federico de la Vega was a leader whose influence transcended his role as president of DECJ. In the mid-1990s, when the relevance of contributing economic funds to the Fideicomiso de la Fundacion del Empresariado Chihuahuense (Trust of the Chihuahuense Entrepreneurship Foundation) was being discussed, he was a decisive promoter so that the businessmen and women of Juárez would make such a contribution. Likewise, he was a decisive representative of state and national leaders at important times.



In 2015, just before he died, de la Vega gave an interview to a Juárez newspaper in which he expressed his view of the economic and social development of Ciudad Juárez. In that interview, he stated that border residents' character had become increasingly strong and resilient as they had overcome economic crises, political problems, and waves of public insecurity.

Rómulo Escobar Valdez (1990-1992)

Rómulo Escobar Valdez inherits a recognized tradition in the livestock and agriculture field, deployed in academic journalism, in higher education, and in the development of important primary activities that were central to the economy of Ciudad Juárez for more than a hundred years. An illustrative fact that Rómulo Escobar shares with us is that he still cultivates a plot of land that his predecessors received by decree of President Benito Juárez. Rómulo Escobar Valdez oversaw DECJ from 1990 to 1992. At the time, this businessman from Juárez was already an industrialist in the dairy sector whose companies spread throughout México, as described in the previous chapter on Chihuahua's industry in the 20th century.

Rómulo Escobar is remembered by his collaborators as an affable president focused on constant work. In particular, the last years of Fernán-



Rómulo Escobar Valdez.

do Baeza's administration in the early nineties and the unprecedented arrival, for the first time, of an opposition party to the government of the State of Chihuahua fell to him. At the same time, the Soviet Union was crumbling to pieces and was giving way to the imposing movement of economic globalization.

Rómulo Escobar explained that DECJ's flagship project in those years was the ExpoMaquila event since it was used to measure the pulse of the manufacturing sector throughout México. However, he points out that another key and, at the same time, complementary task conducted by the executives of the organization he oversaw was to collect and organize all kinds of data related to the Ciudad Juárez economy.

The idea was to measure the growth of the sectors to know where they were going and then advise Juárez businesspeople about the economic future, especially in the manufacturing sector. By the 1990s, the concept of maquiladora had been completely overtaken by the notion of the export manufacturing industry, which came from the arrival of several automotive and electronics factories in Ciudad Juárez.

At the time, gathering information from the industrial sector made it possible to promote more economic investments, based on energy and water prices and regarding spaces for industrial park construction. Furthermore, these promotions served to sell the production already installed in the market, so companies saw the opportunity to relocate or expand in Ciudad Juárez.

In mid-November 1991, DECJ deployed a vital information technology effort related to the attractive aspects of the Mexican-American border, through the official presentation of the Juárez en Cifras manual, with statistics for the period from 1986 to 1990. This document also compiled Ciudad Juárez's economic indicators, which placed the border city as a manufacturing center with great economic growth opportunities.

By 1988, under President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, México had signed economic and financial support agreements that linked it to the United States, such as the Brady Bonds, which restructured México's debt with foreign banks. For this reason, greater participation in monetary investments in our country was foreseen. Ciudad Juárez was one of the few cities prepared for this economic opening.



On November 9, 1989, a popular uprising brought down the Berlin Wall.

Just a few years later, the once enormous and enigmatic Soviet Union would collapse because of internal economic and political crises, leaving the way open for the expansion of international capitalist trade, a route that Ciudad Juárez had inaugurated more than twenty years earlier with the adoption of the IMMEX model.

However, the industrial promotion agenda did not exhaust DECJ's work and was not only focused on attracting factories to Ciudad Juárez. In October 1991, this business organization joined the social needs of the people of Juárez and spoke out against foreign car confiscation in an official letter addressed to the Secretary of Finance and Public Credit, Pedro Aspe Armella.

The letter, signed by other border business organizations, requested lower rates for regularization fees. It also requested authorization to introduce newer model automobiles with anti-pollution equipment to the border to preserve the environment of the two border cities.

David Arelle Sergent (1992-1994)

From 1992 to 1994, it was David Arelle's turn to head DECJ. He was a housing construction businessman who had settled in Ciudad Juárez because of the real estate development opportunities created by the manufacturing industry on the border since the 1970s.

Currently, David Arelle, based in México City, is 100% dedicated to developing economic and technological options for alternative energy management. This field was urgent and essential for all economic sectors. This productive area is even more valuable in the 21st century, given the wave of Nearshoring and the electrical installation shortage in industrial parks and complexes throughout the Mexican Republic.

In the 1990s, the lack of labor to work in the manufacturing industry was quickly filled by the arrival at the border of numerous Mexican immigrants from central and southern México.

David Arelle, at the time, was a representative of a key segment for the economic development of Ciudad Juárez: housing construction. He participated, along with other companies, in the project to build homes for workers. Neighborhood construction was urgent due to housing demand, although the new developments were not always erected close to industrial parks that were advancing well ahead of the urbanization of the border city.

Soon, the demand for efficient public transportation was a limited resource in a city that was growing rapidly, which is why some historians have used the adjective "instant cities" to describe this phenomenon.

In Ciudad Juárez, decisions were made based on economic growth, which was mediocre at the national level. Given the existence of foreign capital to invest, industrial parks were built first. Secondly, labor was attracted from other regions and, thirdly, the municipal government's action came with public service provision.

This urban expansion phenomenon in the manufacturing city of Chihuahua was like other cases of industrial explosion at the end of the 19th century, such as London, México City, Monterrey, Chihuahua, and even El Paso.

Some witnesses of those times of urban growth remember how entire families of people from Veracruz -also known as *"jarochos"* –who had suffered massive job losses in their state used to arrive in buses and how a colony was formed in Ciudad Juárez with them. That is how the popular neologism "*juarochos*"[3] was born.

During this time, CANACO, CANACINTRA, COPARMEX, and DECJ formed a common front.Likewise, records were set for housing construction. However, some companies went bankrupt because several houses remained uninhabited, due to inherent investment risks.

On the other hand, in 1992, Francisco Barrio Terrazas became state governor. In this executive branch, the economic development plans and goals established by DECJ because of the follow-up of the Plan Chihuahua

[3] The term "*Juarocho*" is a play on words combining "*Juarense*" (the official name for the people of Juárez) and *"Jarocho"* a nickname given to the people of the Mexican State of Veracruz; it is different from their demonym which is actually "*Veracruzano"* for men, and "*Veracruzana*" for women.

Siglo XXI (21st Century Chihuahua Plan), which had begun in the administration of Fernando Baeza Meléndez, were implemented word for word.

In this case, the state government was to take the lead in executing economic programs and budgets, closely followed and in harmony with DECJ. Thus, purchasing land for the construction of low-income housing, among other uses, was also included in these plans.

In August 1992, David Arelle promoted the creation of a monetary fund of approximately one million dollars (three billion pesos) to plan the economic development of the Chihuahuan border for the six years 1992-1998. In April 1993, DECJ announced the collaboration between the government and Chihuahua's businesspeople through the creation of the Sociedad de Inversión de Capitales (Capital Investment Partnership), which was dedicated to promoting the economic expansion of Chihuahua's border region.

The economic agreement was made up of 15% by Nacional Financiera; 15% would belong to PROBURSA bank; 35% would be covered by Chihuahua City businesspeople; and the remaining 35% would be supplied by Ciudad Juárez investors. PROBURSA would manage the company.

In July 1993, David Arelle supported the proposal to postpone the tariffs on the border industry for five years, since it balanced the interests of northern businesspeople and the Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial or SECOFI (Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development). This way, Ciudad Juárez companies would be able to compete with U.S. companies in the border area.

Arelle's consent arose in the context of the new tax measures before the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In April 1994, DECJ played a key role in organizing the second part of the Chihuahua Siglo XXI Project's Steering Committee. This committee was integrated by the general director, two representatives of Fomento Económico del Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua (Economic Development of the Chihuahua State Government), and three businesspeople. The project launched eleven strategic clusters that would accelerate the economic development of the State of Chihuahua. During those years, economist José Luis Escanero supervised the Chihuahua Siglo XXI Project in his capacity as a DECJ official.

José Luis Gutiérrez Juárez (1994-1996)

José Luis Gutiérrez Juárez was a prominent leader in border commerce and the fifth president of DECJ. In addition to his development in the



José Luis Gutiérrez Juárez.

economic sector, Gutiérrez was a keen promoter of economic studies shedding light on the growth of commerce and services in Ciudad Juárez, from 1965 to date, by the wage flow generated by manufacturing jobs.

In July 1994, José Luis Gutiérrez prepared a development survey on the Mexican states bordering the United States and the region's economic future. The survey was conducted just six months after the North American trade agreement signed by Canada, the United States, and México was launched. At the time, Gutiérrez served as DECJ's president.

In that survey, national businesspeople believed that during the next 10 years, the northern border states would have greater economic and social development thanks to their great competitive advantages, investment dynamism, efficiency, and the work presented by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Similarly, at the end of September 1994, DECJ arranged to hold a robust supply show in Ciudad Juárez, with the participation of the six states of México's northern border. DECJ's lobbying was accompanied by the Government of the State of Chihuahua, to strengthen the promotion strategy of the local industries that evolved as supply providers for the manufacturing industries of the northern state.

In those years, it was said that the maquiladora cities had become cost centers like Ciudad Juárez and other medium and large cities. However, it was suggested that such cities could become profit centers. To achieve that goal, the large border city had to have advanced technology and skilled labor.

This way, Ciudad Juárez could move from being a maquiladora center to being a hub for light manufacturing by improving the salaries of technical staff, considering each employee's academic level.

In early April 1995, DECJ and some Juárez business organizations publicly requested the Mexican federal government to turn over to local authorities the use of the economic resources collected at the toll booths for crossing the Paso del Norte International Bridge to the United States. In a letter published in local newspapers, they proposed that the money collected should be used to build a more adequate urban infrastructure for the border city. Border business organizations considered that the distribution of wealth in the Mexican tax system was unfair, with only 3.5% going to the municipalities, 14.0% to the states, and the remaining 82.5%

to the federal government. In the same vein, DECJ demanded an increase in the periodic federal contributions to the Juárez municipality from 4% to 10% in August 1995. For this purpose, the federal government should take the economic resources from the taxes collected in Ciudad Juárez and grant a better percentage to the Juárez municipal government. In this regard, José Luis Gutiérrez believed that the number of monetary resources was insufficient to offer adequate public projects and services to the citizens of the border town.

In his public participation, Gutiérrez explained that in all advanced countries, municipalities collected more than 10% of total taxes. In particular, the DECJ leader referred to a historical impediment from the 19th century, for the political and fiscal conformation of the Mexican federal pact. The evident comparison of tax receipts between the municipalities of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, Texas, made the imbalance of Ciudad Juárez's municipal public accounts even more evident.

In 1995, DECJ reported to the Juárez community the creation of 32,000 new direct jobs and 40,000 indirect jobs in Ciudad Juárez, as 190 new businesses had opened during the first six months of the year. The positive official announcement came amid a new national crisis determined by the devaluation of the Mexican peso, which occurred in September 1995. Consequently, the open unemployment rate in the border city was only 2.9%, one of the lowest figures in all of México.

On the other hand, José Luis Gutiérrez emphasized that Ciudad Juárez would remain an attractive city and would maintain its growth in 1996. One of the reasons for such economic balance was that the ambitious Chihuahua Now program had been launched with the participation of the public and private sectors. This innovative plan would generate a great investment attraction dynamic and would guarantee the attraction of new capital for the border city.

At the end of January 1996, DECJ joined the Consejo Coordinador del Desarrollo del Estado de Chihuahua (Coordinating Board for the Development of the State of Chihuahua), which was convened by the state government. Thus, the Juarense business organization collaborated with twenty-six other representatives of the state's different productive sectors. The new board emerged as a sort of economic cabinet to promote productive activities in the northern state, beyond economic crises and changes in government.

In March 1996, José Luis Gutiérrez gave a presentation at the Congreso de Empresarios Chihuahuenses (Chihuahua Businesspeople's Con-

ference on the Plan Chihuahua Siglo XXI). At the event, eight hundred businesspeople from all over the state gathered at the Camino Real Hotel in Chihuahua's capital city to define the state's economic policy.

The meeting sought to promote the cheerful outlook of Chihuahua's businesspeople, successful projects, technology's impact on the economy, the creation of a business directory, numerous services, various products, and private sector needs. There were also presentations on success generation in business. Among these presentations, the Italian economic model of the Emilia Romagna region stood out, among other topics.

In April 1996, José Luis Gutiérrez Juárez asked the Ciudad Juárez mayor for reports on public insecurity in the community. In particular, the DECJ leader condemned the serial murders of young women, regrettable events that hurt the city's image. At the same time, José Luis Gutiérrez recognized the investment projects promoted by the municipal administration.

During the late 1990s, there was an increase in the density of international crossing flows. As a result, José Luis Gutiérrez, along with other businesspeople on both sides of the border, suggested the development of effective systems to streamline binational crossings.

Since then, the people of Juárez proposed establishing the Dedicated Commuter Lanes (DCL) and the Express Line as well as activating a Regional Distribution Center equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The unity between the families and neighbors of the twin cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez became a fact again, as in the past, especially through the Express Line that allows a safe and fluid transit across the border.

