

VOICES *of Mexico*

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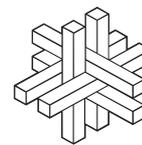
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OUR VOICE

Mexico's current foreign policy vision attempts to focus on promoting the country's development, recognizing that, in the world context, all government institutions in charge of administering and executing the diversity of actions aimed at that end must directly or indirectly benefit from the diplomatic efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Relations itself.

While this orientation is praiseworthy, the country's economic reality makes it impossible to be optimistic. By last August, GDP growth had fallen to 0.74 percent, while, in May, the figures were only at 0.4 percent, according to National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) data.

The predictions are negative. So, the analysts underline that our economy's mediocre performance is due to its heavy dependence on the United States. This means that redesigning strategies to balance this model by diversifying Mexico's trade is urgent, in addition to taking different unavoidable actions like fiscal reform.

This issue of the magazine has a marked component of articles dealing with key facets of the Mexico-U.S. relationship, or that analyze U.S. domestic political issues with an impact on Mexico. Thus, we begin with a magnificent interview with Ambassador Anthony Wayne by researcher Leonardo Curzio, which underlines the importance of Obama's recent visit with his Mexican counterpart aimed at strengthening the high-level dialogue based on the recognition of the increasing interaction between both nations.

Throughout the conversation Wayne, an experienced career diplomat with previous postings in places as different as Argentina, Afghanistan, and the European Union, once again shows a particular political sensibility for linking the critical issues of the bilateral agenda (security, migration, energy) to those new topics that, like education, aim to set relations with Mexico on a more comprehensive course.

In the range of topics that we present for our readers' consideration are two articles by colleagues from abroad who speak to the recurring violence Mexico continues to experience. One of them, from a singular perspective, refers to a musical documentary to talk about the perverse circle of despair and inequality permeating Ciudad Juárez. Describing the aesthetic of horror, Alice Driver puts at center stage marginalized youth whose reality transcends any territory, since they appear as actors in a drama in which reality and fiction overlap. Brazilian professor Júlio da Silveira embraces the cause of undocumented Central American migrants, who have disappeared or suffered all kinds of mistreatment at the hands of organized crime in their journey through Mexico. He emphasizes the alliance among non-governmental organizations, the Church and local communities to make the collective, transnational struggle visible in its efforts to denounce and combat this social cancer.

We dedicate pages in this issue to design in Mexico, given its cultural stamp in the contemporary world and the importance its professionals have taken on in pursuit of harmonizing creativity, aesthetics, and the functional, not only in the use of new environment-friendly

materials, but also as a means for responding to new consumer and user needs. In a world where the visual reigns supreme, we open up three small windows to show how the wealth of our identity permeates the design of fashions that are now competing internationally, to narrate the inventiveness of our industrial designers, and to include our talented Mexican graphic designers, whose origins cannot exclude the legacy of great artists like Diego Rivera himself.

Voices of Mexico takes pride in being a magazine with a universal vocation. On that basis, it has been a sounding board for paying homage posthumously to members of the UNAM academic community who have distinguished themselves for their dedication and commitment. This is the case of philologist and poet Rubén Bonifaz Nuño. A man passionate about the study of and reflection about the Greek and Latin classics, he will continue nourishing the new generations of young people through his humanist teachings, many of which have been captured in the quintessential sublime art: poetry.

Let us turn now to several topics in this issue that deal with the international or regional situation. A discussion of the future of the European Union, framed in an economic crisis to which its members do not seem to have a consensual way out invites us to read the detailed analysis of German professor Kurt Schelker. Profoundly knowledgeable about the challenges facing this ambitious, unprecedented project of unity, he discusses its dimensions and the capacity to internally harmonize the diversity of national interests, underlining the fact that experience and trust are key axes for deepening what he considers the next step: political union.

The North American region reiterates to us the fact that economic integration continues apace. For the case of Mexico, Gabriela Sánchez and Simone Lucatello write about the need to expand the mechanisms to foster scientific-technological development. This is a fundamental factor for decreasing asymmetries with the United States and Canada, but also for consolidating the country's participation globally, determined by knowledge and competitiveness. In addition, greater entrepreneurship on the part of larger numbers of the members of the Mexican or Latino communities in the United States produces eloquent data, as pointed out by authors Enrique Pino and Diego Manzano.

To conclude, we invite our readers to follow the coming 2014 elections in the United States by paying particular attention to this issue's "Special Section," dedicated to reflections on the context of Obama's second term. We also urge them not to lose sight of the political events that will give form to the 2015 Canadian elections, dealt with in this issue by expert Oliver Santín.

We wish to thank our subscribers for their continuing interest in this publishing effort. To them and to our occasional readers, we extend our recognition for their solidarity with the many "*Voices of Mexico*."

Silvia Núñez García
Director of CISAN

Problemas del DESARROLLO

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Interview with Anthony Wayne, U.S. Ambassador in Mexico Mexico-U.S. Relations Today¹

Leonardo Curzio*

Leonardo Curzio (LC): It's an honor to talk with Anthony Wayne, the U.S. ambassador, on a special day for his country [July 4], since of all the foreigners residing in Mexico, the largest community is that of U.S. Americans.

Ambassador Anthony Wayne (AAW): It's one of the largest communities in the world: more than one million Americans live in Mexico alone.

LC: During his visit last May, President Barack Obama noted that 10 percent of the U.S. population is of Mexican origin. Why do we not recognize each other as next-door neighbors if we have these demographic links?

AAW: More than 30 million Americans have Mexican ancestry, and that community continues to grow. In my youth, for example, I noticed that in California there was a large Chicano population—that was what they were called then—and almost 20 percent of my friends in high school belonged to that social group, although the proportion of Chicanos has increased in those communities.

LC: Also, millions of citizens have two passports and both nationalities. Plus, the possibility of immigration reform is opening up. Do you think this will bring the Mexican-American community and the two countries in general closer?

AAW: We hope so. President Obama's aim is to propose a comprehensive immigration reform that will respect our history as a nation of laws forged in diversity. An important step was the Senate's passage of the bill, and now it has to be discussed in the House of Representatives.

LC: We've been waiting for more than 10 years for a solution to the status of that whole community that has lived in the United States, many of them undocumented. Mr. Am-



bassador, in recent months, two very important books about our bilateral relations have come out. One is *Mexico Matters*, by Luis Rubio,² and the other, *Two Nations Indivisible: Mexico, the United States, and the Road Ahead*, by Shannon K. O'Neil.³ Clearly, Mexico's most important international relationship is the one with the United States, since it is a world power. On the other hand, few countries have as much influence on what happens to millions of Americans as Mexico does. What is your evaluation of current bilateral relations?

AAW: The United States is a great country and the relationship with Mexico is very important. That was clear on President Obama's visit May 2 and 3, in the conversations he had with President Enrique Peña Nieto, and the agreements

* Researcher at CISAN.

and projects assigned to me and my colleagues at Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations.

For example, the importance of the economic and trade relationship was underlined; a new high-level forum for dialogue was created to increase both countries' competitiveness in the world and create jobs; a bi-national forum on education and research was created to increase academic exchange. All this was in recognition of the fact that in recent decades, the relationship between our countries has grown and academic exchange has such great importance for the future that we have to invest in it. We also have to make the border efficient so that young people, both from the U.S. and Mexico, can get to know their neighboring country and stay there three months, six months, or even a few years.

LC: Because of its importance, education is the subject of many bills; among others, the one about the 100 000, the "Dreamers," etc., who make it possible to find many points of proximity between the two countries. Our nations' political calendars mean that new administrations coincide every 12 years. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing. So, that happened with Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and George H. W. Bush; with Vicente Fox (2000-2006) and George W. Bush. Barack Obama was re-elected in November 2012 and this coincides with Enrique Peña Nieto. Do you think there's new impetus when a new administration—in the case of Mexico—and Obama's second term both start?

AAW: I have noted energy on both sides of the border. In Mexico, President Peña has indicated that relations with the rest of North America (the United States and Canada) are very important for Mexico's economic future, and the interesting thing is that President Obama has also reformulated these same issues. There's a new vision of the participation of the three countries in the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) negotiations. We value the importance of working together to improve our competitiveness in the world, and think that the supply lines among Canada, the United States, and Mexico are important for our countries' present and the future, even though we also know that we have to improve the situation, since these lines must be transformed to foster innovation and the creation of new possibilities.

LC: The agenda for economic competitiveness is very important. We know that bilateral trade in our region is over US\$400 billion. It seems incredible that we trade more than US\$1 billion every day in goods and services. On the U.S. side, the aim of giving competitiveness more political weight is expressed in the fact that Vice President Joseph Biden him-

"The supply lines among Canada, the United States and Mexico are important for our countries' present and the future; that's why they must be transformed to foster innovation and the creation of new possibilities."

AAW

self will preside over the mechanism. The Mexican government has not yet determined who will join him as co-head, but, what can we expect from this high-level economic dialogue?

AAW: We hope to organize a meeting this year, and we'll work to determine an agenda with Mexico. It's our aim, for example, to improve the flow across the border; a lot of trade crosses every day, but it can be improved and for that, we need new infrastructure.

LC: Are we talking about technology?

AAW: Yes, technology. Certain customs processes can facilitate legitimate, legal trade. At the same time, we can improve the detection of illicit trade and that way foster economic growth and achieve greater competitiveness. We're going to examine all the sectors that can connect the two economies: both countries' land and air transportation, telecommunications, and energy grids, like electricity or natural gas networks.

LC: Speaking of electricity, there's an idea to foster a project to unify the entire hemisphere—I don't know if in 2020 or 2030—, isn't that right?

AAW: Exactly. There's a project to connect all the economies of the Americas because, for example, the price of electricity in Central America is much higher than in Mexico, the United States, Canada, or Colombia. So, we can support economic development in those countries with electricity grids linking them to the South and the North. We can also reinforce energy security and electricity supply on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border with better connections when there are emergencies, etc.

LC: So, in the economic dialogue, our aim is that North America be the most competitive region in the world. Is there a date for the meeting of North American leaders?

AAW: This year Mexico is the host. Last year it took place in Washington, and I had the opportunity of participating. But I still don't know when it's going to be held.

LC: Whenever it is, the presidents will look at the issue of productivity in the region, that is, how to do more things with new technologies. President Obama's speech at the Anthropology Museum gave a lot of food for thought when he

mentioned new forms of energy.⁴ The United States has begun a project that sparks a lot of enthusiasm because it points to sustainability by using these forms of energy. Is this issue important in the bilateral dialogue?

AAW: We have good collaboration on issues of clean energy; we've built a green economy, and that is predicted to continue five or six more years. Our experts will continue investigating together to share best practices so both economies can become even greener, and that's a very good attitude on our part. USAID works with the ministers of energy and the environment.

LC: Let's clear up one point: in 2000 we signed the last border treaty to be certain about where the dividing line between our countries is in the Gulf of Mexico, and one point was left pending about transborder deposits. Has that been completely resolved, Mr. Ambassador?

AAW: Last year our two governments signed an agreement to design the protocols for the border in the Gulf of Mexico. Our House of Representatives just approved that project and now the Senate has to review it. First it will go to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and we hope the legislators act swiftly because this is an important accord for developing this area of the Gulf, which can generate resources for both our countries.

LC: The two countries are both going to the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which should strengthen the instrument we now have, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). But in the Atlantic trade negotiations, before President Obama took office, the United States decided to go to TPP alone and not include Mexico.

AAW: The TPP is a negotiation among Australia, Chile, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, the United States, and Mexico, and the idea is, first of all, to successfully concretize the negotiations this year so we can establish higher standards than NAFTA's —because NAFTA was designed 20 years ago— and open up markets in Asia, which are very important to us. It should be pointed out that Mexico has had an agreement with Europe since 2000, and

“With more exchanges, particularly of high school or university students, will come new possibilities of improving knowledge of the United States and Mexico, and more than 20 million Americans visit Mexico every year.”

AAW

Canada is a few meters away from finishing its negotiations with the European Union. We are preparing to enter negotiations this year. Several very complex issues between us and the European Union in terms of regulatory standards, particularly in agriculture, need to be explored. Nevertheless, we clearly coincide on the aim of not allowing the supply networks, the supply chains, and the flow among Mexico, the United States, and Canada to lose importance.

LC: We may have assumed that NAFTA was leading directly to TAFTA (as the North Atlantic Treaty was dubbed), but it didn't. Just a couple of other issues before delving into the thorny topic of security. It's very interesting to observe what the two countries are proposing for higher education. Our vice minister for North America, Sergio Alcocer, was telling me that, with the United States as our neighbor, home to 30 or 40 of the most important universities in the world, it's hard to believe that there are not many Mexican students enrolled in them. At the same time, you might suppose that many young Americans could come to Mexico to go to summer school. We should remember that the U.S.-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange (Comexus) exists, as do the Fulbright-García Robles Grants, mechanisms that link our two countries. But, when and how is that flow of students going to increase? Is a new body going to be created? Another fund?

AAW: That's the work we have ahead of us: determining what mechanisms we must create to increase the number of students studying in both countries. Today, there are close to 14 000 Mexicans studying in the United States, but only 4 000 Americans in Mexico.

LC: In both cases, the number is very low. . .

AAW: In contrast, almost 200 000 Chinese are studying in the United States. So we have to make the leaders on both sides of the border see that this isn't healthy, since we're neighbors. We have to create new channels so our young people can get to know the other country.

LC: In an interview published by the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE), which by the way, receives support from the U.S. Embassy, the United States is the country most liked by the general public, surpassing Canada.⁵ On the other hand, Mexico's image in the United States is not necessarily the best, but I suppose that the more exchange of students and experiences we have, the better we know each other, and the more we bet on tourism and connectivity, we'll understand each other better.

AAW: With more exchanges, particularly of high school or university students, will come new possibilities of improving

knowledge of the United States and Mexico. Tourism is very important. More than 20 million Americans visit Mexico every year. In 2012, 14.5 million Mexicans spent part of their vacations in the United States. These kinds of experiences are important for putting an end to the stereotypes that exist on both sides of the border. We're very happy with the survey you mentioned.

LC: Mr. Ambassador, today a series of things make it easier for tourists and other travelers to cross the U.S. border, as long as they do it for legitimate purposes. The Global Entry program has been wonderful.

AAW: Yes, Global Entry is really wonderful for people who visit the United States regularly.

LC: I suppose that at the border there are technological mechanisms to make life simpler for people engaged in trade. For example, at the Nogales border, where a large percentage of perishables enter the United States, it's fundamental that the process be simple. In the twenty-first century, how can we make sure that the border is a mechanism for security and at the same time for cooperation?

AAW: We have to create a zone of opportunity, of growth on the border. Today, a million people cross it every day, and US\$1.3 billion changes hands in trade, but we have to work to improve the infrastructure. There are long waits at the border, specifically in Tijuana, Laredo, and Ciudad Juárez. So we must eliminate those lines with more traveler programs like Global Entry or Sentry. Actually, we have to have programs for all goods so customs personnel can approve them before they get to the crossing. We have to have safer transportation to ensure that drugs, money, or weapons can't enter, as well as all the illicit articles that cross the border. We have a bi-national commission to work on these issues and planning commissions at each border point to have a common vision of what's coming 10 years ahead. But, we need to create infrastructure and apportion the budget needed to do it. We're working very seriously on this.

LC: I wonder, Ambassador Wayne, how you find enough time to deal with so many agendas and issues. I read a recent report from the Woodrow Wilson Center about the border that said that a balance must be struck on issues like competitiveness, security, sustainability, and quality of life.⁶ That is, we have to think about the issues as a whole, and not think of the border as a threat for both countries. Are there possibilities of advancing more? We have the Smart Borders treaty, but, can we build models that generate more mutual trust? I heard, for example, that the opportunity has opened up for

creating a preclearance, that is, that immigration and customs paperwork could be done in Mexican airports, so that flights to the United States would be domestic. Is this the case now?

AAW: The possibility exists of exploring pilot projects to see if they can work, and people are open to this on both sides of the border. Right now, conversations are on-going with the Mexican government in which we're examining this kind of activity to make the border flow more easily.

LC: Very interesting. On the other hand, regarding the Mérida Initiative, does the paradigm of co-responsibility for dealing with security issues continue to be valid? That is, do the two countries feel comfortable with this principle?

AAW: I think so. The idea is that this program should evolve, with the idea of co-responsibility remaining in place. Drug and weapons trafficking and their illicit financing are problems shared by both countries, and neither we nor Mexico can solve them with unilateral action. President Peña Nieto's administration has its security priorities, and at this time we are looking to see how to adjust our programs so they fit with those priorities. For example, on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, we talked with our Mexican colleagues about a new, successful mechanism in the United States: special courts for treating addictions.

LC: I read your article.⁷ It's very interesting how a heroin addict's life can be changed.

AAW: Yes, it's a method that has been successful. It's not a complete solution, since in this process, there are no pre-established solutions. If there were, we wouldn't have so many problems today. However, we must learn together and share best practices that can be useful for both of us.

LC: Many community experiences could be useful, even if they're not big national policies.

AAW: Exactly.

LC: To conclude, Ambassador Wayne, I'd like to talk about an issue that I think is essential. What can we do about what Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto called global and regional leadership? We met at the G20, at the Americas Summit;

"We have to create a zone of opportunity, of growth on the border. Today, a million people cross it and US\$1.3 billion changes hands in trade every day."

AAW

“Drug and weapons trafficking
and their illicit financing are problems shared
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can solve them with unilateral action.”

AAW

we have a pile of spaces where we can cooperate, but there's one in particular that is sensitive: Central America. During the meeting of the Central American Integration System (SICA), the United States expressed its interest in economically supporting the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA). Mexico has a lot to do there, and part of the Mérida Initiative is to think that the issue has Mesoamerican scope. What can we do together in Central America?

AAW: I think there's a lot we can do together. One example is this program of electricity supply that we were talking about before. We can work with the Development Bank of the Americas, which has a program called Mesoamerica, and I think that, to establish this kind of infrastructure in Central America, Mexico is one of the neighbors that can cooperate in this process, and we can help indirectly, since we have experts who can lend support. Also, the Inter-American Development Bank could participate in financing the various projects identified as important in Central America. We could share experiences, with Mexico communicating its own experiences in the areas of economic development and citizen security. Clearly there are great challenges in our countries and in Central America, but together with Canada, Colombia, and other nations, we can offer valuable help to these governments.

LC: A few days ago, I was at a meeting of Central American foreign ministers, and in some countries, the situation is desperate. Criminals are really strangling the governments.

AAW: Agreed. We must look at the situation from a broader point of view, think of a regional solution. There's no divide between problems involving the United States and Mexico and those of Central America and Mexico and the U.S. So, we should work together. Also, there are big Central American communities, particularly Salvadorans, in the United States, and we must take advantage of these citizens' experience to help the region.

LC: They say the best way to make friends is by working together, doing positive things for the world. Recently, cyber-

security has posed some challenges for us. This was a very important issue at the meeting of Presidents Barack Obama and Xi Jinping, who, after coming to Mexico, visited California. The United States has felt attacked by the way China has dealt with this issue. Some of the Wikileaks information has caused, let's say, a misunderstanding in the bilateral relationship. On the other hand, there's the challenge posed by Edward Snowden. Given the circumstances, could we conceive of a regional cyber-security protocol, or even respect for privacy?

AAW: I agree that, today, fundamental individual rights are in play for the citizens of any country, particularly those that share a history of human rights values, civil rights. I'm a fan of efforts to establish principles of mutual respect among countries. The first step is good practices and then international agreements created to protect those rights, to fight against crimes like those committed against intellectual property (piracy). I agree that we must work on these issues, creating a community of ideas, of consensuses, and —why not?— of agreements in several areas to protect the privacy of all our citizens.

LC: Ambassador Wayne, thank you very much for this interview. **MM**

NOTES

¹ This interview was done July 3, 2013 and broadcast July 4 on the radio news program *Enfoque* (Focus).

² Luis Rubio, *Mexico Matters: Change in Mexico and Its Impact upon the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Mexico Institute-Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2013), http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/rubio_mexico_matters.pdf.

³ Shannon K. O'Neil, *Two Nations Indivisible: Mexico, the United States, and the Road Ahead* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴ U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Mexico, May 3, 2013. See the speech at <http://spanish.mexico.usembassy.gov/es/news/discurso-y-publicaciones/otros-oficiales/discurso-del-presidente-barack-obama-en-el-museo-nacional-de-antropologia.html>.

⁵ Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, A. C., “México, las Américas y el mundo 2012-2013. Política exterior: opinión pública y líderes,” <http://dominio1.cide.edu/documents/320058/0d79d0e8-a23d-4e30-87dbfa73ddbe579a>.

⁶ Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, “Reporte del estado de la frontera. Un análisis integral de la frontera México-Estados Unidos,” http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/spanish_reporte_estado_frontera.pdf.

⁷ Anthony Wayne, “Tribunales para adicciones ofrecen esperanza,” *Reforma*, July 26, 2013, http://www.monitoreodemedios.com.mx/reforma/160112_2.pdf.

Small U.S. Latino Businesses How and When?

Enrique Pino Hidalgo*
Diego Manzano Luis*



Jeff Topping/REUTERS

In this article, we will explore the fundamental causes of the rise in small Latino, particularly Mexican-owned, businesses in the U.S. economy. These firms have acquired significant presence in different parts of the service sector, like food preparation, trucking, housework, and the hospitality and entertainment industry, as well as in building services.

They are oriented mainly, but not exclusively, to the Latino market, with a purchasing power of US\$776 billion, the equivalent of two-thirds of Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010. This is clear evidence of the high potential for earnings and consumption in this sector. This involves the demand for goods and services from a population of 50.7 million

people of Hispanic or Latino origin with an average annual income of US\$40 000 per person.¹

We identify two phenomena in the origins of these small companies. The first is the dynamic and social characteristics of migration from Mexico to the United State, which can be summarized as a high growth rate and, in general, the affirmation of linguistic, cultural, and social values. The second phenomenon is linked to the business setting, defined as the web of regulatory (fiscal, financial, sanitary, etc.) and promotional institutions that generate a structure of incentives, which, in our opinion, are decisive for immigrants' opening and developing small businesses.

The planning and executing of a certain kind of firm in the restaurant sector in California and other states is of particular interest because it seems emblematic of the Mexican immigrants' entrepreneurship. They generate *competitive ad-*

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vantages that correspond to the social practices of the Latino population, like the use of Spanish, the cuisine of their country of origin, and the way the community lives together. The combination of these elements explains the nostalgia and ethnic products market that is having an impact in creating what could be the probable creation of a *Latino business model* based on establishing productive spaces linked to cultural affirmation. At the end of this article, we point to some traits that typify the organizational structure of Latino businesses, their modes of operation, and the commercial and productive advantages that make them different and competitive *vis-à-vis* conventional firms.

Some initial results in our research point to the need to consider the viability of a program to disseminate and foster this incipient business model. This program would contribute to the consolidation of the disjointed, complex world of small businesses in the United States in the format of a local, state, or regional network, with positive impacts on employment, earnings, and the reaffirmation of the Latino community's cultural and social values.

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U.S. HISPANIC MARKET

The institutionalist theoretical approach allows us to incorporate sociological and cultural dimensions into our analysis of small businesses, making it possible to have a comprehensive understanding of their development in the context of immigration and the government regulatory bodies dealing with economic activity. We will analyze the social and cultural traits of the Hispanic market, which has been conceptualized as a “nostalgia market” and “ethnic products.”² The demand in these markets supports the revitalization of customs and contributes to strengthening cultural identities in the face of the uniformity of consumption patterns fostered by globalization.³

The phenomenon of migration is extremely complex and influences economic processes in different ways. The trends among the Latino population in the United States have an impact not only on consumption patterns, but also on productive activities through entrepreneurs. When we talk about consumption and markets, we have to remember that the U.S. Hispanic population is 50.7 million people, including 36 million Mexicans, whose deep insertion into U.S. society gives them growing electoral weight and greater visibility. Mexican emigration to the United States has decreased sig-

When we talk about consumption and markets, we have to remember that the U.S. Hispanic population includes 36 million Mexicans, whose deep insertion into society gives them growing electoral weight and greater visibility.

nificantly: estimates put the projection of net migration of Mexicans at 260 000 per year for the period between 2011 and 2017, a much lower figure than the 466 000 per year registered from 1990 to 2000.⁴ Nevertheless, the Latino market itself will continue to expand.

From the point of view of its weight in the Latino consumer market, the main and highest demographic concentration of Mexicans is in Los Angeles (3 510 677 people). This is more than three times the size of the Cuban-origin population in Miami (856 007); in the Bronx, the population from Puerto Rico comes to 298 921.

In addition, the Hispanic population has an average income of US\$40 000 a year. The Mexican-origin population earns an average of US\$38 000 annually and is 27 years old on average.⁵

The United States boasts 4.9 million small companies, which generate three-quarters of all new jobs every year. Of these, 900 000 (almost 20 percent) are Hispanic, of which 105 247 are owned or operated by Mexicans (see Table 1).⁶ These businesses operate in *highly specialized and differentiated markets* that offer opportunities for export for companies located in Mexico or elsewhere, as well as being a source for jobs and income for immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States.

Ethnic entrepreneurs have an initial advantage over their competitors since they are familiar with the preferences of consumers from their country of origin and they speak the same language. In 2007, only 23 percent of first-generation Spanish-speaking immigrants spoke English well.⁷ These characteristics become *competitive advantages for small Latino businesses* in different economic activities, particularly in the restaurant industry. Of a total of 100 000 Mexican small businesses in 2010, the largest group was made up of restaurants (8 986) and the second largest of landscaping services (8 911). The rest of the firms were divided among building services, trucking, day-care services, etc. However, the regulatory institutional setting and the support and incentives are fundamental to these businesses.

TABLE 1
U.S. IMMIGRANT-OWNED BUSINESSES
BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (2010)

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES	PERCENT OF TOTAL COMPANIES	PERCENT OF TOTAL JOBS
Mexico	105 247	12	31
India	62 526	7	4
South Korea	56 073	6	2
Cuba	35 769	4	2
China	34 181	4	2
Vietnam	31 283	4	3
Canada	27 648	3	3
Iran	25 289	3	2
Philippines	19 788	2	1
Poland	17 448	2	5
Others	450 539	52	1
Total	865 791	100%	100%

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute, "What Kind of Businesses Do Immigrants Own? Detail by Country of Birth," June 2012, p. 1, <http://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/immigrant-business-owners-by-country-of-birth-20120615.pdf>.

HOW DOES THE INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMIC SETTING FAVOR SMALL BUSINESSES?

Market economies are fraught with uncertainty and the risks accompanying any transaction. Economic and political institutions are designed to mitigate the risks by creating clear rules and a climate of confidence that favors investment decisions, consumption, etc. The design and functioning of institutions also generate transaction costs that are different from the usual production expenditures: examples of the former are the costs of obtaining and processing information, doing paperwork, and monitoring permits and contracts, etc.⁸

The Small Business Administration (SBA) makes a considerable contribution to the U.S. regulatory setting. This is a government body charged with supporting these companies, which it conceives of as its priority because their dynamism, creativity, and innovation make them key elements for

growth and job creation. The SBA has a menu of different kinds of support and incentives in the areas of advisory services, entrepreneurial training, capital financing, hiring, and disaster assistance.⁹ Its programs and advisory services are carried out through a network of partners and collaborative bodies like the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, and the Women's Business Centers.

One central issue for small businesses is financing. The SBA offers loans tailored to the companies' needs. Once authorized, they are actually handled by private intermediaries. The loans are up to 85-percent SBA-guaranteed. In 2011, the SBA set a record by supporting 60 000 small businesses with an overall sum of more than US\$30 billion in loans. In 2012, it estimated that it gave US\$2.83 billion in financing to more than 1 300 small businesses, which helped create or preserve more than 60 000 jobs.¹⁰

Another interesting institution is the not-for-profit association SCORE, which for more than 45 years has contributed to developing small business in the United States. Most of its collaborators are volunteers and business owners or retired employees. In 2011, it supported 470 000 entrepreneurs. Another link in the institutional support network is made up of the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), which offer technical and administrative assistance to both new and established firms. Strategically located in certain universities, these centers make it possible to join together those educational institutions' resources with those of the private and government sectors.

The Women's Business Centers (WBC) are a national network of 80 establishments designed to provide advisory services to women for starting up small businesses in order to foster equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs, who confront specific challenges as women in the business world. A more recent experience that underlines the efforts in favor of small businesses started up by Latina women in California is the organization *Mujeres activas en el comercio hispano* (Women Active in Hispanic Business, or MACH), headquartered in Los Angeles.¹¹

Immigrants' entrepreneurship generates competitive advantages linked to the social practices of the Latino population, like the use of Spanish, the cuisine of their country of origin, and the way the community lives together.

TABLE 2
RANKING OF MEXICAN AND U.S. REGULATORY
SETTINGS (2012, OUT OF 183 COUNTRIES)

ACTIVITY	UNITED STATES	MEXICO
Opening a business	13	75
Getting credit	4	40
Paying taxes	72	109
Enforcing contracts	7	81
Protecting investors	5	46

Source: “Doing Business, 2012” report, www.doingbusiness.org/~media/FPDKM/.../DB12-FullReport.pdf.

The demand in the “nostalgia market” supports the revitalization of customs and contributes to strengthening cultural identities in the face of the uniformity of consumption patterns fostered by globalization.

TABLE 3
MAIN ACTIVITIES OF MEXICAN-IMMIGRANT-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE UNITED STATES (2010)

	ACTIVITY OR AREA	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES
1	Restaurants	8 986
2	Landscaping services	8 911
3	Building services	5 158
4	Trucking	4 694
5	Automotive repair and maintenance	3 390
6	Child day-care services	3 215
7	Real estate	2 354
8	Grocery stores	2 292
9	Beauty salons	1 510
10	Farm work	1 449
	All others	63 281

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute, “What Kind of Businesses Do Immigrants Own? Detail by Country of Birth,” June 2012, p. 2, <http://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/immigrant-business-owners-by-country-of-birth-20120615.pdf>.

The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation report “Doing Business, 2012” offers an evaluation of business regulations in 183 countries, taking into account 11 indicators like opening a business, getting credit, etc. The report’s starting point is the premise that economic activity requires good regulations that have an impact on companies’ life cycles, particularly in the case of small businesses.¹² In the 2012 classification, for its institutional regulatory setting, the United States ranked fourth, surpassed only by Singapore, Hong Kong, and New Zealand, which ranked first, second, and third, respectively. We cannot refrain from mentioning that Mexico ranked 53rd on this classification of 183 economies around the world.

A preliminary look at the five indicators we consider decisive for small companies puts the United States in 13th place out of the 183 countries in terms of opening a business; in 4th place in terms of the ease of getting credit; in 72nd place in terms of paying taxes; in 7th place for contract enforcement; and in 5th place for protecting investors (see Table 2).

For its part, Mexico ranks 75th for opening a business; 40th for getting loans; 109th for paying taxes; 81st for contract enforcement; and 46th for protecting investors. For the five important indicators for starting and developing small businesses, the United States shows considerable advantages over Mexico. We can therefore infer that the U.S. institutional regulatory structure is more agile and effective, creating more confidence and low transaction costs, which in turn are incentives for entrepreneurs.

IS A LATINO BUSINESS MODEL DEVELOPING IN THE UNITED STATES?

We have stated that defining a company as an organization governed by rules, values, and objectives that go beyond the criteria of maximizing profit allows us a comprehensive understanding of the structure and mode of operation of small Latino businesses. As we mentioned, these kinds of businesses, particularly in the restaurant industry, have developed certain competitive advantages *vis-à-vis* conventional firms in the nostalgia and ethnic products markets.

The benefits from these competitive advantages explain the fact that, of all the small companies owned by Mexicans in the United States, restaurants rank as the most numerous, with 8 900 in the universe of 105 000 establishments. Between 2005 and 2010, they were also the highest

growth sector, averaging 850 new companies each year (see Table 3).

These restaurants, usually family owned and operated, seek to maintain their competitive advantages by combining a productive space with social and cultural practices of their community of origin and by creating supply networks of ethnic and standardized goods produced by Mexicans. On occasion, these businesses operate fundamentally for family, cultural, or religious festivities. They generally employ Mexican workers and operate with competitive prices and personalized dealings with both clients and suppliers.

In summary, these characteristics and forms of operation point to a possible *Latino business model* that, without disregarding profits, also seeks to create spaces for living together and social affirmation. Of course, to a certain extent, the rise in small Mexican businesses confirms the greater visibility and economic, political, and cultural influence of the Latino segment of U.S. society. **MM**

NOTES

¹ In this analysis, we will use the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably.

² The nostalgia markets are made up of the goods and services that are part of the consumption habits, culture, and tradition of the different peoples and nations. Ethnic products are associated with a specific country, but are also consumed abroad by groups with different consumption habits and traditions. See <http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/7/14737/L589-1.pdf>.

³ Bernardo Olmedo, “Latin American Migrant Markets in North America, ‘Ethnic and Nostalgia Products,’” *Voices of Mexico* no. 86, September-December, 2009.

⁴ Grupo de Estudio de la Migración Regional, “Migración mexicana a los EE.UU” (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2013).

⁵ S. Motel and E. Patten, “The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups: Characteristics, Rankings, Top Counties” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, 2012).

⁶ Small Business Administration, “Guía de recursos para las pequeñas empresas” (Los Angeles: SBA, 2004).

⁷ Landen Romei, “Emprendimiento de los Latinos” (Monterey, California: Monterey Institute of International Studies [MIIS], 2011).

⁸ See Oliver E. Williamson, *Las instituciones económicas del capitalismo* (Mexico City: FCE, 1989).

⁹ See <http://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-center>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.sba.gov/content/7a-loan-amounts-fees-interest-rates>.

¹¹ See <http://www.machlosangeles.org/home-espanol.html>.

¹² Banco Mundial and Corporación Financiera Internacional, *Doing Business 2012. Haciendo negocios en un mundo transparente* (Washington, D.C.: BM-CFI, 2012).

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Violence and FDI in Mexico

The Economic Impact of the “War against Drugs”

Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera*



Finbarr O'Reilly/REUTERS

In general terms, violence impacts negatively on investment and a nation's economic growth. Nevertheless, this effect is not so clear in the case of Mexico. The economy seems to continue to grow despite the high levels of violence in recent years. This article analyzes recent trends in the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Mexico, a variable with an important impact on the country's economic growth. This is why reviewing its behavior in recent years helps to better understand the economic effect of the extreme violence perpetrated by organized crime in the period of what has been called the “war against drugs.”

VIOLENCE, ORGANIZED CRIME, AND THE MEXICAN ECONOMY

The violence in Mexico has reached dizzying heights, particularly since Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's decision during his 2006-2012 administration to fight organized crime head on, bringing the armed forces into the fray in December 2006. The so-called “war on drugs” declared by Calderón contributed to the exponential growth of violence and resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. By the end of September 2011, murders linked to this situation came to 45 515 according to official estimates.¹ This unprecedented spike in violence linked to organized crime has spread to various regions of the country, and is particularly significant in border states like Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Chihuahua.

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According to official figures, 34 612 people were murdered between December 2006 and December 31, 2010 (see Table 1). Official reports show a total of 2 826 homicides in 2007 and 15 273 in 2010.

The trends in violence levels and the geographic distribution of the conflicts throughout the country have changed in recent years. Previously, drug-trafficking-related violence was concentrated in border regions, particularly Chihuahua, and in Sinaloa, Michoacán, and Guerrero. Ciudad Juárez registered the highest number of homicides during the first four years of the Calderón administration: in 2010 alone, approximately 3 100 persons were murdered in that border city. More recently, however, the violence has spread to other regions of Mexico and intensified, particularly in the states of Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas.

There has also been an important change in the forms the violence has taken. Traditional execution-style killings among gangs of organized crime have begun to involve new forms of extreme violence and paramilitary-type practices, including decapitations, torture, dismemberment, and dissolving the bodies; kidnapping; and mass murder, among others. Hundreds of bodies buried in what have come to be called *narcofosas* (narco-graves) discovered in different points in the country, the *narcobloqueos* (narco-blockades), the hanging of *narcomantas* (narco-banners) sending messages to the government or to other organized crime groups, and the use of car-bombs and fragmentation grenades present a panorama never seen before, with decisive effects on society and the country's economy.

In a developing country like Mexico, analyzing the economic impact of violence becomes fundamental. Certainly, the new forms of organized crime and the clashes between government forces and criminal gangs have transformed economic relations in the country. They have also had important effects on the development of firms and foreign investment.

The violence has spread to many regions of Mexico and intensified. Execution-style killings among gangs have begun to involve new forms of extreme violence and paramilitary-type practices.

However, the general trends of the economic impact are not visible at first glance, which is why a careful analysis of the situation becomes essential.

DRUG TRAFFICKING, VIOLENCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Different studies have been made analyzing the relationship between economic development and drug trafficking; or rather, the economic consequences of drug trafficking.² These studies identify this activity's costs and benefits. Some authors underscore the costs, which derive fundamentally from violence, corruption, and local drug use. In addition, violence generates important losses in FDI. On the other hand, there are those who maintain that the benefits to a country's economy (jobs and investments) are higher than the costs. Among the main benefits are job creation and the entry of cash and investments.

Journalist and economist Carlos Loret de Mola, for example, tries to use arithmetic deductions to calculate the effective weight of drug trafficking in the Mexican economy. He concludes that the economy would shrink almost 63 percent if this illegal activity were suddenly ended in the country.³ To the contrary, in a recent analysis, academic Viridiana Ríos argues that the illegal drug industry generates economic losses of almost US\$4.3 billion a year.⁴ Ríos carries

TABLE 1
HOMICIDES LINKED TO ORGANIZED CRIME (2006-2010)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Mexico	62*	2 826	6 837	9 614	15 273	34 612

*Numbers for 2006 are only for the month of December.

Source: Secretaría de Economía (data from March 21, 2012), <http://www.economia.gob.mx/comunidad-negocios/competitividad-normatividad/inversion-extranjera-directa/estadistica-oficial-de-ied-en-mexico>, accessed August 8, 2012.

out a quantitative analysis and attempts to formally measure the net economic effects of Mexico's drug trafficking industry. This study considers "positive variables" like employment, cash flows, and investments generated by the drug trafficking industry. It also calculates the monetary "costs" of violence and corruption, the estimated losses in foreign investment, and the costs generated by local drug use.

So, it is not quite so clear whether drug trafficking is bad or good for the national economy in the aggregate. However, the moment Mexico is experiencing now makes us think that the economic costs exceed the benefits. The levels of violence and insecurity in the country today are extreme and are largely linked to the traffic of drugs, mainly aimed for the United States. In theory, this generates uncertainly, jeopardizes new investments, and produces unemployment. In effect, it is said that insecurity has a negative effect on FDI, affecting the country's image abroad and producing a negative impact on the factors of production and development; to all this is added an ineffective justice system.

DRUG TRAFFICKING, VIOLENCE, AND FDI

In the current context, we would expect organized crime to affect Mexican businesses, increase their costs, and have a negative impact on investments and the national economy. However, as I pointed out, at first glance, these effects do not seem to exist. This makes it necessary to carefully analyze investment flows and Mexican and foreign companies' development and strategies over recent years. In particular, it is interesting to look at the amounts of FDI, which has a significant impact on an economy's real growth.

It seems important to find out if there has been an exodus of foreign companies to other countries due to the extreme violence in Mexico. In theory, we might think that foreign investment in Mexico has not only not grown, but has decreased considerably. However, this "does not seem to be the case." FDI figures show no clear tendency to drop. The number of victims of the "war against drugs" continues to grow, but so does the economy. In 2011, GDP grew almost four percent.

FDI figures show that Mexico continues to be attractive. From 2006 to 2010, according to the Ministry of the Economy's National Registry of Foreign Investment, US\$115.58 billion came in.⁵ In 2010, the country saw a little over US\$20 billion in FDI, and in the first nine months of 2011, the amount had risen to US\$15.20 billion. That is, Mexico attracted ap-

proximately US\$19.55 billion in FDI in 2011, almost the same amount as the previous year (see Table 2 and Graph 1).⁶

In this context, political analyst Leo Zuckermann states, "We are still a long way from the US\$30 billion that entered in 2007, but what is coming in is not bad, considering the 2008-2009 recession, from which the world has not yet fully recovered. What sticks out in all of this is undoubtedly the foreign investment in the auto industry. Thanks to that, Mexico has become the world's 9th largest automobile producer, with an estimated output of 2.4 million units [in 2011], six percent more than in 2010. Important assemblers like Mazda, Honda, and Toyota have decided to build new plants in Mexico."⁷

According to BBVA Bancomer estimates, violence represents a cost to the country of approximately one percentage point of its annual economic growth. According to journalist David Luhnow of *The Wall Street Journal*, "In much of northern Mexico, businesses pay extortion taxes to drug gangs—a tax that hurts profits." Luhnow observes that the violence also makes transportation more expensive and represents additional security spending. He also says, "The bloodletting has also badly damaged the country's brand, leaving Mexico conspicuously absent from the fast-growing BRICS group of emerging market nations that comprises China, Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa." However, according to Luhnow, "Fears that the violence would sink the broader [Mexican] economy have proved ungrounded, at least for now. Job creation has picked up steadily, consumer credit is expanding, and domestic sales of items such as cars and flat-screen television sets have grown at a double-digit clip"⁸

Various analysts and public officials recognize that despite this violence, Mexico continues to grow and receive important sums of FDI. For example, economist José Juan Ruiz, the director of strategy and analysis for Latin America at Banco Santander, admitted that drug trafficking is "the fundamental threat" facing Mexico, but underlined that he has no information to demonstrate that "this scourge is scaring away foreign investors." Also, he explains that, in the short term, he

Analyzing the economic impact of violence is fundamental. The new forms of organized crime and the clashes between government forces and criminal gangs have transformed economic relations in the country.

