

VOICES of Mexico

CISAN • UNAM

Trump's Unpresidential Presidency: Mexican Reflections

Articles by *José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*,
David Maciel, and *Ruth Dávila*

"Renegotiating" NAFTA

Dialogue of the Deaf

Articles by *Elisa Dávalos*, *María Cristina Rosas*, and *Enrique Pino*

Mexico City: Buildings, Landmarks, and Public Spaces

Muros, Walls, Butterflies, and Poetry

An Interview with Poet and Writer

Gina Valdés

Claire Joysmith

SPECIAL SECTION

Young Mexican Indigenous Migrants Back and Forth to the U.S.

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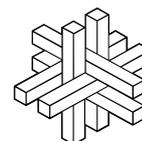
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OUR VOICE

A year after Donald Trump's surprising electoral win sparked many fears, it is time to reflect on the effects his presidency has had in many areas, both domestic and international. They have almost all been negative, not only for certain sectors of U.S. Americans, but also for the inhabitants of other regions and all of humanity.

Our analysis has to be nuanced, however: while many of his most polemical and concerning campaign promises have remained mere electoral propaganda, others have been blocked at least temporarily. This has been brought about by the opposition of political democratic institutions of his own country, such as Congress or the courts, by the international system's multilateral bodies, and even by other leaders and heads of state, who have begun to exercise leadership on global issues that the United States has retreated from. This is the case of the Paris Accords on climate change; the United States is today the only nation that has announced its withdrawal from those accords, when even the last two dissident countries, Syria and Nicaragua, recently signed them. Special mention should be made of the resistance to his policies on his own soil, mainly from organized civil society and local city and state governments, led by governors and mayors.

Despite his resounding failures, such as his unsuccessful attempt to overturn Obama Care, to find enough funding to build a wall along the border with Mexico, or his frustrated attempt to ban the entry of citizens from six Muslim countries, the president's obstinate attempt to impose his very personal vision of prosperity for the United States persists. This vision is fed by the most nationalistic, conservative ideologies of the U.S. intelligentsia and the most protectionist positions of its economic actors. Important among the latter are a broad sector of working people, his electoral base, which has indeed been hurt by globalization, although also by the most recent technological revolutions that have transformed the world of work.

Trump's obstinacy in imposing his vision to thwart the legitimate interests of the "others" is reflected today on several fronts. Two of them that could most affect our country are the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and his proposals to stop undocumented immigration, first and foremost from Mexico. He has taken such aggressive actions as to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which will affect almost 800 000 of our young compatriots. In this issue of *Voices of Mexico*, CISAN researchers and other specialists explain these trends. José Luis Valdés-Ugalde reflects on Trump's psychological profile to try to understand his polemical behavior; David Maciel looks at the state of California's iron resistance to many of Trump's measures, led by Governor Jerry Brown; and Ruth Dávila examines the topic of "white nationalism," undoubtedly one of the trends in contemporary thought with the most influence on the current U.S. government's actions.

In our "Economy" section, three contributions dissect the ongoing NAFTA negotiations to demystify several of the arguments brandished by U.S. negotiators. Elisa Dávalos describes the important level of integration the regional economy has achieved through value chains, which make cancelling the treaty unviable without significantly affecting both companies and workers of the region's main productive sectors, such as the auto industry. María Cris-

tina Rosas demonstrates why the argument about the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico is false and deceptive since Mexico is only responsible for ten percent of the United States' total trade deficit, and the argument does not seriously consider either rules of origin or the products exchanged. Enrique Pino even goes so far as to suggest that it might well be beneficial to Mexico to abandon the agreement, since it would force the country to change its trade and development policies to foster a much-needed diversification.

Migration is another area of great concern for Mexico. Trump's vision is, generally speaking, negative, but particularly with regard to immigration from Mexico, which he blames for many of the problems in U.S. society: unemployment, growing crime, drug trafficking, etc. He considers it even more threatening for white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, the supposed Latino threat to their traditions, their language, their beliefs, and their hegemony. Two young researchers write on this topic: Camelia Tigau concentrates on highly-skilled migration and the kind of immigrants who, though they undoubtedly have made important contributions to the economy, are still stigmatized. Paola Suárez, for her part, introduces us to the reasons behind the recent offensive against young Mexicans known as "Dreamers," pointing to the grave consequences of cancelling DACA.

Resistance is also expressed through literature. The interview by Claire Joysmith of Chicana writer Gina Valdés shows how she uses poetry to demonstrate the wealth the merger of cultures contributes to the United States. Lastly, anthropologist Susana Vargas leads a group of colleagues whose contributions make up our "Special Section," dedicated to young indigenous migration from Mexico to the United States, specifically from states like Oaxaca and Chiapas, and their conditions in California.

Our cultural sections are dedicated to celebrating Mexico City. They take us on a visit to its architecture and monuments, which echo the city's different historical periods, and a reflection on its spaces, be they private, public, or "common," which make it inhabitable and give the city its identity. Its parks, neighborhood markets, streets, and traffic islands are scenes every day of how residents appropriate the space for fiestas, for children to play, or for holding their very frequent political protests and religious processions. One of the most visible manifestations of the city's gentrification is the concentration of certain vocations in specific areas, such as the occupation by the artistic community of the emblematic Edificios Condesa (Condesa Neighborhood Buildings), written about by Alejandro Mercado.

This issue of our magazine was planned before the terrible earthquake that shook the city on September 19 this year, exactly during the commemoration of the 1985 earthquake. This is both a sad and a fortunate coincidence because it has allowed us to celebrate an extraordinary city in all its splendor at this time of pain and reflection. Because of this, the editorial team has decided to dedicate a future special issue to thinking about the earthquake in its many dimensions: urban, social, economic, ethical, and human, among others.

Diego Ignacio Bugada Bernal
Editor-in-Chief

Universidades

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Trump *versus* Fromm: Breaking Bad¹

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*

“The sadistic tendency is the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. This suffering can be physical, but more often it is mental suffering. Its aim is to hurt actively, to humiliate, embarrass others, or to see them in embarrassing and humiliating situations.”

Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*



Carlos Barria/Reuters

THE BEGINNINGS OF SADISM

It has always been clear to the media and the discerning public that from the start of his relatively successful political period, Donald Trump has built a discourse based on lies about everything and everyone. This was a constant in his campaign: against Mexicans, Muslims, women, the disabled, war veterans, and Afro-Americans. And it continues unabated now that he is ensconced in the presidency.

This constant was not enough for his candidacy to deflate. Toward the end of the campaign, the polls put him critically close to Hillary Clinton and the final heroic deed was performed by Vladimir Putin, whose intervention in the Democratic campaign’s operating system handed Trump the win. One of the reasons for this is that there is an entire sector of very resentful U.S. Americans who identified with the Republican discourse, thanks in part to the fact that the magazine guaranteed ratings for the media and also surprisingly managed to impose his agenda and manipulate them given his undeniable media stature.

More than five years ago, Trump had already publicly demanded Barack Obama present his birth certificate. He wanted him to prove he was a U.S. citizen, that he had not been born in Kenya, and that he had not later been educat-

ed in Indonesia in the Muslim faith, facts that Obama was supposedly hiding. Trump also demanded that the then-president present prove that he had graduated from Harvard Law School and that he had also become the first Afro-American to be elected president of the *Harvard Law Review*.

In a single stroke, the undesirable Mr. Trump questioned that the Democrat was a U.S. American, a Christian—a religion that Obama does indeed profess—and that he was intellectually capable of being a respected lawyer graduated from a prestigious university. Obama did present his birth certificate, and even then, Trump insisted it could be a fake. In two words: pure sadism.

Trump spread doubts about Obama’s citizenship and other qualities to disqualify him as president; with that he laid the foundations for the strengthening of the hyper-conservative movement, the so-called “birthers,” that sprang up in 2008. Later we heard that during the presidential campaign, hounded by the media, Trump emphatically said, “Obama was born in the U.S. Period.” Just like that, tyrannically, and with no apology. Clearly his immediate objective was to win the Afro-American vote. The Afro-American congressional caucus rejected Trump’s peculiar *mea culpa*, classifying it as fake and demanding a public apology.

Patricia J. Williams writes, “Trump doesn’t want to lead the country—he wants to lead a culture war.”² And, in effect,

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Added to the most aggressive
misogynist-xenophobic project in the history
of the United States and cultural insularity
is the trade and economic insularity that
Trump preaches at every opportunity.

Trump has followed the textbooks of the Alt Right, which he has been associated with since before being president, and which is aligned with white supremacy and nationalism, anti-Semitism —“We’re not racists; we just hate the Jews” is one of their slogans—, right-wing populism, nativism, and the neo-reactionary movement. All these currents of extremist white nationalism, including the Ku Klux Klan and its Grand Wizard David Duke (former candidate to the Senate who has supported Trump, who in turn has not distanced himself from him) are anti-feminist, anti-multiculturalists, anti-pluralist, anti-Muslim, anti-black, and anti-Latino. In short, they are not democrats and they lean toward totalitarianism. They are the ones marking the direction of the Trump narrative, and it is to his followers —today empowered— to whom this narrative is aimed.

They think that white people are genetically predisposed to being more honorable and intelligent than the black population and that some races are inherently superior to others. They reject the idea that the races are basically equivalent or interchangeable. Added to the most aggressive misogynist-xenophobic project in the history of the United States and cultural insularity is the trade and economic insularity that Trump preaches at every opportunity. This view defends the idea of the “Fortress American” and the right to civic-social belonging as a function of a racial right; therefore, it denies membership in the nation to any race that is not white, based on its being “the other.” That is how Trump represents and preaches a return to the U.S. apartheid that was so damaging to the country’s social fabric. More of Trumpism’s sadism.

It is also a fact —polemics included— that job losses are not the only thing that have created a resentful mass of people who have become the ideal recipients of the nationalist, nativist discourses dominant mainly in Central Europe and now in the United States under Trump. Added to this resentment is the defense of racial and religious rights in the process of establishing order and social organization. All of this includes a rejection of the huge number of migrants pouring in due to the negative effects of globalization, of the wars, and the local conflicts in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Whiteness and Christianity over blackness and Islam in Europe. In the United States, it’s the same; added to this the rejection of the migrant “other,” mainly of Latino origin, and the old negritude that defines the United States historically. Not to mention the phobia against Muslims, guilty in this discourse of terrorist penetration.

More than his supposed mental imbalance, Trump is the pure discursive expression of that discontent that exists in different sectors of U.S. society. This is a majority white, lower-middle-class, aging population without much schooling, having stagnated in middle and high school, and, that as a result, has gotten mired down in the face of the swift advances of globalization.

In the short time since his inauguration, Trump has not been capable of presenting a comprehensive proposal that convinces the majority of voters, not even of his permanent electoral clientele. In addition to his generalizations —NAFTA; Mexico and China, *guilty* of the economic crisis; Muslims, *guilty* of the security crisis, etc.—, Trump has challenged the limits of the ridiculous and has spent his time exhibiting his demagoguery and pathological lying, leading the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, local dailies, and members of the political and economic establishment to emphatically reject him. This, even though the social and economic polarization are rooted in the system that they are a part of.

These important sectors of public opinion are frightened of Trump’s temperament. His lack of control is perceived as potential incompetence and clumsiness in the art of governing for all; and all of this could turn into the generation of bigger local and global crises than the U.S. is already facing, particularly at this time of relative decline in its hegemony —attacking North Korea and Iran from the UN has been counterproductive, for example.

With Trump at the head, Washington has begun an even greater process of local and global polarization —perhaps irreversible—, since he has no conciliatory proposals for solving problems: his are all total, inflexible recipes. If this migrates to the global order, we will be in the presence of the most unilateralist government in history. This will mean that we could witness the risk of the North Atlantic pact ending given his demand to condition the existence of NATO, among other delicate issues with grave implications, even though his military advisors, starting with Secretary of Defense James Mattis, are the ones who rein him in every time he goes too far —which is every day.

THE FALL

The New York Times called it the “Republican Hell.” Donald Trump’s words, lies, and affronts are becoming his own prison. Like a self-fulfilling prophesy, he is in the middle of a shipwreck, long-anticipated since he was a candidate. He is constantly in free fall and his approval ratings have not returned to the 40-percent mark he had when he took office.

Trump has achieved several things with the complacency of the Republican Party: he has managed to break apart Lincoln’s party more than it already was, condemning it to a painful, perilous renewal process. From the moment that he began his pre-campaign with a discourse charged with pathological lying impulses, slinging insults at all his opponents; from June 2015 when he accused Mexicans of being rapists and delinquents, and later when he threatened to veto Muslim citizens and scorned a Gold Star Muslim military family (veterans and fallen in war); when he attacked women calling them “dogs” and “pigs,” until now, after nine months in the White House, he does not have a single achievement to show for it, even with regard to Obamacare (which cost him dearly when the Senate voted against his alternative); not to mention his regressive attempts in the fields of education and migration and the lack of cohesion in his cabinet, who are afraid of him and in frank retreat —i.e., the recent firing of his Health Secretary Tom Price, among 14 important collaborators who have also been fired. This says it all.

Pick any topic you want (the wall; Islam; white supremacists; relations with North Korea, China, Iran, Mexico, Germany, Russia, Cuba, or Australia; cultural wars; the health system; denial of global warming; infrastructure; natural disasters like Hurricane Maria; and a long, long “etcetera”), and we can see that the chief executive has lost his way and control over the situation, which complicates his staying in office. At this point of his self-destructive, wasted presidency, no matter what Donald Trump does, he is perceived as fake, a liar, and even perverse. In short, this is a period of such regression that the U.S. government is not only discombobulated, it is in the biggest institutional crisis since Richard Nixon fired Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox as part of his “Madman” strategies during the ill-fated days of Watergate when he was trying to intimidate his opponents showing apparent emotional instability.

In his attempts to fight the establishment, Trump’s stubborn narcissism and utter ignorance of public affairs makes him incapable of understanding his constitutional obligations

Trump has followed the textbooks of the Alt Right, which is aligned with white supremacy and nationalism, anti-Semitism right-wing populism, nativism, and the neo-reactionary movement.

and the separation of powers in U.S. democracy. Until now, the latter has been maintained thanks mainly to the federalism within which local governments have acted against his measures, containment actions of the judiciary, and, to a certain extent, the actions of Congress.

Added to his lack of sensitivity, surpassed only by his megalomania, Trump shows himself as an actor without the slightest democratic conviction. His style is personalist and authoritarian. This is an unbalanced actor in permanent emotional crisis, insecure and paranoid, who is putting the U.S. constitutional order at serious risk, along with the many local and global agreements that he is consistently dissolving —G5+1 is a grave case in point.

It is Trump and his ego against the world and anyone who questions him. He is caught in a zero-sum game in defense only of himself and in which his sole objective is to win, regardless of national interests and security. The institutional wear and tear caused by Trumpism has meant that the president is being devoured by all the devils he has awakened, and things are becoming worse and worse as a result of the appearance of an ignorant, grotesque, sadistic despot in the purest style described by Erich Fromm in the magnificent work in which he draws a portrait of an authoritarian, perverse leader whose only thought was to get and preserve power for power’s sake, in order to satisfy his sick ego-centrism more than to govern democratically and wisely for his people.³ ■■■

NOTES

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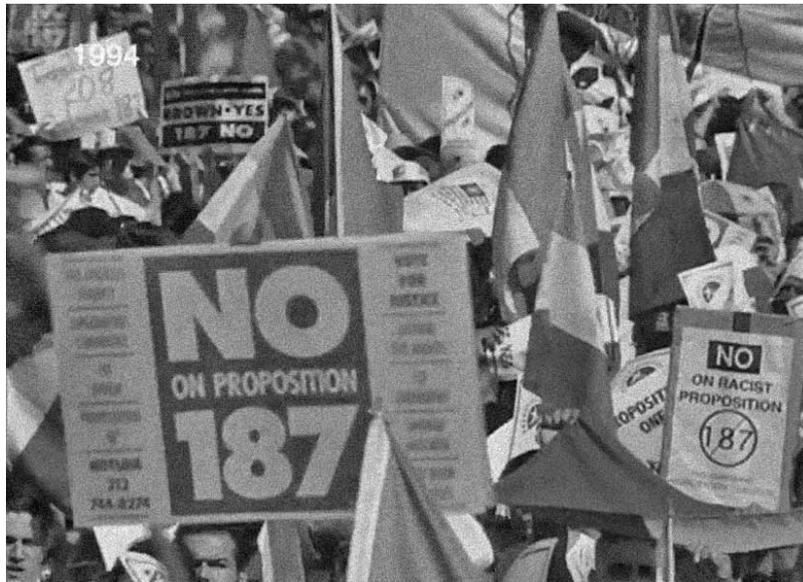
² Patricia J. Williams, “Trump Doesn’t Want to Lead the Country —He Wants to Lead a Culture War,” *The Nation*, September 26-October 3, 2016, <https://www.thenation.com/article/trump-doesnt-want-to-lead-the-country-he-wants-to-lead-a-culture-war/>.

³ Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Open Road, Integrated Media, first published in 1941).

Mexamerica at War with Donald Trump

A Case Study in California

David R. Maciel*



Los Angeles march against Proposition 187, which aimed to exclude undocumented immigrants' access to non-emergency public services.

MEXICAN IMMIGRATION: THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND DONALD TRUMP

Today, the progress and achievements of the Mexican-origin (Chicano) community have been truly impressive and highly significant in all phases and walks of life in the U.S. Mexican-Americans are now a very visible national minority; they have attained civic and political representation, a flowering culture, a substantial educated middle class, extensive business ownership, and academic renown. At the same time, however, the challenges and unresolved issues confronting the Chicano population have become equally grave and profound. This has been compounded by Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016.

It is the purpose of this two-part article to address, first, the ascendancy of Donald Trump to the presidency and its

The Mexican/Latino community today is close to 50 million citizens, and it is growing daily. These numbers have the potential to turn into increased Chicano political power and representation.

impact in the short and long term on the Mexican-origin population. His policies less than a year into his administration have already had wide-ranging, profoundly negative repercussions. My second aim is to describe and exemplify the current Chicano resistance to Trump's anti-Mexican policies in California. A major hypothesis of this article is that when principled, ethnically conscious, skilled politicians achieve political representation and power, their actions matter and have become a beacon of light in these adverse circumstances. Their goals and initiatives put in place are not only significant, but also truly change the course of history for "La Raza."

It is a fact that Mexican immigration to the United States has become one of the most challenging, debated, and complex policy issues of today. This topic becomes even more

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Photos courtesy of the author.

It is absolutely a fact that
Donald Trump has become
the most fervent anti-Mexican president
in rhetoric and in practice
in U.S. history.

difficult in the era of Donald Trump's administration, not just for California, but for the nation as a whole. As a *Los Angeles Times* editorial stated, "The nation has a significant illegal immigration problem, and while Trump rode that issue to victory in November, it's clear he still has no good ideas for what to do next."¹ The same editorial pointed out, "At the risk of belaboring the obvious, immigration —despite society's occasional surges of xenophobia— made this country. Not only does it define the nation's past, it will define the future." Yet Trump seems totally oblivious to these facts and insights. Instead of addressing the complex immigration issues with creative, positive proposals, he has conversely aimed his immigration policies very belligerently almost exclusively at the Mexican/Latino population in the United States.

Trump as a candidate and now as president has unleashed a most aggressive and hostile discourse aimed at Mexico and Mexicans on both sides of the border. Although erratic and inconsistent in his daily tweets on a number of initiatives, this is not the case of the Mexican people. Besides hurling horrid insults and name-calling at Mexicans ("Mexico sends the worst to the U.S."), he has adopted harsh executive directives and policies not seen in the U.S. since the Great Depression. It is absolutely a fact that Donald Trump has indeed become the most fervent anti-Mexican president in rhetoric and in practice ever in U.S. history.

Yet, his mindset and actions cannot be interpreted or analyzed as the result of being just one isolated entrepreneur-politician with a deep-seated racism and hostility against Mexicans/Latinos. Quite the contrary, his anti-Mexicanism did not appear overnight; it has precedents. Decades earlier, prominent academics, journalists, and policy-makers sounded the alarm in the United States about the "threat" —to its national culture, identity, and institutions— of the growing presence and rapid demographic growth of minorities, particularly Mexicans/Latinos. A number of influential texts, such as *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*, by Samuel Huntington; *State of Emergency* and *Day of Reckoning*, by Patrick Buchanan; and *Alien Nation*, by Peter Brimelow, among others, addressed what to them was the



California Governor Jerry Brown (left) and State Attorney General Xavier Becerra (right).

greatest peril to the U.S. American way of life. They all postulated that if the growth in the number of Mexican/Latinos was not halted or reversed, the situation would be dire.

And while in earlier periods this condition was just a theoretical discussion, it is now a reality. The Mexican/Latino community today is close to 50 million citizens, and it is growing daily. These are numbers that have the potential to be transformed into increased Chicano political power and representation. Mexicans/Latinos are by all accounts almost doubling in number every 40 years. In fact, the most renowned demographers and policy analysts agree that by the year 2050, one in every four persons in the United States will be of Mexican /Latino descent. On a related note, analysts state that these population trends indicate that the Chicano/Latino vote in the states of Texas and Arizona in the next presidential elections (2020) will mean that both states will be contested. The same holds true for various other regions. Furthermore, the Latino-Americanization of the United States is one of the most salient features and realities of the new millennium.

The fact that an African-American, Barack Obama, had been elected —and re-elected— to the presidency made the need for an immediate response to this emerging but dramatic change in the U.S. social and political arena an urgent priority: above all else, it showed minorities' growing spaces of power in society. Moreover, white supremacists and ultra-conservative supporters clearly felt that the United States they were accustomed to living and working in was slipping away from them. Thus, "cultural wars" between two visions and policies for the U.S. became evident during the last election. Trump himself said it best on the campaign trail: "I think this will be the last election that the Republicans have a chance

of winning because you're going to have people flowing across the border; you're going to have illegal immigrants coming in; and they're going to be legalized and they're going to be able to vote, and once that all happens you can forget it."²

With great insight and very forcefully, he articulated his message, aimed to address such fears in his repetitive campaign slogan "Let's take back the heart of the country." Although not fully understood, and often dismissed as sheer political rhetoric, this slogan turned out to be a most effective political platform. What he and his supporters really meant by this statement was let's take the country back from minorities, people of color, women, and the progressive elements that had made much headway and progress in the previous decades. In other words, they wanted to return the country to earlier eras when white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant men ruled: an era when all important positions in society and politics (the courts, schools, universities, political posts, the legal system, etc.) labored to maintain the *status quo* that kept minorities "in their place" and thus perpetuated the traditional social order. Donald Trump's election is the clearest indicator of one pole inserting itself into the "cultural wars" fiercely raging in the United States today. Nothing less than the country's social makeup and its political determinants of power are at play and in dire need of resolution.

Thus, it is no wonder that Mexican and Latin American population growth figures prominently in Donald Trump's political and social agenda. The president and his followers are concerned—even alarmed—at the growing presence and influence of Chicanos/Latinos in the country's emerging realities. It is quite obvious to them that little can be done to halt the natural demographic growth of the Chicano/Latino population because of its high birth rate, as well as the fact that the

overall average age of these groups is much younger compared to the Anglo population. Yet the one aspect of the growth of the Chicano community that can be diminished is continued immigration—certainly a factor in demographic growth.

This is the main reason why in this new millennium the immigration debate is no longer only economic. Few voices today claim that Mexican immigrants are taking jobs away from Anglo workers in the U.S., or that they are a cost or burden on the U.S. economy and its institutions. Evidence is overwhelming that in fact Mexican immigrants contribute much more than they receive, and that they are seminal in such economic sectors as agriculture, construction, and service. And yet, one might ask why a successful economic elite such as Donald Trump's does not seem to recognize the simple fact that Mexican immigrants are currently an institutional necessity for the U.S. economy, and that their absence by all accounts would wreak havoc and have catastrophic consequences. His fiery opposition to Mexican immigrants defies logic if it were not for his deep-seated racism and his absolute obsession with the restoration of white supremacy that obviously supersedes all notions of economic pragmatism.

Thus, the explanation for such hostile rhetoric and practice against Mexican immigrants presently lies elsewhere. Its true basis is linked to the social, cultural impact of immigrants in society, and specifically their potential as future voters. In fact, immigration was instrumental in bringing about important victories for the Republican Party in decades past in California. However, it also sealed its fate: a grave decline from which the party has not recovered. The major, definitive moment and event in California for the Grand Old Party (GOP), as it is also known, took place in 1994, when Governor Pete Wilson opted to instigate a severe anti-immigrant campaign for his reelection by placing Proposition 187 on the ballot to deny undocumented immigrants access to public education and social and health services. The proposition also promised a much more aggres-



California farmworkers' leader Cesar Chavez.

Donald Trump's election is the clearest indicator of one pole inserting itself into the "cultural wars" fiercely raging in the United States today. Nothing less than the country's social makeup and its political determinants of power are at play.

sive policy of rounding up and deporting Mexican immigrants. In the end, although voters passed Proposition 187, mostly because of massive, deceitful media coverage, it was actually never enforced. Immediately upon passage, Chicano organizations and lawyers brought legal action claiming its unconstitutionality on the basis that immigration matters were a national and not a state issue. In the legal battle, the public learned the opportunistic “truth” behind Proposition 187 as well as the very positive contributions immigrants make to California’s economic and social well-being.

When the hypocrisy, blatant distortions, and racism of California’s Republican Party were revealed in their entirety, the tide changed, thus signaling the beginning of the GOP’s decline and free fall in California. From then on, immigration rights and reforms would be a central platform issue of the state Democratic Party and would continue to be emphasized by Chicano organizations, academics, policy makers, activists, and media outlets.

Proposition 187 also prompted young Chicana and Chicano activism. Their outrage about the proposition’s possible implementation spurred them to join the massive mobilization against it. For many, that was the beginning of their activism and political involvement, which would continue in their later lives; several of them become influential elected and appointed officials in the state.

In recent years, as the GOP has consistently moved to the right and to more extreme agendas on immigration—the party has been the single most powerful and consistent force in preventing comprehensive immigration reform—, California Republican Party members always followed their national counterparts. And now they have a champion for their cause in President Donald Trump. Trump’s election vividly showed that any Republican candidate who took even a moderate stand on immigration would face a brutal backlash.

Yet, the Republican national position on immigration is one of the main reasons for its profound decline in California. The state has become more Democratic since then. Currently, both houses of the state legislature are in the hands of Democrats. In fact they have a super-majority that allows them to pass legislation comfortably. The state’s public opinion regarding immigration has also shifted greatly. In a recent state-wide poll by the University of California and the *Los*



The Republican national position on immigration is one of the main reasons for its profound decline in California, which has become more Democratic since Proposition 187.

Angeles Times (March 2017), 65 percent of the population favored comprehensive immigration reform and opposed policies for the deportation of law-abiding immigrants. Nowadays, in multi-ethnic, multi-lingual California, most people understand immigrants’ vital contributions to the economy. They most definitely perceive this diversity as a major plus and a reason for California’s strength and progress. Hopefully, this attitude is one more instance of the truth of the saying “where California goes, the country follows.”

Finally, it is important to highlight that a generation of Chicano politicians currently hold positions of power in California (the leadership of the State Assembly and the Senate, for example). For them, immigration is critical—and even a personal matter. They have been defiant and absolutely opposed to the Trump administration’s policies on the subject. Part II of this article will look at “Chicano Power v. Trump” in California. ■■

NOTES

¹ *Los Angeles Times*, “Trump Needs a Better Approach to Immigration because Bullying Isn’t Cutting It,” April 29, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-trump-sanctuary-20170429-story.html>.

² Interview with Donald Trump by Pat Robertson, *Christian Broadcast Network*, September 9, 2016, quoted in Robert P. Jones, “Trump Can’t Reverse the Decline of White Christian America,” *The Atlantic*, July 4, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/robert-jones-white-christian-america/532587/>, accessed August 8, 2017.

Rethinking Nationalisms

Trump and Alt-Right “White Nationalism”¹

Ruth A. Dávila Figueroa*



Interest seems to have been rekindled in the study of nationalisms. Events have forced us to look at and analyze this phenomenon: the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union (Brexit); political and economic crises; the EU refugee crises; the emergence of different poles of power; Trump and his “nationalist, protectionist” discourse; the enormous weakening of multi-culturalism; the reawakening of the clamor for independence in Catalonia; and, lastly, the rise of the racist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant right, one example of which is the visibility of white nationalism, accentuated after Donald Trump’s victory.

My aim here is to reflect on two aspects: the current state of nationalisms and the specificities of white nationalism. About the latter, I should say that the advance of the ultra-right and conservatism in the United States has been gradual; that is, it did not start with Donald Trump’s campaign. It is also important to observe that these movements are not homogeneous and that at this political, historic moment in that country, the so called alternative right (the alt-right) seeks to position

itself in the public debate using social networks and digital media, which play a central role in disseminating its ideology.

THE ALT-RIGHT AND “WHITE NATIONALISM”

Information about the alt-right and white nationalism is scarce and diffuse, posing a problem for anyone who tries to do research on the topic. Few academic articles deal with the construction of U.S. American and Canadian nationalism.² This shows that, until now, the specialists have not been interested in white nationalism; this is probably explained by the fact that the idea of the melting pot suggested that national identity, and therefore, a kind of nationalism centered on a particular identity, was unthinkable in U.S. society, and that the extreme right and white supremacy are not seen as a problem appropriate to studies on nationalism. My thinking focuses on this point.

Despite a practically fruitless search for information about white nationalism, it cannot be said categorically that there has been no research on the matter. Erik Kauffman has stud-

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“White nationalism is the belief that national identity should be built around white ethnicity, and that white people should therefore maintain both a demographic majority and dominance of the nation’s culture and public life.”

ERIC KAUFFMAN

ied it, focusing on Great Britain, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

The phenomenon emerged first in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, associated with the rise of the nation-states. Ernest Renan posits that nationalism is a plebiscite that happens every day.³ In his *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner says that nationalisms in industrialized states are a construct of modernity;⁴ however, this approach does not explain the nationalism of proto-nations (the Basques, the Catalans, the Welsh, the Corsicans, etc.), that were expressed before the existence of the nation-state, even if their ultimate aim is to have their own state, as Adam Smith points out in his broad body of work. Nationalism is also a political instrument that uses national history and symbols, politicizing them to achieve an aim. Nationalism is not necessarily destructive: it depends on the moment in history and the legitimacy of the political aims of those who call for mobilizations to further nationalist ends. Will Kymlicka even speaks of a liberal nationalism.⁵

It is important to emphasize the symbolic and ideological resources that are useful to nationalism and that the intelligentsia appropriates and gives a new meaning to in accordance with that ideology’s objectives. These resources are a common history, the belief in a “Golden Age” and a glorious past, and the possession of a flag and a hymn. But most important is the idea of a national language. In an interview in *The New York Times*, Eric Kauffman said,

White nationalism is the belief that national identity should be built around white ethnicity, and that white people should therefore maintain both a demographic majority and dominance of the nation’s culture and public life. So, like white supremacy, white nationalism places the interests of white people over those of other racial groups. White supremacists and white nationalists both believe that racial discrimination should be incorporated into law and policy.

The terms are not synonyms: white supremacy is based on a racist belief that white people are innately superior to people

of other races; white nationalism is about maintaining political and economic dominance, not just a numerical majority or cultural hegemony. For a long time, white nationalism was less ideology than the default presumption of American life. Until quite recently, white Americans could easily see the nation as essentially an extension of their own ethnic group. But the country’s changing demographics, the civil rights movement, and a push for multiculturalism in many quarters mean that white Americans are now confronting the prospect of a nation that is no longer built solely around their own identity.⁶

It is important to underline that Kauffman situates the rebirth of white nationalism in the mid-twentieth century, relating it to demographic changes caused by migratory flows, multiculturalism, and the movements against racial segregation in the United States. The first two aspects prevail today: a big change in migratory flows and a multicultural society.

I think the most important element in this ideology is racism. We should reorient our analysis of racist manifestations, of the violence these groups exercise; and I think it is fundamental to study how the ultra-right groups have grown and risen in the political spectrum in the United States. The idea that the borders between one community and another are formed by racial differences leads me to think about this ideology as one whose crosscutting axis is the belief that races exist and that the white race is better than the others.

Race, as a social and cultural construct and a historical fact, also emerged in modernity. This means that for white nationalists, U.S. identity originates in its European heritage, in the Anglo-Protestant culture, and the English language. Once again, its center of gravity is racism. Teun Van Dijk, in *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, explains that ideologies are linked to cognition, society, and discourse. They are systems of social beliefs that distinguish between general beliefs taken as givens for a society or culture, and more specific beliefs that are often sectarian, of various social groups within one general culture or another. Ideologies belong to the second kind of beliefs.⁷

If ideologies are the bearers of shared beliefs that control the group’s opinions or attitudes and its knowledge, which can be related to its interests or domination, then, in line with Kauffman’s thinking, white nationalism is an ideology whose central trait is the idea that a white national identity exists, based on what they consider to be a fact: the white race. This belief is fostered and reproduced by ideologues with broad access to certain digital media, for example, *Breitbart News*.

The alt-right is a political-ideological movement that is very active on the Internet, concretely on social networks. Some of its members see themselves as supremacists and espouse chauvinist nationalism with a racist discourse. They denounce what they consider discriminatory policies toward whites and argue there is a debacle of traditional family values due to the legalization of abortion, feminism, and the recognition of sexual diversity. They argue that national sovereignty is being lost because of foreign influence and mass migration and oppose political correctness.

Alt-right ideologue Jared Taylor wrote an article, “What Is the Alt Right?” on the American Renaissance website to explain that this movement “is a broad dissident movement that rejects egalitarian orthodoxies [and is] also skeptical of mass democracy. The entire Alt Right is united in contempt for the idea that race is only a social construct. Race is a biological fact.” And he emphasizes that “the Alt Right is a necessary alternative to a ‘respectable’ right that has completely capitulated.”⁸

The alt-right is an umbrella term spanning a broad range of right-wing movements. J. M. Berger says that “the community’s ‘center of gravity’ has always been white nationalism.”⁹ The Associated Press, for its part, has said that the term alt-right is “meant as a euphemism to disguise racist aims.”¹⁰ The concept “white nationalism” is a conglomeration of different movements and ideologies with affinities and divergences, and that is what makes it ambiguous. I think that, in accordance with the classical definitions of nationalism, there is no such thing as white nationalism. That is why I agree with those who state that it is only a euphemism of the alt-right, which seeks to position itself politically, and therefore distance itself from more radical and even violent stances.

WHITE NATIONALISM AND THE AMBIGUITY OF THE TERMS: BETWEEN RACISM AND NATIONALISM

As mentioned above, there are two theoretical approaches that deal with the issue of nationalism: the one that associates it with modernity, explained above, and the “perennialist” position, according to which it precedes the emergence of modern nation-states. We have, then, peripheral and centralist nationalisms.

As representatives of the first approach associating it with modern nation-states, I look at two thinkers as a starting point: Benedict Anderson and Michael Billig. In his celebrated

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Imagined Communities, Anderson associates the emergence of nationalism with the dissemination of vernacular languages and the use of the printing press. He defines the nation as

an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.¹¹

He explains that there are three key elements for constructing the imagined community: language, culture, and a conception of temporality that unites all the members. Thus, the nation was conceived from the principle of language, not blood, and we could be invited to the imagined community. This idea is fundamental for understanding white nationalism as a movement that, as stated above, seeks to reposition the race issue at the core of the U.S. public debate.