In July 1996, Ciudad Juárez and El Paso business organizations jointly requested U.S. President Bill Clinton to modernize the crossing of the three bridges in the border region, through a letter published in the Juarense newspapers. Among the measures requested, they suggested the sole administration of the international bridges through a single federal agency and the allocation of adequate monetary resources to reduce waiting times for people and goods to less than 20 minutes.

The border business organizations noted in their letter that Ciudad Juárez was the sixth largest city in México and El Paso ranked 19th in the United States in population density. However, both had low standards of living. In this situation, the sister cities suffered from poor air quality, due to smog from the thirty-three million vehicles that waited an hour daily to cross the bridges linking them.

Among other arguments, they stated that millions of person-hours were wasted since hundreds of cars and cargo vehicles were waiting to pass

through only 2 or 3 toll booths. Meanwhile, other toll booths available in the same area remained closed. In short, the delays in the transportation of goods slowed down international trade, according to businesspeople from Juárez and El Paso.

Ernesto Anaya Silva (1996-1998)

Ernesto Anaya worked as a furniture merchant whose business had started in El Paso. Later, he expanded with branches in Ciudad Juárez in the 1990s, under the trade liberalization environment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Anaya was the sixth president of DECJ and served as president of COPARMEX in the border city.

In early June 1997, DECJ founded the Centro para el Desarrollo Empresarial or CEDE (Center for Entrepreneurial Development) in partnership with the municipal government of Ciudad Juárez and the state government of Chihuahua. The essential functions of the new institution were to incubate businesses in the State of Chihuahua and to offer comprehensive consulting, information, and training services to support new entrepreneurs and long-established businesspeople.

Furthermore, CEDE focused on different tasks for the benefit of businessmen and women in the State of Chihuahua. For example, it provided advice on financing and credit; set up offices in appropriate physical facilities to serve clients; and used basic technical equipment and support.

Additionally, it accessed a business library specializing in product issues, markets, statistics, management, and planning; and trained entrepreneurs in the disciplines of planning, management, marketing, and advertising, according to Alejandro Nevárez, then Director of DECJ. CEDE emerged through a pact between the government and Chihuahua's businesspeople. To this end, the Chihuahua State Government, the City Board, the Fondo Social del Empresariado Chihuahuense (Chihuahua Businesspeople's Social Fund), and DECJ joined forces to bring the project to fruition, with DECJ committing to operate the institute and making it self-financing.

The CEDE began operations in June 1997, with a capacity to operate thirty microenterprises plus fourteen incubated companies in the service sector. It also organized informative talks open to the public on microenterprise topics and varied business knowledge.

In September 1997, DECJ proposed the creation of the Fideicomiso para Cambiar la Delincuencia (Trust Fund to Conquer Crime), supported with economic resources from businesspeople and business organiza-

tions in Ciudad Juárez: CANACINTRA, CANACO, COPARMEX and the Maquiladora Association (AMAC), aimed at training professionals with expertise in public security for the private sector and focused on creating a reward fund and designing emblems of citizen rejection of violence.



At the end of October 1997, DECJ organized with great success the Primer Foro Estatal de Proveedores Juárez Can Do It (First State Forum of Suppliers Juárez Can Do It), in conjunction with the Direccion General de Fomento Económico (General Directorate of Economic Development), the Municipality of Ciudad Juárez, AMAC, the Asociacion de Maquiladoras y Exportadoras de Chihuahua (AMEAC), the Centro de Desarrollo de Proveedores (CEDEP) and the project Chihuahua Siglo XXI.

Alfredo Trabulsi, president of Juárez Can Do It, reported that conferences were held on the following topics: How to sell to a large corporation, The main obstacles to selling to a maquiladora, How to sell to a maquiladora in the process of being established, Why buy from local suppliers, The ethics dilemma, What suppliers does Motorola require and what is feasible to buy locally, and How to be a successful case of local sourcing.

In February 1998, the degree of raw material integration generated by national industries to the maquiladora sector in Ciudad Juárez stood at 2.96%, when the Centro de Desarrollo de Proveedores (Supplier Development Center) was already operating. Meanwhile, a comparative study on raw material supply between 1994 and 1997 showed that the city of Chihuahua had an integration rate of 1.38%, while the national average was 2.36%. On the other hand, Ciudad Juárez surpassed the state integration average for the maquiladora industry, with 2.7%.

Héctor David Mora Rodríguez (1998-2000)

The Mora family has a long history in the customs field in Ciudad Juárez. Since its installation more than a century ago, some members of the family worked in the building that today houses the Museo de la Revolucion en la Frontera (Museum of the Revolution on the Border). On the other hand, some of the Mora family members also participated in negotiations with the federal government in the 1960s and served as leaders of industrial associations, as in the case of the Maquiladora Association (AMAC) in the early 1970s.

Héctor David Mora Rodríguez was holder of patent 501 as a customs broker since 1974 and retired in 2006, according to the editions of the Diario Oficial de la Federacion (Official Gazette of the Mexican Federation).

Ricardo Mora emerged as an outstanding advisor to DECJ and currently heads a series of key projects in the modern technology field. These include opening Technology Hub, a modern facility that houses several technological initiatives for the future.



Héctor David Mora Rodríguez.

The state's six-year term from 1998 to 2004 would take a different course from the previous Francisco Barrio administration. The state and municipal authorities of Chihuahua modified the programs and budgets for economic investment in the manufacturing sector to direct them to other areas related to the urbanization of the state's main cities. Initiatives such as Chihuahua Now and Chihuahua Siglo XXI were canceled, so DECJ again focused on attracting foreign investment.

Despite the new Chihuahua government's public policy, from 1998 to 2001 the investment promotion momentum of previous years maintained an important labor flow from the center and south of the country to Ciudad Juárez. This large influx of Mexican laborers continued until mid-2001, when it reached its peak, just before the attack on the Twin Towers in New York.

By the end of the 20th century, the IMMEX model had already spread to the center of the country with the growth of Juárez companies such as LINTEL, led by Federico Barrio. This manufacturing paradigm began to position itself in the State of Guanajuato and, later, in the State of Queretaro. The two central Mexican states had decided to apply –and they did- economic development programs like those deployed during the previous three decades in the State of Chihuahua.

Globally, China was one of the countries that set out to imitate the way of working that the people of Juárez had developed in the seventies, eighties, and nineties. For this reason, diverse groups of Chinese executives spent several months in Ciudad Juárez, dedicated to learning every detail they felt they needed to know, in their efforts to become –as they did– a new world manufacturing center during the 21st century.

In September 1998, the tabloid Guia del emprendedor (Entrepreneur's Guide) was published in the State of Chihuahua, which consisted of twelve pages full of information and had a wide circulation of 70,000 copies. The document provided legal and administrative advice from CEDE and showed the benefits of the training and financing offered by the agency.

Some of the incubated companies were service, fast food, pharmaceutical, and automotive parts businesses. Furthermore, CEDE organized

the Jornada de Platicas sobre Estrategias de Mercadotecnia (Marketing Strategies Talks), which was held between September 28 and October 2, 1998. Mora also promoted the fourteenth edition of ExpoMaquila, held November 11-13 at the Centro Internacional de Comercio y Convenciones (International Trade and Convention Center) in the PRONAF building.

In November 1999, the fifteenth edition of ExpoMaquila consisted of around two hundred Mexican and foreign exhibitors seeking to increase their client portfolio. The exhibition sought to increase the number of Mexican companies supplying raw materials to the manufacturing industry in Juárez. At the time, Mexican companies represented 40% of the suppliers at ExpoMaquila.

In March 2000, DECJ continued its informative and statistical work on Ciudad Juárez and the State of Chihuahua and provided a series of data on economic investments and jobs. A year earlier, in 1999, there was a slowdown in industrial promotion within the state. However, in the same year, a 462-million-dollar monetary investment, and the establishment of twenty-six new factories, which had generated 4,552 jobs, were observed.

In 2000, for the first time, a candidate from an opposition party was elected to the federal government. Emerging from the business sector, Vicente Fox focused his efforts on promoting foreign investment with BANCOMEXT; on the other hand, he focused on strengthening the mechanisms for financing low-income housing through the Instituto del Fondo de Vivienda para los Trabajadores or INFONAVIT (National Workers' Housing Fund Institute). Both federal agencies accompanied the growth of companies from Juárez and Chihuahua dedicated to constructing industrial buildings and low-income housing in other states.

DECJ participated in the promotion of the Asociación Civil Plan Estratégico de Juárez (Juárez Strategic Plan Civil Association) in the late 1990s. It was a conglomerate of the border society, to exchange opinions aimed at generating, precisely, a strategic plan for the economic and social development of Ciudad Juárez and to strengthen the practice of a culture of legality without political party approaches.

At first, the initiative around the civil association was led by Federico Barrio Terrazas. Years later, Miguel Fernández Iturriza led the citizens' efforts, which developed important projects and civil society organizations. For example, the association issues an annual study, "Asi Estamos Juárez," which analyzes social aspects of the community. He also created the Red de Vecinos (Neighborhood Network), which focuses on self-management of community solutions.

On the other hand, Ciudad Juárez stood at the beginning of the 21st century as the Mexican city council that had most developed the civic function of the city council. For this reason, the mayor's office included citizens who monitored and evaluated the tasks and the implementation of the economic budgets of the municipal public functions, in a transparent way and in real-time, through the Regidor MX project.

Another important instrument is Juárez 2030. It is a Plan for the Sustainable Development of the border city, which integrates its residents' views within a work agenda that allows citizen participation and follows up with pre-set indicators. The preceding initiative is joined by the Yo Ciudadano initiative. This plan constitutes a media analysis platform helping to generate civic perspectives in the journalistic field, regarding Ciudad Juárez's transcendental issues.

Carlos Riquelme Canales (2001-2003)

Carlos Riquelme was an important leader of the Asociacion de Hoteles y Moteles de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Hotel and Motel Association), which has been an original and well-established sector that has not stopped growing since its beginnings in the 19th century. First, the marked economic growth of this productive area is due to the relevant vocation of lodging services, typical of the Chihuahua border; second, the remarkable expansion of the hotel industry was driven by the industrial boom of the last sixty years, which turned the border city into a center of business tourism at a global level.

Likewise, this distinguished businessman from Ciudad Juárez stood out for promoting the pleasant and hospitable image that has characterized Ciudad Juárez throughout most of its history. Such positive public perception has been achieved through ExpoMaquila and the different fairs, festivals, and conventions held in the manufacturing city. Among these events, the tequila, sotol, and Maríachi fairs stand out, showing the city's positive attributes.

The organization of the 16ª Muestra de Insumos y Servicios para la Industria Maquiladora (16th Supply and Service Show for the Maquiladora Industry), ExpoMaquila 2000, under the presidency of Carlos Riquelme, was supported by the local CANACINTRA (National Chamber of the Transformation Industry). 221 national and international exhibitors offered their products and services to the public, alternating with conferences and workshops.



In November 2000, a positive statistical data report was presented. The number of active plants established in Ciudad Juárez had reached an all-time high of 307 units and the total payroll in the border town had reached 235,280 workers, right in the middle of the year. In particular, the number of laborers represented the highest volume in its history.

In May 2001, the Secretaria de Desarrollo Industrial del Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua (Industrial Development Secretariat of the Chihuahua State Government) contributed one million 340 thousand pesos to DECJ to continue to support two of its important development programs: ExpoMaquila and the Centros Regionales para la Competitividad Empresarial or CRECE (Regional Centers for Business Competitiveness Network).

In mid-May 2001, DECJ and other business organizations from Ciudad Juárez prepared an interesting plan for the economic development of new technologies for the commercial and industrial corridor Ciudad Juárez-El Paso-Las Cruces. The plan's goals were to promote monetary investments, activate state-of-the-art technology, and consolidate the careers of professionals from the region in Mexican territory.

Furthermore, in addition to DECJ, CANACO, CANACINTRA, the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios de Monterrey (Ciudad Juárez campus), the University of Texas at El Paso, some laboratories of the University of New Mexico at Las Cruces and the El Paso Chamber of Commerce participated in the plan's elaboration.

This DECJ document was entitled Informe Regional de Ciudad Juárez 2001 (Regional Report of Ciudad Juárez 2001) and contained illustrative data. For example, it presented statistical data on the border city regarding available hotel rooms, the number of jobs, the number of people insured with the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social or IMSS (Mexican Social Security Institute), the number of companies in each of the sectors and the related taxes accrued by such businesses, among other aspects.

At the beginning of the 21st century, DECJ established the following seven major advantages of the Chihuahuan border population in terms of economic development: 1) world-class labor for the different areas required; 2) it had 20% of the manufacturing plants in the entire Mexican Republic; 3) only 5% of the workers in the industry belonged to a union and performed productively; 4) businesses developed work in multicultural groups with the expanded experience of executives, managers, engineers, and technicians.

Additionally, the manufacturing Mexican capital maintained the following two positive attributes in state industrial policies and commu-

nications and transportation infrastructure in the Juarense urban area: 5) It had support and tax incentives granted by the state of Chihuahua; 6) eighteen industrial parks were constantly operating.

Regarding the infrastructure to the outside of the city, Ciudad Juárez offered a final strong positive quality: 7) It had efficient communication with the rest of the country and the United States, through the four-lane Pan-American Highway and the modern U.S. highways I-10 and I-25. Furthermore, it had four international crossings, a robust network of binational railroad lines, and two international airports.