TABLE 2
 FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) BY STATE (2006-2010)
 (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Aguascalientes	113.1	206.4	39.1	99.6	39.2
Baja California	955.7	872.7	1 471.0	587.6	885.3
Baja California Sur	442.2	417.1	361.4	169.9	224.4
Campeche	10.6	13.5	-17.1	23.8	9.9
Chiapas	0.6	14.2	-25.2	1.1	2.1
Chihuahua	1 497.7	1 712.3	1 481.7	1 127.8	1 540.5
Coahuila	341.5	117.7	1 138.5	128.5	137.3
Colima	64.6	28.6	-1.3	21.2	3.4
Mexico City, Federal District	9 931.6	17 167.1	13 275.0	8 680.8	7 537.8
Durango	112.6	224.9	574.3	54.7	489.6
State of Mexico	1 341.4	755.9	1 596.7	1 543.4	1 050.8
Guanajuato	-70.7	260.0	270.7	119.3	112.1
Guerrero	26.8	-50.7	1.5	13.6	-53.3
Hidalgo	11.5	2.3	40.3	0.3	17.7
Jalisco	757.0	484.6	210.0	697.5	1 633.9
Michoacán	-110.0	1 590.3	31.9	28.5	3.3
Morelos	311.0	453.3	134.1	-56.3	17.0
Nayarit	159.0	81.7	23.8	50.2	52.4
Nuevo León	1 999.7	3 645.4	2 022.1	1 390.6	5 217.8
Oaxaca	10.7	15.2	17.7	29.2	5.3
Puebla	515.1	346.0	270.0	73.6	486.2
Querétaro	221.9	157.2	444.6	463.5	391.8
Quintana Roo	297.6	865.0	154.2	157.5	61.3
San Luis Potosí	96.2	191.2	141.7	-14.0	264.2
Sinaloa	47.1	41.2	44.6	17.4	21.3
Sonora	335.6	462.1	1 282.3	265.6	123.8
Tabasco	77.2	0.9	46.6	3.7	0.8
Tamaulipas	526.8	467.3	368.4	187.4	206.7
Tlaxcala	9.6	15.5	37.4	4.8	41.4
Veracruz	41.6	75.0	153.8	157.8	54.8
Yucatán	28.5	57.7	33.7	13.2	2.3
Zacatecas	15.4	801.0	1 517.0	77.5	127.5
Total	20 119.2	31 492.3	27 140.5	16 119.3	20 708.6

Source: Secretaría de Economía (data from March 21, 2012), <http://www.economia.gob.mx/comunidad-negocios/competitividad-normatividad/inversion-extranjera-directa/estadistica-oficial-de-ied-en-mexico>, accessed August 8, 2012.

The so-called “war on drugs” declared by Calderón contributed to the exponential growth of violence and resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people.

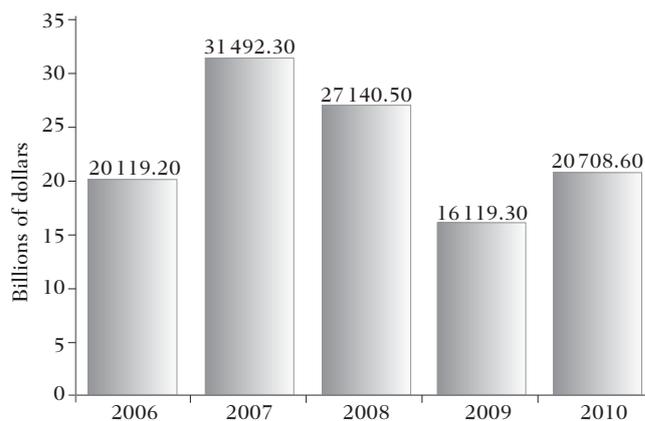
has not observed “any fall . . . in tolerance to investing in Latin America because of a perception of risk due to the drug trafficking, even in Mexico.”⁹

Carlos Guzmán Bofill, the general director of ProMéxico,¹⁰ for his part, states, “Despite the violence unleashed by the federal government’s war against drug trafficking, the global corporations see Mexico as a good place to do business.”¹¹ Former Minister of Finance Ernesto Cordero Arroyo denied that insecurity was affecting the economy’s performance. According to statements he made when he was a federal official, “There is no evidence that Mexico’s economic recovery is decelerating because of insecurity.” According to Cordero, investments continue to enter the country, creating jobs and companies.¹²

It is important to mention that evidence exists to substantiate these statements. Official statistics show that the flow of FDI to regions of the country with the highest levels of violence have increased or stayed the same over the last decade. According to Ministry of the Economy reports, “The amounts sent to the states that concentrated 70 percent of the homicides linked to organized crime were almost the same in the periods 2000-2005 and 2006-2010.”¹³ In this context, “the states along the border even increased their reception of international investments in the same period of comparison.”¹⁴ For example, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas are two of the states that have received the largest amounts of FDI. In July 2011, the Ministry of the Economy’s vice minister of competitiveness and norms, José Antonio Torre, stated, “From 2000 to 2005, Chihuahua, Baja California, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Nuevo León were among the top 10 states to receive foreign direct investment nationwide, and this has continued to be the case in the last five years.”¹⁵

According to a report by Isabel Mayoral Jiménez in *CNN Expansión*, in 2010, “Mexico not only recuperated its attraction for foreign investors after the worst recession in its recent history, but increased it. This improvement is reflected in a higher demand for federal government peso-denominat-

GRAPH 1
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (NATIONAL TOTAL)
(2006-2010)



Source: Secretaría de Economía (data from March 21, 2012), <http://www.economia.gob.mx/comunidad-negocios/competitividad-normatividad/inversion-extranjera-directa/estadistica-oficial-de-ied-en-mexico>, accessed August 8, 2012.

ed debt in the hands of foreign capital, and this entry of funds into the country made it possible to stabilize the exchange rate.”¹⁶ At the close of December 2011, “government securities in the hands of foreigners rose to Mex\$594.59 billion, of which 77.92 percent are concentrated in government bonds, a historic figure of Mex\$463.35 billion (the equivalent of approximately US\$37.50 billion), according to Bank of Mexico statistics.”¹⁷ In just one year, “The balance of foreign investment in bonds increased 60.21 percent, rising from Mex\$289.20 billion in December 2009 to Mex\$463.35 billion in December 2010.”¹⁸

Leo Zuckermann also stated, “Despite the violence, Mexico is attractive for setting up factories to produce manufactured goods for export.” In his opinion, “The devaluation of the peso during the 2008-2009 crisis made the national economy more competitive.” He also states that “increased wages in China’s manufacturing sector and the logistical problems for sending merchandise from China to North America” have also contributed.¹⁹

In 2010, the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico (Amcham) carried out a survey called “The Impact of Security on Foreign Businesses in Mexico,” in which it asked 286 of its 2000 members for their perceptions and actions regarding insecurity in the country. It should be underlined that 60 percent of them said they felt less secure in 2009

According to BBVA Bancomer estimates, violence represents a cost to the country of approximately one percentage point of its annual economic growth.

than in 2008. Despite this increase in the feeling of insecurity, the survey concluded that “84 percent of member companies had plans to stay in business,” a quite solid, significant level.²⁰

To conclude, we can say that organized-crime-related violence has not scared away FDI completely. However, the country’s very delicate situation has affected the national economy in some areas, above all small businesses and border states. Therefore, it is necessary to go into more detail in the analysis of the country’s investments and economic situation, by size of firm, geographic region, and productive sector. This exercise is essential since we might encounter very important negative impacts in specific sectors of the population and areas of the economy that cannot be noted using aggregate statistics, which might be giving rise to an increasingly unequal distribution of wealth. ■■■

NOTES

¹ This is a figure given by the Federal Attorney General’s Office (PGR) on January 12, 2012. Other national sources stated that the so-called war against drugs has cost more than 60 000 human lives. For example, according to *Semanario Zeta* (The Z Weekly), the deaths linked to the violence unleashed by organized crime in the first five years of the Calderón administration came to 60 420. Other sources report higher figures. For example, Molly Molloy, a researcher at New Mexico State University, who also moderates the Google Groups discussion forum Frontera List, states that the current tally of murders related to the fight against drug trafficking “is much higher... almost double.” See Andrew O’Reilly, “Mexico’s Drug Death Toll Double What Reported, Expert Argues,” August 2012, <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2012/08/10/mexico-drug-death-toll-double-what-reported-expert-argues/>.

² See, for example, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), *Drugs and Development* (Washington, D.C.: ONDCP, 1994), and *Economic and Social Consequences of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking* (Washington, D.C.: ONDCP, 1998).

³ Carlos Loret de Mola, *El negocio: la economía de México atrapada por el narcotráfico* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 2001).

⁴ Viridiana Ríos, “Evaluating the Economic Impact of Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Industry,” Spring 2008, http://www.gov.harvard.edu/files/Rios2008_MexicanDrugMarket.pdf. Despite this, the author recognizes that in certain small, less diversified rural communities, the flow of cash generated by activities linked to drug trafficking seems to help alleviate certain levels of poverty and underdevelopment.

⁵ In this period, there was an important drop in investment in 2009, which many explain citing the 2008 crisis, “since investment levels [were] still below their pre-economic shock levels.” This is consistent with the international situation. *CNN Expansión*, “Violencia no aleja inversión foránea: SE,” July 27, 2011, <http://www.cnnexpansion.com/economia/2011/07/27/crimen-no-espanta-a-la-ied-en-mexico-se>.

⁶ Secretaría de Economía, Dirección General de Inversión Extranjera (figures from March 21, 2012), <http://www.economia.gob>

[.mx/comunidad-negocios/competitividad-normatividad/inversion-extranjera-directa/estadistica-oficial-de-ied-en-mexico](http://www.economia.gob.mx/comunidad-negocios/competitividad-normatividad/inversion-extranjera-directa/estadistica-oficial-de-ied-en-mexico), accessed August 8, 2012.

⁷ Leo Zuckermann, “¿Afecta la violencia a la economía?” *Excelsior*, “Nacional” section (Mexico City), October 11, 2011, p. 4.

⁸ David Luhnow, “Mexico Economy Withstands Drug War,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203710704577054400522504414.html>.

⁹ Francisco Medina, “Narcotráfico golpea inversiones en México,” *El punto crítico*, February 22, 2011.

¹⁰ ProMéxico is a federal agency “charged with coordinating the strategies aimed at strengthening Mexico’s participation in the international economy, supporting exports by companies established in our country, and coordinating actions to attract foreign investment.” http://www.promexico.gob.mx/es_mx/promexico/Acerca_de_ProMexico.

¹¹ “Fluye inversión extranjera a pesar de violencia: ProMéxico,” *Proceso* (Mexico City), June 16, 2011.

¹² José Manuel Arteaga, “Cordero desdice a Banxico; inseguridad no afecta economía,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), June 2, 2011.

¹³ “Violencia no aleja inversión foránea: SE,” op. cit.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Isabel Mayoral Jiménez, “En 2010, extranjeros ganaron con México,” *CNN Expansión*, January 12, 2011, <http://www.cnnexpansion.com/economia/2011/01/11/mexico-recibe-inversion-recor-de-cartera>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Leo Zuckermann, op. cit.

²⁰ Belén Zapata, “Gobiernos extranjeros hacen recomendaciones por inseguridad en México,” *CNN México*, February 9, 2011.

Migrant Routes Through Mexico and the Caravans of Mothers

Júlio da Silveira Moreira*



Riding "La Bestia," the famous train that migrants from Central America take through Mexico.

Stringer, Mexico/REUTERS

INTRODUCTION

This article is a condensation of various aspects of my approach to violence against migrants in Mexico, since beginning my research in 2011.¹ This includes studies of migrant routes through Mexico, an analysis of human rights organizations' reports about kidnappings and other acts of violence against migrants, the connection of this profile to recent events, and solidarity and resistance activities, like the caravans of Central American mothers in search of their children who disappeared in transit through Mexico.

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MIGRATORY ROUTES AND TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Studying migration routes through Mexico is essential for understanding migration and violence using theoretical contributions from geography and other disciplines.² It clarifies where the migrants go, how they go, and why, and also underlines the real dimensions of transit migration in Mexico as a huge social and sociological problem.

Few studies of these routes and little objective data about undocumented migrants exist, since it is non-official phenomenon. The legal status of these people makes them officially "invisible." Therefore, we draw on the unique work of Mexican Professor Rodolfo Casillas Ramírez, who, together

with Leticia Gerónimo Mendoza, mapped different kinds of routes, points of entry, and areas of government repression.³

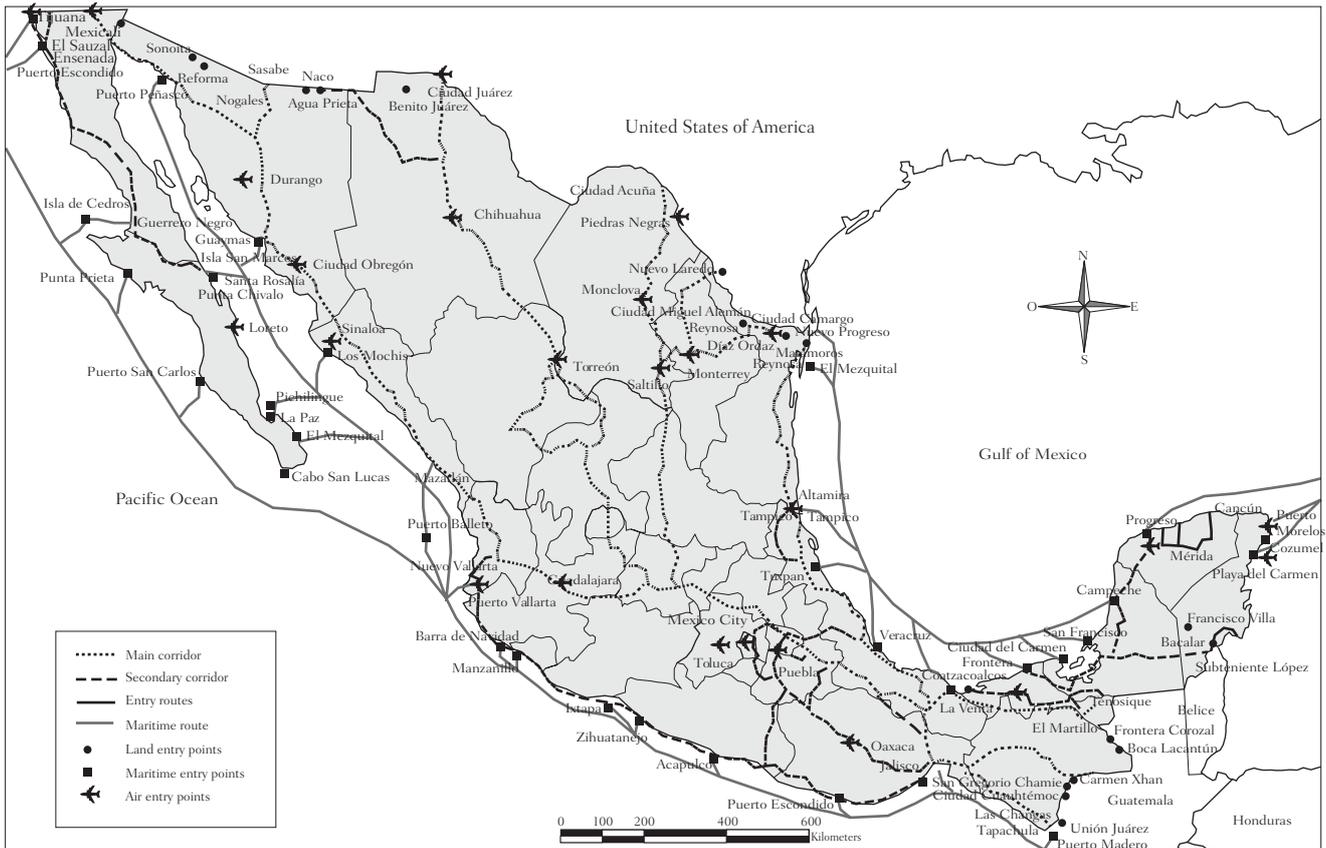
The routes are maritime, air, or overland, each corresponding to the form of entry into Mexican territory. The land routes are subdivided into travel by rail, on foot, by bus line, in cargo vehicles, and in private cars. Migrant groups can choose the busiest or most deserted means and routes, according to their own risk assessments; this makes the routes overlap. The image that best describes this migration is one of dozens of people teetering atop railroad cars. This is the form of travel taken by the poorest migrants, but not the only method or strategy used.

Like the function they fulfill, the routes can be principal or secondary; long or short; autonomous (used only by migrants) or shared (used for other purposes); safe, economical, or alternative. One voyage might combine several routes. The

Government attempts to manage the migratory flows play a decisive role in determining routes, as migrant groups redefine their direction to escape state action.

map Casillas Ramírez developed shows the land and sea routes, and points of entry.⁴ Nevertheless, we highlight that these routes, like the borders, are socially constructed and may vary over time, due to the repressive activity of the state and other conditions. Such maps, although they may not be exactly precise, can be a basis for studying migration through Mexico.

MAIN ROUTES OF MIGRANTS FROM CENTRAL AMERICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES THROUGH MEXICO (2001-2005)



Source: Rodolfo Casillas Ramírez, *Una vida discreta, fugaz y anónima: los centroamericanos transmigrantes en México* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2007), p. 36.

Aside from looking for evidence to find their children, the mothers' caravans aim to expose the situation of violence against migrants in the country.

The land routes are the most traveled and are characterized by being narrow in the southeast, separating and becoming diversified in central and northern Mexico, according to the characteristics of rail and highway infrastructure. Freight trains are the most commonly used, especially by migrants with no money. But they also have a cost. Travelers have to make payments under the table to public officials, private security guards, and railroad employees to cooperate with them, allowing them to climb aboard, taking them off if there is a problem, or not slowing the train when passing through areas of possible immigration controls. For women especially, the cost is taken out of their bodies: they are raped.⁵

There are repeated accidents of persons crippled by falling off the rail cars, trying to jump from one car to another, or trying to jump off a moving train when they spot guards. The crossing can be facilitated by *coyotes* or *polleros*, local guides who lead groups, and is not always directly linked to criminal networks—a *coyote* is not exactly the same as a kidnapper or human trafficker. When it is linked to criminals, they themselves practice kidnapping or human trafficking. But those who most often fall into the hands of the authorities are precisely those who use individual guides barely connected amongst each other.

People congregate where routes cross each other: 1) train platforms: the place of arrival and departure, where migrants are grouped together, 2) ports that are forks in the road, places where migrants can be redirected to other routes, and 3) resting places, where small groups can stay for a time without fear of arrest.

Along the routes, there are migrant houses or shelters, maintained by churches and other supporting collectives and NGOs that welcome migrants and try to provide lodging, food, health care, and psychological and legal services. However, these places are often targeted by criminal networks, zeroing in on vulnerable migrants. Groups of criminals often monitor the shelters, waiting to approach those who leave them to continue their journeys. There are even cases in which

criminals infiltrate them, pretending to be migrants, to gather information and choose their victims.

Public spaces where many people congregate and move about are also part of the migration routes: squares, markets, bus terminals, and train stations. They are used as resting places for migrants who have less support and resources and by criminal networks, for various purposes. Also important to pinpoint are the locations of state control over migration routes: the migratory stations or offices scattered across the territory near the migratory routes, where migrants are taken prisoner by agents from National Migration Institute (INM) to be repatriated to their countries of origin. Documents from 2011 reported the existence of at least 50 migratory stations in all 31 states and Mexico City's Federal District.⁶

Government attempts to contain and manage the migratory flows play a decisive role in determining routes, as migrant groups redefine their direction to escape state action. Casillas Ramírez notes a tendency to shift the lines of transit from the coasts to the central part of the country, which eventually redefines the socio-economic life of whole cities and regions and sites of criminal networks' activities.⁷

The Amnesty International document "Víctimas invisibles. Migrantes en movimiento en México" (Invisible Victims: Migrants on the Move in Mexico) classifies violent events into the following types: a) kidnappings, threats, and assaults; b) violence against migrant women; and c) deaths and forced disappearances. Regarding abuses committed by government agents, the document points out a) excessive use of force, and b) extortion.⁸

Casillas Ramírez lists the following types: a) assault and robbery; b) physical and sexual violence; c) kidnapping; d) torture and amputations; e) blackmail; f) labor exploitation; g) sexual exploitation; h) confinement or being held in captivity; and i) death.⁹

Kidnappings of migrants have become widespread and systematic in Mexico. The National Human Rights Commission reports that in the six months from September 2008 to February 2009, it received reports of 198 kidnapping cases involving 9 758 victims, generating profits of approximately US\$25 million for criminal networks.¹⁰

Along with the kidnappings, the brutality involves other violations such as assaults, rapes, especially of women, and individual or collective executions, which serve to intimidate others. When a victim cannot pay the ransom, he or she can be trafficked, used as forced labor, raped, or even forced to participate in kidnappings and the network's other activities.

RECENT VIOLATIONS AND SOLIDARITY

Although human rights violations of migrants have been known over the years, especially with the pattern of state security and repression that goes along with the U.S. war on terror strategies, the situation inside Mexico came to the fore after 72 bodies of migrants were discovered in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, just after a massacre, in August 2010. However, in the following months the situation became even worse, despite a huge media silence about new cases. On April 6, 2011, new graves containing 59 bodies were found in the same town as the previous massacre. As army investigations and excavations followed, a total of 145 bodies were discovered at these gravesites alone.¹¹

The Mesoamerican Migrant Movement has denounced that, beyond the bodies found in these mass graves, tens of thousands of migrants (or an estimated 70 000 persons) have disappeared across Mexico, plus those who fall off the migrant train known as “La Bestia” (the Beast), and have their body parts strewn over deserts, and the huge number of migrants who are buried as unknown indigents in Mexican cemeteries. The movement concludes,

It seems that not even in death can migrants and their families find a modicum of justice, without going through further procedures or efforts to get their required and shameful identification, and then they very lamentably go from the *clandestine graves* of organized crime to the *pottery field graves* of Mexican cemeteries. (emphasis in the original)¹²

Due to this situation, the Caravans of Mothers that travel all over Mexico looking for clues to finding their loved ones express a heroic, tireless struggle by journeying thousands of miles from Mexico’s southern border along the migration routes. They are supported in each place by local organizations, NGOs, and church personnel, and their migrant houses along the way. Aside from looking for evidence to find their children, interviews with local inhabitants, and searching along train lines, the caravans aim to expose the situation of violence against migrants in the country.

In November 2010, a caravan was organized simultaneously with the International Tribunal of Conscience of Peoples in Movement, the first tribunal of conscience in the world specifically related to cases of human mobility, where a jury of world-renowned individuals analyzed over 50 cases

from all over the globe, and the Third International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees.

After coming to Mexico from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and arriving in Mexico City, the caravan accompanied numerous activists who had participated in these other events to Guadalajara and then to Puerto Vallarta, where they joined a march protesting against the Global Forum of Migration and Development.

Between October and November 2011, another caravan traveled for 14 days and 2 410 miles through the states of Tabasco, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

The caravans receive broad national and international media coverage and are accompanied by social organizations, since the mothers come to mobilize society and the government in the places they go through. They often hold meetings, give lectures, and carry out cultural activities in the migrant shelters; they exchange letters —migrants write letters and give them to the mothers who take responsibility for taking them to their families, and they also bring letters from those families—; they organize exhibitions of photographs of disappeared migrants in public squares, even approaching passersby to ask for information; they search for evidence and persons in city detention centers and morgues; they hold press conferences; they go to formal meetings with government officials. The caravans also publish daily reports and final comprehensive reports based not only on the facts, but on background and further studies.

These caravans’ most important achievements are not immediately evident, but by gathering contacts and evidence over time (in shelters, detention centers, public squares), they effectively lead to re-uniting families. This means on-going solidarity work.

The energy of these mothers and other relatives of disappeared migrants, many of them elderly, traveling for such long periods and in difficult conditions, carrying the photos of their loved ones hung around their necks, asking the population for clues, contrasts with the lack of activity by all the spheres of

The energy of these mothers
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government to find these people, including measures like identifying them among corpses or prison populations.

Another caravan came through the country from October 15 to November 3, 2012; this was the largest one yet (57 mothers from Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador, filling 2 buses) with the longest route (more than 2 500 miles, through 23 towns in 14 states of Mexico). Among the most stirring results was the fact that, due to previous efforts, five parents found their children along the caravan route. **NM**

NOTES

- ¹ Research project "Violence against Brazilian Migrants in Transit over México," carried out in the Sociology Post-Graduate Program of Goiás Federal University (Brazil).
- ² I particularly want to thank Nick Gill (Exeter University, UK) and Deirdre Conlon (Saint Peter's College, New Jersey), organizers of the sessions on "Migration and Activism: Geographies of Resistance," at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (February 24-28, 2012) in New York, where I presented a paper.
- ³ Rodolfo Casillas Ramírez, *Una vida discreta, fugaz y anónima: los centroamericanos transmigrantes en México* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2007).
- ⁴ Rodolfo Casillas Ramírez, "Las rutas de los centroamericanos por México, un ejercicio de caracterización, actores principales y complejidades," *Migración y desarrollo* 10 (Zacatecas), 2008, p. 167.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, "Informe sobre la situación general de los derechos de los migrantes y sus familias," report made on the occasion of the visit to Mexico of Commissioner Felipe González, special rapporteur for migrant workers and members of their families (Mexico City: Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2011).
- ⁷ Casillas, 2008, op. cit.
- ⁸ Amnesty International, "Víctimas invisibles. Migrantes en movimiento en México" (London: Amnesty International, 2010).
- ⁹ Rodolfo Casillas Ramírez, "Agresión y abuso de migrantes: un aniversario para la reflexión," *México social* vol.1, no. 14, September 2011, pp. 26-29.
- ¹⁰ Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos (CNDH) México, "Informe especial sobre secuestro de migrantes en México" (Mexico City: CNDH, 2009); and "Secuestros a personas migrantes centroamericanas en tránsito por México," document prepared for the Inter-American Human Rights Commission in the framework of the hearing held on this issue March 22, 2010, www.centroprodh.org.mx/prodh/index.php.
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- ¹² Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano, "De la fosa clandestina a la fosa común. Comunicado de prensa a dos años de la Masacre de San Fernando, Tamaulipas," 2012, <http://www.movimientomigrantemesoamericano.org/archives/1277>, p. 2.

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Critical Size

Should the European Union Stop Growing?

Kurt Schelter*



The European Parliament in session.

I

Since its foundation, European Union history has been characterized by two forces that shape it even today: its deepening and its growth.

In this context, “deepening” means closer and closer cooperation among member states through harmonization of national policies in the decision-making process at the European Union level in the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council. And this decision making should be more and more based on the principle of majority rule. Requiring unanimity has become the exception. The

objective of this process is deeper integration of the member states in a European Union that is not a state in national terms, but is more than an economic community, which is what existed at the beginning of the process. It is now a supra-national union.

The motives for this deepening had two sources from the outset. On the one hand, the experience with the very cumbersome Treaty of the European Economic Community led to the belief that only more communitarization and less inter-governmental decision making in the community could significantly improve the political influence of a united Europe on a global scale.

On the other hand, the opinion was growing that a union of six plus an indeterminate number of members must follow different decision-making processes than at the time of the 1957 Treaty of Rome. This was again and again to improve the community’s —later the union’s— capacity to ac-

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cept new members, mainly through more majority voting and more continuity in leadership of the main institutions, especially the European Council prior to the admission of new members. One can now admit that the implementation of a “president of the European Council,” elected for two and a half years, has proven to be a success.

Also, the growth or “broadening” of the European Community, later the European Union, has from the outset dominated and shaped its history. But starting points and motives were very different:

The extension to the south to include Greece, Spain, and Portugal was only logical politically because, after overcoming dictatorships, these core countries of the European continent had to be welcomed back into this community of democratic peoples and nations.

Broadening to the north and including Austria were the consequence of the increasing dominance of the EC in the competing European Free Trade Association (EFTA) region.

Enlarging to include 10 new member states after the Iron Curtain in Europe lifted was understood as the fulfillment of a much-repeated promise: the peoples redeemed from the Soviet yoke had to find their legitimate place in a community of free, democratic, and justice-oriented nations in Europe.

Including Malta and Cyprus was more or less a geographic complement; it is amazing that Cyprus, still a divided country, was accepted without serious doubts.

Today, the question of whether the political mechanism of deepening and broadening should be continuous becomes more and more disputed.

When it comes to *deepening*, we are in a dilemma. On the one hand, the debt crisis in some member states shows that a political union with a common currency can work on a solid basis only if the core policies in this area (economic and fiscal) are harmonized more on the level of the union and the competences of the member states are cut.

On the other hand, in its last decisions about the Treaty of Lisbon, the Federal Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany has made it very clear that the German Constitution does not allow the German Parliament and government to follow the way of a “federal state of Europe,” in which no significant competences remain to the member states in the classical political fields. A policy of unlimited integration would infringe on the “identity of the German Constitution.” Anyone who wants to avoid this must change German Basic Law, which would include the risk that at the

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end of this process —perhaps not legally, but in fact— a European central government would arise that would have nothing more in common with the vision of a “united Europe of peoples.” According to all historical experience, this would be the beginning of the end of the European Union and European integration and pave the way for radical re-nationalization of European politics.

Looking at the *broadening* of the union, it is surprising that the president of the European Commission was able without major resistance to appoint a special commissioner entrusted once again with enlargement. After the last wave of growth, this can be understood as a program only. And this program is wrong. With its 27 —and quite soon to be 28— members, the union has reached a critical size, to say the least, if it has not already exceeded that size. Economic circumstances and national political interests are quite divergent. Those member states’ ideas of a “Europe of the future” are very far apart. These differences can hardly be leveled by further deepening, but rather only more obscured with all the negative consequences in a crisis.

Admitting additional members would massively increase those problems. This applies to Serbia, the Ukraine, and especially to Turkey. Even today, in a union of 27, it is quite difficult to detect a “union identity” beyond common contracts, institutions, and procedures. Granting membership to a country of the size, location, neighbors, and internal problems of Turkey would completely change the union’s face, shape, nature, and identity. Citizens like those in the union’s founding member states would not easily accept this. Such a union would be too far from what minds and hearts today associate with a united Europe. The first and least dramatic reaction of union citizens would be even less participation in national and European Parliament elections. Political margins could be sharpened, and we might have to again face the problem of a powerful extra-parliamentary opposition in the member states. The governments of some member states would have to draw conclusions from this development, and one of those might be to leave the union...

We are used to the fact that each enlargement of the union has been accompanied by problems. In particular, the lack of progress of the Central and Eastern European states in different areas, for instance the realignment of a market economy, or reforms in the police and the judiciary, have sparked critical questions and warnings from many experts and political representatives in the face of the too rapid, unconditional accession of those countries. Those warnings were widely ignored against the backdrop of the fact that the opening of the union to the East had been promised for decades to the former satellite states of the USSR in Central and Eastern Europe. The risk of restoration of the former Communist regimes because of dashed expectations in the candidate states was thought to be too high, and there was hope that the shortcomings in some political fields could be resolved in a common effort even after accession. This hope did not materialize in a couple of states.

The European Union is open to new members outside the European states. This is an *option*. But no state in Europe has the *right* to become a member of the union, and the union is not obliged to accept new members, even if they do meet the treaty requirements.

Anyone who wants to preserve the union from harm must be courageous enough to tell the truth to new candidate countries: the union is not currently in a position to accept new members. It has to solve a series of problems in the most difficult situation since its foundation. The union must create new structures, which might then allow more members to feel properly represented.

The instrument of “flexibility” laid down in the union’s treaties, which allows member states to cooperate even more closely on certain issues, needs a counterpart for those states that have to admit from their experience that they have overestimated their strength or their citizens’ determination to integrate. The only possible outcome for those member states must not be leaving the union. The union may not be reduced to a “core Europe” or flee in a Europe at different speeds. That would be false, and a devastating step backward in European cooperation as a whole.

We should think about a “Europe of intersecting circles,” allowing the respective member states to take part in different circles of cooperation and integration: the circle of those who operate a common internal market must be not identical with that of those who want to create common foreign and security policies. Cooperation under the Schengen Convention has shown that there is another way to benefit everyone. This

makes new bodies, new decision-making processes, and a new understanding of European integration necessary. And we should think about a new neighborhood policy on a higher level of cooperation, “privileged partnerships,” and a “renaissance” of the intergovernmental method in political fields where the community method has reached its political or psychological limits.

The last European Council in 2011 surprisingly led quite quickly to a proper way to enter into a “stability and fiscal union”: an intergovernmental approach. The governments of 26 member states have realized that it is not enough only to find a solution to current and very dangerous problems, like the high indebtedness of some members of the euro area and the lack of budgetary discipline throughout the union.

We need a new, wise course for the European Union for the next few years. And the destination can be only a “political union” that deserves the name.

It is no coincidence that ultimately all member states except the United Kingdom have joined this proposal from France and Germany. Not for the first time, the United Kingdom is embarking on a waiting game: just like in the cases of Schengen, Europol, and other projects, in the beginning, the UK blocked even intergovernmental solutions and settled in the waiting room. That was long time ago, and the problems were solved in the end. So, we will experience “*déjà vu*” if we remain calm and patient.

Threats will not help. We must trust each other, following with confidence the proven recipe for all European Union crises: “Experience is a good teacher!”

II

“Experience is a good teacher” —this saying has also described the relationship between the EU and its member states and the North American states for decades. So, it was a matter of experience to shift this relationship from U.S. predominance to the principle of “partnership in leadership.”

Today, the question of whether
the political mechanism of deepening
and broadening the European Union
should be continuous becomes more
and more disputed.

The European Union is open to new members outside the European states. This is an *option*. But no state in Europe has the *right* to become a member of the union, and the union is not obliged to accept new members.

Do European Union issues, especially the further broadening of the European Union, have an impact on this relationship?

Relations between the European Union and its member states on the one hand and the states of the North American continent, on the other, are quite special and quite different.

The United States, Canada, and Mexico are partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The U.S. and Canada have a very close relationship with European Union member states; most of them are partners in the North American Treaty Organization (NATO). The U.S., Canada, and Mexico are strategic partners of the EU, but Mexico is the only strategic partner that is also connected to the EU by a “Global Agreement.”

The U.S., Canada, and the EU are working on a free trade agreement to facilitate and promote trade across the Atlantic.

The United States, Canada, and Mexico are federal states, like some members of the EU, for instance Germany, Austria, and Belgium. The EU itself is not. It is a political union with a unique structure: it is not a state; it is not a federation; and it is not a confederation. It is a supra-national entity, consisting of sovereign states that have shifted parts of their sovereignty to the union level. And this process has not yet concluded.

The internal structure of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico on the whole is not questioned, although the discussion about (more) autonomy for Quebec has been pending for decades. The history of the EU is closely linked to the question of how to deepen integration of the member states on the European Union level.

Quite special areas of integration are freedom of movement within the borders of the EU and the management of border security on the union’s external borders. The idea of the Schengen Agreement is to abolish internal borders and to improve border security by a couple of measures on external borders. For the time being, there has been no signal from the NAFTA partners about expanding their free trade agreement to an area of freedom (of movement), security, and justice.

From the very beginning, the EU was confronted with the question of when and if more European states should become new members of the union. The U.S., Canada, and Mexico are states that defined the external borders of their respective territory centuries ago. Since then, the broadening of those states has never been an issue.

But certainly an interesting question for the North American states is whether the European Union is ready to accept new members and who they might be.

From an economic point of view, a further expansion of the EU to the East and especially the admission of Turkey as a new member would be of interest to the U.S. and Canada. More members of a free trade agreement on the side of the EU would make such an agreement even more attractive. For Mexico, a European Union of more than 28 member states would make this important trade partner even more important. For all players on the economic field, this would create a win-win situation.

But other issues are involved in any further broadening of the EU, which could lead to conflicts even between NATO partners: the United States has never left any doubt that from their security point of view, the EU should allow as many European states as possible to join this union. The membership of more Balkan states and especially the full membership of Turkey would promote their integration into the Western area of freedom and security and minimize the risk of a restoration of Communism in the Eastern European states and of a “drift of no return” by Turkey, for decades a NATO partner, toward the Muslim world. From the EU’s point of view, especially, Turkey’s full membership might bring with it some strategic advantages, especially on the economic field, but probably more and bigger risks and challenges. It is a risk not only for border security, for instance, to have common borders with Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The EU would become a neighbor of one of the most dangerous regions in the world. And it is a big challenge to integrate a population of nearly 75 million Muslims into a Christian-oriented population.

It will be one of the most important and difficult tasks of the trans-Atlantic partnership to find a common approach to address this issue without damaging this relationship.

The European Union will have to answer the question of whether it has already reached a critical size or not, but, until now, no one is willing to draw the necessary conclusions from this fact. It will be watched critically by its citizens, by applicant countries, by its neighbors, and by its partners across the Atlantic. This will contribute to the reflection process needed to come up with the best solution. ■■■

Toward an Agenda for Mexico International Cooperation in Science and Technology¹

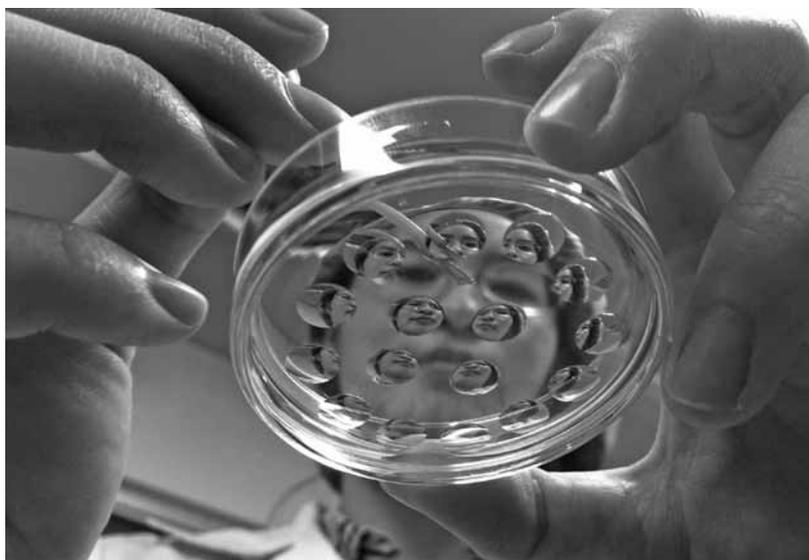
Gabriela Sánchez Gutiérrez*
Simone Lucatello*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the essential role of science must be taken into consideration as a driving force of economic development and social well-being in the globalized world. Development depends increasingly on the knowledge generated by scientific research and on basing public policy design decisions on that information. A knowledge-based society has the possibility of effectively resolving the very diverse problems it faces.

Mexico suffers from huge problems of inequality and a lag in many areas of development. However, as an emerging country, it plays a special role in the planet's geopolitical and economic spheres. For this reason it is fundamental that the country increase its capabilities in science, technology, and innovation and advance toward a knowledge-based economy that will allow it in the long term to resolve problems of health, food supply, care for the environment, and energy use, among other issues. This will only be possible if it recognizes the importance of science, technological development, and innovation.

To produce knowledge, not only the so-called “hard sciences” must participate, but also the social sciences and the humanities, given their capacity to systematize experience and history, investigate the past, unravel the present, and envisage the future. The social sciences produce reflection and global critical analysis from a complex perspective; above all,



Stringer Taiwany/REUTERS

they make it possible to analyze the ethical, social, cultural, and political implications of scientific knowledge and its application, in addition to making it possible to link scientific knowledge and technological innovations to social and human development.

The social sciences are fundamental for designing, implementing, and evaluating public policies that lead to reforms to broaden freedoms and strengthen the rule of law; narrow inequality gaps; improve social coexistence; and create more just, democratic, inclusive societies. For that reason, science, technology, and innovation policy must be comprehensive, fostering an understanding of nature, the world, and the universe. From this broad standpoint, knowledge becomes the driving force for comprehensive human development, productivity, and competitiveness. However, Mexico still has a long way to go to achieve a policy in this field that would make it possible to sketch the country's priorities as a function of its most urgent needs and current capabilities.

* Researchers at the José María Luis Mora Institute.

SOME DATA ON MEXICO'S POSITION

Mexico has a geo-strategic position in the Americas. It is a cultural, political, and physical bridge between North America and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as between the industrialized and emerging countries. This position is strengthened by the integration of the economies through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), by its cultural wealth, which gives its voice greater weight in Latin America, and by the strategic partnership it maintains with Central America. At the same time, it is one of the biggest, most open and dynamic markets in the region.

According to data from the World Economic Forum 2012, Mexico is one of the world's biggest markets (11th place), and has a relatively consistent macro-economic system (40th), a good transportation infrastructure (41st), and an increasingly complex private sector (44th).² Despite this, its scientific, technological, and innovation capabilities do not correspond to those of a middle-income country or one of its international position.

Mexico's Special Science, Technology, and Innovation Program (Peciti) set as one of its main goals that the country would move from 58th place on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index in 2006 to 30th by 2012. However, in the 2010-2011 ranking, it dropped to 66th place, and in 2011-2012, moved back to 58th. Finally, in 2012-2013, it ranked 53rd. Despite yearly increases in the budget earmarked for science, technology, and innovation (STI), only 17.8 percent of the goal was reached.

In addition, according to 2010 figures, in Mexico there was one research and development (R&D) professional per 1 000 members of the active workforce;³ and 21 percent of all researchers in Mexico were full-time, compared to Brazil's 49 percent in the same year.⁴ In 2011, Mexico had 30 graduates from doctoral programs per million inhabitants, that is, 3 691 people, whereby it was trailing Brazil and the United States, with 13 166 and 59 459, respectively.⁵ In addition to this, spending per researcher is significantly lower than that of countries with higher STI development. In 2009, for example, the U.S. spent US\$236.6 million, while Mexico only spent US\$81.11 million and Brazil, US\$146.62 million.⁶

Thirty-eight out of every one hundred inhabitants have access to higher education, which is much lower than middle-high- and high-income countries, with their approximately 60 percent. This can be explained by the application of policies that have ensured 99-percent coverage for basic

In Mexico, thirty-eight out of every one hundred inhabitants have access to higher education, which is much lower than middle-high- and high-income countries, with their approximately 60 percent.

education, 61 percent for high school, and 29.7 percent for higher education.⁷ To this should be added that, according to 2008 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, graduates of higher education represent 17.5 percent of all employees in Mexico. This may indicate that a large percentage of graduates work in the informal sector, or, as the study itself mentions, many have emigrated to other countries, particularly the United States.⁸ This puts Mexico in eighth place among the countries that expel highly skilled human resources.

In summary, based on WEF data, Mexico's innovation potential is held back by the low quality of education (100th place), especially in mathematics and science (124th); the scant use of information and communication technologies (81st), companies' limited inclusion of improvements and innovation to better their productivity (75th); and our markets' low levels of efficiency (84th),⁹ attributed to the existence of oligopolies, duopolies, and monopolies that impede strong investments in R&D.

The strength of an innovation system comes from the connection between knowledge and production, between university and company. However, according to the same OECD study, in Mexico on average, fewer than two out of every 1 000 workers in companies are researchers; and universities are not seen as an important source of information for innovation.¹⁰

Finally, one of the most appropriate indicators for registering innovation capability results is the number of patents requested and granted, since it tells us what a country's dynamic is in the generation of new knowledge applicable to economic activities, and gives direct signs of the existing capabilities and their evolution.¹¹ The Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) 2013 report states that it granted 11 485 patents, of which 245 (2.13 percent) were applications from Mexico, putting it in last place among the countries that sought patents on Mexican soil.¹² The country that patented the most inventions was the United States, with 5 612 (48.86 percent), followed by Germany, Switzerland, and Ja-

pan. The same report states that, while it is true that in almost 20 years there has been a favorable evolution in the overall number of patents registered, the number of patent applications by Mexicans has actually dropped.

Many very diverse factors could explain Mexico's position *vis-à-vis* STI. Research points to three important explanations: first, the absence of a long-term, strategic vision that could establish priorities based on the country's most urgent needs, in order to, in turn, determine the routes to be able to concentrate efforts and achieve more compelling results. The second explanation, derived from the previous one, is the lack of coordination and links among the different actors (academia and the public and private sectors), and therefore, the profound dispersion of efforts among federal and state bodies, academia, and private enterprise, which is an obstacle for defining sectoral, regional, and national priorities. The third explanation is the absence of incentives for increasing STI investment, and of mechanisms and financing instruments that could broaden the participation of the different actors, permitting investment of venture capital and including tax breaks for innovation.