For their part, in Michael Billig and Rosamaría Núñez’s “El nacionalismo banal y la reproducción de la identidad nacional” (Banal Nationalism and the Reproduction of National Identity), they maintain that “nationalism should be considered as a series of ideological beliefs, practices, and routines that reproduce the world of the nation-states.”¹² To explain nationalism in these terms, the authors delve into the issue of identity and put forward the idea that this process is not only psychological, but also social. Thus, identities, far from being internal states, may well refer to, or be constituted as, ways of life situated socially and historically. Identity is a way of life. This is the case of national identity, and this terrain may be so familiar and so banal that it is taken as a given, since we live every day in our national corner of the world of nations.

Billig and Anderson agree on the central role played by the media in the construction and reproduction of nationalism, nationalist ideology, and the national identity. I situate my analysis within this first approach, based on the analytical perspective of Anderson, Billig, and Núñez for three rea-

sons: first, because WASP national identity (or nationalism) in the United States arose in the modern era after the Civil War; second, because of the importance they give the media in the emergence, dissemination, and reproduction of nationalism. In this regard, Billig and Núñez explain that the discourse of banal nationalism is not limited to what politician-celebrities constantly spew. Nationality is transmitted regularly through the media, which adopt a national perspective and construct their public through a national “we.” There can be a game, a subtle deictic, in which a few short, barely noticeable words show the nation as the “context of the statement.” Naturally, this national “we” is not the only “we” reproduced in our regular media consumption. However, careful analysis of the discourse would also reveal a universal “we” that communicates to all of humanity or the world. In addition, there is the foreign “we” that comes to “us” daily through film and television.¹³

My third reason for using Anderson, Billig, and Núñez is the distinction they make between nationalism and racism:

Nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read.... The dreams of racism actually have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to “blue” or “white” blood.... Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of “Empire” which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community.... Another instructive indication of the aristocratic or pseudo-aristocratic derivation of colonial racism was the typical “solidarity among whites,” which linked colonial rulers from different national metropolises, whatever their internal rivalries and conflicts.¹⁴

Lastly, I think it is important to underline a few points that I consider central to this reflection about white nationalism and the alt-right. One is the importance of digital and alternative media. We have to rethink the media as political actors; this will allow us to understand how *BreitBart News* had a huge influence on the 2016 U.S. balloting. Another point is that we have to reformulate our questions about nationalism and the movements that self-define as nationalist, even if they do not come under that category according to

For white nationalists, U.S. identity originates in its European heritage, in the Anglo-Protestant culture, and the English language. Once again, its center of gravity is racism.

what has been theorized about the topic. My starting point is that white nationalism is not truly a nationalist movement. In that sense, it seems appropriate to redirect the analysis toward the issue of racism and its resurgence. It is not that racism had been eradicated, but there was a moment when it was more a cultural issue, that is, something that extolled cultural differences. Today, it seems to have been combined, and both contents, the cultural and the racial, manifest themselves everywhere and are widely disseminated on social and digital media.

Finally, I want to quote Anderson, who was very emphatic in saying, “The reality is quite plain: the ‘end of the era of nationalism,’ so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.”¹⁵ That is why it is worthwhile to rethink nationalisms and the phenomena inherent in them. **MM**

NOTES

¹ This article was originally part of a presentation made at the Mexican International Studies Association’s 31st congress held in Huatulco, Oaxaca, in October 2017.

² See, for example, Jasper M. Trautsch, “The Origins and Nature of American Nationalism,” *National Identities* vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 289-312.

³ Ernest Renan, *¿Qué es una nación? Catas a Strauss* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987), pp. 85-86.

⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Naciones y nacionalismo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988).

⁵ Will Kymlicka, *La política vernácula. Nacionalismo, multiculturalismo y ciudadanía* (Mexico City: Paidós, 2003).

⁶ Quoted in Amanda Taub, “White Nationalism’ Explained,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/world/americas/white-nationalism-explained.html>.

⁷ Teun Van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage, 1998).

⁸ Jared Taylor, “What Is the Alt Right?” *American Renaissance*, <https://www.amren.com/news/2016/10/what-is-the-alt-right-jared-taylor/>.

⁹ Natasha Bertrand, “White Nationalism in the Alt-right’s ‘Center of Gravity’—and Trump Can’t Condemn One but Not the Other,” *Business Insider*, <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-alt-rights-connection-to-white-nationalism-2017-8>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso Books, 2006), p. 22.

¹² Michael Billig and Rosamaría Núñez, “El nacionalismo banal y la reproducción de la identidad nacional,” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* vol. 60, no. 1, 1998, p. 37.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-153.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

A Renegotiation “Made in America”

NAFTA’s Uncertain Future

Elisa Dávalos*



Stringer/Reuters

From the beginning, the renegotiation of NAFTA was marked by President Trump’s statements underlining its negative effects on his country. More than an interest in “modernizing” it, his main motive seems to be either getting more favorable terms for his country or cancelling it altogether. His constant statements and those of his cabinet members have emphasized economic nationalism over the content of the agreement, despite the fact that this affects the interests of a large number of companies and the consumers in their own country.

In the 23 years since it came into effect, NAFTA has profoundly changed the productive structure of North America by modifying the rules of the game of two variables, trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). In the last decades of the twentieth century, and in the context of the third technological revolution combined with important changes in

multinational companies, it has spawned a profound productive integration by turning the organizational forms of international production into global value chains.¹

When the treaty was signed, the regional/global value chains were not important in the world’s economy. Today, however, 80 percent of global trade is carried out through global value chains.² That is why what is at stake in the current negotiations are not mere trade flows, but many productive processes integrated into regional value chains that have become a veritable division of labor among the three signing countries, which exchange the inputs needed to carry out production through their trade back and forth. I should underline that this globalization of the production process is by no means exclusive to the NAFTA region: this is a worldwide process in which Asia, the European Union, and North America have all developed strong links.

As Table 1 shows, the percentage of national value-added content in the total exports of all the countries in the

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TABLE 1
PERCENT OF NATIONAL VALUE-ADDED
CONTAINED IN SELECTED COUNTRIES AND REGIONS'
TOTAL EXPORTS (1995 and 2009)

	1995	2009
United States	91.6	88.7
Mexico	73.4	69.6
European Union	90.5	86.3
Czech Republic	67.9	60.6
Germany	81.3	73.3
Japan	93.1	85.2
South Korea	76.2	59.3
China	88.1	67.3

Source: Developed by the author using WTO-OECD data, <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?r=8490>, accessed in July 2017.

sample show a downward trend, reflecting the integration of the productive processes.

This is a qualitatively different situation from that of 1994, when the agreement was just starting off; and that is why the decisions made for what has been called “NAFTA 2.0” can change or affect the functioning of many companies and industries. It is also why one of the most polemical points in the discussions is raising the rules-of-origin requirements and establishing, in addition, “national content rules of origin,” as the U.S. president has stated. In fact, imposing a percentage of U.S. content on trade in order to qualify for zero tariffs in the region has no precedents in any trade negotiations and is a very aggressive proposal. In addition, it is directly aimed against Canadian and Mexican interests, because it would mean that manufacturing, for example in the auto industry, would have to be carried out mainly in U.S. plants, and assembly plants that are now situated in Canada or Mexico would have to return to U.S. soil.

In addition to changing “national content,” the United States has expressed interest in considerably increasing the regional content of production, specifically, again, in the auto industry, for its products to be eligible for the zero tariff within the region. The auto industry’s rules of origin were stipulated in the agreement in order to give tariff privileges fundamen-

At stake in the current negotiations are not merely trade flows, but many productive processes integrated into regional value chains that have become a veritable division of labor among the three NAFTA countries.

tally to companies producing within the North American region as a whole; the percentage agreed upon for the sector was 62.5 percent. Undoubtedly these rules of origin encouraged European and Asian auto manufacturers to produce inside the North American region instead of merely exporting their products to the United States, Canada, and Mexico, but the United States has said it intends to considerably increase the rules of origin requirements. That would mean a hike in the percentage of automobile content produced within the region that would be required to benefit from NAFTA’s tariff advantages.

Increasing the percentage required in the rules of origin too much could be counterproductive since, instead of raising production in the region, companies from non-NAFTA countries might think it more advantageous to simply export their cars. Caroline Freund has said that toughening up these rules would only lead to lowering the regional content in final goods and interrupting value chains since, by increasing them more and more, importers would avoid the preferences stipulated in NAFTA due to the costly rules of origin. So, instead, they would trade according to the standards of “most favored nation” established by the World Trade Organization (WTO). She goes on to say that if the rules of origin requirements were increased, it would also not favor U.S. content value. If the aim is to bolster the latter, other measures should be taken. In fact, advancing toward the establishment of a worldwide norm would be an important objective for guaranteeing that companies that export to multiple destinations would not be forced to choose among agreements.³

The U.S. negotiators seem to have adopted a strategy of putting points on the negotiating table that have increasingly difficult and unacceptable implications for Mexico and Canada. In the fourth round, they proposed a “sunset clause” that would effectively end the agreement every five years unless all the parties agreed to renew it.

The very idea of putting that on the table cancels the important benefits NAFTA has offered Mexico: certainty for its FDI. When a company is thinking of investing in production, it has to calculate its expenditures and ensure that they

Imposing a percentage of U.S. content on trade in order to qualify for zero tariffs in the region has no precedents in any trade negotiations and is a very aggressive proposal.

will pay off for many years. The trade agreement liberalized not only trade, but also FDI. The idea of a trade instrument that would have to be reevaluated every five years throws out all the benefits that could accrue to our country and interrupts any healthy economic inertia.

President Trump has been very clear when he has said that NAFTA should come to an end to negotiate a good deal and that he likes bilateral treaties.⁴ The profoundly asymmetrical relationship among the three NAFTA signatories will strengthen the United States even more at a bilateral negotiations table, and we should remember that his treatment of Mexico is a reflection of much more than an economic negotiation: Donald Trump wants to put the brakes on the political, social, and cultural influence that Mexican society has in the United States. He is negotiating a trade deal as part of a broader project, aware that the population pyramid is a “risk” for white Anglo-Saxon predominance. His immigration policy goes hand in hand with his trade policy. Canada knows this, and that is why its foreign affairs minister and chief NAFTA negotiator, Chrystia Freeland, stated that her country “isn’t the United States’ problem.”⁵

If Trump has the idea of bilaterally negotiating a treaty with Mexico, his interests have already been sketched out in the points he has put on the table: increasing U.S. content in their trade; eliminating the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico; ensuring that its manufacturing industry not go to Mexico; refusing to consider any issue related to conflict resolution; and creating obstacles for the trade of different seasonal agricultural products imported from Mexico. In fact, in the midst of the third round of negotiations, Trump issued his statement about U.S. imports of Mexican agricultural products and also, in the case of the Boeing-Bombardier conflict, decided to levy a 220-percent tariff on the Canadian company.

The conflict between Boeing and Bombardier originated when the former brought suit against the latter for illegal trade practices, arguing that the Canadian firm sells its C Series jets at very low prices in the United States. In response, the U.S. imposed an extremely high tariff on Bombardier imports;

the Canadian government, in turn, threatened to cancel the purchase of 18 Boeing aircraft. Northern Ireland manufactures the wings and other parts for the Bombardier jets, and this global value chain production also led British Prime Minister Theresa May to enter the fray, stating that she was “bitterly disappointed” with the United States for imposing those tariffs on Bombardier.⁶

Unfortunately, the future of Mexico’s auto industry will be affected. Whether trade is carried out through the WTO, a bilateral agreement is signed with the United States, something of NAFTA is preserved, or no agreement is signed at all with the U.S., European, U.S., and Asian investors will have to reevaluate their strategies, since they brought their resources into Mexico to a great extent with the huge U.S. market in mind. NAFTA included mobility of investment, and that could be lost, but what is very likely, in any case, is that Trump will continue to take measures to spur manufacturing to return to the United States.

Another very vulnerable sector in Mexico is agriculture, particularly in two areas: the big agricultural exporters, who came out the winners with NAFTA, and the grain producers, whose sector was finally dismantled by the agreement as a corollary of terrible long-standing Mexican government public policies. I should underline another very serious factor consolidated by NAFTA: Mexico has become a net importer of corn, the basis for the national diet. That is, we are dependent on imports for the number-one foodstuff in our diet due to the policies of dismantling agricultural production destined for the domestic market.

What other countries have protected and considered strategic, and, therefore, that should be protected using criteria that go beyond costs and competitiveness, in Mexico is disregarded. For example, this is why Mexico has become a net importer of U.S. corn. This is the context in which during the renegotiations, the United States has declared its intention of limiting the importation of fruit and vegetables to certain seasons as a result of strawberry and blueberry producers’ pressure.⁷ These sorts of measures would be the beginning of the fragmentation of the North American agricultural market, which has operated in many parts of the agricultural and animal husbandry sectors through regional value chains.⁸ Undoubtedly, this attitude on the part of the United States would be an incentive for Canada and Mexico to also levy tariffs on other products.

If NAFTA does not continue to exist, trade would be regulated by WTO rules. This would mean that the United States

We must not lose sight of the fact that a large part of the business world wants NAFTA to continue. Recently, the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Thomas Donohue, said that the sectors he represents would do “the impossible” to save it.

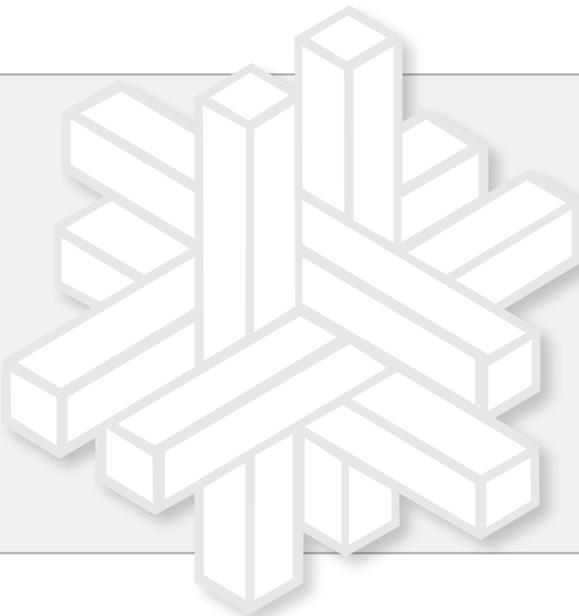
would impose an average tariff of 2.5 percent, and regional trade would come under the “most-favored-nation” clause as stipulated by the WTO. While this tariff is not very high, it does imply considerable cost since Mexico would lose institutional backing and the certainty that NAFTA has given to productive investments. Trump would probably also continue to take different protectionist measures that could affect integrated value chains among the three countries, forcing companies to reconsider location advantages for different phases of their productive processes.

We must not lose sight of the fact that a large part of the business world wants NAFTA to continue. Recently, the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Thomas Donohue, said that the sectors he represents would do “the impossible” to save NAFTA despite the “several poison pill proposals still on the table that could doom the entire deal.”⁹ Important counterposed economic interests in the three countries are involved in the NAFTA negotiations, but whatever the result, we must not forget that Mexico’s participation in the world economy must be mediated and regulated by a long-term program of economic development that will not only grow the

economy, but will also consider the benefits to its population a priority, including the improvement in the quality of life for Mexican society. **MM**

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Myths about the U.S. Trade Deficit

María Cristina Rosas*



Lucas Jackson/Reuters

When Donald Trump was running for the presidency of the United States, his campaign slogan was “Make America great again.” To do that, in the economy, he proposed reviewing the U.S. trade deals with other countries including, of course, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed with Mexico and Canada. The argument behind this was that the agreements signed until that time were unequal, and therefore had been bad for the country, creating millions of unemployed and contributing to the deterioration of the economy and the country’s international relations. While many thought that Trump had simply waved the banner of a protectionist trade agenda for strictly electoral reasons, once he occupied the White House, he took measures that could well be considered isolationist.

On his very first working day as president, January 23, he withdrew the United States from the Transpacific Trade Partnership (TPP), developed during the administration of his predecessor, Barack Obama. The TPP aimed to strengthen Washington’s relations with several Asian Pacific countries in the face of the People’s Republic of China’s growing dy-

namism. Several specialists in the matter, in fact, thought that the TPP’s *raison d’être* was to close ranks with a group of Asian nations to deal with the Asian giant, which since its December 2011 entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) had exponentially increased its presence in world trade. When he withdrew the United States from the TPP, as he had promised during his campaign, the controversial chief executive told the U.S. public that they were winning by the decision, since, otherwise, many jobs would have been lost when U.S. companies moved themselves and their operations to the signatories’ markets. He also said that one of his administration’s main objectives would be to eliminate the trade deficit with the country’s main partners.

Trump’s rhetoric around the trade deficit took on new life when he said that he would try a renegotiation of NAFTA to reverse the deficits with Mexico and Canada, which are its third and second largest trade partners, respectively. What is more, he repeatedly said that Mexico had been the main beneficiary of the agreement, costing the United States many jobs since its inception, which was unacceptable. Later, he announced the beginning of renegotiation 2.0, starting on August 16 with the first of a dozen rounds slated to conclude in the first half of 2018. As if that were not enough, when the

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The U.S. trade deficit *vis-à-vis* China is six times its deficit *vis-à-vis* Mexico and is half what Washington reports as its trade with the G-20 nations. Therefore, insisting on blaming Mexico for the U.S. trade deficit does not jibe with reality.

first round had barely finished, on August 20, Trump ventured to say that the United States might withdraw definitively from the agreement. In this context, it becomes necessary to analyze the U.S. deficit with its main trade partners to determine the validity of Trump's arguments.

The trade balance is part of the balance of payments, which annually logs the transactions that the residents of one country carry out with the residents of the rest of the world. It is made up of various items: the trade balance (trade in goods), the current account balance (trade in goods and services), the capital balance (foreign investments), money transfers (remittances), and errors and omissions (piracy or other illicit transactions).

The U.S. trade balance has a deficit with its main partners. This means that it buys more from them than it sells them. A deficit can also be the result of the products' value added. If, for example, a country sells apples, but imports capital goods, the balance will be unfavorable.

As the graph shows, in 2016, the United States' five main trade partners were the People's Republic of China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Germany, in descending order. It should be pointed out that the United States has a deficit with all of them. Its biggest partner, then, is the Asian giant, with which its total trade comes to US\$578.6 billion, and its deficit, US\$347 billion. The United States sells China aerospace technology, soybeans, and passenger vehicles; it purchases from it cellular phones, consumer goods (electrical appliances), computers, and telecommunications equipment. Beijing is responsible for 35 percent of Washington's total deficit with its trade partners worldwide.

The United States' second-largest trade partner is Canada, another NAFTA signatory. The total trade between the two countries comes to US\$544.1 billion, while the U.S. trade deficit *vis-à-vis* Canada is US\$11.3 billion. The economies of the two countries are not complementary: while the United States sells Canada auto parts and accessories, passenger vehicles, trucks, buses, and vehicles of other kinds, it purchases from Canada passenger vehicles, oil, and auto parts and

accessories. This shows the importance of the intra-industry integration of the two nations' automobile sector.

The United States' third trade partner is another NAFTA signatory, Mexico. Total trade between the two comes to US\$525.1 billion. The U.S. balance is a negative US\$63 billion. The U.S. sells Mexico auto parts and accessories, electrical appliances, and computer accessories, while Mexico sells the U.S. auto parts and accessories, trucks, passenger buses, passenger vehicles, and vehicles of other kinds. Our country is responsible for 10 percent of Washington's deficit with all its trading partners worldwide.

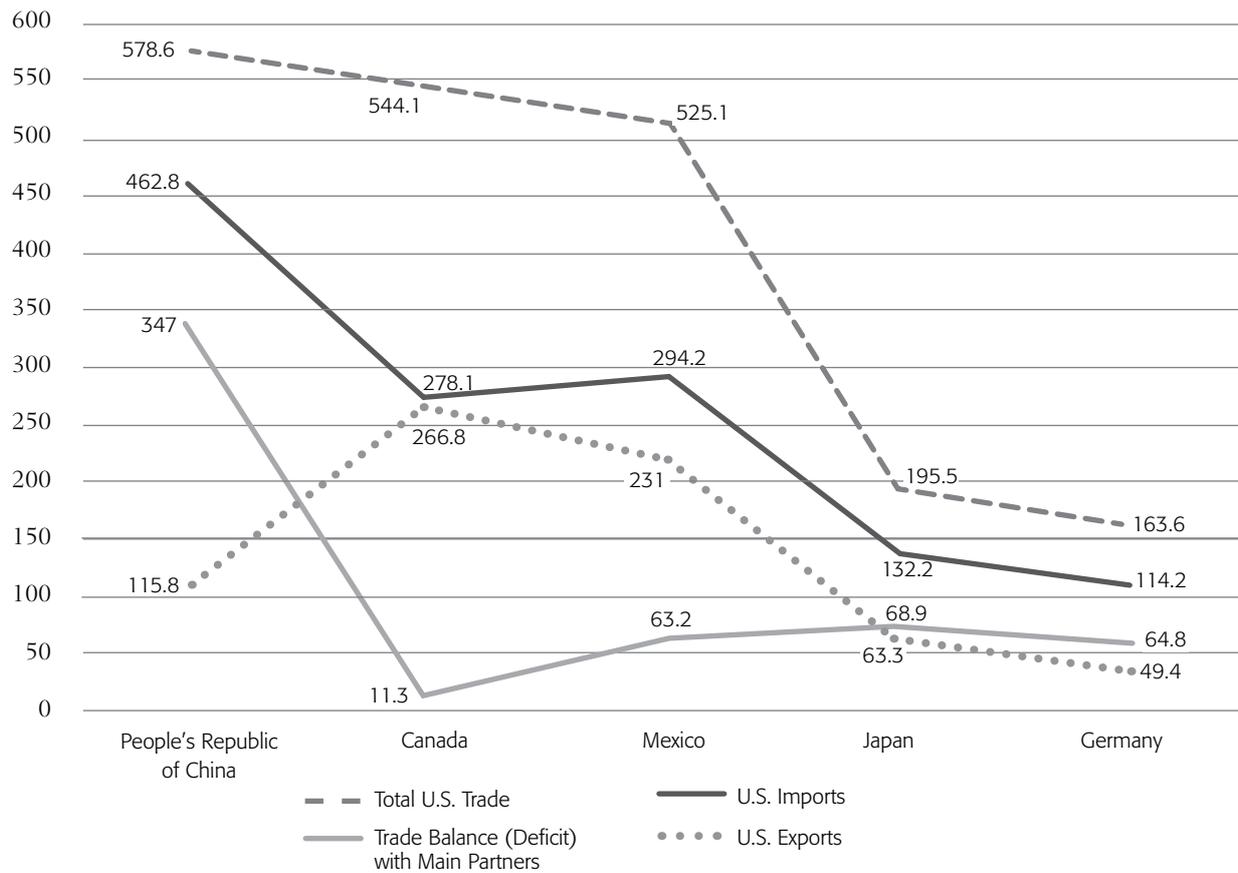
Its fourth trade partner is Japan, with total trade amounting to about US\$195.5 billion, and a deficit of US\$68.9 billion (that is, more than its deficit *vis-à-vis* Mexico). The U.S. sells Japan civilian airplanes, engines, and parts; pharmaceutical formulas; and medical equipment, while the Japanese sell the U.S. passenger vehicles, auto parts, accessories, and industrial machinery.

Its fifth largest trading partner is Germany, with their total trade reaching US\$163.6 billion and a deficit for the U.S. of US\$64.8 billion (once again, greater than its deficit *vis-à-vis* Mexico). The U.S. sells Germany passenger cars; civilian airplanes, engines, and parts; and pharmaceutical formulas, while Germany exports passenger cars, pharmaceutical formulas, and auto parts and accessories.

The United States' huge economy comes to an estimated gross national product of US\$18.6 trillion and a per capita annual income measured in purchasing power of US\$57 467. This makes it a high-income economy and therefore, a high-consumption economy that requires an enormous quantity of goods and services obtained from different countries. This explains its deficit with its main trading partners, but also with regard to other nations. For example, its trade deficit with the members of the G-20 (Germany, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, the People's Republic of China, South Korea, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, and the European Union) comes to about US\$738 billion.

These data reveal profound inconsistencies in Donald Trump's discourse with regard to trade deals and the U.S. trade deficit. In the first place, if the treaties are "guilty" of the U.S. deficits with the nations mentioned, how can he explain its huge deficit with China, with which the United States has no free trade agreement? The same could be asked about the European Union, among whose members are Germany, France, and Italy, with all of which it has substantial

GRAPH 1
 U.S. IMPORTS, EXPORTS, AND TOTAL TRADE, AND U.S. TRADE BALANCE WITH MAIN PARTNERS, 2016
 (BILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS)



Source: Developed by the author using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/top/index.html#2016>.

deficits despite the fact that the proposed Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement has not come to fruition.

In the second place, the U.S. trade deficit *vis-à-vis* China is six times its deficit *vis-à-vis* Mexico and comes to half what Washington reports regarding its trade with the G-20 nations. Therefore, insisting on blaming Mexico for the U.S. trade deficit does not jibe with the reality of the figures shown above.

In the third place, the U.S. trade deficit requires a more detailed analysis than the data makes possible. Trump accuses Mexico of having cost the U.S. many thousands of manufacturing jobs due to NAFTA since many U.S. companies moved their operations south of the border. The fact is that it is not the trade in manufactured goods, but the trade in energy products that is the main cause of the U.S. trade deficit *vis-à-vis* both Mexico and Canada.

Neither isolationism nor protectionism is the answer to the U.S. trade deficit challenge; what is required, rather, is a comprehensive economic and trade strategy, in which instruments like NAFTA have a singular value.

In the fourth place, today, the United States is seeking to strengthen its energy security *vis-à-vis* unstable countries and/or regions like the Middle East and Venezuela, which is why it aims to increase the importation of hydrocarbons from Canada and Mexico. Several projects exist to build trans-border oil pipelines between Canada and the United States to facilitate oil exports from Alberta to the U.S. In the Mexican case, the energy reform has attracted the attention of U.S. companies, which will probably increase their presence

and purchase of hydrocarbons from our country. This means that the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico and Canada in energy trade will not only not drop, but will increase.

Another issue worth considering is the existing intra-industrial integration of Mexico and the United States and of Canada and the United States. I mentioned above, for example, the integration of the automobile sector, which has created what amounts to a huge factory of automotive vehicles in Detroit and Ontario. Intra-industrial integration is very important between these countries, given that 25 percent of everything Canada sells to the United States already has 25 percent U.S. content. In the case of Mexico-U.S. trade, of all the products Mexicans sell their northern neighbor, 40 percent have U.S. content. As we can infer from this, many of the goods sold to the United States by Mexico and Canada cross the borders several times during the production process, benefitting from NAFTA and the preferential treatment they are given because of the rules of origin; and once they are finished goods, they are sold both in the North American market and to the rest of the world. Therefore, the United States, far from being the losing party in its trade with these countries, and in particular, with Mexico, has benefitted amply.

The U.S. trade deficit with a substantial number of its partners can be traced to structural problems in its own economy. Productivity is a growing concern for our neighbor to the north, as is the training of human resources, responsible for providing the value added to the U.S. products sold to the world. In such globalized surroundings, the world is a gigantic factory and many companies —among them those in the U.S.— have decided to produce in the People's Republic of China to be more competitive, to cut costs, and also to have access to Asian markets.

So, neither isolationism nor protectionism is the answer to the U.S. trade deficit challenge; what is required, rather, is a comprehensive economic and trade strategy, in which instruments like NAFTA have a singular value since they can guarantee U.S. Americans preferential, non-discriminatory access to the world's diverse markets.

At a moment when the World Trade Organization's Multilateral Trade Negotiations, or the Doha Round, are stymied, international trade depends to a great extent on the agreements that can be forged between nations to access international markets in conditions of certainty. This is the *raison d'être* of NAFTA and its renegotiation, and that is the spirit that must prevail between the United States and its trade partners. ■■



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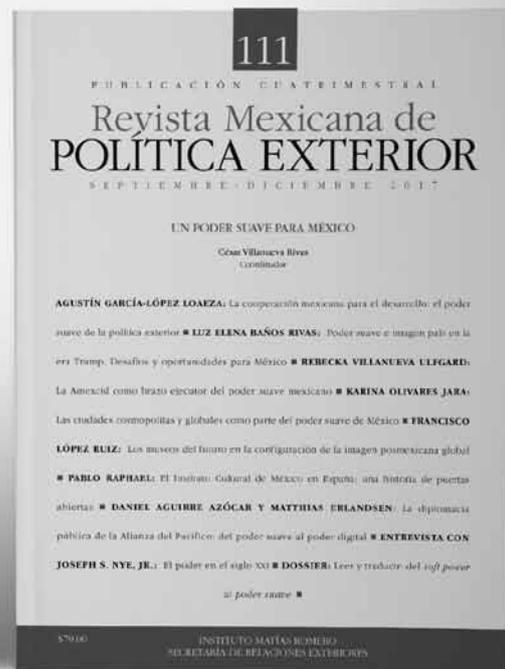
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Scenarios and Sovereign Alternatives On NAFTA's Winding Road

Enrique Pino Hidalgo*



Daniel Becerra/Reuters

Whatever the results of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations, including its possible cancellation, they will leave a profound mark on the present and future relations between Mexico and the United States and Canada. Probably the biggest impact will be for the fragile Mexican economy and its 2018 presidential elections, revealing the full extent of the political dimension of this complex process.

The possible outcomes are multiple, from a supposed “modernization” of the regional treaty to its elimination through a withdrawal of the United States, as President Donald Trump warned during his electoral campaign. One precedent for the second possibility is his swift decision to definitively abandon the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Under these circum-

stances, we can say that the NAFTA renegotiation is far from being only a technical or trade issue as the Mexican authorities are attempting to portray it.

Underlying this process are factors that could pose potentially serious conflicts between Mexico and the United States, such as the financing of the wall on our northern border, the threat of taxing Mexican remittances to our country, and the risk of mass deportations of young former beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In this complex, changing renegotiation, I will examine the aspects I think are the most important.

TRUMP'S NEO-PROTECTIONISM AND NAFTA'S “FREE TRADE” RULES

It is ironic that, despite NAFTA's institutional rules aimed at creating confidence, the protectionist measures Trump has

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Mexico is not the main cause of the trade deficit Trump is complaining about. However, he decided to try out his neo-protectionist policies with his neighbor, identifying it as the “weakest rival.”

announced are creating a climate of uncertainty. This has negative effects for the markets of goods, investments, and overall regional trade. Let’s look at some indicators that illustrate the magnitude of the trade between Mexico and the United States that is at stake in the renegotiation talks.

By the end of 2016, transactions between the two countries came to US\$500 billion, with Mexican exports to its northern neighbor coming to US\$294 billion, or 13.4 percent of total U.S. imports. In this exchange, Mexico had a favorable balance of US\$60 billion, making it the second supplier after China (which contributes with 21.1 percent of U.S. imports) of the world’s largest economy. Canada, previously the United States’ historic largest trade partner, has dropped to third place, with exports representing 12.7 percent of the U.S. total.¹

That same year, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Mexico came to US\$26 billion, 5.8 percent less than in 2015 (when it was US\$28.38 billion), 40 percent of which came from the United States. Particularly noteworthy in 2015 were AT&T’s acquisition of Unefon and Iusacell (for US\$2.04 billion) and another U.S. company’s purchase of Vitro for US\$2.15 billion. Under Enrique Peña Nieto’s administration, the accumulated FDI has come to US\$134.96 billion, surpassing by 52.5 percent all the investment during the entire administration of National Action Party-member President Felipe Calderón, which came to US\$88 billion.²

The authorities wield these figures as evidence of NAFTA’s commercial and financial success. However, they also reveal the country’s economic vulnerability. For example, 80 percent of Mexican exports go to the U.S. market, concentrated in a small number of goods, particularly cargo vehicles, cars, and auto parts, worth US\$107 billion. This industry represents 36 percent of Mexico’s total exports, indicating an excessive concentration and explains the interest of auto firms in renegotiating NAFTA. This trend contrasts with the drop in crude oil sales to US\$7.58 billion, 39 percent lower than in 2015.

Trump’s complaint about the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico is exaggerated. Some sources think that the negative US\$63 billion balance in 2016 would drop to US\$37.56 billion if the U.S.-made imports used in manufactured goods re-exported

to our neighbor were deducted from the total. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, this would bring down the U.S. deficit by 43 percent.³ This is a manageable balance because it comes to 12 percent of the country’s total, which in 2016 amounted to US\$502 billion, of which US\$386 billion corresponded to China; US\$77 billion to Germany; and US\$72 billion to Japan.⁴

Mexico is not the main cause of the trade deficit Trump is complaining about. However, he decided to try out his neo-protectionist policies with Mexico, identifying it as the “weakest rival.” And, in effect, the economy’s vulnerability and the discredit of the Peña Nieto administration are underlying factors for Trump’s repeated threats about supposedly “unfair” trade practices that cost millions of jobs in the United States.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEXICAN MARKET FOR U.S. INVESTMENT AND PRODUCTS

One aspect not commonly mentioned about the renegotiation is the importance of the Mexican market for U.S. and Canadian exporters and investors. At the end of 2016, U.S. exports to Mexico came to US\$211 billion (16 percent of the total), which are estimated to have created five million jobs there. On a regional level, the impact on trade is greater if we take into account that border transactions in the Laredo, Texas Customs District came to US\$284 billion. Henry Cuellar, U.S. representative from Texas’s 28th district, has said that protectionist measures will destabilize the market on both sides of the border.⁵

Mexico’s status as a U.S. and Canadian partner implies enjoying important comparative advantages for foreign capital. In this vein, we should note that manufacturing has been the main target for foreign investment: the auto industry received 43 percent, reaffirming its importance in the NAFTA negotiations.⁶ We should also remember that U.S. investors contributed 38.9 percent of all foreign capital invested, followed by Spain, with 10.7 percent, and Germany, with 9.0 percent. This investors’ “club” is completed by Israel and Canada, contributing 7.5 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively. Clearly, though not marginal, Canadian investment is modest despite its being Mexico’s third partner, with investments in banking, mining, and telecommunications.⁷

Although foreign direct investment in Mexico decreased by 5.8 percent in 2016, this market is very attractive for foreign capital, which enjoys its high profitability, low wages, and

“flexible” environmental and labor regulations. In 2009, foreign investors made US\$7.64 billion in profits. In short, an eventual cancelation of NAFTA is a complex decision that would have repercussions in all three economies.

NOBEL LAUREATES’ CRITIQUES AND TRUMP’S “VOODOO” ECONOMICS

The sharpest critiques of the Trump administration’s fiscal and commercial policies have come out of academia in his own country. Not without humor, it has been said that Joseph Stiglitz, Paul Krugman, and Oliver Hart have two things in common: the three economists have received the Nobel Prize and they have all questioned Trump’s announced economic measures. Stiglitz foretold the failure of a trade policy based on the threat of levying high tariffs on products from Mexico and China.

