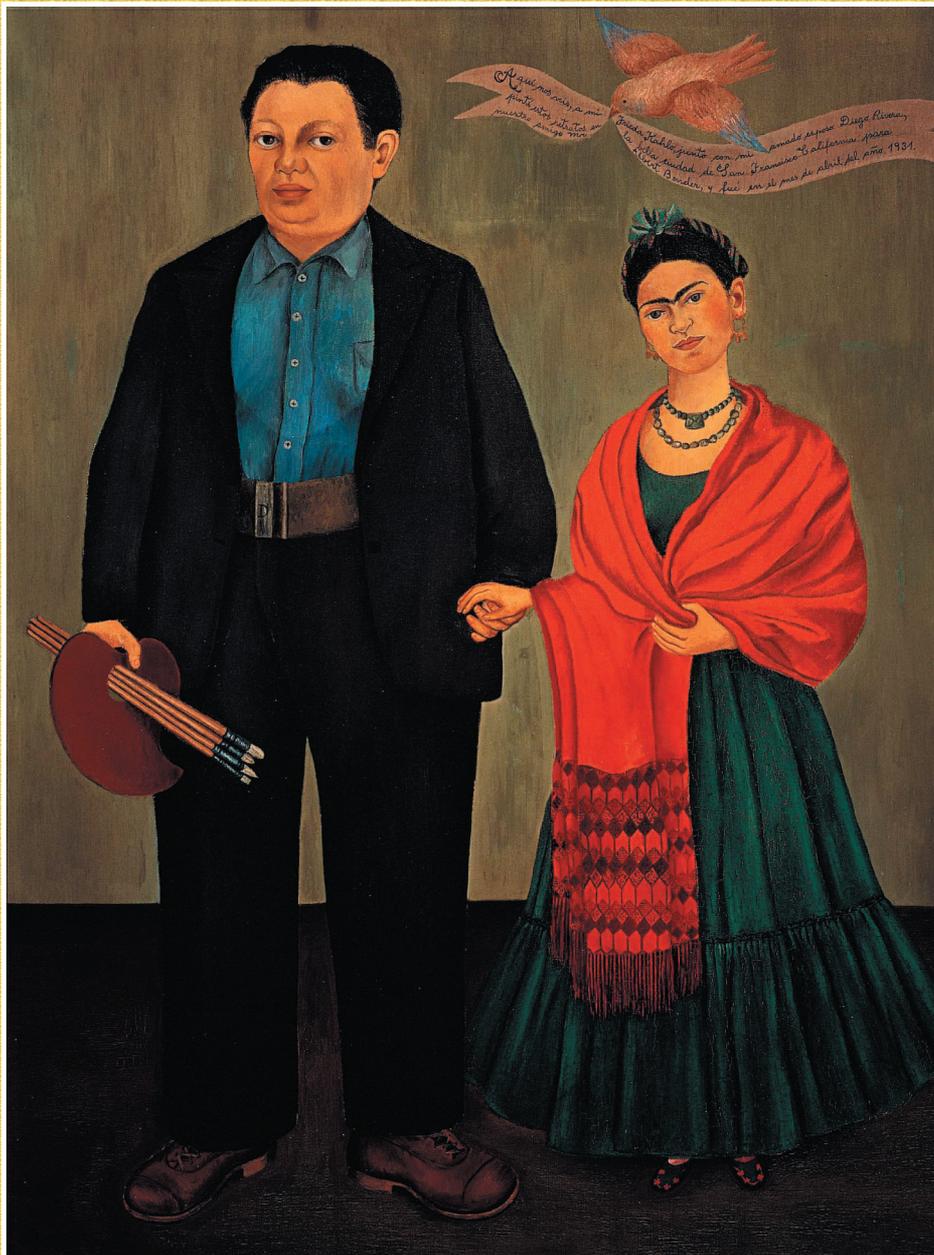


VOICES of Mexico

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Mexico's Process Of Reforms

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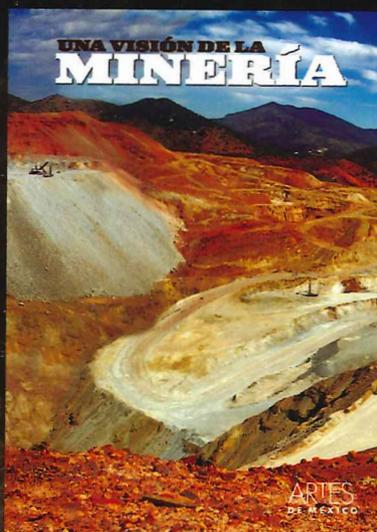


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¿QUÉ ES UNA MINA SINO UNA PLANTA CUBIERTA DE TIERRA?



En el número 86 de Artes de México,

UNA VISIÓN DE LA MINERÍA

descubra una tradición, un oficio
y la vida cotidiana que se construye
a partir del palpitar de las minas,
y del amor a la tierra.



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DE MÉXICO

VOICESTM of Mexico

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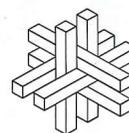
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Elsie Montiel

Cover

Frida Kahlo, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera*, 100 x 78 cm, 1931 (oil on canvas). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Albert M. Bender Collection.

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Elsie Montiel

OUR VOICE

George W. Bush is getting increasingly weaker and has been progressively losing credibility. Even his most loyal Gallies at home and abroad view him with suspicion. His political position has weakened and his initiatives have been systematically rejected by broad layers of society and the national and international political classes, who have been increasingly wounded by his government's clumsy arrogance and offensiveness. He bet on policies so extreme that he got burned and burned his possibilities of governing effectively and with dignity. His skirmishes with Congress are indicative of the fix he is in. Trailing behind him is a veritable political shipwreck that not even Truman or Nixon endured at their worst moments.

This is the head of the most powerful nation in the history of the global village, who opted to exercise *hard power*—and now he is paying for it—and, as a result, his foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East and Iraq, have stopped being rational. Its rational center, which guaranteed U.S. leaders certain equilibrium in local and international decision-making, has been lost. Inside the United States, the facts testify eloquently to this crisis. His closest collaborators (Powell, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Tenet, Bolton, Rove, Gonzales and a long list of others) have abandoned him. Whether because they were worn out or because of political or administrative incompetence, they resigned exhibiting the administration's great fiascos: Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, the Patriot Act, immigration reform, the U.S.\$160 billion budget deficit, etc. The current U.S. administration is discredited domestically and international at historic levels: fewer than 30 percent of Americans approve of the government's performance; internationally the figures are similar, the lowest in modern history for the imperial presidency.

This is a crisis of legitimacy reminiscent of the political crisis of the 1960s. Bush is practically a political liability, what is known in political jargon as a "lame duck", even among some Republicans, who try to disassociate themselves from him. Given his administration's paralysis, today it is managing the remains of what could be a latent crisis of the state, with already palpable consequences due to the breakdown of the political consensus. Certainly, this three-level crisis began with Bush's widely questioned election in 2001, continued tragically with the September 2001 terrorist attacks and sharpened dramatically beginning in March 2003, when Washington illegally, illegitimately and unilaterally decided to invade Iraq. Since then, we have witnessed an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the United States presidency: Bush has prematurely begun to wind down his mandate; he no longer has the social and political support he needs to govern credibly. To top it all off, his decisions lack a strategic vision, not a vision that would let him win, but one that at least would allow him to simply get out of the infernal maze the United States is in the theater of war in Iraq.

In short, it should be emphasized that President Bush is not only managing the shipwreck of his mandate badly: what we are witnessing is the inexorable decline of the United States as a great power. This does not mean that it will not continue to embark on adventures of war games that it does not even know how to get out of anymore. All of this will soon be left to the next administration, which, regardless of the party that wins, will have only one way out: moving toward the center to avoid the extremism and confusion that George Bush has subjected us to.

Today, the future of politics in the United States will depend, perhaps more dramatically than ever, on the course of its foreign policy. If Bush in his desperation insists on attacking Iran in an attempt to distract the public's attention, the next occupant of the White House will inherit an extremely dangerous powder keg. And undoubtedly, that political situation will worsen the precarious domestic and external conflict in which Bush has submerged his country and the entire world.

* * *

The insensitivity of the current U.S. administration and, it must be added, also of broad sectors of that country's political class has affected millions of our compatriots living and working on the other side of the border. This is proven by short-sighted and largely ineffective measures like the fence, or the proposals to criminalize undocumented migrants and curtail amnesty to a minimum. These are the topics dealt with in our "North American Issues" section by researchers Mónica Vereá and César Pérez. Vereá analyzes the different immigration bills presented to both houses of Congress and delineates their increasingly conservative stances. Pérez describes the ultra-conservative, apparently pragmatic—but actually cynical and ahistorical—environment in which the immigration debate is taking place, now dominating both U.S. parties.

Mexico has begun a long-awaited period of change: the much heralded structural reforms. We seem to be shaking off the lethargy of the lack of political consensus. However, the real scope of this trend is not clear yet. A lot of changes

are still to be made. Several articles in the “Politics,” “Economy” and “Society” sections deal with this issue. First, Roberto Gutiérrez looks at the recent electoral reform and its most applauded points like the new relationship it establishes between parties and media by forbidding the purchase of campaign spots at election time. This is a good starting point for the still pending reform of the state. Then, Ricardo Becerra offers us his vision about the enormous importance of the amendment of Article 6 of the Constitution, ushering in a new era for transparency and accountability in Mexico. The amendment is a definite advance in regulating the protection of personal data, determining when it is possible to override banking secrecy or ensuring compliance by public institutions in turning over information requested from them without questioning the reasons behind the request.

Gregorio Vidal offers us a critical analysis of the recently approved fiscal reform, which he considers is actually a series of superficial changes that will not resolve the real need for more government revenues. On the contrary, he thinks the new law will unduly tax small and medium-sized companies without closing any of the loopholes that make it possible for some corporations to avoid paying money into government coffers. Eduardo Andere presents an analysis of basic and middle education in Mexico, pointing to the need of a profound reform. Linked to the issue of education is the state of scientific research policies in Mexico, which also need immediate attention. Mario González Rubí deals with this issue, recognizing some advances, but also pointing to the big problems in development and funding, which in Mexico’s case lags way behind the percent of GDP recommended by the UN. It must be said that as a public university our position on the subject radically differs from those visions that consider that higher education is not a public good. These positions have been proven wrong and ignore that it is a commodity that demands our attention as a problem of mayor state strategic importance and as a matter of national security.

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* also touches on other topics relevant to Mexico today. Jesús Esquivel contributes an article about drug-trafficking-linked violence, which has led the Calderón administration to change its priorities on the Mexico-U.S. bilateral agenda, replacing immigration with the fight against organized crime, a strategy which still remains to be proven right. Enrique Pino also writes about Mexico’s bilateral agenda, but this time *vis-à-vis* Canada, analyzing the specific weight that our two countries’ relations have had in the integration of North America.

* * *

Our “Art and Culture” section joins the national and international celebrations of the centennial of Frida Kahlo’s birth with a review of two exhibitions. The first, in Mexico City’s Fine Arts Palace Museum, brought together the largest number of Frida’s works and objects ever gathered in a single exhibit, including paintings never before displayed, personal objects, letters and photographs. The second, at the Frida and Diego “Blue House” Museum, where Frida lived and died, revealed her treasures, documents, photos, books and other items that had been locked away until recently at her husband Diego Rivera’s request.

In a related article, Guillermo Tovar de Teresa explains the background behind the current exhibit of photographs by Frida’s father, Guillermo Kahlo, and American photographer Henry Greenwood Peabody at the Old San Ildefonso College. The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century photographs of monumental Mexican architecture are landmarks in Mexican society’s recovery of our appreciation for our architectural heritage.

“The Splendor of Mexico” is dedicated to the state of Campeche. Starting with the capital city, Campeche, declared a World Heritage Treasure in 1999, we take in the walls built to protect it from pirates. Then, Leticia Staines offers us the first of two articles about the different architectural styles found in Campeche’s archaeological sites, which preserve the monumental remains of great Mayan cities of the past. Lastly, Jorge Javier Romero gives our readers a taste of Campeche’s cuisine, the result of the mixture of traditional regional recipes with others from old Spain that make for a unique gastronomical identity.

The vast Mayan legacy can be seen in the state’s historical buildings, in themselves worthy of admiration, that now house museums like the Museum of Mayan Archaeology in the San Miguel Fort, one of the two built to defend the city from pirate forays. Its splendid view of the sea is only equaled by its marvelous collection of original Mayan pieces: jade masks, stelas, necklaces, ceramics and the remains of burial sites. In the “Ecology” section, Francisco Gurría analyzes the future of the Calakmul ecological reserve, particularly those areas where human settlements demand the implementation of sustainable development strategies.

Lastly, in our “Literature” section, Arturo Cosme and Rosa María Jasso contribute an article about the treatment of death in pre-Columbian poetry, offering us a very affecting focus on the cosmogony and sensibility of the founding peoples of our land.

In closing, I am happy to announce that *Voices of Mexico* has been awarded the 2007 National Chamber of the Mexican Publishing Industry (Caniem) Prize for Publishing in the category of “Political and General Information Magazines.” We are very proud of this recognition, but above all, it will encourage us to double our efforts to offer our readers a better and better magazine.

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

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n. 35 • septiembre - diciembre 2007

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Mexico's New Electoral Reforms Consolidating the Rules of Political Competition

Roberto Gutiérrez L.*



Guillermo Pérez/Cuattrocuro

A long-simmering debate over new proposals for the reform of Mexico's electoral system came to a head in August, focusing on the proposal to ban registered political parties, private institutions and individuals from purchasing air time in the broadcast media during campaigns. Arguments on both sides were heated, charging rampant media manipulation and profit-seeking on the one hand and the violation of the freedom of expression on the other. Hearings attended by some of the country's best known media figures put the spotlight on the congressional debate, which finally ended in the passage of a bill severely curtailing air time used during electoral campaigns, renovating the Federal Electoral Institute and limiting campaign length.

More than 10 years after the 1996 electoral reform, then considered "definitive," once again a profound process of deliberation and negotiation has

opened up among the country's main political forces about the legal-institutional framework for federal elections starting in 2009. The 1996 rules of the game for electoral competition basically hinged on the construction of trustworthy electoral institutions: the make-up of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) and the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (TEPJF). Today, this has been complemented by a new constitution-

* Professor-researcher at the Sociology Department and director of the Division of Social Science and Humanities at the Autonomous Metropolitan University Azcapotzalco campus.

al design dealing with some of the main problems linked to forms of political competition that put the country's political stability at grave risk during the 2006 elections.

To understand the central thrust of the new electoral reform, it is useful to compare the conditions in which the 2000 presidential campaigns were waged with those of the 2006 elections, which were decisive in sparking both society and the national political forces' determination to reform.

The year 2000 certainly opened up the possibilities for the consolidation of democracy in Mexico with the alternation in the presidency. That year, competition took place without too many contretemps and electoral authorities' performance was not severely questioned. This was due in part to the wide margin by which National Action Party (PAN) candidate Vicente Fox took the election, but also to the electoral authority's correct organization of the elections and management of all the information involved in the process. Another contribution to the social and political calm of that decisive moment

The fact that the parties had to directly negotiate the time slots and rates for airing their ads with the communications consortia gave the media a degree of influence seldom seen in Mexico's modern history.

in the country's democratic evolution was the acceptance of defeat by Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate Francisco Labastida and the attitude of outgoing President Ernesto Zedillo, who lent certainty to the electoral results when he recognized the victory of the opposition party candidate.

The 2006 elections were totally different for several reasons. In the first place, in contrast with the council in charge of the 2000 presidential elections the newly elected IFE General Council, did not have the unanimous support of all congressional caucuses, thus bringing its legitimacy into question; this was an important element that muddied the waters. At the time, it was considered something that could spark serious doubts about the impartiality of the organization of the 2006 elections because the fact that the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) had not participated in electing the council introduced a principle of illegitimacy in its actions. This concern would become open discontent after the president counselor's questionable statements following the close

of voting: before the legal process had concluded, he practically gave the win to the frontrunner in the balloting.

In addition, the fact that one candidate had remained consistently ahead in the polls before election day significantly changed the way that his competitors waged their campaigns. The political work that Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the candidate for the Coalition for the Good of All, had done as mayor of Mexico City had given him enormous visibility at the formal start of the campaigns. So, with this head start, to his rivals, López Obrador looked like the enemy to beat, which led the campaigns to take a different tack from previous elections: a high dose of political belligerence led to what different analysts considered a dirty war against the frontrunner. In that context, the media played a clear role: it was a powerful influence on both relations among candidates and their links to the citizenry. For several months it was evident that the parties were willing to invest a large part of their campaign funding in their media outreach.

The fact that the campaigns were waged in large part in the media gave the latter great power to negotiate and make political decisions, and they used it to impose conditions on the parties and candidates. It is well known, for example, that in the last months of the Fox administration, changes were made in the legislation governing broadcast media—remember the so called “Televisa Law”—¹ to increase the privileges of Mexico's communications monopolies. The fact that the parties had to directly negotiate the time slots and rates for airing their ads with the communications consortia in the midst of tense political competition, gave the media a degree of influence seldom seen in Mexico's modern history. As some of their main representatives have admitted, media entrepreneurs pressured and subjected the political class as a whole to humiliating treatment.

It is absolutely necessary to keep all this in mind to be able to understand the content and scope of the recently approved electoral reform.² Thus, for example, the questioning of the IFE General Council's performance, and particularly that of its president, led to an agreement on its comprehensive, step-by-step overhaul.³ The law also mandated that this should be carried out right away, stipulating that within 30 days of the legislation going into effect, the Chamber of Deputies would elect a new IFE General Council.

Thus, and despite the fact that it was never clearly proven that the election had been fraudulent, the removal of the members of the IFE General Council was accepted, even by the PAN, in order to reach a comprehensive agreement on

new legislation in this matter. It should also be emphasized that many sectors had demanded the council be renovated in a staggered way in order to ensure the experience thus far accumulated not be lost.

Fundamentally, the changes proposed created a new model of relationships among political parties, media and election campaigns. The aforementioned media heavy-handedness during the 2006 elections, which turned into multi-million-peso profits for their owners, created the conditions for the political parties to be able to propose a radical shift in their relations with the media.⁴

The new norms are not just a technical or financial change in the relationship between parties and the media. What has happened is a profound break with the forms of political interaction that had made the media a de facto power with the capability of subordinating the institutional powers

The electoral reform thus affirms a model of representative democracy that had been significantly infringed upon by media pressure. Both the form and the content of the legislative changes implied a major reconfiguration of power relations, which sparked an unprecedented political and ideological reaction by the affected groups. As everyone knows, the media consortia mounted an intense campaign to impugn and discredit the changes that bring with them a substantial reduction in their income from the sale of political ads. In fact, the constitutional reform contained several stipulations that were unacceptable from the point of view of these entrepreneurs' interests. Among the most important are:

- Prohibiting the purchase of air time for electoral spots directly by political parties or others on television and radio.
- Prohibiting the purchase by any individual or legal entity of radio or television ads aimed at influencing electoral choices.
- Stipulating that parties will disseminate their views in the broadcast media exclusively in the time slots allocated to the government by law.
- Designating the IFE as the body in charge of administering and distributing government air time among the parties and authorizing it to cancel radio and television broadcasts if they violate electoral legislation.
- Prohibiting government ads during electoral campaigns.
- Reducing presidential campaign length from 186 to 90 days and midterm federal elections for deputies to only 60 days. Pre-campaigns will also be limited to two-thirds the time allotted to the campaigns themselves.

As a whole, all this implied a considerable reduction in sales of air time for the broadcast media. That is why, arguing that they were supposedly defending freedom of expression, the big radio and television networks openly challenged the legislature both through direct aggression in the open Senate hearings on the issue and in editorials and negative spots inserted in their regular programming. They also tried to influence state legislatures to vote against the bill passed by the federal Congress because a constitutional reform requires the approval of at least 16 of Mexico's 31 state legislatures to go into effect. They were joined in these efforts by some locally important political figures interested in promoting their media image to create more opportunities for themselves in the future. However, despite all the pressure, the reform kept gaining strength, getting important support from different parts of the public and giving rise to broad consensuses that ensured the resounding result of only a single state legislature (Coahuila) voting it down.

A great deal remains
to be determined about the relationship
among the media, money and political parties,
between the IFE and the Congress and
electoral authorities' supervisory
powers over the parties.

In this context, the reform's passage has effectively made for a reordering not only of the institutional variables in electoral play, but the reestablishment—even if only partial—of the sovereignty of state institutions through the subordination of a de facto power that had been increasing its range of economic, political and cultural influence in recent decades.

In addition to the reforms already described, the Congress also established a series of complementary stipulations that have the 2006 elections as a reference point. For example, unions and syndicates of any kind are forbidden from participating in the creation of political parties, since this is reserved exclusively for the citizenry through their free, individual affiliation. It should be remembered here that the participation of teachers in the founding and leadership of the New Alliance Party was roundly criticized.

Negative campaigning has also been prohibited, obligating the parties to abstain from making denigrating and/or slan-

derous statements about institutions, parties or individuals. I already mentioned how belligerent the 2006 campaigns were and their shift from the confrontation of ideas and programs to personal disqualification and fear-mongering. Although it is desirable that the campaigns be pro-active and stay away from slander and insults, it is also the case that electoral authorities will have to be extremely careful to not confuse the latter with the legitimate, necessary criticism political opponents must make of each other.

Even more polemical than this last prohibition is the one that stipulates that the head of the controller's office of the Federal Electoral Institute will be designated by the Chamber of Deputies itself, which throws some doubt on the autonomy that office will enjoy. There has also been a lively debate about autonomy in the relationship between the IFE and local electoral bodies, since the constitutional reform opens up the possibility that, through a specific agreement and at the request of competent state authorities, the IFE can take over the organization of local elections.

We should not forget that the precise profile and scope of the constitutional reform will depend to a great extent on the regulatory legislation that still must be formulated. In effect, then, a great deal remains to be determined with regard to the relationship among the communications media, money and political parties, between the IFE and the Congress, or with regard to the electoral authorities' supervisory powers over the parties. Nevertheless, the general lines of the constitutional reform are a good starting point for creating

a more solid, dependable basis for Mexico's system of competition and representation. **NMM**

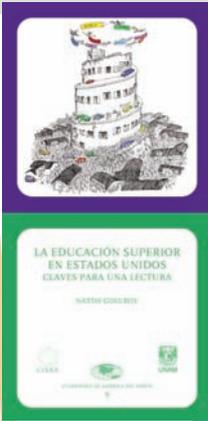
NOTES

- ¹ See my article in issue 77 of *Voices of Mexico*.
- ² The reform began to take shape in the framework of the broad discussion about the reform of the state in Mexico, and was considered a priority on that agenda. It received the almost unanimous backing of the national political forces: in the Chamber of Deputies it was passed with 361 votes; in the Senate, with 111; and 30 of the 31 state and local congresses ratified it. The opposition in some of the congresses came from minority parties that felt their survival to be threatened since the distribution of public monies and broadcast times will be based fundamentally on the number of votes each party received in previous elections.
- ³ The legal procedure for beginning practically immediately the overhaul of the council is stipulated in Transitory Article Four of the reform, which states, "The president councilor will serve a term of six years and can be reelected once. The electoral councilors will serve a term of nine years, will be replaced in a staggered fashion and cannot be re-elected. Both the president and the other councilors will be elected successively by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at the time of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies, after being proposed by the parliamentary caucuses and a broad consultation with society." Their election will take place as follows: "a) A new president councilor will be elected whose mandate will conclude October 30, 2013. He or she may be re-elected for a single term according to the terms of paragraph three of Article 41 of this Constitution; b) Two new electoral councilors will be elected, whose mandate will conclude October 30, 2016; c) When this decree goes into effect, of the eight currently sitting electoral councilors, three will be elected to have their mandates end August 15, 2008, and three who will continue to sit until October 30, 2010; d) By August 15, 2008, three new electoral councilors will be elected whose mandate will conclude October 30, 2013."
- ⁴ In 2006, more than half the public funds allotted to political parties were estimated to have been earmarked for media ads. It should be noted that between 1994 and 2006, 4.5 billion pesos were spent on ads in the broadcast media. See Alonso Urrutia's article "Entre 1994 y 2006 se gastaron 4,500 millones en radio y TV," *La Jornada*, September 7, 2007.



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Mexico: Transparency and The Constitution

Ricardo Becerra*



Paola Hidalgo/Cuartoscuro

The president of the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information, Alonso Lujambio, with President Calderón.

July 20, 2007 is a very significant date for the right to information in Mexico. On that day, an incisive addition to Article 6 of the Constitution went into effect, turning transparency and the access to government documents and information into fundamental rights.¹ This contribution to democratization was originally requested in Chihuahua by five state governors, members of Mexico’s three largest political parties. The proposal reached the Chamber of Deputies, where it was reformulated and put to the vote: 425 in favor and 0 against. Then, the Senate deliberated and passed it unanimously. Finally, in record time, 22 state congresses ratified this authentically nationwide consensus. Where does the importance of this constitutional change lie?

First, in its enormous scope. The first paragraph of the reform reads, “All information in the possession of any fed-

eral, state and municipal authority, entity, body and organism is public.”² This means that no government or public institution—from Tijuana to Tapachula and from Mérida to La Paz— can evade its responsibilities with regard to transparency, and that all its documents, in principle, are considered accessible to any individual. We are talking about the federal government’s 243 bodies, 32 entire state governments, and 2,443 municipal governments, plus all other bodies that receive public monies (under the specific stipulations laid out in the laws regulating them).

But there is one more thing: the senators and deputies wrote the words “all information.” That is to say, we are not just referring to documents regarding the origin, use or destination or public monies, but much, much more: we are talking about all the information that is the basis for government decisions, the faculties and functions of public servants, the analyses, diagnoses, deliberations and communications of state bodies. The underlying message is that,

* IFAI general director for service to the public and institutional relations.

since state activities cannot be illegal and must be rigorous, well-founded and legitimate, they must be public, published and openly defended.

Second, the only principle contrary to publishing information, the only exception given the same value and weight, is the right to privacy. The bill specifies in this regard, “Information referring to individuals’ private lives and personal data shall be protected as stipulated in and with the exceptions established by the law.” This is a step beyond the notions established in Article 6; that is, it is no longer just a matter of preventing authorities from physically invading a person’s domicile or confiscating his/her goods or arbitrarily depriving him/her of his/her freedom or guaranteeing the private nature of communications among private individuals.

The amendment of Article 6 of the Constitution, I repeat, goes beyond these stipulations. The documents contained in government archives containing private information about Mexican citizens cannot be divulged or circulated without

One of the most spectacular steps forward made by the amendment to Article 6 of the Constitution is that it strengthens the right to privacy. Constitutionally speaking, this is no longer only a matter of Mexicans’ “not being bothered” by government agencies, but rather that the state must protect the information it has about them.

their authorization or a powerful legal reason. It is no longer a matter of merely preventing abuses, but of giving new status to personal data and creating a protective ring around privacy.

Third, the reform will have multiplying effects that go beyond the laws on transparency. Paragraph six states, “Legislation will determine the manner in which those mandated to comply will make the information public about public resources given to individuals or entities.” That is, the country is obliged to undertake a series of reforms not only of transparency laws, but also of other areas and bodies that are not public authorities but do make decisions in the public interest and receive public monies. The senators’ recommendation states, “This constitutional change is particularly important because it opens up a very broad cycle of adjustment of norms in the national state’s legal system: political parties, trusts, civil society organizations and any other body which receives public resources. Each with its own specifi-

city, these bodies must also comply with these constitutional norms.”³ That is to say, transparency will come to more laws, organizations and areas of public life because they cannot contravene constitutional principles. Their specificity is respected, but they are obliged to act transparently under constitutional guidelines.

That is the importance and the impact in all directions of making a new democratic rule universal: whoever exercises any form of power is obliged to explain it.

I do not hesitate to say that this is one of the most important democratic reforms to be implemented in Mexico in the last 10 years, comparable in scope and consequences to the 1996 electoral reform. This opens up both unprecedented obligations and a new opportunity: jumping into another age, a new era of access to information. Based on a minimal, general constitutional stipulation, everything can be reformed. And, if this is the case, what will the coordinates of the new age of transparency in Mexico be? I am betting on these five:

1. Improving the institutional design to guarantee this right. Many of the worst simulations we have witnessed in the last four years (since the law, federal regulations and state laws were instituted) have consisted of the bodies responsible for insuring that information flow to the public not being trained, lacking knowledge, or simply being dependent on or too close to officials (heads of departments, governors, etc.) who denied that information. This is the number one task of the new era: guaranteeing independence and autonomy *vis-à-vis* all authorities to ensure access to information.
2. Definitely, the ability to use the most commonly professed pretext for refusing to provide public information in Mexico in recent years—that the document requested “does not exist”—must be nipped in the bud. Mexican citizens may request information from their governments, but since officials argue that it is not written down, their requests are loftily refused, even if the document must obviously, *a fortiori*, exist because it comes under the jurisdiction of the competent authorities. In this case, current Chihuahua legislation points the way to the future: the authorities will be obliged to “document all actions taken in the exercise of the faculties expressly granted them by applicable legal ordinances.”
3. One of the most spectacular steps forward made by the amendment to Article 6 of the Constitution is that it strengthens the right to privacy. Constitutionally speaking, this is

THE AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 6 OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Permanent Commission of the Honorable Congress, in full use of the power bestowed on it by Article 135 of the Constitution, and after approval by both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of Mexico, as well as the majority of state legislatures, decrees:

A second paragraph with seven subsections is hereby added to Article 6 of the Mexican Constitution.

Single Article. A second paragraph with seven subsections is added to Article 6 of the Mexican Constitution, which will now read as follows:

Article 6...

For purposes of the exercise of the right to access to information, the federal government, the states and the Federal District, each in their respective jurisdictions, will comply with the following principles and bases:

- I. All information in the possession of any federal, state and municipal authority, entity, body and organism is public and may only be temporarily withheld in the public interest in accordance with legislation. In interpreting this right, the principle of the maximum public-ness must prevail.
- II. Information referring to individuals' private lives and personal data shall be protected as stipulated in and with the exceptions established by the law.
- III. Without having to show any involvement in the topic or justify its use, all individuals will have access, free of charge, to public information, his/her personal data, or to the rectification of said data.
- IV. Mechanisms for access and expeditious review procedures shall be established. These procedures will be substantiated before specialized, impartial bodies with operational, managerial and decision-making autonomy.
- V. Entities herein mandated shall preserve their documents in updated administrative archives and shall publish in the available electronic media complete, updated information about their management indicators and the exercise of public resources.
- VI. Legislation will determine the manner in which those mandated to comply will make public the information about public resources given to individuals or entities.
- VII. Incompliance with the stipulations regarding access to public information will be sanctioned according to the law.

TRANSITORY ARTICLES

First. The present Decree shall go into effect the day after its publication in the *Official Federal Gazette*.

Second. The federal government, the states and the Federal District, in their respective jurisdictions, shall issue legislation about access to public information and transparency, or make the necessary changes no later than one year after this Decree goes into effect.

Third. The federal government, the states and the Federal District must establish electronic systems so that any person can use from a distance the mechanisms for access to information and the review procedures mentioned in this Decree. Said systems must be functioning no later than two years after the Decree goes into effect. State laws shall establish whatever is needed for municipalities with more than 60,000 inhabitants and the territorial subdivisions of the Federal District to have their own electronic systems within that same period of time.

no longer only a matter of Mexicans' "not being bothered" by government agencies, but rather that the state must protect the information it has about them. For that reason, Mexico must more clearly define the concept of "personal data," dealing with the discussion about a general law

—should it be applicable nationwide?— that would define it, regulate it and protect it.

4. The new generation of laws on access to information will have to deal with the enormous differences among institutions and the branches of government. Circumstances

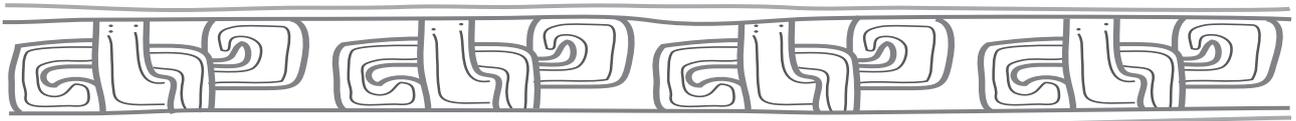
for the legislature, the judiciary and executive bodies are very different. Experience over recent years has taught us that transparency cannot be practiced the same way by bodies that are extraordinarily different, and, therefore, the laws must take into account this specificity and regulate the concrete way that transparency is exercised in different parts of the state.

5. Finally, we will have to redefine the scope of secrecy in all national legislation. Up until Article 6 was amended, all secrets validated in legislation (fiscal, bank or fiduciary secrets, etc.) had the same weight as the right to access to information and transparency: it was a complicated, litigious tie that was only broken with uncertainty. But, with

the change in the Constitution, transparency becomes decisive. Therefore, in all laws regulating organisms of public interest or bodies that receive public monies, there must be a categorical change in favor of access and public-ness, which will end by revealing secrets and opening up public life as never before...to the public. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ See <http://www.ifai.org.mx/Eventos/articulo6>. [Editor's Note.]
- ² To see the entire law, go to http://www.chihuahua.gob.mx/Principal/Contenido/plantilla5.asp?cve_canal=6404&Portal=Principal. [Editor's Note.]
- ³ Ibid.



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Canada and Mexico Minor Players in North America's Economic Integration?

Enrique Pino Hidalgo*



Lyle Stafford/Reuters

Canadian and U.S. representatives at the August 2007 NAFTA Free Trade Commission meeting in Vancouver.

Since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed, exchanges of goods and services between Canada and Mexico have grown relatively quickly, with Mexico's exports to Canada increasing more, turning the latter into our second largest trade partner. In 2004, Mexican products made up 3.9 percent of Canada's total imports, although only 1.7 percent of its total exports went to Mexico, making Mexico the fifth largest destination for Canadian products.

Despite significant growth in Mexican-Canadian trade over the last 10 years and our status as a NAFTA partner, the Mexican economy is not yet a priority for Canada. However,

this does not prevent Canada from being considered a big potential market for our economy if we take into account that our net trade balance came to a U.S.\$6.7 billion surplus.

CANADA'S ECONOMIC VOCATION: CENTERS ON EXPORT MARKETS

The Canadian economy's long-term development strategy was initially based on the production of raw materials for the international market, fundamentally the United States. Particularly at the end of World War II, Canadian authorities fielded policies aimed at becoming strategic suppliers for the industrialization process taking place in the U.S.

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Northeast. The most illustrative cases are the auto industry and the supply of oil and electricity.

