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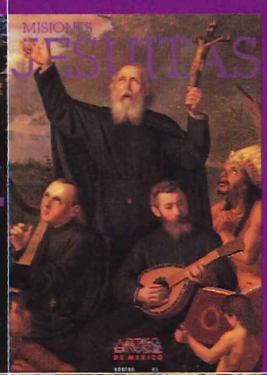

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VOICES of Mexico™

Issue 73 October-December 2005

Elsie Montiel

Cover:
Kayum Ma'ax, Birthing, 1999 (Acrylic on canvas).

Back Cover:
Kayum Ma'ax. Photo: Rubén Vázquez

Contents

Rubén Vázquez

Our Voice

These days the predominant note in the international situation is disaster. The natural disasters caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Stan are testing governments' ability to deal with the consequences. Katrina and the devastation it caused in the southern United States have brought into question the strategy of contention that Washington so fervently boasted of having prepared and the effectiveness of the states in implementing it to deal with natural disasters.

Secondly, this questions states' political determination to establish a strategy of this type. Thirdly, it forces doubt to the surface about governments' —mainly the U.S. government— real willingness to take cognizance of global warming, linked to the Kyoto Protocol, which Washington has repeatedly refused to sign over the years. Lastly, given the Homeland Security Department's failure to respond to the human, economic and social disaster that Katrina represented for the poorest inhabitants of New Orleans, the question arises about whether the very conception of security should not change radically and whether it should not be understood in an integral way, as both a factor in and a means for achieving national sustainability.

The Bush administration is in serious difficulties: it invaded Iraq against international public opinion without having achieved beforehand the successes proposed domestically; it has failed in its attempt to combat terrorism with the invasion, not to mention the military failure that this adventure has been.

To top it all off, Hurricane Katrina has dealt a harsh blow to the administration's credibility: it did not know how to and did not even want to deal with this crisis. Not only did it not predict it, but it underestimated it on its list of priorities, favoring the military action in the Middle East. It sacrificed, then, social consensus even more than it already had done in the name of a concept of security that was empty, dogmatic and highly militarist, which in the end failed in the face of nature's fury.

The policy crisis in political systems, particularly when it is also shaking the Republican Party in Congress because of the accusations of corruption against House majority leader Tom DeLay, is causing serious disruption and, given the absence of consensuses, threatens to become a serious problem of state: the administration is suffering from a crisis caused by a natural disaster, but is not dealing with its origins. It is also not taking responsibility for this dangerous dynamic that, with time, points to a break in the basic key equilibriums in both the domestic democratic order and the international order.

* * *

Mexico's 2006 presidential electoral process began officially on October 1. The campaigns for party nominations are in full swing and the hopefuls are launching their last proposals. This is one of the world's longest electoral processes, and also one of the most expensive.

The press and the media are concentrated on following any and all activity by the actors they think are key: the parties themselves, the front-runners and electoral institutions. And they are putting analysis about what is undoubtedly the main protagonist of the process itself, the citizenry, on the back burner. *Voices of Mexico* has dedicated this issue's "Politics" section precisely to the thinking about public participation in Mexico, looking at the different kinds of political activity: electoral and in social movements and civic organizations. We begin with the second part of former member of the Federal Electoral Institute's General Council Mauricio Merino's thoughts about political transition in Mexico, in which he deals above all with the challenges for solidly consolidating democracy. Merino examines three: the solution of the problem of governability and even the relevance of maintaining the presidentialist system; the much-needed adjustment of political and

government institutions to the new democratic pluralism; and the most long term effort, the transformation of political culture above all through education. Sociologist Roberto Gutiérrez analyzes the depth of the causes of growing abstentionism, which paradoxically has increased in this democratic period. Among its causes, he emphasizes the increasing distance between the citizenry and the political elites created, among other things, by the public's disillusionment in parties and politicians because of their continued priority on special interests and short term problems instead of the population's more structural interests. Tracing the genealogy of abstentionism is of capital importance today for the course of our transition. Equally, we cannot defer the need to understand the social and political reasons for an increase in other kinds of political participation that parallels the jump in abstentionism. Political scientist María Fernanda Somuano deals with the issue pointing out the paradox that even though abstentionism has rocketed, non-conventional political participation is on the rise, sometimes even extra-legal and violent. The risk for democracy in this kind of participation is not in healthy citizens' mobilization in protests or community activities, but in the growing perception that the more extreme a movement, the more it disregards the rules and the rule of law, the greater the possibility that it will be taken into account. Finally, analyst Carlos González contributes an illustrative article about trends in women's and young people's electoral participation: while women have increased their interest in politics, young people seem to be in frank retreat. New paradoxes of our young democracy are emerging: greater women's participation is not yet matched by a proportional number of women in public decision-making and government posts, and the new forms of doing politics has not only not appealed more to young citizens, but seems to have even increased their mistrust of public institutions. All these are just a few of the challenges to the democratic transition in its current phase of consolidation which faces the dilemma of perhaps irremediably distancing itself from the electorate if it does not seriously undertake the changes that its institutions require.

A democracy presupposes not only equal political rights and clear, trustworthy electoral rules. It also demands equal opportunities and treatment for each and every one of its citizens, be they men or women. Our "Society" section is dedicated to the shameful problem of discrimination in Mexico. José Luis Gutiérrez Espíndola describes the situation of a nation in which exclusionary practices are widespread daily experiences despite official and party discourses and rhetoric. Discrimination is exercised against all the traditionally marginalized groups: women, senior citizens, foreigners, the differently abled, the socially and economically disadvantaged, etc., and particularly ferociously against AIDS patients, members of minority religions and non-heterosexuals. These actions are founded on very deeply-rooted social attitudes, which means that once again a radical transformation of our civic culture is needed to eradicate them. Without that, Mexican democracy will not be able to finally consolidate.

The "Economy" section presents a contribution by Eliézer Tijerina, an important critic of Mexican economic policies for the last 25 years, about the impact of the Washington Consensus on the design of our country's economic policy. Tijerina maintains that the extreme orthodoxy with which neo-liberal principles designed for Latin American economic development more than 15 years ago have produced the opposite effect from their original aim: the economy has stagnated and the population's well-being has plummeted. Of the 10 points included in the 1989 accord, practically none has been sufficiently flexible to adapt to special circumstances, and in some instances there has even been notorious incapacity in their implementation.

"North American Issues" is dedicated to an examination of Mexico's industrial policies in the context of the first 10 years of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Researcher Monica Gambrill shows us how industrial policy implemented since 1994 not only has not allowed the country to utilize its comparative advantages as a NAFTA member, but that, quite to the contrary, its effects have been prejudicial in many ways, leading the Mexican manufacturing sector to limit itself to assembling imported parts as though it were the maquiladora industry, instead of producing them. The general result of this trend is that far from NAFTA having an equalizing effect among

the countries of the region, for example in industrial wages and technology production, what has happened is actually an increase in disparities.

* * *

Once again in this issue we have dedicated our cultural space to the state of Chiapas, with its seemingly inexhaustible bounty. "Art and Culture" opens with the work of Kayum Ma'ax, a Lacandón painter alien to global painting trends and currents, who paints legends in order to preserve the traditions of his people. And speaking of traditions, Kazuyasu Ochiai takes us to San Andrés Larráinzar in the Chiapas Highlands to see the ancient *kompánya* ritual, a ceremony involving the patron saints of neighboring villages who visit each other on festival days, and asks himself about the changes that the emergence of the Zapatista Army may have brought about in these customs. Angélica Altuzar tells us about the struggle of the "prayers of Santa Tierra" to preserve their tradition of praying to the hills so that the gods living there will help safeguard the harvest, the land and good relations in the community from the onslaught from established religions and modernity. Lastly, Luis Vargas reveals the pre-Hispanic origin of some of our favorite foods like popcorn and special Chiapas instant drinks.

"The Splendor of Mexico" stops off first at Chiapa de Corzo. María del Carmen Valverde explains this city's importance and the secrets it holds, secrets that go beyond its famous *Mudéjar* fountain and being the port of entry for the Sumidero Canyon. For his part, Tomás Pérez Suárez goes to the Soconusco region to reveal its vast Mixe-Zoque pre-Hispanic legacy, a large part of which is assembled at the Soconusco Archaeological Museum. The section closes with a photo portfolio that follows some of the many roads to be traveled in Chiapas.

"Museums" presents our readers with the Belisario Domínguez House Museum, in honor of a man for whom freedom of expression and love of homeland were more valuable than his own life, located in the beautiful city of Comitán. "Ecology" introduces us to the world of organic coffee, produced combining care and protection for consumers' health and the environment, and that is the hope of thousands of small producers for whom it is their only source of income. Mexico is the world's foremost producer of organic coffee, and most of it comes from Chiapas.

The "Literature" section presents a sample of the work of outstanding Chiapas-born poet Efraín Bartolomé, whose metaphors and expressive force puts us in touch with the spirit of Chiapas even without going there. Prestigious critic Juan Domingo Argüelles explains the importance of this renowned Mexican author. We also include a fragment of the novel *Las posibilidades del odio* (The Possibilities of Hatred) by María Luisa Puga, without a doubt one of the most important women's voices in twentieth-century Mexican literature. Literary researcher Carlos Urrutia offers us an extraordinary sketch of the life and work of this recently deceased author to whom we pay homage in this issue.

Our "In Memoriam" section is dedicated to the exceptional woman and outstanding researcher, Beatriz Ramírez de la Fuente, probably one of the most prestigious scholars and publicists of pre-Hispanic art in our country, who has been remembered by friends, disciples and colleagues from many fora as a pioneer in a study of history with a humanist focus. María Teresa Uriarte, Diana Magaloni, Leticia Staines and Alfonso Arellano, each from a different standpoint, write about her innumerable, invaluable contributions to our national culture and historical research.

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

The Voted Transition Part II

Mauricio Merino*

Germán Romero/Cuartoscuro

As we saw in the last issue of *Voices of Mexico*, the Mexican transition has not been a compromise between power seeking-elites, but a gradual step-by-step process of small negotiations limited to the electoral arena, all related to the 1996 electoral reforms. Therefore, we could conclude that the Mexican transition was not based on a pact, but rather, was a voted transition. Changes have occurred since the beginning in the electoral sphere and in the party system, as we explained in the first part of this analysis. Now, we will talk about the overwhelming impact of these changes in the Mexican electoral system: the transition from the hegemony of an almost single party to a party system. In this respect, the following facts stand out:

1. Up until the mid-term elections in 1985, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) always held a greater than two-thirds ma-

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jority in the Chamber of Deputies. In 1988 it lost that majority, and in 1997 it even lost the absolute majority.

2. Up until 1989, only 39 out of the 2,387 municipalities that existed then were ruled by parties other than the PRI: 1.84 percent of the population.[1] By December 2000, that figure had grown to more than 500 municipalities, while the PRI held 1,382 out of 2,427. In terms of population, by the end of 2000, the PRI governed 44.11 percent at the municipal level; the National Action Party (PAN), 37 percent; and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), 15 percent. But we must add that, before the 2000 elections, 63.6 percent of the population had already experienced local government by alternate parties, and if we take into consideration Mexico City, the figure rises to almost eight out of every ten persons.
3. Regarding local legislatures, according to data compiled by Alonso Lujambio, political change has been very similar: if in 1974 the PRI had 97.8 percent of all the seats, at the start of 2000 it held 49.6 percent.[2] However, another fact must be taken into consideration: in 1974 there were 369 local seats, while at the start of 2000 the figure had increased to 1,108. This means that the PRI lost decision making capabilities, but not seats. In other words, the political class kept its spaces open. So, if at the beginning of the 1970s there were opposition representatives in only four out of 31 local legislatures —4 deputies out of 369—, by the end of the 1990s, as we have already said, the PRI no longer held the majority of seats. The aggregate result is that, even though the formerly hegemonic party still gets the most votes, it has lost the absolute majority.
4. On the other hand, so-called "divided governments" —where the executive and the legislative branches hail from different parties— did not exist in Mexico until 1989. But by the end of 2000 there were already 20 cases of divided government. And even before that year's July elections, 15 states had already had that experience.
5. Regarding the Senate, as we have already explained, in 1993 the electoral system introduced the legal concept of first minority senator for every state: the party that came in in second place would be awarded one seat. But in 1996, with double the number of senators —128 instead of 64— two would be elected by majority vote, one would be allotted to the largest minority, and 32 would be elected from a national proportional representation list. Once again, the electoral system was the door that led to plurality.
6. Finally, on July 2, 2000, for the first time since its birth in 1929, the PRI did not win the presidential elections. So what had been happening in the periphery —in state legislatures and local governments, bolstered by the principle of proportional representation— became the basis for the competition for the center.

At least three problems arise for the consolidation of democracy. First and most notably is the one regarding the decision-making and action capabilities of the presidential regime.

THE NEXT STEP

All this is enough to explain why the Mexican transition toward democracy is not just starting, but has already closed a cycle, even though it has not followed in the steps of other countries. It has followed a pattern based on political liberalization, the salvaging of institutions, and, most evidently, votes. What does seem clear —even though it is always harder to conjecture about the future than to narrate the past— is that democratic consolidation will have to settle the issues it has left unsolved. To go from the electoral and party system —as has been the case up to now— to the political system as a whole implies different problems that can no longer be studied under the same theory of democratic transition. Looking at the same data from the opposite side, at least three problems arise for the consolidation of democracy. First and most notably is the one regarding the decision- making and action capabilities —and even the pertinence— of the presidential regime. The data we have mentioned as evidence of democratization can also be interpreted as a challenge to governability, at least in the short run: the president's hege-

mony, which used to be the gravitational center of the political system as a whole, no longer exists. The president's party has no majority in any of the federal legislative chambers. He is now compelled to negotiate everything with the opposition. And the PRI has become the strongest opposition party in Mexican history. So, to the negotiations in Congress we must add the federal struggle —which the PRI never had to face during its rule. But if this was not enough, we must still remember that the PAN is not a party of corporations gathered around power. It was not born and did not evolve to be a transmitter of presidential instructions, and it does not include unions, peasant groups or intermediate organizations that pledge their support to the executive. This is in contrast to the way in which the PRI was created —and worked.[3] Those groups lost votes and rallying power, but most of them are still affiliated to the PRI. Thus, from the outset, President Vicente Fox's room for maneuver has been much more limited than that of any other president, at least since 1934.

This problem leads, in the second place, to the need to exercise government conforming to the letter of formal institutionalism: to the letter of the law and constitutional political institutions. But, again, good news must be interpreted also as the main challenge: these institutions, particularly those of local governments, changed during the transition in order to open growing spaces for plurality. None can be governed effectively without an agreement between two or more parties. Furthermore, it is an institutionalism that was created mainly while the authoritarian regime was in place. This means that the habit of social participation by citizens or of an institutionalism meant to allow for public debate, transparent negotiations, and efficiency, all at the same time, does not exist in the local or the federal governments. Institutions were created with government-by-one-person in mind, not by many reaching agreements. That is the reason why, besides the general challenge that adapting to democracy implies, political institutions have to adjust to pluralism. Thus, the key to a stable government is not to be found in intermediate organizations, or even in the media, but in the prudence and responsibility of the leaders of the different parties. This is the strongest point made by those who claim that the transition has just begun: indeed, with the exception of the electoral system, political institutions in Mexico were not designed by a democratic regime, and the windows they provide for citizens' participation are still very few.[4]

And finally, clearly connected with this, we must add the contradictions embedded in Mexican political culture which, at least for some time —while democracy educates— will continue to combine traits that belong to an authoritarian logic with others that are already part of democratic life. In this respect, the results of a December 1999 Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) poll are telling:[5]

1. Forty-eight percent of respondents said that they were not very interested in politics, and 24 percent said they were not interested at all. This is complemented by the fact that 76 percent said they preferred a strong leader. In other words, people believe in voting (over 80 percent), but it is clear that they want to use their votes to elect leaders who can solve all public matters, as if this space were not their business also. They want a strong president; an elected, but very strong one.
2. Regarding the rule of law, 44 percent said that laws should be obeyed always. But at the same time, 29 percent said that laws should be changed, while 24 percent claimed a right to disobey them "if they deem them unfair."
3. Finally, 41 percent of those surveyed believe that in order to build "a great nation," all citizens must share the same ideas and values. This is in tune with these other facts: 66 percent said they would not coexist with homosexuals; 57 percent would not accept living with someone with AIDS; 56 percent with someone of a different race; and worse yet, 51 percent would not live with someone who had different political views. But is that not what democracy is all about?

In short, the three traits that set the Mexican transition apart from others are at the same time the hardest chal-

With the exception of the electoral system, political institutions in Mexico were not designed by a democratic regime, and the windows they provide for citizens' participation are still very few.

lenges that democratic consolidation faces. A cycle in the transition process has already been closed. It has led Mexico to plurality and a new party system, but democracy itself is indeed only just beginning. It seems rather evident that democracy cannot be regarded as a destination, but as the means to channel political conflicts and, at the same time, paraphrasing the Constitution, as a way to process public life, that is, not as a checkered flag but as a means to solve public affairs. Norberto Bobbio has offered one of the simplest, and at the same time, one of the most complex descriptions to implement democracy: make public matters public.

It is clear that this requires a building and maintenance process that cannot be subjected to a timetable. Rather, it implies a constant challenge based on clearly established rules and guided by the three values that at some point must be shared by the main political forces of the country and by the vast majority of the citizens: responsibility and/or shared responsibility of each and every participant; tolerance, which allows coexistence with adversaries who embrace different points of view, and solidarity among all, based on an unwavering commitment to uphold the rule of law. On these bare foundations a political process that is something more than a sort of end-cause can be effectively built.

For today's democratic Mexico, the most important debate should be about institutions, which are generally marginalized, in order to put temporary solutions to temporary problems in their right dimension. Institutionalism, supported by the strength of the rule of law and by the respect of every actor, is what can alleviate, even if only in part, pessimistic sentiments.

It seems rather evident that democracy cannot be regarded as a destination, but as the means to channel political conflicts and, at the same time, as a means to solve public affairs.

And what are those concerns? There are at least five delicate matters: first, the tendency of political parties to make a priority of electoral matters, and not always those of an institutional nature, which are national, shared and tolerant.

A second issue has to do with the way in which Mexican society is told about changes. In this respect, the media have historic opportunities and responsibilities, since the way in which it gathers and reports the news turns it into the channel between citizens and institutions. One of the central conditions for democratic consolidation is a well informed citizenry.

In the third place come those powers that are only known because of their perverse effects: drug-trafficking, organized crime and public and private corruption. The strength of responsible political institutions that are willing to defend the rule of law could gradually undermine those hidden powers.

Another important issue has to do with those forces that because of pessimism or ideological convictions have decided not to cooperate with institutional development and have opted to stay outside the process. The best example of this is the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), whose causes have rattled the national conscience, but whose methods have not enabled them to be partners in the democratic consolidation process, simply because violence, in any of its forms, has never been the road that leads to building a democracy anywhere in the world.

Finally, as long as economic frailty is not completely averted, political institutions will obviously be at risk. However, if an institutional vision assumes its share of responsibility for national solvency, in every sense, and not only because of specific or, even worse, circumstantial interests, economic vulnerability, and even the sum of the five points we have mentioned can be successfully overcome.

The necessary condition is an enormous capacity to educate and increase awareness. To think that democracy is the sole responsibility of political parties or even their leaders is one of the worst mistakes that Mexico can make at this or at any other time. VM

NOTES

[1] Alonso Lujambio, *El poder compartido. Un ensayo sobre la democratización mexicana* (Mexico City: Océano, 2000), p. 78.

[2] Ibid., p. 43 on.

[3] Luis Javier Garrido, *El Partido de la Revolución Institucionalizada* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1995).

[4] Again, it is in local government where this is beginning to change, albeit slowly. See Mauricio Merino, comp., *En busca de la democracia local* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1995); and Martha Schteingart and Emilio Duhau, comps., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia* (Mexico City: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2001).

[5] *Plan trianual de educación cívica 2001-2003* (Mexico City: IFE, 1999).

The 2006 Elections
The Phantom of Abstentionism

Roberto Gutiérrez L.*

Blanca Esthela Hernández/Cuartoscuro

Today, Mexico's political-electoral life is marked by a severe paradox. For the last two years or so, the main public actors have been obsessed with the 2006 electoral race, while the public does not seem to be expressing the same interest, as can be seen in its gradual abandonment of the ballot box, shown in a record almost 60-percent abstentionism in the 2003 federal elections.

Later local elections were not very encouraging either. To cite just a few examples, in the state of Quintana Roo in February 2005, abstentionism weighed in at 48 percent, while in the State of Mexico, it reached almost 60 percent. These figures are even more worrying if we consider that in both cases, the governor's seat was up for election.

It is a matter for concern that for the second half of President Fox's term, the parties, chambers of Congress, public servants at all levels, the judicial branch, the media, and business and union leaders have structured their

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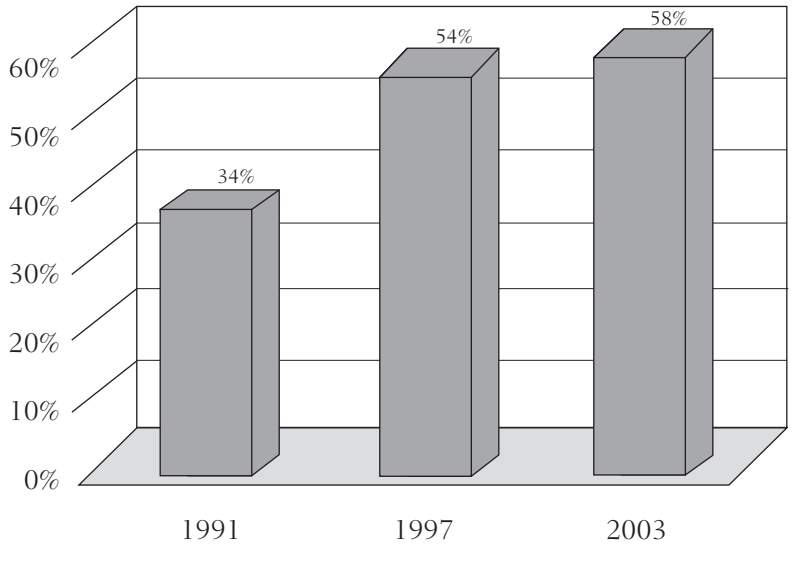
agendas and dedicated a significant part of their time to next year's federal elections without trying to readjust their basic relationship with the citizenry. Thus, the main tasks and responsibilities, crucial from the point of view of the population's interests, concerns and expectations, have been neglected.

This divorce between the elites' and the citizens' agendas represents a major problem for the political system as a whole since its causes and implications structurally affect the possibilities of consolidating democracy in Mexico.

Exploring the complex causes that lead a considerable portion of the citizenry to abstain in certain situations and explaining the implications and the effects of the impact this behavior has on the entire democratic system will allow us to understand more general problems related to the functioning of public institutions, the political parties, the system of representation and civic culture. In other words, the size of abstentionism is an indicator of social, political and cultural processes that, in specific combinations, make up its causal premise.[1]

For the last two years or so, the main public actors have been obsessed with the 2006 electoral race, while the public does not seem to be expressing the same interest, as can be seen in its gradual abandonment of the ballot box.

GRAPH 1
ABSTENTIONISM IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS



Source: Created by the author with data from the Federal Electoral Institute.

There is no doubt that the citizenry's abandonment of the ballot box has reduced the quality of political representation in Mexico, with an important impact on the structural legitimacy of government. At the same time, the system of state accountability to society has been complicated by the elites' autonomy *vis-à-vis* the citizenry. Finally, since voting is the main way citizens can communicate to politicians whether they think their interests are being fostered or not, a voter not exercising his/her right to cast a ballot can be an indication that a sector of society (which may be a majority, as in the case of Mexico in 2003) thinks the political elites are not living up to its expectations.[2]

Thus, an analysis of public participation in the 2006 elections cannot ignore that abstentionism is part of a broader process of disillusionment in public institutions and a feeling that individual action is ineffective, a process that some authors think is also linked to a political crisis in contemporary societies manifested in the lack of confidence in democratic institutions.[3]

In Mexico's case, what is at stake in the next federal elections is the evaluation the voter will make of his/her vote. We can already say that there will be at least two kinds of value judgments. The first is related to the so-called "prospective vote" and the second to the so-called "retrospective vote." In the first case, voters will evaluate the candidates' promises and the possibility that they will be kept, and in the second case, they will make their decision also taking into account the concrete results of prior political performance.

Thus, in 2006 the abstention rate will be influenced by two trends that up until now seem contradictory. The

first is the current hopefuls' ability to generate enthusiasm and motivate people, especially the capability of the man who has consistently headed the polls, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The second trend is linked to people's disenchantment with politics and politicians, directly tied to the fact that the expectations created in 2000 have not been met by Vicente Fox's government.

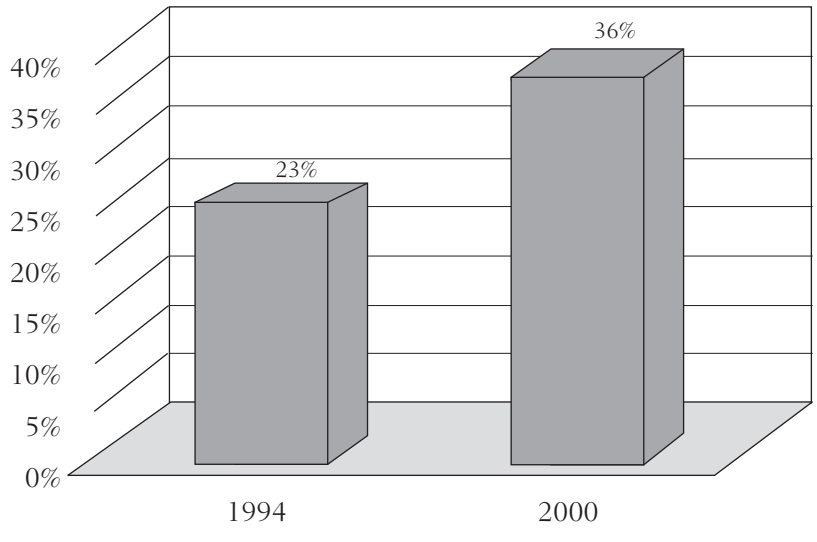
Given this situation, even if electoral participation were to be revived by López Obrador's candidacy, it would not automatically mean that there has been a change in Mexican political culture nor that the public has understood the importance that voting has for democracy or its repercussions in the quality of society's dynamic. Rather, this phenomenon would be explained, first of all, by the fact that there are routinely higher turn-outs for presidential elections that for legislative ones, and secondly, by the continuance of political-cultural traditions of caudillismo and the weight of charismatic leaders in the Mexican social imaginary. It cannot be denied that certain social policies implemented by López Obrador while he was head of Mexico City's government produced recycled hopes for a significant change in the short term.

Certainly, and regardless of whether the bases and real scope of those policies can be questioned, the credibility of the project and candidacy of the former head of Mexico City's government seems well grounded, above all in the most vulnerable sectors of society. Finally, the fact that his popularity did not vanish despite the scandals and litigation that marked the end of his administration indicates the strength of a model of relations between charismatic leader and social base in which blind belief and idealization turn the leader into a practically untouchable figure.

Generally speaking, overcoming some of the structural obstacles that today prevent citizens from improving and broadening their identification with the political processes and actors in a more modern, democratic way does not look easy in the short term. In that sense, it should be pointed out that the citizen's relationship with political parties is very difficult because what political theory calls significant party identifications have not been consolidated. To the extent that citizens see parties and their proposals as alien, the possibilities of clearly understanding political phenomena dwindle, and therefore, so do the possibilities for effective participation. Without loyalty to parties, without expectations about the effectiveness of their actions and without motivation to support their strategies, electoral competition tends to lose its meaning and inspire more rejection than enthusiasm. The latter seems to emerge, as I said before, only when strong figures appear on the public scene. In addition, up until now, the

Abstentionism is part of a broader process of disillusionment in public institutions and a feeling that individual action is ineffective, a process that is also linked to a political crisis in contemporary societies.

Graph 2
Abstentionism in Presidential Elections



Source: Created by the author with data from the Federal Electoral Institute.

legal registration of new parties has not seemed to inject greater vitality into the existing party system.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere in today's Mexico, continues to be one in which debate is synonymous with reciprocal attacks and strategies are based more on exploiting your adversary's mistakes in the media than on disseminating proposals and policy initiatives. In that framework, citizens obviously cannot find strong reasons to get actively involved in electoral campaigns or to go to the polls. This problem has important historic roots, as shown by the fact that abstentionism has been growing for more than a decade, both in presidential and mid-term elections. This is clearly borne out by the graphs.

At first glance, this poses a paradox. During the 1990s, Mexico went through a democratization process marked by a series of institutional changes and growing electoral competition. Holding free, competitive elections, with several choices and guarantees that citizens' votes would be respected seemed initially to be a factor that would foster more participation. However, as we have seen, participation has dropped off, which is even more noteworthy if we take into account that electoral officials and parties have both invested large sums of money to motivate participation. This is why locating the precise source of abstentionism has become a matter of political and academic interest.

As we have suggested, the explanation of this phenomenon has to include a large number of variables that could be separated into two large groups: those we will call structural and those that are specific to the conjuncture. Among the first are people's perceptions about and attitudes toward democracy and the importance of voting; about the main government institutions; and about political parties and social organizations. Also of considerable impact is the quality of political information citizens have.

Among the variables specific to the conjuncture are: having an up-to-date voter registration card; support and benefits received for voting; the importance given to a specific election; the quality of the campaigns and the candidates; and the assessment of the outgoing government. The specific combination of these variables, which include the evaluation of the past and perspectives for the future already alluded to, makes it possible to understand citizens' view of their present, and, therefore, their behavior at the polls.

Coming up to 2006, then, it is necessary to take into account:

- the role of political disappointment and voters' lowered expectations after alternation in office for the presidency;
- people's perception that individual action is not very effective;
- public institutions' and political actors' lack of credibility;
- weak identification with political parties;
- the excessive length and negative image of electoral campaigns;
- the erosion of the main parties' ideological identity;
- the scant relevance and negative image of Congress and the parties; and
- the importance of charismatic leaders.

Overcoming some of the structural obstacles that prevent citizens from improving and broadening their identification with the political processes and actors in a more democratic way does not look easy in the short term.

It seems obvious that the historic gap between Mexico's political class and its constituency, which should be its central reference point, will continue to be the trend, abating only because of the recurring hope stemming from personal leaderships, not strong organizations.

Taking into account the weight of the factors that discourage electoral participation, it seems necessary and possible to contrast some of the political-cultural tasks that would accompany a reversal of the abstentionist trend. In the first place, it is urgent to begin to reconstruct the bridges between the world of politics and day-to-day life, uncovering both the positive and negative effects of political actors' decisions and of the functioning of the public institutions.

This, of course, would have to include a self-criticism by the political elites of the image they project in society. The civic counter-values represented by corruption, secret negotiations, scandal-mongering denunciations and the lack of effective dialogue and respect for the rule of law would have to be progressively disarticulated and substituted by the values of a pluralist, tolerant democratic culture, respectful of

the law and sustained in a reasoned exchange of ideas. Otherwise, it would be very difficult for citizens to see the sphere of politics as one that really represents them and in which they are, in the last analysis, those who hold power.

On this basis and with a normative perspective, it seems feasible to propose the construction of a virtuous circle that would encourage the greatest possible participation. In it, there would be a place for a positive evaluation of the democratic system, a higher sense of responsibility toward the community and of loyalty toward the representative regime, as well as a significant level of confidence in institutions and of effectiveness of citizens' action. It would also include strong identification with a party, sufficient information, attractive electoral campaigns and effective institutional action both in getting out the vote and in updating voter rolls.

Obviously this is an ideal picture; however, it has enormous practical usefulness for building a long-term agenda. In this context, the 2006 elections are an opportunity for the political and social actors with the greatest public responsibility to begin to float initiatives oriented this way.

The responsibility for abstentionism falls on the shoulders of all the institutions and actors in Mexican public life, and in each and every one, from political parties to communications media, from unions to social organizations, and from educational institutions to electoral officials, some sectors have already begun to reestablish the democratic legitimacy of politics and to motivate public participation. Today, their action is key for reversing the democratic fragility of a social and institutional base that is currently insufficient to meet the challenges of consolidating democracy in the country. VM

NOTES

[1] A more detailed discussion of this idea can be found in Esperanza Palma and Roberto Gutiérrez, *El abstencionismo en las elecciones federales del 2003*, mimeographed copy (Mexico City: IFE/UAM, November 2004).

[2] Benjamín Temki, "Explorando la dinámica del abstencionismo electoral" (paper read at the Seminar for the Analysis of National Surveys about Political Culture and Civic Practices, Mexico City, September 2003).

[3] Ulrico Beck, "Teoría de la sociedad en riesgo," *Las consecuencias perversas de la modernidad* (Madrid/Barcelona: Anthropos, 1996), and Anthony Giddens, *Un mundo desbocado. Los efectos de la globalización en nuestras vidas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2000).

Political Participation
The Citizen's Dilemma

María Fernanda Somuano*

Iván Stephens/Cuartoscuro

When we think of a democracy, we generally assume that it is made up of an interested citizenry that keeps informed and participates in its community's political issues. Without citizens' involvement in the political process, democracy loses meaning and legitimacy.

The vote is without a doubt the most common measure of political participation in liberal democracies, perhaps because it is a relatively simple activity requiring little effort or cooperation with others. This is probably why this kind of political participation has been the most studied. However, many types of non-electoral political participation also exist, ranging from supporting electoral campaigns, community activities or contact with government authorities to taking part in strikes, demonstrations or blocking streets. Each differs in the amounts of time and effort required to do them. Clearly, it is much more complex and takes longer for a citizen to write and publish a letter to the editor in a newspaper, collect signatures for a cause or go to a demonstration than to go vote.

Even though electoral participation is the simplest, in Mexico it has tended to decline in recent years. Comparatively, abstentionism in

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Mexico (36 percent in the 2000 presidential elections and 53 percent in the 2003 mid-term elections) is not very far from that of the United States (49 percent and 39 percent for the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, respectively). However, it is much higher than abstentionism in countries like Spain (24.34 percent in the 2004 general elections), France (27.2 percent in the 2002 balloting for the National Assembly), Germany (20.88 percent in the 2004 legislative elections) and Italy (19.5 percent in the 2001 elections for the Chamber of Deputies).