At the Davos World Economic Forum, Stiglitz said that the president does not understand that the size of the trade deficit depends on the United States’ macro-economy, not on its partners. He also warned that the proposed tax cuts will increase the country’s fiscal deficit.⁸ For his part, Krugman questioned the idea of levying a 20-percent tariff on Mexican imports. In a series of tweets, he called it a demonstration of the new administration’s ignorance, dysfunctionality, and incompetence. He even called Trump “mentally ill.” Nevertheless, recognizing that increased spending in infrastructure “could be good,” he pointed out that combining it with lower taxes would cause budgetary problems.⁹

Oliver Hart was less harsh, commenting that he had not yet seen a coherent set of government policies and warning that the idea of dismantling trade agreements or levying tariffs is not the road the United States, or the world, should follow. However, he had no doubt about the president’s will to help those who lost their jobs, although he said that there are better ways of doing that than applying protectionist measures. U.S. trade protectionism is nothing new; Trump simply has gone back to it from a furiously anti-Mexican, racist, persecutory perspective. In recent years, U.S. authorities have applied sanctions on Mexican citrus produce, avocado, and tuna exports, impeding the entry of freight shipments into the United States in violation of NAFTA norms.¹⁰

Former Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers dubbed Trump economic team ideas and proposals “voodoo economics,” while former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo wrote

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an article in *The Washington Post* saying that if Trump “kills NAFTA,” Mexico can take other economic roads toward progress.¹¹ This member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party recognized that the negotiations could fail and confirmed that in Mexican governmental and financial circles, people do not think that failure is impossible and that officials and business representatives have begun to accept it as a possibility.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS AND ALTERNATIVES GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTY OF A NEW NAFTA

Changes in the agreement’s founding norms, and even its cancelation, would have repercussions in industrial, commercial, and trade activities in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. They would distort the international value chains in the auto, electronics, home appliances, and agribusiness export sectors. We should remember that big companies are sensitive to any modification in the rules of the game; this is due to the fact that they design their supply and production strategies based on stable institutional structures in local and international markets. Given this, the confidentiality of the negotiations and Trump’s unpredictable policies are variables that reinforce uncertainty for economic and political actors, both inside and outside the North American region.

The renegotiation results may range all the way from accepting Donald Trump’s trade demands to rejecting any intermediate, conciliatory agreement the negotiators might eventually arrive at. A scenario in which Trump decided to withdraw from the negotiations and declare the regional agreement “dead” is also not outside the realm of possibility. In this regard, we should remember his decision to withdraw from the dazzling Transpacific Partnership. With this same “personal style” of governing, Trump also withdrew from the Paris Accord, a multilateral commitment signed by more than 200 countries in 2015 to fight climate change.

The Mexican authorities’ initial strategy of signing the regional agreement “at all costs” meant making strong concessions on e-commerce, increasing intellectual property rights

Not ratifying NAFTA would lead to a potentially favorable scenario for examining macroeconomic policy alternatives for Mexico's sustained development.

in favor of multinational companies, and significantly changing the rules of origin by increasing the regional content requirements for manufactured exports, all of which, according to Trump, would encourage employment in the United States. One precedent in this regard is the renegotiation of the U.S.-Mexico sugar agreement last June, in which Mexican producers got the short end of the deal with the reduction of the refined sugar (higher value added and price) export quota in exchange for becoming a preferential supplier of raw sugar (of lower value).¹² It is very revealing that the American Sugar Alliance thanked President Trump for defending U.S. jobs, supporting sugar producers and taking Mexico to task for violating trade laws.¹³

NAFTA has been an emblematic instrument of the neoliberal model since the mid-1980s in our country. However, different studies prove that the open, deregulated economy has only developed an assembly-plant-export manufacturing sector based on low wages and a scant number of quality jobs.¹⁴ This strategy has also led to greater concentration of income and wealth, increasing the number of people living in poverty from 53.3 million to 55.3 million in recent years.¹⁵ Therefore, the aims of sustained growth and improved social well-being promised by the “free trade” strategy based on foreign investment and manufacturing exports to the North American region have not been achieved.

In a context of low production and job growth, accompanied by higher poverty rates, not ratifying NAFTA would lead to a potentially favorable scenario for examining macroeconomic policy alternatives for Mexico's sustained development. It would create political and social conditions that would stimulate the design of a new economic strategy to allow the reorganization of production, limit financial vulnerability, and put the brakes on the serious deterioration of society. Of course, financial, commercial, and technological globalization provides cold data about the reality that cannot go unrecognized. Nevertheless, nations have the potential to sovereignly design the way they insert themselves into the world economy and determine their objectives for development and well-being. And that could harmonize the potential of Mexico's

domestic market by diversifying international trade in the context of a global economy. ■■■

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Medical Migration to the U.S. The Case for a Brain Gain Theory¹

Camelia Tigau*



Sergio Moraes/Reuters

For almost 70 years now, brain drain theory has studied the migration of highly skilled professionals, especially from underdeveloped to developed countries, from the global South to the global North. In particular, the migration of medical doctors (MDs) and nurses has been seen as a most problematic and emblematic case for brain drain theory.

Countries such as Dominica, Grenada, or Ireland have a bigger proportion of MDs working abroad than in their countries of birth. Consequently, there are 0.5 physicians per 1 000 inhabitants in Dominica, while there are more than 3 physicians per 1 000 inhabitants in the main OECD countries that are destinations for medical migration. Life expectancy is also higher in developed countries: over 80 years in the U.S. compared to 57 years in South Africa, also a main country of origin for medical out-migration.

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The U.S. is the top receiver of medical doctors in the world. The American Medical Association estimates that foreign-born doctors constitute approximately 27 percent of the U.S. physician workforce.

The U.S. is the top receiver of medical doctors in the world. The American Medical Association estimates that foreign-born doctors constitute approximately 27 percent of the U.S. physician workforce. By 2014, 10 percent of foreign professionals employed in medicine and health sciences in the U.S. came from Asia, 3.3 percent from Canada and Europe, and 3.1 percent from Latin America and the Caribbean.

However, studies estimate there will be a significant shortfall of 130 000 doctors by 2025.² International medical graduates are urgently needed to serve in critical access hospitals (those with fewer than 15 beds) and underserved rural areas.

Health migration is a difficult topic
that brings into conflict migrants'
individual rights to freedom and well-being
and vulnerable groups rights to social justice.

In general, rural communities in the U.S. find it more difficult to attract and retain physicians. As of 2014, almost 15 percent of the U.S. population (46 million people) was living in rural counties, but only 6.1 percent of physicians were practicing in those areas. A shortage of Spanish-speaking doctors and health-care-related translation also exists in both rural and urban areas.

Some critical perspectives show that health migration pits the interests of privileged groups in developed societies against those of less wealthy citizens of middle- and low-income countries.³ They also point out that developed countries have a moral obligation to reduce the inflow of foreign health workers who have often been educated on public money, and therefore should return benefits to their societies of origin.

Health migration is a difficult topic that brings into conflict migrants' individual rights to freedom and well-being and vulnerable groups' rights to social justice in poor countries. Studying the phenomenon quantitatively may provide us with a pessimistic view, while qualitative data show that medical doctors are among the professionals who most circulate knowledge, form epistemic groups, and work for a health-related unofficial diplomacy multilaterally.

INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES ON HEALTH MIGRATION
OR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

Is medical migration good or bad for foreign MDs living in the U.S.? Do they regret having left their countries? In-depth interviews with 16 foreign physicians from the Houston, Texas health hub show a different side of the story. The individuals I interviewed came from China, Colombia, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, and Romania, and they all agreed on their positive metamorphosis as scientists and practicing physicians in the U.S. Testimonies are shown below with anonymous quotes, in order to respect their privacy.

The first case is of Doctor A, a 50-year-old woman who has lived 20 years in the U.S., who studied medicine because

it was a major that took a long time and that would allow her to postpone marriage in a traditional society such as Lebanon, also torn by war when she was a child. She recalls,

I lived through the civil war between the ages of 10 until 26. And that's a big challenge because in the civil war you basically have your whole life on hold. When you don't even think of school, you don't think of [the] future, you don't think of what you want to do. . . . I kept going to school, but it was extremely challenging; there were many months of schooling that I lost. I'm not sure exactly what made me feel that I really wanted to go to school, but the simplest and silliest part of it is that I didn't want to get married because I knew that if I stayed home I would be an easy target or victim. I wanted to study medicine because I wanted something that would go for a long time, because a thing that ends somewhere means that I would have to struggle again with the marriage business.

And I do remember the first time I told my mother and my elder brothers that I wanted to go to high school. It surprised them; they asked me why I want to go to high school. Because if you're in the midst of civil war and poverty you cannot think ahead that school might get you to college, and college might get you to a better job. They cannot think that way.

So anyway, long story short, then, I wanted to go to college, and of course we didn't have the money [for me] to go to college so I went to the government college and I decided to do medicine and I finished my medical school in Lebanon. And I decided to go to the American University of Beirut because this is the time that I can switch without paying money. And I did. And I did internal medicine and oncology there, and then I decided that I wanted to come to the United States because, for me, getting the degree from Lebanon was not sufficient. It was not gratifying, because I felt that the system at the time was not strong enough to make me progress.

So I decided to come to MD Anderson in 1996 and I applied as a postdoctoral fellow. . . . One of the important physicians, also a foreigner, decided to help me. So I stayed here and I repeated everything that I did in Lebanon: my residency and my fellowship, and then I stayed on staff and that's how it worked.

She recalls she only practiced medicine in Lebanon for two years, and that was because she had to fulfill the requirement for the J1 Visa for academic exchange. She came back,

got married, became a U.S. citizen, and she is now a renowned scientist at one of the most important hospitals in the U.S., with major contributions to medical research and patient care in her field. She believes she was lucky to find people who helped her during her career and sees a difference of night and day between her life back in Lebanon and her present life in the U.S. She explains her professional success as a combination of people who believed in her and her own efforts. She thinks medical migration should be analyzed on a case-sensitive basis, depending on the combination of country of origin and destination. Dr. A says,

Lebanon is now very advanced when it comes to medicine. Almost everything that I do at MD Anderson I could do back in Lebanon, but not in Oklahoma or Mississippi. I trust sending my patients to Lebanon. So, do I feel that my country needs me? No. Because there's a surplus of doctors there, and every time I ask, they keep telling me they don't need me. Are there other examples where developing countries might need their doctors? Yes. The return of their physicians abroad may actually be of help for the local medical system. Do they reach the same level of MD Anderson? No. But they don't need to because this intermediate level is good for people.

I'm a radiation oncologist. I know that some African countries don't even have the machine to do my job. . . . Globalization has helped in bringing whoever is interested to the same level of knowledge. What is lacking in many of the countries is that they might not have the infrastructure or the money to practice what they've learned.

Dr. A's story clearly illustrates a couple of trends shown in studies with other MDs from different developing countries.

They are looking for better research opportunities and professional recognition abroad. The primary purpose of migration is therefore academic achievement, due to the fact that, back home, medical research is not or was not subsidized enough to allow a combination of medical practice and production of knowledge. Foreign medical doctors also feel satisfied about being able to take part in important research institutions in the U.S.

No matter what their conditions of out-migration, all the interviewed MDs are willing to give something back to their countries of origin, since many have benefited from public education there or just because they feel a certain affection for their country of birth. As they sometimes become experts

Foreign MDs in the U.S. must pass through a long, expensive certification process, so either they have enough financial resources to pay the fees for the certification exams or they repeat studies they had already done at home.

recognized in the United States and even worldwide, they maintain professional networks with their colleagues in their countries of origin. This is an opportunity for future collaboration and a reason for ongoing cooperation between hospitals and universities in developing countries and U.S. health research institutions. Quoting from one of the testimonies,

I still have a lot of affection for and have roots in Mexico. However, I can develop more as a scientist being abroad. I am recognized internationally, so I can bring resources back to Mexico and watch out for Mexican interests. I think that from this point of view, I am a win for Mexico. (Dr. X, MD, graduate of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, 1999, currently with Memorial Hermann and McGovern Medical School, University of Texas)

This same sense of privilege at being at one of the best research and practice institutions in the world is stated by another Mexican MD who said,

It was very difficult to do research in hematology at the time I studied. This is one of the most important institutions for cancer research in the world. I have a lot more patients than I'd have in Mexico. I work with 10 of the most important authorities in leukemia in the world. I am in an ideal situation. Things turned out so well, that I sometimes wonder, "Am I not dreaming?" (Dr. Y, who received his medical degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 1991, and currently practices and teaches at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston)

In general, foreign MDs in the U.S. must pass through a long, expensive certification process, which means either they have enough financial resources to pay the fees for the certification exams or they repeat studies they had already done at home, which requires a considerable investment of time. This limits medical migration of foreign physicians to a certain age group; most start their careers in the U.S. in

their late 20s or early 30s. However, if their migration is forced due to wars or violence in their countries of origin, they usually find employment in hospital administration, in the pharmaceutical industry, or even in areas completely outside the medical field.

CONCLUSIONS

Highly valuable foreign talent definitely contributes to the advancement of research and economic development in the United States. They are always interested in sharing the knowledge acquired abroad; they participate in epistemic groups (international networks of health experts) and try to take part in academic events in their countries of origin.

Medical migration, then, is beneficial for the countries of origin that receive the experience acquired abroad; for the patients in the countries of destination, who receive good care based on the latest findings in medical research; and for the individuals themselves and their families, as they improve their quality of life. These doctors share their know-how

in the global health system, proving that international global networks of care may actually be more of a brain gain than a brain drain. ■■■

NOTES

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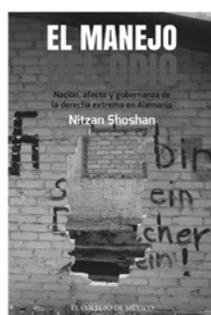
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Suspending DACA In the Trump Era

Paola Suárez Ávila*

Donald Trump's first 100 days began with a series of actions and changes in immigration and national security policies that shook the entire world. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which went into effect June 15, 2012, during Barack Obama's second term, had been very popular and well-received. But with the arrival to the White House of the neo-conservative, who suspended it on September 5, the scenario became critical, particularly for a generation of young undocumented immigrants to the United States.

This article promotes the discussion of what will happen to entire communities of undocumented immigrants of Mexican and Central American origin in the United States after this suspension, and how the U.S. immigration system should deal with the situation of thousands of possible young deportees.

DACA was modeled after the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) after it was not passed in 2010. The DREAM Act continues to exist as a bill and could be the solution to the conflict if it were approved in the coming months.

DACA and the DREAM Act are intended for young undocumented immigrants with no criminal record who were brought as children to the United States mostly from Mexico and Central America. In contrast with the DREAM Act, DACA did not offer a path to status legalization for these young people, but focused on giving them two years so they could go to universities and public colleges and then legally get a job.

The new version of the DREAM Act is a more appropriate solution for the so-called Dreamers, since it allows them to enter onto a path to citizenship without limiting it to two years, as DACA currently does. Under the proposed bill, anyone who arrived to the U.S. under the age of 18 and who had resided there for more than four years would be eligible.



Stephanie Keith/Reuters

To qualify, they would also have to prove that they had finished high school, were enrolled in some kind of higher education, or had graduated. An alternative for qualifying would be that they had kept their jobs for more than 75 percent of the time their work permit allowed under other programs like DACA.

Most Democratic congresspersons support DACA and are coordinating with the Republican senators who have also favored this road for legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants, such as Lindsey Graham, John McCain, and Jeff Flake.

DACA's main goals included giving more than one million young undocumented immigrants the opportunity to access higher education, to get identity papers and driver's licenses, to make it possible for them to travel inside and outside the country, to get a legal job, to improve their families and communities' living conditions, and to be recognized in the U.S. American community.

Its main critics and opponents, including Trump, have argued that the program was an unconstitutional measure on the part of the chief executive, which broke federal immigration laws and fostered unauthorized immigration. When they suspended the program September 5, they argued that

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This first 800 000-strong generation of undocumented immigrants has accessed higher education and certified educational programs in order to find a better job.

former President Barack Obama had abused his power as president when he gave those young people permission to stay in the United States legally.

The program's suspension has been met with demonstrations and criticisms by a large number of universities, non-governmental organizations, students, and political representatives who do not think DACA registrants are remaining in the United States unjustifiably. In any case, they think these young people should be protected and given access to higher education, and that the government should respect their human rights because they have generated wealth and knowledge, and thus contributed to the nation's development.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a conservative who is openly opposed to undocumented migration into the United States, as a spokesperson for the Trump administration, has said that suspending the program was "an act of compassion," because what was really important was to enforce the laws of the United States.

Donald Trump made his decision under pressure from the state's attorneys of nine conservative states headed up by Texas, who demanded DACA be suspended and rescinded if he did not want to be taken to court.

But when the program was suspended, 16 other state's attorneys from the most liberal states, headed by New York, announced they would take Trump to court for doing so. This brings new pressure to bear on the president for him to renegotiate DACA, the DREAM Act, and the long-awaited immigration reform, which would guarantee the regularization of the legal status of more than 10 million undocumented immigrants.

The changes the suspension will make in the lives of more than 800 000 young people registered with the program over the next six months have sparked criticisms domestically and internationally. Immigrant collectives and alliances have come out in opposition, and this has created a new conflict between some conservative members of the Republican Party and Democratic Party leaders with pro-immigrant stances.

The discussion about minors who accompany their migrant parents or who travel alone seeking family reunification

continues and seeks to resolve the needs of a community made up of young undocumented migrants between the ages of 15 and 32, mostly from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. They have lent their strength to movements for immigration, other laws like the DREAM Act, originally proposed in 2001, and DACA.

Many of the young "DACAdmented" have for the first time had access to higher education and a formal job, had the opportunity to freely move through their space, and had the ability to express themselves in social and political movements without fear of deportation. This is the case of the "Undocumented, unafraid" campaign, which has made it possible for these young people to discuss in workshops and forums their needs as an undocumented migrant community taking refuge in sanctuary cities. There, there are universities and NGOs that have supported their struggle for the recognition of their U.S. residency and citizenship.

The possibility of being legally classified as a vulnerable group in the eyes of the U.S. immigration and legal system through DACA was one of the big steps forward during the second Obama term (2012-2016). The program helped legally and administratively promote a discussion about immigrants' rights and those of unaccompanied minors in search of better living conditions in the United States. It acknowledged that they had come to U.S. cities and regions accompanying their parents, recognizing that it was their parents who elected to migrate in search of a better life for their families and children and who left their countries because of the violence and poverty that prevented them from offering the new generations the opportunity to develop.

In June 2017, the pressure from Texas and the other eight states to suspend DACA alerted political studies organizations and centers like the Migration Policy Institute to the need to draw up a balance sheet of the programs and proposed bills to create new methodologies for creating options in the face of that pressure.¹

That analysis led to the generation of new statistics showing the different ways in which the program has been positive and its main advances in its five-year history. From here, several points can be underlined.

The first is the importance of the DACA participants in making thousands of undocumented immigrant communities more stable by seeking access to citizenship based on their labor, responsible civic behavior, and through the human capital they contribute to the nation and their communities.

The second point is the importance of the fact that this first 800 000-strong generation of undocumented immigrants has accessed higher education and certified educational programs in order to find a better job and allowing them to legally move into the labor market, thus reducing poverty levels in their communities.

Eight out of every ten DACA participants are of Mexican or Central American origin. More than 20 percent were able to enroll in a program of higher education, though 11 percent finished only part of their studies. Sixty-five percent of them are men, but the 35 percent who are women have taken the majority of the degrees (59 percent).²

The women who have accessed the benefits of DACA have developed a unique leadership role in their communities, in the universities that have accepted them, and in their workplaces.

The educational offerings for program participants have combined the benefits of the executive action with support from specific state laws. For example, California's DREAM Act has supported their development by reducing tuition, allowing them to go to public universities, and protecting them against deportation in sanctuary universities. In addition, DACA participants who are attending university combine their study time with work and receive better job offers when they finish their studies than those who have not participated in the program and are living in immigration uncertainty.

In the hours after the termination of DACA was announced, governors, state legislators, elected officials, legal services and educational professionals, and members of NGOs carried out a #withDREAMERS campaign,³ arguing that the Dreamers are honest young people with a civic culture that they have contributed to the country's development for a decade, both in their schools and in their workplaces, and that they empathize with the desire for a prosperous United States. Therefore, they all demanded that the president design and foster a bill that would ensure that the young people registered with DACA no longer be subjected to living in uncertainty and anxiety.

I should point out that over the last 10 years, the Dreamers have been fighting to have the discussion on a political platform of the immigration reform and to gain congressional support so that their circumstances can be resolved based on the DREAM Act.

Most of these young people have gone through a difficult transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by a traumatic immigration experience. They have been and continue to be

Donald Trump made his decision under pressure from the state's attorneys of nine conservative states headed up by Texas, who demanded DACA be suspended and rescinded.

vulnerable in the immigration system in the country where they have grown up, due to the scope of the restrictive immigration legislation and programs that have determined the different stages of their lives, including access to higher education, which has been mostly informal and unpredictable.

The 9/11 effect on U.S. immigration policy in turn had repercussions on the community of migrants who took their children to the United States in an unregulated manner. These changes in immigration policy have created serious problems and the crisis in the system, which can be seen in the immense number of people living in irregular circumstances.

If no agreement is reached between both houses of Congress and the chief executive to resolve the conflict over DACA and immigration reform in the coming months, we can foresee a very critical scenario for the Dreamers and young DACA beneficiaries and their families. In the long run they will lose access to political recognition, face deportation, and see their opportunities for social and economic inclusion in their communities diminished. They will be the target of racial and economic violence as well as human rights violations.

In addition, in the current context of minimum protection for communities of undocumented immigrants, families will be separated, which has created vulnerability and poverty similar to what they had experienced in the United States before DACA existed. ■■■

NOTES

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The Edificios Condesa And Mexico City's Artistic Hub

Alejandro Mercado-Celis*

The concentration of artists in specific districts in large cities is a generalized urban phenomenon. Spatial agglomeration of artists has mainly been studied for its role as a driving force for urban renewal and gentrification,¹ and local economic development,² while less attention is paid to its impact on artists' work. With this in mind, we can ask two central questions: Do artists living closely together collaborate among themselves? And, are artists living in proximity part of artistic circles?

I based my study on three dimensions of artistic work: the importance of residential space, artistic production as a collaborative process, and the formation of artistic circles. First, for some artists, their residence is both a place for private life and work. When this is the case, residential spaces are key for observing artists' interactions. Secondly, Howard Saul Becker has shown that artists' work involves many forms of collaboration and partnership; collaboration with other artists as well as with persons who complement their activities or support them.³ Collaboration and partnerships are essential both for people who produce individually, such as writers and painters, and for creators who work in groups, such as in the performing arts or film. Third, artistic work takes place in social circles. A "social circle is a particular form of a network which has no clear boundaries, indirect interaction; the core or cores have a greater density but [it] has no leadership, lacks formal instituted structures or norms, and gravitates around other structures."⁴ Many types of circles exist; the most important is the movement circle that aims "to create against certain established aesthetic principles or images."⁵

Artists' residence patterns show concentration in specific neighborhoods. Mexico City artists' spatial distribution has



For some artists, their residence is both a place for private life and work. When this is the case, residential spaces are key for observing artists' interactions.

its particularities linked to the city's history and general transformation, in particular, the absence of a significant concentration of artists in and around downtown, up to very recently when the historic center went through urban renewal by attracting artists. Nowadays, artists' residential patterns indicate two main hubs within the city: one in the area around the Roma-Condesa neighborhood and the second in the area

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Photos courtesy of the author.

**Edificios Condesa in Mexico City offers
a contained space for studying
artists' collaboration and its residents'
membership in artistic circles.**

known as Coyoacán-San Ángel, which has important cultural infrastructure, including the main campus of the National University and many concert halls and museums serving the entire city.

In the Roma-Condesa neighborhood, a residential apartment complex called “Edificios Condesa” (the Condesa Buildings) has been the home of many artists since at least the 1930s. This complex has 220 apartments in three buildings, occupying an entire city block and sharing an internal private street. I chose these dwellings to conduct my research because of the high number of artists living there, and because artists have occupied it for around 80 years. Edificios Condesa offers a contained space for studying artists' collaboration and its residents' membership in artistic circles. I conducted qualitative interviews with artists living there or who had lived there in the past. The questions explored the decision to live there, staying or leaving the building, and the collaborations the interviewees have carried on with other residents. I also examined the meaning of Edificios Condesa and the impact living in the building has had on individuals' careers. The interviews cover three generations of residents. I complemented this information with a historical analysis of cultural journals and magazines, artists' biographies, and the residents' artistic production.

The Edificios Condesa are in the Condesa neighborhood, founded in 1902. Early modern European, English-style architectural style inspired the buildings' design by Thomas J. Gore, and they were built between 1911 and 1925. Initially developed for the high-ranking employees of the El Águila oil company, the complex is one of the first modern apartment buildings in Mexico City; Gore changed the traditional model of apartments around a shared patio and designed independent buildings around private streets. Another change Gore introduced was the separation of service and residential circulation areas. By the 1930s, middle-class professionals, artists, and intellectuals had replaced the original residents. Later, in the 1970s, a new building was put up in what had been the original buildings' garden area. The new 12-story-tall building was rapidly occupied also by intellectuals and artists. The complex continued to be owned by a single land-

lord, and in the early 1980s, after a tenants' movement against rent hikes, the owners sold the apartments to their occupants. By that time, many artists could afford to buy their apartments.

**A PLACE OF DIVERSITY: DISCIPLINES,
GENERATIONS, FAMILIES**

I identified a total of 154 artists (and two publishing offices) that have occupied the building since 1934. The list is not complete but indicates its role as an artists' hub. The distribution of artistic disciplines is as follows: set design and theater, 22 percent; actors, 21 percent; painters, 19 percent; musicians, 18 percent; design and publishing, 10 percent; writers, 9 percent; dancers, 7 percent; sculpture, photography and art dealers, 4 percent each; and film, 3 percent. The remaining 12 percent includes philosophers, journalists, intellectuals, professors, and the like.

Living in the building creates the chance to come in contact with many generations and their social networks. I identified five generations that have at some point lived there at the same time: a) those who arrived in the 1940s, a visible group of Spanish exiles, like Eduardo Nicol, Ramón Xirau, and Pedro Garfias; b) 1960s arrivals, a large group of artists. Some are still living in the building; others lived their entire lives there; c) those who arrived in the 1970s-1980s and are now in their sixties; d) those who arrived in the 1990s, and are now in their 40s and 50s; e) and the newest residents, now under 40. Many of the artists on my list have lived with their families and raised their kids there. Some of those children grew up and decided to stay in the building, and now a third generation has grown up to also be artists; in some cases they have decided to return to the homes of their grandparents or parents. Some apartments have been passed down within families, generations moving in and out leaving the space for the next one. Other families have decided to rent, in many cases to other artists they know. Others have used the apartments to open offices/studios related to their line of work. Generations grow up together exploring and playing with art, and the children were present in both their parents' artistic events and social gatherings. For many, this communal experience was a determining factor in their decision to become artists.

Artists use the apartments for work. All classical musicians use their apartments as the main place for rehearsal, composition, and work-related transactions. Designers, pho-



tographers, and writers spend most of their working hours at home, and in some cases, especially designers, their home is also their official business address. Theater people and actors use their apartments less intensely, but also report that they use them to develop projects. Those few who have separate studios choose locations within walking distance from the building. Painters use apartments as studios, and a couple of former residents had had their publishing houses in their apartments at different times.

Two artistic movements had central figures as residents. They existed simultaneously and had similar intentions, separated conceptually only by their media; one was made up of writers, the other, painters. The Mid-century Generation was a literary movement that covered both fiction and critical essays about theater, film, and painting. The second was known as the Generation of the Break, made up mainly of painters. Both opposed the dominant nationalist discourse and took a critical view of the post-Revolutionary state and its cultural policies. Both looked to cosmopolitanism and diversity in opposition to nationalism and statism. Central figures of the two circles lived in the building. However, it was a sub-group of them, the House on the Lake Group, that actually centered its activities in the building. The core of the group were writers Juan Vicente Melo, Juan José Gurrola, Juan García Ponce, Inés Arredondo, Eduardo Lizalde, and Tomás Segovia, and painters Fernando García Ponce, and Manuel Felgueres. For them, meetings and parties in the building's apartments are mentioned not only in their accounts of how their aesthetic intentions developed, but many of their works also deal with

Social interaction among residents has given rise to various forms of aesthetic influences, as well as artistic, economic, and political support, and also what can be called accidental dissemination of different kinds of information and knowledge.

the building itself and the life of its residents. The group got its name because Gurrola, Segovia, and Melo were all directors of the House on the Lake in Chapultepec Park, a National Autonomous University of Mexico cultural facility, also within a walking distance of Edificios Condesa. They used it for producing multidisciplinary projects and to disseminate their aesthetic and political views.

Although other movement circles cannot be intimately associated with its residents, the building's significance as a social gathering space for broader networks of artists is well documented. Here, I can mention two who are central figures in Mexico City's cultural life around whom broad artistic-social circles have formed and have continued for more than 30 years. One was created around the Pecannins family, and the other around the contemporary classical music composer Mario Lavista.

The Pecannins sisters (Montserrat, Ana María, and Teresa) opened a gallery in 1964, which became an essential place for the Generation of the Break and a connection to European painters in the 1960s and 1970s. The three sisters moved into the Condesa buildings in the early 1960s, and their apartments were an extension of the gallery and a place for social gatherings of artists. Montserrat married Brian Nissen, a sculptor and painter, in 1965; they still live there. The second and third generations of the family became artists in different fields: music, painting, film, and most of them remain in the building, continuing the tradition of hosting resident and non-resident artists' social gatherings.

Another social circle has gravitated around Mario Lavista. He came to the building in 1972; also in contact with the House on the Lake Group, he participated in their cultural activities and through them became a resident. Lavista, besides being Mexico's most important living classical music composer, is a leading figure in the Mexican cultural scene. Mario is the founder of and continues to direct the musical journal *Pauta* and for many years has published a column of musical essays in the influential journal *Letras libres*, initiated by Octavio Paz. Lavista's apartment has been the gathering place for a variety of artists and intellectuals. Besides his occasional



Plácido Domingo spent his younger years in his parents' apartment there, along with the most beloved Mexican composer of children's music, Francisco Gabilondo Soler, "Cri-Cri."

soirées, he hosts a weekly meeting with friends. In these social events, both residents and visitors participate.

Social interaction among residents has given rise to various forms of aesthetic influences, as well as artistic, economic, and political support, and what can be called accidental dissemination of different kinds of information and knowledge. Artists related accounts of common forms of implicit, unplanned collaboration; and other examples of partnerships were documented in biographies, published interviews, and other artists' reports. Musicians have produced the most collaborations that have resulted in co-authored work. They not only collaborate with each other, but have also participated with artists in many other disciplines and media. Composers and performers ranging from classical to pop and from different generations have lived in the building. In the past, Plácido Domingo spent his younger years in his parents' apartment there, along with the most beloved Mexican composer of children's music, Francisco Gabilondo Soler, "Cri-Cri." In recent years, the building has been the home of the string quartet Cuarteto Latinoamericano, the pianists Alberto Cruzprieto, Luisa Durón, and Teté Cuevas, and classical composers Lavista, Álvarez del Toro, and Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras. In other fields of music, film score composer Pablo Valero and film music designer Lynn Fainchtein also live there. In the pop music vein, I have found members of the rock groups, Café Tacuba, Zoe, Love la Feme, Jorge Reyes, and jazz and pop singers Betsy Pecannins, Margie Bermejo, and María del Sol. Collaboration

among them and with theater directors, film directors, dancers, and other theatrical artists abound.

Mario Lavista gives us the best examples of the sort of collaboration that happens among the residents. Together with Joselo from Café Tacuba, he composed the music for the film *Vivir mata* (Living Kills), in what Lavista calls an "exotic and strange partnership." He and painter Sandra Pani put together an exhibition of 36 of her drawings with his original music to be played along with them. With dancer Columbia Moya and playwright Juan José Gurrola, he created a multidisciplinary show that was performed in the Fine Arts Palace, Mexico's most important music venue. In particular, he has collaborated on many occasions with the Cuarteto Latinoamericano. Arón Britan, the quartet's second violinist, lived in the apartment above Lavista for 20 years; he remembers Lavista calling him to his apartment or knocking on the door to show him a piece he had just written and asking for his opinion on the composition and on the technical matters in his string works. Lavista composed different pieces of music for the quartet, but one, in particular, summarizes my argument: *String Quartet #3 Music for My Neighbor*, dedicated to Arón Britan, his upstairs neighbor, written in Edificios Condesa and recorded by Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

Edificios Condesa is an exceptional case of such a high density of artists living in a single small block for almost a century. My research has documented various forms of formal and informal collaboration among its residents. Regarding the formation of artistic movement circles based on the building, I have found only one clear example; however, many residents are/were leading art figures in Mexico City and their homes have been nodes of many social artists' circles. ■■

NOTES

- ¹ S. Sukin, *Loft Living, Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982).
- ² R. Florida, "Cities and the Creative Class," *City & Community* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 3-19.
- ³ H. S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1982).
- ⁴ D. Crane, *Invisible Colleges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
- ⁵ Charles Kadushin, "Networks and Circles in the Production of Culture," *American Behavioral Scientist* vol. 19, no. 6, 1976, pp. 769-784.

Mexico City. The City of Palaces, Majestic Buildings, and Extraordinary Spaces

Living in one of the biggest cities on the planet is complicated. Moving through the daily chaos is not a major act of heroism, though; for capital residents, it's practically a habit by now. We do have mixed feelings about our city: sometimes we love it and other times we wish we had not grown up here. But we have also acquired the ability to take the time to enjoy it, think about it, question it, long for it, project it into the future, and ask it a thousand questions, even if at bottom we know that the answers can only be found inside us, those who make it live.

This section is about all of this: its art, its architecture, its identity, its past, and its road to the future. The marks history has left on the city, its traditions, and its spaces—public, private, and common, everyone's and no one's—have motivated the pens of the contributors to this issue.





The Central Alameda Park, created in the late sixteenth century, is Latin America's oldest park.

Public Space In Mexico City

William Brinkman-Clark*
Alejandro Hernández Gálvez**

From the spheres of academe and professional practice, the authors talk about public space in Mexico City, exchanging thoughts about issues such as whether public space is the same as common space; whether public space is the property of everyone or of no one; and whether the people who use the space are the ones who make it public.

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Unless otherwise specified, all photos by Gabriel González.



The way in which the public space has changed over the last 30 years is clear evidence of how we relate to our notions of chaos.

William Brinkman-Clark: I've always been interested in the way the notion of chaos is used as a category when talking about Mexico City; and I think it would be a good starting point for this conversation. This notion harks back to the idea of complexity without any kind of order. And, from my point of view, there are two ways in which this unfolds in the urban sphere: as *the* factor that impedes the city from jettisoning barbarism and becoming civilized, or as an almost idyllic quality that can only be found in romanticized imaginaries of the past in which the community ruled. The way in which the public space has changed over the last 30 years is clear evidence of how we relate to our notions of chaos and the different forms that have emerged from that. I'm concerned about those who make a fetish of intervention in that space as a way of ordering or domesticating the chaos, and I'm even more concerned when those forms seem



to increasingly take a permanent place in the imaginary not only of the political class, which seems to have the power of decision on how the public space is transformed, but also of the majority of the citizenry. I'm concerned about this because building a consensus around this discourse is achieved through the "creative" destruction of those singular public spaces that, precisely because of their singularity, strengthen the possibility of an aesthetic experience.