This form of linking economies is key for explaining Canada's trade and financial gravitation toward its next-door neighbor, confirmed by the different auto pacts signed over the years and the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States that preceded NAFTA. In 1994, exports to the U.S. came to U.S.\$207 billion, 86.78 percent of all Canadian exports. Ten years later, they were U.S.\$316.55 billion, or 86.08 percent of the total. These figures illustrate the strategic importance of the United States for Canada.

Canada's trade dependence is increased by other factors that favor intra-regional trade, like the relative proximity of consumer markets and the supply of energy, or, the important advantages in transportation costs. The high concentration of Canada's trade —and Mexico's— is influenced by exporters and authorities' wide-ranging knowledge of U.S. sanitary, customs and other regulations.

Clearly, Canada has built very close trade and financial relations with the U.S., which have benefited it in prosperity and adversely affected it during recessions.¹ In short, Canada's bilateral trade with the U.S. generates more than U.S.\$2 billion a day. Indicators demonstrate Canada's economic and trade solvency, confirming it as the world's seventh largest capitalist economy.²

In the context of Canada's trade pattern, highly concentrated with the United States, we can understand how urgent it is for both countries to intensify bilateral trade and trade with other countries in the hemisphere and the Asian Pacific. This becomes fully comprehensible when we look at Canada's modest —and Mexico's practically marginal— trade position regarding their exports to the Asian economies.

Despite significant growth in Mexican-Canadian trade over the last 10 years and our status as a NAFTA partner, the Mexican economy is not yet a priority for Canada.

TRADE ASYMMETRIES BETWEEN CANADA AND MEXICO

Taking NAFTA as the starting point, let us look at some figures for Mexican-Canadian trade: in 1994, it was U.S.\$4.91 billion and by the end of 2006, it came to U.S.\$21.4 billion, an increase of 400 percent. However, that expansion was inevitably overshadowed by the relatively more visible high levels of U.S. trade and investment with Canada and Mexico.

There are also fundamental differences between the two economies given that Canada has a trade surplus with the U.S. and a deficit with Mexico. But its trade with the rest of the world is in surplus (see graph 1). This facilitates its acting as a net exporter of capital. Mexico also has a trade surplus with both the United States and Canada, but its global trade balance is negative; it is a net recipient of foreign capital.

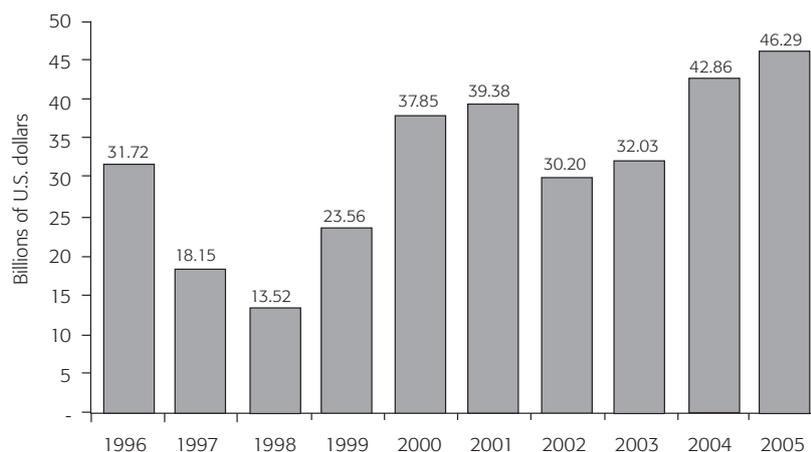
One indicator that confirms the weight of foreign trade in the Canadian economy is the ratio between the value of international transactions and GDP; for the period 2001-2003, on an average, this ratio was 79.4 percent. For the years 2001 to 2003, trade per capita averaged U.S.\$18,943, higher than Taiwan (with U.S.\$17,987) and Mexico (with U.S.\$3,730) (see table 1).

TABLE 1
COMPARATIVE TRADE INDICATORS (2003)

<i>Mexico, China, Canada, South Korea and Taiwan</i>						
	<i>Trade Per Capita</i> (U.S. dollars, 2001-2003)	<i>Trade/GDP</i> <i>Ratio</i> (2001-2003)	<i>Exports</i> 2003 (1995=100)	<i>Imports</i> 2003 (1995=100)	<i>Average Growth</i> 1995-2003 (1995=100)	
			<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>		
Mexico	3,580	57.1	190	241	8	12
China	572	57.1	342	327	17	16
Canada	18,943	79.4	143	139	6	6
South Korea	8,220	71.9	268	172	13	7
Taiwan	17,087	136.2	136	115	4	2

Source: World Trade Organization, <http://www.wto.org/indexsp.htm>.

GRAPH 1
CANADA'S TOTAL TRADE BALANCE



Source: Statistique Canada, *Commerce par produit du Canada et des États-Unis, Importations, exportations et balance commerciale par produit*.

CANADIAN-MEXICAN TRADE BENEFITS THE LATTER

One of the transformations in the structure of world trade can be seen in intra-industry trade, even of similar goods, in demand because of their brand name, style or design or due to advertising. This kind of trade also includes intermediate goods and inputs with the need to move products from one country to another at different stages of production, such as what happens with *maquila* plants, also called “shared-production” models.

In this context, we can briefly examine some of the general trends in bilateral Canadian-Mexican trade since NAFTA. Although, as already mentioned, Mexico-Canadian trade increased from almost U.S.\$5 billion to U.S.\$21 billion from 1994 to 2006, Canadian exports remained relatively low, increasing from U.S.\$1.6 billion to U.S.\$7.37 billion. In comparison, Mexican exports went from U.S.\$3.13 billion to a record U.S.\$14.10 billion in that same period, giving Mexico a trade surplus of U.S.\$6.72 billion.

Despite being a NAFTA partner, Mexico is the destination for only a relatively small part of Canada's exports, only about 1 percent. In 2004, total Canadian exports came to U.S.\$316 billion, while those to Mexico came only U.S.\$2.3 million, barely 0.7 percent. Canada's trade balance with Mexico has been negative for the last 10 years, denoting a trend favorable to the Mexican economy (see graph 2).

In 2004, Canada's total exports by branch of the economy showed a predominance of manufactured goods (60.45 percent), 12.2 percent of which are high tech. Fuel and mineral products contributed 20.5 percent. The size of agricultural and forestry exports should also be underlined: 12.7 percent.

The main products exported in 2004 include automobiles and auto bodies (11.5 percent); natural gas (6.9 percent); and crude oil (5.4 percent). These are followed by auto parts excluding engines (5.1 percent) and trucks and tractors (3.6 percent). Oil and coal derivatives contributed with 2.9 percent and telecommunications equipment and materials, 2.4 percent. If we amalgamate all the goods from the auto industry, they come to 20.2 percent.³

The structure of Canada's imports by country of origin indicates that its economy is less concentrated than if we look at the structure of its exports. In 2004, it imported U.S.\$272.97 billion from the United States, 58.8 percent

Clearly, Canada has built very close trade and financial relations with the U.S., which have benefited it in prosperity and adversely affected it during recessions.

of all its imports. This figure shows significantly less concentration in its imports than in its exports to the U.S. market, which came to 86.08 percent.

Canada's trade pattern, then, indicates a considerably smaller concentration of imports by country of origin, particularly with regard to the United States. This pattern shows a relatively broader diversification than with its exports. This is influenced by the emergence of China in world markets.

There are indications, considered frankly alarming by some analysts, about the structure of Canada's exports and imports that is undergoing a kind of *substitution effect*, whereby U.S. and Mexican goods are being replaced with Chinese ones. Recently, China has replaced Canada as the United States' most important trade partner, putting Canada in third place and bumping Mexico down from third to fourth place on the list.⁴

Some of the general trends in the structure of Canada's imports are present in its trade with Mexico. From 1994 to 2004, imports of goods from Mexico increased from U.S.\$3.3 billion to a little over U.S.\$9 billion. This made Mexico Canada's second largest supplier, contributing 3.6 percent of its total volume of imports.

Among the 10 main products exported from Mexico to Canada in 2004 were auto parts (except engines) (18.3 percent); computer equipment (10.3 percent); and telecommunications equipment and materials (9.7 percent). These goods are followed on the list by automobiles and auto bodies

(9.5 percent); trucks and tractors (6 percent), and measuring and regulating instruments (2.8 percent).

It is interesting to note that the first three kinds of goods on the list represent a little over 40 percent of total Mexican exports to Canada. But, if we aggregate finished and intermediate goods from the auto industry alone, the value of these exports to Canada comes to 33.8 percent of the 10 main products.⁵

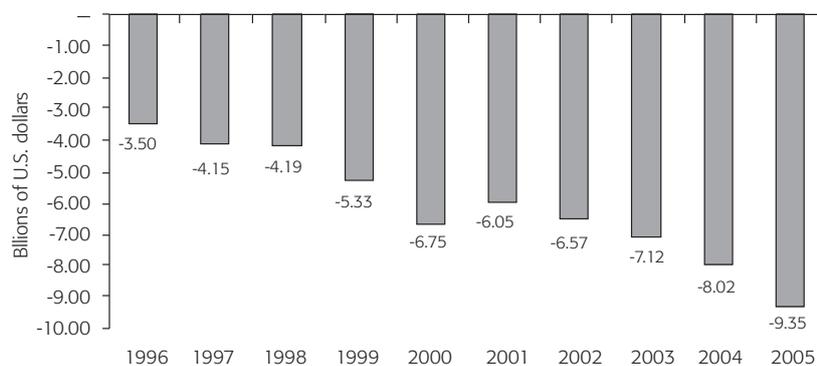
MEXICAN AND CANADIAN
TRADE WITH CHINA

China's presence in world trade has changed competition worldwide. Its production costs are so low compared both to the industrialized and developing countries that even a moderate hike in the yuan or an increase in production costs does not affect their goods' ability to penetrate foreign markets. Canada, Mexico and the United States are no exception.

Following the trends in markets influenced by Chinese trade, in recent years Canada and Mexico have rapidly been penetrated by Asian — mainly Chinese — imports. This has created a growing deficit in both countries' trade balance, with negative effects in domestic job creation.

In 2004, products imported by Mexico from the United States were 56.6 percent of total imports; and from China, 7.3 percent, making it Mexico's second largest supplier. Japan was in third place with 5.4 percent, followed by Germany, with 3.6 percent.

GRAPH 2
CANADA'S TRADE BALANCE WITH MEXICO
(BILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS)



Source: Statistique Canada, *Commerce par produit du Canada et des États-Unis, importations, exportations et balance commerciale par produit.*

China has replaced Canada as the United States'
most important trade partner, putting Canada in third place and bumping Mexico
down from third to fourth place on the list.

The velocity with which imports from China have grown contrasts with the slow increase in Canadian exports, underlying the weakness of Mexican goods in the northeastern part of the Asian Pacific, whether in China, South Korea or Taiwan. This sluggishness of Canadian and Mexican exports prevents them from benefiting significantly from the economic boom that that region has been experiencing for more than two decades.

In conclusion, first of all, in the context of NAFTA, Canada and Mexico require a new trade strategy to permit greater penetration and diversification of their products and services in their respective markets. Mexican producers would do well to remember that Canadian society—and consequently, its markets—is ethnically and culturally diverse, with marked seasonal differentiation and high income. These factors have a decisive impact on consumption patterns and the public's preferences for specific products and services, which makes for potential demand for Mexican goods.

It cannot be forgotten that the concentration of Mexican exports to Canada in a small number of industries and goods is characteristic of our trade pattern, probably linked to the high volumes of imports and exports of intermediate and capital goods by the industries and firms themselves. This confirms the hypothesis about the influence of large multinational corporations on the globalization process.

Under these conditions, the question is whether Mexican authorities have sufficient determination and conviction to be able to design and promote an export trade policy with horizons transcending the interests of the large exporting corporations, making room for the country's small and medium-sized firms. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Let us simply take as a reference point the Canadian economy's rapid growth over the last decade, closely tied to the boom in the U.S. economy. It is understandable, then, that the United States is its most important trade partner.

² In 2004, total exports came to U.S.\$316 billion, 31.9 percent of the country's GDP. If we include services, this indicator increases to 38.2

percent, demonstrating the importance of the country's export markets. In the same year, Canadian imports reached U.S.\$272 billion, or 27.5 percent of GDP; if we again add services, the total came to 34.0 percent.

³ Canada's main exports to Mexico are from the auto industry: automobiles, transmissions, auto parts and accessories. Other important exports are wood pulp, plastics, metal products, wheat and different kinds of seeds. The automobile industry with 24.5 percent and agricultural goods, with 17 percent of total exports, predominate.

⁴ In 2004, Canada's overall import structure showed a high percentage of manufactured goods (81.7 percent), followed by mineral products (8.7 percent) and agricultural goods (7.5 percent). An analysis of this structure by kind of goods indicates that in 2004, the Canadian economy acquired a large volume of intermediate and finished products from the auto, electronics and telecommunications industries.

⁵ The Grubel and Lloyd Index gauges the amount of trade generated by reciprocal exchange of goods from the same industry. In 1994, this kind of exchange between Canada and Mexico represented 64.8 percent of the total, rising to 74.7 percent in 1998, showing a notable advance in intra-industry trade. This implies that for every dollar's worth of goods imported from Mexico by Canada, 74.5 cents correspond to the exchange of goods within the same industry. In practical terms, this kind of trade reminds us that among those most benefited by NAFTA are precisely the big multinational corporations in the auto, electronics and telecommunications sectors.

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Fiscal Reform and Public Finance The Economy Continues To Stagnate

Gregorio Vidal*



Paola Hidalgo/Cuartoscuro

Finance Minister Agustín Carstens at a Chamber of Deputies hearing.

On September 13, Mexico's Chamber of Deputies passed the fiscal reform. The entire package, with its amendments to the Constitution and different pieces of legislation, plus the creation of completely new laws, originated with the administration's June 20 proposal titled "Comprehensive Reform of Public Finance." *Stricto sensu*, the Chamber of Deputies passed one bill amending the Constitution and six more bills concerning different

laws. All the bills were immediately discussed and passed by the Senate, and the constitutional reforms were sent to the state legislatures for ratification.

The proposals were widely debated in the weeks prior to Congress's decision, but as a result of the political situation and different business groups' lobbying efforts, what was finally passed is different from the administration's proposal. In addition, the fiscal and electoral reforms were discussed and passed at the same time. The electoral reform was modified in the Senate, while the deputies passed it one day after having passed the changes on fiscal issues. I am emphasizing this fact because it was a specific moment that will not be repeated under the current administration.

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**Impact on firms will differ greatly, and it will not eliminate
or substantially lessen the use of loopholes. Some of those who already regularly pay taxes
on their profits will pay more, which is inequitable.**

Congress's opposition parties accepted discussing and deciding about fiscal matters as part of a complex negotiation about what has been called the reform of the state. The agenda agreed upon by Congress includes new legislation about the media, particularly radio and television, and about different aspects of government, like the reelection of congressional deputies, a second round of balloting in presidential elections and other issues like federalism, human rights and social guarantees. With regard to fiscal issues, the parties that openly pushed for the reform tried very hard not to get behind any bill that would imply new taxes and to show that they came to the discussion with proposals and bills that took into account all aspects of public finance and would create better conditions for public sector operations. For instance, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) distanced itself from the proposal of increasing the price of gasoline and diesel fuel, insisting that it was the sole responsibility of Felipe Calderón and Finance Minister Carstens, or in any case, of the National Action Party (PAN). The executive, for its part, with the president's active participation, maintains that the proposal came from the National Conference of Governors, where the PRI has a majority.

The political situation is such that the interests of almost all the political parties with congressional caucuses and the federal administration coincide: the discussion and passage of reforms in different areas of the organization of the state, including fiscal issues, are necessary. If only for that reason, it is difficult to foresee a new opportunity for discussion of a reform in this area during this presidential term. The immediate precedent was the failed proposal presented under the Vicente Fox administration, considered still on the agenda particularly by business groups, financial bodies and international cooperation agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Therefore, when evaluating the changes Congress made, the difficulty of reaching agreements on these issues should be taken into account, as well as the sheer size of the resources the public sector requires and the activities that must be considered part of public finance. From that perspective, the fiscal reform is insufficient. It maintains loopholes and uneven

treatment of taxpayers, and does not take into account the conditions to positively link public spending with economic performance.

PUBLIC SPENDING AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF TAXES

Since the 1960s, there has been talk about the need to increase government tax revenues. Under the administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), attempts were made to forge a fiscal reform. In the years following that, it was not possible to increase tax earnings as a proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP), nor were measures taken to somewhat decentralize tax collection. Therefore, in addition to a low taxation coefficient, states and municipalities receive most of their resources through agreements and different regimens established by the Finance Ministry.

With regard to tax revenues, the difference between Mexico and many countries with similar economic conditions is noteworthy. The Finance Ministry's fiscal reform proposal maintains that in the last 18 years, tax revenues, excluding oil-related taxes, products and duties, averaged 9.5 percent of GDP. The same document points out that this is low compared to other countries with degrees of development or per capita income similar to Mexico's. In the Czech Republic, tax revenues as a percentage of GDP are 21.6 percent; in Poland, 18.8 percent; in Hungary, 25.7 percent; in South Korea, 16.7 percent; and in Latin American countries like Venezuela, 21.4 percent; Chile, 20.4 percent, Brazil, 17.5 percent; Argentina, 15.5 percent; Uruguay, 18.4 percent; and Costa Rica, 12.3 percent. Mexico's tax revenues as a percentage of GDP are lower than Bolivia's (13.8 percent) and Honduras (13.7 percent). Only Haiti and Panama's are lower than Mexico's. In 2006, tax revenues in Mexico were the equivalent of 11 percent of GDP. Using this parameter, the federal, state and municipal governments would have to almost double their tax income to reach the economic conditions of similar countries. The increase in tax collection as a result of the reforms passed will be very far from those eight or nine GDP points.

And there is another problem: the low total income of the public sector. That is, low tax revenues are complemented only by small sums from other sources, including those from oil. In this, there is a big distance between Mexico and the other OECD countries or the larger economies of Latin America. Among OECD members, the average fiscal income was 36.9 percent of GDP in 2004. According to Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) information, in 2004, Brazil's was over 35 percent, and Argentina and Uruguay's was 29 percent and 27 percent respectively. In Mexico, total 2006 fiscal income, taking into account all revenues, including those derived from oil, came to 18 percent of GDP. Some Latin American countries adopt measures to increase public sector income through taxes or change certain fiscal rules to get investment to grow.

The ECLAC's *Estudio económico de América Latina 2006-2007* (Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2006-2007) spotlights the reform of Uruguay's tax system, whose main component is the creation of a dual income tax system for individual taxpayers. Brazil, meanwhile, established the Accelerated Growth Program, whose main objective is to increase investment through two fiscal rules to be applied over a long period of time, that directly influence more than one-third of total primary federal spending, making it possible to increase investment expenditures. In Mexico, the main change is the passage of the Single Rate Business Tax (IETU), which will bring with it a very slim increase in tax revenues for the public sector.

THE CURRENT FISCAL REFORM: THE FIGURES

The proposal the Finance Ministry presented to Congress estimates an increase of 1.5 percent in fiscal revenues as a percentage of GDP for 2008. Most of those monies would come from the new IETU. In following years, revenues would grow by almost three points of the GDP. What Congress passed includes three new taxes, the elimination of another and changes in the name and rates or amounts applicable to

the taxes agreed upon. Nevertheless, estimates of the overall increase in public revenues remain unchanged. Several of the bills passed stipulate that by the end of the current presidential term, revenues will increase three percentage points of GDP, one percent of which would be spent by the states and municipalities and two percent by the federal government.

The 2008 Law of Public Sector Revenues, the bill presented by the Finance Ministry, estimates that if the fiscal reform were approved, it would generate 115 billion pesos, or something like U.S.\$10 billion, in additional revenues. That figure is slightly more than one percent of GDP. Other estimates come up with similar numbers, in large part a result of the IETU, one of the two most sweeping budget reforms passed. The rate established in the IETU Law is 16.5 percent for 2008, which will increase by half a point a year over subsequent years until reaching 17.5 percent.

The basis for calculating the IETU is established by subtracting company spending in inputs, equipment, installations, physical construction and real estate acquisitions from its earnings. Wages are also deducted, but not all fringe benefits. The tax would be paid only if the result of this calculation is higher than the payment of income or corporate tax (ISR), and the taxpayer would pay the difference between the two. Specific calculation methods are set out for, among others, the cases of self-service stores, banks and other financial institutions. Impact on firms will differ greatly, and it will not eliminate or substantially lessen the use of loopholes. Some of those who already regularly pay taxes on their profits will pay more, which is inequitable. This may be the case of small and medium-sized firms, the majority of the country's companies, which provide most of the nation's jobs.

Firms that need to invest in assets or that have a high capital/product ratio are in a position to decrease the tax base on which the IETU will be applied. Not all companies continually renovate assets because of the kind of firms they are, the way they operate or the characteristics of the sector they are in. But, in addition, by approving the IETU, the assets tax was eliminated, which operated with a diametrically opposed logic. The assets tax has a minimum rate of 2 percent, but an increase in investment implies a larger base upon which to apply it.

Among OECD members, the average fiscal income was 36.9 percent of GDP in 2004. In Mexico, total 2006 fiscal income, taking into account all revenues, including those derived from oil, came to 18 percent of GDP.

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will remain the same. The government's infrastructure
program for 2007-2012 confirms that increases in public investment
in this area are not expected.

Principles of equity and proportionality are part of the basis of the income and corporate tax (ISR). The tax is levied on the economic result of each firm's activity, without taking into account the kind of business it is to determine the tax base. The exceptions have limited the principle of universality implicit in the ISR, which explains the undersized revenues accruing to the government from it. Simply eliminating the exceptions and loopholes would have made for a substantive fiscal reform.

The revenues to be expected from the new tax on cash bank deposits will be marginal and complicate both individuals and companies' preparing their tax returns. The other source of increases in fiscal revenues is the result of a change in the Law on the Special Tax on Production and Services to introduce a federal tax on the final sale of gasoline and diesel fuel. The new tax stipulates a monthly increase of 2 cents per liter on Magna gasoline; 2.44 cents on Premium; and 1.66 cents on diesel, every month until all fuel prices have risen 5 percent. This is in addition to other hikes like monthly increases of the price of natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, electricity and other fuels. This reinforces a policy that makes public revenues dependent on the public's consumption, particularly of hydrocarbons.

THE FISCAL REFORM, PUBLIC SPENDING
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

With the fiscal reform, the government estimated 3.7 percent GDP growth in 2008. Without it, growth would be 3.5 percent. Except for an increase in the balance of payments current account, no other differences are pointed out. The passage of the reform does not change the country's economic trends. Estimated average growth at the end of the Fox administration for 2007-2012 was 3.6 percent. The new taxes and other modifications do not bring substantial changes with them, but they also do not alter the composition of public spending. Financed public works (investments by the private sector in infrastructure to be paid back by the government at some future date) will continue to be the main way

of investing in infrastructure, with the increase of the public sector debt listed on the books under the item of *Pidiregas*.¹

The change in the Mexican Petroleum Company (Pemex) fiscal regime does not fundamentally alter the company's finances. Congress approved decreasing the ordinary duty rate on hydrocarbons from 79 percent to 74 percent in 2008, and dropping it further each year until it reaches 71.5 percent in 2012. However, the law itself stipulates that in the period from 1998 to 2005, federal government resource requests forced Pemex to pay out 110 to 140 percent of its balance. This meant that it paid out all its profits in taxes and even borrowed to pay taxes. The changes agreed upon do not guarantee that Pemex's financial situation will be corrected. What is more, the increase in gas and diesel prices is what finances the change, at least in part. The resources that will no longer come from Pemex will come from taxes on fuel and will be used for spending in the states, up to the equivalent of 1 percent of GDP.

In short, the composition and size of public spending will remain the same. The government's infrastructure program for 2007-2012 confirms that increases in public investment in this area are not expected. Most of the resources will come from financed public works, partly debt contracted abroad. Capital formation will grow at similar rates to that of previous years, with a gross capital formation to GDP ratio fluctuating between 20 percent and 21 percent; the same will happen to the main macroeconomic variables. The one factor that could change this is less growth of the U.S. economy, particularly in some of its sectors that involve most of Mexico's foreign trade. This would lead to lower GDP growth in the country, or even recession. Therefore, with the fiscal reform, the growth of the economy will continue to be weak, and, considering the increase in the population, it will continue to tend to stagnate. **MM**

NOTES

¹ *Pidiregas* is the acronym for "Differed-Impact Projects in Spending," a term coined by the Finance Ministry in 1996 to describe private investments in priority, long-term infrastructure projects, with the government assuming the corresponding liabilities. See "Pidiregas, situación actual y perspectivas" at http://www.energiaadebate.com.mx/Articulos/oct-nov-2005/victor_manuel_garcia_dela_vega.htm. [Editor's Note.]

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Frida

The First Hundred Years

Roxana Velásquez Martínez del Campo*

This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Frida Kahlo's birth. Commemorations have proliferated, not only in Mexico, her homeland, but around the world: in the United States, Cuba, Russia, Argentina and several countries in the European Union. *Voices of Mexico* joins this homage with a brief sampling of her work exhibited in Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace. This was the largest exhibition ever mounted of her work, photographs and letters, many of which are from private collections and were displayed publicly for the first time.

We have also added a brief description of the exhibit "Treasures of the Blue House: Frida and Diego," shown at Frida's house in Coyoacán, where she spent her childhood, lived for a time with Diego Rivera and died in 1954.

INTRODUCTION

Frida Kahlo's personality stands out in Mexico's cultural panorama in the first half of the twentieth century, whose art was dominated by revolutionary nationalism. She created a unique, powerfully expressive body of work that has left no viewer indifferent. Kahlo's painting impressed Breton, Kandinsky and Picasso alike, and with the passage of time, it has become a symbol of freedom for women throughout the world. Thousands of people go to her exhibits, wherever they are held, and her work is the most sought-after in the Latin American art market. Today, Frida is an icon of universal culture, with all the commercial implications this inevitably brings with it. However, her work undeniably expresses a profound poetic, pictorial truth emerging from a constant reflection about her self, always capable of showing an authenticity filtered only by the fire of her imagination. Aware that her infirmity made her different from others, she turned adversity into the main driving force behind her creative process and the impetus of a vitality in which sensuality, Eros and humor occupied a place of privilege.

THE EXHIBIT

Frida Kahlo Calderón was born in Coyoacán, July 6, 1907, although for two reasons she liked to say she had been born in 1910: that was the year the Mexican Revolution

* Director of the Fine Arts Palace Museum.

Frida Kahlo's work is reproduced by permission of Banco de México.

D.R. © 2007 Banco de México, "Fiduciario" en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. Cinco de Mayo núm. 2, Col. Centro, Del. Cuauhtémoc 06059, México, D.F.



The Two Fridas, 172 x 172 cm, 1939 (oil on canvas).
Mexico City's Museum of Modern Art Collection, Co-
naculta-INBA.



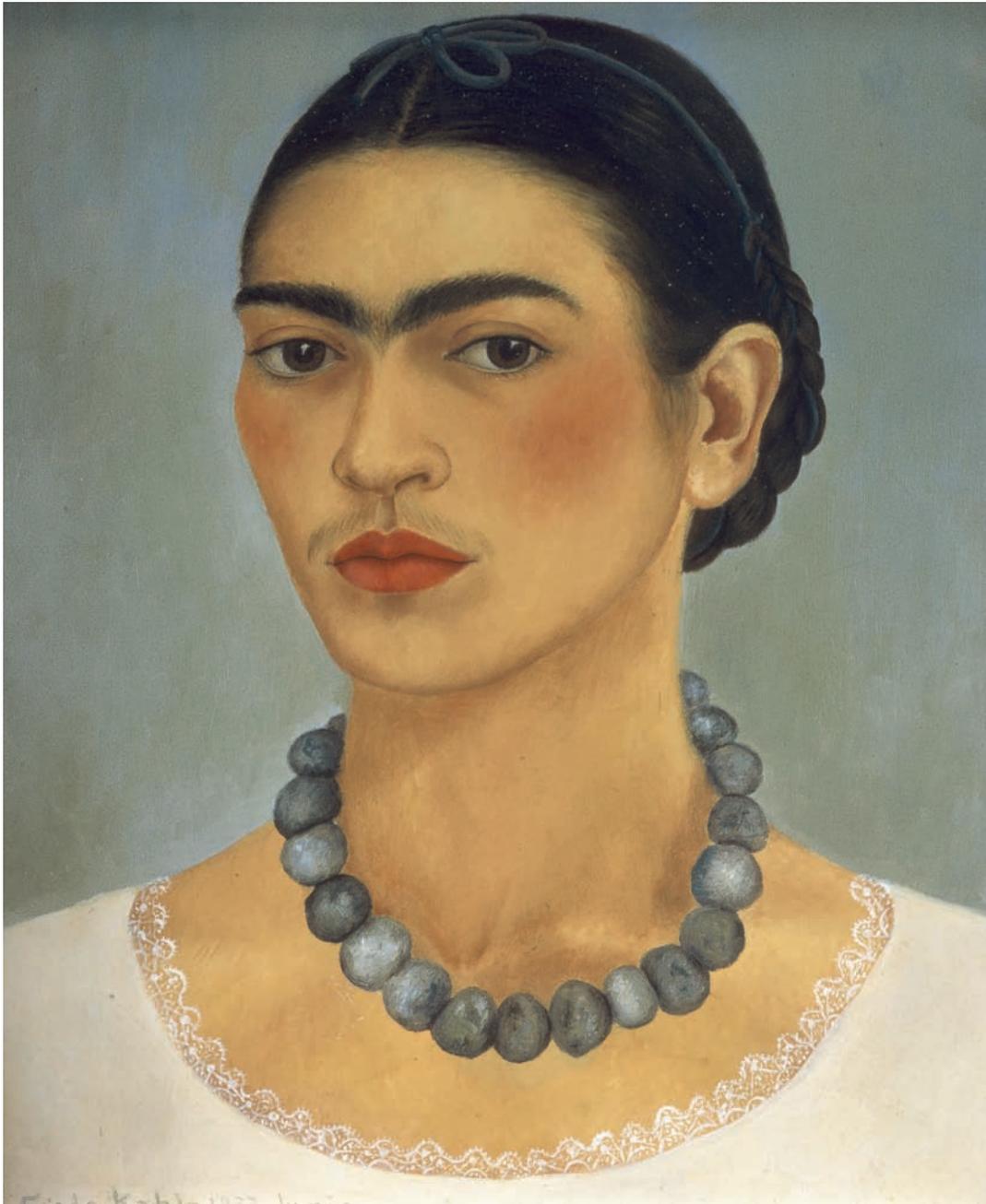
began, and for reasons of feminine vanity, which she undoubtedly had her share of. In honor of her centennial, the National Council for Culture and the Arts organized the “Homage to Frida Kahlo Exhibition (1907-2007)” in the Fine Arts Palace Museum, through the good offices of the National Fine Arts Institute. This undertaking’s importance and complexity required bringing together a Curatorial Committee made up of Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, Salomón Grimberg, Cristina Kahlo and Américo Sánchez.

The exhibit’s purpose was to present different aspects of Kahlo’s work: paintings, sketches, watercolors and lithographs showing her formal creativity and the different symbolic references underpinning her visual language. More than 50 of Frida’s original letters were also included, as well as a virtual show of her Diary —the original is in the Frida Kahlo House Museum and cannot legally be permitted to leave the premises— an autobiographical and pictorial document considered one of her main works. More than a hundred personal photographs and documents were also gathered to situate her artistic endeavors in their historical, social, political and biographical context.

A visit to the exhibition began with *Portrait of Luther Burbank*, which brings the viewer into the symbolic world, approaching the sources from which Kahlo drank to create her work. A careful analysis of her pictorial or mythological references shows that Frida was a woman with a solid literary and visual artistic background. This portrait is one of the few cases in which we have sketches and documents allowing us to follow the artist’s entire creative process: from the first sketch in which she contextualizes the original idea, to the second, more detailed study exhibiting an advanced version of the development of the canvas’s visual and ideological subject matter, to the finished work.

Two rooms were dedicated to painting. Sixty-four oil paintings showed us the different genres Frida worked in: self-portraits, portraits, still lifes, allegories and one urban scene. *The Two Fridas*, painted in 1939, her famous double self-portrait, evidence of her split personality, was the central axis of the exhibit’s museology. Her paternal heritage (conservative, nineteenth-century and European) is represented by the white-clad figure on the right side of the canvas; while the Frida dressed as a Tehuana personifies her internal break sparked by meeting Diego Rivera in 1929 and intensified by her divorce from him, all of which led her to paint herself twice on the same canvas. The whole is made up of portraits of a vast array of key figures in the cultural world, society and the artist’s family, plus the self-portraits, the central nucleus of her production. Through introspection-made-painting, Frida showed the depths of her being, simultaneously suffering and alive, with a psychological intensity only comparable to the force of her visual expressiveness. The sensual, erotic facet of her genius is expressed in her still lifes.





Self-portrait with Necklace, 35 x 29 cm, 1933 (oil on metal), Jacques and Natasha Gelman Mexican and Contemporary Art Collection. Courtesy of the Vergell Foundation; Muros; Costco/Comercial Mexicana.



Courtesy of the Fine Arts Palace Museum.
Photograph by Gustavo A. García

I would like to be able to do whatever I feel like behind the curtain of “madness.” So, I would arrange flowers; I would paint pain, love and tenderness all day. I would laugh my head off at other people’s stupidity and everyone would say, “Poor thing! She’s crazy!” (Above all I would laugh at my own stupidity.) I would construct my world that, as long as I lived, would jibe with all the worlds. The day or the hour and the minute I lived would be my own and everyone else’s.

FRIDA KAHLO'S DIARY



The Suicide of Dorothy Hale, 50 x 40.6 cm, 1938-1939 (oil on masonite), Phoenix Art Museum Collection.



Courtesy of the Fine Arts Palace Museum.
Photograph by Gustavo A. García



Another room showed her work on paper: 46 pencil and ink drawings, plus engravings and 11 watercolors. The sketches show Frida's technical ability, as well as the first creative moment of some of her best-known works. This room is completed with five copies of the only two graphic illustrations that she did: *Two Women* (1925) and *The Miscarriage* (1932).



A script detailing Frida's ideological development and political activism explains the historical, political and social environment in post-revolutionary Mexico in which she and Diego played an important role. A wide array of documents, newspapers, photographs, previously unpublished texts and unique objects (like the plaster corset, painted by the artist herself) show the different directions she took throughout her life: her Catholic upbringing, present until the first years after her 1925 accident; her belonging to a group called "The Cachuchas"; her emotional, rather than ideological closeness to Trotsky; and her adherence to Stalinism, the prevailing doctrine in the Mexican Communist Party (PCM).