Non-participation in elections can have important consequences since it can be a reflection of and can generate different phenomena like feelings of dissatisfaction with policies, actors or specific institutions which generally lead to an aversion for and mistrust of the political system. Another phenomenon is the strengthening of groups that constantly question the functioning of an increasingly exclusionary democracy and the progressive use of means of direct or non-conventional action that can turn into political violence.

We know that in Mexico, electoral participation has declined but, what has happened with other kinds of political activities like signature campaigns or demonstrations? As can be seen in the table, the World Survey on Values reflects Mexicans' preference for certain types of non-conventional political participation and the fact that interest in politics and public matters has increased since 1980.

The figures for 1980 show low levels of non-electoral participation in a system that could still be catalogued as authoritarian. The figures for all types of non-conventional political activity included in the survey increased substantially from 1980 to 1990, as the second half of that decade witnessed intense social mobilizations. 1990 was a year of widespread mobilizations in Mexico, including those of the Cardenist movement and grassroots organizations formed after the 1985 earthquake (for example, the Earthquake Victims Union). It is illustrative to see how this increase in non-electoral participation could also be observed in the expansion of civic organizations in that same period: human rights organizations increased 50-fold, for example, going from four in 1984 to 200 in 1993, while women's organizations went from 10 in 1980 to 97 in 1994.

By 1997, most kinds of participation dropped *vis-à-vis* their 1990 levels, and although by 2001 they had increased once more, in no case did they reach 1990 levels again. The data suggests that the kinds of participation that involve a confrontation with the political system have been decreasing while other, more institutional forms (collecting signatures, demonstrations) have been increasing.

Now, it is clear that faced with an unresponsive political system which the citizenry trusts very little or not at all (such as the Mexican case, in which only 21 percent of citizens say they always or almost always trust the federal government),[1] the threat of law-breaking is permanent. This is particularly the case when the government sends out the signal that whoever breaks the law is listened to more quickly and given priority, putting his/her issue on the government's agenda immediately.

The paradox lies in the fact that a participatory and democratic civil society requires a democratic state; in the same fashion, a strong civil society requires a strong, responsive state. In a state made up of authoritarian institutions that do not respond to citizens' demands, the kinds and characteristics of collective action will be completely different from those of a strong democratic system. In an authoritarian system, citizens will always see their organizational efforts to achieve their interests frustrated, sometimes because of repression, others because of governmental indifference. As a result, increasing numbers of citizens will opt for active political participation against the state or for apathy and alienation from the political system.

Electoral abstentionism can have important consequences since it can be a reflection of dissatisfaction with policies, actors or specific institutions which leads to mistrust of the political system.

If we assume that the fundamental objective of democratic societies is to expand public participation in the political process and increase social control over political elites, then increased participation, even if it takes the form of protest, should in principle be welcomed.

However, as some authors argue, because they question the *status quo*, protests can overwhelm the political system. They would say that politics cannot be done in the streets, but requires a deliberative process in which political elites function as mediators.

CHANGES IN NON-ELECTORAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MEXICO
1980-2001

	1980 %	1990 %	1997 %	2001 %
Very interested in politics	4.1	8.2	9.5	10.9
Signed a petition	9.5	34.7	28.3	31.4
Participated in a boycott	1.3	6.9	8.6	N.A.
Participated in a demonstration	8.9	22.0	9.6	14.5
Participated in a strike	1.9	7.4	5.6	5.3
Participated in the occupation of a public building	1.6	5.2	4.2	2.4

Sources: World Values Survey 1980, 1990, 1995-1997. The 2001 figures come from the *National Survey of Political Culture and Citizens' Practices* (ENCUP), 2001, which can be consulted at the Ministry of the Interior's website, www.gobernacion.gob.mx

On the other hand, others maintain that the very idea of talking about the danger of an excess of political participation, whether conventional or not, is anti-democratic. According to these authors, those who dare to participate in unorthodox political activities are really trying to pressure the political elites to open up the process and respond to their new interests.

What is clear is that the changes in forms of political participation are posing new problems for modern democracies. The growing complexity of public problems increasingly requires a certain level of political sophistication. Consequently, participation in this context can be increasingly dependent on the individual's resources and abilities, that is on their social status. While the more sophisticated expand their capability of influence through direct participation, the less politically sophisticated find it more difficult to compete on this terrain.

In that sense, as Dalton points out, greater levels of participation could be covering up an unequal process in which only those with resources (the capacity to mobilize and organize) or "those who shout the loudest" can have an influence on politics.[2] In fact, according to Fiorina, extremists always tend to be over-represented in politics because they are the ones who participate most in activities that disrupt the *status quo* and therefore, their demands are attended to most quickly.[3] The fact that in Mexico political sophistication and educational levels serve to predict the levels of protest activities points in that direction.

Clearly, non-conventional participation can become a problem when an increasing number of individuals see it as the best or only way to channel their demands, that is, when it replaces and not only supplements conventional participation.

In other countries, electoral participation and other types of political activity are not related at all or have a positive correlation.[4] In Mexico, the opposite is true: some people who stop voting do not absent themselves completely from politics, but rather, they get involved in other political activities, some of them even illegal ones.

By nature, protests or non-conventional political activity disrupts the *status quo*, and when concentrated among certain groups with extreme causes, when, as Mancur Olson says, the unorganized majorities become victims of mobilized minorities, non-institutionalized participation can become a problem.[5] Thus, these forms of participation used by new action groups can rival established political parties and interest groups and, therefore, challenge young democratic institutions. VM

NOTES

[1] In the United States, 56 percent say they trust their government. Parametría, S.A. de C.V., February 2005.

[2] Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies* (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House, 1988).

[3] Morris Fiorina, "A Dark Side of Civic Engagement," Theda Skocpol and Morris Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings/Russell Sage Foundation, 1999).

[4] This refers to a positive statistical correlation, that is that those who participate most in non-electoral activities also vote the most.

[5] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982).

Women's Electoral Participation in Mexico

Carlos González Martínez*

María Augusta Salas/Cuartoscuro

To my daughters, with love and hope

Among the main challenges to Mexico's young democracy is the expansion of the content and forms of public participation. For a couple of decades now, Mexican democracy has made notable achievements in establishing the legal and institutional framework necessary for its consolidation, but we must advance toward more consistent citizens' participation, in form, quantity and quality. This will be the true indicator of its roots in Mexican society, if we continue to think that democracy is a form of government linked to public participation, that is, to the presence of the citizens in the *polis* and the ways that they participate in the construction and exercise of public power.

Paradoxically, one of the fields in which most challenges have been faced and advances made is in that of elections. Here, Mexico has managed to establish a legal, institutional system which became the axis around which the process of democratization has turned in recent years and through which procedures and equilibriums of the political system have been transformed. In the Mexican transition, elections, with their new rules and institutions, played a fundamental role as the support that buttressed the changes in the political regime. Nevertheless, at the same time, it is the field in which public participation has dropped and lost quality. In short, abstentionism has once again grown in both federal and local elections[1] at the same

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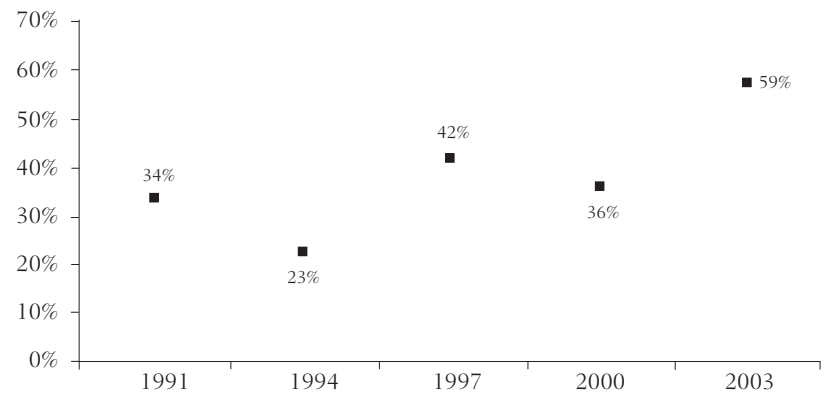
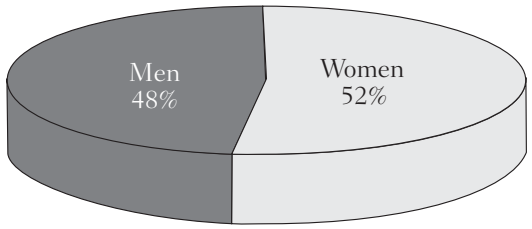
GRAPH 1
ABSTENTIONISM IN MEXICAN FEDERAL ELECTIONS
(1991-2003)



Source: Federal Electoral Institute.

GRAPH 2
REGISTERED VOTERS BY SEX (2003)



Source: Federal Electoral Institute.

time that levels of mistrust and discredit are expanding and deepening.[2] Graph 1 illustrates abstentionism in recent years.

Even though participation rates fluctuate everywhere depending on the kind of election and the political situation in which they occur, it is clear that abstentionism has maintained a tendency to grow over the last 14 years. This was precisely the period when Mexican democracy's legal and institutional changes bore their best fruit, establishing equitable conditions for competition and clear rules of legitimacy increasingly based on the new legality.

A glance at local elections will give us similar results in recent years. But the problem does not lie only in the size of abstentionism but, fundamentally in its quality. Recent studies indicate that abstentionism in Mexico —like in the rest of Latin America— is increasingly more glaringly related to expressions of political dissatisfaction, mainly among young people and population groups whose socio-demographic traits would make us think that there would be greater willingness to participate, even beyond just voting.[3]

Therefore, the challenge for Mexican electoral democracy today is not only increasing the number of people who vote, but, above all, improving the quality of those votes. That is, Mexican voters are more just *electors* than *citizens* to the extent that voting does not completely reflect a fully sovereign, free, informed and reasoned will.

This issue is truly a very broad one. Here, I will only touch on two matters that I consider relevant to citizens' electoral participation in Mexico: the presence of women and young people. Both merit broader exploration than these pages afford, and therefore my aim will not be to go into qualitative explanations, but rather just to remark on the relevant phenomena.

WOMEN, A GROWING PRESENCE

The number of women voters is growing. According to Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) figures, more women than men are registered to vote and have a voter's registration card, a prerequisite for balloting in Mexico. This may be explained by the fact that there are more women than men in the total population. But the important thing is that the percentage of women on the voters rolls is higher than their portion of the population, and that they vote in considerably higher numbers than men, and significantly more than their percentage of the population.

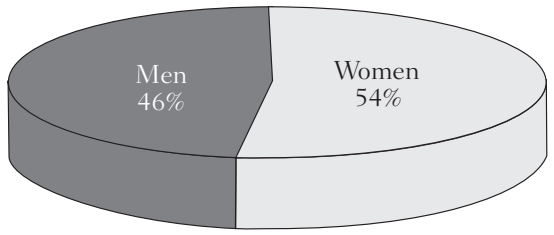
Graphs 2 and 3 illustrate the greater number of women on Mexico's voters rolls and the percentage they represent of the total number of people who actually vote.

Graph 2 shows that women make up 52 percent of all people registered to vote. Graph 3 shows that they make up 54 percent of those who actually go to the polls. Women constitute a little over 51 percent of the population. This means that women prepare more than men to be able to vote and that they go to the polls in greater numbers than men.

But these aggregate national figures do not show the variations on a state and regional level, as does Graph 4.

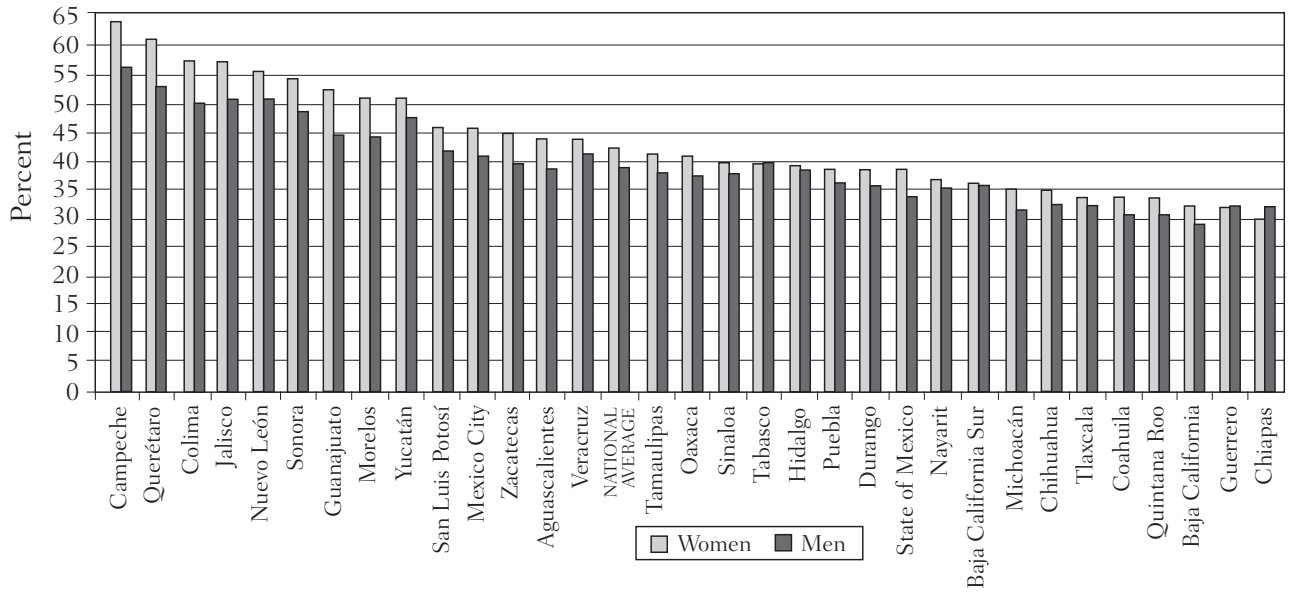
This graph shows electoral participation by sex and by state. From left

Graph 3
Citizens Who Voted by Sex (2003)



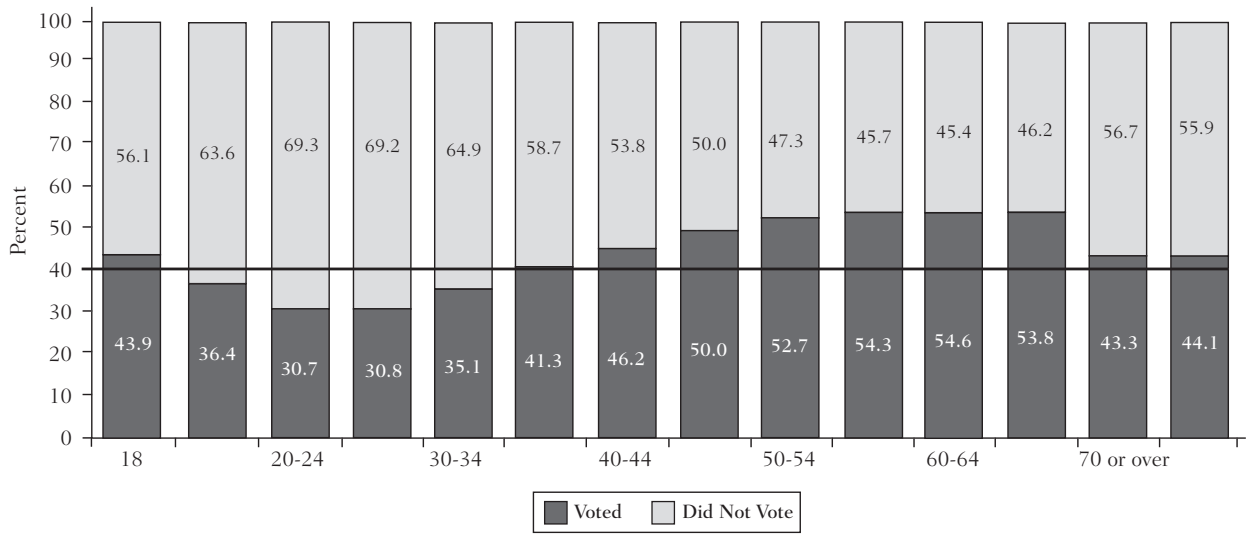
Source: Federal Electoral Institute's Electoral Organization Office study of public participation in the 2003 federal elections; Mexico, 2004.

Graph 4
Citizens Who Went to the Polls by State and Sex (2003)



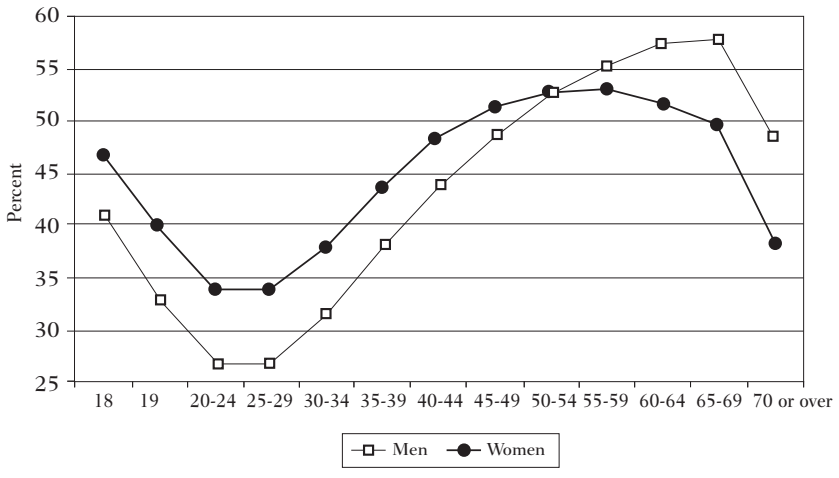
Source: Federal Electoral Institute's Electoral Organization Office study of public participation in the 2003 federal elections; Mexico, 2004.

GRAPH 5
PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS ON THE VOTER ROLLS BY AGE GROUP (2003)



Source: Federal Electoral Institute's Electoral Organization Office study of public participation in the 2003 federal elections; Mexico, 2004.

GRAPH 6
CITIZENS WHO VOTED BY SEX AND AGE (2003)



Source: Federal Electoral Institute's Electoral Organization Office study of public participation in the 2003 federal elections; Mexico, 2004.

to right, it orders voting from the highest to the lowest. As it shows, in those places where voting rates are higher, so is the number of women *vis-à-vis* men voters. Chiapas is the only state in which clearly more men than women vote, but it is also one of the least developed states with a corporative, authoritarian political culture and one of the three states in the country with the lowest voting rates overall. Why is it that in a state where men vote more than women, there is also one of the highest abstention rates and the greatest poverty in the country?

YOUNG PEOPLE, A DECLINING PRESENCE

While women have a growing presence in Mexican elections, young people seem

to be in frank withdrawal since their participation tends to decline. The largest number of abstaining voters are found among people between the ages of 19 and 34, as can be seen in Graph 5.

The horizontal line indicates the number of people who voted in the 2003 elections: a terrible 41 percent. Under that line are only young people between the ages of 19 and 34. Above it is everyone else, including young people of 18 who were voting for the first time.

But this figure is even more remarkable if we consider that people between the ages of 19 and 34 make up more than one-third of registered voters and are also the group that most distrusts politics and its institutions and is most liable to accept corruption, illegality and even domestic violence.[4]

In a country of young people, Mexican democracy finds its greatest detractors among the young. This is a formidable challenge for a country that is tending to age. What will happen in a few years when this sector of disappointed abstentionists achieves greater presence in public spaces? If current trends continue, women will achieve greater presence. And that is a good thing at least if we heed what Graph 6 tells us, highlighting voters by age and sex.

This graph shows that young women abstain significantly less than young men: there are almost 7 percentage points of difference. At least this is a good sign among all the bad news that this article has to share.

We can place our hopes on young women changing things, at least in terms of expecting greater electoral participation by citizens. Hopefully, unlike up until now, we will be able to make that higher women's participation be reflected in a greater presence in the bodies that not only elect the authorities but also where the decisions are made that the authorities have to formulate thinking about all of us. Hopefully. VM

NOTES

[1] We should not forget that Mexico's electoral system is divided into federal and local. In the first, the president, senators and federal deputies are elected. Local elections are for governors, city councils and state congresses. Both kinds of elections have their own sets of legislation and a structure of electoral, administrative, judicial and, in some cases, criminal officials.

[2] All surveys of political culture in the country in recent years show the same trend: most Mexicans do not trust politics or its institutions. See the surveys done by the IFE, the UNAM Institute for Social Research and the Ministry of the Interior.

[3] See the work of Benjamín Temkin of the Latin American Social Sciences Center (Flacso).

[4] See the studies by the IFE itself, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Public Functions, the Mexican Institute for Youth and several specialized firms like Consulta-Mitofsky.

PROBLEMAS DEL
Desarrollo
REVISTA LATINOAMERICANA DE ECONOMÍA

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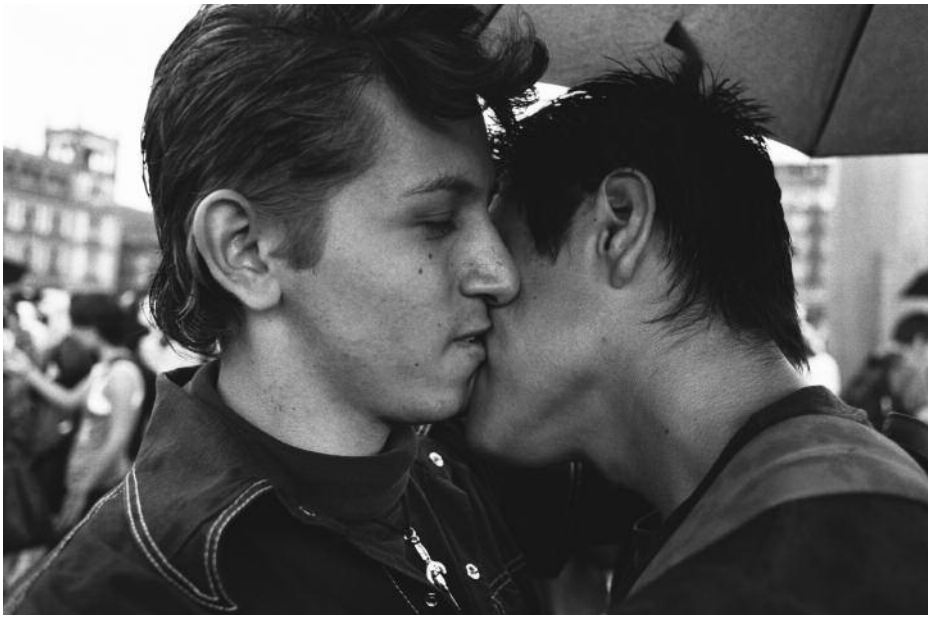
The Culture of Discrimination in Mexico

José Luis Gutiérrez Espíndola*



Ricardo Ramírez Arreola

Until only a few years ago, discrimination did not officially exist in Mexico. A combination of vested interests, narrow visions and political cynicism forged a government discourse incapable of recognizing and politically admitting that several of the social inequalities that marked us as a nation were the result of the systematic exclusion of certain social groups.

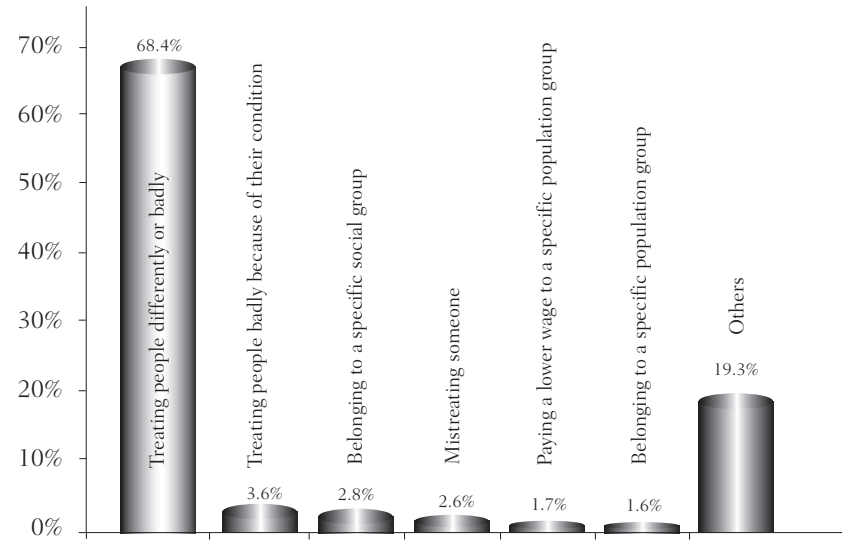
The self-interested myopia of government in this matter has begun to change, albeit slowly. Undoubtedly, the turning point was the reform of Articles 1, 2, 4, 18 and 115 of the Constitution in the framework of the debates about what has come to be known as the Indigenous Law. This reform was published in the *Official Gazette* August 14, 2001, and added a third paragraph to Article 1 explicitly prohibiting any form of discrimination that injures human dignity and has as its object the denial or violation of the rights and freedoms of the individual.

With the incorporation of this anti-discrimination clause, the Constitution lined up with the increasingly more widely accepted interpretation that equality cannot be a simple starting point nor a mere formal declaration of legal equality before the law and the courts, but an end and superior value that orders and gives meaning to a democratic political community.

Coincidentally, that same year a group of academics, legislators, intellectuals, militants of different political parties and social activists, led by a veteran left activist, Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, had founded the Citizens Commission for the Study of and Against Discrimination. This was a pluralistic, deliberative body with two major aims: doing a diagnostic analysis of discrimination in Mexico and formulat-

* General director of Links, Educational Programs and Communication at the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Conapred).

GRAPH 1
MAIN IDEAS ASSOCIATED WITH DISCRIMINATION



Source: First National Survey on Discrimination in Mexico, 2004.

Contrary to what certain members of Congress and some sectors of the federal administration think, the fight against discrimination is not a luxury for poor countries.

ing a legislative proposal to regulate the constitutional prohibition of all forms of discrimination, and, as part of that project, proposing the creation of a state body to promote and monitor enforcement of the legislation that would result from this process.

Both activities were completed in late 2001 and presented to the executive, the legislature and the public. Mexico's president sent a bill to Congress that was approved unanimously in April 2003 and the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (LFPED) was enacted June 11 of that same year.[1]

Its unanimous approval may give the false impression that it was a smooth, uncomplicated process. This was not the case. Agreement did not exist inside the administration about some crucial aspects of the bill: for example, the kind of behavior that should be considered discriminatory, the nature and status of the state body that should monitor the law's enforcement, the kind of protection that should be established for victims of any discriminatory act, and, above all, the scope of the compensatory and promotion policies the state should guarantee to individuals who belonged to vulnerable groups, and who were therefore at greater risk of suffering from different kinds of discrimination.

The bill's journey through Congress was not easy either, and it suffered several changes along the way. Political and budgetary considerations made it impossible to make the new body autonomous and reduced the original list of affirmative action measures. Finally the bill was approved and months later the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Conapred) was created, but the way forward to a solid anti-discriminatory policy, capable of promoting a more just, inclusive society, was not clear.

Many obstacles persist, not the least of which is the lack of awareness on the part of the political class itself about the real meaning of discrimination, as well as its costs and implications. An anecdote told by current Conapred president, Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, illustrates this point. In his text "La discriminación en la agenda del desarrollo" (Discrimination on the Development Agenda), he remembers that in late 2003, during the Chamber of Deputies discussion about the 2004 budget, in reference to the proposed Conapred budget, one legislator "remarked to anyone who wanted to listen that non-discrimination was a matter for developed societies, like Europe, but that it could have very little meaning for a country with needs like Mexico's. In his opinion, allotting sufficient resources to the state's institutional struggle against discrimination was a kind of eccentricity that a poor country like ours could not allow itself."[2] That this was not an isolated opinion is shown by the fact that the budget finally approved was only 33 percent of the original proposal, which in itself was already pretty meager.

Contrary to what certain members of Congress and some sectors of the federal administration think, the fight against discrimination is not a luxury for poor countries, nor is it a demand that is only of interest to certain minorities. Strictly speaking, the right to non-discrimination is valid for everyone and is a central right of modern democratic states. In the words of the distinguished professor Luigi Ferrajoli, it guarantees the right to be different, that is, to be oneself and to continue to be different from others without being subject to or excluded from those others, at the same time that it guarantees the right to compensation for social disadvantages and, therefore, to becoming individuals equal to the rest with at least minimum conditions for living and survival.

Probably, the incorrect idea that part of our political class has about the importance of the struggle against discrimination is derived from a shaky understanding of the problem and a bad reading of the definition established in Article 4 of the LFPED: "For the purpose of this law, discrimination will be understood as all distinctions, exclusions or restrictions that, based on ethnic or national origin, sex, age, different abilities, social or economic condition, health conditions, pregnancy, language, religion, opinions, sexual preferences, marital status or any other condition, have as an effect impeding or negating the recognition or exercise of rights and individuals' real equal opportunity."

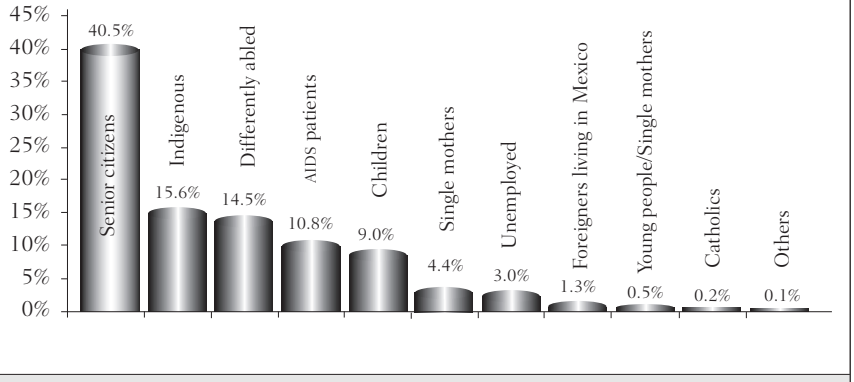
Certainly, when we speak of discrimination, we are referring to a series of attitudes, forms of behavior and social practices that imply inferior treatment of certain persons or groups with a trait understood by society as of little value or labeled as negative, undesirable, perverse, dangerous and/or having a negative effect on society's cohesion. However, these disparaging forms of behavior sooner or later give rise to, as the law says, a restriction or denial of fundamental rights and access to opportunities for development. In fact, the distinctive trait of discrimination, together with disparagement or contempt, is the denial of rights for some, which means at the same time privileges for others. As Mexican scholar Isidro Cisneros has pointed out, in a democratic society in which we are all formally equal, discrimination is the basis for social privileges.

Discrimination begins when certain differences are characterized by people with certain power —whether it be symbolic, political, economic or any other kind— as illegitimate or perturbing. These differences may be, for example, skin color, a disease, a sexual preference different from the predominant one, etc. These differences, once stigmatized, become a reason and pretext for degrading treatment and for justifying unequal access to opportunities and rights, and not uncommonly for legitimizing the subjection of some individuals or groups to others.

As a result, we are not faced with a minor problem. Discrimination injures and corrodes democracy; it reproduces, deepens and also creates inequalities; it incites societal conflict; it has enor-

Discrimination is a series of attitudes, forms of behavior and social practices that imply inferior treatment of certain persons or groups with a trait understood by society as negative.

GRAPH 2
GROUPS CONSIDERED UNPROTECTED

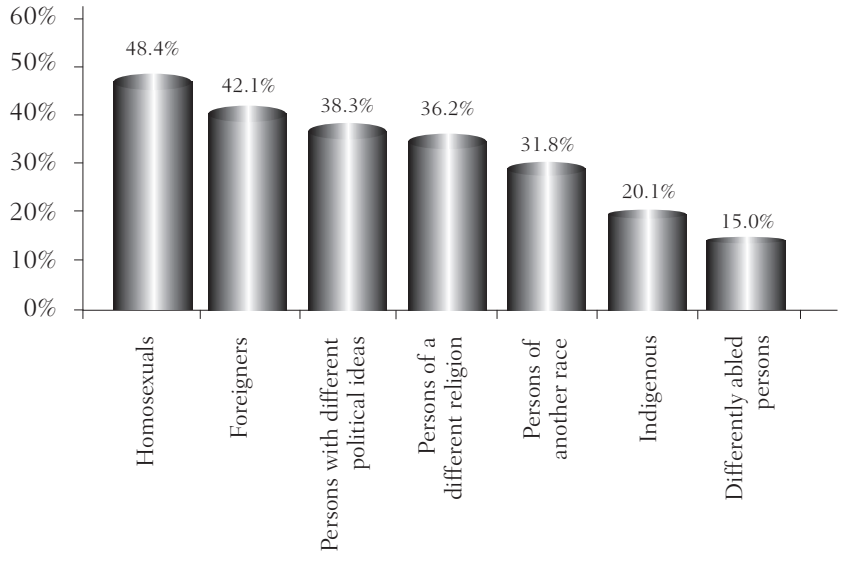


Source: First National Survey on Discrimination Mexico, 2004.

mous costs in the realm of justice, but also economic costs. To get an idea of the serious dimension of the problem, its implications and its ominous consequences, suffice it to cite a few examples of situations in society that can ultimately be traced back to discrimination:

- In Mexico, women's average annual income for paid work is approximately U.S.$4,486, while for men it is practically triple: U.S.$12,184.
- In 2000, 11.3 percent of women over the age of 15 were illiterate, compared to only 7.4 percent of men in the same age group.
- The indigenous population is 45 percent illiterate, while the national average is gauged at 10 percent.
- Most of the illiterate indigenous population are women (48.1 percent), while men represented only 29.6 percent. In Oaxaca, of approximately 500,000 illiterate persons, 67 percent were women.
- The states with the highest indigenous population (Puebla, Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas) occupy the five lowest places on the Human Development Index nationwide.
- The index of children's rights compliance in Mexico shows profound differences by region and state. For example, children from the ages of zero to five years born in the state of Guerrero, a southern impoverished state, have one-third the chance of staying alive, growing up healthy and getting an education as children born in the northern state of Nuevo León.
- Child mortality among the indigenous population (48.3 per thousand live births) continues to be almost double the national average (28.2 per thousand live births).

GRAPH 3
WHO WOULD YOU RATHER NOT HAVE LIVING IN YOUR HOME?



Source: First National Survey on Discrimination in Mexico, 2004.