Alejandro Hernández Gálvez: The only things that exist are good public space, bad public space, and chaos. Even though it's just an easy paraphrase of T. S. Eliot's phrase that Monsiváis uses as an epigraph in *Los rituales del caos* (The Rituals of Chaos), I think it helps us imagine that on *the other side* of that chaos with two faces that you mention (chaos as disaster and chaos as promise), we also have

two variations on the public space. Creative chaos is the vitality of a culture and therefore of a city. In Mexico City it is *the street*, what we “authentically” mean to say by that term when we say somebody has “street smarts,” and the good public space would be the one that allows the most street life in the best possible way. But that description only works for defining opposites: chaos as destruction and bad public space. Based on our own day-to-day practice, we should ask ourselves what we consider vital or productive in the city and, therefore, which spaces we think serve it best. It seems obvious that for someone whose productive life in the city depends on the speed with which he or she

Creative chaos
is the vitality of a culture
and therefore of a city.

can move in it, marches and street markets, or processions and neighborhood pick-up games seem like obstacles or hindrances. From their point of view they are chaos, undoubtedly, and the best public space would be the one that would limit or contain everything that is an obstacle. In that sense, the difficulty with consensus is that, instead of achieving the possibility of differences and dissent (productive chaos), it imposes a single possibility: consensus homogenizes. With regard to this, we should ask ourselves what we call an *aesthetic experience*. If we reduce “the aesthetic” to the relationship between an object and a viewer, we might forget the fundamental, almost etymological, aspect of “the aesthetic,” in which *sensibility* and *meaning* converge. How can we seek or strengthen the construction of *meaning* even when not only what I see but what I experience is, in some or many ways, foreign to my *sensibility*?



The central part of University City, known as “the Islands,” is an oasis for students and non-students alike, where everyone can be at home.

WBC: I like that you used *Los rituales del caos* as a reference because I think Monsiváis contributes the one thing lacking to complete this kind of framework that we're drawing for this discussion: consumption. Undoubtedly, we should define what the aesthetic experience is. You have brought in the idea of dissent; and if we agree that efficiently constructing contemporary consensus depends to a great extent on the homogenization of consumption, then the aesthetic strength of dissent lies in its resistance to that relationship. And I believe that the "public" in the public space is precisely the possibility it offers as an emplacement for dissent. Now, if that's the case, are there remaining public spaces in Mexico City? Monsiváis is careful to note that all the emplacements in his text (the street markets, the university stadium, the subway, the Basilica of Guadalupe) have lost something in the face of the overwhelming advance of consumption. Do you think there are truly public spaces in Mexico City?

AHG: In 1965, Charles Moore published an article in *Perspecta* magazine: "You Have to Pay for the Public Life." Moore compares the civic centers of California cities, particularly Los Angeles, with Disneyland, and finds that the latter surpasses the former in the number of people who seem to take part in different activities in the space, or simply enjoy it. "Disneyland, it appears, is enormously important and successful just because it recreates all the chances to respond to a public environment, which Los Angeles particularly no longer has."¹ Moore says that he wrote that article in Guanajuato, using it as an example of a city that has been able to



Patricia Pérez Ramírez

The "public" in the public space is precisely the possibility it offers as an emplacement for dissent.



Patricia Pérez Ramírez



Thousands of capital residents eat at street food stands every day.

It's hard to think about the “authenticity”
of certain public spaces beyond
a certain ideology of “consumption.”

grow and add “a whole new layer of twentieth-century visual delights” without losing its “picturesque eighteenth-century delights.”² Of course, Moore’s ideas are problematic, especially because we cannot think of Los Angeles as a “normal” city, without the “public space” that Disneyland, its “artificial” counterpart, offers at a cost: you have to pay for the public space! But I also don’t believe we can think of Guanajuato as a “normal” city, and not just from the point of view of Moore, as a tourist. Guanajuato is a clear example of a city that makes its history a representation that it offers the visitor as an “aesthetic experience.” What’s interesting about this is that, beyond the admittance fee in one case, both “cities” (Guanajuato and Los Angeles/Disneyland) offer the visitor —more than their inhabitants— experiences to be consumed regardless of whether we’re talking about the “vulgarity” of the parade of

movie characters or the “sophistication” of Cervantino Festival medieval theatrical interludes performed in every alleyway. These cases may seem extreme, but they lead me to suppose that it’s hard to think about the “authenticity” of certain public spaces beyond a certain ideology of “consumption.”

In Mexico City, what is more public: the Central Alameda Park, recently renovated as a place where doing practically anything that isn’t just looking has been banned; Chapultepec —and which Chapultepec? that of the theatrical Anthropology Museum with its esplanade with the Papantla Flyers, or the Chapultepec of children’s parties with balloons and piñatas in the shape of . . . Disney characters!—; or the streets around the Tacubaya subway station, overrun by “informal” commerce and —they say— drug dealers? Perhaps all of these are truly public spaces with regard to the par-

ticular public that they construct and their expectations about how to use it. In other words —and here it’s impossible to avoid citing Manuel Delgado—, the public space may not exist at all; what may exist is only the ideology and perception of certain types and uses of public space.

In this conversation, I think we should add another kind of space, particularly in Mexico City, that was still visible at least in my long-ago childhood: the common space, the space that isn’t private but that also doesn’t obey the rules —necessarily (and inevitably?) of the state— with regard to the public. The space of pilgrimages and *quinceañera* fiestas in the street, of the gang that controls its territory, and the little boys and girls who play kick-the-can. What do you think of that space? Or rather, do we still see it?

WBC: The relationship between what we understand as common and public is very important, and these spaces you mention are just the kind that I like to think of as public. That place, between private and public, that is the central patio of the tenement, the street temporarily closed that becomes a playing field, or a battlefield, the park that hasn’t been “fixed up” like the Alameda . . . all these spaces are public because, for one moment, they belong to no one. I’m always very emphatic in underlining that a public space, in the purest sense of the word, is not a space that is everyone’s, but a space



Street sales have taken over a large part of public space.

A public space,
in the purest sense of the word,
is not a space that is everyone’s,
but a space that is no one’s.

that is no one's. In Mexico City, I think a lot of these kinds of spaces survive. For example, the "Islands" in University City, or the spaces between the Tlatelolco towers immediately come to mind. . .

AHG: I would say that the experience of the common space is always a common experience, an experience of being part of the community. The common space would be prior to the division that splits it or distributes it in two, the public and the private. And the common space may well survive beneath these two. I agree that the public space must be thought of not as everyone's but as no one's, precisely because it's a space that cannot be appropriated. That is what makes it eminently political and not economic. But my doubt is about the common space, which I insist on thinking of as prior to and necessary for understanding the public and the private. Who does it belong to? I don't think the answer can simply be "to the community" if we don't first think about what that might be. But if the public

space and the private space play in two registers that are almost symmetrical, the political and the economic, *polis* and *oikos*, the common space plays out in both spheres: a tenement party uses the central patio (a private space, with owners and economic value) and at the same time the street (a public space, owned by no one and with a political meaning). Stavros Stavrides's book *Common Space (in Common)* offers us a useful definition:

Understood as distinct from public as well as from private spaces, 'common spaces' emerge in the contemporary metropolis as sites open to public use in which, however, rules and forms of use do not depend upon and are not controlled by a prevailing authority.

He later adds, "Common space is a set of spatial relations produced by communing practices."³ In an attempt to give a day-to-day ordinary example of the superimposition but simultaneous independence of these spaces, I suppose that some of today's misunderstandings in



At main intersections, young people try their luck and show off their talent.



The experience
of the common space
is always a common experience,
an experience of being part
of the community.



our city about issues like street sales arise when people think that the corner street-seller “privatizes” the public space when he or she uses it for commercial purposes while, perhaps —or at the same time?— what he/she is doing is to transform public space, with its fixed, written, prescriptive rules, into a common space.

WBC: I was recently reading David Harvey, who is constantly fighting for the creation of urban commons. The idea is one of striking force, and I undoubtedly think it describes those spaces that allow for —or even favor— the unfolding of autonomous sensibilities and experiences. The fact that our discussion has led us to street sales is a clear symptom of the malaise of our culture, not only because it’s an activity that is easily pointed to as illegal or contrary to a certain work ethic, and therefore an ideal scapegoat, but also because —it must be said— it is an activity easily domesticated and homogenized. However —and I think this is the important point—, the fact that an activity is domesticated does not mean that the space is, too. That commons continues to be the condition for the possibility of singular experiences and sensibilities. And that force is a threat to any order, so much so that the spaces and activities are criminalized to preserve that order: neighbors’ patios, alleyways, and parks are only made visible as spaces where drugs are sold and miscreants gather. And, “informal” sales are dubbed precisely an activity that attacks the common since it is the “everyone’s property.” . . . Are there spaces left in Mexico City that have that ability to foster communing?



Chapultepec Forest, whose name in Nahuatl means Grasshopper Hill, is capital residents' favorite recreational space.

These spaces of the commons can be the ones where not so much the place itself, but what happens there, resists being domesticated, mastered, and appropriated.

AHG: I would say —perhaps too rushed and optimistically— that all of them! First off, I like the fact that together with those “spheres of the common” —I recently read that translation into Spanish for “the commons” in Humberto Beck’s book about the thinking of Ivan Illich—, you talk about “domesticated” activities. It seems impossible to me not to jump from *domus* to *oikos* and suppose a relationship between the domesticated or “domesticatable” and the economic rationality of the *oikos*, or what has an owner: lord and master. So these spaces of the commons can be the ones where not so much

the place itself, but what happens there, resists being domesticated, mastered, and appropriated. This may be related to promoting the potential not only of the common and the community-related, but of the inappropriate; to not allowing the ambiguity of those two extremes of what happens in the city to be lost, according to Massimo Cacciari: leisure on the one hand, and business on the other. This doesn’t imply that the dividing line is clean, stark, and that the street pick-up game —almost non-existent nowadays— is purely leisure and the hipster sidewalk café is only business. It also means that the distinction between formal and informal in terms of occupying the space is not definitive either. The vision that the informal unduly appropriates the common space isn’t always completely wrong, but the formal appropriation of the common space is also not unquestionable. Given the power of capital —perhaps abusing the term— to transform everything into



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Every year, thousands of pilgrims gather on the Basilica's huge esplanade to present their supplications to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

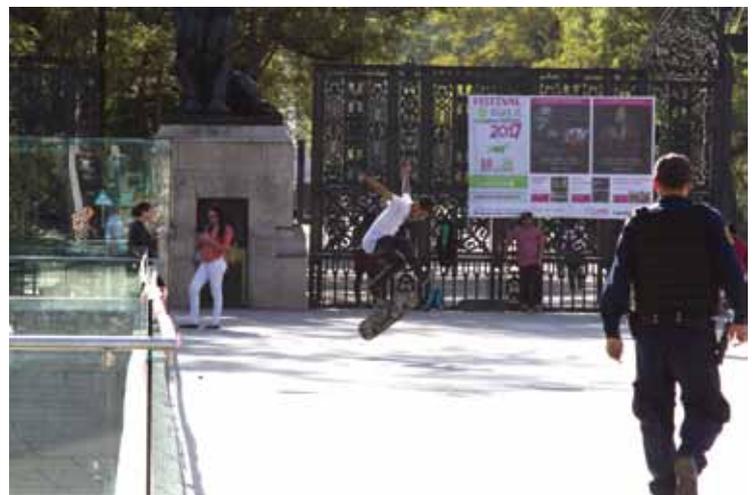
business, we should look for a way to contaminate it with leisure, to “informalize” even the most formal of the formal. People who read or chat for hours in a sidewalk café do it almost effortlessly. In contrast, anyone who sells juice or tamales on a corner doesn't always have an easy time of it in occupying the space. But the *danzón* music and dancing in the park across from Mexico City's Ciudadela shows that at certain moments the public space and the population at large coincide in a common place. Perhaps that's what it's all about: moments, not spaces. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Charles Moore, “You Have to Pay for the Public Life,” 97.14. 51.10:81/pmb/ARCHITECTURE/You%20Have%20to%20Pay%20for%20the%20Public%20Life%20-%20Selected%20Esays%20of%20Charles%20W%20Moore.pdf, p. 126.

² Ibid., p. 139

³ Stavros Stavrides, *Common Space: The City as Commons* (London: Zed Books, 2016).





More than a historic monument, the Angel of Independence has become the emblematic icon of daily life in Mexico City.

Mexico City boasts innumerable significant spaces and monuments that bring into material existence the individual and collective memory of its inhabitants.

The City and Remembrance

Mariana Abreu Olvera*

Beginning with Mexico's independence, new ways of understanding and symbolizing Mexican culture have been produced, many with the aim of building national identity. To do that, during the second half of the nineteenth century, different thinkers and political figures looked in history for the content that would nourish the symbolic construction of the nation. Collecting documents and using them to write national histories was common. And as part of that nationalist upsurge, identity narrative was accompanied by the erection of monuments in the capital and other important cities in the country. The Monument to Independence, for example, was conceived in the context of recognizing and celebrating the public figures who had launched Mexico as an independent nation.

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Photos by Gabriel González (Mercury).

During the Mexican Revolution, new concerns emerged. The dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and its attempt to “Frenchify” Mexico City were symbolized in several of the capital’s architectural projects. Some unfinished constructions were used as the foundation for new monuments, symbols of new political struggles. This was the case, for example, of the Monument to the Revolution. The penchant for nationalism was not put aside, but was re-signified in accordance with the new victories.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Mexican administrations made efforts to install a new social order, reflected in the architectural lay-out of the cities. In Mexico City, they built large housing projects in an attempt to resolve the citizenry’s problems. The monuments, far from being merely celebratory, now had a new functional, practical character. Artistic and commemorative projects would also serve as solutions for concrete problems. The Nonoalco Tlatelolco Housing Project is one of the most emblematic symbols of these new ideals of Mexican modernity.

Mexico City boasts innumerable significant spaces and monuments that bring into material existence the individual and collective memory of its inhabitants. I cannot address myself here to all of them, but only a few.

The Monument to Independence, commonly known as the Angel; the Monument to the Revolution; and the Square of Three Cultures in Tlatelolco are three examples bursting with historic, political, and cultural significance.



Bronze statue inspired by the Greek goddess Winged Victory.

What we usually see as an angel on top of a column and pedestal is actually a statue of Winged Victory, the Greek and Roman goddess who represented victory in battle.

I am interested in analyzing these three monuments since each is representative of a significant moment in Mexican history. They are evocative, very well-known edifications, part of the collective imaginary of Mexico City residents. These examples invite us to reflect on the relationship between the experiences of concrete people and the re-signification constantly underway of the spaces and monuments that hold the memory of our city.

WINGED VICTORY AND THE TURBULENT PROCESS OF ITS CONSTRUCTION

What we usually see as an angel on top of a column and pedestal is actually a statue of Winged Victory, the



The commemorative plaque states the monument’s date of construction and those of its two restorations after major earthquakes, one of which toppled the angel from its column.



Different moments in the city's architecture can be seen on Reforma Boulevard.



Reforma Avenue was to be the home of the monuments representing, respectively, the discovery of the New World, the Aztec Empire, colonial domination, Independence, and the Reform.

Greek and Roman goddess who represented victory in battle and that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was taken on as the symbol of Mexican independence. This emblematic monument was conceived as early as 1843 during the administration of President Antonio López de Santa Anna. That year, a contest was held to build a “monument that would remind us of the heroic actions and campaigns for Mexican Independence.”¹ The San Carlos Academy was in charge of judging that first contest, won by French architect Enrique Griffo. Unhappy with the decision, however, Santa Anna paid Griffo reparations, but commissioned Lorenzo de la Hidalga, a Spanish architect residing in Mexico and who had won second place in the contest, to build the monument.

Lorenzo de la Hidalga visualized the Monument to Independence for the Plaza de Armas in front of the

National Palace. The cornerstone was laid in a solemn ceremony on September 16, 1843. The base or *zócalo* (the name by which the plaza began to be known and is known until today) was built there. However, construction halted and no one spoke of it again. In 1859, a sad street light was put up on the base, leaving the project that sought to commemorate the heroes of Independence in obscurity.

It was not until 1864 that Maximilian of Hapsburg took up the idea of building a monument to independence again. After two failed calls, as Reforma Avenue was being constructed, the idea of erecting the monument along with four others to pay homage to the great eras of Mexican history was once again considered. Each roundabout on Reforma Avenue was to be the home to one of these monuments representing, respectively, the discovery of the New World, the Aztec Empire, colonial domination, independence, and the Reform. Construction began in 1877 with the monument to Christopher Columbus, the representative of the discovery of America, and continued in 1887 with the monument to Cuauhtémoc, the representative of the Aztec Empire. However, construction did not continue with the monument to colonial domination, once again holding up work on the Monument to Independence.



A monument to Christopher Columbus stands on Reforma Boulevard to commemorate the Europeans' discovery of America.

After many other initiatives that came out of different competitions and commissions that all failed, architect Antonio Rivas Mercado was commissioned in 1900 to erect the much-anticipated monument to honor the memory of the heroes of independence. Rivas Mercado, who had studied in France under the influence of the classicists, based himself on the proposals of Cluss and Schulze, as well as on those of the engineers Porfirio Díaz (son of the president) and Francisco Durini, who had been in charge of erecting the monument in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was Rivas Mercado, then, who was lucky enough to be able to finally bring those plans to fruition; and, in 1910, as part of the celebrations of the Centennial of Independence, the Winged Victory was inaugurated as a symbol of that historic process.

Today, the Independence Column is a fundamental Mexico City landmark. Although its objective was to commemorate the heroes of the independence struggle, those of us who live in the city today have given it innumerable new meanings. Demonstrations and marches that

use the Angel as the point of departure or destination; the celebration of soccer victories; free, mass concerts; and photography shoots for quinceañeras or brides are only a few of the examples of everyday events that take place at the foot of the renowned column. Perhaps the Monument to Independence is not associated in the collective imaginary with its historic significance and original commemorative aim, but these everyday experiences give it a new symbolism. The monument feeds on the new stories accumulated in the city's memory.

THE UNFINISHED LEGISLATIVE PALACE

The Monument to the Revolution was once to have been the starting point of the Legislative Palace under the regime of Porfirio Díaz. In 1898, an international call



Resistance to renewing construction of the Legislative Palace grew because it represented the French tastes of a government that had been defeated. The structure, in the form of a cage, remained intact for decades.



went out for the design of that building. The first place was declared vacant, and the project presented by Pier Paolo Quaglia, who won third place, was accepted as the closest to the contest's aims. Unfortunately, Quaglia died, and the commission was given to architect Emilio Dondé Preciat, with construction supervised by Antonio M. Anza. Since both had been members of the panel of judges, this generated criticism, particularly by Rivas Mercado. Thanks to his opposition, the decision was made to review the contending projects, and the one presented by Emile Bénard, a French architect who had studied at the École de Beaux-Arts and its classical school, was finally selected.²

In 1904, the contract was signed and work began. However, it was interrupted by the fall of Porfirio Díaz's government and the revolutionary movement. Only part of the construction was left standing. When Madero's movement won the day, an attempt was made to renew construction; however, Victoriano Huerta's coup frustrated the project once again. Later, under the different revolutionary governments, resistance to renewing construction grew because the palace represented the French tastes of a government that had been de-





Begun during the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship as a legislative palace, the Monument to the Revolution was recycled to commemorate the 1910-1917 movement.



Paradoxically, the foundations of what was thought to be a legislative palace of a dictatorship ended up being the monument to the movement that brought that government down.

feated and people did not want to return to that. The structure, in the form of a cage, remained intact for decades.

For years, Bénard pressed to finish his work, which was impossible in the circumstances of social revolt. In 1922, someone thought of using the central dome to build a national Pantheon, but that never happened. In 1928, the French architect met with Alberto J. Pani in Paris and decided to come to Mexico. However, he encountered a country in crisis and was forced to return to Europe, where he died a few months later.

It was not until 1932 that architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia proposed using the structure to build a kind of *arc de triomphe* to honor the 1910 Revolution. Obregón sought out artist Oliverio Martínez, who would sculpt the four pieces that top the structure's four columns, representing independence, the Reform Laws, workers' legislation, and the agrarian laws. In 1938, construction on the monument was completed which, strangely enough, never had an inauguration.





Cuauhtémoc Roundabout, dedicated to the last Aztec monarch.

The Monument to the Revolution clearly represents how a project's initial objectives are not necessarily always those with which its construction is finished. Paradoxically, the foundations of what was thought to be a legislative palace of a dictatorship ended up being the monument to the movement that brought that government down. Perhaps without a structure that had become useless, no one would ever have thought of building a Monument to the Revolution, or at least, it would not have had the characteristics it has now.

Today, the dimensions of the Monument to the Revolution impress any visitor. The gigantic edifice is surrounded by fountains illuminated at night by colored lights; inside, visitors can go up to an observation point, see an exhibit of rifles and bullets, or go to a cafeteria and a shop that sells souvenirs of the Revolution. Today, the monument is a tourist attraction, the scene for agreeable photographs uploaded to the social networks. It is difficult to find signifiers today more deeply rooted in the collective imaginary than this monument that arose out of the need to erase an uncompleted project. Even so, it is a fundamental reference point for Mexico City, since it celebrates the victory of the twentieth century's most important social revolt

Identity narrative was accompanied by the erection of monuments in the capital and other important cities in the country.

and is, intrinsically, due to the history of its construction, a symbol of the defeat of the Porfirista government.

TLATELOLCO AND ITS LAYERS OF HISTORY

Tlatelolco is the name of a city founded by the Tlatelolcas, a cultural offshoot of the Mexicas; the city was located on an island to the north of Tenochtitlan and the site of the region's most important market. The fall of Tlatelolco was the result of the famous battle on August 13, 1521, against the Spanish conquistadors led by Hernán Cortés. The city was later sacked and the materials obtained used to build the College of the Holy Cross of Santiago of Tlatelolco, the first preparatory school in the Americas, built by the Franciscans for the indigenous people.

Little has been written about Tlatelolco's post-colonial history. However, we do know that between the



Photo: Mario Pani Archive, courtesy of Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco/UNAM.

Architect Mario Pani was the moving force behind the construction of the Nonoalco Tlatelolco Urban Complex.

Mexican Revolution and 1964, the site and the area around it were the home to heavy industry, and its railroad station was the hub where innumerable migrants came from other states, many of whom settled in the area and became workers in Mexico City. Tlatelolco, then, became a marginalized area, where tenements housed low-income people.

In 1957, during Adolfo López Mateos's presidential campaign, he promised social well-being that would come from building large-scale housing projects. In 1958, once in office, López Mateos and Mexico City Mayor Ernesto P. Uruchurtu commissioned Mario Pani to build one such project, which came to be known as the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Urban Project. Pani's proposal consisted of "installing spatial order in the face of the threat of the growth of unregulated areas that facilitated social anarchy."³

The people who had been living in the Tlatelolco tenements were displaced and promised that they would be given access to better housing that would put an end to the supposedly deplorable conditions that prevailed in the area. The paradox was that the housing project built was financially inaccessible for the previous residents, who never returned to their old homes.

Four years after the housing project was concluded, the site would be the base for a student movement that was violently repressed by the government that had promised social well-being only a few years before.

At the same time that construction of the housing project was in the planning stage, work was going on to preserve the archaeological site of the ruins of the ancient Tlatelolca city and the old College of Santiago Tlatelolco. That is how the Square of Three Cultures was founded, the symbolic center of the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Project. The plaza's plaque reads, "It was neither victory nor defeat. It was the painful birth of the mestizo people that is the Mexico of today." The square is named for the three cultures that the government sees as the constituent parts of the modern Mexican nation: the first culture, the indigenous culture, is represented by the pre-Hispanic buildings; the second, the Hispanic culture, is reflected in the monastery dating from the era of the Viceroyalty of New Spain; the third, modern Mexican culture, guided by progress, is represented in the housing project and what was then the Banobras skyscraper, which later belonged to the

Ministry of Foreign Relations and is today the University Cultural Center and Memorial to 1968.

Four years after the housing project was concluded, the site would be the operating platform for a student movement that was violently repressed by the government that had promised social well-being only a few years before. Tlatelolco became a name in the collective political memory that stood for social struggle and the demand for justice. This is how the great monument that the government conceived of as an instrument for its own self-aggrandizement took on unsuspected dimensions. Tlatelolco became the basis for a symbolic social unity in which the state not only does not participate, but is actually its staunch enemy.

No other place in Mexico City offers up such visible layers of history. The Square of Three Cultures is in itself a historic discourse offering a visual journey through Mexican history. A visit to the site is sufficient to give flight to the imagination and journey in a single day through the different eras that have marked our coun-

try. From the pre-Hispanic life of the Tlatelolcas to the student massacre in 1968, Tlatelolco is home to many of the voices that echo through the historic, cultural, political, and social imaginary of those of us who live in Mexico City. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya, "Los proyectos para la columna conmemorativa de la Independencia en la Ciudad de México (1843-1854)," *Revista de historia y ciencias sociales no. 70*, Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, January-April 2008, p. 49. The information for the summary I present here is from Alicia Sánchez Mejorada de Gil, *La columna de la Independencia* (Mexico City: Jilguero, 1990), photography by Héctor Velasco Facio, p. 96.
- ² Humberto Musacchio, "El palacio que no fue," *Emeequis* (Mexico City), no date, <http://www.m-x.com.mx/xml/pdf/224/62.pdf>, accessed July 6, 2017.
- ³ Cristóbal Andrés Jácome, "La construcción del orden," in *Desafío a la estabilidad. Procesos artísticos en México 1952-1967* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Turner), p. 314; and George F. Flaherty, "Tlatelolco inquietante, yuxtaposiciones incómodas," in *Desafío a la estabilidad. Procesos artísticos en México 1952-1967* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Turner).



Photo: Mario Pani Archive, courtesy of Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco/UNAM.

The archaeological site, the Santiago Church, and the Nonoalco Tlatelolco Urban Complex combine the pre-Hispanic past, the colonial period, and modernity in a city that continues to grow.

In Search of New Forms The Architecture of the Mexican Revolution

Diana Paulina Pérez Palacios*



The old Medical Center collapsed in the 1985 earthquake; it was later replaced by the Twenty-first Century Specialties Center.

The culmination of the Mexican Revolution would bring with it a program for national construction. The development of this nation, reemerging from the world's first twentieth-century revolutionary movement, centered on creating a political apparatus that

would promote nationalist values and foster development. This would only be achieved through a program for advancing in three priority areas: education, housing, and health.

When I say that the nation was just beginning to build itself, I literally mean that the government made a priority of erecting buildings that would not only supply the services needed to fulfill its political program,

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Photos by Gabriel González (Mercury).

but that they would also represent, in and of themselves, the ideals of the Mexican Revolution.

In the 1920s, after the armed movement ended, considerable concern existed for the Department of Health to be forged as a strong institution for society. This meant it would undertake great works: the Popotla Health Farm; the department's head offices; and the Tuberculosis Hospital, located in the southern part of Mexico City. In the 1940s and 1950s, more spaces for health care were created, such as the Gea González and La Raza Hospitals and the Medical Center.

In the field of education, monumental works were erected such as the National School for Teachers; the National Conservatory of Music; the Zacatenco campus of the National Polytechnic Institute; and the jewel in the crown of educational infrastructure, the National Autonomous University of Mexico's University City.

In the 1930s, housing for workers would be created; its simplicity of form, materials, and construction would seek to provide decent housing for society's most vulnerable groups. Later, the great housing proj-

The culmination of the Mexican Revolution would bring with it a program for national construction.

ects and residential estates such as Satellite City and the Pedregal de San Angel area would be built when, toward the middle of the twentieth century, architects and urbanists would turn their gaze to the city's outlying areas. It is quite well known that in those decades, the country went through a phase of rapid "modernization," reflected not only in its economy, but in the cultural reference points of modernity, such as buildings, which became its iconic forms. One example of this is the Latin American Tower in downtown Mexico City.

In addition, forms from abroad began to be more frequently noted in the work of Mexican architects. José Villagrán García and Juan O'Gorman adopted and defended the functionalist architecture reminiscent of



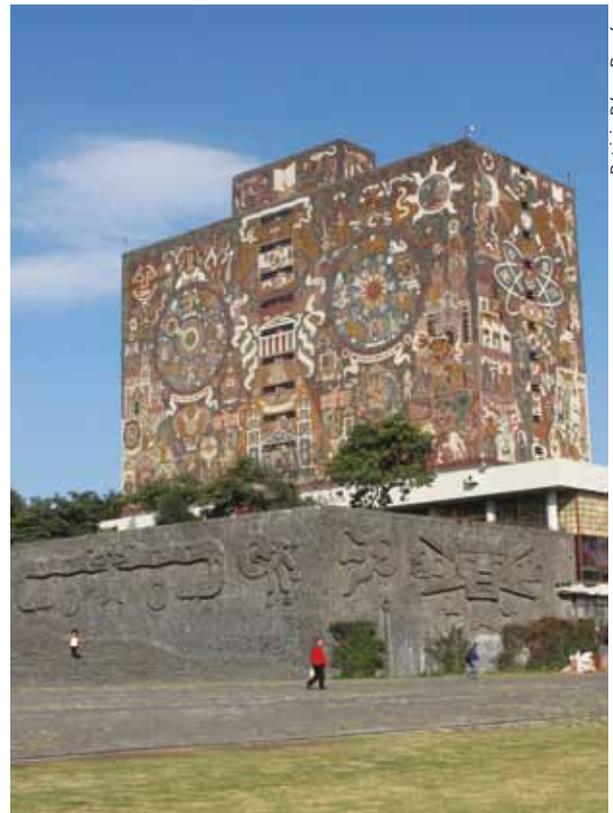
The Ministry of Health building constructed in 1953 was declared an artistic monument in 1991.



The National Conservatory of Music boasts important artistic pieces, such as Armando Quezada's group of sculptures on the façade and murals by José Clemente Orozco.

The country went through a phase of rapid “modernization,” reflected not only in its economy, but in the cultural reference points of modernity, such as buildings.

Swiss architect Le Corbusier and the German Mies van der Rohe.¹ This architecture was taught to the new generations of students, with the result that they incorporated the ideology of greater efficacy and lower cost into their projects. However, around the 1940s, many of these young architects decided on experimentation in the form and use of new materials as a response to the fervent quest for a Mexican identity in architecture that had begun in the 1920s. However, initially, even all the nationalist efforts had not managed to delineate the concepts of “the Mexican” that the architects were to take into account. The definition of this nationalism they were working toward would become, then, a field of formal experimentation throughout the 1920s and would be represented in different constructions.



Patricia Pérez Ramírez

The National Autonomous University of Mexico's Central Library is a master work by Juan O'Gorman, a mosaic of small colored stones.

Just as muralism in the field of art paralleled an aesthetic-political program linked to the country's reality, architecture was inserted under the same guidelines using its own medium. Based on its own formal particularities, historical research, and exploration with regional materials decades later, architects began to establish a dialogue among themselves about how to represent the Mexican experience. In addition, magazines and books from abroad and the trips they themselves took promoted a closer look at the architectural trends from other places, mainly Europe, and above all, the maximum representative of the modern movement, Le Corbusier. This link would create a kind of awareness of the post-revolutionary architecture as a blank page that allowed for experimentation with the values of the architectural avant-garde. The quest for new ways of building and the lack of definition of a Mexican architectural identity made it possible for other forms to be taken on board within the pantheon of proposals. Thus, the architecture of the post-revolutionary period not only referenced a constant quest for defining the parameters of nationalism, but also an exploration of architectural modernity.



The monumental National Teachers' School is home to the 380-meter-long mural *Allegory* by José María Orozco.

Architects began to establish a dialogue among themselves about how to represent the Mexican experience.



In the art deco style, the Handball Court of Mexico was the capital's first inside sports venue.

The quest for new ways of building and the undefined Mexican architectural identity made it possible for other forms to be taken on board within the pantheon of proposals.

In this context, great works stand out that are in and of themselves the result of the first crosscutting theme that structures post-revolutionary architecture: the representation of “what is Mexican” and the value in terms of identity of a renewed nation. Architects like Carlos Obregón Santacilia and José Villagrán García began to explore this objective through different formal lines and were commissioned by the Department of Health to build its headquarters and the health farm, respectively.

Construction began on the Health Department building in 1925, and it is one of the most emblematic examples of the encounter between the quests for modernity and nationalism. Located in the triangle formed by Lieja Street and Tacubaya Avenue in Mexico City, next to the Entryway of Lions opening onto Chapultepec Forest, the building’s formal line is reminiscent of art deco, but combined with a series of characteristics that make it uniquely authentic: black granite framing the entryway fuses with the mixed structure of the entire building; different materials, like the steel in the bridge connecting different spaces, together with the reinforced concrete mezzanine; and the integrated visual artwork, like the reliefs and sculptures by Manuel Centurión and Hans Pillig; William Spratling’s designs; and finally Diego Rivera’s stained-glass windows and murals. The building represents the joint efforts of architects and visual artists and/or designers to present a comprehensive work, an ideological stance that would be adopted decades later by the architects of what was called the Movement of Visual Integration. It is no coincidence that later, in the 1940s, the Medical Center, built by Enrique Yáñez, would also be a joint effort by architects and artists to raise the construction to monumental stature, in which the concepts of national identity and architectural modernity had matured.



The Latin American Tower, for many decades the city’s highest building, has never been damaged by an earthquake.

The Popotla Health Farm and Hygiene Institute (1925), created for experimentation in creating vaccines, were built from a merely modernistic design based on a lack of ornamentation and a minimization of forms. In addition to the sanitary specificity this architecture required, Villagrán proposed this hygienic trait as an aesthetic value he would repeat in his later work (the Huipulco Tuberculosis Hospital [1929], the Jesús Hospital [ca. 1934], and the Medical Center's National Cardiology Institute [1937], just to name a few of his many hospitals).

In education, building new architectural complexes that would provide a healthy atmosphere conducive to children's development would also be a priority. José Vasconcelos's educational program emphasized the construction of spaces that would be appropriate for the development of the nation. In the 1920s, once again, Carlos Obregón Santacilia, commissioned by Vasconcelos to build the Benito Juárez Educational Complex (1924-1925), would do outstanding work. This project, even before the Health Department building, represented an exploration not so much in terms of modernity, but in the development of Mexico's identity, where the architect used neo-colonial style as a solution.

Obregón Santacilia recognized the racial mixture that the Mexican baroque evidenced in terms of materials and formal elements as key for representing "the Mexican" as a formula linking the two cultures, the indigenous and the Spanish.

In terms of government works, the neo-colonial style seemed not to work in the context of post-revolutionary modernity. Strict adherence to primary values of Mexican culture led to the use of neo-Mayan formulas and Mesoamerican motifs to create another architectural proposal. Mexico's pavilion in Seville's 1929 Ibero-American Exposition, designed by architect Manuel Amábilis, was the clear result of how pre-Hispanic elements were integrated into a government-promoted architecture seeking to represent the country's progress. However, these forms were also surpassed by the exaltation of the values of European architec-

Strict adherence to primary values of Mexican culture led to the use of neo-Mayan formulas and Mesoamerican motifs to create another architectural proposal.