On the other hand, at the federal level, it pointed out an area of opportunity that the sister city of El Paso possessed. In early August 2001, DECJ supported the tax proposal of the border businesspeople to establish a special VAT for the region, which would range between 7.25 and 8%; alternatively, the businesspeople suggested considering the option of creating a tax on final consumer spending to compete with the U.S. market.

The Juárez businesspeople were also asking for a reduction in the countervailing duties on products from countries outside the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Around the same time at the beginning of the 21st century, the Juárez businesspeople announced the creation of the Bloque Empresarial Frontera Norte or BEFN (Northern Border Business Block), to seek the economic improvement of all the populations of the states along the Mexican-American border. The BEFN emerged as a dynamic and effective space defending the interests of businesspeople and residents of the Mexican border region.

In September 2001, the month of the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, DECJ provided leadership to the Juárez businesspeople to address the approaching crisis in the border manufacturing sector. DECJ organized the discussion entitled Diálogo entre proveedores y compradores (Dialogue between Suppliers and Buyers), with the participation of the city's main productive and financing entities.

In early November 2002, another meeting was held between businesspeople from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, which resulted in the signing of a collaboration agreement to promote joint investments in the border region, through the efforts of the Great El Paso Chamber of Commerce.







Forty Years of DECJ

SECOND STAGE

At the beginning of the 21st century, Ciudad Juárez was identified as a place of numerous professional opportunities for Mexicans from all regions and stood out as a national economic model to emulate. By the year 2000, the eighth-largest city in the country had left behind an economy based on entertainment and the maquila industry to become a clear industrial benchmark. However, time suddenly "clouded over" and the people of Juárez had to learn other social skills.

Since Carlos Murguía Chavez's presidency, DECJ started with a second stage of leadership, integrated by new generations of Juárez businesspeople who inherited important projects already consolidated and faced new challenges derived from the commercial and industrial environment. Notably, all of them assumed the different adjustments in the U.S. market and the international order.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Ciudad Juárez was identified as a place of numerous professional opportunities for Mexicans from all regions and stood out as a national economic model to emulate. By the year 2000, the eighth-largest city in the country had left behind an economy based on entertainment and the maquila industry to become a clear industrial benchmark. However, time suddenly "clouded over" and the people of Juárez had to learn other social skills.

After the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001, the United States strengthened its border security processes, which slowed the flow of trade and people. As a result, tens of thousands of jobs were lost from 2001 to 2004.

On the other hand, in 2008, a huge monetary crisis was felt, which was reflected in the slowdown of the general pace of the economy at the hemispheric level. These crises may have, in part, caused disruptions in the international organized crime dynamic. Whether this was the case or not, the federal government inaugurated a policy of head-on combat against the drug cartels, which produced an open war whose battlefields were important to populations such as Ciudad Juárez.

Finally, when the violence was contained through significant efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out during the 2020-2022 period and seriously affected the world's population. This global phenomenon significantly reduced industrial activity and raised the need to assume new work rhythms. Furthermore, it reconfigured everyday values. DECJ played a significant role in the process of adopted resilience which, despite having been assumed promptly, still raises questions that have not been completely resolved during the third decade of the 21st century.

Carlos Enrique Murguía Chávez (2003-2006)

Carlos Murguía is heir to a family of Juárez businesspeople, whose first link, José Murguía, came from the Altos de Jalisco region. The Murguía family expanded into other economic sectors from an original lumber, commercial, and transformation activity.

Emma Murguía Valdez is recognized as one of the first female busi-

nesswomen in Ciudad Juárez. She refers to her beginnings in the sale of wood chips until her incursion into the music trade, with an iconic establishment in the Río Grande Mall in the mid-1970s, as described in the reviews of relevant characters prepared by UACJ researchers.



Carlos Enrique Murguía Chávez.

Alfonso Murguía Valdez stands as the dean and last survivor of the group of businesspeople who led the great industrial transformation of Ciudad Juárez during the 1960s, as described in the manufacturing chapter of this study. Alfonso is Carlos' father and the leader of important projects in various industries.

In October 2003, a special businesspeople's commission was formed to work jointly with the governments on public safety issues, headed by Carlos Murguía as DECJ president. The commission would discuss the best solutions to address this issue together with municipal, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

In October 2003, the relocation phenomenon of plants and entire manufacturing sectors to other Mexican states, especially in central México, such as Guanajuato, Querétaro, and San Luis Potosí, was noticed. At the time, DECJ and the office of Desarrollo Industrial de la Frontera (Industrial Development of the Border) elaborated a plan to prevent companies from unnecessarily migrating to other Mexican states or other countries.

Thus, in February 2004, DECJ signed an official agreement with the International Business Accelerator (IBA) of Silver City, New Mexico, to promote jobs and provide consulting services to businesspeople in the border region. The IBA used federal funds to provide free import and export counseling and assistance in researching and identifying target markets and assisting with international transactions. Furthermore, the international association supported the organization of trade missions and seminars.

In March 2004, DECJ participated in the U.S.-México Border Legislative Conference meeting, held on March 25-27 in Chihuahua City. The event addressed a topical issue under the title Improving the Competitiveness of the Border Beltway. The topic was addressed by Carlos Murguía and Senators Jeffrey Jones and Eliot Shapleigh, from Chihuahua and Texas, respectively.

The president of the Border Legislative Conference, Arturo Castro López, who was a congressman from Chihuahua, would present to the almost forty corresponding legislators from both countries. The binational conference was promoted by the Council of State Governments of the West (CSG-WEST), to direct public policies to be followed between the two North American countries.

In April 2004, DECJ approved signing a collaboration agreement to improve import and export trade activities in Ciudad Juárez and strengthen its immediate border environment. The administrative agreement included the Asociacion de Agentes Aduanales or AAA (Customs Agents Association), the Centro Regional para la Competitividad Empresarial de Chihuahua or CRECE (Regional Center for Business Competitiveness of Chihuahua), and the Instituto de Capacitación y Certificación en Comercio Exterior (Institute for Training and Certification in Foreign Trade).

Furthermore, in April 2004, the businesspeople associated with DECJ established a business center in the border region to sell products and services from small and medium-sized Juárez companies to large businesses in Washington, D.C., and some cities in Switzerland, Germany, France, and England.

In May 2004, DECJ planned to reactivate the Centro de Incubación de Empresas de Ciudad Juárez (Business Incubation Center of Ciudad Juárez) with an investment of 645,000 pesos. At the same time, Centro Regional para la Competitividad Empresarial or CRECE (Regional Center for Business Competitiveness) announced the contribution of nine million pesos to favor the correct business operation of industrialists, traders, and service providers in the State of Chihuahua.

In August 2004, DECJ and other business organizations in Ciudad Juárez backed the US$100 million investment project for the modernization of public transport in the largest city in the State of Chihuahua. The concessionaires and industry authorities would be supported by Juárez businesspeople to modernize public transport.

At the time, the construction of the Centro de Exposiciones y Convenciones de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Exhibition and Convention Center) building in the PRONAF area had already been approved. The new construction was to be financed with the economic resources obtained from the 3% surtax charged to the business sector, thanks to timely property tax payment.

Ciudad Juárez was already exporting more products than Monterrey and more than 20 Mexican states combined. The Chihuahua border city even sold more products abroad than several Latin American countries combined, said Carlos Murguía, because 72% of the state's manufacturing sector was in the border region.

At the end of August 2004, DECJ integrated the Comision de Comercio Exterior (Foreign Trade Commission) into its internal structure, which would be headed by businessman Óscar Chávez. Its purpose was to provide a better service to the Juárez associates and investors, through the issuance of initiatives and laws regarding the municipal, state, and federal governments. Such specialized assistance would be supported by a database for the advice and benefit of all DECJ associates.

Carlos Murguía also announced that the border town would host about one billion dollars in various productive projects, among them the prominent Electrolux, Lexmark, and Foxconn plants. Thus, the new economic expansion plans would have a scope of nearly 20,000 new jobs in one year at the border.

In December 2004, DECJ formed an important part of the recently created Consejo para el Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Chihuahua or CODECH (Board for the Economic Development of the State of Chihuahua), established by the state authority through the representation of Carlos Murguía, who held the position of Technical Coordination Vice-Coordinator.

In mid-December 2004, DECJ highlighted the transformation of the urban and transportation infrastructure in Ciudad Juárez, thanks to a major manufacturing company. Electrolux outlined a major project to improve heavy freight transportation in Ciudad Juárez: the construction of dedicated railroad tracks, with an investment of around US$1 billion.

During that time, the IMMEX once again produced hundreds of direct and indirect jobs and the labor force was highly qualified and specialized. Between 32 and 50 percent of its inhabitants came from other states of the country and many of them were originally from small cities that gradually took root in the border city.

Significant indicators generated by DECJ in its reports highlighted that industrial jobs in Ciudad Juárez were classified as follows: 38% in the electronics and telecommunications branches; 21% in auto parts; 12% in the textile sector; 4% in agribusiness; and 25% in various other areas.

At the end of February 2005, DECJ continued to contribute to training small Juárez businesspeople in administration and fiscal matters. Thus, more than 120 microentrepreneurs received information on accounting for their businesses, as part of a workshop held at DECJ's building.

Likewise, Carlos Murguía pointed out the fiscal inequity of the federation towards Ciudad Juárez, despite paying high tax contributions. For example, the municipality of Guadalajara, Jalisco, was credited with federal contributions almost twice as much as what was allocated to Juárez, without considering that both Mexican municipalities had similar numbers in terms of income generation and population. At the beginning of the 21st century, Ciudad Juárez produced twenty-five thousand jobs, that is, 6.25% of the national total.

Meanwhile, CRECE awarded businessperson number 2,000 for reaching the end of their professional training and having accredited the specialized knowledge imparted. This way, CRECE covered a profitable trajectory of advisory and consulting services for the benefit of small and medium Juárez businesspeople for nine consecutive years.

In March 2005, DECJ was included in the select list of taxpayer trustees of the Sistema de Administracion Tributaria or SAT (Tax Administration System) of the Secretaria de Hacienda y Credito Publico or SHCP (Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit). The SHCP had prepared the list in coordination with taxpayer groups and the country's universities under the Sindicos del contribuyente (Taxpayer Trustees) Program.

This measure's purpose was to facilitate the relationship between individuals and tax authorities and to offer support in conducting their procedures. In 2005, fourteen business, educational, and collegiate organizations were officially represented before the SAT, to solve tax problems and apply immediate solutions.

At the end of March 2005, DECJ and a group of businesspeople and state and municipal officials joined the new Consejo de Evaluacion para el Apoyo a la Micro, Pequeña y Mediana Empresa de Ciudad Juárez (Evaluation Board for the Support of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Ciudad Juárez). The board's mission was to evaluate and qualify those commercial, industrial, and service projects feasible for support.

In early April 2005, DECJ refocused on attracting investment for the Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and New Mexico region through an alliance with the Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDCO), whose offices were based in El Paso.

To this end, a collaboration agreement was signed, and the following three goals were established: 1) to outline a regional development plan; 2) to grant financial resources for strategy implementation; 3) to jointly address investor projects and prospects to retain and attract plants to the northern border region. Paul Foster, Bill Sanders, and Carlos Murguía participated in the agreement.

In early May 2005, DECJ became part of the board that would manage the Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial or CEDEM (Business Development Center). This center was founded by the Secretaría de Desarrollo Industrial del Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua (Industrial Development Secretariat of the Chihuahua State Government) to support micro, small, and medium-sized companies in the border region, to strengthen their growth through training, technical advice and detailed information on financing provided by the municipal, state and federal governments.

In January 2006, DECJ and other business organizations signed an agreement with the IMSS general director to improve services for Juárez workers. To this effect, the following eight actions were established: 1) Start operating the new third-level hospital in April 2006 with initial coverage of 60% of personnel and to reach 100% of employees needed by June 30, 2006; 2) start operating the new Unidad de Medicina Familiar 65 (Family Medicine Unit) in the Manuel Valdés neighborhood; 3) carry out remodeling work in the emergency room of PRONAF Hospital 6, with a 50 million peso investment.

Five other measures were also agreed upon: 4) That IMSS workers work on Saturdays; 5) improve infrastructure, services, and medicine supply; 6) develop a subrogation regulation to make external care easier and faster; 7) invest twelve million pesos to end the backlog of programmed surgeries; and 8) integrate a citizen board to supervise the businesspeople in the IMSS tasks.

Years later, during the presidency of Juan Carlos Sapién, Carlos Murguía assumed the leadership of the important DECJ Comité de Competitividad (Competitiveness Committee). This group, made up of twenty-seven companies with more than 100,000 jobs –some 16% of formal employment–, set out to make Ciudad Juárez the best place to work.

He focused on nurturing work environments, strategic communication, employability, and talent, securing a living wage, procuring employee services, and envisioning the future of work, and was supported by Claudia Ochoa

in management. DECJ's initiative would be recognized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is the highest global body in the labor sphere.

Jorge Luis Ruiz Martínez (2006-2008)

Jorge Luis Martínez was known for his sharp vision in the flexible and solid design of DECJ. Originally from the interior of the State of Chihuahua, this businessman represents a younger generation of lawyers and foreign trade experts, contributing to the growth and development of legal services from Ciudad Juárez globally.

