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1000 Issues

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A Comparative Perspective
On Labor Mobility**
Silvia Núñez García

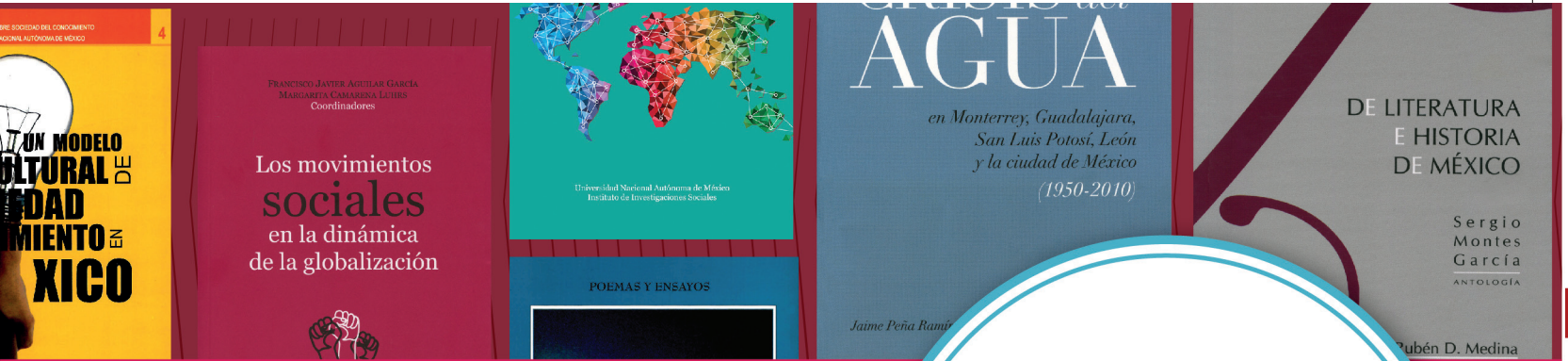
**A Creative Look at Migration
Through Art**
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One Hundred Issues
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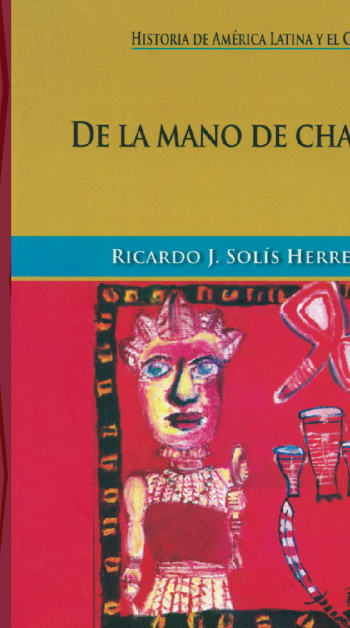
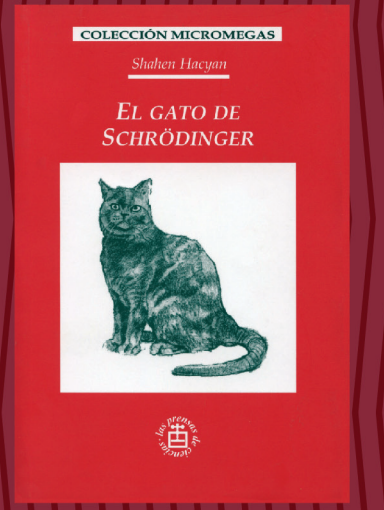
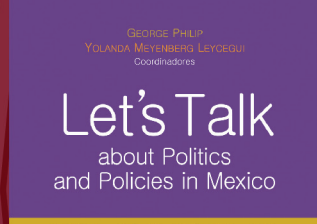
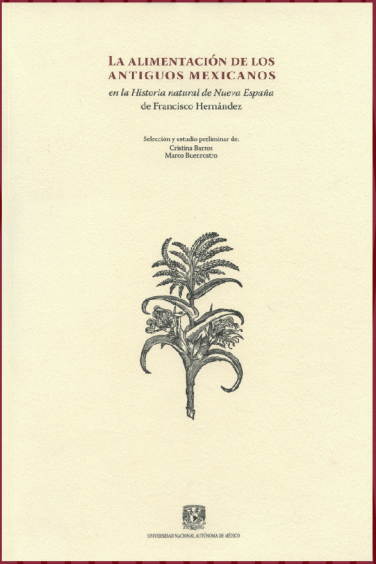
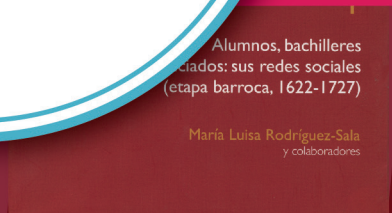
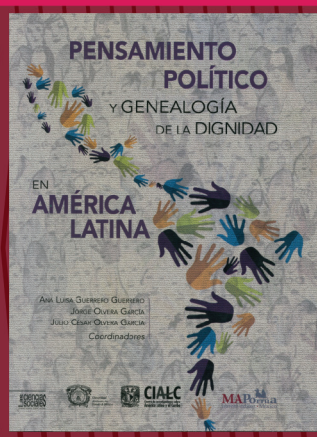
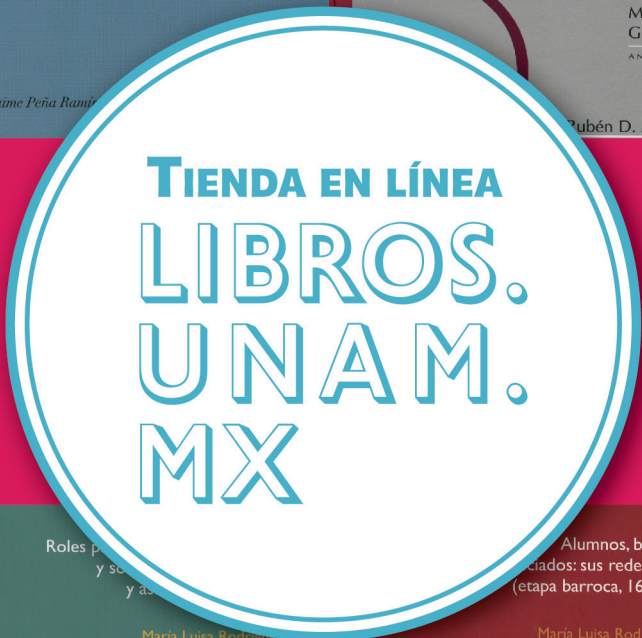


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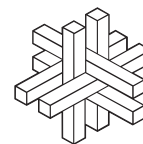
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OUR VOICE

I'm very excited to introduce this one hundredth issue of *Voices of Mexico*, after almost 30 practically uninterrupted years of publishing the magazine, which first came out in 1986. Its mission demonstrates the vision and commitment of the National Autonomous University of Mexico: offering our readers articles of the highest quality, crossing our linguistic border, with reflections on Mexico's past and present, our links with our international surroundings, and other issues of general interest that impact the complex reality of an increasingly interdependent world.

Our magazine began circulating before English was recognized as the language of knowledge, building a strategic bridge with the United States and Canada, our neighbors and partners. It has gradually gathered the contributions of colleagues, specialists, public officials, artists, writers, analysts, and other distinguished celebrities of Mexico and our sister nations.

Many are the benefits of this great effort of dissemination, which brings us closer today to an important readership on several continents. Outstanding among them are the creativity and originality of the "Art and Culture" and "The Splendor of Mexico" sections. The content has also been widely recognized, twice receiving the prize for Best Magazine of Political, Economic, and Financial Analysis, and once named as the Best Political and General Information Magazine by the National Chamber of Mexico's Publishing Industry (Caniem).

While the countless pages found in the 100 issues of *Voices of Mexico* have echoed many authors, its essence is expressed in the shared work of its editors, translators, designers, and contributors, who, with dedication and great love of their work, have ensured this project's continuity, allowing us to celebrate the publication of its one hundredth issue. To all of them, I want to express here my thanks and congratulations.

I feel obliged to single out two people whose role in *Voices of Mexico* has been invaluable; their passion for this publishing adventure clearly demonstrates that when there is communication, trust, respect, and success follow: Diego Bugeda Bernal and Heather Dashner Monk.

* * *

The articles selected for this issue put special emphasis on migration, taking into account the fact that its global human dimension will mark this century. According to PEW Research Center data, by 2013, 232 million international migrants existed the world over, undoubtedly the largest movement of human beings since World War II.

As one of the international issues, I offer up for your judgment a brief text with my reflections about the diverse treatment given to labor migrants through three instruments to promote regional integration in the Americas and in Southeast Asia.

Mexico's history itself cannot be explained without examining the incessant flows of different population groups, who, transiting through Mesoamerica, left their mark by creating great civilizations, among them the Aztecs, the Olmecs, and the Mayas. They were followed by European migrants who began arriving in the first decade of the sixteenth century and have continued to come until our time, settling in the territory of what is now Mexico. For many reasons and with many aims, in addition to these migrants came others from Asia and Africa. All together they have contributed to the melting pot of cultures that makes up contemporary Mexico.

The passage of time has transformed the country into one of the most emblematic for the study of the complexity of the phenomenon of human mobility: today, we are a nation of origin, of transit, and of destination for migrants.

So, please read through the pages of the six contributions that make up the “Special Section” to delve into the uncertain horizon that unfortunately prevails within the migratory debate in North America. At the same time, we must also remember that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed as an instrument to facilitate the free transit of goods and services, but not to promote —much less facilitate— the mobility of the work force.

Among the central arguments expressed by the experts contributing to this issue is the cross-cutting theme of the absence of a regional agreement to coordinate, order, and manage undocumented migration; this absence is rooted fundamentally in a lack of political will and the mistrust not only of the United States, but even of Canada, with regard to Mexico. In the Canadian case, for example, the promise of eliminating the visa requirement for Mexican tourists has still to be kept. For some analysts, this measure has allowed the Canadian government to maintain greater control over the asylum process, limiting the number of visas granted, thereby greatly decreasing the number of requests submitted.

On another note, despite the fact that in 2014, 5.6 million undocumented Mexicans resided in the United States —a smaller number than the 6.9 million estimated to have been there in 2007— the U.S. labor market has continued demanding workers for low-paying jobs. In addition to these workers’ laboring under exploitative conditions, they are excluded from access to the Obama Care health system, and a large number of their children in U.S. schools swell the drop-out rates, reaching up to 30 percent, as one of the authors points out in this issue.

Despite the fact that shaping of the United States was marked by the incessant arrival of immigrants of different origins and beliefs, economic crises have sparked and strengthened perceptions that oscillate between discrimination and xenophobia against irregular immigrants, to the point that this has become one of the most important issues in the 2016 federal electoral process. For this reason, we invite you to pay special attention to the contribution covering the decisive role of the mass media in this critical scenario.

Our usual rich “Art and Culture” section could do no less than to pay tribute to migrants in several articles. One underlines the benefits of participatory art, in which migrants express themselves as actors in their own communities, giving rise to an interesting comparison of the experiences of Mexicans and Central Americans who settle in the United States, and the Africans and Asians who have arrived to Belgium requesting refugee status.

In addition, since the reflection about our borders is directly linked to migration, we look at them from multiple perspectives: one, which underlines their vitality from the point of view of visual art, as a manifestation of young creators on the San Diego-Tijuana border; and another, for example, as the denunciation of the vicissitudes faced by Central American migrants who enter Mexico as a way station in their pursuit of the coveted American Dream.

To conclude, I would like to underline that the asymmetries among the North American partners persist, at the same time that many irregular migrants and their families’ suffering is on the rise in light of the intensification of deportations from the United States, and, although to a lesser extent, even from Canada.

The current dimensions of human mobility show up the inequality and imbalances in the world today. This is a warning to us that it is imperative we protect life as a universal priority and, as a result, seek out common solutions aimed at eradicating violence and establishing peace.

This one hundredth issue of *Voices of Mexico*, then, is a tribute to all the migrants around the globe.

Silvia Núñez García
Director of CISAN

Resignifying the Northern Border

Sabine Pflieger*
 Joselin Barja**

Mexico's northern border is very special. Its 3 200 kilometers not only divides two countries, two cultures, and two economies, but also two worlds: what are commonly called the "first world" and the "developing world." And it is precisely that union and dis-union of two very disparate worlds that force us to rethink the definition of the concept of political or geographical border, since Mexico's border with the United States has become a mythologized conceptual framework, and not only for the people who live there. Many Mexican social structures distant from the border itself are influenced by it and in turn have an influence on the resignifications of it through phenomena like transmigration.

The mystifications of the "American Dream," with its recurring promises of well-being, overflow the border and extend it as a place that is constructed vertically from the northern border to the one Mexico shares with the Central American countries to the south.

TOWARD A REPRESENTATION OF THE NEW TRANSMIGRATIONS IN THE REGION

An estimated 400 000 undocumented people a year enter Mexico on their way to the United States.¹ Most of them are

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Tomás Bravo/Reuters

Central Americans, and Central American transmigration has been intense for at least two decades. What is new is its current dynamic, which has taken on certain particularities making its study and definition complex.

Not all seekers of the "American Dream" will stay a short time in Mexico or continue on to the United States. This means that they cannot continue to be considered a "passing" phenomenon, peripheral to the constituent processes of our society. Whether "passing" or indefinite, many transmigrants contribute to the "assembly," formation, and maintenance of Mexico's global cities and towns that benefit from their

labor power and services.² Until 10 years ago, migrating to the United States required the financial capital and community wherewithal to hire a *coyote* or *pollero*, as smugglers of people to the United States are commonly known. The payment was preferably made on the northern border to reduce traveling expenses. This was even the case for Central Americans since getting into Mexico across the southern border was a simple matter.

The Mexico-U.S. northern border represented a huge line of separation and territorial and imaginary classification between one side and the other of the “American Dream.” The biggest risks of the clandestine crossing were from the extraordinary measures taken to avoid the Border Patrol. With the construction of the border fence between Tijuana and San Diego in 1994 as part of the Operation Guardian immigration control plan,³ many people were forced to seek other routes and ways of crossing. Instead of crossing in urban areas, they had to traverse deserts, water, or mountains, swim across the Rio Grande, hide in huge inner-tubes and be pulled across to the other side, use secret tunnels dug by human and drug traffickers and human smugglers between the two sides of the fence, or walk thousands of kilometers through the desert, running the risk of sunstroke, dehydration, and death after being abandoned by their guides.

As all this was happening along the northern border, the symbolic reference point of crossing into the land of opportunity, the countries of northern Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua) were seeing a deepening of social inequalities with the resulting steady increase in violence.

As a result, in recent years, hundreds of thousands of Central American migrants have fled the structural, emerging violence and had to deal with toughened regional migratory policies that restrict human mobility with the sophisticated operations they require for enforcement. The most recent example is the creation of the Comprehensive Program for the Southern Border, designed in the United States and implemented along the Mexico-Guatemala border, with an investment of US\$51 million.⁴

Shoring up surveillance on both of Mexico’s borders and creating other programs with the same aim of containing migration in the region, like the Angel Rescue plan and Operation Coyote 1 on the border between Honduras and Guatemala,⁵ have had the effect that smugglers seek out more dangerous routes to circumvent the surveillance in areas currently disputed between the Mexican government and groups

of organized crime. Violence is a constant on the journey, not only in the border crossing areas, north or south, but also in the places along the Mexican migratory routes, which constitute a network of territories that are either lawless or where the law is enforced only exceptionally, and where survival becomes the primordial objective, even before successfully arriving in the United States.⁶

If borders designate “a front against a totality,” this border has become de-territorialized from the northern Mexico-U.S. border and, symbolically speaking, currently fulfills its function starting at Mexico’s southern border, with a strong impact on changes in trans migrant plans.

THE REBORDERING OF THE NORTHERN BORDER

What we are looking at is an emo-cognitive displacement that organizes the ways of perceiving and experiencing the world and only occurs inside a specific operational economic and political structure. This makes it possible to say that, in the collective imaginary, the width of the border now stretches from North to South because it is an apparatus of tangible differentiation between what is here and what is there, the world prior to and that of the imaginary identity projection constructed on the basis of the idea of the American Dream. The really existing, operating border is the one represented and experienced, sometimes contradictorily, by the actors situated on either side. For Central America, “the other side” does not begin at the edges of Tijuana, Reynosa, or Matamoros. The “other side,” its vicissitudes and dilemmas, its exclusionary legal and social organization, begins to be dealt with as soon as they cross Mexico’s southern border.

The concept of border has been de-territorialized not by its geographical location, but by the historic artificiality of the borders and their configurations of meaning. It is a symbolic construction that must be sought in the processes, disputes, criteria, and dilemmas that occur in the intercultural contact intertwined with powers, inequalities, and hegemony. The

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dilemmas of the new transmigrations produce subjects with hopes, dreams, and expectations of undefined temporalities and destinations. The pervasive violence in the countries of origin, transit, and destination today generate nomadic practices whose only driving force is to achieve a better quality of subsistence or at least an existence different from the precariousness that was previously experienced regardless of the country the migrants have arrived in.

Through the stories of “Emily” and “José” that we will tell here, we exemplify the diversity of motivations and signifiers that characterize human mobility today.⁷ We also want to underline the incompatible duality of the geographical political borders officially recognized as the boundaries of nation-states, and the imaginary or symbolic boundaries that today constitute lines of inclusion/exclusion for constituting citizens with guaranteed rights. Recognizing the factual existence of territorial borders for the jurisdiction of sovereignty of states, we want to emphasize the *unnatural state* of the construction of borders and, mainly, argue the hypothesis that, on a symbolic level, Mexico constitutes an imaginary-tangible border that either makes it possible or creates barriers to arriving to the country of the “American Dream” and forces the reformulation of the migratory life project on the way to that dream.

“EMILY” AND “JOSÉ”:

TWO TRANSMIGRANT STORIES

“Emily”

For the last seven months “Emily” has been in Mexico. Originally from Honduras, she wants to go to the United States to get the “American Dream.” “Do you know what I imagine about the United States? The United States is dollars; that’s all I imagine. It’s the dollars that are taking me to the United States.”⁸

“Emily” has three daughters, one 22, who left for the United States one year ago, and two others, 14 and 11, who stayed in

Honduras. She hopes to work and save money to buy a plot of land and build a house for her daughters and her mother. She thought it would take her a month to arrive, but the trip has been longer than she imagined.

She entered at Tenosique, Tabasco, with a young Honduran girl she met on the way. They put up at the House of the Migrant; on the train they followed a group of migrants and learned how to occupy the safest places to avoid falls or possible mutilations. They walked for hours under the sun and sold gum in the towns because that was a safer way of getting money than just *charoleando* (panhandling).⁹ When they arrived in Tierra Blanca, Veracruz, some men who controlled the train routes demanded the toll so they could continue. That was when they faced the fear that their lives and freedom depended on strangers and understood that it wasn’t going to be an easy matter to continue crossing Mexico:

When we arrived in Tierra Blanca, they asked us if we had a guide and if we had family that would help us. I said, “No. They only helped us out with US\$100, but no more than that. If you want, I’ll give you the US\$100 to cross.” And he said, “No; it’s US\$400 each from Coatzacoalcos [Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz] to Mexico City.” So I said to him, “But, we don’t have any money.” And the man said, “Don’t worry about it. You’re not alone.” And with that, he phoned someone and said, “Hey, there’s a lady and a girl here and I want to help them out because they’re alone.” He said, “Don’t worry. Ask your family for US\$100, but for your expenses.” And he took us to buy fresh chicken in a taxi. I said to myself, “This is a kidnapping!” And I said to my friend, “What do you think? Aren’t you afraid of this man?”

And the two of us alone with him. He said: “I’m going to take you where I’m staying so you don’t have to pay for a hotel.” And that made me worry even more. And he said, “Don’t worry; I’m not going to do anything to you.”

When we got there, the man opened the door for us very kindly and everything was calm, and we went into a room and I said, “He’s going to close the door and kidnap us!” And there were two young men that I called “soldiers.” We ate there; well, I couldn’t eat, but he didn’t lock us up or watch us, and I said to her, “Over there, we’ll go along that fence.” But at the same time I was thinking, “And what happens if we leave and somebody out there catches us?”

Then the man came back again and left us money. “Here, this is to send out for food because I don’t know what time I’ll be back,” he said. “Where are you going?”

And I said, “To Mexico City.”

“Why are you going there if you don’t know anybody?”

“I’ll call a friend there,” I answered.

And he says to me, “What’s the number?”

“I lost it.”

So, then he says, “Wait for me. I can help you find a way to Mexico City.”¹⁰

After two nights, the men told them when the train would be leaving. The same man who had put them up paid for a taxi and gave them a bottle of water. “Emily” was afraid and repeated to herself that if it had been a kidnapping, the man “wouldn’t have given them so much.” Another man took them in a car to Huehuetoca in the State of Mexico. There were never any questions, just instructions to follow. Once there, another man gave them food in a house for guides who arrived every day with people who paid around US\$3 000 to be taken to Piedras Negras, Coahuila, and then to Houston, Texas.

In that complicated atmosphere, ideas and affections got all jumbled up all the time, making it impossible for “Emily” to realize that, in a subtle way, she had entered into the network of the huge machinery of human trafficking.

“Emily” doesn’t know if she’s going to get to the United States. It’s been seven months and, worn out by the wait, she is considering going to Monterrey with a woman acquaintance and staying to live in Mexico. Her decision is definitive: even if she doesn’t get to the United States, she won’t go back to Honduras. She summarizes her experience this way:

I think that when we leave our country, we think everything is easy. Sometimes we say that the television exaggerates a little, so we leave thinking, “It’s easy.” By the time we get to Mexico we see things differently. The guides and truck drivers you hire start telling you that the immigration officers are coming and they start charging you more. They hide you in stables; they tell you the soldiers are patrolling, and you don’t know the soldiers can’t stop us. But they use all that to scare you.¹¹

“José”

At 32, “José” is traveling to the United States for the third time. Nine years ago he managed to stay seven years. He had a partner and a daughter. Accused of drug possession, he was jailed and deported to Honduras. Now he’s trying to return to rejoin his daughter. He tells us about his life:

I had a very strange, traumatic childhood, for a start, because my birth mother threw me out when I was eight days old. I was

The border is a symbolic construct that must be sought in the processes, disputes, criteria, and dilemmas that occur in the intercultural contact intertwined with powers, inequalities, and hegemony.

very sick when they found me and, thank God, the people who found me put me in the hospital and gave me their name. When they told me that, I was real little, and I began to really hate the person who had thrown me away and many others who were adopted. That lasted until I was 19, when they told me who my mother was. I would see her and run off into the hills very angry until she left. She was really heavy-handed, and, since I would forget that I was supposed to go, she would tie me to a beam and give it to me hard. And that’s how I grew up. When I was about 19, two of my brothers showed up; one of them used to give me money. I was just a kid and I looked like him. One day people came and told us that somebody had killed him. He had been a gang member before and had fallen in love with a girl; she was a Christian. He went to church with her and his in-laws, all covered up so his tattoos wouldn’t show, and the guys in the gang didn’t like that, so they shot him about four times with a shotgun. People told me not to show my face around there because we looked a lot alike.¹²

Following the recommendations of his neighbors, “José” decided to leave his country and set out for the United States. He says that things are different now; in the past there were blockades; you paid a fee to the *coyotes*, but there wasn’t so much violence.

One time he was stopped at a roadblock in the State of Mexico; he managed to escape and ran to a ranch where an older man helped him. He continued to Mexico City. At a market, he got help so he could dress differently and go unnoticed. He hitched a ride, he says, to the Lechería train station in the State of Mexico. As the train went by, he couldn’t catch it because it was going too fast. He contacted family members to ask them to send money; he was extorted by police officers to avoid being deported; he slept in the streets; and he got help from a man who offered him a construction job. He found lodging, food, and a wage, and stayed in the city for four months. He decided to abandon the idea of going to the United States, and continued his story:

I had already forgotten about the American Dream. I was working at a good job; my pay was good. My relatives in the United States sent me US\$100 but one day they sent for me at the park and I was with the boss's kids, when they told me that my relatives from "over there" had sent for me. They said a truck was waiting for me. I remember that along the way the children were hugging me, crying, saying "No, frigging José! Don't go! Don't leave us!" And me with a lump in my throat. The boy who had come for me said, "Go ahead. I'll give you a while so you can take a bath and eat something." Maybe if I had taken that little while I would have thought again, and I wouldn't have gone, but since they caught me all alone, I didn't even want to look at anybody, I was real down, thinking "How can I say good-bye?" And when I left, they said that I had won their trust and that I was like an older brother to them.¹³

Following the instructions of his *coyote*, "José" arrived at the U.S. border. He crossed the river and dodged the wire fences put up by anti-immigrant U.S. ranchers. He had barely gotten in when he was spotted by the Border Patrol and taken to the "coolers," as the places where undocumented migrants are jailed are called.

In an interview with the judges, he explained the reasons why he couldn't return to his country and obtained a temporary permit. He worked in construction for several years until he was deported. Despite a ban on his returning to the United States, he decided to go back. Nevertheless, on this occasion, he was having more trouble. Just to get through half of Mexico he had to pay US\$500, a kind of rent for travelling under a tarp on the train without being beaten, attacked, or thrown off. That is, he came up against a human wall that begins from the southern part of the country and is made up of different actors.

They're Mara gang members; they all have the same tattoo on their necks; they're walking around in the park in Palenque and they even have a list to take down the names of the people who

The social and legal order that produces practically nightmarish transit conditions changes conceptually the meaning of "border." Now, before the American Dream comes the Mexican Nightmare.

get on. They ask the *coyotes* and that's it. The *coyotes* pay them. They have kids who charge you first and if you don't pay, then they come along, armed, and threaten you. Then, after Mexico City, who knows how much you have to pay! The ones after that aren't Maras; from there to the north it's "the company" that's in charge; I think that's what they call the Zetas, and they're the ones that kill you and kidnap you.¹⁴

With the same stealthy attitude and trying to negotiate with the people who have taken over the train routes, "José" hopes to continue until he gets to the northern part of the country.

FINAL REFLECTIONS: THE NEW BORDER, MOVING AMIDST VIOLENCE AND MYSTIFICATIONS

The social and legal order that produces practically nightmarish transit conditions far removed from the American Dream changes conceptually the meaning of "border." Now, before the American Dream comes the Mexican Nightmare. The northern border, a front to be penetrated, now begins in Mexico's South. The migratory policy recently designed by the United States to strengthen the borders from Southern Mexico objectifies the symbolic transformation of the northern border.

Today's transmigrants are no longer those who use Mexico as a bridge to get to the other side. They may live in the country for long periods thanks to an economy shored up by the exploitation of their "invisible" labor power, which assembles the big cities of the transnational circuits. This constitutes an additional factor that "extends the border" because the dynamics of undocumented underemployment are no longer limited as in the past to the northern border areas, but now extend throughout the entire country.

The re-territorialization of the border occurs because Mexico became an in-between territory or space in a world in which national and global cultures develop at the same time but not in synch. The in-between is that place or third space in which infinite differences create a particular tension in border existences. In these in-between spaces, new nomadic migrant forms of mobility are organized, characterized by being expelled by multiple types of violence without having a single fixed destination, with migratory projects constructed along the way, and by identities that are constantly modified in this process. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ According to a statement by the International Organization for Migrations, 400 000 pass through Mexico each year. "Pasan por México cada año 400 mil migrantes," *El Universal* (Mexico City), June 8, 2012.
- ² For more details about the assembly of global cities based on transmigrant communities, see an extensive analysis in F. Besserer and D. Oliver, eds., *Ensamblando la ciudad transnacional. Etnografía especular de los espacios transnacionales urbanos* (Mexico City: UAM/Juan Pablos, 2014).
- ³ Fences began to be built along the northern border in 1991. In 1994, the U.S. government announced Operation Guardian, a surveillance plan that expanded the fence that now stretches across one-third of the border to prevent access by undocumented Mexican and Central American migrants. "Worlds Barriers: US-Mexico," BBC News, November 5, 2009.
- ⁴ Mexican political discourse presented the plan with three objectives: developing strategies for migrants' safety and protection, fighting and eradicating criminal groups that violate migrant rights, and improving the railroad infrastructure on which undocumented migrants usually travel. In reality, the plan translated into greater control and surveillance along the southern border. "Presenta Segob programa Frontera Sur para protección a migrantes," *Animal político*, August 25, 2014, <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/08/presenta-segobprograma-frontera-sur-para-proteccion-migrantes/>.
- ⁵ These plans were implemented parallel to the Southern Border plan in Mexico to contain migration of children and teens traveling with a guide or *coyote*.
- ⁶ The issue of the state of exception developed by Giorgio Agamben and applied to undocumented migratory dynamics can be reviewed in the article by Soledad Álvarez, "¿Guerra en silencio? Aproximación etnográfica a la violencia normalizada hacia los migrantes en tránsito por la frontera sur chiapaneca," Alejandro Agudo Sanchiz and Marco Estrada Saavedra, eds., *(Trans)formaciones del Estado en los márgenes de Latinoamérica. Imaginarios alternativos, aparatos inacabados y espacios transnacionales* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Iberoamericana, 2011).
- ⁷ The testimonies quoted here are extracts from the research project by Joselin Barja, "Migraciones indocumentadas: una etnografía del tránsito por México" (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, unpublished manuscript, 2014).
- ⁸ Interview at the House of the Migrant in Saltillo, Coahuila state, April 2, 2014.
- ⁹ "Charolear" is the term used by migrants to mean asking passersby for money.
- ¹⁰ Interview at the House of the Migrant in Saltillo, Coahuila state, April 2, 2014.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Interview at the Guadalupeño Deacon Shelter in Tierra Blanca, Veracruz, January 12, 2014.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.

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Transnational Students And Public Schools in Mexico

Celina Bárcenas*



Henry Romero/Reuters

Both a universal right and a fundamental element for building a society, education is directly linked to human mobility. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that, as migratory flows change, the educational needs of migrants and those around them also change.

Traditionally, Mexico is a country of origin, transit, and destination for millions of people of different ages, genders, and socio-cultural backgrounds.¹ This dynamic creates specific challenges on many levels, particularly for education as a long-term government policy. For more than 30 years the issue of education for migrants has been on the fringes of the national political agenda, sometimes more present on a federal level and others on a state level, but never as an inte-

gral part and a priority in this country's educational goals. However, some programs have been implemented to deal with these groups' needs.

In recent years, student needs in our country have evolved along different lines. Not only has it been necessary to adjust programs and study plans to incorporate information technologies to educate new generations in order to bring their competitive levels up to international trends, but very particularly, attending to the needs of a group of students whose academic careers have been carried out in more than one educational system has become more complex.²

In this article, I will briefly review the evolution of education for migrants and transnational students in Mexico and identify the outstanding tasks for designing appropriate public policies to deal with all their requirements in the 199 678 schools imparting basic all education in Mexico's 2 457 municipalities.³

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CIRCULAR MIGRATION, THE BEGINNING OF EDUCATION FOR MIGRANTS⁴

In 1976, the heavy flows of farm worker migrants between Michoacán and California sparked the first binational collaborative efforts by educational authorities. At that time, what was mainly required was to ensure uninterrupted educational opportunities for migrant children and teens who traveled every year between the two countries following the agricultural seasons. This kind of mobility is incompatible with both countries' school systems, forcing the students to miss months of classes and making their learning lag behind.

After two years of research and inter-institutional cooperation, a collaborative pilot program began in which academic information was shared about the students that had been taught both by Mexico's Ministry of Public Education and the State of California Department of Education. A few years later, in 1982, after the success of that first program, the Binational Migrant Education Initiative (BMEI, or *Problem* in Spanish) was launched with the aim of offering education to migrant children and young people who attend school one part of the school year in Mexico and the other in the United

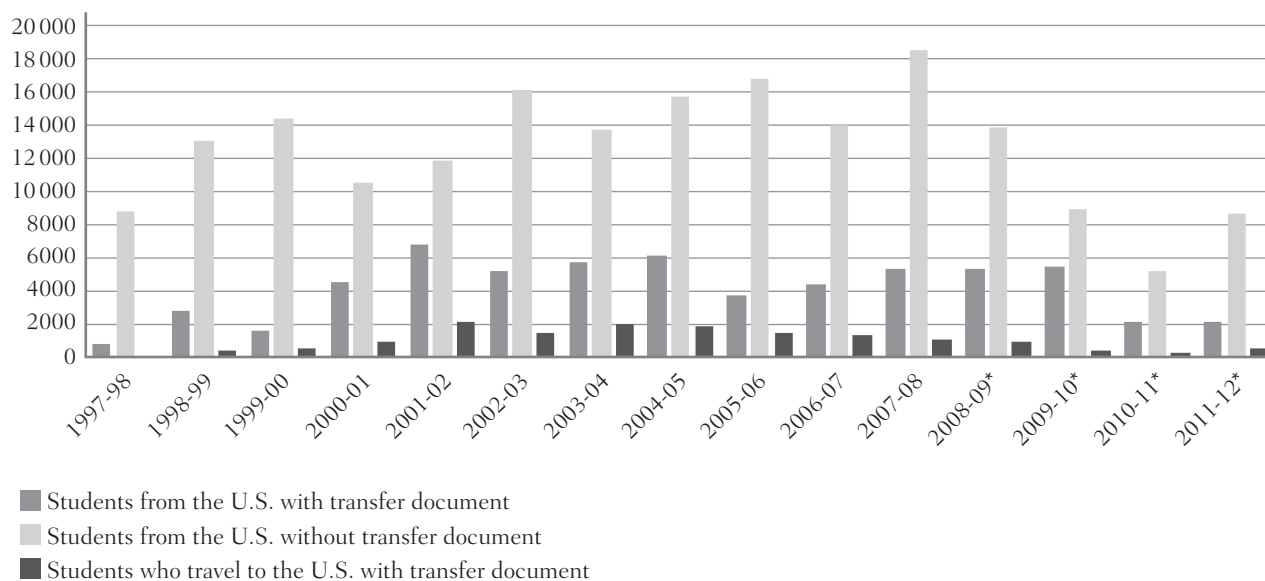
States, who are repatriated by their parents, and those who remain in the United States, as well as to ensure the continuity of their education and that it be of good quality, equal, and relevant to their lives.⁵

Since there is no federal financing for this, the 31 Mexican states that participate in the program pay for it through local budget items and/or funds linked to school administration. On the Mexican side of the border, *Problem* coordinates through a council that includes a representation of the federal Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Relations through the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME), and a national coordinating body with rotating coordinators for each of the five operational crosscutting themes.⁶

The first need detected among migrant and/or transnational students was to overcome the challenge of access to schools. Thanks to the legal framework established in the

In 1976, the heavy flows of farm worker migrants between Michoacán and California sparked the first binational collaborative efforts by educational authorities.

GRAPH 1
NUMBER OF MEXICO-U.S. MIGRANT STUDENTS ENROLLED IN BASIC EDUCATION (1997-2012)



* General access to school at any point in the school year.

Source: SEP, *Informe estadístico de alumnos atendidos en el marco del Problem* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Acreditación, Incorporación y Revalidación, SEP, 2013).

The main objective of the Binational Migrant Education Teacher Exchange Program is to strengthen Mexican identity and academic achievement of Mexican-origin students in U.S. schools.

1990 memorandum of understanding (MOU) on education signed by the Mexican and U.S. governments, the tool to achieve this was the migrant student transfer document, which operates as a binational, bilingual student record that facilitates students' moving between the educational systems of Mexico and the United States more easily.

The extensive use of this transfer document until recently demonstrated the initiative's success. Graph 1 illustrates its use and lack of use since its format changed in 1997 up until 2012. It also clearly shows the proportion of students who entered Mexico's educational system with and without the transfer document. Starting in 2008, increasing numbers of them did not have to present the document to be able to attend Mexican schools thanks to the intervention of Probem authorities and school officials. This is undoubtedly a victory of the system for favoring access to education, with the implementation of other enrollment strategies like diagnostic and placement testing and/or assigning a student to a particular grade by age.

Once the tool had been created to facilitate migrant students' enrollment, the next challenge was to ensure it at any time in the school year. It was then that Probem became the body in charge of obtaining the authorization for migrant students to be admitted to schools by interpreting registration norms, through its state coordinators and in collaboration with the registrars and principals at certain schools. This has become common usage since, as a constitutional right and a recognized universal right to access to education, today, migrant students can enroll in public schools at any time during the school year.

THE QUEST FOR EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SHARED STUDENTS

The cultural diversity that exists in the U.S. population has also required attention be paid to educational needs. This has undergone an evolution that I will not explore here. However,

I can say that, since the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was signed into law, it began to be possible in the decentralized U.S. educational system to implement programs of educational services for people whose mother tongue is not English with federal funding.

