VOICES of Mexico

CISAN • UNAM

7 52435 50329 7 75

www.unam.mx/voices

ISSUE 75 APRIL - JUNE 2006 MEXICO $50 USA $12.00 CANADA $15.00

ARTES DE MÉXICO
NÚMERO 78

De venta en librerías de prestigio
o en Córdoba 69, Col. Roma,
06700, México, D.F.
Teléfonos: 5525 5905, 5525 4036

Rituales del maíz

Conozca sus raíces profundas

VOICES of Mexico™

ISSN 0186 • 9418

Voices of Mexico is published by
El Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte, CISAN (Center for Research on North America),
Of the Office of the Coordinator of Humanities, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM
(National Autonomous University of Mexico).

Address letters, advertising and subscription correspondence to: **Voices of Mexico**, Canadá 203, Col. San Lucas, Coyoacán, 04030 México, D.F. Tel: 5336-36-01, 5336-35-95 and 5336-35-96. Electronic mail: voicesmx@servidor.unam.mx. Annual subscription rates: Mexico Mex$180; USA U.S.$40; Canadá Can$48; other countries U.S.$74, prepaid in U.S. currency to **UNAM. Opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent the views of Voices of Mexico**.

The magazine is not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts. Publicación trimestral, año diecinueve, número 75, abril-junio de 2006. ISSN 0186-9418. Certificado de Licitud de Contenido núm. 2930 y Certificado de Licitud de Título núm. 3340, expedidos por la Comisión Calificadora de Publicaciones y Revistas Ilustradas. Reserva al uso exclusivo del título núm. 04-2002-060413383000-102, expedida por el Instituto Nacional del Derecho de Autor. Correspondencia nacional de segunda clase. Registro 0851292. Características 220261212. Correspondencia internacional de segunda clase. Registro Cri D F 002-92. Preprensa: Ediciones de Buena Tinta, S.A. de C.V., Insurgentes Sur 1700, 6o. piso, Col. Florida, Álvaro Obregón, 01030 México, D.F. Tels. 5661-66-07, 5662-28-31. Impresa en Impresora Transcontinental de México, Democracia 116, Col. San Miguel Amantla, Azcapotzalco, México, D.F.

VOICES of Mexico™

Issue 75 April-June 2006

Elsie Montiel

Zevallos Arches, Córdoba, Veracruz.

Cover:
Juan Soriano, ***Lupe Marín***, 170.3 x 75.3 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas) (Andres Blaisten Collection) (Modern Art Museum Collection).

Back Cover:
Juan Soriano, ***Dove***, 70 x 60 x 60 cm, 1991 (bronze).

Contents

Our Voice

Two events in the United States are marking a moment of political transition. On the one hand there are the marches of Latino workers, mainly Mexicans, in different U.S. cities, in which four million demonstrators peacefully and creatively demanded a comprehensive migratory reform including the regularization of the legal situation of several million immigrants, until now uncertain and vulnerable. The marches were pro-active, sending a message to U.S. society that migrants strongly desire integration into that country and to become a part of the broad, diverse ethnic-cultural mosaic that the United States has been since its origins as a modern nation. Given the unbounded optimism that these demonstrations may have sparked on both sides of the border among some political circles who support a comprehensive migratory reform, we should mention that they prompted a variety of reactions among the public, the media and a broad spectrum of political and partisan groups. Some conservatives did not approve, above all some congresspersons and constituencies who insist on arguing that migrants who have resided in the United States illegally should not be given legal status. On the other hand, progressive political and social sectors maintain that these mobilizations have revealed a heretofore unknown facet of the Latino movement and that, given their undoubted, manifest strength, they will have a considerable impact on the country's political-electoral map in November's balloting.

What is clear is that in the framework of these events, the debate about immigration reform in the U.S. Congress will probably be held up considerably at a time when it was thought it would be more than successful and that an agreement could have been reached to legalize millions of undocumented immigrants, 70 percent of whom are Mexican. We have to expect that the final agreements will be profoundly influenced by the coming elections, which have already begun to have an impact.

The other important event is the resignation of CIA Director Porter Goss and the president's nomination of General Charles Hayden, National Intelligence Director John Negroponte's second-in-command, still to be ratified by the Senate. This strengthens the hard line in the U.S. intelligence community, headed over the last year by Negroponte, who is also the head of all the security agencies and a very important influence on President Bush in this area. The CIA and Porter Goss were under his tutelage, and they seem not to have understood the fundamental priorities in security defense since 9/11. So, hoping to get absolute control of the coordination of national intelligence, the strong man of U.S. security seems to have gotten rid of Goss, who, despite being his friend and colleague for years, stopped being of use to him in the CIA in a very short time. All that remains is the Senate debate, which should be very intense given that among some sectors of civil rights proponents and congresspersons General Hayden is considered directly responsible for espionage against political and social leaders, which presumably could have violated constitutionally guaranteed individual rights. Therefore, this polemical nomination is not expected to get through the Senate easily. For all these reasons, and given President Bush's low approval rating in the polls (29 percent), the worst in his entire presidency, we can suppose that coming political times in the United States will be unpredictable and very intense.

Hayden's nomination seems a fitting accompaniment to President Bush's recent, though expected, decision to send 6,000 National Guardsmen to reinforce the U.S. southern border. This securitization measure had been hinted at on various occasions in the past. This time, the President seems to have made a very important strategic move, and we would be fooling ourselves if we concluded that it only reflects the defensive obsession of U.S. national security policy in recent years. It is interesting that this takes place at a time when the Senate is debating the future immigration reform, which has to be ready by the end of May at the latest. It is even more interesting if we note that Bush associated the measure with a defense of the possibility of regularizing the situation of several million undocumented immigrants. If this is the case, the president seems to have offered his party's and the nation's most conservative sectors a concession (more border security and *ad hoc* measures against illegal immigration and terrorism) in exchange for approving a comprehensive immigration reform, which, given the pressures of the aforementioned Latino mobilizations, looks to him and to the rest of the U.S. political class like the most sensible political solution. In that sense, it would be advisable for Mexican candidates and government, now running

the closest electoral race in their history, to read this change with appropriate prudence, without resorting to knee-jerk patriotic responses before seeing the real results of the chess game that this measure is a part of. It remains to be seen whether Mexico's presidential candidates will be able to deal with this and many other facets of the international situation with the self-possession and modern vision that Mexico requires for its twenty-first century international policy.

* * *

As previously mentioned, everything seems to indicate that Mexico's coming presidential elections will be the closest race in history. Nothing about the outcome is certain and everything seems to change day to day. At least, that is what the polls show. Their surprising, shifting results seem to testify to a malleable, undecided, extremely changing electorate. By the close of this issue, it is impossible to predict whether the votes are going to be divided evenly among three candidates or if two front-runners will be competing for victory. It is also difficult to say much about scenarios of governability for the country's next president, although everything points to a government even more divided than the current one, without a clear majority in either chamber of Congress, an unprecedented situation for Mexico's young democracy. In our "Politics" section, then, we include several contributions about electoral proposals and scenarios. Alejandro Becerra describes and analyzes the three main parties' proposals about foreign policy and relations with the United States, undoubtedly important in light of recent Latino protests in that country. John Burstein points to the most recent political changes in both countries, emphasizing the importance for the United States of the ideological shift in the Supreme Court due to the new appointments and the transfer of political weight from the presidency to the Congress in Mexico. Carlos Casillas deals with the latter issue by analyzing the potential consequences of a new scenario of ungovernability in Mexico with a presidency facing broad opposition in Congress, as well as the possible reshuffling of political forces and party realignments. Lastly, Jorge Alcocer offers the results of a methodology for creating electoral scenarios based on previous voting trends used to analyze the current race.

Another polemical issue which is not always completely understood is the influence of the media on elections. In his contribution to "Society", Raúl Trejo Delarbre, one of Mexico's most renowned media experts, questions the media's supposed omnipotence and attempts to situate it in its proper place and outline the real role it plays in our democracy. In the same section, we include an article by researcher Gabriela Angeles about the most important discussions at the 4th World Water Forum held in Mexico City last March. She focuses particularly on the alternative positions, critical of the proposal to privatize water as a solution to its scarcity in vast regions of the planet.

As we have already mentioned, the parties' positions on foreign affairs and relations with the United States have had an unprecedented importance in Mexico's electoral process, in part due to the recent protests by the Latino community there. In "United States Affairs", specialist Mónica Verea presents an overview of the implications of the different immigration bills currently being discussed in the U.S. Congress.

Events have been very dynamic in recent months in all of North America. So, Canadian expert Elisa Dávalos contributes an article about the repercussions of Stephen Harper's electoral victory, particularly with regard to federalism and his proposals for Canada's provinces and their attributions.

Another very timely topic is the economic and trade integration of the Americas. In our "Economy" section, we include an article by analyst Berenice Ramírez López about the alternatives to the U.S.-proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas for regional integration developed recently by a series of countries that oppose and criticize U.S. hegemony, including Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. In the same section, we present an illustrative article about the causes, dimension and impact of the informal economy in Mexico by Carlos Márquez-Padilla and Daniel Tapia, who focus their analysis on the lack of incentives and the obstacles built into the legal and tax systems that discourage people from complying with formal business requirements.

As a contribution to the festivities celebrating the bicentennial of Benito Juárez, known as the Apostle of the Americas, in this issue we include a contribution by historian Patricia Galeana. She shows us both Juárez, the able politician, and Juárez, the great statesman, emphasizing his undeniable influence on later generations of Mexican politicians, including those of today, regardless of their ideological bent.

* * *

In this issue, the "Art and Culture" section pays homage to Juan Soriano, one of Mexico's most versatile, innovative twentieth-century artists, who died at the beginning of this year. Soriano's work includes painting, sculpture, monumental sculpture, graphics, sketches and ceramics. All of it carries the personal stamp of an artist who, as art critic Jaime Moreno Villarreal writes, took responsibility for his own creations and was never seduced by fads. In this same section, we include an article about mezcal, one of the beverages distilled from maguey sap. Based on the hypothesis that this technique was not brought to Mexico by the conquistadors, but that almost all the Mesoamerican cultures distilled this beverage in pre-Hispanic times, Carmen Serra Puche and a team of researchers began the Road of Mezcal project which has led them to discover that throughout the country communities continue to make mezcal with pre-Hispanic techniques and tools.

"The Splendor of Mexico" section visits the mountains of Veracruz. We start with two brief articles by Cecilia Rábago about the region's main cities, Orizaba and Córdoba. During the colonial period, both were stopping-off points for travelers and trade between Mexico City and the port of Veracruz, and developed thanks to their climate and the natural bounty of their surroundings. This route between Mexico City and Veracruz has been one of the most important throughout Mexican history, which is why when railroad tracks began to be laid, one of the first lines to be built was the one that connected the two cities. Luis De la Llave writes about the difficulties the engineers and builders had in laying the tracks through the mountains. Bridges and tunnels crossing ravines and mountains, empty stations that have been turned into homes, and abandoned electricity plants testify to the importance of the railways in the early twentieth century. Lastly, Mauricio Degollado draws a brief picture of Orizaba Peak, Mexico's highest mountain, which from time immemorial has watched over the cities of Córdoba and Orizaba. Its melting snows providing an endless supply of water, it is vital for life and nature in the entire region, as well as a favorite spot for mountain climbers from the world over.

Our "Museums" section includes an article about the Córdoba Museum which boasts an important collection of donated archaeological pieces representing different Mesoamerican and local cultures. "Ecology" completes our visit to the mountains of Veracruz with an article about Las Cañadas, an ambitious, privately-owned ecological project that aims to protect and preserve the remnants of the region's cloud forest and to change our very limited idea about what sustainable development is.

* * *

In this issue, "Literature" is dedicated to a genre and literary trend that sketches a profound portrait of the social and family environment of drug trafficking. This genre has emerged above all in northern Mexico, and one of its outstanding proponents is Sinaloa-born writer Élmer Mendoza, a fragment of whose novel, *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Janis Joplin's Lover), we reproduce here for the first time for English-speaking readers. Literary critic Miguel Cabañas writes about the relationship between literature and drug trafficking in general and its manifestations in Mexico and Mendoza's work in particular.

We lost two illustrious, beloved intellectuals since our last issue came out. Our "In Memoriam" section pays them a well deserved tribute. They are the extraordinary playwright and director, Ludwik Margules, who was a director at the university theater, and the renowned, innovative demographer Raúl Benítez Zenteno, former director of the UNAM's Institute for Social Research. Two admired figures of Mexican culture, writer Juan Villoro and social scientist and demographer Carlos Welti, write about their human side and their undeniable contributions to their respective areas of interest.

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

Mexico-U.S. Relations And the 2006 Presidential Elections

Alejandro Becerra Gelover*

Since September 11, the issue of security, particularly border security, has permeated all the topics on the agenda to the degree that, since then, the United States looks at almost every bilateral matter through the prism of security.

Mexico-U.S. relations have always been complex. For many years, the traditional bilateral agenda has included substantial issues that speak to the interests linking the two countries like migration, trade, finances, energy, drug trafficking, organized crime and, more recently, human rights and ecology. However, since September 11, 2001, the issue of security, particularly, border security, has permeated all the topics on the agenda to the degree that since then, the United States looks at almost every bilateral matter through the prism of security.

Just like every six years, this year, Mexico is renewing two of its branches of government. July 2, Mexican voters will elect 128 senators, 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies and the head of the executive. Both national and international public opinion are concentrated on the presidential race since the future of the country's internal and external policies will depend to a great extent on who takes office next December 1.

In that context, it is appropriate to ask: Will Mexico's foreign policy toward the United States change in the next six years? In what areas will there be continuity and where will there be change? To answer these questions, this article will review the foreign policy proposals, and particularly those about the United States, made in the action and government programs and internal guidelines of Mexico's main political parties, as well as the electoral platforms those parties' candidates have registered with the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE).[1]

Five candidates have registered with the IFE to run for the presidency: Felipe Calderón Hinojosa of the governing National Action Party (PAN); Roberto Madrazo Pintado of the "Alliance for Mexico" made up of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM); Andrés Manuel López Obrador, of the "Alliance for the Welfare of All," made up of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the Labor Party (PT) and the Convergence Party (PC); Patricia Mercado Castro of the Social Democratic and Peasant Alternative Party; and Roberto Campa Cifrián from the New Alliance Party. Only the first three hopefuls have real possibilities of win-

* Professor at the UNAM Department of International Relations, Aragón campus.

ning. The other two, as candidates for new parties, aim to maintain their legal registration as political parties.

FELIPE CALDERÓN HINOJOSA (PAN)

The PAN candidate's proposal for foreign policy is found in section five of his electoral platform entitled "Effective Democracy and Responsible Foreign Policy."[2] The section points to democratic legitimacy as the essence of Mexico's foreign policy. Calderón says that democratic legitimacy has built a new image for Mexico in the world and that, thanks to that, our country increased its presence on the international scene. The PAN's challenge is to consolidate this international position and foster a responsible foreign policy with sustainable human development as its main axis. This implies using diplomacy and trade policy to improve Mexicans' living standards and that this would be reflected in an active foreign policy based on solidarity. Foreign policy should serve to create the well-being Mexicans require and that can also be achieved by other peoples.

With regard to the United States, Calderón centers his proposals in four areas: 1) building a strategic alliance among the nations of North America; 2) migration; 3) multi-lateral issues; and 4) national security. In the first area, he proposes creating and fostering a more prosperous, secure region in North America (proposal 385); creating working groups with the United States to deal with common interests and to expand the existing Partnership for Prosperity and Security (386). With regard to migration, the PAN proposes permanently solving the migratory problem (387) in the framework of shared responsibility and mutual benefit embodied in international cooperation. The aim would be that migration be legal, ordered, secure and decorous; in addition, the PAN would propose a broad temporary workers program. All of this would be done on the basis of bilateral co-responsibility and attacking the causes of Mexicans leaving for the United States, such as the lack of jobs, backwardness and marginalization. Regarding the impact of remittances in Mexico, Calderon makes three proposals: 1) expanding programs to use remittances as a lever for regional development; 2) facilitating migrants' and their families' access to the financial system to cut the cost of sending remittances and to increase saving habits; and 3) tightening the links among the three levels of government, community associations, migrants and the private sector to favor human development projects and providing communities with infrastructure.

The PAN proposes permanently solving the migratory problem in the framework of shared responsibility and mutual benefit embodied in international cooperation. The aim would be that migration be legal, ordered, secure and decorous.

Henry Romero/Reuters

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa.

In the multilateral sphere, the PAN proposes that Mexico once again become a temporary or permanent member of the UN Security Council (392) and subscribe to all the reforms to the Charter of American States in order to strengthen their development (393). In both cases, Mexico's foreign policy will link up with the United States', which could lead to agreements or disagreements. With regard to national security, Calderón proposes creating hemispheric security accords with the United States (411), and seeking to enforce the current secure borders program (410) to eradicate organized crime on the U.S. border, whether it be drug trafficking, smuggling of persons or goods or terrorism. In brief, for Felipe Calderón, the important issues of the bilateral relationship are national security, development for prosperity, migration and the presence of Mexico in multilateral fora. As is clear, he does not consider all the traditional issues of the bilateral agenda.

ROBERTO MADRAZO PINTADO (ALLIANCE FOR MEXICO)

The PRI-PVEM coalition candidate's foreign policy is described in section three of his electoral platform, entitled "The Government We Want," particularly

in points 3.1, "Sovereign Nation and International Policy" and 3.2, "National Security."[3] According to Madrazo, the defense of national sovereignty is the basis for foreign policy, and international policy is the strategic tool for preserving that sovereignty, strengthening the country's international presence and promoting Mexico's interests abroad.

On that basis, the Alliance for Mexico proposes five areas for bilateral relations: 1) maintaining a good relationship with the United States; 2) border development; 3) multilateral and international policy; 4) migratory policy; and 5) national security. About the first point, Roberto Madrazo offers to maintain respectful, equitable relations with the United States (proposal 729); to come to an agreement with the U.S. on a foreign policy and regional security agenda in which both nations gradually and by consensus decide on issues of mutual interest and articulate their actions (731); to establish effective mechanisms for coordination that facilitate agreements and results to solve common problems (775); and to strengthen the operational capability of the North American Development Bank by geographically extending its mandate (776). In this sphere, he also seeks to tighten links of solidarity with the Mexican and Hispanic communities residing in the United States (732). With regard to border development, the Alliance for Mexico will seek social, economic, cultural and ecological development of border areas, and provide them with the legal instruments needed to effectively enforce respect for human rights in the region (733).

With regard to multilateral and international policy, Madrazo proposes strengthening and democratizing international bodies and condemns the imposition of the will of some nations (754), particularly members of the UN Security Council (761). He will seek to renovate international bodies (734); foster an integral multilateral economic cooperation system (735) to overcome underdevelopment and advance an effective system for achieving world peace and security (736); promote respect and protection for human rights (764); strengthen international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime (765); bolster the use of preventive diplomacy in the management, contention and resolution of conflicts and encourage greater participation of multilateral mechanisms to achieve disarmament, including nuclear disarmament and the control of all types of weapons (769). To carry out all these proposals a very intense dialogue with the U.S. government will be needed.

Henry Romero/Reuters

Roberto Madrazo Pintado.

Madrazo proposes improving the system for sending and receiving remittances, promoting ways to reduce transfer costs. However, he makes no proposal to eliminate the causes of Mexican migration to the United States.

With regard to migratory policy, the Alliance for Mexico thinks it is important to propose to the United States:

a) signing a migratory agreement that recognizes the value of Mexican migrants's work for the U.S. economy and seeks to regularize their migratory status with full respect for their labor rights (752);
b) that migration be mutually beneficial for Mexico and the United States, with absolute respect for Mexican migrants' human rights (743);
c) strengthening the legal and institutional framework for combatting the traffic in persons and promoting accords around this issue with the United States (753); and demand that the United States' actions obey the law, international law and respect the human rights of our countrymen and women who try to cross our northern border (779).

Outstanding among the institutional actions that Mexico must take regarding migrants are:

a) increasing resources and capabilities of Mexican consulates in the United States so they can offer better service to our compatriots and defend their rights (748);
b) developing government strategies that can serve Mexican migrants

abroad in a coordinated, comprehensive way (742);
c) furthering the coordination of migration-related activities by Mexico's border states in order to create a mechanism for dialogue with U.S. border states (751);
d) championing an active policy to support those Mexicans who want to repatriate (749); and
e) improving the system for sending and receiving remittances, promoting ways to reduce transfer costs (745). However, Madrazo makes no proposal to eliminate the causes of Mexican migration to the United States.

The Alliance for Mexico's platform summarizes the issue of national security in the following points:

a) designing a broader national security and defense agenda as the basis for international cooperation and the exchange of strategic information with intelligence services, particularly those of NAFTA (783);
b) fulfilling security responsibilities according to existing bilateral border agreements (777);
c) considering drug trafficking, organized crime, terrorism, money laundering and human rights violations the main threats to national security (778); and
d) guaranteeing the security of strategic facilities throughout our national territory. To that end, the security agenda must include information about the facilities that could be a target for attack (784); the alliance also proposes professionalizing intelligence services and involving personnel designated for this task solely in national security activities (786).

In summary, Roberto Madrazo's position on institutional relations with the United States focuses on border development, multilateral and international policy, migration and national security.

ANDRÉS MANUEL LÓPEZ OBRADOR (ALLIANCE FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL)

The foreign policy position of the PRD-PT-Convergence coalition, the Alliance for the Welfare of All, is found in section six of its electoral platform entitled "Globality, Regional Blocs and Our National Project."[4] According to Andrés Manuel López Obrador, global interdependence is the driving force behind international relations and Mexico must counter the negative effects of the global economy like increasing inequality among regions and countries, the destruction of the environment and prevailing speculation by financial capital. In this sense, globalization should not limit national sovereignty and, as a result, Mexico's foreign policy should promote and support multilateral initiatives for peace, democracy, the respect for human rights and equitable, inclusive, sustainable development.


Daniel Aguilar/Reuters
Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

As a result, foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the United States centers on five points: 1) a state policy; 2) the economy 3) migration; 4) security; and 5) multilateral and international policy. The first item means practicing an authentic state foreign policy involving the three branches of government with clear aims, redefining their jurisdictions and introducing new mechanisms like the ratification of the Minister of Foreign Relations by Congress or the creation of the National Foreign Policy Council (proposal 305). López Obrador also proposes that foreign economic policy should further the strategy of sustainable and socially inclusionary and equitable development (282).

The Alliance for the Welfare of All thinks linking our country to the U.S. economy has shown its limitations as a solution to economic stagnation and that therefore Mexico should make a priority of its relations with Latin America and seek a mature, respectful, equitable relationship with the United States based on preparing a common agenda that neither confronts the two

The Alliance for the Welfare of All thinks linking our country to the U.S. economy has shown its limitations as a solution to economic stagnation and that therefore Mexico should make a priority of its relations with Latin America.

governments nor implies subordinating one to the other. The idea is a policy of regional co-responsibility emphasizing economic re-ordering. The main proposals in this sense are:

a) evaluating the existing free trade agreements in light of the principles of equitable economic conditions, the creation of compensatory funds, the free circulation of labor and job protection (280);
b) reviewing NAFTA's agricultural chapter and implementing programs to deal with problems in the countryside and to encourage regional development (294); and
c) broadening out the activities of the Bank of North America in order to provide the compensatory funds needed by the regions of the country affected by NAFTA (295).

With regard to migration, López Obrador deems it important to:

a) design an accord with the United States that recognizes the positive aspects of migration, promoting amnesty, legalization and documentation of all Mexican immigrants (296);
b) put an end to abuses of Mexican migrants by U.S. authorities; and
c) demand an end to border surveillance by private citizens (297).

The platform also establishes responsibilities toward Mexicans abroad, most of whom live in the United States. It proposes creating a law to protect migrants (308); promoting representation of Mexican migrants in Mexico's Congress (309); designing a scholarship program for the children of migrants in order to enroll them in Mexico's higher education system (311); and encouraging small and medium-sized Mexican-American businesspersons and establishing trans-border professional associations (312).

The three candidates propose a migratory accord between the two countries based on bilateral co-responsibility (shared benefits) that would allow for regularizing the status of undocumented migrants in the United States.

Regarding security, the Alliance for the Welfare of All underlines the importance of reformulating the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America in terms of the defense and sovereignty of the interests of the Mexican state and of guaranteeing the non-subordination of Mexican security policy to that of the United States (298).

With regard to multilateral and international policy, Andrés Manuel López Obrador proposes developing a foreign policy consistent with national needs and fostering the multilateral solution of international problems like the arms race, organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, the conservation of the environment, pandemics and migration (304); rejecting any military intervention outside UN norms (275); furthering a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system and that of multilateral economic bodies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. He also says that the Economic and Social Council should become an Economic Security Council in charge of comprehensively coordinating its agencies' work. In addition, he proposes strengthening the International Criminal Court (276). López Obrador also underlines the need to regulate international capital flows through a tax on financial activity and the importance of establishing international trade rules to compensate for the differences among nations (279).

Final Comments

Clearly, bilateral relations with the United States is a central issue for all three candidates. However, the three both agree and disagree about proposals about how to deal with this relationship for the next six years. Seen as a whole, we can say that the issues on the traditional bilateral agenda are included in their electoral platforms, although each candidate deals with each one differently. Generally speaking, the three candidates fundamentally agree on their perception that foreign policy should serve to develop our country to the benefit of our population. This would imply changing certain practices that would not necessarily lead to a clash with Washington.

Undoubtedly, the central agreement is on migration, security and multilateral and international policies. In that sense, the three candidates propose a migratory accord between the two countries based on bilateral co-responsibility (shared benefits) that would allow for regularizing the status of undocumented migrants in the United States.

Border security and security linked to prosperity are also points of agreement. The intensive use of multilateral

bodies to resolve conflicts and the democratization of international bodies is also a common concern that could lead to differences with the United States.

From the point of view of continuity or change in relations with the United States, neither Felipe Calderón nor Roberto Madrazo bet on radical change. However, Andrés Manuel López Obrador's foreign policy proposals linked to economic and social issues differ substantially from those of the other two candidates, constituting a revision of the current model of economic development that has operated in Mexico and the rest of Latin America in recent years fostered by the United States. This would imply, in principle, a relationship that included more dialogue, though not necessarily greater understanding. López Obrador will have to have a very clear strategy to dialogue with Washington and at the same time defend his platform proposals and, eventually, his government program, but also to not underestimate relations with the most important trade partner for our country and the world. If this is not properly taken into account, he would run the risk of a dialogue with the United States that does not correspond to the country's needs. VM

NOTES

[1] According to Article 176 of the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Processes (Cofipe), political parties and their candidates must register their electoral platforms, which, if they win, will be the basis for their government program.

[2] The PAN's electoral platform contains 412 proposals. Numbers 384 to 412 are those related to foreign policy. The platform can be consulted at http://www.pan.org.mx/?P=43

[3] The Alliance for Mexico's electoral platform is made up of 944 proposals; foreign relations issues are dealt with from points 723 to 787. The platform can be consulted at <http:/www.pri.org.mx/estadetulado/Alianza/documentos/alianzapormexico_plataforma2006.pdf>

[4] The Alliance for the Welfare of All electoral platform contains 312 proposals; proposals 275 to 312 refer to foreign policy. The platform can be found at <http://www.prd.org.mx/docs/PLAT_ELECTORAL_PBT.pdf>

2006-2012
Who Can Govern?

Carlos Enrique Casillas*

Carlos Guzmán/Cuartoscuro

A few months before the election of Mexico's next president, voters' eyes are trained on the race to Los Pinos. However, the experience of recent years tells us that it is not who wins the presidency that will define the future of the next administration, but, in any case, the way in which the new head of the executive builds his relationship with Congress.

For the last nine years, the country has lived with having a president without a majority in Congress. First with Ernesto Zedillo and later with Vicente Fox, a divided government has earned its citizenship papers in Mexico. And, although in and of itself, it should not be a problem, the fact is that with the passage of time, the relationship between the executive and the legislature has become the main obstacle to governability.

As if that were not enough, the most recent opinion polls reveal a very complex scenario for the future president given the prospect, once again, of a Congress in which no party will have a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, aggravated by each of the three main political forces having equal-sized caucuses (see table).

Under these conditions, the order of the basic questions that voters have to ask themselves about the presidential candidates from now until July has to be reversed. Instead of asking ourselves who will win the presidential election, we must ask who can govern with the most divided Congress in recent history.

