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# VOICES *of Mexico*

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## The Challenges Facing Vicente Fox

Roberto Gutiérrez López

## The Art of Luis Nishizawa

Margarita García Luna  
Merry Mac Masters

## U.S. Civil Society A Hemisphere-Wide Paradigm?

Silvia Núñez García

## Morelos: Monasteries, Archaeological Sites and A Glimpse of Cuernavaca

## A Short Story by Jorge Ibarguengoitia



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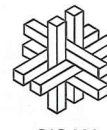
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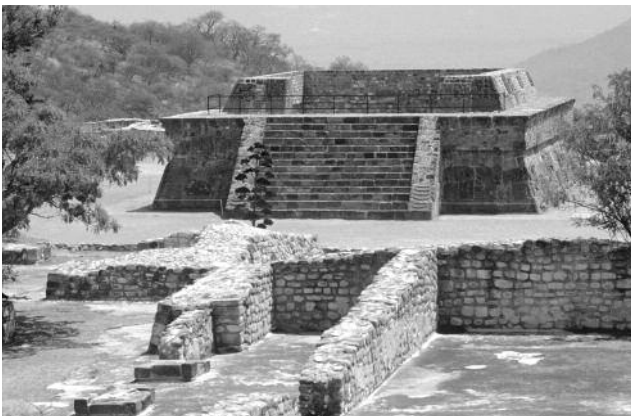
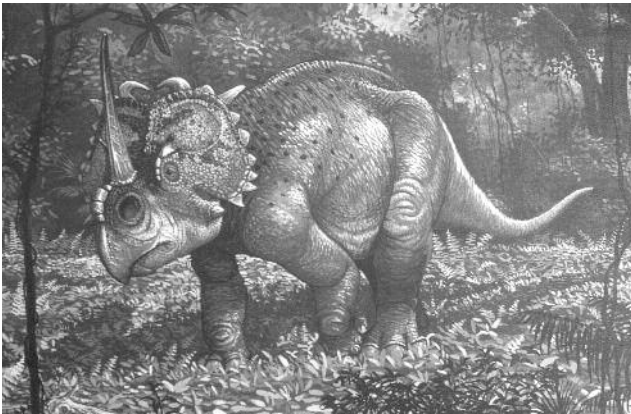
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### **Cover**

Luis Nishizawa, *Homage*, 177 x 123 cm, 1978 (acrylic).

### **Back Cover**

Luis Nishizawa, *The Friars II*, 94 x 184 cm, 1997  
(suiboku ink).

# OUR VOICE

Last February 16, President George Bush made his first visit abroad soon after his inauguration to Mexico, a clear good will gesture, breaking a long tradition of U.S. presidents who usually reserved that distinction for Canada. Undoubtedly, it was a sign of recognition of our country, today the United States' first trade partner. Guanajuato and all of Mexico celebrated. However, an unfortunate coincidence clouded matters: during his visit, Bush ordered a military attack on Irak. In our last issue of *Voices of Mexico*, my article on the U.S. elections pointed to the fact that the sharply contested, relatively unclear election results brought with them the risk of giving rise to a weak president. I expressed my concern that there is a clear temptation for weak U.S. presidents to rely on confrontation and war as a foreign policy strategy because of the public's tendency to support their presidents in times of international crises. Nevertheless, I did harbor the hope that my prediction would not come true. Long before I could have imagined, however, the new U.S. president sent a clear message to the international community about who holds the reins of world power: despite its crisis of democracy, the United States is the world's leading power, and make no mistake about it. Bombing one of the U.S. people's "traditional enemies" had the desired effect not only internationally, but also on the domestic political scene.

Even if it did put a cloud over Bush's visit to Mexico, this does not mean that U.S. relations with its most important trade partners should be affected. That was why Bush emphasized his commitment to the hemisphere, and, concretely, his desire to support the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and to promote the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). This is the main message that should be remembered because it may make for greater growth in the region as a whole, with possible comparative advantages for Mexico given its being part of the NAFTA region. However, it remains to be seen if it can be translated into actions. We should not forget that the U.S. Congress is sharply divided, which could mean serious obstacles for any attempt to get fast track treatment for the FTAA. In addition, if his message is not going to be mere discourse, Bush should show that, now that North America is going through an economic slowdown, he is willing to share the solutions with the other two countries in the region, Mexico and Canada. This could be interpreted, undoubtedly, as a positive sign for all the countries of the continent in advancing toward the FTAA.

\* \* \*

Our "Politics" section in this issue includes an article by Roberto Gutiérrez about the challenges that the Fox administration will face in its first year. Two are of particular note. The first is the need to move toward a political and social model based on common norms accepted by all, which implies a serious effort to reform the state to generalize the rationality of political actions and propitiate the construction of a system whose main characteristic would be certainty. Secondly the fundamental challenge is the encouragement of a political culture of respect for legality, making it the priority on Fox's political agenda. This is especially the case because impunity has clearly not yet been stopped, which in turn puts the security of society at risk.

Mexico's party system has gone through important transformations since the landmark elections of 1988. It has gone from a system of a hegemonic party to one with at least three dominant political forces (the Institutional Revolutionary and National Action Parties and the Party of the Democratic Revolution). Esperanza Palma has written on this theme, showing how the other, new parties are not really organizations with strong ideological and institutional underpinnings and broad social bases. Rather, she argues, they are political forces grouped around the personality cult of a leader that feed on the contradictions and momentary splits in the three large parties, which have gone into profound crises —particularly the PRI and the PRD— since the July 2, 2000 elections.



Amado Avendaño Villafuerte's contribution is especially relevant in the current context of attempts to find ways forward that lead to dialogue and peace in Chiapas. Avendaño analyzes the different strategies that, in his opinion, the Mexican government has used to deal with the conflict. He points out that peace is understood by the Zapatista National Liberation Army and Subcommander Marcos not as a simple signature on an accord between the two parties, but as the authentic transformation of the conditions of backwardness and marginalization thrust upon Mexico's indigenous peoples.

In our "Society" section, we have inaugurated a debate on the question of abortion in Mexico. An extremely complex issue, we plan to present several points of view on the question, and in this issue, we include two. Specialist Myriam Brito Domínguez focuses on abortion as a public health problem. She maintains that extreme positions on both sides have blocked a profound analysis of the problem and therefore have made it impossible to create the conditions for having a serious national discussion. Anthropologist Marta Lamas points to the fact that criminalization of abortion does not lead to its eradication. Serious efforts in sexual education are needed to reduce the high rate of abortions in Mexico, but above all, it must be recognized as a human rights issue involving women's sexual and reproductive rights.

Luis Nishizawa is one of the most poetic painters in Mexico's visual arts. This may be due to his embodying two profoundly humanistic pictorial traditions that masterfully use visual metaphors: the Mexican and the Japanese. Art critic Margarita García Luna and cultural journalist Merry Mac Masters both write about this outstanding Mexican painter in our "Science, Art and Culture" section.

In the same section, we present an article by René Hernández, who goes back 65 million years to offer us a panorama of some of our country's inhabitants in the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods of the Mesozoic era: dinosaurs. Research by the UNAM Geology Institute has uncovered the heretofore unknown existence of dinosaurs in what is now Mexico.

Arturo Cosme has contributed an article about the painting of Sabrina Villaseñor for this section, whereby our magazine continues to promote the work of young Mexican artists.

*Voices of Mexico* considers it an honor that a team headed by Mexican scientist and UNAM researcher Antonio Velázquez Arellano has been given the Queen Sofía Prize, about which we have included a brief review in this issue.

Undoubtedly one of the fundamental issues on President Fox's agenda is fiscal reform. This is not only because previous administrations have long promised and always postponed it, but also because Mexico's economic development now demands it without delay. In our "Economy" section, Miguel Molina says that the timing is perfect for such a reform, given the approval ratings and legitimacy still enjoyed by Mexico's new president. The task is urgent, as testified to by the current low tax revenues. However, Molina argues that fiscal reform must also set social goals so that the benefits are channeled on a priority basis to those living in extreme poverty.

In the same section, we present an article by economist Bernardo Olmedo analyzing the role that businessmen could play in the country's new situation. He contends that the move from the protectionist economic model clear during the Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo administrations (1970-1982) to a more open one today has substantially modified businessmen's relationship to the state, increasing to previously inconceivable levels their influence in the country's economic policy. With this article, we are continuing the analyses about the role that different political actors will be playing in the process of changes in Mexico.

One of the social groups that has increased its influence in decision making about public policy is the so-called third sector, or civil society. In this issue, we have dedicated both our "United States Affairs" and "Canadian Issues" to the analysis of the striking development of this sector in the whole hemisphere, particularly in reaction to globalization and the creation of regional markets and in the protection of the environment. CISAN researcher Silvia Núñez points to how organizations of civil society in the United States and North America in general have oriented their activities toward demanding solutions to problems that are

not solved by either the market or the state. The limitations on civic participation through traditional institutions has spurred third sector organizations to a new dynamism. Delia Montero and José Sosa write on the same topic, arguing that one of the main challenges that civil society faces on a hemisphere-wide basis is moving toward a model of democratic integration and communication that will allow the interests of all the groups—whether large or small—to be represented.

The archaeological, colonial and environmental wealth of Mexico's state of Morelos occupy our "The Splendor of Mexico," "Museums" and "Ecology" sections. In the first, Leonardo Sepúlveda gives us a glimpse of the little-known "city of eternal spring" by taking us for a walk through historic, traditional Cuernavaca and stopping to admire its colonial architecture, museums, gardens and plazas. The variety of climates, rich soil and abundant flora and fauna were determining factors for the establishment of important human settlements in Morelos during the pre-Hispanic era. Archaeologist Barbara Konieczna describes several of the archaeological sites that have been discovered and excavated in the state, each invaluable for constructing that part of our history, among them Xochicalco, the best known site in the region. Architect Alfonso Toussaint finishes off the section by introducing us to the world of sixteenth-century religious architecture that left us a valuable legacy of monasteries, many of which have been declared World Heritage Treasures.

The "Museums" section is dedicated to the Ethnobotanical Garden and Museum of Traditional Medicine and Herbalism, located in a beautiful corner of Cuernavaca. Museum Director Laura Parrilla explains the importance of conserving and increasing the garden's collection, a source of not only botanical but also important cultural and social knowledge.

Lastly, in our "Ecology" section, Francesco Taboada takes us to the low tropical forest of the Huautla Mountains, Morelos' most important ecological reserve. Behind the figures and data about biodiversity and the efforts to preserve the area, Taboada discovers the world where the collective imagination has produced its own myths and beliefs about the beings that inhabit the region.

Mexican literature has prolifically produced very original, high quality short story writers. One of the perhaps least studied sub-genres, but undoubtedly one of the best known and most enjoyed by readers, is the ironic, humorous short story, almost always an urban narrative. Among the writers who have successfully ventured into this genre are many prestigious authors like Jorge Ibarguengoitia, one of whose small masterpieces we have translated and published in this issue. It is accompanied by a rigorous analytical article about Mexican humorous literature by researcher Lauro Zavala.

In our "In Memoriam" section, we pay homage to well-known Oaxacan painter Rodolfo Morales, one of the artists who has contributed to the prestige of Mexican art worldwide, and part of whose work we were fortunate enough to publish in issue 49 of *Voices of Mexico*, dedicated to Oaxacan painting.

We are proud to announce that the Printing Association of Florida gave *Voices of Mexico* printers Editorial Offset the Judges Award in its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Floridaprint Awards for its production of our magazine. We send them our warmest congratulations!

For the last three years we have made considerable efforts to maintain the price of our publication. Unfortunately, for different reasons, among them the constant growth in material and production costs, we will be forced to raise the price of the magazine as of our next issue, number 56. Even with that increase, it will still be more economical than most similar magazines published in Mexico. At the same time, we will seek to maintain and increase the quality of our contributions and graphics.

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla

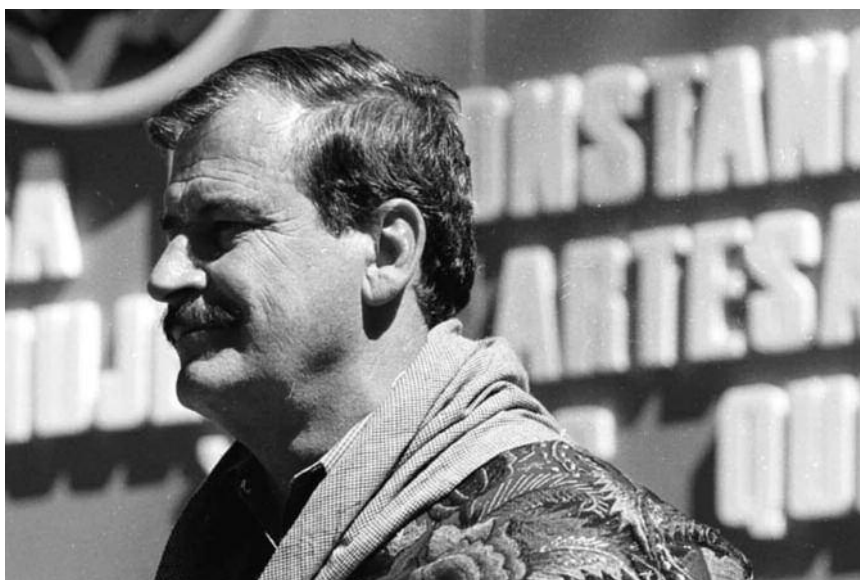
**Director of CISAN**



# Legality, Governability and Democracy

## The Challenges Facing Vicente Fox

Roberto Gutiérrez López\*



One of Fox's main challenges will be promoting a culture of respect for the law.

The recent alternation in the Mexican presidency has created profound expectations both domestically and abroad. Certainly, the undeniable historical novelty of what happened July 2, 2000, has opened up the possibility for major changes in terms of the relationship between the state and society and, with that, in the traditional way that the serious problems Mexico is now facing are dealt with.

Nevertheless, the political, econom-

ic, social and cultural difficulties littering the road toward a successful democracy, toward the consolidation of a new political regimen capable of harmoniously bringing together the institutionally effective democratic exercise of power and an improvement in people's living conditions, cannot be underestimated.

As everyone knows, the so-called "super-sale" commitments typical of electoral campaigns that always tend to promise spectacular transformations in a short time, may in the medium term be very costly for those who proposed them when they cannot deliver.

This seems to be the case of the both necessary and urgent adjustments to ensure the complete rule of law, historically one of the great unsettled issues from the point of view of building truly democratic ways of living together in Mexico. Certainly, several months after Vicente Fox took office, it begins to be clear that the problems linked to illegality in its most diverse manifestations fundamentally persist and will not be easily overcome.

This is a matter for great concern if we take into account that the weaknesses and deficiencies in this area gravely affect the population and also erode the

\* Professor and researcher at the Sociology Department of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Azcapotzalco campus.



Octavio Navea/VE

The July 2, 2000 elections opened up the possibility for a new relationship between the state and society.

bases for the country's democratic legitimacy and governability. Today, just as in the past, issues such as public insecurity—which involves the primordial function of any state, that of protecting the life and property of its citizens—have a negative effect on the nation's public health. The same is true for the majority of crimes, which go unpunished; the corruption of public institutions, as has been shown by the recent paradigmatic cases of siphoning off of public funds from the Mexico City Treasury Department or the case of the Matamoros Customs Office, which admitted an “undocumented” elephant into the country; the inability to quash the power of the different branches of organized crime, illustrated by the spectacular escapes of drug kingpins from “high security” prisons; the persistence of large informal sectors of the economy that systematically evade taxes; and the impossibility of clearly defining the legal circumstances of organizations like the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), among others. We find ourselves facing a highly problematic

situation which, if not changed for the better, will continue to threaten national security and dash the hopes of reaching a consolidated, solid democracy in a reasonable time.

It is not at all difficult to understand the insoluble link between democracy and the rule of law if we consider that the latter, as the more general term, implies the exercise of a set of norms capable of guaranteeing the freedoms and obligations upon which peaceful, tolerant and civilized human concert is based.

In view of recent Mexican experience, we can categorically affirm that without the rule of law it is not possible to enforce the rules that define the coordinates of living together and competing in an order of things that in addition to being plural, creates certainty among its citizens, social organizations and political and economic actors. As a direct result, legality is an essential prerequisite of governability because the latter cannot exist outside an effective pact capable of stably regulating social interaction, political com-

petition and institutional effectiveness. It is worthwhile looking further into each of these dimensions.

*Social Interaction.* In the current phase of our political development, we must remember that decades of relaxation of legality on all levels produced a culture in which people are reluctant to submit to clear norms and procedures, and in which they frequently opt for informal arrangements and interpret the law according to their own interests.<sup>1</sup>

The consequences of this are many and varied and reach into the most hidden spheres of day-to-day relations, such as the way people privately appropriate public space to establish street sales or pay bribes to avoid getting a traffic ticket. But they also touch sensitive, strategic spaces, such as when the National Autonomous University of Mexico was closed for several months during a student strike or the case of the mass production of illegal copies of all kinds of goods.<sup>2</sup>

*Political Competition.* We recently saw the negative effects of some political actors' lack of complete acceptance of the electoral rules of the game. The open clashes in Tabasco and Yucatan after the Federal Electoral Tribunal's decisions tell us that obeying the law continues to be subordinate to political interests and calculations.<sup>3</sup> At this point in our democratic evolution, we cannot be sure that perverting processes and legal decisions with negotiations and political criteria is a thing of the past. Mutual pressures and blackmail among political forces continue to engender agreements outside the framework of the law, agreements that tend to be justified in terms of the system's “stability.”

*Institutional and Procedural Effectiveness of the Mexican Political System.*



First of all, we should remember that democracy is capable of bringing its own set of norms and institutional structure up to date following the guidelines of the rule of law. This expresses very well what German jurist Hermann Heller calls the essential element of politics: the transformation of social trends and needs into legal norms.

When examined closely, the process that ranges from social flows, needs and demands to its institutional-legal expression is extremely important if analyzed from the perspective not only of the relationship between democracy and law, but also of the link that they both have to consensus and legitimacy, that is, the link to the central variables of political life.

The new administration would be making a serious mistake if it forgot that the legal framework of a democracy is more solid the greater the credibility and trust the public has in its norms and institutions. And that is the case because, to a great extent, it is on this that the harmonious relationship between society and the world of legal-political institutions depends.

The side of legitimacy that involves credibility is founded on one of the basic consensuses that upholds democratic states. In restructuring his administration's apparatus, President Fox bet very heavily on proposing an unprecedented form of organization. He has included coordinating committees, commissions, "unities" and ministries that as yet have no clear hierarchy, chain of administrative command or ways of processing obvious overlaps in such fields as national security, border and indigenous issues, public participation and attention to vulnerable groups. Obviously, this could have grave consequences in terms of the coherence

of public policies, their legitimacy and therefore the country's overall governability. So, the overlap of legality and legitimacy seems to be something that determines the reproduction and peaceful and orderly transformation of community life.

Finally, we can say that to guard against the pluralism and diversity inherent in Mexican society culminating in anarchy and ungovernability, our line of defence must be the binding force of fundamental agreements built upon the legitimacy of the rule of law. The reconstitution of the rule of law in Mex-

In the current phase of our political development, we must remember that decades of relaxation of legality on all levels produced a culture in which people are reluctant to submit to clear norms and procedures.

ico will be very difficult if the principles of representation and democratic governability are not harmoniously articulated. In this sense, clearly, dialogue and negotiations within the law are fundamental instruments for consensus since the legitimacy of Mexican democracy will be unintelligible without the development of legally consecrated political pacts.

It is through these pacts that the principles of living together in a democracy must be reaffirmed: equality before the law and legal certainty; the respect for human rights and basic liberties; representative government based on the ballot; respect among different political currents; the elimination of impunity; and the abolition of violence as a political tool.

The primacy of legality in community life is a decisive challenge since it

is the only thing that makes it possible to involve rationality in both political relations and social and economic relations as a whole.

Championing the value of legality for the democracy we are trying to consolidate in our country means, then, emphasizing just how indispensable civility, stability and certainty are for the socio-political health of the community, to the exclusion of those two elements that distort any democratic effort: arbitrariness and impunity.

Looking to the future, the consolidation of the rule of law as an instru-

ment of rationalization will be key to demonstrating that democracy is not—as some of its critics claim—an ungovernable, ineffective social and political system. In spite of any discrepancies that could be stated regarding the central programs of the Fox administration, it would be useful to foster concerted efforts aimed at demonstrating that the existence of a full democracy—that is, a democracy based in law—does make a fundamental, positive difference compared to any other form of government.

Obviously, as I have already implied, without a culture of legality based on society's knowledge and trust in its laws, any institutional initiatives—regardless of how just and appropriate they may seem—can be nipped in the bud if they do not receive the social backing needed for their implementa-

tion. Therefore, it is indispensable that we foster a form of participation that will turn basic freedoms like the freedom of thought, expression and association into levers for progress and modernization. Obviously, this is not an undertaking for the administration alone: its magnitude requires initiatives and contributions from different actors, organizations and public and private institutions. In brief, given the magnitude of these tasks along the road to the consolidation of a democratic rule of law, it would be important that they be made priorities in the country's new political situation, conceived of as duties of state that transcend private interests and short-term political calculations.

It would be very costly for the new Fox administration to postpone these

tasks and focus on immediate discussions that are not particularly relevant for the country's future. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In his most recent book, *México: la ceniza y la semilla* (Mexico, the Ash and the Seed) (Mexico City: Ediciones Cal y Arena, 2000), Héctor Aguilar Camín puts forward the idea that Mexican society is not modern enough to build a stable democracy because that would demand a citizens' culture which in some cases is barely forming and in others has not even been born. Naturally, people's attitude toward the law plays a fundamental part in this.

<sup>2</sup> The faulty "acknowledgment" of legality in the public's political identity is illustrated by the fact that only a little more than 35 percent

of Mexicans think they should obey the law completely; almost 30 percent think the law must be changed; and another 30 percent think it is all right to disobey it when they "believe" it is unjust. Ulises Beltrán et al., *Los mexicanos de los 90* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1997). Of course, these figures do nothing but confirm what is clear in both day-to-day living and not a few political events. From a comparative point of view, according to the last annual report of International Transparency, Mexico has rated very low on the scale of corruption control, lower even than less developed countries like Peru, El Salvador or Senegal.

<sup>3</sup> In the state of Tabasco, the tribunal's decision canceled the gubernatorial election results that gave the win to the Institutional Revolutionary Party, ruling that the competition had been irregular and unequal. The decision was followed by a series of legal and political clashes in which the validity of the tribunal's action was questioned. In the state of Yucatan, a similar problem arose over the election of the citizen councilors under whose auspices the next elections were to be organized.

## SIGLO VEINTIUNO EDITORES

1966  
2001



### LA ESPERANZA DE MÉXICO

UN ENCUENTRO CON LA POLÍTICA Y LA HISTORIA

por JAMES D. COCKCROFT

*La esperanza de México* cuenta la dramática historia de la construcción del México moderno. A medida que James Cockcroft va desgranando su detenido análisis de las causas de la enorme división entre ricos y pobres en México, subrayando también el flagrante contraste entre el corrupto sistema político del país y las aspiraciones democráticas de su pueblo. El desarrollo económico mexicano se distorsiona y desequilibra a causa de una larga colusión entre intereses extranjeros y la clase nacional dirigente. Explica por qué importantes desafíos contra la élite del poder, tales como la revolución de 1910-1920 y la rebelión estudiantil de 1968, fracasaron en su intento de romper la hegemonía de las clases dominantes. Con particular atención hacia la contribución de mujeres, indios, trabajadores y campesinos, esta obra está definida por la convicción de que hoy día las perspectivas más prometedoras del país descansan en la exigencia de justicia y democracia por parte de sus capas más empobrecidas a partir de la insurrección zapatista en Chiapas y de los esfuerzos electorales de la izquierda.

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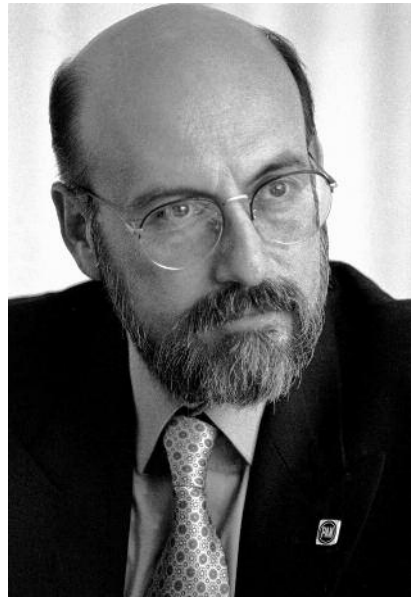
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# The Party System In Contemporary Mexico

Esperanza Palma\*



Dulce María Sauri, president of the PRI.



Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, president of the PAN.



Amalia García, president of the PRD.

How can we characterize today's party system in Mexico? This is one of the central questions guiding academic thinking in Mexico about political parties. The deconstructing of the hegemonic-party system has given rise to a new system that has not yet consolidated. The emergence of new parties during the 2000 presidential elections —some the result of splits in the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) or the Party of the Democratic

Revolution (PRD)— indicate that the new system is still unstable.

A series of electoral reforms implemented since the end of the 1970s were key in deconstructing the hegemonic-party system and the creation of a new one. The most important were the 1994 and 1996 reforms which established the institutional bases for a competition among parties. Certain key elections that entailed a real reshuffling of party elites and voters also played a central role in this process. This is the case of the 1988, 1997 and 2000 elections. In 1988, the PRI's Democratic Current split, eroding the basis for PRI

hegemony in that it gave birth to a broad opposition front that brought together some sectors of the PRI and of the left, a grouping that would later give rise to the PRD. For the first time the Chamber of Deputies had a plural composition that forced the PRI to seek alliances in Congress for amending the Constitution. After the 1988 elections came the first experiences of alternating in office, beginning in states like Baja California, where the National Action Party (PAN) won its first governor's seat in 1989.

The 1997 elections for the federal Chamber of Deputies and a few state

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contests were key for completing the destructuring of the hegemonic-party system. The PRI lost its absolute majority in Congress: it took 39.1 percent of the ballots, vis-à-vis 26.6 percent for the PRD and 25.7 percent for the PAN. The PRI lost several governors' seats (among them Zacatecas and the mayor's seat in Mexico City's Federal District) to the PRD, which scored its first wins at a state level, and Nuevo León and Querétaro to the PAN.

The 2000 president elections confirmed the competitive nature of the party system with the victory of Alliance for Change candidate Vicente Fox. For the first time in seven decades, the PRI lost a presidential election.

Clearly, then, the current party system is situated in the camp of competitive systems. But, beyond this general description, what are its central characteristics?

One important characteristic is that it represents a certain continuity with respect to the previous system, not in terms of how it operates, but through some of the parties in it. Two of the most important parties, the PRI and the PAN, arose in the context of authoritarianism and have transformed their functions throughout the period of democratization. This element of continuity is a contrast with other cases of the democratization of similar —not identical— types of regimes; for example, the democratization of single-party regimes led to the extinction of the state parties and the creation of new ones.

On the other hand, the PRD emerged in the heat of the liberalization-democratization process as a result of a split in the PRI and was a driving force behind the deepening of democratization in our country.

Therefore, today's party system did not come out of nowhere, and competition has also given rise to other parties like the Labor Party (PT) and the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM).

The trend since the 1990s has been the establishment of a system with three large parties, the PAN, PRI and PRD, and two other parties which, though small in electoral terms with localized sup-

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port in a few states, have become relevant, the PT and the PVEM.<sup>1</sup> These are the ones that have maintained a continual presence in elections and have established alliances with the larger parties. In 2000, the PVEM participated in the Alliance for Change in support of Fox's candidacy and the PT participated in the Alliance for Mexico in support of Cárdenas' candidacy. Both have a significant presence in the Congress. In 1997, the PT obtained 3.8 percent of the national vote in federal elections for the Chamber of Deputies, and the PVEM, 2.6 percent; and that same year, PT support was decisive for the PRI to pass the federal budget.

It is still premature to say that the five-party format has been consolidat-

ed. In the 2000 elections, six other new parties appeared; their presence indicates that the system could still undergo some changes. These parties are almost all the result of splits in the PRI and the PRD. They are Convergence for Democracy (CD), a PRI split; the Party of the Democratic Center (PCD), headed by ex-PRI leader Manuel Camacho Solís; Party of the Social Alliance (PAS), with roots in the *Sinarquista* movement; the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM), previously considered a satellite of the PRI that revived years after losing its legal registration and ran ex-PRI and ex-PRD member Porfirio Muñoz Ledo for president in 2000; and finally the Social Democracy Party (PDS), headed by former Communist Party leader Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, who left the ranks of the PRD repudiating Cárdenas' position as a caudillo and the lack of a modern left project.

Convergence for Democracy, the Social Alliance and the Party of the Nationalist Society supported Cárdenas' candidacy, and thanks to that, retained their legal registration in 2000. None of the six new parties supported Fox, although the PARM candidate, Muñoz Ledo, declined in his favor toward the end of the campaign. The PCD, PARM and PDS all failed to reach the two percent of the vote needed to maintain their legal status as parties (see table).

One of the issues raised has been whether the emergence of these parties is relevant for the party system as a whole. In this regard, I think that the majority of these organizations are not really the expression of new social actors seeking representation in the party system. They are groups and/or figures, who for the most part have come out of

VOTE COUNT FOR PRESIDENT AND FEDERAL DEPUTIES, 2000		
Party	President	Deputies
Alliance for Change*	42.52%	38.32%
PRI	36.10%	36.86%
Alliance for Mexico**	16.64%	18.63%
PDS	1.57%	1.88%
PCD	0.55%	1.16%
PARM	0.42%	0.73%
National totals	100.00%	100.00%
<p>* PAN and PVEM.  ** PRD, PT, CD, PAS and PSN.  <b>Source:</b> Federal Electoral Institute (IFE).</p>		

the PRI or the PRD, or the remnants of old groups like the PARM. They are part of a process of recycling the elites who have accompanied the destructuring of the hegemonic-party system. Generally speaking they center around well-known figures with no electoral influence whatsoever who are seeking a place in the political spectrum after having been ousted from important positions inside their parties: this is the case of Manuel Camacho Solís, who failed to win the PRI's presidential candidacy in 1994. They also enjoy the stimulus of the financing and prerogatives stipulated in electoral legislation. Rather than an ideological position, these parties are a reflection of fissures within the larger parties and of merely personal interests.

The case of the Social Democracy Party merits separate mention. In contrast with the other parties, it does propose developing an alternative center-left, or social democratic, project that would compete with the PRD's populism, repetition of old slogans around economic policy and the caudillo-marked nature of its leadership. Social Democracy proposes bringing together

a modern left electorate. The difference between it and the other parties was clear in the presidential candidates' debate, in which Rincón Gallardo was practically the only one who really addressed the substantive issues. The PSD's inability to maintain its legal registration was due, in part, to the plebiscite-like nature of the elections which led most voters to cast their ballots against the PRI more than anything else.

#### THE PARTY SYSTEM AND THE 2000 ELECTION RESULTS

What was the outcome of the 2000 elections, then? Three large parties and two small, but relevant, parties, and another three (Convergence, Social Alliance and the PSN) which retained their legal status thanks to their alliance with the PRD but which actually represent nothing in and of themselves.

It was very significant that no party holds a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies: of a total of 500 deputies, the PRI occupies 210; the PAN, 207; the PRD, 53; the PVEM, 15, the PT, 7; CD, 3;

the PSN, 3 and PAS, 2.<sup>2</sup> The party of President Vicente Fox does not have a majority in Congress, which means that the executive branch will have to negotiate to be able to govern. This has led some analysts to maintain that the new party system is one of moderate pluralism, alluding to Sartori's typology.<sup>3</sup> Their argument is that the number of parties (from three to five important parties), the slight ideological differences among them and the fact that none has an absolute majority, forcing them to share power, complies with the description of moderate pluralism.

At first glance, this characterization seems correct, particularly because we have no other finished typologies of party systems. Nevertheless, we should consider several issues that are matters for later reflection.

First, the so-called "third wave democratizations" have given rise to party systems not included in Sartori's typology, which is based fundamentally on the U.S. and European cases, all examples of consolidated democracies whose parties are based (or were at some time based) on clear political identities with

social roots and a long electoral tradition. Thus, the differences between systems like the Mexican and the Belgian (which Sartori cites as the model of limited pluralism) make the appropriateness of grouping them together in a single category doubtful. A central difference between the new and the old systems is their level of institutionalization, some of whose indicators are the parties' electoral stability, their social roots and their ideological solidity.<sup>4</sup>

The other problem is that by no means are more internal changes and split-offs from the PRI and the PRD out of the question, and they could lead to the creation of new parties that could affect the electoral performance of the larger parties. Up until now, this has not been the case, but it could certainly happen given that both parties are going

through restructuring processes (perhaps even amounting to being refounded) given the 2000 electoral results. The PRI is now in opposition and the PRD suffered an electoral setback of such magnitude that it now has only 53 deputies compared to the 125 seats it won in 1997. Both parties are processing their voting results and repositioning themselves. Their splinters and splits will continue to affect the party system as a whole, which means that it is still impossible to say that we have a consolidated system that can be classified under one of the dominant typologies. ■■■

are those that can form coalitions and practice blackmail; that is, they have made coalitions or supported other parties in their bid for office, and they can exercise a veto in Congress. Giovanni Sartori, *Partidos y sistemas de partidos* (Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Aída Escamilla Rubio, "El 2 de julio en cifras," *El Cotidiano* 100 (Mexico City:UAM-A, 2000), pp. 100-116.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Miguel Ángel Romero et al., "Hacia la consolidación de un nuevo sistema político," *El Cotidiano* 100 (Mexico City:UAM-A, 2000), pp. 168-182 and Juan Reyes del Campillo, "2 de julio: una elección por el cambio," *El Cotidiano* 104 (Mexico City: UAM-A, 2001), pp.5-15.