Given this disheartening panorama, it is important to mention what different actors interviewed pointed to as the great strengths and opportunities in Mexico. On the one hand, the country has a broad legal and programmatic framework that can foster STI, as well as solid institutions of higher education like the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the National Polytechnic Institute (particularly its Center for Research and Advanced Studies [Cinvestav]), among others. In addition to Conacyt's national and regional networks of research centers, Mexico has extensive capabilities in sectors like biotechnology, genome studies, mechatronics, health, clinical research, chemical engineering, the green economy (biodiversity, environmental protection, renewable energies), and civil engineering, among others. It also has the capability to participate in projects in areas like aeronautics, the automobile industry, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, the environment, sustainable urbanism, information

Knowledge has become the driving force
for comprehensive human development, productivity,
and competitiveness. However, Mexico still has a long
way to go to achieve a policy to set
the country's priorities.

technologies, nursing, agriculture, food bio-security, and industrial agriculture.

TODAY'S STI TRENDS: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The emergence of new key actors in the systems of science, technology, and innovation, and based on them, the awareness of the need for new forms of governance in those systems are undoubtedly clear trends internationally. In this context, the government loses its centrality in the definition of scientific policies, while other actors articulated in networks take on an essential role: researchers, institutions of higher learning, research centers, and small and medium-sized firms, among others. All this points to a logic of collaborative relationships in which linking up and joint work among actors is indispensable for generating knowledge and innovation. The alliances among public and private actors, and between academia and companies are today the way forward for overcoming many obstacles.

Work in collaborative networks implies new forms of institutionality and organization that would put an end to the isolation of actors; they would allow them to complement each other in their work, and would permit the development of capabilities and greater agility in implementing programs, projects, and research funds.

The context in which Mexican international STI cooperation policy will develop will be characterized by factors such as an international atmosphere of strong innovation, centered on the most strategic interests of the dominant economies; high investment levels by country and sector, significantly higher than those that Mexico has earmarked in the last decade for science and technology; the very probable widening of gaps in science, technology, and innovation among countries and regions, and therefore, as already mentioned, the growing influence of the use of formal working networks, supported institutionally by governments and companies, to increase competitiveness and innovation capabilities.

In the framework of these trends, international cooperation plays a fundamental role. However, in this sphere also, the vision of the Mexican state has been limited. While in OECD countries this cooperation is a priority, Mexico's 2007-2012 Special Science, Technology, and Innovation Program (Peciti) limits itself to recognizing it solely as a source of financing.

Mexico's innovation potential is held back by the low quality of education, companies' limited inclusion of improvements and innovation to better their productivity, and our markets' low levels of efficiency.

Information from Conacyt and the Mexican Agency for International Cooperation for Development (Amexid) showed that during the 2006-2012 period, Mexico participated in bilateral, multilateral, South-South cooperation, and triangular programs, and, to a lesser extent, formalized projects for decentralized and trans-border cooperation. These programs focused mainly on training human resources (65 percent), scientific research (53 percent), technological development and innovation (24 percent), and infrastructure (2 percent).

In terms of topics, scientific research emphasizes cooperation on environmental issues (22 percent), followed by the food sector and agribusiness and pharmaceuticals and health sciences (18 percent each); ICTs and energy (12 percent each); chemicals and petrochemicals (9 percent); and aeronautics and the automobile sector (8 percent). The main Mexican institutions that have participated in international cooperation programs have been the UNAM and Cinvestav, again revealing the enormous concentration in Central Mexico and in those institutions.

We can conclude that Mexico has participated *reactively* in international cooperation efforts without a defined strategic policy and with very limited resources. How can it move toward a knowledge-based society under these conditions?

MEXICO'S GREAT CHALLENGES

The research results culminate in a series of proposals that can contribute to Mexico positioning itself better regarding STI:

1. *Foster international cooperation.* This must be considered a priority and, therefore, an *ad hoc* policy must be designed with a normative and programmatic framework that promotes it; that fosters activities centered on education and research to strengthen the triangle of knowledge; that encourages the participation of small and medium-sized companies in research-innovation projects; that contributes to the development of a strategic

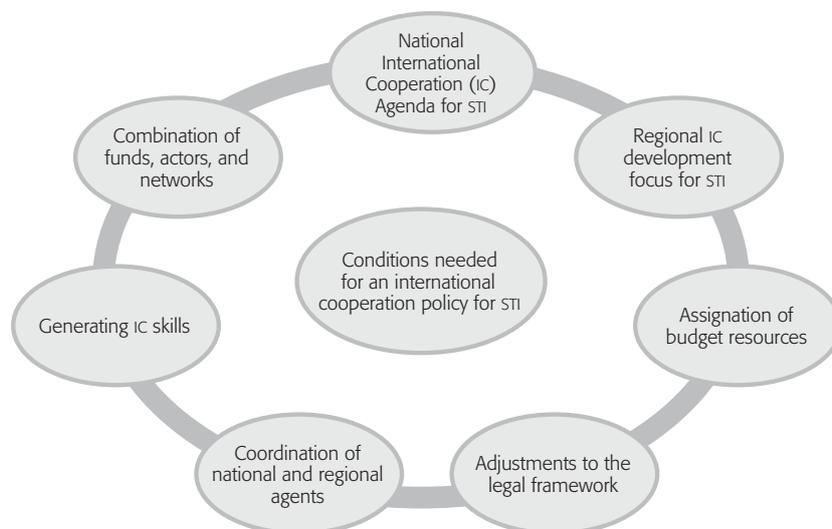
focus for the mobility of students and researchers; and that makes Mexican STI visible, along with their potential and the opportunities they offer, while minimizing the bureaucratization of cooperation processes.

2. *Strengthen the international STI cooperation system.* This means formulating an institutional design and launching an organizational model consistent with the aims of the cooperation policy that will overcome the current dispersion and fragmentation; that will make working in networks a priority; and that will incorporate cooperation as a transversal component of STI. To do this, coordination between Conacyt and Amexid is strategic.
3. *Guarantee the public nature of cooperation policy.* This must be done through substantive procedures and spaces for deliberation, consultation, and decision-making by the scientific community, companies, and organizations of civil society on an ongoing basis.
4. *Ensure the existence of systems for information, follow-up, evaluation, and dissemination* that make it possible to learn from experience, as well as to establish mechanisms of transparency and accountability.

ADVANCING TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL STI COOPERATION POLICY

Lastly, it is necessary to clearly identify the fundamental aim. Here, we refer to the UNAM's proposal: making knowledge and innovation a fundamental lever for Mexico's sustainable economic growth, favoring human development, making greater social justice possible, consolidating democracy and peace, and strengthening national sovereignty.¹³ The diagram in the following page illustrates some of the basic conditions needed for this:

1. *National-International Cooperation Agenda for STI.* This would establish the priorities for topics and sectors in accordance with the 2013-2018 National Development Plan, as well as the International Cooperation for Development Program (Procid), and the Special Science, Technology, and Innovation Program (Peciti).
2. *Regional development focus.* This would make it possible to identify and better attend to priorities, needs, and interests, as well as bolster the existing strengths and competences among actors from the different states. The need to regionalize arises from the recognition of the heterogeneity and plurality of Mexico's regions.



3. *Increasing STI investment.* To this end, it is essential to make existing funds, sources, and resources consistent and comprehensive, as well as to consider alternative sources of financing and the promotion of incentives for innovation.
4. *Adjusting the legal framework.* Here, the aim is to harmonize the legislation on science and technology and on international cooperation for development, as well as to bring together a programmatic framework.
5. *Coordinating agents in a field of multiple actors.* This would operate among public and private actors, institutions of higher learning, research and experimentation centers, civil society organizations, and international

agencies working in Mexico, among others. It is also necessary to strengthen multi-level governance in the local, state, regional, and national spheres.

6. *Generating the skills needed to implement actions for STI international cooperation.* Here, the idea is to create and strengthen institutional capabilities, understood as an intangible resource that allows actors to perform appropriately to obtain optimum sustainable results in accordance with their interests and needs.¹⁴

Mexico will move toward a knowledge society and toward a state policy of international cooperation for science and technology to the extent that it fosters these conditions. ■■

NOTES

¹ The reflections in this article are the result of research carried out by the José María Luis Mora Institute at the request of the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt) in the second half of 2012. The research team, coordinated by Gabriela Sánchez Gutiérrez, is comprised of Simone Lucatello, Esther Ponce Adame, Sonia Romero, Bibiana Gómez, Alejandro López Mercado, José de J. Sosa, Gabriela Díaz, María Eugenia Mesta, and Jorge Pérez Pineda. IDOM Consulting participated as a partner research team, made up of César Valle, Álvaro Gutiérrez, Daniela Aguado, and Diego López.

² WEF, "The Global Competitiveness Index 2012–2013: Country Profile Highlights," www3.weforum.org/docs/CSI/2012-13/GCR_CountryHighlights_2012-13.pdf.

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⁴ Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI), "Ciencia, tecnología e innovación para el desarrollo y la cohesión social. Programa iberoamericano en la década de los bicentenarios," 2012, www.oei.es/documentociencia.pdf.

⁵ Conacyt, "Programa Especial de Ciencia y Tecnología 2001–2006," 2001, <http://planeacion.cicese.mx/docsvarios/pecyt-indice.htm>.

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⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2007, Briefing Note on Mexico" (Paris: OECD, 2008).

⁹ Klaus Schwab, "The Global Competitiveness Report 2011–2012," WEF, p. 514.

¹⁰ Judith Sutz, "Relaciones universidad-empresa en América Latina," in Jesús Sebastián, *Claves del desarrollo científico y tecnológico de América Latina* (Madrid: Fundación Carolina/Siglo XXI, 2007).

¹¹ Gustavo Lugones, Patricia Gutti, and Néstor Le Clech, *Indicadores de capacidades tecnológicas en América Latina* (Mexico City: CEPAL, 2007), p. 45.

¹² Secretaría de Economía, Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial (IMPI), "IMPI en cifras 2013," January–March 2013 (Mexico City), http://www.impi.gob.mx/wb/IMPI/impi_en_cifras2.

¹³ UNAM, "Hacia una agenda nacional en ciencia, tecnología e innovación," Mexico City, September 2012, www.foroconsultivo.org.mx/documentos/agenda_nal_cti_extenso_260912.pdf.

¹⁴ Eduardo Ballón, Jorge Rodríguez, and Molvina Zeballos, *Fortalecimiento de capacidades para el DTR: innovaciones institucionales en gobernanza* (Santiago de Chile: Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural, 2009), p. 62.

The New Democratic Party, Canada's Leading Parliamentary Minority

Oliver Santín Peña*



Thomas Mulcair, leader of Canada's NDP.

The New Democratic Party's (NDP) emergence as the leading minority in Canada's House of Commons can be considered transcendent in the nation's political history. It is the first time a left social democratic grouping has played that role.

This is particularly important given that Liberal and Conservative forces had monopolized power since 1867, making it possible for the elites of both to dominate the political stage. This meant that when one of those parties was in office, the other was invariably the discursive counterweight as the leading minority. This translated into alternation in office of Liberals and Conservatives that stretched out over 40 general elections.¹ However, that dynamic abruptly came to an end in the May 2011 election when the NDP became the first minority with

103 members, leading the Liberal Party by 69 seats. Since that time, the NDP has assumed the task of serving as a counterweight to the majority Conservative Party, headed by experienced Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who leads his Conservative caucus's 166 MPs in Canada's lower house.²

BACKGROUND

While the NDP's origins are found in different political currents and union organizations, it was the merger between the Canadian Labour Congress and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the early 1960s that put the current face on the party.

Since its inception as a party, the NDP, under the guidance of its first national leader, Tommy Douglas, became the

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greatest promoter of federal Medicare, which Douglas developed and promoted during his term as premier of Saskatchewan.³ By 1967, that socialization of medical care became a national demand.⁴ Medicare's media success led Douglas to be considered the most important person in Canada in local surveys, which has been capitalized on by the New Democratic left, since the party is considered the direct descendent of this public good. Nevertheless, its federal implementation fell to Liberal administrations, which, in turn, replicated the directives adopted in Great Britain after World War II.⁵

The NDP has sought to capitalize on programs with social content in its quest for popular acceptance. Therefore, it did not support Paul Martin's minority Liberal government in 2005, which refused to guarantee the non-privatization of health-care sectors in the medium and long terms, or increase public investment.⁶ This position helped reinforce the perception that the NDP considered investment in the public sector a stance that forged its identity.

To this was added the vehemence with which the NDP leadership pushed the idea of forming a coalition government in late 2008, for the first time in Canadian history, together with the Liberal Party, then headed by Stéphane Dion. This sent a message to voters that the NDP and its leader Jack Layton were willing to innovate in the country's politics. And it worked, despite the rejection of Liberal elites who refused to create a coalition government with the left, culminating in the removal of Stéphane Dion.

Later the inconsistencies and contradictions of the new Liberal leadership, which fell to Michael Ignatieff, would end by strengthening Jack Layton's image, making him the firmest and most coherent figure of the opposition.

So, the call for early elections in May 2011 put the NDP in the historic position of being able to win away from one of the two predominant parties—in this case the Liberals—the position of being first minority in the House of Commons. While this was the result of Jack Layton's good handling of the NDP leadership since his rise in 2003, it must be noted that Liberal Party's internal divisions, corruption, and political zigzagging of its last leader reduced its chances for electoral success.

JACK LAYTON AND THE SUCCESSFUL 2011 CAMPAIGN

To put the NDP's 2011 electoral success in perspective, we need to look at the figure of Jack Layton. His political career

The May 2, 2011 results gave the NDP and Jack Layton the opportunity to head the entire opposition, relegating one of the two dominant parties, the Liberals, to a secondary position.

was characterized by ideological coherence since his work as a member of the Toronto City Council, a post he occupied in 1982. He quickly stood out and headed up the left wing of the city council, opposing the construction of the SkyDome and Toronto's candidacy for the 1996 Summer Olympics because he thought both unbeneficial to the general public in the medium term.

Thus, for Layton, the 1980s and 1990s were a chance to explain his ideas nationally through his work on the Toronto City Council. In line with this, once NDP leader Alexa McDonough resigned because of her administration's slim results, Jack Layton would receive the support of well-known NDP members like former leader Ed Broadbent, who would push his candidacy as the party's new national leader.⁷ In the context of this dynamic, the NDP's January 2003 internal elections handed Layton an absolute victory in a single round of voting when he received 53.52 percent of the delegates' votes.⁸

Since that time, the NDP has concentrated on winning over the urban voters in the central part of the country (in this case Ontario and Québec), making it clear that its traditional positions in the West, the Prairies, and the Atlantic Coast had to be reinforced with voters in the country's two most highly populated provinces.

On taking over as NDP leader, Jack Layton immediately pushed a very aggressive agenda against the governing Liberal Party, pointing out that it was very similar to the Conservatives. This strategy gradually won attraction, above all among the parts of the public that observed how the Liberal Party was caught up in internal clashes and government corruption. Layton was very clear, particularly after the Liberal elites refused to form a coalition government in 2008, that the growth of the NDP depended directly on weakening the Liberal Party. In this sense, the New Democrats had to counter the traditional Liberal strategy of discouraging the voters by saying the only way to stop and defeat the Conservatives was voting for their party since a vote for the NDP would be wasted. So, from 2009 on, Jack Layton began publically compar-

ing his ideas with Michael Ignatieff's ambiguities, and thus gradually showed the Liberals and their leader up as a group in crisis, contradictory, and not very interested in people's problems. This positioned the NDP as the only opposition to the governing Conservative Party. The chance to definitively contrast New Democratic and Liberal proposals came with the 2011 election campaign.

During that process, Jack Layton and the NDP won more acceptance due to the Liberal Party's bad campaign and its leader's bad image. In this sense, it is appropriate to point out that Jack Layton's accusation at the April televised debate that Michael Ignatieff had been an irresponsible MP, missing more than 70 percent of the votes without justification when he was leader of the opposition, was an effective blow to Liberal aspirations and catapulted the New Democrats in the polls.⁹

The May 2, 2011 results gave the New Democratic Party and Jack Layton the opportunity to head the entire opposition, relegating one of the two dominant parties, the Liberals, to a secondary position in the political arena. Starting with the beginning of the 41st session of Parliament, the voice of the Canadian left could be contrasted directly with the decisions made by Stephen Harper's right-wing government.

LAYTON'S EARLY RETIREMENT AND THE NEW LEADER

Although it was known that Jack Layton had had prostate cancer in 2009, the rumors of a relapse spread after the 2011 federal elections and proved to be real once a very thin, visibly weak Layton confirmed the reappearance of his cancer, obliging him to leave the political arena to seek treatment.

The announcement came on July 26, 2011, together with Layton's proposal to turn the interim NDP leadership—and therefore, that of the opposition in the House of Commons—over to MP Nicole Turmel. However, Layton died August 22, leaving a posthumous letter to the country.¹⁰ In it, he laid out his last directives to the party, outstanding among which was, once again, keeping Nicole Turmel on as interim leader

Different specialists had considered
Thomas Mulcair the Canadian Tony Blair and a
politician who could take the NDP more toward
the center than the left.

and convening internal elections as soon as possible to consolidate the party and renew political programs for future elections. In the second part of the letter, he bid good-bye to the citizenry with a message of hope and unity.

So, the NDP National Convention was held in Toronto on March 24, 2012, to elect a new leadership. After four votes, MP Thomas Mulcair came out the winner, a moderate candidate compared to the other possible leader, Jack Layton's personal friend Brian Topp.

It should be mentioned that Topp became the candidate most identified with the task of maintaining the NDP's traditional principles. This was reinforced once former NDP leader Ed Broadbent pointed out that Mulcair was a threat to the party since, in his view, his modernizing positions would end up destroying it and its principles in a short time, turning it into another Liberal Party.¹¹ Broadbent was the one who had successfully launched Jack Layton's candidacy nine years before.

In the end, Brian Topp's positions (recognizing the Palestinian state,¹² eliminating Canada's Senate, and restricting the Canadian prime minister's powers)¹³ were elements that favored Thomas Mulcair. In fact, different specialists had considered Mulcair the Canadian Tony Blair and a politician who could take the NDP more toward the center than the left.¹⁴ His detractors underline that the former British prime minister's strategy of taking the Labor Party more toward the center than to the left in order to win votes ended by strengthening the Conservative Party and ensuring its return to office.

SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

The NDP has emerged as the first minority in Canada's lower house and developed under particular circumstances that include the weakening of the previously powerful Liberal Party and the early search for a new leadership after Jack Layton's premature death.

That succession took place right at the beginning of the parliamentary activities of the 41st legislature, facilitating the arrival of Thomas Mulcair, a leader with a new agenda. His election seemed to have been a response more to the party's urgent need to boost its vote count to eventually be able to win office than to the need to strengthen party principles as a basis for distinguishing itself from the Conservative government.

The NDP has sought to be a voice that contrasts with the Tory government, refusing to support the C-38 bill, which concentrates federal budgetary programs and projects, and

Both on domestic economic
and political issues and on international matters,
the voice of the NDP leader has kept up
with the actions of Prime Minister Stephen Harper
on different topics.

includes changes to 70 laws in different spheres like immigration, refugee status, and the environment, among others.¹⁵ The fact is that both on domestic economic and political issues and on international matters, the voice of the NDP leader has kept up with the actions of Prime Minister Stephen Harper on different topics.

Domestically, Tom Mulcair has surpassed even the traditional positions of the Conservatives on issues like free trade: he has insisted on rebooting the World Trade Organization (WTO) and forging trade agreements with the European Union, Brazil, India, and South Africa, leaving agreements with small Latin American countries in the background. He has also put to one side the NDP's traditional critiques of the North American Free Trade Agreement and pressured the Tory government to speed up a trade agreement with Japan, despite the opposition of their traditional labor allies, the Canadian Auto Workers Union.¹⁶

In the international arena, Tom Mulcair has backed Canada's Conservative government in its constant support to Israel's policy in the Middle East and the Palestinian territories. He also supported Stephen Harper's decision to break diplomatic relations with Iran in 2012 and sending troops and Canadian military equipment to Libya in 2012. In the House of Commons, he also backed the French military intervention in Mali in early 2013.

All this has taken place just when the NDP is governing the provinces of Manitoba and Nova Scotia (with Greg Selinger and Darrell Dexter as premiers, respectively), and when, recently, the approval ratings of party leaders in British Columbia (Adrian Dix) and Ontario (Andrea Horwath) have been optimum.

Regardless of the ideological contradictions that the new NDP leader has exhibited, his party is the country's second largest political force. However, the real impact of his strategy will not be revealed until the 2015 federal elections, when Québec voters will determine the NDP's future with their 58 seats won in the last federal elections. Only then will the possible cost of Mulcair's turn in ideology and discourse be

laid bare: he has bet on "modernizing" his party in order to improve its electoral chances of winning office by bringing in votes and parliamentary seats from other provinces. ■■

NOTES

- ¹ It is important to point out that, while in the 1993 federal elections the Bloc Québécois Party became the leading minority with 54 seats, the Conservative bloc (in this case the Reform Party with 52 seats and the Progressive Conservative Party with 2) played a more active role in its negotiations with the then-majority Liberal government. At that point, the Liberals had 177 seats in the House of Commons, where the country's political life is discussed and decided, leaving the Senate with the job of ratifying what is passed in the lower house.
- ² Data and figures for the May 2011 federal elections can be checked at "Elections Canada," <http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>, accessed in February 2013.
- ³ Medicare began operating in the province of Saskatchewan in 1962.
- ⁴ Robert Craig Brown, *The Illustrated History of Canada. A Canadian Classic, Now Completely Revised* (Ontario: Key Porter Books, 2002), p. 511.
- ⁵ John C. Courtney y David E. Smith, *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 84.
- ⁶ For more information, see CBC News, "In depth. The 38th Parliament, June 28, 2004–November 29, 2005," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/parliament38/index.html>, accessed in February 2013.
- ⁷ Stephen Brooks, *Canadian Democracy Seventh Edition* (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 314.
- ⁸ Parliament of Canada, "New Democratic Party. Leadership Conventions," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/Files/Party.aspx?Item=78f08bac-f67d-4621-9381-c4f18b1a0380&Language=E&Section=LeadershipConvention>, accessed in February 2013.
- ⁹ See figures and data in "Elections, 2011 Canadian Elections Results," <http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/results.html>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹⁰ "New Democratic Party: A Letter to Canadians from the Honourable Jack Layton," <http://www.ndp.ca/letter-to-canadians-from-jack-layton>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹¹ *National Post*, "Ed Broadbent defends his criticism of NDP frontrunner Thomas Mulcair's credentials," <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/03/17/ed-broadbent-defends-criticism-of-ndp-frontrunner-thomas-mulcairs-credentials/>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹² Macleans.ca, "Israel, Palestine and Brian Topp," <http://www2.macleans.ca/2011/09/22/israel-palestine-and-brian-topp/>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹³ Brian Topp.ca, "Topp Releases Plan to Restore Confidence to Government," <http://briantopp.ca/issues/topp-releases-plan-restore-confidence-government>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹⁴ Socialist.ca, "Mulcair: the NDP's Tony Blair," <http://www.socialist.ca/node/721>, accessed in February 2013.
- ¹⁵ Radio Canadá Internacional, "Gobierno conservador canadiense rechaza las 871 enmiendas propuestas por la oposición," http://www.rcinet.ca/espagnol/archivo/noticias/11_52_07_2012-06-15-gobierno-conservador-canadiense-rechaza-las-871-enmiendas-propuestas-por-la-oposicion/.
- ¹⁶ CBC News, "Tom Mulcair's NDP takes vigorously pro-trade position," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/11/15/pol-cp-ndp-trade-policy.html>, accessed in February 2013.

GRAPHIC DESIGN FASHION DESIGN FASHION DESIGN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN



From the most functional to the most artistic, design is everywhere in our daily lives. The creative solutions that designers contribute to resolving different needs crystallize in books, objects, clothing, and furniture, and are an expression of everything that goes on around us. Combining innovative processes, diverse materials, and great creativity, the work of Mexican designers has recently occupied an increasingly important place on the national and international scene.

The articles we present here look at three major expressions of design: visual communication, product development, and the fashion industry. Examples abound to demonstrate that, while the work of many designers is inspired in Mexican cultural traditions, their creations transcend any kind of narrow nationalism. More than considering Mexican design as a mark of national identity, we have to talk about the development of an industry and a wide variety of styles that share the global stage.

FASHION DESIGN
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
GRAPHIC DESIGN

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
FASHION DESIGN
GRAPHIC DESIGN

OVERVIEW OF MEXICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN TODAY

Leonel Sagahón*

Design is at a peak worldwide. Today, everything is “designed,” from a house, to an economic policy, to a drug. This is why it is difficult to pin down exactly what design is, where it starts, and where it ends. The same is true of so-called “graphic design,” which seems to be the broad branch dedicated to everything visible. However, there are a host of seemingly unrelated disciplines in which things are graphically designed. There’s medicine and astronomy, in which images are created to study the phenomena of the body and space, without any graphic designers touching them. There are other areas of design, like industrial, architectural, and textile design, which appropriate visual resources initially the exclusive province of graphics, or the specialties that were born under the aegis of graphic design, but have now become independent, like illustration, multi-media design, and typographical design.

Design is so important today that a world without images and designed objects would be unimaginable. Just think about technological devices like cell phones, graphic interfaces like the ones used in automatic teller machines, or publicity. Our surroundings have been conquered by the field of design, a multidisciplinary territory, or rather, an entire ecosystem where it is difficult to establish the borders of what is exclusively graphics.

In this terrain of design, Mexico is an emerging, but relevant, player. More than in other areas like industry or multi-media, where we face technological and economic limitations, graphic design is more vigorous, perhaps because our cultural tradition is deeply rooted in it.

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Gabriel Martínez Meave,
Presidency, 2011
(typography)

Today’s Mexican graphic designers illustrate, do multi-media, edit video, and create new typefaces, all at the same time. They have been trained in schools and universities, and their teachers have also grown up in this environment. They have appropriated foreign technology and use it for local projects. They design for all spheres: cultural, commercial, environmental, and even political. Let’s take a quick look at some of the territories that describe contemporary Mexican graphic design.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF DESIGN

As recently as the 1980s, much of our country’s graphic design was done by professionals who had not studied design: they were architects, painters, engineers, trained in any other field, or without professional training at all. Graphic design was above all a craft learned by doing. While this gave the first projects a mark of diversity that nourished later develop-



Santiago Solís,
How Right You Were Dad,
12 x 3.20 m, 2011
(acrylic).

The poster as a space for expression is still very much alive. Many young designers make posters. They are almost never commissioned by a client; rather, they are inspired by personal concerns.

ment, it also made the discipline inconsistent and fragile. In the mid-1960s, the first design schools at the level of higher education were created in Mexico. Today, there are more than 300, from which thousands graduate every year. It is important to add the advantages for the profession of the institutionalization of these schools: education of the faculty, the development of specialized research, expositions, seminars, lectures, associations, publications, and library systems. In this sense, the international exchange efforts by certain universities really stand out: inviting professors, developing research, and, particularly, giving their students' work exposure. Today, for example, products developed by Mexican students can be found in New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) shop and in galleries around the world.

THE WORLD OF PUBLISHING

Book design has been one of the most important spheres where the profession has developed. History recognizes the time of Miguel Prieto and Vicente Rojo and their work designing magazines, newspapers, and books as the moment Mexican graphic design was born. To that extent, the vitality of the publishing industry is reflected in the vitality of design itself. After a relative bonanza between the 1960s and 1980s that allowed for the flowering of several publishing houses, the economic crisis and the process of concentration of companies worldwide made many of them disappear, absorbed by foreign publishing concerns. This concentration was accompanied by a conservatism that had negative impacts on design in several



Éramos tantos Studio, cover of the book *Taller de taquimecanografía* (typing workshop), Mexico City, 2011.



David Daniel Álvarez and María Julia Díaz, cover of the book *Bandada* (Flock), Pontevedra, Spain, 2012.

Two great history books recently came onto the market: *Historia del diseño gráfico en México* (History of Graphic Design in Mexico) (2010) by Giovanni Troconi, and *Historias encubiertas, el Fondo de Cultura Económica a través de sus portadas* (Hidden Histories: the Cultural Economic Fund Publishing House through Its Covers) (2011), by Marina Garone. Together, they are the starting point for studying publishing design.



senses: the need to lower production costs reduced the budget earmarked for design; the demand for putting out commercially successful books led publishers to copy foreign styles and formulas; and the concentration of many publishing houses in a single commercial enterprise led to uniform graphic styles. In the case of design, the stimulus for quality that competition was supposed to spur focused on technical and technological spheres. All this acted to the detriment of creative, original work by Mexican designers.

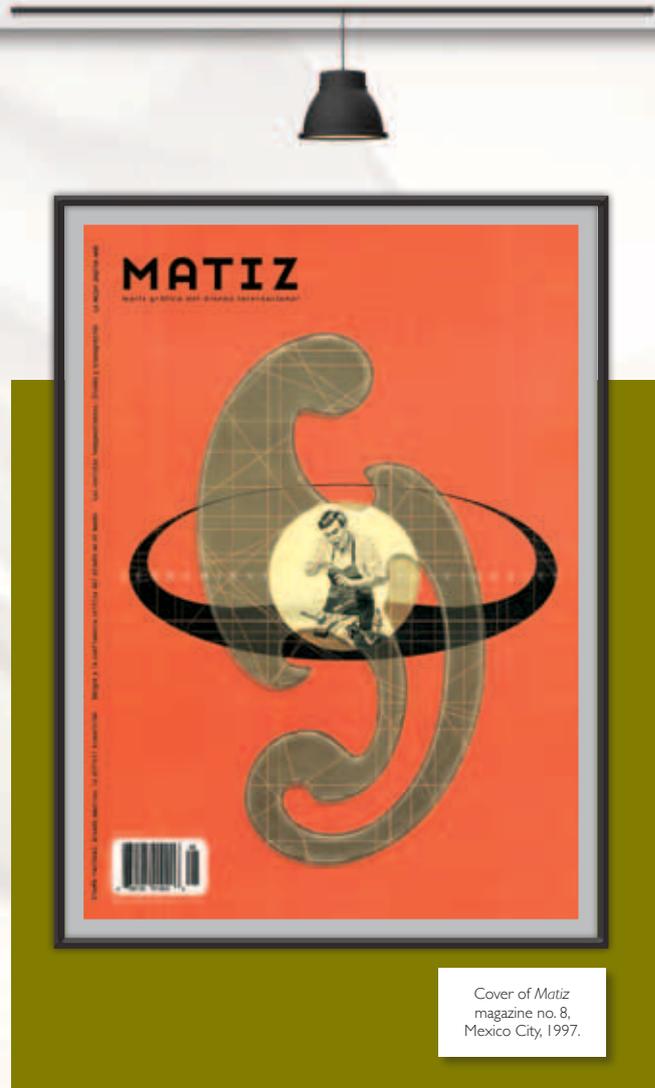
Fortunately, in the middle of the last decade, several independent publishing houses emerged that have revitalized the industry and design itself. Projects like Almadía, Sexto Piso, Tumbona, and Trilce, among others, not only fostered a diversity in publishing that had been lost, but have also placed renewed value on the role of creative design as value added with commercial benefits, so it was no longer seen as an expense that should be eliminated.

MAGAZINES

Magazines are one of the media that generate the greatest dynamism in cultural life. However, in the case of their design, something similar to what happens with books occurs: given the high concentration of magazines published by a single firm, independent magazines are the ones that make the difference. The business of big publishing groups is to sell the most ad pages possible to other companies. So, many magazines end up being what their sponsors want, both in terms of content and of design. Independent magazines fight to put out the content they consider valuable, but few of them survive more than three years. Some understand that beyond being a technique that improves impact and legibility, design is an inseparable part of their content.

POSTERS

Posters have given up their place to other media as a means of dissemination. Bus stop art, ads on city walls, and different kinds of billboards are types of posters, but their language is impacted by publicity; reading time is reduced to the few seconds allowed while passing by in a vehicle; and their images



Cover of *Matiz* magazine no. 8, Mexico City, 1997.

tend to reproduce the aesthetic of the electronic media. The majority are designed by advertising agencies. It is becoming more and more difficult to encounter posters on the streets. The old-fashioned poster, a rectangle of paper that surprised the pedestrian from any wall, has taken refuge in office hallways, become smaller, and stopped being a medium from which designers can make a living.

However, the poster as a space for expression is still very much alive. Many young designers make posters. They are almost never commissioned by a client; rather, they are inspired by personal concerns. The designers print only a few copies; sometimes, they print no copies at all, but just share them on the social media. Designing posters gives the author a freedom very similar to that of the artist, and in this sense,



Moisés Romero,
Empty Ideas, 2012
(poster).

although posters do not fulfill a real mission on the street, they are a kind of gymnasium, an important training ground. International contests for poster design are the main circuit that can give prestige to new talents.

Mexico's International Poster Biennial is one of the most important worldwide. For more than 10 years, Mexican designers have played an outstanding role in events of this kind. Just in 2012, Víctor Santos, Elmer Sosa, and Moisés Romero won prizes at the Mut zur Wut international poster competition held in Heidelberg, Germany, where the young Oaxacan graffiti artist Yescka was part of the jury, seated beside legends like the German Alex Jordan. At one time, winning the first prize at biennials like Warsaw's and Moscow's was the springboard for the careers of designers like Alejandro Magallanes;

now this seems to be the case of Moisés Romero, from Guadajalara, one of the most outstanding poster artists.

ILLUSTRATION

Something similar is happening with Mexican illustrators. The big difference is that this kind of work is used by publishing houses, and illustrators can make their living at it. Publishing for children is a vital area; both big and small publishing houses put out original illustrated materials for babies, small and medium-aged children, and teens. A large part of this energy has been due to Ministry of Public Education programs that purchase large quantities of books, which in turn means there is enough money to pay professionals.

But, is illustration part of graphic design? Some say yes, and others no. But, what is certain is that most young illustrators have studied graphic design or a similar undergraduate degree, and their day-to-day lives combine this activity with projects that are strictly design. It is only with time that some of them come to focus solely on illustration. In addition, illustrations are never published alone; they always accompany texts in books, packaging, ads, posters, and now also electronic backgrounds. This is why knowledge of design is fundamental for illustrations to work better.

The great variety of topics, styles, techniques, and formats that Mexican illustrators cover is worthy of note, whether for scientific or popular topics or literary and artistic ones. In contrast with poster designers, illustrators are more publically visible and self-organizing; they organize their own events and collectives, like El ilustradero, which groups professionals to create projects and support each other to disseminate them.

Events and publications also promote this work, like the competition for the *Catálogo de ilustradores de publicaciones infantiles y juveniles* (Catalogue of Illustrators of Children and Young People's Publications), organized by the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta) in the framework of the International Children and Young People's Book Fair. Like in the case of posters, Mexicans have made their mark internationally: Santiago Solís and Santiago Robles won first place for the Ibero-America Illustrates Prize in 2012; David Daniel Álvarez Hernández and María Julia Díaz Garrido's book *Bandada* (Flock), put out by the Spanish publishing



Santiago Solís, *Only the Little Ones Enjoy Themselves*, 26 x 31 cm, 2010 (mixed techniques).

The change in the course of graphic design has been more a break than an update for the tradition. This new generation and the ones that come after it are not resigned to the idea that to look like Mexicans we have to look to the past.

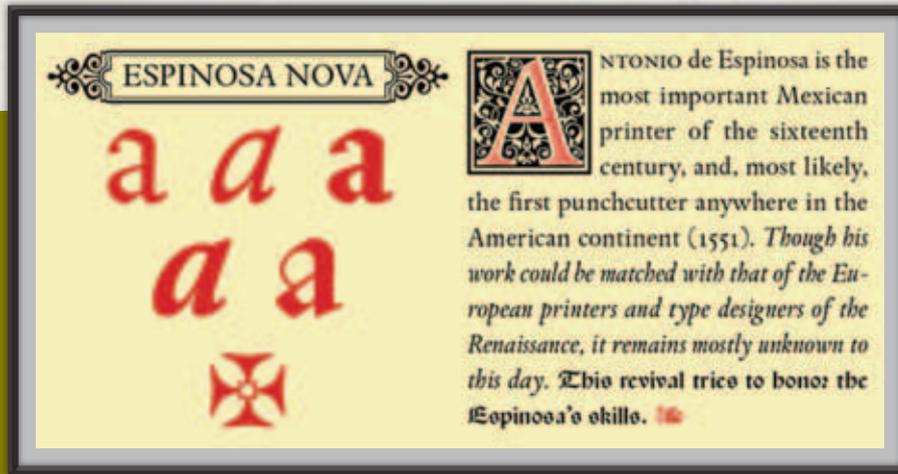
house Kalandraka, won the Compostela International Prize for Illustrated Album; and the book *Migrar* (Migrate), illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro, won the New Horizons Prize at the Bologna, Italy Book Fair.

TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGN

Graphic designers are specialists in typography. The kind of lettering is important because a large part of communication and how one understands what one reads depends on it. It has been this way since the time of Gutenberg, and over time, every culture has designed alphabets according to their tastes and needs. This means it is possible to study these cultures based on their typefaces.

In Mexico until about 20 years ago, the only typefaces that could be used were made abroad, but today a wide variety has been designed inside the country. More and more companies and institutions hire Mexican designers to develop families of typeface to jibe with their needs, and Mexican typographers shine internationally. This is the case of Gabriel Martínez Meave, who has been honored by New York's Type Directors Club and the International Typographical Association (ATypI).

Mexican typographers began designing their lettering for the pure joy of it, without anyone paying them. They have done formidable research projects on old documents, like the ones by Gonzalo García Barcha, Gabriel Martínez Meave, or Cristóbal Henerstrosa to create the digital fonts *Enrico*, *Lagarto*, and *Espinosa*, respectively. These designers have



Cristóbal Henestrosa,
Espinosa Nova (recovery of
the type faces used by Antonio
Espinosa Segundo in 1559).

been hired by publishing houses, commercial firms, and even the government to create specific typefaces to define their identity.

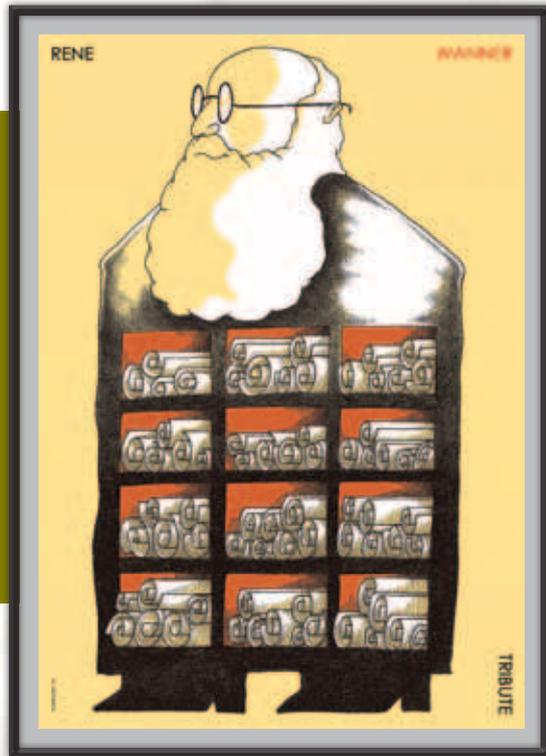
DESIGN WITHOUT BORDERS

After this overview, the question comes to mind about whether we can really talk about Mexican graphic design. Does it have a distinctive, recognizable stamp? No. From the standpoint of the viewer, it would be difficult to differentiate Mexican design from that of other countries, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Style in design should be a consequence of being Mexican. But, who are we Mexicans? What do we look like?

Mexican design was born with the mark of the Mexican school of painting, headed by muralists Rivera, Orozco, and Siquieros, and by the Mexican school of architecture, headed by Barragán and Ramírez Vázquez. This tradition aimed to deliberately institutionalize a Mexican-ness by exalting values like everything related to the indigenous tradition, the history of independence, and the modern revolution. The colors, the monumental scale, the archaeological borders and

motifs, and the patriotic iconography were inherited by the first generations of designers. The state run by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) attempted to generalize this style as though it were the only owner of the country's national heroes and the colors of the flag. At that time, the country was struggling for a place among the other countries, and it seemed desirable to have a Mexican style that would unite us and distinguish us from them. So, we shifted our gaze to folklore, to the picturesque, the archaeological, and the heroic. The iconography was filled with colored strips, landscapes with cacti, pyramids with indigenous borders and idols, eagles devouring serpents, in addition to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Zapata with women soldiers and carbines, and many images of Hidalgo, Juárez, and Morelos. To create an identity, the quest focused on our roots.

The first professional designers identified with the opposition, participated in the 1968 rebellion, fostered the vitality of the left graphics of the 1970s and the popular graphics of the 1980s, fighting against the hegemony of the PRI state and appropriated that same iconography. Mexican style was the result of the will to be Mexican, to look like Mexicans; our commitment was to seem Mexican, whatever that means.



Élmer Sosa
Rene Wanner Tribute,
 Traditional digital illustration,
 2013.

But that tradition has been losing ground in recent years. The most visible mark of today's Mexican graphic design is being made by the generation that graduated from the design schools in the early 1990s and pointed to a change of course from the previous tradition. This generation is the one that today occupies the posts in the institutions that are making decisions about design and carrying out the most visible and influential projects, and, above all, they are the teachers and researchers who are showing the way forward for the next generations.

The change in course has been more a break than an update for the tradition. This new generation and the ones that come after it are not resigned to the idea that to look like Mexicans we have to look to the past. They have a vigorous determination to look to the future and a thirst for transcen-



José Manuel Mateo
 illustrator, *Migrar* (Migrate),
 Mexico City, Tecolote
 publishers, 2011.

dence based on their achievements and not their heritage. This fundamental break is accompanied by important phenomena like the role played by digital technology for design that we imported from abroad, and the dissolution of the social dimension, giving way to a pseudo-artistic personal expressiveness.

In the context of globalization, our gaze alights on everything. For this reason, any image can be picked as a reference point and inspiration, even those chosen by designers from other countries. The feeling of belonging to a nation, which is what allows us to see and recognize our needs, is diluted in the commitment to new virtual homelands with no borders. We give our loyalty to commercial firms and brands; we identify more with the Facebook or Tweeter nation than with this country.

The disappearance of the Mexican style in design is experienced as though something authentic had been lost. But, far from that, that style was the result of a policy that arbitrarily imposed what we Mexicans were like, and ended by being completely alien. On the other extreme, seeing only other homelands and giving up looking at our national needs to be able to satisfy them in design put an end to that identity. Does any other country have one? No, they don't. This is something many people suffer through, but feeling like we're in the same boat with everyone else is a fool's consolation. **MM**

DESIGNING TO RESIGNIFY REALITY

MEXICAN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Gina Bechelany*

Canadian designer Tate Linden says that design is an opportunity to continue telling the story, not just to sum it all up. And it's exactly that continual becoming that those who work projecting the future through creative solutions to the requirements and needs of their society forge day to day.