As described elsewhere in this book, law firms were key to the start-up and consolidation of manufacturing development on the Chihuahuan border. Today, these law firms continue to be a business indicator. Fundamentally, law firms stand as a converging sector of the economy, as they deploy their associated offices throughout México and the United States.

At the end of March 2006, Jorge Luis Ruiz assumed the DECJ presidency and established five goals for his administration: 1) Promote the maquila supply chain; 2) define the Juárez industrial vocation; 3) promote the Ciudad Juárez economy; 4) change the ExpoMaquila 2006 venue to the Centro de Convenciones; and 5) participate in the fourth strategic axis of the "Plan Estratégico de Juárez", defined as: a thriving economy that generates wealth and high added value.

Jorge Luis Ruiz integrated his board of directors with president-elect Alejandra De la Vega –by the way, the figure of president-elect was an innovation established to achieve greater institutionalization of the organization–. The board also included Luis Lara Armendáriz as executive vice president; Abiel Carrillo, vice president for supplier development; Roberto Delgado, vice president for international competitiveness and following up on the " Plan Estratégico de Ciudad Juárez"; and Octavio Muñoz, vice president for commercial and tourism promotion.

In June 2006, DECJ and other business organizations cooperated with the Comision de Desarrollo Económico del Congreso del Estado (Economic Development Commission of the State Congress) to draft the Ley de Fomento Económico (Economic Development Law). For this goal, they formed a drafting committee that included the private sector and the state government. Furthermore, some members of DESEC and CODECH representatives worked with DECJ.



The following five measures were proposed: 1) CODECH should serve as a private sector-led body; 2) the Comisión Mixta de Estímulos Especiales (Joint Commission on Special Incentives) should function regularly; 3) the state executive should use 20% of the payroll tax collection to finance the activities outlined in the Law; 4) Granting of tax incentives for job creation, hiring professionals and technicians, senior citizens and people with disabilities; Lastly 5) it was recommended that tax incentives be allocated to companies that would pay better salaries, expand their facilities, invest in technology and increase consumption of Mexican products and services.

In September 2006, more than one hundred exhibitors participated in the Juárez Avanza Fair, which was organized by Plan Estratégico de Juárez. The event showcased economic, cultural, and social activities, such as Arte en el Parque, Asociación para la Protección y Defensa del Menor, Casa Amiga Centro de Crisis, Centro Caritativo para Atención a Enfermos de SIDA, Centro de Fortalecimiento de la Sociedad Civil, Ciudadanos Comprometidos por la Paz, Comisión de Cooperación Ecológica Fronteriza, COPARMEX, Consejo Ciudadano para el Desarrollo Social, Cruz Roja, Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense A. C., Fundación Leche Lucerna, and the Instituto Municipal de Investigación y Planeación.

In November 2006, the XXII Muestra de Insumos y Servicios (22nd Exhibition of Raw Materials and Services) of the Expo Maquiladora revealed that the national supply represented only 3.3%. However, the great exhibition would be attended by more than 72% of companies from the Ciudad Juárez and El Paso regions, sponsored by DECJ, CANACINTRA, and AMAC.

In mid-February 2007, DECJ, along with other Juárez businesspeople, outlined a program to teach English to 5,000 Juárez residents during the first three years of the project. Employers also sought to turn Ciudad Juárez into a highly competitive city. Sergio Ornelas, head of the initiative and DECJ vice-president, based the program on a self-learning system based on special software.

The English lessons would begin in the third quarter of 2007 with an initial budget of one million pesos, aimed at students, homemakers, and people with disabilities. Furthermore, DECJ, Plan Estratégico de Juárez, and Editorial México Now, two institutions that made up the non-profit Fondo México Now, A.C., participated in the project.

English language proficiency would make it possible to set up call centers in Ciudad Juárez. The teaching strategy would be based on four action lines: 1) build learning centers; 2) use available buildings with the city's educational infrastructure; 3) conduct research; and 4) establish strategic alliances with public and private institutions in the United States.

In mid-March 2007, the possibility of establishing a Citizen's Public Safety Board at the legal level to implement anti-crime programs to prevent crime and strengthen public safety arose. Jorge Luis Ruiz urged government authorities to integrate a collegiate body with a legal basis that would transcend municipal administrations and execute the most appropriate security strategies, coordinating the work of all police forces in the border region.



Jorge Luis Ruiz Martínez.

Jorge Luis Ruiz made the renewed and expanded website *www.desarrolloeconomico.org* available to the border public. The digital site displayed new sections dedicated to orienting potential new investors from other nations, so they could plan the installation of companies in the Juárez region.

In early April 2007, DECJ expressed its opposition to the immigration provision issued by the U.S. federal government, which consisted of introducing the Border Crossing Card or laser visa as an indispensable requirement. In this regard, Jorge Ruiz warned that such a measure would affect the free transit of citizens from both countries and trade efficiency between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso.

In May 2007, DECJ formed a group of business associations to fund research on IMSS services in Ciudad Juárez. For this purpose, the Institute of Biomedical Sciences of the UACJ (ICB) would focus on obtaining precise information to propose solutions to the most urgent problems. The research would last two months with an estimated cost of 130 thousand pesos that would be contributed by the member organizations of the Consejo Coordinador Empresarial or CCE (Business Coordinating Board) of Ciudad Juárez.

At the end of May 2007, DECJ suggested to the municipal and state governments to conduct a comprehensive study of public transport in Ciudad Juárez. It was advised to analyze the distribution of routes and purchase new and alternative units for a more efficient service. Jorge Ruiz stated that integral urban mobility implied transporting the citizens of Juárez in a more efficient, dignified, and orderly way.



Ciudad Juárez suffered from serious shortages, especially lack of water, poor or non-existent paving and lack of decent schools.

Within DECJ's financial analysis, it appeared that the tax laws, especially the federal laws, stated that Ciudad Juárez should have received three or even four times more than the 2.4 billion pesos it received by 2007. DECJ's interpretations of the analysis were summarized in two aspects: Exclusion and discrimination to the detriment of the Chihuahua border city.

Some specific items of DECJ's report argued that Ciudad Juárez had the following seven deficiencies: 1) a chaotic and deficient transport system; 2) a deficit of more than 80% in terms of parks with green areas, according to United Nations parameters; 3) lack of sufficient spaces for sports and healthy leisure activities; 4) 27,000 families lived in high-risk areas; 5) serious air, water and soil pollution problems; 6) a backlog of many years in urban infrastructure; and 7) high rates of violence and public insecurity.

Furthermore, it was clear in that same document that there were six other shortcomings in Ciudad Juárez:

8) The city had doubled its population every 20 years in the last four decades; 9) only 50% of streets were paved; 10) there were serious deficiencies in the provision of sanitary sewage; 11) its water sources were depleted or presented strong shortages; 12) there was an average of 27.5 students per

teacher, while the average for Chihuahua City reached 21.1, and 13) there was a marked deficit in high schools and an unequal school equipment distribution.

At the end of July 2007, DECJ promoted the restoration of the Ciudad Juárez Historic Center. Roberto Chaires, head of the Dirección General de Desarrollo Urbano (Urban Development Department), announced the creation of a trust fund made up of the municipal and state governments and businesspeople, to inspect the execution of all urban development projects in the border city and, in particular, to provide timely follow-up on the construction of plazas and the strategies for remodeling the downtown area, especially the central Mariscal Street.

In the early years of ExpoMaquila's organization, DECJ identified itself as the sole event promoter. Years later, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Manufacturing and Technology Association, the Society for Plastics, the International Business Accelerator, the World Trade Center, AMAC, CANACINTRA, the Secretaría de Desarrollo Industrial, and the Secretaría de Economía joined the event. On the other hand, the topic Ciudad Juárez, Competitive International City would be the axis of the cycle of conferences, which

In 2007, DECJ promoted the restoration of the Ciudad Juárez Historic Center.



was supported by the research work of the Grupo de Impulso. One of the outstanding presentations was: Borderplex Economic Outlook 2008, presented by Thomas Fullerton, from the University of Texas at El Paso. Meanwhile, academics from the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez addressed the scope of the Centro de Investigación en Ciencia y Tecnología Aplicada (Applied Science and Technology Research Center).

In early November 2007, the urgency of helping the victims of the coastal storms in Tabasco prompted DECJ and Chihuahua's business organizations to provide funds to rebuild destroyed homes and renovate urban infrastructure. FECHAC and the business organizations would contribute a 10 percent surcharge on payroll taxes for six months to support the victims and raise approximately sixty million pesos.

In early November 2007, DECJ reported that for the first time in the organization's history, public and private institutions from Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and southern New Mexico had agreed to work together. Accordingly, the facilities of the Paso del Norte Civic Center in El Paso had been opened for exhibitions, conferences, and business meetings.

At the end of March 2008, DECJ became part of the new Comité de Seguridad Pública de Ciudad Juárez (Ciudad Juárez Public Safety Com-





mittee), which would provide the strategies needed to combat organized crime. At the time, other business organizations and the municipal and state governments joined forces to draw up a new public security plan for Juárez.

In May 2008, a major event was announced in which DECJ, and other border business corporations would meet in the state capital. Thus, the city of Chihuahua would host the Tercer Congreso Latinoamericano de Clústeres (Third Latin American Cluster Congress). The cluster idea was part of a strategy born in 1996, as a great businessmen and women initiative.

At the end of May 2008, the Regional Center for Business Competitiveness of Chihuahua (CRECE), which had generated important benefits for many businesses in Juárez during the 1998-2008 period, ceased to operate. Promptly, CRECE inherited all its functions to the Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial (CEDEM) and the Dirección General de Promoción Financiera y Económica Municipal (General Directorate of Financial and Economic Promotion of the Municipality).




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Forty Years of DECJ

THIRD STAGE

This was a new generation of DECJ leaders, whose thoughts about what was happening in that crucial year of 2008 led them to generate new ideas: for example, panoramic studies that later became the Frente Norte initiative. Furthermore, they negotiated the creation of the Fideicomiso de Puentes (Bridge Trust Fund) and the Ley de Coordinación Fiscal Estatal (State Fiscal Coordination Law) before government agencies. Among others, these strategic lines evolved towards more initiative-taking rather than critical participation.

In 2008, the hemispheric economy suffered from the collapse of public housing funds in the United States. Its collapse generated major disruptions in all sectors and the various economic regions related to the neighboring country. Such a monetary crisis would provoke disruptions in organized international crime and, in turn, would trigger unprecedented violence on the border.

The unleashed violence damaged daily coexistence throughout México and especially in Ciudad Juárez; therefore, it generated an unusual response –analytical, committed, and collective– on the part of the Ciudad Juárez business sector. Particularly, DECJ deployed a new vision of the organization that, without leaving behind its strategic design and nature, refocused its work, starting under the management of Alejandra de la Vega and the former presidents who succeeded her in the position.

This was a new generation of DECJ leaders, whose thoughts about what was happening in that crucial year of 2008 led them to generate new ideas: for example, panoramic studies that later became the Frente Norte initiative. Furthermore, they negotiated the creation of the Fideicomiso de Puentes (Bridge Trust Fund) and the Ley de Coordinación Fiscal Estatal (State Fiscal Coordination Law) before government agencies. Among others, these strategic lines evolved towards more initiative-taking rather than critical participation.

Likewise, new work models were created because of the establishment of the Mesa Interinstitucional –with authorities and society leaders–, especially around security. The Mesa de Seguridad sought new and effective cooperation models to contain organized crime, which were imitated in other Mexican states due to their effectiveness. Sometime later, DECJ also branched out to participate in the Consejo de Salud (Health Council) because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alejandra de la Vega Arizpe (2008-2010)

Alejandra de la Vega has shown leadership in the private sector and the commercial, service, and sports sectors. However, she has expanded her action to the social sphere, through her key participation in the important Mesa de Seguridad (Security Roundtable) and the Mesa Interinstitucional para la Renovacion de Ciudad Juárez (Interinstitutional Roundtable for the Renewal of Ciudad Juárez).

Most recently, she ventured into the public sector as the head of the state's Secretaria de Innovacion



Alejandra de la Vega Arizpe.

y Desarrollo Económico (Secretaria of Innovation and Economic Development), with significant contributions to the vision and economic projects developed in the 2017-2021 period. Simultaneously, Alejandra de la Vega's performance has extended in the State of Chihuahua and El Paso.

In early June 2008, Alejandra de la Vega became president of DECJ for the 2008-2009 term. Her central goal was to fight for fiscal equity in Ciudad Juárez, which she achieved. She would seek to have the state and federal governments provide sufficient economic funds to build the necessary public projects in this border town.

In June 2008, DECJ representatives and other business leaders from Ciudad Juárez went to México City to request an increase in the number of federal police officers to guard the streets and businesses of Ciudad Juárez in the face of numerous attacks by different criminal groups.

In July 2008, Alejandra de la Vega began to promote the creation and development of new businesses in Ciudad Juárez by setting up a business incubator that worked thanks to the joint efforts of higher education institutions, the municipal government, the state Secretariat of Economy and, of course, DECJ.

At the end of July 2008, DECJ and a group of Juárez businesspeople demanded President Felipe Calderón to grant more federal budget to Ciudad Juárez, to conduct more public projects in the border town. It was argued that the Federation should invest more public funds in this border region with the United States, following the wealth and high job production generated in Ciudad Juárez.

In the past, Juárez had served as a subsidiary of other regions and now, during a huge economic and social crisis, it had to cover its own basic needs, such as building classrooms and purchasing beds for clinics and hospitals.