Instead of asking the candidates about their programs, we should ask which party or parties the winner will have to negotiate with and what changes that would mean for their gov-

* Political analyst and professor at the Ibero-American and Anáhuac Universities.
cacasillasmx@gmail.com

ernment project. Instead of wondering whether they intend to fulfill their campaign promises, we have to begin to ask ourselves if they will be able to. And, lastly, we should ask ourselves where the necessary negotiating spirit is going to come from among the political forces, because the evidence indicates that up until now it has only rarely existed.

POLLING RESULTS (PERCENTAGE)		
PARTY	FOR PRESIDENT	FOR THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
PAN	30.6	32.5
PRI	28.8	37.0
PRD	37.5	29.0
Other	3.1	1.5

Source: Consulta Mitofsky National Poll, March 2006.

López Obrador is not worried that though the polls put him ahead in the presidential race, his party is lagging behind. He is calculating that once in office, the members of the PRI in Congress will be malleable.

THE REFORMS THAT NEVER CAME

The stature of a government is not measured by its intentions, but by the effectiveness of its actions. This is a maxim as old as the craft of politics itself, and also the corollary of the term that is coming to an end: a government confused about its objectives and the instruments needed to achieve them, a handful of good intentions with no *de facto* possibilities.

The story of President Vicente Fox's administration would be different if from the beginning he had been aware of the significance of governing with a congressional minority. We know that a large part of the plans and projects of the so-called "government of change" was tied to forging a stable majority coalition in Congress.

The options were on the table from the beginning: either you renounced puritanism, those foundational aspirations, and sought a major alliance with the reformist wing of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) —that same group that Fox's forces had defeated at the ballot box but that had worked for the previous two terms on economic reforms— or you threw everything into destroying what remained of the old regime, including the PRI itself.

What happened was neither one nor the other. At the end of the term, the president neither forged an alliance nor has he been able to pass the legislative reforms in fiscal, energy and labor matters that he wanted. His party did not advance one centimeter in Congress or in the different states, and in the current race for Los Pinos, the National Action Party (PAN) is lagging behind.

NO NEGOTIATOR IN SIGHT

Up until now, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) is the most serious hopeful in the presidential race. All the polls consistently put him at least 10 points ahead of his closest adversary; but in legislative terms, López Obrador could be a weaker president than Vicente Fox.

The first reason is that his party would only get 26 percent of the seats in Congress, while the remainder of the ones won by the coalition supporting his candidacy would be distributed between the Labor Party (PT) and Convergence.

The second reason is that the experience of Mexico City's Legislative Assembly does not speak highly of AMLO because during the second half of his term as mayor, he and his Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), making legitimate use of their majority, steamrollered the PAN, PRI and Green Party of Mexico (PVEM) caucuses on innumerable occasions. That was the only way they could get their most emblematic programs passed.

López Obrador, in contrast with Vicente Fox, probably knows how to negotiate with Congress and has better political operatives. But we should not forget that any negotiation is based on strength; that is, you can only negotiate as well as your weight allows. López Obrador would be dealing with a Congress where he had a minority, with only six governors out of 32 from his party, and only 13 percent of the country's city halls in hands of the PRD.

In the case of the PAN and the PRI, things are even more complicated.

For Felipe Calderón and the PAN, the most obvious problem is their already proven inability to build alliances in Congress.

Clearly, if the PAN won the presidency, it would once again have to seek a negotiation with the PRI because the liberal agenda Felipe Calderón has under his arm has no place in the PRD. But the future of that project is subject to several conditions.

The first is that Calderón Hinojosa would not have the very high popular support Vicente Fox started out his administration with because his election would not be a novelty, or alternation in office or end the old regime. As the scenario is unfolding, Felipe Calderón would also not have an easy win like the current president did, much less Fox's charisma that has helped him weather constant mistakes.

We should also not forget that Felipe Calderón was a central actor in Vicente Fox's first legislative defeats. As leader of the PAN congressional caucus, he did not wish to, or could not, make sure some of the president's bills got passed, bills that despite resistances, never faced a legislature as hostile as this one. It was in this first period of the term when conditions existed to further these reforms; in the second half, they just stagnated.

The PRI and its candidate have few options. Stuck in third place in the polls, they are facing a scenario in which the PRI would have the smallest congressional caucus in its entire history. PRI members are used to negotiating from strength in their own interests, but without that, negotiation is impossible.

If they once again lose the presidency, as political animals used to power, it will be very difficult for PRI members to adapt to the new conditions. If they have survived Vicente Fox it has been more because of his mistakes than their successes.

Scattered, anxious about their future and facing an open door, they will seek refuge in the PRD. That is perhaps the reason why López Obrador is not worried about the fact that though the polls give him 39 percent of voter's support, their forecasts only give his party 26 percent of the seats. He is calculating that once in office, PRI congresspersons will be malleable, willing to be convinced and susceptible to pressure. VM

Mexico 2006 Scenarios of Competition[1]

Jorge Alcocer V.*
Armando Robinson Álamo**

Sandra Perdomo/Cuartoscuro

In July 2005, issue 149 of the magazine *Voz y Voto* (The Right to Speak and Vote) published the first version of the prospective model for Mexico's 2006 presidential elections it has been developing for several years with the Center for Studies for an Alternative National Project. It dealt with the trends derived from each party's vote counts from 1994 to 2003 and the surveys produced by the main polling firms and the media.

The second exercise, published in this article, incorporates local elections from 1994 to 2005 and polling data up until the December 2005 to January 2006 Christmas "truce of silence", when the three largest parties' presidential candidates had already been nominated. In contrast with the first exercise, we now incorporate factors that seek to reflect each presidential candidate's possible impact on overall party trends and one other important element: the

* Editor-in-Chief of *Voz y Voto* magazine.
** Researcher at the Center for Studies for an Alternative National Project (CEPNA).

two electoral coalitions approved by the Federal Electoral Institute. In this sense, the prospects for Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador were calculated on the basis of the historic voting record of the parties that form the "Alliance for the Welfare of All" coalition (the PRD, the Workers Party [PT] and Convergence); the same procedure was followed for the "Alliance for Mexico" coalition, made up of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM).

In the last two presidential elections (1994 and 2000) increased party competition during the campaigns did not change opinions about who the probable winner would be.[2] But, in the current campaign, which will end with the balloting on July 2 this year, it has become commonplace to say, with no proof whatsoever, that any of the three main candidates could win the presidency for the term beginning December 1, 2006 and ending November 30, 2012. This idea is accompanied by a prediction that the electorate will divide into three practically equal parts. "Whoever wins the 2006 presidential elections," say the futurologists, "will win by a maximum of one percent." If, as is also anticipated, at least 50 percent of the 35 million registered voters go to the polls, one percent would mean a win by 350,000 votes.[3]

These kinds of predictions and figures have been the basis for constructing catastrophic scenarios for Mexico, including possible conflicts after the elections in which one or more of the defeated candidates could refuse to recognize the victor.

In this article, we intend to present empirical evidence that points to other, less extreme scenarios without arguing that the conflict could not arise because the possibility of its occurring and its intensity is inversely proportional to the size of the difference between the first and second places in the balloting.

Our central hypothesis is that nothing indicates that the most probable outcome of the next presidential elections is the vote being equally divided among the three main contenders.

The Party System

The current party system is made up of eight national organizations registered with the electoral authorities.[4] By law, only national political parties can register candidates for federal election. There is no place, therefore, for independent candidates or for other non-registered organizations to run candidates.

However, under federal law, two national electoral coalitions have been registered that have fielded common candidates for all elected posts.[5] There are five presidential hopefuls for 2006, then: Roberto Madrazo Pintado for the coalition "Alliance for Mexico"; Andrés Manuel López Obrador for the "Alliance for the Welfare of All"; and the three candidates for the parties with no coalition, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa for the PAN, Patricia Mercado for Alternative and Roberto Campa for New Alliance.

This means that there are three central contenders and two marginal ones (those fielded by the two newly registered parties, whose main challenge is to get enough votes to maintain their registration and rights, at least two percent of the national vote each). Based on prior federal election results, we can predict that together, the two newly registered parties will get between three and four percent of the vote. Therefore, between 96 and 97 percent of the votes will be distributed among the main contenders.

If we pay heed to popular thinking, divvying up the vote into three nearly equal parts would mean that the winner would get 33 percent of the votes, the runner-up, 32 percent and the candidate to come in third, 31 percent. Many more combinations could be used, but let us use this one, which illustrates the consequences of there being a one-point difference between each contender.

At the time this article was written, no poll in Mexico predicted this. But the most important fact is that there is no prior empirical evidence to back up this hypothetical result. That is, we have no proof that the electorate would behave dividing its votes in three almost equal parts. What is more, we

do not even know of a case in which the winner and the runner-up in a presidential election had almost equal vote counts.

What the historical data from the 1988, 1994 and 2000 presidential elections show is a distribution of votes between the two main contenders with a significant advantage for the victor, leaving the party in third place with a high vote count, but not nearly as much as the first and second places.[6] The results of the 1991, 1997 and 2003 mid-term elections confirm this trend.[7] In addition, the vote distribution in the many gubernatorial elections held during this period confirms the model of competition between two parties, with a third left far behind. In several cases of hotly contested state elections, the difference between the winner and the runner-up was minimal (Tabasco, Colima, Veracruz, Sinaloa, Tlaxcala, Zacatecas, Sonora and Mexico City's Federal District).

All this makes it possible to put forward the following three facts:

1. The system of competition, which seems to be multi-party, is in reality bi-polar, with a third party left way behind and two or more small, marginal parties. This is the case both on a national and a state level.
2. The PRI continues to be the only party with a national presence. Although the PAN has grown significantly in recent years, it continues to get very few votes in several states of Mexico's South-southwest.
3. From its foundation in 1990 until 2003, the PRD has never gotten more than 25 percent of the national vote in federal elections, and its strength is concentrated in only a few states (Mexico City, Michoacán, Zacatecas, Baja California Sur and Guerrero). Its electoral weakness in central, northern and Pacific-north states is a constant.

The system of competition, which seems to be multi-party, is in reality bi-polar, with a third party left way behind and two or more small, marginal parties. This is the case both on a national and a state level.

In the *Voz y Voto* issue mentioned at the beginning of this article, we offered scenarios designed on the basis of the highest percentages achieved by each of the three large parties in federal and state elections between 1994 and 2003. What we obtained was revealing, although contrary to widespread, prevalent public opinion in Mexico: if in 2006, the PRD and its presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, repeated the party's best historic vote count state by state, they would come in in third place on July 2. A later study by the Consulta Mitofsky polling firm came up with the same results.[8]

Naturally, it is possible that López Obrador's popularity, which has shown up in the polls for months now, will make it possible to turn around the decision of more than six million citizens who have never voted for the PRD, to the point of giving him 33 percent or more of the national vote. The fact that Vicente Fox achieved this turnaround in 2000 argues in favor of this scenario: if it happened once, it can happen again.

In 2000, when Fox (the PAN-PVEM candidate) won the presidency, his party, the PAN, had already approached 10 million votes in the previous presidential election. It also sat in the governor's seat in seven states nationwide and held more than half the city halls of the country's most populated municipalities. In contrast, in 2006, the PRD has gotten less than 15 percent of the vote in more than two-thirds of the states, including some of the most modern, populated ones like Nuevo León, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Baja California, Sonora, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Puebla and Guanajuato. In the state with the largest number of registered voters, the State of Mexico, in the 2005 local elections, the PRD came in a distant third. In the 2000 presidential elections, the PRD candidate, supported by other smaller parties, received a little over six million votes.

In summary, without totally discarding a possible turn-around in preferences and voting by millions of Mexicans, we want to warn about the strength of prior trends which, without being inescapable, do seem a sign indicating what could happen in Mexico on July 2, 2006.

SCENARIOS

In 1991 we published the first results of our prospective model which, with the passage of time and the very diverse

changes that have come about since then, has been strengthened and perfected.[9] Thanks to advances in democracy that make reliable results possible, to generalized use and the spread of polling and to advances in technology, we now are able to create numerical simulations of the results of practically any federal or state election in Mexico.

The model's methodological bases can be consulted in issue 149 of the magazine *Voz y Voto*. We would only like to state that for the following scenarios, we have considered previous federal and state election results as a first factor of importance, so that the dominant element in this exercise is voters' inertia. National polls about voters' intentions for 2006 carried out or published by Mexico's most prestigious companies and media are part of the data incorporated into the model. To consider the effect of having created the two coalitions, we added together the historic results of the PRI and the PVEM, and those of the PRD with those of the PT and Convergence. We have also factored in "subjective" issues that, though supported by prior results, are very optimistic: we are supposing that both the PAN and the PRD would have a very high possibility of repeating in July 2006 their best historic percentage from the years 1994 to 2003 and that, in addition, in some states, the PRD would enjoy a plus derived from its presidential candidate's charisma.

Let us examine the model's results, starting with the most favorable for the "Alliance for the Welfare of All," made up of the PRD, PT and Convergence, headed up by López Obrador.

It is clear that, even supposing that this coalition maximizes its results state by state and granting it its additional advantage because of its candidate's popularity in states like Mexico, Guerrero, Tlaxcala, Tabasco and Yucatán, the highest probable vote count would be 33.2 percent, with its lowest at 31.4 percent and the intermediate estimation at 32.3 percent. But even in the most favorable scenario for the PRD, these numbers are lower than what the PRI would get. Even if the PRD registered the highest possible number of votes, it would be lower than the PRI's lowest projected vote count of 35.8 percent. This means that if the inertia of the past predominates, the PRD would come in second, pushing the PAN into third place. It should be pointed out that in this scenario, the difference between the winner and the runner-up might be minimal, opening the door to a possible post-electoral conflict.

In the second scenario, we have eliminated the subjective factors favorable to the PRD, maintaining only its current trend. The other difference is that in this second scenario, using only the trend of inertia, we suppose that it was the PAN and its candidate that achieved their best results, leaving out of the equation the coalition with the PVEM for the elections between 1993 and 2003. We also suppose that the PRI will perform exactly as its inertia indicates.

In this scenario, the possibility of a win for Felipe Calderón and the PAN is established in a single hypothesis: the PAN would get its maximum number of votes (38.3 percent) and the PRI would get its minimum (38 percent), with a bare 0.3 percent difference. However, if the PAN and the PRI both got their minimum number of votes (36.1 percent and 38 percent respectively), the PRI would come out the winner. The PRD would break the 20-percent barrier, but even if it did its absolute best (22.7 percent), it would still be 10 percentage points below the PAN or the PRI, whichever of the two secured the victory.

In the third scenario, we have given the PRI the advantage, supposing that, in alliance with the Greens, in 2006 it will be able to achieve the best cumulative result reached in the last two federal elections.

In this scenario, the PRI would win by a comfortable margin, beating the PAN in any of the possible combinations. As is clear, if the PRI achieved its maximum result of 40.8 percent and the PAN ended up with 33.6 percent, its minimum, there would be a seven-point difference. In the inverse situation, if the PRI got its minimum and the PAN its maximum, the PRI would still have a four-point advantage over the PAN. The PRD vote would be between 23 and 25 percent, confirming the positive effect of its presidential candidate on its vote count.

Despite its defeat in the 2000 presidential elections, the PRI has consistently been the party with the highest vote in state elections since then and in the 2003 mid-term elections.

CONCLUSIONS

In our first scenario, inertia seems to predominate over charisma and subjectivity. Even if López Obrador and the "Alliance for the Welfare of All" are given the plus that the polls for the last year gives them, they would come in second, with the PRI coming out on top, although possibly in a close race. The PAN would pay the price of the polarization between its rivals and would come in third.

In the second scenario, the PAN would maximize its possibilities of entering into frank competition with the "Alliance for Mexico" coalition, which includes its erstwhile ally, now a competitor, the PVEM, calculated to have contributed four percentage points to Fox's vote count in the 2000 presidential elections. The PRD would come in third, several points behind the winner and runner-up.

In the third scenario, the PRI would capitalize on its recent electoral history and its alliance with the PVEM, coming out the winner by a considerable margin. In this case, competition for second place would be heavy, although the model indicates that the PRI's strength would have more damaging collateral effects for the PRD than for the PAN, explained by the existence of an important segment of voters whose preferences include either of these two parties. In other words, the PRI and the PRD are fervently competing for a group of voters whose first choice is their rejection of the PAN.

We would like to re-emphasize our initial warning: the scenarios presented here are only statistical prospective exercises. They are not predictions, much less auguries or prophesies. The strength of the PRI in the three scenarios can be explained by the importance in the model of each party's vote counts in the recent past. It should be remembered that despite its defeat in the 2000 presidential elections, the PRI has consistently been the party with the highest vote in state elections since then and in the 2003 mid-term elections. For the same reason, the PAN and the PRD, even with the optimistic suppositions we have incorporated to arrive at their best scenarios, are negatively affected by their specific recent electoral histories.

The PAN is hard hit by its poor results in several states in Mexico's South-Southeast, like Oaxaca, Guerrero and Tabasco. During the five years it has occupied the presidency, it has seen a lower than 10-percent vote count in several states, which has not happened to the PRI as an opposition party.

The PRD is limited by the inertia of its structural weakness in almost all of the North and in a good part of Central Mexico. It seems only remotely possible that it go from under 10 percent of the vote in states like Nuevo León and Coahuila, Baja California and Guanajuato to break the 30-percent barrier. If we add that in 15 of the 32 states in 2003, the PRD got less than 15 percent of the vote, the difficulties it faces in aspiring to win the July 2006 presidential elections, even with a coalition, become understandable.

> It is possible that López Obrador's popularity will make it possible to turn around the decision of more than six million citizens who have never voted for the PRD.

Heavy electoral competition seems unavoidable, with three parties occupying center stage and capturing most of the votes, barely leaving open the possibility for the two new parties that will have to compete alone. But tripartisan competition does not mechanically lead to divvying up the vote equally three ways with only a minimum lead for the winner. Only in the scenario in which the PRD and the PAN do their best is this likely, but in both cases with the PRI as the competing party.

Finally, it should be pointed out that given these suppositions and considerations, in no case does the PRI come in third, and therefore, no scenario makes the most heated competition between the PAN and the PRD.

The prospective model confirms the possibility of a change in the previous trends that had been traced in the months before the 2006 electoral process began. While Andrés Manuel López Obrador invigorates the PRD's ability to compete and Felipe Calderón's candidacy has given the PAN's expectations new life, the PRI's strength is almost exclusively based on its national presence, its more than tempered structure and its electoral recovery since 2001.

The aforementioned trends and scenarios are not immutable; as the competition advances and the campaigns

unfold, future polls will reveal the variations in voters' preferences. VM

NOTES

[1] With slight style changes, this article was published in the February 2006 issue of the Mexico City-based magazine *Voz y Voto* (The Right to Speak and Vote).

[2] In 1994, the PRI maintained its advantage in the presidential election during the entire campaign, while in 2000, even though polling gave the advantage to Vicente Fox from the National Action Party (PAN), most believed that the winner would be the PRI candidate.

[3] In 1994, the PRI candidate beat his closest competitor by more than seven million votes. In 2000, Vicente Fox beat the PRI candidate by more than 2.4 million votes and the PRD candidate by more than 9 million votes.

[4] The PAN, PRI, PRD, PVEM, PT, Convergence, Social Democratic and Peasant Alternative and New Alliance. The last two were officially registered in 2005 and electoral legislation forbids them from making alliances.

[5] The PRI and the PVEM and the PRD with the PT and Convergence, which, in addition to a presidential hopeful, must field common candidates for deputies and senators.

[6] In 1988, even given all the reservations people have about official figures, the real competition was between the PRI and the multiparty coalition that backed Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, leaving the PAN and its presidential candidate in third place. In 1994 and 2000, the PRD ended up in third place with Cárdenas again as candidate.

[7] In 1997 the PRD and the PAN received practically the same number of votes and the PRI emerged the victor. In 2000 and 2003, in the elections for federal deputies, the PRI continued in first place, followed by the PAN, with the PRD coming in third. In 2000, the PAN beat the PRI in the presidential elections, but not in the balloting for deputies and senators, which only reinforces the expectation that in 2006 none of the parties will achieve an absolute majority in Congress.

[8] "Votos duros y potenciales, rumbo al 2006" at www.consulta.com, Consulta Mitofsky's website.

[9] The first exercise of the prospective model for electoral results for a federal election, with the same methodological framework as we have produced today, was published in Mexico City's *Nexos* magazine in August 1991.

METHODOLOGY

When voters deposit their ballots in the ballot box, they are supporting a candidate. Pollsters and electoral analysts aspire to knowing as precisely as possible how voters intend to vote before the election. Given the practical impossibility of actually knowing what those intentions are, it is increasingly important to design electoral models that, although they simplify real processes, reflect the essential aspects of voters' behavior and thus explain rationally and methodically the possible way the vote will go in the immediate future.

The numerical simulation model used in this analysis is based on the historic information available about federal and state electoral results and voters' intentions and their acceptance or rejection of candidates shown more recently by polling. This makes it possible to construct a probabilistic distribution function, with its mean value and standard deviation for each party, defined as a set of voters who vote for a specific political party, according to the desired level of aggregation, by municipality, district, state or nationwide, thus defining what we will call the "elector" of the process.

The next step is to hold a virtual election. To do this, through a numerical simulation method, each "elector" decides randomly, but within the range of possibilities that defines the mathematical function that identifies him/her, whom he/she will vote for. By adding up all the votes, we obtain the result of this virtual election. That is the first step, although it is insufficient.

By design and for statistical purposes, we must generate not a value, but a new distribution function capable of defining the most probable scenario for the election under examination. This means that it is inevitable that we carry out as many virtual elections as necessary to achieve statistical validity. The final result is not a single value, but a set of intervals of values defined by the statistical margin of error, among which the most probable is picked, that is, the one in which the results of each of the virtual elections has occurred most frequently. The scenarios laid out are constructed using these most probable intervals that result from the hypotheses considered at the beginning of the analysis.

Contemporary Politics In Mexico and the U.S.
Shifting Balances of Authority

John Burstein W.*

Larry Downing/Reuters

The U.S. Supreme Court Justices.

Side by side, Mexico and the United States are X-raying the heart of their political systems, the former through presidential elections, and the latter through renewal of the Supreme Court. They are redefining political authority in each case. The health of each affects the other.

It is easy to make the mistake of drawing parallels between the presidencies of the two countries. Indeed, Mexico and the U.S. have the same skeletal structure —executive, legislature, judiciary— less by chance, or even shared cause, than as a now historic curiosity: the anti-monarchic political elite in nineteenth-century Mexico was inspired by the liberal democratic republic, as a sort of "American" (writ-large) initiative. Naturally, the Mexican model was more presidentialist, or French (even when emerging from French domination) while the U.S. model —for all the francophilia of the founders— was cut on an English pattern: a traditional but independent justice system being the best prophylactic for kingly overreach.

Jumping to 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court and the Mexican presidency are the institutions in which political authority arguably centers. Normally, the importance of the courts in U.S.

* President of the Mexican development and rights organization Forum for Sustainable Development.

politics goes unnoticed because of the attention paid to the country's electoral contests. But the comparison is uniquely perceptible, though as fleeting as a comet, because of the present convergence of the Mexican political scene, revved up around the July presidential election, and the U.S. political debate focused on the watershed shift in the Supreme Court due to two new appointments.

The X-ray of authority has to see through power. Power, in either of its forms —a whip or a gift— is basically material and works by way of a mechanical kind of cause and effect. Political authority, like gravity, is as hard to see as it is easy to feel. Authority is the political force which convinces others based on principles, their just application and their interpretation via leadership. Authority and power finally rely on each other, and the whole endeavor of politics is to combine the two —authoritative power/ powerful authority— like fizzy-water in danger of going flat.

Authority necessarily comes with a pedigree, always referring back to its origins, which are mythical to some degree. All societies depend on origin-myths and the two countries at hand share very dissimilar *revolutions* as authoritative beginnings of the respective Mexican and U.S. republics. The spirit of the U.S. revolution —more distant— is alive in the Constitution of 1791. In U.S. culture, it is only slightly less sacred than the Ten Commandments and more than a little related.

The U.S. Constitution, of course, establishes the Supreme Court as the final arbiter of legality, sufficiently grand for at least one president, William Howard Taft, to have left the White House at the foot of Capitol Hill and climbed to a place on the bench of the Supreme Court, located on the top of the Hill. The synecdochic terminology in U.S. parlance speaks for itself: those who belong to the highest court no longer receive the title of "judge", but "justice" itself. Supreme Court justices come closest to wearing the mantle of the founders, and their charge is to interpret the Constitution, even in situations now unimaginable to those founding fathers. (The complexions and genders seen among the justices today help maintain the authority of the Court far more than if they had continued to resemble the now-interred Northern European founding fathers.)

The synecdochic terminology in U.S. parlance speaks for itself: those who belong to the highest court no longer receive the title of "judge", but "justice" itself.

Had this vision of the institution been formed in Mexico, the justices might have worn lively masks in the manner of the British's flamboyant wigs rather than pastoral black. Indeed, the justices' mandate is more rabbinical —exegetic— than priestly (exhortatory). But in the popular mind, the function of exculpation and punishment can only be prophetic.

Mexico

Mexico's 1917 Constitution shines, of course, with a very different mythical light, cast by the more recent Mexican Revolution, with its inspired linking of social to political justice. But even though the Zapata-Villa popular forces walked away from the seat of power, thus forever constituting a certain extra-institutional authority, the Constitution was a moment of conceptual inspiration and consensual foundation, with the most affirming view of social-economic rights to this day.

The Mexican Constitution, amended hundreds of times by a weak legislature, has lost much of its authoritative power; far from improving the vision of the document, the modifications feel more like hundreds of cuts and hundreds of bandages. The Constitution's authority became secondary to the government's managing power, first to cement the peace after 1920, and then to establish institutions; it was the presidentialist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which held sway. Authority oscillated within this dyad of president and party in a diminishing shuffle, to the point that Vicente Fox and the National Action Party (PAN) could triumph in 2000.

In contrast to the U.S., the Mexican Supreme Court has never been either roof or platform for Mexico's visionary leaders. The Mexican judiciary suffers from low prestige. The political class was more likely to train as engineers, more recently as economists or financiers, than as lawyers.

The Mexican soft —very soft— revolution of 2000 overcame the PRI's authority-less authoritarianism by inaugurating a non-party man as president whom even the United States could not feel threatened by. Now that Washington and, not less importantly, Mexico's political class have shed their respective instinctive jitters, in 2006 the Mexican people seem disposed to opt for insisting on the creation of a social, in

addition to liberal, democracy as the urgent change needed. Can the electoral process in today's political context achieve this end?

The most important, if least considered, query is: On what authority?

1. The Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) was the jewel in the crown of Mexico's late twentieth-century democratization process; but it is already losing some of its gleam. The political parties, who name IFE members, face their own severe crisis of authority. Now not even all the parties deign to participate, naming their representatives.
2. Catholic Church pronouncements, almost quaintly, are the stuff of the political sections of even the leftist press, signifying more anti-clericalism's demise than religious authority;
3. The human rights ombudsmen's bark belies the fact that their recommendations have no teeth;
4. The non-governmental sectors (unions, civil society, private enterprise) have the authority of the weak.
5. The current president seems to have experimented with the alchemy of making authority out of popularity; he lost both.

In this set of circumstances, "populism" is the only source of authority to which we can resort. "We the people" is the ultimate source of all authority. Either a populist leader will embody authority or the call eventually will be heeded for a new Constitution.

THE U.S.

As it is the least powerful, so the Supreme Court is the most authoritative institution in the U.S. political system. Its grandeur of mission is joined to its workaday hegemony in —as everyone knows— the "most litigious society in the world."

The Supreme Court —unlike the other branches of the federal government— is not elected by the people. The post, for life, of a Supreme Court justice, nominated by the president and approved by the Senate, is based on distilled popular wisdom. But democratic deliberation is again brought into play: the Supreme Court is a synod of nine, and the odd-numbered body, far from claiming to define or discover absolute truth or justice, recognizes the importance of dissenting positions, which are made public and form part of the accumulating body of law under continual precedent-sensitive review. The public debate seeking justice, as ordered by the Constitution, is intended to go on and on. While veiled and recondite —as the Masonic-inspired designers wished— the interpretation of the law is part of the *political* process.

In 2006, the Mexican people seem disposed to opt for insisting on the creation of a social, in addition to liberal, democracy as the urgent change needed.