Even given the differences among the state systems, we can point to the existence of transitional programs that use the mother tongue for the first three years and assume that by the fourth year, the students speak sufficient English to continue in regular classes. Special alternative instruction programs also exist that provide incentives to speaking English, in order to give students the communication tools they need, as do bilingual educational programs that provide instruction in both languages to favor monolingual (whether in English or Spanish) students' capacity to do this.

To foster the education of migrant children of Mexican origin in U.S. classrooms, Mexico's Ministry of Public Education operates two programs: the visiting teacher program and the Probem/BMEI teacher exchange. The former began in 2004 in California and now also operates in New Mexico, Utah, Illinois, Oregon, Nebraska, Colorado, and Minnesota.

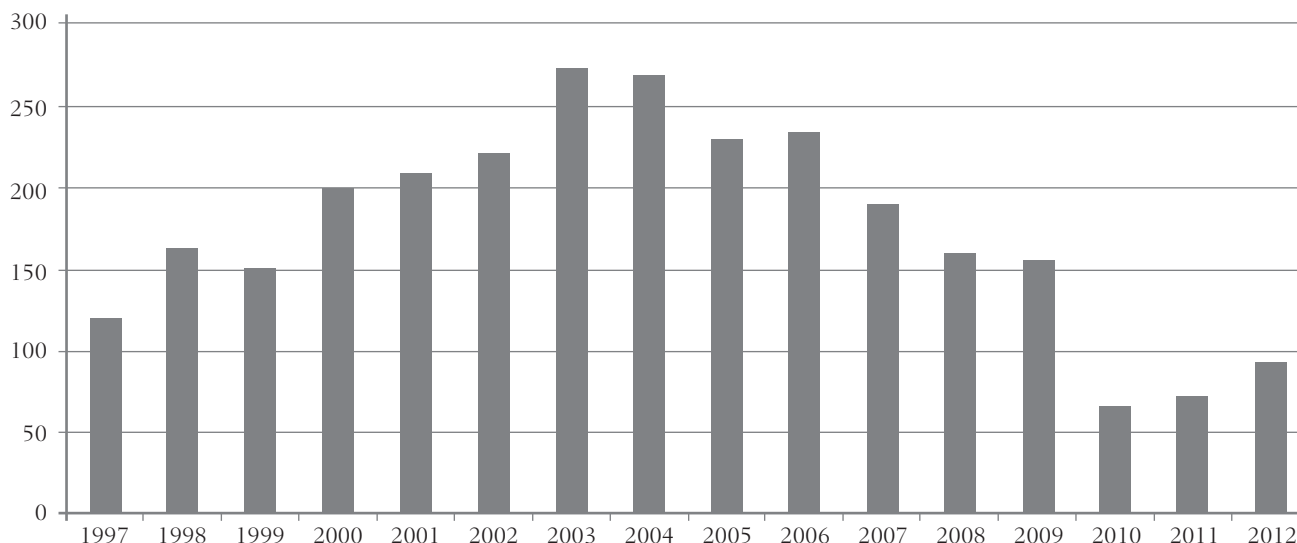
In 11 years, this program has ensured the hiring of more than 200 bilingual Mexican teachers who act as permanent teachers in the bilingual programs of the U.S. schools that request their services. Hired for one year, with the possibility of extending the contract for two more, these Mexican teachers receive the same salaries and benefits as their U.S. colleagues.

The main objective of the Binational Migrant Education Teacher Exchange Program is to strengthen Mexican identity and academic achievement of Mexican-origin students in U.S. schools. With a drop-out rate of 25 to 30 percent and an average nine years of schooling, this population is at a great disadvantage and a high risk for poverty.⁷

Graph 2 shows that, since its creation in 1997, this program has sent almost 3 000 teachers to school districts with high numbers of student populations of Mexican origin for four to eight weeks during the summer to work with students and parents alike on both academic and cultural issues.⁸

While this is the BMEI program with the greatest impact, starting in 2005, the number of participating teachers has clearly declined. The main reason involves the financial limitations of the participating school districts or domestic migration since, as the economic crisis advanced, many schools had to limit their participation, requesting fewer teachers each summer. The most critical point was reached in 2010,

GRAPH 2
MEXICAN TEACHERS IN THE 1997-2013 PROBEM EXCHANGE PROGRAM



Source: SEP, "Informe 2013 Probem" (Mexico City: Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales, SEP, 2013).

The concentration of returning migrants in certain high-immigration areas turns them into actors who define local and regional needs of certain Mexican states.

when only 65 teachers were sent. However, since that time, the figures have improved little by little, showing the continued interest of both parties in continuing this program.

On the other hand, the dynamic of multicultural educational services in Mexico is very different. In recent years, our country has received increasing numbers of children and young people repatriated from the United States. According to National Migration Institute figures, in 2013, 242 905 Mexicans were deported back to our country; 14 339 (6 percent) of them were minors.⁹ We would have to add to this number the children born in the U.S. and therefore U.S. citizens, who are not included in the statistics because they enter Mexico as foreigners, accompanying their fathers and/or mothers.

The concentration of returning migrants in certain high-immigration areas turn them into actors who define local and regional needs of certain Mexican states. This is the case of the border city Tijuana, where the Probem state coordinating body reported a considerable increase of students

presenting migrant student transfer documents between 2006 and 2012. In those six years, these students increased from 228 to 1 869.¹⁰

In addition to the 290 386 shared students in primary grades in the 2013-2014 school year, we should remember that our country also hosted 9 839 students from Oceania, 5 229 from Central America and the Caribbean, 42 871 from South America, 3 687 from Europe, and almost 2 000 from Asia and Africa. All of them face the challenge of accessing and remaining in our country's educational system.

CONCLUSIONS

Fortunately for migrants in our country, on October 8, 2014, the Special Migration Program (PEM) 2014-2018 became law when it was published in the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Official Federal Gazette). This program will not resolve the complex needs of this sector of the population, but it is an important opportunity for transforming public migratory policies with a multi-dimensional, comprehensive approach.

Still pending is the task of adjusting certain concepts and formats in the school administration to be able to identify and follow up with transnational students born in Mexico but who have gone to school in other systems and are covered

with a blanket of invisibility because they do not fit neatly into a category. This deprives them of the services of an inclusionary, just, quality, relevant education.


It is important for educational authorities to reflect on the needs of this population. While it represents no more than 1 percent of all the students in our country, they have the same rights as the other 99 percent. It will be necessary to design a comprehensive approach that takes into account the appropriate indicators and favors teaching Spanish as a second language in an increasingly globalized Mexico. **MM**

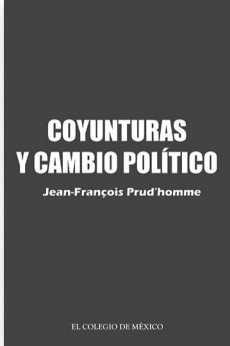
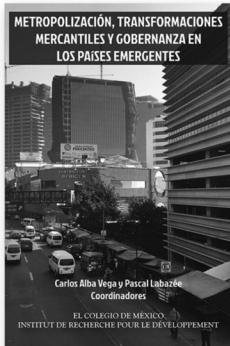
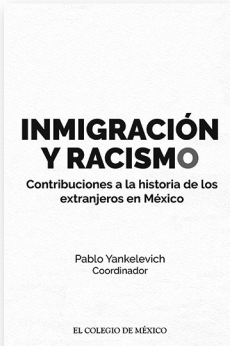
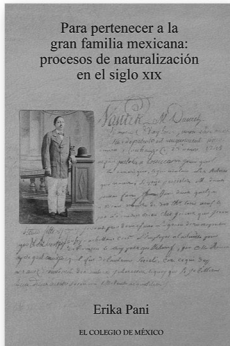
NOTES

- ¹ W. Lothar and P. López Chaltelt, *México: políticas públicas beneficiando a los migrantes* (Mexico City: Organización Internacional para las Migraciones, 2011).
- ² For Dr. Víctor Zúñiga, Dr. Edmund Hamman, and Dr. Juan Sánchez García, transnational students are those who have crossed and re-crossed borders during their education. This refers to borders not only between countries, but also between states, since in a decentralized system like that of the United States, each state autonomously determines the objectives, organization, and structure of its educational system. See V. Zúñiga, E. Hamman, and Juan Sánchez García, *Alumnos transnacionales, escuelas mexicanas*

- frente a la globalización* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2008).
- ³ Dirección General de Planeación y Estadística Educativa, "Principales cifras del sistema educativo nacional 2012-2013" (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2013), http://www.sems.gob.mx/work/models/sems/Resource/11579/1/images/principales_cifras_2012_2013_bolsillo.pdf.
- ⁴ While there is no standardized definition of "circulatory migration," it can be understood as the trans-border mobility that begins with an initial place of origin, goes to (a) destination(s), and returns to the initial point of departure, with no definite time period in any of these places, but with a full return to the place of origin.
- ⁵ Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales, "Carpeta de datos básicos del Programa Binacional de Educación Migrante (Probem)" (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011).
- ⁶ Probem's crosscutting themes are information and dissemination, teacher exchange, access to schools, educational support, and evaluation and follow-up.
- ⁷ R. Díaz de Cossío, "Prólogo," *Memorias del 2º Foro de Reflexión Binacional: Los mexicanos de aquí y de allá: problemas comunes* (Mexico City: Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americana, 2006).
- ⁸ Complete information about this program and how to qualify can be found on the website of Mexico's Ministry of the Interior's Office of International Relations, www.dgri.sep.gob.mx.
- ⁹ Centro de Estudios Migratorios, *Boletín Estadístico 2014. Repatriación de mexicanos*, updated January 13, 2015, http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es_mx/SEGOB/Repatriacion_de_mexicanos__2014.
- ¹⁰ Susana Sierra and Yara López, "Infancia migrante y educación transnacional en la frontera México-Estados Unidos," *Revista sobre la infancia y la adolescencia* no. 4, March 2013, pp. 28-54.

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Regional Agreements: A Comparative Perspective on Labor Mobility¹

Silvia Núñez García*

No issue linked to migration can be dealt with if we do not recognize that the world of the twenty-first century is framed by three interacting characteristics: uncertainty, complexity, and inter-dependence.

Just the size of migration, which, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) comes to 232 million international migrants, leads one to speculate that, if William Shakespeare were born again today, he would most certainly write a play called *Migration: A Tale of Good and Evil*. And it would very probably be more successful than the experts in creating awareness among humanity as a whole about the drama that many experience when forced to leave their homes. And his would also be a better call to the rest of us to take responsibility for resolving the problems that this phenomenon brings with it.

This article will review three alternatives, incorporated in regional integration agreements, whose aim is to link up the actions of different states to order and manage worker mobility, taking note of some of the obstacles they face, and culminating with the issue of responsibilities.

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

The ASEAN was born in 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, bringing together 10 member states² with a population of 608 million people.³ Its main objective was to accelerate economic growth, explicitly to achieve social progress and cultural development,

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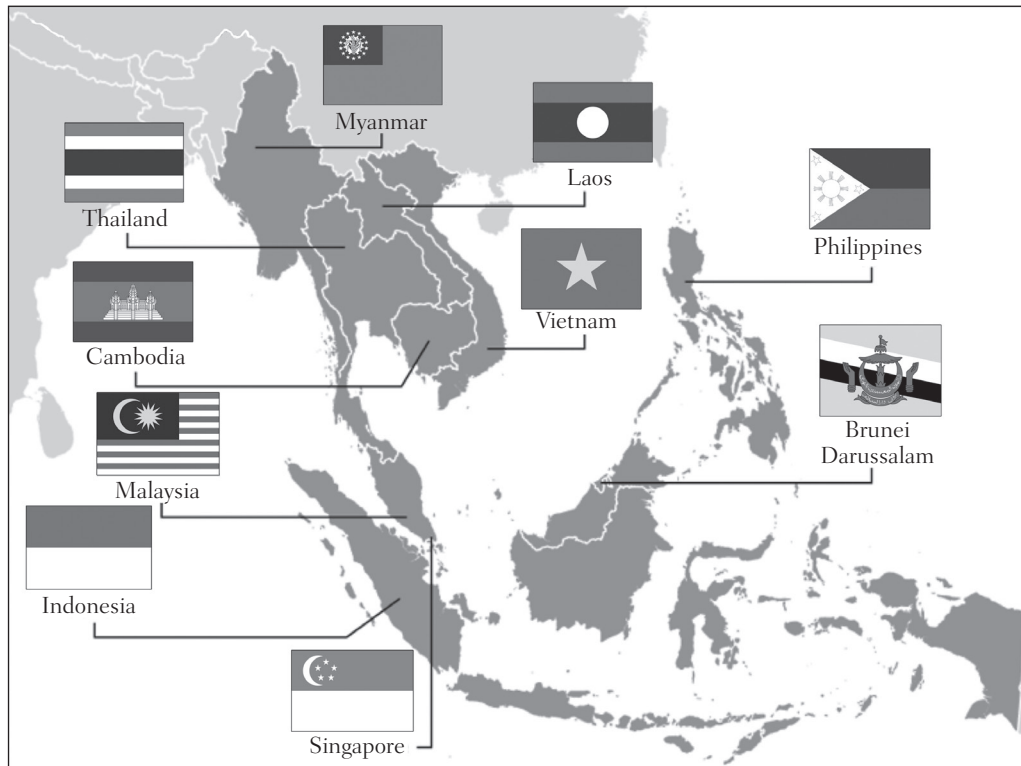
recognizing that they represent important goals, since they transcend economic interests, seeking to promote peace and stability in the region.

The ASEAN has a labor force of 285 million.⁴ Labor migration in these countries is dominated by lower skilled workers, who make up 87%,⁵ and involves millions of people working in the different member states both legally and irregularly. The vast majority of workers who migrate inside the ASEAN countries are employed in manufacturing and low skilled occupations like agriculture, fishing, domestic service, food processing, and construction.

We should remember that Southeast Asia is one of the world's most socially and culturally diverse regions. To deal with this, the ASEAN made English its only official language, seeking to close the language gap, as a requirement for moving ahead in negotiations for integration.⁶ The mobility of skilled workers and professionals within ASEAN is based on mutual recognition agreements and seeks to achieve complete freedom of movement by the end of 2015.

Member countries set a precedent on January 13, 2007 when their leaders signed the ASEAN Declaration on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and

ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES



agreed to assume responsibilities. This declaration mandates member states to offer appropriate employment protection, payment of wages, and adequate access to decent working and living conditions for migrant workers. Both destination and sending countries take responsibility for promoting migrant workers' dignity in an atmosphere of freedom, equality, and stability in accordance with the laws of each of the member nations. In particular, destination countries commit themselves to step up efforts to protect migrant workers' fundamental human rights, promote their well-being, and safeguard their human dignity.

The ASEAN also seeks harmony and tolerance between receiving countries and migrant workers, leading to their co-responsibility. It particularly emphasizes sending countries' responsibility to provide access to jobs and opportunities for a decent life for all citizens, in order to avoid their dependency on remittances from their migrant population. It establishes the need for promoting and generating legal practices that regulate the recruitment of migrant workers as well as the adoption of mechanisms to eliminate bad practices through valid, legal contracts.

Many issues involved in labor mobility, like the prevention of trafficking in persons, are the primary responsibility of other government agencies, such as ministries of the interior, although the ASEAN recognizes its responsibility in eradicating this evil in its 2007 declaration.⁷

In short, it is praiseworthy that from its inception, the ASEAN has set itself big goals, even if in reality it is still far from reaching them, and it remains to be seen if they had been able to achieve free movement of highly qualified workers by the end of 2015.⁸ In addition, many member states have not yet ratified the declaration on migrant workers, and some experts have criticized ASEAN for being sluggish and its procedures being long and drawn out.⁹

THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA)

NAFTA went into effect in 1994 as a trade agreement to increase the competitiveness and well-being of the region's population, which today comes to 450 million people, with a

labor force of approximately 228 million. It was not conceived as a project to integrate the region. However, it has been very successful as an instrument for promoting trade among the three signatories, and, today, North America generates approximately 30% of the world's output.¹⁰

In 1993, the side-bar North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation was signed to ensure effective application of labor standards and local labor laws. However, it does not deal with the issue of labor mobility.¹¹

A non-immigrant visa for NAFTA professionals was created to allow the movement of trained professionals, but it has not been used extensively: only 9 500 persons received one in 2013.¹² We should remember that while NAFTA was being negotiated, it was impossible to launch a more ambitious labor mobility agreement due to restrictive policies, particularly in the United States, policies that are still in effect. So, for workers who move among NAFTA countries, the lack of agreements for the accreditation of professionals affects the emergence of a regional labor force.

In 2014, the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations recommended that Canada, the United States, and Mexico establish a regional mobility agreement to facilitate the flow of workers and to ensure their rights in the three countries, particularly for the case of temporary, low-skilled workers and professionals. By extension, the signatories should take responsibility for clearly defining and guaranteeing workers' rights in terms of wages, working conditions, medical insurance, retirement benefits, and employers' responsibilities.

While regional economic liberalization has not been accompanied by policies for education or developing the labor force, the United States-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research was created in 2013 by an agreement signed by Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto. This has fostered a new era of greater educational cooperation between the two countries, setting a fundamental precedent that in the long run could bolster labor mobility agreements.

Any analysis of NAFTA must take into account its context of asymmetry between Mexico and its partners in the region, which set an international precedent. This includes the fact that the Human Development Index for 2014 put the United States in eighth place, with 12.9 years of schooling, contrasting with Mexico, which was situated in seventy-fourth place with an average 8.5 years of schooling;¹³ in 2012, almost 35 million persons of Mexican origin lived in the United States, six million of whom were undocumented immigrants;¹⁴ and, undocumented workers in the United States continue to be concentrated

in low-skilled jobs in a much greater proportion than the U.S.-born population; in 2012, 62 percent of these workers were employed in agriculture, construction, and services.¹⁵

THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS (CAN)¹⁶

In 1969, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru signed the Cartagena Agreement, creating the Andean Community of Nations. After Chile withdrew in 1976, the four remaining founding countries continued to work in the framework of the accord.

The agreement currently covers a population of 108 million people,¹⁷ with a work force of approximately 47 million.¹⁸ Figures for intra-regional migrants estimate that "76 percent are Colombians (174 000), 16 percent are Peruvians (38 000), 6 percent are Ecuadorean (13 000), and 2 percent are Bolivian (5 000)."¹⁹

Among the community's most important objectives are promoting balanced, harmonious development in member countries in conditions of equality through integration and economic and social cooperation, and accelerating growth and creating jobs for the inhabitants of member countries.

In June 2003, the CAN adopted the Andean Instrument for Labor Migration, stipulating that workers from member countries will receive the same treatment in all other member countries. A year later, the scope of this agreement was broadened by the Andean Security Instrument, which seeks to guarantee appropriate social protection for labor migrants and their dependents in all four member countries.²⁰

The CAN countries guarantee the mobility of employees of service companies as well of the crews of transportation service providers. Another important step was the creation of the Andean Passport.

The problem of the Andean Community is its regional mechanisms' inefficacy; in some cases, they have not been fully implemented due to the lack of political will on the part of the member countries.²¹

FINAL COMMENTS

From these three examples, we can conclude that national states and organized civil society must take responsibility for developing a new capacity for communication, a dialogue that will allow them to understand in depth that migration is

not a mere matter of adding and subtracting, but of millions of human beings' imperious need for a decent life.

Beyond economic policy strategies, we must recognize the indissoluble link between migration and social policies. In contrast with NAFTA, which is a trade agreement, the ASEAN and the Andean Community incorporate the human factor as key.

The most difficult thing to achieve is that signatory states of these kinds of accords ratify their declarations, since that is precisely where the responsibilities lie. The defense and transnational protection of migrant workers must be taken on proactively by bringing together global NGO networks. In the words of Dr. Sergio Alcocer, UNAM's researcher, "The governance of migration in general depends on the co-responsibility of governments as well as of private and social actors."

I would venture to say that trust is the determining factor in the construction of that co-responsibility and that the key to building this kind of an atmosphere is in the construction of axiological consensuses, since only common values can lead to rules that produce visible results. The fundamental question to be answered is how to do that in heterogeneous, dissimilar societies. Individualism is an obstacle that impedes the promotion of the benefits obtainable in contact with "the

others," with "those who are different." So, it is fundamental that centers of higher learning take responsibility for designing new educational approaches transcending individualism and fostering civic, collective values.

The vicissitudes migrants' experiences show us that, unfortunately, we have transited into the dehumanization of work and that changing laws to the benefit of social causes is extremely complicated when the consequences of economic crises and big interests get in the way. As Robert Hutchins said in his book *The University of Utopia*, pressure makes people forget their humanity, and what we need is to understand the world, not handle it.

I would invite all those who have had the good fortune—or the privilege—of participating in conferences, institutions, or activities concerning migration to assume the day-to-day responsibility of building bridges more than underlining barriers. Let us take on the obligation, for ourselves and for the benefit of all, of exercising optimism as an effort of will.

Let us assume the responsibility of transcending the idea that that in which we believe limits us. To paraphrase Saramago's essay *Seeing*, how often has fear embittered our lives and, in the end, turned out to be baseless, with no reason for being? ■■■

NOTES

¹ A special recognition to Jesús Orta Hernández for his support in this endeavor. A previous version of this article was presented at the International Metropolis Conference, hosted by the UNAM-CISAN in September 2015.

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U.S.-Cuban Relations: Zigzags And Obstacles in Rapprochement

Jesús Gallegos Olvera*



Reformulating relations between the United States and Cuba must consider two variables: the advances and results of the rounds of negotiation, and the debate in the U.S. establishment between those in favor and those opposed to President Barack Obama's decision. Both the U.S. and Cuba have definitely taken actions in recent months to broaden and strengthen their relations, interrupted more than 50 years ago, but "normalization" is still a riddle.

The first variable requires pinpointing the general reasons behind each of the parties' positions in the context of their own development. The contention strategy expressed through the economic blockade and embargo against the Cuban government as well as the diplomatic isolation of the Castro regime had been the main public U.S. foreign policy actions *vis-à-vis* the Caribbean nation in the last five decades.

Until the morning of December 17, 2014, the "Cuba" issue seemed to be a Cold War leftover in the Americas. However, it also went through a series of updates after the end of the Cold War with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the political changes in Latin America. In the case of the United States, it could be said that the "Cuban matter" has had its own weight, not only electorally speaking, but also in the political dynamic between Republicans and Democrats. For its part, the Cuban government had blamed the U.S. embargo for the adverse conditions experienced in recent decades.

So, Cuban-U.S. relations have undergone different phases of confrontation and coordination of interests, exemplified by the arrival of a communist government off the coast of the great promoter of liberal democracy; the "Cuban missile crisis"; the Mariel exodus and the problems of Cuban boatlift; the establishment of detention centers on the military base at Guantánamo, where prisoners of war from Iraq and Afghanistan were taken; and the strengthening of rela-

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tions between the island's government and "leftist" countries in Latin America. This has forced members of the U.S. establishment to think of Cuba beyond the ideological and historic variables, meaning that the geopolitical and economic calculation set certain unavoidable imperatives.

The reasons for the Barack Obama administration's push toward changing the direction of relations with the government headed by Raúl Castro converge with analyses by some of the spokespersons for U.S. interests in recent years. Zbigniew Brzezinski in 2012 and Henry Kissinger in 2014 noted that renewing U.S. leadership with a strategic international vision would require rethinking the blockade of Cuba.

From the liberal and neo-realist points of view, the idea of strengthening the current administration's prestige and credibility requires recognizing the inefficacy of the economic embargo and renewing the good neighbor discourse in the Western Hemisphere in which Secretary of State John Kerry's 2013 corollary to the Monroe Doctrine would seem to come to an end. While this is not divorced from the carrot-and-stick policy made popular by Teddy Roosevelt, the responses establish a relationship to the excesses by the intelligence apparatus operated from the National Security Agency (NSA) and exposed to international public opinion through the leaks to the media about the cases of spying on government officials in Germany, Brazil, and Mexico, among others. Added to this is the qualitative aspect of the current administration's interest in establishing a legacy and the distinctive actions this implies.

For their part, some apologists of the current regime in Cuba say that the U.S. government's position is determined by the strength and legitimacy of the cause and the history of resistance of the Cuban people. To this can be added the explanations of why the Revolution's internationalist policy was designed as part of what was needed to shine a light on the situation and avoid the country's complete isolation in the international community. Nevertheless, we should note that the economic situation of the last 20 years on the island is the biggest consideration for understanding the reasons behind the Cuban government approaching and opening up to its U.S. counterpart.

If emigration from the island in the 1960s was spurred by political criteria, in the last two decades, it has been defined by the economy. In this sense, the simultaneous implosion of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of the socialist bloc and the crisis that in the early 1990s reduced Cuba's gross national product by 40 percent have meant that foreign in-

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vestment is an alternative for accessing capital, technology, and other resources like energy. In addition, Cuba has an exceptional geographical location and an educated population, both assets of great value in this process.

Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Rodrigo Malmierca explained his country's conditions and needs in November 2014 when he presented an US\$8.5-billion project to finance different kinds of activities, among them, setting up a car assembly plant in the economic zone around the port of Mariel. As he recognized in a statement prior to the Summit of the Americas in Panama last April, "The continuing blockade, the restrictions on the use of the dollar, the impossibility of exporting Cuban products [to the United States] or using trade credits are obstacles to trade and impede investment in Cuba."¹

This explains why, in addition to the trade partnerships Cuba has established with companies of several countries—out of over 400 in effect, 342 stand out, linked to, among other sectors, mining, oil, tourism, and light industry—, its government passed a new foreign investment law in 2014 that offers tax breaks and new conditions for creating investor security and certainty.

What is clear is that market-oriented reforms set guidelines that reaffirm socialist planning and the continued relevance of state-owned companies and do not clearly outline Cuba's future development model. Nevertheless, as former Clinton administration advisor Richard Feinberg states in an analysis published by the Brookings Institution last November, the Cuban government's document, *Portafolio de oportunidades para la inversion extranjera* (Portfolio of Opportunities for Foreign Investment), shows that it will be cautious in opening up the Cuban economy to international capital because in the front of its mind is what happened in Russia after the end of the Soviet era.²

The point is that, without economic growth, the social advances cannot be maintained. To be sustainable, the so-called progressive Cuban policy definitely requires economic pros-

perity. This is why three key issues must be worked on for the future: economic growth with equality, monetary and exchange-rate reform, and institutional change.

Beyond the agenda and the main political and technical aspects that both countries will have to review, and given that the debate about the process of normalizing relations is in and of itself today one of the main discussions, the interaction between the United States and Cuba is also the object of a series of perceptions and local, regional, and global opinions that point to different issues.

The Latin American Working Group looked at different surveys carried out between 2009 and 2012 that show how opinions favorable to reestablishing relations between the United States and Cuba have grown.³ Most of the polls of U.S. Americans show that between 50 and 60 percent of citizens think moves should be made to reestablish relations, to eliminate the embargo, and to allow travel to Cuba. In addition, according to Cuban Research Institute surveys, while in 1991, 87 percent of Cuban-Americans thought that the embargo should continue, by 2014, only 48 percent thought so.⁴ A University of Florida survey of Cuban-Americans showed that most also supported renewing relations and putting an end to the embargo. For their part, 97 percent of Cubans thought they should be renewed, according to a 2015 survey by the firm Bendixen & Amandi International.⁵

Despite these trends in public opinion, White House presidential spokesperson Josh Earnest has announced a list of issues that must be resolved first. Among them, in no particular order, are the limitations U.S. embassy officials in Havana would face in carrying out their work as they do in other countries, particularly their interaction with civil society; the political reforms linked to progress on human rights issues; the return of expropriated property of U.S. citizens after the Cuban Revolution; and the extradition of any terrorist or fugitive who might be on Cuban soil.

Cuba's recycling of its political argument to explain why its economy is not able to develop as needed and of its demands *vis-à-vis* the U.S. government has opened the way to

its being taken off the list of state sponsors of terrorism; this happened on May 29, 2015, 33 years after it was first included in March 1982. This makes for a change in the perception of the risk of developing links with Cuba; in addition, it has been taken off the package of sanctions imposed by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) linked to the arms trade, aid programs, and restrictions to trade relations. Other issues presented by the Cubans in the negotiations are putting an end to the embargo on Cuba in place since 1960, and its complement established in the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, which establishes legal restrictions for U.S. companies and investors in Cuba, and finally, the return of the territory on which the Guantanamo naval base is built.

Four rounds of negotiations have been held until now, on January 21 and 22, February 27, March 15, and May 21 and 22, 2015, the first and third in Havana and the second and fourth in Washington, D.C. Advances have been reported on issues of civil aviation, human smuggling, migratory fraud, protected maritime areas, hydrography, nautical charts, and health. In addition, in recent months announcements have been made about the reestablishment of the ferry line between Florida and Havana, suspended decades ago; the licensing of a New York hospital to carry out a clinical protocol of the effective Cuban therapeutic vaccine against lung cancer; the visit to Havana and the much-applauded performances of the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra; the participation of U.S. boats in the Ernest Hemingway Fishing Tournament, for the first time in a very long time; and the friendly soccer match between the New York Cosmos and Cuba's national team.

In addition, the Cuban Interests Section and future Cuban embassy in Washington was able to open a bank account when granted a Treasury Department license; it currently operates through Stonegate, a small bank with 22 offices located in southern and western Florida. In the face of this situation, Cuban Vice-chancellor Marcelino Medina warns that the current negotiations with Washington are merely a first stage of a long, complex process. State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke has emphasized that there is still "work to be done" with Cuba. In the last analysis, from the perspective of the U.S. government, normalization is based on the results of the negotiations and not the wish to conclude the process quickly.

With regard to the second variable, the formal process for normalizing U.S.-Cuban relations depends on the political and administrative reading of the faculties of each head of

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government in his own country and that of their respective legislatures. Also relevant is the pressure brought to bear on each side by interest groups represented in think tanks, media, political parties, corporations, intellectuals, social sectors, etc.

Specifically, on the U.S. side, among the opponents to the actions taken by the Obama administration to change the government's position about Cuba is Republican Senator Marco Rubio, who continually states that he will oppose any nomination of a U.S. ambassador to Cuba as long as several prerequisites linked to human and property rights that he considers indispensable are not met. Another staunch opponent is Mario Díaz-Balart, Republican representative for Florida and the sponsor of a law that includes the denial of funds "for an embassy or other diplomatic facility in Cuba."⁶ For his part, Democratic Senator Robert Menéndez has been critical of the Cuban government, pointing to the scant possibility that the current Congress would repeal the laws that establish the trade embargo. For these and other detractors, the argument centers on supporting the Cuban people and not those they call their oppressors, as they say Obama does.

In contrast, those who favor a rapprochement with Cuba, like Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee from California, a member of the same subcommittee that Díaz-Balart serves on, have insisted on increasing trade in order to improve both countries' economies. Similarly, Democrat José Serrano, together with Republican Senators Jeffrey Flake and Michael Enzi, have indicated the importance of establishing an embassy to strengthen the defense of U.S. interests in Cuba and defend the rights of the citizens of their country to do business on the island. In the opinion of these and other members of Congress, the problem lies in the power of the Cuban-American community in Florida. However, despite the fact that the Cuban community in Miami has played a fundamental role at election time—it represents 5 percent of Florida's population—it is important to recognize that in the most recent elections, the lack of identification of the children of exiles with the old Cuban cause has generated important changes. Specifically, in 2012, President

Obama received the support of 50 percent of the Cuban-American electorate for his reelection.

The U.S. Congress is definitely the political body with the faculty to put an end to the policy that establishes the blockade of Cuba, but Obama does have substantial prerogatives about how it is applied. While the 1996 Helms-Burton Act did transfer certain executive faculties regarding the island to Congress, Obama can take action on matters like travel to Cuba, telecommunications, and remittances. Further down the line, executive actions should be put in place to establish direct commercial flights between the two countries and lengthen the list of goods manufactured in Cuba or with Cuban inputs that can enter the United States.

One important area of work has been health; in this sphere, by allowing U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba, Obama is including the possibility that they receive medical treatment there. In addition, the export of medications and medical equipment must be authorized, as well as the sale of raw materials so that medications like Heberprot-P and Nimotuzumab, monoclonal anti-bodies that have resulted from research in biotechnology for the treatment of advanced head and neck cancers, respectively, can be produced on the island.

However, important areas exist in which the U.S. president definitely has no room to act. One clear example is the ban on U.S. subsidiaries in third countries from trading with Cuba, as stipulated in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, as well as the prohibition of doing business with formerly U.S.-owned properties that were nationalized. These are part of the list of the on-going issues being negotiated to achieve "normalization" of relations between the two countries; those negotiations are constantly zigzagging and still have a long way to go. ■■■

NOTES

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The Twilight of the Mexican Moment? The Enrique Peña Nieto Administration Between Perception and Reality

Ruth A. Dávila Figueroa*

A few months after appearing on the front page of *Time* magazine with the headline “Saving Mexico” and receiving the World Statesman Prize for 2014, Enrique Peña Nieto was facing a national and international firestorm. Why this switch? What was really revealed by the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa normal school students?

Mainly U.S. and British media sources reported about the disappearance of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero’s 43 Isidro Burgos Normal School students. Both conservative media outlets like *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Economist*, or more moderate ones like *The New York Times* and prestigious magazines like *The New Yorker* reported the events that showed the crisis of human rights and the rule of law, the corruption, the clandestine graves, the government ineffectiveness in identifying the more than 1 000 bodies found in them, the lack of an official figure for missing persons, etc.

Despite the protests, the scandal in the media, and the drop in popularity of Mexico’s president and of the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), there has been no clear sign, at least from the government, of wanting to solve the students’ disappearance. What exists is a “historic truth,” which, according to then-Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam, is the legal truth. Why is it that what seems to have been a crisis of governability and the possible fall of Peña Nieto’s government has not turned out that way?

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It is my opinion that the twilight of the “Mexican moment” of Mexico’s president is due to a perception rather than a concrete event, with two arguments: first, the “frontstage” and “backstage” discourses of the political class that explain the “divorce” between it and the citizenry; and second, the fact that the mass media, more than informing, forges public opinion and gives rise to different propaganda strategies to generate consensus and maintain hegemony.

THE POLITICS FRONTSTAGE AND BACKSTAGE

The generalized idea that there is a divorce between the citizenry and the political class persists; this can be explained by what is known as frontstage and backstage politics.

From backstage politics, what is being built is the social inequality between politicians and the public, and the exclusion of the latter from the specialized, technocratic knowledge is what has created the current disillusionment with

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politics, a disenchantment with politicians. Now, in terms of frontstage politics, the media have tented to treat politicians like celebrities, actors, or rock stars. This has fostered a fictionalization of politics and politicians, sharpening the rift between political activity and the public. This is because, instead of the media talking about the truly political actions of those in power (which occur backstage), they focus on other kinds of activities that make them look like people in the entertainment business.¹

And this is just what we see when Mexican political scandals are published, like, for example, Peña Nieto and his family on the cover of *¡Hola!* magazine during his state visit to the United Kingdom, or at the graduation party of his current wife's daughter. This keeps audiences busy with trivial pseudo-news, distracting the broad public from national political events.

It is as if, of the whole, light was being shed on only one part of the situation, and the rest was being left in the shadows. The most critical media, like journalist Carmen Aristegui's news program, *Aristegui News*, and *Proceso* (Process) magazine, have brought to light some of the most disgraceful cases of corruption and conflicts of interest of this administration. However, most citizens get their information from the news programs aired by the Televisa group television and radio stations.

MASS MEDIA, PUBLIC OPINION, AND PROPAGANDA

In 1988, Noam Chomsky and Edwar S. Herman published *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. They explain that the media tend to suppress, shade, emphasize, and select the context, the premises, and the overall agenda, and that this is highly functional for those in power groups. They also talk about a propaganda model that serves the big media, allowing the wealth of the owners and the dominant media companies to benefit by making private and public advertising their main source of income.

This strategy works for all the big media whose main interest is financial and for whom information is nothing more

than a commodity. In addition, they try to have a real influence on political decisions, mainly the ones that benefit them financially and politically.

After the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa students, Enrique Peña Nieto's honeymoon with the international press came to an end. The case was highly scandalous, not only because of the events themselves, but because of the government's inefficiency and inexpert handling of the affair and the investigations, which the international media, even those that at one time had exalted the president's image, could not ignore given their magnitude. The Tlatlaya massacre in the State of Mexico and the Ayotzinapa events are proof that Mexico is a lawless country, and media outlets like *The Economist* took the position that Peña Nieto underestimates law and order, emphasizing that distrust in the administration of justice prevails among the citizenry. In short: for the international media, Mexico is experiencing a failure in issues of security.

But these international media have followed two roads: on the one hand, they have praised Peña Nieto's structural reforms, and on the other, they have criticized the inefficacy with which the government has responded to the demand for the resolution of the case of the 43 disappeared students. Thus, what they underlined as the issues of most concern were the human rights crisis, corruption, impunity, insecurity, and the lack of governability and legitimacy of Enrique Peña Nieto's administration.