<sup>4</sup> A systematic look at these issues can be found in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) and Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave Democratization: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Here, I am using Sartori's definition of relevant parties which says that the parties that count

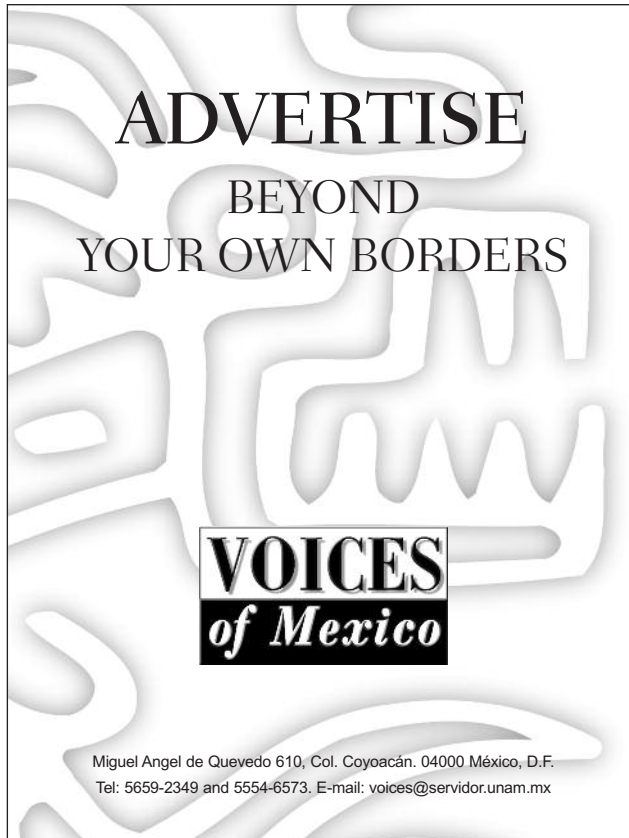
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# The Zapatistas in the Fox Era

Amado Avendaño Villafuerte\*



It is impossible to think that dialogue can be reestablished between only two people, Marcos and Fox. Both sides will have to call on Mexican society as a whole, just as they did during the negotiations of San Andrés Larráinzar, because both the Fox government and the EZLN owe a great deal to civil society, who voted the former into office and supported the latter in times of war.

The media war that the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and the federal government have been fighting since Vicente Fox came into office notwithstanding, the Zapatista conflict in the state of Chiapas has other roots. Although perhaps not so visible today, they were the basis for the January 1994 armed uprising and should be remembered in this new

stage when dialogue may be once again in the offing.

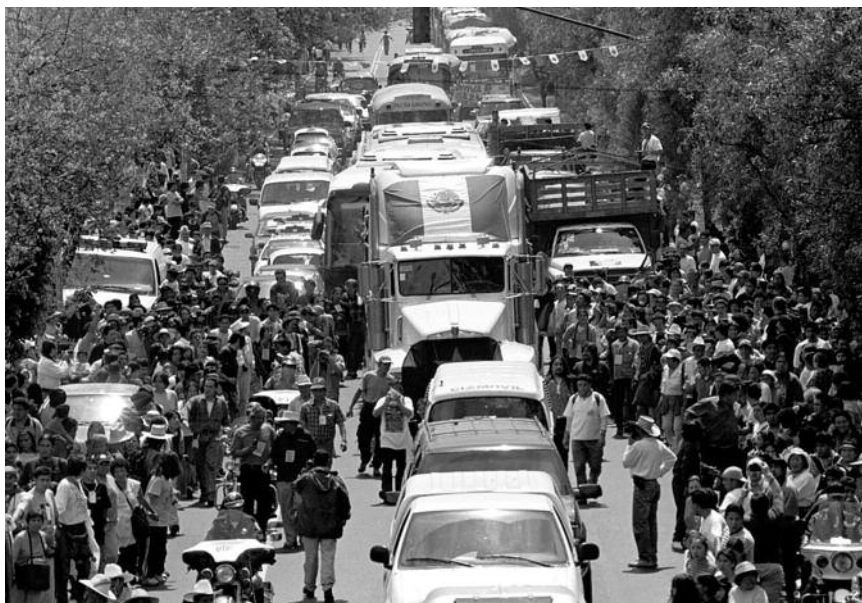
Chiapas is one of the states with the highest levels of marginalization and poverty, directly linked with its high indigenous population. Of the six states in Mexico with very high marginalization, Chiapas has the highest: it has one doctor for every 1,132 inhabitants; one nurse for every 1,315 inhabitants; and one hospital bed for every 1,400 inhabitants. It ranks first nationwide in mortality rates for reported cases of chol-

era, tuberculosis and gastrointestinal diseases. Of its 111 municipalities, 37 have very high indices of marginalization: 57 can be categorized as high; 12 have medium levels; and 5, low levels. In no municipality can it be said that marginalization is very low.<sup>1</sup>

Chiapas is home to nine of Mexico's 52 ethnic groups. Since the conquest, these groups have never sought exceptional treatment for themselves, but simply the recognition of their rights, customs and traditions, their way of life

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\* Director of internet content at the Detrás de la Noticia News Agency.



Carlos Araud/Imagelatina

The Zapatista caravan moving toward Mexico City's central Zócalo Plaza, March 11.

and form of organization: in brief, the recognition of their culture. In 1984, when Subcommander Marcos arrived in the heart of the Lacandon Jungle as a researcher-philosopher-Quixote, in addition to the repugnant conditions of inequality and marginalization of the indigenous peoples, he found fertile terrain for continuing the work of consciousness raising, creating dignity in the indigenous peoples' situation and the quest for hope for them. This task had already been begun and almost consolidated two decades before by the catechists and Christian base communities of the San Cristóbal de las Casas diocese, headed for 40 years by Bishop Samuel Ruiz García. Otherwise, it would not have been easy for anyone to go into the indigenous communities, win their trust, achieve important changes in their social behavior (such as ending alcohol consumption and creating respect for the social role and dignity of women) and some almost theological ideas and then create an army that remained secret for more than 10 years.

The armed conflict in Chiapas took a new turn when Vicente Fox Quesada from the National Action Party was democratically elected president thanks to a de facto citizens' alliance against the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that had governed Mexico for 71 years.

The strategic and military head of the EZLN, Insurgent Subcommander Marcos, gave the new administration the benefit of the doubt in a press conference held in the jungle community of La Realidad, Chiapas, the day after Fox's inauguration. In his message, Marcos said, "[Even] if we add to our understandable mistrust of the word of those in power, the accumulated contradictions and frivolous statements that you and those around you have carelessly thrown around, it is still my duty to say that among the Zapatistas (and I think not only among the Zapatistas), you have a clean slate in terms of credibility and trust....That means you don't have to overcome anything negative as of yet since it is only fair to say that you have not attacked us."

On many occasions during his campaign, President Fox said that one of his priorities in the beginning of his term would be to make peace in Chiapas. He was even so bold as to say in early 1998 that he would solve the problem of Chiapas in 15 minutes and send the bill that President Ernesto Zedillo had frozen since 1995 to Congress right away. (This bill on indigenous rights and culture, written by the Peace Commission made up of legislators from all parties in Congress, was originally developed as a result of the first accords signed between the Zedillo administration and the EZLN.)

The seven-year-old war—in which the different parties have substituted declarations for bullets—has already survived three administrations, each of which has dealt with it differently.

Carlos Salinas de Gortari tried to belittle its importance; his main objective in the last year of his term was to catapult himself into the World Trade Organization as the statesman who had led Mexico to put one foot into the First World. Ernesto Zedillo tried to come to secret agreements with Marcos, but on receiving no answer in the first months of his term, he decided to solve the problem by force and set a trap for the EZLN: he issued arrest warrants for the people he considered the main Zapatista commanders and "unmasked" the real identity of Marcos (who is said to be Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, a social activist and former professor at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City). This manoeuvre did not have the effect the administration expected, however, since, instead of losing popularity, Marcos and the Zapatista movement gained even more sympathies among the public.

Given this failure, Zedillo opted for dialogue and that same year signed agreements with those who months before he had called criminals. The president did end up, however, by not carrying out the agreements signed in San Andrés Larráinzar, Chiapas.

Stymied by the excessive militarization of the state, the administration's disinclination to dialogue, but above all by the non-implementation of the accords signed at San Andrés, the dialogue broke down, thus making room for other actors to take the conflict into their own hands. Clashes grew between PRI and Zapatista sympathizers, and armed clashes between civilians became a daily occurrence; 43 autonomous rebel municipalities were created outside the aegis of the state government with new local authorities, thus plunging the state into a profound crisis of governability.

Out of this situation came the killings like that of Acteal on December 22, 1997, when 45 indigenous people, the majority women and children, were massacred by one of these civilian armed groups as they prayed in a small community church.

Seven years after the uprising, this new chapter in Mexican history—that of the Zapatistas in the Fox era—began with a war of declarations in which both sides sought sufficient popular support to take with them to the negotiations table. In Mexico today, cities are taken and relinquished peacefully. The combatants no longer use bullets. Now their strength is based on their ratings.

Marcos and Fox have entered the game. The Chiapas conflict has recovered its importance to the extent that each temporarily wins the public sympathy with his performance before the cameras and the microphones.



Octavio Hoyos/Imageltaina

"Welcome. Never again a Mexico without us." Zapatista commanders at their Mexico City rally.

The Zapatistas have come out of their trenches armed with speeches and communiques to make use of all the fora open to them, mainly in the media, and to counter the wave of popularity Fox enjoys as Mexico's first opposition president in modern history.

One of the EZLN's allies is the left, that amorphous, explosive mass of ideologies that as a whole managed one of the most overwhelming defeats imaginable in the 2000 elections after spending 10 years supplying the prisoners, the dead and the sacrifices so that democratic change could come about. This is the same left that goes back and forth between standing by the EZLN and concentrating on something else, returning only when, defeated, it laments its presidential campaign strategy.

The EZLN's main ally, however, has been civil society, thanks to whom the cease-fire was achieved January 12, 1994. Now, as always, the Zapatistas have deposited their renewed hopes of consolidating peace with justice and dignity in civil society, which has indi-

cated the road and method for the Zapatista insurgents' fundamental decisions. The symbiotic relationship that the rebels have created with these non-partisan groups of citizens is due mainly to the fact that the demands the EZLN presented in its first declaration of war are not exclusionary. Quite to the contrary, they clearly jibe with the demands of Mexicans—both indigenous and non-indigenous—of the most marginalized classes throughout the country.

It is impossible to think that dialogue can be reestablished between only two people, Marcos and Fox. Both sides will have to call on Mexican society as a whole, just as they did during the negotiations of San Andrés Larráinzar, because both the Fox government and the EZLN owe a great deal to civil society, who voted the former into office and supported the latter in times of war.

Both parties, for different reasons, are aware that establishing consensus that will lead to a peace agreement is imperative. What is more, they are aware of just how close they are to





Subcommander Marcos and EZLN political liaison Fernando Yáñez receive the "key to the city" in Mexico City's Zócalo Plaza.

achieving that. This can be seen in the relaxing of the repression against the Zapatistas that has allowed them to leave Chiapas and travel through 12 different states. Fox, for his part, is certain that an agreement with the Zapatista guerrillas would consolidate his image and his government, not only in Mexico, but worldwide. The difference between the two is in how to achieve peace.

The EZLN says that peace will not come by decree. For them the war will not be over when the three demands they have made to the Fox government are satisfied: the withdrawal of troops from 7 of the 256 military positions in Chiapas, the liberation of all the Zapatista prisoners and the implementation of the San Andrés Accords. If these demands are satisfied, what ensues will be dialogue between the EZLN and the government, not automatic peace. Real peace will not be achieved until the causes of the uprising are eradicated in Chiapas and the whole country.

Fox, on the other hand, urgently needs to announce that he has consolidated a peace agreement, and it will be enough for him to sit at the negotiations table with them to announce that the war has ended, while his counterparts consider that only the beginning.

And that is because to eradicate the poverty, marginalization, hunger, unemployment and above all the grave political and religious clashes that have led to the proliferation of 18 armed civilian groups (better known as the "paramilitary groups"), much more than "15 minutes" is required. With the best of all possible good will, Fox could take his entire six-year term to grant all 13 of the demands that led the EZLN to become an army and rise up in arms.

Peace is a concept that will become fashionable during this presidential term. It will be the most mentioned, discussed and manhandled term of the entire administration. Perhaps for that reason, under the current circumstances, any eventuality other than peace talks would bring discredit and the loss

of part of its social backing to either party.

We should therefore once again arm ourselves with patience and hope that before Fox leaves office, the conditions for the indigenous peoples of Mexico will have changed radically. Only then will Marcos be able to think about what he and the EZLN as a whole will do. As a political organization, they are not very strong, and they have made it very clear that the Zapatista Army does not want to take power; as they have said, Zapatismo is not an end in itself, but a bridge to achieve their demands of democracy, freedom and justice. In the long run, the EZLN should consider its participation in the electoral arena. In any case, Marcos and Zapatismo itself will have to undergo a metamorphosis to become moral leaders and leaders of public opinion, with sufficient strength as an organization to be able to influence the nation's decisions.

In the meantime, in their December 2, 2000, communique to President Fox, the Zapatistas have already been clear about who has the responsibility of showing his willingness to dialogue. "You can, then, show that those who are betting on your government repeating the PRI nightmare for all Mexicans—and especially for the Zapatistas—are right. Or, you can, starting from that clean slate, begin to build in practice what all governments need to carry out their work: credibility and trust."

Now Fox has the ball. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Information from the Center for Information and Analysis of Chiapas (CIACH), the Coordinating Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations for Peace (Conpaz) and Processed Informational Services (Sipro).

# Abortion in Mexico Year 2000

Myriam Brito Domínguez\*



Octavio Gómez/Imagelatina

A symbolic protest at the doors of Mexico City's Legislative Assembly; the crosses and shoes represent women who have died in back-street abortions.

The objective of this article is to present an overview of abortion in Mexico, particularly the 2000 debate.<sup>1</sup> In addition I would like to show that this is an extremely complicated social issue that therefore cannot be solved from extreme or radical positions.

## LEGAL STATUS

In Mexico, abortion is legally defined as “the death of the product of conception at any moment during pregnancy.”<sup>2</sup> Abortion<sup>3</sup> is legally considered a crime, with the penalties varying from state to state. Despite this variation, criminal codes penalize it with from one month to five

or six years in prison for a woman who has had one or consented to having one; from one month to six years in prison to whoever performs an abortion with the woman's consent; and from three to eight years in prison for anyone who performs one without the woman's consent.

Despite the fact that abortion is classified as a crime, different states recognize six grounds which make it not punishable:

- When the pregnancy is the result of a rape;
- When it is actually a miscarriage caused by an accident;
- When the fetus is congenitally deformed (eugenic);
- When the pregnancy could seriously threaten the mother's health (therapeutic);

- When the pregnancy endangers the woman's life;
- Cases of economic hardship when the woman has at least three children already.<sup>4</sup>

Every state decides autonomously the cases in which abortion is not punishable, but the grounds of rape, accident or mishap and danger to the mother's life are included in all the penal codes (see table).

## ABORTION AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

The second important dimension that we should consider is that abortion has become a serious public health problem in Mexico, just as in the rest of the

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world, which affects the living conditions and the health of millions of women. Even though in our country it is considered a crime, this has not stopped it being practiced, but has only forced it onto the back streets where it is carried out clandestinely outside any legal or sanitary regulations.

This is why it is very difficult to have appropriate investigative and analytical tools that would allow us to bring out all its implications and consequences; the underground nature of its practice makes it difficult to obtain reliable statistical data about it. Nevertheless, there is very revealing data about the impact of abortion on women's health.

The figures about the frequency of abortions, the kinds of women who practice them and the number of deaths produced each year because of them vary considerably depending on the source. For many years, government institutions and civic organizations have cited different figures. This was even clearer during recent debates on the issue. Nevertheless, groups and institutions agree that abortion is a serious public health problem and has become the third or fourth cause of maternal mortality, which comes to 1,500 deaths a year (see box, p. 21).

#### BACKGROUND<sup>5</sup>

The abortion debate is not new in our country and, even though different events in 2000 intensified it, it has been part of public discussion since the 1970s as one of the banners of the Mexican feminist movement.<sup>6</sup> In 1972, Women in Solidarity Action (MAS) organized the first public talks on the issue and proposed changing existing legislation. In that same year the government wrote

a bill to change the General Population Law recognizing abortion as a social, not a private, question. This same document established the precedents for the 1974 amendment to article 4 of the Constitution that stipulated that every individual has the right "to decide in a free, responsible and informed manner on the number and spacing of his/her children."

From 1976 to 1978, Annual Days of Struggle for Free Abortion (meetings,

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lectures and other activities) were held to generate a public debate. Feminists proposed not only the decriminalization of abortion and respect for women's choice, but that women have the right to have abortions in state hospitals as part of the public health service.

In 1978, 50 civic and religious organizations founded the National Pro-Life Committee. Since then, this group, with close ties to the Catholic Church, has used quite questionable methods to express its absolute rejection of abortion in any of its forms and its belief in what it calls "the defense of life."

In 1979, the National Front for Women's Liberation and Rights was founded and worked to support the "Voluntary Maternity Bill" presented to Congress in 1980.

In the 1980s, the efforts to decriminalize abortion declined considerably. Nevertheless, the Sixth Annual Days of Struggle for Free Abortion were organized in 1981. In 1982, the Interior Ministry's National Population Council (Conapo) wrote the Draft Plan of Action for Integrating Women into Development, a document which requested the legalization of abortion and that women's right to voluntary maternity be recognized. In 1983, President Miguel de la Madrid presented a bill to change penal code stipulations about abortion and adultery. The bill had been prepared by the Attorney General's Office, the Mexico City District Attorney's Office and the National Institute of Criminology, but it was not approved.

In 1989, a great deal of debate arose when an abortion clinic was closed by police in Mexico City. Not only were the medical staff and the women who had just aborted violently arrested, but they were also tortured by judicial police while under arrest. After one of the detainees publicly denounced the fact and the news became public, an important debate took place about the serious problems caused by back-street abortions, the need for their decriminalization and the gravity of human rights violations in Mexico.

During the 1990s, the debate gradually became more intense. In 1990, the then-governor of Chiapas, Patrocinio González Garrido, and the state Congress considered a bill changing the local penal code to make abortion non-punishable on three new grounds: when the couple requested it as a family planning measure; for economic reasons; and on the request of a single mother. This caused a furious polemic, but the bill was not approved due, in large part, to the pressure exerted by the



### ABORTION, A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

- \* The Mexican Gynecological and Obstetrics Council has stated that between 600,000 and 850,000 abortions are practiced every year in Mexico. International institutions and nongovernmental organizations, however, put the figure between 500,000 and a million. Of every 100 women who have an abortion, between 30 and 45 have severe complications (*Excélsior* [Mexico City], 9 May 2000).
- \* Gregorio Pérez Palacios, the Health Ministry's general director of reproductive health, reports that Mexico sees 220,000 hospital stays a year for miscarriages and abortions (*La Jornada* [Mexico City], 11 August 2000). At the same time, the Ministry of the Interior's National Population Council estimates that the Health Ministry gave care to 65,977 women who had had abortions in 1999 (*La Jornada* [Mexico City], 16 August 2000).
- \* Official spokespersons from the Health Ministry estimate that approximately four women die daily from complications from botched abortions, coming to 1,500 per year. They also estimate that 500,000 women abort annually and that abortion has become the fourth cause of maternity-related deaths (*La Jornada* [Mexico, City], 16 August 2000).
- \* The Information Group for Reproductive Choice (GIRE) estimates that the number of abortions performed annually in Mexico ranges from 110,000 to 850,000 and that the figures vary so widely because the illegal nature of the practice makes it impossible to have exact data. They cite the Ministry of the Interior's National Population Council 1995 estimate of 110,000 abortions, the Alan Guttmacher Institute 1990 estimate of 533,110 and Doctor Raúl López García's 1992 study which put the figure at 850,000 (*Reforma* [Mexico City], 18 August 2000).

Catholic Church, the Pro-Life Group and the National Action Party (PAN).<sup>7</sup>

In 1993, the PAN deputies in the Chihuahua state Congress presented a bill to amend the state Constitution to introduce the idea of "the right to the legal protection of life from the moment of conception." This reform would have eliminated all the grounds under which abortion was not punishable, but it did not pass. The PAN tried to promote the same kind of reform in the states of Baja California in 1998 and Nuevo León in 1999, but without success.

In 1998, the debate heated up when then-Minister of Health Juan Ramón de la Fuente said there was need for a public discussion on the issue.<sup>8</sup> In early 1999, 40 civic organizations joined together to campaign for "Women's Access to Justice" and presented a pro-

posal to amend Mexico City's penal code to increase the number of grounds for non-punishable abortion, but the bill was not approved.

#### THE 2000 POLEMIC

As we have seen, current struggles and controversies over abortion have at least 30 years of precedents in Mexico. However, in 2000 the debate escalated significantly, and presented new features.

I should point out that this debate has been developing in an economic, political, social and cultural context marked by many conflicts and changes, outstanding among which are Mexico's new political playing field and the greater pluralism that the ideological and party system has developed in the

last 15 years. I would add to this the increase in the presence and participation of society in public issues via social movements, opinion groups, civic organizations, political parties and electoral participation, among other means.

#### THE CASE OF PAULINA

The first case that revived the debate and had a major impact on public opinion nationwide occurred in early 2000 when it became known that in Mexicali, Baja California, Paulina, a young girl of 13 who had been impregnated by a rapist (who had entered her house high on heroin to commit robbery) was prevented by public officials from having an abortion. The state penal code does not stipulate punishment for abortions in rape cases, but when Paulina

went to the Mexicali General Hospital, a public institution run by the state government, with a court order authorizing her abortion, the doctors in charge refused to carry it out.

Matters became more complicated when hospital Director Ismael Ávila “tried to convince the child’s [Paulina’s] mother with threats saying that her daughter would be made sterile or would die if she had an abortion.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, a group of women who supposedly worked for the government’s Department of Integral Family Development (DIF) went to the hospital to show Paulina videos of abortions to try to persuade her not to terminate her pregnancy. A Catholic priest also visited her there to counsel her and many presume that he threatened excommunication if she decided to have the abortion.

After a complaint was made and investigated, the Baja California Attorney General’s Office for Human Rights and Protection of the Public sent its recommendation to the state government saying that the public authorities involved had committed irregularities. The recommendation also requested the government create a trust to cover the economic needs of Paulina and her child, given that she had been pressured to take to term a pregnancy that she had had the right to terminate.

Governor Alejandro González Alcocer refused to follow the recommendation, however, just as he refused to comply with the one from the local Human Rights Commission and the September one from the federal National Human Rights Commission. He said that Paulina’s individual rights and guarantees had not been violated and, in June, absolved the hospital doctors for having refused to practice the abortion. In addition, some local PAN deputies,

in coordination with the Catholic Church and the Pro-Life Group, announced that they were going to give the doctors involved an award.

#### THE GUANAJUATO CASE

The second time the polemic heated up was when, on August 3, the PAN majority in the local Congress of Guanajuato approved a bill eliminating rape as grounds for not punishing abortion.

The abortion  
debate is not new in  
our country. Even  
though different events in 2000  
intensified it, it has been  
one of the banners  
of the Mexican feminist  
movement since the 1970s.

This meant that women who became pregnant after a rape would not be allowed to have an abortion, and if they did anyway, they could be given a sentence of from three months to six years in prison. The bill passed with the 17 PAN votes, while the 16 deputies from the other three parties voted against.

This was interpreted as a reaction to Paulina’s case and a form of support for the Baja California government (particularly because both administrations are headed by the PAN). Matters became even more complex since the bill was passed after Vicente Fox and the PAN won the July presidential elections. Different currents of opinion

formed inside the PAN: local Yucatán and Coahuila deputies and leaders expressed their support for their colleagues in Guanajuato, but many other federal and local deputies and senators expressed their disagreement with the bill. Local Baja California Sur deputy Víctor Martínez said that his Guanajuato colleagues were “backward, since their decision to approve the anti-abortion law is something only the ultra-right would do.”<sup>10</sup>

The PAN National Executive Committee stated that it did not support the measure because it considered it “inopportune” and that neither the party nor Vicente Fox intended to promote reforms of this kind, reiterating its position against abortion but against punishing women who had been raped and terminated their pregnancies.

Other national parties (the Institutional Revolutionary Party —PRI— and the Party of the Democratic Revolution—PRD)<sup>11</sup> rejected the bill, calling it a grave historic step backward for women’s rights, condemning it from different public fora and calling for its repeal. The federal government, on the other hand, maintained a non-interventionist stance vis-à-vis state affairs, making several calls for tolerance among the clashing groups and for respect for the existing legislation on abortion, reiterating that it is a public health problem, though not a family planning method.

The anti-abortion groups expressed their complete support for the Guanajuato reform and demanded it be applied in the rest of the country, prohibiting all grounds for not punishing abortion. The Catholic Church also supported the measure. Civic organizations and groups in favor of the right to voluntarily terminate pregnancies con-

## ACROSS THE NATION

IN YUCATÁN, local PRI deputies presented a bill for a totally new state penal code in March. It ratified the non-punishable character of abortion on the five grounds that already existed: in cases of rape, accident, danger to the mother's life, serious physical or genetic malformation of the fetus and for economic reasons when the mother already has three children (Yucatán is the only state that allows for the fifth provision). Although the bill's passage was denounced by PAN, religious and Pro-Life groups in the state, it was not withdrawn or challenged in court. Then, in June, the first public abortion clinic was established to deal with requests for abortion under the five provisions in the law. The clinic also provides physical and emotional care for women before and after their abortions, sex education and preventive medical care for sexually transmitted diseases.

IN MORELOS, local PRI deputies proposed amendments to the state penal code in August to increase sentences for sexual crimes. A few days later, then-governor Jorge García Rubí sent a bill to the local Congress to increase the number of grounds for non-punishable abortions. In addition to the already-existing grounds of rape, accident and danger to the mother's life, he proposed adding cases of non-consensual artificial insemination and serious malformations of the fetus. The bill was approved August 30 by the PRI and PRD deputies, with only the PAN votes against. Pressure from anti-abortion groups led the governor to announce that he would veto those articles of his own bill dealing with abortion, arguing that the PRI and PRD in the previous legislature had committed legal excesses and violations and that the reforms were immoderate "in all their forms" (*El Financiero* [Mexico, City], 7 September 2000).

IN THE STATE OF MEXICO in March 2000, PRI Governor Arturo Montiel sent a bill to the local Congress to add serious malformation of the fetus as grounds for non-punishment of abortion to the three existing ones (rape, accident and danger to the mother's life). The bill passed, but amidst severe pressure from Pro-Life groups and the intense national debate on the issue, this governor also announced in August that he would veto it. The state Chamber of Deputies agreed to repeal the article in question but a few days later local PAN deputies announced that they would postpone its repeal.

demned and rejected the Guanajuato reform and organized different protests in Mexico City, Guerrero, Guanajuato and other states demanding it be repealed. On August 8, a dozen feminist

groups held a rally outside the national PAN headquarters to protest the reforms. The party leadership recognized that it was inopportune to penalize any kind of abortion and offered to establish a

dialogue with their deputies in Guanajuato to find a way out.

The conflict became considerably polarized; the PAN deputies in Guanajuato refused to give up their proposal, counting on the support from different sectors of their party, the Catholic Church and the anti-abortion groups. All this had a profound impact on public opinion. The press, radio and television coverage showed that the different positions were very divided but that there was also growing disagreement with the reform. A telephone survey carried out in Guanajuato by the *Reforma* daily newspaper and published August 12 showed that 18 percent of those polled said they wholeheartedly supported the reform, while 48 percent said they strongly disagreed with it. When asked whether they agreed that a woman who had been raped should have the right to an abortion, regardless of the law, 38 percent of those surveyed said they agreed very strongly and 25 percent said they disagreed very strongly.

A few days later, the PAN National Executive Committee announced that it would not support the Guanajuato deputies' proposal and that it called on them to reconsider. President-elect Vicente Fox—a native of Guanajuato—also distanced himself from the bill, saying that his position was different and that he would not seek to change legislation on the federal level. Finally, Guanajuato Governor Ramón Martí Huerta stated that he would veto the bill, based on what the Guanajuato public decided in a consultation. The results of that survey showed that 68 percent of Guanajuato residents opposed the reform, and the governor announced August 29 that Article 123 of the penal code would be vetoed.



### GROUNDS FOR NOT PUNISHING ABORTION IN STATE PENAL CODES

State	Rape	Accident	Danger to the mother's life	Serious malformation of the fetus	Serious danger to the mother's health	Other causes
Aguascalientes	*	*	*			
Baja California	*	*	*			* (a)
Baja California Sur	*	*	*	*		* (a)
Campeche	*	*	*			
Coahuila	*	*	*	*		
Colima	*	*	*	*		* (a)
Chiapas	*		*	*		
Chihuahua	*	*	*			* (a)
Distrito Federal ©	*	*	*	*	*	* (a)
Durango	*	*	*			
Guanajuato	*	*				
Guerrero	*	*		*		* (a)
Hidalgo	*	*			*	
Jalisco	*	*	*		*	
Mexico	*	*	*	*		
Michoacán	*	*	*		*	
Morelos ©	*	*	*	*	*	* (a)
Nayarit	*	*	*		*	
Nuevo León	*		*		*	
Oaxaca	*	*	*	*		
Puebla	*	*	*	*		
Querétaro	*	*				
Quintana Roo	*	*	*	*		
San Luis Potosí	*	*	*			
Sinaloa	*	*	*			
Sonora	*	*	*			
Tabasco	*		*			* (a)
Tamaulipas	*	*	*		*	
Tlaxcala	*	*	*		*	
Veracruz	*	*	*	*		
Yucatán	*	*	*	*		* (b)
Zacatecas	*	*	*		*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

(a) Non-consensual artificial insemination.

(b) Economic hardship when the woman already has at least three children.

© Legislation changed in 2000.

**Source:** Information Group for Reproductive Choice (GIRE).

## THE MEXICO CITY CASE

The third event that fueled the debate in 2000 occurred in Mexico City simultaneously with the Guanajuato case. A week after the bill was presented in Guanajuato, Mexico City Mayor Rosario Robles Berlanga, from the PRD, announced that she would send a bill to the local Legislative Assembly to change the penal code. Robles proposed adding new grounds to the three already existing ones in the Mexico City legislation (rape, accident and danger to the mother's life). She argued that the grounds for permitting abortion under the law in the capital should be harmonized with legislation in other states, but above all that it was important to protect women's health and rights. The bill she sent, firmly supported by her party (the PRD) and different civic organizations, proposed decriminalizing abortion in cases in which the mother's health was at serious risk and in cases of grave physical or genetic malformations of the fetus.

The reactions that this proposal sparked—at the opposite extreme from the PAN's Guanajuato proposal—were immediate. The PAN, the Catholic Church and the different anti-abortion groups rejected her proposal, accusing her of political opportunism, of taking an intransigent position in reaction to the Guanajuato case and of favoring the “culture of death.” Different sectors of the PAN demanded that the bill be withdrawn, saying it was a threat to life and polarized the conflict around abortion in the extreme. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, the federal congressional leader of the PAN caucus, argued that abortion was not a priority and that given its extreme complexity, it should not be discussed at that time. He said

that the party did not agree with the bill passed in Guanajuato, but neither did it agree with “Rosario Robles' arbitrary attitude.”<sup>12</sup>

The Catholic Church and the Pro-Life groups organized protests in Mexico City to express their disagreement, among them what they called a “March for Life” of 8,000 people. Despite this opposition, the Mexico City administration's bill enjoyed the support of different sectors and social groups.<sup>13</sup> The

The debate revived  
in early 2000 when  
in Mexicali, Baja California,  
a young girl of 13  
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officials from having  
an abortion.

PRD threw its support to the bill, and the PRI national leadership said it agreed on the basis of defending a woman's constitutional right to decide when she should become pregnant and how many children she should have. On August 18, the bill was passed, 41 to seven.

However, a few days later, local PAN and Green Ecologist Party of Mexico deputies challenged the bill before the Supreme Court, demanding that the amended article be declared unconstitutional. The court agreed to hear the case and thus began a procedure that will decide the legality of the reforms, a process that could take up to a year. In other states, other events also stepped up the debate (see box, p. 23).

## FINAL COMMENTS

As the reader can see, abortion in Mexico is a very complex social issue. The positions in favor and against its decriminalization are very polarized and seemingly have no middle ground. On the other hand, the federal government (both under this administration and during previous administrations under the PRI) has not fostered a serious political public debate on the issue, which transcends group or party interests, given that abortion is an extremely serious public health problem that affects millions of women and urgently needs to be discussed collectively.

In addition, the building of a democratic system requires actions and principles to jibe. If everyone has civil rights and the individual guarantee that their own judgement and will are to be respected, how is it possible that the ideological and religious views of certain groups supercede both that individual will and public issues? Or, worse yet, how is it possible that the power of the state can be used to impose a particular religious and moral ideology which contradicts individuals' civil and political rights? A political system that aspires to be legal and democratic must make responsible public decisions that benefit everyone and are not determined on the basis of vested interests and private consciences. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Program of the Mexican College for the information they gave me and especially Laura Téllez and Rosalba Martínez for their patience and help.