Mexican industrial design has developed rapidly in recent times. Not only do more and better designers come on the scene every day, but almost all spheres of society are touched by design, from the smallest devices, to the projections of urban design. Today, this profession is fully integrated into the culture it has grown up in, facing big challenges of all kinds: political, economic, social, and environmental. In this framework, and from a globalized society, innumerable distinct, interesting creative proposals exist.



Alejandro Buendía,
Top, 2013
(pressboard and iron).



Cooperativa panorámica,
Container, 2013
(terrazzo).

One of these has been adopted by certain Mexican designers, who have decided to tell the story by resignifying traditions and some of the specific characteristics of our culture, and by placing new value on traditional trades, with which they establish a face-to-face dialogue. In this sense, designers are increasingly aware that their work consists not only of creating an object as though it had emerged from nothing, but also of finding out about traditional materials and the possibility of using new inputs, as well as of questioning traditional models and productive processes to enrich them with other productive proposals, like collaborating with small artisanal workshops. This new way of seeing has allowed several contemporary designers to project a kind of design capable of harmonizing tradition with innovation.

* Mexican editor and writer.

All photos except those by Mercury are courtesy of Cooperativa Panorámica and Ariel Rojo, respectively.



Cooperativa Panorámica,
Folding Tray, 2013
(metal sheet finished in copper).

Certain Mexican designers have decided to tell the story
by resignifying traditions and some of the specific characteristics of our culture
and by placing new value on traditional trades, with which they establish a face-to-face dialogue.

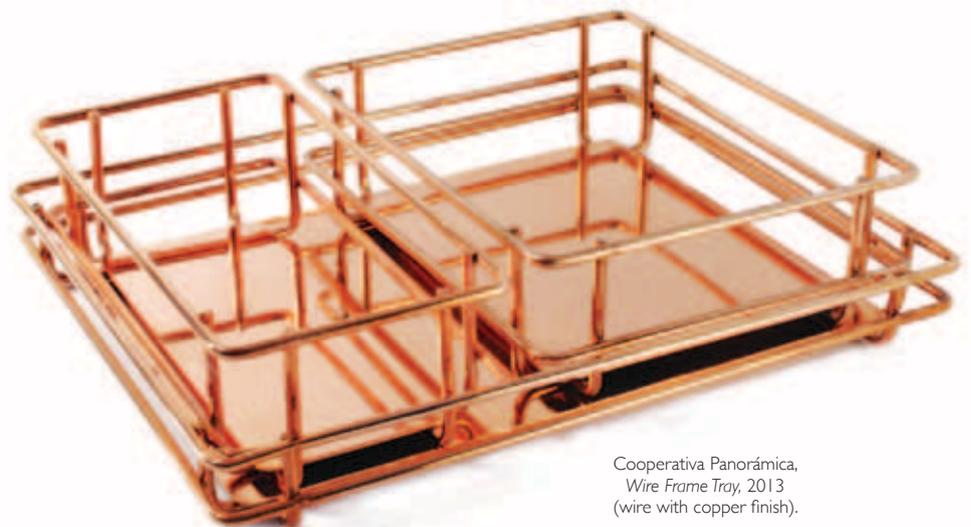


Ariel Rojo, *Alma Rhomboid Chair Group*, 2013 (aluminium).



Ariel Rojo, *Spiral Lamp*, 2008 (wood).

Resignifying design by integrating art, industry, tradition, aesthetic values, and functionality is the new mark of Mexican industrial design, which seems to penetrate more and more comfortably into the international sphere.



Cooperativa Panorámica,
Wire Frame Tray, 2013
(wire with copper finish).

The integration of folk art forms, motifs, and colors, the re-interpretation of furniture, the re-utilization of objects and ornaments, and the dialogue among opposed productive processes, like artisanal, one-of-a-kind creation versus mass production, and increasing concern with sustainability are the new hallmarks of contemporary design. It seems that this new concept has managed to transcend the stereotype that dominated the profession for years: pre-Hispanic motifs, loud colors, and aesthetic references to what used to be associated with what was “very Mexican.” One example of these new expressions is the famous Acapulco chair, which has become an object representative of a place, a climate, and a culture. This anonymously-designed chair created in the 1950s had been forgotten, but today has come alive again thanks to being taken up by contemporary design. The Common Project, a collective, has reinvented the chair without abandoning its original design, improving a few details, but preserving the weaving technique used by the Mayas for making their hammocks. Since this design was re-interpreted, many variants have been created, like rocking chairs, magazine racks, and stools.

Resignifying design by integrating art, industry, tradition, aesthetic values, and functionality is the new mark of Mexican industrial design, which seems to penetrate more and more comfortably into the international sphere. To get to know a little more about this, we talked to three designers about the links between design today and traditions, creative processes, and the materials they use.

Ariel Rojo **QUESTIONS REALITY**

Outstanding Mexican designer Ariel Rojo studied industrial design at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). From a very young age, he began delving into design, but it was in 2002 that he launched his first personal project about Mexican identity, which initially looked into our culture and then reinterpreted it: MX Reload. Since then, all Rojo’s designs allude to some reference point—even if apparently imperceptible— of Mexican culture. Through his discourse, Rojo attempts to convince the public that “global societies exist thanks to the points of origin of their members, and the idea is not to harmonize cultures, but to share them.” That is why his creations constantly bring into play counterposed elements—whether in terms of time, form, or motif—that he manages to harmonize precisely thanks to the design itself. Examples of this are his wall coverings, which at first glance seem very modern. However, in essence, these surfaces



Cooperativa Panorámica, *Hanging Pot and Bird Feeder*, 2013 (terrazzo).



Cooperativa Panorámica, *Basalt Stool and Multipurpose Container*, 2013 (basalt and wood).

“Culture does not determine how you design, but it is undoubtedly reflected in the designs, even if this doesn’t mean that in our case we can speak of a specifically Mexican design.”



Ariel Rojo, *Neighboring Radio*, 2013 (wood and textiles).



Cooperativa Panorámica,
Countertop Mirror. 2013
(basalt stone and mirror).



Photo by Mercury

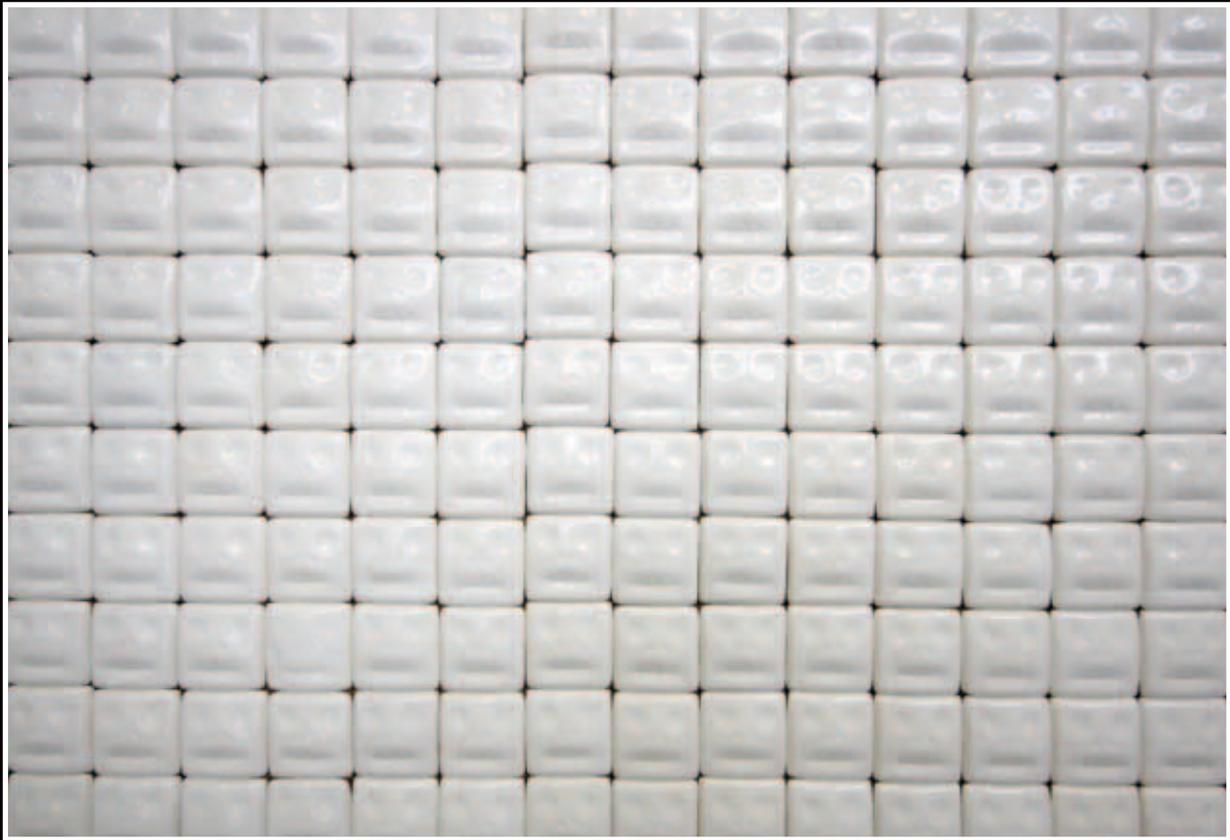
Alejandro Buendía, Chest of Drawers
with Cups-and-balls, 2013 (wood).

involve a modern look at or a reinterpretation of traditional Mexican Talavera pottery. Also, in addition to his designs being a constant reference to popular Mexican culture, they are also imbued with social and political events in our country. For example, the amusing “Money-laundering Piggy-banks, No Commission” is a sharp critique of the policy that allows this illegal practice. Another of his designs, “Noah Noah, the Little Thrifty Pigg,” is a piggy-bank in a lamp, with which the designer attempts to create awareness about the importance of saving energy; or the sugar bowl dubbed “Sweet Death,” which plays with the special idea we Mexicans have of death. In the words of Ariel Rojo, “Mexican culture is so vast and different that if we make an analogy with the world of fragrances, Mexico is a perfume factory with thousands and thousands of aromas,” shown by the great variety and versatility of sizes, shapes, and materials in his designs. info@arielrojo.com

Alejandro Buendía, CHASING ROOTS

A graduate in industrial design from the Iberoamerican University (UIA), Alejandro Buendía Hegewisch has dedicated his career to designing furniture and ornaments around the artistic scene. For Buendía, design must reflect its surroundings as well as a quest for identity and belonging; for that, it must use local resources and materials for the production of unique objects, counterposed to the globalized production of disposable items. But for this designer, reality is quite different: “Today, it’s hard to find objects that reflect our roots. There have been some industrial design initiatives that have tried it, but where they have really been reflected has been in textile design. Culture does not determine how you design, but it is undoubtedly reflected in the designs, even if this doesn’t mean that in our case we can speak of a specifically Mexican design. For example, we have repeatedly seen an object and said, ‘That’s a Japanese design,’ because there’s a stamp that links the design to certain countries. But in Mexico, that hasn’t been achieved yet.”

Recently, Buendía has experimented with Mexican toys in designing furniture built with wood indigenous to the country, specifically from the Southeast: “These pieces emerge from nostalgia for things we’re losing, the toys of our childhood like wooden yo-yos, marbles, or a cup-and-ball, which are practically never seen anymore. That’s why these designs are an attempt to preserve our memories.” His chests-of-drawers festooned with tops and cups-and-balls, chairs with backs covered with wooden toys, are a sample of his interest not only in remembering the childhood of a generation, but also in resig-



Ariel Rojo, *Tzompantli*, 2008 (ceramic).

Mexican culture is so vast and different that if we make an analogy with the world of fragrances, Mexico is a perfume factory with thousands and thousands of aromas.



Ariel Rojo, *Money-laundering Money Box*, 2011 (ceramic).



Cooperativa Panorámica,
Glass Multipurpose Container, 2013
(recycled glass and wood).

“Using references to our culture is a subtle way of imprinting this Mexican identity on objects that can work in any contemporary home, no matter what country they’re in.”



Ariel Rojo, *Línea Alma. Bench with Back*, 2013 (100% recycled aluminium).



Alejandro Buendía, *Star*, 2013
(wood and iron).

Photo by Mercury

nifying these playful objects using them in making furniture.
tanofermata@yahoo.com.mx

Glocal Panorama

Ian Ortega, Víctor Alemán, José de la O., Moisés Hernández, Joel Escalona Christian Vivanco, and Diego Jorge Etienne are the seven designers who, based on an artisanal cooperative business model, formed the Panorámica design firm. Like for Ariel Rojo and Alejandro Buendía, for these young designers, “the context in which we act influences the design we produce. Regardless of the fact that we’re working on a global level, creating products that will be sold in different countries and even different continents, it’s inevitable that our work will have traits of Mexican identity.” Proof of this is “Materiality,” a collection of objects exalting the everyday materials used in our context like basalt, terrazzo, copper, or glass, most unfamiliar to inhabitants of contemporary cities. The Panorámica cooperative’s products are made in Mexico by a network of independent artisans and workshops, but, in addition, in the minds of their creators, they are conceived of as a means of expression. For that reason, in addition to their physical and functional qualities, the objects attempt to awaken criticism and foster diversity and inclusion.

“What we were looking for with ‘Materiality’ was to reflect about the possibility of redefining the identity of these noble materials that accompany us every day in our routine, through a collection that highlighted their unique beauty. More than transmitting an aesthetic or style, we sought to show new ways of working, whether by reinterpreting the materials and processes or by using different business models that allow us to go beyond Mexico and be players on the global market,” says Diego Jorge Etienne. The basalt mirror imitating a totem pole, trays made of metal sheets and finished in copper, inspired by a pinwheel, the containers for food, or the objects made out of terrazzo, are a sample of this design firm’s original concept.

From one-of-a-kind objects to mass production, pieces by contemporary designers have a common stamp: the search for original foundations of Mexican culture and the experimentation with materials and production techniques in dialogue with innovative trends. More and more Mexican initiatives are competing on the global market and, as one of Panorámica’s designers said, “Using references to our culture is a subtle way of imprinting this Mexican identity on objects that can work in any contemporary home, no matter what country they’re in.”
hello@wearepanoramica.com **MM**

DRESSING MEXICO

FASHION DESIGN TODAY

Juan Carlos Rojas Larrondo*

In the early 1970s, Mexico City's centrally-located Pink Zone was considered the most glamorous place for women to go for the latest in fashion. Armando Valdés Peza and María Victoria Díaz, "the queen of hats," were the most renowned Mexican designers, and between the two of them, they dressed both celebrities and society ladies. White and silver predominated in women's clothes, and mini-skirts began to cause a sensation on the streets of Mexico's great capital.

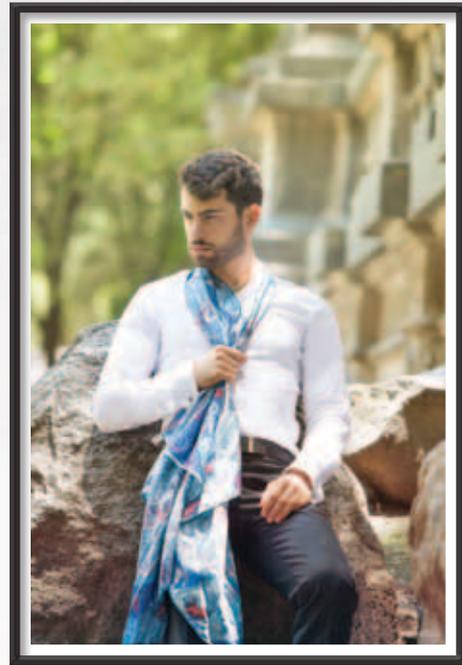
More than 40 years have passed since the Golden Age of Mexico's textile industry, and society ladies have moved on from the heart of the city toward the high fashion boutiques on Masaryk, one of the most emblematic streets in the Polanco neighborhood. Chanel, Salvatore Ferragamo, Cartier, Louis Vuitton, and Rosa Clará are just some of the foreign firms that decorate the avenue, where one very important thing is glaringly absent: a store offering 100-percent-Mexican clothing. What follows is a taste of the panorama of what the fashion industry in our country is experiencing.

A WAVE OF TALENT

Beginning in 2000, the evolution of Internet made promoting Mexican design more agile, facilitating dialogue among those interested in the topic.

"Technology and all the communication tools have meant that we're all aware of what's happening around the world when it happens. This makes the consumer more demanding,

* Mexican historian and writer.



PINEDA COVALIN

and fashion is no exception," says Beatriz Calles, the director of the Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Mexico, one of the country's most important fashion platforms, whose central aim is to showcase fashion, creating alliances to benefit everyone. "We've achieved a great deal, but the main advance is having strengthened the image of the designers that are part of our platform and considerably improving their businesses," explains Calles. "Today we are the strongest fashion platform in the national fashion system. When a season ends, the whole team meets to evaluate our successes and correct our mistakes. That's how we've grown," she adds.

For Calles, what the national industry needs most to flourish is greater acceptance by Mexican consumers. Some of the designers participating today in the shows are Julia y Renata, Alexia Ulibarri, Alejandro Carlín, JI+B, Royal Closet,



MACARIO JIMÉNEZ
MÉXICO



ALEJANDRO CARLÍN

“What’s important is to keep working on success stories so that fashion and its industry have more and more space in the domestic economy and can also compete with other countries.” Pamela Wong

Macario Jiménez, Lorena Saravi, Lydia Lavín, and the company Pink Magnolia. Pamela Wong, Pink Magnolia’s sales director, is sure that this kind of space helps the national clothing industry to advance much more visibly. “What’s important is to keep working on success stories so that fashion and its industry have more and more space in the domestic economy and can also compete with other countries.”

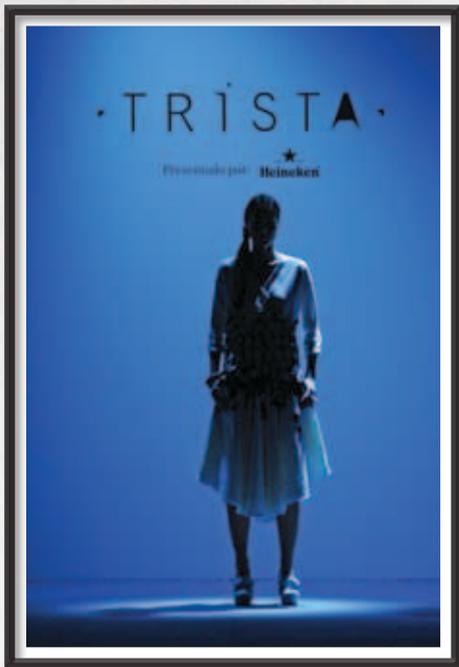
NEW PLATFORMS

Compra Moda Nacional (CMN)

“So Mexicans can be dressed in Mexico,” is the slogan of CMN (*Compra Moda Nacional*, or “Buy Domestic Fashion” in English), the first on-line store that carries the best posi-

tioned designers in Mexico. Its aim: to promote their creations and generate greater interaction with consumers.

“We loyally believe in Mexican fashion’s potential; that’s why we get up every day to create projects, promote and sell the best pieces of the best quality in the country,” says Cris Paglieri, a *Compra Moda Nacional* account executive. Paglieri is in charge of organizing events, dealing with clients, and staying in direct contact with participating designers. Alejandro Carlín, Julia y Renata, Malafacha, Delia González, Adriana Soto, José María Torre Hütt, Clara González, and Sandra Weill are some of the creators who offer their products on CMN, which has different platforms: a PopUp Store, an itinerant store that sets up in different malls throughout the country; a Fashion Fair, which lasts one day; and the Fashion Market W, featuring the latest trends.



TRISTA



CARLA FERNÁNDEZ

“We loyally believe in Mexican fashion’s potential; that’s why we get up every day to create projects, promote and sell the best pieces of the best quality in the country,” Cris Paglieri

INTERMODA

The International Fashion Exhibition in Mexico was first held in Guadalajara, Jalisco, almost 30 years ago. It is held twice a year, in January and July, and its aim is to bring together fashion industry proposals both from Mexico and abroad.

This expo already has international positioning, attracting more than 20 000 buyers and visitors and the participation of 700 national and international exhibitors with a total of 1 380 stands. Admission is free, but exclusively for buyers with an invitation; it takes up 36 000 square meters of floor space at the Expo Guadalajara venue. Some participating countries are Portugal, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, India, the United States, South Korea, and

Chile. It also offers lectures and a series of international runway shows to promote fashion as a profitable business in Mexico.

“MADE IN MEXICO”: MEXICAN DESIGNERS WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

Rolando Santana

Together with Ricardo Seco, Rolando Santana is considered one of the most important designers on the international fashion scene. Born in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Ricardo has been living for more than 20 years in New York, where he first worked with firms like Donna Morgan and Spenser Jeremy.



MACARIO JIMÉNEZ
MÉXICO



In 2009, he began to create his own collection. Today, his house sells pieces in more than 100 stores in the United States and presents its new proposals during New York's Fashion Week. His designs are sober and elegant, and black always features prominently, as well as fringes and vaporous skirts.

Ricardo Seco

Born in Torreón, Coahuila, before venturing into fashion, Ricardo Seco had already spent 12 years in business. After that, he decided to leave his native city to study in Milan and Paris. Later, he became the creative director of the sports shoe company Converse. He has been the star designer of the fashion weeks in Colombia, Miami, and, since last year, New York. His fabric of preference is soft cotton, followed by leather, suede, and wool. His combinations mix traditional Mexican elements and those of other cultures with contemporary touches. For example, in one of his most recent collections, he presented 22 pieces inspired in the look of classical Orthodox

Jews: long coats and wide-cut white shirts merged with leggings and even animal prints.

Alejandro Carlín

Carlín has participated in festivals like the Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Mexico, Colombia Fashion, and the International Fashion Week in Madrid. Born in Mexico City, he moved to Milan to study fashion and pattern design. On his return in 2003, he moved to Monterrey, Nuevo León, where he founded the Lola de Alejandro brand, and, in 2011, launched the luxury line that bears his name, specialized in evening gowns. Organic forms, basic colors like black, white, and copper, silk, wool, and crepe are some of the traits that have distinguished his latest productions.

Jesús Ibarra + Bertholdo

This year, the JI+B brand is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Its two founders, Jesús Ibarra and Bertholdo Espinoza



MACARIO JIMÉNEZ
MÉXICO



ALEJANDRO CARLÍN

are both architects by training. Like Alejandro Carlín, their initial specialty was evening and cocktail dresses. In 2010, they participated in Berlin's Fashion Week and were well received by European critics. The JI+B Blue Blood 2013 Fall/Winter Collection was one of the most brilliant lines of this year's Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Mexico.

Their most recent collection, Blue Blood, is an allusion to the bourgeoisie before the French Revolution, where every detail was important: long, sheer dresses and geographic designs, blouses, and pants.

Short or long dresses, blouses, jackets, and pants made of silk, velvet, Chantilly lace, and leather, plus embroidery with Swarovski crystal are just some of the characteristics of their work.

Trista

In all, its founders have presented nine collections since they opened their house. Graduates of Fashion House of France

Institute of Higher Learning, Giovanni Estrada, with partial studies in architecture, and José Alfredo Silva, who also did undergraduate work in industrial engineering with a specialty in fashion research, have been to countries like Colombia, Brazil, Spain, and Japan. The two designers are the national talents who created this firm, which today has a luxury line and another of more accessible clothing, Simple by Trista, with their particular style. Their last collection was inspired by cacao, with a range of colors varying in hues of grey. They use cotton, denim, and torn fabrics, and have lines for both men and women.

Julia y Renata

One of these designers' main characteristics is that each piece is unique and a-seasonal. Originally from Guadalajara, Jalisco, they launched their firm 15 years ago, and have presented their creations on important runways like the Cibeles in Madrid and the Los Angeles Fashion Week, as well as in Croatia and



PINEDA COVALIN



·TRISTA·



√ CARLA FERNÁNDEZ

“The Mexican consumer has begun to place a little more value on design and brands in our country. He or she has become more aware of national brands thanks to having access to all kinds of information.” Carlota de la Vega

Greece. Designs for avant-garde women who want to experiment make up their collections, with a preference for silk and cotton as the star fabrics for each of their pieces.

Macario Jiménez

The star designer of Mexico’s presidential residence, Los Pinos, dressed the former first lady, Margarita Zavala during the administration of President Felipe Calderón. Macario is now also designing the look for the current first lady, Angélica Rivera. With more than 25 years’ experience in Mexican fashion, he has participated in fashion platforms in countries like Puerto Rico, Yugoslavia, Colombia, Italy, and the United States. Since Jiménez’s collections are inspired in nature, the earth, flowers, and the sea are often some of the elements used

allegorically in his luxury dresses, known for being made of fabrics like organdy, cotton, wool, and satin.

Kris Goyri

Originally from Mexico City, Kris Goyri is perhaps one of the youngest designers dreaming of the national fashion scene. He graduated in 2007 from the Fashion House of France Institute of Higher Learning and began designing ready-to-wear women’s clothing, which taught him about fabrics and textures. At 22, in 2008, he won the “Mexico Designs” contest organized by the women’s magazine *ELLE*. In 2009, he received a scholarship to study in Barcelona and then returned to Mexico City determined to make it. His proposals are characterized by his use of neutral colors like white, grey and



In this vast array of Mexican fashion design, there is a little of everything: from designers who try to feature typically Mexican aesthetic reference points to those who reinterpret the essence of the national culture and express it discreetly in their designs or their fabrics.

raw linen, and by his trims in crepes, chiffons, and sequins. He has dressed celebrities like Miranda Kerr, Julieta Venegas, Ely Guerra, and Kika Edgar.

Carla Fernández

The designer and founder of Taller Flora (Flora's Atelier), a clothing brand and mobile laboratory that travels all over Mexico visiting indigenous communities, has developed a fair-trade business model that protects both the environment and Mexican traditions. Her work has been shown at London's and New York's Fashion Week, Expo Shanghai 2010, and Paris's Ethical Fashion Show, among other important platforms. Carla's first job was with the National Council for the Arts (Conaculta) and the National Fund for Promoting the Arts (Fonart), fostering design and the development of

artisanal techniques and the indigenous communities. She used her studies in art history to create a 100-percent Mexican-owned firm that uses fabrics like denim and silk. All her pieces are hand-made by Mexican artisans, and she uses them to emphasize the country's aesthetic values.

Pineda Covalín

Cristina Pineda and Ricardo Covalín first conceived of their firm in 1996 as part of a National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) project. But what began as a student project is today one of Mexico's most renowned brands, with a presence on four continents: North and South America, Europe, and Asia. In addition, it has a franchising model to show that the clothing industry is also good business. Their emblems are ties and scarves, which show the country's cul-



ALEJANDRO CARLÍN



J+B
JUNQUERÍA-BASTIEN
CONFORTA

tural wealth with inspired prints, for example, of the flight of the Monarch butterfly or Mayan and Mexica symbols. The firm has eight of its own shops tucked in the corners of department stores and in countries like Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Spain, France, Japan, the United States and Canada.

THE NEXT STEP

In this vast array of Mexican fashion design, there is a little of everything: from designers who try to feature typically Mexican aesthetic reference points to those who reinterpret the essence of the national culture and express it discreetly in their designs or their fabrics. But while the enormous talent and creativity of newcomers and respected old hands alike is very clear, in Mex-

ico, we still have only an incipient fashion industry, where designers, consumers, and investors all bring their efforts to bear.

For fashion expert Carlota de la Vega, more and more people are working to foster and support this market. “The Mexican consumer has begun to place a little more value on design and brands in our country. He or she has become more aware of national brands thanks to having access to all kinds of information. For that reason, she/he demands consistency between value and price.” De la Vega adds that a great deal of talent exists, but still not enough bases for business or distribution channels. “That’s why designers have to have not only solid creative grounding, but also be knowledgeable in business administration. It’s important to know that in addition to being a life passion, fashion is a business worth exploring more deeply.” **MM**

Gabriel

Recovering the Invisible

Antonio Luna*



Black Kites Perspective, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, 1997 (graphite on skull).

The recent publication of the book *Gabriel Orozco*, which is actually a catalogue of a retrospective exhibited between 2009 and 2011 at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Georges Pompidou Center, London's Tate Modern, and Basilea's Kunstmuseum, is indispensable material in Spanish for understanding Gabriel Orozco's work. More than a retrospective in time, the book brings together the artist's work through certain key pieces that speak to each other. It should be underlined that this volume had already been published in German, English, and French, but surprisingly, not in Spanish. Fortunately, it finally came out in our language in April 2013, launched at Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace, where Gabriel Orozco (Veracruz, 1962) had an individual showing seven years ago in 2006. For that exhibition, he filled the museum's rooms with more than 150 pieces: sculptures of polyurethane foam, circular designs, and other emblematic pieces.

The museum opened up two rooms for the book launch so everyone who went could get in: one room where the actual launch took place and another that simultaneously

broadcast what was going on in the first, so that everyone could see from where they were sitting. Both rooms were filled. As I waited for the launch to begin, I remembered an article I had read in the Argentinean daily *La Nación* (The Nation) about the myth of Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño in the United States. The article's author, Horacio Castellanos, said that, based on a series of misunderstandings by the publishing industry, Bolaño had been positioned on a par with García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, or Fuentes, as a perfect example of what was, or should be, a Latin American writer.

* Director of publishing of the Jumex Collection.

All photos are courtesy of the Jumex Collection and the Kurimazutto Art Gallery.

Prozce



Pinched Ball, 23 x 33.5 cm, 1993.

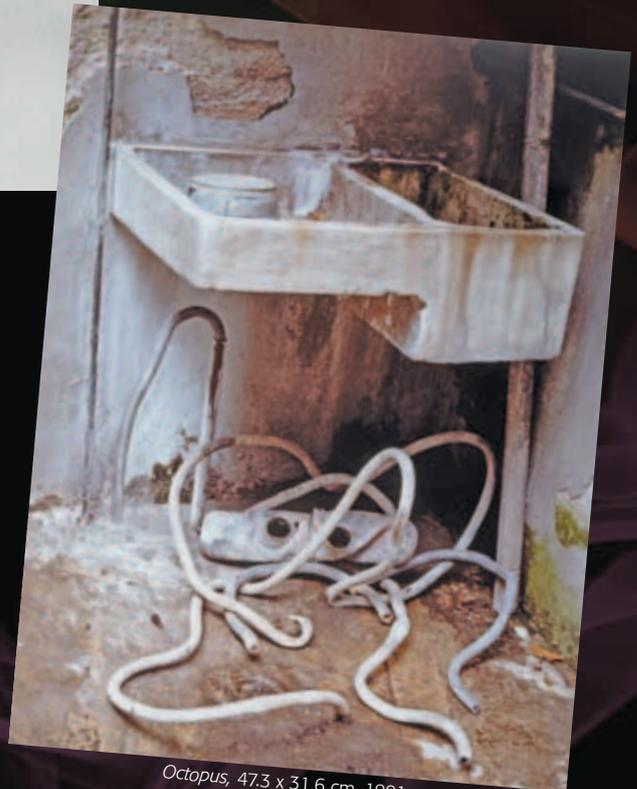


Yielding Stone Image, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, 1992, printed 2009 (plasticine).



Empty Shoe Box, 1.4 x 33 x 21.6 cm, 1993 (cardboard).

Orozco responds to questions about his identity saying, "I never remember I'm Mexican, although I never forget either."



Octopus, 47.3 x 31.6 cm, 1991.

At the book launch, Gabriel Orozco dealt with a similar topic when he talked about the use of clay or a skull in some of his first pieces and how that created ideas about a certain kind of Mexican-ness in his work. Might it not be the case that abroad, Orozco is thought of in a similar way as the Chilean writer? As Mexican or Latin American as the observer might want to see him.

A UNIVERSAL IDENTITY

Because of the way that Orozco deals with the topic of skulls, clay, or this supposed Mexican-ness, it seems that he has never liked the idea of being pigeonholed in a category. In any case, these opinions remain only on the surface. Haven't skulls and clay objects been found in other excavations around the world belonging to other cultures far from Mesoamerica? In an interview published in the same Argentinean newspaper, reproduced on the Kurimanzutto Gallery website, Orozco responds to questions about his identity, saying, "I never remember I'm Mexican, although I never forget either."¹

Along these same lines, in his essay "Muerte súbita. Fosas de arena, prados y el juego" (Sudden Death. Sand Pits, Meadows, and Play), Francesco Bonami states,

We live in a subtle world of segregation, where the concept of what is "Latin" is more linked to immigration than to the language the Romans used to build their empire and dominate the world. However, Gabriel Orozco, as a "Latino" is more closely linked to the language than to his status as a foreigner inside an ordinary society.²



Matrix Mobile, 10.5 m (length), 2006 (bone).

THE FIRST PIECES

Orozco's work is perhaps the best known internationally of any living Mexican artist, and he is considered a true spearhead for contemporary artists. He is said to have been the one who led the way for the generation of artists who followed him: Abraham Cruzvillegas, Gabriel Kuri,

and Damián Ortega, among others. His influence has partially been due to a workshop he gave in his home to younger artists, "The Friday Workshop," a flexible space, without stiff institutional rigor, where ideas flowed swiftly, inoculating participants.

His artistic style was consolidated after having worked in different fields: exploration, moving around, and remembering his daily life, as well as the changes in the spaces where the artist moves. Based on an attitude of manipulating things—an act of boldness—Orozco's work recreates our wonder at what is around us. This ephemeral—and at the same time renovating—will is expressed in Orozco's own words when, in Juan Carlos Martín's simply titled film *Gabriel Orozco*, he answers a comment that in the beginning his pieces could have been done by anyone, saying that even if that were true, no one had had the courage to make them before.

Yielding Stone Image (1992) is one of his early works. It is a photographic log of a nearly 150-pound Plasticine ball (equal approximately to his own body weight) pushed through the



Home Run, various sizes, 1993 (oranges).

Based on an attitude of manipulating things—an act of boldness—, Orozco’s work recreates our wonder at what is around us.

streets of New York City, picking up all kinds of items embedded in the surface of this malleable material. So, the ball was molded by the vicissitudes of the road, thus providing the title of the piece.

Orozco exhibited *Empty Shoe Box* at the Venice Biennial in 1993. This action was later known in the artist’s imaginary as a simple sculptural gesture, a wink that would eventually serve as a catalyst for a series of greater actions. In that same year he presented *La DS*, a Citroën DS automobile cut in half and meticulously reassembled so that, even if the viewer infers that the car can no longer move as it did before, it creates the feeling that it cuts through the air more dynamically than if it were able to move through the streets (see *Voices of Mexico* 54, January-March 2001). This work refers to a sensorial symmetry that he would later refer to again formally for the pieces in the 1996 series “The Atomists.”

In *Home Run* (1993), Orozco asked the neighbors of New York’s MoMA to place an orange on a glass in the windows facing the museum, creating yet again a series of small changeable sculptures based on a small act of will. The title evokes a joyful allegory: if the balls were oranges, what could be said of the bats or the baseball players in this imaginary game. . . ?

When you first look at Orozco’s work, his practices of recovery, improvisation, or actions that recall the Fluxus group or *Arte Povera* become clear. Based on the artist’s inquiries, you get the impression that he focuses more on objects and their contexts, on their possibilities and functions, than on the works themselves. It is as though Orozco is asking himself when the objects stop being objects and turn into sculptures. This inquiry into two concepts unleashes a reaction in the inanimate objects. Have they gotten tired of being immobile? Has their function ended?

In his essay “Rechazo y refugio” (Rejection and Refuge), historian and art critic Benjamin Buchloh, who has studied Orozco’s work in depth, includes an epigraph in which Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias refers to the period when Mexican art had reached maturity. That historical moment, presumably before the 1940s, was replaced by a “hegemony of

an aesthetic made of objects forced into silence.”³ Thus, when Orozco photographs an object and what surrounds it, he shows us a place where some things —perhaps very few— rest. When both context and object awaken and dialogue, Gabriel’s work is created. Once the function of the objects has worn out, and therefore they have been deciphered, the artist’s work imbues them with a significance that makes them continue to be interesting. His work underlines the importance of everyday things and their permanence in our memory.

THE GAME

The notion of play is a constant in Gabriel Orozco’s work. *Home Run* is reminiscent of baseball. The checkerboard pattern on the skull of *Black Kites* (1997) evokes a chess board. Pieces like *Carambole with a Pendulum* (1996) and *Ping-Pong Table* (1998) present two elements as a game based on the game itself. The first piece is an oval billiards table from which a red ball hangs; on the table’s surface are two white balls. The basic rules of billiards have been adapted to a kind of metaphoric game with multiple —almost infinite— possibilities. The second work is made up of two Ping-Pong tables laid out in the form of a cross with a space in the middle occupied by a lily pond. So that, here, the game ends right after it begins. The only winner is the ball, which ends up placidly floating in the water. In the oval-shaped table we find eternity in an instant, and in the Ping-Pong-table cross is incompleteness, the impossibility of the game.

Another playful example is the work *The Atomists*, a work done on airplane tickets, photocopies, or currency from different nations. The artist combines the possibilities of geometry and the images of cricket, soccer, or rugby players. But, what does Orozco want to say? “Play is a way of knowing and perception. Of reality, of the landscape. Games, like sports, are cultural representations of conceptions of the universe and of landscape, of the mentality of an era.”⁴



Carambole with a Pendulum, 89 x 31 x 205 cm, 1996.

When both context and object awaken and dialogue, Gabriel’s work is created. Once the function of the objects has worn out, and therefore they have been deciphered, the artist’s work imbues them with a significance that makes them continue to be interesting.

ARCHITECTURE

Just as there are slight sculptural gestures, others are larger. In 1997, Orozco exhibited *Half-Buried Ferris Wheel* in Hannover, Germany. As its name suggests, it is a large steel structure, only half of which is above ground. *Mobile Matrix* (2006) is the skeleton of a grey whale, weighing more than 1 500 kilograms, hung from the roof of the Vasconcelos Library in Mexico City. The whale's bones are covered with circles and ellipses that simulate the wave action of the sea. This way, the immobile bones continue moving.

Around 2005, Orozco finished another large-scale project called *The Observatory House*, in which he expresses his conceptions about space and architecture. This work examines the notion of sculpture in the spaces we inhabit. Located on the coast of Oaxaca, built by Mexican architect Tatiana Bilbao, it is an idea the artist had planned based on the Jantar Mantar Observatory, built in New Delhi in 1724. The house juts out of a rocky headland whose observatory is a surface in the form of a cross. At the center is a circular swimming pool, and the house itself is below. Swiss art critic and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist interviewed the artist, and quotes him as saying, "A large part of my work is related to architecture because of the way it uses the specificity of the site. In the end, I think that architecture should function like a shoe box. . . . I think architecture should be a space that receives, that yields, not a space that imposes."⁵

▼ *Half-Buried Ferris Wheel*, various sizes, 1997 (installation).





Island within an Island, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, 1993.

Orozco's work deals with things that are barely suggested or whispered. It expands beyond the shoe box until it detonates memories, bringing to mind contexts and objects that stop inhabiting it at length.

Orozco's work deals with things that are barely suggested or whispered. It expands beyond the shoe box until it detonates memories, bringing to mind contexts and objects that stop inhabiting it at length. This is a personal sphere. In general, Gabriel shows us a city and some of the cracks in it where people defined more by their unusual habits—or obsessions—than their day-to-day activities live their lives. In this way, it recreates the interacting social flows, the result of which make up what we conceive as part of the fabric of society, a piece of the city.

Orozco is not a collector; he accumulates objects. The collector has a structured awareness of his/her acquisitions to create series, systems inside the collection. The accumulator groups objects in a non-systematic way and only later finds a dialogue among them, or simply never finds any. This artist's objects regularly insert themselves into a poetic category or a field of action located in a vacuum, in nothingness. However, these objects are more evocations than pieces; they lack a definitive order. At times, they find their place in Orozco's world, and at other times, they are out of place again. This movement, or lack of definition, surpasses the previously mentioned poetry of nothingness and lines up the objects to follow their path in their recovery of the invisible. ■■

NOTES

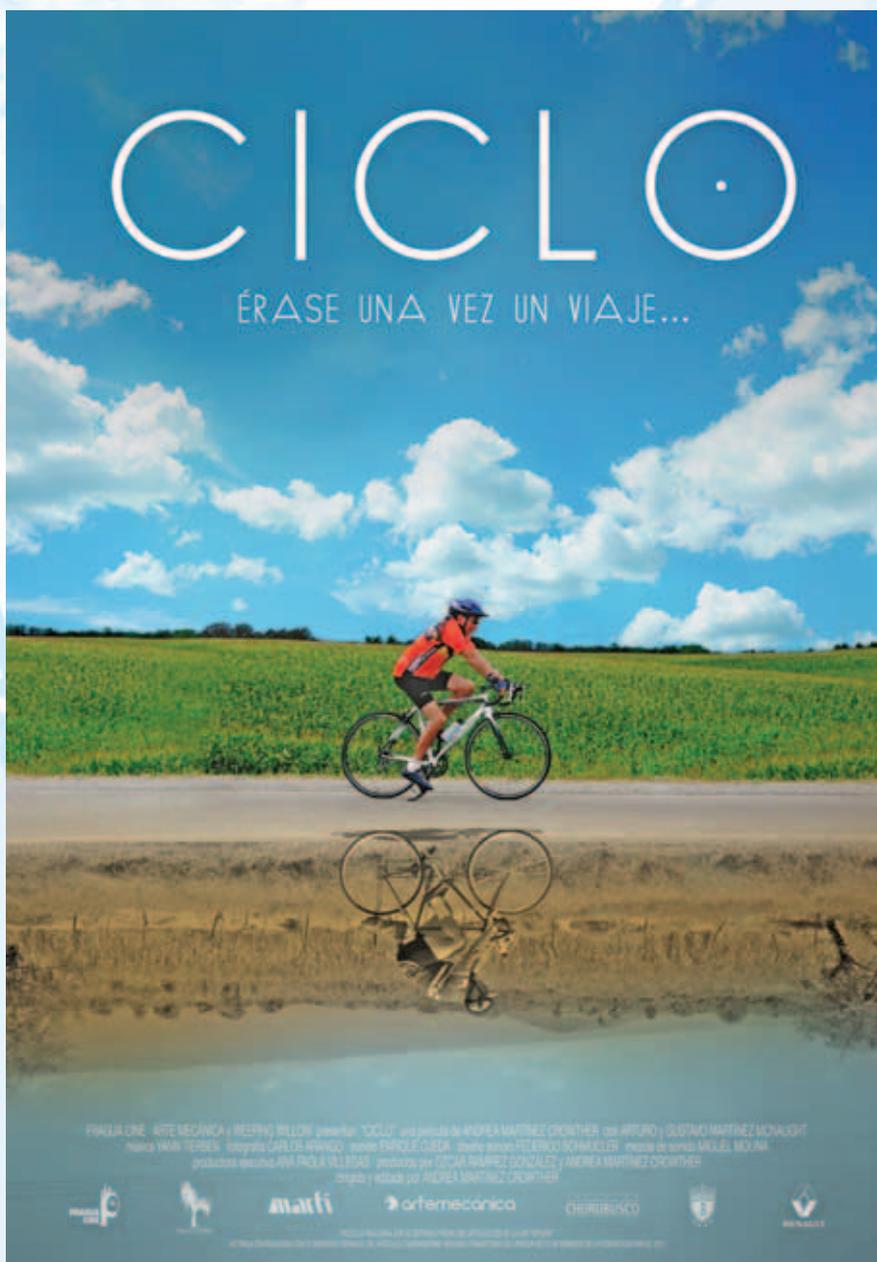
¹ Graciela Speranza, "En búsqueda del círculo perfecto," interview with Gabriel Orozco, "ADN Cultura," *La nación* (Buenos Aires), February 13, 2010, <http://kuri.dev.copyleft.com.mx/espanol/noticias/entrevista-a-gabriel-orozco-en-la-nacion.html>.