Today the esplanade of the Monument to the Revolution is used for leisure activities and social protests.

tural modernity that for young Mexican architects was the most viable solution for building the city.

Juan O’Gorman is one of the foremost representatives of that avant-garde. Between 1931 and 1932, he built the Diego Rivera Studio House in the San Ángel area. The house is known for its merely functional architecture, completely devoid of ornament, openly displaying the concrete walls with floor-to-ceiling windows and simple metal molding. After this first proposal, in 1933, Minister of Education Narciso Bassols commissioned him to build a series of schools designed on functionalist principles, which adapted perfectly to the country’s hygienist needs, leading O’Gorman to call this new architecture “building engineering.” His achievement was to build 25 schools in only six months, clearly showing the advantages of the architectural avant-garde as a solution for the country’s needs and representative of the ideals of the revolution: quickly providing the population with what it needed at minimum cost. Functionalism then became the banner that represented the values of the avant-garde and the socialist stance that was growing in the 1930s. Projects

such as those of the Mexican Electrical Workers’ Union and workers housing became representative and symbolic buildings of modern architecture.

With the years, the maturation of the quest for national identity linked functionalism to fixed characteristics such as regional materials, the abstraction of pre-Hispanic forms, and the integration of the visual arts. This amalgamation then proposed a modern Mexican architecture, developed with contemporary techniques and materials, but linked with specifically Mexican techniques, materials, and motifs. University City is the culmination and maximum symbol of modern Mexican architecture. Among its many buildings are the Rector’s Tower, covered with windows, and the library, whose basalt base boasts pre-Hispanic motifs. In the esplanades are buildings constructed on pillars, leaving the ground floor free, as well as those reminiscent of the bases of pyramids, such as the open ball courts. University City, finished in 1952, shows a way of building that would later be emulated in the Ministry of Communications and Public Works and the Medical Center, to name just two of the most important projects.

The Diego Rivera Studio House in the San Ángel area is known for its functional architecture, completely devoid of ornament.



The Diego Rivera Studio House was designed in the functionalist style by Juan O’Gorman (1931).

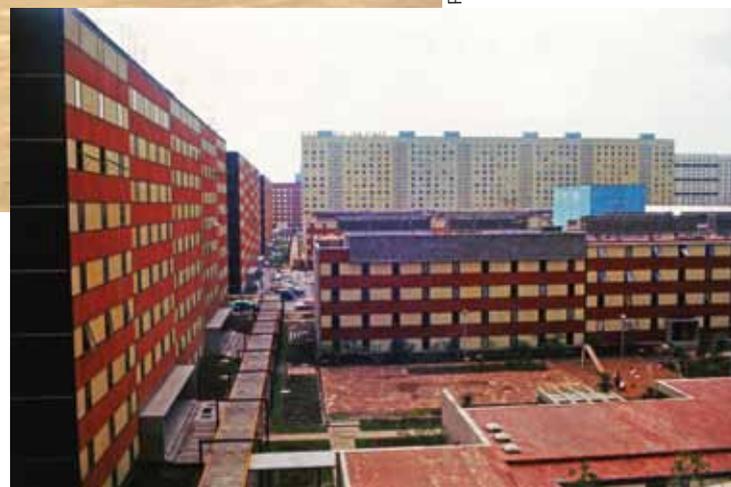


Photos courtesy of the Diego Rivera Studio House Museum/Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes



Photos: Mario Pani Archive, courtesy of Centro Cultural Tlatelolco / UNAM.

With the years, the quest for national identity linked functionalism to fixed characteristics such as regional materials, the abstraction of pre-Hispanic forms, and the integration of the visual arts.



In its time, the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Urban Complex was the faithful expression of the “stabilizing development” period in the second half of the twentieth century.

Thus, monumental construction was one of the visual, aesthetic, and affective values that became characteristic of post-revolutionary architecture, which then becomes a monument erected as representative of the political values of the time. It was hegemonic, and, proposed from the seat of power, through the years it achieved formal consolidation, becoming a symbol of progress, with examples like the Monument to the Revolution and the Latin American Tower.

Many of these buildings are now empty, not having adapted to the needs of today. Buildings like Mexico’s Handball Court (1929), built by Joaquín Capilla and Teodoro Kinhard, which until only a few months ago was in disuse and basically a ruin, is one of the most representative of art deco in Mexico. Villagrán’s Health Farm was also demolished using the argument that the city had to be modernized, just like the Tuberculosis Hospital, whose remodeling put an end to its original forms; and the Juárez

Multifamily Project and the Prado Hotel, were destroyed by the 1985 earthquake. All of these huge works exalted in their forms the need to transcend, and now transcend from their ruins, or in our memories.

The architecture of the Revolution represents a quest that symbolizes a revolution. Its ways of projecting itself and being built celebrate the revolution, but it also attempts to take a political position of its own in the face of the country’s circumstances, proposing a series of monuments that even today continue to represent an imaginary and a set of ideals of its place in past history and our own present. **NM**

NOTES

¹ Jorge Alberto Manrique, “El proceso de las artes: 1910-1970,” in Martha Fernández and Margarito Sandoval, comps., *Una visión del arte y de la historia*, volume V (Mexico City: UNAM-IIE, 2007), p. 92.



Mexico City Markets Stores for all Five Senses

Teresa Jiménez*



Tlatelolco Open-Air Market, a mural by Diego Rivera in the National Palace.

Listening to ingenious sales pitches; touching the fruit to see if it's ready to eat; feasting your eyes on all manner of forms and bright colors; awakening memories with evocative aromas: all this is something that only happens in traditional markets. Launching all five senses when you go shopping is something unlikely to happen on computer screens or in labyrinthine supermarket aisles, the two places that have recently dominated commerce.

Amidst the spread of cybernetic online sales and the interminable surface areas of supermarkets, these small neighborhood outlets persist and not even the most dazzling modern offerings have managed to darken them.¹ Buying and selling in public plazas has a long tradition in Mexico and is directly linked to the country's history. Their origins date back to the Meso-

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Photos by students from the Mexico City Autonomous University, San Lorenzo Tezonco campus. Since 2010, the Click! Photo Laboratory has sponsored more than 15 collective projects with the participation of approximately 1 200 students, coordinated by photography professors from the undergraduate communications and culture program. The photos from some of these projects have been published as books, while others have been exhibited in different places like the San Juan and La Nueva Viga Markets, the Talavera House, the Xochimilco campus of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, and the Cali Cultural Center in Colombia. See the Click! Photo Laboratory online bookstore at <http://www.blurb.com/usr/store/labclick>.

American settlements, where next to every ceremonial center was a *tianguis*.² These public spaces were not simply places for trading; they were true community centers where intense social life went on through different activities regulated by one or several authorities.

THE TATELULCO MARKET

In the area that is now Mexico City, the oldest and one of the most important markets we know of was the Tlatelolco (or Tatlulco) *tianguis*.³ Here in this immense commercial center divided into sections —that the recently-arrived Spaniards dubbed “neighborhoods”—, the *pochtecas* (merchants) gathered to trade products of all descriptions: from live exotic animals; fruit, vegetables, and legumes from the fields; prepared food; medicinal herbs and minerals; ceramic utensils; all manner

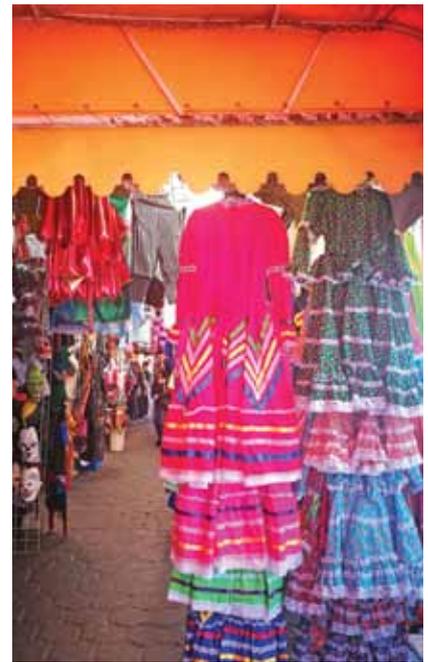
of textiles and jewelry; to extravagant, expensive objects from other towns.

Just like today, everyone, locals and outsiders, natives of the place and foreigners, delighted in wandering through the markets. Bernal Díaz del Castillo left us an account of how amazed the conquistadors were at the Tlatelolco *tianguis*:

From the time we arrived at the great square called Tatlulco, since we had not seen such a thing, we were astonished at the multitude of people and goods there and the great concert and order there. And the principals who went with us showed it all to us, each kind of good, and each had situated and assigned its own place. . . . Then other merchants who sold clothing and rough cotton cloth and items made of twisted thread and peanut vendors who sold cacao, and thus there were as many kinds as exist in New Spain.⁴

Amidst the spread of cybernetic online sales and the interminable surface areas of supermarkets, these small neighborhood outlets persist and not even the most dazzling modern offerings have managed to darken them.





Buying and selling in public plazas has a long tradition in Mexico and is directly linked to the country's history. Their origins date back to the Meso-American settlements.

WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO

It is no surprise that during the viceroyalty, the Spaniards would try to replicate the model of local markets, building a great number of them in other cities. In the early eighteenth century, in the middle of the capital city's Zócalo square, the Parián Market was inaugurated, in addition to the commercial area that included the Merchants' Arcades and the Flyers' Market. Besides selling basic foodstuffs, the Parián offered extravagant luxury items shipped in by the Manila Galleon. In the early nineteenth century, the Parián was demolished and commercial activities were moved from the city's center to a nearby neighborhood.

Under the government of Porfirio Díaz, the La Merced Market was built in 1890. Measuring 85m x 12m, it was the first distribution center for the entire city, where merchandise was still delivered by boat on canals.⁵ Over time, La Merced Market grew to more than 3 000 stalls, and became the central market for the entire country. The huge number of services concentrated around this market, like eateries, saloons, hotels, brothels, and public baths, among others, turned it into a community, just as the pre-Hispanic *tianguis* had been. A lively social life developed around La Merced, generating legendary stories and beloved characters that still endure in the memory of its inhabitants. It was not until 1982 that the new distribution center for the whole country was inaugurated in Mexico City's borough of Iztapalapa, replacing La Merced, although the latter continues to operate.



A lively social life developed around La Merced, generating legendary stories and beloved characters that still endure in the memory of its inhabitants.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MARKET

Describing Mexico City's Distribution Center is as interminable a task as actually viewing its 327 hectares. Suffice it to provide a few data about what goes on there every day to eloquently illustrate the dimensions and importance of this commercial center, the world's largest, almost a city in itself: every day, 350 000 people carry out commercial transactions there, while 450 000 walk its hallways, including buyers, truckers, and employees. About five million buyers go there every month; every year, more than US\$8 billion worth of commercial transactions are carried out there, and it distributes 30 percent of the country's fruit and vegetable production.⁶

TWENTIETH-CENTURY COMMERCE

Mexico's political and social upheaval in the twentieth century's first decades had an impact on all spheres of social life, including food supply and commerce linked to agriculture and animal husbandry:

The Mexican Revolution brought with it extremely serious problems, one of which was the sudden drop in agricultural production both because of the lack of manpower and the fact that many haciendas were abandoned by their owners. It also affected commerce, since communications difficulties impeded the normal flow of goods. No more markets were built during the first half of the twentieth century; rather, little mom-and-pop stores and fruit-and-vegetable shops began to proliferate in the new neighborhoods.⁷

Around the mid-1950s, the Mexico City government developed a plan to provide local neighborhoods with access to perishable goods: a market was built in every borough of the city. Each one had a specific socio-political structure: a manager, a representative an-



swerable to the borough administration; a system for renting and purchasing stands; security; and, in some, even a daycare center for the merchants' children. Under the administration of President López Mateos (1958-1964) alone, 88 of these markets were built. In some cases, well-known architects were commissioned, such as the case of the Coyoacán, San Pedro de los Pinos, and La Lagunilla Markets, built by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, who also designed the National Anthropology Museum, the Azteca Stadium, and the Basilica of Guadalupe. Other markets were established in buildings recognized as architecturally very valuable, such as the Abelardo Rodríguez Market, located in the old San Pedro y San Pablo Jesuit College, where visitors can still see beautiful murals painted by Diego Rivera's students.⁸

Years later, street markets were also set up in some neighborhoods, inspired by the ancient *tianguis*, where small producers offered their wares directly without intermediaries. Today, these pink-awning-covered itinerant markets set up in different places every day of the week and no longer only offer very fresh fruit, vegetables, fish, fowl, beef, and pork; today, as part of

The San Juan Market is considered the city's gourmet market, offering delicacies and exotic ingredients like lion or eagle meat and several varieties of insects, like grasshoppers and ants.

modernity, they offer an abundance of stalls with multiple products, mainly made in China.

OVER HERE, *MARCHANTE!*⁹

What follows is a list of the most representative markets today in Mexico City, worth visiting, whether for their products, their tradition, or simply to delight the eye:

San Juan Market. This is considered the city's gourmet market. You can find delicacies and exotic ingredients like lion or eagle meat; several varieties of insects like grasshoppers and ants; a wide variety of mushrooms and other fungi; and Asian products. This market guarantees quality . . . as it does high prices.



Nativitas and Jamaica Markets. The Nativitas Market is situated in the borough of Xochimilco, considered the city's nursery, where shoppers can find plants from different regions of Mexico at surprisingly low prices. The Jamaica Market is the metropolitan area's biggest florist shop, where an immense variety of flowers come in daily from around the world.

New La Viga Market. This is a maritime enclave, where you have to literally fight to not drown among all the fish and seafood. It's a good idea to go very early, or later in the day if you want to witness the seafood auctions.

Sonora Market. You'll find every kind of traditional medication and herbal charm here: for love, for love lost, for the evil eye, for rheumatism, or for your liver.

In this market's ancient tradition, you can find medicinal products and herbs, remedies used by shamans and traditional healers for almost any complaint of the body or soul. You could say that this is one of Mexico City's most frequented museums.

Coyoacán Market. Here you'll find everything normally sold in a market, but also something extra: food stalls and costumes. No one can resist its traditional Mexican food or the secrets of its stalls for curing last night's hangover —on weekends, it's standing room only at the stalls selling tostadas, barbecued pork, savory turnovers, freshly-squeezed juices, and traditional fruit smoothies. Also, it offers everything needed for every festivity, be it the Day of the Dead, Independence Day, or Christ-

In Mexico, you go to the market
with your five senses on alert.
Yes, you go to buy, but also to let yourself be
seduced by everything there.

mas: piñatas, ornaments, typical clothing, ingredients for traditional dishes, and, of course, costumes, including movie characters, animals, or even polemical public figures. But the Coyoacán Market also sells crafts, toys, modern fashions, and technology. That's why it is a favorite of locals and outsiders alike.

* * *

In Mexico, you go to the market with your five senses on alert. Yes, you go to buy, but also to let yourself be seduced by everything there. Buying and selling is an adventure that transcends the acquisition of merchandise. It means being part of the encounter of ancestral traditions, indescribable aesthetic reference points, figures like those found in the movies, and an irresistible array of items to satisfy the hedonist lurking inside all of us.

Over Here, *Marchante!* **NMM**

NOTES

¹ Every borough in Mexico City has at least one traditional market, in addition to the street markets (previously called "itinerant open-air markets") set up in different areas every day of the week.

² From the Nahuatl word *tianquiztli*, meaning "market."

³ Tlatelolco was a city bordering on Tenochtitlan. A reproduction of this market can be viewed at the National Museum of Anthropology.

⁴ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2000), p. 171.

⁵ In the nineteenth century, almost all the lakes in the Valley of Mexico had dried up, but water transportation was still used to move merchandise from other regions. See "Historia de los mercados en México," http://sic.cultura.gob.mx/ficha.php?table=gastro nomia&table_id=106.

⁶ <http://uneabasto.com/informacion-de-central-de-abastos.htm>.

⁷ Gobierno de México, "Historia de los mercados en México," http://sic.cultura.gob.mx/ficha.php?table=gastro nomia&table_id=106.

⁸ Among the painters of these murals are Raúl Gamboa, Ángel Bracho, and Pedro Rendón.

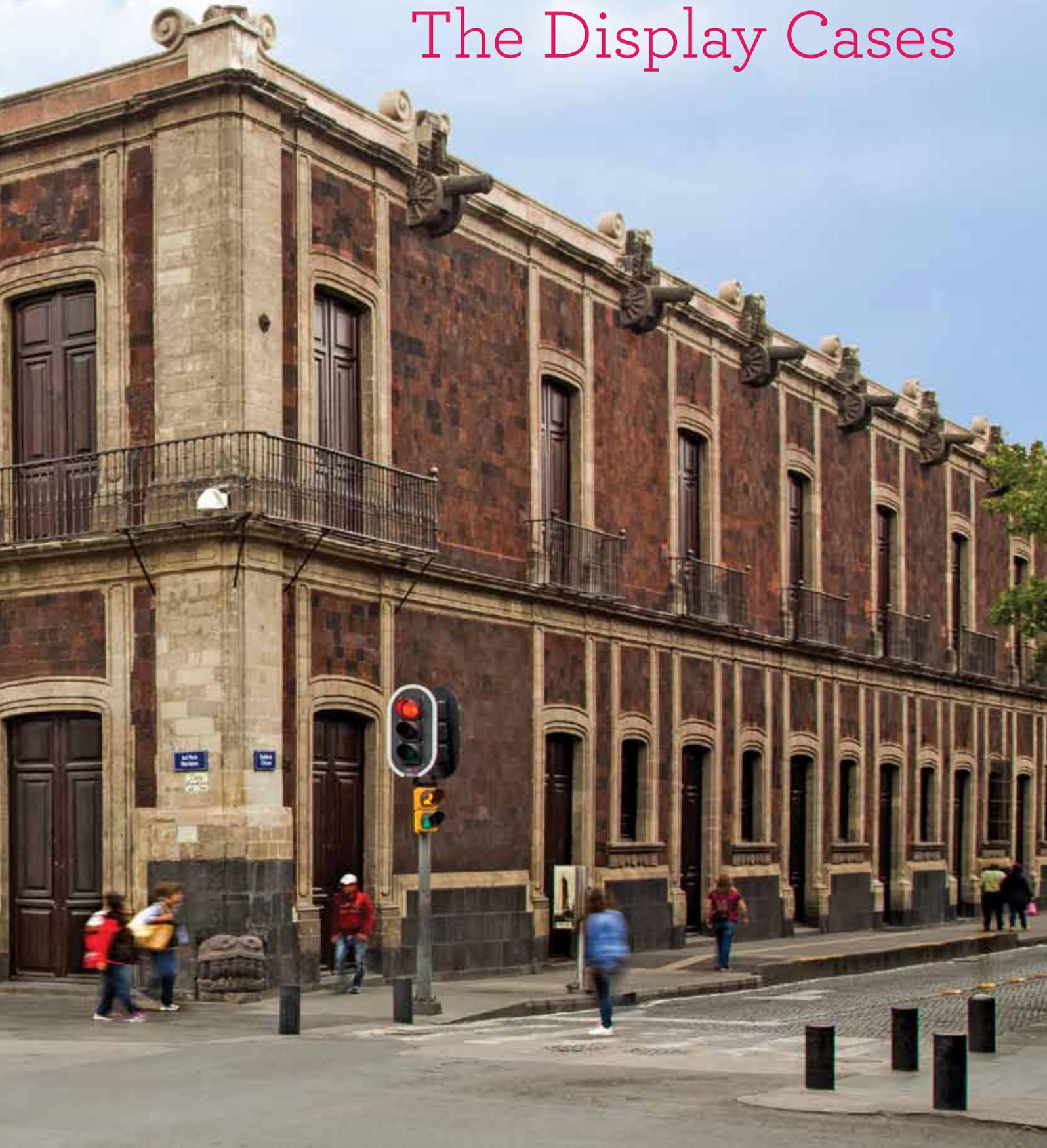
⁹ The term "*marchante*" comes from the French word "*marchand*," which means merchant, but in Mexico, *marchante* is the customer.





MUSEUMS

Mexico City beyond The Display Cases





Central patio. The cannon-shaped water spouts symbolize the fact that the palace's owners were members of the nobility.

A visual, architectural chronicle of the history of Mexico's capital: that is what the Museum of Mexico City is. The ancient site of the Aztecs, even today of monumental proportions and a seemingly endless history, could only be housed in a venue of the same grandeur.

Mexico City's very long history is crisscrossed by innumerable cultural and artistic productions and is continually reconstructed and re-signified. In this metamorphosis, the artistic element has had a fundamental impact on the city's life, making it unique.

One example should suffice: the transformation of México-Tenochtitlan, the indigenous metropolis, into one of New Spain's capitals. In this process, the pre-Columbian art and architecture were replaced by European aesthetics; this led to a complete architectural transformation such that in the eighteenth century, the great metropolis was known as the City of Palaces.

One example of New Spain's architectural opulence was the Old Palace of the Counts of Santiago de Calimaya, the building that today is home to the Museum of Mexico City. Built in

* Photos by Viviana Martínez, courtesy of the Museum of Mexico City, Mexico City Ministry of Culture.

the sixteenth century —nothing is known about this first phase of construction—, it was remodeled two centuries later by Francisco Guerrero y Torres, one of the main exponents of Mexican baroque architecture. Located on Pino Suárez Street,¹ the building is itself a museum, a venue full of signs and winks at the pre-Hispanic and colonial past. To start, on one corner of the outside of the building, the visitor can see that it rests on the head of a serpent, a fragment of a foundation of the *coatepantli*, the wall of serpent heads that surrounded the Great Temple. Outstanding features include its carved stone façade, the characteristic pink *tezontle* stone,

Joaquín Clausell began painting in the impressionist style and set up his atelier on the palace's roof, where he did many paintings on the walls.



Example of architectural syncretism. Colonial construction with pre-Hispanic touches.



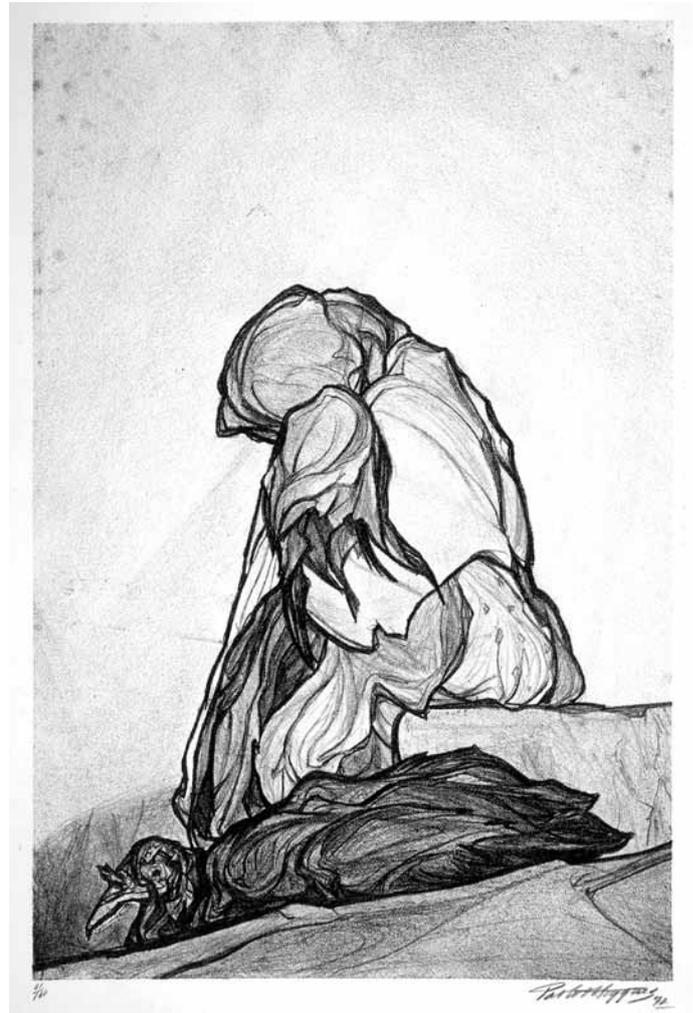
Joaquín Clausell's studio, one of the museum's main attractions.

the central patio's fountain, with its two-tailed mermaid, and the perfection of the carved mahogany doors and other wooden ornamental caps.

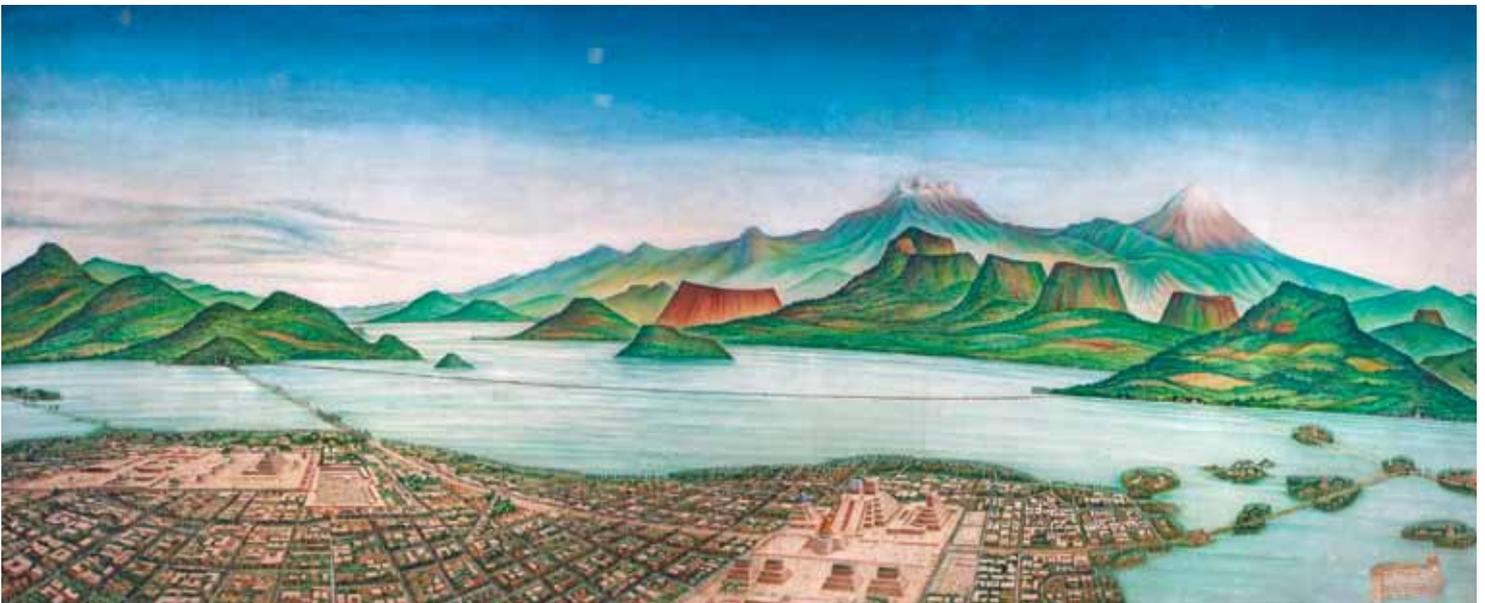
Throughout its history, the palace has been used for different activities: from being a home or store fronts, to becoming a tenement in the early twentieth century, when many families moved to the city's modern suburbs. In the 1960s, Mexico City's Federal District government expropriated the huge home where the family of Mexican impressionist painter Joaquín Clausell had lived to turn it into the Museum of Mexico City. The four walls covered with images painted by Clausell in his studio became part of the museum's permanent collection and are today one of its most important attractions.

The building was restored by architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, who also built the National Anthropology Museum, and was inaugurated as a museum in 1964 with a permanent exhibition that didactically told the story of Mexico City, including items representative of its origins, development, traditions, and artistic and monumental splendor.

Mexico City's very long history is crisscrossed by innumerable cultural and artistic productions and is continually reconstructed and re-signified.



Pablo O'Higgins, *Separation*, 66.5 x 50 cm, 1972 (lithograph).



Luis Covarrubias, *Mexico Tenochtitlan, the Valley and Lakes in the Fifteenth Century*, 210 x 569 cm, 1963 (oil on canvas).



The building is itself a museum, a venue full of signs and winks at the pre-Hispanic and colonial past.

But the city is much more than didactic material. So, it was decided to put away part of its collection and exhibit more recent trends. In 1998, then, when it was classified as part of Mexico City's cultural heritage, the museum changed its approach to include temporary exhibitions and other kinds of artistic and cultural events like conferences, lectures, performances, and workshops, all featuring the history, art, and life of the country's capital and its inhabitants.

Its collection boasts almost 3 000 pieces of art, documents, objects, and period furniture, with examples ranging from the seventeenth century until today. But, the palace also hides a treasure: the Torres Bodet Library, specializing in topics related to the city, with more than 10 000 titles and documents.²

To give the reader an idea of the spirit of this diverse, inclusive exhibition center, open to new artistic expressions, we can point to two recent shows:



Maurice Bernouly, *The 1985 Earthquake, 30 Years On*, 2015 (photograph).

The enormous value of the exhibition “The Soul Recognizes No Races” is that it made visible the racism and discrimination we Mexicans exercise.

- “The Soul Recognizes No Races” (September 2016). The enormous value of this exhibition is that it made visible the racism and discrimination we Mexicans exercise, sometimes without being aware of it. The exhibition’s almost 300 paintings, objects, photographs, and scientific documents demonstrated the power of the prejudices and images in the construction of racist stereotypes. The museum showed capital residents just as we are, but also the way forward to know what we don’t want to be.



“To See You,” an exhibition on racism in Mexico.



Jorge González Camarena, *Xitle Erupts*, 105 x 220 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas).

- “Light and Imagination” (February 2017). A collective show made up of experiences and sensations that used light and sound technologies to guide the public through the capital’s history, its origins (when this great city was a lake region), its transformation, its urbanization, and its chaotic growth.

This year, 2017, the intense activity carried out on site made it clear a comprehensive remodeling was required. It

was decided to re-inaugurate the museum showing the history of the city through “Mexico City in Art. A Journey of Eight Centuries,” a show to run from November 2017 to April 2018, exhibiting the marvelous art that has narrated the city’s development.

In addition to visiting this magnum show, we should always keep abreast of what is happening there, because they say that there’s always something new about the city in the palace.



Portraits, Mapfre Collection.



Joaquín Clausell, Mexican Impressionist (1866-1935)

Clausell's determined, rebellious personality led him to explore both physical and experiential territories that inspired his art. When still very young, he was expelled from his hometown for publically confronting a governor who wanted to name the state of Campeche after himself. That was when he came to live in Mexico City, where he studied law and worked as a newspaper reporter. He wielded his pen in complete opposition to General Porfirio Díaz, landing him, once again, in lots of trouble; after a short stint in jail, he went to the United States and lived for a time in New York, and then on to Paris. There he met Camille Pissarro, who he became friends with and who introduced him to impressionist painting first hand. On his return to Mexico, he married María de los Ángeles Cervantes, a descendent of the counts of Santiago de Calimaya, and they set up their household in the family palace.

Encouraged by his friend Gerardo Murillo, the landscape painter known as Dr. Atl, Joaquín Clausell began painting in the impressionist style and set up his atelier on the palace's roof. There, he did many paintings on the walls —not only landscapes— in a huge collage of unconnected images; today, this is one of the museum's most valuable assets. **NMM**

Museo de la Ciudad de México (Museum of Mexico City)

José María Pino Suárez 30

Centro 06060, Mexico City

Telephone: +52 (55) 5522 9936

Open to the public: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
Tuesday to Sunday

Admission: Mex\$29 with 50 percent discount
for students, teachers, and seniors

Guided visits, bookstore, lectures, concerts,
library



In his studio, Joaquín Clausell began by cleaning his brushes on the walls, and those brushstrokes later became the mural *The Tower of 1000 Windows*.



NOTES

¹ José María Pino Suárez was a vice-president of Mexico, assassinated during the military coup that brought down President Francisco I. Madero during the period known as the “Decena Trágica” (the Tragic 10 Days), from February 9 to 19, 1913.

² Jaime Mario Torres Bodet (1902-1974) was a renowned Mexican poet, diplomat, and politician.

CHTO DELAT

CUANDO PENSAMOS QUE TENÍAMOS TODAS LAS RESPUESTAS, LA VIDA CAMBIÓ LAS PREGUNTAS

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Muros, Walls, Butterflies, and Poetry

An Interview with Poet and Writer Gina Valdés

Claire Joysmith*

Hay tantos muros
que dividen a la gente,
pero por cada muro
también hay un puente.

There are so many borders
that divide people,
but for every border
there is also a bridge.

GINA VALDÉS

In these trumped times, when wall-building is insidiously packaged as a power-and-fear-commodity, as if it were a brand new invention, we may recall the border, that “herida abierta,” that open wound, as Chicana writer and philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa has called it, that extends across some 3 000 kilometers of land and slithers into the ocean as a high wall, lop-sided, in Tijuana, creating what is commonly known as “la esquina de América Latina,” the corner of Latin America.

Today, when bridge-building is an imperative, the epigraph for this article, penned by Gina Valdés back in 1986, is a memorable bastion of this urgency. As is the need to bridge cultures and people, to bring our scattered humanity together, to resort to the vital strength of words, poetry, literature, the arts, generosity, sharing, and the tangible practice of loving kindness.

Gina Valdés’s lines were inevitably committed to my memory when I read them the very first time, that is, 30 years ago. Their rhythm, rhyme, concise clarity, and goodwill summed



up the essence of a sustained practice of bridging that I also strongly believed in.

And that is how I first met Gina Valdés: through her precise, evocative, and down-to-earth poetry. In 2012, I included several of her poems in the anthology I edited, published by CISAN, UNAM, *Cantar de espejos* (now in its almost out-of-print second edition) that includes 23 Chicana poets, a word-and-heart-bridging project conceived to make Chicana poetry available for Spanish-speaking audiences. Of the three poems by Valdés included in the anthology, the popularity of “English con salsa” has in itself shown the extent to which translated versions of Chicana poetry in general, and Gina Valdés’s poetry in particular, have found new homes in minds

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Photos courtesy of the author.

and hearts in Mexico. There is no doubt that poetry does have a place to call home in these troubled times.

Gina Valdés is a living bridge, as well as —she is happy to claim— a rebel from birth, “primed to traverse walls” as her poem “Acts of Protest” reveals:

ACTS OF PROTEST

She didn't turn in the womb,
come out head first in accordance with
biological laws: her first non-conformist act.

Instead she exposed to the world
her buttocks: her second act of protest.

And refused to cry: her third defiant act.

The doctor acted quickly with slaps
until she let out a loud wail

rattling the walls
of the segregated hospital
in the race-rioting city,

walls merging with black-out sirens
of a world at war,

clashing with her father
expecting a son.

At birth, poised for a life of resistance,
testing the power of clamor,

primed to traverse walls.

Con orgullo: Gina Valdés is proud to have been born in L.A., undergoing a fascinating —although life-changing and no doubt challenging— double migration by leaving the U.S. to go with her parents to Mexico at the tender age of one, and then returning to the U.S. at age nine, with her mother and two sisters.

Valdés began writing early in life and has not stopped since. I ask her when she first took to writing poetry. She confidently responds,



The popularity of “English con Salsa” has in itself shown the extent to which translated versions of Gina Valdés’s Chicana poetry have found new homes in minds and hearts in Mexico.