Today, the interpretation of the law is the most effective means of influencing the political process. With its own authority now greatly flagging, even the U.S. electoral system has had to resort to the judiciary's muscular authority for validation in the last elections. Of course expediency always dictates a certain collective inattention to the fine points of electoral democracy; that is when it enjoys sufficient authority. For example, whether John Kennedy won the presidential race of 1960 because of bigger spending, vote-rigging in Chicago, or Democratic acumen, in the American consciousness, he won! By contrast, in 2000, George W. Bush's victory in the Electoral College ballot occurred *in* the Supreme Court.

Naturally, there are long-term consequences for the system. The boost in authority that the Supreme Court lent the presidency results, simultaneously, in the diminishing of authority of the Supreme Court. The result is entropy of authority, and this deconstruction of authority is greatly hastened by an unprovoked war, and domestic defense priorities turning civil liberties upside down. There is a tidal change under way in U.S. affairs around the effort to re-authorize politics. The institutions are unlikely to fall prey to a coup; U.S. society has shifted direction various times without that need. Indeed, Franklin Delano Roosevelt accomplished a soft revolution around economic rights by merely packing the Supreme Court.

What would a Supreme Court-authorized soft revolution look like today? The project is, if anything, extremist, reinforcing *both* extremes: concentrate power in the president/ concentrate power in the localities (states and municipalities). As in Mexico, the tenor is, naturally, populist. Congress —the net loser here— is critiqued, or "de-authorized," for being rife with para-institutionalized privilege, and for having lost touch with the people, and their political culture —religious, enter-

prising. The political project, especially with the country on a long-term war footing, is best pursued through strong leadership, not in a debating society. That encapsulates the first extreme, of centralized power.

The other extreme is "anti-federalist" neo-regionalism. (The sentiment, mirrored in Mexico, curiously, is called "*federalismo.*") This movement channels sempiternal U.S. distrust and resentment of big government into a renewed confidence in not "small", but *local* government. The U.S. Civil War is the starting place. That war defined the primacy of the national project over a contradictory sub-regional one, based on the state's transformation of the status of male African-descendents from being property to being citizens. (Later African-descendent and other women were enfranchised.) But the political project of racial integration only gained clout in the second half of the twentieth century when the principle of the autonomy of the states failed to prevail over that of non-discrimination, when the Supreme Court used its supreme authority to set the tone for a new national culture, sparking "affirmative action" to compensate for historic discrimination and guarantee living above levels of misery. (This, in the U.S. lexicon is the "liberal" agenda, which today internationally is called "human rights".)

There was a secret, hardly discernible below the din of a loudly churning national economy. The national government had been an audacious proposal from the view point of framers whose identities were far more defined in terms of their local states only recently —and not entirely harmoniously— united. The constitutional basis for the increasingly Herculean project of the twentieth-century liberal social-economic construction balances in good measure on the fulcrum of the Constitution according the federal government the power to regulate "inter-state *commerce*."

Even for a nation whose consolidation has been built largely on its economic project, the inter-state commerce clause is confessedly an unsteady foundation on which to rest much of the federal government's authority. Conservative iconoclasts say as much.

A Supreme Court justice of this bent faces a dilemma. She represents the culmination of the Anglo-Saxon common law system, which is traditionalist, confident of carrying out justice by respecting the accumulation of wisdom through time. Justice is the product of a deliberative process; the system which requires that horizontal deliberation (among judges at the same time) be cross-referenced with vertical deliberation (between courts now and in the past) is more *authoritative*…if slower to change. But that same justice is simultaneously charged above all with strictly and dispassionately sticking to the text of the Constitution.

> With its recently changed political composition, the U.S. Supreme Court is quite certain to relegate its duty to precedent to second place, raising in its stead a direct interpretation of the original text.

That is the reason why U.S. liberals are conservative and U.S. conservatives are radicals these days. Democratic senators critically queried George Bush's Supreme Court nominees regarding their respect for precedent, while Republican senators hoped to hear free and daring thinking from John Roberts and Samuel Alito as exponents of "originalism." This doctrine is consonant with the times, being fundamentalist in nature. Beyond Reformation-like claims that justice-seekers should read the text far more than the commentaries, judicial "originalism" in the U.S. debate argues that the Supreme Court's mission is to voice the framers' "original intent." The bestowal of founder-like responsibilities, described above, leads to the faith that those bestowed be able to *reveal* the information on intent that is simply not assured by any recourse to reason.

The "Conservative Revolution" was the term favored by those passionate about cutting government economic redistribution commitments. Since its launch a quarter of a century ago, it has revealed itself to be nihilistic, based on the generic hope that busting the present system will bring about something better. A favorite conservative strategy has been to pressure social programs into bankruptcy, requiring their down-sizing or closure, for example.

But suddenly the great issues before the U.S. public today are more political than economic, as the nation is in war mode against a particularly elusive, foreign terrorism. Questions like how long the indigent should receive welfare have been replaced by whether non- and U.S. citizens imprisoned on a U.S. military base in Guantanamo, Cuba, are protected by the Constitution. For the federal government to assume its lean, militarist nature, it is argued that policies and

programs promoting economic and social rights must be decentralized, their determination left to the realm of once again newly autonomous states and localities. Particularly with its recently changed political composition, the Supreme Court is quite certain to relegate its duty to precedent to second place, raising in its stead a direct interpretation of the original text.

CONCLUSION

Coincidentally, Mexico and the United States are opening up new eras, recasting their political cultures. Crises of authority are the common denominator. In Mexico the authority of governmental institutions is severely depleted; the presidential candidates hope that they can reconstruct a state by virtue of their own election, read as direct authorization "by the people." In the U.S., the crisis will be acted out *within* the authoritative structure of the Supreme Court.

In both cases, governmental power has been reduced. Whether renewed from "below," popularly, or from "above," judicially, both national projects are marked by the search for a new injection of authority into governmental structures.

Mexico and the U.S. share another characteristic: each is extraordinarily inward looking, one out of overconfidence, the other out of a lack of confidence. Not withstanding its asymmetry in terms of power, the bilateral relationship is essential in terms of each country's struggle to imbue new authority into the state, including reordering the relations of relative authority among state institutions. The discourse used in the bilateral relationship centers on economics at the negotiating table and on sovereignty and internationally-defined rights from the balconies; it should focus attention on differing state reform in each country.

Instead, one take from Washington is that Mexico need only enjoy its trade libera(liza)tion, reinforced by a more efficient judiciary, and ensuing prosperity. That is the hold-over of an over-confident vision shared between the two political-economic elites in the 1990s. But by now, most Mexicans figure that whatever miracle the free trade agreement promised has occurred, and has left Mexico economically wanting. The political now has more sway than the economic in Mexico, too. The political fact —only made more obvious by the U.S. proposal to fence out Mexico— is that Mexico is essentially part of Latin America. That fact suggests that Mexico will ride the wave of Latin American neo-socialism.

In the case of Mexico, the bilateral relationship with the U.S. is a particularly important variable regarding the country's participation in Latin America's neo-socialist political renewal.

This neo-socialism has little to do with the Latin American version of socialism from the era of the capitalist-communist Cold War, which excelled as an expression of anti-(Northern)-imperialism. Today, even Hugo Chavez' Bolivarian socialism, if "anti-American" in a show of sympathy for the militarist nationalism of Castro's Cuba, is far more defined by its savvy and audacious investment of oil power across the continent in solidarity with a Latin American economy. Not a military general among them, the other Latin American socialist leaders authorized by elections in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile, are decidedly social democratic in their political economy. They are defining a reasoned nationalism/Latin American regionalism, a renewal or reauthorization of previously authoritarian governmental institutions, and they understand that the first order of economic policy today must be to close the gap between rich and poor.

But in the case of Mexico, the bilateral relationship with the U.S. is a particularly important variable regarding the country's participation in neo-socialist political renewal. And the nature of that bilateral relationship will be defined by how the radical conservative agenda plays out in the United States. If these U.S. radicals achieve the new balance of authority between the extremes of a defense-mandated, lean federal government and local governments empowered with social and development policy, the complex re-authorizing of the U.S. state could favor Mexico's own experimentation with neo-socialist re-authorization of its state. That assumes that the focus of U.S. politics is on the domestic, with an appreciation for international plurality. Should, on the other hand, the powers of a warring Washington, freed of draining debates on social and development policy, eclipse U.S. neo-regionalism, Mexico, recast as a possible beachhead for terrorists, even perceived as clad in neo-socialist guise, is unlikely to enjoy a field of action wide enough to re-authorize its state. VM

The Fence
Rebordering the Border

Mónica Verea*

Stringer/Reuters

The panic caused by the threat of fencing in even more the already "rebordered border" has had a terrible effect among Mexicans and sparked a loud debate in the United States.[1] Mounting border violence and the increase in the number of deaths of our compatriots who try to cross the border, recent incursions across the border by people who look like Mexican military personnel and the shameful incident involving the expulsion of 16 Cubans from Mexico City's María Isabel Sheraton Hotel under U.S. Treasury Department orders to enforce the Helms-Burton Act in Mexican territory are just a few examples of the many problems that continually tense bilateral relations between Mexico and the United States and that require not only practical solutions, but diplomatic measures.[2]

In the 12 years the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been in effect, important economic interaction and dynamic trade and investment have been generated, spurring the creation of new businesses and jobs. From 1994 to 2005, interdependence between the two countries grew significantly because of the broad technically sophisticated social networks that have increasingly rooted themselves in both labor markets, the huge remittances sent to Mexico from the U.S. (by 2005 they

* Researcher and former director of the CISAN. mverea@servidor.unam.mx

There were great expectations that NAFTA would reduce the migration of Mexicans to the United States. However, the flow of migrants actually rose substantially.

came to almost U.S.$20 billion), but, above all, due to the important wage differentials that reached a ratio of up to one to ten.

There were great expectations that NAFTA would reduce the migration of Mexicans to the United States. However, not only did this not happen, but the flow of migrants actually rose substantially.[3] During those years, policy discussions about border control, labor mobility and economic integration of Mexico and the United States have been separate. The logic of security imposed itself on the recognition that migration between the two countries is a function of the *de facto* labor markets based on the supply and demand of labor.

Since the terrorist attacks, Mexico has been collaborating with the United States to establish accords that would reinforce security on our shared border, an interminable source of tension between both countries. Today, different immigration reform bills are under discussion, including proposals that go from building almost 700 miles of fencing along the 1,920-mile border, which in recent years has already been laced with high-tech surveillance gadgetry, to setting up guest-worker programs and undocumented worker regularization plans, all proposals that deserve the attention of our government officials and the Mexican public, given their transcendental impact.

THE FENCE BILL

The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR4437), better known as the Sensenbrenner Bill after its sponsor James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, passed the House 239 to 182 in December 2005. The bill, pending Senate passage, authorizes the construction of a double fence with ditches mainly along the Arizona-Sonora border, where migration flows are larger since traditional crossing points through California and Texas have been closed. Undocumented migrants will be considered criminals and will be disqualified for obtaining a temporary work visa or qualifying for immigrant status. That is, illegal crossing would go from being a misdemeanor to a felony, incurring jail time.[4] Inspired in the Clear Act, which turns all policemen into immigration officials,[5] any foreigner can be detained and required to prove his or her legal status, and, if he/she does not do so, arrested.[6]

In addition, this law mandates employers to verify the authenticity of their employees' documents. To do so, they must send copies to Homeland Security, which has three days to notify them whether the documents are authentic or not.[7] It also stipulates that any company that hires an undocumented worker can be fined up to U.S.$25,000.[8] These sanctions are much more rigid than those imposed by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which includes lower fines and does not require employers to demonstrate the authenticity of migratory documents displayed by employees when hired.[9] That is, while the border is over-policed, the workplace has been practically un-policed given that employers have tended to dislike the provision for penalties against them.

The Sensenbrenner Bill is a clear manifestation of the conservative, extreme right-wing movements that have zealously emerged since the 2001 terrorist attacks. The fear of the "other", the "unknown" and, in general, the fear of insecurity has led these conservative citizens to greater isolationism and xenophobia. They see a very porous southern border penetrated by everything from drug trafficking gangs to what they call terrorists under the cover of illegals.[10] However, these same citizens continue to hire undocumented Mexicans in their labor market. While many Democrats in the United States want to curb the inflow of foreign goods, many Republicans want to curb that of foreigners. The proposed fence shows U.S. isolationist feelings: allowing fewer foreigners in their country.[11]

THE "REBORDERIZATION" PROCESS

The climate created by the terrorist attacks is similar to the one prevalent in the early 1990s. At that time, people thought undocumented immigration was out of control and that what was required was fostering a "reborderization" process to dampen anxiety. To that end, costly border operations were approved and one of the most restrictive laws in the history of U.S. immigration was passed, the Illegal Im-

migration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA).

From 1992 to 2005, the number of border patrol agents skyrocketed from 2,500 to 11,200.[12] The budget for reinforcing the southern border quadrupled in 12 years, jumping from U.S.$1 billion to more than U.S.$4 billion, accompanied by an increase in detentions and human rights violations.[13] As controls increased, the number of deaths mounted.[14]

This brutal reinforcement of security after the terrorist attacks has brought about the "securitization" of the bilateral agenda.[15] For three years after 9/11, immigration was put on the back burner and the only discussion was about how to strengthen weakened security. The Fox administration stopped pressuring for a migratory accord, thinking that the only way to advance on this issue was to establish accords about security in the hopes that eventually, at least part of the "enchilada" could be negotiated. Mexico's government also stopped insisting on the tri-laterlization of a project that would include labor mobility or a NAFTA-Plus. In that vein, then, several agreements aimed at strengthening security mechanisms were signed. One of the most important initiatives has been the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America. Despite these agreements, both organized crime in Mexico and border violence have increased significantly, indicating just how urgent it is that they be addressed and immediate action taken.

Contrary to the "reborderization policy," market forces established their own rules: after the 1990s U.S. economic boom, U.S. employers stepped up their custom of hiring low-skilled and highly-skilled workers in several sectors of the economy, registering important changes in traditional migratory patterns, moving away from mainly male, agricultural, temporary migration to a family-based, multi-sectoral, multi-spacial, and, above all, more permanent migration.[16]

Despite the process of "reborderization," a large number of foreigners in general and Mexicans in particular enter the U.S. annually. From 1994 to 2004, about one million immigrants a year were admitted, among them an average of 150,000 Mexicans. Almost 600,000 legal residents were naturalized, an average of 100,000 of them Mexicans. And, in 2004, 630,000 temporary workers entered the country, 113,000 of them Mexicans who obtained various kinds of visas to work in different sectors of the labor market. These figures do not include the nearly 5.5 million undocumented workers living in the United States and the nearly 400,000 who enter yearly.

Foreign Guest Worker Programs And Regularization Bills

To counteract the Sensenbrenner Bill, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania) introduced a draft immigration bill on February 27, 2006. The bill proposes allowing employed illegal aliens to remain in the United States indefinitely but requiring them to return home before applying for citizenship. It also proposes an unlimited foreign guest worker program that gives access to nearly all American jobs.[17] Specter's plan also includes reinforcing the border through better use of technology for those seeking to enter the country, just like the Sensenbrenner Bill. It would tighten deportation laws and would require employers to check the Social Security numbers of new employees against a computerized federal data base. Specter's draft plan calls for an annual increase in green cards to 290,000 and more visas for unskilled workers.

The Sensenbrenner Bill and other instruments are part of the process of "reborderization". By no means new, they are nonetheless much more brutal. While President Bush has toughened his position about migration and repeatedly come out for greater border control, he does not support building the fence. He is openly opposed to an amnesty because it would support "lawbreakers", but he recognizes the need to make labor available, and therefore supports a Federal Guest Workers Programm (FGWP).

In the midst of an increasingly conservative environment that wants to impose greater security measures, President Bush has attempted to convince Republicans and Democrats alike of the importance of reforming the immigration system. Nevertheless, he has been sensitive to pressures from businessmen who for years have expressed their traditional, insatiable appetite for hiring cheap, undocumented labor, whether because they find no likely candidates for certain jobs or because

While many Democrats in the United States want to curb the inflow of foreign goods, many Republicans want to curb that of foreigners. The proposed fence shows U.S. isolationist feelings: allowing fewer foreigners in their country.

it is a significantly cheaper and more easily exploitable work force than the domestic one, so they can remain competitive domestically and internationally.

It should be remembered that during President Bush's electoral campaign, he courted the Latino community by coming out in favor of a FGWP in January 2004. The "Bush Plan" was never sent to Congress for fear of it being rejected by the members of his own party, but he did send a signal about reviving the discussion on the issue. In addition to a reasonable increase in the number of visas issued annually, Bush supports the creation of a three-year FGWP, with the possibility of renewal. Since the president is opposed to an amnesty and is convinced of the temporary nature of migrants' stay in the U.S., he proposes that these employees be given credits toward their retirement as an incentive to return to their home countries.

The White House has been working with congresspersons from both parties to come to a consensus between its plan and other bills like the Cornyn-Kyl and the McCain-Kennedy bills.[18] The Cornyn-Kyl bill stipulates stiffer border control measures, but also the creation of a FGWP that would demand migrants return to their countries of origin once the authorized stay was over, as Senator Specter proposes. The McCain-Kennedy Bill is bipartisan and less restrictive than the other. It is similar to the unsuccessful Migratory Accord Mexico proposed in 2001 and includes some of President Bush's proposals. That is, at the same time that it puts forward an increase in border security and the fight against smuggling of individuals, it proposes a FGWP that would allow for hiring up to 400,000 people a year who would be considered "guests." The guests would have to work for four years and comply with a long list of prerequisites before obtaining permanent resident status.

The three bills have pro-business provisions that would guarantee a supply of foreign laborers, the aim of a host of businessmen. In order to bring 11 million undocumented aliens out of the shadows, the amnesty they propose is forward-looking, in contrast to the one established in 1986 by IRCA, which was backward-looking.

THE FENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

For better or worse, the issue of migration has once again become a matter of debate among Republican and Democratic leaders. The public is aware of the need to reform the immigration system and there is a willingness to discuss reforms that tend to both control border security and establish a kind of regularization that would satisfy the growing demand for foreign labor in the U.S., obtained by paying a fine for having entered and remained without immigration papers.

> Unfortunately, we are immersed in a presidential campaign in which the current administration, frustrated because it "migratized" the bilateral agenda, may not be willing to invest more effort in migratory relations.

The "reborderization policy," which contradicts the spirit of NAFTA, has not significantly deterred illegal crossings, but has prompted shifts in migration patterns. Continuing this virulent policy would probably prompt even more negative consequences, among them:

1. Shifts in the location and methods of entry, pushing migrants to cross at even more hazardous points.
2. A more permanent stay of Mexican undocumented immigrants, contrary to the spirit of migratory circularity, a consequence unforeseen by Americans, who like to play by the rules of "you work, then you leave."[19]
3. Strengthening the power of human traffickers who, the more the government reinforces the border, the more they charge for transporting undocumented migrants. In that sense, the Sensenbrenner Bill will end up being good business for smugglers.
4. Increasing the number of human rights and labor violations and, unfortunately, of deaths.

We hope that the Sensenbrenner Bill has little chance of passing the Senate since it is exaggerated, aggressive, un-NAFTA, unfriendly, and police-heavy. The Mexican government must invest time and effort in lobbying in favor of the McCain-Kennedy and Specter Bills and to discredit the Sensenbrenner Bill. The ideal situation would be to establish a well-defined lobbying campaign with concrete objectives to influence congressional leaders and policy makers. We must insist on legal access to the labor market through the issuance of more new temporary work visas, a regularization program that would eventually lead to naturalization. It is urgent that we emphasize the need to develop incentives for reestablishing circular migration, since one of the main problems of our towns, despite the large amounts of remittances sent by migrants

to support their families, is the absence of labor that has decided to migrate north and of productive projects to attract migrants to return to their places of origin.

Unfortunately, we are immersed in a presidential campaign in which the current administration, frustrated because it "migratized" the bilateral agenda, may not be willing to invest more effort in migratory relations without getting anything back but security agreements. Recent statements by different members of Mexican society about Mexico's being willing to discourage undocumented migration, without explaining how it would be done, is wishful thinking unless it is coercive or done through important investment in migrants' places of origin. It is difficult to establish a differentiated policy for those who go and those who stay. We must start from the premise that undocumented Mexican labor is an important piece of our nation's human capital that we are increasingly losing. Unfortunately, it seems that this will continue to be dealt with as a border control issue instead of a labor market regulation problem. VM

NOTES

[1] The author thanks Érika Veloz for her efficient technical support.

[2] The 1996 Helms-Burton Act prohibits U.S. individuals and institutions from providing services to Cuban citizens, even outside U.S. territory, in accordance with the terms of the U.S. economic embargo of the island.

[3] For more information, see Mónica Verea, "10 Years of NAFTA = Migration Plus," *Voices of Mexico* 70 (January-March 2005).

[4] Rachel L. Swarns, "Bill on Illegal Immigrant Aid Draws Fire," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2005, p. 24.

[5] This law mandates police, courts and prosecutors to identify, investigate, detain and/or arrest all immigrants without proper immigration papers in U.S. territory.

[6] Andrew Grove, "Keep America, America," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 26, 2006, p. A10.

[7] The proposal to speed up the process is to expand the data verification system from 5,000 to seven million employers over the next two years. "Bush and Congress: Action?" *Migration News* 13, no. 1 (January 2006) and <http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/comments.php?id=3155_0_2_0>; Kleibéel, Marcano, "Sensenbrenner pone en jaque a los empleadores," *Ponte al día* (Philadelphia), January 29, 2006 <http://www.pontealdia. com/article.php?article=20863&edition=292&shownav=1>

[8] That may explain why fines for hiring illegal immigrants can be as low as U.S.$275 per worker, and immigration officials acknowledge that businesses often negotiate fines downward. And why, after the INS raided onion fields in Georgia during the 1998 harvest, a senator and four members of the House of Representatives from that state sharply criticized the agency for hurting Georgia farmers. Eduardo Porter, "The Search for Illegal Immigrants Stops at the Workplace," *The New York Times*, March 5, 2006. Also at <http: //www.nytimes.com/2006/03/05/business/yourmoney/05view.html?_r=1&oref=slogin>

[9] For less than U.S.$50, immigrants can buy a set of fake documents —usually a Social Security card and green card, indicating permanent residency— to get a job. The fake ID's provide employers with crucial protection in the eyes of the law: companies can plausibly deny that they knew they were hiring people without legal permission to work. See Porter, op. cit.

[10] One of these groups is Let Freedom Ring, which compares the functionality of a fence along the border with Mexico to the one that Israel is building in the West Bank which, in their opinion is a proven mechanism for reducing terrorist attacks. See their project at www.weneedafence.com

[11] See "The Isolationism Temptation," *The Economist* 378, no. 8464, February 11, 2006.

[12] By 2006 there will be 12,600, of whom 10,000 are on the southern border. A proposed budget requests more than U.S.$458 million to add 1,500 border agents in fiscal year 2007. The Department of Homeland Security is about to begin a U.S.$35-million border security upgrade in the San Diego area. The money will be spent on new lights and on extending the triple-layered fence from nine to 14 miles, all the way into the Pacific Ocean.

[13] In 1994, 1,294,000 Mexicans were deported; in 2001, 1,744,000; and in 2004, 1,143,000. See Mónica Verea, "A 10 años del TLCAN = mayor migración," Enriqueta Cabrera, comp., *Moverse para mejorar: el reto de la migración mexicana*, at press.

[14] According to Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry, in 2005, 451 persons died from drowning, freezing, sunstroke or being run over in their attempts to cross the U.S. border.

[15] Several pieces of legislation were passed to tighten border security, like the USA Patriot Act, the US-Canada Smart Border Declaration of 2001, the US-Mexico Border Partnership Agreement of 2002, the Enhanced Border Security Act, the Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 and the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

[16] While in 1990, 58 percent of Mexican immigrants lived in California, in 2003, the figure dropped to 40 percent. Arizona doubled its rate from 3 to 6 percent in the same period, and the percentage of Mexicans residing outside the four traditional states doubled from 12 to 25 percent. Center for Strategic Studies, "Managing Mexican Migration to the United States: Recommendations for Policy Makers" (Washington, D.C.: CSIS-ITAM, April 2004).

[17] Those illegal aliens who entered the United States before January 4, 2004 and are currently unlawfully employed would be allowed to legalize their status and their families and stay indefinitely without first returning home.

[18] On May 26, Senators Cornyn and Kyl presented the Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act of 2005 before Congress. John McCain (R-Arizona) and Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), backed by Congressmen Jim Kolbe, Jeff Flake and Luis Gutiérrez, presented the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. For more information, see Mónica Verea Campos, "New U.S. Immigration Policies," *Voices of Mexico* 72 (July-September 2005).

[19] According to recent research, until before border operations began in the 1990s, 20 percent of migrants returned home after six months; in 1997, this figure had dropped to 15 percent; and by 2000, only seven percent followed a pattern of circulatory migration.

REVISTA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE MÉXICO

NÚM. 25 | MARZO 2006

NUEVA ÉPOCA

Tomás Segovia
La verdad ficticia

David Huerta
Poemas

José G. Moreno de Alba
Racismo lingüístico en Estados Unidos

Carmen Boullosa
Fragmento de novela

Adolfo Castañón
Sobre R.H. Moreno-Durán

Angelina Muñiz-Huberman
Pensar el teatro

Héctor Pérez Martínez
Texto inédito

Ignacio Solares
Sobre César Antonio Molina

Arnoldo Kraus
Palabras: refugio atemporal

Sandra Lorenzano
Balbuceo del lenguaje

Ignacio Trejo Fuentes
Mapa de Agustín Ramos

Juan Soriano

Palabras en el Premio Velázquez
Semblanza de Sealtiel Alatriste
Reportaje fotográfico de Ana Lorena Ochoa: Juan Soriano ante su obra

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTÓNOMA DE MÉXICO | $40.00 • ISSN 0185-1330 SUSCRIPCIONES | 55 50 58

Juan Soriano

The More You Contemplate, The Freer You Are

(1920-2006)

Jaime Moreno Villarreal*

Dove, 70 x 60 x 60 cm, 1991 (bronze).

Lupe Marín, 236 x 70 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas)
(Oaxaca Museum Collection).

I was looking at Juan Soriano's hands. As he talked, sitting in a straight-backed armchair, Juan rested them on his legs in an alert pose. Now that I look closely at a small bronze sculpture from the *Dafne* series (1997 and 2005), I am surprised at how his hand has modeled and smoothed each millimeter. *Dafne* represents a delicate woman-tree, whose head and arms are twisted like a single branch that ends in her breasts covered in front modestly by her hands. Juan would laugh at this description; he would wave his hands saying that that is what I see and that that's fine. Juan used to tell me that his hands were clumsy. I didn't believe him. Perhaps he was referring to a certain way he handled materials, that constant refinishing that discovers for us more the artist's feeling than his touch. Some of his most intimate works, like *Portrait of Diego de Mesa* (1948) or *Portrait of Marek* in ink (1977), reveal touches that are small strokes taken much further than the technical solution: they are paintings done with caresses.

One day I asked Juan about how his hands behaved when he was working.

"My hands work on their own. I don't even notice that there's a lapse between what I see, what I think and what I do. By contrast, there are times that it is very difficult for me to achieve a form and I might work on it ten times, a thousand times; do it, redo it, remake it, take it another way, until I get it the way I want it. But I can't tell you how I want it until it comes out of the material. Other times I work very fast; it almost frightens me, as though my hand were doing the thinking and not my head."

"Can you work with somebody watching you?"

"If someone is watching me, I have to grab my hand because it shakes and I can't control myself. And when I'm making a form and I hesitate, the tool falls to the floor. It happens to me all the time; I hesitate and hesitate, and when I am finally about to create the form, I break the brush or I break the pencil!"

* * *

Juan had the privilege of changing without needing to let himself be influenced. The changes of skin in his pictorial work are almost always notable as a sign of rebirth. He knew how to leave himself behind, once, twice, five times and radically. For example, his work from the 1950s, after his 1954 trip to Crete, which confirmed his modern quest of burning his ships behind him, is one of the most influential moments in Mexican twentieth century easel painting with works like *The Return to France* (1954), *Apollo and the Muses*

* Art critic.

The Return to France, 92 x 135 cm, 1954 (oil on canvas) (Modern Art Museum Collection).

He was a painter who opened up new terrain.
From his early youth he had declined to join the avant gardes,
much less their followers. He was very aware that copying
an international style led to parody.

The Memory, 80 x 45 x 26 cm, 1981 (bronze) (Juan Soriano and Marek Keller Foundation Collection).