<sup>2</sup> Although this definition varies in different penal codes throughout the country, they all share the same general idea.

<sup>3</sup> Spanish has a single word, "aborto," for both abortion and miscarriage. Hence the definition, which includes any death of the fetus. To make the distinction that exists in English between abortion and miscarriage in Spanish, the adjective *inducido* or "induced" is added to mean abortion. [Translator's Note.]

<sup>4</sup> It should be pointed out that abortion is not permitted in Mexico: it is considered a crime, although in some cases it is not legally punished. This distinction is important to take into account because most people consider that "permitting" abortion and "decriminalizing" it are synonymous.

<sup>5</sup> The information in this section comes from the following sources: the web page of the

Information Group for Reproductive Choice ([www.gire.org.mx](http://www.gire.org.mx)), a civic organization founded in 1992 that works on disseminating information, training and advocacy of reproductive rights; Alma Muñoz and Roberto Garduño, "Debate sobre el aborto en México," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 28 August 2000; and Marta Lamas, "El feminismo mexicano y la lucha por legalizar el aborto," *Política y cultura. Mujeres y Política 1* (Mexico City: UAM-Xochimilco, 1992), pp. 9-22.

<sup>6</sup> And even before that: in 1936 and 1937, Drs. Matilde Rodríguez Cabo and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro publicly presented the first proposals to decriminalize abortion, made a crime by the 1931 penal code.

<sup>7</sup> The PAN is a center-right, social-Christian party founded in the 1940s.

<sup>8</sup> De la Fuente is currently rector of the UNAM.

<sup>9</sup> *Reforma* (Mexico City), 8 August 2000.

<sup>10</sup> *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 10 August 2000.


<sup>11</sup> The PRD was founded at the end of the 1980s by a coalition of different left parties.

<sup>12</sup> *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 16 August 2000.


<sup>13</sup> Another *Reforma* telephone survey carried out on August 13 showed that Mexico City residents were more inclined toward decriminalization of abortion than those of Guanajuato: 62 percent said it should be permitted under some circumstances and 12 percent that it should be permitted in all cases. In the rest of the country, the answers to this question are 60 percent and 4 percent, respectively. *Reforma* (Mexico City), 17 August 2000.

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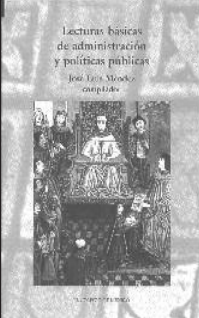
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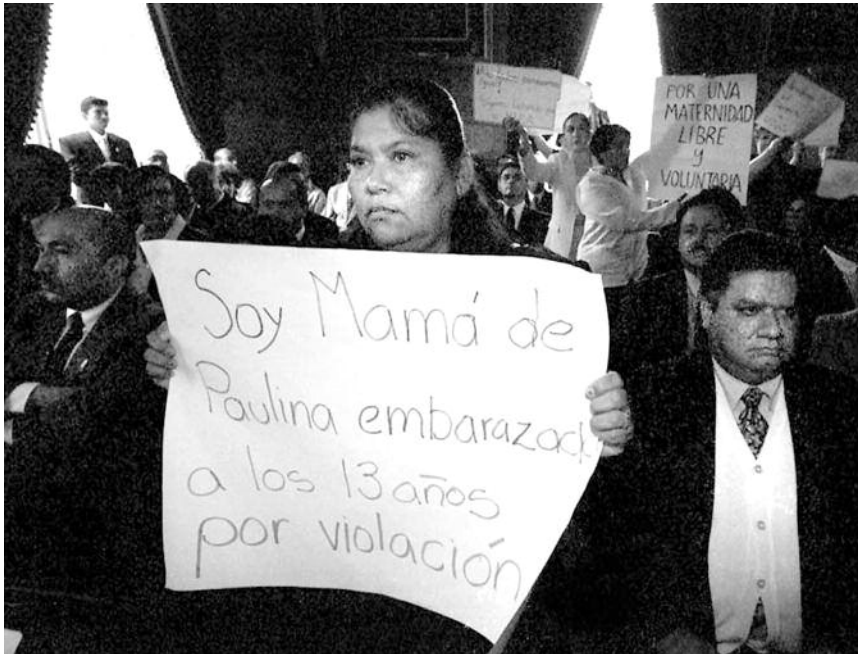
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# Abortion and Politics

Marta Lamas\*



Tomás Bravo/La Jirafilla

The mother of 13-year-old Paulina, impregnated by a rapist.

In Mexico public debate about how to deal with abortion in the law is glaringly absent. Since it is feminists who exert pressure to change the law while the women who have clandestine abortions are silent because speaking up means being stigmatized, no political party proposes decriminalization.<sup>1</sup> For that reason, even though a broad range of actors is involved in the debate, the circumstances have led to a fictitious polarization in which the feminists appear to be on one side,

the only force interested in changing the law, with the Catholic Church hierarchy and the National Pro-Life Committee on the other, the defenders of intrauterine life.

What is the situation of abortion in Mexico today? Mexican citizens enjoy reproductive freedom, ensured by Article 4 of the Constitution. In contrast with canon law, our legislation gives us the right to make fundamental decisions about abortion: throughout the country it is legal if the woman's life is in danger or the pregnancy is the result of a rape; in some states, it is legal if the product is malformed, if the wom-

an's health is in grave danger and for economic reasons.<sup>2</sup> However, the fact that each state has its own penal code makes for serious inequalities: Mexican women living in most of the country are discriminated against vis-à-vis those who live in states which permit abortion for modern legal reasons. It would be only fair to harmonize the penal codes taking the states with the most advanced legislation as the common reference.

Estimates of the number of abortions performed every year in Mexico go from 220,000 (the official figure from the Ministry of the Interior's Na-

\* General Director of Information Group for Reproductive Choice (GIRE).



Octavio Nave/AWE

Former Mexico City Mayor Rosario Robles introduced a controversial bill last year to broaden the grounds for legal abortion in the nation's capital.

tional Population Council) to 850,000, the figure cited by Dr. Raúl López García, assistant medical director of the National Perinatology Institute when he made the statement. New York's Alan Guttmacher Institute's research about illegal abortions in four Latin American countries estimated that 565,000 abortions are carried out in Mexico a year. No matter which figure seems the most convincing, this panorama means that the voluntary interruption of pregnancy must be decriminalized, whether by legalizing it altogether or by broadening out the conditions under which women may legitimately seek abortions.

Feminists have attempted to open up a space for public discussion by dealing with the two main arguments: social justice and public health. Although it is rather inappropriate to talk about "a" feminist position—leaving aside the particularities and differences that constitute the very diversity of the movement—in this case there is clear

agreement. The social justice argument underlines the fact that women with economic resources are able to have illegal abortions in the best of sanitary conditions. The public health argument involves the women who swell the maternal mortality and morbidity rates, while at the same time generating high costs for medical attention in public hospitals.

In Mexico, the feminist strategy has been to talk about voluntary maternity or motherhood. For voluntary maternity to be a reality for women, four indispensable conditions must be met:

- 1) The availability of a thorough, broad sexual education directed specifically at different age groups and social levels.
- 2) Generalized access to safe, cheap contraceptives.
- 3) Abortion as a last resort.
- 4) Putting a stop to forced sterilization or sterilization without informed consent by women.

Until today, these four points continue to be the basic prerequisites for carrying an integral defense of reproductive rights and achieving the goal of motherhood being a voluntary, joyful decision.

Recently, a new petition has been added to this discourse: free access to medical abortion services as a democratic right. This is based on the recognition that Mexico is a plural society with a secular state which respects different beliefs but which also distinguishes public decisions from private ones. The current aspiration of transforming our political order requires a review of state-societal relations and the recovery of the idea of what is public with society as the protagonist.

When we redefine the borders of what is public from society's point of view, we also delineate the new outlines of what is private. This is essential for reforming the criminal treatment of abortion. The principle of personal privacy is based on the concepts of the inviolability of the personality, intimacy and the integrity of the body. The defense of privacy consists of the individual's right to not suffer unwarranted governmental intrusion in matters that affect him/her decisively, such as sexuality and reproduction. Love, sexual desire, the decision to share one's life with another person, paternity and maternity are not public decisions: they are individual decisions that frequently require the exercise of civil rights to be carried out.

From this perspective, the question of whether the state should penalize the voluntary termination of a pregnancy is clearly answered in the negative. Regarding abortion, there is unanimity on only one point: everyone, regardless of political positions or religious beliefs,

agrees that our goal should be that no woman ever again face the need to have an abortion. There are two contradictory positions about how to attain that goal: that of those who think this can be achieved by criminalizing abortion and that of those of us who think that it can be achieved by decriminalizing it. Often this topic sparks clashes with no dialogue. For that reason, we must seek a way out that jibes with democratic political aspirations and introduce a reflection based on arguments.

Everyone believes that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but in our country, hundreds of thousands of women opt for correcting the error of an unplanned pregnancy. This brings us back to something very basic: abortions take place because unplanned pregnancies occur as the result of several causes:

- contraceptives fail;
- violence (rape inside and outside of marriage); and
- ignorance.

Taking a pregnancy to term is a decision that implies a brutal personal and family adjustment with serious economic and psychological consequences that not all women or all families can deal with. Given that it is the woman and her partner alone —if she has one— who will assume the emotional and economic cost of an unplanned, unwanted baby, up to what point should the state interfere in that decision without taking any responsibility? And, from another perspective —that of the concern shared by all political positions that the rule of law be established in Mexico— the law-breaking is reaching unexpected proportions. Despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Mex-



The head of Mexico's Pro-Life Group holds a flyer denouncing condoms as unsafe in fighting AIDS.

ican women have illegal abortions voluntarily every year, none of them go to jail as stipulated by law. Will there be an attempt to enforce the law and put hundreds of thousands of Mexican women in jail every year for having illegal abortions? Will we have to build more jails to lock up these women and the people who perform the abortions? What good is a law that is not obeyed and that at the same time generates serious public health and social justice problems?

To unblock the much needed debate about the right to decide on matters of sexuality and reproduction, some basic, usually disregarded, questions must be reviewed. Rather than repeat here the irreconcilable positions of Catholic fundamentalism and libertarian feminism, we should explore what should be done if neither the state nor society guarantee the indispensable, loving attention that unwanted children need. Should the state support the unwanted children of women who it

would not allow to have legal abortions? Or perhaps the creation of a huge national orphanage is the responsibility of the organizations that fight against women's private decision to end their pregnancies. Why should we not demand, like French psychoanalyst Françoise Dolto, that those who are concerned about intrauterine lives should make effective their position by paying child support for these "innocent little souls" until they come of age?

Lastly, can Mexico disregard the reformulation of legislation carried out in democratic countries in light of the international laws about reproductive rights, and the advance of science, which give women the right to decide about their own bodies and lives?

This series of questions, which go beyond the arid debate about whether a fertilized egg is or is not a person, situates us at the center of the debates about quality of life, individual responsibility and freedom of conscience. These debates are part of the modern



conceptualization of sexual and reproductive rights as intrinsically democratic rights since they are based on freedom (particularly sexual freedom) and require equality (a level playing field of information and access to health services). It is in the equal access to health and educational services—to economically accessible, quality health care, to timely, understandable sex education, to a decline in infant and maternal mortality, to the reduction of teen pregnancies, to abortion as a health service—that the arguments of social justice and public health take on weight.

In our country, guaranteeing the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights requires, first of all, simple changes in the law, and then, setting up sufficient and appropriate services to make it possible. The current challenges to political development in Mexico make a modern conception of equality, including sexual and reproductive matters, impossible to postpone. Mexico's political framework, characterized not only by weak democratic institutions and scant public participation, but also by the tenacious custom of avoiding conflict, has not favored public discussion about all the implications of voluntary maternity, an issue profoundly intertwined with the democratic project.

Therefore, from the point of view of respect for democracy, the goal of equality between women and men, the defense of tolerance and diversity and the concern for sustainable growth, the decriminalization of abortion becomes a necessity of the first water. For that reason, a public debate on the issue is urgent. One problem posed for this debate is that there are no rules guaranteeing equal time to both positions in the media. Another, though lesser,

difficulty is that many people who privately think the demand to decriminalize abortion is legitimate are not willing to say so in public. Abortion inverts the current paradigm of normality that dictates that a woman is a mother. It also challenges the Catholic Church's teachings, so deeply rooted in society. This is why the demand to decriminalize abortion has not enjoyed the political acceptance that it should. No party wants to make an enemy of the Catholic Church and, precisely for that reason,

There is unanimity on  
only one point: everyone,  
regardless of political positions  
or religious beliefs, agrees that  
the goal should be that  
no woman ever again face  
the need to have  
an abortion.

despite the fact that political and philosophical aspects of feminism have filtered into people's daily lives, the defense of sexual and reproductive rights has not been openly and clearly taken on board by groups or parties significant in the nation's political life.

The right to abortion is an ultimate aspiration of women for their freedom and autonomy. The cultural sexism and political authoritarianism of broad sectors of the country are serious obstacles to making that aspiration a reality. Questioning the infallibility of the Church representatives and exposing the blindness of government authorities and politicians is a democratic task that involves us. In addition, in the

framework of sexual and reproductive rights, the defense of the right to interrupt an unwanted pregnancy also establishes a series of ethical-political values needed to face the advance of religious fundamentalism.

The right to interrupt a pregnancy is part of the definition of modern citizenship as the ability to exercise the right to self-determination. For that reason, citizens' adopting basic modern values and attitudes leads to respect for women's sexual and reproductive self-determination. The fostering of social freedom is based on the respect for individual freedom. Sexual and reproductive rights take on fundamental importance in people's real lives, that is, in the bodies of all citizens, both men and women. The initial launch of modern citizenship in Mexico, then, favors a process of change in society, change in which modernity, as an aspiration to a way of living together, plays a determinant role. The message is simple: a more democratic society must also be more democratic in matters of sexuality and reproduction. **MM**

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I am referring here to legally registered parties. The surprising exception during the 2000 elections was Social Democracy, which did not retain its legal status, but whose candidates Gilberto Rincón Gallardo and Tere Vale publicly defended the decriminalization of abortion.

<sup>2</sup> A pregnancy can be terminated in all 32 states when it is the result of a rape; in 29 if it occurs through some carelessness of the woman (for example, a fall); in 28, when the woman's life is in danger; in 13 when the fetus is malformed; in 10 when the woman's health is in serious danger; and in one state, Yucatán, for socioeconomic reasons, when the woman already has three children. Source: GIRE, 2000.

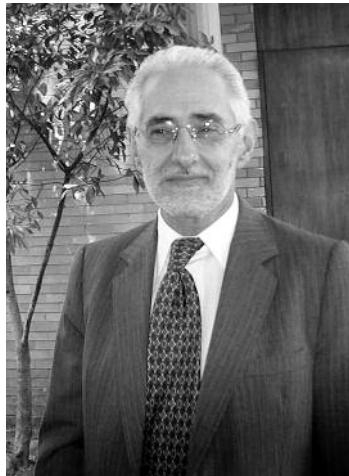
# Queen Sofía Prize Awarded To UNAM Scientist

A group of scientists headed by Dr. Antonio Velázquez Arellano was given the year 2000 Queen Sofía Prize for Research in Prevention of Deficiencies. The U.S.\$30,000 award is given every two years to one group in Spain and another in Latin America in recognition of research aimed at better understanding and preventing harm to children caused by malnutrition and genetic conditions.

The Mexican group received the award for its work in the National Program for the Prevention of Infant Mental Deficiency in the area of screening at birth. Their work was done at the Nutritional Genetic Unit of the UNAM Biomedical Research Institute. The judges also awarded the prize to the work done in "Support for the development of infants born too small, too soon," at the 12 of October Hospital in Spain.

Queen Sofía gave Dr. Velázquez the prize last January personally in the Zarzuela Palace. It is very significant that she gave the group the prize in person because the award recipients began their work at the UNAM, which is commemorating the 450th anniversary of its establishment by royal decree by King Felipe II of Spain.

Dr. Velázquez began his struggle to implement the Program for the Prevention of Infant Mental



Courtesy of the Biomedical Research Institute, UNAM

Deficiency through screening at birth 28 years ago. The screening process consists of the analysis of a few drops of blood taken from the umbilical cord or the newborn's heel to detect early metabolic alterations, thus making it possible to treat them and

avoid irreversible brain damage. Despite the program's being eliminated twice by public health officials, Dr. Velázquez never gave up. He was finally able to reinstate the program in Ministry of Health facilities in 1982 and six years later, the test became obligatory nationwide. Today, all public health institutions do this screening, benefitting 1,000 Mexican children born every year who would otherwise go untreated for mental deficiency.

Dr. Velázquez studied medicine at the UNAM and received his masters in science and a doctorate in human genetics from the University of Michigan. He is the founder of the Nutritional Genetics Unit, the coordinator of the UNAM Center for Genomic Medicine and a member of the Mexican Academy of Science and the Mexican Academy of Pediatrics. He has also received the Eduardo Liceaga Prize from the National Academy of Medicine, the GEN Prize for research on birth defects and the National Prize for Food Technology, among others.





# PUBLICACIONES UNAM

## LA FIESTA DE LOS MUERTOS. UNA CELEBRACIÓN DE LOS ESTUDIANTES UNIVERSITARIOS

Secretaría de la Rectoría  
Dirección General de Atención a la Comunidad Estudiantil  
2000, 145 págs.



"Otra vez llegó la muerte a la Ciudad Universitaria, otra vez bailó con nosotros la catrina. Otra vez celebramos juntos vivos y muertos." Actividad de los universitarios para mantener viva esta tradición representativa de la celebración de los fieles difuntos, costumbre milenaria de nuestra cultura, convirtiéndola en leyenda, altar, arcoiris, verbena, música, poesía, teatro, danza, fotografía, calaveras... con el humo oloroso del copal y el brillante color del compesúchil: instantes para festejar y compartir emociones. "Múltiples son los motivos para congratularnos con la celebración de la Megaofrenda, son éstos los días en los que nuestra Universidad puede verse transformada en un singular escenario. En este libro se presentan las imágenes y los textos ganadores en los diferentes concursos convocados, a nivel bachillerato, licenciatura y posgrado.



## MÚSICA DE CÁMARA

Carrasco, Alfredo  
Coordinación de Difusión Cultural  
Dirección General de Actividades Musicales  
Colección Voz Viva América Latina  
Serie Música Nueva  
CD: 1999

En el folleto que acompaña al CD, se proporcionan algunos datos biográficos de este compositor, (1875 Culiacán, Sinaloa- 1945 ciudad de México); sus obras y su estilo, así como una semblanza de los intérpretes que participan en la grabación. El disco compacto contiene: 1. *Andante pastoral* para violín, oboe, viola, violonchelo, contrabajo (*ad libitum*) y piano (1900). 2. *Minuetto para instrumentos de arco núm. 8* (1897). 3. *Suite para violín, violonchelo y piano núm. 2. Serenata frívola* (ca. 1897-1907). 4. *Berceuse* para violín y piano (ca. 1896-1903). 5. *Scherzo. Piano a cuatro manos* (1895). 6. *Confidencias. (Página de amor) núm. 5* para quinteto de arcos (1905). 7. *Romance* para violín, violonchelo y piano (ca. 1897-1907). 8. *Cuarteto* (ca. 1943-1944) allegro andante tranquilo, allegro giocoso, rondo-final del folklore mexicano.



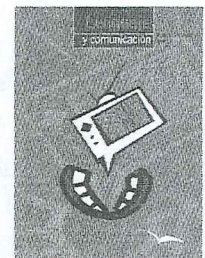
## BIOGRAFÍA DE UNA LENGUA NACIMIENTO, DESARROLLO Y EXPANSIÓN DEL ESPAÑOL

Obediente Sosa, Enrique  
Es una coedición de la Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias de América Latina y el Caribe  
Libro Universitario Regional (LUR)  
2ª edición: 2000, 574 págs.

Presentación diacrónica, sincrónica y dialectológica del idioma español, desde sus orígenes hasta nuestros días, encuadrando su historia en el marco general del desarrollo de España, desde los primitivos pobladores hasta su expansión por diversas partes del mundo, cuyo conocimiento permite entender el recorrido evolutivo de la lengua en diferentes tiempos y espacios. En el texto se presenta *la historia interna*, esto es las crónicas de los cambios fonológicos, morfológicos, sintácticos y léxicos. También se ofrece *la historia externa*, es decir, las situaciones sociales, políticas y culturales que propiciaron determinados cambios.

## LENGUAJE Y COMUNICACIÓN

Goutman Bender, Ana A.  
Dirección General de Publicaciones y Fomento Editorial  
Programa Universitario del Libro de Texto  
2000, 159 págs.



Esta obra ofrece diversos ensayos de lingüística que presentan nuevos planteamientos acerca del vínculo entre comunicación y lenguaje en los medios y en el espacio escénico. Enfatizando la investigación del lenguaje en la práctica comunicativa se hace evidente que pensar y hablar son dos actividades conjugadas para satisfacer la necesidad de comunicar, creando un sistema que permite poner, primero en estructuras del pensamiento y luego en palabras, representaciones conceptuales o simplemente informaciones. Así, la función del lenguaje aparece nítida y evidente en la interacción del acto comunicativo entre sujetos.

## EL PRIMERO SUEÑO DE SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ. BASES TOMISTAS

Soriano Vallés, Alejandro  
Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas  
Colección Estudios de Literatura 6  
2000, 380 págs.



Esta investigación da a conocer un aspecto poco estudiado de la creatividad de nuestra poetisa. Teniendo a santo Tomás de Aquino como guía, se propone demostrar la influencia que la escolástica, tuvo en la Décima Musa. "La medicina de Galeno, la astronomía de Ptolomeo, la filosofía de Aristóteles, el pensamiento de santo Tomás de Aquino, se muestran en la arquitectura de *Primero Sueño* como elementos, no sólo dominados en plenitud sino magistralmente utilizados por el arte genial de la poeta". Se busca el uso que ella hace de santo Tomás, pues la escuela tomista, era, la más extendida, ocupando el lugar más importante en su momento por lo cual Sor Juana no podía permanecer indiferente ante esa corriente de pensamiento. Con la finalidad de hallar la doctrina tomista que se encuentra implícita en los versos de su poema *Primero Sueño*, el autor sigue de cerca el desarrollo científico, filosófico y teológico planteados por la monja.



## EL CABALLERO ENCANTADO DE GALDÓS

Ontañón de Lope, Paciencia  
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras  
Colección Opúsculos  
2000, 131 págs.

Considerada como novela tardía, esta obra de Benito Pérez Galdós se puede leer como una obra de culpa, penitencia, castigo y redención de su protagonista. *El caballero encantado*, hace un inventario de las imperfecciones de la vida social española a través del juicio que hace, principalmente, a los ricos, los clérigos y los políticos. De los primeros dice que manejan el campo por medio de los caciques, encargados de exprimir a los campesinos, además de que no pagan contribuciones, falsifican actas, encubren criminales, atropellan a la gente y manejan todo arbitrariamente. Falta de vocación, pobreza espiritual, ausencia de virtuosismo cristiano, intolerancia y fanatismo son las características de los clérigos galdosianos hasta 1890. Además, los personajes que pueblan los campos se quejan de la miseria en que se encuentran: casi todos ellos, por humilde que sea su origen, están conscientes de ser explotados, de soportar una injusticia generalizada en el país.



# Luis Nishizawa

## Master of His Craft

Margarita García Luna\*



Unless otherwise specified, photos by Daniel Wunguia

*Microscopic Lobster*, 53 x 75 cm, 1978 (mixed techniques).

Japanese on his father's side and Mexican on his mother's, Luis Nishizawa was born on the San Mateo Hacienda in the municipality of Cuauhtitlán, State of Mexico, February 2, 1918. His childhood, spent close to nature, would profoundly influence his sensibilities and be a determining factor in his work.

In 1925, Nishizawa's family came to live in Mexico City. Before enrolling in the San Car-

los Academy in 1942, he made jewelry and studied music. In the academy, he studied under Julio Castellanos, José Chávez Morado, Alfredo Zalce and Benjamín Coria, among others. In 1947, he graduated in visual arts and in 1955 he began his long career as an art teacher at the National School of Visual Arts, where he has since wisely and generously shared his knowledge and techniques with several generations of artists.

At the beginning of his career, Nishizawa was part of the Mexican school with its strong nationalist leanings, but he has not limited him-

\* Director of the Nishizawa Museum Workshop.

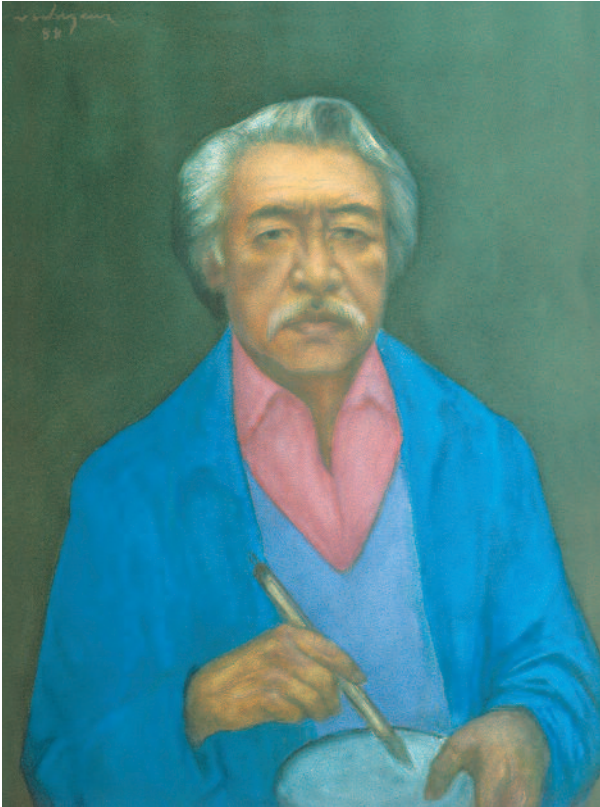
Photos reproduced by permission of Luis Nishizawa.





*Figure*, 104 x 80 cm, 1959 (acrylic).





*Self-portrait*, 122 x 82 cm, 1988 (watercolor).



*My Mother*, 95 x 72 cm, 1967 (mixed techniques on canvas and wood).

self to a single aesthetic trend. This has allowed him to articulate currents as varied as expressionism, abstractionism and figurativism, creating free art with no frontiers. His dual cultural heritage has led him down formal, conceptual and technical roads that have accentuated a personality that is profoundly human. The blend of his Mexican and Japanese roots, those of two ancient and artistic peoples, has been very significant in his work, which radiates beauty and transmits emotion through both form and color. In his long career, he has ventured into different languages: muralism, easel painting, sketching, ceramics, stained-glass and sculpting.

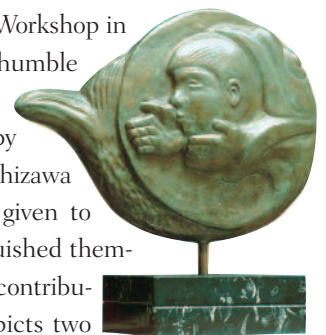
Luis Nishizawa's fine sensibility and complete mastery of his craft has given him a central place in Mexican and world art. His work has won him several prizes and awards. He received an honorary doctorate from the National Autonomous University of Mexico; the Japanese government bestowed on him the "Sacred Treasure of the

Dragon" award in 1987; he was given the National Prize for Art in 1996; and he is a full member of Mexico's Academy of the Arts and has been an honorary member of the National Council for Culture and the Arts since 1993.

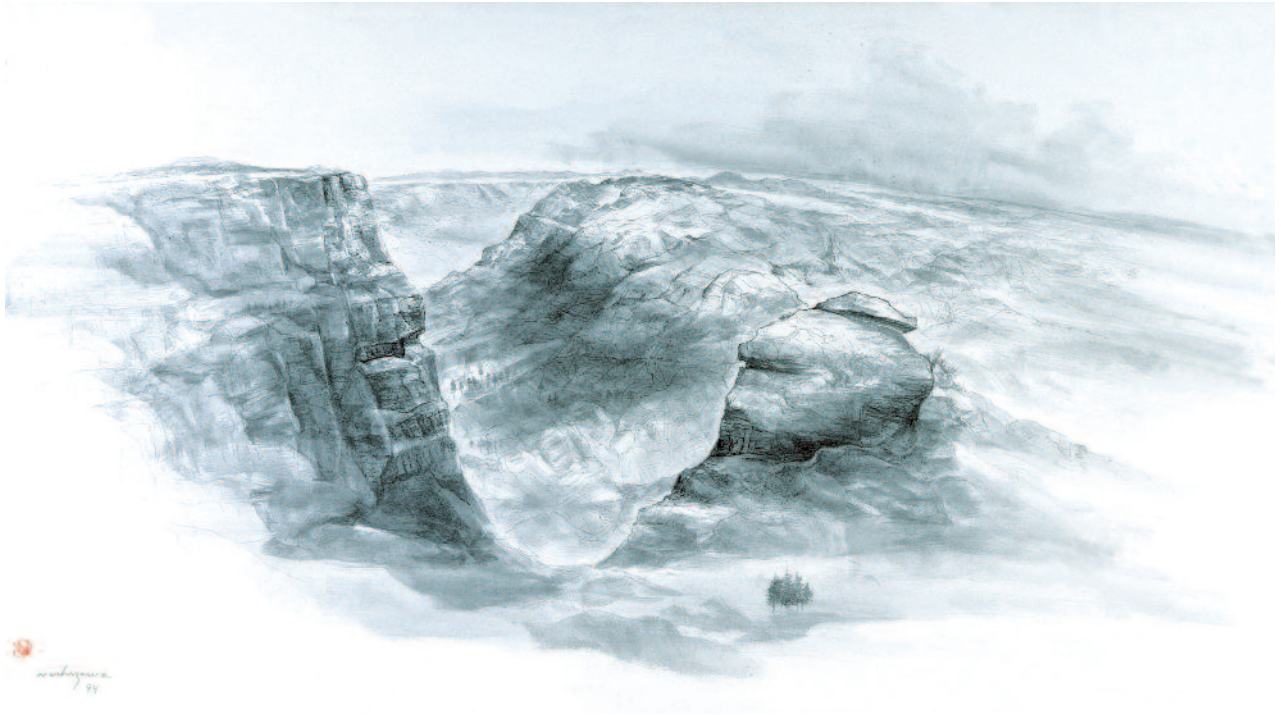
#### THE NISHIZAWA MUSEUM WORKSHOP

In recognition of his vast body of work, his artistic legacy and his work as a teacher for almost 50 years, the government of the State of Mexico created the Nishizawa Museum Workshop in 1992. It is housed in what was a humble eighteenth-century dwelling.

The first patio is covered by stained-glass depicting the Nishizawa clan mon, the heraldic symbol given to Japanese clans who have distinguished themselves in battle or through their contributions to culture. The symbol depicts two



*The Spirit Is Ever Renewed*, 40 x 50 x 9 cm, 2000 (bronze).



Lourdes Grobet/Nishizawa Museum

*Barranca del Cobre*, 94 x 184 cm, 1984 (ink on torinoko paper).



Lourdes Grobet/Nishizawa Museum

*The Friars V*, 99 x 185 cm, 1997 (suiboku ink).





*Self-portrait*, 71.3 x 49 cm, 1965 (mixed techniques on wood).

sparrows among stalks of bamboo where, aware of its strength and flexibility, they have chosen to nest. The bamboo bends under the force of storms or hurricanes, but later straightens up and moves in the wind. This symbol affirms the human spirit as being as intelligent as a sparrow and flexible in the face of adversity. In addition, the dome creates just the right conditions for carrying out the museum-workshop's cultural activities.

Luis Nishizawa has worked in very durable materials: with the delicacy of distemper, or the

hardness of *recinto* (black sedimentary rock), ceramics and architecture. The pieces in the museum are barely a sampling of his vast body of work.

He conceived of the museum as a center of culture, where the public would have the opportunity to get close to art. With that in mind, the museum sponsors different activities, such as temporary exhibits of well-known artists' work, piano and chamber orchestra concerts, lectures, book launches and courses and workshops of different kinds.



One of the museum's rooms.



The museum's patio.



*The Bed of the Universe*, 2 x 8.5 m, 1987 (mural of grey and rusted stone). Museum of Modern Art at the State of Mexico Cultural Center.

The “Chatting Over Coffee” program offers the public a chance to sit down and talk with Luis Nishizawa. This popular activity has attracted people from all walks of life: newspaper and shoe-shine boys, architects, doctors, street vendors, students, retirees, teachers, artists, journalists, bakers, butchers, intellectuals, etc. While sharing his experiences, Nishizawa explains

the links that all these different kinds of people have with the cultural center's activities.

THE NISHIZAWA MUSEUM WORKSHOP  
NICOLÁS BRAVO NORTE 305  
TOLUCA, STATE OF MEXICO  
OPEN, TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 10 A.M. TO 6 P.M.  
SUNDAYS, 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.  
TELEPHONE: (72) 157465 OR 157468.



# Luis Nishizawa

## Heir to Two Ancient Traditions

Merry Mac Masters\*



*Cholula*, 37.5 x 87 cm, 1995 (suiboku ink on paper).