The most conservative U.S. media have centered on the issue of the disappeared students, without delving into the causes, without hinting at the idea of a possible forced disappearance or pointing out the government's responsibility. What is truly alarming for these media was that a situation of extreme insecurity and human rights violations could turn into a political and social crisis that could block the implementation of the structural reforms.

For example, *The Economist*, after hurling rebukes at Peña Nieto, and stating that he "doesn't get that he doesn't get it," closes its article saying,

His bold economic reforms may yet bring political reward. The opposition's splits may help him win a congressional election in June. But the past few months have undermined the authority he used to secure the reforms. And with polls suggesting that turnout in the election will be dismal, the main beneficiary of the cynicism the president is engendering may be Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a messianic populist who has twice almost won the presidency. Mexico deserves better.²

At first glance, the image of Mexico’s president is deteriorating. However, following the two prevailing trends in the international media, it would seem that what concerns them are the possible consequences; that is, that the social and political crisis and the levels of corruption will make it impossible to deepen the reforms and will scare away capital, investments, and big business. In no functional democracy would the level of corruption and impunity that exists in Mexico be well looked upon or allowed.

DAMAGE CONTROL AND PUBLIC IMAGE AS GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

On July 13, the *Aristegui Noticias* portal published the statement, “During the first two years of the Peña Nieto administration, the federal government has wasted more than Mex\$10.8 billion in official publicity,” more than Mex\$900 million of which went to Televisa and TV Azteca in 2014.³ This spending suggests that the current administration is extremely interested in its image and in “informing” the public of its achievements through publicity spots. Despite this onerous spending, the president’s image has deteriorated and his popularity ratings have dropped sharply.

The international press has widely reported on corruption and impunity. After the second jailbreak on July 11, 2015 of drug kingpin Joaquín “Chapo” (Shorty) Guzmán Loera from a maximum security prison, *The New York Times* was emphatic in pointing out that Peña Nieto’s credibility had waned because of it. It went on to write, “The breakout has come as a symbol of the president’s inability to overcome the deeply rooted ills of corruption and impunity and gaping holes in the rule of law.”⁴ *Crisis Group* analyst Javier Ciurlizza said that El Chapo’s second escape would lead to a crisis of trust and legitimacy for the Enrique Peña Nieto administration and both national and international analysts and media seem to agree. But despite the criticisms of the domestic and international press, the president and the ministers of defense and the navy did not cancel their visit to France, where Peña Nieto received a medal from the University of the Sorbonne in Paris.

I think that despite the demonstrations, the calls by the UN and Amnesty International, the criticisms on the social networks, the demands that Peña Nieto resign, etc., there has not been a serious crisis of governability. We can pinpoint hot spots in the states of Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Tam-

International media have followed two roads: they have praised Peña Nieto’s structural reforms and, on the other hand, they have criticized the inefficacy in the case of the 43 disappeared students.

aulipas, but the Peña Nieto administration maintains hegemony. This is due to the following:

1. Though the demonstrations, petition signing, virtual protests, etc., are an expression of the extent to which the population is fed up, in my judgment, they are only symbolic, well-intentioned acts. Huge demonstrations have taken place in Mexico City, but as yet there is no great national movement with the objective of transforming Mexico. What can be seen are disperse demonstrations with immediate —sometimes not very clear— objectives without an over-reaching political project. I think that the “Mexican spring” is not yet upon us.
2. The UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch calls have not had sufficient impact to weaken Peña Nieto’s administration, despite the crisis of legitimacy and the public’s mistrust of the justice system and the rule of law.
3. Despite the acts of corruption and conflicts of interest that members of the cabinet and even Peña Nieto have been involved in with the Higa Group, the administration continues to be invited to different international activities and conferences, like the Summit of the Americas and the World Economic Forum. It has also made state visits to the United States and the pompous trip to the United Kingdom. In my opinion, it still maintains international support and, therefore, legitimacy despite what is perceived in the media.
4. Until now, there have been no important ousters from the cabinet. To the contrary, the population perceived the appointment of Arely Gómez as the new federal attorney general as a gift to Televisa: she is the sister of Leopoldo Gómez, the vice-president of that TV network’s news department. Her predecessor, who will be remembered for revealing “the historic truth” about Ayotzinapa and for famously complaining “I’m tired” amidst the investigation into the case,⁵ Jesús Murillo Karam, moved sideways to head up the Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial, and Urban Development. Despite criticisms leveled at him from different sectors, Eduardo Medina Mora, also associated with Televisa, was ratified as a Supreme Court justice. And finally, despite the so-called “Massacre of Apatzingán” on January 6, 2015, where, according

to the media, the federal police executed 14 unarmed persons in Michoacán, then-federal-commissioner in the state, Alfredo Castillo, after being ousted from that post, was appointed to head up the National Sports Commission. And up until now, everything points to only minor functionaries being removed from their posts after El Chapo's escape.

5. Yet another example showing that despite everything, the Peña Nieto administration is calling the shots, is the scandalous silencing of journalist Carmen Aristegui, who after a difference with the MVS Group, was taken off the air. The population has understood this as a government manoeuvre to silence one of the most critical voices in the media, the person who broke the story of the case called "The White House."⁶

It is important to underline that in June 2015 mid-term elections, the party in office received 29.18 percent of the vote nationwide, a little over 11 million, making it once again

the majority in Congress. For all of the aforementioned reasons, I think we will continue to be witnesses to different manoeuvres for damage control so the economic project initiated by Enrique Peña Nieto with its reform package continues to move full speed ahead, since the structure is intact and continues to receive major international support. Examples of that are the visit of the king and queen of Spain and Peña Nieto's very enthusiastic reception by the French government, despite the many protests both there and in Mexico.

Before finishing, it should be noted that El Chapo's escape and the presidential trip to France took place at the same time that the first round of bidding for 14 blocks of oil investments began. In that context, a phrase from *The New Yorker* comes to mind: "If a man like that [like El Chapo] can buy his freedom in Mexico today, then there is nothing in the country that is not for sale."⁷ ■■■

NOTES

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⁶ About MVS's reaction to Carmen Aristegui's investigation into the president's wife's presumptive corruption case so-called the "White House," in reference to a very expensive house owned by the first lady, see <http://aristeguinoticias.com/2303/mexico/mvs-pidio-no-emitir-reportaje-de-casa-blanca-revela-aristegui/>. [Editor's Note.]
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All of us at *Voices of Mexico* sincerely regret the death of **Dr. Monica Gambrell Ruppert**, a highly regarded researcher at the UNAM's Center for Research on North America, and a frequent, enthusiastic contributor to our magazine.

We send our most sincere condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and students.

Rest in peace, **Monica**.

Corporate Governance

The Case of Nestlé Waters

Delia Montero C.*

Global governance is an idea that encompasses the relationships among diverse actors, whether they be states, multinational corporations, or international bodies, and the way they exercise their political and economic power. All these relationships occur within the dynamic of capitalism, characterized by a triple hegemony: in the economy through the increasingly strong domination of the market economy and its mercantile logic; that of the great corporations and the marked influence of their business methods above and beyond those of other kinds of organization; and the hegemony of business thinking in other spheres of society. This has generated important global changes in the rules of the game for actors, in national and international institutions, and in incentives, and, therefore, has sparked new forms of governance on a global level.

The concept of governance is also applied to the way in which multinational corporations (MCs) relate to governments and companies relate to their suppliers, as well as how a MC operates internally. For Gary Gereff, governance is made up of “authority and power relations that determine how financial, material, and human resources are allocated and flow within a chain.”¹ It is a concept that spans the relationship among diverse actors, not only those with political power, but also those who have the economic power to determine what is produced and where and how the surpluses will be distributed. His study leads me to think of a geography of economic governance and the centralization of economic activities and power.

This assumes that national states are no longer the only field of research worldwide, since other actors with political weight exist in the international arena, like international organizations or civil society organizations, as well as those with enormous economic power, like multinational corpora-



Reuters: Photographer

tions. The latter represent 25 percent of global output, of which 44 percent is produced in their overseas branches. Of the 100 most important MCs worldwide, approximately 70 percent have branches located abroad.

All production-related indicators of MC affiliate economic activities increased in 2011. In that year, overseas affiliates employed approximately 69 million workers who generated US\$28 trillion in sales and US\$7 trillion in value added, demonstrating their power internationally.² A multinational corporation’s output is not accumulated by a national state, since an important part is produced by the networks that have been woven worldwide and have become even stronger through intra-company trade.

What has contributed in recent decades to the consolidation of MCs as important global actors has been the introduction of new information technologies (NICs). This has facilitated better forms of control for monitoring their boards of directors, employees, etc. It has also allowed them to decrease transaction costs by having more efficient information systems. The NICs redefine the firm’s borders by shoring up value creation by simply sharing and transmitting information or specific knowledge. These new controls and organizational benefits transform the way they relate to the countries where they set up business. The NICs generate geographically detailed knowl-

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edge so they know how their networks interact with local governments. This allows them to construct a kind of geography of decision-making in the home office, where the decisions are always made.

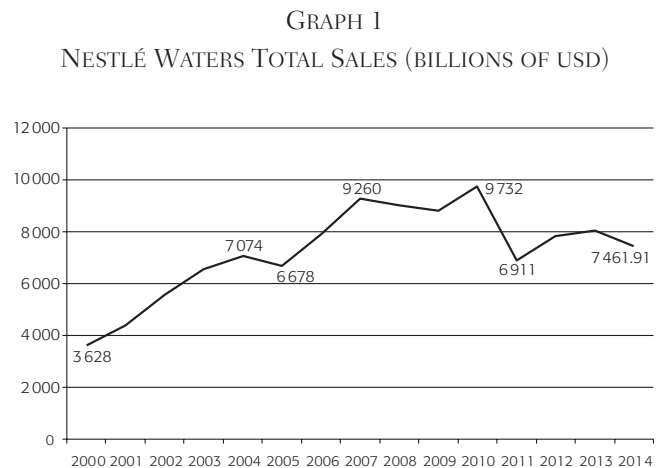
The firm Nestlé Waters North America is an exemplary case of global governance in carrying out its activities with a centralized decision-making geography. Nestlé is one of the world's biggest food corporations. It operates 481 plants in 87 countries, making 10 000 different products; it sells one billion of them every day in a total of 130 countries and employs almost 250 000 persons. It is an international organization that, like any company, has faced challenges in the fields of production controls and monitoring, but, thanks to its restructuring, it has managed to reaffirm its strong market presence.

Despite being a global company, until the 1990s, it operated through geographically- and product-determined strategic business units. The limitations of this kind of organization were made clear with the changes in the market, since it did not allow the corporation to react swiftly and forced it to negotiate different contracts with a single supplier.

As time passed, the corporation realized that its strategy, based on the decentralization of its products, brands, and communications to respond to local needs, created coordination problems. This was because most of its employees only had access to the data of their specific subsidiary as an isolated unit, and not to the information about the production and sales of other units.

In the market turbulence and increased competition of the 1990s, Nestlé recognized the need for better integration to facilitate global learning in order to exploit synergies and reduce production and transaction costs. The acquisition of new businesses increased the heterogeneity and complexity of its product portfolio; so, the firm began changing its management strategies mainly to reorganize in two ways: the division of products and geographical regions, but also differentiating their functioning. This reorganization resulted in the creation of three big divisions: Nestlé Nutrition, Nestlé Waters, and Nestlé Professional. These changes were significant because the company went from a decentralized to a centralized system with greater coordination and control.

The creation of the Nestlé Waters North America Division (NWNA) was the first example at Nestlé of the creation of a management structure based on a global product. As part of NWNA, the company set up very specific global product branches by creating two business units called Perrier Vittel and San Pellegrino to control production, distribu-



Source: Developed by the author using Nestlé financial reports (2000-2014), http://www.nestle.com/asset-library/documents/library/documents/annual_reports/2014-annual-report-in.pdf, accessed October 21, 2015.

tion, and commercialization of these two brands through a global product/brand strategy.

With the creation of NWNA, it also launched a comprehensive measurement and information system that operates by using the same language throughout the operation for bottled water worldwide, including its two business units. The result is greater integration based on close collaboration among the different specialized sections that are part of all its organizational units in order to unify efforts.

NWNA was created in 1992, headquartered in the United States; today it is one of the world's main water bottling firms. It has approximately 100 bottling plants in 36 countries, 33 500 employees, and a portfolio of 63 unique brands. It has managed to integrate into a global organization with a group of affiliates, some completely owned and others partially owned, situated on different continents. NWNA was a pioneer in the North American market, while its competitors Coca Cola and PepsiCo entered the water bottling business later.

One good reason for placing NWNA's water bottling division and the coordination of its two business units in the United States is that the region considered North America consumes 30 percent of the entire world's bottled water; it is followed by Europe, with 28 percent, and Asia, with 28 percent, with the rest distributed in the remainder of the world. But not only that. The United States represents a very attractive market because of its high income —per capita income from 2010 to 2014 rose from US\$48 374 to US\$54 600— in an area where a little over 320 000 000 inhabitants consume the most bottled water.

In the U.S., bottled water is not a basic product, as it is in Mexico, but a luxury that can stop being consumed when family finances are affected.

Mexico and the United States together consume 96.2 percent of the region’s bottled water (600.6 million hectoliters), while Canada’s consumption is marginal. On a global scale, bottled water consumption in 2010 was concentrated in four countries: the United States, Mexico, China, and Brazil consumed almost 50 percent of the world’s total.

Total NWNA sales rose steadily from 2000 to 2008, but in 2011 they dropped. However, despite their recovery, by 2014, they had still not returned to their 2010 levels. This behavior reflects to a great extent the U.S. economy’s zigzags, confirming that this is its main market (see Graph 1).

By 2002, of the total NWNA sales by region, a large part was concentrated in the United States. During the economic crisis they dropped, but by 2013 and 2014 they had recovered, concentrating in that market and Canada 51 percent of the total (see Table 1).

The evolution of bottled water consumption in the United States is worthy of note. This country is currently the world’s first consumer and one of the main countries in per capita consumption, with sales increasing steadily from 2000 to 2007, dropping slightly in 2008 and 2009 due to the economic crisis, but clearly recovering from 2010 on until 2013, when U.S. and Canadian sales came to US\$4.11 billion, 51 percent of the total. This indicates that bottled water is not a basic product, as it is in Mexico, but a luxury that can stop being consumed when family finances are affected since the population has the option of using public

utilities for their supply. The data reflect that the consumption of bottled water in the United States is linked more to marketing and income issues that NWNA has been able to handle appropriately.

The NWNA strategy for expanding in the North American market was to acquire several water bottling companies with long-standing traditions in the United States and Canada, just as it had in Europe with other well-known brands: it acquired seven of the most important companies producing spring water.

In 1980, NWNA bought Poland Spring,³ which dated from 1845 and was going broke. It is the leading bottled water brand and has a large distribution network in the United States, where it supplies 11 western states.

In 1984, NWNA purchased Zephyrhills Natural Spring Water, founded in the 1960s and distributing mainly in Florida. Later, in 1993, it acquired Deer Park Sprint Water, which was about 100 years old and gets its water from the Appalachian Mountains, distributing it mainly to nine eastern states. In 1989, it purchased PepsiCo’s Ice Mountain Bottling Company, whose market is mainly in the Midwest. Another company acquired by NWNA is the Calistoga Bottling Company located in California’s Napa Valley, which dates from 1924.⁴

NWNA also created its own brand, Nestlé Pure Life with water from public utilities that it purifies, bottles, and distributes nationwide, but mainly in the central south U.S. (see map).

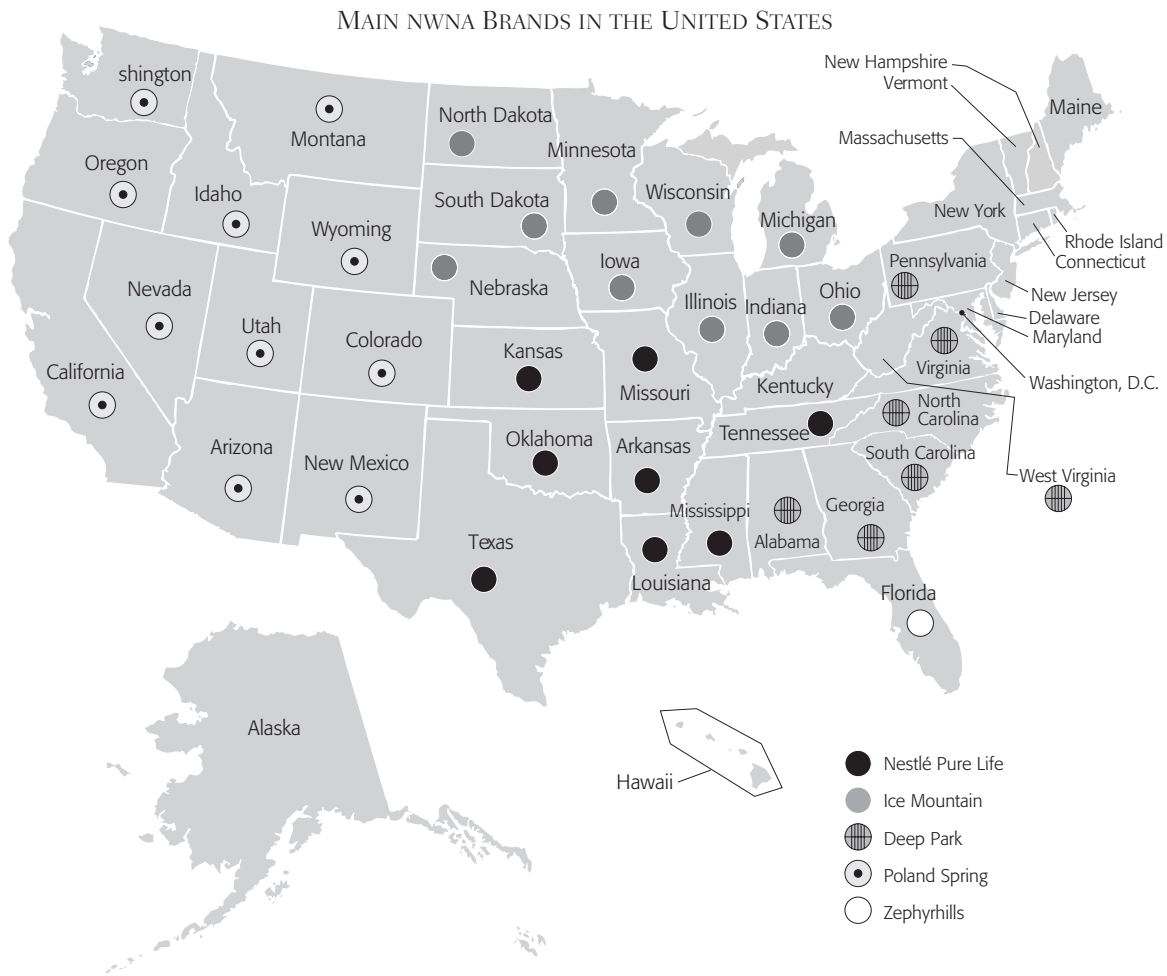
The map shows that NWNA operates in the entire country through its different brands by specific regions without their competing with each other. The new information technologies established on a global level allow them to know in real time their brands’ performance the world over so that they can get ahead of any changes that might occur. The

TABLE 1
NESTLÉ WATERS BY REGION (MILLIONS OF USD)* AND AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL

	2002	(%)	2008	(%)	2013	(%)	2014	(%)
Europe	2 522.88	45.40	4 005.34	44.40	2 446	30.50	2 211.31	29.60
United States and Canada	2 692.08	48.40	4 288.28	47.60	4 109	51.20	3 816.78	51.20
Other regions	343.44	6.20	720.04	8.00	1 470	18.30	1 433.82	19.20
Total sales	5 558.40	100.00	9 013.66	100.00	8 026	100.00	7 461.91	100.00

Source: Developed by the author using Nestlé Annual Reports (2002-2014), http://www.nestle.com/asset-library/documents/library/documents/annual_reports/2014-annual-report-en.pdf, accessed October 21, 2015.

*The original figures were in Swiss francs and have been estimated in USD based on the exchange rate for each respective year.



Source: Developed by the author based on the document “Beverage Marketing Corporation” and the Nestlé Waters official website.

case of the United States is just one example that shows the consolidation of a broad distribution network of its vast range of brands that bottle water nationwide, consolidating a geography very well defined by brands, boosting and centralizing its power in each region. Its production and distribution networks also use these technologies for marketing their bottled water in Europe under brands like Perrier, Vittel, and San Pellegrino. NWNA takes on board the fundamental principle of the Nestlé group of always being very close to the consumer; undoubtedly, this strategy has allowed them to report sales for US\$3.8 billion in 2014 in the United States. **MM**

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A Creative Look at Migration through Art

Human movement across borders has been a source of inspiration for contemporary art. From the point of view of the anthropology and the sociology of art, this issue of *Voices of Mexico* discusses the relationship between art and migration. The articles in this section suggest the importance of creating new readings and currents of thought about artistic creation that condense the memory and cultural heritage of migrant populations.

The special section dedicated to art by migrants analyzes the narratives in visual arts, literature, and cinema that express both the phenomenon of migration itself and the creation of digital communities in border areas. It also includes a brief selection of poems by Chicano poet Francisco X. Alarcón about the importance of migration and the migrant experience, with a language of his own, characteristic of Chicano literature.

In addition to underlining the artistic value of its subject matter, this section will also contribute to the understanding of migration as a space for artistic interpretation, where we can reflect about what migrants experience both as individuals and collectively in their exodus.

Paola Virginia Suárez Ávila



Being a Migrant

Cristian Pineda's Participatory Art

Pascale Naveau Pineda*

In recent years, migration and border crossings between Mexico and the United States have been a recurring motif for many artists. In their canvases, with their pens, or with their cameras, they have denounced the forced disappearances, murders, rapes, and other forms of ill treatment suffered by Central American and Mexican migrants in their pilgrimage to the United States, and the reasons that force them to abandon their countries, usually violence, insecurity, and the lack of opportunities. This article deals with an artistic dynamic developing around the issue of “being a migrant” in the projects by visual artist Cristian Pineda, who shows through his art that it is much more than being a victim, someone undocumented, an “illegal.”

For more than a decade, Cristian Pineda's art has been committed to the issue of migration. From our very first interviews as part of my research project about the reconstruction of the fabric of Mexican society based on artistic processes, it was very clear to me that Cristian did his work not only with skill, but with great conviction. As he said, “Art serves to navigate a little more, to humanize the hard data.”

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Photos courtesy of Cristian Pineda and the author.



▲ Wayfarers.





◀ Circle of Life 1.

**"Art serves to navigate a little more,
to humanize the hard data."
Cristian Pineda**



▶ Circle of Life 2.

What role can art play in a situation of such violence that even governments are overwhelmed and people have to flee their countries to survive? That question is the starting point for my research around the work of this artist from Oaxaca.

The crosscutting themes guiding the painter's artistic process coincide with the questions posed in my own research. That was how we decided to pool our knowledge to develop participatory art projects with migrants in transit through Mexico, but also with refugees from other countries (mainly Africa) in Belgium.

After almost 10 years of creating art with migratory themes in Mexico and other countries, Pineda's vast experience and the diversity of his projects led him to expand his artistic horizon and experiment with new ways of making art in which the migrants themselves are the protagonists. It is not by chance that this self-taught visual artist directs his motivation at the question of migration. Cristian was born in Juchitán, a town in the state of Oaxaca on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This part of the country is an obligatory transit point for Central Americans who want to cross Mexico to the United States. So, from his childhood on, he met migrants, listened to their stories and dreamed about their countries, allowing him to establish relationships of empathy and understanding with them. From 2006 on, Pineda began to be committed to their cause through his work and, both individually and collec-

tively, joining with other artists, he has developed participatory art projects with migrants and refugees.

His first steps along this road can be found in the 2006 series *Wayfarers*. According to art and migration specialist and sociologist Víctor Espinosa,

A more important fact in the development of his own work was the creation of almost 300 sketches of human figures that he did while exploring the route of the migrants. . . . Creating these sketches served as a catharsis that helped him process the reality he saw during his journey. These drawings also became a graphic archive that recorded the inhuman, vulnerable conditions of the migrants in their passage through Mexico.¹

This project later led him to collaborate with the Chiquitraca Graffiti-artist Collective in the work *Where Are They!* about the enormous number of people who have disappeared



▲ *Circle of Life 3.*

in recent years in Mexico.² The work was shown publically during a protest at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City at the time of President Barack Obama's 2013 visit. Cristian Pineda's search for collective experimentation in his work, his forms of action or irruption onto the public space, and his enormous interest in the social expressions of the citizenry are what motivated him to participate in this collective project.

Based on this experience of interaction with the public space, Pineda set his sights on transcending the work *Where Are They!* and developing a participatory art project directly with migrants, which would be exhibited on the street in order to interact, in turn, directly with the



▲ Boxes of Life 2.

Pineda decided to create these participatory projects to develop a genuine vision of what it means to be a migrant.

public. In addition, given the fact that in our society it is almost always the media that guides public opinion about what migrants supposedly are, Pineda decided to create these participatory projects to develop a genuine vision of what it means to be a migrant. This concept became one of his most important works, *Being a Migrant*. By putting the accent on the subjectivity and experience of the participants themselves, this project/work shows the process that allows migrants to go from being victims to being actors, spokespersons for a political and social critique.

This is how Cristian Pineda began a new adventure: participatory art with communities fleeing from the violence in their countries of origin. His first experience began in 2013 with *Paper Wayfarers*. He distributed paper, paints, and pens to migrants so they could draw and write about their condition as migrants. Pineda did not set out to create works that would respect conventional artistic norms and aesthetics with this project, since what he was really interested in was getting down the human process whereby the migrants narrated their individual stories. *Paper Wayfarers* consists of 50 sketches selected from the 300 drawings of his *Wayfarers*, reworked by the migrants themselves, evoking a multicultural human exodus.³ Due to the multitude of sketches and the symbolic charge of the violence they illustrate, *Paper Wayfarers* translates more than anything else the exodus between Central America and the United

States. This project offers a space for the collective participation of migrants together with the artist to construct a work that serves to contain the experiences, narrations, and denunciations about their journey through Mexico. By giving these apparently invisible and undocumented migrants a name, an age, and a nationality, the project gives them a presence.

In that same year, Pineda began a second participatory art project, *Boxes of Life*, with refugees in Belgium. These are wooden boxes that participants use to deposit their experiences and construct the work. In Belgium, he worked with asylum seekers at a Red Cross center where they await a government response about their remaining in the country. Pineda interacted there with people from very diverse cultures and nationalities: Africans, Afghanis, Kurds, and Nepalese, among others. He was very surprised by their sketching and painting techniques, but also by the stories and the wealth of their cultures of origin. This was a very enriching geographical and cultural journey for Cristian and artistically allowed him to experience and observe new horizons. By making his project a participatory art process, he gained a new experience, which favors “meeting a new world.”⁴

By giving these apparently invisible and undocumented migrants a name, an age, and a nationality, the project gives them a presence.



▲ *Boxes of Life 1.*

The work takes this simple idea as a starting point: the object stops being just a thing and turns into an instrument of historic identity, emphasizing how the violence conditions *Being a Migrant*.

Boxes of Life 3. ▶



Parallel to these two participatory art projects, Pineda traveled to the Mexico-U.S. border to see the Arizona desert; he created a work of art based on this experience, *Circles of Life*. His idea here is to symbolize isolated violence using objects abandoned by the migrants in the desert. These objects arranged in a circle are Pineda's installation. This *objet d'art* transmits the idea that no one is protected against violence and that it reaches us all. The work takes this simple idea as a starting point: the object stops being just a thing and turns into an instrument of historic identity, emphasizing how the violence conditions *Being a Migrant*. This sum of apparently isolated facts outlines the generalized violence in our societies; it begins by attacking those most vulnerable, but then expands in a never-ending spiral.

In 2014, Pineda went through a personal experience that made him leave his country and live temporarily in Belgium. During his stay, he produced the series "Foreignisms," in which he experienced *Being a Migrant* from another perspective: his own.

The work is a series of pieces that express my experience when I felt like a foreigner, overwhelmed, far from my visual, cultural, and emotional reference points. This work is the result of a moment of change, of transformation, of a search for myself in another reality, another context, other coordinates, other environmental frequencies, other economic, socio-cultural, commercial stimuli.⁵

The pieces in this series make reference to the emotions, the feelings of the moment, nature, the landscape, and the very marked linguistic and cultural frontiers in this country, but also to his own limitations, whether due to the language or for more cultural and emotional reasons. With "Foreignisms," Pineda not only traveled to another country, but also experienced and journeyed in the shoes of *Being a Migrant*.

On his return to Mexico, Cristian once again took up the topic of migration in Juchitán, the place where it all started. "Migroma" is a large-scale project made up of a series of 30 wooden statues. Faithful to his characters in the 300 *Wayfarers* sketches, the figures in these statues are the same: full-sized human silhouettes that, because of their form and dimensions, have

a very imposing symbolic impact. This work is a public art project, and the statues will be exhibited in the country's streets, central plazas, and parks.

Ten years of trips, discoveries, encounters, narratives, emotions, lessons, experiences, tears, smiles, and much more. At 35, Cristian Pineda has worked ceaselessly on the issue of migration. Because you cannot rest in the face of the sad reality of migration around the globe. He continues traveling the world over and over tirelessly. His trips are accompanied by many reflections about violence, borders, hope, being human, space and territory, and he transmits them to us through his work. Nicolas Bourriaud defines interpersonal art as the art that “has as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and their social context more than the affirmation of a symbolic, autonomous, private space.”⁶ Pineda's art is situated in this desire to interact with his social surroundings and day-to-day experiences. For Bourriaud, interpersonal art “encompasses all the practices that place the aesthetic relationship at the heart of the artistic process and that deal with the issues of connection, encounters, and collaboration.”⁷

Traveling, always traveling. Traveling to other countries, to other borders, to other cultures; traveling toward new artistic experiences. Transcending his knowledge and practices, with his guiding principle: a search for something “beyond.” Going beyond borders and going beyond denunciation. That is the reality—and the dream—of Cristian Pineda. **MM**



◀ Paper Wayfarer 1.

Ten years of trips, discoveries, encounters, narratives, emotions, lessons, experiences, tears, smiles, and much more. At 35, Cristian Pineda has worked ceaselessly on the issue of migration.

NOTES

- ¹ Víctor Espinosa, *Santuarios* (Mexico City: private collector, 2015), p. 30.
- ² Chiquitracra is a collective of Juchitán-based graffiti artists that paints the faces of elders on the facades of traditional houses.
- ³ For several years, Pineda has been visiting migrant shelters in different parts of Mexico where he shares their conditions. The migrants express their experiences through artistic activities.
- ⁴ Catherine Duchesneau, “De la participation en art. L'Écomusée du fier monde comme alliance entre l'art et la participation citoyenne”, *Art participatif et démocratie/Participative Art and Democracy* (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2011).
- ⁵ Interview by the author with Cristian Pineda in 2015.
- ⁶ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Ésthétique relationnelle* (Dijon, France: Presses du réel, 2011).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*

Suggested links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNuNG9fCj8> (*Paper Wayfarers*).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfkJhlg-2so> (*Boxes of Life*).

Migration and Art in *San Francisco Tanivet*

Adriana Fournier Uriegas*



"I'm going to go; I'm going to go to the United States. To see my aunts and uncles and cousins, to see what it's like, to travel; to work, to earn dollars. It's, like, here you can't earn much money because people don't pay enough. That's why."

"Yes, I want to go to the United States when I turn 16 to help out my parents with money."

These are children from San Francisco Tanivet speaking in a documentary produced by Ángel Jara Taboada and Marietta Bernstroff about the community's history. Tanivet, as the locals call it, is 40 minutes from the city of Oaxaca and is part of the Tlacolula de Matamoros district.

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Photos courtesy of Marietta Bernstroff.

Migration has been a constant for San Francisco Tanivet inhabitants. This age-old process, as complex as society itself, is understood as the spatial displacement of the population. A migrant is a person who changes his or her habitual residence crossing geographical and political-administrative boundaries. However, this does not give a picture of the undoubted difficulty of the whole process. In today's world, the reasons behind the mobility of human beings have changed. In the past, individuals or groups migrated to expand trade or colonize new territories. Now, the main reason is to satisfy basic and employment needs. From the beginning of the last century, Mexico has been one of the world's biggest exporters of migrants, who have impacted the culture and life of their destinations, mainly the United States.

The lack of prospects for the future, the few well-paying job opportunities, the deficient educational system, and the idea that nothing good could come to Tanivet pushed the community's young people to leave. Spurred by hope and the aspiration of overcoming the dissatisfaction that affects their personal lives and the town's collective existence, it is mostly young men who have



The lack of prospects for the future and the idea that nothing good could come to Tanivet pushed the community's young people to leave.



left their homes to venture out on the risky migratory road that would take them to the U.S. Most of those who leave the community opt for California. The dangers of crossing our country's northern border are well known. Migrants have to cross the desert and find a way to achieve the "American Dream." The crossings their parents have taken, whether through Tijuana or El Paso, are repeated by their children. The dissatisfaction that migrating has brought their fathers, mothers, and children is a social obstacle for the families' economic and personal development in the community. That is why the women of Tanivet saw no possibility of growing in the future.

In the past, San Francisco Tanivet was a hacienda where people brought in from other towns in Oaxaca and the rest of the country worked. They mainly grew corn and garbanzo beans or chick peas, but they could not support their families on the pay. So, the men began to emigrate to the North, leaving the women to worry, without enough mon-

From the start, the San Francisco Tanivet Initiative has aimed to help the residents use art as therapy to explore skills and forms of expression.



ey or job opportunities. They have lived this way for several decades. This community, in contrast with many others in Oaxaca, does not have any particular tradition or popular festivities or craft that makes them stand out. Some of the inhabitants say, “The whole community has family in the United States, and, if they don’t, they would like to.” Many of those who leave cannot come back to Mexico because they do not have the necessary documents to go and come freely. The ones who return to Tanivet will probably never be able to go back to the United States again. One of the women interviewed for the documentary mentioned above talks about how the town has changed since the young people started leaving: “Before, the town looked sadder, with houses made out of cane and reeds, out of cardboard sheeting.” Undoubtedly, remittances help a community with high migration economically, but the issue of the morale of the people who live there cannot be ignored. The departure of husbands and children creates anxiety due to the prolonged silence, the uncertainty about where they are, and the fear about the enormous risks they run. None of these are feelings that remittances can easily remedy.

In 2010, the inhabitants of San Francisco Tanivet began an art project lead by curator Marietta Bernstroff, a project that would not only raise family incomes, but also people’s spirits. After several talks with the women of Tanivet, it was decided that by using patchwork, embroidery, and the liberating exercise of creating art, the community could start to develop and then begin to prosper. They had no financial support from the government; but, a network of artists and educators was assembled who began to visit the community to share their skills with the women. The artists Bernstroff brought in alternated to avoid possible biases about how the community should represent their stories, which they wanted to be expressed through the eyes and memory of each woman, regardless of the guest artists’ preconceived ideas. The project also receives donations from women in the city of Oaxaca and the United States. From the start, this initiative has aimed to help the residents use art as therapy to explore skills and forms of expression, in addition to the fact that the embroidery they produced could be sold on the market. The project underlines the importance of the community’s history; it reinforces its identity and renews its spirits. Creating

a space for recreation in the community, Marietta Bernstroff and the women agree that it is important to have a place to come back to, where there are both income and better opportunities. They agree that a space must be created that offers skills that will be useful in Mexico or, if necessary, abroad.

The families, husbands, and the “Embroidery Ants” themselves, as Tanivet’s women embroiderers are called, now have to deal with feelings of pride, surprise, and valuing themselves both artistically and personally. They use a patchwork technique, piecing together remnants of cloth, and appliqué, which consists of placing figures made of different pieces of cloth on another piece of cloth or object. They make long paintings whose colors are made of recycled cloth. They discovered talent where they thought there was none and numerous ways forward through art.