"My hands work on their own. I don't even notice that there's a lapse between what I see, what I think and what I do. By contrast, there are times that it is very difficult for me to achieve a form, but I can't tell how I want it until it comes out of the material."

The Bull, 120 x 175 x 167 cm, 1987 (bronze) (Alfonso Pasquel Collection).

(1955) and the crowning glory of that period, *Portraits of Lupe Marín* (1961 and 1962). He was a painter who opened up new terrain. From his early youth he had declined to join the avant gardes, much less their followers. He was very aware that copying an international style led to parody.

"For me, art had no *before*. Everything was the present. Even today I have never gotten excited about something because its supposedly yesterday's invention or the latest thing."

"Well, Juan, I thought it was noteworthy that Rodolfo Nieto allowed himself to be influenced by your painting when he was very young. I mean how he soon took that influence into a different, fertile terrain. It's an example of how influences do not have to necessarily be negative."

"Yes, I had followers in another time, but not for very long. Now I have no followers or imitators. I'm glad they don't follow me because they'd get lost (laughs). When somebody follows an artist, he prostitutes himself. Look, they followed Tamayo a lot, even in Italy, and these weren't mediocre artists following him. But the things they did following Tamayo were horrible! Once Tamayo asked me, 'And you, why haven't you ever let yourself be influenced by me?' And I answered him, 'Because I respect you too much.' How was I going to paint Tamayos? I always say that every day I get up in the morning to paint a Velázquez, but I can't get it right."

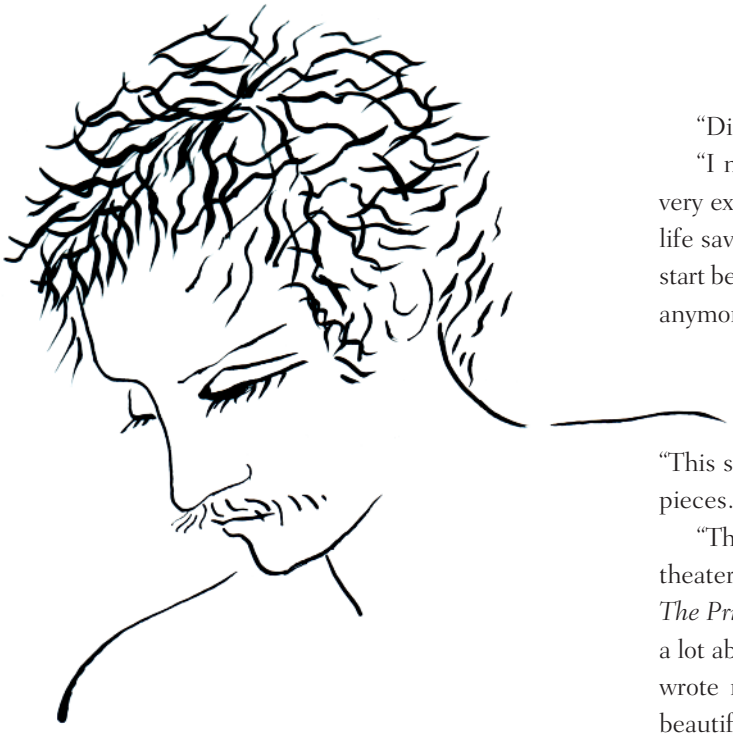
* * *

A while back I heard someone say that Juan Soriano was an improvised sculptor. I stared at him in surprise and he felt intimidated. Why is this wrong impression out there? Many people believe that Juan began sculpting when he was almost an old man. The reason is very simple: he did not begin to do monumental sculpture until the 1980s. Usually, the public only identifies large-scale pieces in plazas and buildings with the name Soriano. But Juan has been sculpting since he was very young.

"I did sculpture in terra-cotta and lots of ceramics, but I didn't cast it in bronze because it was too expensive. The first work I did in bronze must have been when I was already about 50. And it wasn't until I was 60-something that my first public work was accepted in Tabasco, *The Bull* (1987). Then came *The Dove* (1989) for the MARCO museum in Monterrey. If I hadn't lived to be 70, all the large-scale sculpture that I've done would have remained sketches. What luck! Not everybody lives to be 70! For example, there's *Head of María Luisa* (1962). I always wanted to do it in a large format, but I couldn't even dream of paying to have it cast. Besides, I had a tiny studio. Where was it going to fit? It was only recently that I was able to make it large in bronze."

Lupe Marín, 170.3 x 75.3 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas) (Andres Blaisten Collection).

The changes of skin in his pictorial work are almost always notable as a sign of rebirth. He knew how to leave himself behind, once, twice, five times and radically.



Marek, 33.5 x 25 cm, 1977 (ink on paper)
(Juan Soriano and Marek Keller Foundation Collection).

"Did you decide you were going to make money?"

"I never had the desire to tire myself out making money. It is very expensive to be a painter and sculptor. You spend your whole life saving to buy paints. You spend your whole life, and when you start being successful, you don't care anymore. You don't need money anymore except to pay doctors' bills!"

* * *

"This sculpture is very strange, Juan. It's different from your other pieces. What's it called?"

"That one's called *The Memory* (1981). I have always liked the theater and this piece comes out of a play by Agustín Lazo called *The Print*, a play about the Revolution in which the characters talk a lot about the print a hand leaves. Lazo was a great painter and he wrote really good plays. The play starred María Douglas, a very beautiful actress. A long time after I saw the play I thought of doing the sculpture. The hand is the hole in the piece and it has something like a fan. I don't remember now what else it was about, just that the heroine had something to do with her hand print."

Some of his most intimate works, like the *Portrait of Marek* in ink, reveal touches that are small strokes taken much further than the technical solution: they are paintings done with caresses.

Head of María Luisa, 105 x 96 x 68 cm, 1994 (bronze) (Andres Blaisten Collection).

Portrait of Lupe Marín, 87 x 107 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas) (Horazio Fontanot Collection).

Dafne 1, 180 x 132 x 80 cm, 1995 (Juan Soriano and Marek Keller Foundation Collection).

Juan had no teacher and was never really anyone's disciple. His childhood was not a happy one. He was educated among magazines and books, among useless and exquisite objects.

Portrait of Don Diego de Mesa with Dog, 124 x 163 cm, 1948 (oil on canvas)
(Juan Soriano and Marek Keller Foundation Collection).

"And why is it called *The Memory*?"

"It's very simple. Even though I don't remember much about it, it's my memory of the play."

* * *

Juan confesses that his childhood was not a happy one and that he became involved in morally ambiguous situations from the age of nine, when his sister Martha began to introduce him to an adult world full of "bohemians." Perhaps because of this rather brutal initiation, the idea of being an artist was repellent, the worst possible thing he could do.

Once I asked him how old he was when he sold his first painting. About ten, he answered, when he began to sell to Chucho Reyes.

"Did he buy your work to collect it?"

"No way! It was business."

He was part of a group of young boys who made triptychs and devotional folk paintings for Chucho Reyes who sold them as pieces of colonial and nineteenth-century painting. They did them on tin and the most pretentious on copper sheeting. The young counterfeiters turned old images of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, which were very plentiful in those days, into paintings of New Spain gentlemen. Chucho bought moth-eaten wood that the boys "perfected" by shooting it with a shotgun, covered with white lead paint and then painted with "virgins of the Sienese school." The gang of counterfeiters met together in Chucho's patio to urinate together in a pool where they then put the paintings to age them."

"What did you get out of all of that?"

"You have to reinvent all the techniques," he said, laughing. "If you can't reinvent techniques, your things will be like what they call 'academic'."

Juan had no teacher and was never really anyone's disciple. He was born into bad company. In Chucho Reyes's house he was educated among magazines and books, among useless and exquisite objects. There he met Luis Barragán, he became a painter and prepared his first exhibition. Every artistic discipline has its counterfeiters who, in the blink of an eye, become a sun peeping through the pupils. The artist springs forth from the worst possible thing he could do.

* * *

"You've seen a lot, Juan," I said.

"The more you contemplate, the freer you are." VM

Lupe Marín, 355 x 88.5 cm, 1962 (oil on canvas) (Carlos García Ponce Collection).

NEW

NORTEAMÉRICA

ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF THE CISAN

An open forum for debate and exchange
from a multidisciplinary perspective.
Theoretical, methodological and current studies
about North America and its links to the world.

ENSAYOS / ESSAYS

Canadian Scholarship on North America
Laura Macdonald

La razón de Estado en América
José Luis Orozco

Race, Gender and Class Stereotypes: New Perspectives in Ideology and Inequality
Margaret L. Andersen

ANÁLISIS DE ACTUALIDAD / CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Regional Integration and Security: A Comparative Perspective of the European Union and North America
Alejandro Chanona

La energía en la Alianza para la Seguridad y Prosperidad en América del Norte
Rosío Vargas y **Víctor Rodríguez-Padilla**

Elections, Political Integration, and North America: Exploring the Unknown
Imtiaz Hussain

CONTRIBUCIÓN ESPECIAL / SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

A North American Community
Robert A. Pastor

REFLEXIONES Y MIRADAS / REFLECTIONS

ENTREVISTAS

La Organización de Estados Americanos en el siglo xxi: entrevista con ***José Miguel Insulza,*** secretario general de la OEA

NOTAS CRÍTICAS / CRITICAL NOTES

Alexis de Tocqueville: contra el animal tímido e industrioso (consideraciones en torno al individualismo desenfrenado)
Ignacio Díaz de la Serna

Los programas de trabajadores temporales en la política migratoria estadunidense y la propuesta del presidente Bush
Carlos Tapia

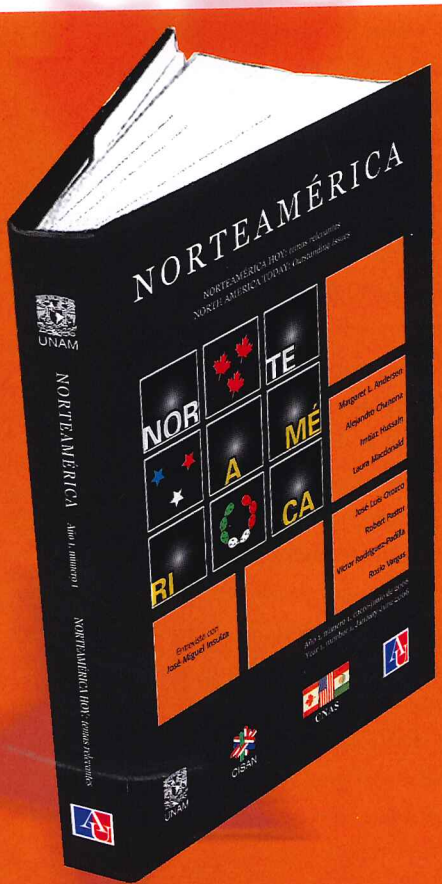
APUNTES BIBLIOGRÁFICOS / BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Revuelta, rebelión y revolución. Ideas sobre política exterior de George W. Bush
Adrián Villanueva Delgado

Sobre literatura y multiculturalismo
Claudia Lucotti y **Laura López Morales**

CRONOLOGÍA / CHRONOLOGY

de temas relevantes sobre América del Norte (enero-noviembre de 2005)
Argentino Mendoza Chan y **Socorro García González**



NORTEAMÉRICA, *Academic Journal*

Centro de Investigaciones sobre
América del Norte (Center for Research
on North America) (CISAN),
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)

Torre II de Humanidades, pisos 9 y 10,
Ciudad Universitaria, México, D.F., c.p. 04510.
e-mail: namerica@servidor.unam.mx
Phone: (011 5255) 5623-0305, ext. 42180
Fax: (011 5255) 5550-0379

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Mexico	1 año	Mex $180.00	**U.S. and Canada**	1 year	U.S. $20.00
	2 años	Mex $320.00		2 years	U.S. $32.00

Mezcal Yesterday And Today

Mari Carmen Serra Puche*
Jesús Carlos Lazcano Arce**

Maguey hearts ready to be cut up and cooked.

For a long time it was thought that the only alcoholic beverage the pre-Hispanic peoples of Mesoamerica knew was *pulque*, made from fermented maguey sap. However, data found at the Nativitas digs, located in one of the Xochitécatl and Cacaxtla monumental zones in Tlaxcala state, seems to indicate that they distilled mezcal in this area before the arrival of the Spaniards.

When housing units from the mid- and late Formative Period (400 B.C. to A.D. 200) and from the Epiclassical Period (A.D. 650-950) were excavated, archaeologists found earthen and stone ovens next to several houses. Based on laboratory studies, we know that these ovens were used for cooking and also for physically and chemically transforming the heart of the maguey.

An analysis of the excavated ovens and the context in which they were found suggests that we are dealing with a complex of artifacts possibly created to produce mezcal. In addition to telling us that they were used for cooking maguey, a chemical analysis of the ovens' content indicates that the inhabitants burned pine as fuel.

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Anthropological Research and Coordinator of Humanities, UNAM.
** Coordinator of the ethno-archaeological project "The Road of Mezcal."
Photos: "The Road of Mezcal" project archive.

In order to prove the validity of this idea, four lines of research were opened up, among which was the ethno-archaeological project called "The Road of Mezcal". Combining procedures from ethnology (the study of human cultural variability) and archaeology, several dozen units of mezcal production have been studied and registered in the states of Oaxaca, Tlaxcala and many other parts of the country. The aim has been to establish the similarities and differences between current implements and forms of production and the ancient ovens and to recognize the social relations involved in producing this beverage.

The Indigenous and Mezcal

Preliminary results of the ethno-archaeological studies indicate that almost everywhere in the country the maguey plant has been widely used to produce different items, including two kinds of distilled beverages: tequila and the even purer mezcal. These results point to the idea that distilling mezcal, long considered a technique imported from Europe during the colonial period, may have been known in the pre-Hispanic world.

One of the main objectives of "The Road of Mezcal" project has been to see how many indigenous communities still produce this beverage. Our study reveals that many societies with pre-Hispanic origins produce mezcal not only in a very craft-based way, but very primitively.

Steer hide used to ferment the cooked maguey in the Huichol community of Guadalupe Ocotlán, Nayarit.

Distilling mezcal, long considered a technique imported from Europe during the colonial period, may have been known in the pre-Hispanic world.

Oven with stone walls at the Nativitas, Tlaxcala archaeological site.

Huichol still covered with mud, ready to produce mezcal.

For example, in the Pai Pai community in the northern part of Baja California, ovens are made for producing the fermented beverage *tepache* and from time immemorial, since the period when the Pai Pai were hunter-gatherers, they made use of maguey hearts, known locally as *lechuguilla*. In agriculture-based pre-Hispanic tribal and class societies, mezcal was produced locally, but the varieties of agave and the tools differed from one place to another. This is also the case today in the Nahua community of Zitlala, Guerrero, among some Zapotecs in Oaxaca and Huichols from the Guadalupe Ocotlán, Nayarit, community.

In the specific case of the Huichol of Guadalupe Ocotlán, we have been surprised not only by the production techniques used, but also by the reasons they have for producing it and their tools, particularly the ones used for distilling. Their still, made out of tree bark and *zacate* fiber, consists of a series of 40-centimeter rings placed on top of each other to a height of 80 centimeters, which is then covered with mud. On the inside, they place a small wooden conduit that drains the alcohol produced from the condensation of the fermented maguey sap into a recipient at the bottom of the still. The drain is also connected to a reed perforating the wall of the still through which the mezcal flows and is collected in a pot or gourd.

[1]

[2]

Varieties of Mezcal

With very few exceptions, such as Aguascalientes and Hidalgo (a major *pulque* producer), we have found that the vast majority of the states produce mezcal, including the states in the peninsulas of Yucatán and Baja California. We have also discovered the existence of an important variety of mezcals, which are given local names, like *bacanora*, produced in Sonora.

Almost all the mezcals are pure (that is, no artificial chemicals or yeasts are added) and have a high alcohol content. However, most continue to be produced mainly for consumption during each community's festivities.

Without a doubt, the great variety in flavor is linked to the tools used to produce the mezcal and, above all, the different species of agave that grow throughout Mexico. Some of the plants used are the *angustifolia*, *salmiana*, *maximiliano*, *tequilana*, *cupreata*, *potatorum*, *karwinskii* and the American agave. In several states, mezcal is allowed to age and it therefore acquires the flavors and aromas of the different woods used to make the casks where it is stored.

The best known mezcal in the country comes from Oaxaca and is made by craftsmen in places called *palenques*. Oaxaca's mezcal producers make four main varieties: breast mezcal (during distillation, they put several chicken breasts in the still so their juices mix with the agave-based alcohol); fruit mezcal; *benevá*, made with wild agave; and pot mezcal, made with either wild or cultivated agaves distilled in pots. The latter procedure, although disappearing, is fundamental for our research because there seems to be a direct association between it and its tools and the pots and ovens found in the archaeological digs at the Nativitas site.

It should be reiterated that mezcal does not come exclusively from Oaxaca, but that there are many other varieties produced in the North and Southeast of Mexico.

Final Considerations

The know-how for producing this beverage has been passed down from generation to generation empirically, and many pieces of evidence lead us to believe that distillation was a technique known to the pre-Hispanic world. Ethno-archaeological research continues and its results will be added to that of ethno-historical, archaeological and chemical research in order to deter-

◂ [1] Still made of clay pots. The reed allows the condensed alcohol to escape. San Juan Bautista Sola de Vega.

◂ [2] Mezcal production site or *palenque* at Santa Catarina Minas, Oaxaca. In the foreground is an earth-lined oven.

[3] Huichol still made from rings of *zacate* fiber and tree bark. ▸

[3]

mine with certainty whether mezcal was produced at the Nativitas site during the mid-Formative Period (400 B.C.), many centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards. VM

Further Reading

Conabio, "Agave, mezcales y diversidad. Mapa sobre la diversidad de las plantas de agaves y mezcal en México," Jorge Larson, comp., *Mezcales y diversidad biológica* (Mexico City: Conabio, 2005).

Serra Puche, Mari Carmen, et al., "Primera temporada de la Ruta del Mezcal," technical report (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas-UNAM, 2001).

Serra Puche, Mari Carmen, J. Carlos Lazcano Arce and Samuel Hernández H., "¿Hornos para la producción de mezcal en un sitio del Formativo en Tlaxcala?", *Arqueología* no. 24 (Mexico City), July-December 2000, pp. 149-157.

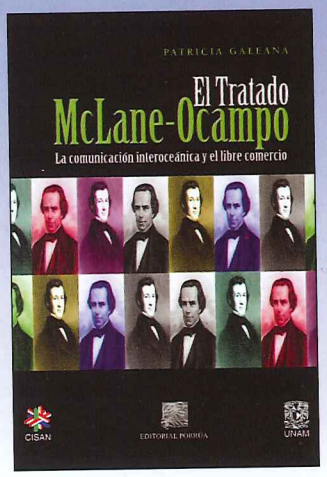
Serra Puche, Mari Carmen, J. Carlos Lazcano Arce and Samuel Hernández H., "El hombre y sus recursos en el sur del valle de Tlaxcala durante el Formativo y el Epiclásico," technical ceramics report (Mexico City: n/p, 2000).

CISAN

publications

El Tratado McLane-Ocampo. La comunicación interoceánica y el libre comercio

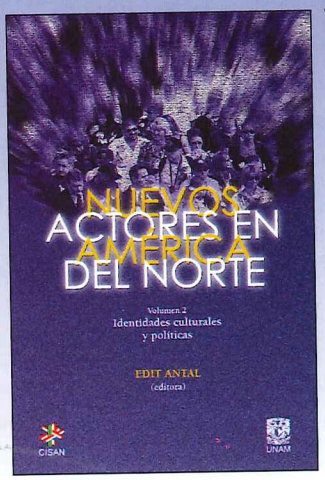
Patricia Galeana



The difficult relations between Mexico and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, the dispute among the great powers over inter-oceanic traffic, the rivalry among Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama over what would be the center of world trade and the debate between protectionism and free trade are just some of the topics this book deals with. It also contains previously unpublished reports by the U.S. representative in the diplomatic negotiations that followed, some of the most difficult Mexico ever experienced.

***Nuevos actores en América del Norte* (vol. 2)**
New Actors in North America (vol. 2)

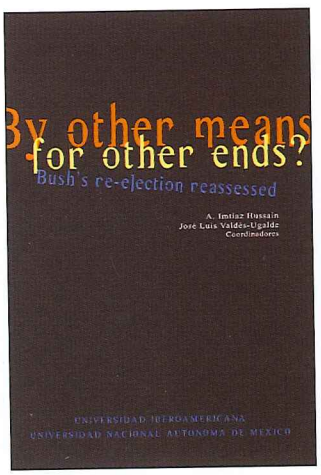
Edit Antal, editor



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

By other means for other ends? Bush's re-election reassessed

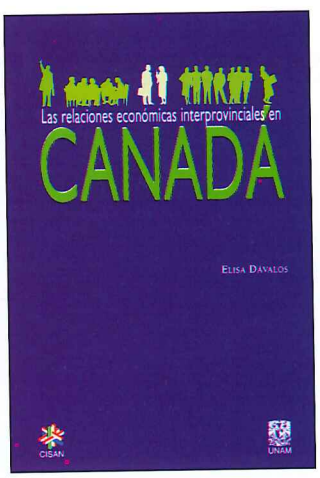
A. Imtiaz Hussain and
José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, editors



This book explains the results of the 2004 presidential elections, pointing to the changes in U.S. society after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Taking into account factors like the expansion of international violence and terrorist activities, as well as domestic socio-political variables, the authors analyze society's reaction to the perception that there was a crisis of survival. This book is the result of a very up-to-date research project, citing specialized journals, influential U.S. newspapers and magazines, web sites of the most influential political and social actors and documents that aim to explain the U.S. political scene.

Las relaciones económicas interprovinciales en Canadá
(Inter-provincial Economic Relations in Canada)

Elisa Dávalos



The decentralization of the Canadian state gives autonomy to the provinces in matters that in other countries are only decided by the central government. Issues like the ability of provinces to regulate aspects of their economies, which has created some inter-provincial barriers to trade and a certain fragmentation of the national market, or the constitutional jurisdiction of the provinces over their own natural resources are studied in this work that analyzes the provinces' regionalist behavior, highlighting their economic interrelationships and performance.

For further information contact
Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte, CISAN,
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Torre de Humanidades II, piso 9, Ciudad Universitaria, 04510,
México, D.F. Tel. 5623-0015; fax: 5623-0014; e-mail: cisan@servidor.unam.mx

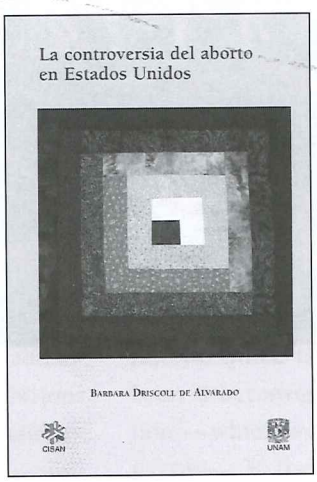
CISAN

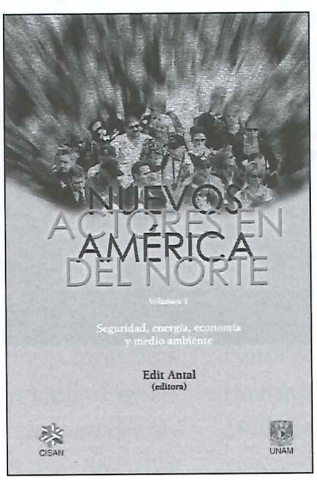
publications

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

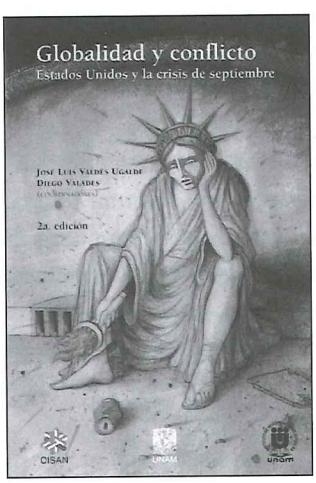
Edit Antal, ed.

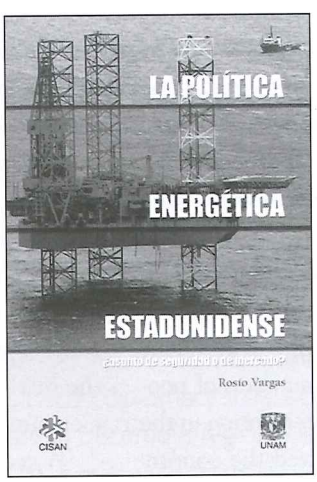
New regional actors (networks, social movements, companies and institutions) have emerged in recent years in North America that academic analyses must take into account. This book is an indispensable contribution to a multidisciplinary focus on their activities and the process of their interaction.

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

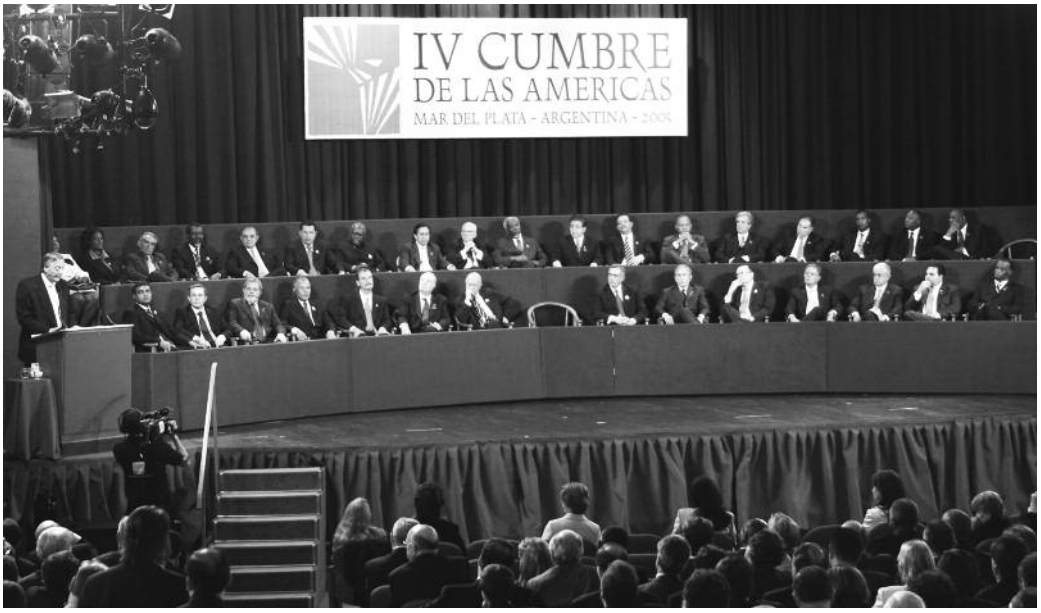
This work contributes to the understanding of the origins, causes and implications of declining oil production in the United States. Events such as the 1970s oil crisis and the current invasion of Iraq demonstrate the role that energy resources can have in changing history. The book combines history,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

Forthcoming

El Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte a los diez años
Recursos naturales estratégicos: los hidrocarburos y el agua
El movimiento chicano en el paradigma multicultural
Procesos de integración en las Américas

Mexico and Latin America
The Uncertainties of Identity

Berenice P. Ramírez López*



Enrique Marcarian/Reuters

In academia, politics and public opinion, it is commonly said that one of the most obvious aspects of recent Mexican administrations is the disarticulation of their foreign policy. What is most visible is the lack of a clear orientation with a state perspective about what a country understands as national interests safeguarded in its foreign relations.

In the second half of the twentieth century particularly, Mexican diplomacy's classical principles (the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the respect for the self-determination of peoples and its corollary of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states)[1] allowed the country to become a regional leader and situate itself as a reference point for Latin America. This has gradually weakened and on some occasions changed into complete identification with U.S. interests.

Given this situation, we ask ourselves why Mexican foreign policy has become disarticulated. Two reasons come to mind immediately. The first is structural, linked to the strengthening of a pattern of secondary export accumulation, the result of which has been a one-sided opening of the market, favoring closer links with U.S. society and its economy.

A second reason is political and ideological and is linked to the forms and functions of the Mexican state, conditioned by structural changes. My perspective is that globalization

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Economic Research (IIEc). berenice@servidor.unam.mx

conditions the form and degree of economies' insertion into the world market, but does not determine the expression of the state. The latter is derived from the balance of political forces and the manifestation of economic and political interests. Therefore, it is a clear characteristic of hegemony and national power. So, agreeing with the U.S. project for the region, with the proposal of a trade and financial opening, with the belief that the best option is a free market, and working for the construction of a modernity that ignores the historical process, geo-economics and geo-politics are what are causing imprecisions in Mexico's foreign policy, which we could dub the uncertainties of its identification with Latin America.