In addition to being biographical and literary testimony of the first water, 51 letters revealed how important Asian calligraphy was to Frida. Using her own idea of "words that fly," her letters were hung in the air for the public to read and walk among. This concept was intended to emphasize the aesthetics of their calligraphy, which is why a few illustrated letters were also reproduced.



Two rooms were taken up by 100 photographs by different people like Lola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Nickolas Muray, Leo Matiz, Edward Weston, N. Winter, Florence Arquin, Esther Borm, Imogen Cunningham, Lorenzo Guerrero, Héctor García, Bernard Silberstein, Lucien Bloch, Francisco Díaz de León and Kati Horna. They provide a portrait of Frida's social, family and artistic surroundings. Her father's influence was determinant in her artistic creation, and so the exhibit also includes photos by Guillermo Kahlo. For Frida, photography had been very important since her childhood: she was often photographed and was a model for distinguished photographers. Photography also became an indispensable tool for painting many of her oils.



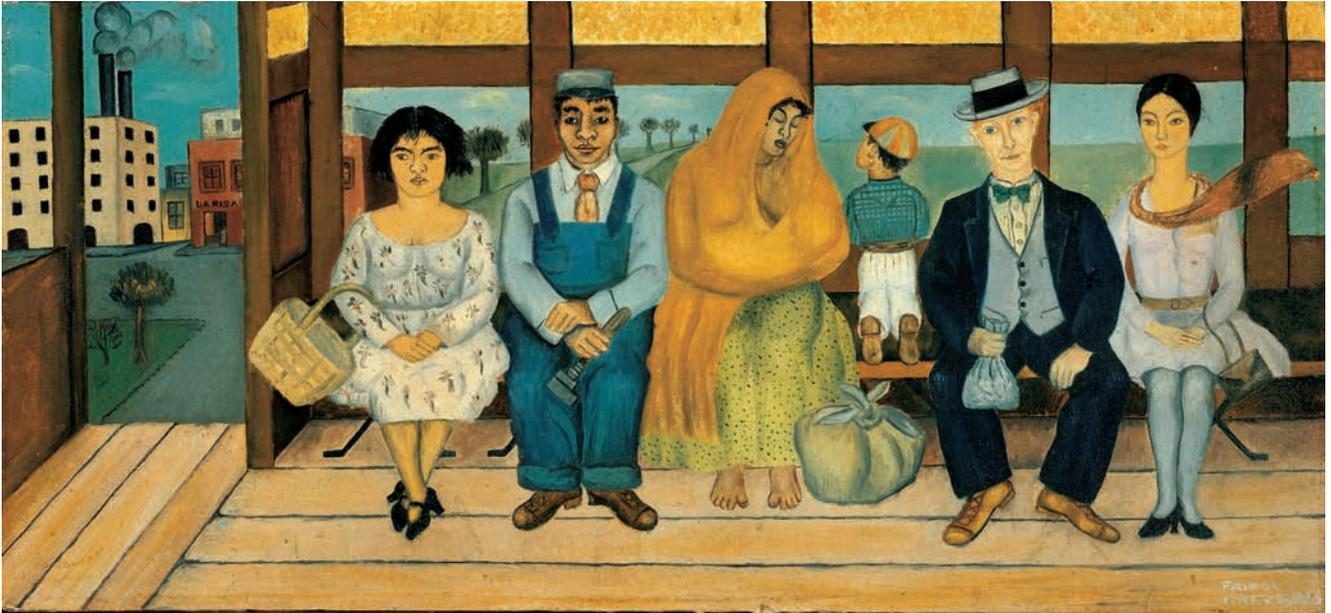
THE CATALOGUE

Bibliography about Frida is vast: in recent decades she has been the subject of many publications and expositions in Europe, the Americas, Asia and even Oceania, and her work occupies a privileged place in national and international collections. Specialized studies, exhibit catalogues, the annotated catalogue, psychological and aesthetic analyses, the publication of her diary and letters, and movies and documentaries have all contributed substantially to disseminating her life and work.



Frida's work undeniably expresses a profound poetic, pictorial truth emerging from a constant reflection about her self, always capable of showing an authenticity filtered only by the fire of her imagination. Aware that her infirmity made her different from others, she turned adversity into the main driving force behind her creative process.





The Bus, 26 x 55.5 cm, 1929 (oil on canvas), Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.



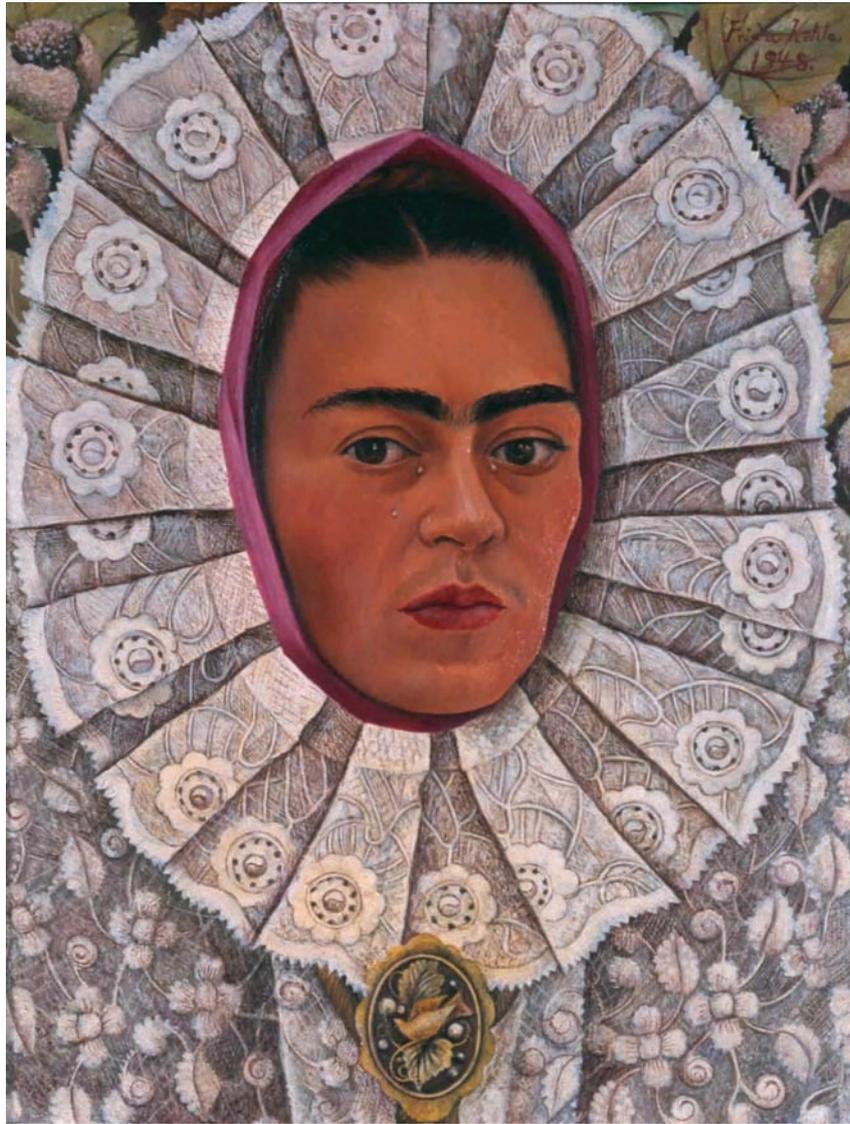
Self-portrait with Velvet Suit, 78 x 61 cm, 1926 (oil on canvas), private collection.



Courtesy of the Fine Arts Palace Museum.
Photograph by Gustavo A. García



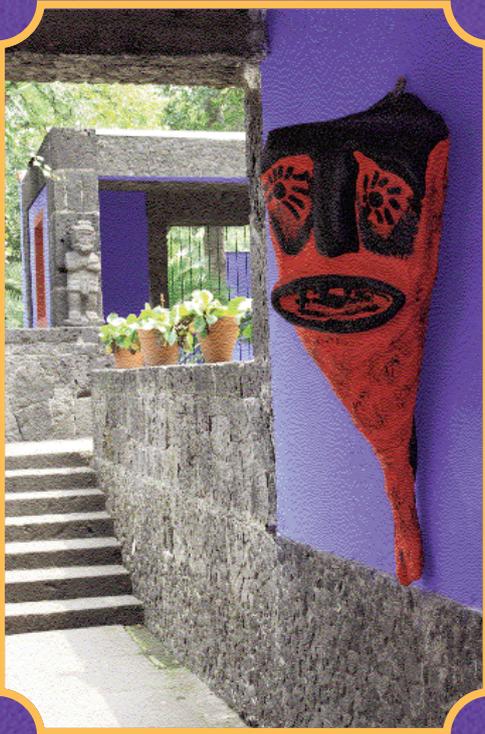
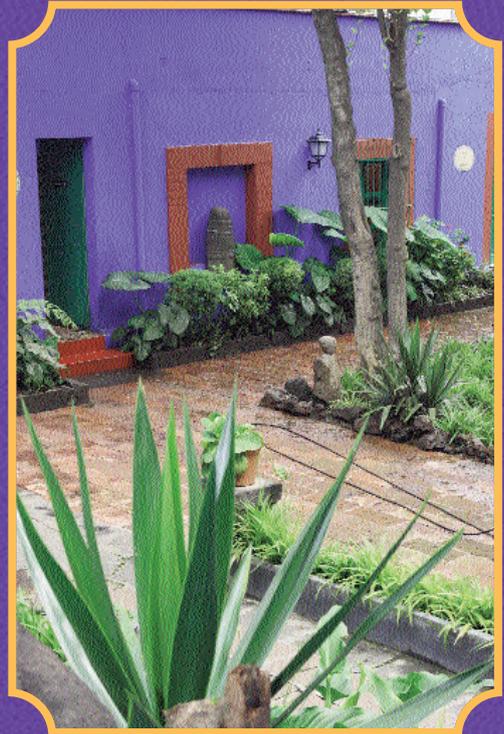
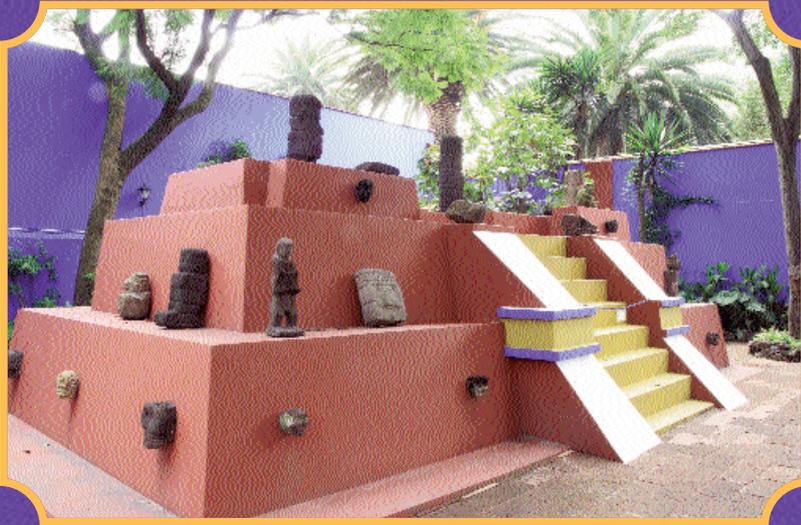
My Dress Hangs Here, 46 x 50 cm, 1933-1938 (oil and collage on masonite), FEMSA Collection.



Self-portrait with Medallions, 50 x 40 cm, 1948 (oil on masonite), private collection.

The catalogue published for the commemorative centennial exhibition aimed to bring together a select multidisciplinary group of Mexican and foreign authors to focus on Frida's suggestive universe from very diverse points of view. Historians, art historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, architects, sociologists, doctors, psychiatrists, writers and critics all contribute their ideas, sensations or reflections about the indivisible binomial of Frida Kahlo's life and painting. Each author analyzes one or more of the exhibition's 64 oil paintings, presented chronologically in the catalogue. Whoever thought that everything had already been said about Frida Kahlo will discover here that her art is as inexhaustible as is unpredictable the dialogue established between the viewer and her work. These essays demonstrate the wealth and variety of the aesthetic experience that Kahlo's canvases produce. In addition to literary pleasure, the reader will make discoveries, new threads of interpretation or even uncover a hidden mystery among the tall symbolic brush in which the painting of the century-old and eternal Frida Kahlo resides. **VIM**





The Blue House Reveals Its Treasures

Museo Frida Kahlo
Londres 247, Col. Del Carmen, Coyoacán, 04000
Phone: [55] 5554-5999
www.museofridakahlo.org
Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



The Casa Azul (Blue House) in Coyoacán is where Frida Kahlo spent her childhood and lived with Diego Rivera until the day she died. It has now brought out its treasures, hidden under lock and key for almost five decades in commodes, wardrobes, glass cases, trunks and, above all, in the bathroom adjoining the room where Diego used to sleep. The bathroom door was sealed in 1957 on orders from Diego himself, who asked his friend Dolores Olmedo to keep the archives there and make sure no one opened it until 15 years after his death.

Three years ago, on the fiftieth anniversary of Frida Kahlo's death, the treasures began to come out into the light, and this year, to commemorate the centennial of her birth, the Blue House decided to share all of them.

Via photographs, letters, books, posters, dresses, sketches, toys, paintbrushes, palettes, paintings, paint thinners and every imaginable kind of object, Frida and

Photos by Mauricio Degollado.

Diego show details of their daily, personal life: their illnesses, their loves, their loyalties, their beliefs, their interests and their taste in clothes.

Specialists agree that there have been no major revelations, but the new information will enrich our knowledge about the work and lives of these two icons of Mexican art from new perspectives.

BENEATH THE DUST AND THE SPIDER WEBS

The people who took off the seals had to deal with the dust and spider webs before getting to Frida's corsets, her dresses, letters, medical file, medications, bed clothing, thousands of documents, cosmetics and jewelry. The room was turned into a vault full of the technology necessary for maintaining the objects at appropriate temperature and humidity levels, while a small portion of the items were exhibited for the public, distributed throughout the house.

Some objects have remained just as the two artists left them. Frida's work table, next to her easel and wheelchair, still has ID-sized photographs stuck to it. There



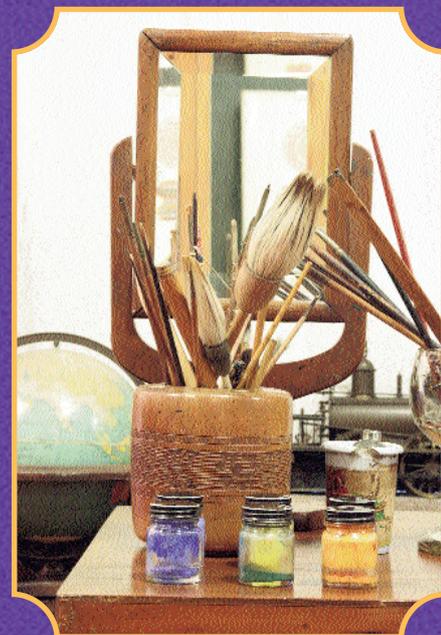


are her palettes, her pencils, bottles with paint thinner, jars of paint, mixers, toys and even a fetus in formaldehyde. This same room contains Diego Rivera's work table.

Frida and Diego's 2,170 books include art and literature, poetry and politics in several languages, even Russian. In many, Frida made notes or sketches, particularly in the medical books that show her interest in investigating about the illnesses she suffered from throughout her life. The show was divided into six rooms, including previously unknown, surprising Frida Kahlo drawings, her Tehuana outfit, and signed photographs, testimony to her insomnia; outstanding drawings by Diego, such as the outlines of his first mural, *The Creation* (1921-1922), in the National High School, the sketch of the mural for the National Autonomous University of Mexico Olympic Stadium and a landscape from his early impressionist period. It also displays a selection of documents from Diego and Frida's archives, correspondence with friends and between the two of them; books and magazines illustrated with Diego's work; nineteenth-century lithographs that Diego liked and referred to for his murals; as well as publications that are indicators of the couple's visual culture. There are posters about

exhibitions and political and artistic events and what is apparently the only poster Diego ever did for the National Lottery. A newspaper reports on the couple's marriage, August 21, 1929. One of her dresses, a headdress, a book and a corset suffice to represent Frida's personality. Among the collection's gems are facsimiles of pre-Hispanic and sixteenth-century codices that Diego collected, studied and loved. This is where he obtained part of his aesthetic sense for interpreting the pre-Hispanic.

When Diego donated the furniture, buildings, art works and objects to the people of Mexico through a Bank of Mexico trust managed by the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli and Frida Kahlo Blue House Museums, he stipulated that not a single piece could leave there. So, the 22,105 catalogued objects must remain in the Coyoacán residence. **MM**



Guillermo Kahlo-Henry Greenwood Two Views of Monumental Architecture

Guillermo Tovar de Teresa*



Guillermo Kahlo, view of the belltower of the Santa Catarina Church, Puebla, Puebla, 1910. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.



Henry Greenwood Peabody, San Felipe Neri Church in ruins, Mexico City, 1898. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.

In the late-nineteenth-century, European neo-romantic experiences sparked enormous interest in the United States in looking at U.S. links with the Hispanic. The Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic worlds had always seen the New World as a kind of bone of contention. The Americans thought they had a manifest destiny, making their nation the guardian of the entire hemisphere. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the United States gradually imposed itself on the Americas and the effects of that vision were felt in Mexico before any other country in the hemisphere.

First there was the Texas War in 1835 and then the invasion that snatched away half our territory between 1846 and 1847. Both led the Americans to feel they had become a kind of new conquistadors of the region, emulating Hernán Cortés and other sixteenth-century warriors. In his *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843), William Prescott painted Cortés as a “Latin lover,” among other

* This text was written by the author for the exhibition “Guillermo Kahlo-Henry Greenwood: Two Views of Monumental Architecture” held in The Old San Ildefonso College from September 2007 to January 2008.

Photos courtesy of the Old San Ildefonso College.

things. Prescott created an important trend of interest in things Hispanic among Boston’s elite, the center of a cultural milieu. One member of this group was a Spanish ambassador’s wife, Madame Calderón de la Barca, who, accompanying her husband during his assignment in Mexico in the 1840s, turned out to be a great correspondent. Her letters, with their description of daily life, the atmosphere and people, are a wonderful testimony to Mexican romanticism. Two other figures stand out in this period: a millionairess and a reporter. On the counsel of Edwin Barber, advisor to Philadelphia, New York and Boston’s main collectors of Mexican majolica ware (Puebla’s Talavera ceramics), millionairess collector and patron Isabel (Bella) Gardiner acquired part of the ceramic wall tiles of the cloister of an old Puebla convent. Reporter Sylvester Baxter, for his part, the author of several books related to the history of the U.S. Southwest, published a monumental monograph consisting of one volume of text and nine of photographs by Henry Greenwood Peabody called *Spanish-Colonial Architecture in Mexico* in 1901.¹ This



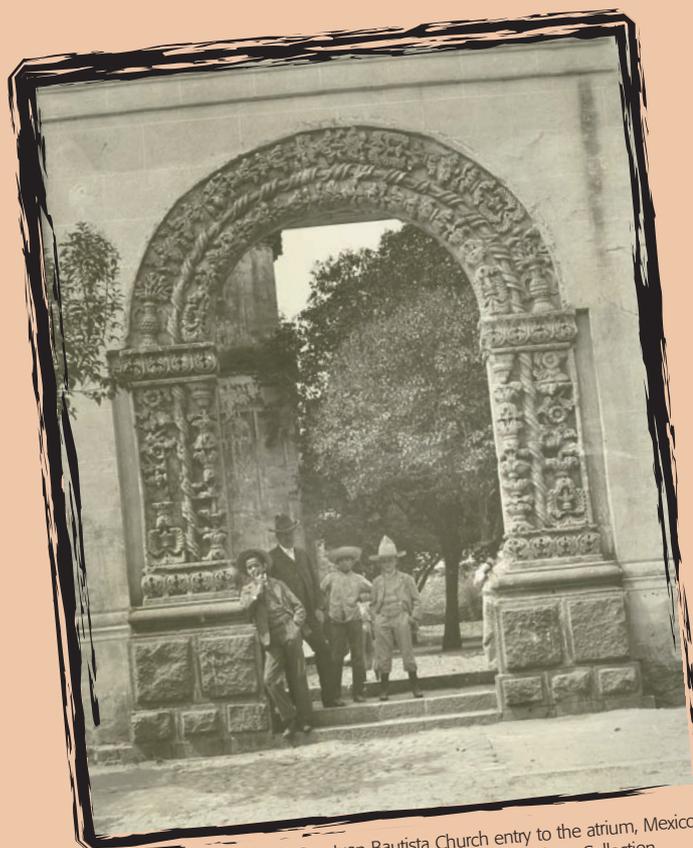
Guillermo Kahlo, Detail of the National Fine Arts Palace Theater cornice, Mexico City, 1911. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas.

important work revealed the wealth of Spain's heritage in Mexico, amazing cultured Americans of the time. The impact was such that the United States proceeded to reconsider its evaluation of New Spain architecture in twentieth-century Mexico. We should not forget that Baxter's work came out three years after the U.S. invasion of Cuba and the Philippines, the remains of the Spanish empire. This unleashed an enthusiasm for everything Hispanic in the United States, leading to the establishment of the Hispanic Society of New York and the creation of an atmosphere that culminated in Californian architecture into the 1920s, spurring many U.S. millionaires to erect veritable palaces in the Hispanic style.

At the same time, the exact opposite was occurring in Mexico, where culture was synonymous with cosmopolitanism and Europeanization. The monuments that Sylvester Baxter so admired were seen here as rancid vestiges of a world that had disappeared, the world of New Spain, which, according to liberal principles, had to disappear to give way to a modern, European-like country. During



Guillermo Kahlo, Tepozotlán Convent baptismal font, State of Mexico, 1920. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.



Henry Greenwood Peabody, San Juan Bautista Church entry to the atrium, Mexico City, 1898. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.

the second half of the nineteenth century in Mexico, very few appreciated the art of the colonial period. Among those who did were the jurist José Bernardo Couto, Catalan painter Pelegrín Clavé, poet Joaquín Pesado and literati Manuel Gustavo Revilla, all of whom were aficionados above all of sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cultural affairs. The ministers of the Porfirio Díaz government and Mexico's great families of the time deplored anything "colonial," with the exception of the Gargollos, the De la Arenas, the Mirandas and a few others. The official circles of the time dreamed of grand constructions and palaces in the Venetian and French style, while the economically and socially prominent filled their houses with European trinkets.

The arrival of Baxter's work in Mexico had an important impact on Porfirio Díaz, his ministers and Mexican high society. How was it possible that Boston society could find new value in Mexico's Spanish heritage? It made people appreciate the importance of what had been ignored or even belittled. From the Finance Ministry, José Yves Limantour proposed to Porfirio Díaz that a photographic



Henry Greenwood Peabody, House of the Counts of Santiago de Calimaya, Mexico City, 1898.
Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.



Guillermo Kahlo, Arches of the Querétaro aqueduct, Querétaro, 1912. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.



Henry Greenwood Peabody, Panoramic view of the Querétaro aqueduct, Querétaro, 1898. Ricardo Salinas Pliego/Fomento Cultural Grupo Salinas Collection.

inventory of that enormous and monumental architectural heritage be made. Guillermo Kahlo, a German photographer residing in Mexico, was commissioned to photograph the country's most important churches, which from that time on began to be considered a national treasure. Kahlo undertook the titanic job of traveling all over the country for years in conditions that read like a novel. Unfortunately, he never saw his magnum opus published with the same quality as Baxter's.

A decade and a half passed before Alberto J. Pani, the minister of finance under the Obregón administration, published part of those materials in six volumes. In 1924, the books began to be published accompanied by texts by Gerardo Murillo ("Dr. Atl"), Manuel Toussaint and engineer José R. Benítez. Today, the complete collection of photographs, together with their glass-plate negatives, is stored in the National Institute of Anthropology and History's National Photography Archive.

Some of the series of photographs circulated among Dr. Atl, Toussaint and Benítez's friends. One of them is the collection currently on exhibit in the Old College of San Ildefonso. In 1934, Baxter's work was republished in Mexico, and its Mexican counterpart has been republished several times. However, a large part of Kahlo's work still remains unpublished. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Conceived by Baxter, the book was the product of a trip to Mexico taken by both author and photographer. It is fair to say that Baxter was not just a successful Boston journalist but, as the *Atlantic Monthly* review states, he also studied in Leipzig and Berlin from 1875 to 1877 where he became fluent in German and interested in German affairs. He was later involved with Charles Eliot as secretary of the preliminary Metropolitan Park Commission for Greater Boston in 1892 and 1893, and in 1907-1909 he served as secretary of the Metropolitan Improvements Committee. As such, he showed great admiration for the results of what Germany was doing in city planning (in his opinion it was the country with the most advanced approach to the solution of the urban problems of the time) and published various articles on the subject for several U.S. journals (*Atlantic Monthly* 104, July 1909, pp. 72-95).

The exhibition "Guillermo Kahlo/Henry Greenwood Peabody: Two Views of Monumental Architecture" will remain open until January 27, 2008. Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Justo Sierra 16, Centro Histórico, México, D.F.

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Education in Mexico

Eduardo Andere M.*



Eduardo Reséndiz/Cuartoscuro

ENROLLMENT AND EXPENDITURE

There are 33,567,200 students enrolled in schools and universities in Mexico. Of those, 76.6 percent, or 25.7 million, are enrolled in compulsory education (pre-school, elementary and lower secondary schools); 11.5 percent, or 3.9 million, are enrolled upper secondary schools; and 7.85 percent, or 2.6 million, are enrolled in institutions of higher education.¹

Mexico's educational system is divided in five levels or stages: pre-school, elementary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school and higher education. Theoretically, pre-school should last three years; primary school, six; lower secondary school, three; upper secondary school, three; and higher education, two to four or five years. For the last two decades compulsory schooling has consisted of nine years,

normally beginning when the child is six years old. But today, Mexico is one of the few countries in the world in which pre-school education is also mandatory (see table 1).

In late 2002, Congress approved an amendment to Article 3 of the Constitution, including its transitory provisions, making pre-school education mandatory, to be implemented gradually beginning in the 2004-2005 school year. By 2008-2009, the school reform must be fully implemented, so that children from the age of three will all have to go to pre-school. At the time of this writing (late 2007), there is debate about the feasibility of the reform. The government itself is encouraging the debate with the argument that there are not enough resources to fully implement the reform. Mexico's national educational authorities are facing a dilemma: the inability to comply with the mandated three years of pre-school education, contrasted with the need to have all children enrolled. If they do not fulfill the constitutional mandate, starting in the 2009-2010 school year, six-year-olds will not

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TABLE 1
ENROLLMENT IN MEXICO'S SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES
2007-2008

<i>Pre-school</i>	<i>Elementary School</i>	<i>Lower Secondary School</i>	<i>Upper Secondary School</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>	<i>Job Training</i>
4,999,700	14,574,200	6,139,200	3,855,700	2,633,800	1,364,600

Source: Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, *Primer Informe de Gobierno*, Anexo Estadístico (Mexico City: 2007).

TABLE 2
GOVERNMENT SPENDING PER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT
(ESTIMATED IN PESOS)
2007

<i>Pre-school</i>	<i>Elementary School</i>	<i>Lower Secondary School</i>	<i>Professional/Technical School</i>	<i>Upper Secondary School</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
11,500	10,400	16,100	15,600	22,500	50,300

Source: Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, *Primer Informe de Gobierno*, Anexo Estadístico (Mexico City: 2007).

be able to enroll in primary schools. Before the reform, Mexico's children had the right and obligation to enroll in elementary school simply by virtue of being six. However, starting in 2008-2009, those children will have to have an official pre-school diploma (certification). For this reason, the educational authorities are arduously seeking a constitutional amendment to cancel or postpone the three-year pre-school obligation.

This will undoubtedly be a thorny topic on the agenda since, at least for 2007, the federal government estimates a real increase of almost zero in educational spending per student. In fact, and using official budget estimates as a basis, national spending on education as a percentage of GDP will drop from 7.0 percent to 6.9 percent from 2006 to 2007.² This is particularly critical because in the last few years, the demand for school education has grown and will continue to grow vigorously and consistently. The pressure of this increasing demand stems not only from the new compulsory nature of pre-school education, but also from two other sources: demographic pressures and educational policies geared toward drastically reducing the drop-out rates while increasing the upper secondary school and higher education enrollment

rates. Higher enrollment rates in all levels plus lower drop-out rates in lower and upper secondary schools will make for pressure on expenditures, since these are the most costly levels of education.

Today, Mexico spends about 19,200³ pesos a year per student nationwide.⁴ However, as shown by Table 2, the distribution of these expenditures increases consistently as students rise through the educational pyramid from elementary school on.

Mexico spends a slightly higher percentage of its GDP (6.4 percent) than the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average (6.2 percent).⁵ In addition, educational spending has grown significantly in recent years. However, expenditures per student are much lower in Mexico than the OECD average and even lower if compared to countries with the highest levels of expenditure per student such as the U.S.

Compared to other countries, Mexico's educational spending is notably smaller when the parameters are expenditures per student. Table 3 shows the data for Mexico, the OECD average and some individual countries.

Expenditures per student are much lower
in Mexico than the OECD average and even lower
if compared to countries with the highest levels of expenditure
per student such as the U.S.

There seems to be a consensus among educational policy scholars in the sense that what is really important is not the level of expenditure, but the way public funds are used. The real question is not how much is spent but how it is spent. Nevertheless, one of the main challenges for a poor country like Mexico will be to improve the way its scarce financial resources are spent at the same time that it seeks new sources of financing to maintain a constantly expanding system, particularly at the most expensive levels of education.

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Educational quality, defined as learning performance measured by standardized testing, is a relatively new issue in Mexico's public debate, in contrast with the United States, where standardized tests have been given for several decades. The first world-scale assessment Mexico participated in was the 1995 Trends in International Mathematics and Science

Study (TIMSS), under the auspices of the International Association for the Assessment of Educational Achievement (IEA).⁶ However, unfortunately, Mexico's federal educational authorities of the time decided not to publish the results. This was a harsh blow for IEA test organizers, who, after that experience decided to change the rules: no country can refuse to disseminate the results of the tests and their analysis anymore.

In 2000, Mexico participated in another international test, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), under OECD auspices, and the results were published in 2001.⁷ For the first time, 15-year-old Mexican students' performance relative to their counterparts in other countries was published (see table 4). In 2002, a group of 11 countries joined the 32 (the 28 OECD members plus four others) that had participated in the 2000 assessment.⁸ In all, 41 countries participated in the 2000 and 2002 assessments. Mexico ranked thirty-fourth. In 2003, PISA was applied for the second time. On this occasion Mexico dropped its ranking vis-

TABLE 3
EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT (U.S. DOLLARS)
2007

	<i>Elementary Schools</i>	<i>Lower Secondary Schools</i>	<i>Upper Secondary Schools</i>	<i>Higher Education</i> ¹
Mexico	1,694	1,602	2,564	4,834
OECD (average)	5,832	6,909	7,884	7,951
United States	8,805	9,490	10,468	19,842
Luxembourg	13,458	18,036	17,731	Nd
Finland	5,581	8,918	6,555	7,697
Czech Republic	2,791	4,769	4,790	5,711
Slovak Republic	2,073	2,389	3,155	5,940
Turkey	1,120	1,808 ²	1,808 ²	4,231

¹ Not including research and development activities.

² Expenditure for all lower and upper secondary education.

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2007: OECD Indicators*, Paris, 2007. Table B.1a.

à-vis the other 40 assessed countries to the thirty-seventh position (see table 4). In 2006, a third round of PISA testing took place, and the results will be published on December 4, 2007. Not much is expected for Mexico from this round.

National assessments carried out in 2005 and 2006 known as Excale (Educational Quality and Achievement Exams) and 2006 and 2007 known as ENLACE (National Academic Achievement Evaluations in Schools) reveal serious deficiencies in primary and secondary school students' learning nationwide.⁹

Summing up, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Mexico has a particularly weak educational system that will have to face enormous challenges in terms of enrollment and quality, challenges that sometimes seem insurmountable when the issue of equity is brought into the picture.

EQUITY

Even with all of this, Mexico's biggest problem and educational challenge is equity. Assessment after assessment shows that this issue is extraordinarily important in explaining and predicting the variance of results among students of the

world's educational systems. What is more, students' poor performance is worsened in countries with severe structural poverty and/or inequality problems, like Mexico and the U.S. In Mexico, the differences in performance of public and private elementary and lower secondary school students can reach up to four grades of schooling. That is, the average private school student can have an advantage in compulsory learning of up to three or four grades of study. Of course, when these results are controlled by the students and schools' socioeconomic, socio-cultural and socio-educational factors, the differences are drastically reduced. That does not refute the fact that, if we disregard the aforementioned conditions, children with more resources, with access to private schools, have a considerable advantage over low-income children attending public schools. The educational system, then, not only reflects social segregation, but fosters it.

THE CHALLENGES

Mexico's educational challenges are monumental. Naturally, a large part of the problem of deficient quality in results must be sought in age-old structural problems like poverty and

TABLE 4
PISA 2000/2002 AND PISA 2003 RESULTS

Country	Average Points (reading, math and science)			
	2000/2002	Ranking	2003	Ranking
Japan	1,629	1	1,580	5
Hong Kong-China	1,626	2	1,599	3
South Korea	1,624	3	1,614	2
Finland	1,620	4	1,635	1
Canada	1,596	5	1,579	6
New Zealand	1,594	6	1,566	9
Australia	1,589	7	1,574	8
Czech Republic	1,501	17	1,528	15
United States	1,496	18	1,469	24
Mexico	1,231	34	1,190	37
Peru	952	41	na	na
Tunisia	na	na	1,119	40

na: not available.

Sources: PISA 2000/2002, OECD, *Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow. Further Results from PISA 2002*, figures 2.5, 3.2 and 3.5 (Paris: OECD, 2003).

PISA 2003: OECD, *Informe PISA 2003. Aprender para el mundo del mañana*, Figures 2.16b, 6.3 and 6.10 (Mexico City: Santillana, 2004).