² Francesco Bonami, "Muerte súbita. Fosas de arena, prados y el juego," *Textos sobre la obra de Gabriel Orozco*, (Mexico City: Conaculta and Turner, 2005), p. 78.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ Elsa Fernández-Santos, "Trabajo con lo que me sucede en la vida," interview with Gabriel Orozco, *El país* (Madrid), February 6, 2005, http://elpais.com/diario/2005/02/06/cultura/1107644401_850215.html.

⁵ Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Hans Ulrich Obrist entrevista a Gabriel Orozco en París," *Textos sobre la obra de Gabriel Orozco* (Mexico City: Conaculta and Turner, 2005), p. 208.



A story is a story is a story, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein. *Ciclo*, a documentary film directed and edited by Andrea Martínez Crowther and released this year, certainly tells a great story.

It is about the journey made by the two Martínez brothers who rode their bicycles in 1956 across two borders: from Mexico (Pachuca, in the state of Hidalgo), across the United States, to Toronto, Canada: 3 500 miles in 82 days. It made the newspapers. It changed their lives.

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Photos in this section courtesy of Andrea Martínez Crowther.

They took with them two changes of clothes, their bicycles to transport their 22- and 25-year-old bodies, a leather-bound notebook, US\$100, a letter of encouragement from their mother, a developed gift for companionship, and the bold clarity of their goal.

Ciclo is, however, a story within a larger picture, of larger cycles containing several stories. It's as much about the roots as it is about the flowers. It is about family trees and individual pursuits. It's much like the Joshua tree growing in the desert that forms a new branch so it can blossom into freely offered renewal and beauty.

Ciclo

Once Upon a Border-crossing Bicycle Trip

Claire Joysmith*



As Andrea Martínez Crowther states in *Ciclo*, in voice-over:

Un viaje puede cambiar las ramas del árbol genealógico de una familia, puede originar otras texturas en la piel, en la cultura y en las costumbres, donde los colores de las banderas se mezclan y los nombres se eligen para pronunciarse en dos idiomas. (A journey can change the branches of a family tree, can originate other textures, on the skin, in the culture, in traditions and habits, where flag colors mingle, and names are chosen to be pronounced in two languages.)

Ciclo is about the traversings and travails of life, about memory, its lifelines and branching-offs. It is about genealogies and mobile identities, a kaleidoscope of interacting lives that influence each other with every gesture, every word, every silence. It is about how the bicycle feat of the Martínez brothers eventually turned into a story of migration, of diasporic displacement, of bilinguality and triculturality, of love found and love lost, of health and illness, of work and joy, of interwoven destinies, cycles and many journeys.

IN SEARCH OF TIMES PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

When I meet Andrea Martínez Crowther for an interview, she inevitably arrives on a bicycle, wearing a protection helmet, black bikers, and a short pleated black skirt. She smiles easily and her enthusiasm is contagious. She has been promoting *Ciclo* practically single-handed, Facebooking, posting photos and exclamation-marked encouragement to cultivate audiences and motivate people from a wide range of ages to go see the documentary film in movie theaters in 20 cities throughout Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara, Puebla, Monterrey, Querétaro, León, Tijuana, Xalapa, San Luis Potosí, and others), before blockbusters such as *Ironman 3* catapult it out of commercial cinemas. So far, it has reached across Mexico's borders to be shown in Ottawa and Palm Springs, but promises to go well beyond.

Andrea Martínez Crowther is by birth, life experience, and personality, a border crosser. Born in Canada, of a Mexican father and Canadian mother, she has lived for extended periods in all three countries of North America. In Mexico for the past 15 years. Tricultural and bilingual, she is fully aware of the complex issues at the root and in the blossoms of linguistic identity formation issues, of the grounding relevance of family; yet she recognizes the freedom afforded by not needing to belong to a particular country or culture. As she says, "I could live in Mexico or somewhere else and feel comfortable."



The two Martínez brothers rode their bicycles in 1956 across two borders: from Mexico, across the United States, to Toronto, Canada. It made the newspapers. It changed their lives.

Ciclo was initially conceived of 10 years before the parallel follow-in-the-tracks trip and film shoot took place. Whereas the initial trip took 82 days, the filming took 5 weeks. Whereas the Martínez brothers went alone on their journey, this time the film crew and five vehicles followed in their wake. Whereas the first trip took place in May-June 1956, the documentary was filmed during the same months, over 50 years later.

"*Ciclo* is about the passing of time," Martínez Crowther says. And she clocks in almost half a century by initiating a parallel odyssey, camera in hand, alongside the two Martínez brothers, who are, in fact, her father Arturo and her uncle Gustavo. Together, they are the main characters in a journey that becomes a documentary road movie rare in its genre.

This is a carefully yet organically directed film of unusual charm about the malleable sweet-and-sour nature of change, about how it is faced, redefined, and explored within the framework of two parallel storylines. It is about resilience, about confronting the elusive though inevitable traces and bicycle tracks of time and cycles, for which the bicycle wheel is an excellent metaphor, visual and otherwise.



DOCUMENTING LIVES AND CYCLES

“I wanted to know what went on in their minds, what kind of things they thought,” Andrea Martínez Crowther responds to a question about why she made this film into a documentary rather than a fictional film, which was the case of her extraordinary *opera prima*, *Cosas insignificantes* (Insignificant Things). “How could I possibly presume to invent them more faithfully than how they really are?” In other words, she sets out not to create characters that actors would have to portray, but, rather, to explore the protagonists as they journey through a revisited biography of sorts, relive memories literally on the road to self-knowledge, on a journey of inner discovery—which is also hers, as she states as self-designated narrator in voiceover moments—and which is shared for us as audience to make it our own. This kind of bee-line to the roots and to the flowers makes this documentary compelling, poignant and, as the director comments, “makes the personal, universal.”

In the film Gustavo states emphatically—and spontaneously, off-script, in fact, as Martínez Crowther reveals—that “La memoria es como tratar de salir de la tumba para ver lo que eras” (Memory is like trying to climb out of the tomb to see what you used to be).

Memory as a reservoir of willpower, of inspiration, of self-confrontation is at the heart of *Ciclo*. Memory that fuels dreams and the future. Memory that transmutes framed fading newspaper clippings into vibrant new film frames alive with

Ciclo is a story within a larger picture,
of larger cycles containing several stories.

It's as much about the roots
as it is about the flowers.

the textures of change. Memory that brings into focus the tragic fading of recall through the onslaught of Alzheimer's, another cycle addressed when alluding to the director's mother and her illness. As she states in voiceover, “Pues mientras yo evoco recuerdos que no viví, los de ella se van desvaneciendo” (As I evoke memories of that which I have not lived, hers are gradually fading); and, “Mi mamá aún vive pero se está olvidando de todo, de respirar, de que existe, de que nació...” (My mother is still alive but she's forgetting it all, to breathe, that she exists, that I was born...).

BICYCLE RHYTHMS

The image and dialogue at the start of *Ciclo* might seem overly simple. The initial scene of the two brothers bending over a map and joking about how easy it is to track with a felt pen the long and arduous journey they traced with bodies and bikes is a good example.

Simple, perhaps, yet one of *Ciclo's* great charms lies in that the entire cycle it takes for the film to unroll, successfully sustains an unpretentious seamless simplicity, a tone and tempo that lure the viewer into sitting back to enjoy, eyes and mind wheeling along with bicycles, car, and camera. The paced rhythm emulates the movement of bicycle tires on the road, of strong muscles on the go, of determination undeterred, of a simple and clear goal. In this sense it is also an ode to the slow steady enjoyment of nature, of the wide-angled vistas gifted to eyes unhurried.



The stops and starts of the journey become the narrative's punctuation. The director's father, Arturo, and her uncle, Gustavo, stop to taste an avocado taco on the way, talk to elderly folks in places visited half a century ago, chat casually about a generations-old small family business, enter a town peopled only by the elderly, compare sepia photos to present day Technicolor sites. The now-then counterpointing also becomes a way of revisiting homes and places now torn down, abandoned, modernized, rebuilt; the sense of change into decline, newness, the forgotten, the restored, into the multicolors of memory, of new cycles to come.

Andrea Martínez Crowther's aim was to blend, as she explains, a variety of visual textures to enhance a full appreciation of the different moments and tones in *Ciclo*. “HD was

important because it's a cheap format and I wanted to be able to shoot and shoot and shoot so that Arturo and Gustavo would be comfortable with the camera and the crew. We had them wired with microphones almost all the time. 35mm was something the producer, photographer and I spoke about using so that we could better capture the beauty of the changing landscapes as we travelled across North America. I knew that I wanted moments of repose and contemplation and 35mm seemed the perfect format for this. Super8 is a format that has such a nostalgic feel and so it seemed perfect for the re-creations of the cyclists. To somehow feel we are there, at that moment, riding with them along the highways. It turned out that there was more original Super8 material that I didn't even know existed. I also included this archival material in the film." All in all, she recalls, she now has over 100 hours of film to store!

Ciclo's soundtrack is an added asset to the documentary. A parallel geographical and emotive journey that moves with the rolling landscapes, accessing the privileged gaze of a bicycle rider, swooping down widening curves and opening vistas. As the geographical landscapes change, so do music, lyrics, linguistic codes, cultural codes.

Although the film is mainly in Spanish, the protagonists move into English naturally as they cross the border into the U.S. and then into Canada. Yet Spanish remains the primary language, at the root of the two brothers' lives and journeys, a language Martínez Crowther chooses should be the protagonist. This is also revealed in the subtitling of the English dialogue, a marker of translational cultural politics; after all, Martínez Crowther is also a professional translator. In this sense, the film can be regarded as a translation of stories, of cultures, across borders, their nuances expressed visually and language-wise.

She talks about her intentional thematic multi-layering, her carefully scripted story narrated in three defined segments, about the ways in which she worked closely with this "structured" format, as she refers to it, in tandem with a spontaneous flow during the live filming of what was developing before her own eyes, for the camera eye to capture.

As the film rolls, the emotional textures shift and deepen, the close-ups become more frequent, a more confessional tone is introduced. Secrets are revealed, old wounds laid bare, illness, pain, and death enter the scene. Intentionally part of



The bicycle feat of the Martínez brothers eventually turned into a story of migration, of diasporic displacement, of bilinguality and triculturality, of love found and love lost, of interwoven destinies, cycles and many journeys.

Martínez Crowther's written script, they nevertheless find expression spontaneously, another of the film's assets and one of *Ciclo's* most moving gifts. Intense emotions are gently curbed, framed and refocused. It becomes clear that this is about—to use a *Ciclo*-related metaphor—the spokes in the bicycle wheels of life.

It is also about grounded feelings revealed in subtly changing countenances. When Arturo's tears flow, the emotional texture is immediate and real. These are not actors. They are real, feeling people on screen, brave and trusting enough to tell their story to an unknown audience.

A courage Andrea Martínez Crowther shares as she tracks and frames her own genealogical maps. In making "a personal story something others can identify with, whatever their age or country." In this sense, the film introduces a family story into the realm of the mythical, without losing a grounding focus.

"There is no particular target audience," Martínez Crowther explains. She has found that, so far, the response to *Ciclo* has come from younger as well as older generations. Although a

striking effect, she adds, is its inspiration for younger generations, who see the two brothers' courage as exemplary. A story, we might add, that would remain unknown had not the director determined to make a film about her father and uncle, "no matter what," as she puts it.

CROSSING REAL TIME BORDERS

Andrea Martínez Crowther narrates how the real time border crossings in the film are a story in themselves. In *Ciclo*, the 1956 border crossings are seamless, punctuated by the classic photograph of men and bicycles, the border-crossing point in the background. Gustavo recalls in the film that the Mexico-U.S. border customs officer welcomed them with a big smile, offered in admiration for their courageous venture. Inconceivable nowadays, when Mexicans are regarded with suspicion, mistreated to alarming degrees, and visas are required and so often denied.

The director mentions how she has always feared crossing a border due to the perplexity and less amiable reactions from customs officers every time she did—in whichever

As the film rolls, the emotional textures shift and deepen, the close-ups become more frequent, a more confessional tone is introduced. Secrets are revealed.

direction due to the multinational baggage the family members carried with them. A fear not allayed by the story behind the film scenes that accurately document the realities of our times. As Martínez Crowther tells it, "I get this immigration officer at the American Embassy who says, 'Wow, so they made this bicycle trip from Mexico and now you're making a film about that!' And he gave a media visa to half the film crew." But, she continues, the other half of the crew came across another immigration officer who denied them visas. And she adds that the filming coincided with Canada's policy changes regarding compulsory visas for Mexicans, complicating things for the crew. Determination and letting change ride was once again the only road to go.

CYCLES, BICYCLES, AND CYCLOPS CAMERAS

There is no doubt this is a key contribution to transnational, transborder, transcultural relations, to portrayals and documentaries in the long history of these three countries, these two borders, and their more recent attempt at an economic union of sorts. In these twisted post-9/11 times, in an age when cyberspace has, as never before, opened up borders virtually, the true tragedy is that geographical, cultural, political insight has not inched toward a similar opening mode but, on the contrary, has become more hermetic than ever.

The sheer determination and courage of the two Martínez brothers' initial bicycle trek over these borders over half a century ago paralleled by their outer and inner voyage as seen through the consistent poetic camera eye in *Ciclo* provide fresh and inspiring insights into the need to build bridges rather than walls, to deepen understanding of what cycles we move into and out of in continuous moment-to-moment change.

Ciclo is a story about border crossings of several kinds. A story of love, friendship and family, of loss and gain, joy and pain, of natural cycles, of roots and flowers, of the camera eye and heart. It is a bright beacon of light, a source of inspiration, an ode of gratitude, a singular and subtle labour of love. A poem set in cyclic motion. **MM**

Arturo Martínez passed away shortly after *Ciclo* was first shown in Mexico. Friends and a *trío huasteco* (a traditional musical trio from the Huasteca area) celebrated his departure.



DAILY LIFE

In the San Francisco Mountains

Araceli Jiménez Pelcastre*

The El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve has been a natural protected area in Mexico since 1988. Located in the central part of the Baja California Peninsula, it covers 2 547 790 hectares below the 28th parallel in the municipality of Mulegé in Baja California Sur. It includes islands, coastal areas, lagoons, plains, and mountainous regions. Specific parts of the reserve have been singled out for special recognition: in 1993, the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) declared the rock paintings in the San Francisco Mountains and the Vizcaíno Whale Natural Sanctuary World Heritage Sites. In 2005, the islands and protected areas in the Gulf of California, also known as the Sea of Cortés, were included on the list, too. All three cases recognized their vast biological, archaeological, and historical wealth.

The sheer size of El Vizcaíno Reserve makes it possible to enter into contact with a wide diversity of ecosystems, landscapes, inhabitants, and settlements. This article

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Photos by Rafael Pareja.



The way to San Francisco de la Sierra is covered with canyons and plains.



The sheer size of El Vizcaíno Reserve makes it possible to enter into contact with a wide diversity of ecosystems, landscapes, inhabitants, and settlements.

will only look at the region of the San Francisco Mountains as a central point for visiting the rock paintings. However, it is not the only area that boasts this cultural heritage: in the Guadalupe Mountains in Baja California Sur, and in the San Juan and San Borja Mountains in Baja California, many other rocky crags and caves also have rock paintings.

The San Francisco Mountain rock paintings are located in a polygon covering the 206 800 hectares declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. This area boasts a masterpiece of human creative genius and bears exceptional witness to a cultural tradition or civilization that has now disappeared. Archaeological research indicates that the human groups that created them inhabited the region about 3 000 years ago. The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) reports the existence of more than 700 archaeological sites that have given up finds of isolated artifacts, workshops, camp sites, pits, cremation sites, funeral caves, rocky crags, petroglyphs, and pictographs; of these, almost 300 sites have paintings and stone reliefs.

The starting point for reaching the Santa Teresa, San Pablo, San Gregorio, and El Parral Canyons is either Santa Marta or San Francisco de la Sierra. The INAH has commissioned personnel in these two towns to organize and coordinate visits to the rock paintings, which can only be made with a guide. The two places are connected to the

state's main highway, Trans-peninsular Highway 1; in the case of Santa Marta, by a dirt road, and from San Francisco, by a 37-kilometer highway, paved only three-quarters of the way. The dirt road is winding and narrow and crosses heights and gullies. For now, the inhabitants keep it passable, but without any pay. Little rocks painted white show the way, contrasting with the light yellowish and reddish earth tones around them. The markers seem to go on forever, along the land, passing houses and other spaces, because in San Francisco de la Sierra and the other small settlements, there are no fences or other kinds of barriers.

San Francisco de la Sierra is the most populated place in the area with a little over 50 inhabitants, distributed in 12 dwellings; many of the surround hamlets, spread-out and isolated, have no more than 10 inhabitants each. It is also common to come upon abandoned dwellings because the owners have died or emigrated, leaving the buildings to deteriorate, with only their foundations and the corrals left to testify to the past. The dwellings are built with the materials at hand: wood, earth, or reed walls; cardboard sheets or local palm leaves for roofs; earth or cement floors; and no electricity, drainage, or running water. These services are replaced by solar panels for lighting and latrines. But the most critical of all is the water.

In San Francisco de la Sierra, before the Spanish International Cooperation Agency built a guesthouse managed by the community and installed a pumping system and distribution network, water was collected from streams and transported on beasts of burden; in the driest seasons a trip to the springs could take several hours. Along the waterways, it is common to find dams that are used to water the animals and to supply the houses with water for cleaning. These small settlements have no land telephone lines and cellular phones do not work. The inhabitants communicate with each other using portable radios, and everyone can hear and participate in the conversations, so they know all the ups and downs of everyone's daily life. Access to medical care is limited; these people are affiliated to the Health Ministry's Popular Insurance service, but no personnel is assigned to the Rural Health Center. The doctor comes through only once a week to provide care for all the towns in the region. Meanwhile, local inhabitants maintain their knowledge of the use of medicinal plants and, if there is no emergency, they deal with illness or injury according to tradition; but they also underestimate problems that then become acute or chronic.

In most of the area, educational services are scanty. Pre-school and primary grades are taught by community instructors or by a single Public Education Ministry teacher in single-room schoolhouses with all the grades together. A few years ago, it was not possible to go to middle school or further without emigrating, until the San Francisco de la Sierra Middle School was opened. However, there is nowhere to go for high school or university, thus forcing young people to leave their homes if they have the resources to live in a city. This means that the average schooling among the mountain



The doctor comes through only once a week. Meanwhile, local inhabitants maintain their knowledge of the use of medicinal plants and, if there is no emergency, they deal with illness or injury according to tradition.

dwellers comes to only four years, and that the work force is employed autonomously above all in agriculture.

The distance from urban areas that can provide a diversity of goods means that people do without consuming them even if they are necessary. They also have to pay higher prices than in the rest of the country. This means they survive in a subsistence economy where local networks for exchanging goods among families are important. These networks facilitate mutual support in emergencies and are strengthened by invitations and attending religious saints' day celebrations in the local communities and participation in festivities, which are almost the only leisure activities available.

The San Francisco Mountains are located between the sea and the desert. Local inhabitants, everyone from the semi-nomad Cochimí people who lived there until the eighteenth century to the Spanish missionaries (first the Jesuits and later the Franciscans and Dominicans, and the descendants of Buenaventura Arce, the founder of San Francisco de la Sierra in the mid-nineteenth century), have had to deal with the elements. These include rocky soil with little organic content, made up of volcanic, granite, and sedimentary rock; a severe, dry climate featuring extreme heat and cold; slight precipitation and high evaporation that prevent the aquifers from replenishing; and remote, difficult-to-access land where canyons and steep peaks crisscross plateaus and hilly areas. The surprising diversity of flora and fauna contrasts with this, as does the presence of endemic species that create a specific, important ecosystem, both beautiful and of great scientific interest. Crossing the plateaus and climbing down the canyons, visitors can appreciate the transition and how dry-climate-loving xerophile plants can co-exist with sub-tropical species. The contrasts can be seen from a distance: the tops of palm trees jut out of the ravines, following the flowing water along narrow paths, while along the slopes, the cacti and spiny bushes cling to the rocks and to life in hope of the annual rains that allow them to store up enough water for the dry season.

The mountain inhabitants, known as “ranchers,” also surprise you with their ability to adapt and their love of the land and the work they do. Amidst these difficult conditions, agriculture is limited; cultivable land in terms of fertility and humidity can be found at the bottom of the ravines in small areas spread out from each other. This makes it necessary to settle there to be able to take care of the crops. These oases bring forth a variety of fruit like citrus fruit, apples, peaches, pomegranates, figs, mangoes, dates,

The mountain inhabitants, known as “ranchers,” surprise you with their ability to adapt and their love of the land and the work they do.



The little hamlets are made up of rudimentary buildings.



A cemetery nestled in the mountains.



Local rancher.

and some grains and legumes. The crops are transported on beasts of burden, uphill, for several hours. Local residents also gather seasonal wild fruit from some of the region's flowering species, particularly the cacti, to supplement their diet and to use in health care. In the past, they used the agave plants to make alcoholic beverages. The families remember that for their ancestors, this was the main sustenance in hard times, although transporting it to sell in larger towns would take several days, putting themselves at risk for hold-ups. However, making alcoholic beverages was banned and became a clandestine operation until it disappeared altogether.

Today, activities center on traditional animal husbandry. Raising and milking goats is predominant; they also have cattle, but to a lesser extent; and barnyard animals are common, including horses, mules, and donkeys. The donkeys are needed for transport along the steep mountainsides. In the daytime, the animals graze, and at night they are shut up in corrals made of stones and branches next to the dwellings. At dawn, they are milked, and cheese is made using the milk. As they take the animals out to pasture, they collect the wood they need to burn in their homes. In the afternoon, they herd the animals back to the corrals. Animal husbandry demands that the ranchers have a diversity of knowledge and skills like lassoing, breaking the animals, riding, milking, vaccinating, genetically improving, inseminating, and birthing, among others.

As a result, the local economy depends on selling and buying animals: horses, mules, and burros for transport; male goats for their meat; female goats for their milk to make fresh and semi-dry cheeses. Other economic activities include preserving fruit, preparing the dried meat known as "*machaca*," embroidering textiles, and leather working. It is important to mention that leather working is indispensable because demand is high for *tehuas*, the rough shoes needed for the local terrain, leggings or chaps, saddlebags, saddles, and a wide variety of items used on ranches. Daily activities are marked by the arrival of tourists and the services offered so they can see the rock paintings. In the San Francisco Mountains, the ranchers are organized, rotating their participation as guides. But they only do it once a year each because tourism is low and concentrated between the months of October and May. The rest of the time, the heat is intense and it is risky traveling to the canyons.

Usually, a trip through one of the canyons takes three days and costs less than US\$250, including the pay for the guide, the animals that transport the visitors and carry the food, and the camping gear. As a result, mountain families have low incomes and

The local economy depends on selling and buying animals: horses, mules, and burros for transport; male goats for their meat; female goats for their milk to make fresh and semi-dry cheeses.

their living conditions include many deprivations. However, they make an important, free contribution as custodians of the region's patrimony, and have followed the recommendations of the government agencies and national and international civil society organizations to optimally manage the natural resources inside the protected area. All of that should be repaid with better basic services.

The distance from central Mexico means that domestic tourism is low; most people come from Baja California itself and other countries. Gradually, however, the region is becoming better known through other windows that explain realities, form images, and create curiosity and the desire to travel to this corner of Mexico. This is the case of the 1998 Carlos Bolado film *Bajo California. El límite del tiempo* (Lower California: The Limit of Time). Local ranchers agree that several tourists told them that they had decided to make the trip after seeing the movie. They also identify closely with what Cody McClintock has to say in *Corazón vaquero* (Cowboy Heart) (2008), and César Talamantes's *Los otros californios* (The Other Californians), which portray daily and traditional life in the region.

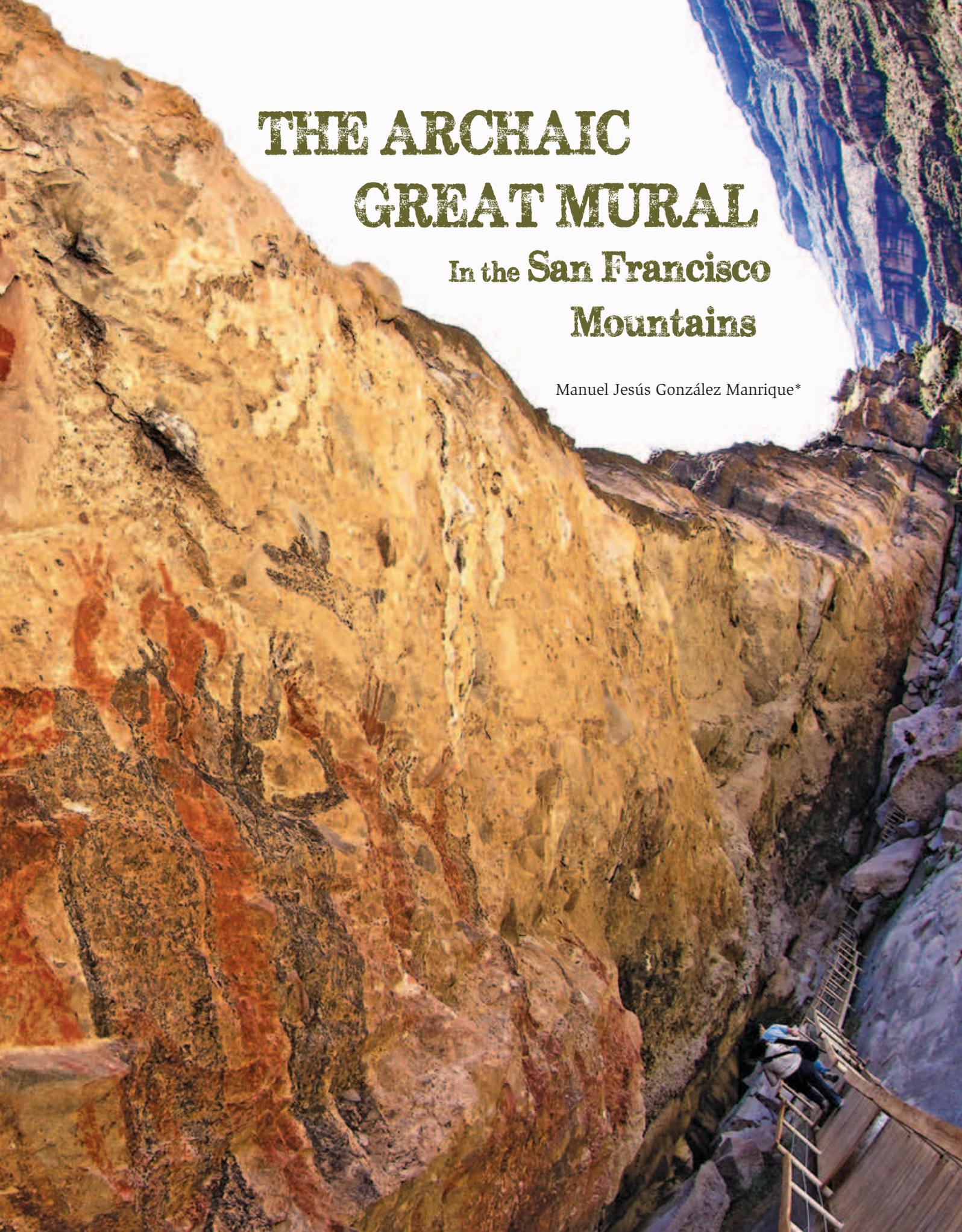
Cordiality, generosity, and a joyful personality are virtues among the mountain dwellers. They are always ready to show visitors the natural beauties of their land, and little by little, they increase their activities, trying to be environmentally friendly. For example, the La Bajada Plain educational path, laid out on what was the road that led to the Gulf of California to gather sea salt and seafood, is now a place for children, accompanied by adults, to give lessons on ecology, making conservationism a life option. With their ears and eyes always open, they show the animals that plow the heavens and others, along the ground, that furtively welcome us. **MM**

Usually, a trip through one of the canyons takes three days and costs less than US\$250, including the pay for the guide, the animals that transport the visitors and carry the food, and the camping gear.



Local guides lead a caravan to the murals.





THE ARCHAIC GREAT MURAL

**In the San Francisco
Mountains**

Manuel Jesús González Manrique*



The caves are nestled among canyons and oases (Painted Cave).



It is thought that the paintings were created by groups of hunter-gatherers and fisherfolk (Cave of Arrows).

The area now known as the state of Baja California Sur has been perceived differently during the diverse stages of exploration and colonization. When the Spanish first set foot on it, they thought it was a large island, until after exhaustive exploration, they realized it was a peninsula. But the perception of its geography was not the only thing that varied over time: its political division also changed. Around 1772, the Concordat for state and ecclesiastic participation divided it into two large regions: Alta (High) California, influenced by the Franciscans, and Baja (Low) California, commended into the care of the Dominicans for their missions and other activities to spread the gospel.

After independence and with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which ended the conflict between Mexico and the United States in 1848, Alta California definitively became part of the United States. A year later, in 1849, the remaining territory was divided by the 28th parallel into two legal entities, North and South, and remained that way until 1887, when these entities were officially designated as “districts.”

This division under the regime of Porfirio Díaz remained in place until 1930, when the geographic nomenclature changed from “district” to “territory,” and it was not until 1951 when amendments to Articles 43 and 45 of the Constitution gave birth to Baja California, the northern part of the peninsula, as a state.

During the conquest, the Spaniards arrived to the Baja California Peninsula in 1534. The first expedition under the

Separated from the rest of the continent and with little communication with the outside world, these settlers developed a different cultural universe in their rock paintings.

command of Fortún Jiménez, dedicated to exploring the pearl banks, concluded with Jiménez’s death when he went too far with the indigenous population. Hernán Cortés would arrive a year later to the coasts of what is now Baja California Sur.

The old *Californios* —an old name for them that is now beginning to come back into use— lived in semi-nomadic cultures located on the slopes of ravines. The protection offered by the natural abutments and hollows, as well as the dry, warm climate, free of permanent rivers, and terrain made up of desert, hills, and plains, allowed them to develop the most ancient art work in all of what is now Mexico: the Great Mural Rock Art. Separated from the rest of the continent and with little communication with the outside world, these settlers developed a different cultural universe in their rock paintings. Fortunately, thanks to national and international efforts, we can still observe them in the San Francisco Mountains, in the central part of the peninsula. They are among the five most important finds of pre-historic art in the world, together with those in Algeria’s Tassili n’Ajjjer, the European Upper Paleolithic, and that of the ancient San or Bushmen of South Africa and of Australia’s aborigines.

The missionary period was inaugurated by Father Juan María de Salvatierra in 1697 when he founded the Mission of Our Lady of Loreto, to spread the gospel among the Pericú, the Guaycura, and the Cochimí peoples. They remained until

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Photos by Fausto Kubli.

the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, and were replaced by the Franciscans.

From this period dates the only piece of historical information that author Enrique Hambleton says we have about the authors of the Great Mural Rock Art tradition. The information was gathered by the Jesuits who explored this part of the peninsula in the eighteenth century. Surprised by the majesty of the murals, they attempted to investigate who had created them among the indigenous people then living in the region, known as Cochimís. The Cochimí people attributed the murals to a group of extraordinary stature who entered the peninsula from the north and occupied the central mountains for an indeterminate length of time. This group was destroyed by internal strife.

The Cochimí people attributed the murals to a group of extraordinary stature who entered the peninsula from the north and occupied the central mountains for an indeterminate length of time.

Most of the old documents about the history of Baja California were written by priests engaged in converting the local inhabitants. Outstanding among them was Miguel del Barco and his *Historia natural y crónica de la Antigua California* (Natural History and Chronicle of Old California), and Francisco Javier Clavijero and his *Historia de la Antigua o Baja California* (History of the Old or Low California), both written in the eighteenth century.

Later, archaeological work, begun in the nineteenth century and intensifying with a more rigorous, academic perspective from the twentieth century until today, provided more data about the first inhabitants and something about their ways of life and beliefs. The rock murals speak precisely to their beliefs, and what has been discovered about death rituals makes it possible to say that the first settlers arrived at least 10 000 years ago. Due to all of this information, Dr. Miguel León Portilla considered that these groups lived in a kind of fossilized Paleolithic period.

The caves in the rocky sides of the San Francisco Mountains were long ago known by their dwellers, and were redis-



An apparent representation of a ritual, including the image of a man with the head of a deer.



The Painted Cave iconography includes human figures and animals.

Carbon dating shows that the Archaic Great Mural rock painting tradition lasted from 9000 BC to 1000 BC in the large mountain ranges of Baja California: San Borja, San Juan, San Francisco, and Guadalupe.

covered by U.S. author Erle Stanley Gardner in his expeditions in the 1960s. Accompanying him on some of his trips, University of California archaeologist Clement Meighan initiated the research in the area.

Formally speaking, Meighan noted that the paintings of animals were very close to life sized, while those of humans were more diverse. One of his main contributions was establishing two periods: one early period in a large format and another late stage where he classified the smaller human figures, the birds, and rabbits, and where the large figures disappeared.

Since their 1983-1986 expedition, archaeologists Baudelina García-Uranga and María de la Luz Gutiérrez have studied and made logs of sites with rock paintings in the San Francisco Mountains. While authors of undoubted prestige like Grant, Ritter, Gutiérrez, and Hyland promoted the use of the terms

“Cochimí” and “Comandú,” more recent investigations, like those by Crosby, Hambleton, Fullola, or Viñas, began to call it the Great Mural; and Viñas later added the term “archaic”; so it is now known in Spanish as the Archaic Great Mural.

These Spanish researchers, interested in the multidisciplinary study of the rock paintings located in the area in the Great Mural style and described by Harry Crosby, did a comparative analysis of the wildlife represented in the San Francisco Mountain paintings, an archaeological-astronomical study, and another to interpret the symbolism of the color and mythological aspects.

Between 1991 and 1994, Gutiérrez carried out a large conservation and study project of the paintings; this was of vital importance for a later expedition headed by J. M. Fullola to be able to excavate and do carbon dating in the same area. Based on that, they were able to establish periods of settlement in the San Francisco Mountains and to propose a theory of their cultural evolution.

For Enrique Hambleton, the rock paintings on the peninsula were created by different groups of hunter-gatherers and fisherfolk at different times over more than 7 000 years, although it is extremely difficult to attribute them to specific cultural groups given the great variety in the images.

Carbon dating shows that the Archaic Great Mural rock painting tradition lasted from 9000 BC to 1000 BC in the large mountain ranges of Baja California: San Borja, San Juan, San Francisco, and Guadalupe. It was recently determined that one of the human figures found in the San Borjitas cave in the Guadalupe Mountains was painted 7 500 years ago, making it the oldest representation known until now in the Western Hemisphere. In addition, that figure is laid over another, possibly older, figure, which still has not been dated.

Generally speaking, the rock paintings of the Archaic Great Mural represent opposed and complementary concepts (realism and abstraction). The paintings in the Painted Cave are clear exponents of this artistic current in the San Francisco Mountains and make up a tradition with a style of its own, mainly pictorial, with figurative and stereotyped patterns, which in the case of the humans, is reduced to mere silhouettes of compact, solid figures depicted from the front, apparently immobile and with raised arms.

The rock paintings are done on volcanic rock or granite, almost always out in the open and at the mercy of severe climate including intense heat, torrential rains, hurricane-strength winds, and extreme cold. Despite their fragility, most of the rock paintings on the peninsula have been preserved in good condition due to their isolation in remote areas, which has prevented both vandalism and massive tourism.

The steepness of the terrain in the Musicians, the Painted, or the Arrows Caves, allows us to suppose that the seasonal meeting which took place in the rainy season, at the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, when the shamans or “Guamas” led the ceremonies and community rites, was

the best time to produce these images. The paintings played a key role in the life of the group, fostering its cohesion, reproduction, and balance. In the same way, and given their close link to nature, it is very probable that the rock art was also a way of expressing their world view.

The monumental, public scale of the murals, as well as their positioning along the heights of the rocky mountain-faces where some of them were painted speak to the tribe’s cooperation and collective effort to carry out different kinds of work to get them done: from finding the pigments and building scaffolding, to the actual painting itself. Very probably this work was done under the direction and supervision of a shaman, just as occurred among the groups of hunter-gatherers in what is now the United States. This collective effort indicates great organization, since, according to the testimony of the Jesuits, the local inhabitants could spend up to 18 hours a day just to obtain enough food to subsist.

We find in the San Francisco caves a great variety of representations of both land and sea animals and human figures differentiated by sex. The land animals include serpents, hares, birds, pumas, deer, and sheep; the sea animals include whales, turtles, manta rays, sea lions, and fish.

The rock paintings of the Archaic Great Mural represent opposed and complementary concepts (realism and abstraction). The paintings in the Painted Cave are clear exponents of this artistic current in the San Francisco Mountains.



Scholars have noted the marked presence of deer, who symbolized both food and survival.



Archaeologists still have much work to do to determine how their creators managed to paint so high (Painted Cave).



The superimposition of animal and human figures implies establishing a thematic link among the forms.

The monumental, public scale of the murals and their positioning along the heights of the rocky mountain-faces where some of them were painted speaks to the tribe's cooperation and collective effort.



The female figures can be distinguished by their breasts painted under their arms. In addition, some of them are wearing what the first Jesuits recognized as the headdresses worn by the groups' chiefs and shamans in rituals.

Formally, the human figures are not very detailed, except their hands, feet, and headdresses. The animals are more realistic and dynamic. Accompanying the natural figures are abstract or geometric patterns that become more and more complicated in the later periods, where we can see square, rectangular, circular, and oval-shaped forms with a lattice-work pattern inside them.

The compositions are complemented with the depiction of tools and objects of daily use like darts, lances, and ritual utensils. While many human figures are depicted as being punctured by sharp weapons, it should be pointed out that there are no depictions of those who threw these objects, with the exception of the figure of a woman who seems to be holding a dart-thrower in the Painted Cave, associated with fawns.

Another characteristic of these paintings is the presence of celestial or astronomical elements, "spheres" and "ellipses" in the ever-present black and red associated with human figures and animals. The discourse of these murals emphasizes the association and coalescence among the figures and the use of four colors (red, black, white, and yellow) as well as their headdresses.

For María de la Luz Gutiérrez, a specialist of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), the oldest paintings in the area are in the Mouse Cave, and are 4 900 years old.

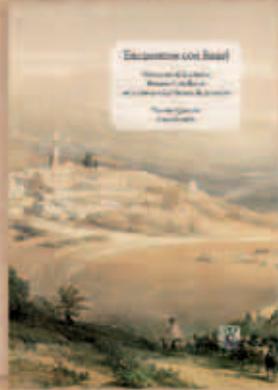
Definitely, this is a rich pictorial language that speaks to us of mythology, of magic, of the power of the shamans, and of a full-blown world view. And as Enrique Hambleton writes in his book *Lienzo de piedra* (Stone Canvas) about these paintings, despite not having the key to decipher this language, clearly something urgent led human beings to return time and again to the same place to repeat the act of painting. A reflection of life on the rough, inflexible stone canvas that was and continues to be what surrounds us. ■■■



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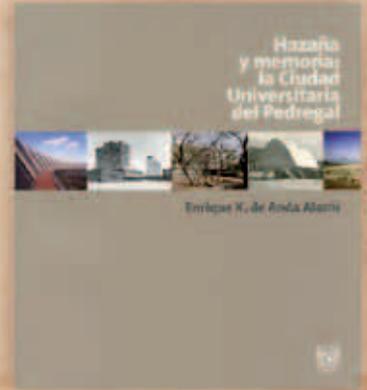
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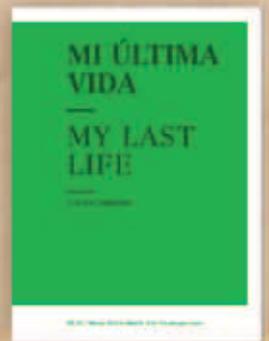
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Bonifaz the Philologist Is Fine

Bulmaro Reyes Coria*

Any statement praising Bonifaz is right, and without false modesty, that is how he accepted every distinction and honor bestowed upon him as a poet, as a philologist, as a fully committed faculty member. Here, to honor his memory, I have chosen to recall some aspects of his philology.

I cannot say he was unrivalled as a philologist, because that would put me in grave danger of contravening the precept of rhetoric that forbids maligning one person in order to praise another. So let me replace the predicate “unrivalled,” which requires comparison, with “optimum,” which can be applied to everyone who strives for this quality that is also a self-contained form of praise, thus freeing me to praise the virtues of other academics elsewhere.

In Rubén’s prefaces to his versions of Greek or Latin texts in the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Mexicana* collection —although I refer specifically to those he wrote when he was still in full command of the physical faculties required for someone whose life revolves around reading, and when he was yet to depend on me to revise his translations, which his later failing eyesight had previously allowed him to do on his own, or simply to listen to the original texts— in these prefaces, I repeat, two qualities are clear: the humanism of the poet, and the poetry of the humanist. Elsewhere, I found how, under the pretext of teaching classics, the poet Bonifaz Nuño becomes a humanist, but the humanist remains a poet.

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Photos in this section, courtesy of DGCS, UNAM.



Bonifaz puts life itself before our eyes: injustice, the tribulations of youth, the obligations and limitations of old age, the frailty of human nature, and frequently he does so using Aristotelian poetics.

Readers of his prefaces are doubly blessed: they receive the reliable instruction about the life and work of classical texts studied by Bonifaz Nuño, with the added bonus of the pleasure of the reading itself. This reveals the power of literature over human life and the writer’s influence on the development of society, since Bonifaz puts life itself before our eyes: injustice, the tribulations of youth, the obligations and limitations of old age, the frailty of human nature, and frequently he does so using Aristotelian poetics. This leads the

poet to invert the world at will and to recreate it, not in order to match reality but as he wishes it to be. I know of lives that have been changed by words as simple as these: “All youth is pain” (the opening words of his work *The Carmina of Catullus*), or, “When man has aged carelessly, he tends to long for his bygone youth as though it had really been better.” These words help others to consider things more carefully before it is too late.