This list could be extended *ad infinitum*: we would have to speak to the lack of educational and job opportunities for differently abled persons; the mistreatment and exclusion of older adults; the harassment and violence against non-heterosexuals. And these figures would end by sketching a country suffering from widespread discriminatory practices, crisscrossed by profound inequalities and injustices.

Given this panorama, different questions arise: Is society aware of the problem of discrimination? Does it realize its dimensions? Does it recognize its consequences? Does it realize that some groups are liable to suffer systematic discrimination? In contrast with our situation a few months ago, we now have a wealth of information that can at least attempt to give a first response to these questions. It is provided by the First National Survey about Discrimination, designed and implemented by the Social Development Ministry (Sedesol) with support from Conapred.

The Sedesol decided to find out what society's perceptions were about discrimination, analyzing both the general public and specific populations hypothetically exposed to discrimination. The sample for the general population encompassed 1,482 interviews of persons 18 years and over, and equally representative surveys were done nationwide of sub-sets of the population: senior citizens, indigenous, differently abled persons, religious minorities and women, with a total of 5,608 questionnaires filled in. To explore the group of non-heterosexuals, given the methodological difficulty in identifying it and building a representative sample, officials opted to do a case study with 200 interviews.[3]

The possibilities for analyzing this survey are enormous so I will concentrate here on only a few features. What

is most noteworthy in this survey? In the first place, that almost seven out of ten persons in the country associate the term "discrimination" with differentiated or negative treatment of certain people. This means that a sizeable proportion of those surveyed perceived the contempt or disparagement inherent in the act of discriminating and appropriately grasped its significance.

But only a small proportion of that universe links discrimination with the loss of rights. This may mean that the population is not sufficiently clear that the contempt and mistreatment associated with discrimination end up translating inevitably into not only symbolic exclusion, but into the restriction of fundamental rights and fewer opportunities for development.

If this reading is correct, the fight against discrimination in Mexico faces serious problems: as long as people do not see the sometimes irreparable damage created by discrimination in people's lives, the phenomenon can tend to be seen as trivial. It can be considered negative, but not particularly serious; it can be seen in any case as an expression of merely individual attitudes that are politically incorrect but unimportant, and not as a problem that leads to social exclusion and that therefore merits the state's corrective intervention in order to restore unjustly trampled rights.

The survey also allows us to infer that the social imaginary has differentiated perceptions of the legitimacy of diverse exclusionary practices, as well as of the consideration and government support discriminated-against groups have a right to. The answer to some questions, for example, about which groups are the most vulnerable, which should receive help from the government, which could create conflicts, etc., makes it possible to identify two main groups of individuals suffering from discrimination in that imaginary:

> The distinctive trait of discrimination, together with disparagement or contempt, is the denial of rights for some, which means at the same time privileges for others.

1. Those who push certain emotional buttons and prompt commiseration or solidarity, but who are the object of a special social consideration to the degree that they are seen as deserving of government support. Among these are clearly senior citizens and, to a lesser extent, differently abled individuals, people with HIV-AIDS and the indigenous.
2. Those who are mistrusted and rejected, who are seen as a potential threat to the social or moral order and whose discrimination is thus implicitly seen as justified: outstanding among these are foreigners, members of religious minorities and non-heterosexuals.

The majority of those interviewed considered, for example, that among the most unprotected groups in Mexico were senior citizens, followed by indigenous, differently abled persons and AIDS patients. Between 67 percent and 75 percent thought the government should support senior citizens, the differently abled and indigenous in seeking jobs, but these percentages dropped significantly when asked about foreigners (52.2 percent thought they should be given government support), non-Catholics (45 percent) and homosexuals (35.4 percent). To a question about who they would never hire, almost one-fifth answered "a foreigner" and "an AIDS patient", while one in ten answered "a homosexual".

The survey included the controversial but illustrative question about whether the interviewee would be willing to have homosexuals, foreigners, people with different political ideas, or another religion, or another race, indigenous or differently abled individuals living in their home. The results are revealing: only 15 percent said they were not willing to have differently abled persons living in the their home; 20 percent objected to living with indigenous. However, the negative responses increased when people of other races, religions and political views were mentioned, rising to 48.4 percent when asked about homosexuals.

These differences in perception pose a potential problem for the fight against discrimination in Mexico because they could encourage our political class to be tempted to only promote actions that benefit discriminated groups favored by public opinion, blocking those directed at safeguarding the rights of equally discriminated against but socially rejected groups, all at the cost of an integral policy and strategy.[4]

The temptation to foster anti-discriminatory policies selectively is not limited to the government; it is also present in the business world, including the large multinational corporations which, despite having anti-discriminatory policies in their home offices, only apply them partially in Mexico. Recently, Conapred announced a case of a powerful soft drink multinational whose subsidiary in Mexico promoted inclu-

sionary labor programs for the differently abled but discriminated against non-heterosexuals.

The issue of a partial, selective anti-discriminatory policy is particularly worrying because, judging from the survey results, homophobia is still very deeply entrenched in important segments of the population. Just look at the following figures: asked about whether government should do anything if the majority of a community decided a group of homosexuals should not live there, two out of every five interviewees said the authorities should do nothing special like, for example, defending homosexuals' rights to reside there without being bothered. Three out of every ten people thought a special neighborhood —that is, a ghetto— should be built for homosexuals to live in.

More than half those interviewed attributed homosexuals' problems in relating to others to their sexual preference, to their behavior and way of life. This is a typical attitude blaming the excluded for their exclusion. Fewer than 20 percent of those surveyed attributed those problems to discrimination and the rejection of society.

It is not strange that under these circumstances, the gay community clearly and unequivocally sees itself as discriminated against. As already mentioned, the survey included a case study in which people from the gay community were interviewed, the results of which include the following:

- Ninety-four percent perceived themselves as discriminated against.
- Seven out of ten homosexuals think their rights to be treated equally under the law, to not be victims of violence and to freely express their ideas are not respected.

The population is not sufficiently clear that the contempt and mistreatment associated with discrimination end up translating inevitably into the restriction of fundamental rights.

- Eight out of ten think gay unemployment is because of discrimination.
- Seven out of ten think that homosexuals have fewer opportunities of getting a job.
- Three out of every ten say that in the last five years they have been denied a job because of being homosexual.
- Four out of ten say they have been discriminated against on the job because they are homosexual.
- More than half assume that the main obstacles for getting ahead are related to discrimination and the lack of opportunities.
- Seven out of ten think discrimination is the greatest suffering people with different sexual preferences face.

In light of these figures and of the denunciations made to the Conapred, it seems impossible not to make a priority of the fight against homophobia. But there are also other urgent matters that the survey leaves no room for doubt about. Just as the fundamental rights of the gay community must be protected, it is also necessary to implement precise anti-discrimination policies to safeguard the rights of women, indigenous, the differently abled, little girls and little boys, religious minorities, migrants, etc.

Although this survey is a base line and we cannot know how perceptions about discrimination have evolved, the results show that, for example, phenomena like sexism, racism and religious intolerance are constituent aspects of the way significant sectors of the population view life.

Two out of every five people interviewed think that indigenous will always suffer from social limitations because of their racial characteristics; one in three thinks that the only thing they have to do to escape poverty is not behave like indigenous; and two in five would be willing to join others to ask that the authorities not allow a group of indigenous to move close to their community.

Perceptions about women are no better: one out of five interviewees thought it was natural that women be denied more things than men; one out of seven thinks that not much should be spent on educating daughters because they eventually get married; one in five thinks that women who want to work should work in "women's" fields; almost one in five thinks that women are less capable than men of holding important posts; one in three considers it normal that men earn more than women; and, finally, one in four agrees with the idea that many women are raped because they "provoke" men, a painfully misogynist affirmation in a country that carries the burden of the shame of the Ciudad Juárez "feminicides."

The National Survey on Discrimination reveals a worrying panorama in which discrimination seems to be routine. The fact that it refers to perceptions and attitudes of contempt should not make us forget that these mental phenomena tend to translate into individual forms of behavior and social practices that limit the lives of those discriminated against because they turn into lives without rights: the rights to

education, to a well-paying job, to decent treatment in health care facilities, and even to simply externalize a preference or identity for fear of scorn, marginality and persecution.

Therefore, the fight against discrimination can only be conceived of as an integral struggle for the restitution of rights to those who have *de facto* lost them because they are victims of social stigma. Restituting those rights implies removing prejudices, promoting respect and tolerance, reforming exclusionary laws and reorienting public policies to compensate groups at a disadvantage socially. In this, the state has a crucial, undeniable role: its task, as stipulated in Article 2 of the Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination, is "to promote the conditions to ensure that individuals' freedom and equality are real and effective." Its irrevocable duty is to fight against discrimination, in favor of equality, in favor of all people enjoying a life with rights, the only kind of life that deserves to be called decent. VM

NOTES

[1] Ley Federal para Prevenir y Eliminar la Discriminación (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2004).

[2] Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, "La discriminación en la agenda del desarrollo" (paper read at the International Forum on Non-Discrimination, organized in Mexico City by the Inter-American Development Bank and the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination in September 2004).

[3] *Primera Encuesta Nacional sobre Discriminación en México* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social/Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2005). For a description of the methodology used, see *Encuesta nacional sobre discriminación. Nota metodológica sobre el diseño de la muestra*, photocopy (Mexico City: Sedesol, May 12, 2005). This document specifies that the sampling was stratified by conglomerate and multi-stage, with a probability proportional to the size and random selection of the units in the different stages of sampling. It also stipulates that the confidence level for sampling the general population is 95 percent, with a margin of error of plus or minus three to four points, while the level of confidence of the sub-samples is 90 percent with a margin of error of plus or minus 4 points. Information about this survey and the survey's data base can be found at www.sedesol.gob.mx

[4] This is not mere academic speculation. Compare, for example, the importance given by the current administration to differently abled persons and the embarrassment in several sectors of the federal government caused by the first publicity campaign against homophobia by the Ministry of Health through the National AIDS Attention and Prevention Center (Censida) and Conapred.

FURTHER READING

Añón, María José, *Igualdad, diferencias y desigualdades* (Mexico City: Fontamara, 2001).

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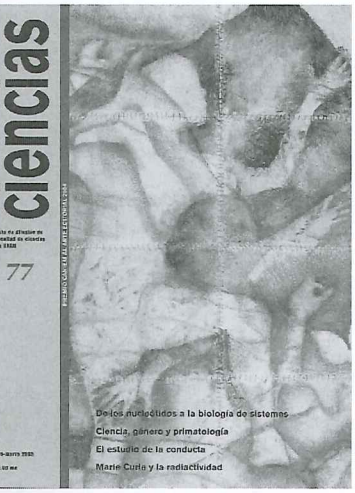

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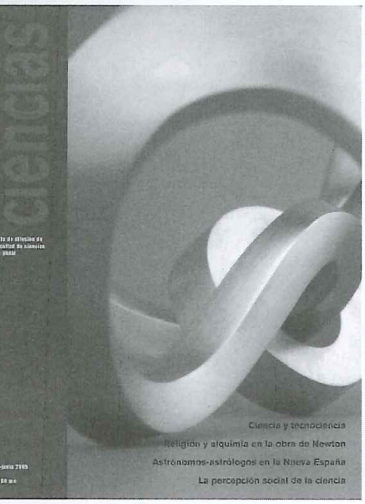

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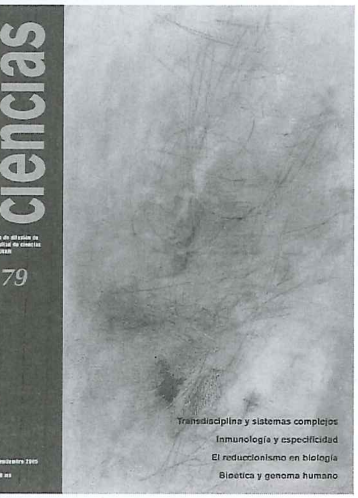

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The Hachwinik, Bearers of Tradition, 2001 (acrylic on canvas).

The Painting of *Kayum Ma'ax*

"Before, they could only come in small airplanes," says Kayum, remembering the arrival of the German painter who, before going, left him his first painting implements: tubes of color, cardboard and paper.[1]

"He lived here about a month."

Kayum is talking about Nahá, a remote Mayan community in the heart of the Lacandón Jungle, until a few decades ago accessible only by light airplane.

"He did portraits. He did portraits of Old Mateo and of Old Chan Kin. I liked to watch him. I took him to work in the fields and then we went to the lagoon by *cayuco* (dug-out). I took him everywhere and he made me his helper. My father gave his permission; he paid me 20 cents."

Photos courtesy of Cultural Dissemination Office, Coneculta-Chiapas.
Photographer: Osiris Aquino.

Dawn, 2001 (acrylic on canvas).

"From the time I was little I made drawings with the charcoal from the fires and my mother worried. She said that it wasn't a good thing to do. But my father said that it wasn't a bad thing if painting was in me."

Kayum was only eight or nine years old and spoke no Spanish when the German arrived. But a long time before that he already knew that painting was in him.

"From the time I was little I made drawings with the charcoal from the fires wherever I could, and my mother worried. She said to clean that up, that it wasn't a good thing to do. But my father said that it wasn't a bad thing if painting was in me, that the gods and people liked paintings. So then my mother didn't say it any more."

"The German didn't teach me much, just to mix colors, but I didn't learn the names." From the German he also learned to appreciate what he once considered an absolute delicacy: sardines.

"One day he offered me some of his food. It was in a can; it was sardines. I liked them very much." So much so that when he began to earn money from his paintings, sold for a few pesos, along with paint, he bought sardines and crackers. "I didn't give anybody any because I liked them too much."

When the German left, he left behind a box of tubes of paint. "I never stopped painting. Although sometimes I did for a few months because I had to help my father with the planting." He did not go to school; he began speaking Spanish at 12 and learned his numbers and letters at 18. "Then I met Gertrudis. I had about 10 paintings of trees and the lagoon. I was embarrassed when she saw my work but she said it was good. I gave her some

paintings; I didn't want to sell them. She gave me more paints so I wouldn't stop painting." Kayum is referring to photographer Gertrude Duby, who, together with her partner, anthropologist and cartographer Frans Blom, made innumerable expeditions to the Lacandón Jungle, among other regions of Chiapas, during which they developed a special link to the Lacandon. The Bloms lived in San Cristóbal de las Casas and Kayum went there with his father's permission.

"She convinced me that my paintings were good enough to sell. I sold them for two pesos to the tourists and then upped the price to five. I painted what I saw in the jungle, the lagoon, the animals, the trees. First I did small paintings, but then I did bigger ones in oil."

With no formal education and without external influences, Kayum perfected his painting, and his themes took on strength.

"When I was younger I sometimes painted what was in my dreams. Then I grew up, I had my family and my painting began to improve. I began to paint legends."

In Nahá, the teachings of Old Chan Kin, his grandfather, are still respected. Until his death, Old Chan Kin was one of the most admired Lacandón leaders by both his own people and outsiders. Old Chan Kin taught them to preserve their

In Nahá, the teachings of Old Chan Kin, his grandfather, are still respected. He taught them to preserve their traditions, to respect the trees because they have spirit, heart.

Nahá, 1999 (acrylic on canvas).

traditions, to respect the trees because they have spirit, heart; to care for the mountain to keep the gods happy because only in that way they will take care of the world and men. Many of his people's traditions live in Kayum's paintings, transformed into legends.

"I paint that in my paintings so they can endure as memory. In the painting *Birthing*, there is a legend: when a pregnant woman is about to give birth, she looks for the *ceiba* or silk-cotton tree. She must not see her husband. She cleans the place with leaves. The woman's labor pains pass into the *ceiba* through the reflection of the light or through the shadow. This is how we are born and the mother doesn't feel so much pain."[2] Perhaps this is why —because they are memory— he resisted selling his work.

"Once I went to San Cristóbal in a little plane to an exhibition Gertrudis organized. I took about 20 paintings to finish and frame. I didn't want to sell them because they were legends. I didn't know what price to put on them. They were legends."

Kayum sold all his work. He is not very sure but he thinks that he sold them for about 70 pesos each. Gertrude took care of the buyers and helped him deposit the money from the sale in the bank.

"It came to about 1,500 pesos; that was a lot for me. She told me I couldn't just wander around the street with that much money, so she put it in the bank."

Money is not the painter's motivation. Rather, his painting is a reflection of his life. Kayum lives in a part of the jungle that little by little has been invaded by groups of Tzeltals and Tzotzils because of bad colonization policies, so his community is facing grave challenges: how to stop the destruction going on around them. The groups that have penetrated the Lacandón Jungle lack the magical-religious link with the jungle that Nahá still has. That is why they cut down the forests on the hillsides to plant crops or raise cattle. In Nahá, they have decided to declare their lands a protected zone and all the inhabitants, regardless of their occupation, work to make sure that the protective measures are complied with. Kayum, like everyone in Nahá, sometimes puts aside his painting to spend the entire day in the hills.

Hunter Kin in the Lacandón Jungle 50 Years Past, 1999 (acrylic on canvas).

In the Jungle the Stream Never Dries Up, 2001 (acrylic on canvas).

Birthing, 1999 (acrylic on canvas).

Jaguar of the Jungle, 2001 (acrylic on canvas).

"I paint legends so they can endure as memory. In the painting *Birthing*, a pregnant woman is about to give birth, she looks for the *ceiba* or silk-cotton tree. Her labor pains pass into the *ceiba* somehow and the mother doesn't feel so much pain."

Despite his occupations as a parent and a member of the community, Kayum's painting has had the opportunity to travel beyond the borders of Nahá, Chiapas and the country itself.

"When I was a boy I wanted to go 'to Mexico'. I began to go to San Cristóbal and then, when some Spanish journalists came to Nahá, they saw my paintings and they invited me to exhibit in Spain. I was in Madrid about a month. I sold all my paintings. I visited museums and I liked them very much. Later I was also invited to New York, to another exhibition of my paintings, but I didn't go because it was too expensive. I also received a grant from the State Center for Indigenous Languages, Art and Literature, a grant for about 1,000 pesos a month. I went back and forth to San Cristóbal to workshops and talks. My work has also been shown in Mexico City."

Kayum was awarded the 1992 Chiapas Prize for visual arts. His certificate hangs on the outside wall of what serves as his "office", together with some charcoal sketches whose themes are anybody's guess. Despite this recognition and his trips "to the world", his attitude toward painting is the same as more than 40 years ago when his father calmed his mother's fears and supported his need to express himself with sketching: painting is in him. **MM**

Elsie Montiel
Editor

NOTES

[1] Except where otherwise specified, all quotes are from the author's personal interview with Kayum Ma'ax in the community of Nahá in the Lacandón Jungle, May 31, 2005.

[2] "Inkaboo Kayum Ma'ax García," *Cinco pintores mayas, cuadros de luz* (Mexico City: Coneculta Chiapas, 2004), p. 83.

When the Saints Go Marching In the Chiapas Highlands

Kazuyasu Ochiai*

Road to Santa Martha. The box of St. Andrew is followed by the box of St. Mary Magdalene.

"Let's escort our Holy Father together!"

The shout of the head church caretaker sinks into the darkness before dawn. From here and there come the replies of his colleagues: "Let's escort him together!" Their families, officials and volunteers stand at the roadside with net bags full of supplies for the coming overnight trip. Flashlights in their hands are lit and begin moving like fireflies. Skyrockets and firecrackers suddenly rock the dreaming cool and humid air over 7,000 feet above the sea. The smoke comes floating on the night mist. But the village is still asleep.

Under a big wooden cross by the roadside, an elderly church caretaker is helping a young man secure the leather forehead strap of a large box wrapped with a reed mat and a rope.

* Professor of anthropology at Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan.

Photos courtesy of the author.

The box is heavy, and not only physically. The responsibility of carrying it is weighty for the young man, since in the box is carefully stored the protagonist of the day: a wooden image of St. Andrew, the patron saint of this town, San Andrés Larráinzar, a Tzotzil-Maya-speaking community of Chiapas, the southern-most state of Mexico.

Why is there a saint's image in the box? And where is it going? *Andreseros*, as the inhabitants of Larráinzar are known, would answer with just one word: *kompánya*! *Kompánya*, a Tzotzil word derived from the Spanish *compañía*, means the relations between the patron saints of neighboring villages who visit each other on festival days. If you still look nonplussed, they might explain a little bit more, "Our Father, the Apostle St. Andrew, goes to see the festival of his younger sister, and Our Mother comes to see the festival of her elder brother." The younger sister, or Our Mother, means either St. Mary Magdalene or St. Martha and her elder brother St. Andrew, Our Father. They are the patron saints of the adjacent villages, Magdalenas, Santa Marta and Larráinzar. St. Andrew also has a little brother, St. James, patron saint of the village of Santiago, and he visits the festival of his little brother and vice versa. The exchange of saints' images is thus an opportunity to enact the mythological sibling relations among the patron saints of neighboring communities.

Kompánya, a Tzotzil word, means the relations between the patron saints of neighboring villages who visit each other on festival days.

Kompánya is not unique to these communities: in the 1980s I found that more than 100 communities of northern Chiapas were practicing it or had practiced it. *Kompánya* is not a permanent institution. It reflects sensitive and dynamic political and diplomatic relations among villages. It might be suspended temporarily or definitively when friction arises between communities, and a new *kompánya* might be established to strengthen the ties between villages.

Andreseros remember that in October 1978, they decided to ban the sale of alcoholic beverages in the town on Sundays. Although the aim of this measure was to exert pressure on the mestizo bar owners in order to expel them from the township, it also affected the vendors of *yakiko',* a fermented drink made from raw sugar that is mostly produced in nearby Magdalenas. The people of Magdalenas began to say that their patron saint, St. Mary Magdalene, was angry about the *Andreseros*' decision and that she might not come to visit the forthcoming festival in Larráinzar. After negotiations, *yakiko'* vendors from Magdalenas were allowed to continue their business at the Sunday market in Larráinzar. When the visiting saint from Magdalenas arrived on the morning of the St. Andrew's festival, people exclaimed with relief, "Oh, our Holy Mother is not angry!"

According to anthropologist Marta D. Turok, a fairly serious land dispute raged between Magdalenas and Santa Marta in the early 1970s. The people of Magdalenas decided not to invite their neighbors' image of St. Martha to their festival in 1973. St. Martha came anyway, however, since, in the eyes of the people of Santa Marta, she was not to be blamed and had no reason to stay home. The mood at the festival was tense. Nobody from Magdalenas got drunk, which was quite unusual on such a festive occasion. Santa Marta was represented only by the official delegation, not the usual friendly throngs. Santa Marta, in return, sent Magdalenas an official invitation to the forthcoming festival. Magdalenas declined, at which point Santa Marta proceeded to diversify its *kompánya*. Images of St. James and Our Lady of Charity, from Santiago and La Caridad, a nearby mestizo-owned ranch, respectively, were invited to attend, in addition to St. Andrew from Larráinzar, to solidify Santa Marta's position and isolate Magdalenas. It was not until the dispute was finally settled some years later that *kompánya* between Santa Marta and Magdalenas resumed. The two newly invited saints' images continue to be *kompánya* of Santa Marta.

Oh my! With all this talk of *kompánya* diplomacy, we have fallen behind the procession of St.

Andrew that left the village at dawn. We should be escorting our Holy Father! Pyrotechnicians lead the procession, musicians follow playing drums and flutes, the box is surrounded by church caretakers or *martoma* (Spanish *mayordomos*) and their wives with incense burners in their hands. Since the box is heavy, its carrier changes every half a mile or so. When the procession arrives at the meeting place of the host community, the box is first placed on a reed mat lying on a bed of pine needles. After offering a prayer, the caretakers untie the rope of the box and open various packages of paraphernalia. A scarlet velvet canopy is extended and tied to the four poles. A white palanquin is placed on the reed mat, and onto this the image of St. Andrew is placed and carefully secured.

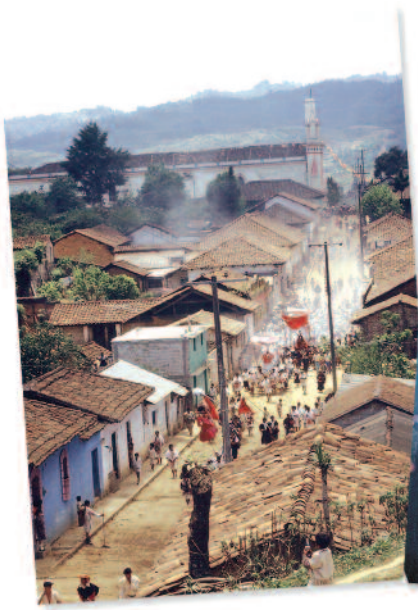
After a while, the church bells clang and the host saint, also mounted on a palanquin, comes to the meeting place with a large escort and many spectators. The visiting and hosting saints on palanquins shouldered by respective *martoma* are face to face with each other. At the signal of a high *martoma*, every *martoma*, whether host or visitor, genuflects three times, crossing himself and advancing one step each time. This movement makes it look as though the host saint and visiting saints on palanquins are drawing near to each other, each bowing three times:

"Welcome, brother, I am happy to receive you!"

"How are you, my sister? I have come to pay tribute to you!"

After host and visiting officials and *martoma* exchange courtesies for about an hour, the host saint leads the visiting saints to the church. When the procession enters the crowded plaza, the church bells start up an incessant clanging. Going at the head of the saints, dancers and musicians perform on and on and pyrotechnicians excite the festive air with generous amounts of skyrockets and firecrackers. This is the high point of the day. The saints proceed with much pomp into the nave of the church, where they are placed and receive candles, prayer and offerings from worshippers. After a while, the visitors are invited to the host officials' houses and are entertained with drinks. In the evening people enjoy yet more fireworks, drinking and chatting until midnight. The visiting delegation sleeps in houses allotted by the local officials.

Early next morning the visiting officials gather in the church to prepare for the return trip. A Catholic priest says mass, in a regular ceremony that makes no reference to the *kompánya*. For the



Saints and officials marching from the church of Larráinzar to the meeting place to bid farewell.

The image of St. Andrew in Larráinzar holds an X-shaped cross, decorated with peacock feathers, on which the saint was martyred.

A saint's day market place is where people from different villages meet.

Saint exchanges between villages played a role in the indigenous uprisings of 1711 in the Chiapas Highlands.

Catholic Church *kompánya* is a rather dubious practice, but the priest tactfully turns a blind eye.

The plaza is packed with vendors from early morning. At around eleven o'clock the church bells clang vigorously and the saints' images are taken out of the nave of the church. Salvos of firecrackers again make the air of the plaza tremble. The saints and the escorts then proceed to the same meeting place as that of the day before to bid each other farewell. They bow face to face three times as they did the day before. The bow is different from the earlier one, in that only the host saint advances three steps and the visiting saints move backward three steps.

The movement of the saints on the palanquins makes it seem as though they were saying: "Don't go, my dear brother!"

"Alas, my sister, I must go!"

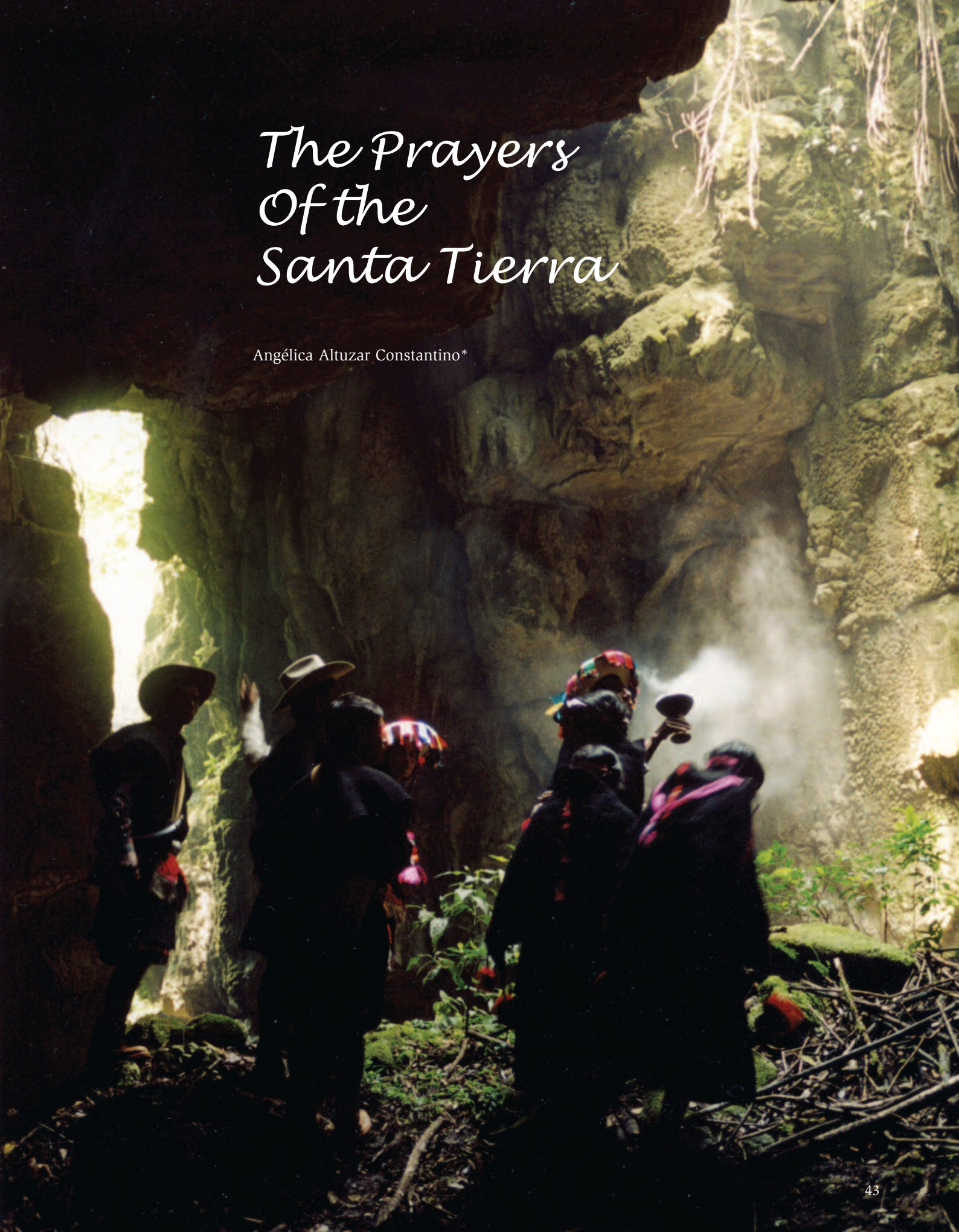
After the exchange of greetings and drinks, the host saint returns to the church with its escort. St. Andrew's image is carefully put back into the box and starts its way home. The return trip tends to take more time, since the road is uphill and people are generally drunk. Musicians play drums and flutes throughout the trip. At some sharp curves and roadside crosses, fireworks handlers shoot skyrockets and explode firecrackers as offerings to the Earth Lord. The fireworks echo into the mountains and announce from afar the return of the delegation to the people of Larráinzar, their hometown.

Due to its heavily Catholic appearance, *kompánya* might be imagined to have originated in Spain. Apparently, however, there was and is no custom of visiting saints either in sixteenth-century or modern Spain, although processions and pilgrimages (*romerías*) do take place frequently on a grand scale. We have yet to learn the origin of *kompánya* in Chiapas. To the best of my knowledge, the earliest recorded account of saint exchange in Chiapas was between Socoltenango and Comitán, now mestizoized towns, in 1688. According to Father Francisco Ximénez, an image of St. Nicholas of Tolentino in Comitán miraculously stopped a fatal epidemic in the town, and thankful townspeople dedicated a festival to St. Nicholas, inviting a saint's image renowned for its miraculous power, Our Lady of the Rosary of Socoltenango. Saint exchanges between villages played a role in the indigenous uprisings of 1711 in the Chiapas Highlands and the archives contain detailed historical records of saint exchanges there all through the nineteenth century.

Kompánya is diminishing. It is not only mestizoization that brings an end to saint exchanges between communities. Rather, it is a change in the whole cultural eco-system composed of ethnic affinity, political situation, socio-economic development and religious change, among other elements, which cause *kompánya* either to be abandoned or to flourish. How has the cultural eco-system in Chiapas changed since the Zapatista uprisings in 1994? New research is needed to shed light on the hidden dimensions of community relations in the Chiapas highlands in the twenty-first century. VM

The Prayers Of the Santa Tierra

Angélica Altuzar Constantino*



From the sixteenth century on, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas have resisted conquest in two ways: some by fighting violently to defend their autonomy even at the cost of their lives and others by systematically withstanding attacks and obstacles, holding their beliefs high. This is the case of the lineage of the prayers of the Santa Tierra (Holy Land), who have managed to preserve their main patrimony: the wise words of their ancestors. These words teach them that they must give thanks for the gifts received, for the bounty of the Earth. The prayers' tradition is losing ground; fewer and fewer participants congregate for the ceremony, pressured by the many groups of Catholics and evangelical Christians who dub these ceremonial practices unworthy because for a long time they included excessive drunkenness. In Chiapas, alcohol is a symbol of oppression and the subjection that these people have suffered historically. However, the prayers of the Santa Tierra continue to receive the voices of the Protecting Spirits in their dreams, which show them the way to the true ritual spaces thanks to which the majesty of their beliefs has not been completely lost.

A butterfly-shaped mist descends from the Chiapas Highlands mountains. Its fine tulle wings cover the valley and alight on one of the most serene Tzeltal pieces of land of the municipality of San Juan Cancuc called Bapuz, whose name means "above the *temazcal* steam bath."

In Bapuz, the river roars and the branches sing. Coffee bushes, grass, wild flowers and star hay delight the eye. The inhabitants are awake before dawn, preparing their ascent on the humid, stone-paved paths leading to the sacred hill of Atzam, where salt water bursts from a spring.

For the inhabitants of this land, time is a road. They travel a long way to the sacred mount where the gods reside, where the heart of Mother Earth lives. They walk hours, offering the fatigue and joy in their hearts.

The gifts for the Lord of the Earth are prayers, white candles, effort and the respect of his faithful. They go to the top of the hills to ask him to make the crop grow healthy, to ask for rain, and that the leaves of the bean plant be free of blight. Everyone hopes to see the corn flowers mature into corn cobs and the dark pods of the beans docilely come apart at the touch of the women who will transform them into food for the people of Bapuz.