In Mexico, the differences in performance of public and private elementary and lower secondary school students can reach up to four grades of schooling. That is, the average private school student can have an advantage in compulsory learning of up to three or four grades of study.

inequality. Another source of educational deficiency may rest on a culture which is not prone to education. Only today's generations are achieving slightly more than a primary education, a good deal higher than that of their parents. In Mexico, families do not support schooling, in contrast to attitudes in Asia or Europe, where love of education is in people's blood or in their mothers' milk, as I heard the principal of a prestigious Finnish school say.¹⁰ In 1960, 15-year-olds and older Mexicans averaged 2.8 years of schooling. In 2005, the years of schooling grew to 8.1. In 1960, 43.2 percent of people in this age group did not finish elementary school, while by 2005, the same indicator dropped to 14.2 percent.¹¹

A third source of educational deficiency is the dearth of opportunities for teaching and learning in the schools that most need them, that is, public or government schools, which generally serve the poorest population. Finally, one additional source of quality deficiency is rooted in the educational system *per se* together with the players' power relations and interactions.

Mexico's educational system is far too decentralized for a political federation. Mexico and the U.S. are both federations, but in Mexico, the most important decisions are made on the federal level. States' decision-making power is circumscribed to operational matters. In contrast with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA), whereby the U.S. government tries to influence educational policy through a complex scheme of incentives and monetary sanctions, in Mexico, the federal government has a constitutional and legal mandate granting full powers to federal authorities and agencies, mainly the Ministry of Public Education (SEP).¹² With those powers, the SEP, together with the Chamber of Deputies, not only determines educational expenditures, but also decides their distribution by state and educational level. Federal authorities also completely decide the objectives and content of all compulsory education curriculums (pre-school, elementary and lower secondary schools) for both public and private schools, and those designed for normal schools (teacher-training colleges). Federal authorities also establish national standards for compulsory education and teachers-college

education. There is also a national assessment policy under the federal umbrella.

In August 2002, the federal government established a decentralized agency to take charge of all national assessments for compulsory and high schools: the National Institute for the Assessment of Education (INEE).¹³ The INEE follows a plan to carry out national standardized tests based on random samples of students. In 2006, the SEP began its own assessment of third-to-sixth and ninth-grade students' performance in Spanish and math using its ENLACE test. Plans for 2008 include increasing ENLACE's coverage and scope in primary and lower and upper secondary schools.

The federal government is also in charge of labor relations with teachers, and negotiations are held on a national level with the only union that holds title to the collective bargaining agreement for compulsory-education-level teachers, the National Educational Workers Union (SNTE).¹⁴ This gives the union great *de facto* power and negotiating capability *vis-à-vis* other interest groups in compulsory education.

As if that were not enough, federal authorities also have the power to design, impose and implement massive measures regarding different issues, like obligatory textbooks in compulsory education (particularly for elementary grades) or universal technological solutions. Using these powers, the SEP has ordered and financed sweeping, costly national technological programs. For example, in 2004, it decided to extend a costly multimedia technology package to all public elementary schools in the country known as *Enciclomedia*,¹⁵ which has introduced electronic white boards into 150,000 classrooms. In just two years (2005 and 2006), this program cost almost 17 billion pesos to operate. This figure is equivalent to the National Autonomous University of Mexico's annual budget, or three times the budget of the federal agency in charge of promoting science and technology in the whole country, the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt).¹⁶

The two pillars of Mexico's educational system, Article 3 of the national Constitution and the SEP, which is 86 years old this year, have exhibited strong resistance to change.

Mexico's educational challenges are monumental.
A large part of the problem of deficient quality in results must be sought
in age-old structural problems like poverty and inequality.

Furthermore, over time Article 3 has concentrated federal and state power over education at all levels, but above all, at the compulsory school level. Amendments to Mexico's educational system like the famous 1992 reform, known as the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education (ANMBE),¹⁷ have been insufficient to overcome the enormous problems in educational quality and equity. The biggest achievements in education in Mexico center on enrollment, but even in this area, Mexico not only lags behind developed countries, like those of the OECD, but also behind Latin American nations with similar or lower levels of development.

It takes decades to change educational systems anywhere in the world. But, if the analysis of the problems and deficiencies is wrong, educational policies will be ineffective. To really transform and improve education in Mexico, a radical change in educational policy is needed.¹⁸ Unfortunately, the political, social and economic conditions required for substantial change in this area in Mexico do not exist. In the coming years, we will see more of the same. **NMM**

NOTES

¹ Throughout the article, the author uses the OECD terms "lower secondary school" and "upper secondary school" as the equivalents of the U.S. "middle" and "high schools." [Editor's Note.]

² Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, *Primer Informe de Gobierno*, Anexo Estadístico (Mexico City: 2007).

³ As of October and the first days of November 2007, the peso exchange rate has fluctuated between 11 and 10.70 pesos per U.S. dollar.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2000: OECD Indicators*, Table B2.1 (Paris: OECD, 2007), p. 205. See http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en_2649_201185_39251550_1_1_1_1,00.html.

⁶ See <http://times.bc.edu> and www.iea.org.nl.

⁷ See www.pisa.oecd.org.

⁸ OECD, *Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow: Further Results from PISA 2002* (Paris: OECD, 2003), p. 12, at http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=5467_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC.

⁹ See www.inee.edu.mx and www.enlace.sep.gob.mx.

¹⁰ Eduardo Andere M., *¿Cómo es la mejor educación en el mundo?: Políticas educativas y escuelas en 19 países* (Mexico City: Aula XXI/Santillana, 2007).

¹¹ Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, *Indicadores seleccionados sobre nivel de escolaridad, promedio de escolaridad, aptitud para leer y escribir y alfabetismo, 1960 a 2005* (Mexico City: INEGI, 2007), at <http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/español/rutinas/ept.asp?t=medu09&c=3277>.

¹² SEP, "Secretaría de Educación Pública," at www.sep.gob.mx.

¹³ See www.inee.edu.mx.

¹⁴ SNTE stands for the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación.

¹⁵ See www.encyclomedia.sep.gob.mx.

¹⁶ Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología at www.conacyt.mx.

¹⁷ ANMBE, "Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica."

¹⁸ I deal with this issue in my book *México sigue en riesgo: el monumental reto de la educación* (Mexico City: Temas de Hoy, Editorial Planeta, 2006).



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Who's at Fault? Drug-trafficking Violence in Mexico

J. Jesús Esquivel*



Oscar Alvarado/Cuartoscuro

President Felipe Calderón has developed a strategy of criticizing and blaming the U.S. government for the violence inflicted on the Mexican people by the drug cartels, saying it is not doing all it should to reduce drug consumption domestically and it is neglecting the fight against drug trafficking. As a result, some members of Bush's cabinet and several federal legislators have responded very negatively and now look at Mexico more cautiously and are less interested in bilateral cooperation.

If the Calderón administration wanted to get an immediate, effective reaction from the United States in the fight

against drug consumption and trafficking by complaining to Washington, "it made a big mistake," said a State Department official who would only talk about the issue on the condition that his identity remain a secret.

"President Calderón needs U.S. support in his fight against drug trafficking and he has already formally requested it; but I don't think his sharply critical attitude is going to get him what he wants, at least for as long as President Bush's administration lasts."

Since December 1, 2006, when Calderón took office, Mexico-U.S. bilateral relations and cooperation have done an about-face. Calderón decided to change the priorities on the agenda, replacing immigration with a frontal assault on organized crime, the legacy he wants to leave in the permanently difficult, complex history of our bilateral relations.

* Washington correspondent for the weekly magazine *Proceso* and for the radio news program "Enfoque."

Since Calderón took office, Mexico-U.S. bilateral relations and cooperation have done an about-face. Calderón decided to change the priorities on the agenda, replacing immigration with a frontal assault on organized crime.

Faced with a growing wave of violence and crime perpetrated by the drug cartels throughout Mexico, what in Mexico has been called “narco-violence,” and that began to mount in the last year and a half of the Vicente Fox administration, President Calderón opted for a very easy but very risky formula for fighting drug trafficking: militarizing the conflict with the different cartels and replacing corrupt members of police forces with army privates.

At first, Washington applauded Calderón’s decision to militarize the fight, though it never stopped warning about the risks implicit for a country like Mexico in exposing the members of its armed forces to the danger of corruption by drug kingpins.

The first operations against the drug traffickers involved sending troops to Guerrero, Michoacán, Nuevo León and Baja California. According to reports published by Mexico’s Attorney General’s Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), these states are strategic because the Gulf, Tijuana, Sinaloa and Milenio cartels run drug routes through them.

Undoubtedly, the mere presence of Mexican troops patrolling the streets of towns and cities has been intimidating to local residents. And it has helped to lower levels of drug-trafficking-related violence in Michoacán, for example, but not much. However, in real terms, the militarization of the fight against drug trafficking is for the moment only part of Calderón’s strategy.

“In Mexico, drug traffickers are more and more powerful and not even the military is going to be able to stop them unless President Calderón decides to use its full attack capabilities. And that would be a very serious mistake because all kinds of atrocities and human rights violations could be committed,” says a special DEA agent, assigned to tactical tracking of Mexican drug kingpins along part of the Mexico-Texas border.

“For now, unfortunately drug traffickers are the only ones capable of stopping or slowing down drug-related violence in

Mexico. These criminals control a large part of state and municipal police forces in northern Mexico and that makes them practically invulnerable to President Calderón’s militarized offensive,” he says.

While this comment may sound insulting to members of the Mexican government, his analysis is shared by certain specialists in research on drug trafficking in Mexico.

Alfredo Corchado, correspondent in Mexico for *The Dallas Morning News*, is perhaps the U.S. reporter with the greatest knowledge about how Mexican drug traffickers operate. In June of this year he published an article quoting sources who assured him that several Mexican organized crime bosses planned to hold a summit to determine the parameters of a ceasefire amongst themselves, as part of a strategy to get the Calderón government to decrease its emphasis on fighting them with the military.

In addition to the new Mexican administration’s militarization of the fight against drug trafficking, it has also been noted for its lack of transparency and its secrecy in dealing with cooperation and the assistance it requests from the United States to deal with this scourge affecting both societies. The effects of this closemouthed approach have not been long in coming, unleashing a wave of speculative news reports about the possibility that Washington might support Calderón with equipment and military personnel specialized in counter-insurgency intelligence operations to thwart the drug traffickers.

“We have a kind of Christmas list that we would like to request of the U.S. government to fight drug trafficking,” explained a high-ranking Mexican diplomat who requested his name be withheld because of the ongoing requests for assistance from the Bush administration. “It is true that we need more support from Washington, but we don’t want their intervention or legislative oversight of anti-drug trafficking operations by Mexican military or police forces.”

The request for U.S. assistance is a fact, but the details are a mystery. This has already sparked widespread speculation in the media including extreme conjectures like saying that Washington is preparing a “Mexico Plan” similar to the anti-narcotics aid package the U.S. Congress passed in the 1990s to back the Colombian government in its drug war, known as the Colombia Plan. That plan included U.S. Congress imposition of conditions and certification requirements on that South American government.

Different Mexican government officials, like Arturo Sarukhán, the Calderón administration’s ambassador

to Washington, deny that Mexico wants a similar aid package.

The Mexican diplomat quoted above explains that Mexico's reluctance to accept a "Mexico Plan" is due to the fact that Calderón would not be able to accept any kind of direct or indirect intervention by the U.S. Congress to certify or condition the Mexican armed forces' operating methods. For the time being, the military is one of this administration's central political-social bases, and U.S. interference would unleash a firestorm from all the political parties.

"The Mexican military has lined up behind the president; it wants to support him as long as it's reciprocal," says the Mexican diplomat. "But the Mexican military is taking advantage of the fact that Calderón needs it, and not the reverse, to demand that he get sophisticated offensive hardware from the United States. They demand this without realizing that, politically, this requires the intervention of Capital Hill, since we would be talking here about a change in the Bush administration's budget for operations to back up Latin American countries."

Because of the Mexican army's demands and disregard for the details of their political consequences, Calderón left the responsibility of paring down the Christmas list of arms Washington could donate for the fight against drug trafficking without direct U.S. congressional action to his experts in relations with the U.S., Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs for North America Carlos Rico and Ambassador Sarukhán.

Mexico's armed forces dream of U.S. combat helicopters and highly sophisticated weapons to meet head on the country's drug kingpins, who undoubtedly have a better arsenal than our police forces. This would require congressional approval and certification, given the equipment's cost and the possibility that it could be used in operations that could entail serious human rights violations, just as has happened on several occasions under the Colombia Plan. In addition, the use of U.S. military equipment by foreign armies is allowed only under the condition that the Pentagon signs off on training in its use and maintenance. The presence of foreign military personnel in Mexico is unthinkable given the nationalist legislation that the Calderón administration subscribes to and Mexico's Congress very jealously defends.

Calderón's criticisms of the Bush administration's disregard for programs to reduce drug use in U.S. society and contain arms trafficking from the U.S. to Mexican drug lords, as well as of its focus on the fight against international terrorism and containing the civil war in Iraq are a source of irri-

Calderón's mistake in the bilateral struggle against organized crime may be criticizing the U.S. openly when it is headed up by the most conservative, vengeful and unilateralist president in recent history.

tation and division both in the White House and Capital Hill. It is in the latter where some officials now want to take reprisals against Mexico in the form of conditioning the granting of assistance to fight drug trafficking, in part explaining the delay in answering the Calderón government request.

"It will not be easy for the Mexican government to get what it wants. It will have to make several concessions and, at least here in the State Department, we know that in Congress, several legislators demand that many restrictions be placed on the Mexican government in exchange for aid, as a reprisal for all the criticisms that President Calderón and Ambassador Sarukhán have made," said the State Department official.

As obsessed with the issue of drug trafficking as the Mexico-U.S. bilateral agenda is, Calderón is facing a great many difficulties in getting what he wants from Washington in terms of counter-narcotics cooperation, drug-use reduction and stopping the illegal flow of arms into Mexico.

His strategy of militarizing the drug war may not be the most appropriate, but it is the most feasible alternative, taking into account that the army is the only institution in the Mexican government with the human and technical capability to effectively face down organized crime, despite the red lights that may go on in terms of preserving Mexico's citizens' individual and constitutional rights.

Calderón's mistake in the bilateral struggle against organized crime may be criticizing the United States openly when it is headed up by the most conservative, vengeful and unilateralist president in recent history. Bereft of domestic and international prestige, and today, even of the support of his own party, which considers him an impediment and a negative influence for its electoral aspirations in November 2008 given his disastrous military strategy in Iraq, Bush may well not be the ally Calderón wants in his fight against drugs. It may even be counterproductive to try to negotiate with Bush an aid package to fight drug trafficking that in the end may widen the gap even more around an issue with such dire effects on both U.S. and Mexican society. **MM**

A Panorama of Science In Mexico Today

Mario Guillermo González Rubí*



Gilberto Molina/Cuartoscuro

THE VICISSITUDES OF SCIENCE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Sketching the current situation and future challenges for science in our country implies first not losing sight of its indissoluble link to the development of institutions of higher learning, particularly the public ones, since it is there that 90 percent of Mexico's research is done. If we take into account the fact that university enrollment today is approximately 10 times what it was in 1970, and that for every academic post that existed then, there are now 24, we can say that the system of higher education (including the scientific sub-system) is the product of processes of institutional construction not more than four decades old.

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Two initial problems are derived from scientific research being carried out in institutions of higher learning: the first is related to funding and the second is a result of the day-to-day tension arising from competition for the legitimate respect of the other academic areas (teaching and dissemination of culture). Even during the so-called "expansion" (1970 to 1985), when the number of full-time positions, combining teaching and the production of knowledge, increased significantly, in practice, academics were required to fulfill teaching requirements, while research was a more ambiguous, lax matter. The people who occupied university cubicles were young, had limited training (bachelor's degrees were the most required) and lacked experience, among other things. For that reason, a process of professionalization on the job that continues to this day began, constituting the genetic mark of an important part of our institutions of higher learning.

FROM REGULAR FUNDING
TO COMPETING FOR RESOURCES

The urgency of dealing with the growing demand for higher education, together with the economic crisis of the early 1980s, worked against more resources being designated for research. Nevertheless, the 1984 creation of the National System of Researchers (SNI), with its mechanisms for individual compensation; the transformation of the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt) in 1991, with the simultaneous differentiated assignation of funds for graduate and research programs; and the passage of the Law of Science and Technology in 2002, which proposed the creation of sectoral programs with private business community participation, all made for the possibility of access to resources linked to fulfilling a series of indicators and the commitment to periodically re-evaluate based on results.

Thus, in the last quarter of a century, competition for resources gradually became—not without resistance—a fundamental paradigm for scientific activity. However, these alternative forms of funding for science and scientists have not made for a significant advance in the conditions in which this increasingly broad and complex activity is carried out, with its permanent demands to improve its forms of organization, keeping up to date and access to cutting-edge technologies. Science is becoming more and more expensive, while resources are becoming scarcer and scarcer. One of the recurring indicators for measuring the importance the state and society place on scientific research throughout the world is the ratio of federal spending in science and technology to the gross domestic product (GDP), with the recommendation that it be assigned 1 percent of GDP. In 2006, Mexico earmarked 0.43 percent of GDP for scientific research, that is, less than half the amount recommended and the same exact amount assigned in 1984, the year when the economic crisis of “the lost decade” hit bottom. It should be pointed out that over the last 20 years, the greatest apportionment occurred in 1994 and 1998, when 0.46 percent of GDP was assigned to this item, while the lowest amounts were assigned in 2002 (0.39 percent) and 2005 (0.37 percent). Both of the low points came under the administration of Vicente Fox, the transition president whose sectoral plan included the goal of earmarking 1 percent of GDP to this area by 2006.¹ If we add that the proposed 2008 budget does not include any increase in government spending for science and technology and that prices of the inputs needed for carrying out

In 2006, Mexico earmarked 0.43 percent of GDP for scientific research, less than half the amount recommended and the same exact amount assigned in 1984, when the economic crisis hit bottom.

research projects in the different fields of knowledge have jumped, the financial prospects for science seem anything but encouraging.

POLICIES THAT BUILD A PROFESSION

But while investment for scientific activities is stymied, it should be underlined that in the last 25 years, participants in Mexico’s scientific sub-system have seen the construction of an institutional framework for pursuing science as a profession, in many cases as observers and in others as actors.

As I have mentioned elsewhere,² the creation of the SNI in the 1980s is associated to two other outstanding events that would show the way forward for science until today. The first is the political activism of a large number of researchers who belonged to what was then called the Academy of Scientific Research. They met the lack of a government proposal for the sector with the formulation of an instrument combining professional recognition (being designated “national researcher”) with the assignation of a temporary monetary incentive that was eventually backed by the president. The second was the formulation of a series of rules and prerequisites that as a whole legitimized a professional profile for those who had made research the center of their daily work.

From that moment on, a full-time position and a doctorate, together with voluntary, individual, periodic peer review, based fundamentally on publications and academic citations, as well as training new researchers by advising graduate students on their theses, have become the central basis for differentiating among professionals in institutions of higher learning. This system has achieved such recognition that, since it was instituted, higher education policies have simply replicated it. While it has already been mentioned that during the period of expansion, scientific research was undertaken without objectives and precise guidelines in universities, after the

advent of the SNI, matters have changed significantly. Today, undefined evaluation mechanisms no longer seem to be a problem in the field of science, and the inquisitorial finger now seems to be pointing at teaching.

While this regulatory framework has achieved broad consensus in the scientific community, with an important impact on the careers of many academics—particularly prompting many of them to conclude their doctorates—and in formulating institutional programs for recognizing merits (fellowships and productivity incentives), it is also true that the number of researchers who fulfill the profile is still limited. Suffice it to recall that when the SNI was founded, the expectation was that 10,000 researchers would be registered by 1990, a figure that was only achieved 14 years later. In 2005—this is the most recent data available—Mexico had more than 240,000 academic positions, 27 percent of which were full time (about 64,800) and only 5 percent of which were recognized by the SNI. In short, there is one “national researcher” for every 20 academic posts, or, one “national researcher” per every five full-time positions.³ In other words, although every year, more national researchers are registered, their institutional presence and influence is in many cases merely individual and limited to the older institutions.

The idea here is not to say that there are no successful experiences of collectively organized research. Over the years, each field has produced recognized efforts to combine professional commitment and academic exchange. In the global context, however, these are real *islands* in adverse institutional settings, or models in which the institutional framework—whether they be research departments, centers or institutes—favors this academic endeavor.

THE UNDESIRE EFFECTS FOR THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Both the SNI and the entire set of policies for science followed over more than two decades have been a change in the structure and values of scientific activity, although their undesired effects should be considered when evaluating their achievements. In that sense, Edward Hackett said more than a decade ago that the new circumstances of academic work are accompanied by ambivalence or underlying tension among university scientists.⁴ These tensions are palpable in institutions of higher learning, and their resolution has tended to fragment research into different planes.

While investment for scientific activities is stymied, it should be underlined that in the last 25 years, participants in Mexico’s scientific sub-system have seen the construction of an institutional framework for pursuing science as a profession.

In the first place, full-time university contracts are based on the always debatable complementarity of teaching and research activities. Nevertheless, both intra- and extra-institutional evaluation instruments made the relationship more complex by associating both functions with fundraising efforts. Requesting and managing funding has become a highly valued skill that fosters the development of larger projects. In this regard, Robert Merton’s Matthew effect comes into play: that is, the tendency of funding bodies to repeatedly benefit those who have already received funding.⁵

Another consequence linked to the new researcher profile requirements (constant production of results and fundraising) is the gradual decrease of the professional importance of teaching, particularly if we understand it as an activity that does not end in the classroom, but requires interaction and permanent availability for dealing with students: office hours for advisory services, review of work and lab practice. While these activities are actually carried out, today it is very evident that there is a paradox: as educational and productivity indicators rise, the time academics spend in institutional settings is dropping.

Another example of this undesired trend in scientific research is the proclivity to split up research results, given the urgency of periodic evaluations that demand quick, constant results. The inclination to publish books that present detailed information about research processes is gradually giving way to writing articles explaining the results obtained separately and in different publications.

There is another kind of criticism of the principles arising out of the policies implemented in recent years: doubts about the education received in graduate programs with high graduation rates, but with limited contributions in their theses or the curtailed freedom arising out of funding for select topics (putting a priority on *relevance*) that could be funded in the future. What should be underlined is the need to broaden horizons of “researching about academic research.”

THE CHALLENGES OF THE INTER-GENERATIONAL TRANSITION

In conclusion, I think it is pertinent to reflect on the quarter century of science policies dealt with in this article, emphasizing the fact that the change in reference points, rules, norms and development patterns has happened essentially in a single generation of academics, whose careers have developed in changing surroundings.

As I mentioned before, the institutions of higher learning were populated 30 years ago by young, inexperienced academics. Many of those same people are still active in these institutions. Over the years, they have gone through a long process of professionalization with differing results, ranging from those who have mainly been teachers with temporary positions to those who have managed to create research collectives and who work in universities and institutes in highly favorable conditions (tenured positions with fellowships and incentives, on the highest rungs of their pay scales). The latter represent the desired result of the organizational efforts of these years. Unfortunately, however, they are the minority. Even so, guaranteeing that their numbers increase would be an important achievement for this generation.

The average age now exceeds a half-century; retirement is just around the corner. However, there is no hiring policy to allow for experience to be transmitted to a new generation. Many young people have worked with these researchers and

then left because they saw no long-term possibilities for developing their careers. The number of academic positions is growing, but specifically in small private universities that hire by the hour and have no interest in research.

We should not underestimate the fact that recent developments in science in Mexico are marked by *chiaroscuro* and are in transition with regard to its practitioners. Those who have forged the shape of research in the last four decades have a legacy; however, unfortunately, there does not seem to be any visible way to preserve it. The future of scientific research will to a great extent depend on dealing with this situation, above all for a generation that is already here and in need of opportunities. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Figures for federal spending on science and technology and researchers who belong to the SNI were taken from *Indicadores de actividades científicas y tecnológicas de Conacyt* at www.conacyt.com.mx.

² See Germán Álvarez and Mario González, "Las políticas de educación superior y el cambio institucional," *Sociológica* 13 (Mexico City: UAM-Azcapotzalco, 1998), pp. 55-87; and Mario Guillermo González Rubí, *La investigación académica en el fin de siglo. Tres experiencias en establecimientos no metropolitanos en el campo de las ciencias sociales* (Mexico City: DIE/Cinvestav, 2006).

³ The data about academic positions appears in *Anuarios Estadísticos de la Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior* (ANUIES) at www.anui.es.com.mx.

⁴ Edgar Hackett, "La ciencia como vocación en los noventa," *Universidad Futura* 13 (Mexico City) (Winter 1993), p. 15.

⁵ Robert Merton, *Sociology of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

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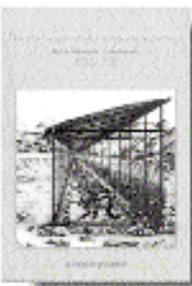
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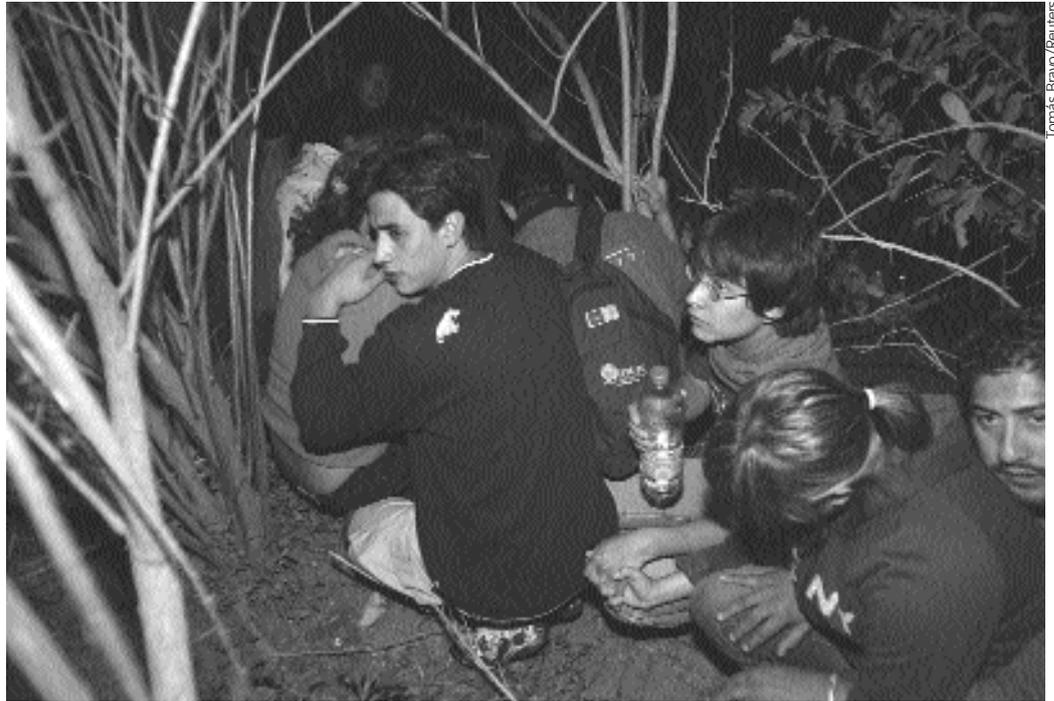


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The Real Reform “Enforcement Only”

Mónica Vereá*



Tomás Bravo/Reuters

The U.S. Senate had the chance to pass the most ambitious bipartisan immigration reform ever conceived, but it was frozen last June 28.¹ Despite the fact that in the end President Bush supported the bill and invested a tremendous amount of political capital in what he dubbed the top priority of his second term, the Republicans were unable to persuade the majority of the Senate of the reform's importance.² The Senate was influenced by an increasingly conservative public, which lobbied by telephone, e-mail and fax to swing the vote against a bill that it considered flawed, expensive, ineffective and against the rule of law.

The main arguments against the reform came, on the one hand, from fervent conservatives who mainly opposed the amnesty program since they thought it offered “illegal” immigrants

a possible path to citizenship, which would automatically exempt them from responsibility for breaking the law. They are also skeptical about government competence in enforcing the border and an unfair legislative process, and are convinced that the procedure had been undemocratic because no open debate had been organized to discuss the reform. The more liberal were considering the possibility of granting more temporary work visas to foreigners, which in the conservatives' view would affect U.S. workers. They also thought that a guest worker program could separate families and leave a new group of temporary workers vulnerable to even more exploitation, and that the bill would also lead to hundreds of thousands of new illegal aliens overstaying their visa time limits (see Table 1).

This failure of the Bush administration and the Republicans will probably have an impact on the 2008 elections since the Latino minorities, a very important group of voters, negatively impacted by this bill not being passed, could vote against

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TABLE 1
 MAIN IMMIGRATION PROPOSALS BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE
 (2006-2007)

TOPIC	SENATE 2006	SENATE 2007
Legalization of undocumented immigrants	<p>Undocumented migrants who have lived in the United States</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 5 years or more will be eligible for temporary residence for 6 years; 2) fewer than 5 but more than 2 years will be allowed to register at a border port of entry. They will qualify for a temporary work permit after residing 5 years; 3) fewer than 2 years will have to leave the country. 	<p>Undocumented immigrants who entered the United States after January 1, 2007 will be given a Z non-immigrant visa. They will have to prove they are employed and pay a fine of U.S.\$5,000.00.</p>
Admission of immigrants and permanent residency	<p>After residing 6 years with a temporary work visa, they will be eligible for permanent residency and after 11 years, for citizenship.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A merit-point system will be established for the admission of immigrants. 2) Beneficiaries will be able to obtain permanent residency in 8 to 13 years. Five years after getting their temporary residency, or green card, they will be able to start the naturalization process. 3) Anyone with temporary residency will be limited in his/her ability to apply for the residency of parents, siblings and other relatives.
Temporary workers programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A temporary worker program would be created for 1.5 million agricultural workers. 2) 200,000 new non-immigrant visas would be issued for temporary workers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A temporary workers program will be created for <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Seasonal, especially agricultural, workers, who will be authorized to stay 10 months, after which they will have to leave the country; b) Non-seasonal workers who will be given a Y visa, valid for 2 years and renewable twice after leaving the country for a year each time to return to their home country.
Border security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Construction of 600 kilometers of border fence and 800 kilometers of new barriers. 2) Increased budget for the Border Patrol to hire 4,000 surveillance agents and 2,500 inspectors for the ports of entry. The Border Patrol currently has 11,300 field employees; in five years it would increase to 18,000. Six thousand members of the National Guard would be sent to support Border Patrol activities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Construction of a 375-mile (600-kilometer) barrier along the border with Mexico and 200 miles (320 kilometers) of moveable barriers. 2) Construction of 70 radar towers on the Mexican border and the installation of surveillance cameras. 3) Increased budget to raise the number of Border Patrol agents to 18,000.
Sanctions for offenders		<p>Increase sanctions for foreigners accused of committing crimes like gang violence, forging documents, illegal entry into the United States and other offenses stipulated in immigration legislation.</p>
Employers	<p>Fines of up to U.S.\$20,000 per undocumented worker hired. Employers will have to verify on line whether employees are in the U.S. legally or not.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Severe punishment for employers who hire undocumented immigrants. 2) The creation of a biometric Social Security ID card and a system of electronic verification for work permits to be used by employers.

the Republicans.³ It is also a defeat for Democratic Party allies, in particular for Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Senator Kennedy, who had promoted the bill for several years.⁴ But mainly, it is a defeat for the nearly 12 million undocumented immigrants (mostly Latin Americans, more than half of Mexican origin) who were hoping for a possible legalization and/or opportunity of getting a temporary work visa that would allow them to continue the work that they are doing anyway, but more safely.⁵ This group increases by about 500,000 a year, 80 percent of whom are of Mexican origin. Mexican immigrants have vastly increased in number: in the 1960s, net migration was about 30,000 per year, but now, the figure has jumped to 400,000, setting off alarm bells in both countries.⁶

The reform bill's defeat in the Senate means that millions of undocumented immigrants will continue to be vulnerable. To many, the outcome is pernicious. For others, the bill was insufficient and flawed. The only real reform that has been implemented is the "enforcement only" policy, with the support of the U.S. public, Congress and the Bush administration. Employers of undocumented migrants have hardly been sanctioned at all; that is, the law of supply and demand continues to prevail.⁷

REBORDERING THE BORDERS

Borders represent a nation's statehood, as each state seeks to control entry into its sovereign territory. A government's ultimate responsibility is to safeguard the security and well being of its citizens.⁸ Immigration enforcement is the action to protect the country through its boundaries or limits to prevent different kinds of illegal flows: arms, drugs, illegal immigrants, etc.

The border between Mexico and the United States is one of the world's most conflictive. Enormous numbers of individuals and goods cross it, countless activities coalesce, many of which are illegal, like drug trafficking and traffic in human beings. It has been guarded mainly by the Border Patrol, institutionalized in 1924, with the aim of effecting surveillance in the border area through a combination of personnel, technology, equipment and infrastructure deployment as well as intelligence efforts in partnership with other federal and local law enforcement agencies. The Border Patrol is responsible for enforcing border areas between legal ports of entry. Inspectors verify admissibility of entrants at official points of entry. Investigators apprehend unauthorized immigrants in the interior. Detention and removal officers are responsible for the custody and tracking of individuals in removal pro-

**"Enforcement only" has caused
a change in the pattern of migrants' stay:
now they tend to remain longer,
separating them from their families
for longer periods.**

ceedings. Immigration enforcement activities are carried out by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).⁹

During the 1990s, the perception that our border with the United States was neglected and porous increased among the U.S. public, which had an influence in the application of drastic measures during the Clinton administration, like costly border operations to control the growing flow of undocumented immigrants not only from Mexico but from many other countries. In that period, Congress also approved one of the most restrictive laws in the legislative history of immigration issues, the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), which created more surveillance and funded more inspectors and border patrols. This situation sharpened after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, intensifying a process of rebordering the borders, with the aim of getting more control over the country's fragile national security. Among the measures adopted are wider and taller fences, brighter lights, more patrols supported by the National Guard and equipped with sensors to identify the slightest movement, infrared video cameras, night-vision cameras, more border patrol checkpoints along highways and, above all, more agents to apprehend undocumented immigrants and detect "suspected terrorists."

To get an idea of the dimensions of this process, in 1985, the Border Patrol budget was U.S.\$203 million, similar to that earmarked for consular affairs (U.S.\$273 million) and inspections (U.S.\$146 million). However, by 1992 there were nearly 5,000 Border Patrol employees (40 percent of all Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS] staff), and its funding was around U.S.\$325 million. By 1998, the Border Patrol had grown to 8,000 employees (93 percent of whom were deployed on the southwest border), and the number of inspectors at land ports of entry had grown to 2,000 (75 percent of them on the southwest border). By 2002, the Border Patrol budget had risen to U.S.\$1.66 billion and its staff to 11,000; the budget for inspections had risen to U.S.\$879 million (with 6,000 inspectors) and that of consular affairs had remained more or less the same at U.S.\$303 million.¹⁰ According to

Department of Homeland Security figures, by 2006, 12,000 border patrol agents were on payroll and the estimates for 2007 come to almost 15,000. By 2008, there are expected to be 18,000 in all.¹¹

In September 2006, Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, providing a budget of U.S.\$1.2 billion to build a 700-mile-long, 30-meter-high double fence on the Mexico-U.S. border, just as Wisconsin Congressman James Sensenbrenner had proposed in December 2005 (HR4437).¹² This all jibes with the policy of “enforcement only.”