Poetry spellbound me at a very early age as I listened to my older sister Marta read out loud in Spanish from our grandmother’s collection: Sor Juana, Juan de Dios Peza, Manuel Acuña, Amado Nervo, and other Mexican poets. I would memorize and mimic my sister’s dramatic readings, and it motivated me to learn to read and write. In first grade, in Ensenada, I fell in love and wrote my first poem. To my surprise, my sister invited me to her friend’s party, and the bigger surprise was that her dramatic reading of my love poem was the main entertainment. A roomful of girls burst into laughter and I cried all the way home. But that didn’t stop me from writing poetry, a good indication that nothing would.

I ask Gina where her poetic urgency comes from; how it ties up with her own history of double migration, her identity as a Chicana, and how it relates to essential aspects of her life and beliefs, whether personal, political, or spiritual.

A concern for social issues often shows up in my work, even in my love poems. This political stance, this poetry of witness, comes from the circumstances of my birth, from my double migration: my karma.

For a Mexicana-Chicana to write and to publish in the United States—even when the themes are not overtly political—is a political act in itself: the act of breaking open, expanding, integrating the English/American literary canon. And perhaps there's another integration taking place, exemplified by the anthology *Bordering Fires*, edited by Cuban-American writer Cristina Garcia, that brings together the works of Latin American and U.S. Latino and Chicano writers.

I was born during WWII, in California Hospital, segregated, as were so many institutions and public places in U.S. cities. The widespread anti-Mexican sentiments erupted in race riots in Los Angeles between servicemen and Mexican youth: the Zoot-Suit riots. The *Los Angeles Times* fueled the conflict. One of the few public voices in defense of *mexicanos* was Eleanor Roosevelt. This unhealthy climate drove my father's proud and enterprising family back to Mexico. I was one year old.

OUR HOME

Papá tried to ignore
the signs staked in lawns,
stood smiling at doors
slamming on his dark face.

Mamá with the smooth
alabaster skin
of a 40's Hollywood star,
she rented our houses.

Race riots in Los Angeles.
War abroad. *Why join
an army waging war on you,*
grandmother said.

Papá wavered, decided to go,
with his U.S.-born family,
back to Mexico. He, destined
never to return to the States.

But we, his daughters,
came north again,

to uproot the signs,
to reclaim our home.

We, *las mujeres*, returned to the States: *Mamá* with her three daughters she called "*Las Women*." I was nine then.

This early border crossing continued all my life and fueled my interest in migration and identity. Even though many of my poems are autobiographical, at the same time they give witness to a particular community, place, and time, and are also an exploration of the universal theme of the journey.

I personally find the following poem by Valdés one of her most evocative, centered on personal migrant experience, haloed by silence, whispers, and mystery:

BORDER DUENDE

This is a mystery I may never solve,
unless a border duende whispers the truth
and I wake to hear it.

Mamá (who worships the god of secrets)
will never tell what truly happened that night.

The air crackled with positive ions
that day in Ensenada: birds hopped
on electrical currents crisscrossing the sky,
uncombed cats slinked through streets,
curtains parted and closed.

Papá cornered me, the youngest, alone
in our yard. Was I staying or leaving?
Where was I going? When?

Papá was building a house of cedar
and sons, uninterested in daughters.
His moneyed sister fancied a family
with his three girls.

The evening sun sparked the sky red
and four plastic bags leaned near our door.
A woman in an old car cruised our unpaved street
scouting for our nonexistent house number.

All Mamá will tell: we fled at midnight
in a Ford steered by the aging American lover
of her young brother.

What a border duende reveals:
 a hushed summer night
 scented by sea breeze and laurel,
 a lime slice of moon, a border guard falling
 under the spell of Mamá's sad beauty;
 on the eyelids of slumbering daughters,
 the flutter and glimmer of dreams.
 All three, nine, twelve, and fifteen,
 asleep in the back seat of a beat-up Ford
 in the defining event of our lives.

What potent powder did Mamá stir
 into our evening's café con leche,
 fearful that one or all
 might choose Papá or wealth?

She will remain eerily silent, like the night
 of our momentous crossing.

And we crossed with wings;
 our U.S. birth certificates hiding
 in the darkness of Mamá's purse.

Who needs papers in a charmed world?

When earth, moon, stars, wind, ocean, hills,
 a one-eyed jalopy, a lovesick Americana,
 and a moonstruck guard all conspire
 to help: to answer a woman's silent cry.

In the following poem, the initial lines quoted are from the first poem of Gina's early bilingual poetry collection, *Comiendo lumbre/Eating Fire*. It addresses what she considers to be "the immigrant experience, identity crisis, and desire for integration."

"A concern for social issues often shows up in my work, even in my love poems. This political stance comes from my double migration: my karma."

"WHERE YOU FROM?"

Soy de aquí
 y soy de allá,
 from here
 and from there...

...soy del sur
 y del norte,
 crecí zurda
 y norteadada...¹

¹ *Comiendo lumbre/Eating Fire* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Maize Press, Mazorca Series, 1986), p. 9.



Valdés expands on her identity crisis with an interesting anecdote:

It started in elementary school in Ensenada with the words we recited daily: "*Yo nací en México, qué linda es mi patria, qué orgullo ser mexicana.*" I felt awkward and confused, *porque yo nací en Estados Unidos*. So I asked Mamá, *¿Soy mexicana o soy americana?* (Am I Mexican or American?). And she answered:

“Even though many of my poems are autobiographical, at the same time they give witness to a particular community, place, and time, and are also an exploration of the universal theme of the journey.”

A ver, dime, ¿si los gatitos nacen en el horno, son gatitos o son bizcochos? (Tell me, if kittens are born in the oven, are they kittens or cupcakes?)

BUTTERFLY WOMAN

My laughter is a black night
full of green birds

My sighs are a flock of crows
diving in a smoky sky
from the heights of pines

I am a woman who writes
under the spell of two tongues
to a whispering flute
and the music of light rain

A woman who seeks
A woman who finds

A butterfly woman
history of migration
in my multipatterned wings.

In Gina Valdés’s poetry there is a welcome sense of humor, also to be found in other Chicana and Chicano poets; it has its own Trojan horse way of reaching hidden corners of the conscious mind to pinpoint poignant issues with an immediacy of its own. How important is it in her own life and writing?

Humor, not widely valued in poetry, often finds its way into my work. It’s what I remember most fondly growing up in Mexico. It was everywhere: in family gatherings, on billboards and graffiti, on screen with Cantinflas and Tin Tan, and, not least, that Mamá was a natural comedian . . . and a feminist without ever

using that word. I learned early that humor is empowering, that whatever you can laugh at can’t control you, that it can help you survive and flourish.

The following poem focuses on Valdés’s mother, her heritage of humor, her resilience as a migrant working mother taking care of three children, and the tender celebratory manifestations of her passing away:

RAINBOWOMAN

She lived out loud, in elemental colors.
Can see her red hair, purple velvet coat,
Mamá at Midnight Mass, rivaling
the moonlit stained glass windows.

Can see her: regal and feline
from her long gold eyes to her silk-stockinged feet,
a teen girl sliding out of a limo
at a Hollywood studio where her long-fingered hands
nimble sewed costumes into perfect fits.

Back in the limo with skin aglow
from a job well done and a secret dream:
admiring her own designs on screen
in the days of Garbo and Dolores del Río.

Always on stage with her comedic wit—
Stop talking while I’m interrupting—
*She lived her truth: Women should be seen
and heard.*

She ignored bad press, defined herself:
Smart. Witty. Shrewd.

And never past her prime. At 80, hearing—
You must have been beautiful when you were young
—quipped— *And what’s wrong with me now?*

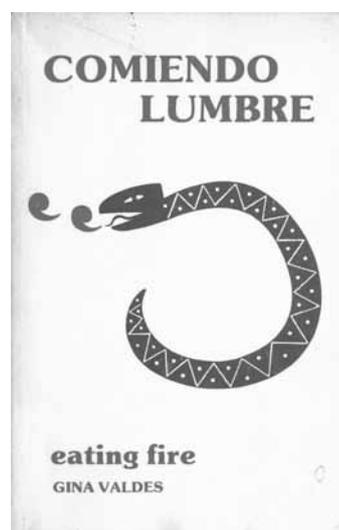
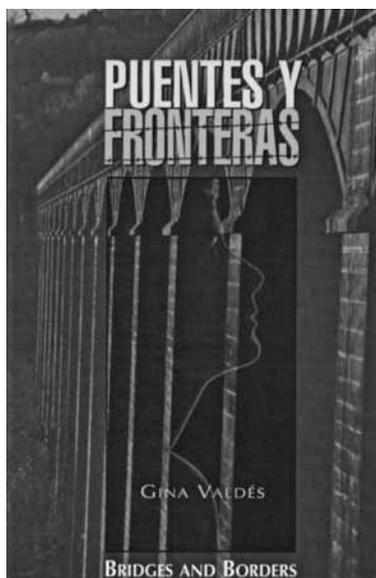
Mamá lived almost a century
following one piece of advice: her own.

On her last breath—a winter day of
window-rattling torrential rain—a rainbow
streaked across the gray California sky.

Growing up in multicultural L.A., I became drawn to other cultures besides the two I juggled, especially to the Far East and Eastern religions. At an early age I married a Japanese artist, lived in Japan, and have a daughter named Rosalía Yuri Hayakawa. I've studied and practiced Zen for over 35 years, and I feel that this also brings humor to my writing, and that it also affects the process since I meditate before each writing session. So much of my life has been about integrating different interests and cultures, embracing those aspects of each that are life-affirming.

To wrap up our conversation, I allude to the rich textures woven into her poetry and enquire about her main poetic influences in growing into her own poetic voice, to which she responds,

Besides the Mexican poets that spellbound me early on and the Chicano/a poets I've met, performed with, and taught in my literature classes, I'm most inspired by Neruda, the Sufi poets Rumi and Hafez, and all ecstatic poetry, the Native Americans, from *los Nahua* to the Navajo to Joy Harjo, ancient Japanese and Asian-American women poets, and, as I say in the poem *Hearing Voices* from my bilingual book of *coplas*, titled *Puentes y fronteras/Bridges and Borders*: "...the anonymous female singers / their spirits."



THE FEATHERWEIGHTS

World Featherweight
Championship.
Mexico-Japan.

Tokyo apartment zings,
men jump, holler, gulp Kirin.

Tiny kitchen steams,
women broil yakitori,
wipe sweat beads.

I flee
men punching, women steaming,

bounce back to game's end,
men shadowboxing, coaching
their favorite.

Ten men flop
down in unison.

I spring up. ¡Viva México!

Roomful of stunned men
gaze at me puzzled.

Women dash
from kitchen laughing,
clap, cheer, hand me
a cold beer.

DARK NECTAR

Sundays, women roast cacao
seeds at mercado Tlacolula:
women who long for their men,
working in California.

They grind the seeds to powder
on volcanic stone, as they've done
for centuries, the dark aroma
filling the clear Oaxacan sky

We ride home on a rickety bus
singing boleros all the way.
Then brew chocolate de agua,
the pleasure of kings and peasants,
with honey and vanilla,
that black orchid.

Under the Zapotec moon
your body glows, a shade between
honey and cocoa. In your mouth
I savor the bittersweet nectar,
hold the spell on my tongue. **MM**



FURTHER READING

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VALDÉS, GINA

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"The Double," *Santa Fe Literary Journal*, Santa Fe, New Mexico (Fall 2016), p. 34.

"Butterfly Woman," *SageWoman Magazine*, Portland, Oregon (Fall 2016), p. 20.

"Acts of Protest," *Pilgrimage Magazine*, Pueblo, Colorado (Fall 2014), p. 10.

"The Featherweights," *The New Observer*, Tokyo, Japan (1998), p. 28.

"Border Duende" in Heather Tosteson and Charles D. Brockett, eds., *The Kindness of Strangers* (Decatur, Georgia: Wising Up Press, 2016), pp.48-49.

"Dark Nectar," Sari Friedman and D. Patrick Miller, eds., *Touching: Poems of Love, Longing, and Desire*, Poetry Series, vol. 2 (Berkeley, California: Fearless Books, 2012), p. 5.

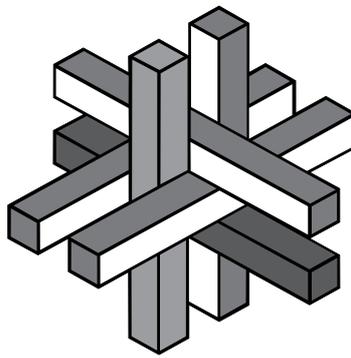
"Rainbowoman" (unpublished).

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Puentes y fronteras/Bridges and Borders (Tempe, Arizona: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1996).

Comiendo lumbre/Eating Fire (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Maize Press, Mazorca Series, 1986).

Gina Valdés's work has been published in five languages in journals, anthologies, and textbooks since 1975 in the United States, Mexico, and Europe. She has recent work in *California Quarterly*, *Pilgrimage Magazine*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Huizache Magazine*, and *Calyx Journal*. Her poem "English con Salsa" has been reprinted 20 times; it has been translated into Spanish in *Cantar de espejos. Poesía testimonial chicana de mujeres* (CISAN, UNAM). She is the author of two bilingual poetry chapbooks, *Comiendo lumbre/Eating Fire* (1986) and *Puentes y fronteras/Bridges and Borders* (1996).



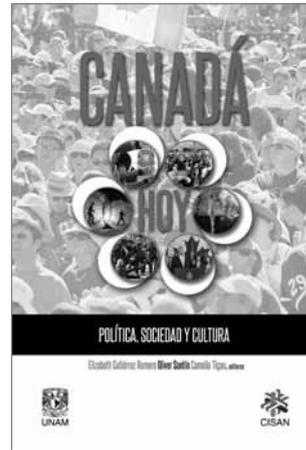
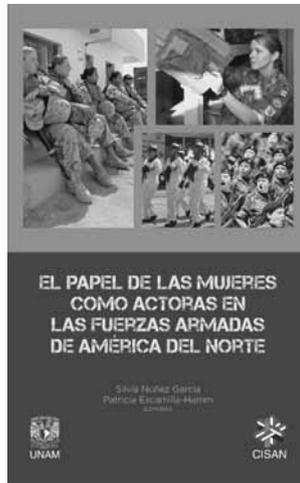
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Silvia Núñez García and Patricia Escamilla-Ham, eds.

While gender in the Canadian and U.S. Armed Forces has long been widely dealt with in the media and by civil society, in Mexico little has been said about women in the military and the role they have traditionally played there. This book is a compilation of reflections on this issue that twelve military women from the three countries presented at a 2014 international seminar held at the UNAM.



Canadá hoy. Política, sociedad y cultura

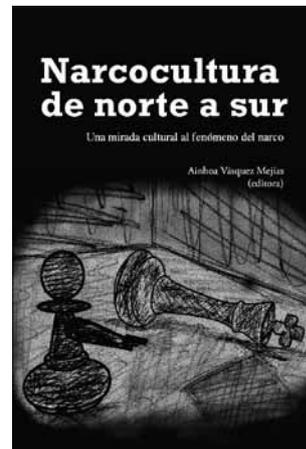
Elizabeth Gutiérrez, Oliver Santín, And Camelia Tigau, eds.

This work, a complement to the CISAN's *Canadá hoy. Economía, recursos naturales, ciencia y tecnología* (2016), analyzes different aspects of Canadian politics and society starting from the dynamics instituted under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-2015). The approach centers on recuperating Canada's multi-cultural tradition through the study of government and social issues.

¡Tú migrante! La construcción de las representaciones de la migración en el contexto de América del Norte y Centroamérica

Aaraón Díaz Mendiburo and Andrea Meza Torres, eds.

This publication contributes to the field of analysis of the representation, imaginaries, and perceptions of migration. This has been studied very little in Mexico, and this book presents a perspective that directly challenges research that turns migrants into a dehumanized "object" of study. Its articles show that the association of the term "migrant" with global security policies has conferred on it a stigma that has contributed to dehumanizing immigrants.



Narcocultura de norte a sur: una mirada cultural al fenómeno del narco

Ainhoa Vázquez Mejías, ed.

This book includes interdisciplinary and international views of drug trafficking, dealing with issues such as the origins of the *narcocorrido*; the influences of Hollywood on narco literature; the transnationalization of an industry that has expanded from the Southern Cone to North America; the role that intellectuals have played; and the narco series boom in the United States. This is a key text for anyone who wants to delve into this cultural phenomenon that is just beginning.

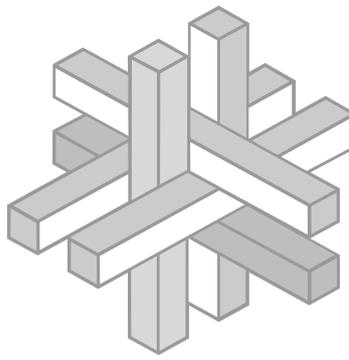
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Anatomía de una relación. Una colección de ensayos sobre la evolución de la cooperación entre México y Estados Unidos en gestión fronteriza

Christopher Wilson, ed.

This book shows us the impressive evolution of approaches to border management for development and the implementation of a cooperative framework. Government officials and other experts explore the actions and cooperative policies for the U.S.-Mexico border, offering a coherent, diligent analysis of the region's constantly changing situation in which bi-national issues are at play.



9 razones para (des)confiar de las luchas por los derechos humanos

Ariadna Estévez and Daniel Vázquez, eds.

Does it make sense to argue on the basis of human rights when fighting for social demands? Some say that human rights are the last frontier of resistance to marginalization, forced disappearances, extra-legal executions, and the plunder of indigenous communities. Others think that this kind of discourse has become a mechanism for managing the suffering of the victims of neoliberal capitalism. Are human rights a promise of emancipation or an apparatus of oppression? This is the central question posed in this book.

Canadá y México durante la era Harper: reconsideración de la confianza (cavilaciones en torno a siete décadas de relaciones diplomáticas)

Graciela Martínez-Zalce, Silvia Núñez, And Oliver Santín, eds.

While dealing with issues of politics, development, human rights, human capital, trade, energy, the environment, security, migration, and cultural exchange, this book also commemorates seven decades of diplomatic relations between Mexico and Canada. Reclaiming this shared history and getting to know "the other" contributes to creating synergies between the new generations of both nations, fostering empathy and emphasizing the benefits of the relationship, without forgetting the fact that "international cooperation is too important to leave exclusively in the hands of governments."



Instrucciones para salir del limbo. Arbitrario de representaciones audiovisuales de las fronteras en América del Norte

Graciela Martínez-Zalce

This collection of essays analyzes the different meanings of borders in North America and how they are represented in film and television scripts. This is a random collection; it does not claim to be an exhaustive review of the border genre. One of its important contributions are the sources consulted, including a compilation of film criticism on the topic, plus a commented filmography.

Forthcoming
La presidencia de Donald Trump y sus impactos

Problemas del DESARROLLO

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Young Indigenous Migrants Intergenerational and Inter-community Disputes

This section will delve into the circumstances of a social group that has not been thoroughly analyzed when studying youth and migration: the members of Mexico's First Peoples. Susana Vargas's article underlines the specificity of being indigenous and the colonial memories present in the



Henry Romero/Reuters

narratives of young Oaxacan residents in California. Alejandra Aquino and Violeta Contreras's contribution points out how the migratory experience of young Ayuujks (or Zapotecs) destabilizes subjectivities and practices established in their hometowns, leading to the questioning of the hegemonic identity representations of First Peoples created in the framework of the Mexican nation-state. Olga Lorenia Urbalejo, for her part, presents one of the most common dilemmas faced by Mixtec youth, whose communities of origin become stronger in migratory spaces, and they must deal with what is expected of them because of their ethnic origin at the same time that they inhabit a border city like Tijuana, Baja California. This is by no means far afield from what Eugenia Hernández looks at in her contribution, when she emphasizes the family negotiation about access to the school system as one of the central issues facing young Oaxacans living in California, revealing the generational disputes between them and their parents. This opens up a dialogue between cultural preservation and transformation, between young people's individual desires and the family and community project. Iván Francisco Porraz examines the migration of youth from Las Margaritas, Chiapas, to the United States. As in all the foregoing cases, a struggle emerges between young migrants and their families, in this case associated with a negative perception of the return: young people are seen as a "risk," since when they return to their hometown, they question the community's status quo. The last contribution, by Jorge Meneses, deals with the experience of young university students in Huatulco, Oaxaca, and at the University of Guajira in Riohacha, Colombia. Meneses underlines the diversity in these young peoples' surroundings and the possibility of creating multiple identities, as well as the ways in which they build their futures.

Susana Vargas
GUEST EDITOR

Colonial Remnants And “Indigenous” Specificity in Migration

Susana Vargas Evaristo*



Lucy Nicholson/Reuters

INTRODUCTION

When discussing indigenous migration and young indigenous migrants, the question invariably arises of why we make the distinction underlining “indigenous” and not simply talk about Mexican migration to the United States in general. Why do we need to point out the specificity of this kind of migration and the social subjects involved? The reason is that they are a population segment that has been profoundly affected by the historic process of colonialism.¹ During this period, diverse ethnic-racial categories were created in order to fix the borders of identities to ensure domination.²

In the collective —and then nationalist— imaginary, the mestizo-indigenous dichotomy was determined to manage and create the bases for the power relations rooted in racist and ethnic classifications. Thus, the so-called “indigenous” are all

those who belong (or recognize themselves as belonging) to an ancestral First People that existed prior to the Spanish Conquest; mestizos, on the other hand, would be all those social groups that have resulted from a racial mix; and “whites” are those who consider themselves the descendants of the Spaniards.

This mestizo-indigenous dichotomy undoubtedly creates limitations, considering the transformations and resignifications that social actors experience as they move to new regions to settle.³ However, we can ask ourselves what consequences this ethnic and racial differentiation has had on society and how it affects the different social groupings.

I should point out that all times and spaces are different, and the ways of naming things have their own dynamic. In this sense, it is not a matter of thinking that the indigenous population has been passive and simply taken on the dominant forms of social classification without filtering them. However, the indigenist integration policies imposed from the

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mid-twentieth century focused on transforming the First People's cultures. Proof of this was the imposition of the Spanish language to integrate the population by homogenizing ethnic diversity, in accordance with the Mexican nation-state's directives.

Other forms of cultural dispossession can be linked to territorial displacement and the destruction of sacred lands, the exploitation of natural resources, or the abandonment of the countryside as part of a national economic strategy aimed at creating a work force for industry. All of this produced social conflicts that emerged out of processes of discrimination, as mechanisms of racial and ethnic legitimacy that ensured the dominant power of certain social groups over those that had traditionally existed throughout Mexico.

Outstanding in this exercise of handling ethnic and cultural complexity is the historic post-colonial process of subordinating certain social groups through concepts like social class, the ethnic group, and race, three central items on which the relations of exploitation/ domination/ conflict are based.⁴ The use of language has been one of the most effective discriminatory devices due to its level of interiorization in the historic memory of Mexico's indigenous population.

This is where I return to the initial question posed in this article: Why is it necessary to specify in ethnic and racial terms the kind of migration we are talking about? The case of Mexican indigenous migration to the United States makes it possible to broaden out the discussion on this issue. In the nation-state, this population group has been considered sub-national and therefore their cultural and civil rights are not fully recognized.⁵ This has meant that they have not had regular access to a classroom education to the same extent as the mestizo population or that their incorporation into the labor market has been precarious, among other examples. That is, the Mexican nation-state's national integration policies have generated mechanisms that have put these social groups at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* what has been called the mestizo society, represented by the state.⁶

HISTORIC MEMORY AND THE INCORPORATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

The next question is how this background affects the process of incorporating young descendants of indigenous migrants into the United States. I will look at the case of the children of Zapotec-, Mixtec-, and Triqui-speaking agricultural work-

The use of language has been one of
the most effective discriminatory devices due
to its level of interiorization in the historic
memory of Mexico's indigenous population.

ers' children whose parents came from different towns in the southern state of Oaxaca. Together with Chiapas and Guerrero, Oaxaca has the highest poverty rates in Mexico, and the three states concentrate the largest indigenous populations in the country.⁷

Indigenous migration from Oaxaca has been one of the country's most vigorous since the mid-twentieth century. They have settled both in rural and urban areas, staying permanently in different places in Mexico and the United States.

I am centering my attention on young Oaxacans living in Madera County and Fresno in California. Both places have communities living near the farms that offer jobs to documented and undocumented workers alike. California's Central Valley agribusiness has been the source of employment *par excellence* for Mexican migrants in general, and specifically for the Oaxacan community.

Research into the agricultural labor market in Mexico and the United States has shown the importance of segmenting the work force by gender, ethnicity, social class, and immigration status as part of a strategy for subduing it.⁸ These conditions are ripe for creating a vicious circle in which Mexican immigrants of indigenous origin are susceptible to being subjected to exhausting workdays under the sun.

Carlos,⁹ the young son of Mixtec agricultural workers, born in Fresno, California, says,

I'm not going back into the fields, and thanks to this job [his current job], I'm hardly ever out in the heat, except on Tuesdays and Thursdays when I'm in charge of the carts outside the store; but it's not hard; I'm just bagging. I prefer this to working in the field; that's no life, that's not a job; it's something lower than a job. It's like misery; it's for the ones who don't know how to read or stuff like that; it's not a decent job. (Carlos, September 10, 2010, Fresno, California)

The literature specialized in Oaxacan indigenous migrants and their incorporation into agricultural work underlines the contradictions inherent in the following duality: agri-industry anchored in the global economy, using cutting-edge tech-

Young Oaxacans, whether Mixtec, Zapotec, or Triqui, are a group of migrants whose profound historic, cultural, and social heritage has been transmitted over generations.

nology, versus the low wages of agricultural workers that favor the growth of these companies. The social categories of class, immigration status, ethnicity, and gender act vigorously in these sorts of contexts, in which employers in a given labor market resort to precarious pay for workers in order to balance production costs and technological creation.

We can see that the incorporation of young migrants of indigenous origins into their destination societies takes place on two levels: one is the institutional-governmental level, linked to immigration policies, institutional absorption, and three fundamental aspects: education, access to housing, and employment. Another level is the ethnic-racial relations that segment the population and that we can characterize as subjective, while inter-ethnic relations produce scenarios of conflict that can manifest in different spheres of social life—the United States has been very prolific and stimulating in its inter-racial debate.

Even when a young Oaxacan, whether he/she be Mixtec, Zapotec, or Triqui, has been born in the United States, the issue of belonging to a specific people and the manifestation of his/her ancestry in different ways, like community and political organization, continuing to celebrate patron-saint fiestas, using his/her language, or transmitting values from the home, all act as negotiating mechanisms about cultural identity in the process of integration into the receiving societies. That is, this is a group of migrants whose profound historic, cultural, and social baggage has been transmitted over generations. This can be explained taking into account oral transmission, the use of the mother tongue, attachment to their hometowns, and the value placed on ancestors.

In this scenario, we must consider incorporation into receiving societies as a process that will not necessarily take a specific route. In any case, it will deepen when young Oaxacans begin to see their own culture as a guarantee of recognition when they feel deprived of rights in the United States. Even if they have immigration documents, they do not always feel they belong to that country's society given their being categorized as sub-nationals in their places of origin, which is then reinforced in their destination countries.

The indigenous nature of migrations shows signs of internalized post-colonialism among the population.¹⁰ This is therefore transmitted generationally, the effect of which is the subordination-domination of certain social groups. All this ideological production about otherness continues to exist among descendants of indigenous people and is manifested in different scenarios. Let us look at what Sara says about it:

I've seen lots of young people who were brought [to the United States] very young, like I was. Their parents might have spoken Spanish or not, but I feel like I was discriminated against, not only here, but also in Mexico, because I'm darker-skinned, I'm short, and I speak another language. So they [young people] suffer from the same conflict, right? Who am I? . . . I feel like the schools here [California] don't do their job. They don't in Mexico either. They don't explain why we are how we are, that it's more than just the color of your skin, right? It's something more than a culture that you aren't even familiar with because they don't teach you. So, I think that, like, that's what's needed, you know? We need talks to be able to understand the history of culture, more than anything, the history of why we're like we are, why we're here, and that it's nothing we should be ashamed of; the exact opposite: we should be proud of what we are. And I think that that's what young people need, that kind of identification and awareness of knowing. (Sara, September, 2010, Fresno, California)

For young Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Triquis, the integration process implies developing sociability strategies to be accepted because several aspects of their lives make them vulnerable, like their physical attributes (they are dark-skinned and short), their culture (the use of their native language), and their social class:

We still feel a little like outsiders, especially anyone of indigenous origin, because people always look at you sideways, even Mexicans: "Oaxacans are shorties, we're dirty, we're I-don't-know-what." But that's not everybody. There are some people who think we're nice and hard-working. (Carmen, no date, Madera, California)

As mentioned above, language is a fundamental factor for understanding how the colonialist structures have acted and the consequences for the descendants of indigenous. For many families, the transmission of the Mixtec language became something devoid of meaning given the ideological

demands of the Mexican nation-state, which has sought to impose a single language, Spanish, on the entire population. As Martina says,

My Dad used to tell my Mom not to teach us Mixtec because if she did, we weren't going to speak very well and we were going to have a hard time and be discriminated against more than we are now. So we just spoke Spanish so we wouldn't have a hard time. So, I didn't learn it until I grew up and had children of my own because I wanted them to learn it because it makes me sad to think that I'm from Oaxaca and I don't know how to speak the language. I feel that our not speaking it is like saying that the Spaniards won; we lost our language. So, I'm trying to learn again and so are they. (no date, Madera, California)

Migration and interaction with other socio-cultural groups has shown the descendants of Oaxacan indigenous that it is possible to remain close to their origins through defending different aspects of their culture. This is a response to the need to feel part of a world they were brought into in their childhood and where they have developed different forms for ethnic-cultural survival. The ethnic awareness that is awakened in interacting with other ethnic groups occupying the same space is part of a complex process of integration in which they resignify and reconcile memories of colonialism in the face of the new signifiers and challenges found in receiving societies.

IN THE MANNER OF AN EPILOGUE

In the early twentieth century, sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois proposed a debate about “double consciousness,” emphasizing that in the context of racialized difference, individuals are able to self-identify and situate their cultural limits *vis-à-vis* others.¹¹ Franz Fanon's approach centers on the mental nature of conflict, on psychological situations that affect the population of descendants situated in a multi-ethnic reality: the one inherited from their groups of origin and the one that the discriminatory, racist scenario reveals to them. According to post-colonial authors, these complex contexts form the subordinate subject, who has to modify his/her subjectivity *vis-à-vis* others, but in the framework of unequal social relations.

Walter Mignolo calls this conflict the remnants of the colonialist-modernity relationship surpassing the limitations of territorial thinking and overflowing historic memory.¹² In this sense, indigenous social actors themselves name and place

new values on their national historical, post-colonial heritage through new narratives, often very different from the traditional image of the Mexican indigenous, as a new configuration of their identity, to a certain extent the product of human mobility. ■■■

NOTES

¹ For Boaventura de Sousa Santos, internal state colonialism is a vast social system of interlocking relationships (or a “social grammar”) that cuts across sociability, public and private spaces, culture, mentalities, and subjectivities. “Epistemologías del Sur,” in *Utopía y praxis latinoamericana. Revista internacional de filosofía iberoamericana y teoría social* vol. 54, year 16, July-September 2011, p. 14.

² For Rita Laura Segato, “Every state, whether colonial or national, installs its own ‘others’ to create positions of superiority to hold power; one way of achieving this is by pushing identities considered ‘residual’ or ‘peripheral’ to the nation out of the way.” In her book, Segato presents a wide-ranging dissertation about the ideological continuity between the colonial period and the creation of the nation. *La nación y sus otros: raza, etnicidad y diversidad religiosa en tiempos de políticas de la identidad* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros Editorial, 2007), p. 138.

³ Laura Velasco, “La subversión de la dicotomía indígena-mestizo: identidades indígenas y migración hacia la frontera México-Estados Unidos,” in Laura Velasco, *Migración, fronteras e identidades étnicas transnacionales* (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2015).

⁴ Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social,” in *Contextualizaciones latinoamericanas* vol. 5, year 3 (July-December 2011), p. 33.

⁵ Naturally, this does not apply only to the indigenous population; we could say the same for parts of what is called the mestizo population. However, I am interested in focusing on the former here.

⁶ John Rex, “Multiculturalism and Political Integration in Modern Nation State,” in *HMiC: història moderna i contemporània* no. 3, 2005, pp. 249-261.

⁷ According to National Council for Evaluating Social Development Policy (Coneval) data, poverty levels among the indigenous population are practically twice those of the rest of the population: 55.1 percent of Mexicans who do not speak an indigenous language are poor, while 79.3 percent of the indigenous population falls into this category. Coneval, “Pobreza 2010,” http://www.coneval.gob.mx/cmsconeval/rw/pages/medicion/pobreza_2010.es.do.

⁸ Sara María Lara, *Nuevas experiencias productivas y nuevas formas de organización flexible del trabajo en la agricultura mexicana* (Mexico City: Juan Pablos Editores, 1998).

⁹ All names of the people quoted are pseudonyms.

¹⁰ Or, as Franz Fanon said, from the point of view of the effects on people's mentality when subjectively fixing identities. See *Black Skin White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

¹¹ Bruce D. Dickson, Jr., “W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness,” in W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Louis Gates, Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver, eds., Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999).

¹² Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Community, Migration, And Youth Cultures in the Northern Mountains of Oaxaca

Alejandra Aquino Moreschi*
Isis Violeta Contreras Pastrana**

Migration has been part of Mexico's First Peoples' lives throughout their history. For most of the twentieth century, they migrated internally toward other rural areas and the country's major urban centers. However, beginning in the 1970s, they increasingly joined the migratory flows toward the United States. By the 1990s, an entire field of studies specializing in indigenous migration had already developed with important results such as the analysis of trans-national communities and the study of racialization processes and their links to labor relations.¹

Among these studies, one issue still underexplored is that of young indigenous migrants, whether international or domestic, to large urban centers. The systematic exploration of how young indigenous migrants experience their youth and what effects their migration has on their communities of origin and their own lives can no longer be postponed.

This article is an effort to contribute to that analysis. Our central aim is to explore from an ethnographic perspective how youth is constructed and experienced in different Ayuujk and Zapotec communities in Oaxaca's Northern Mountains, which are immersed in both domestic and international migratory processes. To do that, we will look at the generational disputes and negotiations over the definition of subjectivities, particularly the tensions around issues of the body, identities, and individual and collective life projects.

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Photos courtesy of the authors

GENERATIONAL DISPUTES OVER MIGRATION AND LIFESTYLES

Young people from the Zapotec municipality of Yalalag migrated massively to the United States in the 1990s. This caused a great deal of tension with their parents' generation, which had dreamed of their children studying and then committing themselves to their struggles for indigenous rights and community spaces. As Flor, a young woman of that generation, explains, "My Dad's hope was that we would get a little more involved in town issues, in its struggle; he would

send me to the meetings of women, the community meetings that happened. My Dad got me involved so that I would love the popular movement” (interviewed in Los Angeles, 2006).