In the business management sphere, at the end of July 2008, AMAC and DECJ signed a pact to improve the participation of local suppliers from 2.7% to 5% over the next five years. DECJ and AMAC would obtain financing from different banking institutions to intervene in the factoring service, through the payment of invoices, so that suppliers would not have wait 60 or more days to pay their invoices.

In January 2009, the Government of the State of Chihuahua called on all social sectors in the state to take urgent measures in the face of the

global economic recession. DECJ, other business organizations, and Governor Reyes Baeza signed an important five-point agreement with the academic and social sectors to benefit the Chihuahua economy.

First, an increase in the public budget was planned to promote the operations of MSMEs in the State of Chihuahua. Additionally, a 50% payroll tax discount would be granted to micro-enterprises established in 2009 and up to 100% to new micro-enterprises.

Secondly, another measure derived from this emerging agreement was that financing would be granted to integrate working capital for micro and small tourism enterprises; primary producers would be organized to consolidate their businesses; and access to exports of nuts, meat, peaches, chile, vegetables, and other products would be facilitated.

Third, five actions were listed to establish and develop infrastructure. Thus, classrooms, workshops, laboratories, and cultural spaces would be built throughout the state and on the new campuses of the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez and the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, through labor contracts for five hundred million pesos.

The fourth provision of the agreement between businesspeople and the state government contained four actions for education and technological development. These included promoting local and foreign companies to use the Fondos Mixtos program, producing better jobs and strengthening the Consejos de Vinculación Académico-Productiva or COVAP (Academic-Productive Liaison Boards), to incorporate recent graduates from high school and higher education into the labor market.

Five of the pact's provisions included measures to protect the economy of Chihuahua's families. For example, self-employment support programs would be strengthened to benefit social groups in marginalized areas of the State of Chihuahua and 30,000 housing loans would be invested for a total of 5,850 million pesos in economic benefits, which would generate 120,000 jobs.

Finally, the sixth point of the agreement referred to ten concrete operations for social and human development. For example, 250,000 families throughout the entity would be helped with their health services, through a projected investment of nine hundred million pesos and 40,000 new affiliations; repatriated migrants and unemployed families would be assisted; and thirteen million pesos would be allocated to child welfare and development homes.

At the end of June 2009, DECJ and other business corporations formed part of a group of thirty-five organizations in that city to demand better public safety on the border from the government. As a result, 879 citizens signed a letter calling on the authorities of the three spheres of government to control insecurity and impunity.

In particular, Alejandra de la Vega led business efforts through the Mesa de Seguridad, under a context of risk and real danger that forced sessions to be held under extraordinary conditions.

In November 2009, DECJ brought together Juárez businesspeople to discuss the public insecurity issue in the border city and to ask the Chihuahua state government to focus on reducing kidnappings, extortion, and robberies. Specifically, it was proposed to review and modify the strategies of Operación Conjunta Chihuahua (Joint Operation Chihuahua).

At the end of November 2009, it was the turn of the Innovatecnia 2009 Fair, which quadrupled the number of visitors compared to 2008, with a total of 2,500 people. The Secretary of Industrial Development, Martha Lara, referred to Innovatecnia's modern approach, as it was aimed at industry-related professionals, researchers, academics, and technical, high school and professional students.

Years later, in 2015, Alejandra de la Vega led the business sector of Ciudad Juárez in the Mesa Interinstitucional para la renovación de Ciudad Juárez (Inter-Institutional Roundtable for the renewal of Ciudad Juárez). This committee was sponsored by the President of the Republic and attended by the highest levels of public administration.

The coordinator was Mario Dena Torres, who served as an efficient facilitator. This committee aimed to define strategic projects, obtain the related economic resources, and follow up on them to optimize the allocated funds, favoring local suppliers and ensuring the benefit for the Juarense society.

The projects proposed by the private sector during Alejandra de la Vega's term as head of the Mesa Interinstitucional were diverse and important. Among them, the Centro de Innovación e Integración de Tecnologías Avanzadas (Center for Innovation and Integration of Advanced Technologies), the promotion of the Centro de Convenciones y Exposiciones (Convention and Exhibition Center), the design of a New Image for Ciudad Juárez and the use of tolls on the international bridges stood out.

The following initiatives were also outlined: restoration of the Historic Center, obtaining competitive electricity rates, infrastructure and

logistics deployment for foreign trade, the attraction of an electric car assembly plant, the operation of a third-level IMSS hospital, the installation of a Multimodal Export Center, and enabling urban mobility from Zaragoza to the Ciudad Juárez historic center.

Later, Alejandra de la Vega headed the Secretaría de Innovación y Desarrollo Económico del Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua (Secretariat of Innovation and Economic Development of the Government of the State of Chihuahua) during the years 2016 to 2021. Thus, she integrated DECJ's vision into the above-mentioned secretariat. From that government institution, she was able to support many of the economic projects previously established. Additionally, former DECJ directors such as Omar Saucedo and Fernando Alba have played a significant role in the public sector, by implementing approaches from the border reality.

Jorge Contreras Fornelli (2010-2012)

Jorge Contreras Fornelli had to overcome the ups and downs of México's economic crises, as discussed in a previous chapter of this book. In that sense, his leadership resembles that of other Juárez and Mexican businesspeople. What was different in any case was to start over from the beginning in terms of business without ceasing to commit himself to the social development of the community.

Jorge Contreras Fornelli experienced the full impact of the explosion of criminal violence that dominated the border city and forced entire families to emigrate or to assume serious daily risks for those who decided to stay and live in Ciudad Juárez. From these painful circumstances, personal and collective stories emerged from which institutional innovations sprouted that, otherwise, would not have been generated during those dramatic years.

The social environment in Ciudad Juárez was confusing during this period. The most sensible thing to do seemed to be to leave the post temporarily. Formal working sessions of DECJ and other business groups were suspended. However, conscious leadership emerged at the worst moment with the decision to overcome the circumstances. Alejandra de la Vega had set DECJ's main goal: the city had to be reclaimed.

In May 2010, Jorge Conteras Fornelli assumed the DECJ presidency with five areas to develop:

1) the provision of citizen security; 2) the study Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Competitiva; 3) the Zona Estratégica de Desarrollo (Strategic Devel-

opment Zone) project, that is, to create a tax-free zone on the border; 4) the rescue of the Historic Center to restore its character as a tourist area; and 5) the construction of the Centro de Convenciones (Convention Center) in alliance between the state, businesspeople and the Federation.



Jorge Contreras Fornelli.

It is worth remembering that a reform to the criminal justice system in Chihuahua, which took place between 2007 and 2008, proved to be highly harmful, since it allowed what was called the "revolving door", because criminals, even confessed ones, went free for lack of evidence required by the process, for example in the case of Rubicela, a young victim of her boyfriend, who asked forgiveness from the mother of the deceased, the famous Marisela, for murdering her daughter and, nevertheless, had been released.

Such infamous events prompted business leaders to seek training in the justice system. However, another unpleasant surprise awaited them, as the state official who had come to instruct them in an industrial building was killed at his home, just after the session was over. It was clear that police and law enforcement agencies had been breached by organized crime. Although 15,000 army members and federal police guarded Ciudad Juárez, the crime rate did not decrease; on the contrary, it increased.

In December 2009, Juárez society took to the streets, demanding justice in an unprecedented demonstration entitled Justicia para Juárez (Justice for Juárez). From that march, Juárez's leaders set out to know the reality in numbers: of 2,388 homicides, there were scarcely 54 filed charges; of 300 kidnappings, only 8 were filed; in 680 cases of "protection money" or "extorsion payment", only 10 were filed; in 873 robberies with violence, only 2 were filed.

But this real violence analysis was only the beginning of many efforts. 2010 became a nightmare year when a terrorist act was recorded.

Four elements were surprised by the following ruse: despicable people had "planted" a wounded civilian, dressed as a federal police officer, and then, with deceit, alerted that a uniformed officer had suffered an attack. However, the frame-up was staged to lure real federal officers who, once present at the scene of the incident, suffered the detonation of a car bomb, remotely activated by a cell phone.

Unfortunately, the red numbers were increasing. For example, in 2010, 17,800 automobiles were stolen, a figure that represented 25% of the national figure for this type of theft. Additionally, that same 2010, the border made headlines worldwide when fifteen young athletes were executed in Salvarcar, a massacre that authorities described as a settling of scores between criminals, which was false.

As a result of this abominable event, President Felipe Calderón attended a meeting in Ciudad Juárez, to which he arrived 3 hours late, causing a citizen to tell him that he had arrived three years late. However, Jorge Tello Peón, and Jorge González Nicolás, both federal and state officials, duly advised in the creation of the Mesa de Seguridad, an effective body whose achievements have been emulated in other communities. It was February 2010.

In October 2010, DECJ lobbied Felipe Calderón to create a free trade zone in Ciudad Juárez promoting the border economy. The plan was integrated by DECJ and other business organizations. It was then submitted to the offices of the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit). Jorge Contreras Fornelli explained that the plan contained several valid arguments for eliminating the Value Added Tax and import taxes for products arriving at Ciudad Juárez.

In mid-November 2010, DECJ decided to suspend the traditional ExpoMaquila indefinitely. It also postponed all annual business meetings due to the serious insecurity in Ciudad Juárez, which was declared at the time the most dangerous city in the world.

In mid-February 2011, DECJ and many business leaders went before several federal government secretaries to report that the Todos Somos Juárez program had not improved public safety in the border city. After a year of the plan's operation, insecurity and unemployment persisted in the city. Various figures speak of a decrease of between 90,000 and 130,000 jobs.



Jorge Contreras Fornelli, president of DECJ, publicly disclosed some of the main crime rates examined at the Mesa de Seguridad of the Todos Somos Juárez program. For example, he said that car theft increased by 97% and homicides increased by 45% during January 2011 compared to January 2010.

Despite the cancellation of ExpoMaquila in Ciudad Juárez, in mid-June 2011, three large technology companies (Hewlet-Packard, Siemens, and Dell) gathered in a business meeting, along with more than six hun-

dred important national and international firms in the industry. The event was held at the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino, located in Sunland Park.The forum was sponsored by DECJ and the International Business Accelerator and included conferences with industry and foreign trade experts, as well as several business roundtables. It also attracted large employers seeking to promote investments in the Chihuahua state border.In mid-July 2011, business leaders in Ciudad Juárez bravely offered to receive and channel extortion complaints to different businesses to protect the common people and manage the criminal's punishment. The most affected were doctors' offices, workshops, stores, and restaurants. The ten largest business organizations served as complaint reception centers.

At the same time, DECJ insisted on planning 30-year financing to build the necessary urban infrastructure for the social welfare of the people of Juárez. The amount earmarked for such public projects would reach US$5 billion, which was equivalent to more than twenty-one times the municipal budget of Ciudad Juárez that had been used for public projects in 2011. Thus, there was a need to build parks, libraries, and other recreational centers.

In November 2011, DECJ proposed the formation of a new trust fund to administer a 5 percent surcharge on the payroll tax to train and equip the Ciudad Juárez police. Thus, DECJ and all the business chambers approved emergency measures to address the crime and violence problems on the border. Alejandra de la Vega, Mario Dena Torres, Luis Lara Armendáriz, and Jorge Contreras Fornelli were instrumental in this innovative process.

FICOSEC
Empresarios de Chihuahua

Jorge Contreras Fornelli estimated that the trust would raise around seventy million pesos in the first year, to improve the performance of Juárez police officers in their tasks of controlling public insecurity. Years later, he was elected state president of the Fideicomiso de Competitividad y Seguridad Ciudadana or FICOSEC (Trust for Competitiveness and Citizen Security) for the 2022-2024 term, due to his experience and trajectory in promoting public security for Ciudad Juárez.

Jorge Contreras Fornelli oversaw strengthening FICOSEC's strategic lines. For example, the following were promoted and implemented: intervention for violence prevention; security and justice institutional strengthening; citizen co-responsibility in the face of crime; strengthening and building institutional capacity; monitoring, measuring, and evaluating government action in security and justice; and fostering competitiveness.

Furthermore, some tools were made available at the national level to prevent and combat crime, due to their content and their digital operation in real-time. For example, a map of state crime, an analysis of the criminal process, and a crime incidence report were deployed. All these elements make up the Observatorio Ciudadano (Citizen Observatory).

The Línea Ciudadana (Citizen's Hotline), an instrument that emerged from the experience of institutional and citizen intervention in Juárez, was also set up. The service provides psychological and legal counseling to victims or people at risk of violence, free of charge and in a professional manner.

By 2015, Ciudad Juárez had exited the dishonorable ranking of the fifty most violent cities in the world. "Protection money" or "extorsion payment" and kidnapping were eradicated, especially since the latter crime was eliminated for thirty-two consecutive months. Other indicators had also dropped considerably. Currently, Jorge Contreras Fornelli, due to his experience in the sector, is a permanent guest of the civil society in the Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública (National Council of Public Security).

Juan Carlos Talavera de Noriega (2012-2014)

After the "storm" of crime, looking to the future in a motivating and solid way was necessary. Ciudad Juárez had lived through the difficult experience of the public insecurity crisis at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. At the time, it was imperative that a new generation of Juárez businesspeople and leaders "take the reins" of DECJ.