In the indigenous universe, each member of the community seeks the common well-being, including that of the plants, animals and things as well as people; that is, everything, both palpable and intangible. Life in the community makes the reality complete. Each being possesses a spiritual force that nurtures him, her or it and at the same time nourishes the strength of the rest. Corresponding to this feeling is an organized collective experience marked by respect, solidarity and fraternity among the members of Chiapas's different ethnic groups.

The roads of the grass and the stones, the mountain, the field, the greeting and the farewell of the sunlight call each indigenous people to union; the earth, the ancestors, the roots and thousand-year-old traditions handed down by hundreds of generations call to them.

One deep-rooted custom is to purify oneself, fasting three days before a visit to the sacred hill to be worthy of the gods' attention. The faith is unquestionable. It is demonstrated by dancing until the sun sets and the 20 candles presented in offering to the spring, the cave, the ancient fathers and nature burn out.

While the celebration lasts, the soul sings, the landscape smiles. The whole countryside trembles at hearing the harp, rattle and Chamula guitar music. It vibrates to the steps of the dancers who are calling the dwellers of the underworld in company of those who offer up prayers, who with their wise words touch the ears and will of the Lord of the Earth, the Giver of Life, so he will provide for the plots of land, the community and the neighboring towns.

* Cultural journalist working in Coneculta-Chiapas.

Photos by Carlos Martínez Suárez, director of cultural dissemination, Coneculta-Chiapas.

The indigenous prayers belong to a representative lineage. Every worshiper dreamed at an early age what his destiny would be: dedicating his life to a dialogue with the Giver of Gifts, entreating for his brothers and sisters, for his people; caring for the candles of hope and offering the best words, those that come from the heart: the true words. And when words are not enough to say what the soul feels, tears fall, humble and pure like the heart of corn.

Don Alonso Méndez Torres and Don Vicente Cruz López accompanied the main prayers to the venerable rituals from the time they were very small children. And one night when they were young men, they dreamed that they were handed over the sacred papers on which their duty as ministers of the prayers and celebrations of the planting of the corn and beans and the harvest were written.

In the Ixcalom cave, inhabited by spirits of the ancient hill dwellers, white candles are planted so the wise words and the prayers of the wise elders can reach the gods.

Copal is the nourishment for the Earth and the tree branches decorating the altar repeat the ancient ways of understanding life and celebrating the sacred. Music also pours from the heart; it is the true music that inebriates the understanding of those who implore and those who are idolized. The final melody of each prayer is called Balún Batson: nine pieces of music for the sacred settlement.

Women, men, children, young people and the aged all have the same will: touching the understanding of the gods who live in the bosom of Mother Earth so they may lavish their creatures with favors.

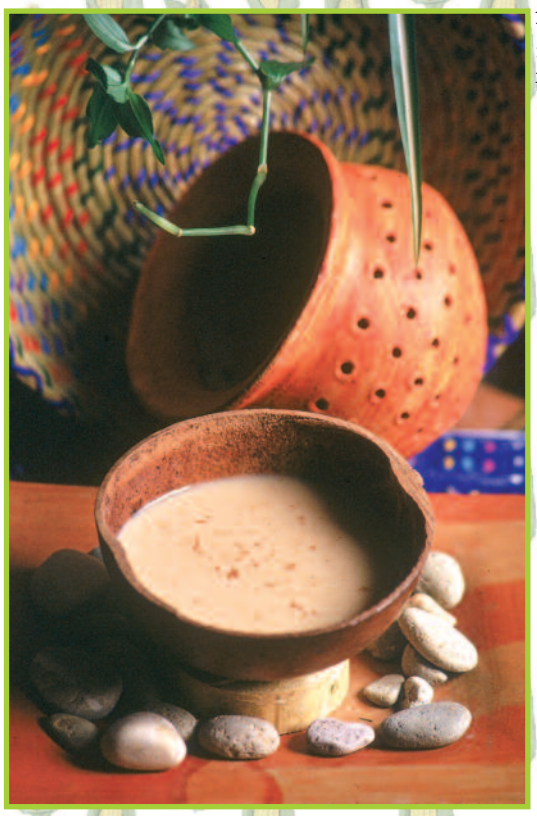
For almost a century, these worshipers have petitioned the support of the Lord of the Earth three times a year for abundance of the squash and grain that feed the municipality. Before the crosses that have blended into the color and texture of the earth, the prayers give themselves over to a deep, mystical, seemingly interminable conversation until they feel that the hill has been pleased to receive the gift of its children.

The fiesta of Ta ajaw, or "visiting the hill" fiesta, ends late at night. The inhabitants of Bapuz come down from the hill and return to their homes, continuing to pray and dance. The true musicians sing their songs dictated to them in dreams by Saint John and Saint Ildefonso, who play with the dwellers of the earth and run after the deer. VM

Prayers of the hills in a ceremony asking for corn in the Tzeltal municipality of Tenejapa.

Prayer of the hills in a ceremony marking the beginning of the agricultural cycle in the Tzeltal municipality of Tenejapa.

Instant Drinks And Popcorn From Chiapas Ancient Gifts For Your Palate



Elsie Montiel

Luis Alberto Vargas*

Most of us are used to instant drinks, powders added to water to turn it into a beverage to quench your thirst, refresh you, or simply offer a pleasant taste. In our time, being self-conscious about our weight, cholesterol levels or overall health, we also want these beverages to have as few calories as possible.

But we would not hesitate to consider these drinks one of the most ingenious and useful inventions of our times. How wrong we are! The Indians from Southern Mesoamerica, including the region that we know today as Chiapas, invented a few of them long before Europeans made contact with the New World.

Their origin is rooted in the way ancient Mexicans got to know and exploited their staple food: maize or corn. This remarkable plant yields more food per hectare than other grains, and its biochemical make-up and physical characteristics give it some interesting properties.

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Unless otherwise specified, photos courtesy of Chiapas State Ministry of Tourism.

A good example is popcorn, made with a variety of seed with a hard, waterproof shell. When the grain is heated, the water inside is converted to vapor and, at a certain moment, the pressure overcomes the resistance of the shell and the grain bursts, extruding the cooked inside, that turns white and fluffy, making the seeds look like what ancient Mexicans saw as stars.

Many people today do not know the basic history of our everyday foods. We think of popcorn as something you prepare at home in the microwave or buy in a movie theater, but few know that it started in ancient Mexico, and that we have archaeological proof of its very old history and uses.

Mexicans found the way to prepare a very tasty beverage called *taxcalate*, made with *pinole*, a sweetener, powdered cacao and *achiote* mixed with water.

For instance, during the last century, ethnographers still found indigenous groups that prepared popcorn with what may have been its oldest culinary technique. They simply placed the seeds in the ashes near the open fire. The heat was enough to make the grains pop, and probably children would catch the popped corn with their hands and eat it happily before it fell on the ground and got dirty.

We also have good ethno-historical data that shows that grains of popped corn were strung together and worn as necklaces during certain festivities. It is certain that this very popular way of preparing corn was at least as appreciated by our ancestors as it is by our contemporaries.

Another useful characteristic of maize grains is that they can be toasted, draining them of most of their humidity. Then they can be ground on the Mexican grinding stones known by their ancient Nahuatl name as *metates* to get a very fine powder which, if kept dry, can last for a long time. This powder is known as *pinole*.

Pinole nowadays is sweetened with sugar, but in the past honey from native Mesoamerican wasps may have been used to make it taste better. It can be eaten as is, but this requires a lot of saliva to moisten it. A Mexican saying says that whoever has more saliva can eat more *pinole*, which means that those with the gift of gab go further in life.

But there is an easier way to have *pinole*: by diluting it in water. But this way it does not taste very good and certainly does not dissolve completely, and the beverage turns grainy. But Mexicans found the way to prepare a very tasty beverage called *taxcalate*. The other two ingredients, in addition to a sweetener are powdered cacao, the basic component of chocolate, and *achiote*, a fruit which yields an intense, bright red color still used by several Indian tribes in South America to dye their hair and paint their skin with traditional patterns. It also has a pleasant taste and is one of the main ingredients of *cochinita pibil*, a special Yucatan dish of pork roasted in a pit.

The mixture of *pinole*, cacao and *achiote*, plus sugar or honey produces a very unusual and tasty beverage that is at the same time nutritious and refreshing. This is a good example of a group of beverages that are also food, since they provide a good amount of nutriments and energy that makes them very suitable for children or undernourished communities.

But the most interesting example of these instant and nutritious beverages is *atole*. This is the result of another very old Mexican discovery from the distant past, known as *nixtamalización,* a procedure used to soften the grain to be able to grind it and turn it into *masa* or corn dough, the preparation needed to prepare tortillas, tamales and many more delicacies.

Masa is also used to brew the beverage known as *atole*. In its simplest version, a small ball of *masa* is boiled in water and sweetened, but fruit or spices may be added for flavor. This way, *atoles* acquire many interesting tastes and are never boring. In some cases herbs are added to make them medicinal.

In Chiapas and other regions of Mexico *masa* is diluted directly in water to prepare *pozol*, another instant beverage. People who work far from home or who travel carry balls of *masa* with them and when

they are hungry and thirsty, they simply dilute one of them in water.

A variant is to leave the balls of *masa* out in the air for a little while and then wrap them up in leaves and carry them until they are needed. This allows microorganisms to penetrate the ball of *masa* and reproduce by consuming the ground corn.

The microorganisms that do this have a very interesting trait: they are able to fix nitrogen from the air and synthesize amino acids, the constituents of proteins. At the same time *pozol* becomes acidic and is known as *pozol agrio,* or sour *pozol,* which has better nutritional qualities than simple corn or even *masa* corn dough. The microorganisms that play a role in this process have been studied in our university. In a true sense, this means that Mesoamericans discovered a way to eat air, albeit with the intervention of microorganisms.

In addition, we must not forget that *nixtamalización* is a simple technique that also enriches corn nutritionally. It starts by soaking raw kernels of maize in very hot water to which lime or some other form of calcium carbonate is added, making it alkaline. A very complex biochemical process begins through which the corn changes profoundly. First, calcium is added, a mineral found naturally in very few products, like milk. But inside the kernel other things are changing. Precursors of the vitamin niacin are converted; this means that people who consume *"nixtamalized"* corn do not have a niacin deficiency, a common condition among maize eaters who do not use this process, such as poor slaves in the southern United States or poor Italian peasants who ate mostly polenta.

In Chiapas, people who work far from home or who travel carry balls of *masa* with them, when they are hungry and thirsty they simply dilute one of them in water.

Corn's protein content is also enhanced by this technique, making it more easily absorbed by the human body, although its amount decreases. These two changes have made it a most important resource for Mexican people down through the ages.

Whenever you prepare yourself another of our modern instant drinks, probably to go along with popcorn on the side, consider their deep roots in the history of Chiapas and the rest of Mesoamerica. VM

The Washington Consensus And the Mexican Economy

Eliézer Tijerina*

Jason Reed/Reuters

The Washington Consensus, formulated by John Williamson in 1989 and published in 1990, contains the economic policy proposals agreed on by U.S. economists linked to the U.S. political center.[1]

This series of political reforms can be summarized in ten points: 1) fiscal discipline; 2) channeling public spending into health, basic education and infrastructure; 3) fiscal reform; 4) freeing up interest rates and, therefore, the financial sector; 5) maintaining a competitive exchange rate; 6) freeing up foreign trade; 7) liberating the flows of foreign direct investment; 8) privatization; 9) deregulation; and, finally, 10) security for property rights. This article will discuss each of these proposals in terms of its coherence and empirical implementation, both in the United States and in Mexico.

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In the 1980s, the recommendation of fiscal discipline gained political support given the fiscal imbalances in the United States, but above all in Mexico. State expansion was perceived as a threat for individual rights and work incentives. This perception was bolstered by the academic-political triumph of free market ideas and the critiques of the mixed economy headed up by Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman in academia and Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the sphere of politics.[2] The decline in the average rate of profit and of the dynamic of the average rate of productivity in the world from the mid-1960s on cannot be ignored either,[3] a manifestation of the exhaustion of what different analyses called capitalism, the mode of regulation, inward development with import substitution, Keynesian economics, etc.[4] In the context of the Washington Consensus, suffice it to point out that Latin American structuralist thinking in the Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLAC) led this body to propose Latin American economic integration as a way around the obstacles to inward development posed since 1949 which was formalized in 1959 and spurred many actions in the 1960s, unfortunately with scant results.[5]

With regard specifically to fiscal equilibrium, we should remember that John Maynard Keynes established the basis for anti-cyclical fiscal disequilibriums. That is why, in the case of what U.S. monetary authorities recently called the irrational exuberance of the financial market, a fiscal surplus is recommended, and that is what happened during William Clinton's second term. On the other hand, if there are recessive trends in the private sector, what is called for is a fiscal deficit and reducing taxes for private investors, which is what has been done during the current Bush administration. Of course, in an open economy, we also have to consider the interaction with external disequilibrium, the exchange rate, and income and its distribution, among other factors.

The United Nations Development Program has added its voice to the criticisms, saying that poverty in human development and in Mexico's economic and social infrastructure compared to, for example, Vietnam, is due to weak tax collection.

Today, the U.S. recession has been combatted, resulting in an approximate 7 percent external deficit in U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), accompanied by a fiscal deficit of about 6 percent of GDP and a private deficit of nearly 1 percent of GDP, at the same time that the irrational exuberance appears in the real estate sector to the degree that prestigious analysts foresee the possibility of a crack by mid-2006.[6] Thus, the consensus's first proposal is only valid in conditions of stable growth with equilibrium in private savings-investment accounts in light of economic theory and the U.S. government's fiscal practices.

It should be emphasized that the rapid drop in Mexico's fiscal disequilibriums in 1989-1994 under Finance Minister Pedro Aspe Armella was so admired by the United States and other developed countries that because of this and other achievements, the *Financial Times* called Mexican economic officials the favorites of the World Bank.[7]

We can say that the consensus's second proposal, redirecting public spending toward health, basic education and infrastructure, has not been implemented in Mexico because policy has aimed at reducing public spending and privatizing health and infrastructure. Thus, for example, education makes up about 6 percent of Mexico's GDP, less than the 8 percent recommended by the UNESCO. At the same time, more money was used to bail out the banking system than to build infrastructure and, definitely, the Mexican economy's declining competitiveness in recent years is linked to deficiencies in economic policy. This has been recognized both by Mexican authorities and the World Bank.[8] The United Nations Development Program has added its voice to the criticisms, saying that poverty in human development (per capita income, health and education) and in Mexico's economic and social infrastructure compared to, for example, Vietnam, is due to weak tax collection, the rapid trade opening in conditions of scant domestic integration of exports, a slight poverty reduction but with increased inequality, and the lack of an industrial policy and technological development and adaptation. That is, Mexico has failed to promote economic development on the firm basis of human development and the commitment to productive development with technological advancement and equity.[9]

The consensus's third recommendation is fiscal reform. Mexico has roundly failed in this fundamental matter. In the last 45 years, only two real attempts at fiscal reform have been made in Mexico: one in 1961 and the other in 1971. Renowned Cambridge economist Nicholas Kaldor was the inspiration for the first attempt, aborted because of opposition from Mexico's Finance Ministry, which argued that it would cause capital flight. For the second attempt, an independent group formed by President Luis Echeverría (made up of Ifigenia Martínez, Francisco Gil-Díaz, Hermenegildo Anguiano Equihua and the author, led by Jesús Puente Leyva, with the enthusiastic support of Horacio Flores de la Peña, Minister of the National Patrimony, and Luis Enrique Bracamontes, the Minister of Public Works) presented a fiscal reform bill that overcame the opposition of the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank in debates in the presence of President Echeverría and Minister Flores de la Peña. But opposition kept the bill from becoming law. Looking back, it is no exaggeration to say that this changed Mexico's economic history for the worse. It is true that the current Finance Minister, Francisco Gil-Díaz, headed up a fiscal reform proposal that earned him the name Hood Robin because it countered universally accepted fiscal standards by seeking to tax the poor to benefit the rich.

Washington's fourth policy proposal is freeing up interest rates. Recent developments in the field of incomplete and asymmetrical information, as well as regulatory and supervisory domestic practices in the banking, credit and financial sector of all countries show that this liberation can only be relative.

All countries have a central bank charged with issuing currency and running bodies to regulate financial activities precisely because of the peculiarities of the sector, public goods, information and asymmetrical powers, and because they are subject to irrational manias and panics, as demonstrated in numerous financial crises in different parts of the world, including the United States. Today, economists have a consensus about control by monetary authorities in developed countries of the short-term nominal interest rate offered to bank depositors, which influences the rest of interest rates which, therefore, stop being totally free.

Current Finance Minister Francisco Gil-Díaz headed up a fiscal reform proposal that earned him the name Hood Robin because it countered universally accepted fiscal standards by seeking to tax the poor to benefit the rich.

The same general perception exists about Mexico. We should add that the interest rate influences capital accumulation and the income of future generations. In addition, stakeholders' freely picking the interest rate is impossible. Lastly the country risk reflects the spread between the interest rates of government securities considered risk free. The significant decline in the country risk in recent years has been an important achievement by Mexico that has pleased foreign investors; but up until now, this has not meant that the Mexican economy's stagnation has been overcome in terms of per capita income or any convergence with income levels of developed countries.[10] In addition we must consider a performative contradiction because the "liberation" of interest rates, just like free market policies as a whole, was not the product either of the free market or of a democratic election, but rather the result of coercion, the training of elite Mexican economists using criteria and objectives of the U.S. economy and opportunist, ignorant imitation.[11]

A competitive exchange rate is the fifth policy recommended by Washington. Today there are doubts about the competitiveness of Mexico's exchange rates. Among other reasons, this is because the country has been incapable of increasing per capita income since the beginning of the free market reforms in 1983. That is, competitiveness should be measured in relation to a level of full employment with equity and other social goals recognized in Mexico's Constitution, such as decent employment, sustainability and national sovereignty.

The discussion about the Mexican economy's loss of competitiveness under the current administration, corroborated by three different competitiveness indices, has included the participation of Guillermo Ortiz, the governor of the Banco de Mexico Central Bank, and Fernando Canales, the minister of the economy. Ortiz only pointed out the need for certain institutional reforms regarding the central issues of the rule of law and public security in general. Canales represents producers and demands

a Central Bank effort to lower interest rates (understood as the lending rate, charged loan recipients, which continues to be much higher than the savings rate paid to depositors) and a more competitive exchange rate, instruments managed by the Central Bank.[12] In addition, we must take into account oil revenues over and above those budgeted; transitory and uncertain, in the last five years these have come to about U.S.$30 billion, which overvalues the exchange rate and the balance of payments.

China joins Vietnam as an example of countries that have surpassed Mexico, confirming the need not only for strategic institutional reforms, but policies different from the market fundamentalism that has prevailed in official Mexican circles since 1983.[13]

Freeing up foreign trade is Washington's sixth proposal. It is surprising how ignorant the economists in power are of basic economic theory. Already in 1955, Professor James Meade put forward the theory of second best, in which he pointed to the changes that should be made to the hypothesis of the "benevolent invisible hand" of the market given the existence of monopolies, economies of scale, external economies and inequality.

One year later, Professors Richard Lipsey and Kelvin Lancaster generalized the theory by demonstrating that in the absence of one of the conditions for optimal economic equilibrium, it can only be reached by separating oneself from free competition conditions. In other words, if there are imperfections in information, knowledge and competition, partial liberation can affect welfare and efficiency levels in an indeterminate way (it can increase them, lower them or keep them unchanged).[14] In addition, the achievements of neo-institutionalism in the last 20 years seem to be massively ignored by the monoeconomics discourse of the market populists or globalization supporters.[15] According to these propositions, market equilibrium cannot be determined independently of cultural and legal norms or the role of the state for fostering a country's innovative economic performance. This refutes the unilateral hypotheses about freeing up markets using the ideological argument that it is for the benefit of all, an idea maintained in Mexico by the main economic policy decision-makers over the last 22 years, particularly and very decidedly former President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000).

> The "liberation" of interest rates,
> just like free market policies as a whole, was not
> the product either of the free market or of a democratic election,
> but rather the result of coercion.

The Washington Consensus's seventh recommendation is to liberate foreign direct investment flows. Mexico did this very rapidly, including financial investments, in the context of freeing up interest rates and liberalization in all spheres. Recent advances in monetary theory, in conditions of incomplete and asymmetric information, have generated a consensus among well informed economists about somehow regulating international financial transactions, while U.S. authorities continue to hold fast to the dogma of unregulated capital markets.[16]

The arguments against neo-liberal extremists also apply against privatization, Washington's eighth proposal. Suffice it to add the severe judgement of the father of neo-institutionalism and 1993 Nobel Prizewinner for Economics, Douglas C. North, who wrote, "In fact, the simple-minded notion that 'privatization' is all that is needed to set faltering and failed economies on the path to growth is a travesty of institutional reasoning that reflects the primitive understanding of most economists about economic history and growth. Creating efficient factor and product markets is a complicated process about which we know all too little. But the one thing we know is that formal rules must be complemented by informal constraints and effective enforcement to produce such markets."[17]

Deregulation is the consensus's next-to-the-last suggestion. To the foregoing arguments, we can add that while fostering freedom from interference is desirable, neo-liberal dogmas have caused increased insecurity and the belief that formal or negative freedoms must be accompanied by positive freedoms to be and do what is thought can be achieved as a decent human being.[18]

Lastly, with regard to security for property rights, we can say that the problem with this recommendation is that it does not take into account the defense of property of those who have none, thus perverting the thought of the founding fathers of economics like Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, Leon Walras and John Keynes, among oth-

The Washington Consensus's seventh recommendation is to liberate foreign direct investment flows. Mexico did this very rapidly, including financial investments, in the context of freeing up interest rates and liberalization in all spheres.

ers, who never excluded justice from their analyses or shared the extravagant tenets of believers in an illusory harmony of markets left to themselves.[19] It would seem that most economists are also unfamiliar with the contributions of welfare economics, particularly those of A. Sen, which corroborate old hypotheses about the need for a social welfare function and its feasibility as the guide for economic policy.[20] VM

NOTES

[1] For almost 25 years, the author worked for bodies such as the Mexican Central Bank, the Ministry of the Presidency, Fomento Industrial Somex, the Mexican Oil Institute and the National Public Works Bank.

[2] My reference for the Washington Consensus is J. Williamson, "What Should the World Bank Think about the Washington Consensus?" *The World Bank Research Observer*, vol. 15, no. 2, August 2000, pp. 251-264. A critical review of contemporary economic thought can be found in E. Tijerina, *Aprendiendo economía con los Nobel. Un examen crítico* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 1999) and in my article "La teoría económica contemporánea, 1969-1998. Un examen crítico," *Anuario. Departamento de Economía 2000-2001* (Mexico City: UAM-Iztapalapa, 2002), pp. 133-147, available at http://mx.geocities/eliezertijerina. com.mx

[3] About empirical evidence for the average productivity of labor and the average rate of profit in Mexico, see E. Tijerina, "La declinación de largo plazo de la economía mexicana, 1960-1995. Un análisis de las interrelaciones coyunturales y estructurales," G. Vidal, comp., *México y la economía mundial. Análisis y perspectivas* (Mexico City: UAM-Iztapalapa/Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2001), pp. 143-165, with a comment by Fred B. Moseley, renowned authority on the analysis and gauging of the average rate of profit. This article is also available at http://mx.geocities/eliezertijerina.com.mx

[4] There is a wealth of literature on this topic. For a concise explanation, the reader may consult the sources in note 2.

[5] H. Guillén, *México frente a la mundialización neoliberal* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 2005), pp. 63-69.

[6] "After the Fall," *The Economist*, June 18-24, 2005, p. 13. For an up-to-date analysis of the three gaps in the U.S. economy, see D. B. Papadimitriou, "How Fragile Is the U.S. Economy?" in *Strategic Analysis* published by the Bard College Levy Economics Institute, March 2005.

[7] D. Fraser, "Mexico's Growing Intimacy with World Bank," *Financial Times*, March 3, 1992, p. 7, and S. Babb, *Managing Mexico. Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, second printing, 2004), p. 181.

[8] *La Jornada* (Mexico City), September 1, 2005, p. 28 and September 12, 2005, p. 26.

[9] United Nations Development Program, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 2005* at: http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/espanol/pdf/HDR05; *El Universal* (Mexico City), September 7, 2005, p. A18.

[10] H. Guillén, op. cit., pp. 219-220 and 334-336; and A. Huerta, *La economía política del estancamiento* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 2004).

[11] Babb, op. cit., pp. 185. The author mentions coercive isomorphism and expert isomorphism, to which I add mimetic isomorphism because it seems evident to me that the fear of social ostracism induces imitative behavior in all facets of human existence.

[12] *La Jornada* (Mexico City), September 12, 2005, p. 26.

[13] D.C. North, "The Chinese Menu (for Development)," *The Wall Street Journal* (New York), April 7, 2005. This article points out that there are many ways forward to development and that the key is to create efficient institutions that adapt creatively to swiftly changing conditions without submissively imitating Western institutions.

[14] J.E. Meade, *Trade and Welfare* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955); K. Lancaster and R.G. Lipsey, "The General Theory of Second Best," *Review of Economic Studies*, vol. 24 (1), no. 63, December 1956, pp. 11-32. I would like to thank O. Aktouf from the University of Montreal Business School (HEC) for his suggestion to incorporate Meade, Lancaster and Lipsey's arguments.

[15] D.C. North, *Instituciones, cambio institucional y desempeño económico* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993).

[16] Exchanging opinions with J.E. Stiglitz in *Foreign Policy* no. 141, March-April 2004, R.H. Wade clarifies the contrast between Stiglitz's opinion and that of other cutting-edge economists and that of the U.S. government expressed by Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs John Taylor, who said that free flowing capital is a "fundamental right." See http://www.ceip.org/

[17] D.C. North, "Institutions, Ideology, and Economic Performance," *Cato Journal*, winter 92, vol. 11, issue 3, pp. 477-489. At http://web5.epnet.com

[18] UNDP, op. cit.

[19] E. Tijerina, "Eficiencia económica y bienestar social: un comentario sobre la Teoría de la Justicia de John Rawls," J.L. Estrada et al., comps., *Ética y economía. Los desafíos del mundo contemporáneo* (Mexico City: UAM-Iztapalapa/Centro Antonio Gramsci/Plaza y Valdés, 1999), pp. 79-95; and Tijerina, *Aprendiendo economía con los Nobel...* op. cit. It is very important to note that the World Bank abandoned its usual apologetic position when it pointed out legal anomalies in Mexico's bank bail-out in its report about world development dedicated to development and equity. See *La Jornada* (Mexico City), September 21, 2005. This welcome change is the answer to criticisms of international bodies and their policies, particularly over the last 10 years.

[20] A summary of A. Sen's contributions can be found in my book about economic Nobel laureates cited in note 2, pp. 187-196.

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NAFTA and Industrial Policy In Mexico

Monica Gambrill Ruppert*

Victoria Valtierra/Cuartoscuro

The expectation of widespread benefits under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was contingent on industrial restructuring. Manufacturing needed to be modernized to adapt it to the new competitive environment, thereby expanding production and employment as well as increasing wages. The first restructuring model that the government tried to promote after the 1983 economic crisis proposed orienting part of the manufacturing industry toward the business of supplying intermediate goods to the country's export industries, mainly *maquiladoras*. NAFTA's Article 303 reinforced this goal by providing a negative tariff stimulus that would encourage the substitution of international sourcing with local production.

In other words, NAFTA was supposed to encourage the restructuring of manufacturing industries, changing them into suppliers of intermediate goods for export industries. More

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specifically, Article 303 was designed to substitute temporary imports from third-party countries with regional intermediate goods. In order to do this, Article 303 taxes duty-free, temporary imports from non-member countries after a seven-year transition period. In other words, after January 1, 2001, Mexico had to collect its general tariffs (that are much higher than those the United States imposes on third-party countries) on temporary imports of raw material, component parts and machinery coming from third parties, instead of allowing them to be temporarily imported without tariffs.

This change in the temporary-import regime created an incentive to substitute third-party goods for goods of North American origin: from Mexico, the United States or Canada. Supposedly, Mexico would have an advantage in this production, by turning pre-existing companies into suppliers of these intermediate goods or attracting foreign suppliers to Mexico. Thus, NAFTA opened a window of opportunity for restructuring part of the manufacturing industry into suppliers of raw materials and intermediate goods for the country's export industries. This could have promoted a new industrialization model, similar to that implemented several decades earlier in South East Asia.

However, it was not taken advantage of. Its place was taken by a different industrial development program that is reinforcing the technological disparities among manufacturing plants in NAFTA countries instead of reducing them, thereby specializing the Mexican manufacturing industry in the assembly of imported intermediate goods and in unskilled labor-intensive activities similar to those in the *maquiladora* industry. Without upgrading and expanding the productive base, and still far from general conditions of full employment, there was no longer reason to suppose that the price of labor would increase in Mexico.

Starting November 14, 1998, the Mexican government issued the first of a series of "Decrees Establishing Programs for Sectoral Promotion" (PROSEC) to neutralize the effects of Article 303. The PROSEC reduce tariffs on the products they cover to between zero and five percent, in order to match them with U.S. rates, instead of charging Mexico's general tariff for countries without preferential agreements on these products. Since the PROSEC eliminate the difference between U.S. and Mexican tariffs, there is no remainder to pay in Mexico; hence they neutralize the tariff incentive that NAFTA had created to substitute temporary importation from third-party countries. Though issued previously, these PROSEC did not need to come into effect until just before Article 303, at the end of 2000.[1]

The Ministry of Commerce (Secofi), which then changed to the Economics Ministry (SE), decided that duty-free temporary imports from third-party countries were cheaper and safer than trying to source these goods from Mexican companies. The *maquiladora* industry had opposed Article 303 and the response of the manufacturing industry to the opportunity created for it had been weak; neither foreign

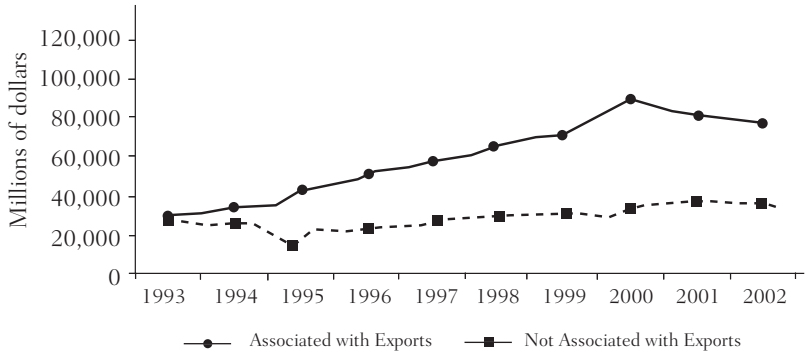
IMPORTS ASSOCIATED AND NOT ASSOCIATED WITH EXPORTS, 1993-2002
(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

YEAR	ASSOCIATED WITH EXPORTS	NOT ASSOCIATED WITH EXPORTS
1993	24,388.3	22,079.9
1994	31,299.0	25,214.8
1995	40,752.7	17,668.4
1996	49,675.2	22,214.5
1997	59,402.7	25,962.8
1998	67,830.0	29,105.2
1999	78,358.4	30,911.2
2000	96,096.0	37,541.3
2001	86,778.0	39,370.8
2002	85,927.8	40,580.2

Source: Bank of Mexico Annual Report, 2002.

NAFTA provided an opportunity for restructuring part of the manufacturing industry into suppliers of raw materials and intermediate goods for the country's export industries that could have promoted a new industrialization model.

Imports Associated and Not Associated with Exports
1993-2002



Source: Table, Imports Associated and Not Associated with Exports, 1993-2002.

With duty-free importation from third parties, instead of turning the manufacturing industry into a producer of intermediate goods, PROSEC is turning it into assemblers of imported goods, thereby disintegrating their productive chains.

suppliers came *en masse* to Mexico nor did an important number of Mexican companies reconvert to take advantage of this alternative. The December 1994 financial crisis was probably the single factor that most complicated the situation.[2] Without credit and without government support, it was no longer feasible to continue waiting for temporary imports to be substituted by domestic production. Therefore, the government reopened the supply of low-cost goods coming mainly from Asia by issuing the PROSEC decrees.

It is important to note the range of industries covered by the PROSEC decrees. Not only do they benefit the same export-oriented companies previously authorized to import temporarily but also the rest of the manufacturing industry, including those that do not export, the only requirement being that they transform the intermediate goods that they import. Therefore, it would not be exaggerated to say that the PROSEC constitute the centerpiece of the government's industrial policy for the entire manufacturing industry and, as such, are the basis for the new industrial development model. Their objective is to raise industrial competitiveness through the supply of world-class machinery and intermediate goods not only for export-oriented manufacturing and *maquiladora* industries but also for the rest of the manufacturing industry oriented toward the domestic market.

The first industry to benefit from the PROSEC was the electrical-electronics sector; and then, between November 1998 and 2001, the program expanded many times to include another 22 branches of industry.[3] Hence, the PROSEC cancelled the opportunity created by NAFTA's Article 303 to give tariff protection to Mexican producers of intermediate goods. Now, with duty-free importation from third parties, instead of turning the manufacturing industry into a producer of intermediate goods, what it is doing is turning it into assemblers of imported goods, thereby disintegrating their productive chains.

In the post-NAFTA period, between 1994 and 2002, the *maquiladora* industry increased the percentage of national intermediate goods incorporated into their final products from 1.5 to 3.8 percent of its total value. Even though this shows a little progress, it does not represent a foundational change because the percentage of national intermediate goods has always fluctuated within this range.[4] That is why it can be said that the NAFTA stipulations, potentially favoring the development of regional suppliers, were not taken advantage of. Instead of substituting temporary imports, this new model constantly increases imports of intermediate and capital goods, although more dramatically in export-oriented companies than in those oriented toward the domestic market.

In the graph entitled "Imports Associated and Not Associated with Exports, 1993-2002", the line that rises more steeply represents the intermediate imports associated with exports, not only in manufacturing but also in the rest of the economy. It represents what companies import in order to be able to export. On the other hand, the line below it, which also rises from

Current trends are worrisome because national content incorporated into the country's exports is not growing as a percentage of the total. This increases the risk of a new balance of payments crisis.

1996 onward, represents imports that are necessary in order to compete in the domestic market.