He is the most prolific author of the *la Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Mexicana* collection. Eight years ago I drew up a list of his works in this collection: Virgil, *Georgics* (1963) and *Bucolics* (1967); *The Carmina of Catullus* (1969); Virgil, *Aeneid* (1972 and 1973); Propertius, *The Elegies* (1974); Ovid, *Art of Love. The Cure for Love* (1975); Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (1979 and 1980); Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (1984); Horace, *Satires* (1993); Caesar, *The Gallic Wars* (1994); Homer, *The Iliad* (1996-1997 and 2005); Euripides, *Hippolytus* (1998); Lucan, *Pharsalia*, with Amparo Gaos (2004); and Pindar, *Odes: Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian* (2005).

Today I must add these three volumes: Horace, *Epodes, Odes and Secular Hymn* (2007); Cicero, *On Duties* (2009); and Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, with Amparo Gaos (2009). From 2010 until his death he gave me the honor of co-authoring his work on *Epigrams* by Martial.

Rubén had handwritten his translation of *On Duties*, but the cruel darkness in which he lived during the editing process of his work prevented him from comparing the originals against the typed manuscript prepared by Silvia Carrillo, let alone do the proof-reading. The errata in the book must be attributed to me, since the revision process had been my responsibility since the publication of his *Gallic Wars*, in which, aided by my son Omar Reyes, I had corrected around 400 errata. This was still in the days—do you remember?—when photosetting was still in use and the PC had yet to establish its reign, and the book could be at the printer’s on average five years.

I spoke with Rubén on one of the last days that his face could still be seen; since he seemed less weak and his voice slightly easier to understand, I hastened to invite him to work and, without a moment’s hesitation, he told me clearly, “I’ll expect you tomorrow at our usual time.” Our usual time was always at midday. Our usual time was. It no longer is. I brought to his bedside a copy of the Latin author Martial’s epigrams which, as I mentioned earlier, we had been working on together for the past couple of years. (I could not hold back my tears because his bed reminded me of other deathbeds almost con-

Those with knowledge of the art
of translation must recognize
the dignity and coherence
of his thinking on the subject.

tingents of other loved ones: one aunt, another aunt; a first cousin and his sister, another first cousin, with all of whom I had lived when misfortune did not keep us apart.)

That day, as if everything was normal, I greeted him with my usual attempted jokes and we immediately set to work: Rubén adopted a certain posture indicating he was paying attention—by which I mean his nurses put him in a less horizontal position—and I dug around in my backpack for the photocopy of the Latin text edited in Cambridge by Walter C. A. Ker, as well as my translation and a pen.

“Ready, Maestro?”

“Go ahead!” he replied with difficulty.

As always, I started out by telling him the type of meter we were going to be dealing with, and then I read out the Latin text loudly and slowly for him to enjoy; then, in the same way, I read the translation, repeating it several times until I was sure that he had memorized it, and then I kept quiet. Silence for creation. Perhaps this explains the government artist sponsorship program. I transcribe below one of the four different elegiacs that we discussed during that final day we spent working together,

Martial’s original text:

Non possum vetulam. Quereris, Matrinia? Possum
Et vetulam, sed tu mortua, non vetula es.
(Martial, III, XXXII)

My translation:

No puedo a una vieja. ¿Te quejas, Matronia? Puedo
también a una vieja; pero tú, muerta, no eres vieja.

Rubén’s rhythmic version:

No puedo a una viejita. ¿Matronia, te quejas? Yo puedo
aun a viejita; mas tú, no eres viejita, muerta.¹

I obviously took note of the changes he suggested, or rather ordered; although naturally I have had to examine them with utmost care, even as I am writing now. Apart from these obvious changes, I can say that he corrected the accent on the

final five syllables of the hexameter verse and adjusted their number in the pentameter, without forgetting to remind me, *ex cathedra*—as if trying to stand up so his voice could be heard beyond the minuscule, cold four-by-three meter space that was warmed up through artifice and which would eventually claim the prisoner from his misfortune—to remind me, I repeat, that he had once had a general discussion with Salvador Díaz Cíntora about translation systems in general, and in particular, respect for diminutive in Latin, an argument he had surely won. Those with knowledge of this art must recognize, though not necessarily accept, the dignity and coherence of his thinking on the subject, which he maintained until the end of his days. It was a very difficult, very hard day; his voice was dim, faltering, but I could understand what he wanted.

He was in the literal translation camp, convinced that this was the most trustworthy way of putting an author into another language. I know from my own experience that this type of translation strives to respect the original in order to reveal the culture it describes. As a principle, it tends to respect the author, so that the reader enjoys, or suffers, in the same way as the translator does, and joins him or her in the process of interpreting the text, when this is necessary or desirable, because after the text has been transferred to their shared language, both translator and reader are on an equal hermeneutic

footing, an equality that is lacking in other translation methods in which the reader loses the opportunity of the initial experience, on account of being subjected to the effect of the adaptation made by the translator: an adaptation, of course, to which the exegesis must be applied that, in turn, requires the translator's creativity. In *ad hoc* circumstances I might be inclined to accept this argument, although my reasoning would doubtlessly be inferior; but here, in honor of Rubén's memory, I can only confess that I am in the same camp. In any case, in the prefaces to my works I include many arguments on this point.

I am writing to attest that Rubén worked until the very end; that he had full control over his mental faculties, and that he was aware of this fact, which must have been most painful of all for him because, after losing his sight he then largely lost his hearing and his voice became practically incomprehensible, but I can also say that little was lacking for his final breaths to be rhythmic. However, I can assure you that Bonifaz is fine: he defended his philology, I repeat, until the end of our last day spent working together. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Ker's English version reads, "Can I love an old woman?" you ask me, Matronia. I can even an old woman; but you are a corpse, not an old woman." [Translator's Note.]

An Entire Universe

Fernando Serrano Migallón*

Some men are universes in and of themselves: individuals whose genius lies in the sensibility with which they interpret reality and make it their own; artists who tend to be modest yet with horizons as vast as the world. Death's absurdity always makes it a difficult topic since it

deprives us of what we love best but, above all, despite its seeming inexplicability, it is the most natural part of our existence. Now it's the turn of Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, a magnificent poet, a free, independent man devoted solely to his art and our culture.

Nowadays, when many shun the classics, seduced by the latest trends, when men of letters come and go, swept away by the wave of the latest batch of best-sellers, when zombies turn into Jane Austen and teens are crazy about decaffeinated vampires, the example of a man who translated the *Iliad* and the poems of Catullus is unimpeachable and has an almost disturbing beauty.

Bonifaz Nuño was born in the town of Córdoba, Veracruz. Ninety years were his days, in the words of the Bible verse;

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he was able to communicate the universal wonder we feel upon contemplating nature, the power of disappointment in love, or the perfection of architecture; he also studied Latin and Greek, precise meter, and immense meanings; all because he did not see himself as a follower of this or that creed, or as a member of one clique or another, but simply as a man, a Mexican, merely engaged in his task of building a better and unprecedented world with his words.

His work was to say in Spanish what others said thousands of years before, weighing and not measuring words, as Alfonso Reyes once said, but also writing exact and perfect texts without this detracting from his expressiveness or his importance. Neftalí Coria aptly described him as a poet of brilliance, and that is true: distanced from our daily struggles and our inherent and oppressive meanness; his pen seemed more like a chisel, creating poems of magnificent purity with a delicate touch; it showed hours of work; Bonifaz Nuño was quite simply a master poet with a craftsman's skill and a Benedictine monk's patience, as Gracián would say; but he was equally a master of the word.

Don Rubén was a member of the Mexican Academy of Language, where he staunchly defended idiomatic roots. At times he could seem like one of those monks who, ensconced in their libraries, safeguarded a legacy, the importance of which would only be revealed thousands of years later. But Bonifaz was always out and about; he returned to his home town; he spoke about what he loved and hated with equal passion and vigor; he was a man of the world, a man whom we approached for his wisdom and knowledge. Trained as a lawyer at the for-



mer National School of Jurisprudence, he always maintained the intellectual rigor inherent in the study of the law and, far from isolating himself on the Parnassus of his beloved classical texts, he taught and researched and sat on the board of governors of the UNAM, the Alfonsina International Society and The National College. We called him a poet because that is how he described himself, though he was much more than that: he was culture compacted into the brief lapse of a human life. We called him a teacher, though he was much more than that: he was an education in himself through the example of his work and his days. Today he has left us and we can only say, "Thank you, Rubén." ■■■

Life with Bonifaz

Sandro Cohen*

In November 1982, I had a memorable appointment at Mexico City's Benito Juárez airport. I would not only be traveling to New York to give a series of lectures about new Mexican literature at various universities, but I'd also have the chance to meet, in person, one of the greatest twentieth-century poets in any language: Rubén Bonifaz Nuño.

And there I saw him, standing at the Aeroméxico check-in counter in what was then the airport's only terminal, a man of medium height with a wide moustache and a shock of gray hair,

dressed in a three-piece suit, a brocade waistcoat, a watch chain, and a National Autonomous University of Mexico pin.

"I'm so honored to meet you, Don Rubén!" I stammered, not knowing what else to say. Also I was young and needed to appear serious. I had read his book *De otro modo lo mismo* (Otherwise the Same) and had even written a synopsis of it in the *Revista de la Universidad de México*.

"Yes, of course," he replied in a faint voice. "I've read it. It lacked adjectives . . ." And after a couple of seconds he

burst out laughing. That's how I met Don Rubén: a joker, supportive, generous, and wise. He only showed his serious side when speaking about the literature he cared for the most, about his teachers, about what one can learn from our elders, about what is worth learning. In contrast, he took himself much less seriously and was very easy going, and that's how he was with the new friends we would make on that trip: René Avilés Fabila, Bernardo Ruiz, Martha Robles, and myself. Rubén had previously met Marco Antonio Campos, Vicente Quirarte, and Carlos Montemayor during the course of their university work. In fact it was Carlos (1947-2010) who had organized the trip as the Autonomous Metropolitan University's "culture tsar."

I try not to be inopportune when sharing moments with *famous people*. An interval exists between first meeting someone and developing an informal relationship with them, one filled with shared experiences and emotions. In that period, I never knew whether my presence is welcome or bothersome. But Rubén never made me feel that way. We were on friendly terms from the start and he never refused to engage in conversation with me, to offer me literary or personal advice, to take my calls, to explain some minutiae of Spanish grammar, to read or comment on one of my poems. But I'd think twice—or more—before asking him a question or calling him on the telephone, before I conquered my fear of showing him a new poem or translation that I was working on. I knew that Don Rubén was always busy with some project, whether it was university work, translating Homer or Virgil or Propertius, or writing essays about indigenous iconography.

I once accompanied him to the Anthropology Museum. Just the two of us. I don't recall how I had been given this miraculous opportunity of seeing the serpents, jaguars, and other stone sculptures on display in the Mexica gallery through Bonifaz Nuño's eyes and sensibility. He explained what happened when the two serpents' heads were joined together, in profile, and touching each other: standing in front of it you could see between them another head—of a human being, a serpent?—,

* Born in Newark, New Jersey, a naturalized Mexican citizen. Poet, narrator, translator, editor, essayist, and researcher. Author of some successful books on writing for non-specialists. *Tan fácil de amar* (So Easy to Love) is his most recent work of poetry.

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an image that we also relate to Tlaloc.¹ The left-hand serpent's right eye was the left eye of the third figure. The right-hand serpent's left eye was the right eye of this image of Tlaloc. Suddenly it hit me that you had to see almost all Mexica sculptures not only in three dimensions, but also in their context and realize how they both fitted into—and represented—the world.

We stood before Coatlicue. Rubén confessed that he had been scared of her, and that he felt she was sending out very strong vibrations, strange sensations.

"I visited she every day for several weeks," he confided, "and I asked the stone: 'What do you want to tell me? What are you? Who are you?' And I sat down to listen to her, until one day she spoke to me. And when I finally understood, the world opened up."

He spoke about the skirt of serpents and the necklace of hearts, about the claws on her hands and feet, ferocious eyes and mouths at the joints. The whole thing seemed like a fabric woven out of serpents and skulls; hands, eyes, fangs, and hearts. He took me behind the statue, showing on the way how Coatlicue's sides were also perfectly sculpted.

That's how I met Don Rubén: a joker,
supportive, generous, and wise.
He only showed his serious side when speaking
about the literature he cared for the most,
about what is worth learning.

"And not only that," he continued. "The base of Coatlicue is also sculpted, because you needed to see it from the other world, from the bowels of the earth."

I immediately thought of the Kabalistic—and obviously geometric—concept that every solid object has not just four but six sides. A simple brick illustrates this truth: it has four sides, as well as an upper and lower surface. The seventh side is the one we cannot see, and is the one that represents *entirety*. It is invisible to the human eye because it represents the vision of God. "The Coatlicue is not a sculpture of a god but a representation of the moment just before the dawn of creation."²

In other words, you must see it as a kind of three-dimensional, 360-degree mural, visible both from the sky and the underworld. It is also a sculpture that depicts time, the instant just before what we call the big bang, translated into the language of Mexica iconography, when everything else is embryonic and about to expand. No wonder it was sending

Bonifaz identified himself as indigenous, never as a mestizo. He genuinely allied himself with the Mexicas, the Toltecs, the Olmecs, and their descendants; a strong and inspirational bridge of communication existed between them and Rubén.

out such strong vibrations! You needed the sensibility to receive them and understand them in their own dimension, without confusing them with the background noise of Western iconography and symbology. Bonifaz Nuño developed these ideas in great depth in his books on the “indigenous stones,” as the poet fondly called them.³

He always identified himself as indigenous, never as a mestizo or a European. Initially, this struck me as both funny and curious in equal measure: Rubén would have blended into London perfectly, sitting in a coffee shop or poking around one of the city’s old libraries in the early decades of the twentieth century. No one would have said he was out of place. Afterward I realized that this self-identification was not at all laughable or curious. He genuinely allied himself with the Mexicas, the Toltecs, the Olmecs, and their descendants. I know that a strong and inspirational bridge of communication exists between these peoples and Rubén, a connection evident not only in his essays on the pre-Hispanic world but also in his poetry, particularly, I believe, after *Fuego de pobres* (Fire of the Poor), when its presence starts to be felt with increasing force.

Although I had to overcome my timidity and fear of being inopportune each time I spoke to him by telephone or when I asked for an appointment for him to check one of my texts, in person he was relaxed and very generous with his time. In 1983, I invited him to comment at the launch of my book, *Los cuerpos de la Furia* (Bodies of Fury) at the Metropolitan Hall of the Autonomous Metropolitan University (UAM). A couple of days previously, he felt unwell and told me over the telephone, “I’d like to be at your book launch, but I don’t know if I’ll be able to be there to give you strength.” I interpreted this as a polite excuse. The maestro did not feel well. He would soon be celebrating his sixtieth birthday—at the time an almost incomprehensible age to me, although in September 2013, I reached that same age.

I had resigned myself to doing the launch without Rubén. But when I saw him walk through the main door, I was delighted and ran over to hug him. I felt like I was floating on

air, blessed by the Gods, truly privileged. Now I think, “How did I even dare to invite him to comment on my book?” Sometimes, when we’re young and manage to overcome our fears, we experience moments that will shape us and drive us forward for years, for the rest of our lives.

During our long conversations at his office in the Central Library of the UNAM’s University City campus, I learned everything I could about translating poetry, meter, and verse. With infinite patience, he taught me how to listen to poetry. He opened up my ears, so to speak. With him I discovered that every meter has its own personality, its own *sound*. I discovered why the decasyllable and the hendecasyllable, the heptasyllable and the octosyllable are all so different. I finally understood what he sought to achieve—and he did achieve it—by combining verses of nine and ten syllables, and why they work so well together. I also understood why his decasyllables are so completely unlike the well-known patriotic decasyllables that we hear in Mexico’s national anthem. He was my first teacher since primary school to insist on the importance of memorizing.

“You have to carry verses with you, commit them to memory, for they will be models for your verses. You have to make their cadences your own. This means you’ll never have to count syllables or arrange accents. That’s nonsense. You feel them, they arrange themselves. You must think about developing an ear.”

From then on, as an exercise I began to versify everything around me: lamp posts, passing cars, the old man leaning up against his doorway. Everything could be converted into music, translated into the language of words filled with meaning and positioned strategically to sing without the need for musical instruments: poetry is its own music.

“No line of verse exists that cannot be translated,” Rubén decreed as we were analyzing, in his library offices, one that was particularly difficult to translate into Spanish, from Robert Browning’s *Andrea del Sarto*, in a fixed meter as found in the original.⁴ And he was right. Perhaps it does not yield on a first attempt. Maybe we hit a brick wall, but it remains true: *no line of verse exists that cannot be translated*. In some corner of the Library of Babel that Jorge Luis Borges dreamed up for us, we can find the solution to the enigma, we can find the translation. We must let the music and the meaning find their vehicle, and they will fit themselves into limp, beautiful poetry.

The poet’s final years were difficult. He liked to eat with the “*Calacas*” (the skulls)⁵ at Rioja, a Spanish restaurant on South

Insurgentes Avenue, very close to University City. He preferred it to *Tasca de Manolo*, on La Paz in the San Ángel neighborhood, a restaurant we used to frequent, because Rioja was much better lit: there he could see his friends, through the *fog*. And every time we met there —Fausto Vega, Vicente Quirarte, Carmen Carrara, Bernardo Ruiz, Raúl Renán, Josefina Estrada, Marco Antonio Campos, and I were the most constant— his other friends, writers, and university officials would invariably join us and a party would start. After we had eaten the hors d'oeuvre, the salad, the soup, and the main course, the standing joke was to say, “That was just a *snack*. Now let’s order the *real* meal.” But before the feast began, Rubén always said, “Right, then. Let’s get smashed and have a good time!” We were sure to order at least one or two bottles of good Spanish red wine —with Don Fausto usually picking up the tab— but by then Rubén would only drink a little.

In his apartment on Don Manolito Street, sitting among his incunabula and other ancient tomes, accompanied by daggers and coins from the Roman Empire, he poured me a cognac. The taste was new to me, but it would become a ritual. Some time later, I had the fortune of teaching poetry workshops for many years in the city of Oaxaca’s House of Culture, and at the Benito Juárez Autonomous University in the same state. There I developed a taste for mescal, and now I consider that a good mescal is on a par with cognac.

One of my Oaxacan pupils, plastic surgeon César Mayoral Figueroa, was an avid reader of Don Rubén. When Mayoral Figueroa was appointed rector of the Benito Juárez Autonomous University, he suggested to me, in the mid-1980s, that we invite Rubén to offer a keynote poetry recital, which



With the former UNAM rector, Jorge Carpizo.

He was my first teacher since
primary school to insist on the importance
of memorizing. “You have to carry verses with you,
commit them to memory, for they will be models
for your verses.”

took place in the House of Culture. It was a very emotional reading to a packed auditorium, with many people standing. The poet was happy. He read out the poems he had prepared, and even recited from memory others requested by the audience. But he was happiest of all when I took him to Monte Alban and he could wander freely about the large ceremonial esplanade. These were the last years he could use his eyes, even though it was like “seeing through the increasingly narrow hole in a roll of tape,” as he himself described the progress of his retinitis pigmentosa.

I could honestly never list everything that Rubén did for me as a teacher and a friend. For example, he wrote the text for the back cover of my book, *Redacción sin dolor* (Writing without Pain), which came out in 1994. He was a witness at my wedding with Josefina ten years earlier. We met for the ceremony held at a Civil Registry office on Reforma Promenade, almost next door to the old *Excelsior* building. Vicente Quirarte, the poet Guillermo Fernández (1932-2012), the painter Rafael Hernández Herrera, and Don Rubén were our witnesses. Before the ceremony, Vicente, Guillermo, and Rubén gathered around a tamale vendor’s food cart for a quick, “delicious” breakfast.⁶

He read and made detailed comments on my book *Línea de fuego* (Line of Fire) (1989). About *Corredor nocturno* (Night Corridor) (1993), he told me: “It’s a symphony.” I never knew how to interpret this comment and didn’t ask him. I was overcome, once again, by timidity, or rather, by fear. “He can’t have liked it. They’re verses. In *Corredor nocturno* I abandoned the strict meter of *Los cuerpos de la Furia* and *Línea de fuego*.” On three occasions and with utmost generosity, Rubén allowed me to prepare anthologies of his poetry. The first one, *Rubén Bonifaz Nuño para jóvenes* (Rubén Bonifaz Nuño for Young People), was published in 1989 by the National Fine Arts Institute (INBA). My own publishing house, Editorial Colibrí, brought out the second one, *Amiga a la que amo. Antología de poesía amorosa de Rubén Bonifaz Nuño* (The Girl I Love. An Anthology of Rubén Bonifaz Nuño’s Love Poems) in 2004. Spain’s Visor de Poesía Collection published the third in



2007, entitled *Luz que regresa. Antología* (Returning Light. An Anthology).

Three years earlier, and again at Editorial Colibrí, Josefina and I published what we imagined was an important collection of Mexican and Latin American books of poetry. We decided to call this new collection “As de Oros” (the Ace of Golden Coins, a suit in the Spanish deck of cards), in honor of Rubén Bonifaz Nuño. And to make this homage clearer still, Josefina suggested that we asked to borrow Rubén’s silver-handled walking stick so that poets, authors of the collection, could pose with it. The photograph would be printed on the margin in black and white, on the front cover of each book. Francisco Hernández’s *Soledad al cubo* (Loneliness Cubed) was the first to be published, followed by many more, including works by Vicente Quirarte, Francisco Cervantes, Juan Bañuelos, Adriana Díaz Enciso, Blanca Luz Pulido, Lucía Rivadeneyra, Jorge Valdés Díaz-Vélez, Alí Chumacero, Minerva Margarita Villarreal, and Rubén Bonifaz Nuño himself, with the anthology that I mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Only the photograph of Rubén on the cover came out in color. There were twenty-five titles in all. We used the actual stick for the first ten titles or so; for the others, the photographer Concepción Morales created digital images that

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And he was right.

could then be Photoshopped and the walking stick placed in the hands of the poets, who posed for their photo holding a broom. We eventually had to return Rubén his walking stick, which had accompanied him for so many decades.

Now that Rubén is no longer with us, my heart is filled with sadness because over the past 30 years, the best of my life, I never emblazoned him with enough adjectives, I did not ask him all the questions I should have asked, I did not take enough photographs, I did not eat with him as often as I could, we did not laugh twice as much as we laughed and we can no longer meet on Thursdays to eat tacos, get smashed, and continue enjoying all the wonderful things that this life—so short, beautiful, and fleeting—offers us. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Bonifaz Nuño explores this and many other fundamental concepts of the indigenous world view in his book *Imagen de Tlaloc* (Image of Tlaloc) (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986), 190 pp. On page 72 he writes, “The image of Tlaloc... is only formed when the serpent heads combine, creating unity, with the human figure.”

² In *Imagen de Tlaloc* (Image of Tlaloc), p. 10, Bonifaz wrote, “All [the images contained in the *misnamed* Coatlicue], without exception, mean the same thing: that power at the imminence of the act, man’s essential role in creation, the fusion of man with the god in fulfilling the supreme act... The consideration of their elements, with their backgrounds and consummations, perhaps offers forceful proof that, in these images which could be considered omnipresent in our pre-Hispanic culture, their creators *did not aim to create the image of a god, but to symbolically represent the power of the god at the exact moment when his reign was about to begin*” (the italics are mine).

³ I would once again mention *Imagen de Tlaloc; Hombres y serpientes. Iconografía olmeca* (Image of Tlaloc; Men and Serpents. Olmec Iconography) (Mexico City: UNAM, 1989); plus *Escultura azteca* (Aztec Sculpture) (Mexico City: UNAM, 1989), among others.

⁴ I tell this anecdote in more detail in an essay published in an issue that pays homage to Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, *Textos nos. 23/24*, year 7, July-December 2006, Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico, pp. 27-30.

⁵ “*Calacas*” is the nickname writer Bernardo Ruiz gave the group of Bonifaz Nuño’s friends. [Editor’s Note.]

⁶ More precisely, the author uses the term “*exquisito*,” which in Spanish means both delicious and refined, to refer to street food. [Editor’s Note.]



Dark Humor and the Horror of Postmodernity

Alice Driver*

“What should not be made about Ciudad Juárez? A musical. It sounds like dark humor, like a bad joke. I asked myself what should not be made about Ciudad Juárez, and I said, ‘That’s what I’m going to do.’” The documentary *Bola negra: Ciudad Juárez, the Musical* (2012) is the product of writer Mario Bellatin and composer Marcela Rodríguez. “Neither of us is a filmmaker,” explained Bellatin and Rodríguez when I first met them at the Hay Festival in Xalapa, Mexico on October 4, 2012, where they premiered their documentary. The following conversation is based on interviews with Bellatin and Rodríguez in Xalapa and with Bellatin at his Mexico City home on October 25, 2012.

My interest in *Bola negra* developed from a long-term research project on femicide in Ciudad Juárez, and, I have to admit, I could not imagine what a musical documentary about the city would look like. The Ciudad Juárez represented in the news, in newspapers like *PM*, certainly left no room

for a narrative outside of extreme violence. I wanted to understand what Ciudad Juárez Bellatin had discovered during his time living there, working with the youth in his choir, and trying to dig beneath the superficial descriptions of universal violence. Bellatin explained that

it is and is not Ciudad Juárez. The title, which mentions the musical, is *Bola Negra: Ciudad Juárez, the Musical* and it’s the title of the movie precisely because it contradicts what you’d imagine making a documentary in Ciudad Juárez would be like. If we read the text and see what’s going on, we’re always trying to keep our distance from the immediate reality. We have a huge, terrible amount of material that we didn’t want to work with precisely because we wanted this film to be a symbol of something much greater than Ciudad Juárez. I believed in something more than the daily horror, the violence, how a society could be organized in this way, despite what I had been told. In spite of what we have seen in some images, there is an order to everything, an organization—everything is planned. Someone always benefits from the situation, except for the victims,

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to whom this film is dedicated. They are the youth; they are the generation that is obviously not taken into account; and they're from the weakest segments of society and are its main victims. For us, part of the magic, the miracle, was seeing how, despite these conditions, young people could organize. They did form the choir, and the people singing in it are from that world. It breaks a bit with the idea that it is Ciudad Juárez. I believe there are images that, for me in particular, take me to other parts of the world. I think of Palestine. I feel that this is the horror of postmodernity. I don't know what to call it. I don't want to give it a name, but it's a very particular kind of horror. It's a horror that repeats itself in many parts of the world.¹

What is lost in the horror of postmodernity, the stories that don't make it into the mainstream news, are precisely those that remind us of the humanity of a place and of its victims and perpetrators, which, as Bellatin pointed out, are one and the same. The perpetrators of crimes are often members of the poorest fringes of society, people who are responsible for the physical action of the crimes, but who are not the ones who plan them. According to Bellatin, the planners "are never caught." What is the role of a writer, an artist, or a composer in taking on complicated social issues like those seen in Ciudad Juárez? Bellatin discussed how:

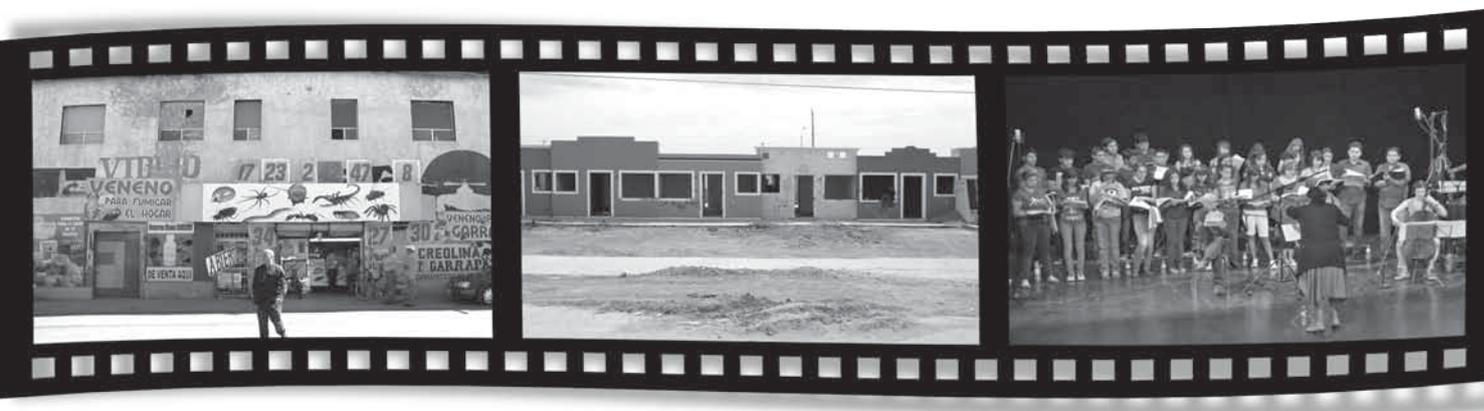
When the documentary shows the faces of missing girls, the experience is representative of being in Ciudad Juárez, of seeing the faces of those disappeared taped to telephone poles and of feeling haunted by their presence.

For both Marcela and me, it was important to explore another area because, as we know, she's a composer, and we're not filmmakers. We both have constant questions about the social role that we should play, especially when dealing with a society that's being destroyed, one that can't seem to find any viable way out. We found isolated marches and protests, but there was no path for artists, for creators. We didn't want to fall into thinking about what our social attitude should be when dealing with a particular reality. Mainly, the forms have been worn down, and, to get right to the essence, to go into depth about the violence, the blood, the testimony, would be to repeat them. That artistic form is already worn out. What we began to discover is that, yes, we can speak for the voice of a whole society, mainly for the youth shown in the film.²

The images of the youth in the documentary work against a whole genre of film and literature about Ciudad Juárez that capitalizes on the violence, that represents porno-misery, and sensationalizes violence to play to our basest desires as consumers. In 2009, I read an introduction to a photography exhibition written by Ciudad Juárez photographer Julián Cardona, and I have carried his words with me, a constant chant running through my mind. He wrote, "Juárez blows like cold wind through the windows of our souls and demands our attention. We embrace its images as if they could fill our own empty spaces, but we cannot hold on."³ For me, this quote captures an essential paradox of human nature: our hunger for voyeuristic graphic imagery accompanied by the knowledge that such images will never be able to satisfy us. We demand images as proof of violence, but, at the same time, those images play a role in society and influence how we judge innocence and guilt and how we perceive bodies.

Bellatin wanted to highlight a different narrative, one that included the victims of violence. The children in the choir in





the documentary sing lines from Bellatin's short story *Bola negra* about a Japanese entomologist, a story that apparently has no connection to Ciudad Juárez. Bellatin described how:

In my case, as a writer, I also flatly refuse to write a script about people who cut off heads. We are already saturated with that subgenre created in the literature of the North, in the literature of violence. In my conversations with Marcela, we began to see how, by applying a text that apparently had nothing in common in terms of logic, we could allude in a much more meaningful way, in a much more reflexive way than the superficial—which can become a repetition from a certain point of view—to the specific problem. The only time you see Ciudad Juárez is when the posters appear, the notices about the disappeared girls, about the famous “dead women of Juárez,” who are also part of the choir. What I mean is that, if you've seen the posters of missing girls, they share the exact same characteristics as the girls singing in the documentary. We had doubts about whether to include the posters or not. There is another element that we wanted to maintain in the documentary, because we lived in Ciudad Juárez and spent several weeks there, and we had other information (aside from what was presented in the media). When we were editing the film we decided to be distant, to always be inside a car, and to never let the camera get close. The camera always maintains a distance, a distance we need in reality to be able to appreciate and see that one can confront this particular situation.⁴

Watching the documentary made me think of Roberto Bolaño's posthumous novel *2666* (2004) about Ciudad Juárez. Bolaño describes a missing woman in Ciudad Juárez as “more or less dead.” What does it mean to be more or less dead? It made me think of ghosts and haunting and the documentary, because *Bola negra* is about a city populated by ghosts.

I also thought the film showed influences of Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955). I didn't know if Bellatin and Rodríguez wanted to guide viewers through a city of ghosts, a place where you see posters displaying the faces of missing girls. However, when the documentary shows the faces of missing girls, the experience is representative of being in Ciudad Juárez, of seeing the faces of those disappeared girls taped to telephone poles all over the city and of feeling haunted by their presence. I asked Bellatin about the influences of *2666* and *Pedro Páramo*, and he replied,

Your mention of Roberto Bolaño is interesting because I think it's the only tribute the victims have received, the dead women of Juárez, most of all in the part of *2666* where he gives bodies and names to those anonymous dead women. Anonymity is terrifying; it's something that goes beyond death. They [the dead women] are always statistics or numbers. In recent years, the government has tried to criminalize all the victims, to say that aside from being killed, they were delinquents. This is their ultimate strategy, as if to say, it's good that they died because they were involved in some type of illicit activity. Hence the outcry of many mothers to try to defend the lives of their lost children, as we see in that scene that to me is key, of the Felipe Calderón administration. A mother rebukes him, calls him a “murderer,” and says that he is not welcome and that her children were not criminals, but that he incriminated them. I think

“Ciudad Juárez blows like cold wind
through the windows of our souls
and demands our attention. We embrace
its images, but we cannot hold on.”

JULIÁN CARDONA



In their musical documentary, Bellatin and Rodríguez remind us of a whole generation of children raised amidst violence.

that was the turning point that unmasked the government. This war is a fictional war. This war is hiding a series of business transactions, because when you're in Ciudad Juárez and you see any one thing that seems out of order—it is not out of order—it is part of an order that we don't have a clue about. Everything is business, and the victims are the weakest populations, like the boys who sing in the film. To me, Roberto Bolaño's novel is very important because he takes 800 victims, and he writes an epitaph for each one. As a writer, I know that's almost impossible to do. What Roberto Bolaño achieves is a feat, because apparently every victim is the same, the same girl between 14 and 21, with long hair, dressed in jeans, from the lower class, a worker.⁵

What Bellatin and Rodríguez achieve is also impressive because they manage to meld two seemingly disparate tales, that of Ciudad Juárez and that of Bellatin's text *Bola negra* (about a character who eats himself alive). The metaphor of a city that is consuming itself is clear when the child choir sings the line "they gorged themselves" over and over in the documentary ("*Comían hasta hartarse. Comían hasta hartarse.*").

We didn't regret the choice [to use the text from "*Bola negra*"] because we said, "If I'd written a story about Juárez, the impact wouldn't have been as big." We used this story because it had nothing to do with the reality of Juárez. We managed to get the youth of Juárez, who are victims and to whom the film is dedicated—a whole generation of youth that's been destroyed, whose future was stolen—to participate in the choir. In the end, the victims and the perpetrators are one and the same. There's

a part in the film where we show child assassins in prison, and then we show young girls singing, and those young girls are their potential victims. There's also a part where we show the faces of missing girls and women, and you realize that they could be the same girls who are singing. We chose to work with the weakest members of society, a population that supposedly, whether they live or die, as the president of Mexico has said "are collateral damage." We arrived in Ciudad Juárez, and we realized something fundamental, something that you know because you've been there: it's a lie that the city is out of control, that the violence has exacerbated. No, it's a business. Everything is organized. Everything is perfect. It's the perfect society. Nothing is out of control. The way everything functions in the middle of such horror is possible because many people are making money.⁶

Having this discussion with Bellatin made me think of a conversation in which a colleague asked "Why isn't anybody making the connection between economics and the violence in Juárez?" What Bellatin and Rodríguez manage to do in their musical documentary is remind us of a whole generation of children raised amidst such violence, a generation that goes about daily life in a city that both is and is not what it seems. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Author's interview, October 4, 2012. [All notes are Editor's Note.]

² Author's interview, October 25, 2012.

³ Julián Cardona, *World Class City* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Canony-mous Press, 2006), s/p.

⁴ Author's interview, October 4, 2012.

⁵ Author's interview, October 25, 2012.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Coordinates of Poetry Out Loud

Approaches to the History of the Spoken Word in Mexico

Pilar Rodríguez Aranda*
Edwing Roldán Ortiz**



Pilar Rodríguez Aranda

The winners of the Spoken Fest Slam at the El Chopo Museum. In the background, organizer Rojo Córdova.

FROM THE UNITED STATES TO MEXICO

Poetry out loud has existed for more than 40 years if we locate its starting point at the famous Ginsberg reading of his poem “Howl” in 1955, or The Last Poets, heirs of the Harlem Renaissance and the originators of the Hip Hop movement. We can also mention Open Mic at the Nuyorican Poets Café, the Taos Poetry Circus Heavyweight Championship, or the Poetry Slams in 1980s Chicago, until today, when national

competitions are common, even in high schools. The success of these poetry activities meant that poetry was disseminated on HBO on the “Def Poetry” show, and at MTV’s “Poetry Slams,” an achievement that was a double-edged sword.

In Mexico, Spoken Word appeared on stage and began to develop only seven years ago, and the media do not seem to have given it any weight, although certain institutions like the UNAM, the Sor Juana Cloister University, the French Alliance, and the Spain Cultural Center have. While media interest would help disseminate poetry as a communicative act, it could also diminish both literary quality and the anti-establishment value of the texts themselves.

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** Founding member of the Exposed Poetry Laboratory and member of the Marsilio Ficino Academic Group.

OF MEXICO CITY AND BEYOND

The UNAM's first poetry out loud festival was actually organized by Juan José Arreola at Chapultepec Park's Lake House in the late 1950s—that is, contemporaneously with the Beat readings. The more recent version, directed by José Luis Paredes Pacho, was held for the eighth time in 2012, and has a great influence in the emerging scene in Mexico City. It has offered the opportunity for audiences to have access, free of charge, to all kinds of oral traditions, from Cuban *repentista* improvisers or singers of improvised *son* verses from Veracruz, to hip-hop singers of all nationalities.

This festival has always hosted a slam before the event itself, and the winner of the slam performs at the festival. This helps him/her to further his/her professional career, as has happened with Rojo Córdova, “Morocco,” Alicia Revólver, and Manuel de J. Jiménez, among others.

In about 2006, everything exploded and poetry events multiplied. The venue changed, but in non-stop poetry slams people come ready to “throw down” a verse, as though they were gangs, or Veracruz 10-line *décima* improvisers, or, famously, actor/singers Pedro Infante vs. Jorge Negrete. The rules: use your voice, your body, the space, contact with the audience, and the poem. You have the right to three rounds to win the prize, which might be a cover song, audience acclaim, a beer, or a sandwich—almost never all together.

The bars that hosted the first poetry slams were Red Fly and Zinco Jazz Club. The most recent ones have been successful in venues like El Viking or others that have a long history like the legendary Bombay Cabaret.

THE COLLECTIVES

Meanwhile, frustrated because of the lack of access to cultural spaces, young people have been grouping together in different collectives, above all in Tijuana, Guadalajara, and Mexico City. Some of the most active groups, attracted to poetry out loud and performance art, include Palabracaidistas (a play on words in Spanish combining the word for “parachute” and “word”), El Gabinete Salvaje de Poesía (The Savage Poetry Cabinet), Tinta Permanente (Indelible Ink), Colectivo Intransigente (Intransigent Collective), Poesía y Trayecto (Poetry and Trajectory), and *Síncope* magazine (whose name is a play on words combining “syncopated” with “fainting fit”). They stage poetic actions on the street and in public

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transport, shooting “*balabras*” (bullet-words), as Karloz Atl would say. They show the importance of poetry out loud as a form of communicating, playing, denouncing, and empowering, of building community and individuals, of healing the silence that violence has sowed in people.

Nevertheless, rivalries do exist. These are not homogenous or fixed groups. They are wide-open spaces where you can arrive, stay, leave, and return. For that same reason, a space for dissent and criticism is never completely constructed. However, this doesn't make them less interesting. There are more and more people: students, workers, kids who haven't finished school, musicians, circus performers, improvisers, actors, performers, kids from 17 to 60. Poetry becomes a map where we rehearse the discourse that leads us to others and discovers us with them.

VARIATIONS, RADIO, AND
INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS

Lots of other poetry festivals—and printed and on-line magazines—exist. Despite a lack of funding, some endure, like the Chilango-Andaluz Festival (Mexico City-Andalusian Festival) or the Festival of Poetry and Movement at the Pino Suárez subway station. Another outstanding one is the Conch Shell Festival in Tijuana and the survival of the Guadalajara Poetry Slam group. This shows that poetry out loud is not a passing fancy and that it has stopped inhabiting only libraries, cultural centers, or university auditoriums. At the same time, for six years, independent publisher VersoDestierro (BanishmentVerse) has been organizing a poetry tourney, Adversary in the Ring, which awards the first three places with a pocketbook publication run.

At this contest, books and poems out loud become a pair of opposites complementing each other: the judges are poets or academics who try to give the same weight to the style and strength of the oral reading as to the composition

In non-stop poetry slams, people come ready to “throw down” a verse. The rules: use your voice, your body, the space, contact with the audience, and the poem.

of the text itself. However, despite the fact that Adversary in the Ring brings together writing and reading out loud, more serious aural publications are needed, since the few that exist are insufficient. Cascada de Palabras Cartonera recently put out a CD of the Spoken Word, and Radiocamote is preparing a memoir of its radio program “From Poetry Recital to Poetry Slam” and of several years of slams in mp3 and book formats.

Undoubtedly, radio offers a format for dissemination and broadcasts (podcasts, interviews) more in accordance with the aural format. Radio station Código DF has been broadcasting “Urgent Words” for more than two years, deejayed by Andrés Castueira. The Mexican Radio Institute (IMER) produces and broadcasts poetry podcasts, increasing even more the interest in poetry spoken aloud. Poetry on radio deals with a great social cause: literacy for an audience not made up of poetry experts, and the revalidation of the social group that has written, spoken, and sought out spaces for it to be well-received.

THE STUDIES

Despite the fact that the sound of language is already receiving the attention it is due in linguistics, ICTs, and digital publications, critical studies of poetry continue to not really completely delve into the (contemporary) act of speaking poetry aloud. Meanwhile, comments like the following abound at each poetry reading: “He/she read well, but the poem was a little incomplete,” “He/she writes well, but really screws up the reading,” “He/she isn’t interested in the reader, just in being published,” “It’s the same as always: different texts, but it all *sounds* the same,” etc. So, we have to ask ourselves: Why does the defamiliarization that the poem’s semantics cause continue to be almost the only focus of attention? Why, if the poem wants to communicate, would it seem that the poet doesn’t? Why does it still continue to seem so far from reality



Francisco Daniél Quintanar

Pilar Rodríguez Aranda at the launch of her book of poems, *Asunto de mujeres* (Story of Women).

to us? Why is it so abstract and elitist? But, above all, why are all poems read so similarly?

At each of its meetings or congresses, the National Network of Students of Language and Literature (Rednell) has offered students the opportunity to disseminate their creations and publishing or research projects. So, Rednell has managed to broaden out literature as a national meeting point; and, as the network has grown, it has had to broaden the way we practice literature to include poetry slams. In 2012, the tenth ENELL conference was held in Tijuana and the Fourth National Poetry Slam included 15 participants from Monterrey, Puebla, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, Tijuana, Zacatecas, and Guerrero, with the motto “Borders among Reason, Literature, and Body.”