Thus, the figure of Juan Carlos Talavera, a young businessman specializing in real estate finance, emerged. This new leader headed the meetings that reconfigured the goals of the DECJ business organization, under the advice of BlueWolf, a company led by Salvador Carrejo, who later became president of COPARMEX Chihuahua. Thus, both business leaders set a platform for relaunching goals and indicators that redefined DECJ's significant role.



Juan Carlos Talavera de Noriega.

At the end of May 2012, Juárez businessman Juan Carlos Talavera traveled on a tour of Chihuahua officials and businesspeople to Taiwan to arrange business deals to be established shortly in the great northern entity. Talavera made the business trip as president of VESTA and newly elected DECJ president.

In early June 2012, DECJ and the business sector endorsed plans to remodel the downtown area of Ciudad Juárez to strengthen economic development and domestic and foreign tourism. This issue was an important topic that had been pointed out years ago by other DECJ presidents.

Juan Carlos Talavera had taken over the DECJ leadership position, even in a difficult context due to the persistent problems of public insecurity and the loss of approximately 90,000 jobs in Ciudad Juárez. These two serious problems occurred in the wake of the 2008 U.S. economic recession. Nevertheless, data showed that by 2012, 40% of these jobs in México's maquiladora capital had already been recovered.

Regarding public insecurity figures, the Mesa de Seguridad reported that homicides in Juárez had been reduced by 88% from December 2010 to 2013. For example, only thirty-one crimes were committed in December 2012, after the highest figure of 269 recorded in the same month of 2010. Meanwhile, car theft with violence registered a decrease of 89.6%.

In early 2013, the Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad y Justicia Penal (Citizen Council for Security and Criminal Justice) ranked Ciudad Juárez as the 19th most violent city in 2012. Years earlier, the border city had ranked first in the world as the most violent city between 2008 and 2010 and still ranked second internationally in the same category in 2011, according to reports from the Mesa de Seguridad in which DECJ participated.

In mid-February 2013, two DECJ members assumed important positions as social leaders: Jorge Contreras Fornelli and Alejandra de la Vega. The former replaced Arturo Valenzuela as general coordinator of the Mesa de Seguridad, under the strategy known as Todos Somos Juárez (We Are All Juárez); the latter assumed the position of alternate in the organization.

At the end of February 2013, Juan Carlos Talavera collaborated in the design of the new plan to reactivate the Ciudad Juárez economy, which was based on the following six goals: 1) industrial promotion; 2) the construction of infrastructure for export logistics, innovation, and competitiveness; 3) the creation of semi-mass transport; 4) the rescue of the Historic Center; 5) the construction of the Convention Center; and 6) the promotion of tourism projects, through image strategies.

In March 2013, DECJ opted to integrate two manufacturing clusters: automotive and electronics. The new organizational model would work to attract more big business firms to the manufacturing city. Historically, the industry in Ciudad Juárez

had been made up of electronics and auto parts plants, which had been predominant for more than 40 years of existence.

In May 2013, a distinguished businessman and former founding president of DECJ was honored as an outstanding employer and citizen in his native Ciudad Juárez: Federico de la Vega Mathews. Since the 1980s, de la Vega raised the most essential challenges that gave direction to DECJ and became an authoritative voice for the private sector in Chihuahua and not only in the border region.

At the end of May and during the following months of 2013, DECJ and other business associations would serve as supervisors of public projects conducted by the Ciudad Juárez municipal government. As a result, three members of the Ciudad Juárez Business Coordinating Council joined the Comité Técnico del Plan de Movilidad Urbana or PMU (Urban Mobility Plan Technical Committee), to ensure that municipal works were completed on time and thus reduce disruptions to the daily life of society and the work of private industry.

In June 2013, Juárez businesspeople devised a publicity campaign under DECJ's leadership, to turn Ciudad Juárez into a pole of capital attraction and to achieve the settlement of new manufacturing companies in the Chihuahua border region. The goal was to dissolve Juárez's bad image, after five consecutive years of high crime and violence rates.

This advertising program would cover 18 months starting in June 2013 and was executed by DCI of New York and the firm Sanders / Wingo of El Paso. By mid-2013, the Juarense employers had already designed an extensive campaign of such magnitude in which they would invest one million dollars. This plan was expected to reactivate tourism and business in Ciudad Juárez.

In early July 2013, DECJ, the state Secretariat of Economy and Borderplex made progress in structuring two clusters, one automotive and one electric. The three institutions mentioned above formed the Comité de Promoción Industrial (Industrial Promotion Committee), which would focus on contracting companies whose purpose was to track down the ideal land to install an automotive assembly company.

In August 2013, DECJ was established as one of the trustees of the Fideicomiso para la Competitividad y Seguridad Ciudadana or FICOSEC (Trust for Competitiveness and Citizen Security). That new body had already received a fund of one hundred million pesos, collected during 2012-2013.

This money was to be used to train the Juárez police, to encourage citizens to file complaints, and to purchase video cameras, which would be installed in the avenues and important buildings of the most populated city in the State of Chihuahua.

In mid-November 2013, DECJ released a significant national and international survey that defined Ciudad Juárez as a prime area for business investment. In 2013, the border city ranked ninth among the sixteen best locations in México and the United States to establish businesses and industries, according to interviews with the leaders of twenty large U.S. companies.

However, that survey showed that the best locations for investment were San Antonio, El Paso, Monterrey, and México City. On the other hand, survey respondents highlighted Ciudad Juárez for its low cost of living, low cost of operations, and low labor costs. Still, they identified a limited social welfare quality, a low high school education level, and the crime rates that dominated the city.

Other findings from these public surveys revealed that one in three of the executives interviewed planned to base their business activities on Ciudad Juárez. Furthermore, these reports showed that 65% had already visited the city between 2008 and 2013. On the other hand, 80.3% of the corporate leaders surveyed highlighted Ciudad Juárez as a manufacturing emporium and 62.3% considered it a great area for the automotive industry.

The statistics and questionnaires were developed by DECJ's staff and Board of Directors. The TECMA Group, the Agencia de Soluciones Empresariales, and the Cook Strategies Group also collaborated with the classification of these documents. Economist Alfonso Arenaza, CASEEM's hiring agency executive, oversaw the presentation of all the statistical findings of the survey.

Benito Fernández Mesta (2014-2016)

In August 2013, Benito Fernández Mesta achieved the inauguration of Museo La Rodadora. This project was far from simple and required managing a relevant public space for a first-rate facility and developing the best museum model for Ciudad Juárez. This new building was perceived as a clear example of the recovery of Juárez's self-esteem and the restitution of the border community's social fabric. The building was erected after several years of joint effort between Juárez social leaders and government authorities.

At the inauguration ceremony, Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, director of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes or CONACULTA



Exterior view of La Rodadora museum.

(National Council for Culture and Arts), and the rest of the building's promoters, stated before the attendees that the Museo La Rodadora represented Ciudad Juárez. It was built thanks to the specialized advice of Marinela Servitje. The land now occupied by the museum was obtained with the help of the Chihuahua State Government.

At the end of July 2014, Benito Fernández Mesta became the new president of DECJ. Initially, he set three goals for the business group: double the membership, collaborate in the Adelante Juárez campaign, and integrate economic and urban development plans for Ciudad Juárez.

In August 2014, the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Ciudad Juárez campus, promoted the development of the local economy through a forum entitled "La Gestión de Recursos para el Desarrollo de Tecnología e Innovación" (Resource Management for Technology and Innovation Development). The event was supported by DECJ, other private institutions, and the State Government. It aimed to provide knowledge and advice to local businesspeople and new entrepreneurs in technology and innovation.

At the end of March 2015, DECJ and several Juárez businesspeople expressed their support for the post of Attorney General of the State of



Benito Fernández Mesta.

Chihuahua to be transsexennial. This way, the goal of continuing with public security and crime investigation strategies would be met. DECJ especially highlighted the work of Prosecutor Jorge González in Ciudad Juárez, during a meeting of the Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (Business Coordinating Council).

By 2015, vehicle thefts had decreased, and the Ciudad Juárez Social Rehabilitation Center (CERESO) was no longer the most dangerous in Latin America, under prosecutor Jorge González. The Vehicle Theft Unit of the State Attorney General's Office in Ciudad Juárez had registered in 2014 a total of 2,482 complaints for that crime, compared to the 12,548 units stolen in 2010, which represented a clear 91% decrease.

In early August 2015, U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker and Mexican Secretary of Economy Ildefonso Guajardo were to meet at the Border Summit in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso. The central topics of the roundtables were focused on border development in the economic, customs, energy, and social aspects.

The various roundtables would address the following six topics and presentation titles: 1) "What's Next for North America?" with businesswoman Alejandra de la Vega, Senator Gabriela Cuevas, the representative of the U.S. Embassy in México, William Duncan, and the president of Hunt Companies, Woody Hunt. 2) "Moving People and Trade Cargo: How to Make the Ideal U.S.-México Border" moderated by Christopher Wilson, Director of the Wilson Center.

Four other roundtables dealt with: 3) "What can the United States Learn from the Border? 4) "People Solving Problems; Where Civil Society Takes the Reins" with María Dávila, president of the association "Jaguares, Jóvenes de Bien", and Fernando García, director of the "Red Fronteriza de los Derechos Humanos"; 5) "The Economic Future of North America: High Level Dialogue Between México and the United States", U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary, and the Mexican Secretary of Economy; and 6) 'Energy Reform and the Implications for the North American Economy' with the Undersecretary of Electricity of the Secretaría de Energía, César Hernández, and the President of Western Refining, Paul Foster.

At the end of August 2015, Benito Fernández Mesta proposed the creation of a medical devices cluster to nurture the supply market in Ciudad Juárez. At the same time, he proposed to DECJ members the consolidation of a group of eighteen investors in the energy sector. This productive

area was a response to a boom in related investments in southwest Texas. Among other activities, he highlighted the progress of the Centro de Innovacion project, the renovation of the image of Ciudad Juárez, and the coordinated work with the Borderplex Association of El Paso, Texas. In particular, the proposed new cluster redefined the rich history of the sector on the Chihuahua border. In particular, businessman Julio Chiu Olivares played a key role in the discussions about this cluster.

In mid-November 2015, DECJ discussed the kind of industries that should be promoted in Ciudad Juárez in the future. Such discussion occurred during meetings with leading academics, business leaders, and representatives of the municipal, state, and federal governments. In particular, the proposed sectors were automotive and auto parts, metal-mechanics, electrical-electronics, agro-industrial, aerospace, information, and communication technologies, processed food and medical devices, and tourism.

In short, the conglomerate of experts convened deployed an economic model in which each organization assumed its goals. Thus, the discussions finally formed a solid strategic platform that was presented to the political candidates for elected office at that time.

In early December 2015, DECJ officially supported the integration of an Observatorio Ciudadano (Citizen Observatory), which would inspect the proper investment of public resources in education within the State of Chihuahua. The civil organization would make sure that the State Secretariat of Education and the parents' societies would report promptly and honestly all their activities for the good of the educational infrastructure. In early March 2016, Benito Fernández Mesta became part of the Consejo de Desarrollo Económico Regional or CODER (Regional Economic Development Council), in his capacity as president of DECJ. Such an association was aimed at outlining and implementing an economic development plan in Ciudad Juárez and nearby towns.

In April 2016, DECJ announced that a U.S. company would begin a campaign to forge a positive image of Ciudad Juárez in the world. Said advertising business oversaw promoting the city of Las Vegas, Nevada as a business and tourism center. In this regard, Benito Fernández informed that the project would cost around three million dollars and would be financed by the local private initiative. At the end of May 2016, DECJ organized the forum "Buen Gobierno y Estado de Derecho: Condición para Prosperar" (Good Government and Rule of Law: A Condition to Prosper) in Ciudad Juárez. Other business groups, civil society organizations, and universities participated in the event.

At the end of May 2016, DECJ became an important promoter of U.S. gasoline imports and promoted the forum "Aspectos Legales del Sector Energético "(Legal Aspects of the Energy Sector) in Ciudad Juárez. One of the conclusions of the event was that gasoline imports were not profitable for Ciudad Juárez businesses, according to Fernando Carbajal, president of the Organización Nacional de Expendedores de Petróleo or ONEXPO (National Organization of Petroleum Suppliers) in Ciudad Juárez.

The JRZ Industry Meeting brought together more than one hundred representatives of the manufacturing industry, various Chihuahua government officials, and leaders of the private sector. In August 2016, DECJ Director Omar Saucedo stated that Ciudad Juárez would be a quite different city if it did not have manufacturing as its main productive activity. This opinion was expressed during the event to award several manufacturing establishments, on behalf of the private sector.

During an official ceremony, some twenty plants located in the border town were recognized by the government and businesspeople for activating the development of Ciudad Juárez. The following companies received such distinction: Robert Bosch, Delphi, BRP, Continental, Johnson Controls, Lear, Electrolux, Eaton, Cummins, Wistron, Male, Johnson & Johnson Cordis, Werner, and Heil Trailer. All these companies were highlighted for developing talent, attracting investment, and commitment to corporate social responsibility and environmental responsibility.At the same time, the following three firms were awarded as Empresa Local Modelo a Seguir (Local Role Model Company):1) Mechatronics, in the automation and robotics segment; 2) Seisa Medical, a medical instruments manufacturer with state-of-the-art technology; and 3) Precision Gisa, which specializes in machining manufacturing. Finally, the CONREDES organization was recognized for linking companies and universities with support from DECJ.