Taking into consideration these elements, this article is a reflection about Mexico's position at the Fourth Summit of the Americas. It seeks to interpret the future of a relationship that is structured pragmatically, with contradictory actions, without clear definitions and with a great deal of uncertainty.

In recent months, Mexico's position in Latin America has been characterized by differences with several governments in the region, such as the friction with Cuba leading to a withdrawal of their respective ambassadors; the discrepancies with the government of Venezuela; what happened at the Río de la Plata Summit, concretely with the president of Argentina; and the distancing from the current Bolivian administration. On the other hand, the Mexican government has expressed interest in becoming part of the Mercosur, in reactivating Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations, and in strengthening its commitments to the goals of the Puebla-Panama Plan, of Mesoamerican Regional Development and of the Mesoamerican Energy Project, all of which merits a detailed review given the scenario that is emerging.

A Brief Review

Mexican governments' active foreign policy *vis-à-vis* Latin America during the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s established the country as a valid broker on a regional level, especially with regard to relations with the United States. The country was seen as an older brother that defended regional interests and was relatively autonomous from U.S. domination. The current administration can be seen to most determinedly abandon this position, although this change was already happening in the 1980s when a new pattern of accumulation was consolidating based on the process of opening, privatization, deregulation and state reform. Since then, the priority has been structuring a new kind of insertion —which we will characterize as passive— in the world economy that led to strengthening relations with the U.S. economy, leading our country to center its economic relations on that country. Today, Mexico sends 89 percent of its exports to the U.S., while 62 percent of its imports come from there.[2]

The strategy of the Mexican economy's trade and financial opening dates from 1983 when adjustment and stabilization policies were implemented, substantially modifying the relationship between the state and the market, providing more space for the private sector and foreign actors. This orientation was refined with Mexico's entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1986. The interest in better international insertion would result in rapid growth of the export sector. Average annual export growth between 1988 and 2003 was 15.1 percent, and the export coefficient soared from 7.7 percent to 26 percent. As a result, the Mexican economy is more open, but imports have grown more dynamically than exports because of the changes in the country's productive structure, with productive chains orienting more toward sectors outside the domestic market, mainly in the United States, a trend that has been deepened by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) coming into effect. Between 1988 and 2003, imports have grown an average of 19 percent annually, while the import coefficient has increased from 8.8 percent to 27 percent.[3]

Another important trait of the export structure indicative of the changes in the structure of production is the participation of manufacturing. In 1980, with the clear importance of oil pro-

In the second half of the twentieth century particularly, Mexican diplomacy's classical principles allowed the country to become a regional leader and situate itself as a reference point for Latin America.

What is most visible in recent Mexican administrations is the lack of a clear orientation with a state perspective about what a country understands as national interests safeguarded in its foreign relations.

duction and export, manufacturing represented 30 percent. By 1999, it came to 89 percent of the total. However, by 2004, manufacturing exports dropped to 84 percent, although the most significant figure is that maquila and assembly plants represented 45.5 percent of all exports and 55 percent of manufacturing exports.[4] This includes products like television sets, television set parts, telephones, computers, private vehicles, videocassette machines, circuits, processors, memories, engines, auto parts, machinery, apparatuses and electrical materials. Of all these items, products from the electronics, auto and garment industries, are the ones most exported to the United States.[5]

I have presented a long characterization of the Mexican opening and the specificities of Mexico's insertion into the international sphere in order to point out that Latin America has experienced a differentiated specialization, although the productive and export structure linked to U.S. conglomerates typical to Mexico is replicated with similar characteristics in assembly plants in Central America and some countries of the Caribbean, although there, what dominates are the textile and garment industries. In order for them to continue to be part of globalized production chains, there is a strong inclination to attract investment to service sectors linked to telecommunications, energy generation and distribution, tourism and the environment. This leads to the incentive to forge free trade agreements and to the idea of creating a regional market through the Initiative of the Americas.

This is the perspective of the governments of Central America and the northern part of South America. The difference with the countries of the Southern Cone is that the former insert themselves in globalized productive chains mainly by processing natural resources. The demand for their production forces them to diversify their markets. In this way, the countries of the Mercosur, mainly Chile, do one-third of their trade with the United States, one-third with Europe and the remainder with Latin America and Asia. In accordance with this productive and trade structure, their international trade priorities are to achieve access and greater equality in the trade of agricultural products and strengthen infrastructure used for intra-regional communication and the exchange of services. It should be pointed out, however, that they are not in a hurry to sign in order to achieve better conditions of access to the U.S. market for their manufactured products; and Chile has already signed a free trade agreement with the United States.

Another very important factor is the change in the political context. In an exercise of representative democracy, the population, faced with increasing unemployment and lower incomes, has given its vote to political parties identified as center-left that emphasize reinforcing the local and the national. This is the case of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva in Brazil, Néstor Kirchner in Argentina, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and, recently, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Michèlle Bachelet in Chile.

If they manage to change the orientation of the growth strategy to one that encourages development, it would be possible to demonstrate what has already been mentioned in the sense that globalization conditions but does not determine the constitution of a national strategy, and that this depends on creating a balance of political forces to sustain it.

Integration Projects and Latin American Governments' Perspective

The impact of neoliberal policies in Latin America can be seen in employment, income and living conditions; in all these spheres, the population has suffered from stagnant productivity, informal sector growth and job instability and precariousness, and therefore an increase in poverty and exclusion.

With those precedents, the Summit of the Americas made a priority of the commitment to fight poverty, inequality, hunger and social exclusion and strengthen democratic governability.[6] The idea was to center attention on the right to work, the creation of public environmental policies and the formulation of a regional position on economic opening and integration, abandoning the passive view that free trade solves

Agreeing with the U.S. project for the region and the construction of a modernity that ignores the historical process, geo-economics and geo-politics are causing imprecisions in Mexico's foreign policy, which we could dub the uncertainties of its identification with Latin America.

everything and assuming an orientation that would strengthen human capital.

These priorities run the risk of being changed and even inverted with the intervention of President Vicente Fox, whose administration has shown itself to be a fierce defender of free trade *per se*, subscribing to the proposal of creating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) proposed by the U.S. government since 1994.

Since the 1980s, Mexico's governments have thought that the results of Mexico's global insertion and productive structure, implemented for the last 25 years, as well as the role of NAFTA, have been extremely important for productive specialization and designing an economic space. These administrations have shared the view of passive insertion, relations with big capital and the main multinational corporations, and do not take into account the deterioration of local production and the domestic market; neither do they recognize the stagnation of the labor market and income, and the increased heterogeneity and disarticulation of production and society.

The FTAA is supported by 26 governments in the region, versus five that want to change priorities.[7] The relevant question here is what the objective and subjective conditions are that have led to unrestrained support for free trade.

One development perspective closely linked to the Washington Consensus considers that, among other things, the gradual increase in a country's productive capacity is a pre-condition for growth and is sufficient to foster genuine development. However, the evidence shows that these productive capabilities are very fragile. There is no increase in employment, in education spending or in research and development that would lead to broadening out productive capabilities and improving productivity. To the contrary, the informal sector is growing and growth in average education levels is slow, with high drop-out rates and a significant brain drain.

In addition, the productive structure that receives incentives is exclusively the one linked to global production networks, where Latin American countries participate in assembly activities and commercialization. The centers for knowledge and design remain in the central countries, which generate a process of self-expanding accumulation.

For these reasons, the governments of Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil warn that one of the dangers of launching the FTAA would be to weaken intra-regional trade by introducing U.S. products. Without active, compensatory state policies, local production would be weakened even more. On the other hand, if the only aim is a maquiladora model, we should not forget that it is labor intensive, centered on the final product of the production process and that the plants are foreign-owned.[8]

At the Americas Summit, Argentinean President Néstor Kirchner said, "We do not want integration that favors big [interests] but integration that favors all....We want economic integration in which the interests of our peoples are respected...without asymmetries, without subsidies, without protectionism."[9]

Representatives of the Brazilian government, for their part, said that to sign the FTAA, they would require the elimination of agricultural subsidies and real, effective access to the U.S. market.[10] In addition, Brazil's position is more oriented to strengthening integration through foreign direct investment in infrastructure, which is the aim of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America.[11]

There may not be substantial differences about free trade, because all the countries have tried to insert themselves significantly in the world market. But there is a difference in emphasis and in the steps to be taken. The countries that do not support the FTAA prefer to first strengthen their internal conditions and only then move out into international competition. The discussions about whether the market is the best mechanism for assigning resources and its other advantages have taken on an ideological tone because it has been said that the five countries that do not support the FTAA have taken an anti-free trade stance.

However, what the governments that promoted a different agenda seem to be supporting is the recognition of

productive differences and the need for fair, equitable treatment. This does not distance them from the proposal by international bodies about the need to gradually broaden out people's individual and collective opportunities and capabilities (UNPD) or what the ILO and the UN itself have proposed with regard to their concern about growing poverty.

The Millennium Summit has focused the problems of developing countries in the same way. Participating countries consider that economic growth is fostered by policies that encourage competitiveness and the creation of competitive conditions in which investment in education and development is fundamental.

What the five countries that do not support the FTAA do not have a consensus on is how to formulate a perspective for integration based on internal conditions; whether it should be done through state intervention; and how they could propose a normative framework for policies oriented toward national integration as a pre-requisite for international insertion.

Another element in the discussion about the FTAA has to do with sub-regional powers. Brazil's participation in the Mercosur, its economic weight in the region and its having fostered proposals like the Initiative for Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America or the Community of Nations of the South favor and consolidate this view of integration, which has benefited from President Kirchner's perspective and his support for regional proposals.

The new initiative, which is beginning to bear fruit and will be strengthened by Bolivia's possible participation is the one announced by Venezuela and Cuba in 2003: the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA).[12] Its aim is to integrate the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean by promoting cooperation, solidarity and their complementing each other. It has begun to indicate the path forward toward a different way for the Latin American countries to relate to each other.

Given these proposals, the position President Fox presented in Río de la Plata does not seem to take into account the fact that despite the virtues he points to in the free trade agreements, the reality is that Mexico's GDP growth from 1980 to 2005 was only 2.5 percent; 48 percent of the work force is in the informal sector; 55 percent earns three times the minimum wage or less; only 37 percent have social benefits; the minimum wage has dropped 70 percent in the last 25 years; and migration to the United States has increased. In this context, remittances have become the pillar of domestic market activity.

As part of his defense of free trade and foreign investment, in January 2006, during his visit to Honduras for the presidential inauguration, Fox announced the Central American Energy Project, involving Mexico and the countries of the region. It includes the construction of a refinery, a hydraulic electrical plant, a gas processing plant and a gas pipeline, which, according to Fox would be a real solution to high energy costs because it would achieve more competitive prices for the energy consumed by Central Americans. It is of note that this project's funding will come from both public and private sources, as well as regional and international agencies.

Several points are worth examining, but the most important is that this project was not announced in Mexico, which shows that conditions in Central America were riper: that is, there is an absence of state companies in these sectors, electricity and gas are privately owned, and thus, the big multinational corporations have a better chance of placing winning bids.

Another important issue is finding out what the distribution network of the gas processing plant, the hydroelectric plant and the refinery will look like. Are they programs for cooperation, for strengthening infrastructure or just new spaces for foreign direct investment?

Among his contradictory actions aimed at recovering leadership in the region, on January 26, 2006, President Fox signed the Strategic Partnership Accord with the Chilean government. The aim is to reinforce the Free Trade Agreement and the Economic Complementarity Accord signed with Chile

If the presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia and Chile manage to change the growth strategy to one that encourages development, it would demonstrate that globalization conditions but does not determine the constitution of a national strategy.

What the five countries that do not support the FTAA do not have a consensus on is whether integration based on internal conditions should be achieved through state intervention.

in 1993 with an instrument that will make it possible to "institutionally strengthen public policies as well as lay the foundation for international cooperation, which will be reflected in consultations and permanent relations between both nations for common political proposals."[13]

These actions take place 10 months after having signed with George W. Bush and then-Prime Minister of Canada Paul Martin the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) in Waco, Texas, on March 23, 2005. The SPP seeks greater integration of the three countries through an agenda for prosperity that emphasizes growth, competitiveness based on deepening market freedom, with a big dose of criteria to reinforce regional security to prevent and respond to threats both within and from outside North America, as well as the establishment of a closed economic bloc that reaffirms the regional division of labor the United States has proposed. The agreement thus stipulates the following:

- Establishing a trilateral system to monitor steel imports in order to have timely information about sudden increases in imports from third countries which could damage regional production.
- Setting up trilateral working groups to come up with measures to improve competitiveness in the auto and auto parts sector.
- Identifying other sectors, like textiles, in which trilateral measures could improve competitiveness.
- Exploring with the private sector the possible review of tariffs and rules of origin in the textile industry, as well as the integration of supply chains using other trade agreements in the region.

The mistakes in Mexican foreign policy derive from the tacit acceptance of passive integration, which bets that through free trade agreements, the market will find the best perspectives. What has not been taken into account is that the most successful countries in the world concert have implemented active policies, clearly making their priorities count, the most important of which is strengthening the domestic market, and things local and regional. This perspective does exist among the countries of the Southern Cone and in strategies like the ALBA.

As long as it is not understood that state intervention for a national and regional project is necessary in a market economy, the certainties derived from the Mexican government's actions will make the construction of a national and Latin American identity increasingly difficult. Without those identities, it will not be possible to sustain or make coherent a state perspective that is also manifests itself in foreign relations. VM

NOTES

[1] Principles stated in the Constitution and the Estrada Doctrine.

[2] *World Trade Atlas 2005,* at www.gtis.com

[3] Berenice Ramírez López, "La apertura comercial mexicana: situación actual. Contradicciones y riesgos," XX *Seminario de Economía Mexicana*, report on CD (Mexico City: IIEc-UNAM, 2005), pp. 1-4.

[4] Banco de México (2005), Información Financiera at www.banxico.org.mx/einfofinanciera

[5] Ramírez, op. cit.

[6] "Declaración de Mar del Plata. Crear trabajo para enfrentar la pobreza y fortalecer la gobernabilidad democrática," Cuarta Cumbre de las Américas, Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 5, 2005.

[7] Venezuela and the countries of the Mercosur.

[8] Jorge Carillo and Claudia Shatan, comps., *El medio ambiente y la maquila en México: un problema ineludible* (Mexico City: CEPAL, 2005).

[9] "América acuerda que no hay acuerdo en torno al libre comercio," *El Observador* (Montevideo), November 6, 2005.

[10] Ibid.

[11] This initiative seeks to involve 12 South American countries in developing infrastructure in energy, transportation and telecommunications. The following integration and development regions have been identified: the Andean Hub, the Southern Andean Hub, the Capricorn Hub, the Amazon, the Guyanese Shield Hub, the Southern Hub, the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway, the Central Interoceanic Hub, the Mercosur-Chile region and the Peru-Bolivia-Brazil Hub. Also, 335 projects that require an investment of U.S.$37.47 billion have been identified. Funding is both public and private, with support from the IDB. www.iirsa.org

[12] www.alba.org

[13] Communique of the Office of the President of Mexico, January 26, 2006.

The Informal Economy in Mexico
An Alternative Labor Market

Carlos Márquez-Padilla Casar*
Daniel Tapia Quintana*

Introduction

Almost inadvertently, Mexico's informal economy has reached a worrisome size that no society or government can wish away as a simple statistic. Today, three out of 10 Mexicans earn their livings in the informal economy. This article will develop the premise that the regulatory framework has lagged behind the economy's increasing dynamism, making the informal economy an attractive alternative for a large number of families in Mexico.

On an institutional level, the debate about the informal economy has its origins in the 1972 International Labor Organization's Kenya Report. More than 30 years after this document was published, the informal economy has become a universal problem. In different ways, the non-structured, hidden or underground economy —as it is also known in other countries— takes different shapes according to each country's geography and socioeconomic conditions. Latin America, and Mexico in particular, have been no exception.

Mexico's informal economy began to be tallied by Labor Ministry reports in 1979. Today, 28.2 percent of the employed population in Mexico works in the informal economy. This is the same as saying that 11,865,000 people carry out their economic activity outside any regulatory framework. Also, the informal sector represents almost 12.2 percent of the economy's total gross value added, but of even greater concern is the growing emergence of informal micro-businesses from 2002 to 2004 in contrast with the decline in formal micro-businesses in the same period. According to data from the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and the National Statistics Institute (INEGI), during those years, almost 260,000 informal micro-businesses were created, while 10,176 formal ones disappeared.

Moisés Pablo/Cuartoscuro

* Assistants to the general coordinator of the President's Office for Public Policies' Project to Incorporate Entrepreneurial Assets into the Formal Economy.

No Consensus on Defining Informality

Defining the term "informality" is complicated. Different authors have dealt with it according to their object of study, without coming to any consensus. However, one way or another, "informality" implies economic activities that do not comply with a country's legal regulations; in the Mexican case this may be Finance Ministry regulations, or those of the Social Security Institute, the banking system or chambers of commerce and industry.[1]

However, the definition of the concept of informality cited in the previous paragraph continues to be ambiguous since a company that does not comply with only one regulation has a different impact from one which ignores the regulatory framework altogether. In other words, informality cannot be defined in terms of all or nothing, but must be conceived of as a continuum on which companies' behavior oscillates between compliance and non-compliance with certain regulations. Naturally, it is important to delimit the object to be defined, whether for economic research or for designing a specific public policy. For the effects of this article, we will stick to the definition used by the INEGI, which considers companies and workers to be part of the informal sector when they are part of the non-structured part of the economy.

Very often informality is confused with itinerant and street sales, a completely justified confusion since this activity is one of the most important in Mexico's informal economy, the fastest growing and undoubtedly the most visible: itinerant sales grew 11 percent annually between 2000 and 2004, expanding by 135,000 persons a year according to the National Employment Survey. However, Mexico's informal sector is much larger and more complex.

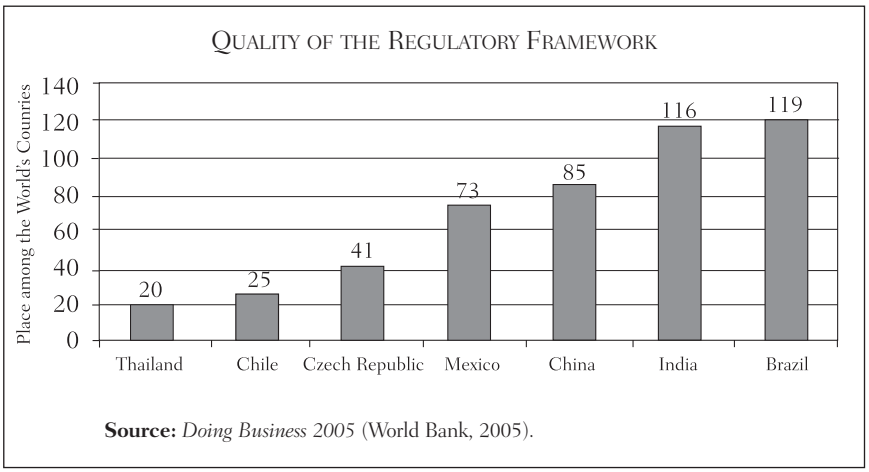
> Of greater concern is the growing emergence of informal micro-businesses from 2002 to 2004 in contrast with the decline in formal micro-businesses in the same period.

According to the last *Cuenta Satélite del Subsector Informal* (Satellite Account of the Informal Sub-Sector), published by INEGI in 2002, gross output in this sector came to 987.55 billion pesos in that year. But when this sum was broken down by kind of economic activity, "trade, and informal restaurants and hotels" (which includes itinerant and street sales) accounted for 318.90 billion pesos, or 32.3 percent of the total. This means that there are other kinds of informal activities that cannot be left out of any serious analysis, particularly considering that "services" and "manufacturing" represented 33.8 percent and 18.1 percent respectively of the informal sector's gross output.

The Informal Economy: An Attractive Alternative Job Market

In June 2002, William Maloney presented a research document at Stanford University about the Mexican labor market. He came to several interesting conclusions for understanding why informal job opportunities continue to exist. First of all, he says that the Mexican labor market is highly dynamic, considering the relatively rapid turnover rate for workers changing from one job to another. More concretely, in manufacturing, workers remain in the same job for an average of five and a half years, a relatively short time in comparison with other countries. It is even more surprising to see that in a six-month period in the same sector, 85 percent of workers who changed jobs had resigned, not been fired or laid off. A large number of these workers end up self-employed or with a job in the informal sector. Maloney reports that by 1992, in the middle of an economic boom in Mexico, 70 percent of those who left their formal jobs to go into the informal market did so to increase their incomes or achieve more flexible working conditions.

Although it is often thought that wages in the formal sector are higher than in the informal sector, this is questionable. The first figure that brings this into doubt is the fact that in 1992, formal sector workers who went into the informal sector reported an increase in income of around 25 percent, while those who moved from the informal to the formal sector only reported an increase of 15 percent. The differences in income between the workers in the two sectors can be explained mainly by three factors: those in the informal sector must earn more since they need to compensate for the lack of fringe benefits afforded by jobs in the formal sector; secondly, they must also have higher incomes because of the risks they run, the implicit costs of the capital they invest and the value of unpaid work by family members who work in their informal economic activities; and third, formal sector workers' gross wage would tend to be greater than those in



Source: *Doing Business 2005* (World Bank, 2005).

the informal sector to compensate for the former's paying taxes. For this reason, it is not necessarily clear in which sector workers earn more.

With regard to the fringe benefits afforded to workers with formal sector jobs, it is not clear if they compensate for the dues or deductions in the wages that must be paid. To quote one paradigmatic example, when a worker signs up with the IMSS, he/she receives medical coverage for him/herself and some members of his/her family. This implies that a second family with a formal job whose paycheck deducts the IMSS fees for his/her membership receives no benefit (because he/she is already benefitting free from the first family member's deduction), and therefore he/she will avoid at all costs paying the fee (thus earning less) to be signed up with the IMSS. This is the same as saying that this second —or third or fourth— family member will prefer a job classified as informal in which he/she will not incur these costs.[2]

Finally, it is important to emphasize that between 1990 and 1992, when the Mexican economy enjoyed sustained growth, formal employment shrank and informal employment expanded.[3] What is more, wage increases in the informal sector surpassed those of the formal sector (relative wage increases). While these figures are not conclusive, at least they show that informal employment has become an attractive alternative for a large number of Mexicans.

WHY GO INTO THE INFORMAL SECTOR?

Informal employment being perceived as an attractive alternative for a large percentage of the active work force does not mean that we are inevitably condemned to informality. Public policies do exist that can contribute to making the formal sector more attractive than the non-structured sector.

According to Maloney's study, companies decide on different levels of formality because they incur different costs and benefits from regulatory requirements.[4] Smaller companies tend to demand less participation in the institutions of formality since their relative costs are higher and they receive fewer benefits.

An examination of the information gleaned from different surveys about Mexico's informal sector shows that small companies tend to have three specific characteristics: they are new; they have limited information about the markets they are immersed in; and, therefore, they run a high risk of going bankrupt. These three variables, together with their very inefficient operations, result in their opting to vary more or less from formal functioning. That is, as Maloney said, causality goes from inefficiency to informality since for these small, new companies, it is unclear whether paying the costs of formality is worth it. As they grow, the likelihood that they will go bankrupt lessens and, analogously, their need to obtain the benefits of formality (such as legally binding contracts, access to capital and the entry into larger markets, just to mention a few) increases.

However, the cost of formality is by no means a constant; rather, it varies according to each country's regulatory framework. There is a general consensus that an improvement in institutional quality decreases the size of the shadow economy.[5] The World Bank *Doing Business* studies aim to investigate the way in which regulations are incentives for or a brake on entrepreneurial activities in different countries, with the aim of proposing reforms to facilitate the opening of businesses to create new job opportunities.[6] In order to evaluate a country's regulatory framework, the study presents comparable quantitative indicators of conditions and help available for opening businesses there; these indicators are used as tools of economic analysis to identify the reforms needed to create those conditions.

The result of the study puts Mexico in seventy-third place worldwide (barely above El Salvador, Jordan and Sri Lanka), while countries like Kenya, Peru and Uganda have better regulations. It is worth pointing out that the

two most alarming aspects of the Mexican regulatory framework are "protection of investors" and the "flexibility of the labor market." Mexico occupies 125th place for both indicators and is comparable to Haiti, Jordan, Senegal and Guatemala. However, we should recognize that with regard to "ease of closing a business", Mexico's regulatory framework occupies twenty-second place, comparable to New Zealand, the United States, Sweden and Denmark.

The alarming thing is the odyssey and average citizen would have to undertake to open and operate a formal business in Mexico. According to *Doing Business 2005*, an entrepreneur who wants to open a business and comply with all the regulations would have to go through 58 days of red tape, carrying out nine different procedures, even today when the government SARE program is up and running.[7] If the businessman or woman had to register his/her property, it would take him/her 74 days to do it. Supposing that he or she wanted to get an operating license, it would take him/her 222 days to carry out 12 different governmental procedures. If this hypothetical entrepreneur managed to "survive" all of this and wanted to pay taxes from his/her first day of operations, it would take him/her 536 hours to make 49 different payments. Even more, if he/she had to lay off staff, it would cost him/her the equivalent of 74 weeks wages per worker. Finally, if the company had to enforce a contract, it would take 420 days to carry out 37 different procedures to get a resolution.

Most probably, whoever attempted to open and operate a business would opt for some degree of informality along the way. That is, he/she would decide not to comply with one or another of Mexico's regulations. In summary, opening up a fully formal business in Mexico would require an inexhaustible store of patience.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The shadow economy should not be neglected: it is a priority on the country's political and economic agenda. The next administration will have to be clear that unofficial activity is a worldwide phenomenon which is difficult to explain and today is part of many of the country's economic activities. It will also be necessary to take into account that informality can be explained as a way forward that is an attractive alternative and not necessarily the response to a lack of growth. Therefore, actions must be aimed at improving the regulatory framework, which has a direct impact on the size and nature of this phenomenon, to make it lest costly to become part of the formal sector of the economy. That is, making it easier to access formality as a way to fight informality.

The public policies the country demands for the next presidential term —particularly in fiscal and labor matters and the simplification of the regulatory framework— cannot wait. If they are not well designed and implemented, Mexico runs three risks: questioning the rule of law and therefore negatively affecting flows of foreign direct investment; weakening tax collection; and putting a growing sector of the work force at risk in terms of their labor rights.

If this is not dealt with, these risks will eventually translate into a drop in living standards. VM

NOTES

[1] By regulations, we understand forms of long-term contracts in which institutions offer services to companies, which in exchange must pay fees or taxes. That is, there is a supply of regulations that are then demanded by every economic unit and, therefore become part of their productive process. See Eugenio Rivera Urrutia, "Teorías de la regulación en la perspectiva de las políticas públicas," *Gestión y Política Pública* no. 2, vol. 13 (2004).

[2] To explain what we mean by "second family member," let us look at an example: if in a four-person family (father, mother and two children), the father is affiliated to the IMSS, the mother has no incentive to work in a formal job (and therefore receive the benefit of medical care) since it is sufficient to have one family member signed up with the IMSS to get coverage for the entire family. This is why this study says that this is the reason someone in that situation would prefer an informal to a formal job, since he/she would prefer to not pay for the cost of health care and other social benefits.

[3] GDP growth in 1990, 1991 and 1992 was 4.4 percent, 3.6 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively.

[4] W. F. Maloney, "Distortion and Protection in the Mexican Labor Market," at http://scid.stanford.edu/pdf/credpr138.pdf

[5] See Alex Dreher *et al*., "How Do Institutions Affect Corruption and the Shadow Economy," at http://econwpa.wustl.edu:8089/eps/pe/papers/0502/0502012.pdf. Also recommended is the article by E. Friedman, S. Johnson, D. Kaufmann and P. Zoido-Lobaton, "Dodging the Grabbing Hand: The Determinants of Unofficial Activity in 69 Countries," *Journal of Public Economics* 76 (2000), pp. 459-493.

[6] World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, "Doing Business in 2006: Creating Jobs," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank/International Finance Corporation, 2005).

[7] The SARE program stands for the Quick Company Opening System, a program of the Federal Commission for Regulatory Improvement (Cofermer), which went into effect March 1, 2002.