The director of the Urawa National Art Museum, Homma Masayoshi, referred to Nishizawa as “an Asian heart submerged in the Mexican humanism that belongs to the aesthetic of sacrifice.”

Although painter Luis Nishizawa (1918) has worked in all genres, he has a predilection for landscapes. He attributes this to being born on a hacienda in the State of Mexico and spending his youth as a shepherd. As a boy he noted the intricate veins of every leaf, every piece of grass, every corn field.

He also noticed the play of light of the sun’s rays through the tops of the trees, in the shadows, on the flowers, the fruit and even the animals themselves.

Living in the country influenced Nishizawa so much that even when he painted abstract works, he never stopped going back to the countryside. He and his friends Amador Lugo, Manuel Echauri and Manuel Herrera Cantoya would get on a bus with their canvases and bean and egg sandwiches to go into the moun-

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\* Journalist working for Mexico City’s *La Jornada* daily.

Photos reproduced by permission of Luis Nishizawa.



Unless otherwise specified, photos by Daniel Murguía

*Don Hermilo... My Friend*, 92.5 x 73 cm, 1952 (mixed techniques on masonite).





*Shrimp*, 54 x 116 cm, 1987 (mixed techniques on canvas and wood).



*Strawberries*, 62.5 x 79.6 cm, 1995 (distemper on canvas and wood).



*Orange*, 34.8 x 44.2 cm, 1995 (distemper).



*Charales*, 59 x 120 cm, 1980 (mixed techniques on canvas and wood).

tains. Nishizawa's taste for landscape also linked him to Gerardo Murillo —better known as Dr. Atl— whom he admired very much and deferred to in some things.

When Nishizawa enrolled in the National School of Visual Arts in 1942, Mexican muralism had reached its zenith. José Clemente Orozco had already painted the murals in the Hospicio Cabañas in Guadalajara, Jalisco. It was a difficult influence to avoid for the young painter and his fellow students.

Art critic Teresa del Conde says that part of Nishizawa's art "can be called dramatic, adding the impact produced by Orozco's art."<sup>1</sup> Another aspect, "lyrical and subjective, never distances itself from the evocation of the natural world, above all the geographical elements to which this painter seems to render a moderate, rhythmic veneration."<sup>2</sup>

Heir to two ancient cultures, Nishizawa did a series of 50 sketches in 1972 called *Hard Times and Broken Dreams* with hippies as the



*Tlayacapan*, 64 x 122 cm, 1994 (distemper).



*Dry Fish*, 70.2 x 22.5 cm, 1999 (distemper on canvas).

central figures. Later he exhibited some pieces of this series in Japan where they were a great success, prompting comments about how they had a Japanese photographic cast. This surprised him because in Mexico people said he was very influenced by Orozco.

The comments continued, however. And Nishizawa argued that his calligraphy was made of figures while those of the Japanese were letters, although he admitted that what he had wanted to present had been interpreted correctly. After that he began a series of landscapes with Japanese techniques, something he would not have done before because of the great respect he had for the masters of the technique.

Once the director of the Urawa National Art Museum, Homma Masayoshi, referred to Nishizawa as “an Asian heart submerged in the Mexican humanism that belongs to the aesthetic of sacrifice.”<sup>3</sup>

As a young man, Nishizawa was attracted by Mexicanist realism, influenced by the refinements of Julio Castellanos’ execution and by his affection for common figures painted without resorting to the picturesque. Later he would break—but not abruptly—with the Mexican school’s neorealism and his work would display a more allegorical realism, an Asian form of calligraphical synthesis in his landscapes, a certain expressionistic violence in his large sketches. Nevertheless, he has always said he was not interested in being part of any particular trend.

Spanish critic Margarita Nelken was one of the first to write about Nishizawa’s work, when he had his first one-man show at the Mexican Visual Arts Salon. In 1951, she wrote, “It would be fruitless to deny Luis Nishizawa’s gift as a painter; just as it would be fruitless to deny seeing in his paintings and sketches the appear-





*Cauldrons No. 1*, 61 x 118 cm, 1995 (distemper).

ance of being excessively influenced by other painters...We think that Nishizawa is proficient enough to be able to escape these too noticeable habits.”<sup>4</sup>

A year later, Justino Fernández would write that Nishizawa “achieves fine work, wrought with clean, quality objectivism.”<sup>5</sup>

Raúl Flores Guerrero commented that, “As a result of his constant travel through Mexico, [Nishizawa] has done many landscapes that have justly placed him in an outstanding position among Mexico’s young painters.”<sup>6</sup>

A founder of the Visual Arts Integration Workshop in 1949 directed by José Chávez Morado, it was only nine years later that Nishizawa had the opportunity to paint his first mural. In 1957, when Fernando Gamboa began coordinating decorations at Mexico City’s Medical Center complex, then under construction, he called on Nishizawa —among other artists— to

develop the theme “Air Is Life” in the main vestibule of the Pneumology Unit’s Hospitalization building.

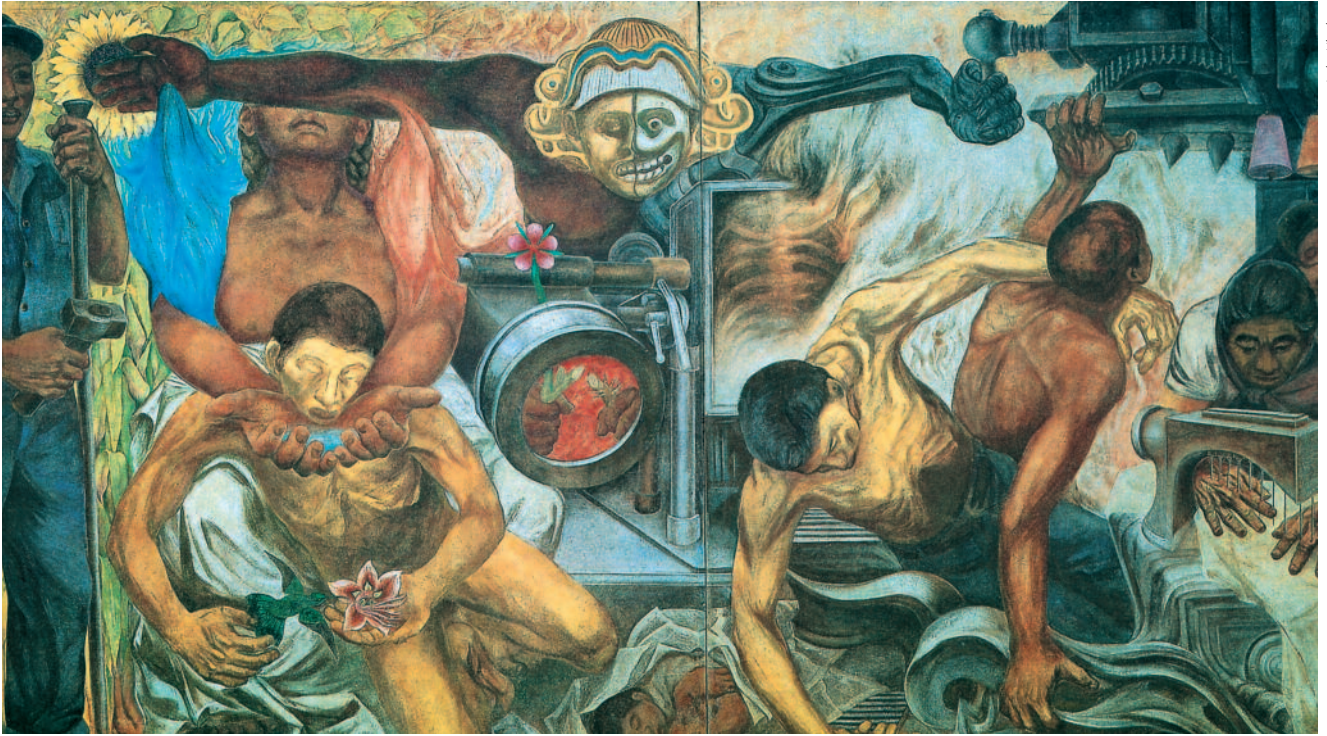
This mural was the occasion for many different anecdotes, including one involving Alfaro Siqueiros. Once, Nishizawa was working in the construction site; since it had no windows, Siqueiros —or “El Coronelazo,” as he was called— who drove by there every day in his car, saw what he was doing, stopped and went to meet the young man. Nishizawa came down off his scaffolding and introduced himself to the master painter and from that time on they were great friends, Siqueiros giving him much appreciated advice.

Raquel Tibol wrote about his mural, saying “Nishizawa has given birth to the symbol through metaphors, through stanzas of sweet, tender, jovial, sensual allegories....In developing his theme, the painter divulges his artistic fore-



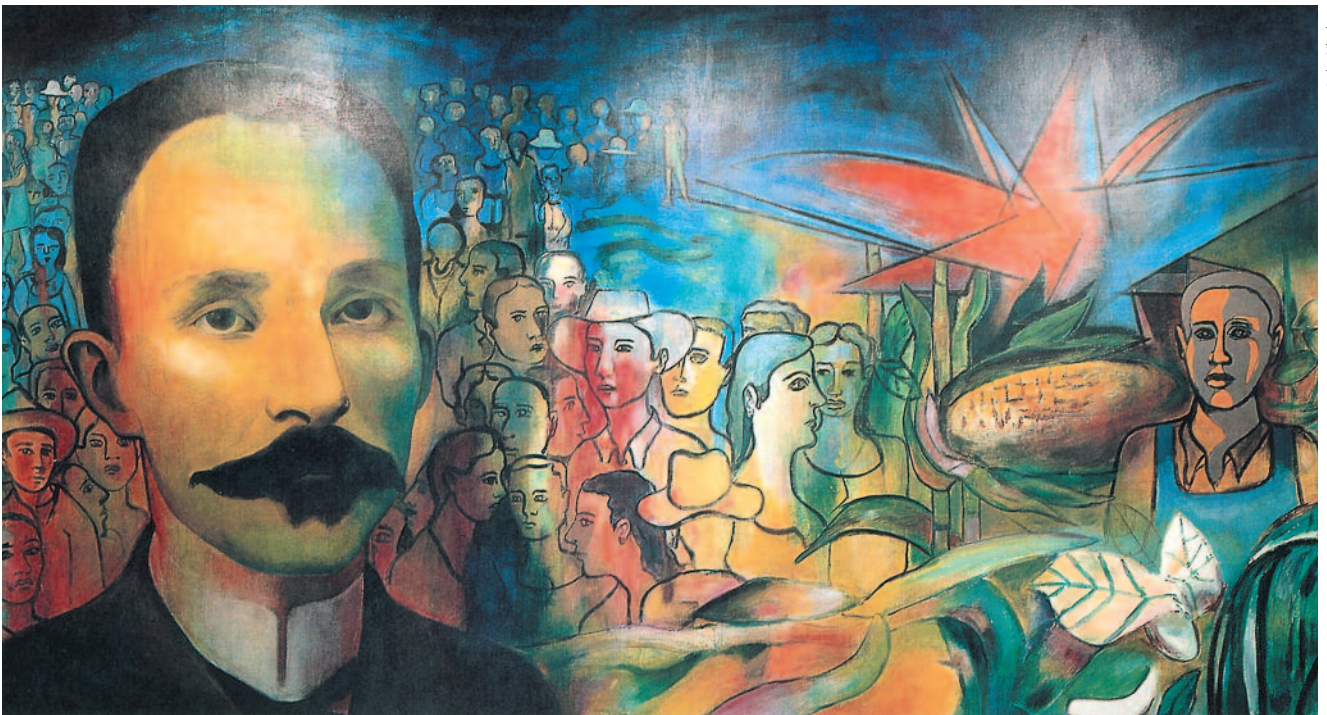
*Butterflies*, 73.2 x 20 cm, 1999 (distemper on canvas and wood).





Javier Hinogosa

*Air Is Life*, mural, detail, 1957-1959 (acrylic on dry plaster).



Javier Hinogosa

*Letter to Martí*, collective mural, detail, 1976 (acrylic). José Martí Cultural Center, Mexico City.

Photographs on this page are taken from the book *Nishizawa* (Mexico City: Talleres de Litógrafos Unidos, no date), pp. 113 and 118.



bears: there is a Rivera-like conception and certain emphases reminiscent of Orozco. But what authenticity of color! What respect for his own sense of sensuality!...Leaving to one side any absurd sense of delicacy, his attitude is one of being a continuer of the Mexican school, but to the delight and enjoyment of the viewer, he did not remain stuck in any pedestrian or scholastic imitation.”<sup>7</sup>

Antonio Rodríguez wrote, “Luis Nishizawa, always fluctuating between the dramatic passion of Mexico and a tendency toward the great abstractions of Japanese art that he inherited from one of his parents, has created in the central part of the Medical Center one of the most poetic, fine and delicately, yet wisely painted murals of the Mexican School.”<sup>8</sup>

This building was so severely damaged by the 1985 earthquake that hit the city that the Social Security Institute gave orders to have it dynamited. Although it was very difficult to take the mural off the wall, it was finally salvaged using a technique whereby the technicians from the National Institute of Fine Arts removed the film of color from the wall and then mounted it on glass fabric. It is now once again on display in the new, rebuilt Twenty-first Century Medical Center.

Nishizawa has also done murals on ceramics fired at high temperatures, such as *A Song to Life* done in 1969 at the Social Security Unit in Celaya, Guanajuato. This first incursion into ceramics was an adventure because he worked with a ceramicist who knew nothing about murals, while he knew nothing of ceramics. He later used the same technique to do his *The Creative Spirit Is Ever Renewed* in 1981 for the Tokyo Railroad Company (in Japan, where they have great mastery in ceramics) and for another mural in the State of Mexico Cultural Center.

Nishizawa once said that his relationship with Japanese painters had been a strong one since they took great interest in him. So much so that he dared to say that they have been influenced by the Mexicans in form, though not



*Haiku No. 9, 1997 (encaustic on wood).*



*Haiku No. 4, 1997 (encaustic on wood).*



*Haiku No. 8, 1997 (encaustic on wood).*



*Rust*, 194 x 145 cm, 1971 (sumi on paper).

content. Under that influence, they have begun to paint murals in public places.

For Nishizawa, a man is a man before he is an artist; he creates his work and expresses himself for or against and under the influence of day-to-day circumstances, political and social situations. In 1976, he painted the mural *Song to Martí* with a team of painters, including Cubans Mariano Rodríguez and Fayad Jamís and Mexican Mario Orozco Rivera, in the vestibule of the José Martí Cultural Center, coordinated by Raquel Tibol. Nishizawa considered that the theme united them and they achieved their aim. The mural is neither obvious nor didactic; it is read visually; it is an exaltation of the Martí who continues among us.

Luis Nishizawa is an artist who has never stopped learning. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Teresa del Conde, *Catálogo de la Sección Anual de Invitados* (Mexico City: Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all quotes are taken from the promotional kit prepared by Sociocultur for the October 1997 homage to Nishizawa.

<sup>4</sup> *Excelsior* (Mexico City), April 1951.

<sup>5</sup> Justino Fernández, *Arte moderno y contemporáneo de México* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas-UNAM, 1952).

<sup>6</sup> Raúl Flores Guerrero, *Pintores. Antologías de artistas mexicanos del siglo XX* (Mexico City: Buró Internacional de Arte, 1958).

<sup>7</sup> *Excelsior* (Mexico City), 2 August 1959.

<sup>8</sup> Antonio Rodríguez, *El hombre en llamas. Historia de la pintura mural en México* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970).





# Dinosaurs in Mexico

René Hernández Rivera\*

Mexico is a vast, colorful mosaic of rocks of different origins and ages, witnesses to the biological and geological events that occurred as they were forming. Some of the most outstanding studies of the different eras include the discovery of the fossils of mainland vertebrates, among them the dinosaurs of the Mesozoic era, in particular the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. The importance of this type of fossil lies in their diversity, abundance and often excellent state of preservation, all of which makes

them key to reconstructing prehistoric environments and possible lines of origin, evolution and dissemination of the different animal groups that lived in our country in that era.<sup>1</sup>

Until the late 1980s, paleo-geographic reconstructions of the upper Cretaceous period in North America, particularly of the Campanian-Maestrichtian ages (from 85 million to 65 million years ago, quite an important span of time), only included the southern United States and/or always depicted Mexico as covered by the sea.

Thanks to discoveries and the studies done since then in different states of Mexico, this idea has changed. Today, we can say that the

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The first dinosaur remains found in Mexico were discovered in 1926.

Photos reproduced courtesy of René Hernández Rivera



Centrosaurus.



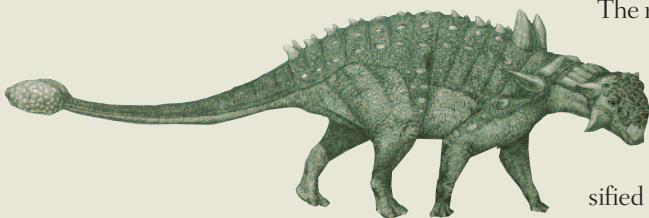
Fragments of large bones have been collected.

southeastern part of what is now the state of Coahuila was covered with broad expanses of shallow, salt-water bays linked to the prehistoric Sea of Tethys, and that dinosaurs, and the impressive flora and fauna that accompanied their existence on Earth, lived in the estuaries and islands in an environment that has now been dubbed the Cretaceous Beaches.

#### LOCALES OF THE JURASSIC PERIOD

Until now, no discoveries of dinosaur fossils from the Triassic period in Mexico have been reported. Finds dating from the Jurassic period, however, have been made in the Huizachal Canyon in Tamaulipas state: a few isolated teeth from Ornithischia (an order of Archosaurian reptiles made up of herbivorous dinosaurs, whose waist is similar to that of a bird), tentatively related to the Heterodontosaurids (considered the equivalent of pigs among mammals).<sup>2</sup>

The remains of another animal from the Saurischia dinosaur group (with a reptilian-type waist) have been classified as from a new species



called *Mexicanum*, of the *Syntarsus* genus and *Coelophysoidea* family. It is a small carnivorous dinosaur with a slim body, averaging about 3 meters in length. Cranial matter from the *Ceratopsaurus* genus, *Abelisauridae* family, has also been identified. These were carnivorous dinosaurs about 7 meters in length.

The Huizachal Canyon area in Tamaulipas, discovered by Dr. James M. Clark in 1982, is very important for Mexico because it is there that the country's oldest remains of terrestrial vertebrates have been found, dating to approximately 180 million years ago, placing them in the latter part of the early Jurassic period.

Among these are the Tritylodontids, represented by the *Bocatherium mexicanum* genus, of the group of proto-mammals or mammal-like reptiles. In addition, at least five different taxa have been identified, that is, new groups of mammals.

Other vertebrates found are the Crocodylomorphs and at least three distinct types of Sphenodontians related to the Rhynchocephalians, two of them named *Cynospheonodon huizachalensis* and *Zapatodon ejidoensis*.

Another animal unearthed has been named the *Tamaulipasaurus morenoi*, which resembled today's Amphisbaenians, digging reptiles with very small eyes.





René Hernández participates in several paleontological digs.



Hadrosaur of the *Kritosaurus* genus prepared and pieced together in the IGLUNAM laboratory.

An important find was a flying reptile determined to be a new species of the genus *Dimorphodon*, which has been given the name *Weintraubi*. Its state of preservation was surprising since it was found in three dimensions, or “in bulk”, which is very rare since almost all Pterosaurs found have been crushed. Its anatomy, particularly the form of its foot, proves that flying reptiles or primitive Pterosaurs walked on four feet and not two as some authors suggest.

Paleo-ecological reconstruction of the area shows volcanic activity including eruptions, falling ash and mud slides, something rather similar to what happened a few years ago at the Chichonal volcano in the state of Chiapas. The animals, trapped by lava flows or the falling ash, were buried and at the same time preserved through a rather unusual process of fossilization almost unique in the preservation of vertebrates. This also explains why there are no examples of medium- to large-size animals and only small fossils have been located.

In Puebla, in the “red layers” near the town of San Felipe Ameyaltepec, fragments of large bones identified as from Sauropods have also been collected. The age of the rocks, however, is still a matter of debate. Also being researched are the quite fragmented dinosaur remains discovered in Chiapas in rocks from the Cretaceous period.

#### DINOSAURS FROM THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD

The first dinosaur remains found in Mexico were discovered in 1926. The remains of a Ceratopid (a dinosaur with horns on its face) were unearthed in a dig at Soledad, near Múzquiz in the state of Coahuila. Later, there were reports of the discovery of Hadrosaurs (literally large reptiles, better known as *picos de pato*) in Sonora (1942) and Baja California (1954) and Hadrosaurs and Ceratopids in Coahuila (1959).

During the 1980s and part of the 1990s, different research projects were launched to investigate the existence of dinosaurs from the Cretaceous period in Coahuila and Sonora.<sup>3</sup>

Paleo-ecological studies suggest that in Sonora the enormous herbivore dinosaurs, the Hadrosaurs and Ceratopids, must have needed enormous quantities of vegetation to survive and that the climate must have been hot, with abundant rainfall. The evidence from the kind of sedimentary rock formed by the Cabullona group reinforces this idea, given that they seem to have been deposited by vast lakes and rivers that covered the prehistoric landscape.

In late 1987, the UNAM Institute of Geology (IGLUNAM) formally began the study of dinosaurs of the Cretaceous period with a project called “First Mounting of a Dinosaur Gathered,





Prepared and Pieced Together in Mexico.” In spring 1988, 65 percent of a 7-meter-long dinosaur was gathered in the Presa San Antonio collective farm, or *ejido*, in Parras, Coahuila. It was then prepared and pieced together in the laboratory of the UNAM’s Institute of Geology museum. The dinosaur skeleton is now on exhibit at the museum’s Paleontology Room. Based on an examination of its extremities, it has been identified as a Hadrosaur of the *Kritosaurus* genus (a genus still under discussion because some paleontologists consider it identical to the *Gryptosaurus*). Curiously, the central metatarsus of its left hand are fused.

In the same excavation in which the *Kritosaurus* was discovered, parts of two other Lam-

beosaur-like dinosaurs (with crests on their heads) were gathered. These were identified mainly by their ischia, bones from their pelvic region.

The IGLUNAM further supported the study of Mexican dinosaurs and in collaboration with the Coahuila state Education Ministry Paleontology Commission and the enthusiastic participation of renowned U.S. paleontologist Dr. James I. Kirkland, the year 1993 began with an ambitious project called “Prospecting, Recovery and Study of the Cretaceous Dinosaurs of Coahuila.” The study’s objectives are to discover the fossil potential of the state’s Cretaceous sediment, particularly for dinosaurs, in order to determine what type they are and disseminate the research results to the scientific community and the public in general through lectures, articles and books.

During the first excavations in February 1993, several important finds were made. Undoubtedly the best was the relocation of the fossil fields on the Rincón Colorado *ejido*.

Over a 40-square-kilometer area, almost 200 deposits of dinosaur fossils have been found. The most important, both in terms of quantity and their state of preservation, have been those spotted at the Hill of Our Lady, re-christened the Hill of the Dinosaurs. Some of the fossils even preserve the impression of the animal’s skin, and in other cases, the animal seems to have been mummified and then permineralized.

The largest group of dinosaurs found were the Hadrosaurs, both with and without crests, followed by the Ceratopids. Several Theropods, carnivorous dinosaurs of the same family as the Tyrannosaurs, Dromaeosaurs and Ornithomimids, have also been found, however. Among other the vertebrates gathered were fishes, particularly sharks and ray fish, crocodiles and tortoises.

Among the indirect evidence is a great quantity of fossilized excrement attributed to tortoises, crocodiles and dinosaurs. Footprints of at least two different groups, probably Theropods and Hadrosaurs, have also been unearthed.



Fossils found in different locations are important because of their diversity and excellent state of preservation.

The most abundant invertebrates found, the mollusks, belong to the genera *Ethmo-cardium* sp., *Inoceramus vanuxemi*, *Turritella vertibroides*, *Eutreohoceras* sp., and *Sphenodiscus* sp. The association of the *Inoceramus vanuxemi* and the *Sphenodiscus* indicate that they date from the late Campanian age, that is, that they lived 74 million years ago, a calculation based on the Geological Society of America's most recent time table.

A considerable quantity of fossilized fruit has also been gathered, including at least seven different types of fossilized plants related to palms, magnolias, birds of paradise, zingiberaceae and others now being studied.

The fossils have been discovered in what geologists call the Cerro del Pueblo Formation. Its sediments are composed of alternating layers of mudstone and sandstone of both dry-land and marine origin. They display plentiful marks showing ancient waves and hurricanes.

The environment in which the dinosaurs of southeastern Coahuila lived seems to have been a river delta. Some of the river's branches led into a salt-water lagoon connected to the sea, which explains finding dinosaurs, crocodiles, tortoises, fruit, leaves and marine invertebrates side by side. Sometimes the sea's influence was predominant, and sometimes, the land's: this explains the alternating layers of mudstone and sandstone.

This location is considered enormously important for the late Cretaceous period because of its diversity, abundance and the excellent state of preservation of both the plant and animal fossils. It is probably unique in the world and has quite justly been nicknamed the "Cretaceous Beaches." In an analogy with today's sites, it would undoubtedly be similar to San Blas and Tobará in Nayarit or Morro de la Mancha or Coatzacoalcos in Veracruz.

Currently, research is underway to establish the distribution patterns of the Hadrosaur family during the upper Cretaceous in North America, taking into account that the Hadrosaurs were the most diverse and largest group of all the

dinosaurs: herbivorous Ornithomimids inhabited the Northern Hemisphere during the upper Cretaceous period, but they have also been documented in Argentina. These animals seem to have represented 75 percent of the total biomass of the local fauna in most cases, certainly of that of Coahuila.

In Chihuahua, dinosaurs from the Hadrosaur, Ceratopid, Ornithomimid and Tyrannosaur families have been discovered, as well as other materials currently under study.

The aim of this research project is to emphasize the provincial aspects of Hadrosaurs in a more detailed way, taking into account both the



The study of dinosaur footprints renders information that supplements that supplied by their bones.





Recent studies of Mexican dinosaurs have begun to reveal the different species that lived here during the Mesozoic era.

geographical and physical context, that is the coastlines, climate, topographical and hydrographical barriers, biomass, etc., so as to be able to establish correlations between the different taxa and one or more characteristics of the environment.

#### DINOSAUR FOOTPRINTS

The study of dinosaur footprints and other vestiges is undoubtedly very important because it renders information that supplements that supplied by their bones, such as the speed at which they walked or ran; whether they were quadrupeds, bipeds, or combined both positions; whether they traveled in herds or alone; how they hunted; and many other characteristics. The problem with footprints, as well as droppings, is that it is very difficult to determine which genus and species of dinosaur produced them.

Dinosaur footprints discovered in Oaxaca have been attributed to Teropods and two families of Sauropods from the middle Jurassic period. In Michoacán, two families of Teropods and two of Ornithopods form the upper Jurassic period have been reported. And in Puebla, representatives of a family of Ornithopods and

another of Sauropods from the upper Cretaceous period have been found.

In Coahuila, footprints from the upper Cretaceous have been located in the Cerro del Pueblo Formation, attributed to Hadrosaurs and Teropods. Particularly outstanding are those spotted in February 1998 on the Rincón Colorado *ejido*, attributed to a Teropod.

These recent studies of Mexican dinosaurs have begun to reveal their diversity, the different kinds that lived in our country during the Mesozoic era; which were exclusive to Mexico, which came from elsewhere and how they were distributed. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For several years, the UNAM Institute of Geology (IGLUNAM), together with other institutions and researchers, has been developing projects on Mesozoic continental fauna, the results of which are given here, particularly the discoveries about the early Jurassic in Tamaulipas and the late Cretaceous in Coahuila.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the “tanks” of the Cretaceous were the Ankylosaurus, while rhinos are the equivalent of the Triceratopids.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Carlos González León has reported from the UNAM Institute of Geology IGLUNAM Northwest Regional Station in Sonora evidence of *pico de pato*, Ceratopids, Tyrannosaurs and Ornithomimids. The fossils were unearthed south of Naco, in rocks of the Cabullona group, dating from the late Cretaceous period (Santonian, early Maestrichtian), and are from 66 million to 74 million years old.



# The Concentration of Line

## Notes on the Work of Sabrina Villaseñor

Arturo Cosme Valadez\*



Photos courtesy of Sabrina Villaseñor

*Dalliance Triptych, Erotic Games, 120 x 100 cm (mixed technique).*



*Integration*, polych, 153 x 40 cm (mixed techniques).

Sabrina Villaseñor paints bodies. This should be taken literally: she paints bodies, not human beings. Her work displays no faces or gestures. It defines muscles, torsos, backs, genitals. Sabrina Villaseñor makes works of art that seek an almost inhuman warmth.

#### THE STRENGTH OF DRAWING

I know very little about this artist and some of what I know may only serve to muddy the way to the secret of her canvases. She studied design at the Iberoamerican University and did further studies at the Elisava School of Graphic and Industrial Design in Barcelona. Surely her concern with design was already the root of that decision.

We could think that her professional education made it possible to define the precise nature of her art: the severity of her stroke and the definition of her lines. It would be hard to find an unnecessary line on her canvases, and I think that this economy is also a profound way of expressing reality. If I am not mistaken, Sabrina Villaseñor is interested in more than beauty or, to say it differently, she is interested exclusively in the beauty of reality.

She immersed herself in the visual arts at the Fine Arts Academy's Surikov Institute in the former Soviet Union for two years. I imagine her in that far-off city, observing new colors and forms strictly from the point of view of a sketch artist: a mix of abstraction, geometry and love of form. Like with everyone else, mastering this technique opened up other tools for her. Among her later teachers —Georgeanne González, Philip Bragar, Gilverto Aceves Navarro, Luis Argudín and José Luis Cuevas— are notable sketch artists. That is not a chance occurrence if we look at the results.

That experience was so intense that she has not wanted to put down her pencil. And of

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\* Mexican writer and art critic.





*Deliberation*, 70 x 80 cm (pastels and collage).

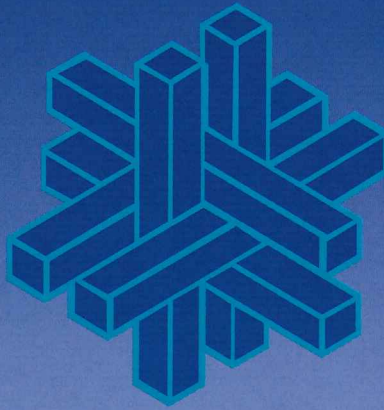
course, there is no reason she should. She uses water colors, oils, pastels, Indian ink, and she does it with knowledge and talent. Basically, though, she draws. This should not be taken as a stage in a broader evolution, as though looking at her work showed up technical limitations. We are dealing here with a musician who prefers quartets to symphonies, who has opted for concentration and reflection instead of a breadth that takes in everything.

This explains why her work is so essential, from all points of view. I am not familiar with Sabrina Villaseñor's life story, but it would be easy to imagine that one day, without any warning, she looked at a human body and felt the vertigo of understanding it as a thing, an unjustified and unjustifiable object, although with a difficult-to-understand dignity, at the same time both fragile and forceful.

It does not matter if I am wrong and things happened a different way. This amazement consisting of guessing what is human from a truly elemental perspective is rendered in her work: a thing among things, before the gesture, the word and any form of communication (except, perhaps, the erotic). How bewildering! From the violence of that surprise, this woman has created an interesting, profound, monothematic work.

The strength of her stroke and the power of her line have been placed at the service of isolating and repeating the human figure in a strictly physical sense. ■■■





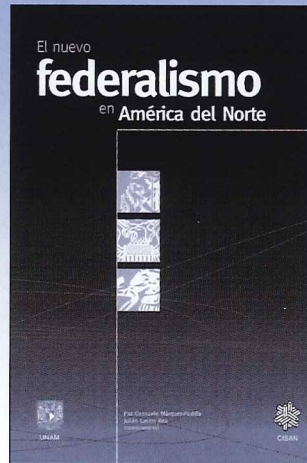
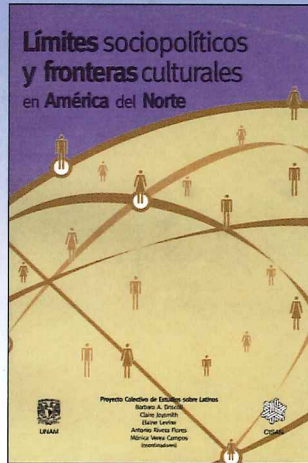
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**p u b l i c a t i o n s**

***Límites sociopolíticos  
y fronteras culturales en  
América del Norte***

Barbara A. Driscoll, Claire Joysmith, Elaine Levine, Antonio Rivera and Mónica Vereza, compilers

A multidisciplinary group of Mexican and foreign specialists study the growing presence of the Latino community in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the United States.



***El Nuevo Federalismo  
en América del Norte***

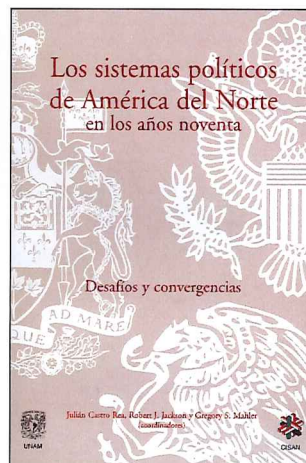
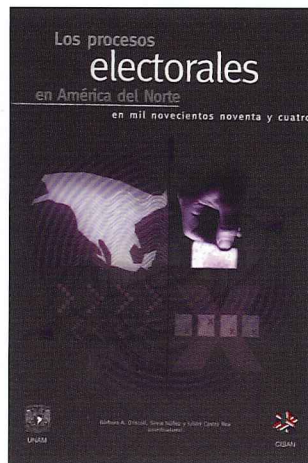
Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla and Julián Castro Rea, compilers

This work explores the origins, successes and contemporary dilemmas of the federal system in Mexico, Canada and the United States. In brief, the book looks at the factors that have an impact on federalism in North America today and recent trends in its transformation.