Despite the deployment of forces along the southern border with Mexico, the measures do not seem to have been effective: every year, immigration officials apprehend a large number of immigrants, not to mention the ones who manage to get in undetected. In 1994, almost a million people were apprehended; in 2000, the number was the highest in the last 15 years: 1,700,000. Nevertheless, after the terrorist attacks, detentions dropped substantially to about 1,100,000 in 2005, 92 percent by the Border Patrol, and 85 percent of whom were Mexican. Thus, since the beginning of the 1990s, crossing the border into the United States has become increasingly difficult, expensive and dangerous (see graph 1).

At the same time that U.S. immigration officials are catching, removing and deporting more people, the casualty list is also increasing: people who freeze to death, commit suicide, are hit by trains, cars or trucks, or are bitten by snakes.¹³ Human rights violations have increased year by year, the same as deaths, which went from 30 to 60 a year before the border operations begun in the early 1990s, to more than 500 this year.

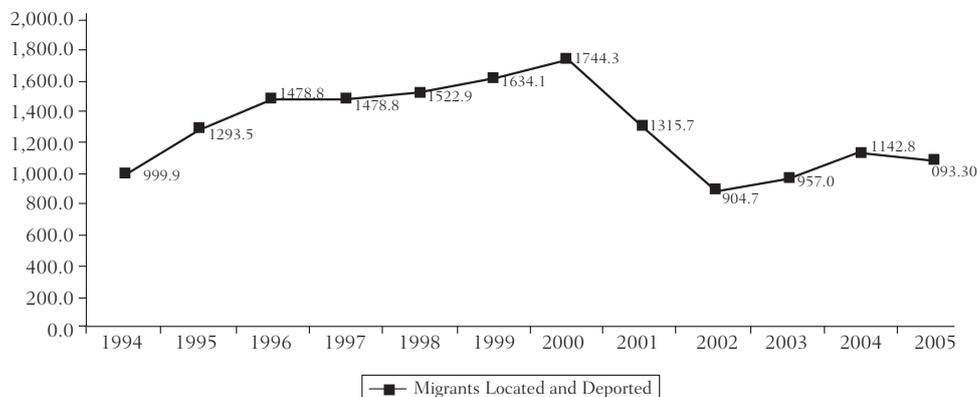
This means that technology and training for border surveillance has become more and more institutionalized and sophisticated. At the same time, the Bush administration has established an exclusive “enforcement-only” immigration reform, which it has assigned unprecedented amounts of funds in accordance with its “rebordering” policy, a national security priority since the 2001 terrorist attacks.

CROSSING WITHOUT DOCUMENTS IN THE AGE OF “ENFORCEMENT ONLY”

Thanks to support and organizational efforts both of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico and the University of Texas in El Paso, I was able to do a border tour in February 2007. Along with nine other Mexican researchers I had the privilege of having this experience and observing close up not only the important collaboration between the cities of El Paso, Texas, and Juárez, Chihuahua, but also the chance to see how migration was handled along a stretch of about 200 kilometers along the Chihuahua-Texas-New Mexico border.

Watching the National Guard supporting the Border Patrol’s more than 12 patrols out of the El Paso immigration offices had a big impact on me.¹⁴ I was able to observe how suspected migrants were located and detained: a family hidden in the bushes waiting to cross the border was localized on the screens and the guard members sent a message to the Border Patrol with the coordinates of their exact location, so they could immediately be apprehended.

GRAPH 1
IMMIGRANTS FROM MEXICO LOCATED AND DEPORTED (1994-2005)
(Thousands of Immigrants)



SOURCE: 2006 *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*.

Immigration reform
in the U.S. is urgently needed:
there are 12 million
undocumented migrants living there,
the vast majority with jobs.

The land border between Mexico and the United States already has different barriers: from high-tech, intensely monitored triple fences in urban areas, to simple fences in unpopulated areas, plus the powerful surveillance equipment that detects and illuminates moving bodies. The recently established electronic surveillance Pilot Project 28 set up in Sasabe, Arizona, is a sample of the most up-to-date technology used to deter immigrants. It consists of nine mobile towers with cameras and sensors to detect arms, vehicles, drugs and, of course, body heat at a distance of 45 kilometers, in addition to its constantly watched screens which clearly show the bodies and satellite telephones for efficient communications.¹⁵

By law, immigrants must be asked for their passports and visas at the port of entry. U.S. immigration law establishes different punishments for those who cross the border without documents. For example:¹⁶

- Detention is the seizure and incarceration of an alien in order to hold him/her for judicial or legal proceedings, or while awaiting return transportation to his/her country;
- Expedited removal is the action to remove inadmissible aliens that do not have entry documents or have counterfeit, altered, fraudulent or improper documents; or because they commit fraud or willful misrepresentation. The Department of Homeland Security has the authority to order the removal, and the alien is not referred to an immigration judge, except under certain circumstances after an alien makes a claim to lawful status in the U.S. or demonstrates a credible fear of persecution if returned to his or her country.
- Voluntary departure is when the alien chooses to depart from the U.S. without an order of removal.¹⁷

Sometimes, some U.S. immigration officials break their own laws by mistreating, robbing, beating and even shooting undocumented immigrants. In addition, there are the U.S. civilian volunteers known as the Minutemen. They are angry

at their land being illegally crossed and sick of the “Mexicanization of their territory.” This makes them feel they have the right to apprehend, detain and even mistreat migrants (the “other”, the “outsider”), fired by a combination of repressed xenophobia and supposed respect for the rule of law. If we add to this tragic scenario the severe calamities migrants may have to go through during their risky crossing, like dehydration, drowning in the Rio Grande, animal bites or stings or the possibility of suffocating during a trip hidden among boxes of vegetables in trucks driven by human traffickers, better known as *coyotes* or *polleros*, the situation could not be worse.

On the Mexican side, citizens must show passports and visas only when they leave the country by air. This is not the case when they cross by land. It is the U.S. authorities who demand to see their passports and visas when they cross the border. Migrants who try to cross at unauthorized places and without visas may run into the Beta Group, an arm of the Ministry of the Interior’s National Migration Institute. This small group, scattered along the entire border, especially at key points, alerts potential Mexican migrants about the risks of crossing the border at unauthorized spots and without the required documentation. Their job consists of giving out pamphlets with the necessary survival information, as well as about the rights migrants can demand in the not-too-remote possibility that they are apprehended.¹⁸ Unfortunately, the Beta Groups meet up with very decided migrants, few of whom change their minds about crossing the border even after they have been warned. Visible dust storms and the intense heat or cold that starts earlier than they had imagined will tire them out, but not even the risk of dying during their attempt to cross discourages them from trying to get to “the other side.”¹⁹

Given the increasing difficulty of crossing the border, the network for trafficking human undocumented migrants has also become more complex, despite the enormous sum thrown at this problem, but not well invested.²⁰

“Enforcement only” has caused a change in the pattern of migrants’ stay: now they tend to remain longer, separating them from their families for longer periods. Unfortunately, many of our compatriots are willing to pay traffickers (many without much experience) whatever is necessary to cross to “the other side,” even if it is an enormous sum.²¹ Therefore, many are reluctant to return to their places of origin, even temporarily.²²

This complex network of traffickers is extremely varied and disjointed. Generally, the traffickers pay their border

contacts on both sides, including the famous runners (who cross the border at a run) or look-outs, to carry out the operations. The supposed “guides” establish signal codes, opening up trails on the U.S. side to establish a route for the immigrant to meet up with the *pollero* or *enganchador*, who will turn him/her over to his/her relatives or directly to an employer.

Unfortunately, most of the walkers die a short distance away from salvation.²³ After a day of literally frying in the scorching sun, these citizens begin to feel disoriented, dizzy and weak. By the second or third day of their journey, they are practically dying. In most cases, they die just a few feet away from roads, towns or sources of water without knowing it, tortured by the fear of meeting up with their enemy: the Border Patrol, the “cops”, “immigration” or even the Minutemen. Clearly, there is an impeccable hierarchy in this network, since trafficking in human beings is a very lucrative business because of the impressive increase in border surveillance.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We recognize that the United States is the country that issues the most visas to temporary workers from all parts of the world and that we Mexicans have benefited greatly from this. We also agree that any sovereign country is completely within its rights in exercising its statehood and controlling entry into its territory, protecting its borders from the entry of immigrants who do not have the required documentation. However, immigration reform in the United States is urgently needed: it is not happenstance that there are 12 million undocumented migrants living there, the vast majority with jobs, and who have shown themselves to be a work force the country needs for its economy to grow and to maintain its national and international competitiveness.

For that reason, the defeat of the immigration reform in the Senate has very dramatic consequences, particularly for undocumented migrants. For the time being, despite their expectations of being able to regularize and/or legalize their stay in the country thanks to the work they have done, there has been no recognition of their contribution to the U.S. economy, society and culture. This turns them into even more marginalized, vulnerable people and workers. The continuous “enforcement only” process along the southern border will probably intensify and be perfected. One or more physical and virtual fences will probably be built that will make the traditional crossings of undocumented migrants even more

difficult. Simultaneously, state and local governments will adopt more arbitrary, biased measures, as they have in recent years, using different approaches to impede and limit the stay of undocumented migrants in the U.S. The measures will consist not only of apprehending, deporting or removing migrants, but also of punishing them, making their stay miserable, regardless of how long they have been working there or how many employers they have served, simply for being “illegal aliens.” This situation will probably divide U.S. society even more since a marginalized, resentful community of undocumented migrants with fewer and fewer possibilities of being integrated into society continues to exist.

The increasing number of injustices and outrages will make their vulnerability more evident. Therefore, it is crucial that we insist that migration not be dealt with as a matter for unilateral border control, but as a phenomenon that implies the need to regulate regional labor markets and to recognize how Mexican labor complements the U.S. labor market. **MM**

NOTES

¹ The author would like to thank Érika Veloz for her efficient technical support.

² The Senate has discussed several bills in 2007 to effect a comprehensive reform to the immigration system (see Table 1). A bipartisan coalition led by Senators Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz) came to a supposed agreement supported by President Bush. The Senate voted on a series of amendments and the coalition failed to move the bill forward on June 7. Under pressure from the White House, on June 26 the Senate voted 64-35 to revive the debate, but two days later, it was stymied.

³ According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Hispanics made up 8.6 percent of the nation’s eligible voters in 2006, up from 7.4 percent in 2000. In states like New Mexico, Texas and California, Hispanics make up well over 20 percent of eligible voters, though that number is a significantly smaller share of the overall Hispanic population than other ethnic groups. In 2004, 6 percent of all votes were cast by Hispanics

⁴ A detailed analysis of the bills presented in both houses of Congress in recent years can be found in Mónica Vereá, “¿Hacia una reforma migratoria?” *Norteamérica, Revista Académica*, year 1, no. 2 (Mexico City/Washington, D.C.: CISAN-UNAM/CNAS-AU) (July-December 2006).

⁵ Of the 37 million people born abroad who live in U.S. territory today, approximately 11.5 million have been naturalized; 11.8 million are legal residents; almost 1.3 million have temporary legal status; and more than 11 million are unauthorized or undocumented immigrants. Approximately 3.1 million undocumented immigrants entered the country from 1995 to 2000, and about the same number again from 2000 to 2005. Some of them have returned to their countries of origin or have regularized their immigration status.

⁶ Mónica Vereá, “A 12 años de TLCAN = + migración,” Enriqueta Cabrera, comp., *Desafíos de la migración: Saldos de la relación México-Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: Planeta, 2007), pp. 339-374.

⁷ Since IRCA passed in 1986, it is illegal for an employer to knowingly hire an undocumented immigrant.

⁸ Deborah Meyers, “From horseback to high tech: U.S. border enforcement,” *Migration Information*, Migration Policy Institute, February 2006, at www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=370.

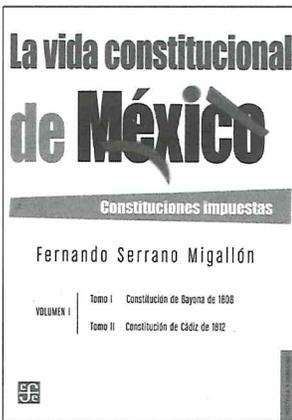
- ⁹ Dawn Kenot and Jeanne Batalova, "Spotlight on Immigration Enforcement in the U.S.," *Migration Information Source* (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, March 2007).
- ¹⁰ David Dixon and Julia Gellat, "Immigration and Enforcement Spending since IRCA," background paper prepared for the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future, September 2005, quoted in Deborah Meyers, op. cit.
- ¹¹ The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was abolished in March 2003, and all its immigration-related functions were transferred into the newly created Department of Homeland Security in a merger of some 180,000 employees from 22 different agencies. The 2008 DHS budget includes funds for 3,000 new Border Patrol agents, provides for 950 new detention beds, and continues funding for an automated, user-friendly eligibility verification system.
- ¹² In the House, 64 Democrats (about one third of the caucus) voted for the bill authorizing the building of the 1,226-kilometer-long double fence along the Mexican border. Mónica Vereá, *Contradicciones entre las expresiones antiinmigrantes y el insaciable apetito por contratar migrantes* (Mexico City: CISAN/UNAM, at press).
- ¹³ Foreign Affairs Ministry figures cite 516 deaths for the fiscal year 2004-2005, 40 percent more than in 2004.
- ¹⁴ In 2006, the deployment of about 6,000 members of the National Guard along the border to support the Border Patrol in intelligence assistance, surveillance, training and logistical services was authorized. They are not allowed direct involvement in law enforcement efforts.
- ¹⁵ In September 2006, the U.S. government contracted Boeing to create a system to gradually make it possible to establish electronic surveillance of the most inaccessible points along the Mexican and Canadian borders. Haydée Ramírez, "Moderniza EU vigilancia virtual," *Reforma*, July 8, 2007, p. 12.
- ¹⁶ Mary Dougherty, Denise Wilson and Amy Wu, "Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2005, Office of Immigration Statistics," *Annual Report*, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C., November 2006.
- ¹⁷ In 2005, authorities formally removed 210,000 foreigners, 70 percent of Mexican origin. In the same year, 1,174,059 removals were processed, 70 percent of the formal removals were of Mexicans. Of the 1,291,000 foreigners apprehended, 965,000 accepted voluntary deportation. Expedited removals accounted for 72,911, or 35 percent, of all formal removals.
- ¹⁸ The pamphlets alert the migrant about dangers like extreme climatic conditions that could cause dehydration or freezing to death, about diseases, dangerous, stinging animals, and the fast currents in rivers, among others. In general, they recommend that once they have been detected by U.S. authorities, they should not run or put their hands in their pockets so agents do not think they are armed.
- ¹⁹ Mónica Vereá, comments about the documentary *Al otro lado* (On the Other Side), directed by Natalia Almada, projected June 9, 2007 by the UNAM University Gender Studies Program (PUEG).
- ²⁰ In 2005, human smuggling and trafficking investigations resulted in 1,712 seizures valued at U.S.\$43.2 million. See Mary Dougherty, Denise Wilson and Amy Wu, op. cit.
- ²¹ Human traffickers charge up to U.S.\$4,000 to get people across the Mexico-U.S. border, more than the U.S.\$1,000 it costs to go from Morocco to Spain by sea, but less than a sophisticated package to bring in an undocumented migrant from China to the U.S., which can cost up to U.S.\$30,000.
- ²² Mónica Vereá, "Los inmigrantes ante los procesos de refronterización vs. desfronterización entre México y Estados Unidos," Alejandro Mercado Celis and Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero, eds., *Fronteras en América del Norte: Estudios multidisciplinarios* (Mexico City: CISAN-UNAM, 2004), p. 176.
- ²³ Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Devil's Highway: A True Story* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2004), p. 76.



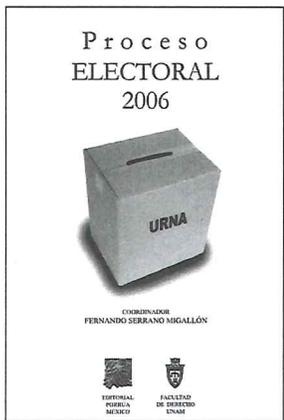
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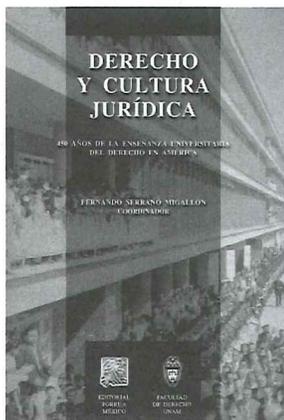




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Congress, Border Security And Immigration Fences of Political Irresponsibility

César Pérez Espinosa*

*For my godparents, Diamantina Múzquiz Martínez
and Pedro Hernández Zavala*

SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION POLICY

President Bush and the U.S. Congress's policies of building fences along the border to ensure security and their failed attempts to pass comprehensive immigration legislation are examples of their political irresponsibility. Neither branch of government has managed to propose coherent solutions to change North American integration with regard to non-economic issues. Until now, legislative action has consisted of passing bills about border security with an eye to the elections and postponing a real reform of the immigration system. And as for the executive branch, President Bush's plummeting national and international approval rating is the lowest ever registered in modern history.

There is a glaring lack of strategic vision to improve the country's security system and take substantive legislative action about immigration. Once again, both branches' political response to important, difficult problems like immigration seems to be more a way out of the political exigencies of the moment than responsible, orderly action. The U.S. economy has been in decline over the last seven years and poverty levels are increasing. In addition, its world leadership is weaker and weaker and lacks an economic policy that takes into account the new conditions of world competitiveness and fosters freedom of transit for labor. Accepting its social responsibility by granting legal status to millions of undocumented workers in the short, medium and long terms is far from being one of the priorities on its political agenda.

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Carlos Barria/Reuters

BIPARTISAN EFFORTS WERE NOT ENOUGH

Until before security was folded into the issue of border control and therefore into the issue of undocumented immigrants crossing the border, it was no surprise that discussing and passing bills that one way or another touched on immigration would happen in every session of Congress. The bills might be presented by both parties or even in both houses of Congress, but the important thing is that they would be partial changes that would not cause electoral problems; plus the changes in legislation were not politicized to the extent that they became matters for national debate. Since

the 103rd Congress, everyone has worked on hundreds of bills pertaining to immigration policy, at least indirectly, and certain parts of that policy have been modified.

However, the first signs that it was necessary to make substantial changes in overall immigration legislation came after 9/11, when security became central to the national debate. The legislature designed measures to reinforce security along the border with Mexico and simultaneously resolve the situation of the illegal status of an estimated 10 to 12 million immigrants living in the United States.

What these bills and the administration mostly sought was greater control over different processes like issuing visas for visitors, terrorism, drug trafficking and immigration. The measures discussed were conservative, since they mainly aimed to impose limits, conditions or prohibitions affecting immigrants in areas like employment, education, health care and identification, and in several instances even criminalized the actions of the undocumented.¹

A national political debate of this magnitude had not taken place for more than 20 years. Since the passage of the 1986 Simpson-Rodino Act, a comprehensive “omnibus bill,” all other debates on immigration have taken place within the confines of the Congress and have not drawn in the public. The most recent proposals, however, were discussed in a political context in which the different social actors, the business community and politicians were all vying to intervene directly or indirectly for their sectoral or vested interests.

In that sense, proposing a more profound change in immigration law was a national necessity; in addition, its comprehensive content increased the debate’s complexity. The legislators’ reaction is due largely to the fact that any attempt to significantly change immigration law becomes a major issue on the national political agenda, and many social and economic actors, who cover an extremely broad ideological spectrum, began to express their positions publicly in the media.

The lack of consensus among legislators from both houses, whether Republicans or Democrats, shows that the debate

After 9/11, the legislature
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10 to 12 million immigrants in the U.S.

is happening not only on a federal but also on a state and district level. This is why the failures of both the 109th Congress (with its Republican majority) and the 110th Congress (with its Democratic majority) should not come as a surprise.

We should point out that the most conservative Republican legislators and their president did not agree. George W. Bush’s leadership has shrunk not only on the world stage, but also inside his own party. Even without the support of some of their members, the Republicans managed to pass a comprehensive bill in the House during the 109th Congress, despite its not being fully accepted by the president, at least according to political statements made at the time. The Sensenbrenner bill was introduced to Congress on December 6, 2005, and became H.R. 4437, The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act, on December 16, 2005. This bill had its origins in a visit of administration officials to Congressman Sensenbrenner to talk about the position that would be taken in November, concretely about the way to handle the immigration crisis in order to secure the border and the country’s interior.

The bill was changed in committee after pressure from both sides of the aisle. The Immigration Reform Caucus (IRC) presented a good many of these changes. Although the tradition in the legislature is to respect the observations of the legislators with the greatest experience in a specific issue, in this case, custom was disregarded because of the ideological polarization among congresspersons.²

Highlighting the division along partisan and house lines, in the Senate, then under Republican control, a bill was presented that differed greatly from the one with majority backing in the House of Representatives. The differences between members of the House and the Senate about central, electorally sensitive points like the creation of a program to legalize undocumented migrants and protect their human rights, among others, were substantial. These issues made a bicameral agreement impossible despite the fact that there was a bipartisan majority in the Senate. With the approaching elections, the political out for both parties was to simply stop debating the issue, a decision that showed the members’ interest in safeguarding their constituencies. The many corruption scandals Republican leaders were involved in made them vulnerable to losing their majority, and in November 2006, they finally did. This also revealed Congress’s inability as a nationally representative political institution to propose an important reform of immigration legislation, an issue it has not dealt with comprehensively for over 20 years.

By contrast, the month it took to pass the Secure Fence Act of 2006 is a sign that the legislators have not understood the magnitude of the social and political aspects of the immigration problem, and have simply used the fence to ensure an electorally safe way out to “shore up” security.

THE QUICK, ILLUSORY WAY OUT WAS APPROVING THE FENCE

The Berlin Wall was torn down almost 20 years ago, and with it, the world thought that the time of building walls and fences between countries to allow them to coexist would never return. The U.S. government’s decision shows that those times are not yet gone.

The politicians argued that border security, involving ports, travelers and trade entering and leaving the country, is fundamental for the United States. As a result the 109th Congress paid special attention to border security, linking it to immigration after 9/11.³ This concern and the “control” of the southern border were issues that created a consensus necessary for both houses to work very quickly—in about a month—to come up with a bill to define the operational control of border security.⁴

By May 17, 2006, the Senate had already approved a Republican amendment stipulating the construction of a 370-mile-long triple fence in urban border areas and 500 miles of anti-vehicle barriers, but it maintained the articles in the bill that had already been won, rejecting another Republican amendment that would have eliminated them. However, immigrants convicted of a felony or three misdemeanors, and, with certain exceptions, anyone who had disobeyed a deportation order were excluded from the legalization plan.⁵ The most radical House Republicans posed harsh opposition to a comprehensive reform.⁶

In two days, the House of Representatives voted the bill to reinforce security along the border: 283 for, 138 against and one abstention.⁷ The bill was so important that the Senate began its discussion September 29, 2006 and approved the bill 80 votes to 19.⁸ President Bush signed it one month later, turning it into Public Law 109-367.

The most recent attempt to advance on the matter of immigration was made in the current 110th Congress, now with a Democratic majority. A proposal was again introduced to change the immigration system, stop illegal immigration and bring the millions of undocumented workers living in

Measures were mainly aimed at imposing limits, conditions or prohibitions affecting immigrants in areas like employment, education, health care and identification and even criminalized their actions.

the United States out of the shadows.⁹ The change in strategy did not work. Senate experts on the issue began the debate, but the bill failed again when the Democrats could not get it passed on the floor. Sixteen votes were said to be lacking.

Even though there is an almost even number of Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, despite his leadership, President Bush could not convince his fellow party members to vote in a conservative bill. Without them, the final passage and signing into law of this bill seems remote, and probably the most radical conservatives would have been sufficient to derail its passage.

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT’S LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

During the Vicente Fox administration, idealism prevailed over political prudence. At the beginning of his term, then-Foreign Affairs Minister Jorge Castañeda incorporated migration into the political relationship. This political decision was not backed by diplomats who adhered to a traditional vision of dependence regarding the bilateral agenda. The minister thought that seeking a new form of communication implied lobbying the Democrats—at that time a minority in Congress—Latinos, the Catholic Church and unions to try to set up a temporary program, and farmers, businessmen and the Republicans to achieve a regularization of the millions of Mexicans in the U.S.

His optimism truly overflowed when he invented the so-called “whole enchilada.”¹⁰ His failure, even though he was one of Mexico’s academics most familiar with the way politics are done in the U.S., shows that it is not enough to have an expert head up the Foreign Affairs Ministry. What is more important is to have a permanent dialogue with the actors and sectors most representative in decision-making when dealing with issues on the bilateral agenda.

A migratory agreement about temporary workers continues to be more wishful thinking than a political reality

for PAN administrations. Without a doubt, the strategy must be different. It is necessary to constantly work with pro-immigrant and human rights groups. For decades Mexico's national interest has been linked to the defense of these issues. Those in charge of them in the new government must understand this principle of the U.S. political process: every political struggle is measured by its effectiveness in terms of being active and flexible.

HISTORY LEAVES US ANOTHER POLITICAL LESSON

Seven years after the National Action Party took office, the decision to build fences along the border with Mexico is a clear sign of a prevailing unilateral vision of security and migration. Whether because of ignorance or political expediency, the first PAN government immediately overestimated the possibilities for an immigration agreement. Despite expectations and promises, at least during its two first years, this would never go beyond being the rhetoric of a government saying it was doing a lot to change traditional forms of interdependence between the two countries without really achieving anything. At the end of Fox's term, the achievements were minimal and disappointment outweighed his demagoguery.

Now, while it has been more prudent and managed to not make immigration the center of the agenda, the second PAN administration has not gotten any better treatment for our fellow countrymen through other means either. So, the expectations of Mexican groups and federations in the United States of having a functional, intelligent ally to propose another way of working both internally and in bilateral governmental relations to improve their lot continue to be dashed.

The legislative system moved as it has historically in the last 20 years, rejecting proposals that would benefit a large number of undocumented immigrants and supporting restrictive, coercive measures. This only goes to show how divided the legislature is and how much it lacks the leadership needed to design national policies on priority issues like immigration. The next president will have to think about how to move forward with a visionary, inclusive policy that spans more than one term if he/she wants to continue grounding his/her mandate in the elementary principles of democratic government.

Yet again, the short-sighted pragmatism of conservative legislators led them to block a bill necessary to the social and legal life of millions of human beings. They acted in their short-term interests, among them, the midterm elections and

the leadership of conservative political groups. And they forgot about the changes in the world and the challenges they will be facing in the region in the immediate future. The consequence of this lack of political imagination is the inability to resolve the security and immigration questions, and this will have repercussions in the near future in other areas of domestic U.S. life, in bilateral relations with Mexico and in the construction of North America as a geo-strategic region. In addition to the millions of Latin American migrants, the governments of their countries of origin —among them, Mexico's— should step up regional efforts to negotiate the regularization of these citizens' migratory status and a temporary work program with the U.S. Their compatriots' legal immigration status, along with economic integration, is a regional necessity.

Given the complexity and importance of the region's political and social problems, the U.S. Congress is no longer politically capable of forging consensus on national issues. The political response for regulating immigration will come from the local and state levels and the differences among the states may lead to uneven political decisions. If the conservative positions that have prevailed electorally in the last seven years also dominate local and state decisions, undoubtedly, the United States' image of "liberal democracy," of being a place where the freedom and security of the individual is respected, will be seriously undermined. This will make it even clearer that if the federal governments of North America want to govern with greater certainty and consensus, they will have to continually deal with the issue of immigration and security by turning toward the citizenry as a collective body with irrefutable rights. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Jon Kyl, "The Need for Immigration Reform and Improved Border Security," on line at http://kyl.senate.gov/legis_center/border.cfm.

² "H.R. 4437 – Sensenbrenner/King Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005," *Federation Control Act of 2005*.

³ Blas Nuñez-Neto, "Immigration Related Border Security Legislation in the 109th Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, December 9, 2005, on line at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/58262.pdf>.

⁴ <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/109:H.R.066061>, consulted March 16, 2007.

⁵ Maribel Hastings, "Aprueban muro y vía de legalización," *La Opinión Digital*, Los Angeles, May 18, 2006, and "Senado de EE.UU aprueba reforzar cerca fronteriza," *La Voz Online*, May 18, 2006.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery>.

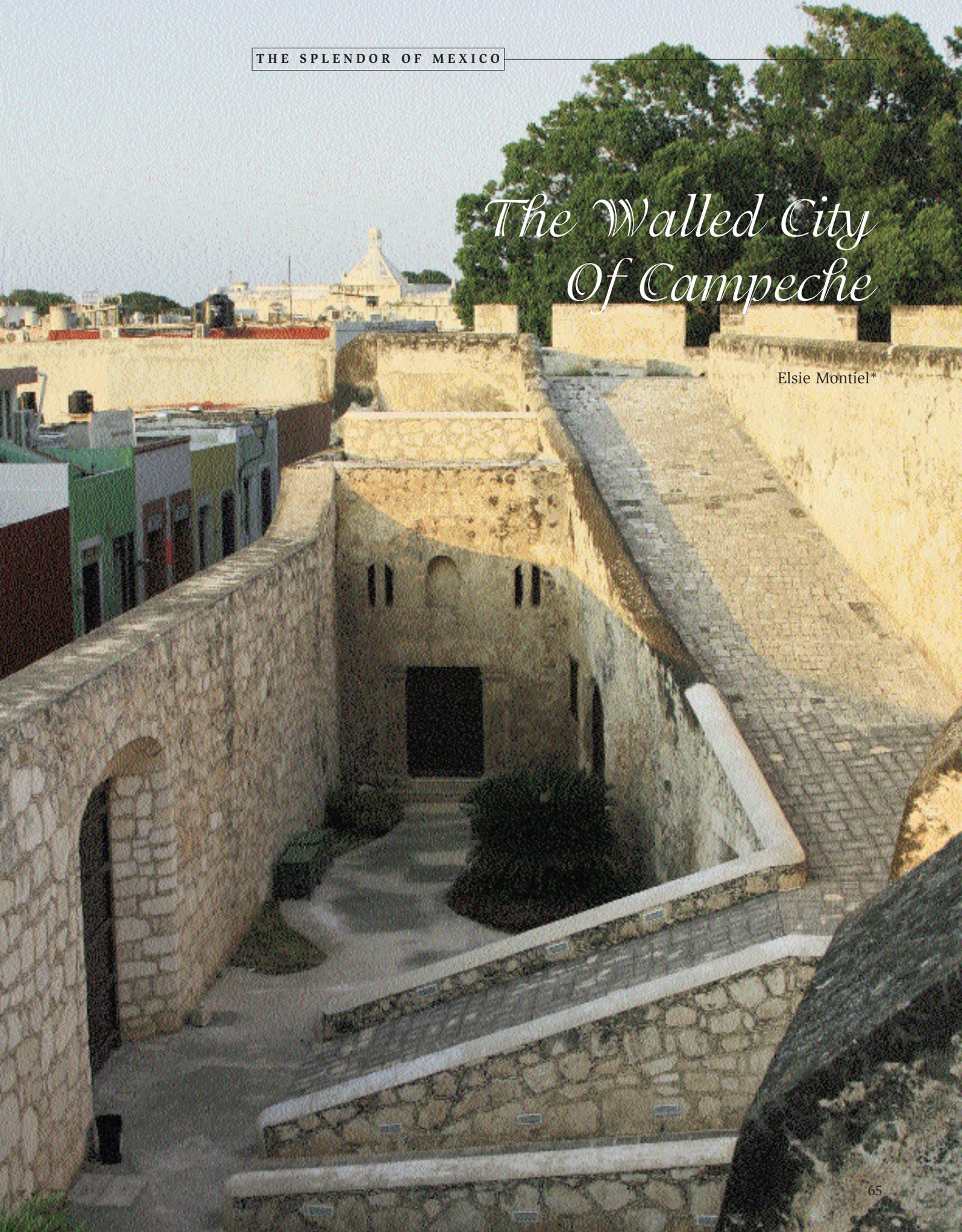
⁸ http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Jorge G. Castañeda, "Memorias diplomáticas anticipadas. Testimonio," *Enfoque*, February 10, 2006, p. 14.

*The Walled City
Of Campeche*

Elsie Montiel*

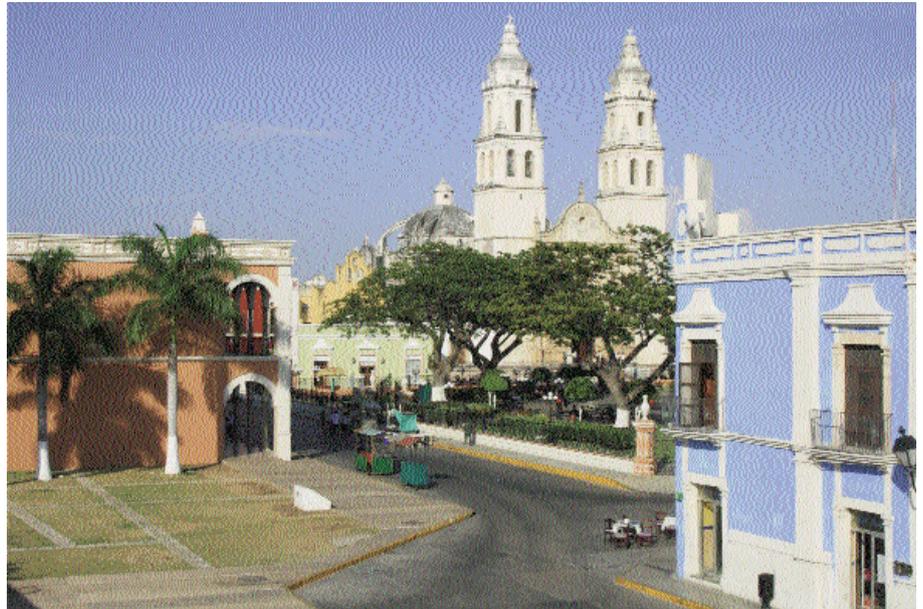




Chapel next to Campeche's cathedral.