Even though Flor quite liked participating in community life, her plans did not include “dedicating her life to the struggle.” Like many other young people, she was concerned with earning a living. For people in her age group, particularly the women, it is not easy to get a good job in their town. They can embroider, make shawls and sandals, wash clothing, or work in the fields, but these activities are not enough to support themselves. As Flor said,

I was in the movement’s youth group and we could study dance. It was all very nice culturally and politically and in terms of education, but when I thought in terms of money, I realized there was no way forward. So, that’s when I said “What is there in this for me? It would be better to emigrate.” (interviewed in Los Angeles, 2006)

Her parents were against her leaving because it was not the future they had dreamed of for her and because they knew that most of the young people who leave do not come back. Her mother said, “I don’t want to lose another child. I don’t want to go through that again. This business of the money is just a lie. What you always need is family unity; it’s no use to us if they leave to help us if we lose them anyway. Because, once you leave, you won’t come back” (interviewed in Los Angeles, 2006).

For the adult generation, their children’s migration was painful. They were convinced that no great future awaited them, since they had seen that, although most migrants managed to save money and build big houses in the town, on the other side of the border, they faced being “illegals,” racism, and exploitation every day of the week. In addition, the problem is that it is very difficult for young people to earn a living in a situation devastated by neoliberal policies.

DISPUTES OVER CONTROL OF SEXUALITY

Another of the areas in which the subjectivity of young people and adults came into conflict is sexuality. Until the 1970s, the Yalalag controlled young people’s sexuality, particularly that of the women, in different ways. So, a great many of the women from the previous generation had been locked away in the home as soon as they entered puberty and went into

Young people imagine the North as bursting with freedom, where they will be able to live their own lives without being criticized or judged by the community.

marriages arranged by their parents without ever experiencing courtship before marriage, among other practices.

While young Yalaltecs have obtained greater autonomy in leading their lives, strict control continues to exist over their intimacy, producing a great deal of tension between the two generations. For example “it looks bad” for a young woman to walk through the community by herself. One of them, Elvia, explains: “Here, nobody walks down the street; everybody is locked up in her house. Very few people visit other homes, even of family members, because right away, tongues start wagging” (interviewed in Yalalag, 2005).

Gossip or outright criticism are ways the community exerts strong pressure for young women to stay at home, and when they do not, they run the risk of being stigmatized: “Since I’m somebody who says hello to other people and I do go out because I got used to doing that when I was a young girl because I used to go out to sell things, sometimes people bad-mouth me and don’t want their daughters to associate with me” (Elvia, interviewed in Yalalag, 2005).

For parents, controlling their daughters’ leaving the house is to “protect” their reputations and preserve their “honor” and that of the family, something still closely perceived as being related to their children’s sexuality. As Clara, a young migrant, says,

In my time, I was brought up with that custom that said that starting in primary school, nobody could go out. That happened to me. My grandfather locked me up; that’s why I think to myself, thank God my mother came in time and took us to the United States with her. Otherwise, they would have married me off already.” (interviewed in Yalalag, 2005)

Young people also are pressured to behave in accordance with dominant gender codes. A girl is expected to be “decent” and hard-working, which for the past generations means doing all the housework, being demure, serious, not having boy-friends, and not going out with friends, among other things. In the case of the boys, while their mobility is more accepted, they are also pressured to behave according to the norm.



As Mauricio, a young man of 23 who has been in the United States for some time, explains, “People are really closed off and quick to judge there [in Yalalag]. People are really critical. You can’t do anything. For them, if you have a girlfriend, it’s a sin; if you’re seen kissing her in the middle of the street, even worse” (interviewed in Yalalag, 2005).

In the face of all this control, they imagine the North as bursting with freedom, where they will be able to live their own lives without being criticized or judged by the community. Even though that is not always the case, for many young people, the United States represents a place of greater freedom where they have the possibility of enjoying this period of their lives for longer. As one young woman says, “There, you have the freedom to express yourself and do what you want. Nobody criticizes you. I see that clearly, for example, in the way they dress, how they can go out of the house and have a boyfriend. Here [in Yalalag] they judge you for that” (Irma, interviewed in Yalalag, 2005).

DISPUTES OVER “DRESSING RIGHT AND BEING A GOOD AYUUJK”

José González was walking in downtown Tlahuitoltepec, in the Oaxaca Mixe Mountains, sporting his “punk Mohawk.” It was the 1990s, and the whole aim of the fashion of the time was to “look evil, heavy, and crazy” (José, interviewed in Tlahuitoltepec, 2012). Countercultural performances and music like rock and reggae were part of how this generation of young Ayuujk was constructed, by appropriating certain elements of urban youth cultures and breaking with their parents’ generation.

While the young have inherited the struggles of those who came before them, they are putting forward other ways of being young, of being Ayuujk or Zapotec.

Toward the end of the 1980s, many young people who emigrated to cities to work came into contact with different urban youth cultures and, on returning to their hometowns, congregated around rock music, which became an element for marking their identity that broke with older generations.

Young rockers questioned the communities’ principles and discourses about “being a good Ayuujk,” linked, for example to wearing “traditional” clothing, but also to a code of “good” behavior. These new identities were rejected by the communities, which saw them as “cultural contamination” and “ethnocide.” As one young man of that generation said, “They [the previous generation] were the ones who would say ‘get those kids in line’ or ‘it makes the community look bad for them to walk around like that’” (interviewed in Tlahuitoltepec, 2012). This led to community assemblies often discussing the issue of “gangs” and taking preventive measures like censoring young people’s bodies: “When some kids were brought before the justice system, they would have their hair cut at the local alderman’s office and be made to dress properly in white shirts, dress shirts” (Rigoberto, interviewed in 2012).

In the late 1990s, violence among gangs and punishment condoned by the community increased throughout the region; after that, the Ayuujk youth countercultural movement took other forms.

DISPUTES OVER THE AYUUJK IDENTITY²

One generational debate in some Ayuujk communities continues to be about identity. This is the case of a collective of Tamazulapam youth, who identify with reggae music and the Rastafarian movement. They are between 15 and 30, and in 2005, they created the Ayuuk Culture and Resistance Collective (CCREA). These young people have inherited from their parents a commitment to community life and an interest in continuing to value their own language and culture.

The direct Ayuuk-Rasta inspiration was the Rasteca movement that they encountered during their stay in Mexico City.³ They saw coincidences between the Rastafarian philosophy

and Ayuujk philosophy, but think of their community of origin as a place in which their most significant cultural references meet and which they want to be the starting point of a “cultural return” and a critique of society. They have created their own Rastafarian music in Ayuuk and Spanish and have adopted certain performative elements like dreadlocks and the colors green, yellow, and red, also the colors of the Ayuuk flag.

In the words of one member of the collective, “A Rasta-Ayuujk is a person with self-awareness, awareness of what he/she is and what he/she does, and who also maintains his/her tradition and language” (anonymous, Tamazulapam, 2012). These young people say that being Rastafarian is synonymous with living with “respect among brothers,” being “respectful of nature,” “thinking positively,” or “having a positive vibe,” “being interested in the community” and “being aware of what’s going on in the community and the country.” For others, Ayuuk Rastafarianism is also a way of opposing the individualistic system promoted by “Babylon” or “the oppressive system.” For them, this is represented by “the government, injustice, inequality, and the oppression of the indigenous peoples of the country.” However, they have been severely questioned by the community; for example, some say that reggae and Rastafarianism come from “outside.” All this generates reflections inside the collective about what it means to be Ayuuk today.

As one of the young founders of the movement says, “We would meet and talk about whether we were still Ayuuk or not. . . . We eventually said that, yes, we were Ayuuk because we spoke the language, we were born here, our parents are from here, and we also wanted to continue being from here” (Timio, interviewed in Tamazulapam, 2012). However, being a Rastafarian inside the community continues to be viewed as a bad attitude; this means that they have often been accused of promoting “something alien to the community” and of no longer being Ayuuk. They, however, feel differently, saying, “We are Ayuuk and we want to continue to be. Just because we like it [the Rastafarian philosophy] doesn’t mean we’re no longer Ayuuk. On the contrary, we want to be



and to be in the community, to be a part of it and contribute what we can to it” (Timio, interviewed in Tamazulapam, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

We have covered generational conflicts between systems of aspirations and hegemony over the production of subjectivities among adults who try to change younger people’s behavior and preferences. While the young have inherited the struggles of those who came before them, they are putting forward other ways of being young, of being Ayuujk or Zapotec and of being in the community;

these new forms have destabilized the prevailing subjectivities and practices. The young are therefore questioned when they see in migration a new life project or when they appropriate urban youth cultures. However, in the cases we have analyzed here, this leads them to create new youth identities previously not experienced in their towns, which spark tensions there and question the national hegemonic representations of “indigenous” identities as immutable and defined by tradition. ■■■

NOTES

¹ See Federico Besserer, “Luchas culturales en la agricultura del capitalismo tardío,” *Alteridades* vol. 22, 2000, pp. 15-22; Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, comps., *Indígenas mexicanos migrantes en los Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: University of California, Sta. Cruz/Universidad de Zacatecas/Miguel Ángel Porrúa /LIX Legislatura, 2004), pp. 9-74; Michael Kearney, “The Effects of Transnational Culture, Economy and Migration on Mixtec Identity in Oaxaca,” in Peter Smith and Joe R. Feagin, eds., *The Bubbling Cauldron, Race, Ethnicity and the Urban Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 226-243; and Carol Nagengast and Michael Kearney, “Mixtec Ethnicity: Social Identity, Political Consciousness and Political Activism,” *Latin American Research Review* vol. 25, no. 2 (1990), pp. 61-91.

² People in Tlahuitoltepec call themselves “Ayuujk,” while those in Tamazulapam refer to themselves as “Ayuuk.” This accounts for the different spelling.

³ The Rastecs merged the basic principles of Rastafarianism with what they imagined as the Aztec culture.

Young Mixtecs

The Vicissitudes of Life in Tijuana

Olga Lorenia Urbalejo*



Photos courtesy of the author

towns in Guerrero where their parents are from nor do they identify with those places.

We will see how they live with the notion of being of indigenous origin at the same time that they are city-dwellers, as I underline certain questions like separating themselves from their obligations and the differences regarding job opportunities. Their lifestyle includes a variety of forms crisscrossed by the history of their group, their migratory background, and, of course, by personal experience. Here, youth is understood as a social construct in which the particular variables of the locale must be taken into consideration.¹

LIFE PROJECTS

In the 1970s, people from Mexico's rural areas moved into urban centers. A large number of agricultural laborers from different indigenous groups set out for Northern Mexico, which at that time promised to be an industrial center because maquiladora plants were opening there. Settled since then in cities like Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and Tijuana, Baja California, these people have been part of the changes the cities have gone through and, as groups, have themselves reconfigured their socio-cultural practices. We might think that the descendants of these indigenous migrants have not gone through significant changes with generational turnover; however, this is not the case. We are witness to a diversity of ways of experiencing their youth as members of an ethnic community.

This article deals concretely with the case of the Mixtecs from the mountains of Guerrero, who since 1980 have been settling in Tijuana's Valle Verde neighborhood. Some young people arrived as children, while others were born in the city and consider themselves Tijuana natives. In some cases, they do not even speak Mixtec, and most have never been to the

Being young in an indigenous family is different from being it in a non-indigenous one. The former have gone through processes in which they are forged into urban indigenous or, as in this case, indigenous Tijuana residents. As they themselves say, this means that they understand that they are Mixtec because "it's something inherited; it's in the blood." But they also know that being Mixtec in this city can make them victims of racism. When they identify themselves as Tijuana residents, they show it in their physical appearance and their lifestyles, assuming the image of an "ordinary" urban youth, but whose roots, though not explicit, continue to exist. This means that the dynamics of their border life include the marker of their ethnic background, which they sometimes hide and other times use to identify themselves.

The Valle Verde neighborhood, located to the east of Tijuana, is one of the more than 10 areas inhabited by indigenous people in the metropolitan area.² Solidarity Street is noteworthy for the number of Guerrero Mountains Mixtecs living there, among them women working in the community center's garment workshop, set up by the good offices of the Valle Verde Mixtec Association. Together with the municipal government and the federal Ministry of Social Development, the association has also set up a communal dining room. The

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community center hosts meetings and has a church of its own, where different ceremonies and festivities are held, such as the festival of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of the mountain town of Xochapa, which has been celebrated in Tijuana since 1994.

During the day, Solidarity Street most obviously follows the dynamic of adults; but in the afternoons, young people socializing on the corners, young men in particular, become more visible. Their clothing is important: it is “more modern” than that of their elders. Some people ask relatives in the United States to send them clothing, or they search out used clothing at the street markets, items of clothing discarded “on the other side [of the border],” but which on this side are highly prized. Just as they dress to distance themselves from the stereotype of “what an indigenous person should look like,” as young people in the city, they listen to music different from their parents’ preferences (above all *chilenas* performed by bands and groups from their region of origin) to mark their identity. So, they listen to all kinds of music: Northern *banda* groups, *reggaeton*, and romantic music, among others.

In addition to their clothing and music, young people think they have a certain autonomy in more important decisions, such as marriage, since here they do decide who and when they want to marry:

Before, they did respect what they [their parents] said. . . . Well, you’re Mixtec and you’re going to marry a Mixtec. That is, before, they used to force you. Before, but not now. Most of my fellow Mixtecs get married to mestizos . . . , girls from different states, from the state of Puebla or the state of Mexico, Sinaloa, Nayarit, a mixture, like. They might marry a gringo, but it’s not that you have to marry somebody. You marry who you want to. (Ana, interviewed by the author in Tijuana, 2011)

Even so, young couples who have children very early are common. Very often they marry people with the same roots because they’re neighbors or boys they’ve spent a lot of time with. Ivonne, who is mestiza, married a young man she met while she was studying middle school close to Valle Verde. After getting engaged, she found out that her fiancé’s family was Mixtec from Oaxaca; he had never told her about it—he arrived in Valle Verde when he was four years old—and he didn’t want a child of theirs to speak Mixtec. However, Ivonne thinks that her fiancé’s history is important and that he should feel proud of it.³ In addition to showing that young people consider the possibility of marrying differently, this example

They know that being Mixtec in Tijuana can make them victims of racism. They identify themselves as residents, showing it in their appearance and lifestyles, assuming the image of an “ordinary” urban youth.

reveals that having an ethnic background is not something they talk about when they introduce themselves.

The fact that the young people in the neighborhood share certain traits does not make them all the same. There are those who “bum around and fall into vice” —this is how the adults and other youths who do not associate with them describe them—, and those who consider themselves “good young people,” who have surpassed average levels of schooling to go to high school and university. They have fulfilled their parents’ migratory project that consisted of giving their children a better life, and they do not want to be associated with those they call “bums,” who do nothing but paint graffiti on the walls, like the little groups gathered on Solidarity Street corners. The “good young people” also see themselves as different from those who live in the towns where their parents are from, and different from what their parents were like, not only when they lived in Guerrero, but also living in the city. That is why, until now, they have not continued the family customs; they are more open to change and try to be understood from that perspective. For this reason, when asked what they will do in the future if they do not intend to continue with the traditions, the answer is simple: study.

DIFFERENCES IN GETTING A JOB, WORKING, AND STUDYING

Bachelor’s degrees in law and education are two of the most popular among these young people, who also sometimes work to pay for part of their upkeep. This is the case of Rosenda, a law student at the Autonomous University of Baja California and a supermarket cashier. Working is nothing foreign to these young people; some of them worked when they were little and accompanied their mothers who did itinerant sales around the San Ysidro border crossing and in downtown Tijuana, and some continue to do this today.

Going into education can also be considered a labor niche for Mixtecs in the city; the difference is that today they must

complete formal schooling, which they usually do at the National Pedagogic University; in the past, it sufficed to pass an exam at the Indigenous Education General Office for them to be assigned to one of Tijuana's intercultural bilingual schools and there become professionals. Female teachers are usually found in schools in the Bilingual Intercultural System and less frequently in the regular educational system.

Some of the other jobs on the border that young people do are itinerant sales (usually without a municipal license to do so) and the maquiladora manufacturing jobs. The maquiladora plants have been characteristic of the city's economy since 1964 and are catalogued as jobs for migrant labor. Since these are companies that have few prerequisites for hiring like minimal schooling or basic Spanish fluency, female former agricultural workers or palm-hat makers can find a place in these factories.⁴ Some of the young women with little schooling see these jobs as a way forward. Isabel tells us about her experience:

I went to school, but not a whole lot: just until third grade. . . . I was also one of those dumb-heads. . . . No, it [maquiladora work] isn't hard. You just get in and if you want to work, they train you; like, they give you what you need to do it; they help you with all that, they teach you. . . . I'm in the molding area; we make pieces, little pieces used to send to the park . . . like showers—I don't know what you call them—like little faucets that open up in the park. That's what we make there. (interviewed by the author in Tijuana, 2011)

The young men, for their part, go into brick-laying, and both in Mexico and the United States, are outstanding at it. So, Tijuana is not the exception, and the mason's trade is passed down to their children. One example is Teodoro, 30, whose father taught him to be a brick-layer and who says he is proud of being able to put up the braces to build a house and then take charge of the works until it is finished, in addition to being able "to build prettier houses."

The fact that young people continue to do the kind of work that indigenous people in cities have done for generations shows the difficulties of dealing with certain exclusionary barriers thrown up because of their ethnic origin. Nevertheless, it is important for the communities that this kind of work be recognized and that they be able to continue doing it because this is a way to win a place in destination societies and in the profession, one of the reasons they moved to Tijuana in the first place.

Just as they dress to distance themselves from the stereotype of "what an indigenous person should look like," young people, listen to music different from their parents' preferences to mark their identity.

CONCLUSION

Some young people distance themselves from the groups they are part of by blood and tradition because they become aware that being indigenous brings with it a disadvantage. But they also are part of a process of normalization and integration into urban life, which dictates codes of conduct that stipulate what it is to be young people in a city. They also develop new ways of relating to each other with regard to marriage, work, and school—as students they see studying as a way to move up socially and to attain better jobs. However, none of them is exempt from precarious labor.

This article has presented some of the possibilities these young Mixtecs have in the city because, as Maritza Urteaga and Luis Fernando García point out, today, "a new regime is changing space and time, producing new, very different parameters in the production of youth, the ethnic, and contemporary culture."⁵ Amidst the social and cultural changes this new generation of young people is experiencing, they find different ways to discover meaning in the hegemonic positions, and they try to position themselves in relation to them, producing political "othernesses." This would be another issue to analyze with regard to being young and indigenous in the context of the urban experience. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "La juventud no es más que una palabra," in Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociología y cultura* (Mexico City: Grijalbo/Conaculta, 1990), pp. 163-173.

² The neighborhood was established through resettlement. In the case of the Guerrero Mixtecs, this came after the rains of 1993, caused by the El Niño storm systems. The plots in Valle Verde have been sold on credit and the government supported the installation of basic public services and utilities.

³ Interview by the author with Ivonne in 2015 in Tijuana.

⁴ Areli Veloz, *Mujeres purépechas en las maquiladoras de Tijuana: Experiencias y significados del trabajo* (Madrid: Editorial Académica Española, 2011).

⁵ Maritza Urteaga and Luis Fernando García Álvarez, "Juventudes étnicas contemporáneas en Latinoamérica," *Cuicuilco* vol. 22, no. 62 (January-April 2015), p. 10.

Dilemmas Facing Oaxacan-Indigenous-Origin Youth in the United States

María Eugenia Hernández Morales*



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In the early 1990s, migrants of indigenous origin from the state of Oaxaca working as agricultural laborers in California's Central Valley decided to take their children to the United States due to the privations they suffered in their communities, sharpened by the effects of Mexico's neo-liberal policies on the peasantry.¹ New family members were born in their destination country.² Some of the migrant children, today young adults, still do not have documents legalizing their stay and live in the shadow of deportation. Others have benefitted from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. However, not all have been eligible due to the lack of one document or another, because they do not fulfill some other prerequisite, or because of the high cost of the paperwork.

Those born in the United States also face obstacles for studying, working, and decidedly for improving their families' situation. This is despite the prevailing impression that they

have "more opportunities" to make their parents' life aspirations a reality, the aspirations they had when they arrived in "California, the land of opportunity," where they have spent their youth.

These young people belong to a generation that has been born or grown up in California's Madera and Fresno Counties, both prominent agricultural areas. Thanks to their families' efforts, and in contrast with their parents, most have been able to go to school, although this is not necessarily the case of all the sons and daughters of indigenous Oaxacan immigrants living there. This makes them "the privileged of the excluded," who live between two distinct cultural worlds. On the one hand, they have inherited from their parents all the cultural baggage of their ethnic heritage, and, on the other hand, they live in a heavily racialized society, which considers them Hispanics, Latinos, or "people of color." It is in the link-up of these contexts that they construct their daily lives. The specialized literature deals with this, calling it "living transnationally," which consists of a wide gamut of relationships and practices that make it possible to reproduce their origins even at a distance.³

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The life experience of these young people of indigenous origin includes shifting generational tensions and negotiations discussed inside families with different levels of loyalty and orientation. One of these is a critical revision of the parents' community life, contrasted with the U.S. cultural surroundings, where the norms for youth are more permissive than in the parents' home communities.⁴

The relevant literature points to the school system as the main space for assimilation for the sons and daughters of immigrants, together with learning English. Schooling levels are a factor that often determines the kind of job a young person will get when finishing high school, community college, or university.

The social inequalities prevailing in a country are reproduced in school given that it has its own means of internal segregation.⁵ However, what educational structure do these young people have access to? And what are the strategies they use to be able to study?

For young people of Oaxacan indigenous origin, accessing the educational system is a challenge in itself, both from an economic and a cultural and symbolic point of view. This is due to the combination of a series of factors, among which are their parents' and themselves being migrants, the significance of study for the family, and its economic cost or their access to loans and scholarships.

Armida, a young woman of Mixtec origin born in Madera County, came under pressure from her family when making the decision to continue her university studies or not. The decision was made by consensus by her family given that the possibility of educational mobility in a program for outstanding students was what her parents had hoped for for their daughter. However, Armida did not necessarily share those aspirations, because they meant being away from her family and dealing with a series of adverse situations, among them, constant discrimination.⁶

When young people go to school, they begin to have their first experiences of discrimination, including racism, on the part of Anglos and Mexicans alike. This is particularly the case while they learn English, a time in which the new language can get mixed up with Spanish and, in some cases, with the indigenous language (Mixtec, Zapotec, or Triqui).⁷ In this complicated process, some young people become bi- or trilingual.⁸ Their use of the indigenous language combines with their phenotype (mainly the color of their skin) to unleash double discrimination, to the point of affecting their mobility, according to the experiences these young people have

Some of the migrant children,
today young adults, still do not have
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in the shadow of deportation.

related. In Anglo society, people often believe that the darker a person's skin, the "less intelligent" they are. Therefore, some of these values strongly imbued with discrimination are sometimes internalized, which means that, in some contexts, the young people deny their ethnic backgrounds.

Their studies are paid for by family efforts, although these young people also seek government financing through work-study programs and university loans, usually offered with interest.⁹ If they came to the United States as children, access to this kind of financing is more complicated depending on whether they have documented residency or not, since if they do not, they must pay much higher tuition as foreign students.

Some studies have delved deeply into the reason why some young people fulfill their educational aspirations and others do not. And, ethnic origin has an important place among the factors.¹⁰

Pedro, a young man of Triqui origin who arrived in Madera as a child, is negotiating with his family to stay there. His mother, tired of working in the fields after more than 15 years, without documents to allow her to stay legally, is considering returning with her family to their hometown in Oaxaca. The dilemma is that Pedro has been an outstanding student, and thanks to that, has gotten a job in the medical care system serving the immigrant population, something he achieved with a great deal of effort and thanks to being trilingual. For him, the idea of returning means missing out on his personal aspirations and practically losing his life in the United States altogether. In this case, the family decision becomes a day-to-day negotiation in which people continually experience the hope of regularizing their presence in the United States or returning to Mexico.¹¹

Entering the labor market is a key issue for understanding immigrants and their descendants, as well as for knowing the kind of jobs and in what conditions they enter the global market. When most Oaxacan indigenous families arrived to the United States to work in the fields, they were unfamiliar with the California laws that banned child labor and

For young people of Oaxacan indigenous origin, accessing the educational system is a challenge in itself, both from an economic and a cultural and symbolic points of view.

forced them to send their children to school. For this reason, some young people went to school without this being a family initiative and occasionally worked in the fields on weekends to make money and pay for their studies.

Studies have found that young people often experience agricultural labor as something without value; also, a paradox exists because it inflicts a stigma on them, something they carry with them by inheritance or because of their history, but that at the same time they need in order to get away from “a life that makes no sense.” This may be related to the idea that in the context in which they are living, a stereotype has been created that says that if you belong to a family from Oaxaca, you can only work as an agricultural laborer without considering the educational capital you are creating.

Some studies ask whether young people of indigenous origin will continue doing the jobs their parents have done,¹² or if labor mobility exists, which would imply ethnic replacement in the U.S. agricultural sector.¹³ On the one hand, we need to understand the strategies these young people use to make their way forward in the world of work and know what their capacities, strengths, and expectations are in terms of searching for better job and life opportunities. For example, some of them plan to continue their graduate studies outside the United States, find jobs better suited to their educational level in different countries, place new value on their bilingual or trilingual abilities in order to be considered candidates in the labor market with more competencies, and even return to Oaxaca.

It has been seen that among the most important dilemmas these young people face is family negotiation about access to the school system and the labor market. In this sense, what do these experiences tell us? They speak to a cultural complexity that includes a generational dispute between young people and their parents. The young feel the urgent need to change things and have a capacity for change that makes them question themselves and think critically. This is related to what they do in their day-to-day lives and often makes them confront their family heritage. Thus, a discussion

opens up about knowledge and cultural permanence, which are also the result of individual decisions in the quest for better living conditions. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ Some of them had benefitted from the 1986 amnesty provided by the Immigrant Reform and Control Act (IRCA).
- ² The children brought into the country have been called “Generation 1.5” because they arrived in their infancy, and those born in the U.S. are second generation.
- ³ See Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, “Perspectivas internacionales sobre migración,” in Alejandro Portes and Dewind Hosh, comps., *Repensando las migraciones. Nuevas perspectivas teóricas y empíricas* (Mexico City: INM/Universidad de Zacatecas/Porrúa, 2006), pp. 191-230.
- ⁴ Nancy Foner and Joanna Debry, “Relations between the Generations in Immigrant Families,” *The Annual Review of Sociology* no. 37, 2011, pp. 545-564.
- ⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Los herederos. Los estudiantes y la cultura* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 2012), chapters “La elección de los elegidos,” pp. 11-45, and “¿Aprendices o aprendices de brujo?” pp. 81-99.
- ⁶ Interview with Armida by the author in 2012 as part of the fieldwork for her master’s thesis in cultural studies, titled “OaxAmericans: La construcción de la identidad étnica en las y los jóvenes de origen indígena de Oaxaca en Madera y Fresno, California, Estados Unidos,” done at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, <https://www.colef.mx/posgrado/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/TESIS-COMPLETA-HERNANDEZ-MARIA-EUGENIA.pdf>.
- ⁷ Not all the children learn the indigenous language, a circumstance closely linked to the policies of imposing Spanish on First Peoples, policies that began in the nineteenth century whereby they were forced to learn Spanish as their first language to “integrate” them into national Mexican society.
- ⁸ Those who arrived in the U.S. as small children learned Spanish by socializing with other children in school at the same time that they were learning English. Those born in the United States learned Spanish with their families and English in school. Many parents even speak only their indigenous language and little Spanish. English also gives the young the power of being the intermediaries between their parents and U.S. society. This can be seen when parents need to know something about red tape, when the translation by their children becomes indispensable. Cases are also known in which the parents speak only their native language and Spanish and the U.S.-born children speak only English that they have learned at school, making the oldest child the interpreter inside the family, where language skills are disparate.
- ⁹ This depends on the little girl or boy’s academic record since primary school, because, with grades higher than other students, they can get support and admission to the most prestigious universities. A university selection process also includes a long and sometimes torturous road on which ethnic origin is important.
- ¹⁰ William Pérez, *We are Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream* (Sterling, Virginia: Stylus, 2009).
- ¹¹ Interview by the author in 2014.
- ¹² Andrés Pedreño Cánovas, *Que no sean como nosotros. Trayectorias formativo-laborales de los hijos de familias inmigrantes en el campo murciano* (Murcia, Spain: Editum/Universidad de Murcia, 2013).
- ¹³ Carol Zabín, *Mixtec Migrant Farmworkers in California Agriculture. A Dialogue among Mixtec Leaders, Researchers and Farm Labor Advocates* (Davis, California: California Institute for Rural Studies/Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1992).

Waking from the “American Dream” Young Migrant Returnees In Las Margaritas, Chiapas

Iván Francisco Porraz Gómez*

The word “return” has many meanings involving going back to a place or a previous circumstance one left behind. However, for some young migrant returnees who try to reconstruct their life stories after their experiences in the United States, coming home does not always mean “coming back to oneself,” to “my customs,” or “to my starting place,” since it is a fact that has marked their present.

This article aims to analyze the return experience that some Chiapas-born migrants go through after moving toward the so-called “gringo dream.” To do this research, I approached rural youths in Las Margaritas, Chiapas, which for several decades has been incorporating itself into the international labor market. I look here at their view of the return, as well as the new patterns, styles, and practices of youth created in that process.

FINAL POINT FOR MIGRATING

According to the most recent report by the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI),¹ the municipality of Las Margaritas has 111 455 inhabitants, making up 21.82 percent of the regional population and 2.22 percent of the state’s. Of these, 49.14 percent were men and 50.86 percent, women. Of the total, the 47 219 (40.38 percent) five years of age and older spoke an indigenous language.² “Today, 90 percent of

When many young people talked about their migratory journey and the reasons they returned, they did so sadly and with contradictory feelings.

the 37 677 Tojolobals in southeastern Chiapas live in the municipalities of Las Margaritas and Altamirano; the remainder are distributed in the municipalities of Comitán, Maravilla Tenejapa, Ocosingo, La Independencia, and La Trinitaria.”³

Chiapas ranks first among Mexico’s 32 states and capital city in poverty and extreme poverty. Las Margaritas stands out as one municipality that suffers from them the most: 75 339 of its inhabitants (60.76 percent) live in extreme poverty. Out of its 398 boroughs, 143 (36.39 percent) are categorized as highly marginalized, while 136 (34.61 percent) are classified as very highly marginalized. Las Margaritas youth are weighed down by poverty, ancestral marginalization, and government decisions, which cancel out any possibility of a reactivation of production that could bring them into the work force. This is why migration is increasingly part of their life projects.

WHEN YOUNG MIGRANTS THINK ABOUT RETURNING

A world with restricted privacy, substantial pressure, and external mandates is not something young people feel as their own, and they are ruled by rebellion and a thirst to live differently. Because of their social condition, the rules of the

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Photo courtesy of the author

market, and the dominance of institutions that define a system of relationships barred to undocumented migrants, in their case the international migratory experience is reduced to expecting to become part of the work force. This also sparks rebellion. In turn, it fosters the construction of a social identity that —no matter how fragile— will allow them to incorporate or reinterpret their circumstances and create new signifiers and symbols that allow them to assess and define their available courses of action and make sense out of their current lives.

When many young people talked about their migratory journey and the reasons they returned, they did so sadly and with contradictory feelings. Diego, for example, said,

In the United States, I felt good, sometimes enjoying my work and life there, and many things. But I didn't think that one problem would lead to many others. The truth is that when I was doing really well, I experienced a tragedy, but maybe it was my mistake. I dared to do something that is forbidden there and, well, the police arrested me. I went to jail, and, well, here I am back again. (Interview by the author in July 2010, Las Margaritas, Chiapas)

Diego's story is no different from that of many Mexican migrants. Forced return is a tragedy that obliges them to come back in unforeseen conditions. Their hope of saving up for a truck or a house is ended, particularly when they had not expected to return to their place of origin, when living the "American dream meant living it there." But they have had to return. Diego's problems with the law made it impossible for him to go back to the U.S., to which he adds,

Bottom line: I didn't want to come back here. I decided that I wanted to be there, but it wasn't possible, especially when you're in trouble with the authorities. Yeah, that's pretty grim; they've got you on file there, and crossing the border meant risking getting locked up for quite a few more years in jail, and I wasn't up for that anymore. (Interview with the author, July 2010, Las Margaritas, Chiapas)

Young migrants repeated
 "feeling like a stranger in the place where
 I was born." What does it mean to be
 a stranger in the family home?

Another problem, access to medical care, is also a determining factor for returning. This was Benjamín's case; he returned to save his life when he became ill and was unable to get treatment in the United States:

I remember that the second time I went, everything was going along fine until I got sick. First, stomach pain, then it got worse and they told me I had a very serious health problem and needed an operation; but maybe my health did worry me. . . . That was hard. At night I would think, I'll go to Margaritas; I'll finish selling my house and rent; or if I had a pet, I'll sell it, to be able to get out from under the expense and my illness. But, as I say, it's really hard. Just imagine: to get a job as a policeman here in Mexico you already need to have finished middle school. If not, there's no work, even picking up drunks; there just isn't any if you haven't got schooling. The truth is that I did have a bit of a hard time; after that I came back to Mexico; but here they lent me a hand so I could get the operation. It was something wrong with my liver, and, well, now I'm okay, but it was hard. Here, I think, I didn't get to live the American dream again, did I? But I had to see, or just wake up, to see that this is my reality, here in Mexico. (Interview by the author, July 2010, in Las Margaritas, Chiapas)

After crossing the border, Benjamín's health problems sometimes made it impossible for him to work, which is why he decided returning was the way to save his life and even cover the debt he had incurred when he migrated to the United States. After recovering his health and paying his debt, he realized he could go back again; however, he was still very mindful of his unfortunate experience there.

Another case I looked at was Noel's; initially, he was reluctant to talk about his experience as a migrant in the United States. While his friends talked about their adventures, love affairs, and other stories, Noel was quiet, nodding his head to what some of them were saying. It was necessary to create a climate of trust to get a young migrant who had enjoyed his bachelorhood, his "freedom," his dollars in the United States, to talk about his experience and how his life turned around beginning with a relationship he had with a young woman in California:

Look, sometimes I don't even want to remember what happened, because it makes me sad and I hadn't expected it to end like that. I was living with a girl from Los Angeles, in California. And, well, we were good together; we worked a lot, but we also

Returning takes on multiple meanings for migrants: it can mean they have been a success or a failure, or have lost their freedom, with no possibility of negotiating to stay.

raised a lot of hell. I was addicted to cocaine, "dust," and once I got crazy with her; we hit each other and her friends came around and cut me with a knife. I have scars on my arms. Some friends took me to the hospital. I was arrested and it was all over for me. They didn't press charges, but they threw me out of the United States. (Interview by the author in July 2011, in Las Margaritas, Chiapas)

Noel was deported by immigration authorities, and given that he had no savings, his hope of residing in the United States and getting citizenship ended abruptly. In his words, going back to his place of origin meant "feeling like a stranger in the place where I was born. I see things now that I don't like here."

This is why it is indispensable that we explore the world of young migrants, look into the ways they have appropriated the spaces of the center and the peripheries they are expelled from or are exploited by the power of capital. These ways reveal resistance and opposition that, while the same matters of postmodern and global culture are at stake, their use of their human capital (their age and labor power), makes them agents who mobilize, who put into play their capacity for agency, and define the terms of their dissidence and the dimension of their interactions with agents and institutions surrounding them or in a broader context.