For a little while, poetry became the right to play with our language, a way of rehearsing communication with the other. Perhaps we didn’t have young people’s best poems, but at that time, the only thing that mattered was exploring real and literary space, celebrating the meeting, and the promise of more. Poetry as a meeting place for our collective memory was revived.

POLITICAL SLAM:

VANILLA WAFER VS. #YOSOY132

Built during the administration of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa during the biggest wave of violence the country has ever seen, the Stela of Light is a monument repudiated by Mexicans,¹ a point from which the last mega-marches have exploded in Mexico City. Mockingly nicknamed “the vanilla wafer,” it has finally become a center for digital, interactive culture, where



Poet Edwing Roldán.

we have seen in recent months the (con)fusion between the repudiated monument and the art that repudiates it. The confrontation is absorbed by that which limits it, where the confrontation of the world based in poetry sacrifices itself and is saved. The doors of the stela open so that poetry can return to a space in conflict; some underground poets despise this act; others take advantage of it, while their hosts, Rojo Córdova and the National Council for the Arts and Culture (Conaculta), await them.

NOTES IN NEW DIRECTIONS

We don't know how many poetry readings people—or literature students—go to in a year. Perhaps not all of us should feel attracted to the conflict that poetry causes in what is human. But why not? It seems to me, frankly, that the question is quite unexpected: Why do we not come together in poetry like we do in dance, in song, or in conversation? Why does poetry seem so alien if we learn from a young age how to read, speak, and be interested in pretty words or ugly words?

Poetry out loud contaminates reality more, expands toward it, and recreates geography to discover old paths of orality, languages that visit each other.

Perhaps it's because philosophy and the humanities in general have believed that thinking and language satiate only themselves because they are never found in the dispersion of life and its events. That is, the idea of a tree is more attractive than the tree itself; the idea of love more interesting than love as such; and the idea of a poem more prestigious than that which poetry is directed at.

Álvaro Campos says, "I am a continuous dialogue./An incomprehensible speaking-aloud." And that's what poetry, thought, and language are: a continuous dialogue that seeks to come out to once again find itself in its interior.

The work of each of the collectives and individuals, promoters, and/or creative provocateurs has broadened out literature as a meeting point inside and outside the spaces traditionally occupied by "intellectuals." However, the road still seems long, since both the voice of the readers and the ears of the listeners have to mature through workshops, critiques, more events, and publications.

Enunciating a poem increasingly becomes a wake-up call for those who, coming from vulnerable social groups, take the risk of writing and believing that they see not only in writing, but also in reading, an honest way of accessing the world, of confronting and reconciling with it. This is the opposite of what is shown by the artistic system, whose enunciation continues to be elitist, foreign to how people speak, opaque when it projects feelings, ideas, situations, hardened by the solemn enunciation that belongs to the bureaucracy of the creative system.

There is no precise date or day. Poetry out loud contaminates reality more, expands toward it, and recreates geography to discover old paths of orality, languages that visit each other, to create other underworlds, to recreate itself in the attempt. ■■■

NOTES

¹ A very expensive monument that was not ready on time for the bicentennial festivities. People in Mexico think that all that money could be used for other useful projects with more social impact. [Editor's Note.]

Reflections on Obama's Second Term



A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC of the U.S. political system is situating the first executive not only as the nation's moral leader, but as the central axis that articulates the gamut of interests involved in the functioning of a pluralist democracy. James D. Barber has incorporated other attributes into presidential leadership that go beyond this and that he considers essential, such as the president's capacity to bring cohesion to the hope of the people and to focus their most intense emotions.

The melding of all these elements must also be accompanied by keeping some of the promises made during the campaign to promote public policies that deal with the citizenry's needs, plus appropriate supervision of government administration and the economy's performance. Obviously, in an era marked by the media, the president's personality will also weigh in public opinion, turning him/her into a celebrity.

Barack Obama seems to possess most of these characteristics; that is why the aim of this section is to analyze different aspects of his second term. To do that, we have six valuable contributions by academic experts in U.S. political, economic, and social developments, who explore new responses to stimulating questions about them, using diverse conceptual approaches.

Is the U.S. moving toward more inclusiveness in terms of the role of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities? Is the weight of the different groups in the U.S. electorate today due to a profound socio-cultural transformation or simply to pragmatism? What elements exist today to affirm that the United States is in decline, or rather to recognize that it is only going through a series of crises?

Rounding out this space is the multi-thematic agenda that Barack Obama and Enrique Peña Nieto say they will cover to lead to a relationship that will be more inclined toward the prosperity of their respective peoples. Nevertheless, the great culmination of the United States' much-awaited immigration reform and its impact on Mexico are still an uncompleted story.

Silvia Núñez García

U.S. Elections From Melting Pot to Multiculturalism in the United States

Imtiaz Hussain*



Janson Reed/REUTERS

INTRODUCTION

A tyranny of small-group decisions had huge cultural consequences in the November 2012 U.S. elections. It was not just the minority groups (Hispanics, Afro-Americans, and Asians, in order of voting clout) “ganging” up against Mitt Romney and the Republican Party, or even other non-mainstream groups (such as gay men and lesbians) doing the same: even the largest voting bloc, women, took a decisive pro-Obama stand. Was a melting-pot United States yielding to a multicultural alternative? If it was, the predicted outcome of Samuel P. Huntington’s “clash” thesis may have arrived without a clash.¹

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Four sections of this article explore that puzzle. Whereas the first defines culture before distinguishing between the melting-pot and multicultural conceptions, the second analyzes culture-related election data. The third places the immediate electoral aftermath within a historical context, while the fourth probes the immediate future.

CULTURAL TRANSITION: BATTLE OF MELTING-POT AND MULTICULTURAL MINDSETS

Behind Huntington’s clash thesis, built upon immigration from what he called “torn” countries, like Mexico, lay other discordant forces: a) at least two strands of Islam, one promoting fundamentalism, the other depicting non-assimilation into Western society, as with veil-wearing women; b) mass

production, fast-food, and genetically-modified farm production displacing rice-paddy- or *tortilla*-based cultures elsewhere;² and c) an unfolding Internet revolution breaking all country- and culture-based barriers, exposing deviant behavior by just about everyone, including Muslim mullahs, Catholic priests, and Protestant evangelists.³

According to the giants disseminating it,⁴ culture boils down to the relationship between the human being and his/her environment.⁵ So the farmer's environmental interaction became agriculture, which became impossible for Eskimos, while Chinese sericulture depended on locally available silk producers, whose laborious work required they sit, differing significantly from the Detroit assembly-plant operator's work, which was largely done standing. Edwin T. Hall describes what emerges as a "highly selective screen between man [and, to be politically correct, woman] and the outside world," including all the "disparate" events that constantly occur: "the subject or activity, the situation, one's status in a social system, past experience . . . ," and so forth.⁶

Hopping, skipping, and jumping over so many fascinating dimensions to the immigration context, "the melting pot" is a harmonizing bucket in which the different shades pooled produce the essence of the host country. Whether the inputs are "white," "black," "yellow," or "brown," the U.S. end-product should know the Constitution, sing *God Bless America*, build an "American pie" repertoire, and eventually promote a "made-in-the-U.S.A." mindset. Since these were all long-term WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) expectations, the U.S. melting pot was expected to reflect and relate to that.

Under multiculturalism on the other hand, the Chinese-American and the Muslim-American, the Indian-American and the Hispanic-American can retain not only their original "cultures" but also be able to have them constitutionally protected. Canada was the first to establish such multicultural guarantees (beginning in 1971),⁷ but given how the Bloc Québécois was wiped out in the 2011 elections, questions persist about whether Canadian multiculturalism has sunk in sufficiently. Nevertheless, the headscarf controversy is informative:⁸ at one extreme, a Muslim woman's right to wear it is constitutionally protected in Canada; at the other extreme, France, the perfect melting-pot country, forbids her to do so, while in between, the United States gives her constitutional freedoms but she alone faces pressures in the social market. Returning to the original puzzle, with the November 2012 elections nudging the United States toward a multicul-

tural future from a melting-pot past, the country may overtake Canada as the ideal multicultural country and France in disbanding a melting-pot identity.

NOVEMBER 2012 ELECTION MESSAGES: A MULTICULTURAL *QUID PRO QUO*?

There is a catch to any argument attributing Obama's victory to "minority" votes: 55 percent of women's votes went to Obama, 43 percent to Romney, with women accounting for at least 50 percent of the U.S. population. Yet, that the "minority" votes disproportionately favored Obama may have been the clincher: 93 percent of Afro-American, 74 percent of Asian, and 69 percent of Hispanic voters preferred Obama, as opposed to 6 percent, 25 percent, and 29 percent, respectively, favoring Romney.⁹ These same "minority" groups favored Obama by similar margins in 2008, creating an eight-year window of opportunity for institutionalizing any socio-cultur-

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al transformation... formally or informally. Romney raking in 48 percent of the popular vote (57 458 819) against Obama's (60 190 138) exposed the WASP plight to be not only that of a minority, but also a minority in decline (unlike the others):¹⁰ Romney won 56 percent of the Protestant vote but missed out on half of all Catholic and 70 percent of all Jewish voters. Huntington recounts how Alexis de Tocqueville spoke of "Anglo-Saxons" in his 1830s visit as "one group among many in the American ethnic landscape," but since its culture had "survived for three hundred years as a paramount defusing element of American identity," others had no choice but to adapt to it.¹¹

That is the equation the 2012 elections changed. In the 2012 elections, "minority" groups made up 37 percent of the population, casting an unprecedented 28 percent of the votes.¹² According to PEWS's Paul Taylor and D'Vero Cohn, "minority groups . . . [are] on track to become a majority of the nation's population by 2052." In 2012, 70 percent of the electorate was white, dropping from 72 percent in 2008,

while Latinos increased from 9 to 10 and Asians from 2 to 3 percent of the electorate for those years. Since the latest U.S. census recorded more non-white than white births, politics cannot remain oblivious to demographic changes: not only is the United States “increasingly brown rather than white,” but also a place where “women and the young are finally finding their full political voice.”¹³

Politicians might ignore demographic changes, as was true of Romney specifically and Republicans broadly, but subtle demographic changes reconfigure politics significantly. Given how the 1992-2007 economic boom expanded immigration, the Hispanic population, which profited the most of all U.S. immigrant groups in this surge, shot up in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Washington, while actually doubling in proportion to the state population in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.¹⁴ Many of these states were safe Republican strongholds in the 2012 elections, but with higher Latin population growth rates, by 2050, they are expected to become less “red” and more “blue,” less “white” and more “brown.”

Swing states made that change in the 2012 election because a) Romney ignored Latinos, and b) first-generation immigrants have a historical preference for Democratic Party affiliation. Romney’s 2011 promise to veto the DREAM Act had an impact, as did the hiring of Kris Kobach, the FAIR leader instrumental in creating Arizona’s SB1070 and copycat legislations elsewhere,¹⁵ and the belief that illegal immigrants would “self-deport” alienated many—just as Obama’s Deferred Action immigration legislation attracted many—especially in swing states.¹⁶ Seventy-five percent of Colorado Hispanics voted for Obama, 70 percent in Nevada, and 53 percent in Ohio. Broader still, at least half of the 24 million eligible Hispanic voters (12.2 million) registered to vote, utilizing this political tool to make political changes for the first time. Any future election victory will be measured by adjustments to this dynamic. For the Republican Party, it is not a matter of *if* that change will take place but *when*. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal’s mild post-election rebuke of Mitt Romney suggests the adjustment issue is already on the table.¹⁷

Whether the Tea Party hijacks the Republican Party manifesto again or not, for now the Democrats have emerged as the multicultural champions just the way the Republicans were the WASP counterpart. With the first Hindu elected to the U.S. Congress (Tulsi Gabbard, a Democratic woman from Hawaii), the first Buddhist elected to the U.S. Senate (Maz-

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ie Hirono, another Democratic woman from Hawaii who won a seat vacated by retiring Senator Daniel Akaka), not to mention the growing number of Latino legislators and justices, a critical U.S. detour from a WASP toward a multicultural identity is underway demographically and, in 2012, electorally. Surely this is not a window of opportunity many politicians will neglect for long.

David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies correctly sees the end of the Ronald Reagan “era,” or “mandate,” and with it, its key characteristics: “conservative dominance powered by conservative voters and Southern whites.”¹⁸ Dubbing Obama’s victory a “mandate for moderation,” *Time*’s Joe Klein argues the South “won’t rise again until it resolves the issues that have marked its difference from the rest of the country since the land was colonized,” a clear message that the Republican Party’s fate is also the South’s,¹⁹ but also that without a different approach to immigrants, that message will no longer bring victory.

ANOTHER MANDATE ELECTION?

If that reading is correct, then the 2012 election was a mandate, like Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s in 1936, Lyndon Baines Johnson’s in 1964, Ronald Reagan’s in 1980, and Barack Obama’s in 2008. Of the three of those presidents to win a second term, Obama barely squeezed by with his victory margin: 50 percent versus 59 percent for Reagan and 61 percent for FDR.²⁰ Yet, he is in the company of those who redefined the country’s political trajectory: FDR by institutionalizing the New Deal and Reagan by rolling the snowball to uproot the New Deal. Obama stands at the precipice to renegotiate the New Deal, but his success will come only from “new Americans”: the minorities, as previously discussed, a larger proportion of whom built their U.S. dreams on precisely the welfare provisions provided by the New Deal.

Donna Brazile, who deals with all of the above cases except Reagan,²¹ interprets a mandate as having three characteristics: a) a charismatic candidate, obviously with a manifesto

of change in hand; b) an inconsequential opponent; and c) a snapshot moment when historical circumstances weigh heavier than everyday political dialogue. Judging by those standards, despite a poor first debate, Obama won the election without renegeing on the momentous changes he wants in the next four years. Yet, since many of his 2008 proposals did not pan out, could this be *déjà vu*? Those proposals that did, though, were astonishing: jettisoning “don’t-ask-don’t-tell,” the Iraqi withdrawal, finding and serving justice on Osama bin Laden, and a foreign-policy track record that, for the first time since John F. Kennedy’s 1960-1963 administration, has left a positive foreign-policy balance and garnered immense foreign support.

Romney’s flip-flop campaign and stout defense of fading WASP interests fulfill the second mandate criterion. The third is debatable, but plausible. At a time of immense economic ills, epitomized in Obama becoming the first president to win with an unemployment record as high as 7.9 percent, historical circumstances can only serve secondary purposes. If, however, Obama plays to the socio-cultural changes underway, he might become the first president to usher in two mandates in U.S. electoral history. This is not unreasonable. As the “first black man in the White House” and winner of a Nobel Prize for rhetoric rather than for deeds, Obama is uniquely placed to make other epochal changes. How he does so will brand him for posterity: either a “messiah” as he appeared to be in 2008, or an overblown under-achiever as in the first 2012 presidential debate.

WHICH WAY ‘BAMA: HAIL HILLARY?

The question is very much like whether the University of Alabama will end the college football season on top or not. Barack Hussein Obama needs nothing short of multiple touchdowns. At the top is an economy thirsty for jobs — a huge arena of cultural change since the new demand for U.S. global competitiveness is service-sector training with education as the spearhead rather than the technical training necessary for manufacturing jobs. *Race-to-the-top* education,

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race-to-the-bottom energy dependence, and multifaceted climate-change transformation are all one package. This touchdown began by avoiding a fiscal cliff in January 2013 — that is, even before the first term concluded.

It must be followed by immigration reform. A third touchdown would be to avoid any foreign adventure. Finally, his “Hail Mary” move has to be to strengthen the Democratic Party through congeniality, rather than stiff-upper-lip restraint, much like Bill Clinton showed him how to do in the Charlotte, North Carolina, Democratic Party convention. This is not to suggest anointing Hillary Clinton as his successor, but given the cultural changes underway, women’s empowerment, and surging minorities, no other candidate from either party presently has better credentials than she. The message is clear, but unlike his ill-prepared first-debate performance, the president had better do his homework this time. **MM**

NOTES

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⁴ For instance, David Landes, “Culture Makes Almost All the Difference,” *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, Chapter 1 (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

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⁶ Edwin T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, second edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), pp. 85 and 87, but see Chapter 6.

⁷ Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

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¹⁰ “The White House: Obama’s Path to Victory,” *Time*, November 19, 2012, p. 16.

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- ¹⁶ Cindy Y. Rodriguez, "Latin Vote Key to Obama's Re-election," *CNN*, November 9, 2012, <http://www.edition.cnn.com/2012/11/09/politics/latino-vote-key-elections/index.html?iref=allsearch>, accessed November 10, 2012.
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- ¹⁹ Joe Klein, "Obama's Mandate for Moderation," *Time*, November 19, 2012, p. 31.
- ²⁰ "A Subtle Message about Things to Come . . .," *Time*, November 19, 2012, pp. 38-39.
- ²¹ Donna Brazile, "Where Obama, and America, Go from Here," *CNN*, November 8, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/07/opinion/opinion/roundtrip-election-result/index.html?iref=allsearch>, accessed November 10, 2012.

The Re-election of Barack Obama and Foreign Policy: Smart Power vs. Decline¹

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*

Against all predictions and despite the burden of U.S. history, Barack Obama was re-elected, making him the seventh president to achieve a second mandate with over 50 percent of the vote.² All of his domestic and foreign policies have been closely scrutinized, generally at the instigation of the Republican opposition. The 2008 election results (53 percent of votes for Obama vs. 46 percent for McCain) painted a picture of a polarized United States, particularly given that an Afro-American went on to win a second presidential term of a nation historically divided according to strict racial hierarchies.³

While "racial thinking" is predominant among various sectors of society, the ultra-conservative political elite, headed by the Tea Party movement, has taken it upon themselves to spread and reinforce the belief that Obama is not fit to gov-

ern. These sectors cannot forgive him for being an outsider president: a young, progressive politician and therefore a non-WASP "anomaly." The members of this movement therefore adopted a stratagem that has been successful in the past in U.S. social history: to discredit his actions, they accused him of being a socialist, a Muslim (in other words, non-Christian), and even questioned his U.S. citizenship. However, this has not affected Obama and its only achievement seems to have been to put the political system in check and to have plunged the Republican Party into a crisis, the magnitude of which remains undetermined.

The criticism leveled at Obama—generally unfounded and from extremist political positions—has focused less on his foreign than his domestic policies, which are of more interest to the average voter.⁴ This process has laid bare the confusion and demagoguery among the Republicans, very possibly caused by their lack of proposals or spokespersons

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who can articulate coherent ideas about how to recover international leadership. They are bereft of ideas and running on empty. Therefore the issue of the economic crisis is caught up in a political disagreement sparked by the far-right's efforts to damage Barack Obama.

For example, in August 2011, a possible suspension of payments was discussed given the lack of a timely agreement in Congress that would allow the debt ceiling to be raised; eventually an agreement was reached, but only at the last possible moment and, to top it all off, leaving various points requiring subsequent negotiation.⁵ This has brought moderates and ultras back into the political ring, and worse still, in December the situation threatened to lead the country to the edge of the fiscal cliff.

This agreement imposed various budget cuts: over the coming decade the defense sector faces cuts of US\$480 billion, which suggests that Obama will have to exercise caution when defining his foreign policy priorities. This budget cut is a bone of contention among conservative sectors as they fear that a restricted U.S. foreign policy will erode the country's power base on the world stage. However, Parent and MacDonald say that these fears are baseless because throughout history (not only for the United States but for other powers, too), reduced military strength has generally not led to diminished international importance.⁶ In some cases the opposite is even true, since huge military expenditure has triggered economic disasters and some important foreign commitments have not been met.⁷

While "racial thinking" is predominant among various sectors of society, the ultra-conservative political elite, headed by the Tea Party, has spread and reinforced the belief that Obama is not fit to govern.

Furthermore, in the Republican primaries, the potential nominees' foreign policy positions suggested a resumption of Bush's hard power. For example, the eight contenders (Jon Huntsman, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann, and Rick Perry, most of whom were subject to extreme pressure from the Tea Party) agreed that, if elected president, they would adopt an aggressive policy toward Pakistan, Syria, and Iran (and even involve the use of military force against the latter two). They would also continue supporting Israel run by the unpredictable Netanyahu (à la Bush) and would try to force China to abandon its unfair trade practices. Some of these candidates did not hesitate a moment to return to the policy of rolling out an anti-missile shield in Eastern Europe, and six of them were determined to use waterboarding on prisoners of war. The only ones opposed were Paul and Huntsman.⁸

Mitt Romney, the Republican Party's nominee, took a similar line. At that time, the Republican candidate and his campaign team focused on discrediting Obama's foreign policy achievements and on attempting to capitalize on some



Kevin Lamarque/REUTERS

mistakes of his administration, such as the attack on the United States consulate in Benghazi, Libya, where Ambassador Christopher Stevens died on September 11, 2012. Obama continues to face criticism on this issue, and in fact Chuck Hagel's nomination to head up the Pentagon was used to exert pressure. Hagel was finally confirmed on February 26 after sharp confrontations in the Senate, with 58 votes in favor and 41 against. Ultimately, the Republicans' indication that they would return to hard power as their first recourse revealed their negligence regarding foreign policy issues, suggesting that within the party the hard-liners that dominated the agenda have not taken into account the damage done by Bush's foreign policy. They have yet to realize that, as Brzezinski suggested at the time, it is better to exercise effective leadership than to dogmatically impose U.S. hegemony.⁹

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The concern over current U.S. foreign policy comes at a critical juncture: 1) the country's historic relative loss of leadership on the world stage: 2) political disagreements and budget crisis, and 3) a polarized pre- and post-electoral context in 2012. It is therefore particularly important that the country's foreign policy avoid excesses; in other words, it must not commit to more issues than it can handle, and, therefore, not make large, unnecessary, and inflexible investments in actions abroad. Initially, the smart power strategy was mainly aimed at tackling the first point, but it has gradually been forced to adapt to the needs inherent in the second and third points.

In the first place, in terms of recovering leadership, Washington has perceived that the advantages of a smart power strategy outweigh its disadvantages. For example, the United States has avoided directly confronting countries with which it has had troubled bilateral relations over the past three decades (such as Iran, North Korea and even Venezuela.)¹⁰ In addition, multilateral diplomacy has been chosen as a route for reaching international decisions (for example the intervention of North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in Libya). Furthermore, the United States has shown an interest in practice in global issues, such as global warming, human rights, sustainability, and economic and financial stability. It has also shown interest and the willingness to enter into dialogue with actors it had previously snubbed or distanced itself from, due to negligent willfulness (the European Union, the

The smart power strategy is a relatively advantageous way of advancing the interests, objectives, and values of the United States around the world, not a means of solving all the problems affecting the international community.

Muslim world, and countries in the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions, among them, Cuba).

Nevertheless, this strategy has not achieved all of its objectives. Suffice it to cite the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has also failed to diligently seek basic consensus on items on the global agenda, such as the economic and financial crisis, and the environment. But it should be emphasized that the smart power strategy is, in principle, a relatively advantageous way of advancing the interests, objectives, and values of the United States around the world, not a means of solving all the problems affecting the international community as a whole. Although it would eventually have an impact on broadening multilateral democratization of the global system and the redesign of its architecture, the smart power strategy essentially seeks a safe environment for the United States, which appears to a certain extent curbed by its loss of leadership and by the rise of other emerging players who may eventually become predominant, co-actors in the international arena.

Therefore, Obama kept stressing the importance of smart power during his campaign, and since his re-election he has held a steady course; he has stuck with the idea of solving problems derived from the loss of leadership, and of resuming relations with new emerging actors, all in order to recover the country's pre-eminence in the reorganization of the international system.¹¹

In the second place is the budget crisis. Although fears exist because this situation may place limitations on U.S. defense and security policy, it can also be said to offer a potential advantage. Restricting the use of military power is a smart choice in a context in which its use is accepted neither locally nor internationally, and instead threatens to worsen already-chaotic situations (such as Afghanistan and Iraq), especially if the use of military power is unjustified, as was the case in Iraq. In addition, the events that took place during the Bush administration taught a lesson: an exaggerated use of force does not necessarily confer on a nation status as the world's

supreme power, nor does it guarantee control over regional balances.¹² The transition toward recovering international leadership and legitimacy, a process initiated by Obama in his first term of office, is certain to be consolidated during his second administration. As he pointed out in his State of the Union address on February 12, 2013, he will continue with the smart power strategy, in an attempt to show the face of a cooperative country with an interest in the common good, to eventually recover legitimacy and regain the authority to play an influential and predominant role in decision-making in a globalized world, without this involving actions in any way detrimental to other players.

It should be noted that, even though the current administration continues to work with a sharply divided Congress, the rifts are more related to domestic than to foreign policy. This does not mean that Democrats and Republicans share the same ideas on how to pursue U.S. interests abroad. However, it will be easier to reach an agreement as long as 1) not all foreign policy issues involve party-based preferences of the U.S. electorate, and 2) the United States' international position remains coherent and it continues working toward the reconstruction and consolidation of a safe environment for the country.

Thirdly, but no less importantly, the 2012 presidential election results show an electorate more concerned with the fate of the U.S. economy and social spending than with foreign policy. Therefore, the candidates' proposals on international issues were not decisive for all voters. Obama has clearly been concerned with the financial crisis, proposing domestic reforms and even looking for opportunities abroad, through the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the creation of a Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) with the European Union. Nevertheless, the ultra-conservatives have led the charge against the president's initiatives, including this ground-breaking agreement. This has obviously impeded any chance of reactivating the economy and ensured that deficit, debt, and unemployment levels remain high.

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The Republican Party's anti-political approach can be seen firstly in its concern about falling over the edge of the "fiscal cliff" and then falling victim to the so-called "sequester" of the budget. But in the recent elections, an obstacle arose that would prevent conservative sectors from obtaining enough votes to regain the presidency or to win a majority in both chambers: splits within the party. Although most critics of Obama's administration come from the Republican opposition, not all its members are ultra-conservatives and Tea Party members (which incidentally seems to disregard the country's critical financial situation: for example, when it imposed the budget this year or refused to support Obama's bills to improve the economy). In the United States, public opinion about this movement became even more negative as a result of such positions; the Republican Party itself took a blow during the elections because it had shown too much tolerance—not to say complicity—with a clearly authoritarian, regressive movement. However, the Republican defeats in the presidential election and in the Senate have contributed to its members taking more moderate positions. Therefore, they agreed to negotiate, albeit under certain conditions, educational and immigration reforms that seem to be making good progress.

The situation facing the United States described above constitutes a complex panorama for the current administration. But this does not suggest that the United States is about to lose its power, or that it will meekly cede its place to emerging players on the world stage. Its economic strength has been affected to a certain extent, given that its national debt now exceeds its GDP and its growth dropped 2.9 percent in 2010 compared to 2009. However, the World Bank still ranks the United States as the world's leading economy, with a GDP of US\$14.5 trillion, compared to China with \$5.8 trillion, and it is also the world's second largest manufacturing nation after China. It continues to have the most powerful military, with expenditure outstripping every other country: up until 2010 it was still the world's biggest military spender, at US\$698 billion per year, equivalent to 4.8 percent of its GDP.¹³ In terms of public spending as a percentage of GDP, in 2009, according to the 2011 United Nations Development Programme, it spent 16.2 percent on both health and education, and in 2008, according to the World Bank, it invested 2.82 percent in science and technology.

This set of indicators suggests that that we cannot talk about an absolute decline in the United States.¹⁴ Although it is growing slowly in comparison with the BRICS,¹⁵ the latter

In terms of recovering leadership, Washington has perceived that the advantages of a smart power strategy outweigh its disadvantages. For example, the United States has avoided directly confronting countries with which it has had troubled bilateral relations such as Iran, North Korea, and even Venezuela.

countries are not spending much on key sectors for more sustainable development and have a long road ahead of them in other areas such as income distribution, poverty, inequality, and human rights. Finally, from a political perspective, the United States continues to be a key player on big international issues and, for some countries, its intervention in some of these matters is essential as long as it remains able to balance power.

The outlook is certainly worrying given the narrow margin for maneuver for taking action, especially in terms of for-

eign policy. However, the strategy seems to have given the United States a historic opportunity to correct the effects of its past excesses around the world, in order to regain lost ground. Achieving this will not depend only on its vast quantity of resources and capacities, but on using them as efficiently as possible, on the mechanisms it uses to implement objectives, and on its ability to develop a coherent strategy and able leadership, in other words, to move forward with smart power. ■■

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Karen Zavaleta, my research assistant, for her valuable support in reading and carrying out the final edit of this essay.

² The other six were: Andrew Jackson (with 54.23 percent of the vote), Abraham Lincoln (55.02 percent), Dwight D. Eisenhower (57.4 percent), Richard Nixon (60.67 percent), Ronald Reagan (58.77 percent), and George W. Bush (50.7 percent).

³ Michael Hunt refers to three key characteristics of U.S. foreign policy down through history that have formed the basis for its ideology and public policies: 1) a vision of national grandeur, 2) racial hierarchy, and 3) limits imposed on revolutions. See Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 17-18.

⁴ This is shown in a survey published by Gallup a few days before the 2012 elections, in which 37 percent of U.S. Americans interviewed said that the economy is the top issue facing the country, followed by unemployment and the fiscal deficit. Meanwhile, no foreign policy issue is mentioned by even 5 percent of the population. Gallup Politics, "Economy Is Dominant Issue for Americans as Election Nears," October 22, 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/158267/economy-dominant-issue-americans-election-nears.aspx>.

⁵ Although for the first time in 20 years both parties agreed to raise taxes for the wealthiest, the bipartisan agreement put off negotiations on more thorny issues such as cuts in public spending and debt; it was therefore deemed insufficient by the IMF and credit rating agencies like Moody's.

⁶ Joseph M. Parent and Paul MacDonald, "The Wisdom of Retrenchment," *Foreign Affairs* no. 6, vol. 69, November-December 2011.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Waterboarding is an interrogation technique catalogued as torture. The issued gained prominence after John Brennan's nomination as director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Brennan worked for the agency under the Bush administration and claimed that he had completely opposed the use of such techniques; however, during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee, he admitted that he had not tried to stop this program.

⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice. Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

¹⁰ This article was written before the crisis in U.S.-North Korea relations that began at the end of March 2013. [Editor's Note.]

¹¹ As part of this new strategy, the United States understands that it cannot deal with major international challenges on its own. Therefore, its new approach centers on working alongside other actors with whom it has to share certain spheres of influence. However, its ultimate aim continues to be maintaining its position as the most influential player and ensuring that the twenty-first century is a U.S. American century. See "Moving America Forward 2012. Democratic National Platform," <http://assets.dstatic.org/dnc-platform/2012-National-Platform.pdf>.

¹² In fact, the idea of smart power refers to the capacity of effectively drawing on both soft and hard power, and so even internally within the United States, the need has been recognized to make the most of the country's military, diplomatic, economic, legal and moral strength in a balanced and integrated way. See R. I. Armitage and J. S. Nye, *NCIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America* (Washington, D. C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), http://csis.org/files/media/csispubs/071106_csissmartpowerreport.pdf; Joseph Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011) and The White House, "Defense Guiding Principles," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/defense>.

¹³ China ranks second with approximately US\$119 billion, followed by Great Britain with US\$59.3 billion in annual spending, France also with US\$59.3 billion, and Russia with approximately US\$58.7 billion. See Sam Perlo-Freeman, Julian Cooper, Olawale Ismail, Elisabeth Sköns, and Carina Solmirano, "Military expenditure," *SIPRI Yearbook 2011. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2011, <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2011/files/SIPRIYB1104-04A-04B.pdf>.

¹⁴ In 2007, the percentage of GDP spent on education and science and technology was, in the case of Brazil, 5.2 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively; in Russia, 7.4 percent and 1.12 percent; in India, 3.3 percent and 0.8 percent; and in China 3.3 percent and 1.44 percent, respectively. In 2009, the percentage of GDP spent on health in Brazil was 9 percent; in Russia, 5.4 percent; in India, 4.2 percent; and in China, 4.6 percent. The World Bank, no date; OECD, no date.

¹⁵ According to the World Bank, the U.S. GDP grew from 2009 to 2010 by 2.9 percent, while in Brazil, it grew 7.5 percent; in Russia, 4 percent; in India, 9.7 percent; and in China, 10.3 percent.

The Economy, an Ongoing Concern for the Obama Administration

Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero*



Jessica Rinaldi/REUTERS

More than 6 months have passed since Barack Obama won his second term as president of the United States, and during that time, the focus of public opinion has shifted from economic and domestic issues to electronic espionage and international events, particularly the revolts in Syria. However, on a national level, Obama's clear victory at the polls represented the possibility for him to continue his proposals and consolidate what he achieved in his first term, since many of his commitments and the economic and social problems he has to face could not be resolved in only four years.

The reasons and variables that determined Obama's victory have been analyzed again and again; among them demo-

graphics, minorities, electoral organization and strategy, social networks, the undecided vote, or the large amounts of money raised during the electoral campaign. These will all undoubtedly be factors in the mid-term elections slated for late 2014. However, the importance of economic variables will once again come to the fore, and with them, a rigorous review of how they evolve.

No scholar of U.S. political processes can help but notice the importance of economic performance in explaining the election's outcome, particularly given the drastic results of the financial, mortgage, and productive crisis that began in late 2007. This is why those variables, determinant factors in Barack Obama's reelection, must be monitored.

Among the economic issues of most concern to the U.S. public—and that will continue to be front and center—are the growth of the economy, the budget deficit, the debt, unemployment, and the trade deficit. All these are linked to

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economic policy decisions that unleash sharp disputes in Congress and can even bring the government to a halt. This happened with fiscal policy, on which Democrats and Republicans do not agree. Rather, their positions seem to radicalize: on the one hand, the Obama administration proposes raising taxes for those in the highest income bracket, while the Republicans reject that proposal and insist on lowering spending.

We should remember that, starting in 2005, gross domestic product (GDP) growth dropped steadily, but in 2009, it declined sharply (-2.8 percent). To resolve this complicated situation, from the first months of his presidency, Obama drew up a US\$787-billion economic stimulus package. From then on, and despite positive performance, the recovery has been slow and uneven: while in 2010, growth increased 2.5 percent, in 2011, it grew more slowly, by 1.8 percent; and for 2012, it was 2.8 percent.¹ This last figure was impacted by the economy's weak performance in the last quarter of 2012: only 0.4 percent. In fact, in that same period, defense spending dropped significantly (22 percent), a contraction that could not be compensated by the positive —though quite low— levels of consumption, investment, and exports.

The U.S. economy's erratic growth posed serious questions not only domestically, but also in other countries that, like Mexico, concentrate their foreign trade with that nation and are also productively interdependent with it. This is a factor fundamentally in the auto industry, which means that a drop in economic growth rates and demand has immediate repercussions in Mexico.

Another ongoing concern in the United States is the fiscal deficit, that is, the difference between public spending and revenues. It should be pointed out that when Obama took office for the first time in 2009, the deficit was almost 10 percent of GDP, or US\$1.3 trillion, which was above the historic average. However, by early 2013, that ratio had dropped to 7 percent, a figure that has remained stable. For that reason, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reported that in this fiscal year, the deficit would decline to US\$642 billion, only 4 percent of GDP for 2013. It also maintains that, if the

trend continues, the deficit will drop to US\$560 billion (3.4 percent of GDP) in 2014 and US\$378 billion (2.1 percent of GDP) in 2015.²

Among the causes of the declining deficit in 2013 is the increase in tax revenues, together with reduced government expenditures due to the cutback in defense spending and unemployment benefits, either because workers have found jobs or because their benefits have run out. It is also pointed out that the government has received significant revenues from mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which have recovered after having been bailed out during the financial crisis.

It is difficult to discover the reasons why the Republicans want to balance the budget. Since the 1960s, the country has almost permanently lived with what are considered acceptable deficit levels and for only four years, during President William Clinton's second term, it had a fiscal surplus. However, the decrease in the deficit does not satisfy the Republican representatives, who are constantly pressing for a balanced budget by guaranteeing less public spending rather than increasing taxes. Therefore, in Congress, a polarization exists that makes it impossible to forge agreements between Democrats and Republicans. Among the latter is where the most conservative positions prevail, identified with the Tea Party's political platform. All this leads to extreme situations that affect millions of people.

This has also been expressed around the issue of the debt since, to finance expenditures, which exceed revenues, the government must go into debt. In this context, the debt has increased, reaching 100 percent of GDP, and is predicted to continue on its constant rise for the long term given the government's diverse expenditures, some related to health programs, particularly Obama Care, Medicare, and Medicaid. This has been widely debated in Congress, where in August 2011 a US\$2.1-trillion increase in the debt ceiling was passed. However, in negotiations between Democratic and Republican members of Congress, they included an agreement to significantly decrease the deficit and that, if this did not happen in 2012, a mechanism for automatically cutting different public expenditures would be brought into play, beginning in January 2013: this is called the "sequester."

Although the automatic cut-backs finally began last March, this mechanism is known to have been derived from a political decision that was not the best response for the economy or for working people. Therefore, the conflict will continue to be debated.³ Nevertheless, at the end of the current fiscal

year, a reduction in spending of up to US\$85 billion has to be made, meaning that the adjustments would be distributed over seven months. In addition, unpaid furloughs, obligatory for government employees, could be announced in areas as diverse as education, defense, airports, or the national parks services. This means that the impact would spread throughout the country. However, according to some reports, four out of every ten U.S. Americans have already felt the impact of those cut-backs.

On April 10, 2013, President Obama presented his annual budget for the 2014 fiscal year, which presupposes continuing negotiations between Republicans and Democrats. His proposal is for a US\$3.77 trillion budget, with investments in infrastructure and education, new taxes on the wealthiest, and reductions in the costs of social security and Medicare. With this proposal, the president thinks the deficit will drop to US\$744 billion, which would be the equivalent of 4.4 percent of GDP (even less than the predicted 5.5 percent).

While for the White House spokesperson, Obama's budget plan could supply sufficient arguments to put an end to the automatic spending cuts in place since March, the Republican reaction to this project was immediate and forceful. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner made it clear that the proposal did not convince them and that they wanted to repeal the health reform backed by Barack Obama in 2012 and to partially privatize Medicare. This means that if they do not come to an understanding, the government would have to partially close down.

In September and October the negotiations were held about the debt ceiling, which is currently US\$16.7 trillion, a vital issue for the United States to be able to continue servicing its debt. Because of its importance for the government, determining the debt ceiling became a way for the Republicans to pressure or blackmail regarding issues that are fundamental for them, like the health insurance law. Despite the importance of all these issues today, however, unemployment continues to be at the center of public interest. In spite of the constant decline *vis-à-vis* its high in 2010 (9.6 percent), 2012 closed with 8.1 percent and it has continued to drop, reaching almost 7.4 percent.⁴ This, however, continues to be a tragedy for millions of people, as Nobel Prize laureate for economy Paul Krugman said.⁵ The figures are staggering: of the more than 10 million U.S. Americans out of work, 4.3 million have been unemployed at least 27 weeks. Also, 7.9 million people work only half-time, and more than 2 million unemployed, discouraged, no longer even look for work.

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Finally, the trade deficit has decreased slightly. However, we have to consider that U.S. exports depend on countries that are suffering from big economic problems, particularly those in the euro zone. Although trade flows rallied between 2010 and 2012, and this helped encourage the recovery in the United States, the prospects both in Europe and in China are of a serious slow-down.

CONCLUSION

A review of the evolution of these economic variables results in a relatively positive balance sheet for Barack Obama's second term. Despite his political opponents' strong opposition, advances were made, above all if we consider the disastrous economic situation that came out of the previous administration, that of George W. Bush. The results are not completely satisfactory but they show positive trends.

But perhaps more important than following the key economic variables will be healing the divisions that have characterized U.S. society in recent years and that seem even more exacerbated in Congress. Tempering those extreme positions among Democrats and Republicans would be politically and economically even more significant for Barack Obama and for the nation. ■■

NOTES

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, table 1.1.1, http://www.bea.gov/table/index_nipa.cfm.

² Congressional Budget Office, May 2013, "Budget Projections: Fiscal Years 2013 to 2023," <http://www.cbo.gov>, p. 8.

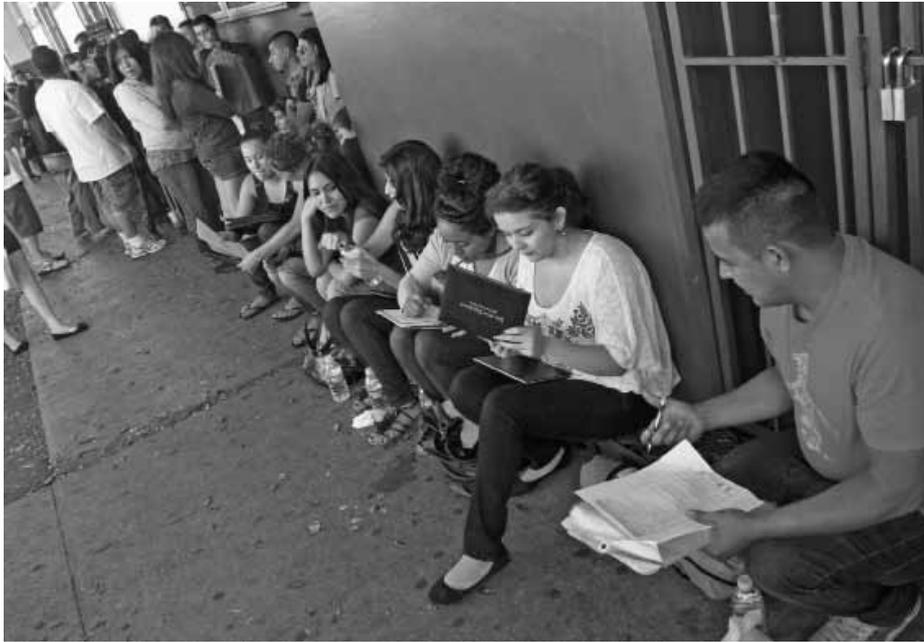
³ In fact, lowering government spending would spark a greater economic slow-down, which would also have an impact on employment.

⁴ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://data.bls.gov>.

⁵ Paul Krugman, "The Forgotten Millions," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2012.

The Dreamers' Social And Post-Electoral Value¹

César Pérez Espinosa*



Two topics that are always part of the debate on the sociopolitical situation of Latinos in the United States are undocumented migration and the search for consensus on a comprehensive migratory reform, that is, one that benefits the majority of undocumented migrants.

At the beginning of Barack Obama's second term, despite the many and diverse proposals presented over the decades, what is expected is a different, much more inclusive plan that would include significant advances for the more than 11 million people who want to integrate fully into that society. At least in political terms, the time when a new federal immigration law is signed seems remote. This is true particularly if it were to include articles that would really be the basis for short- and medium-term benefits for those who work day-to-day hidden away, in the shadows and who are so helpful for the comprehensive social, cultural, economic, and even political

development of the United States. In the context of the 2012 federal elections, the issue of regularizing these migrants' status became politicized and increased the importance to the candidates of the Latino vote.