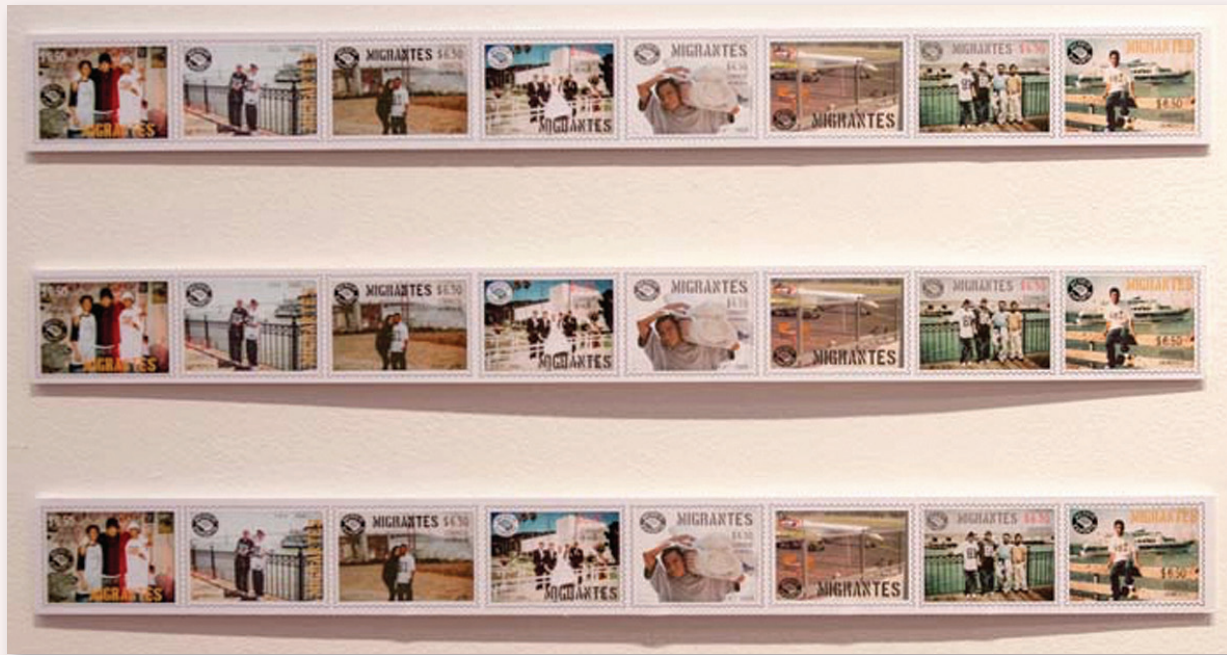
In February of this year, Mexico City’s Folk Art Museum inaugurated the exhibit “New Codex: Oaxaca, Migration and Cultural Memory,” with the participation of 43 artists together with the San Francisco Tanivet community and others that have

also experienced migration. The exhibition included textiles, photographs, knitting, engravings, and letters that could all be used to reconstruct and interpret the experience of migration that communities like Tanivet have had. Together with the Oaxacan artists, works were shown that had used different techniques like textiles, painting, gourds, videos, and stenciling. Among the pieces are *Traces*, by Jannis Huerta, socks embroidered with red patches representing the exhausting road the migrants travel; *Routes of Absence*, by Ana Hernández, an embroidered map that shows the Tehuantepec Isthmus with the routes traveled and the connecting points between departures and destinations; and *American Dream* by José Cruz, an engraving on a gourd from Pinotepa de Don Luis, that involves a failed experience of migrating to the United States. The artists’ memory is what allows them to understand and take pride in their cultural memory, achieved through contemporary artistic language.

Today, the same exhibition is on display at the Social and Public Art Resource Center in Los Angeles, California.¹ The “New Codex” exhibition chal-

The families, husbands, and the “Embroidery Ants” themselves now have to deal with feelings of pride, surprise, and valuing themselves both artistically and personally.





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lenged political limits, not only because it shares local work internationally, but also because it meant getting visas for two Tanivet embroiderers, Juana and Leo, who had not seen their children for about 10 years. So, an emotional reunion was held where happiness was the predominant note. The exhibition has been so well received that it may be extended for several more months; meanwhile, the women embroiderers are preparing another exhibition where they will present a mural for Oaxaca's Textile Museum.

Marietta Bernstroff has been working with the women from Tanivet through embroidery for a little over six years. In 2006, she also founded with them MAMAZ, the abbreviation from the Spanish for Women Artists and Corn, where they worked with participants from Mexico, Cuba, and the United States. This project began after the multinational company Monsanto brought in its genetically modified seeds. The project represents women's relationship to the countryside through embroidery, using materials accessible to them, like corn or flour sacks and sheets. With "New Codex: Oaxaca, Mi-

gration and Cultural Memory," these women have reconstructed their history with needles and have woven their experience into cloth.

The Tanivet embroiderers now have skills that they had not known about before, with a strength that allows them to produce and express themselves; they are disposed to create and make art. The women of Tanivet represent in their embroidery the difficulties they have had to undergo as their family members leave; they portray a life of memories, absence, and desolation.

Marietta Bernstroff's project is contemporary and conceptual, but with a social approach. She tells us that, from this experience she has learned the importance of "doing art for art's sake, of people telling their stories, and that art is not merely conceptual." She also notes that we must understand the arts in their different forms. For her, it is very important that there be no dividing line between art and crafts, that the value of art be understood whether it comes from indigenous communities or urban artists. The issue is not whether this is



The women of Tanivet represent in their embroidery the difficulties they have had to undergo as their family members leave; they portray a life of memories, absence, and desolation.

contemporary art or not, but the lack of opportunities to explore. Many communities like Tanivet do not have art workshops or support to improve their schools. They have to make utilitarian art that they can sell to the tourists, and, if that does not work, then they migrate to pursue the “American Dream.” Bernstroff says about the contemporary art she works with that it is an expression of the moment, the day, but with another language: “If history is understood through art, through these women, these artists, then you can understand the problem of migration.”

Using these principles, she maintains the idea of letting the embroiderers explore all the artistic possibilities. She knows they do not consider themselves artisans because they do not have that ancient cultural tradition, and the women of Tanivet have become the artists they are today by exploring the use of fabric and colors in their cloth canvases. For Marietta, “to speak of contemporary visual artistic language is to speak of the Embroidery Ants of Tanivet.”

The works of the women of Tanivet go beyond the beauty of artistic expression. Their work transcends borders, literally and metaphorically; not only has their art crossed to the United States, but it has also crossed over the line of hopelessness to find a reason for pride reflected in each of their embroideries. San Francisco Tanivet has gone through the process of migration and, prompted by it, the community, together with Marietta Bernstroff, has lifted itself up, reminding us of the importance of cultural identity. Tanivet’s “ants” emanate dignity and leave in their wake a transcendent lesson charged with beauty, motivation, and effort. **NM**

EDITOR’S NOTE

English composer and pianist Michael Nyman participates in the exhibit with a documentary and a series of letters from his personal collection written by an immigrant and his family between 1917 and 1943, which reflect the day-to-day difficulties experienced in the migratory process.

The Golden Dream

Migration and Realism in Fictional Film

Montserrat Algarabel*





Migration has been widely addressed throughout the history of Mexican cinema. In both dramas and documentary features, Mexican filmmakers have explored stories and characters involving this constant flow of people, mostly from Mexico into the United States, bringing forth changing perceptions and creating different perspectives about this complex phenomenon. Some examples of the various approaches to this in Mexican movies are fictional films by renowned directors, such as *Espaldas mojadas* (*Wetbacks*) (Alejandro Galindo, 1953), a classic crime thriller set in the border town of Ciudad Juárez; *La ilegal* (*The Illegal Woman*) (Arturo Ripstein, 1979), the melodramatic account of a woman's disappointments and struggles in California, starring soap opera diva Lucía Méndez; and *El jardín del Edén* (*The Garden of Eden*, María Novaro, Canada/France/Mexico, 1994), an almost mythical quest by a group of women for a promised land along the Mexico-U.S. border. Recent Mexican documentary films like *Mi vida dentro* (*My Life Inside*, Lucía Gajá, 2007), *La frontera infinita* (*The Infinite Border*, Juan Manuel Sepúlveda, 2007), and *Los que se quedan* (*Those Who Remain*, Juan Carlos Rulfo and Carlos Hagerman, 2008), focus on critically describing the plight of both Central Americans and Mexicans who migrate to the U.S., most of them lacking legal documentation, as well as on the manifold aspects and consequences of this specific kind of migration.

Through fictional and documentary narratives, these Mexican filmmakers have depicted the never-ending dangers of travelling north and then trying to safely cross the border without papers, coupled with the constant fear of deportation once in the United States. They have exposed the hardships and uncertainty faced by broken families as some family members choose to leave their hometowns while others have to stay behind; they have denounced human rights violations of those harassed by authorities and criminal organizations alike, mi-

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Photos of *The Golden Dream* courtesy of Machete Films.

grants who are even killed, enslaved, and forcibly disappeared along the treacherous road to the U.S.; and they have narrated the stories of the few who painfully make it *al otro lado* (to the other side), searching for the so-called American Dream given the poverty, desperation, and lack of opportunities in their places of origin, revealing how tough everyday life in a foreign country is for a migrant with no clear legal status and highlighting the cultural conflicts that migration entails.

Even comedies, like *A Day without a Mexican* (Sergio Arau, U.S./Mexico/Spain, 2004) and the mega blockbuster, both in Mexican and U.S. theatres, *Instructions Not Included* (*No se aceptan devoluciones*, Eugenio Derbez, 2013), touch on issues related to migration. The former uses parody to recount a raving mad tale showing the disastrous impact that the sudden, unexplained disappearance of all Mexican migrant workers has on U.S. Americans' daily life. The latter, through Derbez's characteristic slapstick humor, displays all kinds of zany sequences as Valentín (Eugenio Derbez himself), the clumsy Mexican main character, illegally migrates to the U.S. with his baby girl without major setbacks, and then slowly but surely succeeds in the Hollywood film industry as a stunt man. This kind of fictional success story contrasts sharply with more realistic narratives depicting a bleaker state of affairs: by watching the news and reading the papers, one can easily infer that this kind of success is the rare exception for large migrant populations rather than a proven rule.

Through fictional and documentary narratives, Mexican filmmakers have depicted the never-ending dangers of travelling north and then trying to safely cross the border without papers.





Given these examples of how Mexican filmmakers have represented migration in cinema, Spanish-born, Mexican director Diego Quemada-Diez's first feature film, *La jaula de oro* (The Golden Dream, Mexico, 2013), emerges as a unique approach to this topic because it describes in full, gritty, and sometimes unsettling detail, migrants' perilous experience, centering the whole story on the journey itself. Closer to documentary narrative and aesthetics than to fictional accounts, this drama delves into migration's all-too-real trials and tribulations, into different kinds of well-documented abuse that thousands of migrants are currently subjected to in their north-bound voyage.

The Golden Dream follows three Guatemalan teenagers, Juan (Brandon López), Sara (Karen Martínez), posing as a boy by the name of Oswaldo, and Samuel (Carlos Chajón), as they cross into Mexico and plan to make their way toward the U.S. After entering Mexico, Juan, Sara, and Samuel are joined by Chauk (Rodolfo Domínguez), a Tzotzil teen who speaks no Spanish but quietly exhibits a keen understanding of

adult life. Juan does not want to travel alongside Chauk: he shows a certain racism when he constantly dismisses Chauk for being an *indio*, and allows jealousy to seep in because Sara, his budding love interest, manages to befriend Chauk despite the language barrier. While in Chiapas, Juan, Chauk, and Samuel face their first obstacle as they are violently caught by policemen (presumably immigration officials) and are found to have no papers: their backpacks and shoes are stolen and they are forced back into Guatemala. After this unfortunate experience, Samuel decides to stay there, while Juan and Chauk resume their journey. They cross the border into Mexico for a second time to reunite with Sara and the threesome boards a train, known as *La Bestia* (The Beast), which will take them all the way north to the Mexican-U.S. border. When the train is stopped by soldiers in order to seize and later deport the travelling migrants, Juan, Sara, and Chauk manage to escape and find refuge in a sugarcane plantation, where they find a place to stay and jobs. Further down the road, the three teenagers are captured by several armed men —*narcos* in all likelihood—, who take Sara with them when they realize she is a girl and beat up Juan and Chauk as they try to prevent her abduction. After accepting that they cannot get Sara back, Chauk nurses Juan's injuries to continue with their journey. Together with several other migrants, Juan and Chauk are again captured by another group of armed men (most certainly linked to organized crime) who ask the kidnapped twosome for U.S. telephone numbers to carry out an extortion scheme. Juan is set free but returns to pay Chauk's ransom using his earnings from working in the cane fields. Juan and Chauk finally arrive in the border town of Mexicali and pass over into the United States with the help of human smugglers, colloquially known as *polleros*, who, after taking what is left of the teens' money for their so-called services, leave them all alone in the desert. Quite unexpectedly, Chauk becomes the target of a U.S. American hunter of undocumented immigrants when a bullet hits and instantly kills him.



La jaula de oro (The Golden Dream), has a unique approach to migration, describing in full, gritty, and sometimes unsettling detail, migrants' perilous experience, centering the whole story on the journey itself.





The “golden dream” of the movie, the expectations of a better future that fuelled Juan’s hellish journey and motivated him to flee from an impoverished and hopeless Guatemala for the U.S., is transformed into a “golden cage.”

Once on U.S. soil, a forlorn Juan seemingly finds an end to his odyssey when he manages to get a menial job at a meat factory. Thus, the “golden dream” of the movie, the expectations of a better future that fuelled Juan’s hellish journey and motivated him to flee from an impoverished and hopeless Guatemala for the U.S., a promised land of opportunities, is transformed into a “golden cage” upon Juan’s arrival in California, a trap consisting of long factory hours, squalid working conditions, and the looming threat of deportation, suggested by the film’s title in Spanish. That title was actually borrowed from the 1983 popular *corrido* “La jaula de oro” (The Golden Cage), by the *norteno* group Los Tigres del Norte. The nostalgic lyrics to the song are the voice of a homesick *mojado* (“wetback”) lamenting the menacing prospect of being deported after 10 years of living and working in the U.S. and bemoaning the fact that he has become “a prisoner in this great nation” despite having achieved a much better life style for himself and for his family than the one they had back in Mexico.



Before *The Golden Dream*, Quemada-Diez had worked extensively in major motion pictures, including three films by distinguished British director Ken Loach (as a clapper loader in *Land and Freedom*; as an assistant camera operator in *Carla’s Song*; and as a camera operator in *Bread and Roses*), as well as Alejandro González Iñárritu’s *21 Grams* and Fernando Meirelles’s *The Constant Gardener* (in both of which Quemada-Diez was a camera operator). His close connection to Loach’s realistic filmmaking style, subject matter, and socially engaged and politically conscious storytelling certainly inspired Quemada-Diez to create a vivid account about migration, based on the director’s own thorough research and interviews with migrants, the raw material for the script he co-wrote with Gibrán Portela and Lucía Carreras.

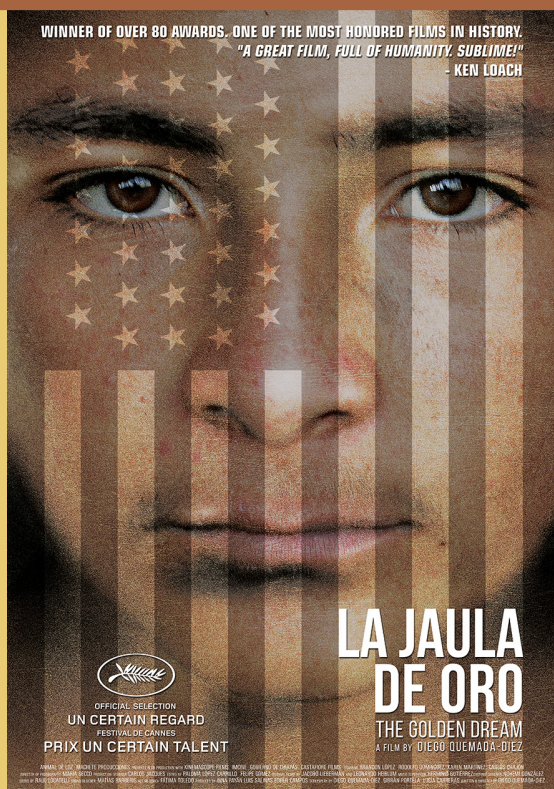


This is an unmistakably urgent film, just like the current situation of migrants not only in Mexico and on the line that separates it from the U.S., but worldwide.

The Golden Dream's actuality is further anchored by the casting choice of non-professional actors and by the brief on-camera appearance of Alejandro Solalinde, a renowned Catholic priest and human rights activist who has tirelessly helped and supported migrants in his *Hermanos en el camino* (Brothers on the Road) shelter, located in Ixtepec, Oaxaca. This cameo, coupled with a careful selection of locations along *La Bestia's* path (picturing different places in the Mexican states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Morelos, State of Mexico, Jalisco, Michoacán, Sonora, and Baja California), beautifully shot by cinematographer María Secco, and the featuring of authentic migrants on their way north, provides *The Golden Dream* with poignant realism, in no way softened or sweetened by the film's narrative. The protagonists' encounters with different abuses, from officials in all levels of authority to drug traffickers and other kinds of organized crime gangs, clearly display how migrants, under the pretext of being undocumented, are put into a place of constant vulnerability that results in mistreatment, intimidation, violence, exploitation, and, ultimately, death, as Chauk's fate shows.

Within this context of extreme vulnerability, females are specially targeted given the intensified sexual harassment and assaults that they endure on the road. Although Sara's fate is not explicitly made clear in *The Golden Dream*, it is indicative of how *narcos* routinely kidnap migrant women and girls to rape them and later on enslave them in prostitution rings. Needless to say, drug traffickers are not the sole perpetrators of violence against migrant women, as immigration personnel and other civil servants in several countries often demand sexual favors in exchange for safe passage. In short, Quemada-Diez's narrative is non-complacent, giving a truthful account of migration: the fact that only one out of four main characters makes it all the way on their journey from Guatemala to the U.S. points to the real-life appalling statistics that attest to the human catastrophe entailed in migration today.





It is quite likely that this brutal honesty in the depiction of migration —albeit sensitive, restrained, aesthetically flawless, and certainly non-melodramatic— explains why *The Golden Dream* has gathered several awards and mostly positive reviews around the world. Quemada-Diez won the François Chalais Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013, where the ensemble cast was given due credit for their performances in the film with the “Un Certain Regard” prize; Quemada-Diez also received the Gold Hugo in the New Directors Competition at the Chicago International Film Festival held in 2013. In addition, he was awarded a Special Jury Prize for a First Work at the 2013 Havana Film Festival. In Mexico, *The Golden Dream* received most of the Ariel Awards —Mexico’s Oscars— it was nominated for in 2014, including Best Picture, Best Screenplay, Best Sound, Best Editing, Best Score, and Best Cinematography, and it obtained the prize for Best First or Second Mexican Feature in the 2013 Morelia International Film Festival. All this makes *The Golden Dream* one of the most lauded and talked-about films in recent Mexican cinema history.

This is an unmistakably urgent film, just like the current situation of migrants not only in Mexico and the line that separates it from the U.S., but worldwide. *The Golden Dream* marries social concerns with both aesthetic and emotional insight, helping viewers get a brief glance at a reality that calls for further research in several academic fields and, most crucially, that demands that governments on both sides of every border take decisive action. **MM**



Narco Series

A New Narco-Ethics?

Ainhoa Vásquez Mejías*

[1] ▶



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3. The Lord of the Heavens. 4. The Queen of the South.

1. Camelia the Texan. 2. The Team.

Many Latin Americans living in the United States today can say they have not lost their cultural roots in part thanks to the television produced in Miami. Far from their homelands, but rebuilding them

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Photos courtesy of series production companies.

through fiction, Mexican scriptwriters, directors, actors, and producers recover the life, world view, and social predicaments of their places of origin to transmit them to their compatriots living in the same uprooted circumstances. *Telenovelas*, or soap operas, have historically played a fundamental role in this sense: they unify the experiences of transnational communities, develop a feeling of identity for Latin American migrants in the United States, and keep memory alive. *El señor de los*



The Queen of the South.

cielos (The Lord of the Heavens), for example, is already in its third season; in three years it became the most successful *telenovela* ever produced by the U.S. television network Telemundo, together with the Mexican production company Argos, boasting an audience of over three million viewers.¹ This is a sub-genre of the traditional *novela*, which has been dubbed “narco series,” revolving around the world of drug trafficking, bringing the violence of the cartels and the adventures of the big drug kingpins to the small screen.

It may be so successful because *The Lord of the Heavens* is inspired by the life and the myths about drug trafficker Amado Carrillo Fuentes (the show’s character Aurelio Casillas) and tells the story of a flesh-and-blood man that all the Latinos in the United States have heard of. So successful, also, because it has taken on board all the elements of this cultural creation that has, in turn, been dubbed the “narco aesthetic,” the image of the culture surrounding drug trafficking, spawning works like the aforementioned *novelas*, literature, film, and music. A narrative sub-genre derived from this social problem that, from the Miami television industry, has captivated Mexican viewers, depicting villains who seem to be heroes in a constant struggle against dark political forces.

The narco-aesthetic has emphasized ostentation, showing off excessive luxury in high-quality clothing, mansions, haciendas, and surgically-created beautiful women. Money gotten through murdering rivals and highly profitable drug trafficking at the same time that it puts anyone in the business’s life in danger. Existing on the limits, always in danger, and therefore valiantly. Lives worth living in order to get wealth, fame, power. An attractive image for multiple audiences: adults, young people, and even children who project their yearnings, dreams,

Mexican scriptwriters recover the life, world view, and social predicaments of their places of origin to transmit them to their compatriots living in the same uprooted circumstances.



The Team.

and fantasies of splendor in that vision of others who have escaped from misery, poverty, and helplessness, to become millionaires, respected by all. A way of thinking that has become an ethics, more than an aesthetic, as Colombian critic Omar Rincón says, “Anything goes to stop being poor,” the ethics of financial gain at the cost of anyone who gets in your way.²

Some elements of the narco-aesthetic have been appropriated by the narco series to make a few pioneering *novelas* into million-dollar investments with heretofore unimagined ratings, like *La reina del Sur* (The Queen of the South), *Camelia la texana* (Camelia the Texan), *Señora acero* (Lady Steel), and the three seasons of *The Lord of the Heavens* by Telemundo and Argos; *Los dueños del paraíso* (Owners of Paradise), a co-production of Telemundo and Chile’s National Television station; Univisión’s *Escobar, el patrón del mal* (Pablo Escobar: The Drug Lord) and *La viuda negra* (The Black Widow); AXN’s *El mariachi* (The Mariachi); and TNT’s *Señorita pólvora* (Miss Gunpowder), creations of U.S. television networks who have decided to use Mexican screenwriters and actors to invest capital in this format in view of these stories’ high earnings, though they have little love and lots of blood.

Telenovelas with elements of the narco-aesthetic, like ostentation and excess: excessive violence, excessive wealth,³ and a new narco-ethics that has inverted the melodramatic format of the classic soap opera. Unconditional love is replaced

by ambition. The leads are no longer a couple that viewers hope to see at the altar in the last episode. Love has given way to torture, aggression, and murders. The hero is no longer the brave policeman who fights the villain's evildoings; he is now the millionaire drug kingpin fighting for his life, facing down corrupt cops, representatives of a tainted political system.

Aurelio Casillas, the Lord of the Heavens; Teresa, the Queen of the South; Anastasia Cardona, the Owner of Paradise: these are the people who in a traditional melodrama we would identify as the villains. They're bloodthirsty, pitiless leaders of illegal businesses. But, it's they we hope to see on television. It's with them that we identify since, like us, they are part of the people: they love, fear, and, just like we would like to, triumph. They are hero-protagonists, who struggle against their adverse destiny and come out the victors. Characters who face off with the often corrupt morally-bankrupt police and governments who come out at the other end successfully. This is the mark the U.S. television networks have put on their series created for Hispanic audiences. With that, perhaps without thinking about it, they have added a new component to that list of the narco-aesthetic converted into narco-ethics: the inversion of the melodrama in which drug kingpins turn out to be the heroes.

These are popular, epic tales that, far from offering a negative view of the illicit aspects of drug trafficking, have made violence, blood, and death an answer to social injustices, the lack of opportunities, and political corruption. A heroic perspective about drug traffickers: traffickers who have a clear moral code, whose main concern is the family, and who triumph over police, the real villains. Villains, since their main moti-

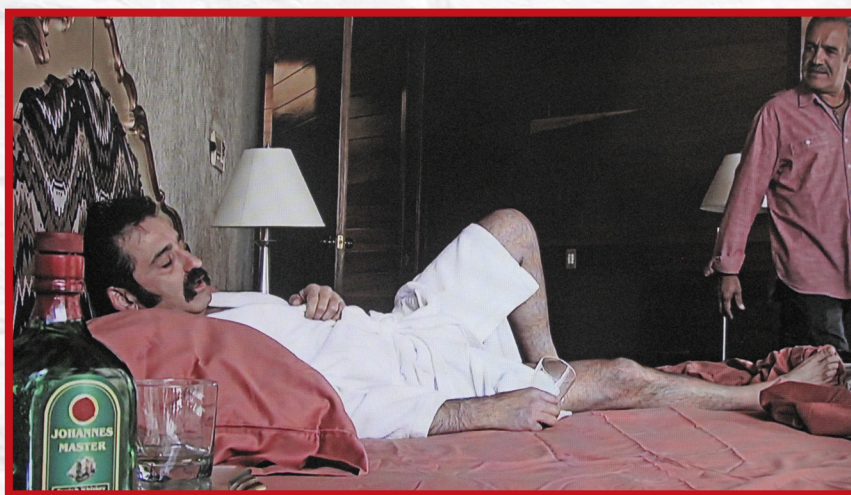
The narco-aesthetic has emphasized ostentation, showing off excessive luxury in high-quality clothing, mansions, haciendas, and surgically-created beautiful women.

vation is always money, to the detriment of the welfare of the country they say they serve.

On the first season of *The Lord of the Heavens*, Marco Mejía is the son of DEA agent Enrique Camarena, tortured and murdered in Mexico. He is the one who should be the hero, but he is portrayed as an aggressive, unfaithful, vengeful character. And, of course, in accordance with the classical parameters of melodrama, he dies at the end of the season, while hero Aurelio Casillas goes on to become the sole kingpin, flaunting his unlimited power and riches.

Cops as the evil characters are taken to the extreme in all the narco series: corrupt, ambitious, pitiless. Parts of the government and the militia are also presented from the dark side, associated with the drug cartels as their political and financial interests dictate. They change trafficking bosses according to the possibilities offered by them. By contrast, the drug traffickers have a clear moral code: they protect the people and their families above all else, and they do not hide their illegal activities. Thus, while government institutions trick the public creating an image of security, stability, and protection, the great drug lords take care of their people and promote loyalty and solidarity. "It's better to be a trafficker with balls than a vulgar agent whose word means nothing, who has no decency, no moral code," says the Lord of the Heavens.

This inversion of the traditional melodramatic code is taken to its maximum expression in the narco series *The Queen of the South*. Teresa, the world's most wanted drug trafficker, saves Mexico from corruption in the final episode. In a pact with the DEA, she decides to testify against Epifanio Vargas, the trafficker of all traffickers, a senator, and the next president of Mexico. With her testimony, it is she who thwarts this big trafficker's ambitions that would sink Mexico into a narco-state. Teresa literally saves her country, becoming a full-fledged heroine.



The Lord of the Heavens.



The Queen of the South.



Lady Steel.



Camelia the Texan.

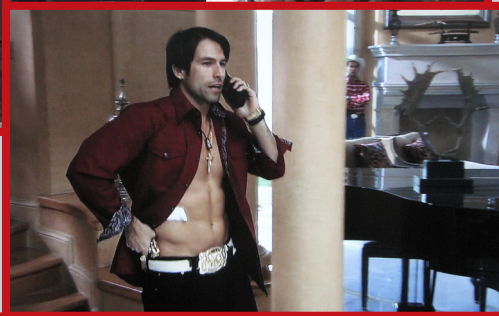
These are popular, epic tales that, far from offering a negative view of the illicit aspects of drug trafficking, have made violence, blood, and death an answer to social injustices, the lack of opportunities, and political corruption.



Lady Steel.



Existing on the limits, always in danger, and therefore valiantly. Lives worth living in order to get wealth, fame, power. An attractive image for multiple audiences: adults, young people, and even children who project their yearnings, dreams, and fantasies of splendor.



The Queen of the South.



The Lord of the Heavens.



Drug traffickers as heroes, ostentatious, surrounded by every imaginable luxury, and at the same time brave and sensitive to the needs of their people, have turned this narco-aesthetic into a narco-ethics, propagating this model not only in literature, film, and songs, but in *telenovelas*, probably the format with the biggest impact on the public. This image created by Mexicans in the United States has threatened the government, which has responded by creating series to show their side of the story.

One such effort was the series *El equipo* (The Team), broadcast by Televisa, which tried to portray the fight against crime as an epic story. Its lead characters, brave police willing to give their lives for justice, hunt big drug kingpins and always come out on top. Following the classic rules of a police procedural, it tried to offer the citizenry security and confidence in the police. It also tried to clean up the public image of the Mexican federal police forces, constantly accused of being corrupt. The heroes were police; the villains, marginal types: a classic melodrama.

The Team was counterposed to *The Lord of the Heavens*, two similar television programs but with different moral values, different poles of good and evil. TV viewers' critical spirit is also different. Mexican television tries to adjust the model of righteousness and honor that constantly comes under question in reality. To the contrary, the narco series produced in Miami impugn this model. The drug traffickers come from the people, without money, without jobs; but, they get to the top on their own merits—granted, in an illegal activity, but through their own efforts. They are recognizable characters, with virtues and defects: ostentatious but sincere, sensitive to their people and their families; in the end, with good hearts. In contrast, public servants lie, are corrupted because of their unbridled ambitions, and represent a flawed system.

As Raquel Velasco writes about the literature portraying drug trafficking, narco series also make visible the denunciation of the lack of opportunities, the corruption of governments and institutional parties, and violence as the only alternative for escaping from anonymity and poverty: "This narrative offers an explanation of the times we are living in, founded on the consequences of a corrupt government and the ancestral submission of a people incapable of electing better representatives."⁴ As a mirror we hold up to ourselves, the narco series, produced by Mexicans living in the United States, say more about ourselves than the vertigo of the violence and the adrenaline of bullets flying. A narco-ethics that carries with it a questioning of the society in which we live, a debate that needs to be opened. **MM**

NOTES

¹ "El señor de los cielos rompe récord de audiencia en E.U.," *Diario Basta*, April 24, 2015, <http://www.diariobasta.com/basta/nota.php?id=14335>.

² These elements, today recognized as part of the narco-aesthetic, have been summarized mainly by Colombian theoreticians like Omar Rincón, Héctor Abad Faciolince, and Alberto Fonseca. It should also be mentioned that the narco-aesthetic as a sub-genre has its precedents in Colombian literature in the novels *La virgen de los sicarios* (The Virgin of the Hitmen) by Fernando Vallejo, *Sin tetas no hay paraíso* (Without Tits, There's No Paradise) by Gustavo Bolívar, and *El cártel de los sapos* (The Frog Cartel). The last two have also been made into narco series.

³ Colombian critic Héctor Abad Faciolince points out that ostentation is the central component in what has been called the narco-aesthetic; therefore, it is this element that makes us, as viewers, want that life. "The gangsters realize the secret dream of almost every merchant: being able to show off. The fact that they have what others secretly want is the key to their success." Héctor Abad Faciolince, "Estética y narcotráfico," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* vol. 42, no. 3, 2008, p. 514.

⁴ Raquel Velasco, "La narrativa del narcotráfico y la novela del sicariato en México," in Norma Cuevas and Raquel Velasco, eds., *El norte y el sur de México en la diversidad de su literatura* (Mexico City: Juan Pablos Editor, 2011), p. 270.

Post-Punk in Concert

The Tijuana Digital Art Circuit

Paola Virginia Suárez Ávila*

*We were living in phony progress: the city in full movement,
the number-one song, a multitude of cars, and the most beautiful stores.
That was before; now unemployment coldly and cynically condemns us to poverty;
but people are people. On the Internet I saw that
the collective karmas do aerobics in Central Park;
I don't stop crying. Can you hear me?
Somebody is holding up a placard that reads,
"Free Charles Manson" in red letters. Punk never died, my surfing brother.*

Rafa Saavedra¹

Tijuana's contemporary art movement is of great interest worldwide because it has managed to create a border and transnational identity that has been reproduced in visual art, film, and literary works merging new artistic technologies with traditional techniques in a cultural production process unique in Mexico.

This article's analysis is guided by the rebirth of cultural life in this border city, and, in particular, centers on the study of digital works in which contemporary local artists have sought to interpret the daily life and visual culture of their city and the Tijuana-San Diego trans-border region.

The emergence of a new circuit of local art between the cities of Tijuana and San Diego has influenced the region's cultural development, contributing an aesthetic that analyzes the importance of the human, technological, and socio-political relations between Mexico and the

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Photos courtesy of the author.



United States. In this sense, the development of technology-based art has been a key point in Tijuana: since the mid-1990s, artistic endeavors have grown with the development of new communications platforms and the expansion of artistic disciplines such as multi-media art and electronic music, creating a new aesthetic of the Mexico-U.S. border.

TIJUANA, MEXICO'S NEW MECCA FOR DIGITAL ART

This new circuit of digital and visual art from the Tijuana-San Diego trans-border area has surpassed the typical mechanisms for creating art nationwide, formerly fostered by Mexico's governmental institutions and cultural centers, creating an independent proposal with local development linked to the impetus of globalization and the socio-political projects along the border. This new circuit is part of a worldwide process linked to the digital revolution of the 1990s, including the surge in Internet technology and access to media, and the expansion of the digital social networks among a large part of the young, university, urban population throughout the world.

The development of technology-based art has been a key point in Tijuana: creating a new aesthetic of the Mexico-U.S. border.

The new spaces for communication generated in the first years of the digital revolution have made the appearance of new non-state cultural actors possible, such as visual artists, agents, cultural promoters, and independent writers in Tijuana. They have joined forces to collaborate to achieve an important degree of cultural development. Over the last 20 years, all this has created the new independent art circuit in which self-organized projects are promoted and resources sought out circumventing the public cultural policies designed from Mexico's capital, which historically have shown no interest in art from the border, and therefore, included no mechanisms to benefit artists from the region.

Thus, the global digital revolution has facilitated the generation of new communications mechanisms that have been marginal in government-sponsored artistic-cultural production. In the case of Tijuana, the beginning of the technological revolution has allowed for broadening audiences locally and globally, and for creating specialized circuits of border art, promoting and generating new aesthetic discourses that



Technology was the key point for building a new ideology in the border area with the appearance of musical and visual arts collectives like Nortec and Torolab.

seek recognition locally, but also have the aim of connecting with artistic circuits with greater global impact, such as the ones in U.S. cities like San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles.

The region's new digital art has made possible the formulation and promotion of new creative processes. Since they focus on daily life on the border, on the discussions about what the border is, and on how it is experienced mainly by young people, they acquire an exclusive, specific character. To do that, using electronic storage, distribution, and promotional sites like the Internet portals YouTube, Vimeo, Behance, among others, has been fundamental. Virtual communities for cinema, visual art, electronic music, and literature have also been generated on Blogspots, Twitter and Facebook groups, and Instagram.