***Los Procesos Electorales  
en América del Norte***

Barbara A. Driscoll, Silvia Núñez and Julián Castro Rea, compilers

The importance of examining the elections in the U.S., Canada and Mexico in 1994 is that they were the first elections to take place under NAFTA. The convergence of political spaces implied in these elections cannot help but have an impact on all three countries.



***Los sistemas políticos  
de América del Norte  
en los noventa.  
Desafíos y convergencias***

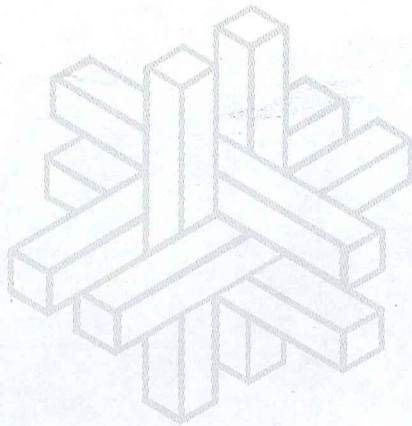
Julián Castro Rea, Robert J. Jackson and Gregory S. Mahler, compilers

This book takes a comparative approach to the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian legal systems, constitutions, federalism, government institutions, domestic and foreign policies.

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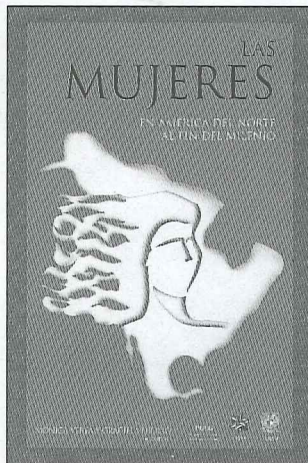
**CISAN**

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

***Las mujeres al fin del milenio en América del Norte***

Mónica Verea and Graciela Hierro, compilers

A pioneering concept, this book is a collective look by Canadian, U.S. and Mexican women academics, officials and artists at the work of today's women and the role they have played in North American societies.



**Estados Unidos y Canadá  
¿Signos conservadores hacia el siglo XXI?**

***Estados Unidos y Canadá  
¿Signos conservadores hacia el siglo XXI?***

Mónica Verea C. and Silvia Núñez G., compilers

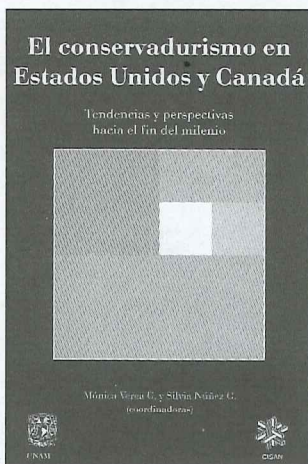
An exploration of conservatism in both countries. It points to the questions the North American societies are going to have to answer in the next century.



***El conservadurismo en Estados Unidos y Canadá. Tendencias y perspectivas hacia el fin del milenio***

Mónica Verea C. and Silvia Núñez G., compilers

Different analytical approaches and scholarly perspectives to characterize what is generally called "conservatism". The authors start from a recognition of multiple theoretical, conceptual frameworks in their endeavor to overcome stereotypes.

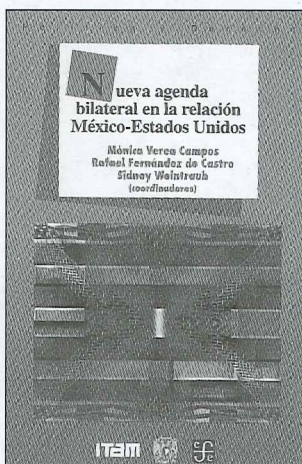


**Nueva agenda bilateral en la relación México-Estados Unidos**

***Nueva agenda bilateral en la relación México-Estados Unidos***

Mónica Verea Campos, Rafael Fernández de Castro and Sidney Weintraub, compilers

A presentation from different angles of the most important items on the new bilateral agenda for the two neighboring countries.



**Forthcoming:**

*Los derechos de las minorías en Estados Unidos y México.  
La globalización y sus manifestaciones en América del Norte.*

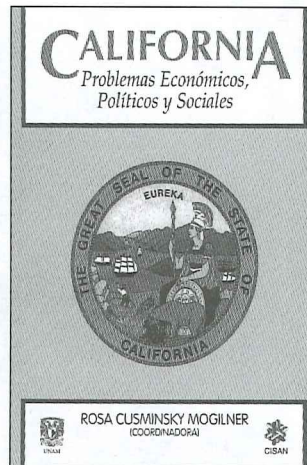
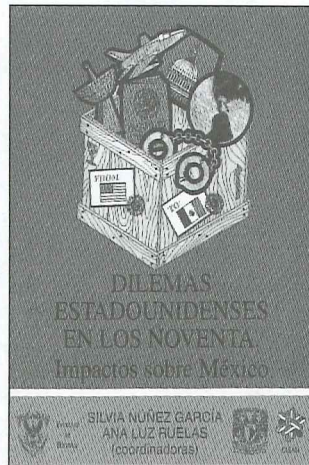
*El voto de los mexicanos en territorio estadounidense. Impactos nacionales y binacionales.*



**Dilemas estadounidenses en los noventa. Impactos sobre México**

Silvia Núñez and Ana Luz Ruelas (coords.)

Reflections on the inevitable integration offers the reader a more horizontal look at ocurent U.S. problems and their impact on Mexico: among others, the crisis of the welfare state, antiimmigrant paranoia, the changeover from a war economy to a more competitive civilian economy.



**California: Problemas económicos, políticos y sociales**

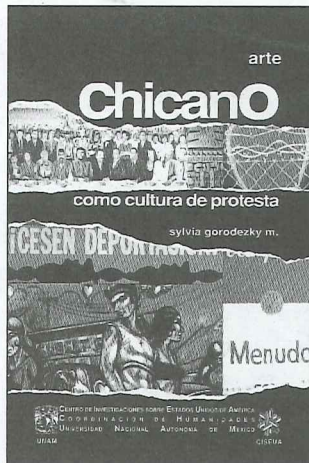
Rosa Cusminski (coord.)

Despite its recent crisis, California is still one of the strongest economies in the world. Specialists from Mexico and the United States examine different aspects of its social, legal, historical, economic and political life.

**Arte chicano como cultura de protesta**

Sylvia Gorodezky

An analysis of the paradoxes of Chicano art based on an overview of Chicano artists and their situation vis-à-vis Mexico and the United States. Includes color prints.



**Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar en la vagancia. Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial**

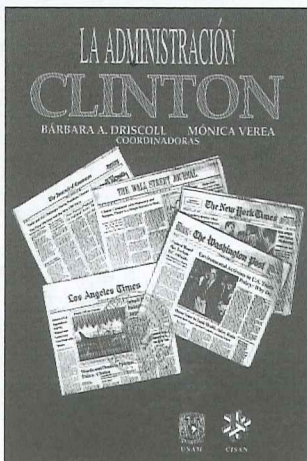
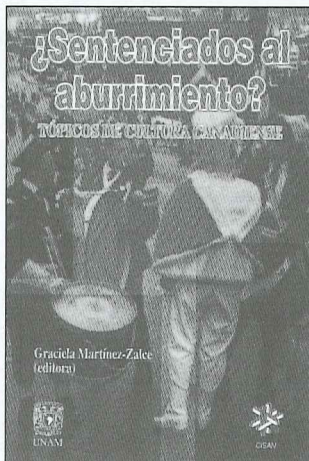
Bárbara Driscoll

A look at the little known story of nonagricultural Mexican migrant workers in the United States under the Railroad Bracero Program instituted during the Second World War by both the Mexican and U.S. governments.

**¿Sentenciados al aburrimiento? Tópicos de cultura canadiense**

Graciela Martínez-Zalce (editor)

This work brings together different approaches and opinions about Canadian culture and identity. With a look at music, painting, film, literature, television, theater and history, cultural manifestations inherent in Canadian society, it questions the existence of a national identity and culture.



**La administración Clinton**

Bárbara Driscoll, Mónica Vereá (coords.)

An analysis of the beginnings of the Clinton administration. A basic sourcebook to explain the transition to a Democratic Administration and to evaluate current political events.





# Fiscal Reform in Mexico

## Some Issues under Discussion

Miguel Molina\*

This article presents an overall perspective on fiscal reform as currently debated in Mexico. First, it reviews the objectives of fiscal reform based on a summarized diagnosis of the dismal straits of Mexico's fiscal structure; and then it describes and assesses some of the main proposed fiscal instruments in relation to the alleged main beneficiaries. Finally it concludes with thoughts about the timing and feasibility of the proposed reform, as well as the short- and medium-term contradictory effects of using the available instruments.

### CURRENT SITUATION

Total 1999 federal tax revenues represented an estimated 9.4 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). This compares unfavorably to the 1992-1994 period when tax revenues represented a yearly average of 10.1 percent of GDP. Mexico's low revenues fare even worse when compared with other countries: according to the World Bank, in 1999, Italy's total tax revenues were 42.2 percent of GDP; United States', 19.8 percent; and Chile's, 18.9 per-

The timing of reform is ripe, considering that Fox's democratically elected government is at the peak of its legitimacy and popularity.

cent. Even in relatively poorer countries like Venezuela, revenues reached 17.5 percent of GDP; in Bolivia, 15 percent; and in Argentina, 11.2 percent. Paradoxically the maximum income tax rate in Mexico appears to be rather high when compared with more or less similar economies:<sup>1</sup> in Mexico, it is currently 34 percent, while in Korea it is 28 percent and in Brazil, 25 percent. Other, more developed countries have higher maximum rates: France, 53 percent, and Sweden 50 percent. In terms of the value added tax (VAT) revenue, while 92 percent of all consumption is taxed in Chile and 75 percent in Bolivia, in Mexico it comes to a mere 55 percent. This VAT situation is particularly relevant, since the short-term actions of the proposed fiscal reform are cen-

tered on changing its structure. I will come back to this point.

In addition to the low revenue base, the structure is also quite fragile because it is highly concentrated: Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex), through a host of specially tailored taxes, including an excise tax —also charged on alcoholic beverages and tobacco— contributed with almost 23 percent of total government tax revenues<sup>2</sup> (when international oil prices fell in 1994 this percentage fell to less than 20 percent). Pemex's tax burden may have been too heavy since the company's capital expenditures are lagging behind demand, at least in production and distribution of natural gas and gasoline, currently imported in order to cover for insufficient domestic supply.

Although it is extremely difficult to pinpoint the main reasons for such low tax revenues, several deep-rooted weaknesses in the tax law and revenue collection system can be identified if not quantified. The income tax structure tends to be neutral (as opposed to progressive) and includes a host of special tax provisions and exemptions. The VAT stipulates notable exemptions or zero-rate structures (also significantly regressive); local taxes are insignificant (92 percent of local government expenditures are financed with federal tax transfers); corruption and evasion are

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rampant; and an inefficient tax collection system seems rather expensive and burdensome for both taxpayers and the tax authorities.

In contrast with this tight situation, there appears to be practically a national consensus that the country's tax base should increase significantly and rapidly. All political parties and public opinion makers are also supporting fiscal reform, demanding it be discussed, designed and implemented in the short term. The widespread opinion is that the timing for reform is ripe, considering that Fox's democratically elected government (which ousted the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI) is at the peak of its legitimacy and popularity, and also that it is imperative to address the gigantic social backlash of the economic growth model pursued over the last few decades.

Although as yet there is no full-fledged proposal for fiscal reform, administration officials have been publicly arguing in favor of certain areas of reform. Political parties and other interested groups have also been actively debating, insisting (perhaps more loudly than the government) that any fiscal strategy must include revamping and updating the government's institutional framework and expenditure mechanisms.

#### THE STATED OBJECTIVES OF FISCAL REFORM

Most actors on the Mexican political scene consider that expenditures are the flip side of the coin to fiscal reform. To many advocates, each additional percentage point of tax revenue should be tagged—in advance—to particular social expenditure and investment programs.

To others, especially officials who have gradually been ousted from positions of power they held in previous governments, fiscal reform should also be part of the renewed government instruments of short-term macro-economic management; this vision has quietly gone out of fashion in recent months.

For current administration officials, the objective of fiscal reform is to in-

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crease the resources available for education, infrastructure and social expenditure. A by-product should be a fiscal system that induces savings and investments instead of consumption, and which is based on fairness. However, it seems that a concern for social justice, supposedly the guiding objective of overall policy, is less frequently heard in most financial and economic circles.

Although less noted in the media, one objective of fiscal reform mentioned by local and state representatives is the federalization of taxes. They argue that revenues would increase significantly if only they were more local tax-related. Local tax authorities, the argument goes, are more likely to monitor and control tax collection closer to the actual taxpayers.

#### THE FISCAL REFORM INSTRUMENTS

There are several areas of discussion around fiscal reform, particularly regarding changes in three key instruments: income tax, VAT and the expenditure-side mechanisms of reform. All proposals and discussions seem to concur that reform necessarily means streamlining the complexity and procedural red tape that currently pervades the tax system. Other areas of consensus are the reduction and abolition of existing loopholes and special tax provisions and exemptions in the income tax base and the need for stronger executive and judicial instruments against corruption and evasion. Aside from these, the remaining proposals are still under debate.

With reference to income tax, administration officials and most other proponents have been publicly discussing the reduction of the maximum tax rate from 34 percent to 30 percent (in several fora 32 percent has been mentioned), coupled with significant changes in tax provisions regarding the tax base itself—in relation to taxing consumption—and several other aspects that distort how the tax base affects the financial performance of companies. Another idea put forward (albeit less strongly) is dumping the entire income tax structure and applying a flat-tax.<sup>3</sup> Here, the implicit argument is that income tax in Mexico has not had the expected progressive nature, and thus a flat tax would arguably have the same neutral effect but would be more efficient.

A hotly debated idea is the "Pardon for the Past" proposal made by the finance minister as soon as he took office. The idea is to swiftly forgive any misdeeds or underpayments of previous years as long as the 2000 income tax



return is properly submitted; the logic behind this is that it is wiser and more profitable to bring in as many taxpayers as possible now, rather than betting on being able to bring them to justice—and collect—for past underpayments. Debate around this idea will probably continue during the next few months.

Arguably, the most important part of the debate is the reform of the VAT. Currently, medicine, food and other minor articles are exempt from VAT. The administration's proposal is to include the most significant goods among these items—namely medicine and durable foodstuffs—into the VAT structure at the 15 percent rate currently charged for most other goods. Although a new stream of revenue would almost instantly come from this, the measure's potential side effects are substantial. From the government's point of view, enlarging the VAT tax base would set Mexico in the right direction in relation to other countries; furthermore, the finance ministry holds that evasion is positively correlated to the variance in VAT rates, and that there is no other available instrument as expedient. Finally, officials contend that greater fiscal policing has only a limited short-term effect. Articles assessing the VAT proposal<sup>4</sup> conclude that it would have a "relatively regressive" impact, burdening the poor more heavily than the rich. The administration recognizes the effect and has emphasized that the excess revenue would be channeled to education, infrastructure and social expenditure.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is rather difficult to envisage a better political environment for badly needed

fiscal reform. Given this, Mexico must make sure that fiscal policy is based on a clear medium-term strategy that assures expansion of both the overall tax base and income tax revenues (with a socially progressive outcome). If revenue collection is to be increased in the short term, however, it seems that rigidities in the overall economic and political environment will very likely mean a tax reform with a neutral or

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non-progressive—if not regressive—fiscal reform. If consumption-related tax provisions are adopted (if for no other reason than their feasibility when compared to other more desirable but unrealistic ones in the short term), they should be counterbalanced with additional targeted expenditures and investment for the poor. Unfortunately, on this front Mexico's system of inequality seems to reproduce itself. Public spending on education and health are also of a neutral/proportional nature (similar amounts are spent for the poorest 20 percent of the population and for the richest 20 percent).<sup>5</sup>

A must of fiscal reform will be addressing the changes required for better and more clearly targeted social expenditure. Although several social

programs exist (with varying degrees of perceived success), there is neither a benchmark nor quantifiable goals that would allow for an assessment of their efficiency. Without measurable targets, social expenditure funded with new fiscal resources may well prove to be a worthless effort. The stronger commitment to public accountability of both government and civil society will be put to the test precisely when the additional resources from fiscal reform become available. Mexicans must make sure that, this time, the funds are both efficiently and almost completely channeled to the poor. **MM**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Maximum income rates can be tricky to estimate because there are several instances of double taxation. This is the case, for example, of taxes on dividends; in Mexico once income tax has been paid by a company, personal income tax on dividends paid by the company to shareholders only generates a 5 percent rate. In other countries, like the United States, dividends are fully added up and accrue a 33 percent rate. Thus, comparisons should be regarded more as rough estimates.

<sup>2</sup> In 1998, according to Banco de México, "Economic and Financial Developments in 1998 and Policies for 1999," Banco de México (1999). (<http://www.banxico.org.mx>)

<sup>3</sup> A flat tax is a tax rate applied to all levels of income. It is often discussed as an alternative to a progressive tax.

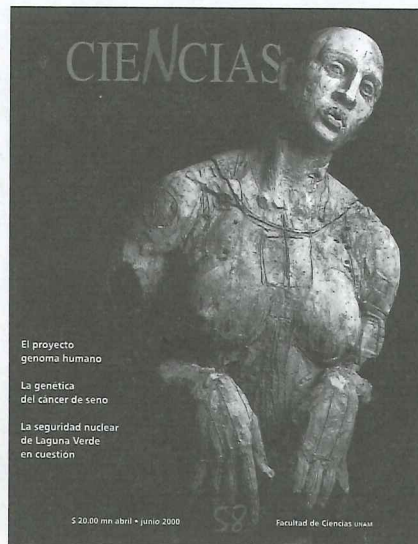
<sup>4</sup> An excellent, short and substantial analysis of the VAT effects and expenditure elements is to be found in Fausto Hernández Trillo et al., "La reforma hacendaria integral: algunos retos," *Este País. Tendencias y opiniones* (Mexico City), February 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Fausto Hernández Trillo, *op. cit.*

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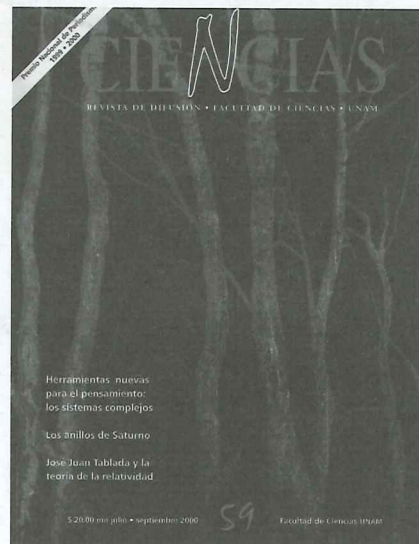
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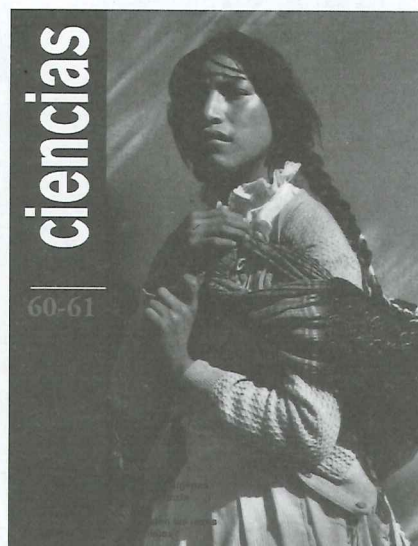
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# The Role of Businessmen In the Transition

Bernardo Olmedo Carranza\*



Arturo Guerra/La Jirada

Mexico's modern business community has displayed different forms of behavior with regard to participation in national political and economic life. History shows that on diverse occasions, whether openly or discretely, businessmen have changed their attitudes, positions and agreements vis-à-vis federal administrations. These changes are clearer when they coincide with transition periods. From 1940 until today, we can distin-

guish two clear moments and their respective changes. The first occurred when the 1982 foreign debt crisis heralded the exhaustion of the protectionist economic model, oriented to the domestic market. That transition was fundamentally economic.

The second change took place during what can be classified as an eminently political transition that came about not because of the weakening of the new economic strategy implemented after the 1982 crisis, but as an effect of the exhaustion of the corporatist, clientelist political system centered on

the symbiosis of the government and its official party. This transition began with Mexico's 1994 financial crisis, which was expressed in a political crisis. That was when conditions began to ripen for the real possibility of breaking up that historic, pernicious symbiosis between the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the government, a possibility that had its most significant precedent in the election of a governor from a different political party in Baja California (1989), breaking the monolithic power the PRI had had until then.

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Moving from an apparently passive attitude to open protagonism, the business sector is meeting the current transition with the concrete proposals that emanated from the Business Coordinating Council (CCE), the “elite of the elites,” in 1998. The CCE’s appointed task is to coordinate the activities of all Mexican business organizations, to speak publicly for the sector, as well as to constitute a bridge between the business community and government. Its 1998 proposals were reiterated by other business associations in late 2000 once Mexico’s new president, businessman Vi-

This implied that businessmen recognized the government’s role in guiding the economy in exchange for its establishing the bases for the development of their companies through strict protectionism. At the same time, this attitude presupposed practical abstentionism by businessmen in all matters political. They were not even formally included as one of the “sectors” of the official party (as were the peasants, workers and community organizations), thus excluding them from public office or participating in elections. They could, however, negotiate with the government

administration, even if in word only, President López Portillo emphasized the importance of businessmen in the nation’s life and decision making.

The 1982 foreign debt crisis and the “statization” (state appropriation and control) of the commercial banking system marked the end of that model of accumulation. That state take-over was the culmination of the clashes between the most important sectors of the business community and the government. The crisis brought with it an absolute loss of confidence by society and, in particular, businessmen—private investment dropped and capital flight was rampant—which in turn brought profound transformations.

That year marked substantive changes both in the economy and in political life which began with the Miguel de la Madrid administration, continued under Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo. Between the last two, two assassinations of prominent members of the official party took place: that of Luis Donaldo Colosio, at the time PRI presidential candidate slated to succeed Carlos Salinas, and that of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, then PRI general secretary.

Both the economy and the way of understanding and managing it underwent changes. That is when what some have called the “modernization” of the country began; this has implied a new role for the state and the reorientation of economic policy, forced both by the 1982 crisis and by international pressure after the moratorium declared on foreign debt payments. That reorientation is perceived in the opening of Mexico’s economy to foreign goods and capital, an extreme form of liberalization that during the López Portillo administration was severely questioned and attacked.

Moving from an apparently passive attitude to open protagonism, the business sector is meeting the current transition with the concrete proposals that emanated from the Business Coordinating Council (CCE), the “elite of the elites,” in 1998.

cente Fox, a member of the National Action Party (PAN), had taken office.

#### THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEXICO’S ECONOMIC MODEL

After 1940, Mexico’s economic growth was based on the model known here as “a mixed economy,” which implied that there was both a capitalist model of accumulation and an agreement between businessmen and government on state regulation of the economy, subordinating the market and its logic of competition and efficiency. The model was based on the artificial creation of a strongly concentrated market, protected from foreign participation and competition, and an import-substitution policy to industrialize the country.

and, from their very particular position of strength, have an impact on decision making both through formal and informal mechanisms. This meant that control of a large part of the economy passed in practice into the hands of a block of certain factions of the political bureaucracy, large multinational corporations, the elite private bankers and the large industrial and commercial companies who sold to the domestic market.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1970s, this model began to show signs of strain, both economically and politically. This could be seen in the clashes between Luis Echeverría’s and José López Portillo’s administrations and the country’s most important business groups, which after that opted to participate more openly. Nevertheless, on different occasions during his admin-

Mexico's economy went very quickly from a strongly protected, closed economy to one of the world's most open and liberalized, thus inaugurating a new stage and model of accumulation known as neoliberalism. To a great extent this was the result of pressure from our creditors and the international regulating institutions and of our new leaders' identification with the new vision of the economy and economic policy. In general, this vision coincided with that of businessmen in that it aspired to lead to more efficiency and sustained and balanced growth. Nevertheless, the results of this change have not lived up to those hopes or official promises.

The new model's postulates —among which are the recognition of companies as the driving force behind the country's development— led to the establishment of a new relationship of the business community to the government, to the degree that businessmen and their representatives were brought into the decision-making process. This was the case of businessman Claudio X. González, at that time —and now once again— president of the CCE, brought into the government as a special advisor for international affairs to President Salinas.

In December 1994, when Ernesto Zedillo had just taken office, he had to deal with the effects of a restrictive economic policy and an over-valued peso. He was forced to devalue the Mexican peso, unleashing a severe economic crisis that very month. The economic model continued to be the same, with the same restrictive policies, and with priority on management and control of macro-economic indicators.

The results are well known: Mexican exports grew immensely, as did

imports (in the year 2000 we had a more than U.S.\$8 billion foreign trade deficit); the peso was seriously over-valued (some analysts put it at about 35 percent); productive chains were broken, except those linked to exports which, despite everything, reduced their participation as suppliers; and the informal economy and poverty both grew substantially (academic specialists who disagree with official figures estimate that 60 percent of the population — around 60 million Mexicans— is poor).

Nevertheless, businessmen think that this is the product of inefficient

When the business community says that Mexico is going through a transition, it means that Mexicans have decided "to abandon uncritical, conformist attitudes and assumed a new vocation of demanding, participating, solidarity and co-responsibility."

public administrations derived from the corrupt, authoritarian, corporatist, clientelist political system in power for more than 70 years. The results of last July's elections expressed a rejection of a political system that was at the root of corruption and inefficiency permeating society and everything it touched, a political system that could no longer stay afloat and went into crisis.

Businessmen began to perceive the new transition when President Zedillo opened up spaces for what is still an incipient political reform and a move toward a broader democratization process that allowed for greater pluralism in the political alternatives offered the public. Nevertheless, these changes happened fundamentally because of the determination and pressure from soci-

ety itself, the political parties and civic, union and community organizations, including an important role played by the business community.

In 1998, the CCE wrote a document that laid out the position of the business community —especially its elite— vis-à-vis the transition in Mexico.<sup>2</sup> This document has also been the basis for some of the CCE's affiliates to develop more concrete proposals about what they think should be done to change the country.

In its preamble, the document states, "The institutions that make up the

Business Coordinating Council, aware of our responsibility in this crucial transitional stage of our history, and committed to the common good of the nation, propose to all our affiliates —as well as to the principle actors in this process and to Mexican society in general— that we all actively commit ourselves to achieving a free Mexico, characterized by the existence of the rule of law, institutions and ethical principles and values, that will lead us by peaceful means to a full representative and participatory democracy with a socially responsible market economy." When the business community says that Mexico is going through a transition, the document explains, it means that Mexicans have decided "to abandon uncritical, conformist attitudes and assumed a new vocation of demanding,

participating, solidarity and co-responsibility.” They also underline that it is not only possible that the business community participate in the design of a new system; it is its “moral duty.” And they back up their idea with 24 fundamental theses.

This idea of active business participation can be seen in the following statement: “Mexican business, together with other sectors, took upon ourselves the task of accelerating the democratic transition that Mexico had been going through for several years, confident in our conviction that the consolidation of democracy in our country would gen-

5. Modernization of the institutional framework for labor relations, making it agile, flexible, with greater legal security for both workers and management.
6. Effective action to invest more in human capital (education and training).
7. Sufficient, efficient and rapid investment in physical capital (infrastructure).
8. Modernization and opening up of the energy sector.
9. Reform of the financial system to make credit available for companies, particularly smaller firms.

With a new president of Mexico from a party that had traditionally been in the opposition, the transition becomes political. It is the end of the dominant-party system, and businessmen are demanding to participate in the design of a new system.

erate the appropriate political conditions for structural change in the economy that would spur a high, sustained growth.”<sup>3</sup>

Out of this has come the “Businessmen’s Ten Commandments,” also known as the “business agenda,” which concretely explains the business community’s position —as represented by the CCE— on the transition:

1. First and foremost, respect for the rule of law in all spheres of national life.
2. Consolidation of macro-economic stability.
3. Modernization of fiscal policy.
4. Promotion of a rational, inexpensive regulatory framework for economic activity.

10. Consolidation of democracy “based on a clear, transparent, uneventful handing over of the administration that would establish the basis for our country’s long-term development.”

With regard to the year 2001, current CCE President Claudio X. González has pointed to the most urgent matters, the issues “that will affect future generations and in which the phantoms of populism and demagoguery threaten to make themselves felt”: fiscal reform; the application of the rule of law; nationwide security for all Mexicans; reforms of the energy sector and the legal framework and reforms to institutionally and operationally strengthen the country’s key social security agencies.<sup>4</sup>

It should be mentioned that the Mexican Management Confederation (Coparmex), considered Mexico’s business syndicate and one of the main components of the CCE, has already published its *Propuestas de la Coparmex 2000-2001* (Coparmex Proposals, 2000-2001), which takes up the CCE’s fundamental theses in more concrete formulations.

Today, with a new president of Mexico from a party that had traditionally been in the opposition, a worn-out political system is being buried and the transition becomes political. It is the end of the dominant-party system, and businessmen are demanding to participate in the design of a new system based on their proposals. Today more than ever before, the climate is favorable to them, not only because the president himself is a businessman, but also because, as he said during his February speech at the Davos, Switzerland world forum, he has characterized his administration as derived from an entrepreneurial state.

## CONCLUSIONS

Mexican society is paying close attention to the transition. The business sector has its own discourse, in which it demands clarity and transparency as preconditions for change. Although when this article was written, President Fox’s administration had not yet completed its first 90 days in office, business circles (including some independent milieus like certain associations with voluntary membership, whose postures are usually more critical and autonomous of the central chambers of commerce and industry)<sup>5</sup> are reserving judgement about the construction



of new policy and the instruments that the new administration will use.

Until now there has only been a call to participate in the design of the National Development Plan. The invitation, however, has not been accompanied by any formal consultation mechanisms for social participation, but rather to urge people to take part as individuals. As yet, no fiscal or financial reforms—one of the business sector's main demands—have been presented. The few announcements made about these issues have kept businessmen expectant, with certain fears that fundamentalist orthodoxy could “take over” this administration of change and transition. **NMM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Celso Garrido and Cristina Puga, “Transformaciones del empresariado mexicano en la

década de los ochenta,” Cristina Puga and Ricardo Tirado, comps., *Los empresarios mexicanos, ayer y hoy* (Mexico City: Editorial El Caballito-UNAM-UAM-Consejo Mexicano de Ciencias Sociales, A.C., 1992), pp. 132-133.

<sup>2</sup> Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, *La transición mexicana y nuestra propuesta para un desarrollo sostenible en el largo plazo* (Mexico City: CCE, 1998).


<sup>3</sup> Claudio X. González (president of the CCE) (inaugural speech, Eleventh National Congress of Industrialists, Mexico City, 12 July 2000), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Claudio X. González (speech during the Perspectives 2001 Seminar, Mexico City, 1 February 2001), pp. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> One example is the opinion of Fernando Correa Mota, president of the National Association of Importers and Exporters (ANIERM), expressed at the inauguration of the ANIERM's 57th annual symposium “Mexico's Foreign

Trade: Strategies and Proposals for Facing the Competitiveness of the Twenty-First Century.” Correa said, “The lack of coherence of government policies stems from its divorce from national production and the subordination of its strategies to models that work in different contexts from our own. In that sense, the insertion in the world market is dealt with by denying the real situation in the country and illogically copying the paradigms that other cultures base themselves on.” He added, “That is why a new economic strategy has become necessary, a strategy that maintains a sensible equilibrium between the market and the state, between free trade and prudent trade protection, between public and private interests, between productivity and employment, between productive efficiency and social welfare. Building an alternative development strategy is a very complex task since its success will depend not only on its conceptual solidity, but also on the implementation of a profound political reform that will establish the basis for a democratic system. In my interpretation, that was the meaning of the change for which we Mexicans voted last July 2.” (Speech at the ANIERM annual symposium, Mexico City, 20 February 2001), pp. 2-3.

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# U.S. Civil Society A Hemisphere-Wide Paradigm?

Silvia Núñez García\*

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The privileged place of civil society's organized, active participation as a cornerstone of the consolidation of democratic processes in Latin America prompts us to look at its participation in the United States, given its status as an advanced democracy and an influential actor in the hemisphere.

As social scientists who must situate phenomena in their contexts, our point of departure must be the profound contradictions throughout U.S. history due to slavery, racism, nativism and other institutionalized practices that legitimize exclusion, at the same time that they have permeated (and as a result, molded) a particular notion of citizenship.

Considering that citizens are the substantive axis around which the public sphere of a nation-state (civil society) turns, it is paradoxical that the U.S. Constitution does not explicitly mention them until the Fourteenth Amendment (1868),<sup>2</sup> with regard to a national identity; prior to that, it emphasizes the individual or individuals or even the people.<sup>3</sup>

Even though at the center of federalist thinking is clearly an open call for

In the U.S.  
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fundamentally by virtue  
of its being  
complementary to  
government  
and business.

the people to take their destiny into their own hands and design the institutions they need, the sense of a citizen's democracy in the United States does not allude directly to the notion of the common good as a result of an essentially political equality.