Juan Carlos Sapién de Anda (2016-2018)

In July 2015, Juan Carlos Sapién chaired the Board of Trustees of the Amigos del Museo de la Revolucion en la Frontera MUREF (Friends of the Museum of the Revolution on the Border), as part of the development of initiatives in favor of a better quality of life for the people of Juárez promoted by DECJ's board members. Among other activities, the Juarense press highlighted in that same month of 2015 the inauguration of the exhibition Alfareros de Mata Ortíz, which displayed samples of the world-renowned ceramics of the Paquimé culture.

In February 2016, Pope Francis' visit to Ciudad Juárez was quite an event. The event required great logistical efforts to adequately manage the concentration of people. Among such measures was the provision of drinking water for millions of people. Juan Carlos Sapién oversaw this important challenge, which was described as a successful experience in supplying water on time and for each person, which favored the enormous collective expression of the Juárez community. In October 2016, the new DECJ board with Juan Carlos Sapién at the helm assumed the following purposes: Continue with the Mesa Interinstitucional; build and develop the Centro de Inteligencia Artificial (Artificial Intelligence Center) and the Centro de Innovación e Integración de Tecnologías Avanzadas (Center for Innovation and Integration of Advanced Technologies); finalize the Ley de Coordinación Hacendaria (Tax Coordination Law); and integrate the Fondo y el Fideicomiso de Puentes (Bridge Fund and Trust).



Juan Carlos Sapién de Anda.

Juan Carlos explained that, unlike the business chambers that managed services for their members, DECJ works in favor of initiatives to improve the quality of life of Juárez people, especially the most disadvantaged. Thus, DECJ changed its focus due to the years of public insecurity experienced in Ciudad Juárez, through the formulation of the Modelo Económico y Social de crecimiento integral y de desarrollo tecnológico (Economic and Social Model of Integral Growth and Technological Development).

During these years, DECJ's membership increased by eleven members, bringing the total to fifty-one leading businesspeople, eighteen of whom became members of the Board. Additionally, DECJ maintained an alliance with organizations such as Borderplex and FICOSEC, which allowed it to be financially sustainable and strengthen the organization's executive staff.

At the end of October 2016, some DECJ representatives joined a group of citizen and business institutions to follow up on the Agenda Minima de Desarrollo (Minimum Development Agenda), agreed with candidates for popular election, always from a position which was independent of political parties and governments.

Along the same lines, they evaluated the 2016 Plan Municipal de Desarrollo (Municipal Development Plan), in an open dialogue with the mayor's office of Juárez. Likewise, DECJ was directly present in the discussions focused on restructuring the state bank debt with the State Con-

gress. With the legislative branch, the invitation to prepare the shortlist of specialist candidates from which the state's superior auditor would be selected was attended.

In mid-August 2017, several members of DECJ and other Chihuahua business organizations participated in the U.S.-México Border Summit. At the meeting, border employers contemplated the need to extend duty-free business to export their products. The merchants and industrialists of El Paso and the State of New Mexico seconded this position. Between August and November 2017, DECJ's Board of Directors asked the Chihuahua State Attorney General's Office to design an effective plan, to make surveillance cameras work better in public spaces in Ciudad Juárez. This way, audiovisual technology would strengthen the work of police officers and executive and judicial authorities on the border.

In June 2018, DECJ and IMSS created a web portal with a directory of daycare centers that provided services for parents in Ciudad Juárez. The site provided information on locations, available spaces in each IMSS daycare room, and the best routes to travel from homes to work centers. The proposal responded to the goals of the Mesa de Trabajo sobre los Derechos Humanos y Laborales de las Mujeres en Ciudad Juárez (Working Committee on Women's Human and Labor Rights in Ciudad Juárez).

In this area, DECJ supported the development of the Plataforma de Inteligencia Competitiva or PICsp (Competitive Intelligence Platform). This digital tool generated twenty-three key infographics on imports and patents and forty economi-bites to easily digest economic information, providing eight fact sheets on costs and local competitiveness.

In this context, PICsp generated ten updates of the Juárez Outlook tool that concentrates data for investors, chambers, and authorities about the city's advantages. With Borderplex, DECJ promoted a regional strategic plan for El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juárez. Likewise, with the Secretaria de Innovación y Desarrollo Económico, the Chihuahua Exponencial image campaign was designed to communicate the state's strengths and economic capabilities.

One of the most relevant achievements was recorded in 2019, because of the work focused on the Ley de Coordinacion Fiscal (Fiscal Coordination Law). DECJ's initiative-taking action, led by Sapién, achieved that the percentage of municipal resources allocated to Ciudad Juárez was 26%; as it was previously 21%. The economic and population growth of the border city was reflected in the state's expenditures.

In the same line of work, Juan Carlos Sapién focused on the creation of the "Ley Estatal de Ciencia y Tecnología" (State Law of Science and Technology), through the work with the legislative commissions of the Chihuahua State Congress. A positive result of this new legal instrument was the creation of the Fondo Estatal de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación or FECTI (State Fund for Science, Technology, and Innovation).

Managing various monetary resources has been important in the formation of the Centro de Innovación e Integración de Tecnología Avanzadas or CIITA (Center for Innovation and Integration of Advanced Technology), an agency that had the support of 80 million from the Fondo Juárez Investment Committee, belonging to the Fideicomiso de los Puentes Internacionales (International Bridges Trust), plus 30 million from the state government, 130 million from CONACYT funds and 1.45 million from the municipality, furthermore, the land donation from INDAABIN.

Likewise, financing was obtained for establishing the Centro de Innovación de Moldes y Troqueles or CIMYT (Center for Innovation in Molds and Dies), based on DECJ's efforts. This organization was equipped with Japanese equipment to train professional talents in advanced manufacturing, such as manufacturing prototypes based on state-of-the-art technology, as well as using computer programs applied to different processes. Seventeen million were granted by the state PROSOFT and eight million by a private consortium, plus UACJ's participation.

In the cluster development sector with commercial and technological assets, the consolidation of BIOMED stands out, which consists of a conglomerate of healthcare companies based in the border cities of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso and whose impact perimeter extends to various North American regions and other parts of the world.

During Juan Carlos Sapién's tenure, DECJ maintained its presence in organizations that add value to key processes, such as the Fideicomiso para el Ahorro de Energía or FIDE Juárez (Energy Saving Trust Fund), the CONALEP Advisory Council, the FOMIX CONACYT State Council, the Subcommittee of the Programa de Estímulos a la Innovación (PEI), the Technical Committee of the Centro de Desarrollo Sostenible (PERSE) and the CIMYT Council.

Furthermore, during the biennium, CEDJ maintained its strategic alliances with institutions such as El Paso Economic Development, the Bordeplex Alliance, the American Consulate, the Asamblea de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil de Juárez (Assembly of Civil Society

Organizations of Juárez), FECHAC, FICOSEC, the Plan Estrategico de Juárez, the Buro de Convenciones y Visitantes or BCV (Convention and Visitors Bureau), as well as CODECH.

At the same time, during Juan Carlos Sapién's presidency, DECJ's Programa de Competitividad Laboral (Labor Competitiveness Program) emerged and was led by Carlos Murguía. This plan received recognition from the International Labour Organization (ILO).



Álvaro Bustillos Fuentes.

Álvaro Bustillos Fuentes (2018-2021)

During his presidency, Álvaro Bustillos faced global uncertainty about the future of the economic labor environment, due to the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the response to the adverse situation consisted of reinforcing the Juárez business unity through unprecedented virtual and stimulating calls, all of which achieved the solidarity not only of the private initiative but also of other social organizations in the State of Chihuahua.

In August 2018, already as president of DECJ, Bustillos participated in the Tercer Foro Abierto sobre Fronteras (Third Open Forum on Borders). That meeting aspired to connect border cities in the States of Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Texas, to expand economic development and social well-being on the Mexican-American border.

In November 2018, DECJ joined the Juárez 2030 program, which was endorsed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It is worth noting that the Ciudad Juárez improvement plan was based on the well-known Sustainable Development Goals, which were put forward by the United Nations (UN).

Álvaro Bustillos also invited Paty Jinich, who served as the exceptional chef at Paty's Mexican Table. She headed a reality show in Ciudad Juárez called "La Frontera." The event was part of Ciudad Juárez's corporate and social image and positioning campaigns. Also, a report on the maquiladora city of Chihuahua was placed on the Bay Area Economic Institute's platform in San Francisco, California.

Bustillos also integrated the work of the Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior, Inversion y Tecnologia (Mexican Council for Foreign Trade, Investment, and Technology, better known as COMCE). In his new

role, he promoted the opening of a local office and the creation of a DECJ committee, which deployed a directory of exporting companies and export services in the State of Chihuahua, which broke down into different productive sectors.

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In February 2019, DECJ's Board of Directors officially unveiled the "Plan Estratégico de Especialización Inteligente para Ciudad Juárez" (Smart Specialization Strategic Plan for Ciudad Juárez). The plan was based on the RIS3 model and had been implemented in Bilbao, Spain, by IDOM Consulting, to undertake modern economic development in Ciudad Juárez.

At the end of March 2019, Ciudad Juárez would host the Segunda Cumbre Nacional Metalmecánica (Second National Metalworking Summit), which was aimed at promoting business openings in the industrial sector. DECJ reported that it had partnered with the Cadena de Proveedores de la Industria en México or CAPIM (Industry Suppliers Chain in México), to invite large companies from all over México and to set up the appropriate planning for the event.

In late February 2020, business organizations DECJ, Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Chihuahua (DESEC), and a group of Chihuahua employers founded Promotora para el Desarrollo Económico (Promoter for Economic Development), Chihuahua Global. This new agency would support investment promotion and economic development in the State of Chihuahua.

At the time, another huge obstacle overshadowed the world: the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, several initiatives emerged to prevent and address the negative effects of contagion in Ciudad Juárez. DECJ's leadership openly proposed a series of emerging measures to the municipal, state, and federal governments.

On the work and personal level, twelve actions were proposed: 1) allocate a state budget to purchase COVID-19 tests and apply them free of charge to citizens; 2) establish a testing program for all travelers entering the city by any route; 3) facilitate COVID-19 tests for employees of manufacturing companies with more than 500 employees.

Regarding companies, the following measures were suggested: 4) grant facilities for payroll tax payment; 5) favor property tax payment; 6) discontinue non-priority economic activities; 7) generate a support plan for SMEs with loans at preferential rates and terms; 8) freeze tariffs such as water, electricity, public transport, highway tolls, vehicle revalidation, and international bridges during the pandemic; 9) eliminate fines and surcharges for state and federal taxes; 11) not cut off basic services to users for non-payment; and 12) return federal taxes to companies and individuals. During this complex stage, the Sabemos Chihuahua platform was created. This emergency health plan consisted of publicizing the solidarity activities conducted by the private sector as solutions to the difficulties that marked the pandemic environment.

In early April 2020, DECJ and other business leaders issued an official statement requesting the federal government to provide economic support to SMEs. The measure was in response to mitigating the negative effects of the fall in jobs and economic investment and the need to strengthen the small and medium-sized business sector.

That same April, Álvaro Bustillos joined the Contingencia group, aimed at protecting citizens during the health contingency. This society helped the people of Juárez by managing monetary resources and health, food, recovery, and public safety services. Together, the diverse groups of civil society offered to donate one million pesos to constitute the fund called Héroes de la Salud (Health Heroes).

In June 2020, DECJ, the El Paso Community Foundation, and the Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense formed the fund known as El Paso y Ciudad Juárez Unidos contra la COVID-19 (El Paso and Ciudad Juárez United against COVID-19). The central purpose of the monetary support was to assist the staff of doctors and nurses caring for patients infected with the Coronavirus. Bustillos brought Mariachis to the clinics

and hospitals with the highest risks and patients, as a show of support and gratitude to the nurses and doctors.

In early July 2020, DECJ reported the first signs of economic recovery in Ciudad Juárez amid the effects of the pandemic. Such positive effects were due to trade competition between the United States and China and the effectiveness of the new trade agreement between the three North American nations (USMCA).

In August 2020, The Bridge Accelerator work plan was presented. This project constituted the first binational acceleration program for local supply chain development in Ciudad Juárez, which was deployed by Ricardo Mora, Technology Hub director. The activities aimed to expand local suppliers' participation in the manufacturing value chain. Participants could access the Demo Day and receive up to twenty-five thousand dollars to integrate seed capital and promote their own projects.

The economic planning work gave birth to a new project called Frente Norte. This plan would be oriented to replace the maquiladora model to make the labor force become highly qualified and have a better economic income. This initiative would have the following four lines of work: 1) Smart Manufacturing; 2) Cross-border Hub; 3) Continuous Care; and 4) Smart City.

The year 2020 saw the re-launch of a series of planning efforts and programs deployed over several decades by DECJ board members, through the four strategic axes established by Frente Norte. This was an effective reconfiguration of many important previous initiatives, which were described in a few strategic lines of action.

As part of this statewide plan, Frente Norte had integrated more than five hundred regional leaders from the private, public, academic, and civil society sectors; it had also attracted young people, students, entrepreneurs, and employees. On the other hand, this program was based on knowledge and technological innovation as the driving force for transformation, based on four main guidelines aimed at projecting actions. In early December 2020, the 2020 Virtual Forum on Labor Regulations entitled "Retos y Oportunidades de la Reforma Laboral y el Tratado entre México, Estados Unidos y Canada ("Challenges and Opportunities of the Labor Reform and the Treaty between México, the United States and Canada") focused on companies' knowledge and professionalization. This meeting was based on the framework of the labor reform and the novelties of the trade agreement recently signed by the three North American countries.