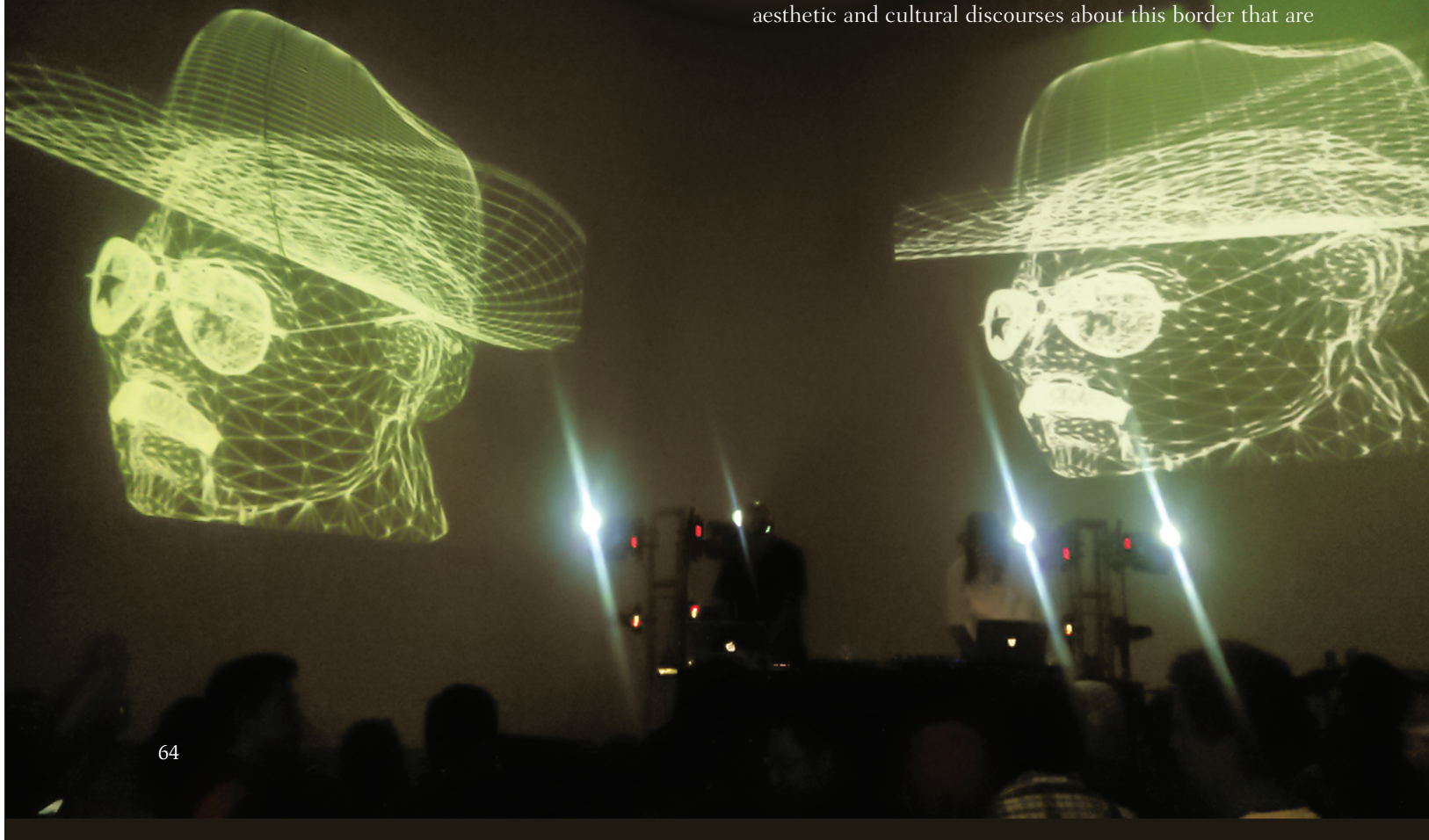
In this case, the digital revolution is expressed in cultural practices that combine modern with traditional praxes; the cultural change that inspires young people to create digital and/or multi-media art takes advantage of virtual and real

spaces for developing a new aesthetic around specific border themes as a space of identity convergence and divergence and human and material movement as part of daily life.

The changes in traditional practices in the production, distribution, and consumption of visual art and independent literature in the region show how access to technology has allowed Tijuana to put itself on the map of the world's cultural cities without the need to ask for sponsorship from Mexican or U.S. cultural institutions to promote it.

Néstor García Canclini has stated that the transformations generated by a new economy and technological innovations have created economic frameworks specific to the digital era, in which the creative economy, artistic communities, and the new cultural practices are seen as a resource for the local economies that are part of the global market.²

On that basis, the generation of new artistic circuits that promote the cultural and artistic production in border regions, together with the creation of virtual communities, can be recognized as a political-cultural project that has taken root in the most recent globalization. The characteristics of this project in Tijuana speak to the ability to independently produce culture and visual art in the region linked to a cultural history of its own that sets Mexico's border region apart as a marginal space in the social and cultural sphere. In addition, the generation of these circuits makes possible the appearance of aesthetic and cultural discourses about this border that are



diverse and different from those already espoused by the nation-states through their own cultural institutions.

In that sense, promoting the region's cultural circuit permits the fostering of an identity specific to the people who live and transit through the border, as well as the creation of an artistic community that discusses and generates its development through art. New independent cultural actors promote the creation of new cultural circuits in virtual and non-virtual spaces and with local and global communities that are discussing similar themes and aesthetics. In both cases, young people are key actors in developing digital communications platforms and circuits.

Guiomar Salvat Martinrey and Vicente Serrano Marín mention that the new communications spaces created with the digital revolution establish new spaces for culture, and even a new culture "that makes visible the emergence of a new way of understanding relations with the world and other human beings based on technology that determines an artificial space to replace the dominant beliefs about nature, what is human, knowledge, and political and social relations."³

From that perspective, digital art, inscribed in a new culture, makes it evident that the digital world lets us enter into the creation of a new language in which traditional genres of art are weakened and new identities, as transmutable and ephemeral as art itself, are generated, making it manifest that if the subject is changing in this time, so is art. Equally, a new frontier appears between what used to be catalogued as "High Culture" and "popular culture," making it difficult to discern what is produced within the traditional structures of national art and what is produced in the sphere of popular art. New

The cultural change that inspires young people to create digital and/or multi-media art takes advantage of virtual and real spaces for developing a new aesthetic around specific border themes.

communication exists within artistic production to undermine the hierarchical structures of art traced in the past by the nation-state and its cultural institutions.⁴

To know how these relationships are expressed in digital art and in Tijuana's artistic circuit, we will take into consideration that the border region's cultural community has an enormous incentive to communicate using technology with other border and non-border communities to create a wider circuit of distribution and production of culture about and from the border. The border community that fosters it and the government and non-governmental cultural actors (institutions, collectives, groups, and artists) that develop it face new communications phenomena inside the region to find out which processes conceived of and reproduced in art are those that should be discussed within the theme of the border.⁵

The generations of young people who have nourished border art in Tijuana use it to socialize their knowledge, their vision of the world, and their identity *vis-à-vis* the changing phenomenon of the border's cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions. From an anthropological point of view, the sociability of young people in the digital era explains the transformation of their experience and that of their community with technology, replacing the vision in which technology absorbs all cultural phenomena, recognizing that it is young people in digital practice who transform cultural practices and the dynamics of human communication.



THE YOUNG ARTISTS OF THE TIJUANA-SAN DIEGO BORDER

The young creators and artists of the Tijuana-San Diego border are social and cultural actors who have bet on a project of digital communication in a process of economic production strengthened by local and global digital networks. The expansion of the action and communications by young creators in the region has transformed the space around Tijuana into a key city for understanding technological relations in the socio-cultural sphere. Thus, the expression of young artists in Tijuana constitutes a space in which they study and find their own aesthetic to express the way in which they make technological knowledge their own and bring it to the production of works of art and digital culture in their global surroundings, giving this border region its own characteristics.

The discussion about the border among Tijuana's artists since the 1990s has maintained tension with the cultural and artistic proposals emerging from Mexico City and Chicano art. As a reference for multi-media art, in the 1980s, the border artists found in the production of visual art an autonomous space for dialogue to understand and reflect from the point of view of art about everything related to the cultural and socio-historical condition of the Mexico-U.S. border. When a group of artists, activists, and cultural promoters from the Tijuana-San Diego area created the Taller de Arte Fronterizo/Border Art Workshop in 1983, they managed to situate "the border" as a central place for the production of works with a non-traditional format, known as performance art.

The change in the border region, seen as peripheral until the mid-1990s, generated new discussions with the opening of Mexico under the 1994 North American Free Trade Agree-

The generations of young people who have nourished border art in Tijuana use it to socialize their knowledge, their vision of the world.

ment, which once again discussed what a border was and what it was good for. The community itself fostered cultural self-organization projects to make up for the lack of artistic means of production, the dearth of local cultural industries, and the design of cultural policies that had not helped in previous years to encourage local art.

Technology was the key point for building a new ideology in the border area with the appearance of musical and visual arts collectives like Nortec and Torolab, whose characteristic trademark was the relationship of northern Mexico with the cutting-edge technology developing in California. Prolific writers also appeared on the scene like Heriberto Yépez and Rafa Saavedra, who fostered new forms of writing based on new narratives combining Spanish with English and using the blogspot as a technological platform. These narratives transformed reading and created new challenges for the artistic community in the region in terms of its production.

NEW ARTISTIC CIRCUITS EMERGE ON THE BORDER

In conclusion, the emergence of new artistic circuits in the region to promote border cultural and artis-



Growing action and communications by young creators have transformed the space around Tijuana into a key city for understanding socio-cultural technological relations.

tic production has been an immensely political cultural project. Guiding it have been the capacity for independent production of culture and visual art in a border region with regard to its own cultural history and the generation of political-cultural discourses about the Mexico-U.S. and other borders. These discourses promote a particular vision of the cultural reason for being of the borders in the era of globalization. In addition to these two guidelines, I would add the promotion of an identity of its own for the border region constructed and deconstructed based on the artistic discourses in which young people have been the key actors for their discussion, using digital communication platforms and circuits on a local and global level.

As a result of this local digital art project, both a tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the region has been created that helps transmit knowledge, identity, and memory of the border society, as well as a cultural

circuit that makes it possible for new independent cultural actors to promote contemporary visions of digital art with regard to national and international institutional projects like those of the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). **NMM**

NOTES

¹ Rafa Saavedra, "Fuck your Dreams," *Esto no es una salida. Postcards de ocio y odio*, Punto de Quiebre Collection (Mexico City: Nitro Press, 2012), p. 7.

² Néstor García Canclini, "Introducción," Néstor García Canclini, Francisco Cruces, and Maritza Urteaga Castro Pozo, comps., *Jóvenes, culturas urbanas y redes digitales* (Madrid and Barcelona: Fundación Telefónica and Ariel, 2012), p.4.

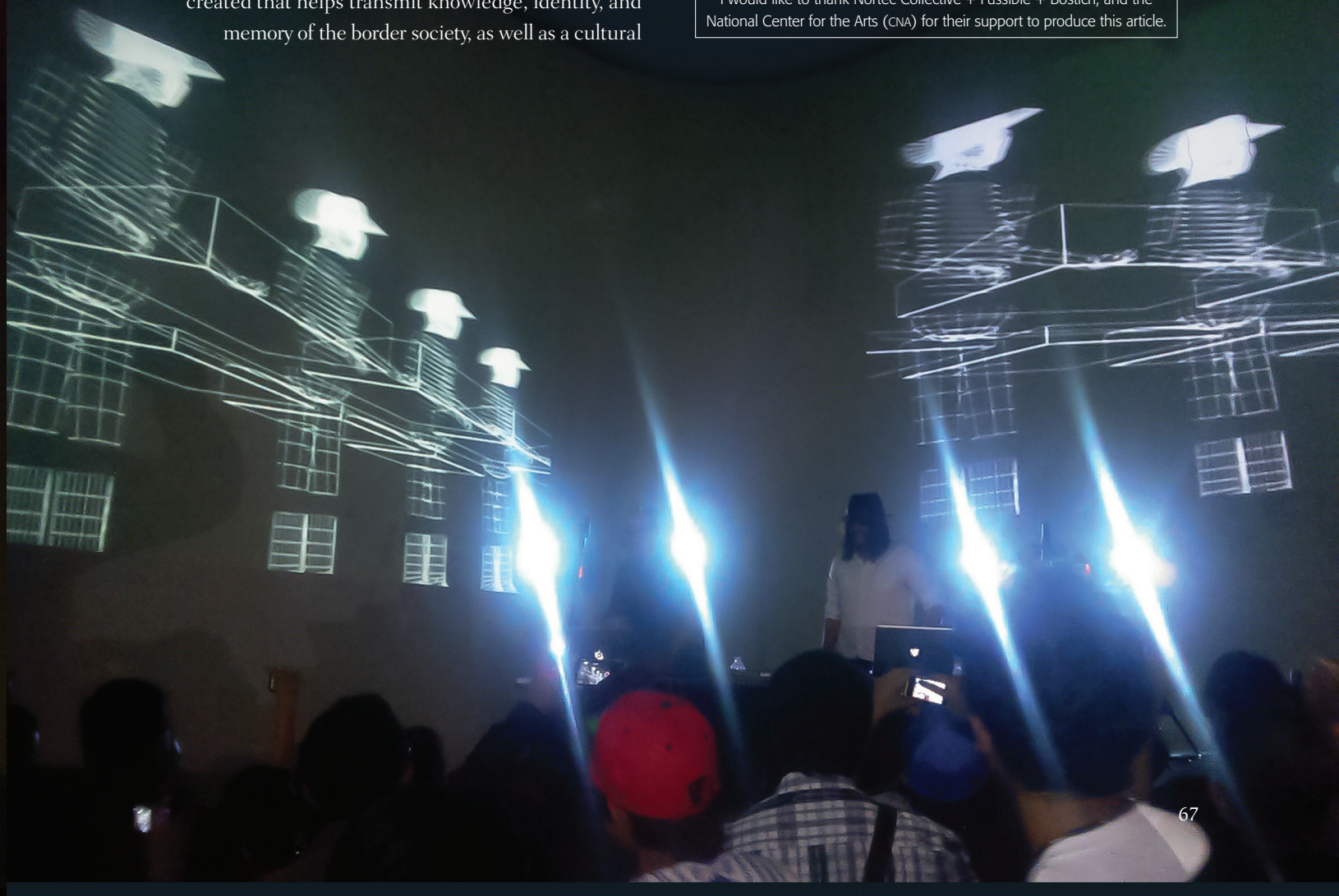
³ Guiomar Salvat Martinrey and Vicente Serrano Marín, *La revolución digital y la sociedad de la información* (Seville: Comunicación Social. Ediciones y publicaciones, 2011), p. 142.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The concept of border along the border space contains a great many connotations in the cultural and historic spheres. The border has stopped being just a political line drawn by the 1848 Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty and has become a social space where different populations of Mexico and the United States have historically interacted.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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Bridge Poets

bridge poets
don't recognize
borders

they cross
outlaw poetic
tunnels

they're migrant
butterflies
of the word

catacomb-goers
who meet
in broad daylight

bridge poets
have chapbooks
as passports

they write verses
granting them
life-long visas

they're spiders
weaving
spider webs

with silk threads
as fine as
sighs

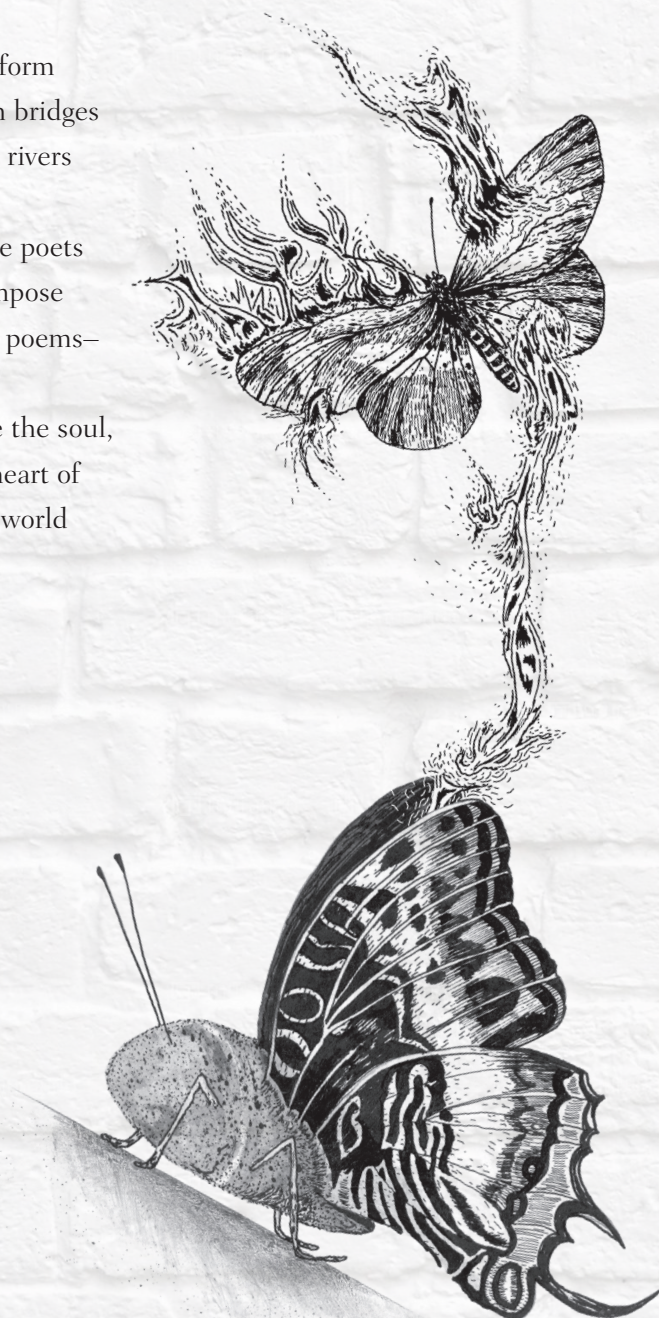
bridge poets
open
their arms

to form
human bridges
over rivers

bridge poets
compose
bridge poems—

they are the soul,
the heart of
the world

© Francisco X. Alarcón (†)*



*Laureate Chicano poet. He passed away during the editorial process of this publications. May he rest in peace [The Editors].
Illustrations by Santiago Robles.



Poetas Puentes

poetas puentes
no reconocen
fronteras

cruzan túneles
poéticos fuera
de la ley

son mariposas
migrantes
de la palabra

catecumbes
que se reúnen
a plena luz

poetas puentes
tienen poemarios
como pasaporte

escriben versos
que dan visas
a perpetuidad

son arañas
que tienden
telarañas

con seda
tan fina como
los suspiros

poetas puentes
extienden
los brazos

hasta formar
puentes humanos
sobre ríos

poetas puentes
componen
poemas puentes

del mundo
son el alma,
el corazón



Poeta macehual

soy un poeta
macehual, seguidor
de mariposas

un trovador
sin corte, sin cuartel,
que anda a pie

por los senderos
sin caminantes fuera
de los linderos

mi voz es flor,
canto silvestre libre
como el rocío

la Luna de abril
es mi madre del cielo
que me bendice

el río revuelto
que desata un huracán
es hermano mío
soy un poeta
hacedor de versos
de vida y lluvia

sin otro templo
que la cima del monte
bajo el Sol

mi cara la hallo
en las caras y sonrisas
de mi gente

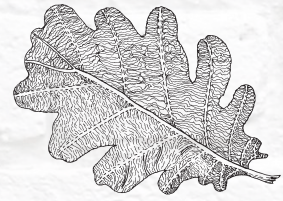
soy un poeta
macehual, seguidor
de mariposas

sin otro techo
que el cielo raso
lleno de estrellas

el mundo entero
ya sin fronteras es
mi casa y solar



Macehual (Common Folk) Poet



I am a *macehual*
poet, a follower
of butterflies

a troubadour
with no court or quarter,
going on foot

trekking paths
with no walkers beyond
well travelled ways

my voice is a flower,
a wild song free
like the dew

April's Moon is
my mother blessing me
from the sky

the unruly river
a hurricane brings about
is my own brother

I am a poet,
a wordsmith of verses
of life and rain

with no other temple
than the mountain
summit
under the Sun

I find my face
on the faces and smiles
of my people

I am a *macehual*
poet, a follower
of butterflies

with no other ceiling
than the open sky
full of stars

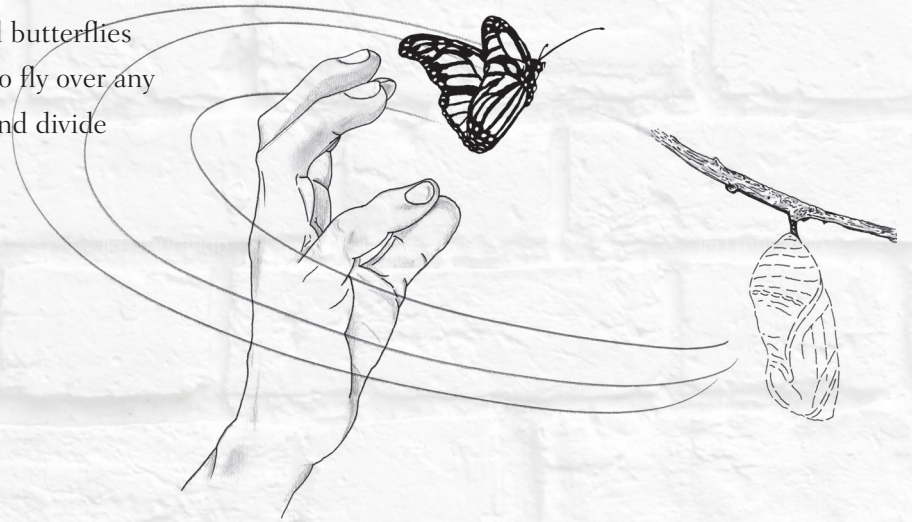
the whole world
already borderless is
my home and yard



I *Tierra / Earth*

poemas y mariposas
con alas sobrevuelan
cualquier frontera

poems and butterflies
have wings to fly over any
border and divide



II *Fuego / Fire*

batiendo oscuras
piedras-palabras poetas
dan fuego-poesía

striking dark
word-stones poets
draw fire-poetry

III *Agua / Water*

gotas en nubes
de la mano se dejan
caer como lluvia

droplets in clouds
join hands and let go
falling as rain



IV *Aire / Air*

el aleteo
de mariposas puede
causar un huracán

the wing flapping
of butterflies can cause
a hurricane

V *Espiritu / Spirit*

que mariposas
ballenas, siempre rijan
aire, tierra y mar

may butterflies, whales
forever rule the air,
the land, the sea



THE SPLENDOR OF MEXICO

Baskets of The Comcaac

Weaving Memory and the Future¹

Isabel Martínez*
Carolyn O'Meara**



Photo courtesy of the Lutisuc Asociación Cultural I.A.P., www.lutisuc.org.



Photo courtesy of the Lutsuc-Asociación Cultural I.A.P., www.lutsuc.org

The limberbush branches, the raw materials, are gathered in the desert: the women go out alone or in family groups, either walking or organizing themselves to go in a pick-up truck.

The Seris or Comcaac, as they call themselves, are an indigenous people of approximately 900 individuals living in the towns of Punta Chueca (Socaaix), in the municipality of Hermosillo, and El Desemboque del Río San Ignacio (or El Desemboque de los Seris) (Haxöl Iihom), in the municipality of Pitiquito, both along the Gulf of California coast in the state of Sonora, Mexico. They speak Seri or Cmiique Iitom, Spanish, and in some cases, English. In their daily lives they speak Cmiique Iitom, which is how they transmit the important information for explaining everything involved in the creation of a basket.

Until the early twentieth century, Seri baskets were the most important household objects for the women who wove them. They were used to transport cactus fruit, blankets, and fish; as kitchen utensils; and even as musical instruments and a bride's dowry. However, in the course of the twentieth

century, the Seris' lifestyle, based on hunting, fishing, and gathering, as well as their social organization, changed, and with it, so did the role of basket-weaving. In El Desemboque, one of the main sources of women's economic earnings is the sale of basket wares. In addition to caring for their families and doing the housework and, in some cases, gathering food in the desert, some women spend a large part of their days at this task. In addition to their economic value, the baskets continue to be one of the most important objects in their lives. Their continuing manufacture contrasts with the other objects the Seris stopped making over the last century, among them ceramic figurines, bows and arrows, and rafts made of cane and wood.

PREPARING THE MATERIAL FOR WEAVING A BASKET

To weave a basket, they must first gather desert limberbush (*haat*) branches, burn them to remove the bark, process different qualities of fibers, prepare the dyes, dye the fibers, and create the designs. The branches are gathered in the desert: the women go out alone or in family groups, either walking

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Photos courtesy of the authors.



Processing the fibers requires tactile knowledge to recognize textures and sight to distinguish a certain shine and opacity that define their quality.

or organizing themselves to go in a pick-up truck. In addition to having to identify the bushes and selecting them for branch length and straightness, they gather medicinal and edible plants while out in the desert. When they go out in a group, they usually protect themselves by calling out their names when they move out sight of each other.

On returning to the village, they prepare a fire to remove the bark from the branches. Sometimes the men who accompany them or the women themselves gather the firewood, preferably dried limberbush root and jumping cholla or *cote-exoj*, since they burn very hot and evenly. Burning the branches requires sophisticated technical knowledge to be able to recognize the plant's odor, color, and sound. Without that knowledge, the inside of the branch would be burned, damaging the raw material. Each weaver has her own favorite technique, but generally speaking, the women take the bark off the branches from the bottom to the top by holding the branch in their teeth and creating sufficient tension with the hands to peel off a long ribbon in a single movement. The teeth and the mouth are basic tools in the production of these baskets; this frees the hands up and allows them to produce long, evenly shaped strips of fiber.

In the places where the weaving materials are processed and the weaving itself is done, relatives and friends alike gather; amidst conversations and meals, they exchange techniques and practices, as well as motifs for their designs. These are also places and occasions for gathering and visiting, where relatives, neighbors, and friends come together to talk and sometimes exchange or sell each other baskets or necklaces.

Once the bark has been stripped off the branches, they must be washed in sea water since, as the women from El Desemboque warned, using fresh water could cause the basket to rot. Tools are also important. The weavers use two kinds of awls when processing the fibers and in the weaving, one made of deer bone, known as *ziix icoop*, and another made of metal. Some women, like Raquel Hoeffler, emphasized their preference for the bone awl because it does not rot the fibers and because the quality of the weave is better.

Processing the fibers requires tactile knowledge to recognize textures and sight to distinguish a certain shine and



Photo courtesy of the Luisuc Asociación Cultural I.A.P., www.luisuc.org.

opacity that define their quality. Since we are outsiders to this indigenous group, language has been one way of approaching this wealth of knowledge, and we present here some important terms.

The branches are first divided in half and an intense yellow fiber found in their center, called *zee*, is extracted, since if it is left in, the weave would rot. Then, along the length of the branch, the top of each half is removed, called *ipocj itac*, literally meaning “the backbone.” This is how the first classification of fiber, between the *ipocj itac* (the exterior of the branch) and the *zee* (the inside of the branch), is produced. The women process the inside part first. This processing of the fibers is described using the root of the verb *azee* in Cmiique Iitom, which literally means “making *zee*.” *Zee* is the name they give these fibers at the time of weaving,

Each woman has a formula for dyeing and weaving, which is her personal signature. Every basket is unique.

despite the fact that during the process of separating the fibers, they call them *iteelaj*, or “edges,” perhaps referring to the edge of the branch. These fibers are characteristically hard, rigid, and stiff and are used for the fiber bundle that is later wrapped to form the coil of the basket. The second process consists of separating the fibers from the top of the branch into two types, both hard and shiny, that will be used to wrap the fiber bundle. They are classified into *ipocj itac* and *izquipot*. Once the fibers have been separated, they are put into their corresponding groups and separated into a roll, or *hamizj*.



When the fibers are processed, they can then be dyed. The first baskets with designs, and therefore with fibers possibly dyed the red-brown *heepol*, were reported from the early twentieth century. Since the mid-twentieth century, Seri women have multiplied the techniques for producing dyes, particularly black, as can be seen in some museum collections. However, as Berta Estrella and Francisca Morales say, the color they achieved was reddish. They experimented on dyeing techniques using crepe paper and finally with aniline dyes, which produced the beauty and quality they were looking for. Despite the fact that they can still recreate processes like the *haat ah hipool*, as Angelita Torres did in El Desemboque in winter 2014, producing black dyes using saltbush leaves and oxides, they prefer aniline. Beyond anilines' being practical, however, the appreciation of the beauty of their baskets and the recognition of both the artists' personal creativity and tradition is fundamental to them, which is why the technique for dyeing the materials in the red-brown color (*heepol*), despite its complexity, is a favorite among the weavers.

Each woman has a formula for doing it because it is her personal signature. Every basket is unique despite being part

of shared knowledge; and they are recognizable by their technique and quality in both the national and international markets.

WEAVING A BASKET

Seri basketry is woven using simple coiling with open spaced wraps or more closely spaced wraps, wrapping the fiber bundle as it is rolled counter-clockwise. The bundle is perforated from the outside of the piece, creating the same design on both sides with similar quality in the weaving. Whether coiled (*cöhadapnij*) or interlocking (*ihafiz*), every basket starts with a knot

Once the knot has been made, the outside of the weave is punctured with the awl. The top of the knot is perforated and every stitch introduces a fiber that covers the roll until it forms a spiral creating the base for the basket (*hahiti*). To weave, the knot is held in the left hand while the right hand constantly dampens the fibers with seawater and perforates

the roll at the top with the awl. A fiber is introduced into the hole to then be able to weave the outside of the roll with it; with that, the handful of fibers is covered, squeezing it and maintaining the tension both on the weave and the roll itself. The aim is to maintain the rhythm of perforation to create a uniform covering, producing a continuous weave from beginning to end. To finish a basket, the fibers are gradually cut so that the volume of the inside of the roll slowly diminishes. The artist continues weaving with that roll until it disappears. The main kinds of baskets made are in the form of a plate (*hasaj*), in the form of a pot (*haat hanoohcö*), or, less frequently, a giant basket (*saptim*) since it takes anywhere from a year to a year and a half to make one.

DESIGNS AND MEMORY

Baskets with and without designs are made in the same way. The knot and the basket base are the beginning, and starting from there the weavers define their distribution and position. When shown photographs of some of the baskets found in national and international museums, the El Desemboque weavers admired their beauty and emphasized that, in con-

Until the early twentieth century, Seri baskets were the most important household objects for the women who wove them.



trast with the women from the past, they process fibers with which they make miniature baskets, or earrings or pendants. Proud of their expertise, they also underline the quality of the dyes they have produced and perfected with time. The designs are each artist's personal signature, and that is how they recognize certain baskets, sometimes showing photographs of their mothers, aunts, or sisters holding those same ones. They tell stories of how they conceived of the design and then showed it to other women, building together through teaching, one woman to another, as part of their tradition. The designs hold memories of their mothers, aunts, sisters, sisters-in-law, or women they have never met, but whom they could relate to by recreating their designs in a new basket.

SALES

Weaving a design that the El Desemboque artists considered old or traditional is an expression of a tie through direct experience or word-of-mouth that links them to the women who had woven them in the past; this can increase the basket's value. At the same time, it has opened up a space for continuing to create this tradition because they have nourished it and innovated around it by leaving their own personal mark on the baskets they wove. This warp on which tradition and commercialization are woven spreads locally to the tourism networks of Bahía Kino and Hermosillo. Institutions dedicated to commercializing and promoting crafts in Mexico participate in wider networks, like Fonart and Conaculta. One of the most important basket-selling networks in El Desemboque links these women to commerce in the southern United States, where their pieces are appreciated for their technique and the process and quality of the weaves. Taken all together, this has made it possible for these baskets to continue to be the most important objects in their lives, a way of generating income and of transmitting knowledge and part of their tradition, to which they contribute their creativity and transformation. ■■■

NOTES

¹ We would like to thank Francisca and Marta Morales, Ana Torres, Aurelia Molina, Marta Monroy, Berta Estrella, María Luisa Astorga, Débora Perales, Ana Rodríguez, Selene Rodríguez, Adriana Estrella, Angelita Torres, María Luisa Molina, Genoveva Hoeffler, Raquel Hoeffler, María de Jesús Félix (Carolina), Lourdes Hoeffler, and Miguel Estrella for the knowledge described in this article.

MUSEUMS

Rufino Tamayo *Contemporary Art Museum* **A Window Inside a Forest**

Isabel Morales Quezada*





◀ *Two Women*, 182.5 x 132 cm, 1981 (oil on canvas). Rufino Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum-INBA-Conaculta Collection. © D.R. Rufino Tamayo/Herederos/México/2015/Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, A.C.

In art, there are no legacies. There are discoveries, conquests, affinities, abductions: re-creations that are really creations.

Octavio Paz¹

Perhaps for some inhabitants of this planet, a forest is not the most common place for an art venue. But, in the Chapultepec Forest, the Rufino Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum co-exists with spaces that symbolize certain moments and yearnings in the history of Mexico, like the National Museum of Anthropology and History, the Chapultepec Castle, or the Modern Art Museum. So, the yearning for the Tamayo Museum originated with the artist who gave it its name: Rufino Tamayo.

* Staff writer.

Photos courtesy of the Rufino Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum.

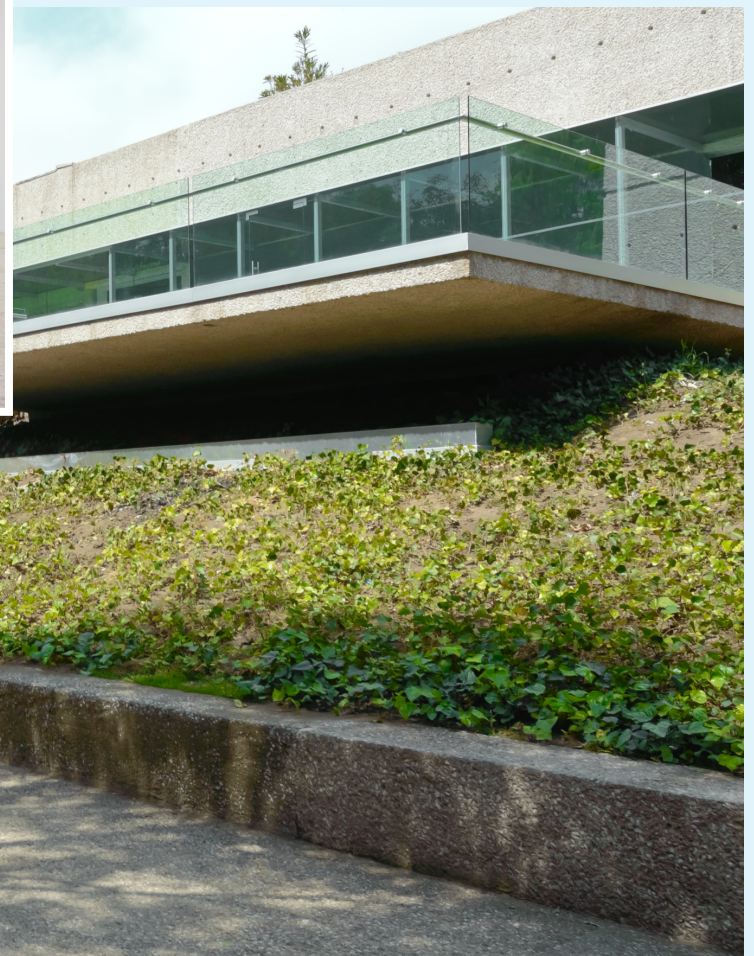
Born of indigenous parents on August 26, 1899 in the city of Oaxaca, Rufino Tamayo created his own style far removed from Mexican muralism and the nationalism that dominated his time. In 1911, he moved to Mexico City, where he began his studies at the National School of Visual Arts. Always open to what was going on in other parts of the world, in the 1940s, he went to New York, where he lived for almost 20 years, and in 1949, he had several exhibitions in Europe. In 1964, he returned to Mexico with his wife Olga, where he would continue painting until his death in 1991.² In one of his essays about Tamayo, Octavio Paz writes,

The modern aesthetic opened his eyes and made him see the modernity of pre-Hispanic sculpture. Later, with the violence and simplicity of every creator, he took over those forms and transformed them. Using them as a basis, he painted new and original forms. Certainly, folk art had already nourished his imagination, preparing it to accept and assimilate that of ancient Mexico. However, without the modern aesthetic, that initial impetus would have dissipated or degenerated into mere folklore and decoration. If we think about the two poles that define

Tamayo's painting, visual rigor and the imagination that transfigures the object, we immediately note that his encounter with pre-Colombian art was a true conjunction.³

It was precisely that conjunction motivated by the impetus to open himself up to different international artistic forms of expression that guided Tamayo's artistic production and thinking, that made him international and at the same time a representative of Mexico in the world. At the end of the 1960s, his interest in international contemporary art led him to begin a collection of twentieth-century works. For Tamayo it was fundamental that Mexico look outward and be enriched by other aesthetic experiences, which is why he donated his collection and decided to promote the creation of a museum to hold it. Its construction was headed by architects Teodoro González de León and Abraham Zabludowsky. In his speech at its inauguration, Tamayo said,

The collection of international contemporary art that from today on will be permanently housed in this museum . . . is a donation that my wife and I make with enormous affection to the





▲ *Watermelons*, 130 x 195 cm, 1968 (oil on canvas). Rufino Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum-INBA-Conaculta Collection. © D.R. Rufino Tamayo/Herederos/México/2015/Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, A.C.

country, in the firm conviction that it is going to substantially enrich its cultural wealth and at the same time open it up to new horizons.

We believe very sincerely that Mexico is already winning a place of certain significance in the international order and, as a result, we think it is time that in the field of culture it definitively break through that stultifying nationalist fence that has impeded it until now from frank and open communication with the rest of the countries of the world, sharing with them our fortunate experiences, but also recognizing the value of their own, using them without prejudice for our own benefit.⁴

Inaugurated in 1981, the Rufino Tamayo Museum discretely harmonizes with its surroundings. Its shapes and volumes, made of reinforced concrete and white marble, seem to burst out of the forest; and, although it is only 150 meters from Reforma Boulevard, one of the city's most important thoroughfares, visitors do not really see it until they are in its welcoming esplanade. Despite being so close to the city's traffic and hustle and bustle, the space around it manages to establish a distance and create a tranquil atmosphere thanks to the vegetation, the forest's huge trees, and the fountains that the passers-by find in their path on the way to the museum. Its pyramid shape, with its grass-covered slopes, echoes pre-

The Tamayo Museum fulfills its job of disseminating the expressions of international contemporary art by exhibiting work by outstanding artists from different parts of the world.