Before the Spanish arrived, Campeche was a Mayan settlement by the sea. The region was dominated by the powerful cacique Ah Kin Pech, who witnessed the arrival of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, the first explorer to leave the island of Cuba to travel the coasts of Mexico at the behest of Don Diego Velázquez in 1517.

The age of splendor of the Mayan civilization in the region had ended centuries before. Many of its powerful cities like Calakmul, Becán and Edzná had been abandoned and were silently being overrun by nature. That is why, when they began their war of conquest, the Spaniards had to first subdue the powerful empires of the Mexicas and the Tarascans in the central highlands and the west. After Tenochtitlan was vanquished and the lord of the Tarascans beaten back, the Spaniards began incursions in different



View of the main plaza with the cathedral in the background.



Detail of the "Holy Burial" depicting the passion of Christ.

parts of what is now Mexico. The Yucatán Peninsula turned out to be particularly difficult to subdue and colonize. Campeche was the jumping-off point for colonizing expeditions to the peninsula and would be formally founded in 1540 with the name Villa de San Francisco de Campeche by "Handsome" Francisco de Montejo, the son of the conquistador Francisco de Montejo.

By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Campeche was already playing an important role in the colony's economy as the first port on the peninsula. From there, an endless number

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Unless otherwise specified, photos by Elsie Montiel.

of natural riches were brought from all over the conquered land: wood, rice, the famous “ink wood”, salt from the coast, sugar, cotton broadcloth, honey and wax. “Ink wood” was very sought after in Europe for dyeing cloth. The ships embarked for Veracruz and from there continued to Seville once a year, loaded with products from all over Spain’s colonies.

This abundance attracted pirate greed. The Spanish fleets and colonial ports were constantly threatened with attack. Some of the pirates were backed by rival European kingdoms that wanted to destabilize the Spanish crown. The port of Campeche was no exception: Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Lauren “Lorencillo” Graff, Kornelius “Pegleg” Jols, Diego “The Mulato”, Jacob Jackson, Henry Morgan, Bartolomé “The Portuguese”, Lewis Scott and Rock Brasiliano all made an appearance.



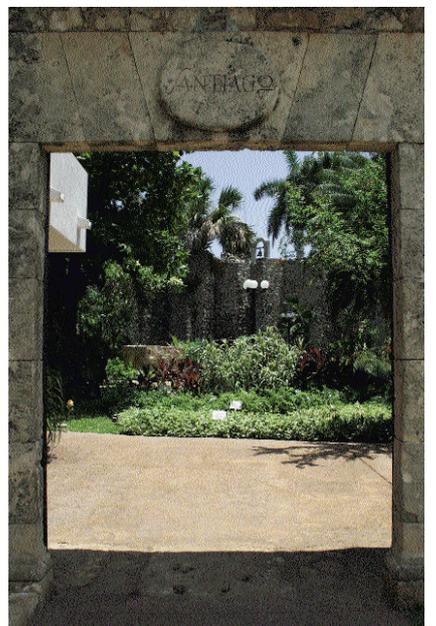
Only 500 meters of the wall surrounding the city survive.

Fighting was continuous for a large part of the seventeenth century. Two of the best remembered battles took place in 1678, when Scott sacked the city for three days after being well received by residents who thought he had brought soldiers to protect them, and in 1685, when another pirate, Gramont, and several hundred men laid waste to the city for more than two months, looting the surrounding areas. Finally, the crown recognized the need to invest in defending the site.

It is said that the plan to fortify and completely wall up the port dates from 1686. Military engineer Marín de la Torre’s proposal was to enclose Campeche within a large irregular, six-sided polygon, with eight bastions joined by a two-meter-thick, eight-meter-high wall built with quarried rock and *sascab*.¹ Communication with the



Interior of House 6 Cultural Center.



The entrance to the Xmuch-Haltún Botanical Garden.

exterior would be limited to four gates: the San Román, Guadalupe, Sea and Land Gates. The first two no longer exist. Work was concluded on the fortifications in the early eighteenth century, but by that time pirate attacks had almost ceased. The wall around the city was 2,560 meters long and the defense system was completed by two forts built on nearby hills.

Today, 500 meters of the wall, seven bastions, two gates and the two forts (the San Miguel and the San Pedro Forts) survive, all put to good use as museums, a botanical garden and exceptional look-out points from which visitors can see the sea or the city. Walking along the remains of the wall makes you imagine the dangers and uncertainties Campechanos used to face.

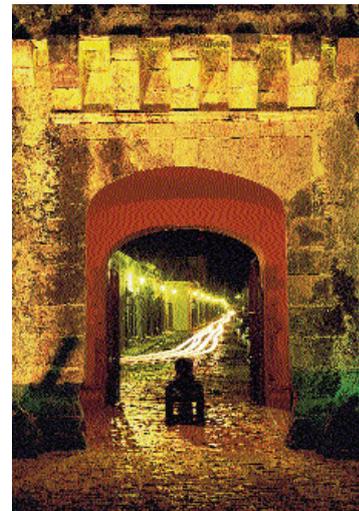
The Land Gate was the main entrance to the city and continues to be one of its symbols. It still has its turrets, its casemates and its warehouses, as well as its defenses made up of a triangular wall and a four-meter wide and three-meter-deep moat. It is said that the doors opened at 6 a.m. and closed at 6 p.m. Anyone who did not enter in time had to seek refuge in the surrounding areas until the next day.

The San Juan Bastion was the main defense for the Land Gate. It has been restored in the seventeenth-century style, including its kitchen, armory, a storeroom with dungeon and the captain's quarters. Like the other bastions, it is topped by a watch tower, turrets, cannon portholes and a bell tower to warn the population in case of a pirate attack. The Santiago Bastion, the last to be built, now holds the exquisite Xmuch-Haltún Botanical Garden, which boasts more than 150 species of local flora. Outstanding among them is the *palo de tinte*, or "ink wood," the *jipi-japa* palm, beautiful orchids and the nenuphars or lotus plants. The ground floor of the Santa Rosa Bastion has a well and two vaults for storing gunpowder and food. One of the three bastions on the coast side, the San Carlos Bastion, whose purpose was to safeguard the Sea Gate, today holds the City Museum. The Bastion of Our Lady of Solitude, the largest, is the Museum of Mayan Archaeology, with its valuable original stelas.

Once the pirate threat had passed, the San Pedro Bastion was used as a jail for the accused awaiting trial by the Holy Inquisition in Spain. Over the entrance door is the Vatican coat of arms: the papal tiara and Saint Peter's crossed keys.



The San Román Church, home to the black ebony Christ.



The State of Campeche Tourism Ministry

The Land Gate, one of the city's symbols.



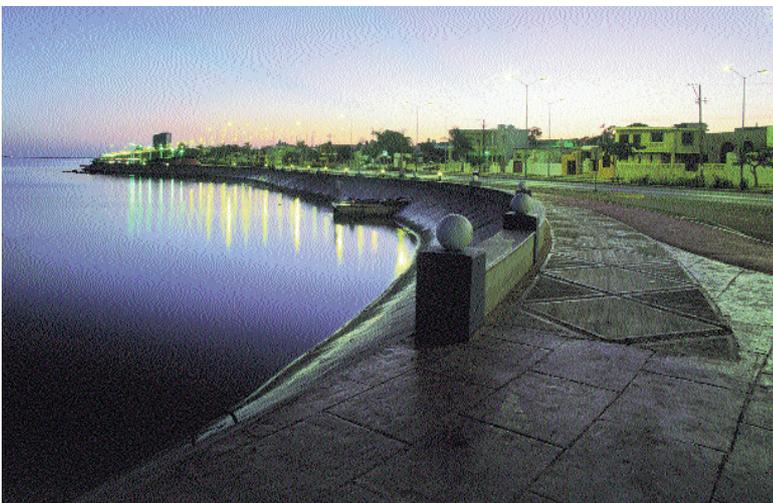
Resting from the day's labor.



The San José el Alto Fort, also a museum.



The entrance to the San José el Alto Fort.



The modern sea wall is a perfect place to watch the sunset.

The San Miguel and San José el Alto Forts guarded Campeche from two hills near the town; their lookouts were to raise the alarm if a pirate attack began. The San Miguel Fort today holds the Museum of Mayan Culture and boasts valuable archaeological pieces. The San José Fort, now a museum, is smaller, but similar architecturally and is excellently positioned.

The colonial period left a greater heritage than military architecture. Campeche, whose population prospered in trade, agriculture and cattle ranching, was given the status of a city in 1777. By that time it already had lordly civic and religious buildings; these were later added to in the nineteenth century without losing a sense of harmony.

The city, then, entered the twentieth century with one of the country's most admired, aesthetically pleasing historic downtown areas. Its cobblestone streets, flanked by one- and two-story houses, painted in warm colors and enhanced by an uninterrupted succession of wrought-iron balconies, can be walked along without assaulting the eye with the juxtaposition of historical buildings and modern horrors that development has imposed on other colonial cities of Mexico.

The restoration of 1,600 facades and monuments in both the Historic Downtown area and other neighborhoods accentuated the beauty of the city as a whole. The facades' clean lines go beautifully with the spotlessness of the streets and the light city traffic.

Inside the area protected by the wall are buildings like the early-eighteenth-century cathedral with its bell-like towers. Inside the cathedral is the Jesus of Nazarene Chapel-Museum (1540-1600) where mass was said before the cathedral was built. This chapel displays a seventeenth-century piece unique in Latin America, made

of cedar and mahogany embossed in silver, called the "Holy Burial," depicting the passion of Christ on the cross through several angels, situated around the supine body of Christ and holding symbols of the passion. The entire work weighs about 600 kilograms and is taken out once a year on Good Friday in a procession, carried on the shoulders of 40 men. This piece can only be seen in Campeche because the townspeople oppose it being loaned out to exhibit in other museums or venues in Mexico or abroad.

Other architecturally important constructions include the Carvajal Mansion, the House of the King's Lieutenant (today the Campeche Regional Museum), the Municipal Archives build-

The State of Campeche Tourism Ministry



ing, the Tukulná Crafts House, the House 6 Cultural Center, the State Historical Archive, the Francisco de Paula Toro City Theater, the baroque former San José Church, the San Francisquito Church and the San Juan de Dios Church, with its interesting tile-covered doorway.

Outside the old city are other interesting sites like the San Francisco Church and Ex-Convent, founded in 1546. It is said that the first mass to be given in the hemisphere was held here in 1517. The San Román Church, built by indigenous workers in 1565, is home to the venerated black ebony Christ, patron saint of sailors and the source of many legends.

Modern Campeche is not to be scoffed at, either. Walking along the sea wall is the perfect way to watch the sunset, where modern walkways join fishing boats resting from the day's labor.

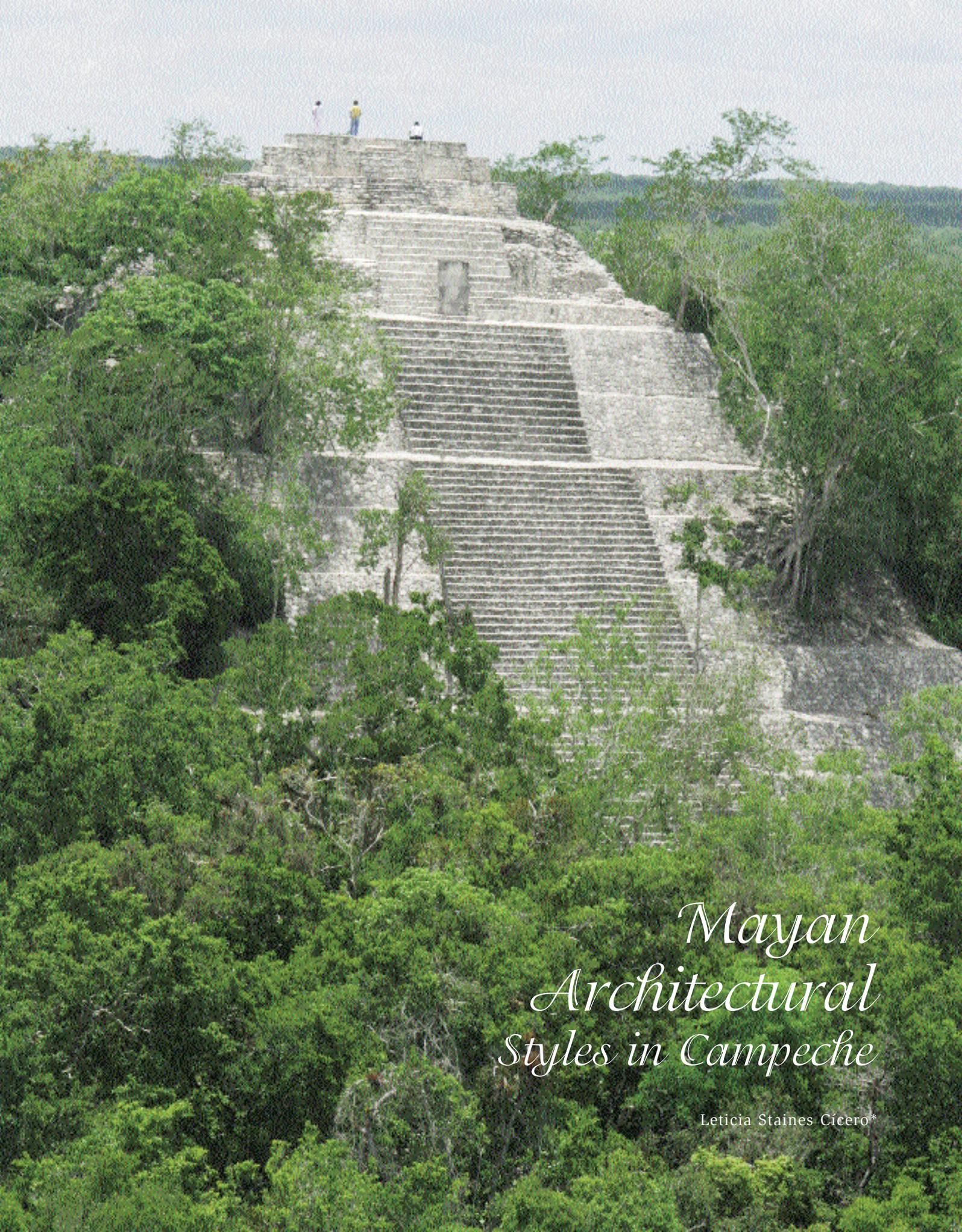
In December 1999, Campeche was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Treasures. Its merits are undeniable. It will take the visitor only a few hours to discover them, but it is much more difficult to describe their grace and beauty with something other than hackneyed adjectives. **MM**

NOTES

¹ *Sascab* is a mineral described as “decomposed limestone,” “breccia” and “the lime gravel mixture the Maya used as mortar.” It has been used as a building and paving material in Mesoamerica since antiquity.



The facades' clean lines go beautifully with the spotless streets.



*Mayan
Architectural
Styles in Campeche*

Leticia Staines Cícero*



▲ Calakmul, Structure I.

The architecture of Mesoamerica is the cultural manifestation that has lasted the longest and is a reflection of the cosmological conceptions and the social, political and economic organization of those who created it.

Different Mayan groups built majestic structures throughout the large geographical area they inhabited.¹ The topography was varied: they settled on high mountains, in forests or in small natural highlands, on islands, riverbanks, lagoons or at the seashore.² This, together with climate diversity, which influenced the kind of vegetation and fauna that flourished, conditioned urban planning, although sometimes the inhabitants transformed their surroundings.

The historic development of the Mesoamerican groups has been divided into different periods according to the passage of time and geography.³ In all of them, the Mayan arts distinguished themselves for their manufacture and aesthetic qualities. In architecture, we can observe characteristics in construction shared by the Mayan groups that allow us to classify them as a cultural unit. Nevertheless, in different places and chronological stages, architectural changes came about that led specialists to divide the area into stylistic regions.

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Photos by Elsie Montiel.

Photo previous page: Structure II, Calakmul.

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The Mayan groups share characteristics that allow us to classify them as a cultural unit.



▲ Calakmul, Structure I.

SOME ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Most great Mayan cities displayed different kinds of construction according to function: monumental buildings, acropolises, temples, palaces, basements, defensive walls, plazas, ballgame courts and a complex network of elevated avenues or *sakbeob* that communicated the architectural groups inside each city and the different settlements with each other. They used several kinds of vaulted roofs in rooms and tombs.

Just like in many other Mesoamerican settlements, in most cases, Mayan monumental buildings display different stages of construction: that is, after the first part was built, another was placed on top of it and another on top of that. This is why the majority of the buildings we see today are actually only the last stage of construction, very often from the late classical or post-classical periods, while the previous stages are hidden.

The Mayans used products and raw materials from their local ecosystems. Thus, constructions were built with blocks of limestone joined by lime-

based mortar. Both interior and exterior walls and floors were covered with stucco made from the same limestone-like rock mixed with sand, giving them a smooth, whitish surface. They also used the stucco to make architectural sculpture and reliefs and as surfaces for painting murals.

All styles and historical stages of architecture are closely related to the visual arts. The exteriors of the buildings were painted, usually red with pictures, although most of the murals that have been preserved are found in tombs and inside rooms. Architectural sculpture, as well as stucco sculpture, reliefs, stone mosaics and murals, were linked to the architectural spaces in such a way as to create a visual language evoking power, the cosmos and the gods. They were great, harmonious scenes with a variety of forms, volumes and colors. Also, in wide open spaces like plazas, they erected stelas and free-standing, multi-colored sculptures.

A city's lay-out was linked to the stars and the culture's view of the universe. Some of the main buildings face a specific way so they can mark the solstices,

equinoxes and other cosmic events.

This was a highly stratified society. The members of the dynasties in power emphasized the legitimacy of their lineage through monuments and architecture itself, since the phases of construction were associated with the ruling classes' rise to power. In addition, the sovereigns were buried in these monumental edifices, generally accompanied by sumptuous offerings. Commoners, it should be noted, lived on the outskirts of the urban area in houses made of non-durable materials, like a frame of reeds packed with mud and lime, on a low, oval stone platform with palm or guano leaf roofs.

Although Mayan building have been classified into several architectural styles,⁴ I will briefly refer to those seen in some representative archaeological sites in the state of Campeche: in this first article, I will touch on the Petén style, while in a later article, I will examine the Chenes and Puuc styles.

THE PETÉN STYLE

The word “*petén*” comes from the Mayan word for island. Thus, Guatemala's lake Petén Itzá got its name, as did the small islands dotted in it, the largest of which is today called Flores Island. For this reason, certain architecture of constructions in this region, the central lowlands, is called the Petén style.

In this area the towns grew considerably from



▲ Calakmul, Structure II.

Characteristic of the late pre-classical period was the complex made up of three temples, a large one at the center, flanked by two smaller ones, all built on top of the edifice.



Model of Structure II, Calakmul.



▲ Calakmul, Structure IV.

Calakmul is one of the Mayan cities with the largest number of stelae: until now 120 have been found.



▲ Calakmul, Structure VIII.



▲ Calakmul, stela.

the mid-pre-classical period on: in the North, El Mirador, Nakbé, Tikal and Uaxactún, in Guatemala, and Calakmul, Becán, and Edzná in southern Campeche.

Toward the end of the mid-pre-classical period and during the late pre-classical period, monumental architecture with a definite style began to be built. The structures are enormous pyramid-like basements, with superimposed bodies and taluds divided by streets; their corners are rounded and turned in; and one of the main elements is the molding known as *delantal*. The wide front stairways lead to a temple on the top with high, slightly inclined facades, usually with thick walls and narrow rooms.

Buildings of exceptional size were built

in this period like Calakmul's Structure II, which was 60 meters high. Also characteristic of this stage was the complex made up of three temples, a large one at the center, flanked by two smaller ones, all built on the edifice's uppermost body, like Calakmul's Structure E-III.

Another distinctive element is the great multi-colored stucco masks with traces of animal and plant representations, placed on the sides of the central stairways. In most cases they represent deities, among them the god of the sun. These masks can be found at sites like Calakmul, El Tigre and Edzná in Campeche.

Clearly, religion had already been consolidated in these early years and the monumental buildings were considered sacred spaces like the mountain or *witz*, the place of origin and entrance to the under-

Becán is surrounded by a pit that served to channel and drain off surface water.



▲ Becán, Structure IX.



▲ Becán, Structure I.

world. The powerful metropolises had a centralized government that legitimized their political power and controlled the population's ideology through imposing buildings, architectural sculptures and reliefs.

CALAKMUL

Beginning in the late pre-classical period, Calakmul, in southern Campeche, became a political, economic and religious power.

Structures I and II are extraordinary buildings rising out of the jungle. Archaeological work on Structure II has revealed important information about the historic process of the Petén region. Stratigraphic soundings and archaeological excavations inside

the building have uncovered a long architectural sequence ranging from the middle pre-classical period to the late classical. In Sub-structure II c 1 (dating



▲ Becán, Structure IV.

In Becán, a substructure was uncovered with a multicolored relief representing a figure with symbols of the so-called monster of the earth.



▲ Becán, figures.

from between 405 and 250 B.C.), a temple topped by a frieze including a modeled, multicolored relief was found. The temple's interior boasts a barrel vault until now unique in Mesoamerican architecture.

Other structures in Calakmul, distributed around patios and plazas, are called palaces, two-story buildings with long passageways that may have been inhabited by the elites. The I-shaped ball-game court is on the North Plaza. Between A.D. 400 and 600, some structures were remodeled and later, some

buildings acquired Río Bec style traits.

Calakmul is one of the Mayan cities with the largest number of stelae: until now 120 have been found. On them are depicted the rulers performing different rituals and texts written in glyphs usually narrating the figure's name, the date he took the throne and his victories over other cities in war. For that reason, the sovereign's clothing singles him out as the highest warrior with royal insignia and figures of gods and his forbears. The city's emblem glyph is



▲ Becán, moat.



▲ Becán, relief depicting the monster of the earth.



▲ Balamkú, entrance to the Southern Group.

Balamkú complex is made up of three architectural groups in the Petén and other later styles with certain Río Bec traits.

also depicted to identify it or the dynasty.

BECAÁN

Becán is another monumental city a few meters from what is now the Escárcega-Chetumal highway. The central nucleus is surrounded by a magnificent piece of engineering: a pit built during the late pre-classical period served to channel and drain off surface water. This gives the place its name since Becán means “ravine formed by water.”

The site is made up of large buildings and

plazas distributed throughout the central area; the monumental buildings are mostly from the late classical period, but some show evidence of being built in several stages.

Buildings IX and X are examples of the early part of the period. Observations indicate that at the end of the pre-classical, the basement of Building IX had masks like those of the Petén tradition, which were covered over when the structure was transformed in the following period

In Structure X, a substructure was uncovered with a multicolored relief representing a figure with symbols of the so-called monster of the earth and serpents with open maws.



▲ Balamkú, Structure I.



▲ Balamkú, Basement I-A.



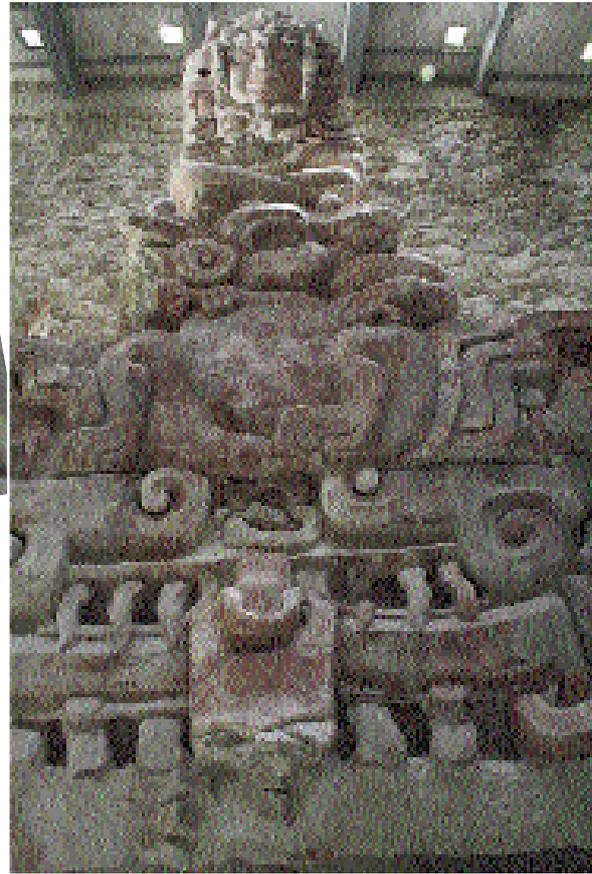
▲ Balamkú, possible jaguar, detail of Basement I-A frieze.

BALAMKÚ

The name Balamkú means “temple of the jaguar.” This complex is made up of three architectural groups in the Petén and other, later, styles with certain Río Bec traits. The Southern Group is of particular interest: inside Basement I-A, a substructure was discovered that was a building with three entrances. In the 16.8-meter-by- 4.1-meter frieze, four human front-view and seated, cross-legged figures were modeled on top of animal-like figures. The latter were placed on masks representing the mountain, the place of origin. This relief is undoubtedly iconographically very rich. The figures were also multi-colored, although very little evidence remains of them today.

NOTES

- ¹ The cultural area inhabited by Mayan groups covers what are today the states of Campeche, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, the eastern part of Tabasco and Chiapas, as well as Belize, Guatemala and western Honduras and El Salvador.
- ² Mayan territory has traditionally been divided into the Southern Highlands (southern Guatemala), the Central Lowlands (southern Campeche, Mexico, northern Guatemala and western Belize), the Northern Lowlands (the central and northern part of the Yucatán Peninsula), the Highlands (of Chiapas and Guatemala) and the Pacific Coast.
- ³ Like the other Mesoamerican cultures, the periods are divided into the early pre-classical period (1400-800 B.C.); mid-pre-classical period (800-400 B.C.); late pre-classical (400 B.C.-A.D. 250); early classical (A.D. 250-600); late classical



▲ Balamkú, frieze, one of the four human figures.

(A.D. 600-900/1000); early post-classical (A.D. 1000-1250); and late post-classical (A.D. 1250-1519).

- ⁴ The styles are the Petén style (northern Guatemala, western Belize and the extreme south of the Mexican states of Campeche and Quintana Roo), the Motagua (southwestern Honduras), the Usumacinta (the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico and of Guatemala), the Palenque style (Chiapas), the Río Bec, Chenes and Puuc styles (northern Yucatán Peninsula), that of northern Yucatán, and that of the Gulf Coast of Quintana Roo and Belize.

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*Refined
Authentic Cuisine*

Jorge Javier Romero*





The State of Campeche Tourism Ministry

Campeche mixed its population well, and one of the best proofs of this happy mixture is its cuisine.

Where is Campeche? Relatively little known in both Mexico and around the world, this area has forged an identity of its own by absorbing a mosaic of influences: everything from Campeche is a culture unto itself, but with very close relatives.

Campeche's culture belongs to the great family of the Yucatán. In broad terms, the Yucatán peninsula is home to a single cultural unit, but a unit with a rich diversity of expressions. Undoubtedly, the peninsula's political division—first Campeche broke away in 1857 and then Quintana Roo in 1903—contributed to the emergence of local specificities and particular definitions. In Quintana Roo, for example, most of the population is made up of very recent immigrants: natives of Yucatán do live there, and there is above all a strong presence of the Mayan culture underlying everything from Yucatán, but Cancún and Chetumal are cities inhabited by people from all over. It was designed that way since Porfirio Díaz's 30-year dictatorship, the *Porfiriato*: the territory was used for colonization, based on subjecting the Mayas who until then were hidden away in their jungles. Today, Cancún and the so-called Mayan Riviera are symbols of the entire peninsula, injected with cosmopolitanism, even though Mérida is still



Elsie Montiel

ahead as the region's capital, cultural center and example of quality of life.

Campeche is different. Its population was already there. The Mayans lived there and then the Spaniards came, and the city was founded in the sixteenth century: a social unit with hierarchies and rules, whose members relate to each other in a common space of trade and social exchange. Campeche was a port—though never a deep-sea port, and with difficult high tides and enormous ebb tides—and an important trade site for goods entering the peninsula. In the seventeenth century it was attacked by pirates and the city was fortified, but the project turned out to be completely obsolete since, by the time the walls were finished in the mid-eighteenth century, piracy had disappeared. In the nineteenth century, the city was home to a society proud of its traditions and ability to live in harmony. A beautiful city facing a very singular, absolutely still sea. Despite being walled in, it was a tolerant, open society, with



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Stingray sold in Campeche's market.

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Photo previous page: Shrimp rolled in shredded coconut. Courtesy of the State of Campeche Tourism Ministry.

The influence of the flavors from overseas transformed Campeche food into one of the country's great cuisines.

its well-defined neighborhoods. A city that became dominated toward the end of the colonial period by everything Catalanian, or perhaps everything Valencian —studies would be needed to ascertain precisely and Mexican historiography has delved but little into nineteenth-century immigration: from the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries the Yucatán peninsula, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico received a large number of immigrants from Catalonia, who ended up becoming the regional bourgeoisie.

Campeche mixed its population well. And one of the best proofs of this happy mixture is its cuisine. The Mayan ingredients combined with the Arab ones, which arrived with the Andalusian Moors who colonized the area in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Lebanese, from early twentieth-century migrations from the decomposing Ottoman Empire, plus the Catalonians and the Valencians. The influence of the flavors from overseas transformed Campeche food



Elsie Montiel

into one of the country's great cuisines, though, like the region, it is not very well known outside the walls of the Gulf of Mexico.

To start, in Campeche, people eat the entire range of Yucatán cuisine. The northern part of the state is dotted

with towns very similar to those found in the state of Yucatán, with its strong Mayan culture, in some cases even monolingual. This is the land of *cochinita pibil*, of free-range turkeys cooked in *sac cool*, of *kitam pipián* or mountain pork, stews made of *tepezcuintle* rodent (*jaaleh* in Mayan) or the now very rare *weech* or armadillo in chili pepper paste or *adobo*. Of all the peninsula's wild animals, the one most coveted for food was the deer, until it became endangered. It is eaten fresh, stewed in *sanchac* or roasted in a *pib*, an earthen oven where *cochinita* and special ritual tamales are made for the Day



The State of Campeche Tourism Ministry

of the Dead festivities from October 30 to November 3, known as *pibipollos* or *mukbipollos*, hybrid terms indicative of the region's racial mix.

These enormous tamales are a kind of huge turnover made of corn meal mixed with lard and *achiote* paste, filled with chicken or pork stewed with tomatoes, onions and habanero chili peppers —what Jamaicans call “Scotch bonnet peppers”— and spiced with cumin, oregano, garlic, pepper and cinnamon. The tamale is wrapped in banana leaves, not only for their flavor but also because it prevents the tamale from sticking, and it is roasted in the *pib* overnight, so it can be included in the offerings to the dead on the lower of the three lev-



Papadzules.

Elsie Montiel



Mauricio Degollado

X'catik chili peppers.

els they always include representing the underworld, the earth and the heavens.

One gem of traditional, popular Mayan cooking is the *dzotobichay*, a special tamale distinguished from the enormous variety of tamales in Mexico and the rest of the Americas because it is eaten complete with wrapping. Naturally, it is not wrapped in banana leaves or in corn husks as almost all tamales are: the main ingredient of this delight is the nutritious *chaya*, or tree spinach, a leafy plant native to the region. For the *dzotobichay*, the leaves are chopped up and mixed with the corn meal dough; then the little tamales are filled with a paste made from squash seeds and boiled eggs and wrapped in larger *chaya* leaves. They are steamed and served whole, including the covering, softened by cooking, bathed in a tomato and onion sauce, sprinkled with ground squash seeds and chopped boiled eggs, and garnished with a toasted habanero chili pepper.

Together with these dishes of mixed heritage, but with a strong indigenous component, comes the clearly Spanish lineage of pork and beans, a relative of Spain's *fabadas* and stews, and a three-meat *puchero* stew, Madrid's *cocido* or Catalonia's *escudella*.

All these dishes are common to Yucatán cooking. But when you get to the city of Campeche, you also find varieties with the local addition, something from the sea, which enriches regional cuisine until it becomes one of the country's most varied.

Cazón, that tender, little, white-meat shark, previously very common in Gulf waters, contributes its strong flavor to extraordinary dishes. It is eaten fresh, cooked in tomatoes and onions, accompanied by the peninsula's enormous avocados, freshly cooked black beans and toasted habanero chili peppers: this is the flagship dish of Campeche's cuisine. However, it reaches its full culinary stature by being grilled, a tradition born of the need to preserve it due to the lack of refrigeration. Pieces of grilled shark are simmered in salt water with *epazote* leaves and sour oranges, drained and dried in a skillet until they become a white powder used to make *cazón* bread, another typical dish of the region. It is made with corn tortillas spread with refried black

beans, sprinkled with the shark dust, piled on top of each other and bathed in a tomato and onion sauce, naturally accompanied by the all-pervasive habanero chili pepper and avocado.

The most complex dish made with shark meat is stuffed *x'catik* chili peppers. Grilled shark is cooked in tomato and onion sauce and used to stuff locally grown chili peppers, relatives of Central Mexico's *güero* chili pepper or Basque *guindillas*, but the size of a red Bell pepper. They are then dipped in batter and fried, and served in a tomato sauce.

Pompano is another major player in food from the sea near the city of Campeche. It is



Elicé Montiel



Mauricio Degollado

Pibipollos or mukbipollos.



Elsie Montiel

A dish originally from Puerto Rico but recently adapted to Campeche is made from shrimp rolled in shredded coconut, arranged around a half coconut filled with a fruit sauce, almost always applesauce.

eaten fried or marinated and cooked in tangy *escabeche* sauce, clearly of Valencian origins; this way it can be preserved for months and used in other dishes like fish with rice (a soupy rice dish also inherited from the Iberian peninsula) or cooked in an aromatic green sauce made of parsley, sweet chili peppers, chives and roasted garlic. It is also stuffed with sardines —giving you a fish stuffed with another fish— or shrimp.

Yucatan's *chirmole* is made in Campeche with *esmedregal* or jack fish and crabs instead of turkey and its stuffing. Fried sawfish is a simple but tasty dish: the fish rounds are fried in very hot oil until a crust is formed, but without drying out the meat. It is accompanied by a *salpicón* made of onion, radish, habanero chili pepper and sour orange juice or a *chil-tomate* sauce made of grilled tomatoes and habanero chili peppers.

Campeche's other important city, Ciudad del Carmen, contributes jumbo shrimp to the regional cuisine. A dish originally from Puerto Rico but recently adapted to Campeche is made from shrimp rolled in shredded coconut arranged around a half coconut filled with

a fruit sauce, almost always applesauce. Also from Ciudad del Carmen —previously known as Laguna because it is on an island in the middle of the Laguna de Términos, the Términos Lagoon— are breaded oysters.