In 1993, just before NAFTA came into effect, there is no substantive difference between one line and the other but, starting with the 1995 financial crisis, imports associated with exports began to grow. Even though they went down in 2001, this should be attributed to the recession in the United States, not to a change in Mexico's industrial policy. In total, imports associated with exports increased 252 percent, in contrast to the 84-percent increase in imports not associated with exports. Both lines reveal the same tendency toward increasing dependence on these intermediate goods, but they grew earlier and faster in the export-oriented companies. So, despite efforts to increase national suppliers for the *maquiladora* and PITEX industries, they did not counterbalance the opposite tendency toward increased importation of intermediate goods.

These tendencies are worrisome because national content incorporated into the country's exports is not growing as a percentage of the total. Not only does this increase the risk of a new balance of payments crisis but it also tends to reduce the quality and quantity of Mexico's industrial exports. As a result of the lack of backward linkages, industrial employment does not expand as expected. While national exports specialize more and more in assembling imported intermediate goods, it is the imported intermediate goods that contain higher levels of value added. This gives way to a productive structure in Mexico that is essentially different from that of its main trading partners. It permits no convergence within North America: not in the price of the goods they manufacture nor in the wages they pay. There is a structural disadvantage between Mexico's export of productive services, in exchange for the importation of high-tech intermediate goods; and this disadvantage restricts the ability of the manufacturing industry to pay higher wages. Such a scenario suggests inequality will increase instead of decreasing in North America.

This model of industrial restructuring could be categorized as the "*maquiladorization*" of the manufacturing industry. Within the worldwide fragmentation of productive processes, Mexico is assigned the role of assembler of imported parts and pieces. However, this is no longer a predetermined function of those U.S. non-tariff barriers that used to regulate what *maquiladoras* could export to the U.S. Under NAFTA rules, this productive function is now open to change. The irony is that Mexico continues limiting itself mainly to assembly, not just in the *maquiladora* but now increasingly in the manufacturing sector, too, due to the accumulated inertia of three decades of previous *maquiladora* experience and the lack of consistent industrial policies. Still, it is important to recognize that the opportunity is there because it cannot be taken advantage of if it is not recognized. VM

NOTES

[1] This first PROSEC Decree was substituted by another on May 9, 2000; this one was reformed on October 30, 2000 and again substituted December 31, 2000 in order to increase the number of industrial branches included in each revision. After NAFTA Article 303 came into effect in early 2001, the PROSEC were reformed on March 1, May 18, August 7 and December 31; then it was substituted by a new decree on August 2, 2002, each time with the same objective of expanding its scope.

[2] It is worth noting that manufacturing companies did not have access to the kind of financing that they would have needed during the NAFTA transition period in order to restructure as regional suppliers of intermediate goods. In this period, the real variation in loans given by commercial banks to the manufacturing industry has been negative in 45 of the 49 industrial branches: for example, in the clothing industry it was -83.3 percent; leather and its products, -83.3 percent; vehicles and automobiles, -79.3 percent; plastic products, -78.5 percent, etc. (*Reforma*, April 5, 2003, p. 35A); and the financial crisis translated into a fiscal crisis of the state that made it impossible for the government to finance alternative incentives.

[3] The PROSEC cover diverse sectors, like furniture, toys and games, shoes, mining and metallurgy, capital goods, photography, agricultural machinery, chemicals, rubber and plastic, steel, pharma-chemicals, medicine and medical equipment, transport (except automobile and autoparts), paper and cardboard, wood, leather and skins, automobiles and auto-parts, textiles and garment, chocolate, sweets and similar products, coffee and others.

[4] The sale of domestic intermediate goods to the *maquiladora* industry are not irrelevant sums even though the percentage is low; its volume went from 1,039,000 pesos to 20,320,434 pesos. Measured in dollars to control for inflation, its total increased by a factor of 10, from U.S.$195,100 to U.S.$1,970,500 between 1994 and 2002. But even so, the percentage is so low that it cannot be said that a there is a symbiotic relation between the *maquiladoras* and the manufacturing industries. INEGI, *Estadística de la industria maquiladora de exportación* (Mexico City: 1994-1999 and 2002).

Efraín Bartolomé Poet of Emotion And Intelligence

Juan Domingo Argüelles*

A little more than a decade ago, Efraín Bartolomé (Ocosingo, Chiapas, 1950) wrote that a poem has achieved its greatest consummation when it is "the happy union of music, image and meaning, capable of creating in its reader an emotional change similar to the emotion that engendered it."

In a milieu and at a time in which many makers of verse were losing sight of the essence of poetry, Efraín Bartolomé emerged with a lyrical force and vitality that immediately got readers' attention. Consciously removed from juggling games and verbal pyrotechnics, and against the current of authors "of the rhythmic pirouette and the vertex of the word," as Marco Antonio Campos has aptly called them, Efraín Bartolomé shook the milieu of Mexican poetry with a particularly intense first book, charged with emotion and intelligence that from the very beginning, from its title, announces a surprising perception and poetic instinct: *Ojo de jaguar* (Jaguar Eye).

Jaguar Eye was published in 1982 by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, edited by Marco Antonio Campos, who was able to discern that this poet —who, in contrast with other members of his generation had not published books as a youth— had a different voice, a sure voice, that he brought to this first book at the same time that he underlined it with an emphatic, energetic personal reading, from the first page, from the first poem:

> Why talk/ of the *guayacán* protector tree of weariness/ or the cedar drum upon which the axman plays/ Why tell of the foam/ at the mouth of the Lacanjá river/ Mirror of leaves / Cradle of alligators/ Fount of silver-scaled *macabiles* with wondering eyes/ If this tongue were to change into an orchid/ This voice into the ptarmigan's call/ This breath into a puma's snuffling/ My hand a black tarantula writing should be/ A thousand monkeys in a troop my joyous heart would be/ An image the jaguar's eye could quickly see/ But nothing happens Only the green silence/ Why talk then/ Let this love fall from the tallest ceiba tree/ Let it fly and weep and repent/ Let this wonderment be quenched till it be earth/ Aroma of *jobo* plums/ Otters/ Fallen leaves.[1]

"An intelligent, sensitive poet," wrote Campos then, "whatever Efraín Bartolomé sees, hears and touches, he interrogates, shades and turns into verses of a smoothness and cadence that you experience. We feel the rain falling interminably, the humid air flowing through the

* Mexican poet and literary critic, his recent publications include *Leer es un camino: Los libros y la lectura: del discurso autoritario a la mitología bienintencionada* (Mexico City: Paidós, 2004), and *Historias de lecturas y lectores: los caminos de los que sí leen* (Mexico City: Paidós, 2005).

Drawings by Héctor Ponce de León

The Chiapas jungle was never exactly a "theme" in his poetry, but rather an imperious need to name reality and make it sing.

skin and the lungs, the green humidity shrinking and darkening; he makes us hear how 'a sound of crickets echoes birds/ scrapes the skin of the air.' We see with him the quiet fury of the river, we breathe in the smell of the coffee that the night spills."

To his trade as a poet, Efraín Bartolomé brought another version of the healer of minds and spirits. A psychotherapist by profession, he knew about the power of the exact word. The word —always the word— at the service of human improvement.

For all these reasons, just as he made it known through the poem, parallel to that, in affirming his craft, Bartolomé affirmed his certainties without the slightest doubt. He explained that psychology has taught us that the most complex form of behavior is emotion, and that this is so because it is combined behavior, made up of sensations, perceptions, cognoscitive activities (imagination and thought) and muscular, visceral and glandular reactions.

With absolute knowledge of the processes of sensibility and intelligence, he said, "A verse charged with poetry is capable of producing that behavioral complex. The poet registers it and produces it in the reader. Intellectual verse (which transmits 'ideas'), sense-laden verse (that produces 'sensations') or image-laden verse (that generates images and often dazzles) are poor forms of true poetic verse. That is, they only reach the senses, only the imagination, or only thought. They are necessarily less charged than the magic in which a group of words with a specific sonorousness leads to a tempo, an image and a meaning united in such close harmony that, by touching the spirit of the reader, it produces an effect of an explosion of the emotions."

Today, 23 years after the publication of that first masterful book and after having published 10 other books of poetry, the work of Efraín Bartolomé is a fundamental reference point and a permanent presence in contemporary Mexican poetry. Other equally masterful books followed *Jaguar Eye* and were collected in the impressive volume *Oficio: Arder (Obra poética 1982-1997)* (Craft: Burning [Poetic Work 1982-1997]), also published by the UNAM. This 545-page tome contains several of the most extraordinary moments of Mexican poetry in general and in particular of the works produced by the poets of Chiapas, the land of Rosario Castellanos and Jaime Sabines, the land of *El rescate del mundo* (The Rescue of the World) and *Al pie de la letra* (Literally) the land of *Tarumba* and *Algo sobre la muerte del mayor Sabines* (Something About the Death of Major Sabines).

Jaguar Eye was the felicitous beginning of a poetic work that has continued with *Ciudad bajo el relámpago* (City Under Lightening) (1983), *Música solar* (Solar Music) (1984), *Cuadernos contra el ángel* (Notebooks Against the Angel) (1988), *Mínima animalia* (Minimum Animalia) (1991), *Música lunar* (Lunar Music) (1991), *Cantos para la joven concubina y otros poemas dispersos* (Songs for the Young Concubine and Other Scattered Poems) (1991), *Corazón del monte* (Heart of the Mountain) (1995), *Trozos de sol* (Pieces of Sun) (1995), *Avellanas* (Hazelnuts) (1997) and *Partes un verso a la mitad y sangra* (Cut a Verse in Two and It Bleeds) (1997).

In the same year that *Craft: Burning* was published, another great bilingual, illustrated edition of *Ojo de jaguar/ Jaguar Eye* saw the light of day, put out by the Chiapas state government, whose English version was done by Asa Zatz, the translator of other great Spanish-language writers like Alejo Carpentier, Ernesto Sábato and Gabriel García Márquez.

Zatz wrote about this work,

> A couple of years ago, a distinguished colleague sent me a small volume of poems as something worth translating. It was by a poet named Efraín Bartolomé who originally came from a Mayan village in Chiapas near the border with Guatemala. Entitled *Ojo de jaguar* it concerns the rain forest of his region which he deals with in a series of short poems as a living system, touching on its vegetation, animals, the people associated with it

and their relation to it, as well as his own. He even had the temerity to write a poem that provides a thrilling description of the effects of a devastating forest fire on the environment's living tissues. He touches, as well, on the rain forest's historical past and forecasts the dismal future awaiting it....Needless to say, I was hooked with the very first poem and *had* to translate the rest of the book which turned out to be one of the most pleasurable experiences of my career.

For more than two decades Efraín Bartolomé has been building a body of poetic work in which he constantly returns to the jungle and the motifs of *Jaguar Eye*, but in which he has demonstrated that the Chiapas jungle was never exactly a "theme" in his poetry, but rather an imperious need to name reality and make it sing. When he has needed to name the city, situate it in his memory, invoke it and even curse it, he has done it. Rather, he did it immediately after his first book: *City Under Lightning* is the opposite image of the paradise he offers us in *Jaguar Eye*.

Of course, the much needed review of each of Bartolomé's books exceeds the scope of this article, but let us say that each of these books really constitutes a chapter in a work that is always advancing toward the light, with emotion and with intelligence.

In *Notebooks Against the Angel* the poet defines his craft and practically marks his path, saying, "This notebook weighs/ It is pure light/ It is pure shadow: /it is all my blood charged with meaning." A few pages later, talking to the angel, the certainty arises that will end by naming the undeniable path that, from then on without possibility of return, the poetic work and craft will follow: "I am the angel./ My sword cuts the day./ The tree of the night is torn apart:/ a branch of shadow will fall on your species./ I don't care:/ be known that I am a poet and my craft is to burn."

Buttressed by his profound knowledge of poetry, that is by the poetic myth and the most polished gold of the poetry of all time —from Homer and the Dervish songs to Baudelaire, Darío and Neruda, among other great writers— Efraín Bartolomé's lyric work unites music to the meaning of the word, that word that comes down to us from the most ancient and hidden places of human beings and which in *Cut a Verse in Two and It Bleeds* makes him write the following invocation: Speak for me, tongue of my forebears/ Keep me from lying/ Keep me from ever beguiling/ about the coursing of my blood/ about the vagaries of my heart (Translation: Asa Zatz).

A no less important element of this work is the recovery of local speech and vocabulary that becomes universal. Never renouncing his own speech (which is what gives him identity and fixes forever the fidelity and felicity of the past) is one more of Bartolomé's poetic qualities.

Efraín Bartolomé's poetic work is an event, a happy eruption in the sometimes monotonous course of Mexican poetry at the end of the twentieth century, and today it is a fundamental presence and reference point in the poetic panorama of the recently inaugurated twenty-first century which, in poetical matters, often so easily beguiles.

The security with which he emerged and the firmness with which he has continued reserve for Efraín Bartolomé a solid future with his readers. Because Bartolomé has been given practically all the most important prizes and distinctions a poet can aspire to in Mexico: the Aguascalientes National Poetry Prize (1984), the Carlos Pellicer National Poetry Prize (1992), the Gilberto Owen National Prize for Literature (1993) and the Jaime Sabines International Poetry Prize (1996). But, undoubtedly, the highest award he receives over and over is the one given by his readers who find in his books an indelible experience in which emotion and intelligence are united in the best expression of poetry. VM

Bartolomé's lyric work unites music to the meaning of the word, that word that comes from the most ancient and hidden places of human beings.

NOTES

[1] "Where the Monkeys Dwell". Translated by Asa Zatz.

Invocation[*]

by Efraín Bartolomé

Speak for me, tongue of my forebears
Keep me from lying
Keep me from ever beguiling
about the coursing of my blood
about the vagaries of my heart

In you I put my trust
In your wisdom burnished by time
like the nuggets of gold neath the patient waters of limpid rivers

Let me question before I believe:
Let me light up words by which to walk in the night

Keep me from talking of what I have not seen
of what I have not glimpsed with the eyes of my soul
of what I have not lived
of what I have not touched
of what I have not bitten into.

Don't allow me to make music foreign to my voice or my fingers
music not traveled in the air before reaching my ear
music not played on the blind harp of my heart

Don't let me buzz in the void
like the bees at the window pane of night

Don't let me be silent when I sense danger
or when I strike gold

Never a verse let me insist
that has not shucked the
the dark clam of my heart

Speak to me tongue of my forebears
Mother and wife

Don't let me fail you
Don't let me lie
Don't let me fall
Don't leave me
Don't.

Translated by Asa Zatz

Drawings by Héctor Ponce de León

* Taken from the book *Partes un verso a la mitad y sangra* (Mexico City: La Flauta de Pan, 1997).

Tepeyolotl *
Heart of the Mountain

by Efraín Bartolomé

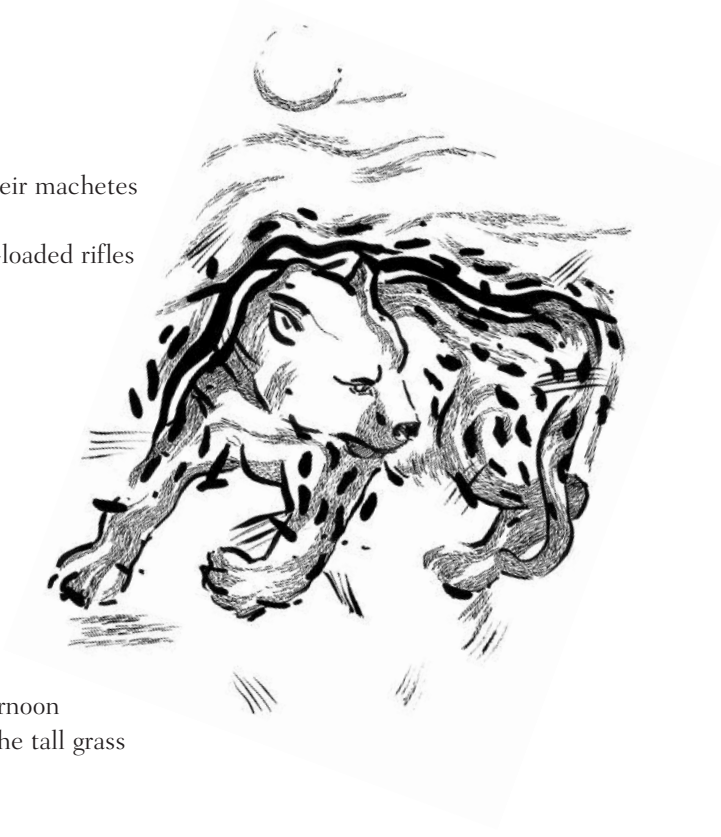
The big cat still arrived to do damage at times

Rumors were still heard
It was said that a flash of lightning entered and left no trace
other than some blood stains

The hair on the back still stood on end
before the sunken track —well marked in the fresh mud—
on the bank of certain streams where *that* smell remained impregnated

We still found at times his violent claw marks on some tree trunks
We still heard of him
He still ventured upon the pioneer cows
in the new pastures of the mountain

At times male and female dared
and they prowled around the house at night
They drove the dogs mad
and the dogs woke everyone up
They made the farmhands turn pale and take hold of their machetes
They caused the women of the farms to recite prayers
and they didn't leave until the owners took their always-loaded rifles
and shouted and opened the door
and went out with their big lights on their heads
and fired from the corridor against the intense night
and the impassive starry sky



A piece of the sky fell on the back of the beast
and accentuated his shine

I still remember that double light close to the ground
between the sapodilla tree and the *guapac* tree:
the two eyes blazed in the dense darkness

I still remember the arrival of the mule drivers that afternoon
and how at night they released their abundant herd in the tall grass
I still remember the uproar in the early morning
And the crazed neighing
And the thick snorting
And the fear

* Unpublished. Soon to be included in the next edition of *Ojo de jaguar*.

I remember well the violent galloping that approached:
the great drove of mules ran toward the house seeking protection
"*El tigre* becomes brave during a full moon" said a cowboy

I still remember the mule that escaped: it came snorting
—wide-eyed— "trembling like a person":
gushing blood from its hind quarters

That's how we saw it before it fell as if dead
and showed its shredded rump:
the skin cut in narrow strips with perfect parallel incisions
as if traced with a *gillette*

I still remember that our cousin from the city wet himself when he saw that
I still remember the eyes of that mule
and its trembling under that sublunar shine
and a desire to not go far from the corral in the days that followed

The hurricane still entered the palm-thatched huts from time to time

We still heard of him

It was still said that a flash of lightning entered
and left no trace other than some blood stains
from that baby "who wasn't even baptized"
and who he found sleeping in a small hammock

He still defended his territory

He still descended to earth to drink blood

When that happened:
when he sprang from the day or from the night
he left for a long time that atmosphere like dry rain
that memory like a storm
haunting the country house

Little by little they were done away with:
now even their skins aren't seen at the ranches

Little by little the blood of the victims dried up

Little by little the spirit of the people dried up

There barely remains a vague memory of that flash of lightning on earth.

Translated by Danion L. Doman

Rogelio Cuéllar/Conaculta/INBA/CNFPL Photo Archives

María Luisa Puga Heroine of Writing

Carlos Urrutia*

María Luisa Puga lived most of her 60 years feeling like an outsider, as though she inhabited places without belonging to them. In the trips she made around the world, she was never alone. She was always accompanied by her diaries, countless notebooks into which she poured her writing to explain reality to herself.

She wrote in them with intensity and discipline, without pretexts to interrupt her craft or postpone the moment of creation. Her routine, which she maintained even through illness, sleepless nights or pain, consisted of getting up every day, including weekends and holidays, at 4 a.m. to sit before her blank page.

She visited European, African and Mexican cities. Finally, she settled in a cabin in the middle of a forest on the banks of the Michoacán

* Researcher in literature.

lake of Zirahuén. There, across from Esteban, the immense tree visible from her studio window, she shared her circumstances, her way of understanding silence, her perception of the social situation and human feelings that were woven into the last third of her literary work.

She was born in Mexico City's Anzures neighborhood in 1944, but her earliest childhood memories were from Acapulco and Mazatlán. Her only childhood fantasy was to become a writer. While she read romantic Corín Tellado stories, she wrote her own in which she and her sister were the heroines.

Then she came upon *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank and she began to keep her own personal diary where she put together the feelings that ran through her life.

"It is as though that diary were my mama, whom I run to when I need to tell her everything that people do to me," said Puga many years later to justify the physical presence of the diary that, with the passage of time, had become thousands of notebooks papering the walls of the house she lived in.

In April 1968, Puga left Mexico City for Europe. There, she traveled through different countries for 10 years; she had a romantic breakup and economic problems that pushed her toward the capital of Kenya, Nairobi.

There she wrote *Las posibilidades del odio* (The Possibilities of Hatred), a novel that narrates the forms of identity that originate in colonialism, as well as the abuses and corruption of the ruling class, in a story that brutally lays bare the injustices of the Third World.

In Nairobi, said Puga, "I saw the reality I grew up in as a child: the reality of hunger, injustice and unlimited luxury. I discovered that in Nairobi, I was the corrupt one, the powerful one, the one who could get away with anything. That is why I wrote my first novel. Yes, in hatred and rancor, there are creative, not vengeful, possibilities."

Then, with her novel written, Puga returned to Oxford, where she ran into an old friend who was returning to Mexico to turn in a manuscript to the Siglo XXI Publishing House. Puga gave him her own, and in 1978, *Las posibilidades del odio* was published. It caused great expectation among writers and critics who considered the theme somewhat exotic, but above all, who praised María Luisa Puga's precise, fluid writing style.

Puga returned to Mexico intent on beginning a career in letters and "aspiring to having the influence of Virginia Woolf and the depressing air of Elías Canetti in my literature."

Upon returning, she almost immediately joined the Mexican Communist Party and ran for alternate deputy in her electoral district. Two years later, having separated herself from political activism, she published *Cuando el aire es azul* (When the Air Is Blue), a novel based on the Cuban people, about a utopian society located in an isolated landscape where the air is blue, there are 28 hours in a day and people have managed to develop coherently socially and economically.

Puga found a voice of her own, which consisted of making her characters speak subject to their circumstances, in a mix of autobiography, fiction and reflection.

Later she published two books of short stories that consolidated her important rise in Mexican letters: *Inmóvil sol secreto* (Immobile Secret Sun) and *Accidentes* (Accidents). An untiring writer, Puga discovered in short stories a respite from writing novels: "I write my short stories at the same time that I work on a novel and it is a kind of rest from it. Something different and refreshing. While writing a novel, I feel the need to throw something out and I do it by writing a short story."

Puga had already found a voice of her own, which consisted of making her characters speak subject to their circumstances, in a mix of autobiography, fiction and reflection, always with a certain sadness and nostalgic surprise with which she perceived the painful reality of the eminently masculine world it fell to her to live in. In her

literature, there is profound concern for social issues that by that time she had managed to separate from political activism.

In 1982, she published *Cuando rinde el horno* (When the Kiln Bears Fruit), an interview-portrait about the ceramics of Hugo X. Velásquez. After this essay written in a single night, for the first time, María Luisa Puga felt like a real writer. That year, she worked as a proof reader at the Siglo XXI Publishing House, she began to give literary workshops, and received the 1983 National Prize for a Novel for *Las posibilidades del odio*.

It was in that same year in one of her workshops that she met the man who would be her partner until her death, Isaac Levín, who had been a business executive for multinationals, a consultant for the U.S. government and an auditor in Costa Rica, and who gave it all up to write short stories. He attended Puga's workshop and they decided to go through life together in literature, the only way in which María Luisa could explain her presence in the world.

"I write to understand and to touch. All people have different ways of living and of feeling an active part of the world. Writing is one of those ways. If I don't bring the things I see to my writing, I feel like I have been left out. By writing them I make them real and I can touch them."

In 1984 she was operated on for a back problem and as she convalesced, closed up in her room and almost without being able to move, she once again escaped from her reality by writing. This is how the novel *Pánico o peligro* (Panic or Danger) came about, in which she narrates in the form of a diary the story of three close friends and their growth in a trip down Insurgentes Avenue in Mexico City.

"The novel's characters are myself and nobody," Puga would explain. *Pánico o peligro* is the constant struggle of Mexico City inhabitants to make sense out of their actions, the concerns of a "colonized middle class" and the feelings of a class of bureaucrats who let themselves be manipulated, exchanging their identities for stability.

Pánico o peligro won Puga the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize for that year and contributed to her being recognized as one of the great writers of Mexican literature.

She resumed her literary workshops. She was invited to lecture about women and letters and the social role of women; she headed up literary events, and in 1985, together with Mónica Mansour, made a tour of rural towns in the northern part of the country. When she came back to the city, Puga was shocked. "Literature does not exist in the rural areas. They don't know who Elena [Poniatowska] or [José] Agustín are; they don't know who Rulfo is..."

"I write to understand and to touch. If I don't bring the things I see to my writing, I feel like I have been left out. By writing them I make them real."

Then, she decided to use all the fora she could and began to quite rightly criticize the country's cultural policy and education. "It seems like cultural projects have the aim of showing us the culture that other peoples produce so we can learn it, not just get to know it. Not to enrich ourselves with it, but to submit to it."

Closer to cultural events and literary workshops, María Luisa felt that she was distancing herself from her commitment to writing. At Isaac Levín's suggestion, she abandoned her social commitments, left Mexico City and changed urban noise for the silence of the forest. She left for a cabin built by her partner on the banks of Zirahuén Lake. Levín also built a little hardware store to pay for living expenses. The reason she decided to abandon life in the city: "I did it for love. I say that in a low voice because some people believe it's not a very serious argument."

In her life in the countryside, Puga continued with her work discipline and made it even stricter. Little by little, she adapted to the silence of the forest. In the beginning, she scared off loneliness with many mirrors that she put up in her study to

Conaculta/INBA/CNIPL Photo Archives

fight off the silence with her own reflection. Then, little by little, she replaced the mirrors with internal images: "While writing, but above all at the moment you sit down to write, there is an anxiety, some that makes you suffer, but just as writing has its bad moments, it has other fantastic ones. The best is when you forget you're writing; you're writing, but it is no longer you, no longer your hand, your computer, your pen, but the story is being told through you."

In 1987, *La forma del silencio* (The Shape of Silence) was published, which Puga had written from her cabin and in which she expounds on the importance of silence as the central axis of today's society, in perpetual crisis.

"Things are destructured: the couple, the family, society, the country. Everything collapses in a torrent of useless, increasingly specialized, words; words that are drier and drier and more and more incomprehensible, more distant from human feeling. In the 1940s the war shook the world. In the 1950s, plastic filled it with hope. In the 1960s it was love. In the 1970s, death made its appearance once again. In the 1980s, crisis. The words sound as if they had already been said, already been tested out, already failed. Human beings continue to be as vulnerable as ever."

Far from the activities of the country's cultural centers, María Luisa Puga surrounded herself with literature and continued firmly committed to literature and society in her way. She divided her time between Isaac Levín, her dogs with their evocative names (Comma, Period, Novel, Story), her notebooks and the literary workshops she gave to children and adolescents in the town's school.

"I went to live in Zirahuén because I wanted to organize my own austerity, live in voluntary, controlled poverty that would allow me to see the process of the country's crisis. I have managed to find a way to sustain myself and fight for people to develop a more critical spirit for analyzing the crisis. What I picked was a space to write in, not to be a successful writer. It would get in the way to be too well known because I would stop hearing my writing and I would begin to hear my image."

In her quest to find different points of view for telling stories, Puga wrote about the circumstances of her life and the world around her, delving into the minds and concerns of different characters.

In one of her best written books of short stories, *Intentos* (Attempts), she explores the sudden arrival of death ("Una, dos, tres por mí" or "One, Two, Three for Me"); its equally unexpected appearance for someone who thinks about it without really knowing its basis ("Malentendidos" or "Misunderstandings"); the childish blindness that leads to selfish cruelty to the unknown ("Nuevos caminos" or "New Roads"); the unconscious theft of a

manipulated girl ("Lucrecia"); the mind of a middle class woman with a dysfunctional family ("¿Te digo qué?" or "Should I Tell You What?")

Later she published "Antonia," which deals with the relationship of two women who were childhood friends and their journey through Mazatlán and London in a trip that takes Antonia, a young woman full of life, to her death from breast cancer.

In "Las razones del lago" (The Reasons of the Lake), Puga recreates the town of Zirahuén from the viewpoint of a pair of decrepit dogs who wander among the women washing clothes on the banks of the river.

"La viuda" (The Widow) reveals the terrible problem of being a submissive woman and what happens when she finds new freedom on the death of her husband. The story came from the time when a woman very close to Puga lost her husband and during the funeral uttered a single sentence: "I'm tired of being the queen mother."

Next came "La reina" (The Queen), the story of a tremendously beautiful young woman, tormented by the sordidness of her surroundings, and "Inventar ciudades" (Inventing Cities), the story of an orphan girl who must leave the city to go to live with two old people in the provinces.

"Nueve madrugadas y media" (Nine and a Half Early Mornings), her most autobiographical story, is a long dialogue that takes place at the time suggested by the title between a young male writer and a mature woman writer about the processes of creation.

In a corner of the text, María Luisa Puga makes reference to an event that would have important consequences for her but that she preferred not to mention: one morning in 1995, she was kidnapped from her cabin. While she was being led through the forest by her captors, she fell down several times, which led her to suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, which combined with the pulmonary emphysema caused by her constant smoking.

In 2002, she suffered from the effects of the arthritis and was rendered practically immobile, confined to a wheelchair that she had painted red and that was pushed everywhere by Isaac Levín.

To fight the pain, María Luisa Puga resorted to her best escape: she wrote about her relationship with the suffering and made it a character in her life. She evaded the fear of breaking her joints with the pen and thus emerged *Diario del dolor* (Diary of Pain), the last book she would publish, which consists of 100 small fragments about that relationship with Pain, an ever-present character.

The book comes with a compact disc that brings the reader Puga's voice reading the story. It has been taken to the Ministry of Health's pain clinics as part of the therapy for dying patients.

On the day it was launched, Puga said about *Diario del dolor*, "I began to write to get it all out, until the presence of pain began to be something that was always there with me. I told myself, 'If I am locked in here with it, well, it's locked in here with me, too. It is not going to be able to leave.'"

In December 2004, just when she was beginning to walk again with the help of a cane or a walker, in one of the routine check-ups for which she traveled to the city, the doctors discovered too late an advanced case of cancer in her ganglia and liver. Three weeks later, she died on Christmas Day at 3 p.m. in Mexico City's Nutrition Clinic. She left two more incomplete novels in which pain played a primary role in the story.

Her innumerable notebooks that she was so devoted to were left in the care of her friend Elena Poniatowska.

Her last request was to be cremated and have her ashes buried at the foot of her tree Esteban, across from the cabin that held her collection of video tapes, the memory of a shipwrecked sailboat and the love professed for her until the very end by her inseparable partner Isaac Levín. VM

Pánico o peligro won Puga the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize for 1984 and contributed to her being recognized as one of the great writers of Mexican literature.

The Possibilities of Hatred Fragment[1]

by María Luisa Puga

Drawings by Héctor Ponce de Léon

THREE

Jeremiah was sitting in Uhuru Park, far from the cafe, although he could hear the music just fine. Of course the group that was playing (it must have been from Zaire) and the people dancing couldn't be seen from there. Perhaps later, when it was dark and more crowded, he could try to get in and begin his round of the tables left empty by the dancing couples, taking a drink of beer here and a sip of Pepsi-Cola there. Whatever he found, and with the constant risk that someone would come and beat the hell out of him. But Jeremiah had been a boxer. Actually, only for a very short time because he had realized that the blows could affect his ability to study. It had been better to leave it. But the training had left its marks: he was a muscular, agile boy. And tall.

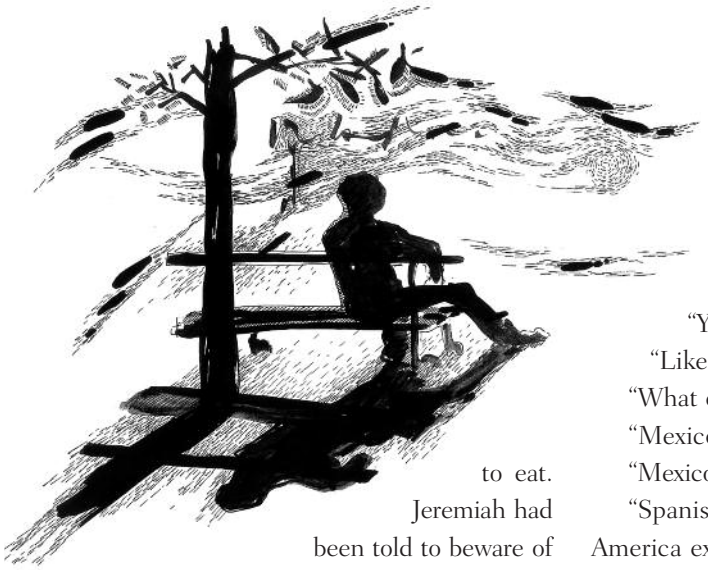
He took advantage of the last rays of the sun as he watched the people cross the park. There were several boys like him; some he recognized, others not. They must be new in the city and that wandering around out there of theirs, empty-handed, not deciding to go into the cafe, meant that they didn't have any money either. You could tell even though they were still clean, still attentive. You could tell. The ones that did have money went right in, not quickly, but directly into the cafe. As though attracted by a magnet. There were others who came into the park hovering, pursuing the tourists. Totally calmly, they asked them for money. Jeremiah heard tell that that's what students did in Europe, that it was normal. He didn't dare. The whites intimidated him. He kept away from them. It was better that way. Also, he guessed that his father, now in the hospital, would not like him to go around asking for money like that. He had said, "Go get a job in Nairobi until you start your classes. We have to pay the 200 shillings for the hospital." That was a week ago

and nothing. He couldn't find work. For two days now he hadn't had any money. He hadn't eaten. Many like him stole. It was risky and you had to know how. Be prepared for anything. But Jeremiah didn't even consider the possibility, perhaps because he already felt weak, or maybe because he didn't think he could lie to his father.