In other words, what is really objectionable in U.S. "exceptionalism" is its ability to reproduce the distance between the de facto citizen and the de jure citizen, bound by an ideology that seems to celebrate citizenship as something inherent in the nature of certain individuals or groups of "the virtuous." Does that mean, by any chance, that it is an attainment that strengthens the weak?

In brief, what I mean to emphasize here is that, regardless of the liberal tradition and the democratic government usually attributed to the United

States, it was born and consolidated as a country far from the essential principles of an inclusive democracy. This makes a reading of its civic experience both complex and unique.

## DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF THE U.S. EXPERIENCE

It was the eighteenth century when Alexis de Tocqueville noted the autonomy and influence of U.S. civil society. He considered that people's zeal in grouping around public questions turned its different organizations into real schools of democracy, in which individuals learned to respect, communicate and exercise their rights. This led to a civic vitality unprecedented in the European experience of the time and also provided a mechanism that would tend to limit the state's power.

For purposes of definition, I should point out that the organizations that make up the third sector cover an immense range: informal groups (neighborhood organizations, sports clubs, etc.); formal organizations (unions, cooperatives, religious groups, etc.); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and even semi-governmental agencies when they have been formed by members of civil society.<sup>4</sup>

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This sector, in the context we are dealing with here, can be defined today fundamentally by virtue of its being complementary to the governmental and business sectors. By contrast, Latin America presents a different picture: here the NGO protagonism tends to obscure a broader view of the sector, identified mainly as not-for-profit organizations committed to significant social causes, that is, to resolving the needs not dealt with by either the state or the market.

Broadly speaking, in Latin America, these organizations have oscillated between autonomous, re-active positions, social networks or networks for collective protests, and part of traditional power structures (such as unions, churches or the state), up to the most recent and promising efforts for building strategic transnational alliances to promote harmonious, sustainable development.<sup>5</sup>

However, one characteristic shared in all the countries of the hemisphere is that people join these organizations voluntarily; they have not only practiced their fundamental right of free association but are also able to directly show their aspirations and needs.

Returning to the U.S. case, according to CIVICUS World, by 1997, this sector was made up of more than 1.4 million groups, with an aggregate worth of U.S.\$500 billion. It is important to note that the third sector has created new and diverse job opportunities: in the 1980s, it accounted for 13 percent of the increase in jobs in the United States, France and Germany alone.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the lack of sufficient data to determine exactly the correlation of structures and missions, spheres of action, sources of financing, number of members and staff in the U.S., clearly

the sector's growth has increased both in industrialized and developing countries.

Today, it is key for learning about and understanding modern society and a necessary point of reference for anyone monitoring its effects on the creation of new social capital<sup>7</sup> and preventing against the not infrequent cases of corruption and fraud found inside it.

The sum of human and material resources concentrated in the construc-

Civil society requires  
that its members,  
be united not only by  
shared interests, but also  
by at least a minimum  
of common values.

tion of civic organizations, together with their intense relations with the governmental and business sectors, have favored a climate in the United States that tends to political and legally legitimize their existence and functioning.

They are equally noteworthy for their ability to gather and mobilize resources from local, state and federal governments, and from businesses, foundations and philanthropists, donations and the volunteer work of their members. They sometimes even sell certain goods and services, usually not for a profit.

#### ELEMENTS OF COHESION

Clearly, the strengthening of the organizations of civil society requires constructive attitudes by their members,

united not only by shared interests, but also by at least a minimum of common values, outstanding among which are solidarity, integrity, trust and mutual collaboration.

The central characteristics that give unity and formality to these structures and can be clearly seen in the United States are:

1) The existence of democratic mechanisms that allow for the members' participation in the organizations' decision-making or leadership bodies.

2) A permanent capacity for building internal consensus, thus fostering the possibility of transcending the organization itself and making alliances with other groups. Here, pragmatism plays a central role, although this by no means implies renouncing one's own critical outlook or, above all, self-criticism.

3) The ability to develop tools for internal regulation that make the organizations credible and legitimate as responsible social agents, beginning with the ability to make their strategies, financial situations and activities clear to the public.<sup>8</sup>

I should mention, however, that these organizations' optimal functioning is also at one with their adherence to the established legal framework. In the case of the United States, this assures them stability. Once legally established, they favor a plural society, which gives their objectives and/or demands meaning.

It is appropriate to mention at this point that these citizens' organizations lead to the creation of collective identities and that this, in turn, leads us to the idea of "community." And, individuals are capable of feeling part of a community because in it converge both their independence and their interdependence with others.<sup>9</sup>



If the organizations of the third sector are seen as communities, they come alive in our minds, with all their dynamism and fragility. According to Anne Golden, their true potential consists, first, in identifying shared goals, based on interdependence, and then proceeding to move ahead.

Developing a sense of community rescues the individual from a growing process of alienation and isolation which makes it impossible for him/her to come up with appropriate solutions given the magnitude of his/her problems, and offers the opportunity of generating processes of empowerment that make it possible to have an impact on the different levels of decision making.<sup>10</sup>

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The United States has not escaped the effects of the constant changes and adjustments experienced by all societies. Today, its scenario is one of contrasts: new civic organizations multiply while simultaneously the citizenry's participation both in public life and in the traditions of grassroots community life seems to be weakening.

Here we should consider Robert Putnam's controversial thesis about the decline in social capital in the United States.<sup>11</sup> After reviewing a good deal of empirical evidence, Putnam states that Americans' civic participation in its simplest form has been declining for almost three decades without there being a significant difference in voting rates for state or local elections.

The figures Putnam uses from the General Social Survey show that membership in religious groups and regular church attendance have dropped by one sixth since the 1960s, which may

indicate that people's sense of religiosity is being redefined in terms of their individual interests and not in terms of institutions.<sup>12</sup> In like fashion, union membership has dropped to an alarmingly low level: 12 percent.<sup>13</sup> Parent membership in parent-teacher associations has also declined to only 7 million people.<sup>14</sup>

The following four elements are probably contributing factors to the origin of this problem:

Americans run  
the risk of getting trapped  
inside their own  
institutional structures,  
which will tend to become  
petrified through disuse  
and indifference.

a) The new demographics that indicate fewer and fewer marriages, more divorces and fewer children.

b) The massive influx of women into the work force, imposing limits on the time and energy they can dedicate to actively participating in civic tasks they traditionally undertook (parent-teacher associations, the Red Cross, the League of Women Voters, etc.).

c) Americans' pattern of frequently changing residence and their concentration in suburbs.

d) Technological changes and their impact on jobs, wages and even management of leisure time.<sup>15</sup>

In the model of a market society, the public domain as the sphere par excellence for constructing and recon-

structing the common good seems to be succumbing to the temptations of unrestrained consumption. If money is not a means, but rather an end in itself, getting it is identified directly with each isolated individual's actions insofar as he/she is a competitor or rival of "the other" or "others."

Less willing to commit themselves to civic activities—given that "time is money"—Americans run the risk of getting trapped inside their own institutional structures, structures that will tend to become petrified through disuse and indifference, perhaps making it impossible to build a democratic consensus that—basic though it might be—does limit totalitarianism.

There is always the possibility, however, of a rebirth among our neighbors to the north of civic commitment beyond conventional structures. If their liberal notion favors individual rights and this has been compatible with an intense and historic community tradition,<sup>16</sup> the ability to reverse unfavorable trends will be maintained through the creation of trust and the development of innovative forms of civic participation.

Even when this participation has had a marked class and social-status component given that the vast majority of members of third sector organizations are educated members of the middle layers of society, we should not disregard the potential for the civic organization of minorities. That is, the historically most vulnerable sectors of society could become a new source of social capital.

The impact and consequences of the emergence of civic organizations of those who have been voiceless in U.S. society is yet to be calculated given that in order for it to happen, they must first conquer their independence and autonomy.<sup>17</sup>

I would like to conclude by referring to the question in the title of this article, which still goes unanswered, and by quoting Robert Putnam on the question of models:

The concept of “civil society” has played a central role in the recent global debate about the preconditions for democracy....In the newer democracies this phrase has properly focussed on the need to foster a vibrant civic life....In the established democracies, ironically, growing numbers of citizens are questioning the effectiveness of their public institutions....In America, at least, there is reason to suspect that this democratic disarray may be linked to a broad and continuing erosion of civic engagement....High on our scholarly agenda should be the question of whether a comparable erosion of social capital may be underway in other advanced democracies.<sup>18</sup> **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This article was originally presented as a paper at the First Annual International Seminar on Pan-American Integration, organized by the Center for Argentine-Canadian Studies in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 15 and 16, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis of the concept of citizenship in the United States, see Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship. The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> It is surprising that when the Constitution alludes to the members of other nation-states, it refers to them as citizens or subjects. See, for example, the Eleventh Amendment.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mihancivilsociety.org>, *The New Force —An Introductory Guide to Building Civil Society Organizations*, Chapter 1, June 2000, released by The Mihan Foundation.

<sup>5</sup> Diana Tussie et al., comps., *Nexos. La sociedad civil en las cumbres*, no. 2 (Buenos Aires: PIEI/Flasco, September 2000).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mihancivilsociety.org>, “The State of the Third Sector,” Chapter 1.

<sup>7</sup> Here, I mean social capital in its broadest sense, that is, the sum of all the resources mobilized to support civil society. *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Anne Golden, “Building Stronger Communities: Why Is This Important Now?” (paper read at The Governor General’s Canadian Study Conference, Banff, Canada, May 17, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* vol. 6, no. 1 (Baltimore, Maryland), January 1995, pp. 64-78.

<sup>12</sup> These figures are particularly important if we take into account the historic importance that religious affiliation has had for U.S. society. Even today, the United States has the largest number of churches and houses of prayer per capita in the world. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> Conversation between the author and John T. Schmitt of the Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>16</sup> See Francis Fukuyama, “The Primacy of Culture,” *Journal of Democracy* vol. 6, no. 1 (Baltimore, Maryland), January 1995, pp. 7-14.

<sup>17</sup> See L.M. Salamon and H.K. Anheier, *The Emerging Sector: The Non-Profit Sector in Comparative Perspective —An Overview* (Baltimore, Maryland: Institute for Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

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Elsie Montiel

# A Glimpse of Cuernavaca

Leonardo Sepúlveda\*

**C**uernavaca: “the city of eternal spring.” Its abundant vegetation and warm climate invite relaxation, but also dreams and ideas.

Evidence shows that the valley was inhabited 2,000 years before the arrival of the Spanish, and it was believed to be the site of a mythical paradise called Tamoanchan. It was the Tlahuicas, however, the last tribe of the Nahuas to

arrive in the Valley of Mexico, who founded there a large settlement called Cuauhnahuac, meaning “near the woodland.”

The Spanish arrived in the area only a couple of months after conquering the Valley of Mexico and, reputedly, unable to pronounce the name Cuauhnahuac, they rechristened it Cuernavaca. It was there that the Franciscans founded their fifth monastery and that Hernán Cortés settled when the crown made him Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca in 1529. Since that time, sugar cane has been cultivated in the region. At the end of the colonial period, with

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\* Free lance writer.

Photos of the Palace of Cortés and the Ascension Convent are reproduced by permission of the National Institute of Anthropology and History. CONACULTA-INAH-MEX





Daniel Munguía

The Castle Photography Museum.



Daniel Munguía

View of the Borda Garden.



Leonardo Sepúlveda

The garden of the India Bonita Restaurant in the Mañana House built by U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow.

the outbreak of the War of Independence, General José María Morelos y Pavón and other rebel leaders were imprisoned there.

The town's prosperous tranquility was disrupted again in 1855 during the War of the Reform when Juan Álvarez, a rebel against the dictator Santa Anna, was proclaimed president there and Cuernavaca designated as the national capital for a little over two months.

In 1862, Emperor Maximilian was captivated not only by the town's climate, but —legend has it— by the charms of “a pretty Indian girl” with whom he would have an affair that prompt-

ed him to acquire the Borda Garden and other properties.

In 1911, Emiliano Zapata occupied the town in support of the Revolution headed up by Francisco I. Madero and in the following nine years, the city was occupied successively by the different warring groups.

After the peace, Cuernavaca was rediscovered as a retreat and inspiration for different writers and artists. The Briton Malcolm Lowry wrote *Under the Volcano* there in 1947; the German Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man* in 1964, among other works; and Britain Rosa E. King finished her *Tempest Over Mexico: A Personal Chronicle* (1970). Diego Rivera painted his first historic mural there in 1930 and muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros set up his atelier in the town. These were the first of a long list of visual artists, writers, intellectuals and celebrities who have lived in Cuernavaca and continue to do so.

Today, the city also offers the visitor many places of interest, appropriate for short tours, for a glimpse of its history, traditions and art.

#### DOWNTOWN

In downtown Cuernavaca, the most outstanding building is the Palace of Cortés; construc-





Murals by Diego Rivera in the Palace of Cortés.



Bajo el Volcán Hotel.

tion began on it in 1525 and it has served at different times as the seat of the state government, a jail and the town hall. Near the entrance are three enormous pre-Hispanic monoliths brought from different parts of the valley: one depicts an eagle, another a reptile and the third has several symbols for which it has been named “the stone of charms.” The palace holds the Cuauhnahuac Museum with its collection of regional objects and works of art. The second floor boasts a mural by Diego Rivera that depicts his own particular vision of the history of the state of Morelos.

Leaving the palace and walking west, the visitor can take in several sights, including the Zacate Plazuela, Las Casas and Tepetates Streets and the Morelos and Juárez Gardens. The latter holds an old kiosk built in 1890 with stands selling a wide variety of juices, fruits and fruit drinks; on Thursdays and Sundays local bands play concerts for the public there.

Further west is the cathedral. Inside the church are several paintings from the colonial period that depict the life of Mexico’s first saint, Felipe de Jesús, slaughtered on a missionary voyage to Japan along with 25 others. Worthy of note are the enormous baptismal font, the Franciscan monastery’s cloister and the art work in the gallery, foremost among which is a wooden sculpture of Saint Christopher carrying the Baby Jesus. Around the cathedral are four chapels, in-



The Palace of Cortés.

cluding the Open —or San José— Chapel and the Chapel of the Third Order.

On that same block is the “House of the Tower,” as the Brady Museum is called. Originally part of the monastery, it was purchased by artist Robert Brady who amassed an enormous collection of art work during his travels. A few meters away is one of Mexico’s first sports clubs, the Revolution Garden.

A few steps from the cathedral is Cuernavaca’s most romantic park, the Borda Garden. Built in the eighteenth century by one of the scions of the Borda mining dynasty, it holds a large





Denise Munguía



Cloister of the Ascension Convent.

Leonardo Sepúlveda



Leonardo Sepúlveda

The Palace of Cortés, one of Mexico's oldest civic buildings.

fountain, an artificial lake and several buildings in which the Morelos Cultural Institute carries out its intensive program of activities. Next to the garden is the Guadalupe Church, also built by the Bordas. After it was built, people said that “God gives to Borda and Borda gives to God.”

Two blocks to the north is the Mañana House, built by U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow and which is now a restaurant. Legend has it that the house got its name because when the ambassador asked the builder when he would finish, the answer was always, “Mañana.”

Other places of cultural interest are The Castle, or Photography Museum, a nineteenth century red brick building; the Calvary Chapel; the interior of a building which was originally the Bellavista Hotel, and now functions as a bank, in which Alfonso Xavier Peña painted murals on Mexican dance. Another nearby hotel, named Bajo el Volcán (Under the Volcano), was the home of Malcolm Lowry. The Miguel Salinas Public Library also has murals by Norberto Martínez worth a visit.

## SUBURBS AND ENVIRONS

Other places in Cuernavaca like the Porfirio Díaz Park and Bridge, the Barrancas Walk, with its hanging bridge, Salto Chico and the San Antón Cascade all are alive with natural beauty and a rich history.

Further away from downtown is the Olindo House in the Acatzingo neighborhood, where Maximilian apparently lived with his indigenous mistress; Siqueiros' atelier, offering the visitors the sight of several murals, in the Jardines de Cuernavaca neighborhood; the pre-Hispanic ruins of Teopanzolco in the Vista Hermosa area; and traditional neighborhoods like Tlatenango, San Jerónimo and Los Reyes Magos.

In the suburbs is Sumiya, an authentic Japanese villa in the middle of Mexico, whose buildings were brought piece by piece from across the Pacific Ocean. Near there is Palmira, which boasts a church designed by Félix Candela, one of the international pioneers in modern architecture. **MM**



# Archaeological Sites in Morelos

Barbara Konieczna\*

The diversity of climates, soil, flora and fauna, as well as the physiography of what is now the state of Morelos was the determining factor in the establishment of a great many human settlements there in the pre-Hispanic period because the inhabitants had countless resources for both subsistence and trade. The roads through its valleys and lake basins were used for traveling to other cultural regions, thus favoring trade that extended to the most remote

dominions of Mesoamerica. This made possible the concentration in Morelos of a mosaic of pre-Hispanic cultural elements from the vast region of Mesoamerica that the local population assimilated and molded with its own particular stamp.

The oldest settlements known in Morelos date from approximately 1500 B.C., or the beginning of the middle pre-classic period, when humanity adopted a fully agricultural village life. These settlements were established near water, a basic requirement for sedentary existence and producing agricultural surpluses. Gualupita, Cerritos, Cuautlixco, Yautepec, Tlaltizapan, Olintepc, Nexpa and Chalcatzingo are some of the archaeological sites from that period.

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Photos by Daniel Munguía

Xochicalco.





Flower, Chalcatzingo.



The King, Chalcatzingo.



The ruins of Chalcatzingo, first inhabited around 1500 B.C., were discovered in 1934.

#### CHALCATZINGO

Located in the eastern part of the Valley of Morelos, Chalcatzingo was first publicized in 1934 by archaeologist Eulalia Guzmán thanks to her discovery of a magnificent bas-relief on a stone called “The King.” Its origins date back to 1500 B.C., and evidence indicates that the first occupation of the area lasted 500 years: it was a small hamlet of farmers who traded with the peoples on the Gulf Coast, the Valley of Oaxaca, Puebla and what is now the State of Mexico. About 1000 B.C. the settlement grew considerably, reaching its high point around 750 B.C. The

inhabitants built big rooms (some 8 to 10 meters long) over a broad area at the foot of large rocks. They dealt with the uneven terrain by building embankments and terraces. Not much can be seen of these houses today since after being excavated and studied, they were covered over with dirt again to preserve them, given the poor conditions the buildings were in. Archaeologists also excavated the foundations of temples and human burial sites with offerings.

In its heyday, Chalcatzingo must have been important for the whole Central Highland. Its inhabitants maintained contact with very remote areas, as can be seen in the influence of the great Olmec artistic style from the Gulf of Mexico in its magnificent bas-reliefs. The realist, mythical and even symbolic representations reflect their creators’ world view.

The decline of Chalcatzingo, around the year 500 B.C. coincided with that of other urban centers in the Valley of Mexico and the Gulf Coast. Its inhabitants remained there, however, until the arrival of the Nahuatl tribes in the thirteenth century of our era and adapted to the new political and economic organization in the area. With the arrival of the Spaniards, the pre-Hispanic buildings were covered with new con-





Legend has it that Quetzalcóatl was born where the vast expanse of Xochicalco's civic and religious buildings were erected.

structions and remained hidden until the twentieth century.

#### LAS PILAS

Las Pilas is located in the environs of Chalcatzingo. This settlement flourished between the years A.D. 500 and A.D. 650, during the classical period (which lasted from A.D. 100 to A.D. 850). This was when Teotihuacan extended its influence throughout Mesoamerica. The Las Pilas archaeological site retains relatively few vestiges of the ancient culture, but what does remain reveals architecture of the classical Teotihuacan type, characterized by the use of the so-called *talud-tablero*, typical of temple construction.

Its inhabitants settled near the springs given their water "culture." During excavation, canals built with great flag-stones to carry the water to storage deposits for use in the dry season were discovered. After the canals were no longer used to convey water, ceremonial human burials were effected in these aqueducts: the bodies, placed in lotus position, were flanked by rich offerings.



A plumed serpent winds all the way around this pyramid atop the Xochicalco ruins.

#### XOCHICALCO

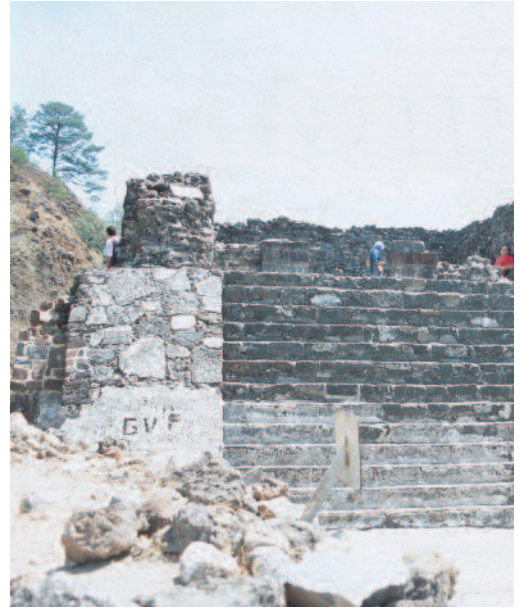
The splendor of Xochicalco came between A.D. 700 and 900. After the fall of Teotihuacan, it became the most important cosmopolitan center in Central Mexico.

The city was planned. Its hilltop location required extraordinary adaptation and use of the topography. All the works like underpasses, fill-ins, ramps, stairways, waterways, etc., demonstrate a profound knowledge of engineering, mathematics, architecture and, of course, aesthetics. Access to this fortified city was restricted and controlled. Multi-level plazas were





The remains of the temple to Tepoztecatl survey the entire Valley of Cuernavaca.



Part of the ruins atop the Tepozteco Mountain.

built, culminating with the main plaza, the highest, on which the buildings of the governing elite were erected. And the great walls protected the city from intruders.

Xochicalco's buildings were of both a civic and religious nature and many incorporated decorative elements from other regions of Mesoamerica. On the base of the feathered serpent are Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya and Nahuatl glyphs in bas-relief. Other iconographic elements placed on the sides of this building indicate that the city's inhabitants knew astronomy and, therefore, had knowledge of calendars. This can also be seen in the observatory built to watch the movement of the heavens located in a natural cave adapted for the purpose.

Thanks to archaeological findings, we know that the city's inhabitants traded with the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Coasts, as well as with other inland regions: many decorations have been found representing animals and plants identifiable with those remote lands.

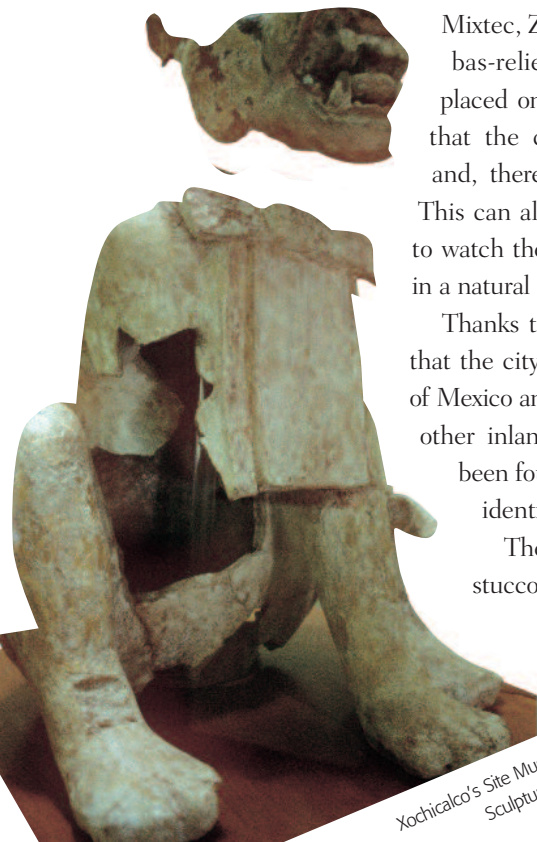
The city's buildings were covered with stucco and painted and connected to each other by well-built boulevards and ramps. The spaces in their interiors were ample, and there-

fore pillars and columns were used to hold up the roofs. In addition to holy buildings and palaces, there were warehouses and storehouses for grain and water, *temazcal* steam baths and ball game courts.

All this grandeur met with a violent end when domestic rebellions led to the destruction and burning of the buildings. The greatness of Xochicalco endured only in the memory of local inhabitants, narrated hundreds of years later to Spanish chroniclers.

#### THE TEPOZTECO

The Tepozteco is a post-classical archaeological site, singular in that it is located on top of the mountains surrounding the town of Tepoztlán. Among the different constructions at the site are the remains of the temple discovered in 1885, apparently dedicated to a deity called Tepoztecatl, dating from the late post-classical period (1350-1521). To erect it, the inhabitants had to level the rocky terrain and build a platform upon which several buildings were placed, of which Tepoztecatl's temple is the most interesting.



Xochicalco's Site Museum.  
Sculpture.



Yautepec is an excellent example of a royal palace or *tecpan*, originally covered with stucco and red, blue and yellow paint.

According to archaeologist Giselle Canto Aguilar, the buildings taken as a whole are arranged in such a way as to suggest a royal palace similar to the one found in Yautepec.<sup>1</sup> In the door-jambs of the temple's center room and on the benches with their backs to the walls, bas-reliefs have been preserved that depict geometric designs, personages, calendar dates and symbols of this people's world view, among them, the god of *pulque* (a fermented drink made from the sap of the maguey plant), Ometochtli. In the middle of the central bedroom, on a pedestal, was the figure of Tepoztecatl, until its presence so disquieted the Spanish friars that they removed it in the sixteenth century.

#### YAUTEPEC

South of Cuernavaca, at the entrance of the town of Yautepec is the large mound of the Archaeological site of the same name. Thanks to archaeologists' patient excavations, this site has proffered valuable information about life in a royal palace, or *tecpan*.

The pre-Hispanic settlement in Yautepec dates from the middle pre-classical period, just

like Chalcatzingo. The ostentatious building, whose facade has been preserved, corresponds to the last stages of building, when Morelos was part of the Mexica empire. Originally, it was covered with stucco and painted in brilliant hues of red, blue and yellow, among other colors. As the building was being cleaned, remains of paint were found, and among the different geometric designs, archaeologists were able to identify the representation of the god of water, Tláloc. The upper part of the palace has numerous internal patios surrounded by rooms, a pattern of distribution typical of a *tecpan*. Around the bed-chamber of the main lord were workshops, store-rooms and service quarters. The platform on which the *tecpan* is built is 95 meters by 75 meters, but Yautepec as a whole in its heyday took up 200 hectares, with a population of approximately 11,500.<sup>2</sup> According to archaeologist Hortensia de Vega, the *tecpan* was twice covered by other structures, with the front facing in a different direction to comply with the Mexica belief that the life cycle ended every 52 years.<sup>3</sup>



Xochicalco's Site Museum.



The materials from the Yautepec site threw light on the *tecpan* inhabitants' many trade contacts with other areas like Guerrero and Puebla. The dominion of Yautepec was one of the most powerful of the time of Mexican dominance and is frequently mentioned in the written records of the period.

#### TEOPANZOLCO

Located inside what is now the city of Cuernavaca, this site, a contemporary of the Yautepec *tecpan*, has been reduced to four hectares by the city's growth. In that area, a few ceremonial buildings have been preserved with architecture similar to that which the Mexicas used in the center of the city of Tenochtitlan. Of particular inter-

Xochicalco was at its  
zenith between A.D. 700 and 900.  
After the fall of Teotihuacan, it became  
the most important cosmopolitan  
center in Central Mexico.

est is the great base of the pyramid with its double stairway leading to the temples of Tláloc (god of water) and Huitzilopochtli (god of war). The walls of the temples have been preserved; supposedly they held up a kind of wooden roof covered with hay. The walls and the stairways of the pyramid's base still show traces of the stucco that covered all the buildings. The construction clearly took place in two different stages, perhaps due to the custom of every 52 years covering the building and erecting another on top of it. In front of the pyramid base is a plaza surrounded by small platforms and other bases, on which temples dedicated to lesser gods were built. Two round bases were the foundations for the temples dedicated to the god of the wind, Ehécatl, one of Quetzacóatl's other guises. In the southern part of the site is a large platform topped with the remains of walls; archaeologists suppose it to have been living quarters. In the same area are small platforms also for living quarters, one which was found underneath the base and can be seen above ground. This room was used by craftsmen who made pigments using iron oxides that they burned in the furnaces along the walls of the house.



Teopanzolco may have been part of ancient Cuauhnahuac.



Construction of Teopanzolco took place in two stages.

Teopanzolco has also rendered up evidence of sacrificial rites carried out according to Mexica custom. Its ceramics, dating from A.D. 1200 to 1521, show signs of both Tlahaica and Mexica influence. This locale may well have been part of ancient Cuauhnahuac since its location gives it a strategic view from which to survey and control much of the valley.

#### COATETELCO

Located near Miacatlan in western Morelos, the history of Coatetelco, like that of other post-classic pre-Hispanic sites, has been interrupted repeatedly.<sup>4</sup> Excavation has supplied evidence of occupation from the period of Teotihuacan influence (from A.D. 450 to 600), but the constructions that survive are from the late post-classical period (A.D. 1350-1521), mainly the time of the Mexica presence in Morelos. Like in other sites in the state, the only surviving part of the old settlement is the remains of the ceremonial center. The inside of the houses have carved pre-Hispanic rocks and there is a base upon which a chapel was built in the six-

teenth century and a church in the eighteenth. The site has bases for pyramids, platforms and a ball game court (one of the smallest known in Mesoamerica), near which are the remains of a *tzompantli* were found, a spot for placing sacrificial skulls, with a great many stone spikes where they were affixed.

These buildings were erected in the traditional way, by forming a nucleus of dirt and rock and covering them with faced stone. The remains of stucco have survived on some walls and stairways. The distribution of the buildings around the plaza was integrated into the topography of the terrain. Stylistically speaking, the buildings are typically Mexica: pyramid bases with two stairways on the outside of the building, flanked by thin beams. This kind of access would lead us to believe that there were twin

Yautepec dates from the middle pre-classical period. The building whose facade has been preserved, corresponds to the stage when it was part of the Mexica empire.



Coatetelco's ball court, one of the smallest in Mesoamerica.



At Coatetelco, surviving ruins date from the late post-classical period.





One of Xochicalco's two ball game courts.

temples on the top, such as in other structures of the same period. During the excavations, it was possible to determine that all the constructions were built in four stages.

On the east end of the main plaza is the "great temple," called this because it was the highest structure in the site. A broad stairway with two lateral beams leads to the temple. The main bodies of the bases are built in the slanted *talud* form and covered with stucco. Archaeologists found a stone sculpture of a woman whom they called Cuauhtlitzin; actually, it is a sculpted head hidden by the inhabitants in the carved stone vault purposely placed at the height of the first stage of the platform. Archaeologist Jorge Angulo thinks that the statue resembles the Mexica goddess Cihuateotl who may have originated with the Coixca groups of the Pacific Coast.

\* \* \*

The sites open to the public and described in this article are only a small part of the state of

Morelos' archaeological wealth. Many other great surprises are certainly in store for us, surprises that will change our understanding of the lives of the inhabitants of these lands before the Spaniards arrived. **MM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Giselle Canto Aguilar and Laura Ledesma Gallegos, "Historia antigua de Morelos," *Antología de textos para IV curso sobre historia y cultura del estado de Morelos* (Cuernavaca: INAH-Morelos Center, 1999), pp. 25-79.

<sup>2</sup> Michael E. Smith, *Archaeological Research at Aztec-Period Rural Sites in Morelos, Mexico. Excavations and Architecture*, vol. 1, *University of Pittsburgh Memoirs in Latin American Archaeology* no. 4 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Hortensia de Vega Nova, "Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica en Yauhtepec, Morelos," *Memoria del Tercer Congreso Interno del Centro INAH-Morelos* (Cuernavaca: INAH-Morelos Center, 1994), pp. 149-169.

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Angulo Villaseñor, *El museo de Coatetelco-Guía oficial* (Mexico City: INAH, 1978).



# The Monasteries of Morelos

Alfonso Toussaint\*

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Photos: Daniel Munguía

Passageway in the Tepoztlán Monastery.



Once the Spanish conquest headed by Hernán Cortés from 1519 to 1521 was completed, the services of missionary friars were required to help incorporate the enormous indigenous population into the new system the conquerors were imposing.

The first 12 Franciscans arrived in 1524, therefore, and, allied with Cortés, began their difficult missionary labors, for which they were favored by the conquistador.

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\* Architect and restorer living in Morelos.

To balance out the strength the Friars Minor acquired, the Dominican preaching friars arrived in 1526. In addition to blocking Cortés' aspirations, they would be responsible for setting up the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, whose power would last for a good many years during the viceregal period.

And finally came the Augustinians in 1533 to complete the trio in charge of disseminating the new Christian doctrine and bringing new faithful into the fold, thereby peacefully achieving the total domination of the populace.

To give an idea of the myriad of architectural styles and riches found in the monasteries in the state of Morelos, suffice it to note that the UNESCO has declared 11 of them World Heritage Treasures.



Leonardo Sepúlveda

Interior of the Atlatlahucan Monastery.



Sarah Peing

Saint Augustine Monastery, Jonacatepec.



Leonardo Sepúlveda

St. James Chapel in Tlayacapan.