Hispanic buildings and at the same time is one of the emblems of contemporary architecture in Mexico.

Just like in Tamayo's work, this museum is a sample of the integration of tradition and modernity, of the specific and the universal, since the architects visited museums of distant countries as part of their research to create a space that would meet the needs of contemporary art. A place situated in one of the city's most important green areas where visitors peek in, curious, to find other interpretations and ways of conceiving art.

Once inside, the natural light that flows in through the skylights uncovers the venue's central patio from where the rooms fan out. Ramps and stairways lead to them to begin the visit. At certain moments during the visit, you come across windows that look out onto the forest, an opportunity for pausing, perhaps to meditate about the exhibition or to sit and leaf through one of the books placed on a table before

a huge window. The views to the outside make us turn our eyes to the place where we're situated.

The Tamayo Museum fulfills its job of disseminating the expressions of international contemporary art by exhibiting work by outstanding artists from different parts of the world. It recently hosted the exhibition "Infinite Obsession," made up of work by the celebrated Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, which sparked great interest among Mexico City residents, particularly young people. So many visitors came that the museum decided to open its doors in the evenings and until the wee hours. The wooded surroundings even favored people camping out, as though waiting for a rock concert. This exhibit was followed by "Story of a Negotiation," by Belgian-Mexican artist Francis Alÿs, who, through his work, paintings, and videos reflects on political, social, and cultural problems in different parts of the world.

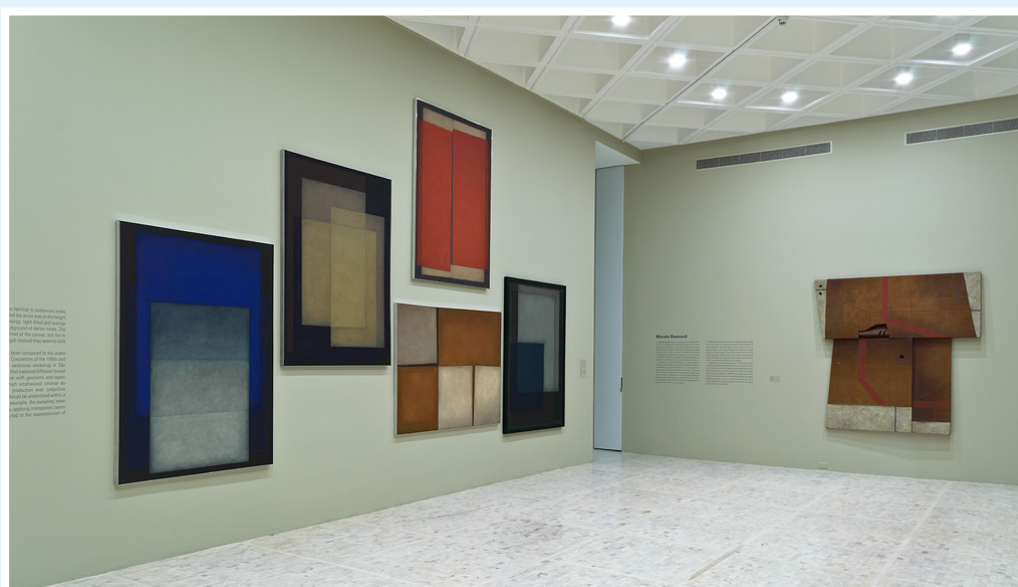
In addition to traveling exhibits, the museum offers exhibitions of the permanent collection donated by Rufino Tamayo, like the one that accompanied Alÿs's, entitled "Superpositions: Latin American Art in Mexican Collections." That show is part of a program that invites curators to explore the museum's collection of more than 300 works emphasizing the painting and sculpture of Europe, the United States, Latin America, and Asia, from 1945 to 1975. Some of the artists included are Armando Morales, Rogelio Polesello, Roberto Matta, Julio Le Parc, and Jesús Soto. The exhibition offers the opportunity to find these Latin American artists' links to international expressions of art.

Just like Tamayo's work, this museum is a sample of the integration of tradition and modernity, of the specific and the universal.

Finally, the Rufino Tamayo Painting Biennial was created to foster artistic production today, supported by the Olga and Rufino Tamayo Foundation. The seventeenth biennial will be held in 2016.

Although your visit is about to end, the museum still offers certain surprises, such as the "modular," a space dedicated to the consultation of books about contemporary art and its representatives and about Rufino Tamayo himself. A kind of library made up of blocks of wood used for sitting to read. This place is part of the museum's expansion, directed by architect Teodoro González de León from August 2011 to August 2012. Closed to the public in that period, the work added new exhibition rooms, a documentation area, a cafeteria with a terrace, expanded office space, the store, and the bookstore, increasing its total area from 4 798 square meters to 6 846 square meters, but retaining its character and form, ensuring that the new spaces harmonize with the originals.⁵

The museum's rooms unveil the world seen by the artists who inhabit it, transform it, imagine it. Before leaving, I look toward the vestibule where, tucked away, is a work by Tamayo, "Homage to the Indian Race" (1952). The explanatory plaque reads,





Its pyramid shape, with its grass-covered slopes, echoes pre-Hispanic buildings and at the same time is one of the emblems of contemporary architecture in Mexico.

The matriarchal figure rises up imposingly, its form and color reminiscent of the black clay figurines produced in Oaxaca. It is a simple scene: a woman of the people seen by Tamayo in some market in Oaxaca, whom he elevates, turning her into the essence of the indigenous. The simple transformed into the complex; the ancestral, renewed, becomes a modern allegory of what is profoundly Mexican.

Rufino Tamayo wanted a venue for Mexicans where they could approach and become familiar with international contemporary art. He himself was international without stopping being Mexican, since he knew how to look at the work of other artists and find in modernity, in the vision of his contemporaries, the connection with the indigenous past and present, with Mexican culture. The Rufino Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum is the legacy of an artist who yearned for Mexico to have a window on the world that would enrich the production and study of art. A space through which it could discover not only the differences, but the commonalities

among national and international artists. A window in a forest surrounded by history, where you can look at the contemporary other and, in the reflection, look at yourself. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Octavio Paz, "Tres ensayos sobre Rufino Tamayo," *Los privilegios de la vista II* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995), pp. 281-286, ICAA Record ID: 1126421, accessed July 8, 2015.

² Juan Carlos Pereda, "Semblanza y cronología. Rufino Tamayo," <http://www.rufinotamayo.org.mx/wp/tamayo/semblanza-y-cronologia/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

³ Octavio Paz, *op. cit.*

⁴ The author found this text of Tamayo's inaugural speech in a book, open and on display under glass at the museum.

⁵ "El nuevo Tamayo," August 20, 2012, <http://www.arquine.com/el-nuevo-tamayo/>, accessed July 7, 2015.

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The magazine was born in 1986 with one essential objective that is still valid today: offering information and analysis about Mexico, its economy, society, and politics, to readers in our two neighboring countries.



100

Issues of

VOICES

of Mexico

One hundred issues. It's easy to say, but in addition to being a landmark number, it also implies a great deal. First of all, that *Voices of Mexico* is a valuable publication that has sustained itself over the years, with ups and downs, but that has kept its readers and managed to find new ones. It's also a number that invites drawing balance sheets and accepting new challenges. It means being critical and self-critical and learning from the comments and suggestions from all participants: editors, directors, and former directors, contributors, and above all, readers. More than three decades ago, the UNAM found that it needed to have a publication specifically for English-speakers, above all in the United States and Canada, as a response to the fast-paced regional economic integration process beginning at the time. The magazine was born in 1986 with one essential objective that is still valid today: offering information and analysis about Mexico, its economy, society, and politics, to readers in our two neighboring countries. All this, with the aim of building bridges of communication that would make

A Wonderful Journey

it possible not to reduce, but to understand, the differences between us.

Voices of Mexico has had different eras and has based its decisions on different editorial lines. Initially, it emphasized socio-political and socio-economic content. Starting with issue 18, it came under the aegis of the Center for Research on North America (CISAN) as its publication for broad dissemination, and thus changed its editorial policy to incorporate topics of general interest for U.S. and Canadian readers. For the first time, therefore, it included articles about Mexican art and culture as a vehicle of understanding and communication with our regional partners. Not only that: it also began publishing color pages. Each of the successive directors has made fundamental contributions: creating sections for the analysis of the dynamics of North America in light of regional integration; for reflecting about Mexico's insertion into a globalized world; and, finally, adding the "Special Section" to each issue to deal more or less exhaustively, in the manner of a dossier, with a problem relevant to the country or a region or their interrelation with the world based on a critical analysis rooted in different disciplines and theoretical, ideological, and political points of view.

Among the magazine's authors are many of the country's most influential specialists, writers, and academics, headed by researchers from the CISAN itself and our university's other research centers and institutes.

The magazine has received many awards for different aspects of its endeavors: the quality of its content; its attractive graphic design; the selection of its photographs and its editorial excellence; and the quality of the printing itself. Its contribution to the task of bringing closer together the three North American nations has even earned it financial support from the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture, sponsored



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by the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Bancomer Cultural Foundation. The magazine has also won the prestigious Juan Pablo Award for the Art of Publishing given by the Chamber of the Mexican Publishing Industry. *Voices of Mexico* is listed in several periodical indexes and on several important data bases maintained by librarians' associations in the United States.

Over these 30 years, its pages have also been fertile ground for paying homage to many illustrious Mexicans, some of the country's most renowned internationally. Poets, writers, scientists, Nobel Prize laureates, painters, sculptors, researchers, and many, many more have contributed their own articles or have been the subject of reflection by other, equally important authors. Just one example would be the issue dedicated to Octavio Paz.

The times and technology are by no means foreign to us either; today, even before the magazine has come off the presses, the on-line version of *Voices of Mexico* can be viewed at www.voicexmx.unam.mx, which is part of the CISAN/UNAM website. In accordance with the open access philosophy we share, readers can see all the content completely free.

Something which undoubtedly has always been a big plus and has contributed to shaping the magazine's identity are its covers, always depicting work by a Mexican artist, whether well-known and successful or a fledgling creator. To celebrate the one-hundredth issue, we have offered up a selection of them.

The most important thing is that *Voices of Mexico* goes on. To ensure that, we have begun to restructure and rethink the publication, and those efforts will soon bear fruit. The idea is to update without losing the original essence: bringing the best of Mexico to English-speaking readers through our most renowned voices. **MM**

Diego Bugada Bernal
Editor-in-Chief



Universidades

Año LXV · Nueva época · núm. 65 · julio-septiembre, 2015

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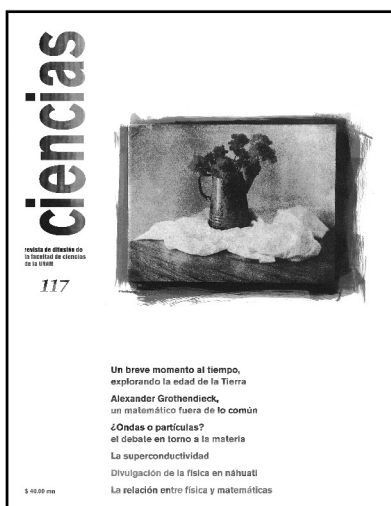
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The Ongoing Immigration Debate in North America



Joshua Roberts/Reuters

Migration from Mexico to the United States has been happening and, of course, evolving in many ways for over 150 years. However, it seems that migration policy has not been able to keep up with and adapt to all the changes in this process. The U.S. labor market usually sends out strong signals about the demand for foreign-born workers of various types; however, policies are often inflexible and unresponsive to these needs.

Even though the U.S. recognizes itself as a nation of immigrants, the recent economic crisis brought to light and accentuated underlying anti-immigrant sentiments that continue to prevail within certain segments of the population and that have generated a climate of hostility toward many Latin American labor migrants, especially undocumented Mexicans. Public opinion is sharply divided over what should be done about the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants estimated to be currently living in the U.S.

The articles in this special section address various aspects of the ongoing immigration policy debate. The first refers to characteristics of and recent changes in the number of Mexican immigrants in the U.S.; the second explores NAFTA's specific impact on migration. The third article discusses the media's role in informing and shaping public opinion about immigrants and the costs and benefits of immigration. Another text explores the difficulties immigrants face, particularly those who are undocumented, when trying to access health care in the U.S.

The subsequent article offers some explanations about why recent attempts to reform immigration policy in the U.S. have failed; and the last article maintains that conservative Canadian politicians' discourse about the excessive benefits of their country's asylum system are being used to justify more restrictive policies currently aimed at Mexicans.

Elaine Levine

The Insertion of Migrants in the U.S. Labor Market

Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero*



Jessica Rinaldi/Reuters

Throughout its history, the United States has distinguished itself as the great host for people seeking opportunities to improve their lives and those of their families. Today, the adverse conditions prevailing in many places lead thousands to try to enter this labor market, even at enormous risk, to get a job and become part of that society or send remittances to ensure their families survive in their countries of origin. As a counterpart to these needs, one incontrovertible condition exists: the U.S. economy requires immigrant labor for areas with low participation of the native-born.

The U.S. market itself points to the kind of workers required to cover the demand in specific jobs and industries, whether highly skilled or low skilled. However, migration policy has not been able to effectively keep up with these needs; despite the existence of several kinds of visas for temporarily covering market demand, they are insufficient and

do not correspond to the market's complexity. That is why today's estimates put the numbers at several million undocumented workers in the U.S. labor market —sometimes working for decades— who are trying to regularize their immigration status and are pushing to make U.S. immigration policy more flexible or to reform it altogether.

TEMPORARY AUTHORIZED OR DOCUMENTED MIGRATION

Available official data specify the kinds of temporary work visas in the United States. The H-1B visa is for highly qualified workers, that is, people with higher education and professional experience. U.S. companies are in charge of initiating the paperwork for these kinds of professionals to temporarily immigrate; they must show that no resident or native-born workers exist with the professional or academic competencies required for the jobs available. This kind of visa allows the immigrant to work for up to six years; after that, the person

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must leave the country and wait a year to apply again for an H-1B visa.

The number of available visas may fluctuate. However, in recent years, it has averaged at 65 000 a year, which restricts the arrival of engineers, physicists, or technicians that the U.S. productive sector requires.¹

The H2 visas were created in 1943 to satisfy the need for workers in the sugarcane industry, supplied by laborers from the Bahamas. The program changed in the 1980s, dividing the visas into two still-valid categories: the H-2A visa for agricultural workers with jobs in sowing and harvesting crops, and the H-2B visa for non-agricultural workers for jobs related to gardening, construction, forestry, and cleaning personnel. The latter visa is limited by a quota specified by Congress, currently at 66 000 workers a year.

No quotas exist for H-2A visas, but the employer must exhaust all possibilities for hiring among residents and/or nationals. In addition, the process is only practical if there is enough time to hire a large contingent of workers to deal with a specific harvest since the employer must travel and recruit the workers from the other country or hire an international employment agency to do the recruiting.

The Department of Homeland Security publishes an annual list of countries eligible for H-2A and H-2B visas, and that determination is valid for one year after publication. The number of low-skilled workers legally admitted is considered very small since neither the H-2A nor the H-2B visa covers the demand for these kinds of workers.²

UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION

Taking into consideration PEW Research Center information, the non-authorized immigrant population in the United States is estimated to have reached its peak in 2007 at 12.2 million. However, with the recession that began at the end of that year, this kind of immigration went down considerably, and by 2009 was estimated to have dropped by one million persons, to finally level off at 11.7 million people in early 2012.³

By 2008, 76 percent of all undocumented immigrants, or about 9 million of the 11.9 million total, were estimated to be of Latino origin, and nearly 7 million were Mexican.

Census information from 2010 confirmed the increase in the population of Latin American origin, including those of Mexican origin, in the United States. With a total of 308.7 million inhabitants, of whom 50.5 million were of Hispanic or

The non-authorized immigrant population in the United States is estimated to have reached its peak in 2007 at 12.2 million to finally level off at 11.7 million people in early 2012.

Latino origin, 32 million were of Mexican origin. The latter have been widely distributed throughout the U.S., although, naturally, there is a higher concentration in five or six states. This can be represented graphically as shown on the map.

But, in which sectors of the U.S. economy do unauthorized migrants work? A great majority labor in very specific areas like agriculture, construction, and certain services related to food processing and cleaning, where native-U.S.-born workers have very low participation.

It is worth noting that the vast majority of unauthorized immigrants are low-skilled workers without high levels of schooling in their countries of origin, which is why they are concentrated in low-paying occupations.

Pew Research Center reports show that these immigrants participate to a large degree in certain occupations, such as, for example, farming (25 percent); building, grounds-keeping, and maintenance (19 percent); and construction (17 percent).

A very high percentage of these immigrants participate in some specific construction jobs: 40 percent of bricklayers and 37 percent of drywall installers are undocumented workers.⁴

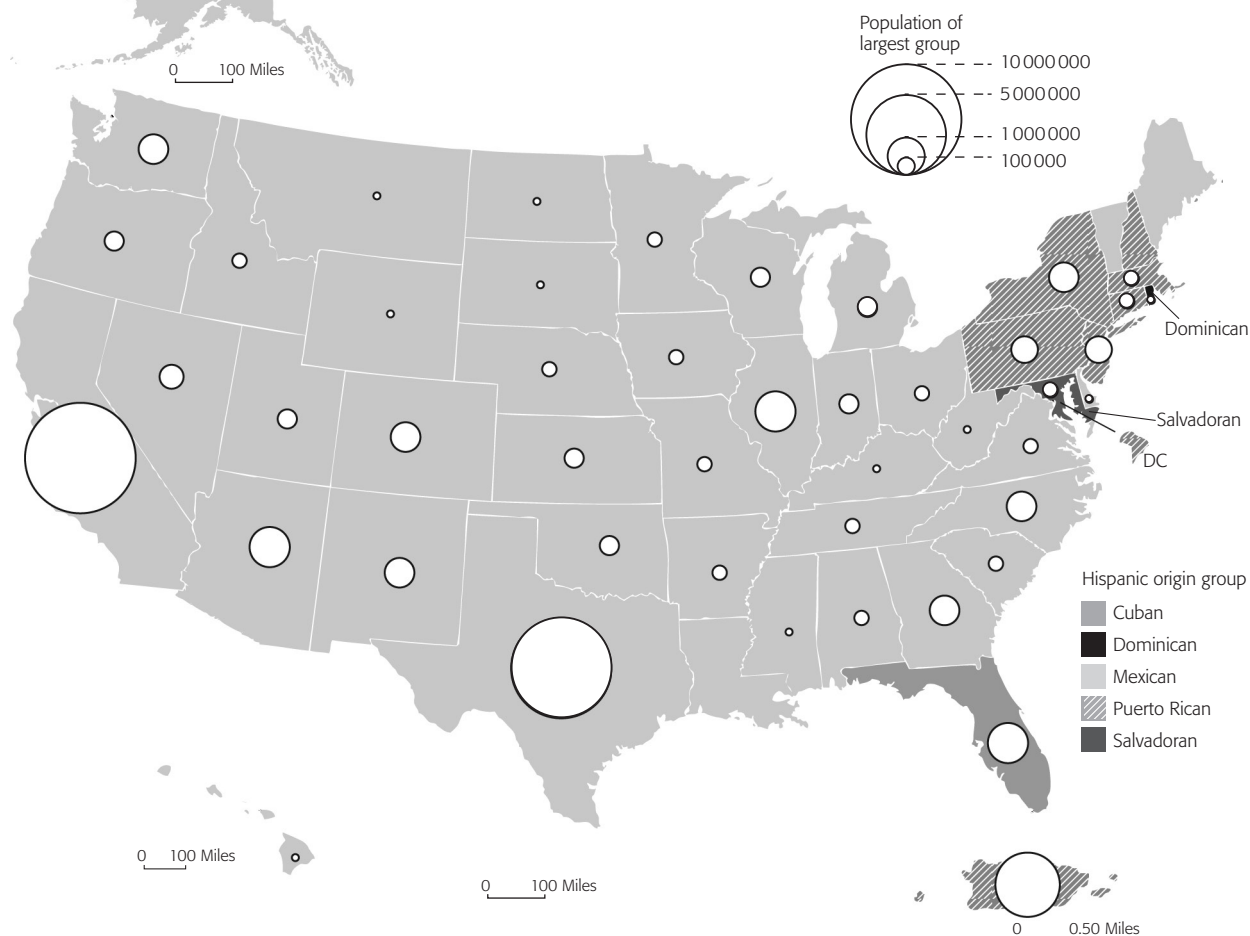
The foregoing is consistent with recent data about Mexican migrants returning to their country after the crisis that began in the United States in 2008, as reported by the Survey on Migration on Mexico's Northern Border. Some figures exist about this group of workers that jibe with the PEW Hispanic Center data. There have been changes in Mexican migrants returning from the United States and the sectors they enter into: the agricultural sector went from 26.7 percent in the 1999-2001 period to 17.8 percent in the 2010-2013 period. By contrast, the number of Mexicans returning to go into construction rose sharply in the same time period, increasing from 24.4 percent to 40.9 percent, reflecting the crisis in the U.S. real estate sector.⁵

Certain jobs in construction also showed very high participation in the 2010-2013 period: one of every three returning migrants had worked in the United States as a bricklayer; painter; plumber; flooring, tile, insulation, or air-conditioning installer; or an applier of waterproofing for buildings or other constructions. The second most important activity percentage-wise was agricultural work.

LARGEST DETAILED HISPANIC ORIGIN GROUP BY STATE: 2010

The area of each circle symbol is proportional to the population of the largest Hispanic origin group in a state.

The legend presents example symbol sizes from the many symbols shown on the map.



Source: The Hispanic Population: 2010 Census Briefs, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>.

NOTES

CONCLUSION

A first reflection that the analysis and estimates made with the information available lead to is that unauthorized migrant workers complement the labor by native-U.S.-born employees and contribute to solving the problem of low-skilled, low-waged workers in the U.S. market. In addition, despite some assertions of possible competition for these jobs by U.S. workers lacking professional studies, this seems practically impossible since the activities where migrants are concentrated are very low-paid. ■■

- ¹ See www.inmigracionusa.com/visa-de-trabajo.html, accessed July 13, 2015.
- ² See http://spanish.monterrey.usconsulate.gov/h2_visas_de_trabajo.html, accessed June 29, 2015.
- ³ Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Ana González-Barrera, "Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed," <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/09/23/>, accessed July 3, 2015.
- ⁴ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States," Pew Research Center, April 14, 2009, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/04/14/a-portrait-of-unauthorized-immigrants-in-the-united-states/>.
- ⁵ Orlando García Vega and Érika Zamora Ramos, "Características laborales de los migrantes mexicanos que regresan a México desde Estados Unidos. Un análisis de 1999 a 2013," *20 años de la Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de México* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población, 2014).

Legal and Unauthorized Mexican Migration to the U.S. In the NAFTA Era¹

Mónica Vereá Campos*



Lucy Nicholson/Reuters

In the 20 years since NAFTA came into effect, it has brought broad regional economic interaction among many sectors in Mexico, greater dynamism in foreign investment, and myriad trade transactions that have led to diverse businesses opening. However, the predicted growth of the Mexican economy due to NAFTA's implementation was supposed to create enough jobs to eventually diminish the flow of Mexican migrants to the United States; that did not happen. The flow of legal and unauthorized migrants increased, mainly for the first 15 years, since the push-pull factors of Mexican migration to the United States have persisted, particularly in periods of economic growth. NAFTA's twentieth anniversary gives us an opportunity to reflect on what has happened to migration flows from México to the United States.

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MEXICAN LEGAL MIGRATION TO THE U.S. DURING THE NAFTA ERA

a) Mexican Population and Immigrant Admissions

The United States has always been the most important immigrant-receiving country in the world; today it receives 20 percent of all international immigrants, and its immigrant population has been growing steadily for the last 40 years. Mexicans have been the largest group of migrants in the United States in recent years. Generally speaking, in 2013, nearly 11.6 million foreign-born U.S. residents were from Mexico, around 65 percent of them without authorization. This represents 4 percent of the U.S. population of 315 million and 29 percent of the country's 41.3 million foreign-born population.²

Mexicans in the United States are immigrants or legal permanent residents (LPRs); naturalized U.S. citizens of Mexican origin; non-immigrants, who have temporary visas, mainly as

The largest share of U.S. work visas for all nationalities goes to highly skilled workers, but Mexicans have not played an important role in this category.

tourists and workers; and unauthorized or irregular migrants. In terms of LPRs, about 3 million (3 086 000) Mexicans were admitted as immigrants to the United States from 1994 to 2013, an average of 155 000 a year. Mexico is the country whose citizens receive the most green cards every year; for example, out of 990 553 LPRs admitted in 2013, 14 percent were from Mexico (see Table 1).³

According to the Department of Homeland Security, 1.3 million Mexican LPRs became citizens over the last 20 years, representing only 9.5 percent of the almost 13.7 million foreigners naturalized from 1994 to 2013.⁴ Nearly two-thirds of LPRs of Mexican origin still have not taken the step toward naturalization. This may be because it is costly or they do not intend to stay all their lives in the U.S. and plan to return to Mexico when they retire.

b) The Growth of Mexican Non-Immigrant Admissions

In the 1990s, an important number of foreign high- and low-skilled temporary workers were hired in the U.S. labor market due to the decade’s sustained economic growth. According to the most recently available Department of Homeland Security (DHS) estimates, in 2012 about 850 000 foreign nationals were temporary workers residing in the U.S.

Even though the largest share of U.S. work visas for all nationalities goes to highly skilled workers, Mexicans have not played an important role in this category, compared to other foreigners from India and China who have occupied first and second places in recent years. Table 2 shows the number of highly skilled Mexican temporary workers granted H1-B visas during the NAFTA era. It grew from 2 785 issued in 1997 to 3 683 in 2013, representing only 2.4 percent of a total of 153 223 H1-B visas granted in that year. The same has happened with L1 visas (intercompany transferees): in 1997, 2 346 L1 visas were granted to Mexicans (6 percent of a total of 36 589), and the number grew to 4 079 L1 visas in 2013, representing the same proportion of a total of 66 700.

Based on the bilateral Free Trade Agreement signed by the United States and Canada in 1989, NAFTA established four types of persons to whom a non-immigrant Trade NAFTA or TN visa would be granted: business visitors, merchants, investors, and people transferred between companies. Around 60 classifications of professionals receive this status. The number of Mexican professional TN visa holders grew from 171 in 1997, to 9 548 in 2013. However, although they have grown significantly mainly in recent years, their numbers are insignificant compared with the tremendous size of trade between the two countries. Intraregional trade flows have increased by roughly 400 percent; from around US\$290 billion in 1993 to over US\$1.1 trillion in 2012.⁵ Mexico grew its exports almost ten-fold, from US\$144 million to US\$1 billion a day, making it the United States’ fourth largest trading partner.

Unskilled Mexican workers have obtained an important number of visas, mainly as agricultural workers (H2-A) and non-agricultural laborers (H2-B). While in 1997, 16 011 H2-A

TABLE 1
ADMISSION OF IMMIGRANTS FROM MEXICO
AND THEIR NATURALIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES (2001-2013)

	2001	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total						
Total Immigrants	1 058 902	1 122 373	1 042 625	1 062 040	1 031 631	990 553
Naturalizations	608 205	604 280	619 913	694 193	757 434	779 929
Mexico						
Immigrants	204 032	157 992	138 717	142 823	146 406	134 198
Naturalizations	103 234	77 089	67 062	94 783	102 181	99 385

Source: Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, several years.

visas were issued to Mexican workers (96 percent of all those issued), in 2013 the number grew by more than 300 percent to 69 787 visas (94 percent of the total issued). This demonstrates this sector's important dependence on Mexican workers. In terms of non-agricultural laborers, only 7 678 Mexicans were granted H2-B visas to work in 1997, but the number reached 41 883 in 2013. While H2-B visas issued to Mexicans represented 49 percent of the total in 1997, their participation steadily grew to 73 percent of the total for 2013 (see Table 2).

THE MEXICAN UNDOCUMENTED POPULATION DURING THE NAFTA ERA

a) The Growth of Unauthorized Flows despite Severe Border Reinforcement

Since the 1970s, U.S. immigration policy has focused on apprehending undocumented migrants on the border through enforcement policies. Contrary to the spirit of closer relations among the three countries through the establishment of a formal North American region with NAFTA, the same year it came into effect (1994), the Clinton administration be-

Unskilled Mexican workers have obtained an important number of visas, mainly as agricultural workers (H2-A) and non-agricultural laborers. This demonstrates an important dependence on Mexican workers.

gan militarizing the border with different operations that continued throughout the 1990s. Border enforcement became even tougher after the terrorist attacks in 2001 and much more brutal since the 2007 financial crisis, with budget hikes for that purpose as a policy priority.

It is important to mention that the Bush administration took steps to limit the use of informal returns (voluntary return and departure) at the border in favor of formal removals and non-judicial removal, which have had more severe consequences for the repatriated, whose numbers grew from 70 000 in 1996 to 419 000 in 2012. Today, unauthorized immigrants are increasingly subject to formal removal and criminal charges. Three factors have been the key drivers of major changes in deportations during the last two decades: new laws that expand the grounds for removal; a faster removal process;

TABLE 2
VISAS ISSUED TO MEXICANS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE (1994-2013)

Categories	H1-B ¹	H2-A ²	H2-B ³	L-1 ⁴	TN ⁵
Total					
1994	42 843	7 721	10 400	22 666	4
1997	80 547	16 011	15 706	36 589	171
2013	153 223	74 192	57 600	66 700	9 548
Mexico					
1994	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
1997	2 785	15 335	7 678	2 346	168
2012	3 543	61 324	36 341	3 890	7 600
2013	3 686	69 787	41 883	4 079	9 480

¹ Workers in specialty occupations ⁴ Intra-company transferees

² Agricultural workers

⁵ North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional workers

³ Non-agricultural workers

Sources: For 1994, <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/tri3fullreport.pdf>; for 2012, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_ni_fr_2012.pdf.

and sizeable and sustained increases in immigration enforcement personnel, infrastructure, and technology.⁶

To appreciate the dimension of border enforcement during the NAFTA era, it should be mentioned that in 1992, only 5 000 border patrol officers were watching Mexico's 1 969-mile northern border at different points. Twenty years later, 21 500 agents were hired by the DHS. The Customs and Border Protection (CBP) budget doubled between 2005 and 2012, growing from about US\$1.5 billion to roughly US\$3.8 billion. Clearly, such spending hikes for reinforcing the border have been reflected in the number of apprehensions and deportations: they rose throughout the 1990s and peaked at 1.7 million in 2000. After dropping to somewhat lower levels between 2001 and 2007, they fell dramatically from 2007 to 2011 during the financial crisis. According to Department of Homeland Security statistics, in 2014 the Border Patrol apprehended 485 651 illegal immigrants, compared to 420 789 in fiscal year 2013. Apprehensions of non-Mexicans have been increasing. The increase/decrease in immigrant flows has traditionally been tied to push-pull factors that also correspond to economic cycles.

Despite this tremendous spending on their “enforcement only policy,” the undocumented population in the U.S. has tripled during the NAFTA era: while in 1994 there were about 3.8 million undocumented migrants, their ranks grew to 9.4 million in 2001, peaked at 12.2 million in 2007, and fell to 11.3 million in 2009 during the economic recession. In 2014, the undocumented population was estimated at 11.7 million (58 percent of Mexican origin).

According to figures from Mexico's National Employment Survey (ENOE), the annual volumes of Mexican emigrants to the U.S. fell from 793 000 to 321 000 between 2007 and 2012, which has had a negative impact on inflows of family remittances to the country. According to the Bank of Mexico, remittances grew from US\$3.673 billion in 1995, peaked at \$25.1 billion in 2007, and then decreased to US\$21.9 billion in 2013.

b) Return Migration: an Important Shift In Migratory Flows

According to a Pew Hispanic study, for the first time in recent history Mexican-U.S. migration patterns have registered an important shift in flows. Net migration (the in-flow of Mexicans who come to the U.S., minus the out-flow of those returning to Mexico) has reached an equilibrium. Net migration

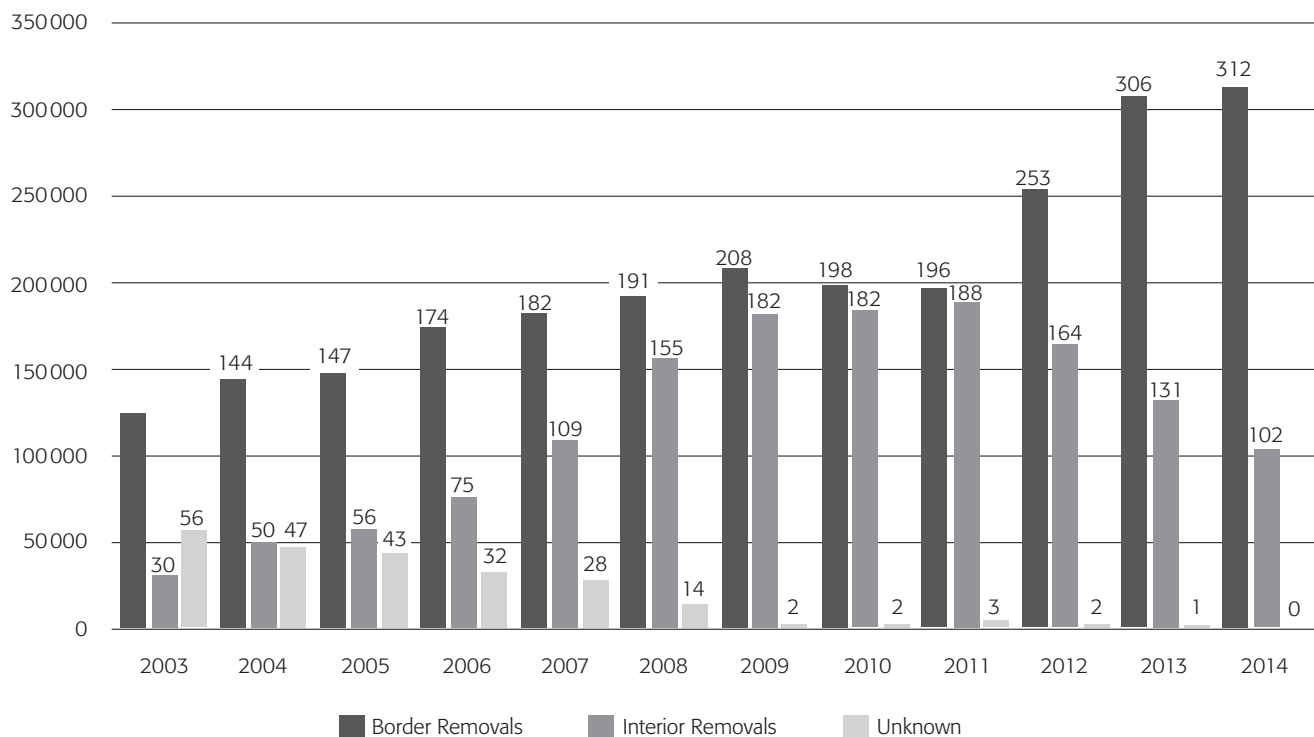
**Despite tremendous spending on the
“enforcement-only policy,” the undocumented
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during the NAFTA era: in 2014, it was
estimated at 11.7 million.**

from Mexico to the United States, both legal and illegal, now stands at zero or less. In other words, the number of migrants coming to the U.S. from Mexico is equal to, or smaller than, the number of migrants leaving or being deported from the United States and returning to Mexico.