And with his eyes half closed, he watched the people go by without taking too much notice. People like yesterday. He let them go by without envying them, without hating them. Some single white men, messy looking; others in noisy groups looking for a woman. They wanted Africans but they didn't quite know how to look. Timid, clumsy, usually young. He had seen them make a mistake and they made him laugh. They offered money, they didn't offer. The girls were always making fun of them. But they didn't understand a single African language. And Jeremiah enjoyed watching the groups of Africans who had already been living in the city for some time (or perhaps they were from the city. From rich families, maybe, and they just came to have a good time). The girls pretended to be alone; they sat at a table looking bored, and the white man would come up. It never failed. They would dance once or twice. Without being able to hear —above all, trying to make sure that the girl didn't notice that he was watching her because right there she could cause trouble, say that he had insulted her or anything else— from far off, without being able to hear, it was easy to tell the moment when she asked the white man for money because he got nervous. Jeremiah supposed she explained to him that she wanted it before going with him. And Jeremiah could always discover her group, the group that was waiting for her around there without looking at her again a single time, but attentive, sort of approaching her. Suddenly, in a flash, she would disappear into the group, and with a single step be as though she were buried. She disappeared. And the white man at first looked all around as though nothing had happened. There were times when the girl was right there next to him, right there, dancing in the embrace of one of her friends, and he didn't recognize her. Jeremiah couldn't hold back his laughter. Then the white man, desperate, would go in among the couples looking for her and she, hiding, would dance more spiritedly, laugh harder and hold her guy closer. Jeremiah enjoyed these things. He didn't feel any pity for the whites. He would like to have done things like that, but for that you needed a group, a girlfriend. And for that you needed money. And though Jeremiah felt that people looked at him with liking, he didn't go near anybody. He preferred to keep himself apart.

He set to deciding whether to light another cigarette or wait. Yesterday, someone had given him the pack. Menthols. Not a new pack, but almost full. Desperate, not so much from not eating as from not smoking, he had asked a guy for a cigarette. A white guy. He hadn't noticed. "You got a cigarette?" he asked without looking much at the face. "Yeah, here. Keep the pack. I don't like menthols."

He also wanted to decide whether to go to the bar where there was a waitress who wanted to sleep with him. She told him the first night. "If you want, I'll sleep with you." That night Jeremiah had still had money to pay for the meal. It was his first night in the city. "But I don't have any more money," he had told the girl. "It doesn't matter." And he had slept with her. She wasn't very clean. She had a little dark room in some far-away neighborhood, almost outside the city, where the streets were rivers of mud. She lived alone there. She came from Kericho, she had told him. She had been in Nairobi for two years and was saving money to go back home (at home, they didn't know where she was). Her wages from the bar were barely enough



to eat. Jeremiah had been told to beware of diseases, that they were expensive to cure. She didn't know if she had one or not. Maybe she did. They didn't make love. They slept together and she said, "When you're hungry, come by the bar and I'll give you something. They won't get mad." He would go tonight.

"You got another cigarette?"

Jeremiah raised his eyes and looked at the dark-haired white boy. Mechanically, he held out the pack and then his own cigarette to light him up. The boy breathed in deeply and gave him back the cigarette, looking at him full in the face. "Thanks." He sat down next to him and smoked in silence. Jeremiah waited, but when he saw that the other didn't speak, he sank again into a kind of tranquil lethargy, looking at the people, content just because he was going to eat, because he wanted to see the waitress after all. He would make love. What of it?

"You know how much you have to pay to get into that discotheque," the white boy asked suddenly.

"Ten," said Jeremiah, rather intrigued. The guy wasn't English. He didn't look like a tourist like all the rest. There was something different about him. He looked at him a moment. He must have been more or less his own age, but he wasn't as tall. He had nothing in his hands.

"Are you on vacation or do you live here?

"On vacation," said the other guy. "And you?"

"Me too. I'm from Nyeri."

"Oh."

"Do you know where Nyeri is?"

"No."

Jeremiah laughed.

"Are you a student?"

"Yes. You?"

"Me too, but I came to Nairobi to look for work to pay my father's hospital bill, but I can't find any."

"Is there a lot of unemployment here?"

"Yes."

"Like in my country."

"What country is that?"

"Mexico."

"Mexico...what language do they speak there?"

"Spanish. They speak Spanish in all of Latin America except Brazil. There, they speak Portuguese."

"Oh, yes. Mexico is close to the United States, isn't it?

"Very close," smiled the boy. "Do you like Americans?

Jeremiah shrugged. It was the same to him.

"I hate them."

"Why did you come to Kenya?"

"I have some friends here. I came to visit them, but I also wanted to see something of Africa. I would like to travel a little bit through Kenya. Do you know it well?"

"Some, by my home, by Mount Kenya."

Jeremiah had never talked so much to a white before.

He looked at him curiously, and then suddenly said, "Hey, would you loan me some money? I haven't eaten for two days."

"How much?"

"Well," he smiled, "the truth is that I need it to pay for my father's hospitalization. So I can go back to my town and get work on some farm and save to pay you back. It's 200 shillings."

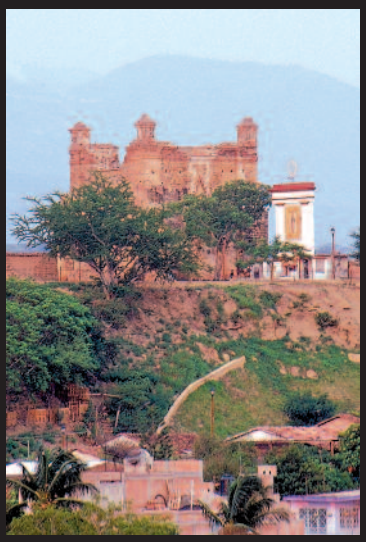
The boy looked at him in silence and then looked toward the park. People passed by, the music came and went with the wind. He had arrived from Mexico two days before. VM

NOTES

[1] María Luisa Puga, *Las posibilidades del odio*, Lecturas Mexicanas Collection (Mexico City: Conaculta, 1985), pp. 61-66.

Chiapa de Corzo
A Meeting Place

María del Carmen Valverde Valdés*



Photos this page by Elsie Montiel

Nestled in the sultry Central Chiapas Depression on the banks of the Grande or Grijalva River and just before the entrance to the spectacular Sumidero Canyon is the city of Chiapa de Corzo.

Famous for its magnificent sixteenth-century *Mudéjar* fountain, a few people know it for its colorful *xicalpestles* (lacquered and painted gourds), and even fewer know it for its *parachico* revelers, the main attraction at the fiesta of San Sebastián.[1] Also, few people are aware of the existence of a first-class archaeological site in the city, even though a round-about had to be built on the route of the Panamerican Highway to avoid going directly over one of its pyramid's foundations. Most people only visit Chiapa de Corzo because the boats that go through the Sumidero Canyon leave from there, and they are not aware that its nooks and crannies and environs contain an ancient and sometimes fascinating history.

The town of Chiapa has been inhabited by different groups continuously from the earliest pre-Hispanic times until today. It is one of the few places in Chiapas that has

▲ This pre-Hispanic building is on private grounds.
▼ Structure 32 still stands at a crossroad near the entrance to the city.
Photos: Elsie Montiel

* Researcher at the Center for Mayan Studies of the UNAM Institute for Philological Research (IIFL).

been both an urban center and a meeting place for different cultures that have been determinant in the history of today's Mexico.

First Inhabitants

In the Central Depression of Chiapas, vestiges of settlements have been found dating from before the use of ceramics. An enormous amount of archaeological evidence tells us of occupation during the entire pre-Hispanic period. One part of the population was concentrated around urban and religious centers and the rest was distributed in the agricultural areas along the rivers. However, few locations show continual settlement; most had relatively short, intermittent occupation. This, together with the testimonies that indicate that the area was a migratory route and therefore an area of constant cultural exchange and trade, could explain certain political and social instability down through its history, as a consequence of the continual movement and encounters of different cultural groups over a period of more than 3,000 years.

Today, the Chiapa de Corzo archaeological site located to the east of the modern city has been divided in two by the Panamerican Highway. Urban growth has been responsible for the disappearance of many of its mounds, some of which have vanished beneath the modern city's buildings. Like many other settlements, this one began as an agricultural village between 1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C. thanks to the excellent soil on the banks of the Grande or Grijalva River, and evolved into the region's largest political, economic and religious center and the cultural heart of the Central Depression by 700 B.C. By that time, it was already an incipient city, strategically located *vis-à-vis* pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica's main trade routes. For this reason, Chiapa de Corzo was not alien to the influence of other cultural regions like the Olmecs of La Venta (between 800 B.C. and 400 B.C.), or the Mayans of the lowlands during the rise of the great city El Mirador (between 400 B.C. and 100 B.C.). Its maximum development was reached between the Late Pre-Classical and the Early Classical (450 B.C. to A.D. 450), a period in which the Maya area's political institutions were going through a full-blown process of development and change. Its Mixe-Zoque-origin inhabitants would abandon the city during the Middle Classical (from A.D. 550-700), when Teotihuacan's influence had already been felt, and the area surrounding it would be occupied later by another cultural group.

Archaeological studies indicate that there are about 100 structures in the site, among them the foundations of pyramids, housing complexes, platforms and terraces around patios or plazas with complicated designs, as well as what are called palaces, the more complex buildings. These include tombs or burial chambers which, in contrast with simpler burials found in other mounds, contained high-quality offerings of materials like copal, jade, bone, obsidian, amber and sea shells in the form of ornaments like ear plugs, seals, bracelets and lip plugs, as well as various examples of local pottery (most of these objects can be found in the Tuxtla Gutiérrez Regional Museum, since there is no site muse-

Elsie Montiel

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The former Santo Domingo Monastery.

Rubén Vázquez

um). Among the most important finds of the Chiapa de Corzo archaeological site are five fragments of stelas, one of which (number 2) is inscribed with one of the oldest known dates of the "Long Count" found until now, leading to very important research on the origin of writing in Mesoamerica.[2]

Meeting the Conquistadors

Although the history of the Zoque people in Chiapas covers a long period, it is relatively unknown. This is not the case of their successors, the Chiapanecs, who occupied the site for a shorter time but were the protagonists of epic moments that became legend in Chiapa de Corzo.

The Chiapa indigenous arrived to the Central Depression in the Post-Classical period, and, subjecting the local inhabitants, conquered the best land in the valleys on the river banks. They established their capital in what is today downtown Chiapa de Corzo. Apparently, they lived in constant conflict with their Zoque, Tzotzil and Tzeltal neighbors, even ferociously resisting Mexica dominance. Bernal Díaz del Castillo's description of the city gives an idea of its importance and magnificence:

> We agreed to make our way through their city of Chiapa, and it could truly be called a city, and well populated, the houses and streets very much in concert, and more than 4,000 souls, without counting the many other subject peoples who inhabited the environs....We entered the city, and as we arrived at the most populated part, where their great temples and places of worship were, they had houses so close together that we could not set up camp.[3]

Although the Chiapanecs vigorously resisted conquest, once defeated, they very quickly absorbed the cultural patterns hailing from the old world.

Unfortunately no architectural vestige of this proud, bellicose capital remains; we know that its civic, ceremonial center was razed by the colonial power's religious zeal, and its uninterrupted occupation ended by destroying any other vestige of the ancient city. We also know very little about the cultural

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basis of this people, both because we lack written records and because the Chiapanecs, although they vigorously resisted conquest, once defeated, very quickly absorbed the cultural patterns hailing from the old world, losing their own in the process. In fact, their ancient language has disappeared. What has been preserved of the history of this warlike group are the testimonies of the chroniclers of the time of the Conquest, who narrate the ferocious battles between Chiapanecs and Spaniards, the Chiapanecs' incredible demonstrations of bravery and the military tactics they used. It is said that during one of these great battles, the Chiapa were cornered by the Spaniards and preferred death to surrender, throwing themselves off the highest cliff of the Sumidero Canyon. The veracity of this episode has never actually been proven, but it is a fact that when the colonial city was founded, it was named Chiapa de los Indios in recognition of the Chiapanecs' unusual valor and military ability. It is also true that the Chiapa Indians and their capital played a fundamental role in the history of the Spanish conquest of what is now Chiapas, from the entry of Luis Marín in 1524 and Mazariegos in 1528 to the different rebellions in the 1530s. Seemingly, it was during these uprisings against Spanish domination that the rebels, who had earlier abandoned the town to withdraw to the Sumidero Canyon, finally met the Spaniards in a battle that was to become legend.

As a result of the last uprising in 1534, many of the rebels were hung in the plaza of Chiapa de los Indios while their leader, Sanguieme, was burned alive "between the two trees in the plaza of this town."[4] One of those trees, "la Pochota", an enormous *ceiba* or silk cotton tree that witnessed the feats of the resistance, still offers shade to visitors in today's Chiapa de Corzo plaza. Next to it is the magnificent *Mudéjar* colonial fountain, "La Pilona" as it is affectionately called by local residents, included in leading treatises on Hispano-American viceregal art as one of the few monuments of civil architecture that remain to us from the century of the conquest itself.

Religious architecture, a witness to the arduous Dominican efforts to spread the Gospel, can also be seen in Chiapa de Corzo in the solid construction of the former Santo Domingo monastery, adjacent to the plaza. The size of the entire church complex speaks to the importance of Chiapa de los Indios, probably the largest and one of the most important of what was then the province of Chiapa.

The meeting of cultures left the city other attractions. Visitors cannot leave the town without seeing the Lacquer Museum in the former monastery, which offers

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The Lacquer Museum in the former monastery offers a select sample of the most famous local craft, the colorful *xicalpestles* or painted gourds.

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a select sample of the most famous local craft, the colorful *xicalpestles* or painted gourds. The Mexican name for gourd is *jícara*, a word adapted from the Nahuatl word *xicalli*; the objects are actually dried squash shells painted with lacquer, a technique that dates from the pre-Hispanic period. These products were among the most highly sought after in Chiapanec trading. Making them is a long and very complicated process and they are painted with many different, varied motifs, all with a wonderful, joyful color scheme. In the past, natural pigments ground and mixed with oil for decorating were used, but today, chemical colorings are more common. The city is bursting with bad imitations of lacquer, but in the oldest neighborhoods pieces are still produced with the legendary lacquer technique, a reflection, just like the town of Chiapa de Corzo itself, of a hybrid, ancient history. VM

Notes

[1] Held in January, this is one of the most famous fiestas in the state of Chiapas. The main attraction is the dance of the *parachicos*, men dressed in colorful outfits, painted masks and big wigs, that revives the legend of Doña María de Angulo, a colonial lady who, thankful that her very sick son was cured in Chiapa de Corzo, became the benefactress of its inhabitants in hard times.

[2] The "Long Count" is a dating system used by the Mayans during the Classical period (between A.D. 300 and A.D. 900), which not only pinpoints the date by specifying *bactunes*, *tunes*, *uinales* and *kines*, but also incorporates other aspects like the agricultural, the lunar and the ritual calendars.

[3] Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *La historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa Editores, 1972), pp. 421-423.

[4] Heinrich Berlin, "El asiento de Chiapa", *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia*, vol. 31 (1-4), 1958, p. 19.

The Mixe-Zoque Legacy in the Soconusco

Tomás Pérez Suárez*

Ball game court at Izapa 1 archaeological site. Photo: Elsie Montiel

Vase with the figure of a *coatí* holding its muzzle. *Plomiza* ceramics. Earty Post-classical period.

Although traditionally the Pacific Coast of Chiapas is considered part of the Mayan area, strictly speaking, archaeological and linguistic evidence show that the region was actually inhabited in ancient times by members of the Mixe-Zoque linguistic group. Mayan does not belong to this group, but the language of the culture we now call Olmec may well be part of it.

According to colonial chroniclers, Mixe-Zoque speakers inhabited part of southwest Chiapas, from Tapanatepec, near the border with Oaxaca, to Tapachula, on the border with Guatemala, where Tapachultec was spoken. However, shortly before the Spanish conquest, speakers of varieties of Mayan (Mam, Quiché and Tuzantec) and Nahuatl had begun to settle in some parts of this fertile, strategic area.

The word "Soconusco," the name given to this part of Mexico's Southeast, is derived from the Nahuatl *xoconochco*, meaning "place of the sour prickly pears" (*xoconostle*), the name of a now extinct people and a province that paid tribute to the Mexica empire in the sixteenth century.

Today, Soconusco is the name given to one of the state of Chiapas's eight administrative areas or counties. It covers 16 municipalities located between the Pacific coastal plain and the southern arm of the Chiapas Sierra Madre mountains, from Mapastepec to the Guatemalan border. Due to its climate and fertile land, the region has been continuously inhab-

* Archaeologist. Researcher at the Center for Mayan Studies of the UNAM Institute for Philological Research (IIFL), and professor at UNAM School of Philosophy and Letters, the National School of Anthropology and History and the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography. Photos of ceramic pieces by Tomás Pérez Suárez.

ited for at least 5,000 years. Its strategic location has made it an important cultural corridor between Mexico and Central America.

The earliest signs of human habitation date back 5,000 or 6,000 years when groups specialized in exploiting coastal resources settled in the Chantuto region, giving rise to a peculiar kind of archaeological site called *concheros*, or "shell places", because of the large deposits of clam shells that they took out of the estuaries and mangroves. Years later, other groups whose economy was based on agriculture founded the first villages and began a ceramic tradition called *barra*, which not only has the merit of being the oldest in Mesoamerica's Southeast, but also of having created beautiful vessels of technological excellence. Some researchers even think that their spreading out from this region helps us understand the origin of the Mixe-Zoques, the ethnic group that founded the Olmec culture on Mexico's Gulf Coast.

About 1200 B.C., the population of Soconusco received a big cultural impact from the Olmec metropolitan area. The presence of traits of this first great civilization is clear in several objects studied and recovered in the region. One example of this is the pottery and some of the stone sculptures from Izapa on exhibit at the Soconusco Archaeological Museum in Tapachula.

Late Pre-classical figurine from Izapa.

Izapa A archaeological site. Photo: Rubén Vázquez

Plomiza ceramic receptacle with the image of the god Tlaloc. Early Post-classical.

Three-legged plate with eagle-shaped legs. Late Post-classical.

Bottle with images and hieroglyphics characteristic of the Mayan area.

Complex B Izapa. Sculptures at the main plaza. Photo: Elsie Montiel

This important pre-Hispanic city had a long history of occupancy and flowered between 300 B.C. and A.D. 200; its inhabitants created a specific style of sculpture that rendered many aspects of their world view in stone. Their rich iconography includes images like the silk cotton tree-crocodile, the tree and axis of the cosmos that communicates the underworld with the heavens; toothed gullets that symbolize heaven; gods with prominent noses out of whose mouths emanates fertilizing water; two-headed beings that represent the cosmos; the rites of decapitation to invoke rain; descending gods; and many others.

We know little about the Classical period in this region, but evidence shows that in its first stages from A.D. 300 to A.D. 600, Teotihuacan groups used it as a cultural corridor to Central America. During the Late Classical period (A.D. 600-800) and Terminal Classical (from A.D. 800 to A.D. 1000), in addition to influences from Mayan lands, it acted to disseminate the complex called "Yokes, hatchets and palms" which may have been related to the presence of the Pipils, Nahuatl speakers who lived in Guatemala and El Salvador.

During the Early Post-Classical (A.D. 1000-1250), the region was the birthplace of the production of pottery with a characteristic metallic sheen, called *plomiza*, highly prized throughout Mesoamerica. Vessels of this kind have been found in important sites like Chichén Itzá in the Mayan region, Tula in Central Mexico and several parts of Oaxaca, the Gulf Coast and even in the West.

During the first half of the Post-Classical period, the Mesoamerican peoples also began to make metal artifacts; this activity would

greatly increase in the second half of the period. Using different techniques like smelting and hammering, the smiths created luxury items and tools out of copper, gold, silver and alloys like *tumbaga* (copper and gold) and bronze (copper and tin).

No deposits of these metals or workshops have been found in the Soconusco, which means that the metals found in the region were taken there from other parts of Mexico and Central America. The production and exchange of cacao, used both as food and as currency, gave the local elites access to these artifacts through complex trade routes. Rattles, needles, tweezers and hatchets are the metal objects most frequently found in the region and can be seen in the display cases at the Tapachula museum.

The expansion of the Mayan states that blossomed in the Guatemalan highlands, especially those inhabited by Mam and Quiché speakers during the Late Post-Classical period (A.D. 1250-1550), was the reason many Mayan groups came to this area where a Mixe-Zoque language, Tapachultec, had been spoken of old. Until the end of this period, the Mexica empire, attracted by cacao production and by the desire to forge greater contact with the Mayan groups of the Guatemalan highlands, left a deep imprint in the Soconusco. Different sources, such as the Registry of Tributes and the Mendocino Codex, offer us information about the peoples that inhabited the Soconusco province when it was a tribute-paying region, its hieroglyphics and the products it delivered to Mexico-Tenochtitlan.

One product of this relationship is a stone sculpture and the excellent Aztec-tradition vessels displayed in the

Soconusco Museum. We should also mention that even during the first half of the twentieth century, Nahuatl speakers, speakers of the language of the Mexica, still remained in some towns in Soconusco.

A new order was imposed with the Spanish conquest and colonial occupation. The region became part of the captaincy of Guatemala, as did a large part of what is today the state of Chiapas. With independence began the long process of annexing the area to the Mexican state, which culminated in 1882 when a treaty between Mexico and Guatemala established the border between the two countries.

During the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, large, mainly German-owned, haciendas were established in the region. In that same period, large groups of Asian immigrants crossed the Pacific and arrived on the Chiapas coast. Today, the region is a port of entry for many Central American emigrants who for different reasons have settled there. All these actors define the make-up of today's inhabitants of Soconusco. VM

Efigie receptacle with the image of a warrior whose head is the top. *Plomiza* ceramics. Early Post-classical.

Stelae 11 found in complex B, Izapa. Photo: Elsie Montiel

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The Soconusco Archaeological Museum

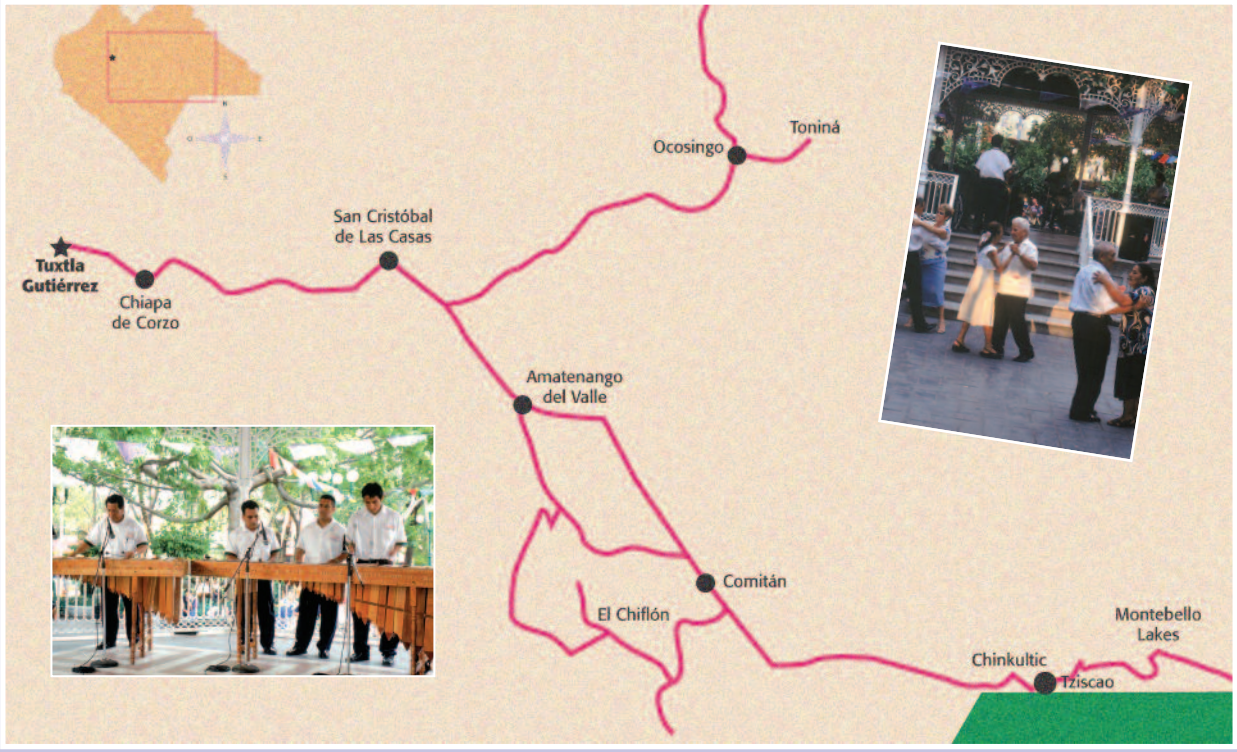
Describing the historical complexity and cultural dynamic of this long-inhabited region of Chiapas was the main objective of establishing the Soconusco Archaeological Museum. Because of the nature of its collection, the museum especially emphasizes pre-Hispanic times; the sculptures from Izapa and the *plomiza* pottery are among its most important collections. However, its rooms also include other actors, from both colonial and modern times, who have participated in the cultural plurality that today characterizes the region's inhabitants.

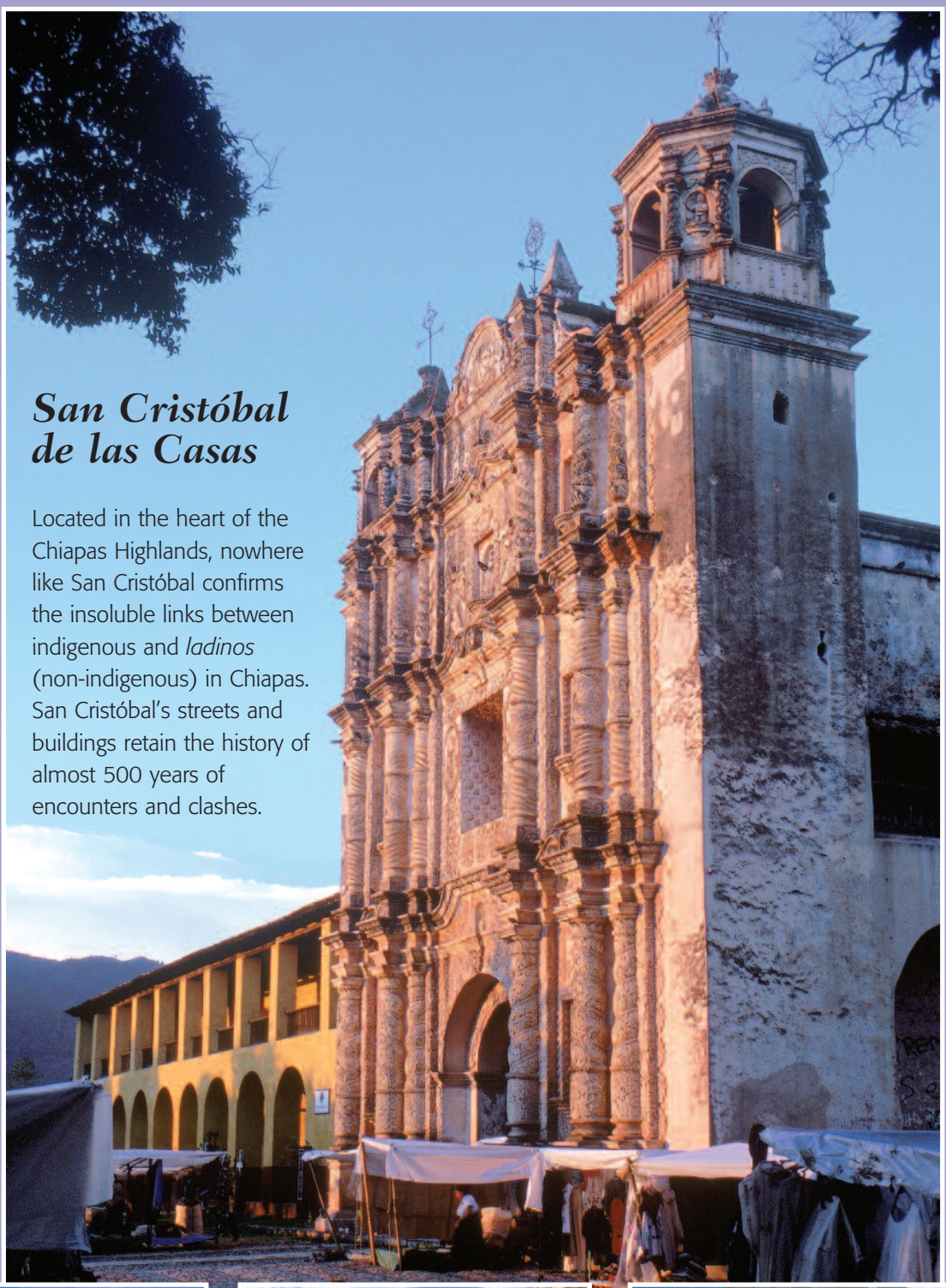
Three-legged Teotihuacan-style vessel with battlement-shaped legs. Early Classical.

Soconusco Archaeological Museum
8 Avenida Norte # 24, between 1 and 3 Poniente
Tapachula, Chiapas
Phone: (962) 626 4173
Open: Tuesday to Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Photos by Elsie Montiel

Snapshots from Chiapas





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San Cristóbal de las Casas

Located in the heart of the Chiapas Highlands, nowhere like San Cristóbal confirms the insoluble links between indigenous and *ladinos* (non-indigenous) in Chiapas. San Cristóbal's streets and buildings retain the history of almost 500 years of encounters and clashes.

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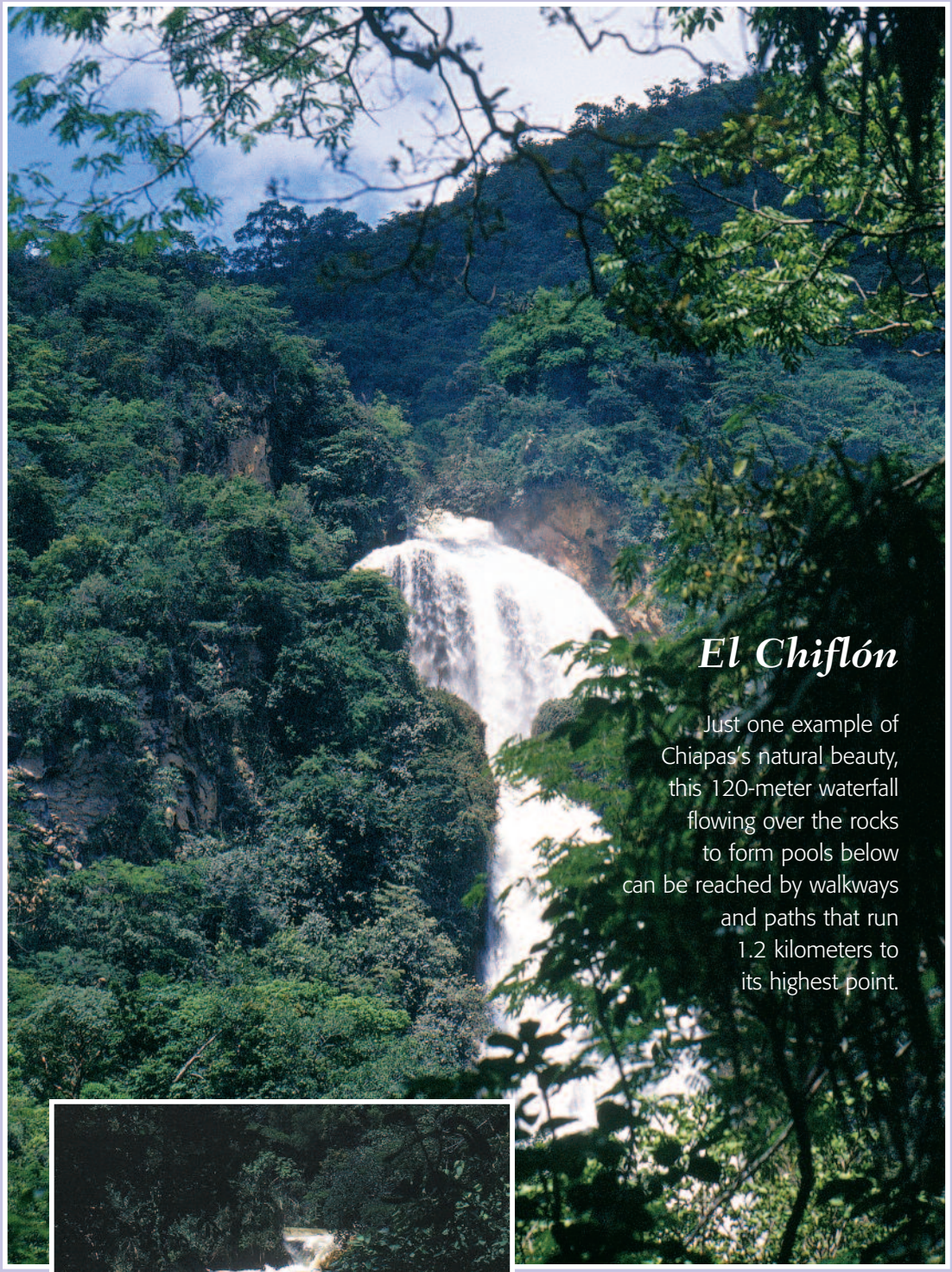

El Chiflón

Just one example of Chiapas's natural beauty, this 120-meter waterfall flowing over the rocks to form pools below can be reached by walkways and paths that run 1.2 kilometers to its highest point.