Going to Campeche is a very interesting gastronomical experience. In getting to know its culture, you must complement the vestiges of Mayan society and colonial and nineteenth-century architecture by a visit

to its markets to eat roast suckling pig, black stuffing or pickled turkey; to the capital's portals in San Francisco or San Martín, to eat mixed *panuchos* or a sandwich made of ham encrusted with cloves baked in sherry; or to elegant restaurants like La Pigüa,

where freshwater mullet eggs become Campeche's caviar and you can try the incredible *xc'atik* shark-stuffed chili peppers or pompano in green sauce. In Ciudad del Carmen, you must go to La Puntilla's restaurants, and, if you arrive early, in Hecelchak'an on the main plaza, you can eat the best pork à la *pibil* of the entire Yucatán peninsula. This culinary journey can be drawn out for a long, delightful stay. **NMM**



Elsie Montiel

Agriculture in Calakmul Resiliency, Sustainability or a Better Standard of Living?

Francisco D. Gurri García*



Calakmul, like most Mexican Mayan jungles, was populated by urban workers, peons and landless peasants from all over Mexico who traveled to the forests of Tabasco, Chiapas, Quintana Roo and Campeche in the early 1970s to take possession of the lands that President Luis Echeverría Álvarez offered them in what was to be the last great agrarian allotment of the Mexican Revolution. The future *ejidatarios* were very different from each other, but they had something in common: they wanted to work their own land and did not have the slightest idea of the challenges they were about to face.¹

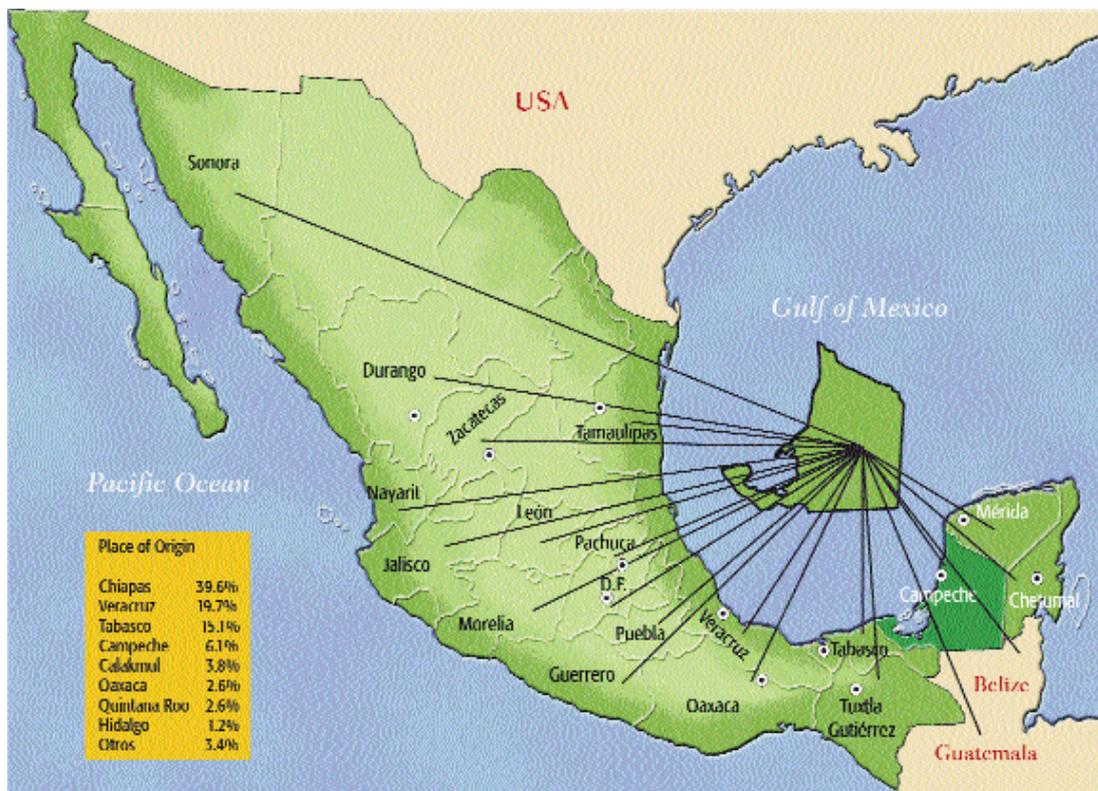
In 1999, the El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (Southern Border College or Ecosur) Ecological Anthropology Research Group began a research program in the municipality of Calakmul, Campeche, to tell the story of how these colonists survived. The municipality, colonized by migrants from 23 Mexican states, offered researchers an ideal opportunity to study how cultural background influences the decisions people make when adapting to their environment (see map).

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To adapt, people come together in functional associations known as adaptive strategies. Among peasants, reciprocity, shared meanings, life-long training, intimate acquaintance and life-long guarantees of support for each member make the household the basic adaptive unit. Household composition, structure, activities and cultural patterns, as well as the rules and regulations that guide the decision making process for survival and reproduction, form the adaptive strategy. To identify the strategies that migrants to Calakmul developed over the past 20 years, the Ecological Anthropology Research Group studied 700 families in the 29 most recently formed communities in Mexico's last agricultural frontier.

Two different adaptive strategies were identified. Each one reflects the migrants' history and their motivation for migrating. The first is practiced by 55 percent of the families and we named it the household subsistence agricultural strategy (HSA). Most of the colonists that generated it were peasants before arriving to Calakmul, and many arrived after being displaced from their lands. Among them are indigenous groups who abandoned their communities in Chiapas because of religious persecution.

For HSA households, agriculture is part of a diversified subsistence strategy that makes use of different resources and/or labor opportunities throughout the year. They harvest corn and chili peppers in October; they hunt small game in the overgrown fallow fields where they also harvest yucca and yam planted years before when they cleared the plot for cultivation; they gather honey and harvest termites and herbs in the forest. From May to June they eat fresh fruit and vegetables from their backyards where they also raise pigs and chickens with food obtained from their agricultural plots and the surrounding forest. They have no savings, so when they need money they sell jalapeño peppers (*Capsicum annum L.*), work as journeymen and take advantage of the government program Oportunidades and Procampo subsidies.

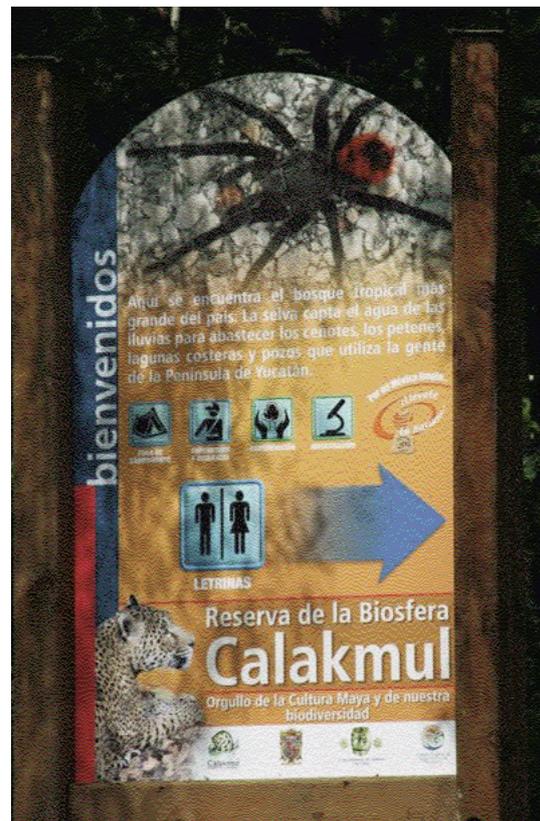




To adapt, people come together in functional associations known as adaptive strategies. Among peasants, reciprocity, shared meanings, life-long training, intimate acquaintance and life-long guarantees of support for each member make the household the basic adaptive unit.

The second adaptive strategy was named household commercial agricultural strategy (HCA). For HCA farmers, agriculture is the family business. They invest in agrochemicals, use tractors, hire outside labor to help them at harvest time and produce primarily for the market. They generate savings when they sell their jalapeño crop. These savings are used to invest in capital goods, to buy cattle and to open bank accounts. The cattle are sold during the months before the harvest to purchase food and other necessary survival items when resources are scarce. Cattle may also be sold during the jalapeño pepper harvest to pay pickers. In Calakmul, those who generated this strategy may not have been farmers before moving to Calakmul. All of them, however, considered the lands given to them by the government as an opportunity to make money.

HSA households live in extended family units where the household head coordinates his wife, single and married children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren's labor and decides how to invest and distribute their resources. In HSA households, lands and all capital goods belong to the head of the household, so young people invest their extra income in consumer goods such as food, clothing, radios, stereos and furniture. HCA strategies are composed of several kin-related nuclear families of different ages, where the younger households, usually belonging to the sons of the head of the older household, exchange labor for access to their fathers' grazing lands and capital goods. Perhaps because they have their own homes, lands and



complete control over their resources, young married HCA men invest in capital goods to help them with their high-input agriculture.

Both strategies have advantages and disadvantages, but the HSA is less vulnerable and more sustainable than the HCA. HSA adaptive strategy is a redundant system that guarantees there will be enough for consumption throughout the year even if one or more productive activities fail to provide. This strategy is highly inefficient in monetary terms but very resilient and adequate in an unpredictable environment such as that of Calakmul, which is plagued by recurring droughts and gets hit by a devastating hurricane at least once every seven years. HCA households, on the other hand, depend on the success of their jalapeño crop to generate savings, invest in capital goods and obtain the operating capital they need to restart the next agricultural cycle. Unfortunately, the jalapeño crop is harvested in late October and early November, just before the hurricane season is over.

Reliance on jalapeños also makes their agricultural practices energy inefficient with a high environmental impact. To obtain profitable amounts of peppers, HCA farmers must plow flat lands with relatively thick layers of earth known as *planadas*. These *planadas* are scarce so farmers are forced to use tractors, apply industrial fertilizers and herbicides that allow them to increase the number of years a single plot may be cultivated. In the tropics, the amount of time a plot will need to recuperate is inversely correlated with the years of cultivation so that these practices have already transformed thousands of hectares into unusable, weed-covered plots that inhibit secondary growth. HSA agricultural systems, on the other hand, hardly use agrochemicals, and, unlike HCA households, that use only the commercially valuable fruit, HSA farmers recycle non-marketable agricultural by-products in their backyards and other parts of their subsistence system.

Finally, most dry farm agriculturalists in seasonal environments must deal with a scarcity season right before the harvest. In Calakmul, this season extends from around the middle of July to the third week of October. HCA households use savings or sell cattle to tide them over. HSA households, on the other hand, must find alternative food sources in the forests and fallow fields and make money as agricultural laborers at a time when few jobs are available. Children and teens of both strategies lose weight during this season. HCA youngsters, however, only lose body fat, while HSA children under 10 stop

While HSA is a more resilient and sustainable strategy than HCA, the latter offers their members a better quality of life, and, because they do not drop out of school, it offers their youngsters greater expectations and opportunities for the future.



growing, and their adolescent sisters lose lean muscle mass. In addition, because HSA depends on family labor, HSA adolescents —particularly girls— must drop out of school and reduce the time they spend in recreational activities.

Thus, while HSA is a more resilient and sustainable strategy than HCA, the latter offers their members a better quality of life, and, because they do not drop out of school, it offers their youngsters greater expectations and opportunities for the future. This paradox has not only presented itself to peasants in Calakmul, but to agriculturalists in tropical areas around the world. Unfortunately governments and development agencies have promoted HCA-type agriculture which has led to the abandonment of entire agricultural systems. In Calakmul the end of the story has not been written yet, and so far the choice of strategy has been made by households before migrating. Today, eight years after we started this study, both HCA and HSA systems have started sending migrants to the United States. The former tend to abandon agriculture when it stops being profitable and buy cattle or goats, while the latter use their remittances to maintain their agricultural way of life. Let us hope, therefore, that for the good of one of our few remaining tropical forests, the 55 percent of farmers in Calakmul who practice HSA do not decide to make agriculture their business. **MM**

NOTES

¹ This article is based on research conducted with grants from Conacyt, Sisiera, SYPR and FOMIX Campeche. Data analysis was carried out by me, José Armando Alayón Gamboa, Dolores Molina Rosales and Mirna Vallejo Nieto. I have also used material generated by students and assistants from the Ecological Anthropology Research Group.

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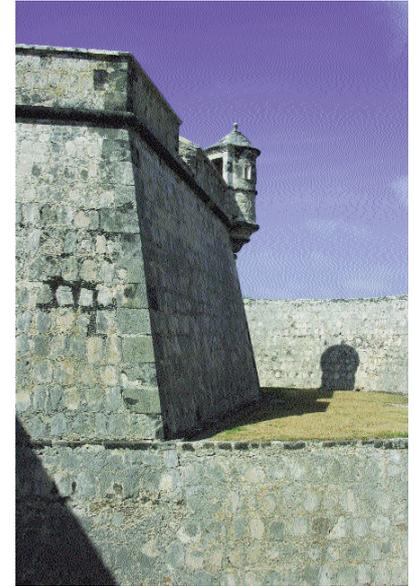



MUSEUMS

*The San Miguel
Museum
Colonial Architecture and
Mayan Archaeology*

Marco Antonio Carvajal Correa*





THE DEFENSE OF CAMPECHE

In the eighteenth century, France, Spain and Italy united against England in the Seven Years War (1761-1768). In 1762, England occupied Havana and Manila, two of Spain's important trading centers. To get these two enclaves back, Spain ceded Florida, making the Yucatán Peninsula of great strategic importance since whoever controlled Florida and Yucatán would dominate access to the Gulf of Mexico.

This made the port of Campeche part of British expansion plans in the Americas. In 1771, given the threat, the governor, Don Antonio Olivier, reported to King Carlos III of Spain about the need to start work on the city's defenses. The court's reply was slow in coming, but it finally authorized the construction of two forts, the San Miguel Fort on La Eminencia Hill, and the San José Fort on the Vigía Vieja Hill, plus four coastal batteries at the foot of the forts.

The English invasion that motivated building the forts never came about;



Ceramic incense burner. Edzná Archaeological Site.

* Director of museums at the National Institute of Anthropology and History Campeche Office. maanjl@hotmail.com

Photos by Elsie Montiel.
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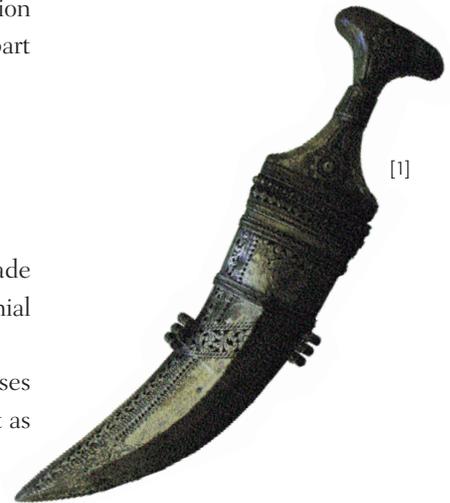
they were not attacked a single time in the eighteenth century. But the situation changed after Mexico's independence. Over almost 50 years, the San Miguel Fort, part of the city's defenses, was brought under siege six times.

MILITARY ARCHITECTURE

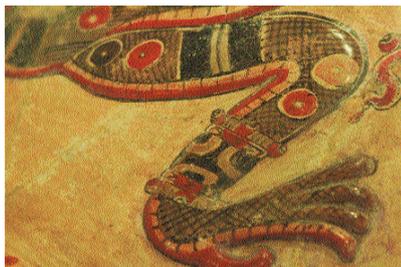
Construction began on San Miguel Fort in 1779, with the finishing touches made in 1801. Its lines and design are extraordinary, and it is representative of the colonial period's best military engineering.

Broadly speaking, it is a rectangular building without flanks with its main defenses on the upper story, characteristics that in strict military architectural terms define it as a redoubt. If we stand in front of the façade facing the land, what we see is the ascending embankment known as a glacis. In the central part is a winding access path built to prevent easy penetration by projectiles and frontal attacks by the enemy.

In the top part of the building are the *merlones*, or solid narrow walls between the crenels on the battlements, and the parapets to protect marksmen, alternating with portholes that allowed the gunners to orient the angle of elevation of the cannons. The building's north and south faces are finished by tower sentry-boxes that protected sharpshooters as they fired upon the enemy from above.



[1]



[2]

[1] Wooden-handled, metal-plated dagger. On loan from the Campeche INAH Center Collection.

[2] Detail depicting a reptile and a human head, representing a warrior's *wayay*. Becán Archaeological Site.

[3] *The Lady of Jaina*, considered a masterpiece of Mayan Sculpture. Jaina Archaeological Site.

[4] Room 1, displaying the chronology and geographic location of the Mayan culture.



[3]



[4]

Advancing toward the redoubt on the winding road, we come to the moat that surrounds the main body of the building. A drawbridge crosses it, leading to the gate and guardhouse, with its vaulted walkway or tunnel, and from there, to the barracks square or parade ground, built on the cistern for storing rain water. Around the square are the doors to the commandant and the troops' quarters, the chapel, the kitchen, mess hall, arsenal and storeroom.

On the upper plaza, we find the *barbeta* or low wall that would allow the artillery to fire openly on any ships attacking the city. Today, the museum has an interesting collection of 20 cannon from that period, some used in the field, others for fortifications and others on ships.

THE MUSEUM OF MAYAN ARCHAEOLOGY

The fort continued under army jurisdiction until 1951, when it was abandoned. Its roofs fell in and its interior filled up with weeds.

Years later it was restored by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the state government and inaugurated as the Museum of Weapons and the Navy, August 7, 1963. In 1975, the collection was changed and the building was turned into the today's Museum of Mayan Archaeology of the City of Campeche.



[6]

REINAUGURATED IN 2000

The state's plans for tourism, among other things, prompted the Campeche INAH Center, together with state authorities and other federal bodies, to carry out one of the region's most ambitious projects in 2000. Their aim was to turn the museum's museography into one of the country's most modern, updating its scientific content and enriching its collection with some of the discoveries from the most recent archaeological digs in the four stylistic regions of Campeche state: North Petén, Puuc, Río Bec and Chenes.

The museum displays more than 450 pieces of pre-Hispanic Mayan art, produced using materials like jade, stucco, ceramics, bone, shells and limestone. Its collection also includes human remains from tombs found in digs in the same regions.

The museum's 10 exhibition rooms cover 600 square meters. Each room has graphic and thematic materials and explanations of each piece to ensure that visitors —mainly students— always have a clear, simple, brief expla-



[7]



[5]

[5] Room 3. Three doorjamb from the Xcalumkin Archaeological Site.

[6] Becán Archaeological Site.

[7] String of beads made of sea shells in the form of fantastic masks. Calakmul Archaeological Site.

[8] Mask of the Divine Lord Yich' ak K' ak, or Jaguar Claw. Calakmul Archaeological Site.



[8]



[10]

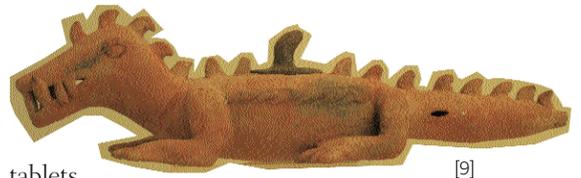
nation of what they are looking at. For anyone who wants more details, each room has tablets

with additional information; three rooms also have interactive digital screens.

The museum's scientific discourse includes the horizon of Mayan culture in Campeche; trade; architecture in Campeche; the house on the water (Jaina Island); the divine Lord Jaguar Claw; the order of the universe; the content of Mayan writing; war among the Mayas; the cycle of life; and recent exploration of the Becán and Balamkú archaeological sites.

THE COLLECTION

The museum has one of Mexico's most impressive collections of Mayan culture, with extraordinarily beautiful, masterfully crafted pieces in a diversity of techniques.



[9]

[9] Incense burner. Jaina Archaeological Site.

[10] Room 6, dedicated to the gods and cosmogony of the Mayan peoples.

[11] Tomb of the Divine Lord Jaguar Claw. Calakmul Archaeological Site.

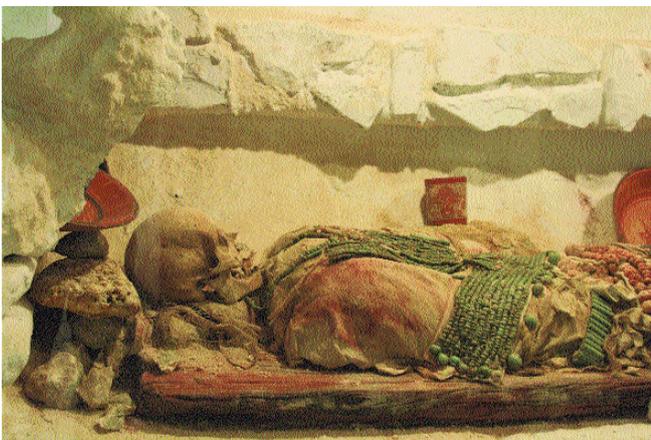
[12] Anthropomorphic incense burner. Calakmul Archaeological Site. [Following page.]

JADE

No other material was as symbolically important for the Mayans as jade. For this reason, it was used in funeral preparations to portray the faces of dead sovereigns whose spirit was compared to corn. The corn's green leaves were a metaphorical representation of the regeneration of life. The museum has five of the most important jade masks in existence, found in royal tombs at the Calakmul archaeological dig.

CERAMICS

The ceramics collection also includes exceptional pieces. The quality of the Mayan pieces can be attributed to the fact that they began production from the very beginning of their agricultural settlements, with ceramic production evolving parallel to their most complex organizations and largest cities. First, it satisfied the basic need for recipients, but with the passage of time, the preparation of the clay and pigmenting and firing techniques became more sophisticated, resulting in veritable masterpieces of Mayan art.



[11]

STONE SCULPTURE

During the classical period (A.D. 200-900), the lowland Mayans erected enormous stone stelae in their main cities to register the succession of their dynasties, their military victories and the important enemies captured by their rulers. The museum contains smaller works crafted with great mastery, like altars, figures of gods and symbolic objects.

HUMAN REMAINS

[12]

Most of the pieces on exhibit are from the offerings buried with great rulers. The rulers' remains were subjected to preservation techniques like wrapping them in cloth made from plants and covering them with layers of resins, lime and cinnabar (iron oxide) until they looked like cocoons. One of the museum's most interesting attractions is the exhibit of the tombs of the Divine Lord Jaguar Claw and his attendants.

Clearly, the San Miguel Archaeological Museum boasts a wide variety of pieces and museographical resources that brings the Mayan world directly to us. This experience has sparked the desire for adventure and knowledge in several generations of researchers and a public interested in the topic, both of whom have followed the ups and downs of archaeology without losing their ability to be surprised. For young people, a museum visit is an invitation to join the search for the Mayas. **MM**



FURTHER READING

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Museo Arqueológico de Campeche, Fuerte de San Miguel

(Museum of Mayan Archaeology, San Miguel Fort)

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Admission and Services The museum is open to the public Tuesday to Sunday from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Admission is 27 pesos. Children under 13, students, teachers and senior citizens with ID enjoy free admission, and entry is free for all on Sunday. A fee is charged for video-taping.

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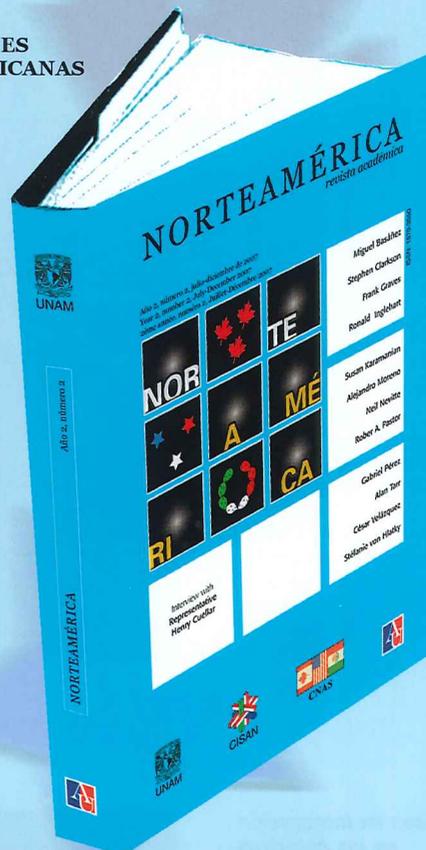
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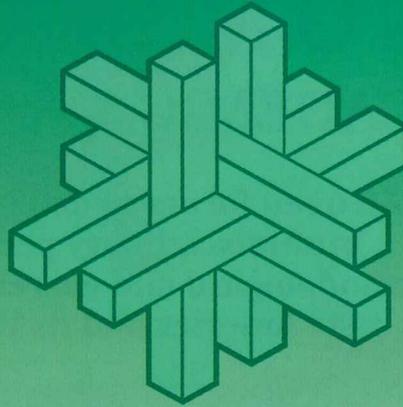
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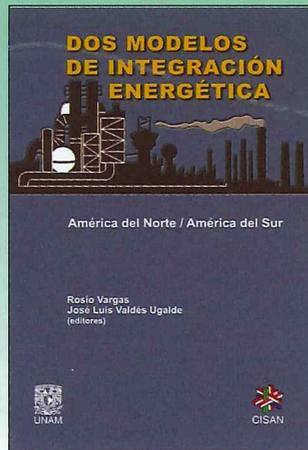
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p u b l i c a t i o n s

Dos modelos de integración energética. América del Norte/ América del Sur

Rosío Vargas and José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, eds.

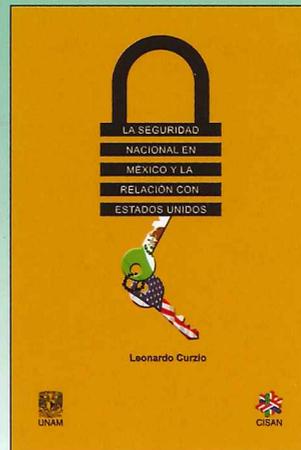
This book analyzes the two main forms of energy integration in North and South America, and tries to answer questions like what that integration looks like in practice, whether we can expect solutions to national energy problems without putting national sovereignty at risk and whether integration is compatible with the energy security of all concerned.



La seguridad nacional en México y la relación con Estados Unidos

Leonardo Curzio

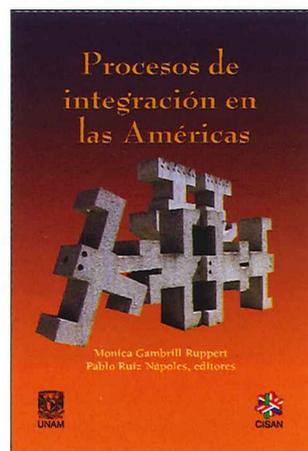
The classic national security paradigm must be reinterpreted in the light of the changes both in Mexico and the world. Over the last 20 years, Mexico has gone from being an inward-looking economy to one of the world's most open, though very dependent on the United States; it has stepped up emigration so that, today, unprecedented millions of Mexicans live and work in the U.S.; and in terms of security, it has become part of the equation of security in North America. For all these reasons, we have to review all our suppositions and doctrine in this area.



Procesos de integración en las Américas

Monica Gambrell and Pablo Ruiz Nápoles, editors

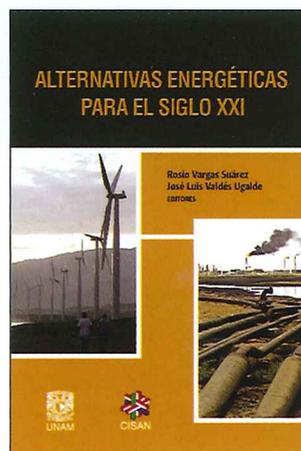
This book studies the intensification of integration processes in the Americas. Based on a huge amount of empirical data, the articles seek to show the impact of integration in regionalization processes. They deal with topics like the theory of the new regionalism as a tool to study recent integration processes; the specificities of Tamaulipas-Texas transborder cooperation; the inconsistencies in official data gathering that make it difficult to ascertain the real magnitude of trade among the NAFTA countries; and Venezuela's contribution to Andean integration.



Alternativas energéticas para el siglo XXI

Rosío Vargas and José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, editors

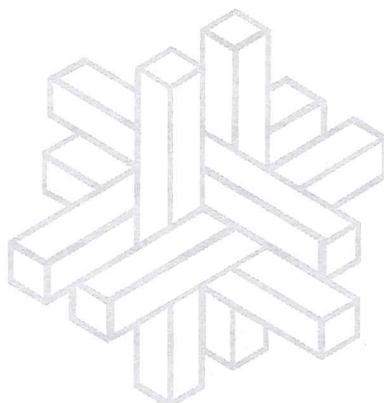
This book deals with a vital issue for the world today: the search for energy alternatives to compensate for the imminent scarcity of traditional sources, particularly oil and gas. Based on specialized studies warning that current rates of oil consumption will exhaust known reserves in about 40 years, the authors offer a panorama of the international oil situation, emphasizing the growing importance of natural gas and other renewable energy sources, as well as the obstacles and perspectives these new options face.



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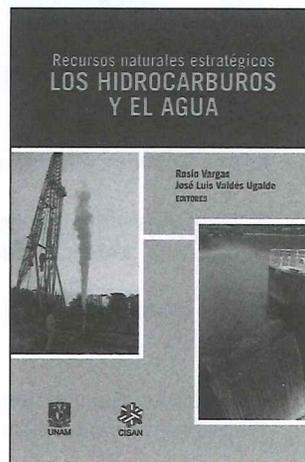
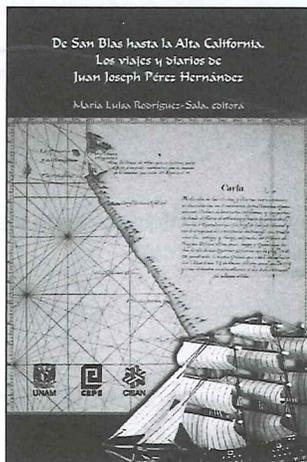


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p u b l i c a t i o n s

De San Blas hasta la Alta California: los viajes y diarios de Juan Joseph Pérez Hernández
María Luisa Rodríguez-Sala, editor

This book deals with the vicissitudes and feats of Juan Joseph Pérez Hernández, a Spanish Royal Navy seaman in charge of the maritime exploration of the northern part of the New World in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The author explains that the ultimate reason for these travels was to be found in the policy and aspirations of two European empires, the Spanish and the Russian. The Spaniards wanted to consolidate and expand their territories in these northern latitudes in the face of the threat of the penetration through trade and settlement by the nascent Russian empire.



Recursos naturales estratégicos. Los hidrocarburos y el agua

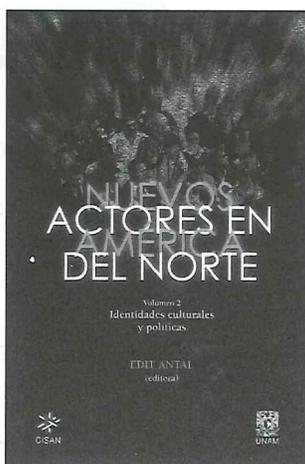
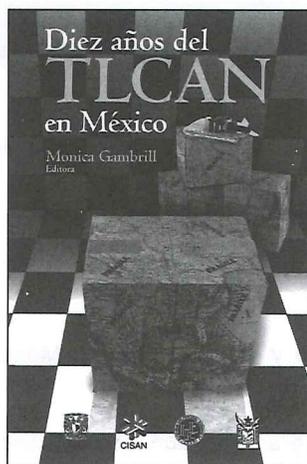
Rosío Vargas and José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, editors

This book deals with an issue vital to the survival of the so-called global village: the imminent scarcity of strategic natural resources, basically oil and water, and the risks this poses for the world's well-being and peace. Experts from different disciplines and of different nationalities look at the problem from different perspectives. The prospects are not very promising.

Diez años del TLCAN en México

Monica Gambrell, editor

Ten years after NAFTA came into effect, specialists in different disciplines met to evaluate the effects of its implementation in Mexico. Among other topics, the book looks at macro-economic factors, national industry and the maquiladora plants, foreign investment, labor mobility, agriculture and animal husbandry, cargo transport, the environment and conflict resolution. Particularly interesting is its focus on the agreement's implications with regard to greater integration with the United States.



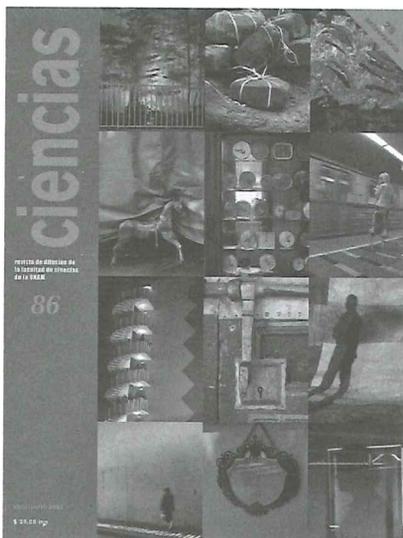
Nuevos actores en América del Norte (vol. 2)

Edit Antal, editor

This work analyzes new and pre-existing actors in North America and the dynamics of their relationships. With a multidisciplinary focus and from their own point of view, the actors themselves evaluate the role they have played while the authors try to understand the mechanisms they use to create societies of a new kind. The book is structured by topic, with four cross-cutting themes: energy resources and security; economic and environmental issues; cultural identities (including indigenous questions); and problems linked to social actors' political identity and empowerment.

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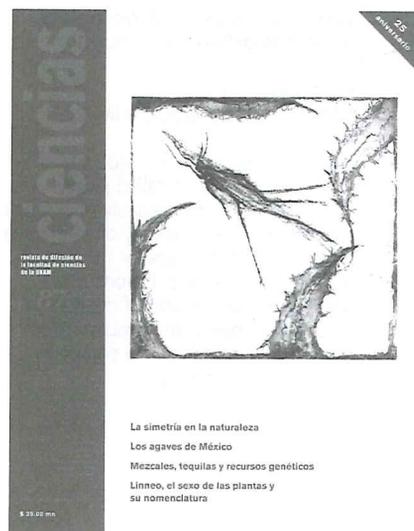
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Death in Mexico's Pre-Hispanic Poetry

Arturo Cosme Valadez*

Rosa María Jasso**



It is often said that death has become a naturalized Mexican citizen. This is a falsehood, or a baseless commonplace: if anyone is truly cosmopolitan, it is death, this omnipresent visitor in every culture. However, we can say without fear of error that in our country's poetry, the mention of death plays a special role, unparalleled amongst other peoples, oscillating between playfulness and obsession, fascination and fear, resignation and exorcism. In any case it is not at all outlandish to maintain that, with well-known exceptions, the best poems written in Mexico from pre-Columbian times to at least the twentieth century, constantly deal with this theme. I will not argue that in this essay for reasons of space, but instead will focus on an analysis of a few fragments of Nahuatl poetry.