To exemplify this, it is important to remember that in the United States, every year more than 65 000 undocumented students get a high school diploma.² However, given immigration restrictions, they are then not able to continue their studies at the university, join the army, or get a legal job. These students entered the country at a very young age and culturally identify with U.S. society. The "dreamers," as they have been dubbed, have assimilated socially. Some of them even speak only English and have little relationship with their countries of origin because they have lived in the United States the entire time they have been students.

For the political parties, incorporating millions of migrants has been a big question that comes to the fore in every election and becomes an important, generalized demand of the

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different groups and sectors that make up the Latino community. While it is true that every year, thousands of migrants enter the machinery leading to citizenship, it should be pointed out that the legal process they go through is by no means linear and has many different moments along the way. For this reason, the “dreamers” struggle and achievements can be considered important and a historic advance in the decades-long social struggle that has sought to improve education for Latino children and young people.

In this century, Latino social groups and some political ones have never let up the pressure to make the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, better known as the Dream Act, a political and social reality. The legislative struggle has its origins in 2001, when this law was introduced as a bill by Republican Utah Senator Orrin Hatch and the Democratic senator from Illinois, Richard Durbin. In the House, it was presented by a Democratic representative from California, Howard Berman, and a Republican from Illinois, Chris Cannon. It emerged as the response to the 1996 legislative measures that banned states from offering higher education to undocumented foreigners or allowing them access to federal funding to continue their studies.

Since immigration is always difficult to work on and the debates tend to last years because of the many political interests involved, several versions of this bill already exist. In 2001, 2003, and 2005, Dream Act proposals were stymied in both house’s Judiciary Committees despite being joint proposals with bipartisan support. However, thanks to the interest of Latino legislators and pressure groups from sectors linked to Latinos, the bill continued to be put on the legislative agenda until its most complete version, known as the 2009 Dream Act, was forged. This legislation proposed offering the status of permanent legal residency to minors who had been brought to the United States by their parents through no agency of their own and who knew no other homeland.³ The proposal included all young people under the age of 35 who had entered the U.S. before the age of 16 and, after at least five years residency, had acquired a high school diploma.

The Dream Act of 2009 also stipulated that the “dreamers” would retain that conditional legal status for six years, during which they could study in a U.S. institution of higher learning and would not face barriers to traveling inside or outside the country. In addition, after those six years of residency, if they got a degree from an institution of higher learning, after serving in the military for at least two years and having demonstrated good moral behavior, they would be eligible

to apply for full permanent residency.⁴ Once again, the possibility of enjoying the benefits of this law was conditioned by time considerations, which would leave out a large number of migrants.

The arguments in support of this proposal at the time were the possibility of making the United States more competitive in the global economy since this sector of the population would be highly skilled and therefore could contribute to the nation’s growth. This was framed in the country’s aspiration of having the world’s highest proportion of graduates of higher education by 2020, given that having a university degree means making 60 percent more than the national average.⁵ The monetary factor, linked to the political decision, is found in the meaning given the bill by the Congressional Budget Office, which in 2010 reported that, if the Dream Act were passed, government revenues would grow by more than US\$2.3 billion over 10 years.⁶ This number would undoubtedly grow after President Obama’s executive order.

A new federal immigration law for those who work day-to-day hidden away and are so helpful for the comprehensive development of the United States seems remote.

The Defense Department also backed the bill, recognizing that there are foreigners serving in the military whose immigration status should be regularized. For her part, Secretary of the Interior Janet Napolitano stated in 2010 that passing the bill would make it possible to direct immigration and border security efforts against those who do represent a threat to U.S. security.⁷

Despite support from representatives and senators from both parties, the bill was voted down several times. This is in spite of full support from the American Teachers Federation, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, the National Parent Teacher Association, the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Association for Community College Admission Counseling, and numerous pro-human rights groups and migrant organizations.⁸

The political handling of this issue by legislative leaders and even presidential hopefuls has been a constant over all these years. One example of the changing political positions for getting bi-partisan consensus even occurred among the

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bill’s sponsors. For example, in 2006, Senator McCain co-sponsored the bill in the Senate, but during the 2008 presidential campaign and the 2010 Senate race, he did an about face, turning 180 degrees and returning to conservatism. Finally, in the voting that year, he cast his ballot against the bill, showing the importance of electoral pragmatism in his political life: initially, McCain wanted support from Latino groups for his nomination, but once that political moment passed, he once again opposed creating a legal way out for these young people’s immigration status.

2010 was crucial for the “dreamers”: despite the fact that Congress voted down the bill, 11 states approved laws to allow undocumented students to continue their studies in institutions of higher learning. In California, Illinois, Kansas, Utah, Texas, New York, and New Mexico, they can even get

state funding to study; nine other states also have similar bills before their local legislatures.⁹

In 2011, the bill was reintroduced before Congress, but this time sponsored only by Democrats. The Republicans blocked it, arguing that the real priority was reinforcing border security. On this occasion, the proposal had President Obama’s backing and that same year, he issued an executive order to the effect that the Office of Visitors and Border Security should cease deporting young undocumented immigrants who were enrolled in any institution of higher learning, considering them low-risk threats.¹⁰ With this order, Obama sidestepped the legislative process knowing full-well that the Latino vote was fundamental for his reelection.

In June 2012, one week before the meeting of the presidential candidates with the National Association of Elected Latino Officials, Obama made a televised announcement from the White House saying, “These are young people who study in our schools. They play in our neighborhoods. They’re friends with our kids and pledge allegiance to our flag... They are Americans in their hearts, minds—in every single way but one: on paper.”¹¹

Right away, in the name of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano said, “Effective immediately,

COMPARISON OF THE 2009 BILL AND THE 2011-2012 EXECUTIVE ORDER

	Dream Act 2009 (Bill presented to Congress)	Differed Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) 2011-2012 (Executive Order)
Presented by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-partisan coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democrats
Prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being between the ages of 12 and 31 • Having arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16 • Ability to prove U.S. residency for at least five years • Having graduated from some high-school or university level educational program • Being morally solvent (no criminal record) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16 • Providing documentary proof of five years continual residency in the United States • Being enrolled in a high-school or collage level educational program, having received a diploma from such a program, or being enlisted in the armed forces • Being under the age of 31 • Being morally solvent, not having been convicted of more than three misdemeanors. Those with felony convictions, convictions for drug offenses or even a single DUI do not qualify
Immigration status that would be granted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residency (Green Card), conditioned on getting a diploma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deportation differed for two years
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2009, the bill failed to pass the Senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In effect

certain young people who were brought to the United States as young children, do not present a risk to national security or public safety, and meet several key criteria will be considered for relief from removal from the country or from entering into removal proceedings. Those who demonstrate that they meet the criteria will be eligible to receive deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and will be eligible to apply for work authorization.”¹²

This means that people under 30 who are enrolled in a college-level educational program, have received a high school diploma, or who are serving in the armed forces can request deferred deportation as long as they were brought to the United States before the age of 16 and have no criminal record. It is estimated that more than 1.7 million “dreamers,” 85 percent of them Latinos, will benefit from this order. The immediate beneficiaries, those who already have a high school diploma, come to 700 000, while about 250 000 are currently enrolled in some kind of college.¹³

The measure was applauded nationwide by immigrant groups and other political organizations who supported the idea that the United States had educated these migrants, who, with their work as professionals could contribute to national development and who represented no threat whatsoever due to their aspirations to live the “American Dream.” According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), by December 2012 there were approximately 365 000 applications, and 103 000 of them had been approved.¹⁴ At the 2012 National Democratic Convention, dreamer Benita Veliz even made a speech, marking a historic moment: she was the first undocumented immigrant to speak at a national party convention in the United States. This type of event shows how the “dreamers” and immigration policy continue to be fundamental points on the U.S. agenda and that they also influence political stances and even party platforms.

Latino groups’ pressure found its best ally in the argument for greater inclusion of highly educated undocumented immigrants. The 2012 electoral alliance linked Latinos to the electoral fate of the Democrats, partly because of the weight of Latino voters in key states for winning a presidential election. The Republican candidate was not particularly adept when he underestimated the decisive percentage of the majority of the Latino vote. We should not forget that part of that vote goes to Republicans, like for example in Texas and Florida. In Florida, favorable results for the Democratic Party have changed in the two elections of Barack Obama. The explanation can be found in the diversity of the Latinos living

The “dreamers,” as they have been dubbed, have assimilated socially. Some of them speak only English and have lived in the United States the entire time they have been students.

there, given that the only Latinos voting are not Cuban-Americans, but many thousands of people from other countries, who are increasingly inclined in favor of the Democratic Party. **NM**

NOTES

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Obama and Peña, The New Agenda

Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla*

Demography and geography are more relevant than we tend to think. The U.S. 2012 federal elections clearly showed that the changes experienced by new citizens of the United States have had a major impact. The United States has proved to be an indispensable, global power, as Madeleine Albright described it, and that it is a nation firmly rooted in the American hemisphere, but with limited reach. All this relates to Mexico.

In a sense, this demographic transformation has already been underway for several decades, but has only recently revealed itself as a decisive factor. Perhaps many Republicans considered Barack Obama's 2008 election the result of a series of unrepeatable mistakes, including running Sarah Palin, their vice-presidential candidate. However, the 2012 results proved that these circumstances were more structural than they had previously thought, and were part of a clear trend.

In response, the Republican strategy was to form a phalanx. They brought up issues that were extreme but related to people's day lives, such as the alleged ineffectiveness of the federal authorities, in order to take back control of the debate after having clearly lost their grip on it toward the end of George W. Bush's administration. This explains the rise of the Tea Party, a populist organization mainly focused on preventing Barack Obama's reelection. Enjoying the staunch support of Fox News, which overstated the movement's actual power, this right-wing organization was a magnet for many conservatives and moderates.

This popular movement fed into the Republican Party's highly conservative discourse which, paradoxically, some perceived as sparking a fresh debate. In particular, the move-



ment adopted an inflexible anti-immigration position that was therefore anti-reform. The Tea Party put forward the somewhat fallacious argument that the fiscal deficit was caused by the majority of undocumented immigrants using welfare services without paying taxes; it also accused them of not "Americanizing" and failing to share the country's values. Obviously, no mention was made of the fact that undocumented migrants are afraid of using the services and of being deported, that their taxes are always withheld, and that only with great difficulty could they request the returns to which they are legally entitled. Migrants also pay sales tax and do not usually demand even their most basic rights.

The credo of this small but growing and influential group within the Republican Party includes, of course, favoring armament programs regardless of existing huge military expenditures. And the movement's firm and resolute opposition to

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any tax increase means that fiscal deficits bring spending cuts back into the spotlight, and social services are the most vulnerable items in the budget.

Since 1952, the electorate in the United States has been divided: there have been more Republican presidents but the Democrats have won a majority in Congress more often. However, it has become clear that neither party can win based only on the regions where they enjoy a majority: the Democrats in the Northeast and the Pacific Coast, the Republicans in the South and Midwest. The “swing states,” which do not show a marked preference for either party, have taken on huge electoral importance. Colorado, Florida, Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Baltimore were won by President Obama in 2012 (Wisconsin was the only swing state he did not take). In particular, the Hispanic vote helped sway the election in the Democrats’ favor.¹

We could ask ourselves why, if presidential candidates traditionally tried to come across as centrists while making their opponents look extremist, this time both sides opted for the extremes. I think that the parties’ adoption of extreme positions was caused by two factors: 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis. Both events have polarized ideological stances.

Many white Protestants and Catholics have identified themselves with the Republican Party and have abandoned the Democratic ranks—something that has not necessarily happened among the non-Christian white population. Fifty-nine percent of white males voted for Mitt Romney.² Obama has clearly lost the support of his country’s white males: in 2008, 43 percent voted for him, while in 2012 this percentage dropped to 39 percent.³ The most recent elections show that ethnicity, race, and gender are having an impact on politics in the United States. In other words, the minorities clearly voted for Obama: 93 percent of Afro-Americans, 71 percent of Hispanics, and 73 percent of Asians.⁴

Contrary to what Republicans believed, this coalition of minorities was formed in around 2008, when 67 percent of Hispanics voted for Obama, a figure that increased by four percent in 2012. The Afro-American vote dropped slightly, from 95 to 93 percent in 2012, while the Asian vote increased sharply from 62 to 73 percent.⁵

In reaction to various Republican bills limiting access to legal abortion, most women (55 percent) voted for Obama,⁶ who also received 76 percent of the gay and bisexual vote, as well as 60 percent of votes from the youngest voters between the ages of 18 and 29. The majority of over-65s voted for Romney (56 percent).⁷

As Robert Kaplan says, the United States is solving problems in Afghanistan and Iraq when its priority should be Mexico.

“Fixing Mexico is more important than fixing Afghanistan.”

The coalition of minorities was definitely a watershed. This change in the country’s demographics has had important electoral consequences. While we used to talk about the potential electoral impact of the Hispanic vote, it has now become a reality. Even though only 12.5 million of the 23.7 million potential voters turned out, the sum of all the minorities made the big difference.⁸ The so-called “Rainbow Coalition,” which struck fear into the hearts of voters who once feared the Afro-American Democratic candidacy of Jesse Jackson, leading many white Democrats to shift allegiance to the Republican Party, became powerful enough to reelect President Obama.

But geography is also important, as scholars of geopolitics know very well. During his first term, Obama did not show any great interest in Mexico, essentially demonstrating a lack of understanding about the inevitability of geography. As Robert Kaplan says, the United States is solving problems in Afghanistan and Iraq when its priority should be Mexico. “Unfortunately the U.S. has been diverted from addressing its hemispheric priorities by concentrating on the Great Middle East. Fixing Mexico,” Kaplan concludes, “is more important than fixing Afghanistan.”⁹ Kaplan argues that although geography does not completely determine destiny, it does define the limits of the possible and goes on to explain that no wall can be built that can protect the United States if there are problems in Mexico. “Kaplan’s vision of a prosperous and stable twenty-first century [U.S.] America requires that Mexico become a first world country.”¹⁰ These alarmist statements are pejorative to Mexico; the journalist considers that, like the Roman Empire, the United States could fall due to the chaos that might afflict it from the south.

Nevertheless, Kaplan fails to mention that part of the origin of the empire’s riches is what is causing the chaos. To a certain extent, the United States is responsible for the problem for two reasons. First, the weapons of war that are illegally flowing into our country from the United States: the U.S. could stem this flow; or otherwise the “boomerang” effect of all the violence they produce could turn back on it. Second, the mas-

sive demand for drugs in the United States creates violence that is not going to stop at the border. This does not mean that Mexico should shirk its responsibility for protecting its borders to prevent drug trafficking and weapons channeled to international organized criminal groups. But, it is important to remember that globalization gives rise to problems that require joint solutions.

I agree with Kaplan in that, whether we like it or not, the 3 000-kilometer border marks limits on a shared destiny, but I think that, rather than a threat, Mexico presents an opportunity to the United States, and Obama would prove himself as a statesman if he perceived it. Other regions in crisis, like the European Union, would like to have a neighbor with the potential of Mexico, with its growing middle class and capacity for consumption. Shannon K. O'Neil refers to the paradox: "But while Mexico faces a serious security threat from organized criminal groups, the country continues to collect taxes, build roads, run schools, expand social welfare programs and hold free and fair elections."¹¹

President Obama made his first visit after his reelection to Mexico, and it was his first meeting with newly elected President Peña Nieto. Although the meeting was a resounding success, it probably did not fulfill the expectations of either head of state. It did, however, generate something very important for Mexico: the discourse has changed and that in itself represents a big step forward that can only have positive repercussions.

The two leaders discussed the issue of the "shared future" to "foster" economic development and growth. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is vital as a means of reaching an agreement with countries in the Pacific region. Mexico has been a member of the Pacific Group; therefore it is fundamental that it partner with the United States in this new role in the area.

A safe and efficient border will also be possible by focusing on facilitating smoother cross-border trade and the renewed commitment to the 21st Century Border Management Initiative. This will require investment in infrastructure, facilitate the secure flow of legal commerce, enhance law enforcement along the border, and ensure a rapid joint response to natural disasters.

It was very interesting that the presidents gave priority to education. Fewer students from Mexico than from Vietnam, China, and Japan go to study in the United States. The deputy minister for foreign affairs for North America, Jorge Alcocer, said that of the 750 000 foreigners studying in the United States, only 14 000 (1.8 percent) are Mexicans. Most are un-

dergraduates.¹² But we should note that, while just a few years ago there were only one million students in higher education in Mexico, today there are three million, and this represents a great potential for research and innovation.¹³

Although hardly any U.S. citizens come to Mexico to study, we are the third most popular study destination in Latin America. Therefore, both presidents agreed to promote greater educational exchange, and they set up the Bilateral Forum on Higher Education to foster innovation and research.

The priority given to education may well have very significant effects. Students who know about another culture can act as bridges of understanding between countries, leading to improved bilateral relations. In addition, they set up a High Level Economic Dialogue (HLED) group at the cabinet level. Members will meet once a year to advance strategic economic and commercial priorities central to promoting mutual growth. The U.S.-Mexico Transboundary Hydrocarbons Accord was also signed to bolster energy security in North America. An agreement was also reached in support of our shared duty to exercise responsible stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico, for the development of oil and gas reservoirs that cross the international maritime boundary between the two countries. And finally, the USPTO (U.S. Patent and Trademarks Office)-IMPI (Mexican Institute of Industrial Property) Memorandum of Understanding on IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) Cooperation was signed.

President Obama indicated that migration reform is one of his priorities in Congress. Although we know that this reform is of interest to Mexico because of its undoubted consequences for our country, it is undeniably an important matter for domestic politics in the United States; the issue has come to the fore since the demographic weight of the Hispanic population made its presence felt in the elections. The reform can be a sign that the country's leaders are willing to push forward policies with bipartisan support; this will be popular for a population tired of politics without results. The draft S744 bill drawn up by the bipartisan Group of Eight may be a model to follow. Although 71 percent of the popu-

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lation “favored finding a way for people here illegally to stay in the country if they meet certain requirements,” only 33 percent supported the Senate’s bill, while 28 percent opposed it.¹⁴ Only 31 percent think that illegal immigrant workers should leave the United States, while 50 percent believe that they should be allowed to keep their jobs and request U.S. citizenship;¹⁵ 78 percent support a discussion of migration reform that also addresses border security.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that despite the predominantly negative propaganda in the United States, found in the writing of both Robert Kaplan and Samuel Huntington,¹⁷ the existence of more Hispanics among the United States population has led to a change of opinion, with 57 percent of U.S. Americans believing that the United States is largely responsible for illegal immigration and should take a leading role in reaching an agreement with undocumented immigrants.¹⁸

This is undoubtedly a radical change in public opinion that will help the eagerly anticipated migration reform; however, the reform clearly will not be the panacea that many believe. Border security will be strengthened and more undocumented immigrants will be deported.¹⁹ It will take 10 years to get a Green Card, and from 13 to 15 years (the time frames proposed by the Democrats and Republicans, respectively) to be granted citizenship. Also, immigrants will have to pay fines and taxes during that time without having access to social services; however, as terrible as this path may appear, it is preferable to living in the shadows and in fear of the authorities. In short, some kind of migration reform is better than none, and 11 million undocumented immigrants are ready to set out on the long road toward legalization.

We could repeat that demographics count, because ultimately migration will subside when both countries are in more need of young people. In the United States, one out of eight citizens is over 65. By 2030, there will be 72.1 million senior citizens.²⁰ Worldwide, if today 30 people are eligible for a pension for every 100 workers, by 2040 that number will have grown to 70.²¹ Populations are aging in many countries. According to statistics for Mexico, in 1990 there were 16 peo-

ple over 60 for every 100 children and young people; by 2010, that number had grown to 31.²² Without a doubt, one of a country’s most important resources is its population of young workers. Mexico should not bet on migration, nor must the United States ignore the importance of the Mexican workers living within its borders, workers who have a strong work ethic and are willing to work long days in harsh conditions while earning lower wages than other workers.

The agreements at least change the overall discourses; it is time for political leaders to build on these ideas to implement clear policies designed to achieve these targets which, if properly formulated, can result in promoting the world’s most important economic region.

Classical authors have focused on different aspects: Malthus on demographics and geopolitics; George F. Kennan and Mackinder on geography. However, they were reductionists who did not see the complexity of all the factors. Also, during the research process we have forgotten the relevance of demography and geography in the relationship between the countries.²³ I reiterate that these factors currently define U.S.-Mexican relations. The growth of the Hispanic population in the United States and the 3000-kilometer border, at a time of global crisis, together with Mexico’s economy being on a solid footing and with a growing —albeit weakly— economy, all represent an opportunity both for the United States and Mexico. ■■■

NOTES

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The Importance of Immigration Reform for Obama's Legacy

Michael D. Layton*

After a U.S. President is inaugurated for a second time, if not before, his attention shifts from his reelection to his legacy. How will the nation evaluate the eight years he served as its first executive? How will future generations judge his tenure in office?

For Barack Obama this question has become paramount, and some tentative answers have begun to emerge. To begin with, he will always be recognized as the first African-American president, an important milestone in the advance of racial equality in the United States. In terms of his decisions in office, a series of both domestic and foreign policy initiatives and events will certainly factor into any assessment of his legacy: "Obamacare"; Guantanamo Bay; the



Arturo Nava

killing of Osama Bin Laden; his use of drones; the Boston Marathon bombing; and an array of foreign policy challenges (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, the Arab Spring, Benghazi, Syria, North Korea, and the list goes on).

There is one public policy issue that has emerged from Obama's reelection that will have an important and enduring impact not only on any assessment of his legacy but also

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a campaign promise, but solidifying his legacy
and a partisan advantage in the electorate
for the long term.

on the balance of power between Democrats and Republicans for decades: immigration reform.

Major policy reforms at key moments of United States history have cemented a president's legacy and solidified his party's electoral support. Abraham Lincoln's defense of the union and support for the Thirteenth Amendment, which ended slavery (and was immortalized in Steven Spielberg's 2012 movie), solidified Republican dominance for the rest of his century. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal transformed the relationship between the national government and society and forged a dominant partisan coalition for decades.

Can Obama's leadership on immigration reform, combined with looming demographic changes in U.S. America, cement not only Obama's legacy but also a lasting Democratic electoral advantage? In this essay, I will first establish the importance of Latino and minority voters to Obama's two electoral victories and discuss why immigration reform is so important to Latino voters. Then, I will turn my attention to the monumental demographic changes that will transform the United

States in the coming decades, and discuss their implications for Obama's legacy.

WHY LATINOS MATTERED TO OBAMA,
2008 AND 2012

The fact that heightened minority turnout and vote share made it possible for Obama to win the presidency in 2008 and retain the White House in 2012 is by now accepted wisdom. As shown in the table below, Obama lost the white vote in both elections, by 12 points in 2008 (43 percent to 55 percent) and by a staggering 20 points (39 percent to 59 percent) in 2012.¹ His support among minority groups compensated for this disadvantage, as African-Americans (93 percent), Latinos (71 percent), and Asians (73 percent) threw their support even more enthusiastically behind the incumbent (see Table 1).

The other noteworthy change from 2008 to 2012 was the overall racial composition of the electorate. There was a decline in the percentage of the electorate comprised by white voters, from 74 percent to 72 percent, but increases in Latino (from 9 percent to 10 percent) and Asian voters (from 2 percent to 3 percent). This is the first time that the total number of votes declined for any racial or ethnic group, in which the vote total from whites went from over 100 million in 2008 to just over 98 million in 2012, while the total votes cast by Blacks (plus 1.7 million), Latinos (1.4 million) and Asians

TABLE 1
VOTING BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP IN THE 2008 AND 2012 ELECTIONS

	2008			2012		
	Group	Obama	McCain	Group	Obama	Romney
	Percent			Percent		
All Voters	(%)	53	45	(%)	51	47
White	74	43	55	72	39	59
African-American	13	95	4	13	93	6
Latino	9	67	31	10	71	27
Asian	2	62	35	3	73	26
Other	3	66	31	2	58	38

Source: Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/elections/how_groups_voted/voted_08.html and http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/elections/how_groups_voted/voted_12.html.

If the Democrats can keep
their electoral advantage among Latinos
and other racial minorities, as well as the youth,
they will marginalize Republicans for
the foreseeable future.

(0.5 million) all went up.² The relatively low turnout among white voters and increasing share among key minorities added up to a victory for Obama, although his overall margin of victory declined from eight to four percentage points. It is also worth noting that the total number of votes he received declined, the first time this has occurred for a successfully re-elected president in modern times.

Noted conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly saw this as a fundamental shift in political power and the orientation of the electorate and the government: "It's a changing country, the demographics are changing. . . . It's not a traditional America anymore, and there are 50 percent of the voting public who want stuff. They want things. And who is going to give them things? President Obama." He rather glumly concluded, "The White establishment is now the minority."³

Eliseo Medina, secretary-treasurer of the Service Employees International Union, had a very different assessment: "The Latino giant is wide awake, cranky, and taking names."⁴ Given the importance Latino voters had demonstrated on election day, they had every right to be cranky: first, at leading Republicans, including Mitt Romney, for embracing the policy of self-deportation as a solution to the broken immigration system; and second, at Barack Obama, who had not only failed to move on immigration reform during his first term but had also deported record numbers of undocumented immigrants in every one of his first four years in office. Obama did have an important saving grace: in June 2012, he took executive action to address the situation of so-called "Dreamers," formally called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which temporarily suspended the deportation of young people residing unlawfully in the U.S. who immigrated as children with their parents. This action provided a measurable boost among Latinos in their level of support and enthusiasm for Obama's re-election.⁵

In an interview with *Rolling Stone Magazine*, when asked what he would do with a second term, Obama responded, "Immigration reform I believe we'll get done, because the Republican Party will start recognizing that alienating the fastest

growing segments of our society is probably not good politics for them – not to mention the fact that immigration reform is the right thing to do." From November 7 onward, the Obama administration made clear its commitment to comprehensive immigration reform. As the president proclaimed in Mexico City, "Without the strong support of Latinos, including so many Mexican Americans, I would not be standing today as President of the United States. That's the truth."⁶ With his next breath he began to talk about the need for immigration reform.

At first glance it might not seem obvious why Latino voters are so interested in immigration reform. After all, many public opinion polls before the election indicated that the slow economic recovery was their primary concern. In addition, only citizens can vote, so anyone without legal immigration status or who had not yet become a citizen could not vote anyway. But this perspective underestimates the intimate links between Latinos on both sides of the citizenship divide.

A Latino Decisions poll done in March 2013 found that 63 percent of Latinos eligible to vote "know somebody who is an undocumented immigrant" and that 39 percent "know someone who has faced detention or deportation for immigration reasons."⁷ Thus, while commentators might debate the pros and cons of reform in the abstract, for those Latinos who enjoy the right to vote, immigration policy has great personal relevance, especially the harsh reality of detention and deportation. Another groundbreaking poll by Latino Decisions, this time of undocumented immigrants, found that 85 percent have family members who are U.S. citizens and three-fifths have a U.S.-born child. In addition, nearly nine out of ten plan to apply for citizenship if immigration reform were to pass.⁸

INTERPLAY OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT

In the U.S. system of separation of powers, President Obama is dependent on Congress to enact legislation, and the recently elected 113th Congress presents a fascinating panorama. Many have proclaimed the newly elected House as the most racially diverse ever. Here are the numbers as reported by the *National Journal*: 101 women; 42 African-Americans, 31 Hispanics, 12 Asian-Americans, and 7 openly gay or bisexual members. With a total of 435 members, the House is about one-third minorities, compared with a national minority population of 36 percent. Not only is the electorate more racially

diverse, so are its duly-elected representatives. The Senate, however, has only six minorities among its 100 members: three Hispanics, two African-Americans, and one Asian-American. This year saw a record number of 20 female senators: although a far cry from being half, this number does represent an important advance, when as recently as the 1970s there were years when not a single woman served as senator.⁹

Ironically, the Senate is the point of origin for the most important and promising comprehensive immigration reform proposal. The Group of Eight, evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, has taken the lead in developing the legislation. One of its members, Sen. John McCain (R-Arizona), frankly stated the core motivation of Republican support: “Elections, elections.”¹⁰ But this pragmatic, electoral motivation is at odds with a key element of the conservative, Republican ideology: the rejection of any “amnesty” for those who have broken the law by immigrating illegally. For Democrats and their constituents, a pathway to citizenship is an essential element of reform. Hence, the proposed legislation, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, contains two key aspects: first, securing the border combined with rigorous employer enforcement, and second, a comprehensive reform of immigration law that includes a challenging pathway to citizenship.¹¹

It did not take long before cracks in Republican support for the bill began to emerge. The primary Republican spokesperson for the bill is Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), a rising star in the party not only for his Cuban-American heritage, but also for his conservative credentials. He has come into direct, public confrontation with former Senator Jim DeMint, who now leads the Heritage Foundation conservative think tank. Heritage published a damning analysis of the reform that claimed it would cost more than US\$6.3 trillion to implement, although the contents of the report have been overshadowed by a scandal involving racist claims by one of the co-authors in his doctoral dissertation. (The researcher, Jason Richwine, wrote in his 2009 Harvard dissertation, “No one knows whether Hispanics will ever reach IQ parity with whites, but the prediction that new Hispanic immigrants will have low-IQ children and grandchildren is difficult to argue against.”)¹²

What is at stake for Republicans is not simply their support of immigration reform, but their relationship with a growing segment of the population. What is at stake for Obama is not just a campaign promise, but solidifying his legacy and a partisan advantage in the electorate for the long term.

DEMOGRAPHY, PARTISANSHIP, AND OBAMA’S LEGACY

The question this essay addresses is whether immigration reform can cement Obama’s legacy in terms of cementing the support of “minority” voters, especially Latinos, for the Democratic Party. One issue beyond dispute is that soon whites will no longer constitute a majority of the U.S. population, and the country will soon be “majority-minority,” i.e., what are today considered racial and ethnic minorities will soon constitute more than half the population. Whichever party wins their loyal support will dominate electoral politics for the foreseeable future.

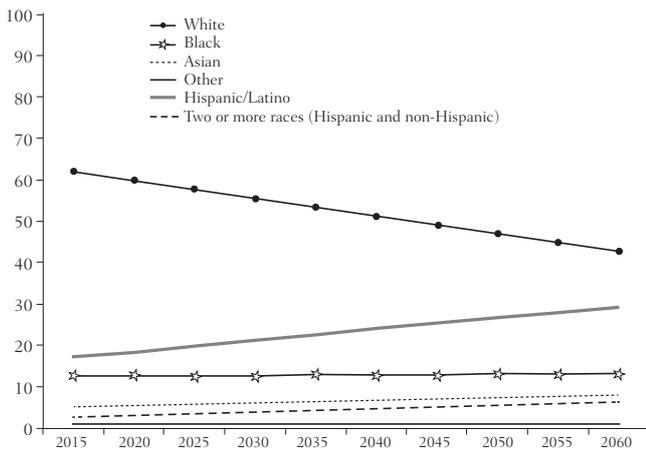
The demographic projections tell a compelling story. By 2060 the Census Bureau forecasts that the percentage of whites will decline by 20 percentage points, from 62 percent to 43 percent, while the percentage of Hispanics will rise from 18 percent to 29 percent, Asians will grow from 5 percent to 8 percent, and those reporting two or more races will double from 3 percent to 6 percent. The United States will become what California, Texas, New Mexico, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia are today: minority-majority (see Table 2).

The other critical aspect of this demographic transformation is age: this demographic showdown was presaged by Ron Brownstein writing in the *National Journal*: “Brown Versus Gray,” popularizing the work of Brookings Institution demographer William Frey, who “projects that minorities will constitute an absolute majority of children by the end of this decade.” As the young, brown generation grows, the white population will age, with the number of senior citizens enrolled in government programs doubling from 40 million to 80 million in two decades, and more than four-fifths of these beneficiaries are white.¹³

The reality is that if the Democrats can keep their electoral advantage among Latinos and other racial minorities, as well as the youth, they will marginalize Republicans for the foreseeable future. What impact will immigration reform have upon how racial and ethnic groups align with the political parties?

For Latinos who enjoy the right to vote,
immigration policy has great personal relevance,
especially the harsh reality of detention
and deportation. Eighty-five percent have family
members who are U.S. citizens, and three-fifths
have a U.S.-born child.

TABLE 2
POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY RACE
AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, 2015 TO 2060



Source: United States Census Bureau, "Projections of the Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2015 to 2060," 2012 *National Population Projections*, <https://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2012/summarytables.html>

Using a bizarre analogy, conservative and Tea Party leader Dick Armey said, "You can't call someone ugly and expect them to go to the prom with you. We've chased the Hispanic voter out of his natural home." But it is wishful thinking on the part of Republicans to imagine that their support of immigration reform will win them Latino votes: on a number of other issues there is an important rift. In other words, the Republican Party is not necessarily the "natural home" for many Latinos. For example, Latino voters are more supportive of gay marriage and health care reform, and many see the government as key to their achievement of the American dream, a notion at odds with the Republican anti-government rhetoric. Some polls estimate that Latinos lean Democrat by a two-to-one margin, and that advantage is even more pronounced among younger Latinos.¹⁴

Obama's support for immigration reform and the internal debate among Republicans about whether to favor it reflect the histories of both parties. When the Republican Party was born in the 1850s, it benefitted from the support of the nativists elements of the Know Nothings and the American Party, who opposed immigration and the Catholicism of most immigrants. On the other side, the ranks of the Democratic Party swelled with newcomers to America, especially the Irish and Germans. In a sense it is more consistent historically for

Many have proclaimed the newly elected House as the most racially diverse ever. 101 women; 42 African-Americans, 31 Hispanics, 12 Asian-Americans, and 7 openly gay or bisexual members. The House is about one-third minorities.

the Democrats to favor immigration reform, while it goes against the grain of the history of the Republican Party.¹⁵

It the end, Obama's support for immigration reform might not be enough for him to be credited with solidifying the support of Latinos and other minorities for the Democrats. Clearly, he is the beneficiary of the long-term trajectory of his own party and that of his opponents. A central issue in determining a president's legacy is how much credit he deserves for what transpires during his term. In the case of Barack Obama, his biography aligned with demographic change in America, and a test for Democrats will be whether subsequent candidates will elicit similar levels of support, enthusiasm, and turnout. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ It is important to note that it is not uncommon for Democratic presidential candidates to do poorly among white voters. In their losing efforts in 2004, Kerry garnered 41 percent, and in 2000 Gore earned 42 percent of their votes.
- ² Thom File, "The Diversifying Electorate-Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections)," *Current Population Survey Reports*, pp. 20-569 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-568.pdf>, accessed May 9, 2012.
- ³ Bill O'Reilly, "The White Establishment Is Now the Minority," November 07, 2012, Fox Nation, <http://nation.foxnews.com/bill-oreilly/2012/11/07/bill-o-reilly-white-establishment-now-minority>, accessed May 9, 2013.
- ⁴ Carrie Budoff Brown, Jake Sherman, and Manu Raju, "2012 Election Puts Spotlight on Immigration Reform," November 8, 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/83552.html#ixzz2Sj0BqwZs>, accessed May 10, 2012.
- ⁵ Immigration Policy Center, "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): A Resource Page," October 25, 2012, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-resource-page>, accessed May 7, 2012. *Latino Decisions*, "New Poll: Obama leads Romney among Latinos in key 2012 battleground states," June 12, 2012, <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2012/06/22/new-poll-obama-leads-romney-among-latinos-in-key-2012-battleground-states/>, accessed May 17, 2012.
- ⁶ Douglas Brinkley, "Obama and the Road Ahead: The Rolling Stone Interview," *Rolling Stone Magazine*, November 8, 2012, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/obama-and-the-road-ahead-the-rolling-stone-interview-20121025>. "Remarks by the President to the People of Mexico," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/03/remarks-president-people-mexico>, accessed May 7, 2013.

⁷ Latino Consortium/Latino Decisions CIR Poll Toplines-Released March 18, 2013; http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/1913/6357/1744/Latino_Consortium_Toplines_-_March_18_Release.pdf, accessed May 15, 2013.

⁸ Matt Barreto and Gary Segura, "Poll of Undocumented Immigrants Reveals Strong Family and Social Connections in America," *Latino Decisions*, April 15, 2013, <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/04/15/poll-of-undocumented-immigrants-reveals-strong-family-and-social-connections-in-america/>, accessed May 17, 2013.

⁹ Doris Nhan, "Map: Compare the Diverse 113th Congress with a Diversifying U.S. Population," *National Journal*, March 15, 2013, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/thenextamerica/demographics/map-compare-the-diverse-113th-congress-with-a-diversifying-us-population-20130315?mrefid=skybox>, accessed May 12, 2012.

¹⁰ Dana Bash and Tom Cohen, "Possible Compromise on Immigration Reform Takes Shape," CNN, January 28, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/28/politics/immigration-reform>, accessed May 7, 2013.

¹¹ For the complete bill and summary, see <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s744>.

¹² Anna Palmer and Tarini Parti, "Immigration Battle: Marco Rubio vs. Jim DeMint," *Politico*, May 8, 2013, <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/05/rubio-demint-immigration-91048.html>; Robert Rector and Jason Richwine, Ph.D., "The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer," The Heritage Foundation, http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/sr133.pdf; Dylan Matthews, "Heritage Study Co-

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¹³ Ronald Brownstein, "The Brown versus Gray: The Demographic Schism between Minority Youth and Elderly Whites May Polarize American Politics for Decades," *National Journal*, June 2, 2011. http://www.nationaljournal.com/njonline/no_20100508_1960.php/brown-versus-gray-20110602, accessed May 7, 2013.

¹⁴ Andrew Dugan, "Democrats Enjoy 2-1 Advantage Over GOP among Hispanics," February 25, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/160706/democrats-enjoy-advantage-gop-among-hispanics.aspx>; Matthew Cooper, March 17, 2013, "GOP Can't Win Latinos Over Immigration," <http://www.nationaljournal.com/thenextamerica/politics/gop-can-t-win-latinos-over-immigration-20130317>; Paul Taylor, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jessica Hamar Martínez, and Gabriel Velasco, "When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity," Pew Hispanic Center, April 4, 2012, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2012/04/PHC-Hispanic-Identity.pdf>, accessed May 16, 2013.

¹⁵ William E. Gienapp, "Nativism and the Creation of a Republican Majority in the North before the Civil War," *The Journal of American History* vol. 72, no. 3, December 1985, pp. 529-559, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1904303>, accessed May 7, 2013. Robin Dale Jacobson, *The New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

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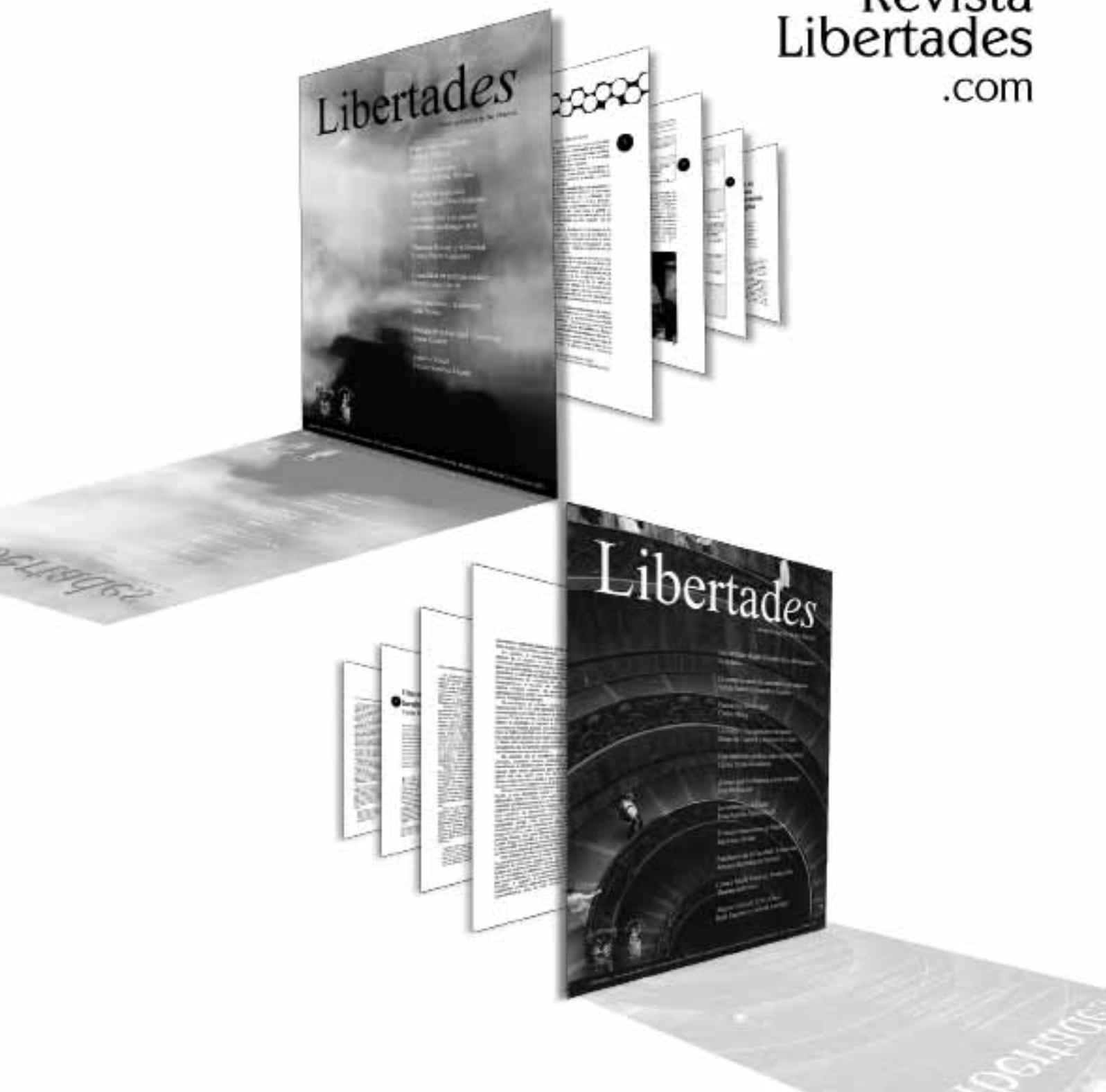
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Vecinos en conflicto. Argentina y Estados Unidos en las Conferencias Panamericanas (1880-1955)

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

Leandro Morgenfeld

Peña Lillo/Ediciones Continente

Buenos Aires, 2011, 448 pp.



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

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

Paolo Riguzzi and Patricia de los Ríos

UNAM

Mexico City, 2012, 738 pp.

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

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

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

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

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

Since the end of the nineteenth century, bilateral relations between Argentina and the United States have centered on the U.S. strategy for economic and political domination in the region.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the U. S., the Pan-American Conferences were a scenario where it attempted to expand capitalism to counter European domination in Latin America and avert the creation of Latin American integrationist projects that would exclude it.

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

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

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

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

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

Both books analyse the period spanning the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries and authors put forward the need to study bilateral relations looking beyond political and diplomatic issues.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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