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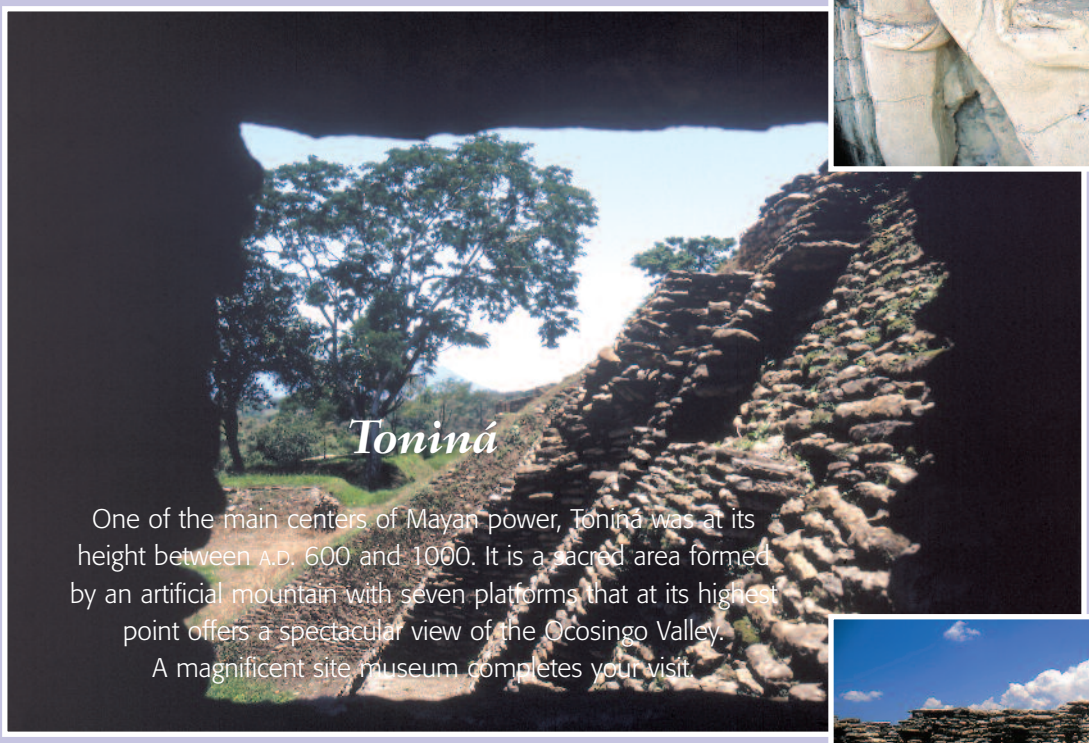

Toniná

One of the main centers of Mayan power, Toniná was at its height between A.D. 600 and 1000. It is a sacred area formed by an artificial mountain with seven platforms that at its highest point offers a spectacular view of the Ocosingo Valley. A magnificent site museum completes your visit.

Photos by Rubén Vázquez

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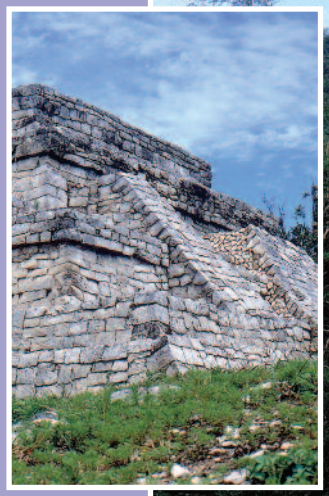
Comitán

Founded in 1527, the streets and buildings of Comitán retain the flavor of colonial Chiapas. It was the birthplace of writer and poet Rosario Castellanos who in her novel *Balún Canán* described the atmosphere and lifestyle of Comitán inhabitants with all their virtues and faults. The illustrious Belisario Domínguez was also born in the city, and the Act of Independence of Chiapas was signed here in 1824.

Chinkultic

This Mayan site built on limestone hills flourished during the Late Classical period (A.D. 600 to 900), but was inhabited until the Early Post-classical period (A.D. 1200). Although many structures still have not been explored, it is worth stopping here to visit its acropolis and ball game court and stand on the structure on the site's highest point to gaze out at the magnificent view of the *cenote* and the valley below.



Photos by Elsie Montiel

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Montebello Lakes National Park

Known for the many shades of their waters, the 59 Montebello Lakes connected by underground waterways are the product of the erosion of a chain of ancient *cenotes* or sinkholes over thousands of years. Only a few of them can be visited. Their colors are the result of refracted light, the kind of soil and the underwater vegetation. This site is blessed by nature with an abundance of flora and fauna.

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The Belisario Domínguez House Museum

Elsie Montiel

Few figures in the pantheon of our national heroes are as admired as Belisario Domínguez. As a senator, his clarity and valor in denouncing the treason and breach of principles of General Victoriano Huerta, the president of Mexico at the time, cost him his life, but were enough to immortalize him.

It was early 1913. Mexico was going through one of the bloodiest periods of the revolutionary struggle. Francisco I. Madero, who sparked the 1910 revolutionary movement and became

president of Mexico, was deposed and shortly thereafter assassinated together with Vice President José María Pino Suárez. The order had been given by Huerta who, with the complicity of his allies, several generals and the U.S. ambassador in Mexico, had staged a coup d'etat, betraying Madero and making himself interim president. Huerta was feared by many. Everyone knew that his favorite weapon for fighting opposition was assassination. The country's senators behaved moderately, except Belisario Domínguez, who, on the occasion of Huerta's first report to the nation, presented a courageous speech on September 23, to be read in public session. In this speech, he made no concessions and denounced the president's actions, calling him ignorant, an assassin and a traitor, reproaching his colleagues for their indecision and lack of character, demanding they denounce him before the people, depose him and save the republic. When the Senate refused to have his speech read and the national press refused to publish it, Belisario decided to print it himself to get public support for their representatives. Here is a sample of his words:

> Look into yourselves, gentlemen, and answer this question: what would you say of the crew of a great ship that, during the most violent of storms and in a tempestuous sea, named as pilot a butcher who, with no nautical knowledge, was navigating for the first time and had no more recommendation than having betrayed and murdered the ship's captain?

One of his own colleagues denounced Belisario. The answer was ruthless: a few nights later, Huerta's thugs dragged him out of the Jardín Hotel, where he was staying in Mexico, took him to the Coyoacán cemetery and shot him in the back. Congress reacted to his murder, many deputies were arrested and Congress was dissolved.

Belisario Domínguez immediately became a symbol, an example of what a true representative of the people and national interests is like. Since 1953, every year the Senate has

Belisario Domínguez became a symbol, an example of what a true representative of the people and national interests is like.

Elsie Montiel

bestowed a medal of honor in his name to prominent citizens for outstan ing service to their country or humanity.

How can we understand a 50-year-old man in the prime of life, an eminent physician graduated from the Sorbonne of Paris, a father, with no economic problems, loved and admired by many, a member of an old Comitán family, and only two weeks after inheriting his Senate seat making such a drastic decision?

The answer is to be found precisely in his hometown of Comitán de Domínguez, Chiapas. Here, moving through the rooms of his home and what is today the Belisario Domínguez House Museum, amongst furniture, surgical instruments, cards, photographs, letters, documents and newspapers, we can understand that his death was not the product of an exceptional heroic act, but the logical outcome of a life dedicated to effectively serving his neighbors, fighting against injustice on all levels and fulfilling his duty above all things.

Let us look at the pharmacy at the entrance. Named La Fraternidad (Fraternity), it is a faithful reproduction of the one Dr. Domínguez had next to his office. Here, we discover that Belisario, doctor, surgeon and oculist, graduated in Paris in 1889, exercised his practice without class distinctions. This is important if we consider that he lived in a city where it was not well looked upon for a member of the upper classes to concern himself with someone who did not belong to his circle. Three days a week, he saw the poor, and on other occasions, he went out into the Tojolabal canyons to treat the needy. His generosity was methodical and discrete: through a slot that connected the pharmacy with the doctor's office, he passed his pharmacist the patient's prescription, including a code that only the two of them knew telling the

His death was the logical outcome of a life dedicated to effectively fighting against injustice and fulfilling his duty.

pharmacist how much he should charge, which was decided according to the patient's income. If the patient was very poor, the code would be "charge to my account" and both medication and office visit would be free. The doctor was also well versed in pharmacology, combining patent medicines from national and foreign suppliers with medications, oils and infusions made locally, as well as traditional herbs that brought with them the wisdom of the ancient Mayas.

The Family Room holds objects, photographs, calling and congratulatory cards in an area decorated with European furniture, rugs and curtains. All this speaks to us of a comfortable economic position, but also of a man who appreciated family life. Somewhere there is an explanation that his daughter played the piano and that he enjoyed listening to her practice whenever he could take a break from his practice. We also learn that he inherited his liberal blood from his father, Don Cleofas Domínguez Román, a merchant who fought for the Reform movement and against the French invasion.

Another plaque brings the romantic visitor some history, briefly describing his first meeting with the woman who was to become his wife, a description which also reflects the social milieu in which they moved. Domínguez had been given a hero's welcome on his return from Paris. Being single, with a degree in medicine, from a respectable family and prosperous economically made him the best catch in Comitán. A big reception was organized to which the young ladies from the best families were all invited. They spent weeks preparing their best gowns for the event, dresses made of imported fabrics, perfect make-up and accessories. They all hoped to capture his heart with their looks. After greeting innumerable young ladies, Belisario went up to the one who was the most discretely dressed and who had the least anxious smile, Delfina Zebadúa, and told her how beautiful he thought she was. One year later they were married and in the next ten years they would have four children. Their marriage lasted less than 14 years because Doña Delfina would die in 1903 after a long

The Family Room speaks to us of a comfortable economic position, but also of a man who appreciated family life.

illness through which her husband could do nothing for her. Not long before, Belisario had lost his mother and father.

The next exhibition room is his bedroom, kept just as it was in the time he was a bachelor and then a widow. His clothing and accessories, including a scarf pin, cane, top hat and cufflinks, testify to his impeccable attire.

The Doctor's Office invites the visitor to ponder the state of medical technology at the time. Apparatuses and instruments imported from the United States were at the cutting edge of Belisario's time. A still is also on display, designed by the doctor himself, that he used in preparing medications, as well as suitcases, books and his work desk.

The rooms entitled Historic Framework and the Senate follow him in his incursions into politics. They include copies of his "Chiapas, Letter to *Porfirista* Gentlemen of Mexico City" and the newspaper *El Vate*, in which he not only denounced the state of poverty and neglect Chiapas suffered from, but also demanded that state and federal officials intervene to correct it. These were published in Mexico City between 1903 and 1905, where he lived for a time after the death of his wife. Another interesting piece is the letter in which he defended the Comitán Civic Hospital from the governor's greed, and another in which he challenged a San Cristóbal local strongman to a duel after the latter proposed he join a political uprising. Domínguez wanted to avoid bloodshed in his state and proposed a duel to the death as a way of deciding the matter. He never received an answer.

Many other documents also summarize the tragic events of the revolutionary struggle from the time of the death of Madero up until his own disappearance and assassination, as well as the dissolution of Congress. One particularly interesting piece is the only newspaper that reported his assassination.

The Speech Room is papered with the full text of the speech that cost him his life and

that few people have actually read. By now, we have gathered just enough information to understand that, more than an act of heroism, his words were a demonstration of consistency. The Documents Room summarizes on paper Don Belisario's social, family and civic life. A Multi-purpose Room and Specialized Library complete the tour of the museum's rooms.

Finally, the garden awaits us, replete with all manner of flowers and plants, particularly the doctor's favorites. Several benches and a hospitable silence are the epilogue of this voyage of discovery. A moment of reflection may well offer us one last lesson: life is not worth much if it is to be lived gagged and dominated by the fear of the violence of those in power. VM

Elsie Montiel
Editor

Casa Museo Doctor Belisario Domínguez
Ave. Dr. Belisario Domínguez 35
Comitán, Chiapas C.P. 30000
Phone: (963) 632-1300
Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.
and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Unless otherwise specified photos courtesy of the Belisario Domínguez House Museum.

NORTEAMÉRICA
The CISAN's Academic Journal

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A NEW JOURNAL

The National Autonomous University of Mexico's Center for Research on North America (CISAN) is preparing to publish the second issue of its new biannual journal based on academic excellence, ***Norteamérica***, with the aim of contributing to the study and reflection about the political, economic, social and cultural situation of North America. To this end, we wish to invite the national and international academic community to contribute under the following

GUIDELINES

- The journal's theme is interdisciplinary in the areas of social sciences and the humanities about the North American Region (Mexico, the United States and Canada) and its links to the rest of the world.
- All papers must be previously unpublished.
- ***Norteamérica*** is a peer-refereed magazine, and all articles will be submitted to a board of specialists for review.

SECTIONS

Norteamérica has three sections: "Ensayos" (Essays),"Análisis de Actualidad" (Current Analysis) and "Reflexiones y Miradas" (Reflections and Glimpses). Contributions will be received in Spanish or English and published in their original language, and for each section, the articles must have the following characteristics:

Essays and Current Analysis
- Only articles based on scholarly research will be considered. These two sections will not publish articles on current events or opinion pieces.
- The articles must include relevant, up-to-date source citations.
- Articles must be accompanied by 4 to 6 key words and a 100- to 150-word summary or abstract.

Length: 30 to 60 pages.

Reflections and Glimpses

Interviews
- The interview will be with an outstanding figure from the academic, political, social and/or cultural world.
- Each interview will include between 5 and 10 analytical and comparative questions.

Length: 15 to 20 pages.

Critical Notes
- Academic reflections about a polemical, current issue.

Length: 10 to 15 pages.

Bibliographical Notes
- Essays that review, compare and profoundly analyze from 2 to 5 recently published books on the same theme.

Length: 15 to 20 pages.

Chronologies
- They will deal with the most important events in North America and the rest of the world and their reciprocal impact.

Length: a minimum of 15 pages.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS FOR THE SECOND ISSUE OF ***NORTEAMÉRICA*** IS DECEMBER 15, 2005. PLEASE SEND AUTHOR'S RESUME WITH THE MANUSCRIPT.

FOR PUBLICATION

All manuscripts must comply with the following norms:

- A page is understood as a double-spaced (**not a space and a half**) text printed on one side of letter-sized (8.5 x 11 inch) paper in **12-point Times New Roman typeset,** with an average of 1,680 spaces.
- Manuscripts must be submitted in both printed and electronic form. The printed version must be on 8.5 x 11-sized paper, numbered from the first to the last sheet, without binding. An original and three copies are required. The electronic version must be in Microsoft Word.
- Manuscripts with corrections written by hand, words crossed out, indications on cards, etc., will not be accepted.
- Tables and graphs will also be turned in printed on letter-sized paper and in Microsoft Word and Excel, respectively, and will count toward the final total length.
- Source citation will be done using the author-date citations and references list style, also known as Harvard system. Example: (Diamond, 1995: 49-59).
- *Example of the reference list in the author-date style:*

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

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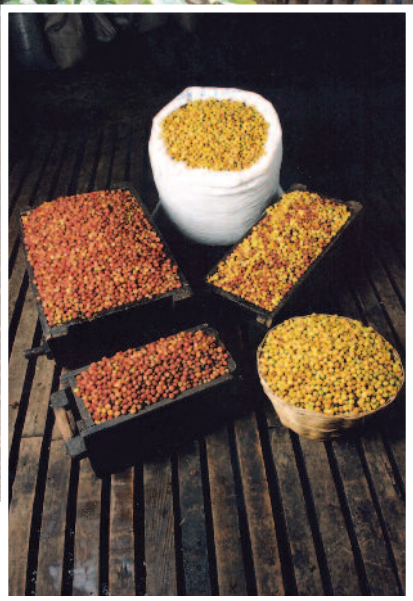

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Organic Coffee from the Chiapas Highlands

Rubén Vázquez Martínez*

Coffee was brought from Europe to Mexico —and to the rest of the American countries that grow it— between the mid-eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. French, English and Spaniards brought the coffee tree to the colonies and determined the way it was to be produced and consumed.

During the colonial period, coffee was imported from Cuba to New Spain, ground and packaged, and consumed as an exotic beverage. Its beginnings as a commercial crop are not completely documented, but we do know that in the nineteenth century it was successfully distributed in the states of Veracruz, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco and Michoacán.

* Mexican photographer and writer.

[1, 2, 3] Photos courtesy of Chiapas's Ministry of Tourism Public Relations Office. [4] Photo: Elsie Montiel.

Compost deposits on the Irlanda plantation. Photo: Elsie Montiel

Coffee trees arrived in Chiapas in the mid-nineteenth century from neighboring Guatemala and flourished in the Soconusco region thanks to the excellent altitude and humidity conditions. At the same time, numerous families of coffee growers came from Europe, mainly from Germany, attracted by the generous advantages offered by President Porfirio Díaz's colonization policy. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Soconusco region was dotted with large estates dedicated to intensive cultivation that guaranteed high volumes of production destined mainly for the foreign market, especially Europe and the United States. At the same time, thousands of peasant and indigenous families who grew coffee on a small and medium-sized scale in pre-industrial conditions were displaced. From the beginning, this would be one of the sources of the social and economic contradictions that characterize coffee growing in our country.[1]

In the twentieth century, Mexico became the world's fourth largest coffee producer, and Chiapas the leading producer in the country, a place it still occupies: of the 12 producing states, a little over 30 percent of domestic production comes from Chiapas, which has the best climate and soil conditions for so-called highland production.

Since exports have always been high on the agenda —even today, 80 percent of current national production is for export— coffee has historically been subject to the highs and lows the international markets periodically suffer; for that reason throughout the twentieth century there were recurring coffee crises. Today, coffee represents 3 million jobs, but 84 percent of coffee-growing towns are mired in poverty or extreme poverty. Most production comes from small producers (66 percent is grown on plots of less than 10 hectares), organized in small community groups, and 65 percent of Mexican coffee growers are indigenous. In the state of Chiapas alone there are 72,000 producers. The previously large, powerful plantations are also fighting to survive and adapt to a world that poses new challenges to production and commercialization of the popular beverage.

Mexico became the world's fourth largest coffee producer, and Chiapas the leading producer in the country.

Toward Organic Coffee Cultivation

Today, the reality of coffee, both in Mexico and in the rest of the world, is dominated by such contradictory objectives as producing the best quality coffee, conquering a market with excess demand, fighting monopolies and intermediaries and their practices, guaranteeing a living for thousands of small owners whose families depend on the crop to survive, and at the same

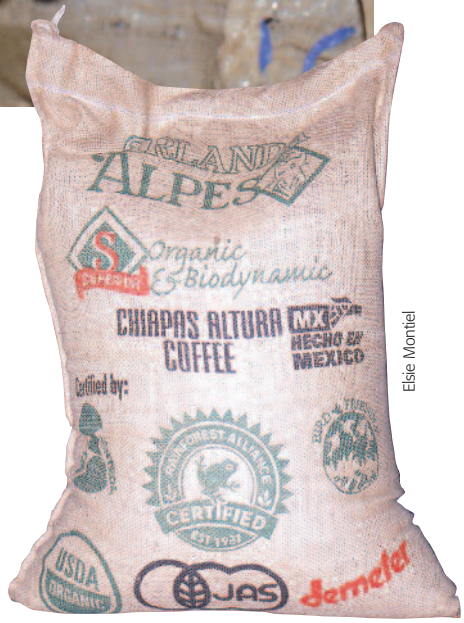
Processing plant on the Irlanda plantation. Photo: Elsie Montiel

time conserving and protecting the environment.

Coffee requires rich, humid soil that absorbs water well and quickly drains off excess rain. It is grown mainly in cold regions, at temperatures that vary from 13 to 26 degrees Celsius, between sea level and 1,800 meters above sea level. *Canephora* (robusta) and *liberica* varieties grow best below 900 meters altitude; but arabica (the most common type in Mexico and Chiapas) prefer higher altitudes: the higher the altitude, the better the quality.

Coffee trees can grow in the shade or in the sun. And the differences between the two methods determine not only the time needed for maturation and the quality of the coffee, but also the degree of damage to the environment. When the coffee grows in the shade, it shares the land with different species of trees and grasses that benefit the environment by facilitating water collection, oxygen generation, carbon fixing, erosion control and the conservation of flora and fauna. In Chiapas where most coffee groves are located in forests and jungles characterized by biological diversity, plantations have a definite role to play in ecological conservation. In addition, shade-grown coffee takes longer to mature, which benefits the quality of the bean produced.

Rubén Vázquez



Elsie Montiel

Finca Irlanda is one of the very few coffees that has earned certification from many different international bodies.

Sun-grown coffee trees do not share the land with other species of plants and mature more rapidly so the number and size of crops increases, but they produce lower quality beans and cause irreparable damage to the environment by fostering erosion and the destruction of biological diversity.

Until a few decades ago, ecological considerations did not play a determinant role in coffee production and commercialization. It was common practice to use large quantities of commercial fertilizers to stimulate growth of the healthiest plants and increase yield. Also, insects and blight that attacked

The Big House on the Argovia plantation. Parts of the estate are open to tourists. Photo: Elsie Montiel

The Hamburgo plantation Big House. Photo: Elsie Montiel

both the bushes and the berries were fought off with chemical pesticides and herbicides. The unequal production and commercialization conditions between the large coffee growers, hoarders and packers and the thousands of small and medium-sized producers were also not taken into consideration. But, when the crisis of world markets became practically insoluble,[2] the damage to people's health and the environment caused by the pesticides and intensive cultivation techniques were revealed and the fight against poverty became a vital necessity for many countries' economic policies, production and commercialization practices began to adapt to other global imperatives. The time was ripe then for organic agriculture and fair trade, which have increasing markets in Europe, Japan and the United States.

Mexico is the world's foremost producer of organic coffee, and a large part of that production comes from Chiapas: of 27 certified organic coffee producers in the country, 13 are from Chiapas. Attracting hard currency and economic and social benefits stemming from social organization to produce and commercialize as a community are some of the advantages of the organic market, in addition to awareness about the conservation of the environment, sustainable development and the benefits to consumers' health.[3]

Organic cultivation without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides is increasingly widespread in Chiapas. Growers use compost and biological control, fighting pests like the coffee berry borer (*hypothenemus hampei*, the worldwide enemy of coffee trees), the brown coffee twig beetle (*xylosandrus morigerus*) and the *chacuatete* (*Idiarthron subquadratumn*) with their natural enemies. Organic cultivation also seeks to combat water contamination during the wet processing of the coffee by gradually setting up water treatment plants. The conservation of plants and trees also leads to the preservation of biodiversity: as a whole, then, it is a practice that is a real hope for sustainable development.

Under the auspices of fair trade, more equitable rules of commercialization have been established worldwide, offering small producers (mostly indigenous and peasants), organized democratically and managing their resources transparently, preferential prices that allow them to compete in a world dominated by big capital. The idea is to combat the use of intermediaries that puts most of the profits in the pockets of roasters and big brand names.[4]

Organic cultivation and fair trade are ruled by strict certification norms that attempt to guarantee the final con-

Sorting and storing the beans on the Hamburgo plantation. Photos: right, Elsie Montiel; left, Rubén Vázquez

sumer a high quality product that is not a risk for their health and is beneficial socially and ecologically.

Not all producers in Chiapas are interested in organic production. Many small producers still lose their crops because of lack of support, credit or precise knowledge about how to access preferential markets. Many continue in the clutches of intermediaries who own transportation and processing equipment and have a connection to the markets.

Some of the large growers are facing production crises and lack of labor to work the big coffee groves. Their option is to hire Guatemalan immigrants, particularly women, for picking and selection. Organic production does not interest them because they sell their entire crop to U.S. companies that buy the coffee green (the unroasted bean), process and pack it in different ways, most of the time without specifying where it is from. Others have opted to redirect their businesses and are preparing to face the twenty-first century by opening up their impressive mansions to tourists and cultivating other products, like, for example, ornamental flowers on part of their land. Still others have switched completely to organic coffee, and are an example of ecologically safe plantations, such as Finca Irlanda, which boasts certification by more than five international bodies including the very exclusive Bird Friendly.

But the innumerable world crises, the plummeting prices, the environmentalist efforts and thousands of families' day-to-day struggle for survival go unnoticed by millions of people the world over who could not get through their mornings, their endless nights of study or their long conversations with old friends without a good cup of coffee.

Notes

[1] Working conditions on the coffee plantations are not the topic of this article, but it is important to mention that many references are made in the literature about the exploitation of labor on the plantations, mainly using the form called *enganche*. This involved innumerable indigenous from the Chiapas Highlands who had lost their land as a result of the Reform and needed a way to make a living being tricked into going to work on the plantations. They were attracted by *enganchadores*, or recruiters, who worked for the plantation owners in the Soconusco region who advanced them part of their wages before taking them to the region, promising them better living standards and the guarantee of returning to support their families with money in hand. Most never came back and succumbed to unending debt or the diseases typical of the humid lands, accustomed as they were to the cold climate of their homelands. The plantation owners never worried because there were always more indigenous to take their places.

[2] In Mexico, the Mexican Coffee Institute (Inmecafé) was dismantled in 1989, leaving many small and medium-sized producers defenseless; many had to compete in increasingly unequal conditions at a time when world market prices plummeted. Inmecafé had supported the production-processing-commercialization chain of the product.

[3] Organic coffee pays between U.S.$20 and U.S.$30 more per quintal than the price on the New York Stock Exchange.

[4] Under fair trade price norms, a certified organization of small producers sells directly on the market and gets up to U.S.$60 more per quintal of coffee than quoted on the New York Stock Exchange.

Elsie Montiel

The Benefits of Moderate Coffee Consumption (four cups a day)

- Helps prevent drug and alcohol consumption.
- Reduces the chance of developing diabetes by 30 percent.
- Prevents colon cancer.
- Alleviates headaches.
- Reduces the incidence of Parkinson's disease by 80 percent.
- Helps diminish male infertility.
- Stimulates the brain (memory, attention and concentration).
- Diminishes depression, suicides, cirrhosis.
- Increases physical energy without causing dependence.
- Improves mood.
- Increases scholastic performance by 10 percent.
- Prevents depression and discourages alcohol consumption among young people.

Source: Vanderbilt University

Composition of Coffee

- caffeine
- minerals: potassium, magnesium, calcium, sodium, iron
- lipids, sugars and amino acids
- vitamin B

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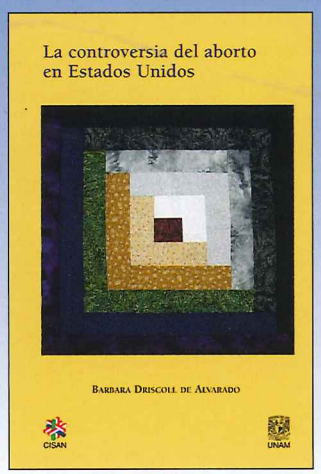
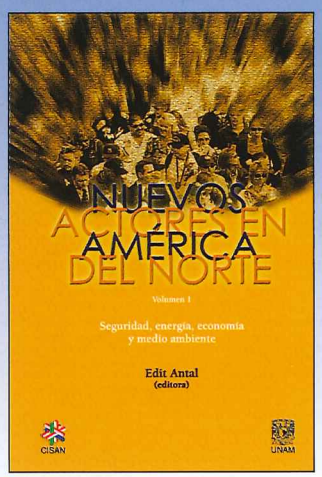
publications

La controversia del aborto en Estados Unidos

Barbara Driscoll de Alvarado

Examining the role of abortion in contemporary U.S. history opens up an important window for understanding that country's political development: the conservative agenda, the emergence of religious groups, the challenges for liberals, political parties and even scientific research in certain areas, given that this issue has transcended the sphere of private life and medical practice and has become an important symbol in the moral and, above all, political controversy.





Nuevos actores en América del Norte

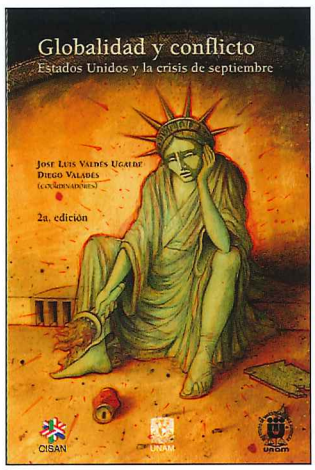
Edit Antal, ed.

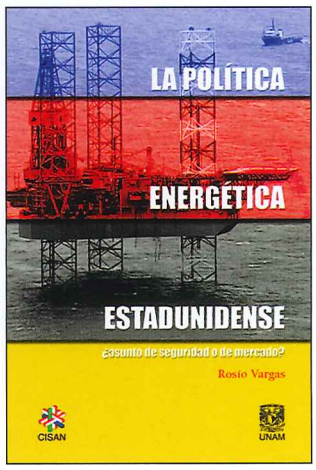
New regional actors (networks, social movements, companies and institutions) have emerged in recent years in North America that academic analyses must take into account. This book is an indispensable contribution to a multidisciplinary focus on their activities and the process of their interaction.

Globalidad y conflicto Estados Unidos y la crisis de septiembre
Second edition

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde and Diego Valadés, coordinators

The wound opened up by 9/11 has not yet closed and is still having an impact worldwide. Specialists from the fields of political science, philosophy, sociology, economics and internationalism contribute in this book to the debate about the whys, the wherefores and the scope of that impact, asking questions and seeking answers about the short and long-term effects for the U.S. and the world.





La política energética estadunidense: ¿asunto de seguridad o de mercado?

Rosío Vargas

This work contributes to the understanding of the origins, causes and implications of declining oil production in the United States. Events such as the 1970s oil crisis and the current invasion of Iraq demonstrate the role that energy resources can have in changing history. The book combines history, the current situation, an analysis of the international oil market and domestic energy policy in the United States.

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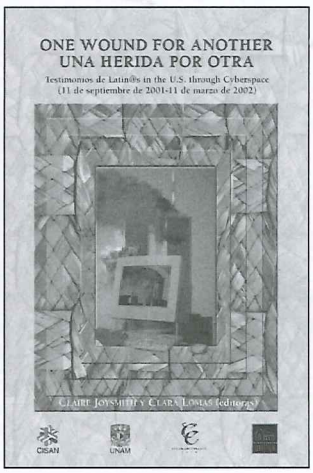
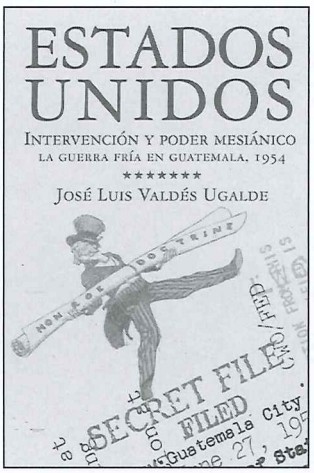
CISAN publications

One Wound for Another. Una herida por otra. Testimonios de latin@s in the U.S. through Cyberspace (11 de septiembre de 2001-11 de marzo de 2002)

Claire Joysmith and Clara Lomas, eds.

September 11 revealed a multi-ethnic, middle- and working class country among the victims. This book gives voice to that other country, concerned that the response to the terrorist attacks give rise to a different, more representative, plural and just country. 9/11 also means that the U.S. people have become a testimonial people that has to deal with catastrophe, unjustified massacre, irremediable loss, displacement, incomplete mourning and the anger marked by the emergency out of which these testimonies are born.





Estados Unidos: Intervención y poder mesiánico. La Guerra Fría en Guatemala

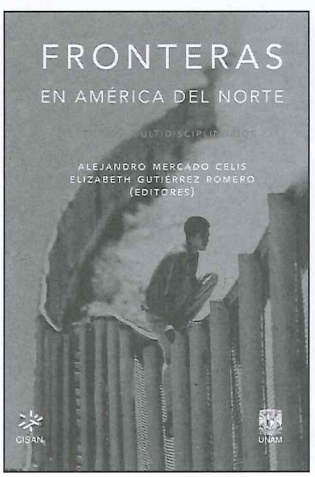
José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

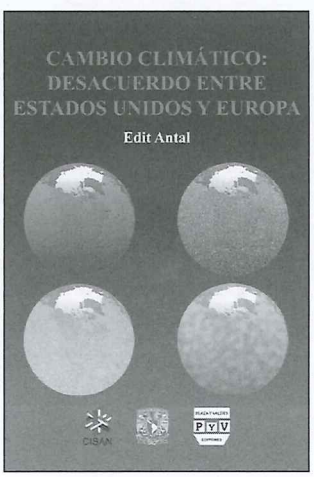
The outstanding feature of this book's analysis of the 1954 intervention in Guatemala is that it is sensitive to the need to present a comprehensive image of Washington's actions, taking into account both internal and external factors, local and international dynamics, as well as power relations and the issues contained in its discourse.

Fronteras en América del Norte. Estudios multidisciplinarios

Alejandro Mercado and Elizabeth Gutiérrez, eds.

This book compares the Mexican and Canadian borders with the United States, singling out the regional as opposed to the national, and debates theoretical and empirical questions from a rich multidisciplinary perspective.





Cambio climático: desacuerdo entre Estados Unidos y Europa

Edit Antal

This book uses a constructivist focus to explain the differences between the United States and the European Union with regard to climatic change. The United States takes no preventive measures until the damage has been proven and can be measured and refuses to revise its way of life, production and consumption. Europe, on the other hand, is more cautious and is making ready to take measures even at the expense of economic losses.