30 Universidades

• JULIO - DICIEMBRE DE 2005 •

Seis reflexiones en torno al libro
Feminización de la matrícula de educación superior en América Latina y el Caribe
Daniel Cazés

Medidas flexibles de gestión de desplazamientos en zonas urbanas: hacia la sistematización de planes de integrales de movilidad
Oscar Sánchez

Presentación del libro
Feminización de la matrícula de educación superior en América Latina y el Caribe
Rosaura Ruiz

El protagónico rol de las universidades en la gestación de los nuevos procesos democráticos
Miguel Avendaño Berríos

Algunos problemas de la enseñanza de la historia reciente en América Latina
Coralia Gutiérrez Álvarez

Calidad de vida y medio ambiente
La psicología ambiental
Graciela Baldi López y Eleonora García Quiroga

Sección Cultural
La Maga

Unión de Universidades de América Latin

Suscripcione

Circuito norponiente de Ciudad Universitaria, México, D.F., 04510 Tel: (55) 5622 0093 Fax: (55) 5616 21

correo-e: udual1@servidor.unam.mx página web: http://www.udual.o

De venta en librerías universitarias, Fondo de Cultura Económica y Gand

The Alternative Voices of the 4th World Water Forum

Gabriela Angeles Serrano*

Carlos Guzmán/Cuartoscuro

Introduction

Since water is the basis of life on our planet and an essential resource for the progress of humanity, undoubtedly one of this year's most important international events is the 4th World Water Forum, held March 16 to 22, 2006 in Mexico City.[1]

Its sessions' crosscutting themes were water management for food and the maintenance of ecosystems and water for growth, development and sanitation that we all have the right to. But what concrete proposals are there for using this resource in this way at the same time that we reduce risks? The sessions were planned taking into consideration the commitments made in past summits to share the advances in the application of measures to improve local water management.

We should ask ourselves about how possible it is for a world forum, whose main goal is to explicitly include the exchange of experiences among a multiplicity of the highest level stakeholders, to really motivate participation and dialogue since locally, people do not share the idea that global accords can directly be implemented successfully given the multiplicity and

* Researcher at the CISAN.
ganserr@servidor.unam. mx

In recent decades the problem of environmental deterioration linked to social inequality and poverty has made it necessary to reformulate the meaning of the term "progress".

diversity of geographic areas and interests.[2]

Despite the diversity of conditions and interests, it has been nine years since the first world forum in Morocco and interest in the issue clearly has not declined. On the contrary, more and more representatives from different spheres have come with a broad spectrum of proposals and expectations.[3] A large number of non-governmental organizations, scientists, professionals, academics, businesspersons and other members of civil society attended.

It was a big contrast to see sunburned peasants wearing cowboy hats attending the sessions and eating next to high governmental officials, scientists and international delegates. The presence of poor delegates is particularly noteworthy because the registration fee of U.S.$240 to U.S.$600 was too expensive for anyone who did not have the economic backing of a public or private organization.

To get an idea of participants' profiles, we should first of all consider that the forum was co-organized and promoted by the World Water Council (WWC) and the National Water Commission (Conagua), the host organization.[4] The characteristics of both the organizers and the forum make it easy to foresee the exclusion of certain sectors with limited or no presence among these high-level circles, despite the legitimacy of their interests.

For some local interest groups, for example, the 4th World Water Forum proposes and defends an ideological platform conceived from the highest levels of power. This fact alone brings into doubt the authenticity of its interest in disseminating plural, diverse opinions about water, one of the issues that has some of the greatest political implications capable of generating conflicts of interest on a world scale.

However, it was a great surprise to hear the voices of participants and panelists alike who opposed official positions, and to see anti-forum participants distributing pamphlets and inviting people to so-called local "empowerment sessions". These people echoed deeper scientific postulations and promoters of social inclusion in demanding an agenda centered not on certainties, but on the great challenges and the difficulties in facing them.

How much were these voices and alternative proposals represented and how were their proposals included? The answer to these questions would allow us to determine whether the positions for and against the spirit of the forum are completely antagonistic or if some level of consensus is feasible that would make convergence and, in the long run, the prevention of conflicts possible. In this article, I explore this point, based on an overview of the main debates and the profile of the different proponents. Then, I will briefly deal with the issues and challenges that emerged from the sessions, and conclude with the matter of how "alternative" proposals were represented in the final declaration.

The Big Debates and Their Proponents

This forum's central objective was to share experiences and learn from one another. Despite its simplicity, this idea, present in the inaugural speeches, reflects a strong practical bent and puts forward a difficult-to-achieve goal. That is because learning is complicated by sharp ideological clashes, as Loïc Fauchon, this year's co-president and the president of the WWC, in the inaugural session, pointed out when he said that no issue is as big a concern and matter for disagreement worldwide as water.[5]

In the sessions led by international organizations like the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Global Water Partnership, among others, the discourse was moderate, perhaps given the global strength of groups fighting against the participation of multinational corporations in water management. These discourses that apparently included more opposing opinions touched only tangentially on the controversies that emerged in previous fora since, from their perspective, those discussions limited the establishment of mechanisms for cooperation and the achievement of common goals. An example of this attitude was that these institutions relegated to

second place the debate about whether water should be considered a human right or an economic good subjected to market forces as well as the controversies about whether processes of deregulation, privatization and decentralization are the only means for channeling demands effectively. They also consider the conflicts of interests that these issues are creating in all spheres a secondary matter.

By contrast, the great dilemmas that water management and the conflicts it can create were discussed. For example, David Grey, from the World Bank, spoke about the differences that can exist between local and global interests and between current demands and future necessities. He accepted that they could be legitimate, though counterposed interests, and therefore expressed the need to advance beyond a "minimum platform" of accords. Nevertheless, the effort to include these debating points was unsuccessful: what was considered important was satisfying the global need for financial resources and investment in infrastructure as a means to successfully deal with the vulnerability of many regions exposed to climate change and thus advance in meeting the millennium goals.[6]

This moderate discourse may be understandable in light of an ideology sustained by a great many discourses emanating from international institutions, but also from national agencies, private enterprise and government representatives of Mexico and other countries. Another vein of this ideology may be the WWC view regarding the human right to water:

> "The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. An adequate amount of safe water is necessary to prevent death from dehydration, reduce the risk of water-related disease and provide for consumption, cooking, personal and domestic hygienic requirements."[7]

In view of this, it would seem that the principle of the right to water is limited to covering the basic necessities.[8] On the other hand, the acceptance of this principle by governments worldwide would seem to indicate that there is consensus that every individual should have access to a minimum amount of water for covering his/her needs. Up to this point, we would all seem to be in agreement. However, when we discuss what the key local action should be for achieving the goal of "water for all," the voices emphasizing the lack of resources to invest in infrastructure and the strategies for increasing it managed to make themselves heard over those that underlined the need to improve technical and institutional capabilities of local and community inhabitants as the means to strengthen their autonomy in managing their resources without requiring financing of any kind.

People went so far as to say that the debate about counterposing public and private water management was a false one given the successful experiences in local management when a public, community effort has included private participation. At the end of the day, as the OECD and the World Bank said, it does not matter where the resources come from; what matters is getting enough of them to take the local action required and prevent the risks associated with water scarcity. Nevertheless, the alternative voices disagreed with this position and asked for the public-private controversy about water to be reformulated as a political priority.

In this context, in his magnificent presentation, Erik Swyngedouw suggested that before taking concrete action, the political nature of the water issue should be recognized, as well as the limits of market forces, particularly when dealing with social and environmental problems. Thus, the dilemma between public or private participation was reaffirmed, analyzing both from the perspective of equality, community and citizens' autonomy, environmental deterioration and the responsibility for it. Therefore, the issue of water and its unequal distribution was also examined from the socio-economic and political standpoint and not just as a matter of geographical, demographic or climate change heterogeneity.

For its part, the "highest-level" discourse argued for a consensus, emphasizing that at the forum, no one was

Guaranteeing water as a human right continues to be a topic of discussion for bodies like the WWC, whose aims favor this principle and are oriented to finding a way to concretize it.

trying to impose privatization, since, as Mexican Minister of Environment and Natural Resources José Luis Luege Tamargo said, "This debate is about a dialogue and sharing ideas." However, at the same time, he welcomed private and foreign investment for sanitation infrastructure. To justify this contradiction, he reiterated that having efficient public bodies and greater social commitment did not solve the problem of infrastructure and the challenges implied in comprehensive management of water resources. Despite this argument, the debates continued at the forum about this supposed public need for infrastructure. However, it is not enough to know that these investments foster development and create jobs. What must be clarified is up to what point taxpayers would be taking on the responsibility for paying for a raw material, water, destined to insure the maintenance of very lucrative private, multinational businesses.[9]

EMERGING ISSUES AND NEW CHALLENGES

Water is a political issue. This means that it can create greater polarization if we consider the participation of broad sectors on all levels, something that could be seen at the forum when new key issues emerged during the discussions that to a certain extent revealed the complexity of social and environmental phenomena that are difficult to see and deal with using current focuses. Although paradoxically it was not recognized in the final declarations, some of these emerging themes are of strategic importance for developing countries and particularly for Mexico:

The issue of water and its unequal distribution was also examined from the socio-economic and political standpoint and not just as a matter of geographical, demographic or climate change heterogeneity.

1) *Transborder water management*. This matter requires further attention in light of free trade agreements given the existing legal vacuum which gives multinationals the power to control all forms of commercialization not explicitly regulated by treaties as currently written.
2) *The protection and sustainable management of underground water and water ecosystems*. These are necessary if we consider strategic means to deal with climate variability and environmental deterioration. More than investing in infrastructure, this would imply reconsidering priorities regarding water.
3) *Empowerment of communities and the citizenry.* This would give the population autonomy in managing its resources based on a new culture that would make water, conceived as a human right, a priority.
4) *The governability of water*. This implies recognizing everyone's right to water and the obligation to act ethically when dealing with the challenges its management brings with it.

THE BIG CONCLUSIONS: WATER FOR ALL?

Despite the only slight optimism about the forum's plurality and objectivity, it is true that many voices did make themselves heard and the most important debates did happen. However, the people who talked about privatization never managed to dialogue with those who defended access to water as a human right, and vice versa, despite the success stories told by the proponents of both models. Thus, voices were heard affirming that public participation improved access to water and increased communities' autonomy, but others said that private participation "educated" communities in caring for their resources. Despite this back and forth of ideas, access to water was not declared a fundamental human right.[10]

The question remains whether the forum's organizers considered it a total failure or a resounding success. Given its format and the presence of many interests, it is not out of the question to think that the objective was to consolidate strategies to strengthen the influence and local control over resources and in this way increase profits from investments and minimize the conflicts that could arise from the existence of alternative positions and values that, to our surprise, were also presented at the forum.[11]

Although these voices could be heard loud and clear, presenting solid arguments based more on fact than theory, at the end of the forum, the doubt remained about whether there could have been greater consensus or at least

if it would have been possible to strike a chord amongst those who were reluctant to learn from others. Unfortunately, there was never enough time to ask these and other questions. VM

NOTES

[1] In recent decades the problem of environmental deterioration linked to social inequality and poverty makes it necessary to reformulate the meaning of the term "progress" to at least question its ethical basis. Thus, for example, we should ask ourselves whether it is ethical to move entire populations from their places of origin or take away their traditional means of subsistence in order to consolidate an economic development project like the construction of a hydroelectric plant or an industrial belt.

[2] I am referring particularly to groups that are fighting to maintain structural living conditions and autonomous organization in their communities, such as indigenous confederations, *ejido* collective farm members and peasants, as well as some sectors of academics and social scientists committed to different causes like the fight against big dam projects.

[3] Many meetings with alternative proposals and evident social commitment were held in Mexico City parallel to the official forum. However, I was surprised by the active participation in the official forum itself of activist committees like the one made up of people from Baja California against the relining of the All American Canal.

[4] The WWC was founded in 1996 as a multilateral platform that brings together a variety of high-level actors, including explicit and implicit links to the governments of several countries, the United Nations, the World Bank and different ministries and national, regional and global public and private networks. In September 2005, the World Water Council was granted special consultative status by the UN Economic and Social Council. This special status gives the council the opportunity to designate official representatives to the United Nations headquarters in New York and their offices in Geneva and Vienna (www.worldwatercouncil.org). Conagua is Mexico's autonomous federal body with full authority to manage and preserve Mexico's water resources, and is obviously an active partner in the WWC.

[5] Fauchon heads up one of the main subsidiaries of SUEZ, one of the most profitable multinationals in the water industry.

[6] At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders signed the Millennium Declaration which inspired the eight objectives included in the Millennium Development document, and the 18 goals, including the one that proposes that by 2015, the number of people without access to drinking water should be reduced by half. <www.un.org/millenniumgoals>, consulted March 30, 2006.

[7] Guaranteeing water as a human right continues to be a topic of discussion for bodies like the WWC whose aims favor this principle and are oriented to finding a way to concretize it in rural and urban projects. See *General Comment* 15, CESCR, 2002 at <www.worldwatercouncil.org>, consulted March 29, 2006.

[8] In some sessions, it was even proposed that 30 liters of free drinking water was the minimum amount any individual should have access to. In the case of Mexico City, given the uncertainty about the amount of potable water piped into houses, many people pay between four and ten pesos a liter for purified water. During the 4th Forum, a 500-milliliter bottle of water sold for 15 pesos.

[9] In North America alone, the water industry's annual profits come to more than U.S.$115.8 billion in the United States, U.S.$1.084 billion in Canada and U.S.$707 million in Mexico. In all three cases, the industry's growth in the first decade of this century will be over 20 percent. See <www. datamonitor.com>.

[10] The almost 150 countries who were signatories to the final declaration of the 4th World Water Forum did not want to include the access to water as one of the fundamental rights of human beings as Venezuela, Cuba, Uruguay and Bolivia proposed.

[11] At the end of the forum, the weakest voices continued to argue for the right to develop their communities, to preserve the quality of their rivers and lagoons and to autonomously decide to carry out economic activities in their lands with better living and health conditions.

PROBLEMAS DEL
Desarrollo
REVISTA LATINOAMERICANA DE ECONOMÍA

Publicación trimestral del Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Vol. 37, núm. 144, enero-marzo, 2006

ÍNDICE

A la venta en librerías de la UNAM. Suscripciones y ventas: Depto. de Ventas del IIEc: Torre II de Humanidades, 1er. piso, Ciudad Universitaria, 04510, México, D.F., MÉXICO o al A.P. 20-721, 01000, México, D.F., MÉXICO. Tel.: (52-55) 5623-0080, Fax: (52-55) 5623-0124, 5623-0097. Correo electrónico: *ventiiec@servidor.unam.mx*. *revprode@servidor.unam.mx*
Colaboraciones: Departamento de la Revista: Torre II de Humanidades, 5o. piso, Cubículo 515, Tels.: (52-55) 5623-0105, 5623-0074, Tel./fax: (52-55) 5623-0097, con atención de la directora, doctora Esther Iglesias Lesaga. Correo electrónico:
revprode@servidor.unam.mx
Consultar la página:
Http://www.iiec.unam.mx/problemas_del_desarrollo.htm

Votes, the Media and Campaigns
Four Myths About Communications and Politics

Raúl Trejo Delarbre*

PRI/Cuartoscuro

Today, no national political campaign can be successful without the broadcast media. Candidates and parties, governments and institutions all seek attention in the media to reach society. Thus, they subordinate what they want to say to television and radio formats. So, they end up saying only what they are allowed to say.

The media has monopolized the public arena to such an extent that its approval seems indispensable for the success of any effort at publicity and campaigning. As everyone knows, broadcast media companies shade, temper and even determine the public affairs agenda according to their interests.

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Social Research. rtrejo@servidor.unam.mx

But it is one thing for television and radio to be irreplaceable in forging consensuses in contemporary societies, and it is quite another for them be so omnipotent that the rest of the powers in society (state, political, judicial and formal powers) should be subordinate to them. The power of the media is important, but it is often magnified out of ignorance, obfuscation or just getting too comfortable.

Most state officials, political leaders and legislators believe, at least in Mexico, that the media has unlimited power. They forget that in societies like ours, the media is, or should be, limited by legal frameworks, social demands and the action of state institutions. Together with this, they overlook the existence of other sources of information and persuasion —social and family surroundings, the context, experi-

ence, etc.— that citizens pay as much, or more, attention to than the media.

Precisely because it has singular, and habitually excessive, power and because it has a daily, intense capability to influence society, it is important that the broadcast media be competitive and plural and that both the state and society itself continually make demands upon it. When this does not happen, like in Mexico, then the broadcast media behaves as if it were a superlative power.

It is natural for communications companies to want to dominate like they have in Mexico today with a power that often subjugates governments, parliaments and institutions. And it is not often that those profiting from power want to get rid of or stop exercising it. The most disturbing thing in the Mexican case is that among what some call the political class and, in general, in the state institutions responsible for organizing and guaranteeing society's ability to get along, the fear of the media amplifies these companies' already important power. Particularly during the administration of President Vicente Fox (2000-2006), the federal government's subjection to the ambitions of Mexico's two television monopolies, the reluctance of all the political parties to meet the challenge that they mean for democracy in the country and the docility the vast majority of federal deputies and senators *vis-à-vis* the television corporations have been part of the causes of the state's paralysis and subordination to the power of the media.

Within this panorama, it may be useful to delimit what the mass media is capable of —and what it is not— with regard to electoral processes. In the following pages, I will analyze four myths that are frequently repeated about the relationship between the media and politics.

First Myth: Elections Are Decided in the Media

Present almost in every public space today, the mass media has undeniable, often unavoidable, weight in forging public opinion. Above all, the media is the most important conduit for people finding out about public affairs. What candidates say and do during a political campaign is made known through the mass media before any other means.

Today, television is the main source of socialization of public affairs. People are informed by it although they later supplement the knowledge gained there by consuming other media and additional spaces of socialization, depending on the groups and relational circuits each individual has.

In addition to information, as we all know, the mass media generates a large number of opinions about the facts they inform their audiences of. The very selection and editing of that information implies preferences, decisions and biases in the presentation of public affairs. And, of course, the political opinions of presenters, reporters and announcers, whether expressed explicitly or not, influence one way or another in the value judgments people make about these affairs.

> The media has monopolized the public arena to such an extent that its approval seems indispensable for the success of any effort at publicity and campaigning.

According to *Reforma* newspaper polls, during Mexico's 2000 electoral season, 66 percent of citizens said they heard the news on television, but only 47 percent said they believed "a great deal" or "something" of what they heard on those broadcasts. This is what Alejandro Moreno, the head of the polling process called a "credibility deficit." "At least one-fifth of the electorate gets its information about politics from television, but people do not believe what they see and hear," he said.[1] And the importance of other sources for finding out about public affairs but also to discuss them —that is, to forge an opinion about them— is so great that it is noteworthy how underestimated they are in political parties' campaign strategy design.

Campaigning fundamentally based on merchandising in the large mass media often underestimates the role of conversations in the family and on the job, among other places. On election day in 2000, the *Reforma* newspaper reported that exit polls showed that 64 percent of voters had heard "a great deal" or "something" about the news thanks to their personal relationships. These answers led *Reforma*'s polling specialist to conclude that, "Conversations with the family and friends are the second most credible source of information for Mexican voters: 44 percent said they believed a great deal or something about pres-

Precisely because it has singular, and habitually excessive, power and it has a daily, intense capability to influence society, it is important that the broadcast media be competitive and plural.

idential candidates, compared with 47 percent who believed television news; 41 percent, radio news; 40 percent, newspapers; and 37 percent, other people who are not relatives or friends. Almost certainly, however, what these voters talk about or find out from friends and relatives is a reproduction and, in the best of cases, a reinterpretation of what was seen and heard on television."[2] This process of reinterpretation opens an important margin for citizens to have opinions that do not necessarily agree with the ones the mass media is trying to induce.

It is clear that the media has an influence, but from there to say that its influence is so strong that it ends up defining election results in contemporary societies, there is a distance well worth very prudent contemplation. The mass media is no doubt one of the essential factors in defining political opinions, though not the only one and, on occasions, not even the most decisive one.

Second Myth: The Media Has the Same Influence Throughout Society

In any mass society, media audiences are, by definition, heterogeneous. People have different interests, preferences and contexts. That is why research into the media and its effects has been able to say, as Mexican analyst Francisco de Jesús Aceves clearly explains, "The audience is not a monolithic conglomerate. Quite to the contrary, there are important sexual, age and socio-cultural differences. This diversity will also determine the media's capacity to influence."[3]

For several decades now, the most serious studies in the field of mass communications have rejected improvised or hurried interpretations that attributed the media with a capability of manipulating and influence so overwhelming that, as some authors supposed, its content could be just injected into people like with a hypodermic syringe. At this point in communications research, it has been established that the media of course has enormous influence on society's behavior and opinions, but always in accordance with the circumstances of each segment of its audience and, naturally, according to the circumstances and the intensity of exposure.

Depending on their content, some messages will have more influence among women than men and others will be more persuasive among young people or the unemployed, for example. Still others will have scant influence in a society saturated by content of all kinds, among which those of a political nature get mixed up in a sea of offers, incitements and media demands. So, supposing that a message designed to prompt intense impressions or reactions will be able to change people's vote is a way of overestimating the effect the media has on electoral processes.

Third Myth: Electoral Propaganda Does Not Compromise Parties

In 2006 the Mexican state, through the Federal Electoral Institute, will earmark almost 4.2 billion pesos in contributions for national political parties' operating and campaign costs. The decision that the state finances the largest part of party expenditures is one of the key norms that this country has managed to establish in electoral matters. Because they depend basically on a state subsidy, the parties are safe from the risk of being funded by illegal or extra-legal groups. When private and/or unregistered backing exceeds legal limits, the parties can be sanctioned. This happened to the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the National Action Party, which were fined about one billion pesos and half a billion pesos, respectively, because of irregularities discovered by electoral authorities in the cases known as Pemexgate and the "Friends of Fox".

Together with safeguards like this, being funded with tax monies has been one of the most important guarantees of political party independence. However, seen from another perspective, being given large sums of money has caused the parties' growing dependence on the media. Because they have large sums of money —which once they are legally registered they no longer attempt to get for themselves because it is one of the prerogatives they obtain from the state— the parties can buy sizeable

It is natural for communications companies
to want to dominate like they have in Mexico today with a power
that often subjugates governments, parliaments and institutions.

quantities of publicity spots in the media, particularly the broadcast media. This right, part of the rules of equality in Mexico's electoral processes, hypothetically allows political messages to be more widely and better known by the citizenry. But it also has at least three perverse consequences.

The first is the preeminence of media buys over other kinds of political activity. The media message allows the parties and their candidates to reach more people with less effort. But the effects of campaigning at a distance are not always better than the work done close up in public meetings or thanks to other kinds of contact with the citizenry.

In the second place, the supremacy of media ads molds campaigns according to the formats and demands of the electronic media, to the degree that campaign speeches, statements, actions and proposals tend to be reduced to extremely short phrases, sound bites, so concise that it is impossible to express the government project behind them. This style is often prejudicial to the profundity of the political discourse.

A third result of the preponderance of the media over other political tools is the construction of a new relationship based on commercial interests between parties and media corporations. Having vast sums of money to buy ads and competing for air time turn the parties into television and radio customers —spending in the printed media is often substantially less— and they stop acting as the institutional intermediaries of dialogue that under other conditions they often are. This move from being an institutional actor to being a customer of a private company has political consequences when the parties and the media corporations negotiate the purchase of election ads with agreements that go beyond the simple acquisition of space at publicly known prices. In Mexico, for example, the most important television and radio networks frequently offer parties space in addition to what they have bought for electoral ads: interviews on news programs, favorable commentary by informational program hosts, friendly treatment for their candidates on talk shows, and even preferential treatment of their interests in the publication of polls are all part of what the media offers the parties so that they spend their considerable funds with them.[4] In 2006, Mexican parties will invest between 60 percent and 70 percent of their federal campaign funds in ad buys, fundamentally from the broadcast media.

FOURTH MYTH: MORE PRESENCE IN THE MEDIA LEADS TO A HIGHER VOTE COUNT

When they find it easier to spend tax monies on ad buys than making an effort at other ways of doing politics, the parties are feeding a grievous and, to a certain extent, deceptive vicious cycle: since they are convinced of the supremacy of media publicity, they earmark increasing amounts of funds to it. And given that that investment makes for expanded presence on television and radio, the citizenry and political leaders are feeding the omnipresence of the media in public affairs.

In each of Mexico's national elections, at least since the end of the 1980s, it has been shown that there is not necessarily a direct correlation between a party or candidate's presence in the mass media and their vote count.

In 1988, we began a detailed review of the space Mexico City's main dailies dedicated to national parties' campaigns on a significant sample of dates. The PRI presidential campaign got almost 55 percent of the coverage in those papers; the PAN, 12.3 percent; and the left coalition known as the National Democratic Front (FDN), 17.4 percent. Nevertheless, on election day, official figures put their vote count at 51 percent, 16.8 percent and 27.6 percent respectively.

In the same year, a group of researchers from the University of Guadalajara measured the air time the two main national news broadcasts gave to the presidential campaigns. The coverage was so unilateral that PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari received 92 percent of the air time on those programs. Manuel Clouthier, of the PAN, received only 3.5 percent, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the FDN less than 4 percent. However, the official vote count for the PAN was almost five times greater than the percentage of the time its candidate received on the daily TV news, and that of Cárdenas was seven times higher.[5]

A result of the preponderance of the media over other political tools is the construction of a new relationship based on commercial interests between parties and media corporations.

In the 1994 presidential elections, the PRI received 32 percent of the air time dedicated to the campaign on the two highest rated national TV news programs. It also received more than 34 percent of the time on radio and television news programs throughout the country and 42 percent of the print space in a sample of Mexico City dailies. According to official figures, Ernesto Zedillo, the PRI candidate, received 50.18 percent of the vote.

The PAN presidential candidate, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, was given 17 percent of the air time on the two main news programs, 19 percent on radio and TV news programs nationwide and 12.3 percent of the space in Mexico City dailies. His vote count was 26.7 percent.

Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas received 19 percent of the coverage in the two main TV news broadcasts, 23 percent on television and radio nationwide and 21.3 percent of the space in the Mexico City print media, but only got 17 percent of the vote.

In other words, the PRI and PAN candidates got a higher percentage of the vote than the percentage of their coverage in the broadcast and print media. But the PRD hopeful had more presence in the media than at the polling booth.

The same thing happened in the 2000 presidential elections. PRI candidate Francisco Labastida cornered almost 40 percent of the air time dedicated to presidential campaigns on national radio and television newscasts. He got more coverage than Vicente Fox, the candidate of the coalition headed by the National Action Party, who received 27.4 percent. Fox got a little more coverage on the two most important national television newscasts: 30.7 percent versus Labastida's 28.1 percent. But at the ballot box, Fox received 42.5 percent of the vote, while the PRI candidate got 36.1 percent.

PRD candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas received 20.1 percent of television and radio time nationwide in those elections, 23 percent of the two main telecasts and slightly less than 17 percent of the national vote.

Fox, the winner of the election, received 12 percentage points more in votes than the percentage of the coverage he got on the two main television newscasts and 15 points more than his share of the coverage on radio and television news programs nationwide.

Labastida received eight percent more votes than the coverage he received on the two main TV newscasts, but almost four points less than his coverage on radio and television news programs nationwide. This greater presence on those programs did not jibe with the votes he would get.

Cárdenas and his campaign had decreasing media yields if we evaluate them in the light of his results at the ballot box. His vote count was 6 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively, under the coverage he received on the two main television newscasts and on radio and TV news programs nationwide.

This data deserves further analysis. But we hope that the comments in this article suffice to show that in Mexican electoral campaigns, more space in the media has not necessarily meant more votes on election day. VM

NOTES

[1] Alejandro Moreno, *El votante mexicano. Democracia, actitudes políticas y conducta electoral* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), p. 196.

[2] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

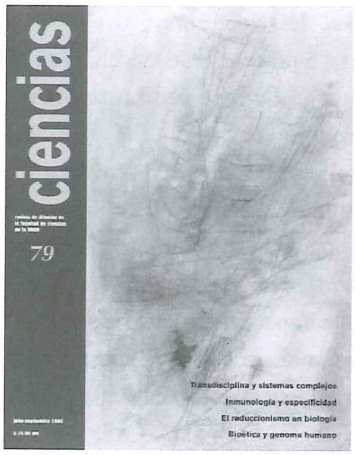
[3] Francisco de Jesús Aceves González, "La influencia de los medios en los procesos electorales. Una panorámica desde la perspectiva de la sociología empírica," *Comunicación y Sociedad* no. 18 and 19 (Guadalajara), May-December 1993, p. 225.