YOUNG RETURNEES AFTER MORE THAN FIVE YEARS IN THE U.S.: "BEING A STRANGER WHERE I GREW UP"

Something repeated by young migrants was "feeling like a stranger in the place where I was born." What does it mean to be a stranger in the family home? Can you be a foreigner in your own home? These and other questions arise from the experiences some of these young people shared. Most of them had made the decision not to return to Las Margaritas. However, life's twists and turns brought them back again, and

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they felt that they were not the same, that that home, that neighborhood corner, that community no longer felt the same to them. “I don’t feel comfortable,” was a recurring thought among them.

Many of the young returnees who go back to their places of origin are repatriated or are in conflict situations did not fulfill the objective promoted by the imaginary of migration (material goods, the house, the car). To the contrary, they recreate and re-signify the transformations of their social and cultural life outside their communities. They use a very particular aesthetic, style, or look, as they say, making visible the northern clothing both of the *pochos* and the young rocker. They experience the space as something denied them, despite having grown up there. That “feeling strange,” different, leads them into conflict with their surroundings and their loved ones. As Rossana Reguillo says, young people are exposed to situations of greater vulnerability and poverty when they live with the “privations typical of their age, their appearance, their style.”⁴

Although the environment in the receiving country is *per se* a space of exclusion because they are Latinos, Mexicans, or indigenous, they are able to appropriate practices and knowledge linked to the youth cultures and life models of contexts not their own. By contrast, when the environment brings with it cultural change that does not jibe with that defined by the family and community—that is, being successful in the form of dollars or remittances—the local response is exclusion, open rejection, or fear as a pretext to justify their rapid exit from the place of origin.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Analyzing young returnees implies examining the ethnographic and sociological condition of rural youths in the context of migration between Mexico and the United States. This makes it possible to understand how they construct their reasons for emigrating and how they see themselves when

they return. This introspection translates into objective products (being able to send remittances and save money) as well as into subjective matters (their achievements and failures, which have repercussions both for them and their families). In this sense, the dialogue opened up with young migrant returnees and their testimonies make it possible to understand how they defend themselves in contexts of conflict, which can be anyplace, ranging from the home and the community to governmental and private institutions.

Also, the way they deal with the destination country, where they come up against racism, discrimination, violence, and intolerance in both discourse and practice, which have become normalized behavior in society, means that these young migrants’ lives unfold in a climate of uncertainty due, for example, to the threat of being deported if they are arrested. Returning takes on multiple meanings for migrants: it can mean they have been a success or a failure, or have lost their freedom, with no possibility of negotiating to stay.

A micro-, meso-, and macro-analysis of the return, from the point of view of the young migrants themselves, brings into play an experience that can be multidimensional or limited. Given the time they have lived as migrants, it also brings into play the personal contacts and cultural repertoires learned, exposing a hybrid being. This reveals valuable dimensions for further research. Young migrant returnees run into problems regarding their trajectories and deployment in defined times and spaces, but they are also excluded inside their own families when they have not accumulated possessions. This leads them to be stigmatized, and even more so when the young person was forcibly returned, that is, repatriated. ■■■

NOTES

¹ INEGI, “Perspectiva estadística. Chiapas,” December 2011, <http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/sistemas/perspectivas/perspectiva-chs.pdf>.

² Consejo Nacional de Población, “Indicadores sociodemográficos, 2005-2050,” http://www.conapo.gob.mx/es/CONAPO/Indicadores_sociodemograficos.

³ Hadlyn Cuadriello Olivos and Rodrigo Megchún Rivera, *Los tojolabales, pueblos indígenas del México contemporáneo* (Mexico City: CDI, 2006), pp. 3-4.

⁴ Rossana Reguillo, “Condición juvenil en el México contemporáneo. Biografías, incertidumbres y lugares,” in Rossana Reguillo, comp., *Los jóvenes en México* (Mexico City: FCE/Conaculta, 2009), p. 339.

Young Male and Female Indigenous University Cybernauts Between *Cara a Cara* and Face to Face¹

Jorge Alberto Meneses Cárdenas*



Noah Berger/Reuters

Young Latin Americans can be divided between those connected to the Internet and institutions and those who are not. However, we have to make visible those who, even in disadvantaged conditions, are situating themselves in bordering cultural spaces.² Metaphorically speaking, I would suggest this means transiting from *cara a cara* to face to face. To this end, I will situate myself in two university arenas: the University of the Sea in Huatulco, Mexico, and the University of Guajira, in Riohacha, Colombia, the former on the Mexican Pacific, and the latter in the Colombian Caribbean.

INTERNET USERS IN COLOMBIA AND MEXICO

According to Colombia's National Administrative Statistics Department (DANE), 41.8 percent of the overall population

Far from women being seen as destined to take charge of household matters, their skills inside the home make them be viewed as subjects with extra qualities that allow them to move ahead in their university careers.

said they were Internet users, but in rural areas, only 31.2 percent so.³ Of these, 94.7 percent said they had cell phones, and 55.5 percent of that national total said they could log on to Internet using them. On the Atlantic Coast, where Riohacha is situated, 61.2 percent said they had a cellular phone.

In Mexico, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), 57.4 percent of the population uses the Internet, 71.5 percent uses cell phones, of whom 86.4 percent use them to connect to the Internet.⁴ In this universe, 94.5 percent of higher education students use these services; however, the state of Oaxaca, where Huatulco is, comes in in the next to the next-to-the-last place among Mexican states for cellular phone users: 60 percent.

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FROM RANCH —AND OTHER PLACES— TO CITY

At the University of the Sea, young students hail from different regions like the coastal areas, the mountains, the plain, the Tehuantepec Isthmus, or the border between Guerrero or Chiapas states. This means that through these halls move young Zapotecs, Ikootts, Mixes, Mixtecs, Afro-Mexicans, and young people of other ethnic backgrounds.

The University of Guajira is attended by young Wayuus from the Highland, Middle, or Low Guajira region; from the border area with Venezuela, who come to “the indigenous capital of Colombia,” as the sign at the entrance to the town of Uribia says; plus Wiwas from the Santa Martha Mountains, or African-Colombians from Chocó, from Cali, from Cesar, or from Riohacha, who share the space day-to-day with their mestizo brethren.

One proof of the precariousness of their lives is the time it takes them to get from their communities to the cities where they train in the university. Some travel 15 hours or more to return home, more than it would take to get from Latin America to Europe by air. The reason is not the distance, but the travel conditions, in addition to the danger encountered on the highways and roads. It feels like something out of a discourse of cruel realism to say that, like hawks, robbers on the highways —seemingly never to be completed— are just waiting for the moment to charge the traveler for his/her right-of-way. But no: that danger is part of the ongoing insecurity in both coastal tropical areas and their regions in general.

In addition, they are among the first generations from their hometowns who are familiar with and have had access to cellular phones and computers in their early youth and even before. These devices are more familiar to them than to those who never finished primary school.

HOUSING

The destinations of university migrants are single residences shared with other students they are unrelated to, or the homes of members of their extended families. Often they are precarious rooms where they use the same space for sleeping, working, eating, and doing homework as they surf the Internet looking at Facebook or chatting on WhatsApp, if they have wifi to connect their computer —if they have one— or cell phone to the web, which uses data to go on line if they have enough left to do it.

Male and female cybernauts of different social conditions share porous spaces with a density of meanings that may well be places for the crisscrossing and clash of cultural borders.

They may reside in places with surveillance (rooming houses) or without it. In the former, they may rent a room alone or share with other students; the rooms without surveillance are often rooms, apartments, or independent rented houses. The difference is that in the rooming houses, the landlord decides the surveillance and makes the rules and, despite paying for their rooms, the renters may well be subject to pressure, harassment, and even forms of symbolic violence. In the case of the women, they may be questioned about their virginity, subjected to controls of who can visit them (and whether they can ask their guests in), inspected, at least visually, and, if they have arrived late, checked to see the conditions they arrived in, which is the cause for murmurs at the very least.

INDIGENOUS FORMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The indigenous forms of social organization (termed “fosi” by Zapotec anthropologist Wilfrido Martínez Matías) are revived in the practice of young university students.⁵ These include cooperation among different groups for the common academic good, reciprocal aid in different situations, the distribution of activities, or personal fiestas, all of which makes young people with different origins, genders, languages, and idiosyncrasies interact even though their knowledge and social practices are a heterogeneous mosaic that crosses cultural limits traditionally seen as homogeneous.

This all becomes clear when they do their housework. Without attempting to generalize, the women are more familiarized with the responsibilities implied in fending for yourself when away from your family. Knowing how to cook, wash, and clean the house, among other things, are skills that complement their university lives. It is not unusual to see men battling with elementary day-to-day activities, like getting fed and washing their clothes.

When the population in shared apartments is mixed, the women may act as organizers, and the dynamics can be

fraught with tension, conflict, and dissidence. The men may opt to leave or submit to the rules made by those who know more about the distribution of income and common activities inside a home. However, far from women being seen as destined to take charge of household matters, their skills inside the home make them be viewed as subjects with extra qualities that allow them to move ahead in their university careers more easily than the men.

MIGRATION AND GENDER

Migration observed from a gender perspective is showing that men first of all seem to be subjects who need to reconstruct themselves, breaking with practices from their homes and learning to fend for themselves. In many cases, they follow instructions from their female companions, who have no reason to be seen as falling in line with the sexist rhetoric that defines them as “the weaker sex.” Even though they come out of patriarchal power structures, as shown by the aforementioned circumstances, they are better prepared to deal with a life in which they will occupy different social positions, as roommates and university students, and that will require that they construct and reconstruct themselves in every border cultural micro-context they occupy, whether it be the home, school, or other public spaces.

What is certain is that their intervention in the university community organization, where activities are distributed through diverse social relations, revitalizes the forms of indigenous social organization, adapting them to the needs, unexpected occurrences, and day-to-day activities of young people.

CELL-ITUS?

While doing fieldwork in Colombia’s Guajira highlands, I went through many municipalities and hamlets with only a handful of houses. One time, a Wayuu over 50 told me that before, when a relative died, you used to have to go off on horseback, on a motorbike, or in a pick-up truck to tell the relatives who lived far away, whether in Colombia or Venezuela. He said that now, with cell phones, everything was simpler: you just had to call the phone number of the hamlet’s store or dial someone with a cell phone and get the information out there. One young Zapotec woman university student

Mixtec rap, Afro-Colombian hip hop,
stories of Isthmus gay Zapotec stewardships,
Wayuu *yonna* folk dance are
just a few cultural expressions shared
on Facebook and other networks.

in the mountains of Oaxaca said that the way to get messages and news out is to dial the phone booth in a store in the town, which will have a megaphone to announce over a loudspeaker that the mother or relative in question should answer. In both cases, the way people connect reflects the structural precariousness both of phone and Internet services, as well as other basic services like electricity, water, and health care, among the most visible.

Despite this, cell phones and computers are socio-technological objects/devices that are being used/appropriated by young people. Some young people say that the cellphone appeared in their lives when they were between 11 and 15, while others say they did not have one “of their own” until they went to the university. Rosalía Winocur says that the cellphone is turning into an extension of the home.⁶ In the university circumstances I observed, without disregarding this idea, I think that the cellphone is much more than just an extension of the nuclear family home or the classroom. More than putting them in constant communication with their relatives, among other things due to the lack of connectivity in their towns and their parents’ not being used to cellphones, particularly smartphones, they connect them to the digital world permanently, not only for their academic activities but also to make possible many socialization practices among equals. In many cases, if they do not have a personal computer, the cellphone is used for homework and also as a mobile device that connects them to parallel micro-worlds.

Male and female indigenous university students who do not have a device—either temporarily or permanently—are disconnected from day-to-day dynamics. If they have one, but are not connected to the Internet because of the lack of structural resources in the school or personal circumstances, the precariousness of the contemporary indigenous university student (male or female) comes to the fore: being connected to different social networks is how they constantly exchange information, share homework, and carry out group or individual activities through the networks they create according to their personal likes and dislikes, educa-

tional needs, and many practices of sociability, leisure, and communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The performative is present in the face-to-face interactions and “enter-actions” (social, digital interactions). Cultural borrowings, symbolic exchanges, which materialize in social situations, are the result of a process in which the flows of meaning can link up ways of expressing agreements, solidarity, and different fusions, but also can create tensions, conflicts, and fission, in which precariousness comes to light and integration becomes relative, mediated by inequality and power.

The male and female cybernauts of different social conditions share porous spaces with a density of meanings that may well be places for the crisscrossing and clash of cultural borders expressed in different in-person and digital social network interactions.

Mixtec rap, Afro-Colombian hip hop, stories of Isthmus gay Zapotec stewardships, Wayuu *yonna* folk dance, local elections, Caribbean coastal *vallenato* music and festivals, student demonstrations, university events, and hometown churches, just to point to some cultural expressions, are shared on Facebook and other networks. The digital narratives are many; the photos, videos, memes, and texts are combined; they are all used in the present continuous, and cross with/in the biography of the male and female subjects in many narrative forms.

They may narrate-experience personal tensions, describe yearnings, announce their moods, share digital books, or post an invite to their birthday party. Many forms of interactions are made visible through their surfing the net, in the flow of situated knowledge that, far from being superficial, are testimony to the new forms of “being together,” new socio-cultural networks that make reference to a mosaic of knowledge that ranges from the personal to the local, the community-based, the national, and the global; from agreement and fusion to conflict and fission.

Lastly, I would like to point to the challenge embodied in the transit from *cara a cara* to face to face. Young male and female indigenous university students—and I would say, young people in general—in each situated specificity, are immersed in dynamics in which the space becomes dynamic through flows of meaning. Border micro-spaces can be

seen as arenas for socialization/sociability, from which they are transiting/surfing. The arenas of socialization can be seen as youth archipelagos where they are constructing situated experiences. The multi-situation-ness of the young forces us to understand their performative positions in a relational way, since it is clear that the ethnography of multiple spaces makes visible the social-digital connections, their face-to-face interactions, and the ways in which these new social relations are intimately reconfigured by the local spaces of meaning.

In the interest of seeing youth as a becoming, culture allows us to observe the flow of trajectories more than systematize their homogeneities. We can see how they are constructing their trajectories from border cultural scenarios, how precariousness and establishing agency offer the opportunity of making visible young people’s social situations as well as their multiple positions and identities. Perhaps we have arrived at the moment of seeing in young faces, actions, and meanings, chameleon-like beings who, depending on the social situation, inhabit their gender, ethnicity, their being at the university, as cybernauts. ■■■

NOTES

¹ This article is part of the doctoral research titled “L@s internautas del Pacífico mexicano y del Caribe colombiano. Juventudes universitarias indígenas en espacios físicos y virtuales,” carried out with the support of the National Science and Technology Council (Conacyt).

² I use the notion of border areas found in Renato Rosaldo, *Cultura y verdad* (Mexico City: Grijalbo/Conaculta, 1991).

³ DANE, “Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida 2015,” Colombia, http://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones_vida/calidad_vida/Presentacion_ECV_2015.pdf accessed June 10, 2016.

⁴ INEGI, “Estadísticas a propósito del día mundial del internet (17 de mayo),” Mexico, http://www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/aproposito/2016/internet/2016_0.pdf, accessed May 20, 2016.

⁵ Martínez Matías points out that community labor and collective decision-making are familiar to young Mexicans in the UNAM System of Scholarships for Indigenous Students. I adopt this term and agree that these forms of social organization can be observed among the young male and female university students in Huatulco and Rihochá, even though they each have their specificities. In Mexico, community labor is called *tequio*, and in Colombia, *minga*; both refer to reciprocity and involve punishment if not fulfilled, but are reconfigured based on young students’ experience.

⁶ Rosalía Winocur, *Robinson ya tiene celular. La conexión como espacio de control de la incertidumbre* (Mexico City: UAM Iztapalapa/Siglo XXI, 2009), pp. 32-33.

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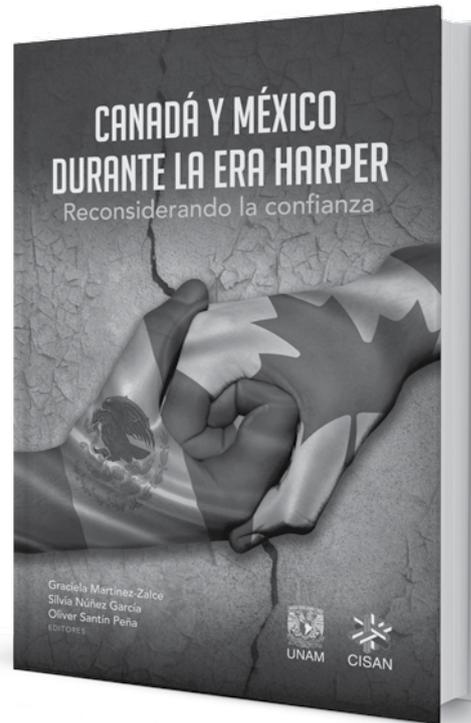
**Canadá y México durante la era Harper:
reconsiderando la confianza**

(Canada and Mexico in the Harper Era:
Reconsidering Confidence)

Graciela Martínez-Zalce, Silvia Núñez García,
and Oliver Santín Peña, eds.

CISAN, UNAM

Mexico City, 2017, 140 pp.



The history and current situation of Canada are dealt with only modestly in North American studies, which for several decades now have centered on the United States, its history, its domestic and foreign policy, or its relations with its neighbors, just to cite a few examples. Justin Trudeau's taking office as prime minister in November 2015 positioned Canada as one of the central actors in international politics, above all thanks to his government's leadership in receiving refugees, mainly Syrians. However, in Mexico a great deal is still unknown about the country of the maple leaf, whether its politics, culture, society, or economy. In addition, the importance of a broader, closer relationship between our two countries is not widely recognized.

In this context, the research done by the Center for Research on North America (CISAN) has been key for generating knowledge about our northern NAFTA partner. Since its creation in 1988, this center has been committed, as former Director Silvia Núñez García has said, to broadening and strengthening research on Canada, which has been structurally weak for more than two decades. The book *Canadá y México durante la era Harper: reconsiderando la confianza* (Canada and Mexico in the Harper Era: Reconsidering Confidence),

published in 2017, contributes admirably to the mission of offering literature about Canada. Its six articles deal with issues like Canada's power structure, management of energy resources, and diplomatic relations with Mexico in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, among others.

This volume offers an approach to today's Canada, for example, for understanding how a Conservative government managed to stay in office almost 10 years in a country that abroad is seen as liberal, or for breaking down stereotypes about Canada's commitment to the environment and sustainable development.

Silvia Núñez García's prologue presents some of the commonalities of both our nations, which make it possible to see how closer bilateral relations are not only possible, but desirable after decades of a cold, distant connection. In her opinion, both Mexico and Canada are characterized by their "vocation for peace, harmony, and cooperation; . . . both countries are identified by their opposition to protectionist policies and their favorable attitude to the free market, with particular attention to actions that strengthen democratic governance."¹

Núñez García also shares how, beyond the official bilateral relationship, other actors are the ones who have

fostered ties the most, such as civil society, academia, and sub-national governments. This is particularly interesting since it is a case of how paradiplomacy is sometimes more effective than diplomatic relations on the level of foreign ministries or heads of state. One example can be found in Quebec, one of Canada's ten provinces, which has forged close links to its counterparts in other countries, and Mexico is no exception.

In the article "Antecedentes y consolidación del liderazgo conservador de Stephen Harper en Canadá" (Background and Consolidation of Stephen Harper's Conservative Leadership in Canada), Oliver Santín Peña presents a detailed review of the Conservatives' rise to power. It began in 2000 with the emergence of the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance after the Liberal Party entered a crisis due to the corruption scandals that began to explode during the government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 2002.

It would seem that from 2003 to 2011, Canadian politics was a web of early elections, party leadership reshufflings, and "punishment" votes by the electorate. However, Oliver Santín's article presents the period simply, thanks to his efforts to address non-experts in Canadian politics. His article emphasizes the figure of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper; in Santín's words, studying him "will be indispensable for understanding what has happened in Canada in such a short time, and the role the country is going to play in coming years."²

In his article "Canadá y México en el contexto del TLCAN: veinte años de relaciones problemáticas" (Canada and Mexico in the Context of NAFTA: 20 Years of Problematic Relations), author Athanasios Hristoulas deals with three stages in the two countries' bilateral relations: the years before the signing of the agreement, the period after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the nine years of the Stephen Harper government. This allows the reader to examine both the similarities and differences between the two countries around sensitive issues such as trade and national and regional security.

He makes it clear, for example, that during the second half of the twentieth century, Canadian foreign policy was interventionist, particularly during the Cold War. This orientation was manifested in its participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organiza-

tion (NATO). In that same period, however, Mexico defended non-intervention in line with the Carranza and Estrada Doctrines. On the other hand, Hristoulas makes an interesting, precise analysis of the complexities of the NAFTA negotiations, which Canada was not initially a part of due to both the Canadians' and the Mexicans' wariness about their privileged relationship with the United States.

Along these same lines, "Visa canadiense para mexicanos: una reflexión sobre la construcción mediática de Canadá sobre México" (Canadian Visa for Mexicans: Thoughts on Canada's Media Construction of Mexico), by Juan Carlos Barrón Pastor, looks at how the imposition of the Canadian visa on Mexicans tensed bilateral relations, above all in the framework of Stephen Harper's 2014 state visit to Mexico to commemorate NAFTA's twentieth anniversary. The effects of that imposition, as well as positions later taken by both Harper and Mexican President Peña Nieto, are analyzed from a pertinent geopolitical perspective. What Barrón makes very clear is that all these events, which he terms a "diplomatic disconnect," cooled bilateral relations as never before. At the end of his article, he presents a prospective scenario of those relations and Canadian positions on migration.

In "Cómo comprender a Canadá en tiempos de restricción" (Understanding Canada in Times of Restriction), Graciela Martínez-Zalce delves into Mexican-Canadian relations from another perspective, that of cultural exchange. Based on this, she shows how certain artistic performances, like those of Quebec's Cirque du Soleil, and events like film festivals and concerts, contribute to generating knowledge about Canada, but above all to social and cultural understanding. In her words, "Entertainment is a very big window, to the point that it is the first item on the Canadian Embassy's agenda in Mexico in terms of the Mexican public's introduction to Canadian culture."³

Also very pertinent are the articles "Los recursos naturales en Canadá durante el gobierno de Stephen Harper" (Natural Resources in Canada during the Stephen Harper Government), by María Teresa Gutiérrez Haces, and "Networks in Canadian Cultural Analysis," by Will Straw. The first explains the Conservative government's strategy for energy resource management, particularly of Alberta's tar sands, and explains in detail

the role and relation of the onetime Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with Harper's energy projects. Particularly interesting is the polemic around cases of impunity of Canadian energy companies.

Will Straw's article is very useful for academics from the region because it analyzes different ways in which Canadian studies are carried out around the world and some of the tools for deepening research in certain areas like the arts. He also argues how and why what has been called "Canadianization" marked research and knowledge generation about Canada.

Why has Canada abandoned the Kyoto Protocol? Why have Mexico and Canada not managed to consolidate a strong, close bilateral relationship? What is the make-up of Canadian identity? The answers to these and many other questions can be found in *Ca-*

nadá y Mexico durante la era Harper: reconsiderando la confianza, a contribution to contemporary Canadian studies. ■■

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NOTES

¹ Silvia Núñez García, "Prólogo," *Canadá y México durante la era Harper: reconsiderando la confianza* (Mexico City: CISAN, 2017), pp. 9-10.

² Oliver Santín Peña, "Antecedentes y consolidación del liderazgo conservador de Stephen Harper en Canadá," in *op. cit.*

³ Graciela Martínez-Zalce, "Cómo comprender a Canadá en tiempos de restricción," in *op. cit.*, p. 127.

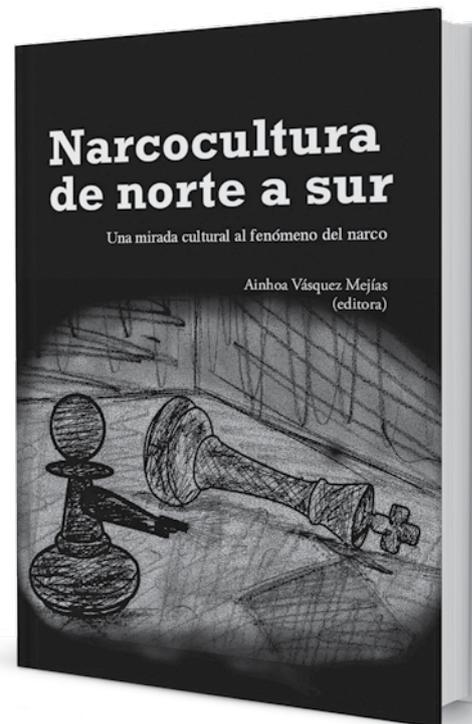
Narcocultura de Norte a Sur. **Una mirada cultural al fenómeno del narco**

(Narco Culture, North to South.

A Cultural Look at Drug Trafficking)

Ainhoa Vásquez Mejías, ed.

CISAN, UNAM/Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua
Mexico City, 2017, 223 pp.



Narco culture is a relatively new phenomenon to academia. The first time I dealt with it was when I wrote the protocol for my bachelor's thesis; when I looked into the state-of-the-art literature on it, I was surprised to find very little information, even though the phenomenon was decades old.

Today, eight years after my first approach, information continues to be sparse, although the references have been enriched with excellent works like those that I will review here.

Narcocultura de Norte a Sur (Narco Culture, North to South) is the outcome of a project headed by Ainhoa

Vásquez Mejías, a talented Chilean researcher. It began with an international colloquium; some of the papers presented there make up the chapters in this book. But, where did this very singular theme come from? It all began with the concrete existence of drug trafficking, one kind of organized crime, the illegal trade in narcotics. Probably due to how it was dealt with in public policy under the administration of former President Felipe Calderón, today, drug trafficking has been consolidated as an expanding phenomenon that affects the economic, social, and cultural fabric of society, and whose effects impact everything, from car sales to young people's values and aspirations. It is also reflected in some popular phenomena, such as music and the construction of a certain aesthetic.

We can find, then, a particular sub-culture inside Mexico's hegemonic culture specifically corresponding to the sphere of drug trafficking. It is called "narco culture." It is integrated into the social context through *habitus*,¹ and becomes naturalized through the construction of this sub-culture among certain social sectors, creating a new identity adopted as the result of the situation experienced day to day. In this way, narco culture "convinces no one but believers."²

All this has become a very important topic given that it involves the expression of the identity of a part of Mexican society: on the one hand, those directly involved in the world of drug trafficking (drug bosses, hit-men, dealers, etc.) and, on the other, those who participate in the culture created by the former, even if they have no direct connection with them and may just like *narcocorrido* music or to dress like drug traffickers. Narco culture, then, is the manifestation of a reality that cannot be banned. That is how it becomes part of the collective imaginary and the source of inspiration for the social construction of reality, and therefore, of something that, one way or another, projects the activities and feelings of those social realities: literature.

We could begin an interesting debate about the effect of literature and, therefore, its impact on society. Can we prove that reading about a specific phenomenon, listening to music with certain content, or watching television series or movies about a certain topic has some influence on behavior? Or, to the contrary, are these manifestations of the cultural industry nothing more than a reflection of the society that they come from?

From the songs circulating
drug traffickers' exploits, to the more
elaborate storylines about the life
of a certain drug boss, the "narco novels"
now take us into that world that
we do not want to be part of,
but that are dying of curiosity about.

The arguments pro and con have been studied, and not only with regard to drug trafficking, but the important thing is to point out that these manifestations of narco culture exist and play a role in the entire fabric of society.

Thanks to the media, literature's reach is not confined to the publication of a text that few can read. Rather, these works become a reference point for the so-called cultural industry, with all that this implies. From the first manifestations that circulated the drug traffickers' exploits in songs, to the more elaborate storylines about the life of a certain drug boss, the "narco novels" (literary narrative about narco stories) now take us into that world that we do not want to be a part of but that at the same time are dying of curiosity about, appealing to our repressed impulses regarding violence, drugs, and sex. Stories brimming with corruption, death, and injustices are the raw material of this relatively new literary genre, and it must be said that it in itself is an object for debate.

Delving into the stories described in this kind of literary product requires a special taste for brutal tales that use no "literary language" to metaphorically dress up the situations they describe, since crudity of expression is a basic characteristic of this kind of text. But that does not mean that they leave out elements of human nature: sentiments and emotions manage to weave themselves into the violence characteristic of drug traffickers.

Based on the analysis of several representative works, *Narcocultura de Norte a Sur* takes us by the hand through different scenarios related to the phenomenon: from the first documented *narcocorridos* —or at least the closest thing to them— that Arturo García Niño's essay uses to introduce us to a reflection about narrative on this topic written in Mexico, to the analysis of concrete works in this genre, such as the pioneering *Con-*

trabando or *Entre perros* (Among the Dogs), and the most recent manifestation, the narco series.

As García Niño mentions, the narrative written *to be read* is the continuation of the narrative written *to be sung*, and both are precursors of the narrative conceived as images put to music. And all three are cultural products in permanent circulation. The author adds that marketing has been very good at transforming “the narco” into a product. This is also analyzed by Diana Palaversich, who explains the importance of “all things narco” for that discipline.

One of the social groups that most consumes narco culture are the young: among other reasons, they are often the main characters in the stories of a world in which, if you aren’t skilled enough, you can very well not live very long, or, if you’re too daring, you can also disappear. But, can this be considered dangerous?

Opinions are divided, like about everything involving drug trafficking. However, as happens with every sub-culture, the responsibility for propagating it both actively and passively falls mainly to the young. We can see this in certain stories centered precisely around this age group, as is explained in a couple of the chapters (“Literatura, infancia y narcotráfico: leer como el axolotl” [Literature, Childhood, and Drug Trafficking: Read Like the Axolotl] and “Juvenicidio, sistema neoliberal y narco: ¿una generación culpable de su muerte? Las crónicas de Javier Valdez Cárdenas y Diego Enrique Osorno” [Youthicide, Neoliberal System, and Drug Trafficking: A Generation *Guilty* of Its Death? The Chronicles of Javier Valdez Cárdenas and Diego Enrique Osorno], which analyze the role of young people in this world.

From the oral tradition, with the *narcocorrido* as a means of disseminating the drug trafficking world, we move on to the written tradition, represented by narco novels. Thanks to a hyper-production of the latter by transnational publishing houses, we have access to works that could be defined as “600-page *narcocorridos*,” such as the popular *Reina del Sur* (Queen of the South) by Spanish writer Arturo Pérez-Reverte. The public loves their action-packed plots bursting with violence and sex, underlining what the readership demands: attractive scenes and “real” situations that they can also identify with.

For his part, Felipe Oliver delves into how the traditional revolutionary *corrido* was displaced by stories

of drug traffickers, who sparked enormous curiosity among ordinary people. Oliver’s chapter refers to the existence of a direct line of progression from the verses of a *corrido* to the development of a narco story, which expands the idea put forward in the original.

The study of the narco culture based on its different products has become a pressing need. However, instead of just examining it from the point of view of a single discipline (sociology, economics, or law, for example), what is required is an inter-disciplinary approach, since its effects on society are not confined to an area covered by a single discipline.

One of the main sources of information for researchers who study this phenomenon is the stories told in different cultural narco narratives because that reality that peeks through the fiction is a slippery object of study, difficult to access. In this sense, I recognize the importance of analyzing the narco narrative because the interpretation of these sources of information depends completely on works such as the one Ainhoa Vázquez Mejías and her colleagues present us. Here, we can study not only the content of the work, but also the characteristics of the genre and the handling of fiction within it.

Considering the historical context of a work of literature is extremely important for interpreting it correctly. The narco narrative is not a strictly accurate reflection of reality, but it does offer fiction fed by circumstances that sometimes involve much more intense issues than the final product presents. ■■■

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NOTES

¹ *Habitus* includes the mental or cognitive structures through which individuals behave in the social world; they have a series of internalized schema through which they perceive, understand, appreciate, and evaluate the *outside* world. Dialectically, the *habitus* is the product of the internalization of the structures of the social world. They represent the social structures of our subjectivity, which are initially constituted based on our first experiences (primary *habitus*) and later, on our adult life (secondary *habitus*). This is the way in which social structures are emblazoned on our minds and our bodies by interiorizing the exterior.

² Luis Astorga, *Mitología del narcotraficante en México* (Mexico City: UNAM /Plaza y Valdés, 2004), p. 5.



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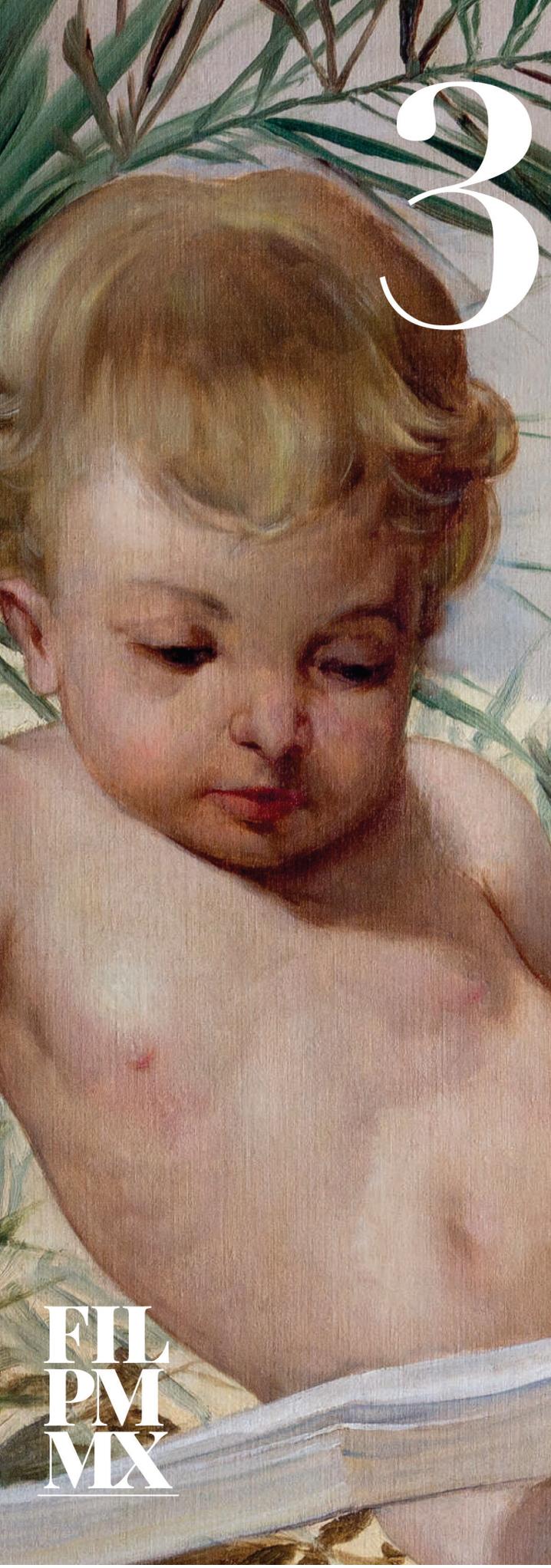
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