The architectural by-product of the friars' activities, although based on that of their European counterparts, developed their own characteristics in order to resolve the needs that came with the conversion of large numbers of native people to the new religion.

Many of the ceremonies were carried out in the open air; to that end the open chapel was invented, in which the Holy Eucharist and the priest were under a roof and the rest of the faithful were in the open air in the main atrium. At the center of the atrium was a cross with the symbols of the passion, but never a

crucifix because it would have been difficult to justify the condemnation and prohibition of human sacrifices when the Catholic Church venerated a body hanging on a cross. Later, the processional path and chapels set along the way were included in the atrium so the procession could stop there and sing a response. There the processions were carried out and the Eucharist was set on an improvised altar to venerate it before continuing to the next chapel. Extraordinary examples of these chapels can still be seen today in Atlatlahucan and Tepoztlán.



Leonardo Sepulveda

The painted, vaulted ceiling at the Yecapixtla Monastery.

The styles are mixed:  
 a Romanesque foundation might  
 be surrounded by  
 Gothic elements, finished  
 with plateresque, Mudéjar, Herrerian  
 or mannerist decorations and  
 culminate in a unique style  
 of baroque.



Leonardo Sepulveda

The oldest mission in the state of Morelos, in Ocuituco.



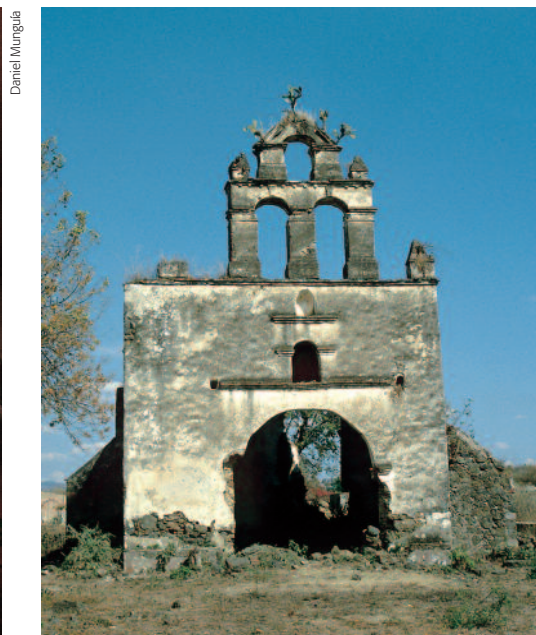
Daniel Munguía

Fresco at the Tepoztlán Monastery.





Interior of the Tepoztlán Monastery.



King's Chapel at Tlayacapan.

Once the main parts of the church had been built, the next step was building a dwelling for the friars, what would eventually be the monastery—or convent, as the term was used at the time for both male and female religious—itsself. Usually, the monasteries were buildings with two floors. The ground floor, or lower cloister, was a patio surrounded by passageways, the sacristy, kitchen, refectory, the *de profundis* room (where the monks prayed, often beginning with a *de profundis* psalm, and sometimes kept watch over their dead), the chapter room, the pilgrims' portal (thus named because it was a roofed area used to house visitors denied access to the rest of the building) and, of course, the orchards, gardens and corrals.

On the upper floor, usually reached by broad staircases, was the upper cloister, around which were the friars' cells with romantic windows looking out over the orchard and general landscape. The prior's cell always looked out onto the atrium and was usually next to the library, distinguished visitors' cells and the access to the choir.

Finally, there was the church itself. Usually it was north of the cloister, an enormous single,

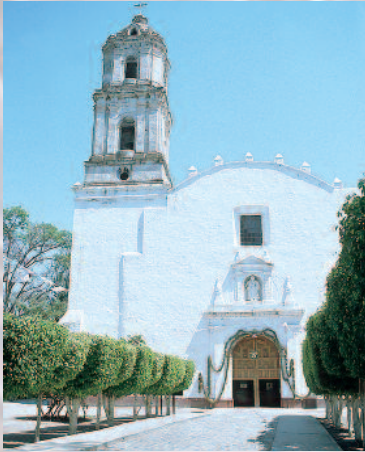
high nave—in place of the primitive carved ceilings made of wood and covered with shingles—facing west to east. In a few cases, like Tepoztlán, Tlayacapan, Jonacatepec and Tlaquitenango, prevailing winds led the builders to not place the church north of the cloister. Because these churches were the last structures built—since they represented the house of the new Lord to be praised and the most time and money were invested in them—they are the most highly and elegantly decorated of the constructions in these complexes.

The styles are mixed: a Romanesque foundation might be surrounded by Gothic elements (like vault ribs and cloisters, Yecapixtla's rose-window or carved pink granite pulpits), finished with plateresque, Mudéjar, Herrerian or mannerist decorations and culminate in a unique style of baroque.

To give an idea of the myriad of architectural styles and riches found in the monasteries in the state of Morelos, it is enough to note that the UNESCO declared 11 of its monasteries World Heritage Treasures in 1994. **MM**



# Morelos' Main Sixteenth-Century Monasteries



Daniel Munguía

St. James the Apostle Monastery, Jiutepec.



Daniel Munguía

Central Patio, Tepoztlán Monastery.



Daniel Munguía

Altarpiece of the Cuernavaca s Cathedral

## FRANCISCAN

1. *The Ascension Church*, today the cathedral of the city of Cuernavaca. Built between 1525 and 1552. Designated a cathedral in 1891. Magnificent frescoes and architectural detail. World Heritage Treasure.
2. *St. James the Apostle*, Jiutepec. Built between 1539 and 1549 and added to in the next three centuries.
3. *The Ascension*, Temimilcingo. Originally an open chapel that expanded until it became a small monastery. Data indicates that other foundations existed that either were never finished, have been drastically altered or were later destroyed. This is the case of the monasteries at Saint John the Evangelist in Xochitepec and Saint Luke in Mazatepec.

## DOMINICAN

The Dominicans were the last order of monks to come to what is now Morelos. For that reason, they found the lands already distributed among the Franciscans, who arrived first, and the Augustinians. The Dominicans did manage, however, to adjudicate nine sites for themselves, although in achieving this they went through severe confrontations. The sites are:

1. *The Nativity*, Tepoztlán. World Heritage Treasure. Built between 1560 and 1570. A delicious plateresque facade and magnificent belvedere. Today, it is a museum under the auspices of the National Institute of Anthropology and History.
2. *Saint Dominic*, Hueyapan. World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1539, it was finished about 1560. It contains the extraordinary Hueyapan Niche, carved out of a single piece of wood.
3. *Saint John the Baptist*, Tetela del Volcán. World Heritage Treasure. On the slopes of the Popocatepetl Volcano, it was founded in 1563 and finished in 1581 with the participation of Friar Juan de la Cruz. A noteworthy mural and coffered ceiling in the sacristy.
4. *Saint Dominic*, Oaxtepec. World Heritage Treasure. Built between 1535 and 1586 with the participation of Friar Domingo de Betanzos. Fragments of the Tepozteco idol were used in its foundations. Noteworthy murals and quarried stone.
5. *The Ascension*, Yautepec. Finished about 1567 with lateral chapels built later on the south side.
6. *Saint Dominic*, Tlaquiltenango. Built by the Franciscans between 1530 and 1550 and ceded to the Dominicans after litigations in 1586, it boasts a mural and being the place where the Mauricio de la Arena Codex was discovered in a wall.
7. *Saint Michael the Archangel*, Tlaltizapán. Founded in 1548 and finished about





Daniel Mungula

Tepoztlán's open chapel and church facade.



Leonardo Sepúlveda

St. John the Baptist Monastery, Tlayacapan.



Leonardo Sepúlveda

Portrait of a bishop, Yacapixtla Monastery.

1553. Emiliano Zapata had a mausoleum built in its atrium for the remains of revolutionary movement leaders.

8. *Saint Dominic*, Cuautla. Finished about

1580 with many changes made in later years.

9. *Saint Catherine of Siena*, Itzamatitlán. Destroyed.

### AUGUSTINIAN

The friars of the Order of Saint Augustine built the most sumptuous of all the monasteries.

1. *Saint John the Baptist*, Yecapixtla, World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1535 by Friar Jorge de Ávila, it is reminiscent of the Gothic style, and has a magnificent rose-window, pulpit and choir railing. The side facade is plateresque.

2. *Saint John the Baptist*, Tlayacapan. World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1554 and finished by 1572. Tracery vaulted ceilings, a doubly high sacristy and a mural. Part of the monastery is now a museum.

3. *Saint William*, Totoloapan. World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1534 by Friar Jorge de Ávila. A mural with an interesting Lord's Prayer in Nahuatl. Panels depicting the history of the crucifix.

4. *Saint Matthew*, Atlatlauhcan. World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1570 and finished in the 1580s. A magnificent open chapel and crenelated processional chapels.

5. *Saint James the Apostle*, Ocuituco. World Heritage Treasure. The Augustinians first founded it outside Mexico in 1534, but finished it in 1541. Magnificent fountain. It was commissioned by Friar Juan de Zumárraga.

6. *The Conception*, Zacualpan. World Heritage Treasure. Founded in 1535 and finished by 1567. Attributed to Friar Juan de la Cruz (or Cruzate). A marvelous, massive building with a beautiful open chapel. The Rosary Chapel was added in the nineteenth century.

7. *Saint Peter and Saint Paul*, Jantetelco. Probably founded by Friar Alonso de la Veracruz about 1558, it was finished in 1565. One of its cells today holds a museum dedicated to Mariano Matamoros.

8. *Saint Augustine*, Joncatepec. Founded in 1558. Friar Juan Cruzate died and was buried here in 1575. A large atrium, a mural and a wooden balcony.

### UNFINISHED OR DRASTICALLY MODIFIED

1. *Saint Andrew*, Jumiltepec. A curious monastery whose floor plan is unlike the norm, perhaps because it began as an open chapel.

2. *Saint Mark*, Tlayecac. Unfinished. With a large nave and some rooms

adjacent to the monastery.

3. *The Purification or Precious Blood*, Tlanepantla. A magnificent, single-story nave and cloister, surrounded by many chapels with eighteenth-century, bas-relief decoration.





Photos by Daniel Mungúa

Nenuphar.

# The Ethnobotanical Garden And Museum of Traditional Medicine And Herbalism

Laura Parrilla Álvarez\*

The ethnobotanical knowledge gleaned from popular use of plants continues to be entwined with Mexicans' daily life along with other practices and is recognized today as part of our cultural patrimony.

Morelos' Ethnobotanical Garden and Museum of Traditional Medicine and Herbalism is very special. The garden itself is a museum, structured with research areas, inventories, cataloging, service to the public, thematic interpretation and maintenance, among others. All of them fulfill both an educational and social

function by preserving a cultural system born and maintained without the need for written rules.

Here, living plants make up the permanent exhibit. What is being preserved and shown is precisely that intangible patrimony: the knowledge and use of traditional medicine, centrally in the state of Morelos.

The garden today boasts approximately 800 species divided into five collections: food and condiments, ornamental, orchids, xerophytes and medicinal plants. The medicinal plants make up the bulk of the garden's species. Ethnobotanical research has determined that the state of Morelos has between 500 and 950

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\* Director of the Ethnobotanical Garden and Museum of Traditional Medicine and Herbalism.





Nenuphar.

*Passiflora* or passion flower.*Moco de guajolote*, or turkey booger flower.

species of medicinal plants,<sup>1</sup> and to date, the garden's collection numbers about 500.

The collection's importance has been recognized by the Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens, and it is registered as a national collection of medicinal plants, given that it is a formalized collection, it is representative and it includes endangered species.<sup>2</sup>

The exhibition is organized according to both cultural use and genera (for example, if the plants are varieties of orchids, cacti, medicinal, condiments, etc.) to enrich the interpretation of the collection and at the same time facilitate plant care and conservation by providing the particular growing conditions they need. This might be an obstacle for the definition of a collection policy, which is why the brief description of each item includes its medicinal use. Therefore, even if the plants are grouped thematically or taxonomically, they clearly form part of the medicinal collection.

In addition to a living museum, we are essentially a botanical garden given over to the kinds of academic functions and commitments and research and dissemination activities common to this type of institution. The role of botanical gardens has been redefined due to the disappearance of plant species to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of plant resources, particu-

larly of the local flora where they are situated and the conservation of endangered plant species and populations.<sup>3</sup>

Botanical gardens have become specialized in the cultivation and propagation of plants and being educational centers that offer visitors first hand experiences in biodiversity. The World Strategy for the Conservation of Botanical Gardens puts the priorities for conservation on rare and endangered species, economically important species, those needed for restoring the stability of ecosystems, other important plant groups like food crops and their wild relatives and medicinal plants. This strategy, however, is always undertaken from the viewpoint of conserving germoplasm and the genetic wealth and variety, but not from that of the plants' cultural value.

Therefore, in conservationist terms, botanical gardens are considered the last resort for a few plants: refrigerated spaces for genes and seeds that await better days to germinate in laboratories. This is like saying we can film the last dance, the last prayer, the last fiesta of a people and keep the record of it to inventory the loss and weep over our misfortune. In my opinion, the educational potential of botanical gardens is more important than their conservationist potential because they offer us the possibility of making the public aware of the vast



Museum of Traditional Medicine.



Traditional remedies are widely used in Mexico.



cultural and genetic wealth we possess, in addition to fostering respect for the cultural diversity manifested in the use and appropriation of the plants.

The Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens considers the Morelos garden fully consolidated. However, for the last 20 years the garden's administration has struggled to keep it active and to fulfill its objective of conserving both a cultural and phylogenetic patrimony. This has made for an enormous commitment and the very great possibility that we have not been able to develop its full potential given our restricted budget.

The place is four hectares in size: about one and a half hectares are taken up by the collections, another hectare and a half are given over to a park and the rest is used mainly for administrative purposes.

Maintaining the collection is quite complex given the wide varieties of species, their arrangement for exhibition and unfavorable soil conditions.

The reproduction area is vital because this is where the plants that will later be introduced into the exhibition to keep the collection complete are grown. This area reproduces plants that die when they have finished their natural life cycle, which is very difficult since about 40 percent of the species in the garden

have short life cycles and some are wild plants for which there is no experience in man-managed growth. Many of these plants vary substantially when subjected to human cultivation techniques.

The garden's collection includes historically important plant species such as those used by Mexico's pre-Hispanic inhabitants; information about them has been gleaned from codices and other historical sources. Among these plants are the *zoapatli*, different kinds of copal, *pericón*, scale ferns and *toloache*. The *toloache* is an interesting example of popular belief in the magical use of plants. It is said that an infusion of the plant drunk by the person one loves without luck will make this person love you back, but actually the *toloache* is extremely poisonous so its exhibit requires surveillance and clear signs warning the public.

Other plants with widespread, important cultural uses are endangered by over-use. Among these are the *linaloe*, the *cuachalalate*, the *copalchi* and the yellow *quina*.

The small but novel Museum of Traditional Medicine and Herbalism situates its subject matter as an alternative in terms of cultural models, offering a concise overview of the relationship between Mexico's population and medicinal flora. Recently restructured, the museum won a national prize in 1999. Located next to the gar-



The Baby Jesus of Health.



Substances used for remedies.



*Lantana* in the Ethnobotanical Garden.





Cotton flowers.



Walkway in the museum.

den, it has five small rooms dedicated mainly to explore the relation between beliefs and emotions and health care practices, a phenomenon little studied by medicine. For example, they take a look at the healing powers attributed to patron saints like the *Niño de la salud* (Baby Jesus of Health), whose traditional attire was changed after the 1985 earthquakes in Mexico and is now dressed like a doctor because it is believed that the souls of the doctors killed then are now helping him in his tasks.

There is also a room with interesting descriptions of popular ailments, along with their symptoms and remedies, including things like “the loss of one’s soul” or the “loss of one’s shadow,” which happens during sleep. Another is the *ojo*, or “evil eye”, which affects children mainly and is caused by the wrong person touching their heads (mothers can avoid this by pinning a red ribbon or a charm called “*ojo de venado*” on the baby’s clothes). The *susto*, produces lack of sleep and tension in a person who has suffered a shock or experienced a strong emotion.

Another room displays the most commonly used seeds and herbs, altars with all the essences needed in rituals to expel bad spirits or beings who are causing the person to suffer.

What is interesting about this museum is how the combination of ritual, common knowledge and traditional practices is believed to be more effective than medicine to prevent and solve health problems. And sometimes it actually is. **MM**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Information from biologist Margarita Avilés.

<sup>2</sup> Edelmira Linares, “Los jardines botánicos en México y su potencial para albergar las colecciones nacionales,” *Amaranto* 19 (3) (Mexico City: Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos, 1992), pp. 17-26.

<sup>3</sup> Vernon H. Heywood, “Los jardines botánicos y la conservación de la biodiversidad,” *Amaranto* 10 (3) (Mexico City: Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos, 1998), pp. 10-16.



# The Tropical Dry Forest of the Huautla Mountains

Francesco Taboada Tabone\*



Sarah Peirig



Sarah Peirig

In the Morelos towns bordering the mountains of Guerrero survives a popular collective fancy based on the strange animals that live there, a fancy seemingly anachronistic in the twenty-first century. The most widespread and strangest legend is about a serpent local residents call *tilcuate*. This reptile has the peculiarity of feeding on human milk. The *tilcuate* comes up to a woman nursing her child, exhales a mist that lulls her into a reverie and begins suckling at her breast. To keep the baby from crying and waking her up, the *tilcuate* puts his tail in its mouth.

A cousin of the *tilcuate*, the *heloderma*, a relative of the gila monster that the locals call a “scorpion,” has a

\* Documentary film maker and researcher.

bad reputation linked to its own death. Wherever it dies, so the legend goes, nothing will ever grow, nothing will ever blossom again. And whoever touches the body is to be pitied because he or she will have brought about his or her own demise by doing so.

People say that when the *mazacuata* snake is old, it grows wings and goes from one corral to the next eating cattle. The chameleon is reputed to be the best cure for a woman who does not know how to make tortillas; if she will only pet its back, she will be able to make any culinary delight her man might require.

These are the Huautla Mountains, a region whose biodiversity merited its being declared a biosphere reserve. “I have picked up a scorpion [*heloderma*]. In fact, I have bathed several of them

and I’m still not dead,” says Raymundo Castro Trejo, a native of the area, who works as a para-taxonomist at the reserve’s center. “We’re trying to get local inhabitants and tourists to shake their fear and repugnance for reptiles as part of our environmental education program. We mustn’t forget that our country is the world’s first in reptile species. Our job is to conserve that,” says Belinda Maldonado, assistant director of the Huautla Mountains Center for Environmental Education and Research (CEAMISH), directed by Dr. Óscar Dorado.

This region, soaked in history, where the flag bird or *coa*, a relative of the mythical Quetzal, lives, is almost three hours from Cuernavaca on the Jojutla highway. The ancient Tlahuicas, inhabitants of Morelos, developed





Panoramic view of the Huautla Mountains.



These cactii are treasures of the ecological reserve.

a vast culture confirmed by the archaeological finds the local residents have discovered in the area. It was here that General Emiliano Zapata made his headquarters and shared a house with his two wives, Luz and Goya Zúñiga. Zapata knew that the government would hesitate to enter this “forest,” says 103-year-old Audiaz Anzures, a Zapatista veteran. It is called a forest because of its diversity, “low” because of the size of its trees, and “caducous” because the trees lose their leaves during the dry months from October to May.

This region boasts 937 species of plants, some unique to the area and unknown to scientists until recently. It also has a number of culturally important plants, among them the ancient copal used in pre-Hispanic ceremonies. According to Belinda Maldonado, there are 125 types of legumes, 325 species of butterflies, 180 bird species, 66 species of mammals (including almost 30 kinds of bats), five of Mexico’s six species of felines (the *yaguarundi*, the mountain lion, the bobcat, the *tigrillo* and the ocelot), 52 species of reptiles, 11 of amphibians and 8 of fish, two of which

(the carp and the perch) were introduced by men.

“This kind of forest has been neglected because of the height of its vegetation,” says Maldonado. “In Mexico there are only three reserves with these characteristics: Huautla; Chame-la, which is smaller than Huautla, in the state of Jalisco; and Sierra Gorda, in the state of Querétaro.” In addition to the dry forest, Morelos has other ecological reserves: the Montenegro Mountains; the Tepozteco National Park; the Cacahuamilpa Caves National Park; and the Chichinautzin Biological Corridor, the environs of which are controlled by illicit logging mafias despite its being an ecological area, but where the government is powerless to avert deforestation.

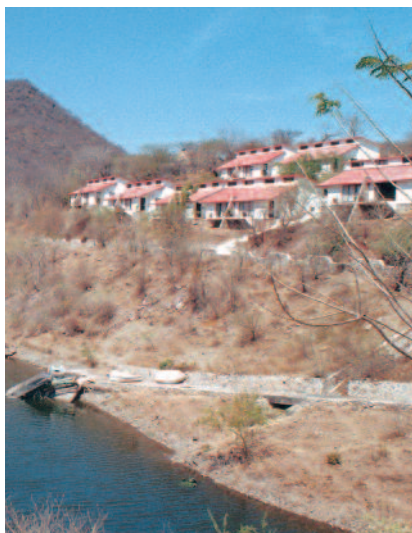
This low forest or caducous tropical forest was declared a state ecological conservation area in 1993.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, the Morelos State Autonomous University has overseen its protection.<sup>2</sup> The CEAMISH has two facilities: one is on the Chamilpa campus in Cuernavaca, and the other is the biological station in the mountains

which has infrastructure for housing scientists and personnel, as well as academic and family ecotourism groups. Its mission is to preserve Mexico’s dry tropical regions through scientific research, teaching, environmental education and participatory planning.

The conservation of this reserve requires local resident participation. For this, they must become aware of the area’s importance and have the means of subsistence they need so they do not fall into over-exploiting the ecosystem. To that end, alternative programs to the cattle ranching that erodes and deforests the area have been developed. For example, local residents have been encouraged to explore their artistic capabilities with a ceramic craft program. Another program that is beginning to see results is the cultivation of edible mushrooms (*oreja de cazahuate*). These alternative forms of making a living aim to create environmental harmony in the area and improve family incomes, which have been hard hit since the bankruptcy of the Huautla mine.

From the colonial period on, Huautla has had silver, zinc, lead and copper



The mountain biological station.



Don Audiaz Anzurez Soto remembers when Emiliano Zapata came through the Huautla Mountains.

mines. Today these mines have become attractions for the blossoming CEAMISH-organized ecotourism trade. The mines were first run by the Spanish, later by Italians, English, Americans, Canadians and, finally, by a Mexican and an Argentinean who went bankrupt, leaving local residents jobless.

“They never gave us the severance pay they had promised,” says Raymundo Castro, a 10-year employee of the mine, who knows the region well. “Then other people came to take away all the iron pilings and metal out of the tunnels to sell it, and they didn’t pay us either.” That was how emigration to the United States began. Today, not a single family in the area is without a relative north of the border.

Despite their poverty, the inhabitants continue to be very likeable and friendly. Doña Celsa Morán, for example, makes her living by cooking for visitors. We sat down in her kitchen to chat and savor some delicious beans cooked on a wood stove, with red hot sauce, *cecina* (dried, salted meat) and hand-made tortillas. Recalling the legend of the chameleon, we asked Doña

Celsa if she had petted one to “make good tortillas,” but she said no. She did, however, tell us the *tilcuate*’s latest bit of mischief: “A man from Xochipala, a nearby town, was surprised to see that his wife cooked him perch every day. He asked her who brought the fish and she said she had thought he had. The man thought his wife had a lover who was bringing her fresh perch daily, so he decided to hide and wait for his rival to arrive. How surprised he was when he saw the *tilcuate* saunter into the house with a full belly, loaded with perch that he soon spit out on the table. Without blinking an eye, the jealous man killed the reptile with his machete.”

“Tell us, Doña Celsa, what did the *tilcuate* have to do with the perch?” asked a rural teacher who was there.

“Oh, perch are good for making milk. Those *tilcuates* are no fools. They know that perch are full of vitamins, and that’s why he brought them.”

These beliefs have lasted down through the centuries. People enjoy themselves thoroughly telling stories that are highlights in the towns and hamlets where almost nothing ever happens.

However, the influence of migrants, who come home bringing customs from our neighbors to the north, plus a plethora of television commercials endanger the survival of these traditions.

The CEAMISH staff are making desperate efforts to preserve them. Given the characteristics of the reserve, deforestation has not been as relentless as in the Chichinautzin Biological Corridor, the famous Zempoala Lagoons area, where little by little loggers have surrounded the area. But both the culture and the ecosystem are in danger of being lost. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 1999 it was declared a biosphere reserve and the 31,000 hectares protected in 1993 increased to 59,030, the size of the current reserve.

<sup>2</sup> The university has received support from different organizations, among them, the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt), the British Council, the National Council for the Conservation of the Biosphere (Conabio) and the Mexican Nature Conservation Fund (FMCN).



# The Challenge of Globalization Civil Society in Latin America and Canada

Delia Montero\*  
José Sosa\*\*

In recent years, the study of local, regional and international citizens' movements and organized civil society in Latin America and Canada vis-à-vis globalization from the viewpoint of different disciplines has taken on importance.<sup>1</sup> This process has been characterized by the robust development of computer sciences and communications, which has made it possible to analyze society's problems without being isolated and has given civil society the opportunity of knowing what is happening on the other side of the world. Latin American and Canadian civil societies have been no exception to this.

From the perspective of the Canadian government, international relations must be reconstructed to make sure that they are guided by democratic processes respectful of human rights that make economic development, the fight against poverty and the improvement of the environment possible and that promote the participation of civil society. To achieve this, citizens' pro-

Civil society  
has organized  
important actions  
worldwide proposing  
the total cancellation  
of the poorest  
countries' debts.

posals must be taken to international summits and citizens themselves must participate in negotiating international free trade agreements, but not as mere tokens. Up until now there has been no real dialogue with society. Governments have listened, but not opened up dialogue or they have put forward arguments without coming to any consensus, as was clear in Seattle and Prague last year. This is one of the tasks that the Canadian government will promote during the Summit of the Americas this year in Quebec. The summit's aim is to establish an agenda that would include the promotion of democratic processes and economic development for Latin America, as well as the participation of civil society in the discussion of these issues.

DEMOCRACY, CIVIL SOCIETY  
AND GLOBALIZATION

Processes like the organization and mobilization of civil society and democracy in the Western Hemisphere have intensified in different sectoral and geographical fields. Multi-sectoral networks have been formed with the participation of social and civic organizations like unions, peasant groups, indigenous peoples, the popular urban movement, environmentalists, human rights fighters and women's and intellectuals' organizations.

The participation of organized civil society in the hemisphere is very dynamic vis-à-vis the signing of different free trade agreements. We find, for example, the Trilateral Network on the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Continental Social Alliance created to answer the current negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The objectives of these networks include fostering actions based on common strategies and respect for diversity. Today, the general coordination has fallen to the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC) until the Quebec summit. RMALC was founded in 1991 as part of the process that led to the creation of the trilateral network among

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Mexico, the United States and Canada and later the continental alliance that was born at the Santiago de Chile People's Summit in April 1998. At that meeting, organizations' representatives from the entire hemisphere came together at the same time that the presidents and prime ministers were meeting to discuss the FTAA. Both these networks are multi-sectoral.

These organizations' aim is to have an impact on the negotiations in an attempt to concretize a globalization in the interests of the different peoples involved. In that sense, the alliances have been pro-active, organized to work for the rights of peoples expressed in terms of an alternative globalization, including the establishment of an alternate agenda, independent of governments and world trade and the definition of a strategic agenda that makes effective coordination possible.

A great deal has been advanced in consensus-making hemisphere-wide, but the discussion continues among pluri-sectoral and multinational organizations that are working to achieve consensus maintaining respect for every organization's and country's full autonomy. The discussion about the role of civic and citizen's movements is expressed not only in the undoubtedly important process of trade and economic integration of the hemisphere. Their own origin, linked to the fight for civil and human rights continues to offer a much broader panorama.

On the one hand, continuing deficient democracy and political participation in broad spheres of public policy make it absolutely necessary that the social sectors directly and indirectly affected by health, housing and educational programs make contributions to change the course of government action,

which suffers from a strong dose of financial paralysis imposed by the neo-liberal stage. In that sense, it is not sufficient that the experience accumulated by civic organizations over recent decades be transferred to public institutions to broaden out their vision and give them more elements on which to base their public decisions. What is required is that public perspectives about the main problems and social needs be formulated taking into considera-

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tion the new democratic values that permeate the majority of the population. Principles like self-government, subsidiarity and community organization must be fully incorporated into policies and programs.

On the other hand, the fact that a citizens' movement cannot remain isolated from the influence of other national and international actors poses the challenge of ensuring the creation of a globalized regimen of living together and trading with stable, reciprocal bases. It is not simply a matter of the extensively discussed question of global regimens of governability but, in essence, the formulation of institutional and non-institutional bases for interaction among social movements within a country and among distant nations

and regions linked by common regional and global problems.

The fundamental ingredient of this "social governability" is, as seems obvious, the practice of democracy. As contradictory as it seems, it is one of the main courses along which the formation of pluri-sectoral and multinational coalitions and fronts are being formed. While the plural, participatory essence of these networks is not under discussion, procedural questions and the need to create safeguards for smaller or less closely meshed groups and sectors absorbs an important part of the time and resources available. This means that there is still a long road to travel before we can consider the global sphere of action of civic and citizens' groups completely formed.

#### POVERTY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL MANAGEMENT

The reduction of inequality and economic polarization, intensified in the last 15 years, is vital because it will permit the full participation of all citizens in public life. As long as these problems are not resolved, any action by civil society, whether it be international, regional or local, will have little chance of success.

Latin America's excessive debt, particularly of its poorest countries, is a brake on any initiative for redistributing wealth given the disadvantageous situation of the debtor countries in the renegotiation of what they owe international financial organizations. Civil society has organized important actions worldwide proposing the total cancellation of the poorest countries' debts. However, international financial organizations like the World Bank and the



International Monetary Fund together with the countries of the Group of Seven have renegotiated these debts imposing severe adjustment programs that, far from benefitting the population, have impoverished it even more.

Until today, civil society's actions have not had sufficient impact to dissuade either the governments who have negotiated or the international institutions from imposing so many restrictions when they renegotiate debts. As long as the problem of excessive indebtedness is not resolved, the fruits of development will not be enjoyed by the populace, and everything will remain good intentions.

In this context, Canada's role is interesting: as a member of the G-7, it is in solidarity with World Bank and IMF policies, but on the other hand, Canadian NGOs work decisively to fight poverty in Latin American countries.

Citizens' movements have also worked arduously in solving problems common to all countries, such as the degradation of the environment and poverty—both intimately linked—and for that reason their proposals aim to attack them jointly. These issues began to be studied in the 1970s as the result of worldwide concern over what was perceived as an ongoing environmental crisis that was destroying the ecological bases for sustainability, particularly given chemical, bacteriological and biological warfare and the irrational privatization of natural resources.

In the 1970s, Latin America suffered the first impacts of the dominant economic development model characterized by unregulated industrial growth that caused high levels of air, water and soil pollution, deforestation, damage to biodiversity, erosion, desertification and the loss of fertility in the soil due to the

use of techniques that wore out agricultural land.

Environmental problems have become a concern for civil society and international organizations like the United Nations Environmental Program, leading them to try to find alternatives for sustainable development in the context of increasing social and environmental deterioration. They have made proposals of two kinds: first, that conditions and potential for sustainable ecosys-

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tems be generated along with economic development. This obviously would imply a change in the world's economy that would mean changing the way the main highly polluting companies produce. This seems quite difficult to achieve given free-market, competitive market conditions.

Secondly, it is necessary to change people's vision of environmental problems so that they become part of their day-to-day activities. Civil society also has an important role to play in creating awareness and educating the public about this.

As the Canadian experience has shown, the effective application of environmental laws requires not only the organization and participation of local communities and environmental groups, but also a broad dissemination of ideas and understanding of the problems involved.

Undoubtedly, new technologies are a very important issue as well as a characteristic trait of globalization. But they become particularly important when we look at the way young people experience the effects of their use. Nevertheless, young people's massive use of the computer sciences has not been sufficiently studied, nor have the enormous changes that they imply for future generations in matters of employment, education, etc.

In Latin America, this takes on particular importance because access to training in new technologies is not available to everyone; even the use of personal computers and Internet access is still quite limited. On the other hand, the incorporation of new technologies into work reduces the number of jobs available.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The study of human rights would have no reason for being if women were not included. Their rights have gradually been recognized by the international community, but it was not until 1994 that the International Convention to Eradicate Violence against Women was formalized, obliging signatory countries to regularly report back on the concrete actions they were taking with regard to the problem. In Mexico, work has been done to establish legislative reference points, a process that has generated a permanent conflict about how to deal with the dichotomy between the public and the private. For this reason, gender aspects of legislation requires a profound analysis.

Currently there is a broad discussion about culture and development in

the twentieth century, evident in the literature in applied anthropology and in some proposals that have come out of the new global situation. The debate is very important given that migration, new technologies and communications not only change most people's lives very rapidly, particularly those of indigenous peoples, but these changes also advance more rapidly than the implementation of anthropologists' proposals. To analyze all this, highly theoretically and practically experienced international and inter-cultural teams are needed.

Along these same general lines, people have discussed not only the economic and social changes that have come about because of globalization, but also the gap between rich and poor—both within and among countries—that this has caused. Without a doubt, the result is an increasing number of people who are excluded, particularly among indigenous groups, and who continue to be divested of their resources and knowledge.