[4] Media corporations can make these offers in exchange for other services by political parties. In March 2006, Televisa proposed preferential treatment for PRI and PAN presidential candidates if their senators voted in favor of legislative reform favoring the company's technological and financial expansion. Several senators from these parties denounced this deal even though the reform, known as the "Televisa Law" passed with the vote of the majority of PRI and PAN legislators. Testimony of this exchange of media protection for legislative favors was published by Senator Manuel Bartlett Díaz in the article "Cómo fue y será esa ley" (What Happened and What that Law Will Be Like) in the *Enfoque* supplement of the Mexico City daily *Reforma* on April 9, 2006.

[5] These figures and those that follow, as well as the methodology used to arrive at them and the complete series of information obtained in the research on media coverage of Mexican elections in 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2000 can be found in Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *Mediocracia sin mediaciones. Prensa, televisión y elecciones* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2001).

ciencias

79 julio-septiembre 2005

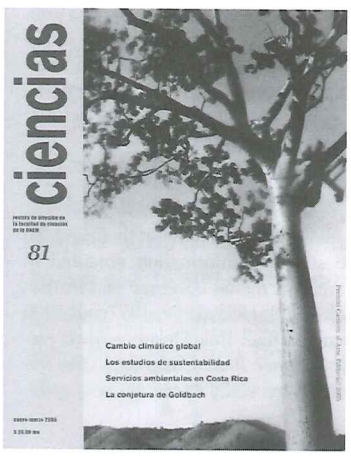


- La interdisciplina desde la teoría de los sistemas complejos
- La metafísica de lo complejo
- La evolución biológica como sistema autorganizado, dinámicas no lineales y sistemas biológicos
- La especificidad inmunológica, historia, escenarios, metáforas y fantasmas
- Reduccionismo y biología en la era postgenómica
- La bioética y el proyecto del genoma humano

80 octubre-diciembre 2005

- 2005, voltear al pasado para mirar el futuro
- Átomos, polen y probabilidades
- La física del siglo XXI
- La hipótesis cuántica de la luz
- Matemáticas, relatividad y filosofía kantiana
- El cine y la era atómica
- Entrevista al matemático Herberto Castillo

81 enero-marzo 2006



- La ecología global
- Los estudios de sustentabilidad
- Servicios ambientales en Costa Rica
- La horticultura indígena amazónica
- Incendios forestales
- ¿Formuló Goldbach la conjetura de Goldbach?

Suscripciones y números anteriores

Cubículos 319, 320, 321
Departamento de Física
Facultad de Ciencias, UNAM
Coyoacán, 04510
México D.F.
Teléfono: 56 22 49 35
Fax: 56 16 03 26
Direcciones electrónicas:
revci@hp.fciencias.unam.mx
http://www.ejournal.unam.mx

The New Harper Government
A Delicate Balance Between Regional and Federal

Elisa Dávalos*

Jason Reed/Reuters

Stephen Harper's government has inherited a healthy economy. The Central Bank has predicted that average growth in 2006 will be three percent, despite a projected international increase in interest rates and a probable drop in the demand for exports to the United States.

In addition to the economic initiatives Harper has proposed (among them the reduction of the Goods and Services Tax, or GST, from 7 to 6 percent, an increase in the military budget and making direct payments to parents of Can$1,200 per year for each child under six), other changes are also expected given the ideological and political career of the recently elected prime minister.[1]

Some analysts foresee a close alliance with President Bush, which has begun to be noted in Harper's statement that Canada will stay out of the Kyoto Protocol. Others interpret this as an answer favoring the large oil companies in Alberta province, which are big polluters and

* Researcher at CISAN.

REGIONAL VOTE BY PROVINCE
(PERCENTAGE)

	LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA (LIB)	PROGRESSIVE CANADIAN PARTY (PCP)	NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA (NDP)	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS (BQ)	OTHERS
Newfoundland	42	42	13	-	-
Prince Edward Island	52	33	9	-	3
Nova Scotia	37	29	29	-	2
New Brunswick	39	35	21	-	2
Quebec	20	24	7	42	-
Ontario	39	35	19	-	4
Manitoba	26	42	25	-	4
Saskatchewan	22	48	24	-	3
Alberta	15	64	11	-	6
British Columbia	27	37	28	-	5

Source: Data from http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes/electionnigth/ [January 23, 2006].

clearly support Harper since his arrival in office.

Actually, Harper and Bush have several differences with regard to values and interests. For example, Canada has firmly defended sovereignty in areas of the Arctic Ocean, given the economic potential it represents in terms of natural resources like water and possibly oil, which has caused irritation in the United States. The Harper government promised to build three military ice-breakers and install a sensitive remote network in the Arctic to detect foreign ships and submarines traveling through the region. These plans to defend Arctic sovereignty would cost approximately Can$5.3 billion.

Another difference with President Bush is that Harper does not defend Christian values to the hilt, although the Conservative Party, under whose leadership the Canadian right unified, does include Christians for whom the defense of family and society values is a priority. In fact, the Conservative Party has had a heated debate about whether to support the legalization of homosexual marriage or not, and Harper seems more disposed to act motivated by political interests and consensuses than to champion moral principles considered key for the development of society.

A fundamental point in Harper's platform has been the so-called "fiscal imbalance" between the federal government and the provinces. He has promised to combat it and to achieve a long-term accord among the provinces to resolve it permanently.

During his political career, his positions on the defense of the market economy, in favor of a small state and greater economic decentralization seem more important, and the latter is key for Canadian federalism.

A fundamental point in his platform has been the so-called "fiscal imbalance" between the federal government and the provinces. While previous Prime Minister Paul Martin denied the existence of such an imbalance, Harper has promised to combat it and that he will achieve a long-term accord among the provinces to resolve it permanently.

This is a burning question in Canada's economic history, and the provincial governments have already begun to discuss it. For example, in Ontario, it has been suggested that the way to achieve fiscal balance between the federal government and the provinces is not only increasing federal transfers, but changing mechanisms for tax collection in order to decrease federal taxes and augment provincial ones.[2]

As the political leader of Alberta province, Harper openly supported economic measures to weaken the power of the federal government and strengthen provincial governments, specifically, though not exclusively, those of the western provinces.

In fact, at the close of the electoral process, after his victory had been announced, Harper stated, "People of the West, let me just say one thing, and let me be clear. The West has wanted in. The West is in now! Canada will work for all of us!"[3] The idea that the West "wants in" alludes to the fact that it had previously considered itself excluded from national decision making.

As prime minister, Harper will have to deal with a series of thorny regional issues, but now from Ottawa, presiding over an entire country with a great diversity of interests and problems.

As the political leader of Alberta province, Harper openly supported economic measures to weaken the power of the federal government and strengthen provincial governments, specifically, though not exclusively, those of the western provinces.

For example, during his political career, Harper has made statements criticizing equalization payments, transfers sent to Canada's less developed provinces. A writer in the *National Post* wrote that Harper "has spent much of his life attacking the policies and institutions that made Canada great," adding, "Harper's open hostility to the role of the national government is completely at odds with Canadian tradition and history."[4] Equalization payments are important for the Atlantic provinces, for Quebec and, in the West, for Manitoba and to a lesser degree, Saskatchewan.

With regard to another regional issue, Atlantic offshore oil, in November 2004, when he was leader of the opposition, Harper stated that Newfoundland's economic development should be achieved following in the footsteps of Alberta, through autonomous management of its oil resources. He exhorted then-Prime Minister Paul Martin "to let Newfoundland and Labrador keep 100 percent of its offshore oil revenues....Alberta's financial arrangements with Ottawa have allowed it to flourish, and Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia should receive similar treatment."[5] These Atlantic provinces managed to establish maritime infrastructure for drilling oil thanks to enormous federal financing, with the commitment of repaying the money using oil revenues.

With regard to the Canadian social welfare system, in 2004, Harper said, "Canada is a Northern European welfare state in the worst sense of the term, and very proud of it. Canadians make no connection between the fact that they are a Northern European welfare state and the fact that we have very low economic growth, a standard of living substantially lower than yours [the United States'], a massive brain drain of young professionals and double the unemployment rate of the United States."[6] This has created fears that Harper will attempt to privatize the Canadian health system, which is publicly managed and provides universal coverage. During his campaign, Harper said that the changes the provinces would like to make to the health system should be based on the Canada Health Act; he has ratified this statement to allay any fears about a possible privatization of the health system. The thing is that Premier Ralph Klein of Alberta, Harper's home province and political base, has put forward the possibility of Canadians' purchasing medical insurance "for non-essential problems", and come out in favor of the so-called "third road" which would allow doctors to offer their services in both private and public health systems.

In Canada, provincial governments have constitutional jurisdiction over health care, and to cover these costs, they receive transfers from the federal government. But if any province violated the Canada Health Act, the federal government could stop transferring the money. Previous liberal governments have warned Alberta that it should stay within the confines of the act. The premier of Saskatchewan, Lorne Calvert, has expressed his concern that Klein could violate the act: "The federal government's job is to ensure the act's principles and values are being adhered to so that Canadians can be confident health care will be provided no matter where they live or what is available in their wallet."[7]

The Canadian health system, together with other social welfare measures, have been an important factor in keeping Canada united, have become part of Canadian identity and have differentiated it from its neighbor to the south, the United States.

Under his mandate, the new prime minister will face the difficult task of reconciling diverse regional interests at the same time that he efficiently takes on his federal responsibilities. Because

of his government's characteristics, the positions Harper takes will depend on how much he negotiates and how far he moves toward the center in order to neutralize the trends of the different positions to stay in power as a minority government.

The expectations created around his platform and declarations include not only that he will constitute a more transparent government, as he clearly stated alluding critically to the rival Liberal Party, but also that he will create a favorable climate for provincial governments, foreseeing possible clashes of interests with the federal government.

Harper maintains good political relations with the population of the West, who supported him, but he also needs to negotiate in the House of Commons with parties whose votes he will need to avoid being brought down like his predecessor. VM

NOTES

[1] http://www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=FC790167-4185-9294-f52ea9e21cf0&k=

[2] http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename_thestar/Layout/Article_PrintFrien (February 14, 2006).

[3] http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes/analysiscommentary/western_cloud.html (February 14, 2006).

[4] http:www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=c6d738b6-4117-9342-40f7c61424aa (February 14, 2006).

[5] http://www.cbc.ca/nl/story/nf_harper_motion_20041104.html

[6] http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes/liderspartes/harper_speech.html (March 9, 2006).

[7] http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/20060126/alberta_private_healthcare_06 (January 30, 2006).

Juárez, Statesman

Patricia Galeana*

Francisco Toledo, *Juárez and the Mexican Republic*, 1990.
D.R. © Francisco Toledo. Photo: Galería Juan Martín.

The people and the government must respect the rights of all. Among individuals as among nations, respect for others' rights is peace.
BENITO JUÁREZ

After 11 years of fighting, Mexico's War of Independence concluded in 1821 with a conciliatory program without structural reforms, and the process of construction of the nation-state began. The following dichotomies were posed to resolve the dilemma of its organization: monarchy or republic; federalism or centralism; conservatism or liberalism.

The different national projects sought the country's political stability through a strong government.[1] The conservatives believed that monarchy was the solution. When the first empire failed, they opted for a unified republican system, then for the dictatorship of military strongman Antonio López de Santa Anna, and finally for establishing a Second Empire with a foreign prince. The liberals, for their part, believed in setting up a federal republic.

Mexican liberalism evolved throughout the nineteenth century. First it fought for independence from the Spanish empire and later for the independence of the state from the military and church forces. There was a failed attempt at reforming the state in 1833; and from 1855 to 1863, the generation headed by Benito Juárez transformed the theocratic, estate-based state into a secular national state. Dismantling the old regime and abolishing the colonial structures cost a three-year civil war and a five-year foreign intervention. The country was divided between two governments for an entire decade.

During this whole period, Juárez was president of the constitutional government. He managed to bring together the liberals and then forge a nation. He achieved respect for civic authority and subjected all forces to a single command. "Without that unity, the idea of a homeland would have evaporated, as happened in the 1847 war."[2]

Juárez led the defense of national sovereignty in the face of foreign intervention, of the republic in the face of the empire, of federalism in the face of centralism and of liberal reform in the face of conservative tradition to establish a secular state.

Juárez occupied posts in municipal, state and federal governments and in the three branches of government. In the judiciary, he was a judge, a magistrate and president of the Supreme Court. In the legislative branch, he was a state and federal deputy. And in the executive branch, he was a city councilman, four times the governor of his state, the minister of justice, church business and public instruction, the minister of the interior and president from 1858 until his death in 1872.

Dubbed "The Worthy of the Americas," he belonged to the most brilliant generation of nineteenth-century Mexico, the generation that fought against the whims of Santa Anna, the military strongman without ideology who became the arbiter of national politics for the first three decades after independence. It was also the generation that suffered the trauma of the loss of more than half the nation's territory after the invasion and war of conquest by the United States. It was one of the generations that, as Arnold Toynbee wrote, instead of disappearing, was strengthened by crisis; the generation that consummated the liberal reform.

Juárez defended national sovereignty in the face of foreign intervention, the republic in the face of the empire, federalism in the face of centralism and liberal reform in the face of conservative tradition to establish a secular state.

A member of the Zapotec nation, he did not learn Spanish until the age of 12. He went from being a servant to a seminarian and then a well-known professional. He was a teacher of Roman, canon and civil law and of experimental physics.[3]

His efficient, honest work as an attorney brought him recognition in the community. Among his legal writings is his proposal about a new form of property, about checks and balances of the branches of government, about direct elections and a law about the administration of justice which was the first step for putting an end to the immunity and privileges of the Catholic Church and the army.[4]

A man of few words, Juárez was convincing more because of the strength of his arguments than his oratory. With his austere appearance, always

* Historian and professor at the UNAM School of Philosophy and Letters.

dressed in black, he was the first civilian to impose his authority over the military. His formality commanded respect and was the personification of authority. He was not only a great politician, but a great statesman, meaning someone who designs long-term public policies that transcend his own moment in history.[5]

Like any good attorney, he always believed that respect for the law was the first step a civilized society needed to take to achieve well-being:

> I believe it my duty to speak to you to urge you to double your efforts to put an end to anarchy, reestablishing the rule of law, the only guarantee of a lasting peace in our country, the only barrier to the bastardized ambitions of those who have founded their well-being in the high positions of the Republic. Outside the Constitution that the Nation has given itself through the free, spontaneous vote of its representatives, all is chaos. Any plan adopted, any promise given outside this fundamental document will lead us inexorably to anarchy and the loss of our Homeland, no matter what the background and position of the men who make it.
>
> Profoundly convinced of this truth and complying with the duty that the law imposes, I did not doubt in picking up the constitutional banner that Don Ignacio Comonfort had handed over to the criminals of reaction. I considered that once legality was lost, anarchy took sway among us because the men of Tacubaya, without the impartial guidance of the law, would be led by their passions from one crime to another...taking with them the peace of the Republic.[6]

He also thought that operating within the law was the only way to legitimize authorities and make them respected by the governed. The law was the only thing that should legitimize the authorities.[7]

In his first inaugural speech as governor of Oaxaca, Juárez declared himself to be a son of the people and a defender of their rights, promising that he would make sure that the people would be educated to abandon "the ways of disorder, vice and poverty".[8] He knew how to govern with the best men and take criticism.

Juárez was not only a great politician, but a great statesman, meaning someone who designs long-term public policies that transcend his own moment in history.

At a turning point in national history, the second independence of Mexico, this time from French intervention, was consummated around Juárez, as was state independence from the Catholic Church and the army.[9]

The Reform Laws passed by Juárez in the midst of the civil war marked the birth of the secular state.[10] Mexico was the third country in the region to decree the absolute separation between church and state after a conflict around the issue.[11] The law of freedom of worship conceived of religious freedom as a natural right of Man, "without any limit except the rights of third parties and the demands of public order."[12]

Juárez fought clericalism, understood as the use of the priestly investiture for purposes other than religious worship and which has even been condemned by the Church itself at different times in its history.[13]

As the French abbe Testory warned the Mexican clergy, when the church becomes a fortress confronted with the state, it is taken like a fortress. That is why the state went from secularizing the clergy's property to its nationalization. Nevertheless, in the words of Francisco de Paula Arrangoiz, one of the most important leaders of Mexican monarchism, the church enjoyed more freedoms under Juárez's republic than under Maximilian's empire.

From the time that Miguel Hidalgo abolished slavery and castes in 1810, ratified by José María Morelos in 1814, the liberals sought to suppress the racial differences of the colonial regime. Everyone was Mexican. Juárez was westernized and became the paradigm of those who in the nineteenth century sought to incorporate indigenous communities into modernity.

With the victory of the liberal republic, thanks to the establishment of free, mandatory primary education, women also gained access to education.[14] Women were able to begin their emancipation through study.

Peoples find their paradigms in the figures that stand out in their history. Mexico has in Juárez the paradigm of the defense of national sovereignty against foreign intervention, of the rule of law versus military coups, of civil society versus corporations, of

secularism versus intolerance and of the defense of the subjected race versus racial discrimination.

From the fight against interventionism came the Juárez Doctrine, according to which no one should seek the recognition of foreign powers in exchange for ruinous treaties, but should demand equal treatment with respect for the dignity that every sovereign state deserves.

This doctrine was ratified by President Venustiano Carranza at the victory of Mexico's 1910 Revolution[15] and later by Foreign Minister Genaro Estrada in his doctrine about the recognition of foreign governments.[16] These principles are included in Article 89 of Mexico's current Constitution which deals with Mexico's foreign policy: the principles of non-intervention, the self-determination of people s, the peaceful solution of controversies, the legal equality of states and the fight for peace.

Mexico, wrote President Juárez, "is a people as free, as sovereign, as independent as the most powerful on earth....Let us have faith in the justice of our cause. Let us have faith in our own efforts, and united we will save our Homeland" and "the principles of respect and the inviolability of the sovereignty of nations."[17]

Certainly, today, these ideals seem utopian. But down through the history of humanity, it has been the utopias that have moved the noblest part of the human spirit. Let us remember that Juárez realized his utopia. VM

NOTES

[1] Edmundo O'Gorman, *México y el trauma de su historia* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1976), p. 87.

[2] José C. Valadés, *Maximiliano y Carlota en México* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1993), pp. 325 on.

[3] Patricia Galeana, *Benito Juárez: el indio zapoteca que reformó a México*, second edition (Madrid: Red Editorial Iberoamericana, 1988).

[4] It was known as the Juárez Law of November 1855.

[5] "In Juárez can be found a finely balanced mix of the statesman and the politician; that is, a man of state, capable of conceiving great plans of government action, and a man versed in political manoeuvering." Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Crítica del poder* (Mexico City: Clío, 1977), pp. 320-326.

[6] Speech of Benito Juárez at the National Palace in Veracruz, December 29, 1858, Jorge L. Tamayo, comp., *Benito Juárez. Documentos, discursos y correspondencia*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional, 1966), p. 431.

[7] "The respectability of the government emanates from the law and honorable action and not from their dress or military apparatuses appropriate only for the kings of theater." Andrés Henestrosa, *Flor y látigo* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura del Distrito Federal, 2006), p. 113.

[8] Speech before Congress after having been sworn in as governor of Oaxaca, October 29, 1847, in Jorge L. Tamayo, comp., *Benito Juárez. Documentos, discursos y correspondencia*, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Editorial Libros de México, 1974), p. 528.

[9] See Benito Juárez's speech on entering Mexico City at the time of the victory of the republic over French intervention and the Second Empire in 1867.

[10] José María de Jesús Diez de Sollano recognized in a memo written to Pius IX in 1861 that the fact that the Mexican government had established the separation of church and state also benefited the former. "Memorándum del señor José María de Jesús Diez de Sollano a Pío IX, 28 de septiembre de 1869," Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs, Fac. 658, p. 201 and its appendix, annex m.

[11] After Haiti and Colombia.

[12] Felipe Tena Ramírez, *Leyes fundamentales de México, 1808-1957* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1957), pp. 660-661.

[13] Ives M. Congar, *Sacerdocio y laicado* (Madrid: Estela, 1964), p. 47.

[14] Juárez's government program of January 20, 1861 states, "Secularizing public establishments will also provide education to women, giving them the importance they deserve by virtue of the influence they exercise in society." "Programa de Gobierno del president Benito Juárez, 20 de enero de 1861," *México a través de los informes presidenciales. La educación pública* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública/Secretaría de la Presidencia, 1976), p. 10.

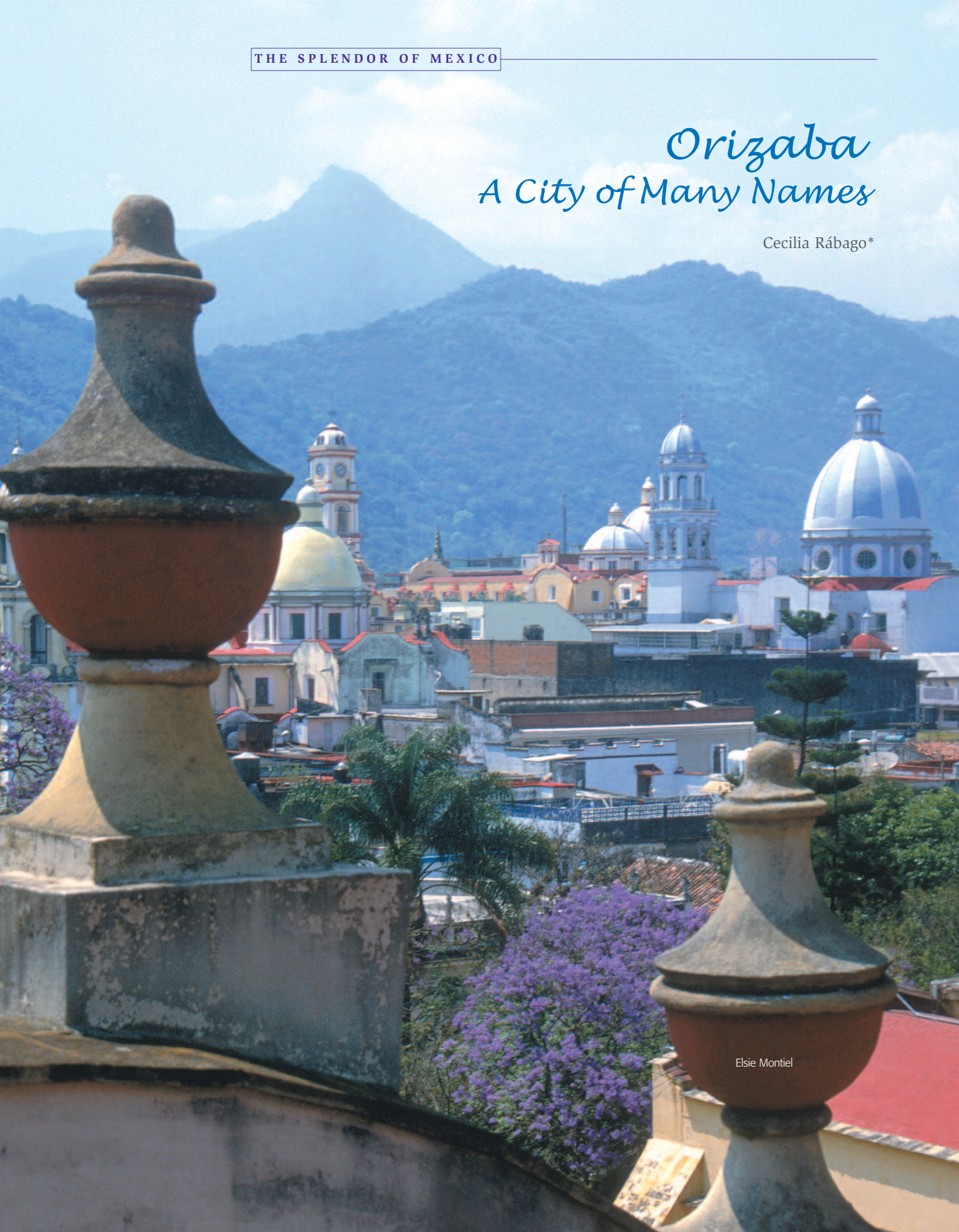
[15] The Carranza Doctrine, stated in his speech when opening Congress on September 1, 1918, emphasizes the same principles as Juárez. "That all countries are equal; they must mutually and scrupulously respect their laws and sovereignty;...that no country must intervene in any way or for any reason in the internal affairs of another. They must all subject themselves strictly and without exception to the universal principle of non-intervention;...that no individual must aspire to a better situation than that of the citizens of the country where he is going to establish himself nor make of his foreign citizenship a badge of protection or privilege. Citizens and foreigners must be equal under the sovereignty of the country they are in; and that the laws must be uniform and equal as far as possible, without establishing distinctions based on nationality, except with regard to the exercise of sovereignty." *La Revolución Mexicana. Textos de su historia*, vol. 4 (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/ Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1985).

[16] In a letter dated September 27, 1930, the Estrada Doctrine stated that Mexico did not recognize or disavow governments and that with absolute respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of nations, it limited itself to withdrawing its representatives if its security was endangered, and to reinstating them when the danger was past.

[17] Jorge L. Tamayo, comp., *Benito Juárez. Documentos, discursos y correspondencia*, vol. 6 (Mexico City: Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional, 1966), p. 246.

Orizaba
A City of Many Names

Cecilia Rábago*



Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

The Iron Palace was brought from Belgium in three ships in the nineteenth century.

Orizaba has had many names. The first was of Nahuatl origin, Ahuializapan, meaning "joy on the water." During the time of the conquistador Hernán Cortés, it was called Oricahua or Ahuilicaba. The current name, Orizaba, was first used in 1559. The poet Rafael Delgado called it "rainy"; the populace called it the city of "Our Lady of the Bridges" because of the 37 bridges crossing the Orizaba River. Today, a tour of the river bank includes 13 of those bridges.

A Little History

Located in a valley of central Veracruz, surrounded by high mountains, at the foot of Citlaltépetl or Orizaba Peak, the area was inhabited in pre-Hispanic times by Toltecs and Totonacs. Shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards, despite ferocious resistance, Ahuilizapan was conquered by the Aztecs who demanded tribute. In the sixteenth century Orizaba was born on what was an old indigenous settlement, and

* Promoter of cultural tours in the high mountain region of Veracruz.

developed thanks to commercial cultivation of sugar cane and then tobacco and trade which sprang from its being the stopping-off-point for travelers between Veracruz, the viceroyalty's main port, and the capital of New Spain. It was at its viceregal height around 1764 when Carlos III established the tobacco monopoly, reserving the cultivation, processing and sale of tobacco to the region of Orizaba, Zongolica and Córdoba.

A century later, the Orizaba Valley became an important industrial area thanks to its climate and topography. Superb waterfalls favored the establishment of many hydro-electrical plants that provided much-needed electricity to the region. With easy communication, Orizaba was the birthplace of the textile industry and has been an important producer of paper, cement and beer. It was also the site for decisive episodes in the history of the early twentieth-century workers movement.

Natural and Cultural Attractions

Surrounded by heights like the easily climbed Borrego and Escámela Hills, Orizaba offers magnificent trails for those who like walks in the open air. Situated in the foothills of the mountains surrounding Orizaba Peak, it is crisscrossed with innumerable, crystal clear, cold springs fed by melting snows that captivate the visitor. At the top of Borrego Hill, an iron cross honors the Mexican soldiers fallen during the battle against invading French troops

The municipal cemetery is interesting not only because of the popular art work displayed in the sculptures over the tombs, but also because it holds the famous "Stone of the Giant" on whose surface pre-Hispanic sculptors carved out figures representing a ritual flaying.

Elsie Montiel

Mauricio Degollado

in 1862. The hill boasts a beautiful view of the city with the bell towers of the San Miguel Cathedral, the San José de Gracia Parish Church, the Calvary Church, the Our Lady of Carmen Church and many more beautiful examples of architecture and sacred art. Orizaba has the largest number of churches, 17, of any city in the state of Veracruz.

One of the most special buildings worthy of a visit is the old Municipal Palace. Built in Belgium in the nineteenth-century European architectural style, its iron structure was sent in pieces to Mexico aboard three steamships. The so-called Iron Palace, an elegant building in the art nouveau style was inaugurated on Independence Day 1894 after overcoming problems like the lack of funds to pay the Belgian manufacturer and the need to even out the marshy ground it was to be erected on. For 90 years, the palace was the town hall, until it was replaced by the current, neo-classical building constructed during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, which houses a mural by José Clemente Orozco.