The forum was promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and DECJ's Programa de Competitividad Laboral (Labor Competitiveness Program). The latter plan consisted of an initiative that sought to gather the experiences of the broad and experienced labor world in Ciudad Juárez, especially following the introduction of the IMMEX model on the border. Fundamentally, the care and strengthening of the labor climate were at the core of the activities of the meeting.

On the other hand, with the Juárez Digital Economy plan, the existing levels of capacity and technological innovation in Ciudad Juárez were determined. On this basis, ways to boost projects, knowledge, and resources were established. Previously, Microsoft had chosen El Paso as one of the five cities in the U.S. to develop the digital economy.

Omar Saucedo, former DECJ director and community outreach manager at Microsoft, explained the use of the following six indicators to measure the degrees of technological development in Ciudad Juárez: 1) performance; 2) market reach; 3) available local talent; 4) connectivity; 5) the relationship between the different components of the infrastructure for holding events; and 6) information and understanding of technology companies.

Álvaro Bustillos also prepared the structure of the Ciudad Juárez Regional Development Council (CODER), whose first DECJ representative was Federico Talavera. He also created the award "Dar es sembrar" (Giving is Sowing), which we will talk about later because of its relevance concerning the recognition of business leaders' trajectory.

Federico Talavera de Noriega (2021-2022)

Federico Talavera de Noriega is a representative of the new generation of businesspeople that emerged from the Juárez industrial dynamics of the first decades of the 21st century. With origins in the real estate development sector on the border, Talavera received DECJ's leadership, which was envisioned as an organization that, besides promoting business goals, had been devoted to managing cultural, sports, and social projects, as well as recognizing company leaders' solidarity efforts.

Federico Talavera followed up on the initiative of businesspeople affiliated with DECJ Chihuahua Global, aimed at resuming the efforts that had historically been planned for investment promotion and attraction to the State of Chihuahua. This activity profile constituted a crucial task of the economic development that Chihuahua's industrialists had been conducting since the early 1960s through various private agencies.

Especially, the promotion and attraction of monetary investments have been central to the private efforts of Ciudad Juárez businessmen and women. These transcendental economic efforts had been manifested in the early activities of Jaime Bermúdez Cuarón and Alfonso Murguía Valdez. Later, they were deployed in the creation of the Chihuahua Now program and the activities of DECJ's own Promotion Committee.



Federico Talavera de Noriega.

However, such actions were interrupted in recent years of the 21st century. Alfredo Nolasco initially directed the Chihuahua Global agency and is currently headed by Mario Juárez. Its offices are in the Technology Hub building.

In August 2021, DECJ, other business associations, and several manufacturing plants in Juárez were officially recognized for their hard humanitarian work, with the firm purpose of timely vaccinating the people of Ciudad Juárez against COVID-19. In particular, the Confederacion Patronal de la Republica Mexicana or COPARMEX of Ciudad Juárez highlighted the intensity and consistency of the vaccination campaigns led by DECJ.

An important development in Federico Talavera's administration was the growth of DECJ's membership to approximately eighty members. This increase followed the favorable trend that Álvaro Bustillos had initiated during his regime as the head of this business organization, doubling the initial number of members to a total of seventy. In general, DECJ's associates have intended that the board members take on a project, "buy a ticket" and develop it in harmony with other business and administrative initiatives.

During his tenure, Federico Talavera strengthened the follow-up of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which started in Ciudad Juárez in May 2024 in a definitive way. Likewise, the Regional Development Council of Ciudad Juárez (CODER) was finally established as a body that effectively articulates business organizations that lack a single operational coordination. Thus, CODER is now working properly under Dagoberto Cedillos' leadership.

In September 2021, DECJ executives announced the trip of a large group of businesspeople and local institutions to Detroit, Michigan, to attract new businesses to the border to design and manufacture electric vehicles. At the time, the city of Detroit was known as the world's most important center for manufacturing Smart vehicles.

Fernando Alba, director of DECJ, informed that the delegation for the Detroit trip would be made up of the Southwest Manufacturing Association and INDEX, as well as the Secretariat of Innovation and Economic Development (SIDE). In total, 14 Chihuahua business, academic and government leaders would attend an exchange program between October 4 and 8, 2021. The William Davidson Institute of the University of Michigan and the United States-México Foundation promoted the program.

Within this business promotion area, Federico Talavera obtained a 9-million-peso fund, from which it will be possible to support companies dedicated to the development of electro-mobility, semiconductors, entrepreneurship, and the development of business talent.

At the end of January 2023, DECJ received the Premio a la Competitividad 2022 (Competitiveness Award 2022). In that month, the Centro de Competitividad Chihuahua awarded the distinction to nineteen organizations in the northern state during the official ceremony held at the Government Palace in the city of Chihuahua. All selected organizations stood out for their commitment and competence in the services provided to the Chihuahua community and for developing a transformation process to achieve excellence and exceed expectations in the work performed.

In February 2023, DECJ and other business groups joined the Cuarta Red Local de Socializacion del Derecho de Acceso a la Informacion or Plan DAI (Fourth Local Network for the Socialization of the Right of Access to Information) for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The purpose of this network was to organize and implement different actions in a single work plan. The DAI Plan was aimed at neighborhood committees, journalists, academia, and business groups, with the firm goal of promoting access to public information and generating actions to improve the local environment of Ciudad Juárez.

In those initial months of 2023, DECJ responded to a call from the Government of the State of Chihuahua to promote more than two hundred new business projects. These selected plans could take advantage of a 100% economic subsidy, which constituted a timely resource to support the best business ideas structured by the most effective entrepreneurs so that they could materialize in a viable way and subsequently become self-sufficient.

The business start-up promotion program aimed to achieve four goals: 1) to strengthen entrepreneurs through incubation programs; 2) to encourage project formalization; 3) to reduce the rate at which business units disappear; and 4) to promote existing programs offered by incubators in the State of Chihuahua.

A highlight of Federico Talavera's administration was the gala dinner of the Dar es Sembrar Award, an event aimed at recognizing the entrepreneurial and social trajectory of businessmen and women. Ciudad Juárez has stood out in its history for generating economic wealth but has also shown solidarity with disadvantaged sectors on the border and with other marginalized regions of the State of Chihuahua. The dinner's first edition was the project's kick-off and the official recognition of the businessmen and women applicants. In general, the goals and relevance of the award were positively received by the public.

At the second gala dinner, Pablo Cuarón Galindo received the Dar es Sembrar Award. At the third, Roberto Assael Pontremoli received the award, which was attended by businesspeople from the interior of the state. The gala dinner for the private sector was organized by Javier Gómez Ito, who has assumed his key role outstandingly.

Federico Talavera was also in charge of reactivating the CONREDES program, with the support of Michael Portie in the working committees. Talavera also managed spaces for citizen participation in the Organismo Público Descentralizado del Parque Central (Decentralized Public Organization of the Parque Central). He is also present in the Agencia Estatal de Energía (State Energy Agency), whose topic he addressed on an international panel seen below.

On the other hand, it promoted the visit of the academic Valeria Moy, director of the Instituto Mexicano de Competitividad or IMCO (Mexican Institute of Competitiveness), an institute with which DECJ conducted a timely Diagnosis of the Efficiency of Border Crossings at the Mexican-American border.

In another strategic line, Federico Talavera promoted two fundamental aspects of the binational business platform through a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to México, Ken Salazar, which was attended by federal and state officials. The first focus was the promotion of a chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ciudad Juárez, and the second was the promotion of more binational trade and communications infrastructure on the border.

Within this same strategic line, Federico Talavera promoted meetings with the director of the US-México Foundation, Enrique Perret, whose goals are focused on business commitments and strategies between México and the United States. In this specific case, the sessions consisted of analyzing and preparing the best way to take advantage of industry relocation or nearshoring.

As part of the promotion and representation before different agencies and foundations abroad, Federico Talavera participated in the panel organized by the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation, aimed at businesspeople from that country and related to topics of energy, executive talent, and legal certainty, in which Ciudad Juárez shows a competitive strength.

Through the COMCE platform, an agency led by Álvaro Bustillos that brings together 28 exporting trade companies, during Federico Talavera's term in office, more than 80 webinars, courses, and training sessions related to the sector were held, furthermore, connections were established with peer organizations in other countries such as the Madrid Platform and the SIAL trade fairs in Paris and Toronto.

Regarding DECJ's institutional strengthening, Federico Talavera focused on the creation of an associate profile, worked on the projection of social goals and the integration of the executive team that, with the support of FICOSEC, will follow up on innovation and business specialization initiatives, among other things.

Federico Talavera presided over the Consejo de Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Chihuahua or CODECH (Council for Economic Development of the State of Chihuahua), which brings together the various CODERs in the state and coordinates their respective activities in the entity.

Cristina Touché Lozano (2023 to date)

Cristina Touché mentioned in her first speech as president of DECJ that her task was exciting and challenging because the border was at the center of international attention. As a result, companies from all over the world wanted to invest in Chihuahua. Consequently, DECJ was called to lead efforts to develop inclusive and sustainable economic growth.The business leader also referred to the fact that Alejandra de la Vega had been the only woman president of the DECJ. Thus, Touché now had the opportunity to head it and for that reason, she felt especially motivated. At the same time, Touché's new position coincided with the tenure of Cynthia López de la Fuente, who became the first woman director in DECJ's history.

In her turn, Cristina Touché oversaw the presidency of the Council for the Economic Development of the State of Chihuahua (CODECH), which was the highest integrating body of leadership and economic projects of the different productive sectors. The administrative efforts of this governmental body covered the private and public sectors. On the other

hand, the CODECH leadership was held alternately by the heads of DECJ and DESEC.

In mid-February 2024, the strategic Digital Directory of Exporting Companies was organized. This document was designed to support Chihuahua companies abroad, which conducted various steps before public offices, private organizations, embassies, and trade fairs. With this directory, DECJ provided international support, promotion, and protection to Ciudad Juárez companies.

In mid-March 2024, Cristina Touché participated in the panel entitled "Acelerando la igualdad de género" (Accelerating Gender Equality). In this forum, facilitated by notary Eduardo Romero Ramos, Touché shared experiences, anecdotes, and opinions with other female speakers and the audience, in her capacity as president of DECJ.



Cristina Touché Lozano.

Other women also contributed their views at the event. These included Fabiola Luna, treasurer of Index at the national level and director of the Mujer, Manufactura Index working group; Gabriela Marroquín, partner at the Baker Mackenzie law firm; the governor of the State of Chihuahua, María Eugenia Campos; and Miriam Villafaña, Director of CSR/Inclusion, Diversity and Equity at Baker Mackenzie.

On the other hand, Touché Lozano was an important member of the board of the Fondo Estatal de Ciencia y Tecnología en Innovación del Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua (State Fund for Science and Technology in Innovation of the Government of the State of Chihuahua). This administrative body seeks to manage economic financing to make viable different applied research, industrial prototypes, and patent models with an entrepreneurial profile and business vocation.

Also, and related to the above, DECJ's president played a significant role in the Start Up Juárez initiative. This project consisted of the promotion and accompaniment of new business ideas, which responded to current trends in the capitalist market and required financial and administrative support for their proper development.

Cristina Touché also pointed out the need to facilitate urban mobility in Ciudad Juárez, given the maneuvers that Ferrocarriles Mexicanos (FERROMEX) was carrying out in the center of the Chihuahua border



Ciudad Juárez Manufacturing Sector.

city. Such operations prevent the proper transit of people and vehicles and establish a territorial division in the urban area. The timely intervention of DECJ's president in this urban problem is part of her lobbying efforts to improve social conditions and productive activities in Juárez.

Additionally, Touché hosted a business delegation from Tijuana, Baja California. The goal of this visit was to learn about the successful ideas and activities that had been conducted by successive DECJ presidencies and other promoters in Ciudad Juárez. It is important to emphasize that there are many similarities between the two largest border cities in México.

Both cities have a dense population and operate a large manufacturing sector. Of course, their proximity to the United States offers both border poles great possibilities for developing trade with America. Likewise, the two cities share similar public insecurity problems, caused by organized crime and the uncontrolled flow of migrants, which emerge as two serious challenges that require urgent and decisive attention.

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Juárez is one of the most attractive regions for business.

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The Future North

Economic History Essay about the Paso del Norte Region

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CENTER MAYOREO OUTLET

This book, which commemorates the 40th anniversary of Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez A.C. (DECJ), invites us on a journey through time, exploring how the business community of our beloved city has forged a destiny of progress and resilience.

More than four centuries ago, this region became a natural passage for brave explorers and adventurers in search of a better life in the northern lands. Since then, it has been a destination for people in search of progress. Despite the difficulties imposed by the nature of the area, the people of the region, with ingenuity and will, have managed to transform the environment into a prosperous region.

Forty years ago, a group of businesspeople decided to found an organization that would help them face the city's challenges together. That is how Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez was born. Throughout its history, the organization has promoted the most pressing issues for the citizens of Juárez, from attracting investments and creating infrastructure to training and developing human capital.

This publication narrates the rich history of our city and honors the achievements of the women and men who have participated in the organization since its foundation.

Vía Áurea
editorial

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