This phenomenon, known as the “zero net migration point,” seems to be the result of several factors: the U.S. recession and slow economic growth since 2007 have weakened the U.S. job market, especially in housing construction; the rise in the U.S. unemployment rate meant fewer jobs for both immigrant and native-born workers; increased border security, enforcement measures, and record-setting numbers of deportations of both unauthorized and legal immigrants (and their U.S.-citizen children); and the rising dangers associated with illegal border crossings. The establishment of more restrictive measures for U.S. employers like the E-Verify program has also made it harder to hire unauthorized immigrants. In addition, by expanding the participation of state and local law enforcement agencies through Secure Communities and 287(g) agreements, local authorities, sometimes aided by *vigilante* groups, have become involved in dealing with unauthorized migrants living in different states.⁷

Finally—but this is no minor problem—the very harsh anti-immigrant environment in some states during the last decade has had the effect of undocumented migrants emigrating to other states, going back to their countries of origin, or remaining and being much more vulnerable, because it is highly costly and risky to re-enter the U.S., and even more so if they have family members left somewhere.⁸ At the same time, within Mexico, several reasons have influenced this slowdown of the migratory flow: the cost and high risk of emigrating, the long-term decline in the birth rate, and an increase in the average age of the Mexican population are some of the elements that have influenced the “zero net migration flows.” In spite of this new situation, I agree with Francisco Alba that even though nominal wage differentials have been hovering for years at about a 10-to-1 ratio for manual and semi-skilled jobs in favor of the United States, it is still very attractive to

GRAPH 1
BORDER REMOVALS, INTERIOR REMOVALS, AND UNKNOWN



Source: Alex Nowrasteh, "Interpreting the New Deportation Statistics," January 5, 2015, Liberty Cato Institute, <http://www.cato.org/people/alex-nowrasteh>.

migrate. Whether this change is cyclical or structural remains to be seen and will be put to a test once the U.S. economy is in full recovery and returns to dynamic growth.⁹

I believe that the main reason for this important change has been the significant numbers of undocumented migrants deported or removed in recent years. It is important to stress that almost half the border removals are "expedited." From 2004 to 2014 almost four million immigrants were removed from the border as well as from the interior (see Graph 1). Dur-

Barack Obama, the "Deporter-in-Chief", has reacted to Republican congresspersons' ongoing refusal to pass any type of comprehensive immigration reform by implementing executive actions to temporarily alleviate the status of some of the undocumented.

ing the first six years of his presidency (2009-2014), Obama, known as the "Deporter-in-Chief," deported or removed 2 524 000 unauthorized immigrants in 1 575 000 border removals and 949 000 interior removals. If we compare this data with the last six years of the Bush administration (2003-2008), 1 669 000 unauthorized immigrants were removed, 962 000 from the border, 475 000 from the interior, and 232 000 of another nature. Removals grew from one administration to the other from 278 000 to 420 000 a year. Perhaps because the economy is growing again, during the last two years this "return migration" has dropped from a peak of 4.4 migrants per 1 000 in 2008 to 1.5 in 2014.

c) *President Obama's Actions*

The "Deporter-in-Chief" has reacted to Republican congressmen's ongoing refusal to pass any type of comprehensive immigration reform by implementing executive actions

Obama decided that he had to act on his own since Congress was not acting on immigration; he introduced the Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) program.

to temporarily alleviate the unauthorized status of some of the 11.7 million undocumented presently in the U.S. The first such act, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), created in June 2012, grants renewable two-year work and residence permits to unauthorized foreigners who had arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16, had lived there at least five years, and were under 31. People who receive deferred action have been able to stay temporarily without fearing deportation and could be considered for employment authorization for a three-year period (537 662 applications were accepted for review out of 557 412 received). Two years later, Obama announced the expansion of DACA. After the Republicans took control of Congress in the November 2014 elections, Obama decided that he had to act on his own since Congress was not acting on immigration; he introduced the Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) program, which would allow an estimated four million unauthorized foreigners whose children are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and who have lived in the U.S. at least five years to apply for renewable three-year deportation deferrals and work permits. So far, most Republicans in both houses have opposed Obama's actions, declaring that there was now no chance of enacting bipartisan immigration reform and exploring ways to prevent them from going into effect by denying funding for implementation.

FINAL THOUGHTS

No doubt, NAFTA, an expression of the economic ties among the three North American countries, did create a space for greater formal and informal, documented and undocumented labor mobility between two of the countries than was expected when it was conceived. Given the infrastructure created by NAFTA, it is essential for the Mexican government to explore the possibility of establishing a collateral treaty within NAFTA, in order to increase the number of TN visas for Mexicans as an option for medium- or low-skilled

labor mobility, expanding the categories, so current Mexican undocumented workers could adjust their status to the TN status. From our perspective, it is urgent that the U.S. Congress approve a truly comprehensive immigration reform to provide opportunities for those increasingly vulnerable unauthorized migrants. Meanwhile, deportation relief through Obama's executive actions is a window of opportunity for them. NAFTA might be an ideal platform upon which immigration reform could be based, at least as it pertains to Mexico and Canada, in terms of legalization or establishing programs to import labor or increase the number of visas for that purpose. Transnational families separated between the U.S. and Mexico should be urgently given attention. New avenues should be built to share responsibilities among the member countries in trying to solve the migration dilemma that has been growing during the NAFTA era, for some 20 years. ■■■

NOTES

¹ This article is based on a longer version that includes immigration to Canada and México: Mónica Vereá, "Immigration Trends after Twenty Years of NAFTA," *Norteamérica*, year 9, no. 2, CISAN (July-December 2014); and on Mónica Vereá, "A 12 años de TLCAN = + migración," in Enriqueta Cabrera, ed., *Desafíos de la migración: saldos de la relación México-Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: Planeta, 2007).

² Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, "Mexican Immigrants in the United States," *Migration Information Source*, Washington: Migration Policy Institute, October 9, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-unit-ed-states>, accessed in December 2014.

³ Fifty-four percent of green-card recipients in 2013 were status adjusters.

⁴ In 2013 alone, about 779 929 LPRs became citizens; 99 385 (13 percent) were Mexicans.

⁵ Carla Hills, "Las ventajas económicas del TLCAN: el punto de vista de Estados Unidos," *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica* vol. 14, no. 2, ITAM (April-June 2014).

⁶ Marc Rosenblum R. and Doris Meissner, *The Deportation Dilemma: Reconciling Tough and Humane Enforcement*, Washington, D. C., Migration Policy Institute, April 2014. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deportation-dilemma-reconciling-tough-humane-enforcement>, accessed in November 2014.

⁷ Mónica Vereá, "El debate hacia una reforma migratoria en Estados Unidos durante los primeros años del siglo XXI," in Patricia Galeana, comp., *Historia comparada de las migraciones en las Américas* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2014).

⁸ These states are emblematic precisely because they are relatively "new destinations" compared to the traditional ones. See Mónica Vereá, *Anti-Immigrant Sentiments, Actions and Policies. The North American Region and the European Union* (Mexico City: CISAN, 2012).

⁹ Francisco Alba, "Mexico. The New Migration Narrative," *Migration Information Source*, Washington, D.C., Migration Policy Institute, April 2013, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexico-new-migration-narrative>, accessed in January 2014.

The U.S. Media's Depiction Of Immigration's Impact On Society

Manuel Chavez*



Sandy Huffaker/Reuters

Immigration to the United States has usually been a point of contention across most of the country. Ironically, a country formed by immigrants from the beginning is always uneasy about new “arrivals,” especially those from different ethnic or racial backgrounds than the original English settlers. This constant, persistent pattern resists newcomers’ culture, language, traditions, religion, and values.¹ Even for new immigrants who share the same language, as in the case of the Irish, the previous settlers viewed them with suspicion and resentment. Over time, this has created stereotypes and negative attitudes that affect immigrants directly.

Today, these negative attitudes are focused on Latin American immigrants, especially from Mexico, who are shaping a

new demographic mosaic in U.S. society. No matter where in the United States one travels, Mexican immigrants are a clear, visible presence. Areas that did not traditionally register an important influx of immigrants now experience a significant presence, such as along the Northeast Corridor (from Vermont to Washington, D.C.) and in the Southeast (North Carolina to Georgia). Even places considered non-welcoming to immigrants, such as Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota, Mississippi, and Alabama, are witnessing the increasing presence of Latino communities.²

And this social process shapes two major impacts: the growing resistance of white conservatives to the continuing increase of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States—an irreversible trend—and the perpetuation of blame placed on new immigrants for everything negative happening in the country, from national and state budget deficits to language dominance. These two consequences, then, have a direct impact

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**Attitudes toward immigrants turn
negative based on their legal status.
When young white adults identify
immigrants as unauthorized, they see
them as a greater threat.**

on public opinion, which in turn influences public policy. As politicians hear negative attitudes from their constituents, both state and federal elected officials will favor anti-immigration policies. For instance, Reyna and her colleagues found some evidence of the correlation between negative attitudes and support for restrictive immigration policies.³

Another recent study shows that attitudes toward immigrants turn negative based on their legal status. The study by Murray and Marx examines how young white adults perceive authorized and unauthorized immigrants and refugees, finding that they have developed more negative attitudes when they know the immigrants are in the country illegally. A perception of greater threats and anxiety develops when these young adults identify immigrants as unauthorized. A caveat of the study is that these attitudes were identified in mostly urban white upper-middle- and upper-class areas.⁴

And while many media researchers argue that because of the availability of the Internet and its digital social media tools, discriminatory and racist attitudes should decline, the reality is that the pattern has not changed. In fact, some have maintained that the news media polarization that allows the public to select the channels to fit their political ideology has increased the general spread of negative stereotypes and biases against new immigrants.

But this is where the need arises for a central question: How does the U.S. news media distort, misinform, mislead, and use biased reports about immigration when it is touted as an institution facilitating a well-informed citizenry that can make better decisions? This article argues that the main reason is that the existing ideological polarization across U.S. Americans has permeated the news media outlets, which tailor the information they provide to their audience. This is especially true for networks like Fox News and OAN (One America News Network), which shape information to fit the conservative political agenda, and MSNBC and CNN, which fit in with a liberal perspective.

For instance, conservative news media presented the number of deportations under the Obama administration as evi-

dence that the president was soft on controlling the wave of illegal immigration, implying that the border was chaotic and uncontrollable. In his Fox News commentary show, Lou Dobbs reported this “softness,” when in reality the Obama administration deported close to 400 000 people every year. In 2012, President Obama’s deportations totaled 419 000, the highest number in 20 years, up from around only 50 000 when President George H. W. Bush occupied the White House in 1992.⁵ Fact checking, a function of good journalism, was absent in the Dobbs newsroom.

Another example is the inadequate information provided on the number of apprehensions on the U.S.-Mexico border: in 2014, they came to 479 371, or 65 000 more than the previous year. This is another example of how, in fact, the Obama administration has been tough in enforcing border controls. The almost 16-percent hike in apprehensions in one year was missed by most conservative news media reports. Moreover, the 14-percent reduction of Mexican nationals apprehended by the Border Patrol was, again, missed by right-leaning news reports.⁶

Is this lack of unbiased, objective, professional journalism a problem of professionalism in the newsroom or a lack of a clear distinction between news and editorial/opinion segments? In answering this question, scholars are again divided: some argue that the main reason involves what is called “framing” in the newsrooms’ functions and activities. News media framing in the communication research literature means that journalists, reporters, editors, and managing editors operate with a particular view to presenting information in their articles, editorials, or commentaries. This model argues that it is the result of their own personal perspectives, ideology, experiences, and education that are invariably reflected in the journalistic products. Many times, this is modulated, tuned, or changed by editors, who also have their own personal frames. This model is more evident in news organizations that sympathize with a particular ideology or follow a direct editorial viewpoint or interests, thus producing news that reflects that perspective.⁷

For others, the news media sets an agenda either for public opinion or politicians and governments. This model is called “agenda setting,” which simply has tested the assumption that by placing certain news items prominently, with big headlines, or giving them more airtime (in the case of broadcasting), they advance an agenda or influence the public or even governments. Similarly to framing, agenda setting responds to political views, personal perspectives and ideologies, and/or management interests. The challenge for most readers and

audiences is that it is very difficult for them to distinguish when the media is providing unbiased news and information and when they are framing a story or issue or putting an issue on the public agenda.⁸

In the case of immigration, both framing and agenda setting are embedded in the publications and broadcasts the U.S. news media provides.⁹ News organizations provide hard-liners support for their views by showing and publishing stories that depict the U.S. border as a vulnerable point of entry where “anybody” can enter the country freely. The selection of images (photos or video clips) presented to the public are many times old enough that they do not reflect the current reality of the border. Groups and lines of immigrants walking freely across the desert, people boating or swimming across rivers, and runners who cross the interstate highways are repeated over and over to the point that the U.S. public believes there is a real invasion. This is the fuel welcomed by politicians who advocate “securing” or “sealing” the border with Mexico. Little is done to clarify who is crossing, from what countries, and moreover, in what numbers.

Another frequent frame used by the biased press depicts Latino immigrants in many communities using public services like hospitals or clinics, schools, and transportation, projecting an image of masses of illegal and costly abusers. This is then transposed as the abuse of services that many conservative politicians use to promote reduction of public services in needy communities. But one frame that is difficult to dilute is the one that shows Latinos involved in crimes and law violations. This may be the most negative frame impacting immigration: a frame that fuels a perception that violence and the total lack of respect for the rule of law is prevalent among all immigrants, their families, and communities. Another frame that has been widely propagated is that if immigrants are willing to cross the border illegally, they are intrinsically willing to break the law at all times and under all circumstances. So, it is not surprising that U.S. Americans are divided on how they see immigrants when asked in opinion polls. The Pew Research Center reported that 52 percent of U.S. Americans see immigrants as a strength, and 43 percent as a threat.¹⁰

While historically the press has been a source of influence for creating, shaping, and maintaining stereotypes, it is only now, with the world’s major digital and broadcasting advances, that these biases travel faster and deeper. In fact, the U.S. news media has subtly and, in some cases, very openly, tried to set the public policy agenda on immigration. This is the case when Fox News runs three major opinion segments host-

ed by commentators like Bill O’Reilly, Sean Hannity, and Lou Dobbs, who do not clarify that on their shows, they present their personal perspectives rather than hard, fact-checked news. As U.S. American medium-sized and small communities across the entire country witness the arrival of Latino immigrants, the images and words coming from the media infuse—or diffuse—their previous viewpoints or assumptions.

Alternative professional media present a softer version of Latino immigrants, stressing their contributions to society, culture, and even to tax revenues. Yet, this frame is not as popular as the one that blames immigrants for the weaknesses of the U.S. political, social, and economic system. But, once again, this is nothing new in U.S. political rhetoric. One question that arises is whether U.S. society is totally polarized on attitudes and views of immigrants and immigration reform. The response depends on who answers the question.

Most U.S. Americans relatively marginally support immigrants. But significant gaps exist across political ideologies regarding support for new immigration reform based on party affiliation, whether Republican or Democratic. A 2014 Pew Center survey showed that while 60 percent of Democrats consider it extremely/very important to pass new immigration legislation, only 46 percent of Republicans thought the same.¹¹ This perspective that crosses party lines does not correspond to the large majority of U.S. Americans who believe a reform is needed. Almost three in four U.S. Americans, or 73 percent, agree that there should be a way to stay legally in the U.S. if unauthorized immigrants meet certain requirements; only 24 percent disagree.¹²

Also, when public opinion polls unravel demographic composition, the picture changes based on race and ethnicity. In the same Pew survey, the differences across those characteristics were noteworthy. U.S. Americans who identified themselves as white expressed lower support (44 percent); blacks reported higher support (49 percent); and as expected, Hispanics support the passage of new legislation by a 72-percent margin. The difference between whites and His-

The existing ideological polarization across U.S. Americans has permeated the news media outlets, which tailor the information they provide to their audience. This is especially true for networks like Fox News and OAN (One America News Network).

One frame that is difficult to dilute is the one that shows Latinos involved in crimes and law violations. This may be the most negative frame impacting immigration.

panics is almost 28 percentage points. This jibes with the premise that previous groups of immigrants are resistant to and distrusting of new immigrants.

Another frame used frequently by the U.S. press is about the levels of education immigrants have when they arrive in the country. This means that Asian immigrants tend to be seen as better for the country because, as they have higher educational levels, they can contribute more; Latino immigrants, on the other hand, with low levels of basic education, are perceived as a liability. While this may be true in the strict sense of educational attainment, some Latino immigrants are highly educated and make significant contributions to the U.S. economy and society.¹³

However, when economic conditions are difficult and employment declines, immigration is perceived as a problem. During the recent severe economic downturn of 2008, about

50 percent of U.S. Americans perceived immigration as a problem rather than as an opportunity. Public opinion about immigration further deteriorated because there was a perception that immigrants took U.S. jobs, depressed national wages, and threatened the U.S. economy. Peri found these results and linked his findings to a strict immigration policy approach.¹⁴

In the face of these daunting conditions, are there any attitudes promising a positive outcome for immigrants and immigration reform? The answer seems to be in the affirmative. Another recent Pew Research Center survey comparing views on immigration over a period of 20 years shows that the view that immigrants provide strength and not weakness to the U.S. is increasing. In 1994, only 31 percent answered that immigrants strengthen the country with their hard work and talents, while in 2013 almost half (49 percent) answered similarly. This is an increase of almost 20 points in two decades. And here is the major contrast: while in 1994, 63 percent answered that immigrants were a burden, in 2013 only 41 percent agreed with the same statement.¹⁵ And the main question remains: What were the most influential sources of information shaping attitudes about immigrants: the news media, personal experiences, or family/friends/colleagues? Scholars in North America will continue to seek a plausible and empirically solid answer. ■■

NOTES

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Mexican Immigrants’ Access to Healthcare On the U.S.-Mexican Border

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Clara Bellamy Ortiz**



Migration and healthcare coverage are two very serious problems, even more so when they are intertwined, mutually fostering their disadvantages. The United States is the destination of almost 90 percent of the world's migrant population,¹ and Mexico, as its neighbor and due to its economic and social crisis, is the country that contributes the largest number. In 2010 alone, it ranked first for the number of international migrants, expelling 1.19 million people, adding to the little over 33 million individuals of Mexican descent already living in the United

States, of whom 21.2 million were born there. Today, Mexicans represent 4 percent of the country's total population and about 30 percent of all immigrants.²

Immigrants face a series of obstacles and difficulties and see their rights trampled upon. One of those rights is the right to health. So, it is fundamental that people understand and take on board the fact that this right is recognized by different national and international instruments.³ This article describes very briefly the Mexican and U.S. systems and analyzes the changes brought about by the healthcare system reform sponsored by Barack Obama. We also map the actors involved, giving examples of some national and binational, governmental and non-governmental initiatives that have been put in place to improve the health of immigrants along the border.

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THE MEXICAN AND U.S.
HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Mexico’s healthcare system is both public and private. The public sector offers coverage to part of the population through social security linked to formal employment through the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS); the Institute for Social Services and Security for Government Workers (ISSSTE); Mexico’s state-owned oil company, Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex); the Ministry of Defense (Sedena); and the Ministry of the Navy (Semar). The rest of the public sector focuses on the general public, mainly low-income individuals through the Ministry of Health (SS), State Health Services (Sesa), the IMSS-Opportunities Program (IMSS-O), and Popular Health Insurance (SPS).

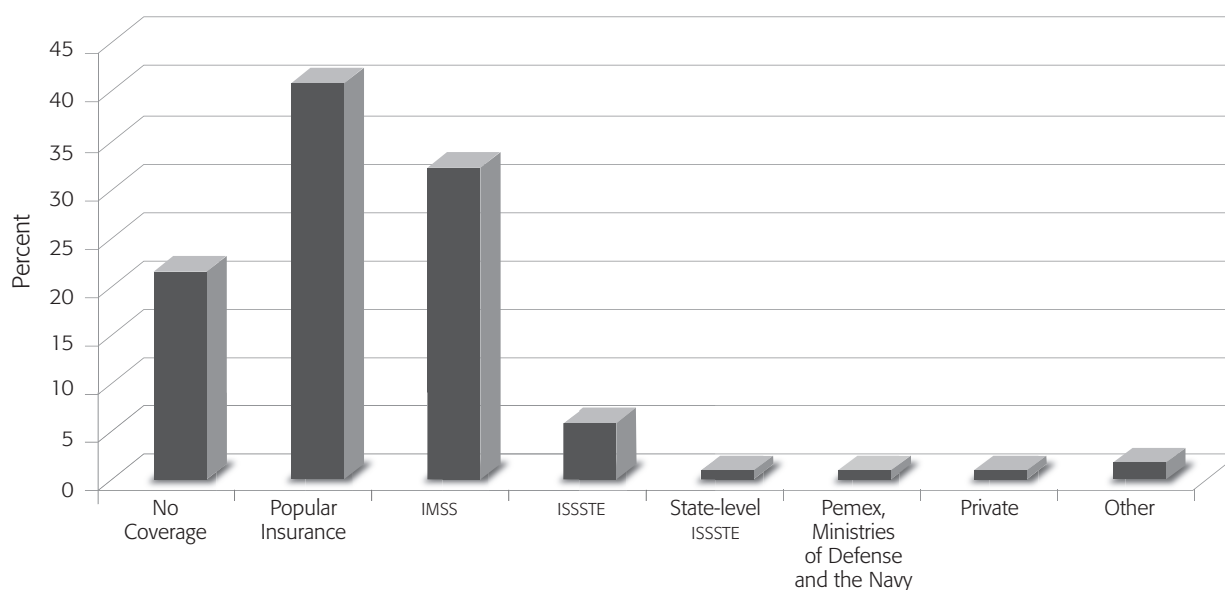
The private health sector is made up of insurance companies and private service providers. Currently, the system is facing several problems given that the state has not been able to guarantee minimum services for all. Services are not distributed geographically according to the need for care; problems of access, equity, and quality exist; resources are not rationalized or optimized; and there is a persistent lack of resources to resolve priority health problems.⁴

Immigrants face a series of obstacles and difficulties and see their rights trampled upon. One of those rights is the right to health.

Also, since the Popular Health Insurance program was initiated in 2004, the number of people affiliated has increased every year without achieving the hoped-for universal coverage by the target year, 2010. There is also a discrepancy in the data with regard to the affiliation of the 17 million people reported by the 2010 census and the National Commission for the Protection of Health.⁵ Graph 1 illustrates the affiliation to health services in Mexico. The enormous gap between the public and private sectors should be underlined.

The U.S. health system is mixed: public and private, state and federal. It operates mostly through the purchase of private insurance policies, which can be paid for by employers or acquired directly by U.S. citizens or their spouses. The commercial logic of private insurance policies does not differ

GRAPH 1
HEALTH CARE COVERAGE IN MEXICO (2012)



Source: Developed by the authors using estimates from Coneval based on MCS-ENIGH, “Indicadores de acceso y uso efectivo de los servicios de salud de afiliados al Seguro Popular,” 2012, p. 20, <http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Informes/Evaluacion/Impacto/Acceso%20y%20Uso%20Efectivo.pdf>, accessed February 12, 2015.

Note: An individual can be affiliated to more than one institution.

at all from that of other kinds of goods or services. With regard to public insurance schemes,⁶ one is Tricare, designed for those in the military and managed by the Defense Health Agency.⁷ There are two other federal programs: Medicare, which covers citizens over the age of 65 and people with disabilities or severe health problems like cancer,⁸ and Medicaid, which is for low-income families, children, pregnant women, adults without children, older adults, and persons with disabilities. Each state of the union has its own Medicaid program.⁹

The Veteran's Health Administration (VA) is a public insurance system for combat veterans, which offers care in hospitals, clinics, community centers, and the home, among other services.¹⁰ Finally, another public insurance scheme is the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides coverage to about 8 million children and families whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, but who cannot pay for private insurance.¹¹

Table 1 illustrates the percentage of coverage in 2013 by these insurance plans, showing that none of the programs surpasses 12.5 percent, a very low figure. It was in response to this that Barack Obama decided to carry out a reform of public health services so that they would be more affordable and cover more people, what has been called "ObamaCare."

OBAMACARE

Health coverage in the United States is low even for citizens and financially unaffordable for the vast majority since it is mainly provided by the private sector. Another disadvantage is that it is conditioned on formal employment, a difficult condition since many employers do not offer medical insurance and a high percentage of immigrants are undocumented. In addition, these forms of insurance are selective, making coverage limited. Of all the immigrants in the United States, the most unprotected in terms of health care are those of Mexican origin. According to figures reported, 53.5 percent have no coverage; the figure is higher (63 percent) among those who

Health coverage in the United States is low even for citizens and financially unaffordable for the vast majority since it is mainly provided by the private sector.

TABLE 1
HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE UNITED STATES
ESTIMATES FOR 2013 (PERCENT)

Health Insurance Coverage	12.5%
Private Health Insurance	11.8%
Employer-based Health Insurance	9.1%
Direct-purchase Health Insurance	9.8%
Tricare/Military Health Coverage	10.9%
Public Coverage	11.9%
Medicare Coverage	8.1%
Medicaid/Means-Tested Public Coverage	10.6%
VA Health Care	10.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey, Health Insurance Coverage Status*, 2013, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_1YRS2701&prodType=table, accessed February 20, 2015.

have lived there for less than 10 years. In addition, of the 46 percent who do have some coverage, 27 percent have private insurance, which means that those with lower incomes are less likely to have medical insurance. In short, approximately 6.4 million Mexican immigrants in the United States have no health insurance.¹²

Given these problems, Obama fostered the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), also known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA), healthcare reform, or simply ObamaCare, which he signed into law on March 23, 2010. Its aims are to increase the quality and affordability of health insurance plans, decrease the number of people without insurance by expanding public and private coverage, and reduce the costs of access to health care, both for people and for the government.

ObamaCare has allowed the public to purchase health insurance by registering on line, a process open in different periods from its initial launch. The last period lasted from November 15, 2014 to February 15, 2015.¹³ ObamaCare targets those who are not covered by their employers or do not qualify for any government health insurance program, or are on the list of exceptions. However, it does not cover everyone: undocumented immigrants cannot access health insurance and "a person who is not a citizen of the United States" cannot benefit from the ACA.¹⁴

According to Óscar Chacón, to purchase ObamaCare, you have to have a social security number. Before the reform, private insurance was an option for undocumented immigrants. Another problem Chacón pinpointed is that immigrants who could access ObamaCare have not had many incentives to do so since Mexican and Central American immigrants consider health a privilege, not a right. He has also pointed out that the higher immigrants' educational levels, the greater awareness they have that health is a right.¹⁵

UNEQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR IMMIGRANTS

Today, no public policy for binational health insurance exists, which means that Mexican immigrants in the United States receive their care from the U.S. health system as long as they are not undocumented. Therefore, their migratory status determines their ability to access public or private health services.

IMPROVING MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS' HEALTH IN U.S. BORDER STATES

Along the Mexico-U.S. border, a series of different actors, governmental and non-governmental, state and federal, on both sides of the border come together to provide care for Mexican immigrants. Binational and public/private mixed initiatives also exist. Despite all these efforts, health care does not reach everyone, particularly the undocumented.

The Mexican government has implemented different activities and programs for Mexicans residing in the United States through the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME), such as the Binational Health Week, the Health Windows, Repatriation of Gravely Ill Compatriots, Go and Come Back Healthy, and Promoting Health on the Northern Border programs.

The Health Windows program was created by the Mexican government in 2002, and developed by the Ministries of Health and Foreign Relations through the Institute of Mexicans Abroad. It offers information and facilitates access to local health services, focusing on immigrants who have no access to health care. One of these windows exists at each consulate (50 in all throughout the United States), and two windows are mobile. They operate with the inter-institutional collaboration of Mexico's Health Ministry, local agencies, the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC), the

The Binational Health Week organizes health promotion and preventive activities for immigrants and their families, in collaboration with the Health Initiative of the Americas.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the American Cancer Society.¹⁶ Although the program is quite broad because it operates in all the consulates, many immigrants of Mexican origin reside far away from them.

The Repatriation of Gravely Ill Compatriots program seeks to channel these patients to a federal or state health center according to the illness they have been diagnosed with.¹⁷ The Binational Health Week organizes health promotion and preventive activities for immigrants and their families, in collaboration with the Health Initiative of the Americas and with the participation of different bodies from both countries.¹⁸

The Go and Come Back Healthy program carries out health promotional and preventive activities in places of origin, transit, and destinations of immigrants and their families through inter-institutional and inter-sectoral participation. The Promoting Health on the Northern Border program does just that by concentrating on priority issues among the border immigrant population in the cities that do not have Mexican consulates.¹⁹

The US-Mexico Border Health Commission (BHC) is a binational body whose objective is to optimize health and quality of life for inhabitants of the border area. It is comprised of the respective federal health ministry and department, the chief health officers in the 10 border states, and outstanding health professionals from both countries. Its priorities are access to health, strategic planning, research, data collection, and academic alliances, tuberculosis, obesity, diabetes, infectious diseases and public health emergencies. In 2013 and 2014, some of their activities included Leaders across Borders; the U.S.-Mexico Border Reproductive Health Summit; the U.S.-Mexico Border Tuberculosis Consortium; the U.S.-Mexico Border Binational Infectious Disease Conference; the Border Health Symposium; the Power of Collaboration, Community-based Healthy Border Initiatives; the Prevention and Health Promotion among Vulnerable Populations Initiative; the Border Obesity Prevention Technical Work Group Meeting; Healthy Border 2010/2020 Strategic Plan: Phase V; the

U.S.-Mexico Border Health Research Work Group Meeting; and the Annual Binational Border Health Week.²⁰

Some examples of civil society organizations' activities along the border should be mentioned. Prevecasa is a civic association based in Tijuana that works on prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. It arose out of the collaboration between two professors at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and a Mexican doctor who continues heading the organization. Most of the research is funded by the United States.²¹

The US-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership (BPP) is a foundation that supports a binational network of organizations working on the border. BPP published a report in 2006, "Corporate Giving Trends in the U.S.-Mexico Border," presenting the results of a survey of 110 companies. Of all the goals of their actions, 13 percent involved health. Another example is the Binational Health Collaboration Program implemented by the United States-Mexico Foundation for Science (Fumec). Fumec acts as a fiduciary agent to allocate funds, coordinate health activities, manage technical and administrative aspects of the institutions involved, and link up actors in academic and institutional networks.²²

Despite the multiplicity of actors involved in the U.S. and Mexican health systems, in both countries, health continues to be a privilege reserved for those with a higher socio-economic level or who belong to specific social groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The U.S. and Mexican health systems are divided into public and private. In the United States, a greater percentage of the care is private. In Mexico, although the Popular Insurance program has increased coverage in recent years, it is still a long way from providing care for all.

Initiatives by both governments have been important but insufficient to cover the health needs of the immigrant pop-

ObamaCare does not cover everyone:
undocumented immigrants cannot access
health insurance and "a person who
is not a citizen of the United States" cannot
benefit from the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

ulation. Their impacts have been limited because they have focused mainly on promoting health, but not in providing care. Other actors have emerged who have intervened in the issue, covering some deficiencies; these are the non-governmental organizations and civic and social associations that have not discriminated against the undocumented when providing care.

Thus, the lack of coverage of the immigrant population's health needs continues to be a very serious problem; despite what has been established in law, neither the Mexican nor the U.S. governments have achieved universal coverage or real access for all, which is aggravated in the case of immigrants, particularly the undocumented. This has contributed to health not being perceived as a right and to people not understanding that it is legally and legitimately something that can be demanded and not a privilege or charity. ■■■

NOTES

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Obstacles to Immigration Reform And Mexican Migration to the U.S.

Elaine Levine*

While most people in the United States would agree that the country urgently needs to reform its immigration policies, no clear consensus exists about what the new policy should be. The fact is that U.S. Americans have very contradictory ideas and attitudes about immigration and immigrants. Given the primary role immigrants have played throughout the nation's history, it is by and large "politically incorrect" to oppose immigration altogether. However, many of those who refer to their immigrant forbears with pride show disdain for recently arrived poor immigrants seeking better work and a better life. Furthermore, since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, it has become somewhat more acceptable to at least show suspicion and skepticism toward some immigrant groups.

Immigrants come to the U.S. from almost all regions of the world, bringing with them a wide range of educational back-



Lucy Nicholson/Reuters

grounds, class structures, languages, and ethnicities, and thus are often classified accordingly. There is a notable difference of perceptions and attitudes toward low-skilled, less educated workers and highly skilled and educated profes-

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sionals. As of the most recent census (2010), over half (53 percent) of the immigrants living in the U.S. were born in Latin America. Almost half of those (29 percent of the total immigrant population) were from Mexico, and many were from Central America, while Asians made up 28 percent of the foreign-born population and Europeans, 12 percent.¹ Perhaps the most salient division among immigrants today, certainly in the public eye, would be the distinction between those who have and those who do not have “legal” authorization to reside in the country. Hence, one of the most controversial aspects of almost any and all proposals for reform is how to deal with the estimated 11 million or more unauthorized immigrants.

The immigrant share of the U.S. labor force has been on the rise for several decades, especially since 1990. Between 1990 and 2010, the foreign-born component of the labor force grew faster than the native-born component and “immigrant employment has tended to rise faster than native-born employment.”² Since the 1990s, Latin American immigrants in particular have been an important component of labor force growth in the U.S. Mexico has long supplied the largest number of workers from south of the border. The demand for labor in the U.S. and the supply from Mexico, and increasingly from Central America as well, evolved in such a way that Latino immigrants became the primary source of low-skilled, low-wage workers in several branches of the economy and in various parts of the country.

The high numbers of unauthorized workers from Mexico and their generally low levels of educational attainment, characteristic of most recent Mexican and Central American immigrants, make them extremely vulnerable in terms of working conditions and wage levels. In contrast, the number of unauthorized immigrants from European or Asian countries is quite low. The severe 2008-2009 recession momentarily stemmed the arrival of new labor migrants, especially the unauthorized. The supply from Mexico and Central America is more or less adaptable—or can be forced to adjust—to demand conditions north of the border.

From 2009 through 2013, given the severity of the recession and a climate of growing hostility toward immigrants, in some parts of the U.S., U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removed an average of 1 000 unauthorized immigrants a day, most of whom were Mexicans or Central Americans. The continued presence of large numbers of unauthorized immigrants, who had been actively recruited and/or readily employed by U.S. businesses and households, and the separation of families and other abuses and hardships

Many of those who refer to their immigrant forbears with pride show disdain for recently arrived poor immigrants seeking better work and a better life.

suffered by those deported clearly evidence the urgent need to change current policies.

The demand for immigration reform has resounded in the halls of the U.S. Congress and across the nation since the beginning of this century. Although various proposals have been presented and voted on over the past 15 years, none has been approved by both houses thus far. President Obama was unable to fulfill his campaign promise to achieve immigration reform during his first term in office. Even the Dream Act (Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act) has succumbed to legislative impasse more than once since it was first proposed in the Senate in 2001.

In the aftermath of the “great recession,” which officially ended in June 2009, the overall economic climate has not propitiated positive attitudes toward immigration reform and/or somehow regularizing the status of millions of unauthorized immigrant workers. At first there were lingering fears of a double-dip recession, and GDP growth has been disappointingly slow for the past seven years. Total employment did not return to its pre-recession level until June 2014. The employment level for Latinos began to recover in 2010—even as overall employment continued to decline—and surpassed the pre-recession figure in 2012. However the rise in the number of Latinos employed was initially accompanied by falling wages, especially in the case of Latino immigrants.

Before the 2008-2009 recession, Mexican and other Latin American immigrants easily found work in several labor market niches where their participation had grown rapidly during the 1990s and the first part of the 2000s: construction, meat packing, poultry processing, crop production, various branches of food processing, plant nurseries and landscaping services, building cleaning and maintenance, and personal care for children or the elderly, among others. The recession brought high levels of unemployment for all. Throughout the economic decline, from the beginning of 2008 until the middle of 2009 and the weak recovery thereafter, unemployment for Latinos, especially Latino immigrants, was consistently higher than the rate for non-Hispanic whites and lower

The hard times experienced throughout the country have generated hostility toward those who a few years earlier had been recruited to fill thousands of jobs that local workers would not accept.

than the rate for blacks, just as it has been since the 1970s or earlier.

The overall unemployment rate peaked at 10 percent in October 2009, four months after the recession had officially ended. Since then it has fallen more or less steadily but extremely slowly. In June 2015, the unemployment rate (5.3 percent) was still above the pre-recession level of 4.6 percent, which was the annual average for 2006 and 2007. Furthermore the current unemployment rate would be higher if it were not for the fact that the labor force participation rate has dropped by at least three percentage points, from 66 percent in 2008 to 62.9 percent in 2014. In addition to the approximately 8.3 million unemployed persons actively looking for a job at this time, another 6.1 million want to work but have stopped looking for employment because they do not think they can find a suitable job.³

Most U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents who became unemployed during the recession received at least some relief through unemployment insurance payments, which were nevertheless certainly insufficient to compensate for their losses. Obviously, none of the unemployed undocumented immigrant workers have received any benefits whatsoever. The hard times experienced throughout the country have in some places, especially in some of the southeastern states, generated hostility toward those who a few years earlier had been sought out and even actively recruited to fill thousands of jobs that local workers would not accept.

In spite of his 2008 campaign promise, no immigration reform was passed during Obama's first term as president. In what many have considered a more or less desperate move to have at least something to offer to Latino voters in November 2012, Obama implemented the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on June 15 of that year. This program grants those who meet the requirements, who entered the country before their sixteenth birthday and prior to June 2007, temporary exemption from deportation and permission to work in the U.S. for a period of two years, with the possibility of renewal for a subsequent period. The U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services offices began receiving DACA applications on August 15, 2012. Two years after its implementation, over 500 000 requests had been approved.