Forthcoming

El Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte a los diez años
El Tratado McLane-Ocampo. La comunicación interoceánica

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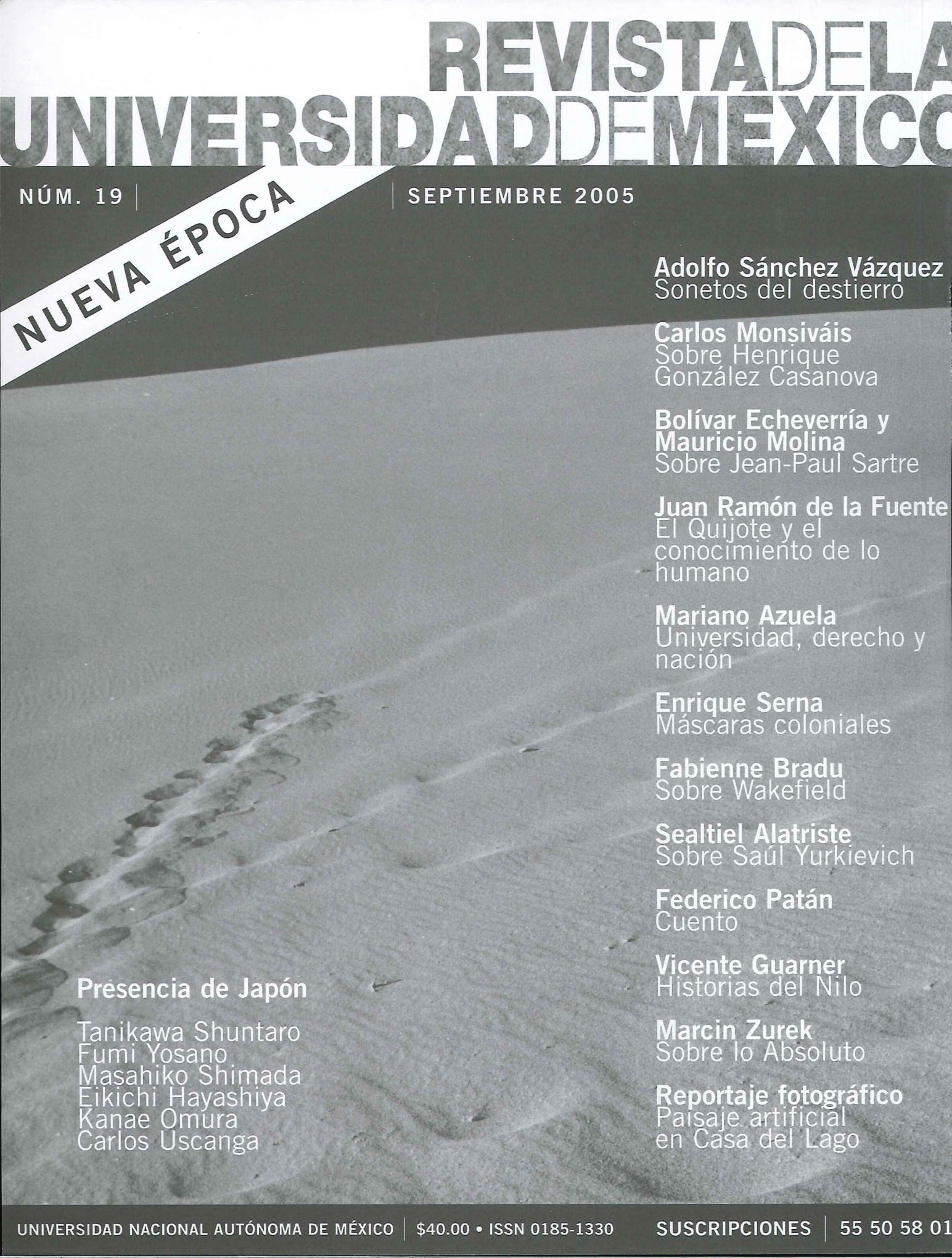

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Beatriz de la Fuente

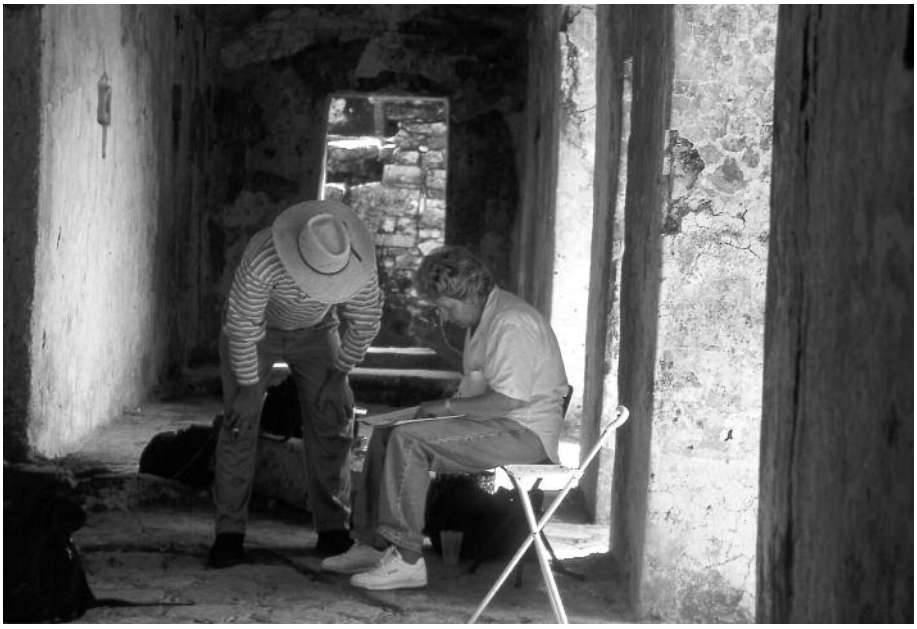
Paulina Lavista

1929-2005

In addition to her invaluable contribution to the research and knowledge about our pre-Hispanic past, Beatriz de la Fuente left her mark on many other spheres of life: as an academic official, the teacher of several generations of students, the author of innumerable articles and books, as a friend and as a woman. This issue of *Voices of Mexico* pays homage to her life through the testimony of those who knew her well. Their words illustrate the magnitude of the loss her death represents for our university and our culture.

A Lifetime Dedicated To Pre-Hispanic Art

María Teresa Uriarte*



UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research Photo Archives

They say that sometimes you cannot see the forest for the trees. I think that in the case of the life's work of a woman as outstanding as Doña Beatriz de la Fuente, the forest of her many achievements is so conspicuous that it is very difficult to focus attention on a single aspect.

Beatriz de la Fuente, the academic researcher, the incomparable teacher, the wise and generous woman with whom I had the privilege of sharing the last 30 years of my life.

I first attended her seminar in the so-called University Print Shop where she was the director. At that time, I was just beginning my master's program and the thesis I had in mind was about cave painting in Baja California. Besides being my teacher, she was the advisor for both my master's and doctoral theses.

From that time on, I was always impressed by her clarity of mind, her exceptional intelligence and her always finished appearance.

Paying homage to her academic work means situating oneself in the dense forest of her many publications, her innumerable lectures and the many projects she directed, such as the theses she was advisor for, the research seminars she led and her master work on Mexican pre-Hispanic mural art.

Thinking about her once again wounds my heart because exceptional people in

* Director of the UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research.

Our dear teacher taught us that art history requires a formal analysis that had to be filtered through the cultural and comparative methodological studies that would produce new ways forward through which we could understand human beings.

everything they took on in life should not depart, at least not so soon.

As her oldest disciple, as her colleague, as her friend, as her partner in so many undertakings and adventures, memories surge forward, choking the mind and disturbing the spirit for a very simple reason: thinking about her work and trying to review it is practically impossible on the confines of a page.

Some things are indispensable. For example, that Doña Beatriz taught several generations of Mexicans to actually see the messages, often difficult to perceive for the untrained eye, in pre-Hispanic art. Untangling the forms, perceiving them in their plasticity, in their aesthetic values, in their dimension as a work of art in the context of the world's civilizations. Pointing to a road of its own for art history, in which astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, architecture and archaeology were all mixed was one of her many merits.

I do not know precisely when we were overcome by the eagerness to classify, so in vogue in the nineteenth century, when everything had to be seen as differentiated categories stored in static compartments. Doña Beatriz, our dear teacher, taught us that the art history we had to practice did require a formal analysis; as proof, we have *Las cabezas colosales olmecas* (The Colossal Olmec Heads), *Los hombres de piedra* (The Men of Stone) and *La escultura de Palenque* (The Sculpture of Palenque). But she also taught that it had to be filtered through the complex world of meanings, the history of religions, the cultural and comparative methodological studies that would produce new ways forward through which we could understand the human beings that in another time and another space felt and foresaw that their transcendence lay in the possibility of shaping in any way, in clay, in stone, on paper, the messages of their minds, those *Peldaños de la conciencia* (Rungs of Consciousness) that she taught us to review without ever forgetting "criticism and self criticism" to constitute a true Mexican school of history of pre-Hispanic art.

In addition to her innumerable publications and lectures, her many national and international awards (the National University Prize; being named UNAM Researcher Emeritus; the National Prize for Science and the Arts in the Area of History, the Social Sciences and Philosophy; the Tatiana Proskouriakoff Award given by Harvard University that she did not live to receive; and having the privilege of being until now the only woman member of the National College), she was always generous as a teacher, with her hand and heart open to the concerns of dozens of students who passed through her classes.

At the pinnacle of her career as an art historian, she took on what would be her posthumous work, the enormous project "Pre-Hispanic Mural Painting in Mexico", which she directed intelligently and lucidly until the very last moment of her life despite her body not obeying the dictates of an untiring spirit avid for knowledge.

Doña Beatriz de la Fuente has left an indelible mark on dozens of students, on hundreds of readers of her works, on hundreds of listeners at her lectures. Her impressive legacy leaves a void difficult to fill. The most her disciples can hope for is to not forget her friendly smile in the face of vicissitude, her indomitable spirit, her tenacious energy when faced with new challenges, her immense capacity for work, and the monumental body of work that we have as a legacy and a challenge, to try to follow through with her mission of bringing together pre-Hispanic art and the minds and hearts of the generations of university-goers who will come after us.

Beatriz de la Fuente has left an indelible mark on dozens of students. The most her disciples can hope for is to not forget her indomitable spirit and the monumental body of work that we have as a legacy.

In pre-Hispanic Mexico, it was said that the wise man is the one who can dialogue with his own heart, he who in his dialogue is able to know and dominate his polarities or, as Carl Jung would say, his shadow and, therefore, his light.

When time passes after a person's death, the logical thing is that those who loved him/her tend to think he/she was perfect. I think this is a great injustice, because there are no perfect human beings. Doña Beatriz had her faults. That is why she was wise, because through her self-knowledge, through her dialogue with her own heart, she conquered her polarities and thus her light conquered her shadow. And I know, as do many who knew her very well, that her life was a long search, the tortuous road of inner knowledge.

Her academic work can be seen in a thousand ways. We do not have to go very far: the most recent issue of *Arqueología Mexicana* (Mexican Archaeology) includes an article about the Ixcaquixtla tomb recently discovered in Puebla and it is, point for point, a mirror of the publications Dr. De la Fuente began about pre-Hispanic mural painting.

Beatriz de la Fuente initiated a Mexican school of pre-Hispanic art history. Her catalogues, her descriptive methods, her ways of analyzing the structure of a work of art have been traveled of necessity by hundreds of scholars basing themselves on our teacher's work.

This means that as an academic, she undoubtedly earned herself a place on her own. But it was not with all that knowledge, with that enormous torrent of achievements in her intellectual life that she achieved wisdom. No. I am here to bear witness. Her wisdom was the result of a prolonged, profound dialogue with her own heart. VM

Promotor of the Study And Conservation of Pre-Hispanic Murals

Leticia Staines Cicero*

Beatriz de la Fuente dedicated a great part of her life to the study of pre-Hispanic art. During her academic career as a researcher at the UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research, she delved into different aspects of Mesoamerican art and, amazed by the forms and volumes of the sculpture, spent several years analyzing it basing herself on art history methodology.

Her respect for and interest in Mexico's ancient art made her start by demonstrating and insisting that this pre-Columbian production was, indeed, art. For her, art is the way in which human beings are able to create and recreate the world around them. In her insistent, careful research, which produced many articles, books and lectures, we can perceive the way in which Beatriz de la Fuente analyzed artistic expressions and transmitted her hypotheses, always with solid, rigorous foundations.

Immersed in that far-off world, attempting to decipher the codes of artistic expression, she was attracted by mural painting. She thought that the fundamental quality of images represented on a two-dimensional architectural surface was that they were means of communication with their own characteristics, and whose resources and forms offered innumerable meanings. She was also concerned about the fragility of the paintings, permanently at risk of disappearing because scholars of this stage of Mexico's history paid no attention.

Ernesto Peñaloza/UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research Photo Archives

To achieve her aims of registering, protecting and studying these works of art, she designed a project called "Pre-Hispanic Mural Painting in Mexico" and, in 1990, invited five researchers to begin its long road with her. She decided to struc-

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research.

ture the project in the five cultural areas where painted walls are still preserved: Teotihuacán, the Maya area, Oaxaca, the Gulf Coast and Mexico's Central Highlands. I was responsible for coordinating the research into the Mayan murals.

Analyzing the paintings of the different Mesoamerican cultures allowed us to discover the variety of styles and the wealth of historical content found in the topics represented, giving us an insight into more about those cultures.

The aims were clear: creating a systematic catalogue in which, with photographs, sketches and maps, we could register the pictorial evidence and thus make sure it was not lost, keeping this patrimony available for evaluation, study and dissemination. Given the complexity of the universe of mural painting, a global approach to the murals and their context was necessary. That is why Dr. De la Fuente thought it fundamental to bring together different disciplines and why she invited students of the humanities and the exact sciences from different UNAM institutions and the National Institute of Anthropology and History to participate in this project. This is how multi-disciplinary studies have been carried out under the direction of archaeologists, historians, art historians, biologists, architects, astronomers, epigraphers, chemists, restorers and graphic artists.

For the last 15 years, every Thursday we 24 people who are now members of the project have met in a seminar to study and analyze mural painting and discuss new proposals about iconography, composition, style and techniques. Under the precise, well-guided leadership and coordination of Dr. De la Fuente, we all learned how to approach the murals, how to recognize their formal and iconographic qualities and how to deepen our analysis of them, submerging ourselves in that language of lines, colors and textures that are the expressive media of painting. In that same fashion, she fostered discussions and participated with the intention of learning, always open to other opinions. In the seminar, then, there was a coming together of languages: ours deciphering the pictorial, which in turn acted as the medium for conveying ideas, customs, rituals and beliefs of the Mesoamerican peoples.

Dr. De la Fuente's efforts in this important, sweeping project have resulted in the publication of six volumes: two about Teotihuacán, two about Bonampak and two about the Mayan area. Two more about Oaxaca are now being prepared for publication, while the catalogue about the Mayan area is being finished and the catalogues about the Gulf Coast and Mexico's Central Highland are being drafted.

The catalogues include not only the well-known murals, but all the evidence found, from large scenes to small fragments, since we think that any pictorial remnant is of value in itself. This means that the material is very rich in information. The body of this pre-Hispanic artistic tradition is unequaled internationally. And the interest in disseminating it can also be seen in other activities: courses, lectures, national and international exhibitions, an Internet website, the *Boletín Informativo* (Informational Bulletin) the project puts out every six months and other publications.

For the 15 years in which I worked closely with Doctor Beatriz de la Fuente as her collaborator, disciple and friend, she showed untiring commitment to the project, pre-Hispanic cultures and her colleagues.

This undoubtedly makes her an example of discipline, patience and humanity reflected daily in her positive vision of life. VM

Her respect for and interest in Mexico's ancient art made her start by demonstrating and insisting that pre-Columbian production was art. For her, art is the way in which human beings are able to create and recreate the world around them.

The Teacher

Diana Magaloni Kerpel*

Pedro Cuevas/UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research Photo Archives

On February 6, 2002, we students close to Beatriz de la Fuente, headed up by Tere Uriarte, the director of the Institute for Aesthetic Research, organized a colloquium to honor our teacher's academic career. Then, in a moment of clarity, I thought that the combination of the words "Come Closer and Look," the title they accepted for the colloquium and the publication that came out of it, summarized what Beatriz de la Fuente had taught me in her examination of Mesoamerican art.

Beatriz de la Fuente had the pioneering passion to approach the world of what was then considered archaeological pieces and to look at what was unique and unrepeatable in each work. "The doctor" as all her students traditionally, respectfully and affectionately called her, always tried to teach us to search for the creative, sensitive and intelligent human being behind the materials and the forms. In this way, both her reflections as a teacher and in her written work displayed the humanist tradition of art history, unveiling the creative process and the dynamics of signification and expression intrinsic to each work, in contrast to archaeology's way of proceeding which inserts objects and monuments into explanatory patterns of social organization and ideology.

Beatriz de la Fuente's vision was decisive in the task of calling attention to the expressive and signifying power of

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Beatriz de la Fuente described, examined and interpreted, but she also shared what she had seen and left it as a legacy in the form of exhaustive catalogues that are an important point of reference for the conservation of Mexico's ancient art.

Mesoamerican art. She used to say that art was one of the most sublime and complex forms of communication because it translated humanity's fundamental concerns into the language of forms charged with meaning.[1] But her approximation is not reduced to suggesting and translating the worlds underlying the images; she also recognizes in them value and respects them for themselves, since her methodology outstandingly includes her capacity as a promotor and the vision of a cataloguer. That is to say, Beatriz de la Fuente came closer, looked, described, examined and interpreted, but she also shared what she had seen and left it as a legacy to future researchers in the form of exhaustive catalogues that are today valuable veritable mines for future work and an important point of reference for the conservation of Mexico's ancient art. In her approximation to the works and the people who created them, the doctor was also committed to educating the sensibilities of her public because, as she once said, "Knowing and understanding, knowing and respecting go hand in hand."

Another important idea that runs through her work —about which I had the pleasure to talk and exchange ideas with her on different occasions— is the question about the diversity and unity of the cultures of ancient Mexico, apparently contradictory characteristics of what we today call Mesoamerica. I often heard her reflect that the particularities of Mesoamerica's artistic expressions were very significant and little understood. The art works, she said, as products of human beings, change with time and in space. The study of styles, as a way of defining the characteristics that identify a creative people and the different moments of its expression, indicate to us that there were profound differences in ways of thinking, translating and expressing questions and concerns in Mesoamerican art. These differences need to be more closely analyzed in the context of Mesoamerican unity and not be passed over or brandished as an argument for the non-existence of a whole. Our teacher's questions arose from her true proximity to the works: she was very familiar with all the archaeological sites; she was always up to date about new finds; and her eagerness to understand the human creators behind them was proverbial. I remember affectionately and with surprise the first time I saw her, when she was working on the restoration of the mural painting in the Cacaxtla, Tlaxcala Red Temple in summer 1990. Beatriz de la Fuente asked for permission to look at the painting closer up. This meant she had to climb down an improvised, rather unsafe wooden ladder that descended six meters into the painted room we were restoring. When we granted her request, the doctor's eyes shone: they looked like two enormous jade windows opening up to another time. She went down, sure of herself; she got close up and looked, opening up with her gaze my future as a restorer who would analyze the techniques and materials used by many schools of artists of Mesoamerica, for the project she dedicated 15 years of her academic life to and that I had the pleasure of sharing: Pre-Hispanic Mural Painting in Mexico.

How many times her eyes opened up ways forward to others who, like me, do what we do in her company. VM

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[1] Beatriz de la Fuente, "¿Puede un estilo definir una cultura?" (paper read at the round table discussion "Olmeca: Balance Sheet and Perspectives" in Mexico City, March 2005).

An Exemplary Life At the University

Alfonso Arellano Hernández*

Beatriz de la Fuente honored me innumerable times with her teachings, comments and criticisms over the two decades I was her student, disciple and friend. In our almost daily contact, she revealed bits of a profound, yet never hidden, knowledge, the product of experiences matured over time in her beloved National Autonomous University of Mexico, and she always had the perfect word at just the right moment; affable or hard, but always aimed at producing improvements in both herself and those around her.

So, I remember that in early February 2002, in one of those academic, personal talks, Dr. De la Fuente asked me, in her own demanding way, if I was a *universitario* or not.[1] The question was unexpected; it disquieted me and I was silent. So, she asked me again. After an eternity of seconds, I was able to say, "Yes, I am."

But, how do you define or explain that quality of "being a *universitario*"? What did it mean to Dr. De la Fuente, and therefore, for those who have known her close up. And, how was she one? At the time we were talking and I was able to respond, I was certain, based decidedly on what I had learned from her, that being a *universitario* was a vital attitude.

The idea is to be duly and honorably accountable to the university through its three substantive tasks: researching, educating and disseminating research results. Beatriz de la Fuente never neglected these tasks, even in the difficult periods of her life. That is, for her "being *universitaria*" intimately and indissolubly brought together these three tasks. But the matter does not stop with this definition: it goes much further, since anyone with a refined sense of responsibility can accomplish that.

"Being *universitario*", then, takes on a deeper meaning, since countless times it implies going against the current at an incalculable price, seldom paying off because it means returning to our alma mater, working in favor of the society from which it emerged, repaying everything that has been invested in us and doing so both disinterestedly and to a greater degree than was originally given. For those who have the honor of working in the university, economic remuneration takes a back seat because the spiritual satisfaction is greater. At least that is what Beatriz de la Fuente told me on numerous occasions.

Thus, I am certain that for Dr. De la Fuente, "being *universitaria*" meant overcoming day-to-day pettiness and implied giving ethics its due place and value, over and above the individual and professional ambitions that characterize ordinary

Gaceta UNAM Archives

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human beings. Without any doubt, it is an arduous task, since on different occasions Dr. De la Fuente spoke to me of the almost intolerable fatigue that this vital attitude caused her, particularly when people came to her seeking favors or to satisfy special interests. At the end of the day, she was human, and wanted to go beyond herself and admit her errors so as to amend them as well as possible and with a conciliatory spirit. A seldom seen, enviable ability.

Beatriz de la Fuente's university adventure began first with her study of medicine and later of history. She would prolong them with her two master's and her doctorate in history, with a specialization in art. One of the immediate results of her efforts was the creation of the Pre-Hispanic Art Seminar, which shortly thereafter became the Graduate Program in Art History now given at our university's School of Philosophy and Letters, and which she directed from 1987 on, always with an attentive, inquisitive spirit, full of humanism.

Being devoted body and soul to research, teaching and the dissemination of knowledge from 1971 on did not spare her from exalted academic-administrative responsibilities. In the mid-1970s, she headed up the General Publications Office, and from 1980 to 1986, the Institute for Aesthetic Research. In both cases, she focused her efforts on both academic and administrative activities. In the former office, she fostered the publication and distribution of many works from all fields of intellectual endeavor; in the research institute, she promoted new forms of research and the institute's international recognition. She also was the life-long, honorary head of the Humanities Coordinating Department's Art Collection, which includes fundamental works of Mexican art.

She held other posts outside the UNAM, but one of the highest honors given her was belonging to the UNAM Board of Governors in the 1990s.

Dr. De la Fuente's circumspection was proverbial and very respected. So, she was not only a *universitaria* in the sense already described, but an exemplary one at that. For this reason, she was awarded many distinctions, among them, being the only woman member of the National College from 1985 on; the National Prize for Science and the Arts in the Area of History, the Social Sciences and Philosophy in 1988; the 1992 National University Prize; and being named UNAM Researcher Emeritus in 1996.

As a *universitaria*, Dr. De la Fuente gave her life to our alma mater with complete dedication, for almost five decades, overcoming all adversities. She concerned herself with delving into the knowledge of human beings through their artistic works and, consistent with her humanist spirit, she always awakened sincere scientific interest in others, whether they were colleagues, students or disciples, in a direct, friendly, warm, informative manner, using words that were both pertinent and disquieting.

Being a *universitaria* then, is a vital attitude that Beatriz de la Fuente raised to unusual heights as a woman, a wife, a mother, a teacher, a friend and *universitaria*, guided by a profound empathy with human beings past, present and future. VM

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[1] In Mexico, *universitario/a* refers to someone who has studied or worked at Latin America's first university, the UNAM, with the connotation of it being an honor and a matter of pride. [Translator's Note.]

Reviews

La política energética estadunidense: ¿asunto de seguridad o de mercado?
(U.S. Energy Policy, A Matter of Security or the Market?)
Rosío Vargas Suárez
CISAN-UNAM
Mexico City, 2005, 217 pp.

Seldom is a book as timely as this. Oriented to the complex U.S. reality, the coherence and appropriate weight given to the apparently unrelated issues of world energy and the situation of the United States in particular allows the reader to completely understand the problems posed. Examples of these problems are the unfair competition with Mexico in oil sales, in the view of a U.S. oil producer, or the even more imposing U.S. energy crisis in the context of the world's large consortia.

In *U.S. Energy Policy, A Matter of Security or the Market?*, Dr. Rosío Vargas writes that the United States practices market protectionism to favor its domestic consumers. However, the Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq are presented as international oil policy issues that reveal aspects of national energy security. In the United States, few seemed to notice the dual game of security and the market (terms that change positions according to the political context), while for many external observers the central theme of this book is very important for understanding what is currently behind world events.

The book states that both criteria (the market and security) coexist in a game that is more about strategy than energy policy, characterized by the hybrid nature of their objectives in specific contexts, such as in that of a less monolithic, more "pragmatic" unilateral government, in which the internal government actors and interest groups have coexisted with multinational interests imbedded in the power elites, in a historic-economic process that can be divided into three stages: 1959-1972, 1973-1985 and 1986-2001, united by a barely perceptible thread and described by the author in the first chapter in a minute analysis of the results, scope and limits of U.S. energy plans. As Dr. Vargas writes, "The challenge of energy policy makers, then, was to find a balance between the market and the action needed to ensure economic well-being" (p. 63).

When he/she finishes reading this useful work divided into four chapters, the reader has the impression that studying U.S. energy policy implies explaining the geopolitics of the world's energy. In the chapter "La política energética estadunidense desde Richard Nixon hasta George Bush" (U.S. Energy Policy from Richard Nixon to George Bush), the author provides a theoretical and conceptual basis to how we should analyze energy policy, what we should understand by state intervention, regulation, scarcity, abundance, costs and benefits, integration and energy vulnerability and dependence.

In my opinion, the chapter "El sector energético de Estados Unidos: un panorama general" (General

Panorama of the U.S. Energy Sector) should be called "El sector energético desde Estados Unidos" (The Energy Sector from the United States) because it relates the geo-technical nature of world energy resources, their location and the data that shows production, consumption and distribution from 1949 to 1998, all backed up by tables and graphs that demonstrate what has happened and where the energy sector is going. It also points out the proven existence of different fuels like coal and natural gas, at the same time that it underlines the importance of understanding the dimensions of the energy problem with regard to nuclear energy, electricity and, above all, oil, which occupies the main place given its geo-strategic importance for North America.

The author also argues with academic rigor one of her main —and perhaps the most important— hypotheses, backed up by other writers: geologically speaking, the U.S. oil decline is inevitable and will have repercussions the world over. She broadens out what is implied in her statement in the chapter on "La seguridad energética estadunidense" (U.S. Energy Security), in which, in a corollary to this research into the crisis facing the world, she maintains that "the depletion of its oil reserves after long exploitation is what is making the issue of security important for the United States" (p. 174). We are reaching the technical limits of exploitation of this precious energy resource, and we must seek alternatives.

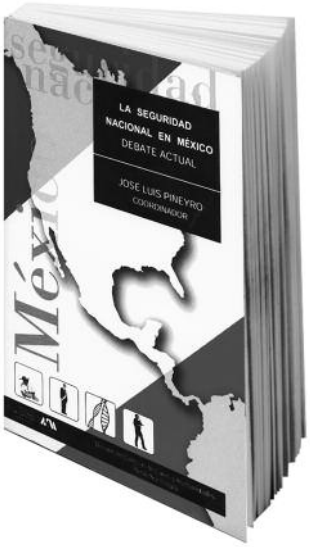
This indispensable book is a good starting point for understanding the arduous task we are facing that, one way or another, concerns us all. VM

Alfredo Álvarez Padilla
CISAN-UNAM

La seguridad nacional en México: debate actual
(National Security in Mexico: The Current Debate)
José Luis Piñeyro, comp.
UAM-Azcapotzalco
Mexico City, 2004, 500 pp.

With an integrated perspective and free of the prejudice that national security should deal exclusively with military or intelligence matters, *La seguridad nacional en México: debate actual* (National Security in Mexico: The Current Debate) allows the non-specialist to familiarize him- or herself with the topic. Using accessible language, the authors of this collective work explain their theoretical-methodological position, which acts as a crosscutting conduit for explaining the social, economic and political historical moment the country is going through at the same time that they provoke academic discussion and invite the reader to reflect.

These essays are the result of rigorous research and have the social sensitivity fitting for experts in



each of the issues dealt with. In this case, they are members of the National System of Researchers (SNI), academics from Mexico's most important universities: the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Autonomous Metropolitan University and the Ibero-American University.

This review will comment on the chapters that deal with Mexico-U.S. relations. One example is "La estrategia de defensa de la administración Bush" (The Bush Administration's Defense Strategy), by Ana Teresa Gutiérrez del Cid, who reveals George W. Bush's hard-line policy that posits that the international order was reconceived after September 11, 2001 with a return to a Cold War mentality. Accordingly, U.S. hegemony and its military commitment to exterminating radical Islamic forces will be reflected in a unilateral, economically and socially very expensive foreign policy since the United States spends more than one billion dollars a day on its military, contrasting sharply both with its expenditures on education and pensions and low family incomes (including many Mexican families).

The essay "México y su política exterior" (Mexico and Its Foreign Policy) by José Luis León Manrique looks at foreign policy from 1945 to 2002. This review is impressive because of its historical-analytical focus which clarifies some very important national sovereignty issues, looking at three aspects: the nature of the international system, the national economic and political situation and foreign policy actors. It also appraises the most important products of that policy: the relationship with the United States, the links to the rest of the world and the connection between foreign policy and national security. The author simultaneously shows the development of Mexican and U.S. foreign policy, pointing to the positions of different administrations in both countries and emphasizing the moments of rapprochement, tension or distancing in Mexico-U.S. relations because of the way of dealing with different problems like border issues, migration, drug trafficking, trade and energy sources. León also explains how historical necessity dictated the reorganization of Mexico's state security apparatus and how our insertion in the international scene follows the Washington line. Examples of this are the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the neoliberal model that have increased Mexico's vulnerability *vis-à-vis* its northern neighbor despite the good intentions of Mexico's multilateralism that has not crystallized as a strategy.

Rosa Albina Garabito deals with "Política económica y la seguridad nacional" (Economic Policy and National Security) when she says that a solid economy will sustain our state, since its basis is social and political legitimacy. These conditions will make stability possible, and by exercising its autonomy, the state will have control over its strategic resources and therefore be able to make decisions, thus strengthening its sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the exterior. This will prevent the confusion between national security and the security of the administration, something exemplified in Mexico with episodes like the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre and the 1970s dirty war. Garabito's thinking ranges from matters as important as Mexico's economic development and how it has been affected by the break in the social pact, unbridled privatization, shrinking public spending, declining social expenditures and the foreign debt to the desperate stratagems for obtaining financing from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with the intention of getting international capital to return. All of this has forced Mexico's population into extreme poverty and led to higher unemployment, lower wages and increased migration to the United States, which in 2002 brought in millions of dollars in family remittances while at the same time demonstrating the degree of Mexico's financial and labor dependence on the United States. Lastly, Garabito underlines that to guarantee economic sovereignty, it will be necessary to productively include society in an economic circuit which will give the state certain amounts of political legitimacy.

The article by Juan Manuel Sandoval Palacios, "Seguridad nacional y migración internacional de México a Estados Unidos" (National Security and International Migration from Mexico to the United States), puts forward the idea that the U.S. perspective on its own security will be decisive for granting Mexico a place on its agenda because it conceives of our country as a fundamental factor for the strategy on hemispheric cooperation and security. The United States thinks that Mexican political stability is very important for meeting its political and military expectations,

as well as its fuel supply needs, basically oil. One of its priorities is the militarization of border areas using the strategy of low intensity warfare. Sandoval Palacios recapitulates Reagan administration measures to absolutely control undocumented immigrants and analyzes its policy of using force through specific programs that under later administrations would become a series of operations by the Investigations Division of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) linking the Central Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the State Department using surveillance and prevention of undocumented migration, drug trafficking and 9/11 and terrorism as a pretext.

Military-political control enjoyed high budgets throughout the 1980s that made it possible to incorporate plans and programs that initially allowed the border patrol to use firearms and, with time, high-tech military equipment. After the signing of NAFTA and with the intention of preventing increased migration through mechanisms like Operation Guardian, Operation Safeguard and Operation Rio Grande, the strategy would be to force "illegal" immigrants into non-traditional, dangerous routes. Given this, the U.S. discourse contains the slogan of aiming for bi-national security, which former President Carlos Salinas and current President Vicente Fox have supported unconditionally, recognizing U.S. hegemony.

Mexico, for its part, has implemented the "Southern Plan" which aims to extend the control of its border with Central America to the Tehuantepec Isthmus, reproducing the treatment that the United States inflicts on our migrants and facilitating the implementation of the Puebla-Panama Plan. The author concludes that guarding the borders means the "control of geo-economic regions of a geo-strategic character" which will guarantee the United States continue to be the global hegemonic power.

In his essay "Estados Unidos: libre comercio e integración energética subordinada" (The United States: Free Trade and Subordinate Energy Integration), José Luis Manzo Yépez explains the U.S. oil supply's vulnerability. This is a matter of national security that the U.S. has attempted to resolve through free trade agreements disadvantageous to Mexico because of the commitments it has agreed to in order to guarantee credits to deal with its financial crises. At the same time the United States seeks to ensure its presence in strategic places to watch over investment, exploitation and commercialization of oil, gas and electricity through initiatives contained in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Puebla-Panama Plan. The privatization of the energy sector has been polemical, particularly under Fox, who, using multiple service contracts and acting unconstitutionally, sees the opportunity of providing foreign investment with strategic information that will eventually make it possible to supplant Pemex without making it disappear. According Manzo, the lack of financial resources is a pretext; he explains interesting alternatives for financing such as using part of the workers' retirement funds or issuing Series "B" stock. For the author, hemispheric energy cooperation is possible if it is based on principles of economic and environmental rationality and mutual respect. Another of his essays, included in the book, "Electricidad y seguridad nacional" (Electricity and National Security) puts forward the idea that the total privatization of the electricity sector would be harmful, but that private capital participation is viable if limited and strictly regulated. The author contributes ten proposals for restructuring the electricity sector.

Because it has a multidimensional perspective, *National Security in Mexico: The Current Debate* includes articles that deal with issues like environmental sustainability; disarmament and Mexico's peace policy; biosecurity and food security; the impact of bio-technology and transgenic crops; the state's social policy; the function of public finances; the geo-strategic rise of the Pacific Basin; terrorism and security from Latin America; and the study of natural and human disasters. VM

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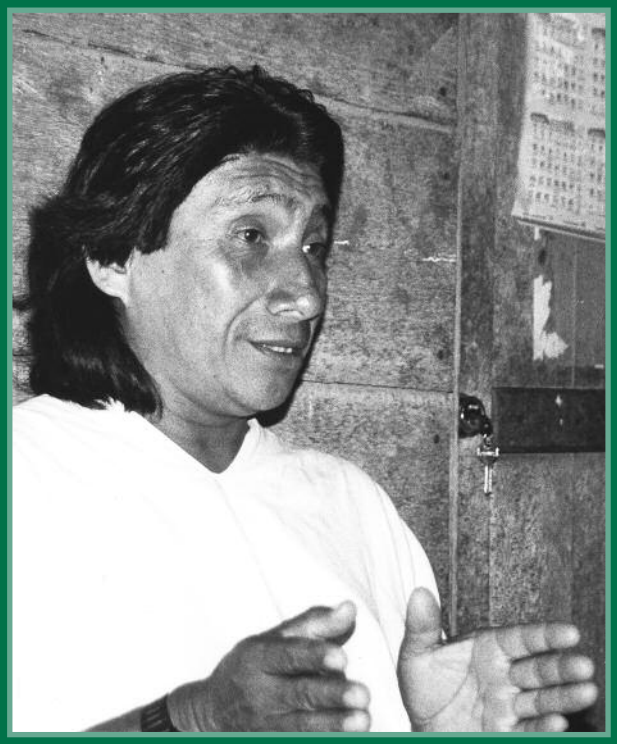

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