Globalization has affected them decisively since it thwarts their customs by imposing a lifestyle that counters local traditions, causing cultural and environmental imbalances. The free market sees indigenous peoples as a problem that should be managed intelligently, given that it considers them an obstacle to development. The case of Chiapas is exemplary: Chiapas is a region with enormous natural wealth where indigenous peoples try to defend their territory from invasion and their natural resources from depredation.

In that sense, globalization should be reevaluated and its negative effects and the uncertainty it has generated about the conservation of cultures and indigenous rights halted. Rethinking globalization implies changing its prac-

tices in order to aid in creating positive processes in which the autonomy of these native peoples would obviously have to be respected. This suggests a different world order that would include a new relationship with indigenous peoples, nation-states and corporate elites.

Globalization has not only had negative effects. We should also point out its impact on the communications media, particularly in their dissemination

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of indigenous peoples' demands. The constant struggle of indigenous peoples for their rights is not new. However, alongside globalization there has been a kind of "transnationalization" of indigenous struggles in Latin America and a growth of the number of ethnic demands, which in turn made it possible to create a great network of multicultural cities that are jointly able to demand their rights.

It is paradoxical that when we speak of cultural diversity, we do not refer to the Canadian experience, where an enormous amount of work has been done in favor of indigenous peoples' rights and which has applied a multicultural policy over the last 30 years, one reason it identifies profoundly with Latin America.

Canada has a multicultural policy because of its many waves of immigrants, particularly beginning in the early 1960s.

However, this policy has not been free of controversy. The indigenous question in Canada is part of that multicultural debate, and it is interesting to note that the First Peoples of North America have suffered from a series of political, economic and social disadvantages both before and after the creation of Canadian federalism. This has turned them into a vulnerable group in constant struggle for their rights. These peoples, together with the different groups of immigrants who have gradually come on the scene, are forms of cultural diversity and part of the human assets that have developed Canada. However, their struggle for achieving more equitable political representation vis-à-vis the rest of the population has been difficult. The Canadian experience seems very important to the indigenous peoples of Latin America, not only with regard to their incorporation into daily life, but also with regard to the respect for their customs.

Without a doubt, recently civil society has developed globally and is faced with a great task: the solution of environmental, economic and social problems, among others. Seemingly, its greatest challenge, however, is dynamically keeping up with the problems derived from what we today call globalization. **MM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This was the central theme of the seminar "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizens' Movements in Latin America and Canada," jointly organized by the Mexico chapter of CALACS, the Autonomous Metropolitan University, the Canadian Embassy in Mexico and the State of Mexico College in November 2000. This seminar brought together researchers, public officials, social leaders and activists from Latin America and Canada to look at civil society's role given the challenge of globalization from their different perspectives. In this article, we describe some of the main ideas expressed in those working sessions, as well as the most important conclusions.



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# The City in Writing



## Humor and Irony in the Contemporary Mexican Urban Short Story

### Part I

Lauro Zavala\*

**M**exico City went through many changes between 1975 and 1999. Perhaps the most notable of these, the one that seems to encompass the others, is its atomization, that is, the fact that the city has become an increasingly formless, unending conglomerate of many cities, all joined together in a single space that has come to be

called —without being a euphemism— the growing “urban blotch.”

Despite the current formal division of Mexico City in political wards, the real division enabling the recognition of areas of cultural homogeneity is what has been christened with the rather peculiar name “*colonia*,” or “colony.” Each of these areas usually covers no more than 10 or 12 streets, as can be verified on any Mexico City map. But what is really surprising for the attentive observer is that in

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some of these areas a particular unity of language, customs, rhythms and urban landscape has been preserved, characteristics that not only are distinctive, but have even generated a literary tradition of their own.

In this essay,<sup>1</sup> I show some of the trends in brief narratives produced in Mexico City in this 25-year period, in particular in works written using humor, irony and parody. With these literary instruments, the writers offer a critical, familiar, plausible view of urban life in which it is possible to recognize the most conflictive dimensions of a contradictory day-to-day existence.

The distinctive elements of this body of work include a hybrid form that combines literary narrative with urban chronicles, the use of language characteristic of precise areas of the city, experimentation with the conventions of the fantasy and detective genres and a reversal of the traditional relationship between the home and the street.

\* \* \*

## SOME ROOTS

Humor as a writing strategy in urban stories and chronicles has some very valuable precedents in Mexico. Already in the first short prose pieces by Salvador Novo written in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, there is a certain modern, ingenious impertinence: “Big bills like the 10,000 peso note condescend to rub elbows with lightweights like one peso notes.”<sup>2</sup> Something similar can be said of Alfonso Reyes, whose humor is more light-hearted and care-free; see for example, the titles of a couple of 1931 urban stories: “Por qué ya no colecciono sonrisas” (Why I No Longer Collect Smiles), followed by “Por qué ahora colecciono miradas” (Why I Now Collect Glances).<sup>3</sup> In a 1959 text, he concludes his description of city trash collectors like this:

There it goes up the street, every morning's parade float, gathering the world's relics to start another day. There, broom in their lance-rest, go the Knights of Trash. The communion bell rings. We should all kneel.<sup>4</sup>

The *La Familia Burrón* (The Burrón Family, a play on words that roughly translated means “the Donkey Family”) comic book narrative chronicles a life style in which the family network is still the enjoyable center of solidarity in social relations.

The early 1950s gave us another direct antecedent of contemporary humorous narrative: the parodies of detective stories by Pepe Martínez de la Vega. His main character, detective Péter Pérez, became a very popular radio personality at the time. He is able to solve problems on an empty stomach in exchange for a cup of *atole* and a tamale sandwich, based on his experience as a denizen of the poorest part of Mexico City, Peralvillo and environs. So, for example, Péter Pérez solves that classical enigma of detective fiction, the mystery of the closed room (where a crime is committed in a closed room without forcing

the lock) using his familiarity with urban living conditions: the criminal was able to enter the room because the house owners were so poor that they never had enough money to put a roof on it.

Jorge Ibarguengoitia's well-known short stories, written between 1968 and 1976, continue to have surprising vitality in the last decade of the century, which is why they have been included in several volumes of materials originally published in daily newspapers. Ibarguengoitia's humor, particularly in the stories of his 1967 *La ley de Herodes* (The Law of Herod) display permanent surprise in the face of the catastrophes of our peculiar urban idiosyncracies.

One of the most representative stories in the literary history of Mexico City is "Cuál es la onda" (What's Doin'?) by José Agustín, published in 1967, which makes a strong critique of government demagoguery. Before finishing their nocturnal tour of the city, Raquel and Oliveira get into a cab whose driver gives them his personal view of the government radio program, *La hora nacional* (The Nationwide Hour):

No, it don't bore me neither; I think it's good. The thing is that you hear all about how progress is a good thing an' all about progress an' stability an' the communist menace everyplace, 'cause don't ya think they tire a body out with all that gab? In the papers and on the radio and on TV and even in the toilet —your pardon, miss— they go on about it. Sometimes it seems like it prob'ly can't be so true if they have to repeat it so much.<sup>5</sup>

This critical view was not only part of the cultural climate at the end of the 1960s, but it also established an almost journalistic form of narration adopted by a whole generation of urban writers. In contrast with the self-pitying, nostalgic intimism dominant in previous years, Mexican short-story writers in this decade began a more critical, pro-active tradition whose natural writing strategy was characterized by an irony that appealed to their readers' complicity.

#### CROSSING THE LITERARY FRONTIER

Our history, however, begins in the second half of the 1970s when writing style, genre and velocity changed noticeably.

One of the distinctive traits of the post-modern narrative that emerged in the last 25 years is its hybrid, protean nature. In particular, the writing of numerous contemporary urban narrators explores the increasingly vague borders between short stories and chronicles without ever abandoning its ironic tone and parodying intent. This is the case of *Crónicas romanas* (Roman Chronicles) by Ignacio Trejo Fuentes, *Crónicas imaginarias* (Imaginary Chronicles) by Juan Villoro, the university chronicles in *Cartas de Copilco* (Letters from Copilco) by Guillermo Sheridan and Carlos Monsiváis' sharp observations about the fleeting nature of everyday excitement.

If we think of caricaturists as chroniclers who practice their craft with extreme brevity







and conciseness, we must include those who structure extremely brief narratives in the form of comics with 8 to 10 frames. This is the case of Jis, who has explored the possibilities of a necessarily urban black humor in his series *Policías y ladrones* (Cops and Robbers) (1997), originally set in Guadalajara. El Fisgón, another cartoonist, recently published his own urban narrations with the revealing title of *Cruentos policíacos* (Cruel Cop Stories) (1998).

One of the most outstanding short-story writers who has explored the frontier between the short story and the chronicle in the last two decades of the millennium is Juan Villoro. His brief volume *Tiempo transcurrido* (Time Passed) brings together 18 stories laconically titled for each year between 1968 and 1985, both years central for understanding the changes in Mexico City's urban culture. In the story corresponding to 1976, we meet Rocío, a woman symbolic of her generation with an ethical viewpoint and a look that attracts more

devotees every day. Villoro draws her in a way that by no means leaves aside the social aspects, but goes beyond that to make her an archetype that can be colored in almost at will:

Rocío was liberated, but she wasn't crazy. Rocío read books, but if they had already been made into a film, she went to the movies instead. Rocío had a cute little figure, but she didn't go out without a bra. Rocío didn't admire the gringos, but she didn't favor the Russians either. Rocío approved of premarital relations, but she didn't sleep with Fredy until they had already been engaged for six months. Rocío was modern enough to subscribe to *Cosmopolitan*, but old-fashioned enough to not pay any attention to the "techniques to drive your man crazy." Rocío was not a middle-class chick from the Ibero University, but she also was not about to study with the lower-class boors at the UNAM. So she enrolled at the Metropolitan University's Xochimilco campus. Rocío was feminine (she liked to wear make-up and cook), but she believed in women's independence (she wanted to study neurophysiology).

In brief, Rocío was neither up-tight nor a nympho, cultured or uncultured, a leftist or a right-winger, cosmopolitan or provincial, submissive or domineering, or very daring or very dull.

At a time when musical tastes were divided as never before and young people became a stampede of Hamlets in search of decisions ("What do you like, rock or disco music?"), Rocío was indifferent.<sup>6</sup>

Óscar de la Borbolla, for his part, has created his own Mexico City urban genre: the *Ucronías* (U-chronicles), news about the impossible, originally published in a newspaper column and later gathered in a collection of short stories. Let us look at the first paragraph of a story called "La familia mexicana" (The Mexican Family):

Frightened by the severe crisis that is crumbling the family, that sick cell, that neurosis-making

molecule or badly finished building brick of our society, numerous psychoanalysts, bartenders, priests and taxi drivers decided to join forces and knowledge to undertake the salvation—as far as generalized rejection would allow—of this out-of-date basic form of humanity. To that end and after much discussion, they recently agreed to create the Unified Movement of Lovers, the UMA, whose main objective is, obviously, to safeguard that strategy for living together—one of many—called the family.<sup>7</sup>

The other “*ucronías*” have themes like the advantages of dying, the creation of a Party of Ego Lovers (or PIE), and a documented history of corners. In “Tengo hambre” (I’m Hungry), the author confesses, “to making some additional income by subletting my subway seat and my place in the tortilla mill line.”<sup>8</sup>

As De la Borbolla himself says, the book is a series of brief texts that are “crisscrossed with a corrosive sense of humor that uses laughter as a lubricant to introduce ideas, fantasies and critiques that shake up people’s consciousness.”<sup>9</sup> It is unabashedly an allegorical strategy of the contemporary urban chronicle.

#### IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS LANGUAGE

In this city fiesta that is reading brief urban prose, we can find homages to urban language, whether in its regional varieties (such as in Emiliano Pérez Cruz’s narrative) or its peculiar idiolect (such as in some of Lazlo Moussong’s stories). Let us look at a playful version in this fragment from Rafael Bullé-Goyri’s “Diálogo con una secretaria” (Conversation with a Secretary):<sup>10</sup>

- Good afternoon, miss. My wife told me that the doctor was asking about our dog’s condition and I’m here to give it to him.
- You’re going to give the dog to the doctor?
- No, miss, I’m going to give him the condition.
- Well, the doctor isn’t in. Tell me about it.

- I don’t know, miss. Maybe if you call the local bar you can find him.
- I don’t mean the doctor, I mean her.
- Who do you mean? The dog or my wife?
- The dog, of course, sir.
- Well, it seems like the hair isn’t falling out anymore.
- Well, no, actually, I use a great shampoo made out of aloe. I don’t know how you’d notice it on the phone...<sup>11</sup>

In “El caló como acto de justicia” (Slang as an Act of Justice), Lazlo Moussong shows the wealth of the underlying meaning in the slang used by urban police. Let’s look at a fragment of the narrator’s lexicological exploration after one policeman gives instructions to another about how to continue with an interrogation.

“Play the drums and see if he plays the trumpet, but if the mariachis are quiet, tune in to the AM station” (*Hit him in the stomach to see if he talks and if he doesn’t, give him some electric shocks with the cattle prod.*)

I confess that I continue to be surprised at the peculiar way the officers expressed their legitimate differences with the government, which is why I asked,





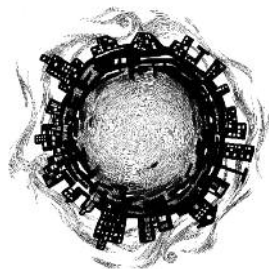
“And why are you promoting this former president?” (*Why are you investigating this poor son-of-a-bitch?*)

“Well, we caught him in the middle of the revolutionary family<sup>12</sup> and now he’s explaining inflation to us.” (*He belongs to a gang of thieves and now he keeps telling us lies.*)<sup>13</sup>

Emiliano Pérez Cruz uses urban language characteristic of Nezahualcóyotl City, the largest, most densely populated city in the world. In “Recordar es volver a gatear” (Remembering Is Going Back to Crawling) from his book *Borracho no vale* (Drunk Is No Good), he exhibits the ingenuity of the “Neza” dialect.

In his stories, we can recognize the marks of migration from countryside to the city, the forms of interaction that mix work and eroticism and the diversity of jobs characteristic of economically marginal urban areas.

Emiliano Pérez Cruz is one of a group of writers who have registered, with a dose of humor, irony and precision, the day-to-day existence that was also marginal to urban narrative until they began to write. Among this group are Armando Ramírez (the chronicler of the Tepito neighborhood, in downtown Mexico City), José Joaquín Blanco, Hermann Bellinghausen and a long etcetera that has already merited a first anthology, *El fin de la nostalgia* (The End of Nostalgia), published by Valverde y Argüelles in 1992, and the more recent publication of a collection of urban chronicles put out by the National Council for Culture and the Arts under the simple title *Periodismo cultural* (Cultural Journalism).<sup>14</sup>



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This article is an abridged version of an essay first published in Lauro Zavala, comp., *La ciudad escrita. Antología de cuentos urbanos con humor e ironía* (Mexico City: Solar, Servicios Editoriales, 2000), pp. 13-28.

<sup>2</sup> Salvador Novo, *Nueva grandeza mexicana. Ensayo sobre la ciudad de México y sus alrededores en 1946* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso Reyes, “Ficciones,” *Obras completas*, vol. 23 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> In Mexico, the trash man announces his presence by ringing a bell as the truck goes up the street. [Translator’s Note.] Reyes, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> José Agustín, “Cuál es la onda,” *Inventando que sueño* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967), p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Juan Villoro, *Tiempo transcurrido. Crónicas imaginarias* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1986), p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Óscar de la Borbolla, *Ucronías* (Mexico City, Joaquín Mortiz, 1990), pp. 89-91.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup> Rafael Bullé-Goyri, *Bodega de minucias* (Xalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 1996), p. 145.

<sup>11</sup> Parts of this quote are untranslatable because in Spanish, the subject of a sentence is often understood and not explicitly stated, thus leading to the confusion between the doctor’s location and the dog’s condition. In addition, in Spanish, all nouns and pronouns have gender, and there is therefore no pronoun for “it,” thus leading to the confusion between how to find the doctor and how the dog is doing, as well as whose hair is no longer falling out. [Translator’s Note.]

<sup>12</sup> The “revolutionary family” was the name given to the government party elite. [Translator’s Note.]

<sup>13</sup> Lazlo Moussong, *Castillos en la letra* (Xalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 1986), p. 151.

<sup>14</sup> Of course, some of these chroniclers have also merited special studies that show their literary richness and aesthetic and ideological breadth. See Linda Egan, “Lo marginal en el centro,” *Las crónicas de Carlos Monsiváis* (Doctoral thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1993); Linda Egan, “El ‘descronicamiento’ de la realidad (El macho mundo mimético en Ignacio Trejo Fuentes),” *Vivir del cuento (La ficción en México)* (Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, 1995), pp. 143-170; Gerardo de la Torre, “Periodismo cultural: palabras en juego,” *Memoria de papel. Crónicas de la cultura en México* 10 (1994), pp. 5-35; Carlos Monsiváis, “De la Santa Doctrina al Espíritu Público (sobre las funciones de la crónica en México),” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 35 (El Colegio de México, 1987); Carlos Monsiváis, “Apocalipsis y utopías,” *La Jornada Semanal*, 4 April 1999, pp. 3-5.

# Minor Arts Taking the Bus<sup>1</sup>

Jorge Ibarguengoitia\*

People think taking a bus is a pleasure, a necessity or an affliction, depending on their candor and optimism. I consider it more an art that one must learn and master. In my long years as a bus passenger, I have discov-

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\* Mexican author and playwright.

ered and substantiated the rules that I am going to explain, so that if any reader is interested, he or she may use them.

To wait for the bus: you have to do this while simultaneously saying your rosary, asking God that it not be too full and that the driver will want to stop. While waiting for a bus, you must





constantly run from one end of the block to the other, trying to read the signs on each of the buses lined up one immediately in front of the other. You also must watch the stoplight regulating vehicle movement along the block, move toward the middle when it's red and move back toward the corner when it's green.

To get on the bus: you must be the first one on, if necessary beating back arthritic women and mothers with children who are in your way, paying no attention to shouts of, "There are no gentlemen left in Mexico!"

Once on board: you must block the entrance and pay with a large denomination bill, thus forcing the driver to accelerate before all the passengers get on. Remember this maxim: every passenger is your enemy; the fewer of them, the better.

If the bus is full, you elbow your way back, always remembering to say, "Excuse me please," until you get to the side seats where nobody is sure if three or four should fit. Once there, you say, "Make a little room for me," and without further ado, sit on the two seated passengers and start reading the newspaper. Most of the time, one of the two victims will get up, furious, and leave. Then you can comfortably settle into the free seat.

If the seat next to you is vacated, you must open your legs as wide as possible and pretend to be asleep or start drooling to make sure nobody will sit down next to you. The further you are from the rest of the passengers, the better.

Behavior toward women: on buses, women have no priority (we've done enough letting them vote and do silly things in public). If an old lady

stumbles over to you and says, "Oh, sir, won't you have pity on me?" you answer, "No."

If the bus is empty and you're young—very young—high school kids, for example, you have to all get on at once and party. The moment you get on a bus is one of the few opportunities a young person has of expressing him or herself in public and letting everyone see his/her personality. To do that, you have to screech at the top of your lungs and come up with some really original quips like, "The last one on pays, driver," run to the back of the bus, all the while kicking your fellow students and sit on the back seat, jostling each other.

Once you're seated, if some of your friends are still on the street, it's a good idea to call out to them, but something clever like, "That Shooter! Where did you leave Jaws?" If you don't have any friends on the street, it's appropriate to take the pen away from the slowest kid in the bunch and threaten to throw it out the window. This will cause immediate screaming and a struggle that will inevitably create a good impression among the other passengers. It raises their spirits and makes them long to be young again so they, too, could party.

If you're a beautiful young girl, you must get on the bus swishing your long hair, with an expression on your face that says, "Bummer! Me here! I belong in a Jaguar!" Then, you have to sit down next to another woman just to avoid anyone touching your legs.

If you get on with children, you mustn't be selfish. You have to let the little mites come into contact with all the passengers, whom Mother Nature has probably deprived of the joy of





being mothers or fathers. You have to let your children play with the lapels of the gentleman next to you and with the hair of the lady sitting in front of you and lick the hand of whoever is holding on to the railing.

The bus is our home, even if only for a moment. While we ride in it, we must act completely naturally, as though we were in our own house. If we're tired, we take a nap; if we have a cold, we spit on the floor; if we're hungry, we eat a mango. If people get on and begin to sing or recite poetry, we must pay attention to them, even if afterward we don't put a nickel in their tin cup.

While we must maintain them at a distance, it is a good idea to be friendly to our fellow travelers. If one of them has been spitting, for example, when we get off the bus, it is appropriate to say in farewell, "Congratulations. You spit 14 times.

That's a record." These little things raise the spirits. If someone is standing in the stairwell, instead of saying, "Move over, you nuisance," it's a good idea to say, "You're fine there. You're not blocking anybody's way," and then stomp on his foot.

Lastly, you must remember that the bus driver is like the captain of a ship. He knows where to stop and you must accept his decisions, even if he takes you three blocks past your stop, drops you off in the middle of the block two lanes from the sidewalk, in the middle of a traffic jam or forces you to step down into a puddle. **MM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This short story is reprinted from Lauro Zavala, comp., *La ciudad escrita. Antología de cuentos urbanos con humor e ironía* (Mexico City: Solar, Servicios Editoriales, 2000), pp. 64-68.

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# Rodolfo Morales

## A Sovereign of Simplicity

Adán Esperanza\*

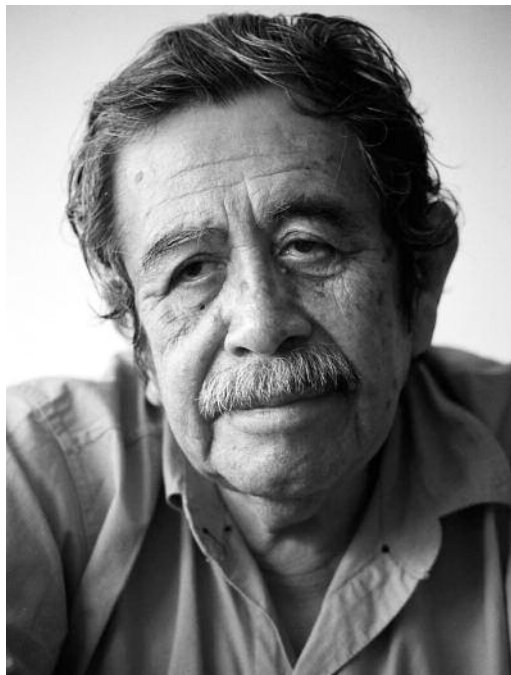
To speak of Rodolfo Morales is to speak of generosity, patience, character, love of his fellows. It is to speak of a painter of the people, the love of the people, of a unique artist.

Rodolfo Morales was born in Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca, May 8, 1925. His humble origins, his simplicity, his love, respect and admiration for women—for those wonderful women of his people—and his affection for the faithful friend and companion, to whom he told the great adventures and many odysseys of his childhood, his dog, are all well known.

Morales began his studies in 1949 in the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City. He painted his first work as an artist, a mural, in High School No. 5, where he was a drawing teacher.

From the beginning, Rodolfo Morales was a man who rendered daily life with no more complexity than that of a people—or rather, of his people. He also painted their dark faces, perhaps those of people tanned from their daily toil, figures lost in marvelous colors, characteristic of a master.

Of women, he always said, “I believe that Mexico has a matriarchy...They [women] are the ones who have the power in the family.” His work always showed the day-to-day to and fro of his people, their buildings, their colors, their individuals, a permanent dream, a possible hallucination of the fantastic, the unreal, that which can only be looked at with love and hope. His work, so important, has



Octavio Nava/A/E

traveled from his town to distant places in Mexico and the rest of the world: Spain, the United States, France, Canada, just to mention a few, where he is renowned.

An intimist, the painter of frescoes and waking dreams; delicate and rugged at the same time. In his canvases characters float absorbed by the beauty of the colors of Rodolfo Morales, angels wrapping his people in their arms, dogs keeping them company on every kind of occasion.

Ingenious, a dreamer, a lover of what was his—his people—and just as his work always depicts them, so was he always a simple man.

He liked going to a fiesta in his

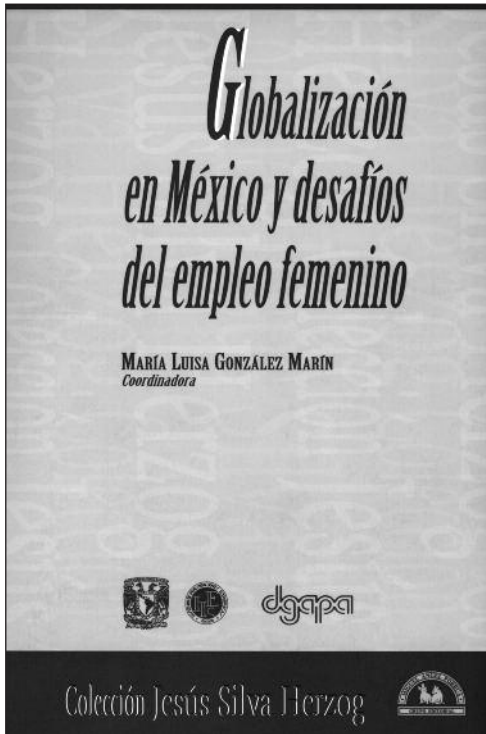
town better than going to some fancy, ostentatious place. He was just as comfortable on a rock on some street of a town as on an upholstered chair. He worked without great ado, just observing from his window, painting and painting.

On the way from his house in Ocotlán to the former monastery, he would silently greet other walkers. As he watched the restoration work, he would talk about his dreams. He had great projects for his town, like the restoration and conservation of churches—because if people appreciate anything in Oaxacan towns it is their churches. He also designed plans to support children—little artists—like the founding of a music school, and these projects have been taken up by the foundation that bears his name.

To talk about Rodolfo Morales is to talk about hopes, about a man with a great capacity for sharing (the house where he lived his last years is open to everyone), about giving and asking nothing in exchange, about an artist in all the meaning of the word. **MM**

\* Rodolfo Morales Cultural Foundation.

# Reviews



## **Globalización en México y desafíos del empleo femenino**

(Globalization in Mexico and the Challenges  
for Women's Employment)

*María Luisa González Marín*, comp.

Miguel Ángel Porrúa

Mexico City, 2000, 323 pp.

This book's central objective is to look at the changes that globalization has brought about in women's working conditions. The trade opening, the restructuring of production, flexibility on the job, the introduction of new technologies, the growth of the informal sector, the drop in social spending, the proliferation of maquiladoras and the spread of poverty are all issues that condition the way women enter the world of work and the magnitude of the challenges they face.

The first point that should be emphasized is that the increase in women's economic activities has not gone hand in hand with a growth in family income levels. Second, instead of the new forms of organization of labor alleviating or eliminating the old problems that women in the work force faced, they have sharpened them: we are now seeing new forms of submission, discrimination and obstacles to improving working conditions.

At the same time, several of the essays in this book deal with the fact that technological advances, increased media coverage, growing participation of women in the work force outside the home, their increased educational levels and the possibilities opened up by part-time work, piecework and homework



are contributing to the construction of a new feminine identity. Traditional values (being submissive, sensible, self-sacrificing) are being displaced by others that make it possible for women to participate more in public life (being intelligent, hard-working, organized).

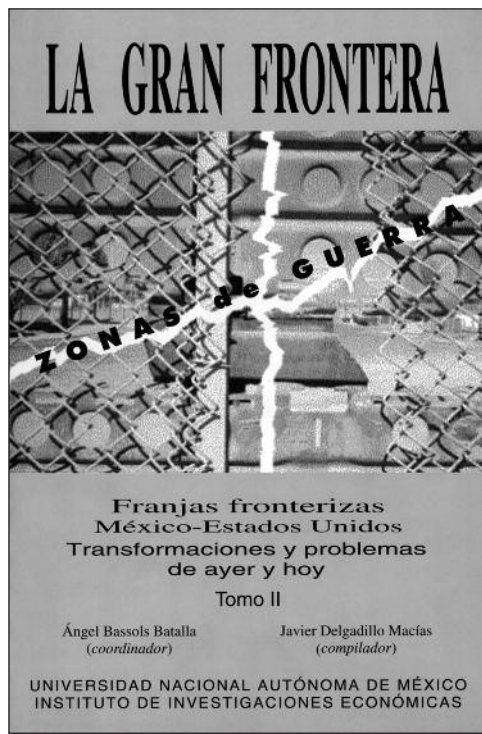
The book points to how at the same time that it has increased poverty and women's employment in low-paying jobs, globalization has also caused transformations in the social consciousness that leads to the construction of a new women's identity. Today, women are expanding their presence in the different spheres of public life, occupying high-level posts and taking responsibility for important jobs in government, schoolrooms, business and research. However, for most women, having the best-paying jobs is still a far-off goal. The possibility that the little girls of today achieve a high educational level and a good job in 15 or 20 years depends on several factors, among which is the change that must be made in today's economic policies.

No matter how fast they run to catch up with modernity, women almost always get there late; only a few are part of the privileged minority. What is happening is so bad that getting a job as a worker in a maquila plant or as a saleswoman or doing homework is seen by the women themselves as something to be prized given the poverty, unemployment and violence around them. Not only does society need to offer women better jobs, but it must also eliminate sexual harassment in the work place, the depreciation of jobs that mainly women do, violence and the lack of concern over the problems they face in raising and educating their children. A world in which housework and taking care of children is seen as an essential social function that must be fulfilled by both men and women—the key for really establishing the bases for an egalitarian society—still seems a long way off. While globalization has contributed to deepening women's struggles for their rights, it has also worsened women's working conditions.

The book mainly looks at women's employment in Mexico by economic sectors (services, commerce, agriculture and industry). It also examines two topics of special interest: the changes in women's educational levels and the future of women's employment in Mexico between now and the year 2015. Since the factors that affect the job market are not exclusive to Mexico, we have also included four studies that compare the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on women's employment—including indigenous women—in the three countries of North America.

This book can be useful to readers interested in scrutinizing the challenges that NAFTA and globalization pose for women's employment, challenges that future generations of women will have to face. Change always causes uncertainty and fear; modernity could be catastrophic for us women; avoiding that depends to a great extent on the action taken to put an end to gender and class subordination.

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**La gran frontera. Zona de guerra.  
Franjas fronterizas México-Estados Unidos**

(The Great Border. War Zone. Mexico-U.S. Border Areas)

*Ángel Bassols Batalla*, coordinator; and *Javier Delgadillo Macías*, comp.

Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas-UNAM

Mexico City, vol. 1, 1998, 297 pp.; vol. 2, 1999, 463 pp.

In 1990 the Institute for Economic Research (IIE) began its project “Mexico-U.S. Border Areas” to commemorate the approaching 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo through which Mexico lost 1.4 million square kilometers of territory to the United States and because for 500 years, conflicts have been a constant along the great border.

The research project, which lasted 10 years and is dedicated to the memory of those who have given their lives and talent in the quest for justice in this area, bore fruit in the form of two volumes dealing with the social and economic problems of the two border areas: the states of the United States that used to be part of Mexico and which maintain close economic and social ties to our country, and the northern, northeastern and northwestern states of Mexico today.



The books' objective is to contribute to the defense of Mexico's national interests and sovereignty along the border with the United States. It also aims to encourage our country's young academics and social leaders to familiarize themselves with the region's economic, social and geopolitical situation and illustrate the need to deepen our knowledge of the history of relations with our neighbor to the north, particularly in the framework of the transactions derived from NAFTA.

Many sources in both Mexican and U.S. libraries were consulted to dilucidate central questions in this study like the settlement of the border areas. The first volume, *Territorial Domination, Conflicts and Disintegration* presents an overview of the different processes of colonization as the Europeans (Spaniards, French, English and Russians) arrived in North America in the sixteenth century, the "struggle for social space" between those immigrants (and, after 1800, also the citizens of the new United States) and the original, indigenous inhabitants. This was the beginning of sharp contradictions and attempts at greater expansion by these new citizens.

It also presents a comparative graph of the Greater Mexico of 1821 and the Mexico of today. After the signing of the Adams-Onís Treaty, which cost Spain the northern part of California, as well as Utah, Nevada and Colorado, U.S. expansion westward intensified. This led to the loss of Texas (1836-1845), war between the two countries (1846-1848) and the loss of La Mesilla in 1853.

A new wave of violence and harassment against U.S. citizens of Mexican origin broke out after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The attempts to conquer and/or buy new Mexican lands continued well into the 1880s when Porfirio Díaz consolidated his dictatorship. He was the one who set Mexico firmly on the road to capitalist underdevelopment with his concessions to the United States' blossoming industrial capitalism.

The last part of this volume deals with the wars of expulsion and/or extermination against the indigenous peoples of the U.S. North and Southwest.

The second volume *Transformations and Problems, Yesterday and Today*, covers the period from 1880 to the end of the twentieth century. In addition to emphasizing the importance of regional studies, it also deals with particularities of the border region, among them a sketch of the power groups at play, the situation of Mexican workers who emigrate to the United States and some well-known figures in recent history.

Numerous tables, graphs and maps illustrate and reinforce the thinking in both volumes, as well as the didactic objective of this study, which unravels the different conflicts in the area that tend to intensify with globalization and economic integration. The book finishes on the note of pointing out the insufficiency of the measures taken to resolve the differences and contradictions.

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Nishizawa