The fact that Obama received 71 percent of the Latino vote in the 2012 elections, as opposed to only 27 percent for Romney, seems to have made an impression on some Republicans with an eye to the future importance of Latino voters. By the end of January 2013, Washington was buzzing with talk of immigration reform. A bipartisan Senate commission comprised of four Republicans and four Democrats was formed to draw up a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform. As a result of their efforts, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013* (S744) was approved by the Senate on June 27, but it was never put to a vote in the House of Representatives. Leading members of the House preferred a more gradual, "piece-meal" approach. Five separate bills dealing with specific issues were marked up in the House Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees but never reached the floor for a vote. Thus, even though new life was breathed into the immigration debate after the 2012 elections, the extreme partisan divisions that have plagued Obama's entire presidency prevailed once again and finally thwarted the possibility of achieving immigration reform in 2013.

Clearly evidencing his frustration over the impasse in Congress, Obama announced on June 30, 2014, that he would soon take executive action to make changes to the immigration system. The summer of 2014 was marked by the widely publicized arrival at the southern border of an unusually high number of unaccompanied minors from Central America hoping to obtain refugee status in the U.S. Public opinion about how to manage the situation was highly vociferous and extremely polarized. On September 6 the president announced that he would delay taking any executive action on immigration until after the mid-term elections.

On November 20, 2014, Obama announced an expansion of DACA and a new program of Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) to provide work authorization and protection from deportation for all applicants meeting the stipulated requirements. The DAPA program and the expansion of DACA have not been implemented so far because 26 states took legal action to block them from taking effect. The federal government's appeal of the decision to block these measures has not yet been resolved.

Although only the federal government has the constitutional and legal power to determine immigration policy, lack

of action at the federal level has prompted many states to take matters into their own hands. Several states have invoked the argument of federal inaction as a justification for passing highly punitive laws to detect and remove unauthorized immigrants. In contrast, some recent examples exist of states and localities that have enacted laws and implemented policies to allow immigrants certain rights and protections, in recognition of the important role they have played in bolstering languishing local economies.

All these economic, political and social factors interact to determine the demand for immigrant labor in the United States at any given time. Furthermore, the resulting demand then interacts with the economic, social, and political conditions that determine the supply of willing and available migrant workers from potential sending countries over time.

By the end of 2012, the number of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. labor force was a little higher than it had been in 2007, even though the total number of Mexican-born residents in the country was estimated to have either stagnated or even declined. At that time, the number holding jobs was still lower than, and the unemployment rate almost twice as high as, pre-recession levels. Since Mexican immigrants are a primary source of information for their friends and relatives back home concerning job opportunities in the U.S., it is logical to assume that they also provide information about the lack of jobs and the rise in deportations. Between 2008 and 2013, approximately 1.5 to 1.6 million Mexicans were removed or deported from the U.S., and this figure alone goes a long way in explaining the apparent decline in the number of Mexicans currently residing there.

The wage differentials and the extremely precarious working conditions prevailing in Mexico still provide strong incentives to migrate. According to official statistics, almost 60 percent of all persons counted as working did not have formal employment status as of July 2014; 27.17 percent were counted as employed in the informal sector of the economy; and an additional 31.61 percent, although working in formally established enterprises, had no formal contractual relationship with their employers.⁴ The earnings of approximately 80 percent of persons with incomes in Mexico are less than one half of the current minimum wage in the U.S. Almost half of the population is considered to be living in poverty or recognized as having an income “below the level of well-being.”

Under such conditions, it is difficult to imagine that the available supply of willing labor migrants from Mexico has actually diminished. What has changed significantly since

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languishing local economies.

2008 are the economic conditions and the political climate prevailing in the U.S. The highly uncertain employment prospects and possibilities of being able to remain in the U.S. are surely in and of themselves strong deterrents to assuming the risks inherent in the journey to “the North.”

Thus, the repercussions, both direct and indirect, of this “great recession” for Mexican immigrants in particular, and to some extent for Latinos in general, go far beyond the immediate economic impacts. The economic crisis brought to light and accentuated underlying anti-immigrant sentiments that continue to prevail within certain segments of the U.S. population and have generated a climate of hostility toward many Latin American labor migrants, and especially toward undocumented Mexicans. It remains to be seen how the supply of and demand for Mexican labor in the U.S. will interact and evolve once the U.S. economy has fully recovered from the 2008-2009 recession and if and when the federal government can approve and implement any sort of comprehensive immigration reform. ■■

NOTES

¹ U. S. Department of Commerce, “The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010,” *American Community Survey Reports*, May 2012, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>.

² Rakesh Kochhar, C. Soledad Espinoza, and Rebecca Hinz-Pifer, “After the Great Recession: Foreign Born Gain Jobs; Native Born Lose Jobs” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, October 29, 2010), <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2010/10/29/after-the-great-recession-brforeign-born-gain-jobs-native-born-lose-jobs>, p. 3.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The Employment Situation-June 2015,” news release, July 2, 2015, www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empstat.pdf.

⁴ Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), “Población ocupada por niveles de ingresos,” *Banco de Información Económica* (2014), <http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/bie/>; INEGI, “Indicadores oportunos de ocupación y empleo. Cifras preliminares durante julio de 2014,” press release no. 380/14, August 22, 2014, Aguascalientes, Ags., <http://www.inegi.org.mx/inegi/contenidos/espanol/prensa/comunicados/ocupbol.pdf>; and Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social-Coneval, “Pobreza en México. Resultados de pobreza en México 2012 a nivel nacional y por entidades federativas,” 2013, <http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Medicion/Paginas/Medicin%C3%B3n/Pobreza%202012/Pobreza-2012.aspx>.

“Canada Is Not a Hotel” Debating the Hospitality Of the Canadian Asylum System

David Rocha Romero*



Shaun Best/Reuters

History seems to repeat itself more up north: the increase in Mexican migrants, many requesting asylum in Canada,¹ prompted greater restrictions in immigration and asylum legislation under Stephen Harper's Conservative government. One clear example of this trend is Law C-31, in effect since December 15, 2012, making protection for refugees in Canada dangerously vulnerable to political whim.² Among other measures, it gives the government more authority to jail asylum-seekers for long periods of time.

“Canada is not a hotel,” is a phrase that exemplifies these changes. Coined by Jason Kenney, Canada's minister of Citizenship and Immigration from 2008 to 2013, this refers to Canadian generosity and to privileges rather than the respons-

ibilities of migrants seeking asylum. The discourse of Conservative politicians about the Canadian asylum system's excessive hospitality is frequently used to justify anti-immigrant policies rooted in racial criteria.³

Canada manages immigration largely through its asylum policies, seeking to diminish both requests and the number of refugees who arrive at its doors to invest, study, work as skilled or manual laborers, but also as refugee claimants, fleeing precarious living conditions, discrimination, persecution, and violence in their places of origin. Often they are not accepted in their destinations, prompting them to seek refugee protection and await the decision of the Refugee Board of Canada.

With the world's largest economy next door, Canada has received a growing number of migrants, many undocumented Mexicans, who, fleeing from anti-immigrant U.S. policies or the economic crisis that began in 2007, crossed its southern border seeking asylum.⁴ In 2008, 2 305 asylum requests

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were submitted in Canada by individuals who had been in the United States.⁵ However, due to the Safe Third Country Agreement, which came into effect December 29, 2004, if a person enters Canada from the United States, he or she cannot request asylum.

Table 1 details the selection criteria for admitting immigrants. Those who arrive for economic reasons are by far the most often accepted and are selected according to their ability to contribute to the economy; this category includes “business immigrants.” It also shows a downward trend in the number of refugees, who are allowed to reside permanently when their claims are granted. This decrease coincides with the years of the economic crisis and the hike in deportations from the United States. Before Mexicans were required to request a visa in 2009, Canada was already limiting the acceptance of refugees.

In 2008, their numbers dropped almost 22 percent *vis-à-vis* 2007. These figures lead us to think that imposing the visa requirement was not the result of too many Mexicans requesting asylum and “abusing the excessive hospitality of the Canadian asylum system.” Rather, it looks like the intention was simply to decrease the number of requests from

The discourse of Conservative politicians about the Canadian asylum system’s excessive hospitality is frequently used to justify anti-immigrant policies rooted in racial criteria.

Mexico and therefore not have to deal at their ports of entry with refugee claims they considered fraudulent and costly. This coincides with the idea that the political discourse about Canadian hospitality is frequently used to justify anti-immigrant policies.

In 2012, Mexico was still leading asylum requests, with China in second place, and Hungary in third, although the number of Mexican requests had dropped 62 percent *vis-à-vis* 2009.⁶

Policies to control migration and asylum more strictly have gotten the desired results and they seem to have been specifically targeted: as Minister Kenney put it, Mexicans “are actually trying to immigrate to Canada through the back door of the refugee system and I think that’s unacceptable,” qualifying it as an abuse of the Canadian system’s generosity.⁷

TABLE 1
PERMANENT IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA BY YEAR OF ARRIVAL AND CATEGORY

	Economic Immigrants	Family Class*	Refugees
2000	136 282	60 613	30 091
2001	155 716	66 785	27 917
2002	137 863	62 290	25 110
2003	121 046	65 120	25 983
2004	133 746	62 272	32 686
2005	156 313	63 374	35 774
2006	138 248	70 515	23 499
2007	131 244	66 240	27 954
2008	149 067	65 583	21 859
2009	153 491	65 207	22 850
2010	186 915	60 224	24 697
2011	156 118	56 449	27 873
2012	160 821	65 010	23 099
2013	184 181	79 684	24 049

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, <http://www.canadaimmigrants.com/immigration/statistics/canada-permanent-immigration-1989-2013/>, accessed June 30, 2015.

* Family reunification sponsored by a family member resident in Canada.

TABLE 2
REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM BY MEXICANS (2003-2013)

	New Claims	Finalized ^a	Accepted	Rejected	Abandoned	Withdrawn ^b	Accepted (%) ^c
2003	2556	2240	601	953	280	406	27
2004	2916	2703	672	1338	244	449	25
2005	5346	3699	714	2286	225	474	19
2006	4951	3288	930	1694	153	511	28
2007	7074	3651	385	2132	281	853	11
2008	8115	5705	604	3397	357	1347	11
2009	9313	6098	508	3393	435	1762	8
2010	1314	5876	655	3480	325	1416	11
2011	803	6109	1029	4195	281	604	17
2012	389	3038	570	2152	113	203	19
2013	114	1016	182	686	65	83	18
January-September 2014	71	261	73	157	9	22	28

Notes:

- The term “finalized” refers to successful requests, including those dating from previous years.
- “Withdrawn” requests are those cancelled by the government because the claimant was excluded from the protected status or for other reasons, such as the claimant’s death.
- The acceptance rate is the percentage of all requests finalized.

Source: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, <http://www.vancouver.sun.com/life/Take+Mexico+safe+list+immigration+protesters+urge/10396363/story.html>, accessed June 20, 2015.

While in 2008 an average of 10 000 Mexicans made asylum requests, by 2014, under the new laws, fewer than 100 were filed.⁸ This decrease resulted in Canada’s dropping to last place on the list of the 15 nations that receive the most asylum requests. Requests have increased worldwide by 45 percent, rising to 866 000 in the first months of 2015, but Canada only received 13 500 in that period. Meanwhile, Germany, in first place, received 434 300; the United States, 403 300; and Sweden, a nation with 9.6 million inhabitants (one-fourth of Canada’s population), 75 100 requests.⁹ Canada has designed strategies to stop being a preferred refugee destination.

Evidence cannot be ignored that shows that the recent changes in immigration and asylum legislation aimed to restrict the entry of a particular ethnic community, as happened on different occasions in the twentieth century when measures against Chinese, Jews, or Japanese were put in place.¹⁰ Or rather, the changes are aimed at restricting a socio-economic layer of that ethnic community: the Mexicans requesting asylum, whose motivations have changed over the years.

In the second half of the 1990s, persecution for sexual orientation and domestic violence were the main justifications for claims;¹¹ by the second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century, most of the requests (13 700 to the United States and 30 142 to Canada) were the result of the negative effects of the war against drugs.¹²

The media played an important role, particularly in demanding Mexicans be required to obtain visas in 2009, by presenting the refugee issue as a “crisis” and portraying our compatriots as criminals and fraudulent asylum seekers, as well as by exaggerating the high cost to the state of every approved asylum application (under certain circumstances, some

Those who arrive for economic reasons are by far the most often accepted and are selected according to their ability to contribute to the economy; this category includes “business immigrants.”

The intention of the visa requirement seems to have been to cut the number of requests from Mexico to not have to deal with refugee claims they considered fraudulent and costly.

claimants are eligible for help with housing, social benefits, health coverage, and work permits), as well as the costs of detecting illegitimate requests. It seems the discourse of “the illegality and criminality” associated with Mexicans in the United States migrated north.¹³

Table 2 shows that one of the effects of the visa requirement was that the number of new requests dropped significantly from 2009 to 2010. The downward trend in asylum request approvals is clear starting in 2012, with a marked drop in 2013. This trend is very probably on-going, judging by the results in 2014.

Another effect of the changes in immigration and asylum policies is the drop in the percentage of migrants *vis-à-vis* the rest of the population (see Table 3). According to these numbers, and considering that Canada’s birth rate has been very stable over the last five years, increased deportations (12 006 from 2004 to 2005, rising to 13 249 from 2008 to 2009) will probably mean that the migrant percentage of the population will continue to drop.

FINAL COMMENTS

The anti-immigrant policies and the U.S. crisis in the second part of the century’s first decade, together with the violence unleashed by the Mexican government’s war on organized crime, increased the migration of Mexicans to Canada, many

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF MIGRANT POPULATION *VIS-À-VIS*
TOTAL CANADIAN POPULATION (2000-2011)

	2000	2010	2011
Migrants as a Percentage of the Total Population	18.9	21.2	20.6

Source: For 2000 and 2010, Secretaría de Gobernación, “Observatorio de migración internacional,” http://www.omi.gob.mx/es/OMI/1_Migracion_Mundial. For 2011, Statistics Canada, “Foreign-Born Population, As a Proportion of the Total Population,” <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/2011001/c-g/c-g01-eng.cfm>.

seeking exile status. Like its neighbor to the south, the Canadian government has begun closing its doors to these migrants.

The visa requirement for Mexicans imposed by this government in 2009 arguing a supposed abuse of Canada’s benevolent asylum system is actually one of the actions to better manage the denial of asylum claims since the number accepted every year has been very similar over the last decade, with a marked drop only in the last two years. This confirms that it is having an effect. The discourse by Conservative politicians about the benefits of Canada’s asylum system is frequently used to justify anti-immigrant policies there, and its current target seems to be Mexicans. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Asylum is offered to persons with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political views, or membership in a specific social group, as well as to those in danger of torture, cruel treatment, or unusual punishment. “Glossary,” Citizenship and Immigration Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/glossary.asp>, accessed June 15, 2015.

² Carrie Dawson, “Refugee Hotels: The Discourse of Hospitality and the Rise of Immigration Detention in Canada,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* vol. 83, no. 4 (Fall 2014), pp. 826-846.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Monica Davey, “Illegal Immigrants Chase False Hope to Canada,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/21/us/21refugees.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, accessed July 1, 2015.

⁵ James Bisset, “Abusing Canada’s Generosity and Ignoring Genuine Refugees. An Analysis of Current and Still-needed Reforms to Canada’s Refugees and Immigration System,” Frontier Centre for Public Policy Series no. 96 (October 2010), pp. 1-47.

⁶ Refugee Claimants, <http://www.canadaimmigrants.com/immigration/statistics/refugee-claimants/>, accessed June 22, 2015.

⁷ “Mexicans Trying to Immigrate through the Back Door, Says Kenney, Canada’s immigration minister,” CBC News, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/mexicans-trying-to-immigrate-through-the-back-door-says-kenney-1.792456>, accessed May 22, 2015.

⁸ Peter Rakabowchuk, “Ottawa Makes It Easier for Mexicans to Come to Canada,” Huff Post Politics Canada, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/05/12/mexican-immigration-canada_n_5310130.html, accessed June 27, 2015.

⁹ Nicolas Keung, “Global Asylum Claims Rise 45%, but Canada Lags in Receiving Refugees,” *The Star.com. Immigration*, <http://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2015/03/26/global-asylum-claims-rise-45-but-canada-lags-in-receiving-refugees.html>, accessed June 10, 2015.

¹⁰ Yolande Pottie-Sherman and Rima Wilkes, “Anti-immigrant Sentiment in Canada,” in Mónica Vereá, ed., *Sentimientos, acciones y políticas antiimmigrantes* (Mexico City: CISAN, 2012), pp. 275-289.

¹¹ George Usha, “Mexican Migration to Canada: Case Study Report,” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* vol. 6, no. 3 (2008), pp. 463-474.

¹² Liette Gilber, “Canada’s Visa Requirement for Mexicans and Its Political Rationalities,” *Norteamérica* year 8, no. 1 (January-June 2013), pp. 139-161.

¹³ Liette Gilber, “The Discursive Production of a Mexican Refugee Crisis in Canadian Media Policy,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* vol. 39, no. 5 (2013), pp. 827-843.



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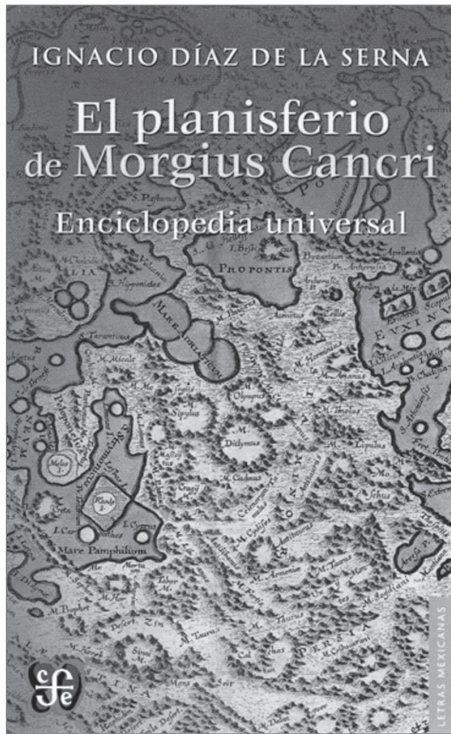
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El planisferio de Morgius Cancri.
Enciclopedia universal
 (The Flat Map of Morgius Cancri.
 Universal Encyclopedia)
Ignacio Díaz de la Serna
 Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE)
 Mexico City, 2014, 255 pp.

In one of his most celebrated essays, “The Storyteller” (1936), Walter Benjamin expressed his consternation at what he perceived as the end of the art of storytelling. The German thinker associated it with the devaluation of experience, and, as a result, with a growing incapacity to communicate that experience. More than storytelling capacity, he noted the lack of the ability to create fables, which comes from the oral tradition: that is, the epic tale.

We should remember, however, that already in Flaubert’s late work, when he aspired to writing a novel about nothing, fiction had begun to be suspicious of its materials, and occupied itself determinedly with procedures. That road that began with *Bouvard y Pécuchet* (1881) by Flaubert himself, and which in poetry was sparked by Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard* (A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance) (1897), gave birth to the avant-garde of the twentieth century, that is, writing critical about its vehicle: language.

El planisferio de Morgius Cancri. Enciclopedia universal, by Ignacio Díaz de la Serna, invites the reader to revisit some of Walter Benjamin’s ideas about storytelling. The preamble of

the book asks us to doubt; it talks about a flat map and alludes to a universal encyclopedia, but there is no guarantee that what we are holding is anything like that. Nevertheless, something close to a certainty is slipped in: a machine for inventing. That is the key: invention before storytelling, as Benjamin-the-reader-of-fiction would prefer. Not a Machine-for-Storytelling, which would imply stories that look at themselves and sometimes deny themselves as such, but rather a Machine-for-Inventing, the mental territory where everything happens according to a certain logic, which only occasionally has points of contact with that which, not too convinced, we call reality.

Just like the novel *Los acordes esféricos* (The Spherical Chords) (Mexico City: ERA, 2005), the texts of *El planisferio de Morgius Cancri* seem to enjoy their apparent anachronistic character. Almost everything that happens in the stories takes place—or seems to—in the past, and the language, with its surprising mixture of registers, attempts to produce that sensation, but a ferocious sense of humor constantly destabilizes the reading. Are these characters real? Are they imaginary? Are they real beings in imaginary lives? It is a real flat map: it

places the roundness of a ferociously personal narrative on the two dimensions of the page.

This book probably belongs to a genealogy that dates back to Marcel Schwob's *Imaginary Lives* (1896) and that —just between us— moves through titles like *Retratos reales e imaginarios* (Real and Imaginary Portraits) (1920), by Alfonso Reyes; *Historia universal de la infamia* (A Universal History of Infamy) (1935), by Jorge Luis Borges; *La sinagoga de los iconoclastas* (The Temple of Iconoclasts) (1972), by J. R. Wilcock; or *La literatura nazi en América* (Nazi Literature in the Americas) (1996), by Roberto Bolaño. The main antecedent of *El planisferio de Morgius Cancri* is recognizably Borges, but it is a book with a different temperament: it lacks the Argentinean's modest intent and appeals to the guffaw rather than a smile.

Reading *El planisferio de Morgius Cancri* means meeting up with the world of, and particularly the characters from, *Los acordes esféricos*, a novel set in the eighteenth century, written as the commented diary by Ireneo Díaz, who allows the author to amble through an imaginary Madrid. We reencounter Nereus, an herbalist trained in Basle and an inhabitant of Noriamula; Charles III, the emperor of Spain and the Great Onan; Joseph Townsend, better known as Fucking Joseph, an English reverend and author of *A Journey Through Spain in the Years 1786 and 1787, 1791*; Sister Hierónima, a devotee of Christ raped by Satan; Ireneo the Pious from the peninsula of Anatolia, the author of the *Gospel of the Nomad* and the patron saint of bile; and Cunqueiro —not the Gallegan writer of the same name, one of Díaz de la Serna's reference points, together with writers like Ítalo Calvino or Roberto Calasso—, the ship's captain who controlled beasts with his gaze and was in contact with a devil woman. Almost all of them crossed paths with the person or the work of Beelzebub (or Lucifer or Satan, according to your preference), the character from the *Old Testament*, whose new adventures are offered here. *El planisferio* is, therefore, a rewriting in the form of an encyclopedia of the author's previous narrative work.

A subtle essayist, sophisticated disseminator of the work of Georges Bataille in Mexico, retired poet (*Humos y dispersos* [Smoke and Dispersed], Mexico City: Quinqué, 1989), an expert on the republican ideals of the U.S. founding fathers, Ignacio Díaz de la Serna (b. Mexico City, 1955) seems to feel the need to construct alter egos when he writes fiction. In *Los acordes esféricos*, it was Ireneo Díaz, a native of New Spain who traveled during the Enlightenment to the Iberian Peninsula, which, at least in the fiction, seems more akin to obscurantism —some of the scenes bring to mind Goya's *Witches'*

Sabbath. The same is true with *Planisferio*, this time signed by Morgius Cancri, of whom little is known: it is a pseudonym, he likes steak seasoned with pepper, as a child he dreamed of the clouds of the Indian Ocean, and he played *La cumparsita* on the accordion.

But back to the original idea. In this book, the author is seeking to invent, to recover the lost art, according to Benjamin, of storytelling. This is no easy task, not in what Nathalie Sarraute has called the "Age of Suspicion,"¹ and here is dubbed the Age of Befuddlement. But, of course, it is impossible to invent as if nothing happened in the last century. In that sense, Díaz de la Serna's prose does its job as parody. It constructs a parallel voice to those of past ages, without being absorbed into them. The writing in *Planisferio* has different formal sources: medieval literature, Spain's Golden Age, sketches from Pompey, or the Encyclopedists, and it interlinks different forms of wisdom that come equally from history and the occult sciences. However, it has no choice but to be contemporary.

In the epilogue to his *El hacedor* (The Maker), Borges wrote a few lines that, although well-known, are no less relevant: "A man sets himself the task of portraying the world. Through the years he peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and people. Shortly before his death, he discovers that that patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his face."²

I don't know if Díaz de la Serna has traced his own face in *Planisferio*. A complete portrait would have to include, for example, the admirable epilogue of his Bataille anthology, *La oscuridad no miente* (Darkness Does Not Lie) (Mexico City: Taurus, 2001). It may be the map of Noriamula, a town impossible to pinpoint where people like telling stories, where old Nereus and his polyglot macaw insult passersby, and where the rare imagination behind these stories may well come from. ■■■

Nicolás Cabral

Essayist and editor of
La tempestad (The Tempest),
a Mexican art magazine

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¹ Nathalie Sarraute, *La era del recelo: ensayos sobre la novela* (Madrid: Guadarrama, 1967). [Editor's Note.]

² Jorge Luis Borges, "Epilogue," *The Dream Tigers*, Harold Morland, trans. <http://thefloatinglibrary.com/2008/12/09/dreamtigers-epiloge-j-l-borges/>. [Editor's Note.]

Textos orales sobre la figura del indio de Nuyoo

(Oral Histories about the Indian from Nuyoo)

Grissel Gómez Estrada

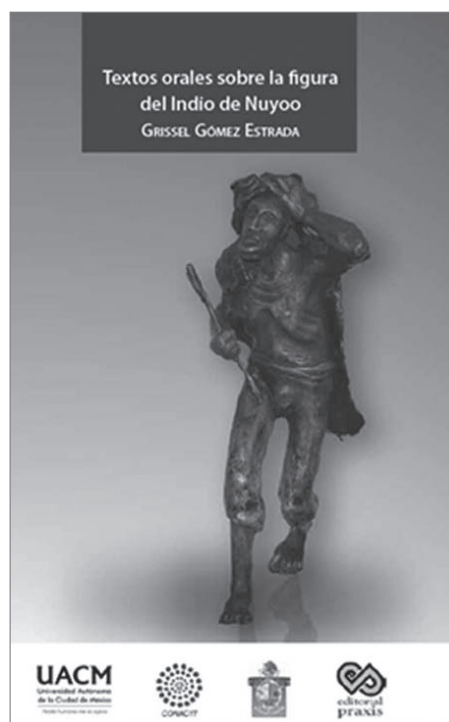
Autonomous University of Mexico City/Conacyt/

Government of Oaxaca

Mexico City, 2012, 144 pp.

I forgot what had happened, but what my grandfather says—and he was told by his great-grandfather—is that Remigio left to fight in Huajuapán; he turned into a pig, and then he turned into a cat to fool the soldiers, but, since he was very clever, he didn't let himself get captured.

Demetrio Andrés López Rojas,
73, peasant, Santiago Nuyoo, Oaxaca



It is legitimate to speculate that in turbulent times, when uncertainty and radical changes govern everyday life, communities convulsed by them resort to myth and legend as a mirror in which they can recognize themselves and identify their history, their values, and their traditions. Not to mention that these ideas sink deep roots into society; they are not conscious or deliberate, and they have a symbolism that gives them a power of permanence capable of transcending several generations. That mirror image is not only the reflection of the times when they originated; it is also the invention of the communal identity and the creation of the glue that holds them together, keeping them coherent with a vast, more structured totality.

Conceived as something alive and active, legend, myth, or historical event do not adapt to the times: they offer sustenance to changes, giving them the on-going, basic recognition of an identity. Society adapts to the transformations in its relations thanks to the recognition that allows it to continue to be itself in its becoming: history, tradition, and myth are both cause and effect of a community that develops over time.

In this order of ideas, the research on which Grissel Gómez Estrada's based the book I am reviewing is exemplary.

It is a meticulous collection of oral histories, rescued from oblivion and from the marginal knowledge of two places in the state of Oaxaca, a city and a rural community, associated with a certain episode in the history of Mexico's independence.

In 1812, the caudillo Valerio Trujano, one of General José María Morelos's men, took Huajuapán de León, an enclave that would turn out to be strategic for the later occupation of the state capital, at that time the Intendancy of Oaxaca. The town was almost immediately surrounded by the Royal Army commanded by General Régules, whose superior forces outnumbered ten to one those of the troops fighting for independence. However, Trujano and his men managed to resist the siege for 111 days, making it the longest of the war. The conflict was resolved when Morelos, dubbed the "Servant of the Nation," who had been fighting in Cuautla, came to the insurgents' aid, forcing the royal troops to withdraw. This is as far as official history takes us.

This episode is mixed together with a legend that remained on the sidelines of history, but has lasted in the collective memory of the region's inhabitants for more than 200 years. Central to that story is the figure of Remigio Sarabia, seemingly a mule driver from Santiago Nuyoo, a small indigenous

community of Tlaxiaco, who by chance—it was market day—was in Huajuapán when it was surrounded, cutting the city off from the outside. In other versions of the story, the so-called “Indian from Nuyoo” was in town looking for a priest—in order to kill him—who had run away with his wife or had taken her by force. In any case, Sarabia joined the rebel troops, rendering them a great service, as will be seen.

It is said that the man was a *nagual*, that is, he had the ability to turn himself into an animal; and that he used this ability to enter the enemy camp every night and spy on Régules while he gave his subordinates their orders. That way, he was able to tell Trujano the movements the Royalist Army would make the following day, giving the insurgent general the opportunity to take countermeasures. Despite all this, the defense of the town became unsustainable, making it urgent to notify Morelos about the situation so he could help the rebels. Once again turned into an animal—legend tells, it was specifically a pig—the “Indian from Nuyoo” was able to cross the royalist lines and make his way to the generalissimo alerting him to the difficult straits of the independence fighters. The national hero immediately went to their aid and forced the royalists to retreat.

The center of the legend I just described has several versions. Grissel Gómez researches and classifies them based on extensive fieldwork, whose results make up the final body of this traditional story. She tells us, for example, that the narrators interviewed in Santiago Nuyoo told the orthodox version—shall we say—of the story, while the residents of Huajuapán de León, a much more modern, populated urban center, had developed versions in accordance with Catholic mythology, no less magical than the original indigenous version. Thus, in Huajuapán, Remigio Sarabia’s ability to break through the enemy lines is attributed not only to his being disguised, covered with a pigskin, but to the Lord of the Heart, a black Christ that has become the patron saint of the locale, performing a miracle so he would not be discovered. By contrast, the inhabitants of Santiago Nuyoo maintain that the hero was a *nagual* and that these beings exist, or at least existed. As such, he is attributed with a series of extraordinary acts, such as producing rain in times of drought by smoking a cigar; all of these versions are logged and ordered in her book.

But not only that: as a scholar of oral literature, she also offers a large number of elements to understand the function, meaning, and research method of the legend with its variations. Other disciplines like anthropology, history, ethnography, and even psychology benefit from the material gathered with

a view to understanding how a community affirms certain values and identifies itself with them through the narrations that connect it to its own country. This is why Gómez Estrada observes that the values that all the variations of the narration include, like Sarabia’s cleverness and courage, allowed this first people, usually neglected in national history, be included in it: the “Indian of Nuyoo” is also all the anonymous indigenous people who fought for independence without their contributions being recognized, with a few individual exceptions such as in the case of “El Pípila.”¹ Referring to her interviews, which she reproduces in Spanish and in many cases also in Mixteco, she comments,

In addition to talking about the vision people have of Remigio Sarabia, considered a *nagual*, who could turn himself into a cat or a pig, they recreate places, they tell popular anecdotes about the times of the fight for independence, they sketch for us their world view and beliefs. From another perspective, the inhabitants of Nuyoo have not only identified with the figure of Remigio Sarabia as an emigrant, but he has also served to give them an identity in the national context.²

The book, then, is a valuable document whose content is superior to what it seems at first glance. The recovery and reflection about this kind of story transmitted orally from parents to children are experiencing an irreversible turning point. Over the course of her fieldwork, this researcher has proven that it is older adults who keep the memory of stories like this one alive. New generations do not seem interested in keeping alive the cultural baggage of their people, and, in any case, have not shown any intention of maintaining and ordering their rich collective imaginary. Though sad, this is one more reason to be pleased that this book exists, offering us the beauty and power of a legend still living that in the near future may no longer be with us. ■■■

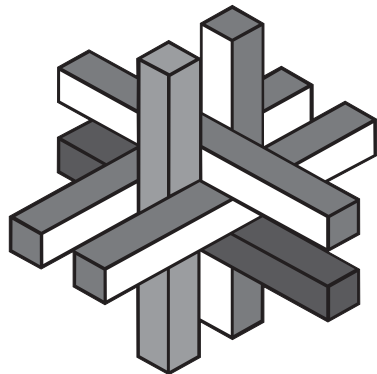
Arturo Cosme

Mexican editor and writer

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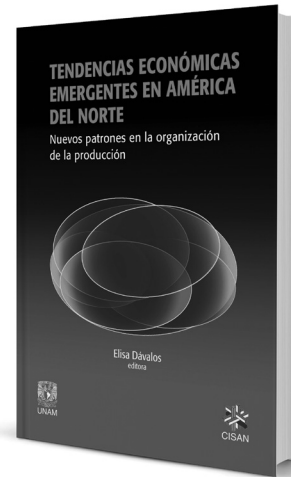
¹ “El Pípila” is the name given to an indigenous miner said to have won the siege of Guanajuato by approaching under the cover of a stone slab the wooden door of the fortress where the Spaniards had barricaded themselves and setting it on fire, thus allowing the insurgents to breach it. [Translator’s Note.]

² Grissel Gómez Estrada, *Textos orales sobre la figura del indio de Nuyoo* (Mexico City: UACM/Conacyt/Government of Oaxaca, 2012), p. 74.



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Tendencias económicas emergentes en América del Norte. Nuevos patrones en la organización de la producción

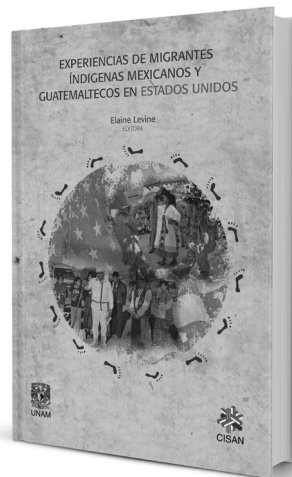
Elisa Dávalos, ed.

This volume presents studies of regional and global productive actor, global value chains, and the context in which in North America they have brought together government policies and businesspeople organized in corporate networks. It delves into the most important trends in the process of intra-regional economic integration and the interaction of this region with the world.

Experiencias de migrantes indígenas mexicanos y guatemaltecos en Estados Unidos

Elaine Levine, ed.

This book presents research results about the specificities of indigenous migration to the United States and the impact it has had in their community life. Each author has underlined a specific aspect of the migrant experience. And each one reveals something about the reaffirmation and redefinition of individual and collective identities that indigenous people experience as a result of migration.



Derechos humanos y transformación política en contextos de violencia

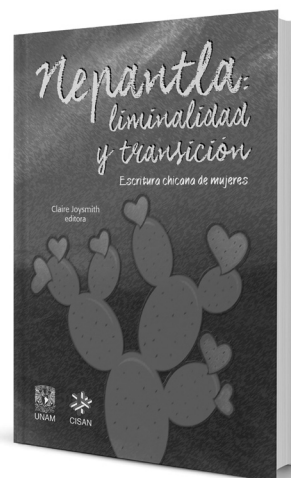
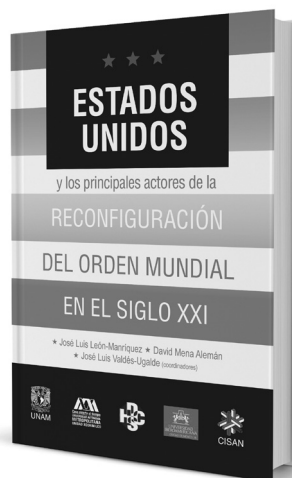
Ariadna Estévez and Daniel Vázquez

Is the human rights discourse a useful tool for generating processes of political and social change in contexts of violence? With a multidisciplinary approach, the authors of this volume analyze human rights as a social practice carried out amidst power relations in the framework of the convulsions of the twenty-first century, as well as the challenges and limits of the use of this discourse reflected in NGO action strategies, institutional activities, and the concentration of political and economic power.

Estados Unidos y los principales actores de la reconfiguración del orden mundial en el siglo XXI

José Luis León-Manríquez,
David Mena Alemán
y José Luis Valdés Ugalde, coords.

From different points of view and thematic perspectives, this volume presents an understanding of the changes in the international system in the second decade of the twenty-first century, starting with an analysis of some of the most representative actors on the global stage. It pays particular attention to the role of global governance and the part the United States plays and will play with regard to other actors on the world stage that were already powers or have emerged as such in recent years.



Nepantla: liminalidad y transición. Escritura chicana de mujeres

Claire Joysmith, ed.

In this work, Chicana cultural philosopher Gloria E. Anzaldúa discusses "nepantla," the Nahuatl term, meaning "place or site in the middle." She resignifies it as an incipient paradigm of liminality and transition, as a core part of the Chicano experience, focusing on certain women writers in particular. Anzaldúa conceives of Nepantla as a "between-worlds" place, state, and perception; somewhere that different borders cross, from where new creative, literary and linguistic, spiritual and psychological, sociocultural and geopolitical identities can be explored and forged.

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Problemas del DESARROLLO

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