THE TEXTS

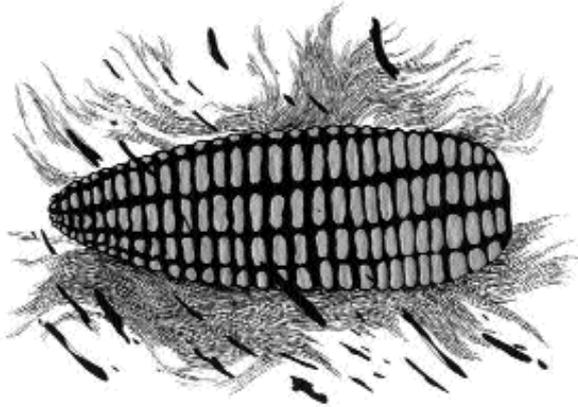
Certain difficult-to-translate and consult documents contain anonymous pre-Hispanic poetry dating to before the fourteenth century. I will begin my journey with Tlaltecatzin de Cuauhchinanco (1357-1409), perhaps the first "face with flesh and color" in our country's literature. Like many other writers of his time in both East and West, he was a "lord," that is, a noble, in this case a Chichimec, who had the rare reputation of being happy. He sings to the frothy cacao drunk by princes, the tobacco flower that he shares with his friends and, above all, to the *ahuiani* (literally, "she who makes happiness"), the woman who lavishes pleasure, in this case, the prostitute. However, while he describes the pleasures of this world in his poem—only one text survives—he is plagued by the theme of death, which at first glance seems contrary to the delights he has been exalting:

* Mexican writer and editor for the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (Conapred).

** Mexican writer.

Drawings by Héctor Ponce de León

Sweet, delectable woman,
 Precious flower of toasted maize,
 You only loan yourself out,
 You shall be abandoned,
 You shall have to leave,
 You shall be left fleshless.¹



Is this a moral prejudice alluding to fleeting sex and referring only to the *ahuiani*? Not in the least. A few verses later, the poet stops to think about his own impermanence and faces it bravely, although not without wavering slightly:

I must not go
 To the place of the fleshless.
 My life is a precious thing...
 I will have to abandon it,
 I will have to leave,
 Some time, it will come...
 I abandon myself
 Oh, my God!
 I say: I go,
 Wrapped like the dead.

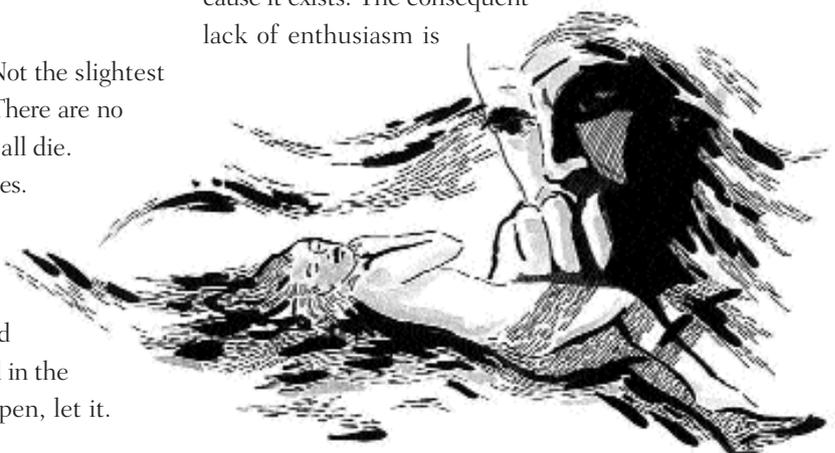
What lucidity! What honesty! Not the slightest allusion to his birth or his merits. There are no pretexts, prologues or excuses: we all die. Neither is there begging or reproaches. "Oh, my God!" is a simple interjection justified masterfully in the following lines, which prefigure fatality in the Mexican fashion and that would seem to be summarized in the following idea: whatever is to happen, let it.

Does the poet not fear death? Of course he does. He says so clearly in the first three lines. However, he does not wallow in anguish because he knows it is inevitable, and as a result takes it on board in full. Between the desire not to die and the understanding of the event, he opts for the latter.

This tone is generalized among the pre-Hispanic poets, who offer a reflexive vision of death. Everyone has insisted so much on the warlike nature of the pre-Columbian peoples that their exquisite level-headedness often goes unnoticed. Nevertheless, that is their main characteristic, or at least one of them. Let us look at this passage written by Nezahualcōyotl (1402-1472), for example:

We rejoice with song,
 We drape ourselves with flowers here.
 Does our heart truly understand it?
 We must leave that behind when we leave:
 That is why I weep. It makes me sad.²

It would be difficult to find a more contained and reasonable art. It begins by pointing out the blessings of the world to then reveal them as fleeting. In the third line of the quintain, he asks a question that touches both the intellect and one's sensibility, and with it, disarms the joys of this life without suppressing them. In a certain sense, happiness is a result of a lack of profundity. By contrast, prudence approximates the real, even at the cost of discouragement. That is how things are, and they are unfortunate, without exaggeration or shame. It is only fitting to accept death because it exists. The consequent lack of enthusiasm is





not the child of desperation, but of proper understanding.

Less intellectual, but perhaps more delicate and significant, are these two lines by the same author:

Like a painting,
We will fade.³

Here, death, far from being an event, is a process. Stopping existing is linked to the physical fact, but also to fading in the world's memory. Our stay here is destined to dissolve in oblivion, whether we are a king of heroic deeds or an ordinary person, as the poem from which these lines were taken emphasizes. No one can survive ("we will all leave/we will all die on the Earth"), but the event is registered without any particular emotional charge surrounding it. In any case, the essential thing is that the magnificent lines we just repeated point with unequalled decorum to a dual death: the corporeal and the spiritual death, understanding the latter as fading in men's memories.

Between the end of the fourteenth and the middle of the fifteenth century, Tochiuitzin Coyolchihqui concurs with this concept of death in which, through a kind of ontological leap, the living being dissolves into brutal nothingness:

We come only to sleep, we come only to dream:

It is not true, it is not true that we come to live on Earth.

We turn into spring grass.

Green again, our hearts open their corollas and flower,

Our body is a plant: it blossoms and wilts.⁴

Naturally, there is something more here than vanity attributed to biological and cultural life. Anticipating Shakespeare's reformulation of the Stoics and the poets of the Spanish Golden Century, the author compares life with an uncertain slumber. Our inevitable wilting rubs out our brief existence and turns it into a phantom. The image of survival enclosed in the third and fourth lines emphasizes its contingency and, like Nezahualcōyotl, resolves it in suppression.

It should be pointed out that the gods play no role whatsoever in the poems cited. In general, fifteenth-century pre-Hispanic writers mention them rhetorically, to lend their song greatness, particularly when they talk of feats of war, but not to allude to a possible unearthly life. It is true that almost all of them mention, with slight variations, *the place where somehow one lives*, but this is never represented as something that comes after life on earth or as a consolation for life's inevitable disappearance. That is why the mid-fifteenth-century "lady of Tula," Macuilxochitzin, can ask in this delicate sestet, whose final line seems to allude to immediate existence:



Are the songs taken
 To His house,
 The place where somehow one exists?
 Or do thy flowers exist only here?
 Let the dance begin!⁵

Axayácatl (1449-1481), the supreme lord or *tlatoani* of Tenochtitlan, also vacillates before the enigmatic behavior of the deity and even insinuates a reproach, justified by the theme of the poem, which refers to the only sudden defeat the Aztecs suffered at their height, before the arrival of the Spaniards. In any case, he reaffirms the inevitability of death without suggesting any kind of transcendence:

Did fatigue perchance overcome the Owner
 of the house,
 The Giver of Life?
 He makes no one on earth resistant.⁶

Naturally, it is not necessary to cite many more examples to conclude that in Nahuatl poetry, death



is seen as an irrevocable event. However, if the reader wants to appreciate the originality of this judicious conception, it is necessary to underline the serenity with which contingency is assumed in it. Contrary to the widespread temptation of feeling oneself necessary in the world—the reason behind men's creating myths, religions and certain texts—the ancient Mexican poets look the finite in the eye and turn it into a guideline for life. Not without sorrow, of course, but beyond all social vanity that, in the face of death, becomes nothing. In a curious parallel with the philosophies of Heidegger and Sartre, the emptiness of being cuts across and overflows even the self, which would like to exist even if only as a cobblestone, and which is finally resigned to not being able to even be that. The following lines of Cuacuauhtzin de Tepechpan (mid-fifteenth century) conveniently illustrate this:

Where shall we truly go
 To never die?
 Even were I a precious stone
 Even were I gold,
 I would be melted
 There in the hearth of the furnace I will be
 pierced.
 I have only my life.
 I, Cuacuauhtzin, am wretched.⁷

A little before the conquest, Náhuatl poetry continued to bear this kind of fruit. This is not a minor fecundity. Ayocuan Cuetzpaltzin, from the second half of the fifteenth-beginning of the sixteenth centuries, somehow summarizes the death-theme of his ancestors' poetry:

In vain we have arrived,
 In vain we have blossomed in the earth.
 Only thus am I to leave,
 Like the flowers that perished
 Will nothing remain in my name?
 Nothing of my fame here on Earth?
 At least flowers, at least song!⁸

What we had identified as definite statements appears in this late period as a question. Another



thing: poetry (flowers and song) begins to insinuate itself as a kind of palliative for the inevitable.

Almost immediately after, in the anonymous “Funeral Song to Mixcóatl” (early sixteenth century), we read:

You shall yet blossom and again flower in
the earth!
And you shall live to the sound of the drums.
In Huexotzinco you shall delight the princes
And your friends shall see you.

What a transfiguration! As yet without mentioning the religion of the conquerors —perhaps not even being familiar with it more than as a rumor brought by the troubled times— the poet somehow puts forward his cosmogony: the resurrection of the dead, without going any further. Dominating this quatrain is, in effect, the promise of survival, the certainty, opposed to the previous conception, that the dead can endure even in an individual sense, in such a personalized way that it is even linked to the dead person’s friends. It is perhaps appropriate to suppose that it is literary license or a fantasy of the poet, unrelated to the idiosyncrasy that would later be imposed. It does not matter. In any case, it is a different view of death. The times of great poetry about the transience of life were gone. But

their depth continues in force, as this fragment of “The Flowers and the Song” shows:

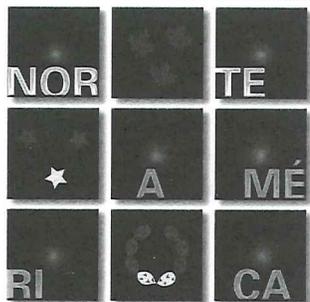
Here on earth is the region of the fleeting moment.
Is it also thus in the place
Where somehow one lives?
There, does one feel joy?
Is there friendship there?
Or have we come to know our faces
Only here on earth?

NOTES

- ¹ “El poema de Tlaltecáztin” (*Tlaltecáztin icuic*), *Cantares mexicanos* (Mexico City: Biblioteca Nacional de México, n.d.), folios 30r and 30v. In José Luis Martínez’s book, *América antigua (nahuas/mayas/quechuas/otras culturas)*, volume 6 of the Old World Collection (Mexico City: SEP, 1976), the poem is called “Dulce, sabrosa mujer,” but this translation and all the others not by Ángel María Garibay are taken from Miguel León-Portilla’s book, *Quince poetas del mundo náhuatl* (Mexico City: Diana, 1994).
- ² Nezahualcóyotl, “Los cantos son nuestro atavío,” *Romances de los señores de la Nueva España*, Ángel María Garibay, trans., folios 41r-42r.
- ³ Nezahualcóyotl, “Como una pintura nos iremos borrando”, in op. cit., folios 35r-36r.
- ⁴ Tochiuhtzin Coyolchiuhqui, “Venimos a soñar” (*Zan tontemiquico*), *Cantares mexicanos*, Ángel María Garibay, trans. (Mexico City: Biblioteca Nacional de México, n.d.). In the translation reproduced here, the poem is called “Sólo vinimos a sonar.” I have used the title of the translation by León-Portilla so that it jibes with the Nahuatl.
- ⁵ Macuilxochitzin, “Canto de Macuilxochitzin” (*Macuilxochitzin icuic*), *Cantares mexicanos* (Mexico City: Biblioteca Nacional de México, n.d.), folio 53v.
- ⁶ Axayácatl, “Canto de Axayácatl, señor de México” (*Ycuic Axayacáztin, Mexico Tltohuani*), *Cantares mexicanos* (Mexico City: Biblioteca Nacional de México, n.d.), folios 29v-30r.
- ⁷ Cuacuauhtzin de Tepechpan, “Canto triste de Cuacuauhtzin” (*Cuacuauhtzin icnocuicatl*), *Romances de los señores de la Nueva España*, folios 26r-27v.
- ⁸ Ayocuan Cuetzpaltzin, “Las flores y los cantos” (*In xochitl incuicatl*), *Cantares mexicanos* (Mexico City: Biblioteca Nacional de México, n.d.), folio 10r.

FURTHER READING

English speakers can consult the following translation direct from the Nahuatl:
Bierhorst, John, *Cantares mexicanos, Songs of the Aztecs* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985).



NORTEAMÉRICA
Academic Journal of the CISAN-UNAM

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- *Example of the reference list in the author-date style:*

Diamond, Larry, Seymour Menton and Juan J. Linz, comp.
1995 *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, Boulder, Colo., Reinner.

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Reviews

Recursos naturales estratégicos.

Los hidrocarburos y el agua

(Strategic Natural Resources. Hydrocarbons and Water)

Rosío Vargas and José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, eds.

CISAN-UNAM

Mexico City, 2006, 184 pp.

This interesting book focuses on two kinds of natural resources, fundamental and therefore strategic for the development and survival of many countries. The first part includes studies and research results by outstanding academics about oil and natural gas, essentially concerning their unequal distribution in the world, the relentlessly larger increase in demand than in supply, which raises their price, their strategic importance in countries' economies and development and their marked tendency to be depleted, causing great concern about them being non-renewable. The authors also analyze issues like the world oil order, oil policies of both oil-rich and oil-poor states, the size of potential world reserves and their generalized depletion, as well as their link to growing international conflicts, particularly the ones promoted by the United States to ensure its control of what remains of the world's oil and fuel supply for the longest possible time.

Based on the Gubert multiple cycles curve, Douglas B. Reynolds maintains that in 10 years, the United States will suffer from oil scarcity and expresses great skepticism about its oil policy and domestic techniques and tactics to solve this problem.

Ian Urquhart studies the potentially enormous reserves in bituminous sands in Alberta, Canada, their role in that country's current oil export capability and the possible impact as a guarantee of U.S. oil security, prompting what could become its second oil boom. However, he expresses certain misgivings about the United States' enormous, growing thirst for oil and above all natural gas, particularly in light of the complex business and political interests surrounding the reserves and the environmental impact of their exploitation.



Antonio Gershenson uses solid data, tables and graphs to show the sustained tendency for oil and natural gas reserves to drop in the planet's main hydrocarbon basins, with the resulting increase in prices and official manipulation of figures about oil and gas reserves in Mexico and possibly in other countries.

Omowumi O. Iledare, in an optimistic well-documented study, emphasizes the enormous importance that the U.S. continental marine platform in its territorial Gulf of Mexico waters has taken on in the last decade. This is due to the growth of its proven recoverable reserves and the production of oil thanks to scientific and technological advances for deep-water (over 200 meters) exploitation. This is pointed out in the U.S. National Energy Plan, on which its current and future projects to exploit and supply hydrocarbons are based.

Mel Kliman argues that the Canadian perspective in favor of integrating North American energy systems contrasts with Mexico's not very decided participation.

The contribution of Rosío Vargas, the book's co-editor, is particularly noteworthy. She explains the need for a geopolitical perspective to understand available and potential oil resources, their unequal geographical distribution, the gradual depletion of key industrialized countries' deposits, their resulting increased dependence on the exterior for energy and the imperious need to obtain these

resources and secure them wherever they are. This has been a matter of vital interest, particularly for the United States, for a very long time. Its current government has made this its central objective. Proof of that is the invasion of Iraq, with United Kingdom support, using the pretext of the fight against terrorism.

It is common knowledge that the fuel basins of southwest Asia continue to be the largest in the world, turning the Persian Gulf into strategic booty for our neighbor and its associates.

Vargas clearly explains how the United States, sparked by its ambition, has used the banners of neoliberalism and globalization to counter measures by developing countries' governments to protect their energy resources for conservation, exploitation and management. In the specific case of Mexico, three factors prove this affirmation:

1. The dismantling of state companies intensified by the Fox administration under the pretext of the need for foreign investment and technology, in addition to a predatory tax system;
2. The resulting stagnation of Mexico's oil industry, accelerated by efforts to exploit and export unrefined fuels instead of fostering the petrochemical industry and the export of industrial products; and
3. Military control of Mexico's oil infrastructure, regularly demanded by the United States to ensure its oil supply.

Along these same lines, Víctor Rodríguez-Padilla looks at the government strategy in place for almost 20 years in Mexico, which has been an instrument of macroeconomic stability and attraction for private investment, as well as to privatize Mexico's oil industry by dismantling Pemex and turning oil-related activities over to foreigners. This is exemplified by what are called multiple services contracts, which are clearly unconstitutional, damaging the nation's patrimony.

In the second part of the book, two interesting articles refer to the role water plays in Mexico's relationship with the United States. Based on the theory of complex systems, they look at issues like the economic, political and military asymmetry between the two countries, the relationship between the surroundings and security—not limited to the military view—and the possibility of major conflicts given the growing scarcity of resources.

Mexican researcher Agustín Maciel Padilla states that for the United States, water has become a matter of national security, particularly along the border with Mexico. This is due to its intensive industrialization; population growth, especially on the Mexican side; and the patent deterioration of the environment. This is particularly the case of the quality of the air and water caused by the disastrous management of industrial waste as a result of both governments' actions for almost a quarter of a century, paradoxically to try to create an efficient hydraulic infrastructure along the border and protect the environment. Among these actions are the creation of bi-national institutions derived from NAFTA and the Twenty-First Century Border Program (1996).

According to Maciel, of these three factors, the United States is only interested in water as a matter of national security because it considers it a possible source of contamination and epidemics for its population. At the same time he argues that for that very reason, the U.S. should not ban migrants from access to health services. In my opinion, both countries should consider health in the border area a matter of national security and deal with it promptly and effectively.

U.S. researchers D. Rick van Schoik, Erik Lee and Thomas McGuckin also deal with this issue. They emphasize the recent intense cooperation between the two governments with regard to environmental security, arguing that trade is the main motivation and foreseeing opportunities for a real long-term partnership for water management.

The authors concur that the two countries' international waste water treatment plant has been a fruitful experience, but that there have been many failed attempts also, including the resurfacing of the All American Canal, built to guarantee water for San Diego to the detriment of that being collected by Mexican wells. This is the result of an abusive unilateral decision, just like the one, in its time, to give Mexico salt water in Arizona. They also point to the need for better monitoring of water flows in the basin and the impacts produced by being careless of or altering them. They suggest that a body be established to manage the water and promote trade of the different kinds of water left unused by each of the parties so they can be better utilized.

Recursos naturales estratégicos is therefore a work that brings together varied opinions on matters of common in-

terest, written in simple, clear language. It should promote awareness among key Mexican government officials about the need to design a comprehensive border policy as part of our bilateral relations. That policy must be based on our understanding of the many, complex components

in the relationship, considering implications and consequences, and raise itself to the height of an instrument for national security. This task is urgent. **MM**

Edmundo Hernández-Vela S.

Encuentros y desencuentros entre México y Estados Unidos en el siglo XX

Del porfiriato a la posguerra fría

(Convergences and Divergences of Mexico and the United States in the Twentieth Century. From the Porfirio Díaz Dictatorship until After the Cold War)

Walter Astié-Burgos

Miguel Ángel Porrúa

Mexico City, 2007, 460 pp.

Many have been the defining moments in the complex bilateral history of Mexico and the United States. Geographic proximity joins almost fatefully with a history oscillating between divergence and convergence.

Walter Astié-Burgos's book *Encuentros y desencuentros entre México y Estados Unidos en el siglo XX* (Convergences and Divergences of Mexico and the United States in the Twentieth Century) helps us understand the singularity of this relationship. Written by a career diplomat, the book's 12 chapters narrate interesting political and diplomatic encounters and incidents that show just how complex the relationship between the two countries is, with their different histories and ways of understanding the world, at times similar and at times dissimilar, but sharing a geographic, economic and political space.

The author analyzes the evolution of the Mexico-U.S. link situating it in its international context. The role of our neighbor as a world power, particularly during the twentieth century, has had very clear implications for this relationship. Under these conditions, it is necessary to understand domestic issues in both countries and their place in the international dynamic.

The book's first three chapters narrate the historical events that determined the nature of the Mexican state at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,



when relations wavered between frank confrontation because of the 1847 war and Mexico's resulting loss of territory, and greater closeness because of the convergence of the two economic models during the *Porfiriato* (the 30-year dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz). It is this last historical period that is the starting point for Astié-Burgos's systematic examination.

Starting then, the author analyzes more than 100 years of history that explain the forging of national and cultural identities and how that has been reflected in both countries' foreign policies. Taking this into consideration, some structural and other more temporary aspects of the links between Mexico and the United States can be reviewed.

While the United States' pragmatic policy contrasts with that of its Mexican counterpart due to dramatic events like the outbreak of the 1910 revolutionary war or the 1938 oil expropriation, at other times, the Mexican position comes close to being equally pragmatic. In fact, the extensive lobbying by the Salinas administration to get NAFTA approved in the early 1990s actually has precedents in the remote

past, when Porfirio Díaz and Álvaro Obregón did the same to further their interests in the United States.

The description of certain diplomatic incidents is useful for understanding the roots of the dual nature—both nationalist and pragmatic—of Mexico's foreign policy and its relationship with the United States. In the same way, partisan alternation in office in the United States and the Democratic and Republican Parties' sharing power help us understand their influence in the U.S. drawing closer to or distancing itself from Mexico.

The author analyzes this in the book's middle chapters, where he looks in detail at bilateral relations during World War II and the Cold War. During that period, when convergence and divergence came in waves, Astié-Burgos underlines both countries' positions on regional and world matters. Thus, the study of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines's isolationist policy or Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and Luis Echeverría's diversification strategy reflects the vision of the instruments used by both countries in the international sphere based on positions that clearly sought to consolidate Mexico's political autonomy *vis-à-vis* the United States. Curiously, this is where we can begin to observe a qualitative change, in contrast with the *Porfiriato* or the revolutionary period: there is a relative maturation of the legal instruments for managing bilateral relations, but it is perhaps in the following period, particularly after 10 years of confrontation during the administrations of José López Portillo and Miguel de la Madrid,

when we see a significant transformation of the bilateral agenda and the mechanisms for dealing with it.

The 1990s, the decade that concludes the book, show the complex evolution of bilateral relations. As Astié-Burgos himself states, the two nations became more and more interdependent until they reached the level of dependence and integration. Certainly, with the signing of NAFTA and in the wake of the so-called "spirit of Houston," economic ties between the two countries became significantly institutionalized, with direct implications in other aspects of their relations. Despite the new focus for managing relations, even with the emergence of numerous, diverse institutional mechanisms for cooperation, tense *moments* still arose because of each country's focus on issues like drug trafficking or human rights. This made the structural limits of the renewed Mexico-U.S. understanding clear.

In conclusion, despite the fact that the book does not deal with relations after 2000 when more democracy was demanded, but above all when they were highly conditioned by the priority placed on border security after 9/11, Astié-Burgos's work is a useful tool for understanding the vicissitudes of the links between two countries that, despite their increasing closeness, still seem very distant. **MM**

Bibiana Gómez Muñoz
and Roberto Gutiérrez

Femenino/masculino en las literaturas de América. Escrituras en contraste

(Feminine/Masculine in the Literatures of the Americas. Contrasting Writings)

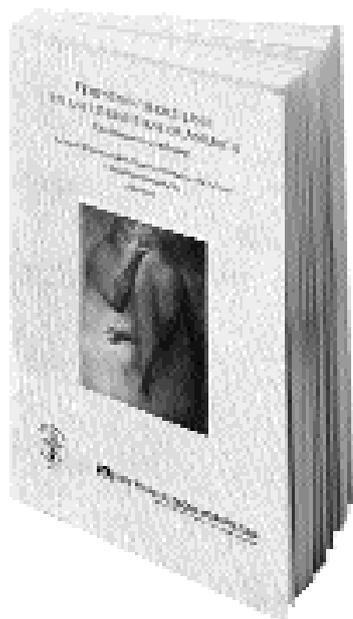
Graciela Martínez Zalce, Luzelena Gutiérrez de Velasco and Ana Rosa Domenella, eds.

UAM/Editorial Aldus

Mexico City, 2005, 525 pp.

In his book *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom emphasizes the need to maintain the aesthetic, moral perspective while reading to avoid contaminating our critical perception. He also insists on being aware that the so-called

"canon" is an "art of literary memory" into which literary works the world is ready to consider immortal gradually insert themselves. Of course, for him, the Western canon is based mainly on principles of selectiveness which "are elitist only to the extent that they are based on purely artistic criteria." In accordance with this, the selection of the "best" literary works of humanity often include mostly English-speaking European authors (and an American or two), and, in descending order, French, Italian, German and Spanish writers. *El Quijote* barely approaches Shakespeare's grandeur and, aside from this book, it is almost impossible to encounter books in Spanish from Latin America or elsewhere on the list. If you look carefully, you run



across Jorge Luis Borges and, perhaps, Gabriel García Márquez. And that is thanks to the fact that they can be included in what Bloom calls “literature of the imagination.”¹

However, those of us who are located more on the periphery know that other criteria for reading are also justified, partly because our situations demand focuses that are offensive to Bloom or come under the heading of his famous “School of Resentment,” that is, any approach to literary texts that emphasizes political, social or gender issues that is clearly part of the terrible cultural studies, or, even worse, proposes alternative readings of long-established texts.

This is one of the reasons that *Femenino/masculino en las literaturas de América* is so welcome in our milieu. I believe that it is no exaggeration to say that projects like the Diana Morán Workshop for Literary Theory and Criticism broaden our horizons and encourage us to continue exploring the literatures of the Americas from perspectives that foster an interdisciplinary critical analysis which obviously continues to include the criteria of aesthetics. I have been more interested in the study of English-language literature and reading this book has encouraged me for several reasons. In the first place, because it offers me a broad panorama of works and authors from our hemisphere in a format that invites reflection. Paralleling the literary production by men and women breaks abruptly with a schema that usually dominates many critical studies and which is also obvious when looking at canon lists: the complete absence or minimal participation of

women writers. In the second place, *Femenino/masculino en las literaturas de América* allows us to get a clear idea of the most recent production in Hispanic America, the French Caribbean and Canada. It is gratifying to me to see that many of the themes that I feel an affinity for in my English-language reading are precisely those that are also central in the literature of the Americas: the reformulation(s) of the notion of cultural identity based on violent colonial pasts, on the Diaspora of the present and future, on societies made up of a diversity of races, some more native than others, of the imperative need to give voice to the other, to the one from below, to the subordinate, of the need to “sacarse de encima la Historia” (get out from under History) —as Eduardo Belgrano Rawson says— through alternative forms of writing in which memory, oral communication, intertextuality and hybrid composition play a fundamental role.

Jamaican critic and sociologist Stuart Hall, living in England, has analyzed the new post-colonial subjects. We, as Latin Americans, can number ourselves among them, not so much, and not only, because we were colonized (although our cultural and linguistic Spanish-ness is already more than 500 years old), but also because of the impact of a kind of globalization that does nothing but accentuate differences, transform our ways of life and remodel our identities, as the editors of this book point out very adroitly in their introduction.

Among the points Stuart Hall develops, one is pertinent because of its link to the essays in this book. It is his idea that more than conceiving of a single, fixed identity, determined in great measure by a shared history and by the common images that make us into “a people,” the only way to understand and transcend the traumatic nature of “the colonial experience” is precisely through recognizing that, in addition to the similarities, there are also critical points in which profound, significant differences make up what we are or what we have become, since history has intervened and we are in a process of constant transformation.² To do this, we must concentrate not on a process or idea of uniform continuity, but on the breaks and discontinuities that forge our sense of originality. Thus, cultural identity is achieved through the transformation and a permanent “becoming,” in addition to “being.”

I believe that all the essays in this book play with this sense of transformation and this need to explore different but complementary positions with regard to the histo-

ry of our hemisphere. A common thread throughout the work—even if it is not always explicit—is that of the relationship between historiography and fictional narration, the latter seen as an alternative, legitimate version of the so-called official History. This is precisely the power of literature and the power of men and women writers, who, in the place they are speaking from, face and confront the positions of power. And this is also the contribution of the volume I am reviewing. In this sense, the essays by Ana Rosa Domenella, Mónica Szurmurk, Tabea Alexa Linhard, Laura Cázares, Blanca Ansoleaga and Laura López explore the way in which men and women writers use fiction to propose a historical review of their countries' past, from the indigenous of Tierra del Fuego and the Caribbean slaves silenced by colonization to the violence of the dictatorships that have been the scourge of our continent, whose repercussions can always be felt in the form of social instability, drug trafficking, etc. Thus, we have a critical introduction to authors like Sylvia Iparraguirre and Eduardo Belgrano Rawson, Reina Roffé and Sergio Chejfec in Argentina; Laura Restrepo and Fernando Vallejo in Colombia; Rosario Ferré and Luis Rafael Sánchez in Puerto Rico; Julia Álvarez and Pedro Vergés in the Dominican Republic; and Maryse Condé and Patrick Chamoiseau in the Caribbean island of Guadalupe and Martinique.

However, saying that only these essays propose the relationship between historiography and fictional narrative would not be exact, since, as the editors point out in the introduction, the historical context and surroundings are the basis for all the works analyzed in the book. I know that I am simplifying Bloom's position, but it is true that the committed viewpoint of this volume's essayists would earn them the soubriquet of "resentful" used by another unfortunate social science, cultural criticism. Nevertheless, in my reading of any literary text, for me it is fundamental to have a comprehensive view of it, a view that, of course, incorporates the work's aesthetic side, its different textual levels, its subtexts. But this cannot be done if you do not also reflect on what surrounds the work, the very biography of the authors (whether men or women), their immediate surroundings and their family background; in short, their history, that of their family and their country.

Precisely one of the saddest consequences shared by colonized countries is the continual Diaspora, an exile

that breaks with any simplistic notion of belonging and national identification. Rather, what prevails, as post-colonial theory points out, is a conflictive relationship between a feeling of rootedness that we all seek and a permanent feeling of uprootedness, of not belonging, of exile that can be geographical, but is also often internal. As we read in these pages, people even go the extreme of being uprooted, displaced, torn from their place of origin, rather than being silenced, oppressed, made to disappear or jailed in their own lands. These extreme situations demand new forms of literary expression, a break from established values and the narrative recovery of characters who, in other times and other situations, would not have had a voice. As the essays of Mónica Velásquez, Cecilia Olivares, Margarita Tapia, Luz María Becerra, Graciela Martínez-Zalce, Regina Cardoso Nelky and Gloria Prado demonstrate very well, the historical-political context sustains and sparks writing in which transgression, subversion and perversion are underlying themes that serve as a catharsis in the face of wrenching realities. In these cases, the literary modes include the testimonial novel (this is the case of Costa Rican José León Sánchez's *La isla de los hombres solos* [The Island of Solitary Men]); plots that break with linear narrative structures and with the trustworthiness of the narrative voice (such as in the works analyzed here by Diamela Eltit and Augusto Roa Bastos); cinematographic adaptations that express homo-, hetero- and transexuality; novels sustained by gender subversion and the use of the erotic as a metaphor for the wrenching caused by dictatorships and repression, as happens with the creation of characters like Madama Sui by Roa Bastos,³ with women writers recognized as writing "like men" (as Juan Rulfo said of the Colombian Fanny Buitrago) or with female characters who break with social norms like the protagonists of Nicaraguan writer Carmen Naranjo, Chilean Marcela Serrano or the Peruvian Carmen Ollé.

In the essays by Rose Lema, Luz Elena Zamudio, Ute Seydel, Luzelena Gutiérrez de Velasco, Maricruz Castro, Claudia Lucotti, Elena Madrigal, Berenice Hurtado and Nora Pasternak, cultural diversity, the consequences of exile, constantly being uprooted are all shown by two themes that take on a typical dimension of the Americas, post-modern and post-colonial, thanks to original, daring strategies in the texts: on the one hand the narrative and poetic presence of love for the homeland, the value of

family and a literary reconstruction of one's origins; on the other hand, experimentation, a liking for the grotesque and the carnivalesque, the presence of intertextuality, the varied use of oral communication and even the lyricism to deconstruct not only the realistic modes imposed by authoritarian governments, but also the traumatic realities created by colonization, dictatorships and globalization. From Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Cazares and Julio Cortázar to Nicolás Guillén and Nancy Morejón; from Silvina Ocampo, María Luisa Bombal and Cristina Peri Rossi to Nicole Brossard, Michel Tremblay and André Lagier; from María Virginia Estenssoro and Oscar Cerruto to Dionne Brand, Austin Clarke and Alfredo Bryce Echenique, textuality turns into a discursive game at the same time that it is an expression of resistance.

Femenino/masculino en las literaturas de América is a unique opportunity to explore the new —and not so new— literatures of our hemisphere, hand in hand with the academic demand of each of the essayists, but also accompanied by their emotional affinities. The only thing

left for me is to rejoice in the perseverance of this research group and in the constant production of books like this one. ■■■

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NOTES

¹ For Harold Bloom's ideas, see "An Elegy for the Canon," in *The Western Canon* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994).

² Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

³ Madama Sui, the protagonist of a novel by Roa Bastos, lived in Parauay in the 1960s and 1970s. Her image remains in the country's collective memory. She was an eccentric young girl, a mix of Japanese and Creole descent, whom nobody can be indifferent to. She died at the age of 20 and was an admirer of Eva Perón, the favorite of a dictator and the scapegoat of a group in power that found in female prostitution the most effective method for corrupting. In love with a man hunted by the regime, Madama Sui personified the clash between unbridled sensuality and the purest form of love. [Editor's Note.]

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