The State Art Museum, with its large collection of works by Mexican and foreign artists, is housed in a magnificent eighteenth-century religious building. Originally used as the Saint Felipe Neri Oratory in 1776, it was built next to the sanc-

Orizaba was born in the sixteenth century on what was an old indigenous settlement, and developed thanks to commercial cultivation of sugar cane and tobacco, and trade which sprang from its being the stopping-off-point for travelers between Veracruz and Mexico City.

Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

Del Carmen Church. Orizaba has the largest number of churches, 17, of any city in the state of Veracruz.

Elsie Montiel

One of the city's landmarks, the Mier y Pesado Foundation Building.

tuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe; in addition to its religious purposes, for many years it was used as a hospital. The museum has eight rooms and the collection includes works that go from the viceregal period to contemporary art. Some of the rooms exhibit works by artists visiting Veracruz, foreign artists like Rugendas, Humboldt, Heidi or Claudio Linati, who showed the New World to Europe, and works by Mexicans like José María Velasco and Diego Rivera, including a Rivera collection made up of 36 pieces in different techniques and formats.

The municipal cemetery is interesting not only because of the popular art work displayed in the sculptures over the tombs, but also because it holds the famous "Stone of the Giant." This is the popular name for a 8.3-meter x 6.8-meter megalithon on whose surface pre-Hispanic sculptors carved out figures representing a ritual flaying during the ceremony of Tlacaxipehualiztli, celebrated in honor of Xipe Totec. On the surface of the calcareous, slightly chalky, irregular shaped river stone is a figure of a captive warrior being sacrificed, a frog, a picture of Tlaloc and two dates that presumably mark important historical events.

Orizaba, previously an obligatory stopping-off-place for travelers, is today a city with attractions of its own that prompt the contemporary visitor to a longer stay. VM

Elsie Montiel

A walkway along the Orizaba River.

The City of Córdoba A Heroic Past

Cecilia Rábago*

Mauricio Degollado

Exact copy of the Treaties of Córdoba in the Municipal Palace.

Córdoba is a privileged city. Strategically located in central Veracruz, it is within a stone's throw of the port of Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico and an easy distance from Puebla and Mexico City in Central Mexico. Its semi-warm, humid climate has given birth to fertile lands and majestic scenery. Its past includes one of the most important moments in national history. And, as if all that were not enough, it is guarded on the horizon by a snow-capped mountain, Mexico's highest, Orizaba Peak or Citlaltépetl.

Its foundation in 1618 is linked to the constant robberies by escaped slaves, or *cimarrones*, holed up in the region's mountains, of carriages and stages carrying passengers, innumerable colonial products, and gold and silver from New Spain to the port of Veracruz, the only point of departure for Europe.[1] The settlement, origi-

* Promoter of cultural tours in the high mountain region of Veracruz.

Elsie Montiel

The Orizaba Peak guards the city's horizon.

Elsie Montiel

Portal de la Gloria which hosted the head of the Insurgent Army, Agustín de Iturbide.

The *Villa* of Córdoba was under viceregal rule for two centuries, but toward the end of the colonial period, it would play an outstanding role in achieving independence.

Elsie Montiel

The city's cathedral, opposite the Municipal Palace.

nally set up to protect the Orizaba-Veracruz road, also benefitted from nature's bounty.

The plans matured when Don Juan de Miranda, Don García de Arévalo and Don Andrés Núñez de Illescas, residents of the town of Huatusco, presented a request to the thirteenth viceroy of New Spain, Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba. The viceroy appreciated the great service that they intended to do for the Spanish crown, but also the fact that the place had an agreeable climate, healthy air, fertile land, abundant water, mountains with plentiful stands of cedar, walnut groves and innumerable robust, leafy trees, spacious valleys, lime deposits and other materials useful to a future population. The licence for founding the city, or *villa*, was granted in representation of Spain's King Felipe III, and included the stipulation that it should be named after the viceroy.

On April 27, 1618, the so called 30 Gentlemen, who, together with their families were going to found the *villa*, proceeded in caravan from the town of Amatlán to the place known as Lomería de Huilango, or

Elsie Montiel

The neoclassical municipal palace's 21 columns commemorate the May 21, 1821 battle.

The classical colonial portals,
with their semi-circular arches, are the doorways
to buildings that housed viceroys, emperors, presidents
and great figures from the past.

"the place where doves abound", where what is now the city of Córdoba was to be established.

The *Villa* of Córdoba was under viceregal rule for two centuries, but toward the end of the colonial period, it would play an outstanding role in the history of the fight for independence. First, its inhabitants participated in the bloody battle against the well-armed forces of the royal army, which ended in a victory for the insurgents on May 21, 1821. Shortly thereafter, on August 24 of the same year, it would witness the consummation of independence, with the signing there of the Treaties of Córdoba by the Lieutenant General of the armies of Spain, Don Juan de O'Donojú, the envoy of the Spanish crown and last viceroy of New Spain, and Don Agustín de Iturbide, the commander of the Insurgent Army.

Since conditions after more than 10 years of fighting were still critical, Viceroy O'Donojú feared for his safety and decided not to travel to the capital. But the Veracruz climate was not to his liking either, so Córdoba was proposed for the meeting. When he arrived, the viceroy said,

Elsie Montiel

Carrara marble obelisk. View from the municipal palace.

"Given the good faith and harmony with which we proceed to this enterprise, it will be very easy for us to untie the knot without cutting it." Under that premise, they negotiated the terms that would change the links that had united the two continents for four centuries: Mexico became an independent country.

Buildings, streets and monuments tell the city's history. The classical colonial portals, with their semi-circular arches, are the doorways to buildings that housed viceroys, emperors, presidents and great figures from the past, like the Portal de Zevallos, which hosted Viceroy O'Donojú, or the Portal de la Gloria, at the other end of the plaza, that lodged the head of the insurgent army.

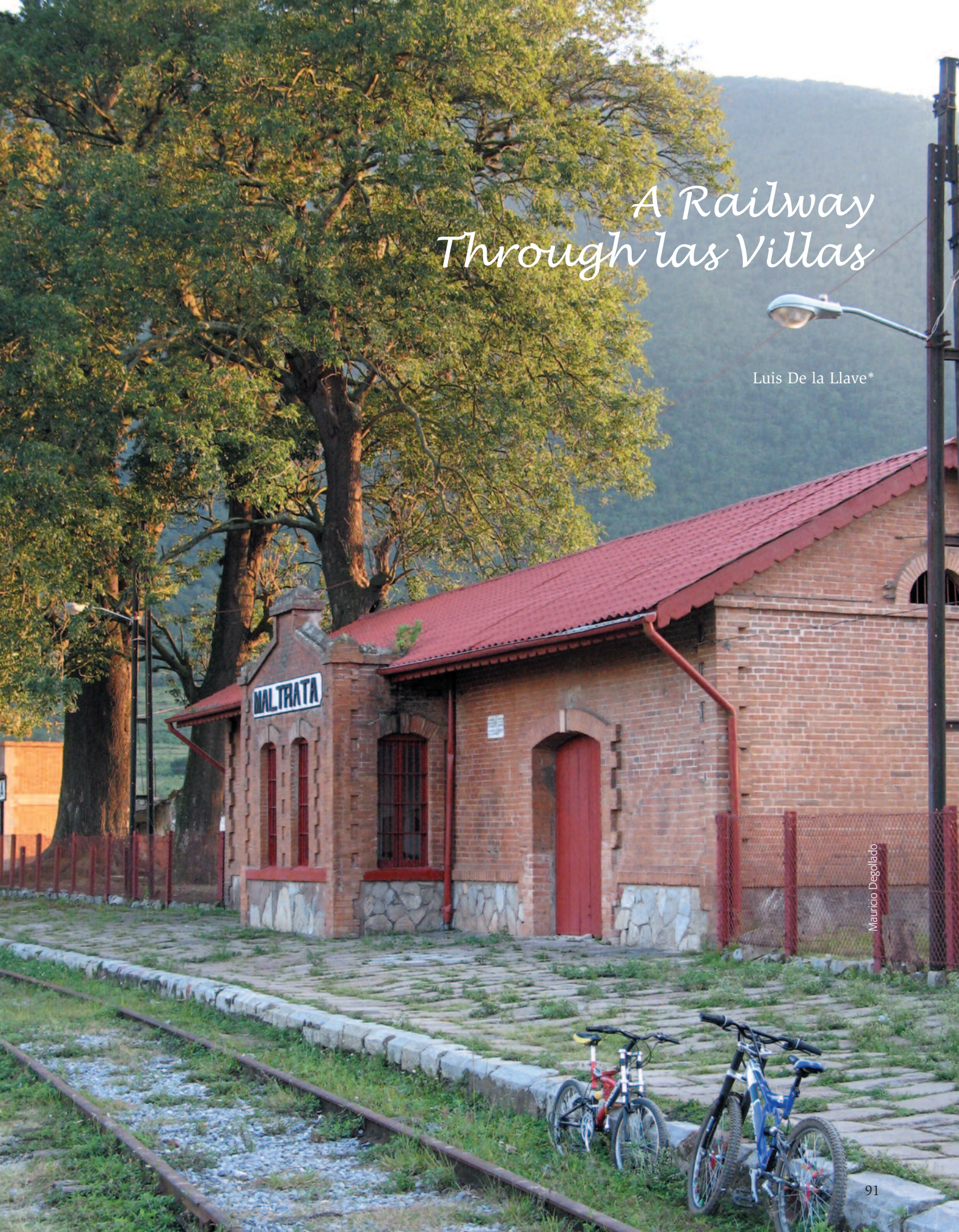
The Plaza de Armas is characterized by its culture and architectural beauty, its park boasting ramrod straight palm trees swaying to the rhythm of the wind from the port. Every Thursday in its central esplanade, local inhabitants come together to dance the *danzón*. On one end is the neo-classical municipal palace whose 21 columns commemorate the date of the May battle, as does the Carrara marble obelisk right in front of it. The municipal archives hold an exact copy of the Treaties of Córdoba, as well as other treasures. Opposite the palace is the cathedral, with its imposing towers and bell towers, and inside, embossed gold sheeting and Our Lady of Soledad, who hides a legend that, like many others in the city, it will be a pleasure to discover. VM

Notes

[1] New Spain was by no means free of the slave trade; African slaves were used in agriculture and mining. Many ran away and hid in the mountains, living from what they could steal from stages and travelers on the Royal Road from the port of Veracruz to Mexico City. These ex-slaves were known as "black *cimarrones*".

A Railway Through las Villas

Luis De la Llave*



Mauricio Degollado

From the first years after Mexico's independence and throughout the nineteenth century, the railroad seemed the most promising tool for resolving all the country's problems. Or at least, that was the imaginary of a people who had only just wrested their independence from Spain. Despite being impoverished and devastated by the years of fighting, Mexico would still have to confront serious violent conflicts that would coincide in time and space with the construction of the first railway lines and would significantly delay the completion of the country's first long-distance rail line.

This article reviews the progress of Mexican Railways through the Great Mountains in central Veracruz. The story began in 1837 when the Mexican government granted Francisco Arrillaga the first permit for building a railway. But he failed to lay a single track.

Other more fortunate experiences followed, but it was not until 1857 that the government granted the license that would finally be used, overcoming all difficulties, to connect the port of Veracruz with the nation's capital. The route Arrillaga picked was surprising to some, but the one the Escandón brothers chose in 1858 spurred irate protests. It was the result of field research done by U.S. engineer Andrés H. Talcott and his technical team, hired by the licensees to determine the direction an interoceanic railway to join the Gulf Coast with Acapulco on the Pacific should take.

The first stage of the route was planned to leave the port of Veracruz, going through the towns of Córdoba and Orizaba —known during the viceroyalty as *las Villas*— and continue toward Mexico City.

Córdoba was located on the edge of a hot, marshy area, while Orizaba was situated in a fertile, healthy valley irrigated by the waters of the Citlaltépetl or Orizaba Peak. The two *villas* were located on a road used for cattle drives, the least favorable for setting up a railroad.

* Architect, professor at the Veracruzana University School of Architecture in Córdoba, Veracruz. Currently doing research about the architecture of railway stations.

Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

Today, the ravine's tunnels and bridges are not in service,
and although the trains no longer run there, the whole structure maintains its majesty
and is a living demonstration of the ingenuity and skill of its builders.

The train first had to cross the coastal plain as rapidly as possible; this area was uninhabited because of the diseases that flourished there such as "black vomit" and malaria. Then it had to go through the deep White River or Metlac Ravine canyon, where the most complicated viaduct of the whole line had to be built. Finally, before reaching Mexico City's 2,223-meter summit, it had to ascend almost 1,000 meters over a short distance on the steep slopes of the Eastern Sierra Madre.

To do the job, in 1861 the licensees founded the Veracruz to Orizaba Railroad Company, including important political figures and well-known regional merchants on its board. However, the initial construction the company began in the coastal region coincided in late 1861 with the landing of French Emperor Napoleon III's invading troops who came to impose a monarchy headed up by the foreigner Maximilian of Hapsburg.

Under French control, the builders arrived at the Macho Pass in 1864, a village 76 kilometers from the port on the edge of a plain barely 460 meters above sea level. The railroad would stop there for almost six years without advancing an inch, facing the mountains and the Chiquihuite Ravine.

In 1867, lacking the support of the French army, Maximilian was executed, national troops recovered Mexico City and Benito Juárez reestablished constitutional order. The railroad then known as Mexican Imperial [Railway] ran 139 kilometers in the opposite direction, from the capital to Apizaco in the state of Tlaxcala.

President Benito Juárez's intention of pardoning Escandón's dealings with the Empire in the public interest caused a great deal of indignation and political debate. However, Congress decided in favor of the company, which changed licenses for the fourth time in 1868. The railway that was

intended to reach the Pacific Ocean once more lowered its expectations and changed its legal status. The new Mexican Railway Company, Ltd., committed to build the 255 kilometers that the Talcott project had established between Apizaco and Macho Pass, besides adding a 50-kilometer length of track to the city of Puebla.

Activities were immediately resumed in the lowlands; crossing the Chiquihuite Ravine took a year's work, and, even though the village of Atoyac is only six kilometers from Macho Pass, the steam engines did not arrive until January 1871. Between Atoyac and Córdoba is the Atoyac River, making it necessary to build a 100-meter bridge today used for pedestrian traffic.

From the Chiquihuite Hill on, the scenery changes; the temperature drops and the railroad goes through a rich agricultural region, with a temperate, humid climate, the home to innumerable pre-Hispanic settlements and later, important haciendas that cultivated sugar cane, coffee and tobacco.

The *villa* of Córdoba, founded in 1618 to provide safety to freight and passenger traffic, saw its first locomotive in August 1871. By that time, it was nationally important because the treaties that granted Mexico independence had been signed there on August 24, 1821.

To allow the train to get closer to the town, engineers George Foot and Donato Murray changed the original route and built the station on a wide, slightly sloping curve. Their gesture was well received and motivated local inhabitants to also build an urban train that would extend its service to the new station.

The tracks stopped at Fortín Station, located at the foot of Metlac Ravine. The technical team, headed up by engineer Guillermo Cross Buchanan, had to build a 304-meter-long, 114-meter-high viaduct, already planned in the time of the Imperial Railway, or come up with a new design to cut costs and construction time.

They decided to go around the ravine, going down its slopes until they found the best place to cross the Blanco River. They built several tunnels and three bridges; the main bridge was a 135-meter-long curve, 28.15 meters above the river itself.

The Metlac viaduct was finished in 1872 and over it rode the famous, unique English double-boiler Fairlie locomotives, built especially for mountainous regions. In 1928, with increased freight, the mountain length of track was electrified and new locomotives, built by the American Locomotive Company, ran over the Metlac Ravine.

Today, the ravine's tunnels and bridges are not in service, and although the trains no longer run

Mauricio Degollado


Elsie Montiel


Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel


Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

there, the whole structure maintains its majesty and is a living demonstration of the ingenuity and skill of its builders.

When you leave the ravine, the scenery changes; you can see to the end of the Sumidero Valley, which looks narrow because of the closeness of the mountains. The train went through this area for the first time on September 5, 1872, when it arrived at Orizaba station, outside the *villa* and very close to Cocolapan, a prosperous thread factory owned by the Escandón family.

From the beginning it was a hum of activity; the project was ambitious. The builders reported the station house finished in 1875. It was an interesting brick building on a long platform where warehouses and restaurants were also built. The complex kept growing: the most important machine shop, carpenter's shop and sheet metal and boiler shop of the whole line were built in the patio.

The line between the port of Veracruz and Mexico City was inaugurated January 1, 1873. The first trip, headed by President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, is considered historic and the beginning of the railroad era in Mexico.

Today, Orizaba's station no longer serves passengers and stands empty. The round house and its rotating platform that saw so much service are still recognizable and there is a nostalgic air about the whole place.

How much did Mexican Railway influence the region's industrial development? It depends on how you look at it. The fact is that since then, in addition to the Cocolapan factory founded in 1836, other important textile factories were built there: San Lorenzo in 1881; Cerritos in 1882; the Orizaba Industrial Company (CIDOSA) in 1889. New industries continued to be built: in 1893, Santa Gertrudis, a plant specialized in jute processing was established. The runoff from Orizaba Peak, in addition to being abundant, had a low mineral content, which was taken advantage of by another new company, the Moctezuma Brewery, starting in 1896.

Mute witnesses to all that activity are still left today: the daring bridges, the tunnels that can be walked through, and innumerable railway stations, one for every town in the mountains. VM

Further Reading

Baz, Gustavo and Eduardo L. Gallo, *Historia del Ferrocarril Mexicano*, Riqueza de México (Mexico City: E. L. Gallo & Cía., Editores, 1874).

García Díaz, Bernardo and Laura Zevallos Ortiz, *Orizaba*, Veracruz: imágenes de su historia Collection (Mexico City: Gobierno del Estado de Veracruz, 1991).

Garma Franco, Francisco, *Railroad in Mexico. An Illustrated History*, vol. 1 (Denver, Colorado: Sundance Publications Limited, 1985).

Gresham Chapman, John, *La construcción del Ferrocarril Mexicano, 1837-1880*, Sepsetentas Collection no. 209 (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1975).

Guadarrama Olivera, Horacio and Adriana Navega Chávez Hita, *Córdoba, imágenes de su historia* (Mexico City: Universidad Veracruzana/Ayuntamiento Municipal de Córdoba/Ediciones El Naranjo, 2000).




The Day of the Dead

This November, **INSTITUTO MEXICANO DE ESPANOL Y CULTURA** will once again offer its **Day of the Dead** (Día de Muertos) program.

Participants in this program will enjoy an enriching experience in Mexican culture. They will spend the holiday with natives of the surrounding Pueblos (Towns) of Cuernavaca. All visits and tours are guided by **IMEC** teachers.

The first and second of November, Mexico celebrates the Dia de Muertos. This celebration represents the unity and fusion of two distinct cultures, the indigenous and the Hispanic.
A mixture of grieving and festivity, it is a holiday that celebrates unity and community spirit throughout the Mestizo world.

For the indigenous people of Mexico, death is viewed as the beginning of a new life, thus the festive nature of this celebration. The Day of the Dead is a day when deceased family members are reunited with the living. The family erects an altar and offers to the departed exquisite dishes such as tamales, mole, bread, fruits and a vast variety of deserts. The altar is also decorated with candles, holy water, flowers (cempazuchitl) and pictures.

In Mexican culture, the altar offers to the living, a means of sharing the good things of life with those who have departed this world.

If you want to participate please visit our web page

www.imeccuernavaca.com.mx
pregunta@imeccuernavaca.com.mx

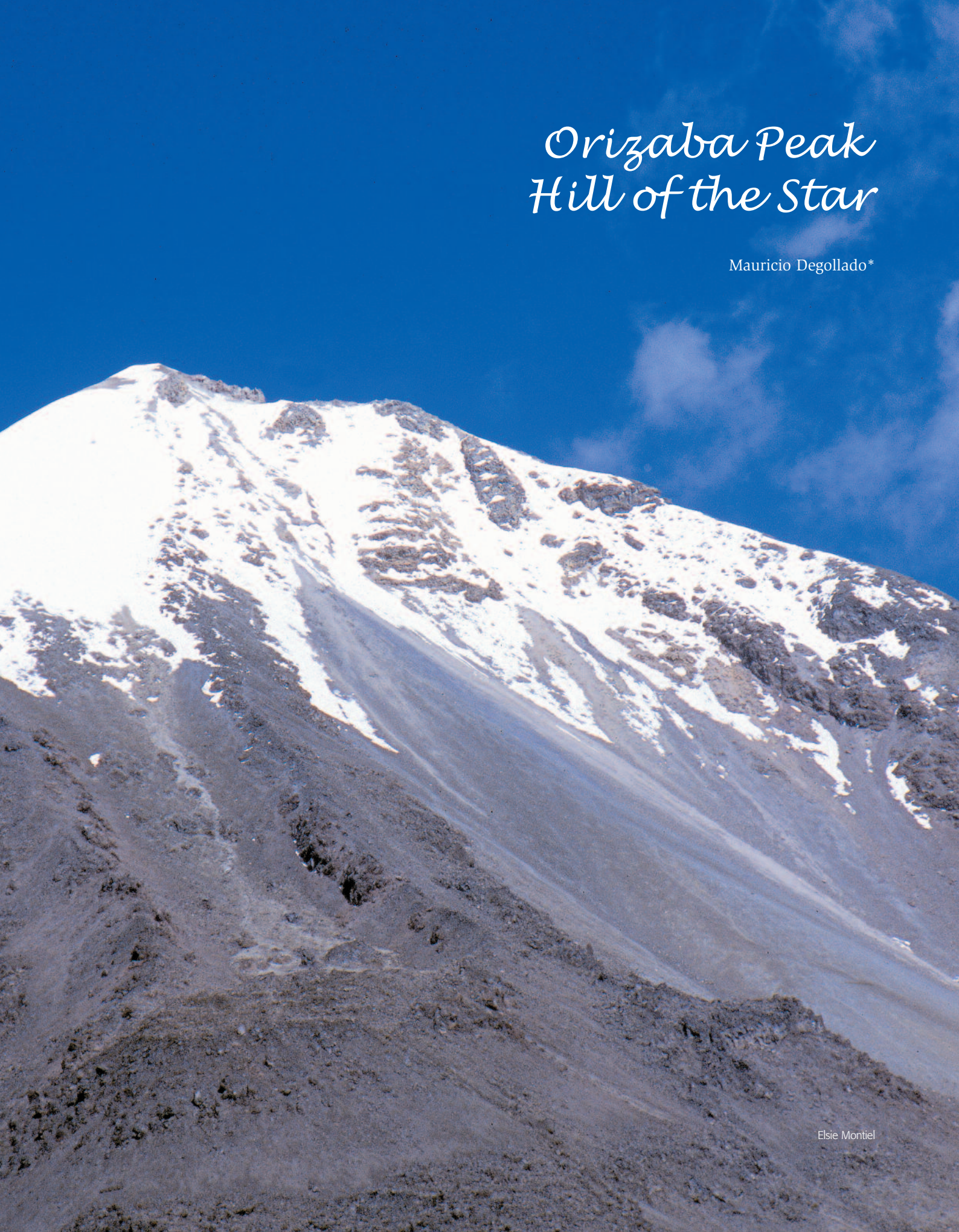
¡Join the IMEC family!

IMEC
Instituto Mexicano de Español y Cultura

Street Adress: Piñanonas 26, Col. Jacarandas, Cuernavaca, Morelos, 62420, Mexico
Email: pregunta@imeccuernavaca.com.mx Tel/Fax: +52 (777) 315 79 53, 322 10 83

Orizaba Peak
Hill of the Star

Mauricio Degollado*



Elsie Montiel

Orizaba Peak is Mexico's highest volcano and the third highest mountain in North America. Its 5,747-meter height is surpassed only by Mount McKinley in Alaska (6,187 meters) and Mount Logan in the Canadian Yukon (6,050 meters). Orizaba Peak is in the state of Veracruz, bordering on the state of Puebla, and is part of the orographical system known as the Eastern Sierra Madre. It is world famous for the beauty of its almost perfect cone shape, captured on film by innumerable professional and amateur photographers, its different microclimates and its altitude.

Pre-Hispanic Past[1]

The obsidian mines that crisscrossed the insides of Orizaba Peak were fundamental to the economy of Central Mexico and its east coast. We know that it was used as long as 5,000 years ago in the area of Tehuacán. In the classical period it reached Guatemala and in the post-classical period it supplied Mexica workshops. After repeated Mexica attempts to conquer the region with its capital Cuauhtochco, they were finally victorious in the mid-fifteenth century, gaining control of the mines.

The Gulf Coast and the area of Cozcatlán and Tehuacán used the obsidian from these deposits for more than 4,000 years. Calcahualco and Coscomatepec, Veracruz, and La Mesa and Cantona, Puebla, were all control points for the trade routes the precious stone traveled. Workshops that made all kinds of obsidian products —utilitarian, ritual and crafts— were set up in the agricultural areas of Jamapa, in the High and Low Papaloapan Basins and on the Blanco River. Spearheads and arrowheads, scrapers and knives, made using pounding techniques, are some of the most noteworthy articles. Working these mines was dangerous. In addition to innumerable cuts and the risk of cave-ins (obsidian sticks out of the ground forming

Innumerable chroniclers describe
the rocky, dusty pathways, the pine forests,
the ravines of great sand beds and
the intrepid beauty of its glacier brightly
reflecting the light.

* Mexican photographer.

Elsie Montiel

Mauricio Degollado

sharp points and blades, and the tunnels were narrow), there was the cold and the altitude (more than 3,600 meters above sea level), which thinned the air and quickly caused fatigue. It was so inhospitable a site that today there is no town at that altitude.

The Region's Influence

Orizaba Peak, also know as Citlaltépetl, has a profoundly important influence on the surrounding area: together with the Eastern Sierra Madre, it blocks the humid winds from the Gulf of Mexico, causing copious rainfall on the eastern slope and slight precipitation on the western slope.

Its ice and snow are an unending source of crystalline water for the rivers that run through deep ravines, smothered in vegetation, that even in the longest, deepest droughts maintain a considerable flow.

The flora is determined by three different kinds of climate: humid temperate, sub-humid temperate and cold, with notable differences between the eastern and western slopes. On the eastern slope, vegetation is exuberant and resplendent, evergreen, with large forests and fertile land for cultivation; on the western slope, the vegetation is scanty like a prairie, with few forest areas, predominantly covered with herbs and cactus.

Population density within a radius of 19 kilometers around the crater is quite low because a general lack of resources, communication and transportation, and in general, harsh natural conditions make life very difficult at these altitudes. There is not a single important city in the area: Serdán City is 19.3 kilometers away and Orizaba, 26.4 kilometers. The few inhabitants of the mountain spurs live in isolated cabins or in small hamlets of no more than a few hundred inhabitants; their main activities are logging, agriculture and herding.

In 1937, to protect the region's natural beauty, particularly the wild flora and fauna, Pres-

Elsie Montiel

Elsie Montiel

ident Lázaro Cárdenas decreed the creation of a national park extending 19,750 hectares around the volcano.

Volcanic Activity

Orizaba Peak is considered an intermittent volcano, alternating periods of activity with periods of inactivity. During the colonial era there were several incidents between 1537 and 1687 but then it went dormant again.

Both the peak and its surrounding area have suffered from numerous earthquakes, some of them very destructive, such as the one that in the early morning of August 28, 1973 devastated the cities of Córdoba, Orizaba, Río Blanco, Mendoza City, Serdán City, and other smaller towns. This is because Orizaba Peak and its environs are at the foot of a great tectonic fault line that runs across Mexico, from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, making the area around it one of the most seismic and geologically unstable in the world.

Explorers and Climbers

A paradise for climbers and explorers, Citlaltépetl was first scaled after Mexico's independence. It was explored, but not climbed by Enrique Galeotti in 1839. In 1848, it was climbed for the first time by French mountain climber Alexandre Doignon. Nevertheless, tradition has it that the first to climb the volcano were the U.S. soldiers of General Winfield Scott's invading army. It was also visited by many scholars, among them botanist Hugo Fink in 1874, who collected data about the volcano's flora and described the forests below the snow line. Others who reached the top in 1883 were Mateo Polwes and Pedro Vigil.

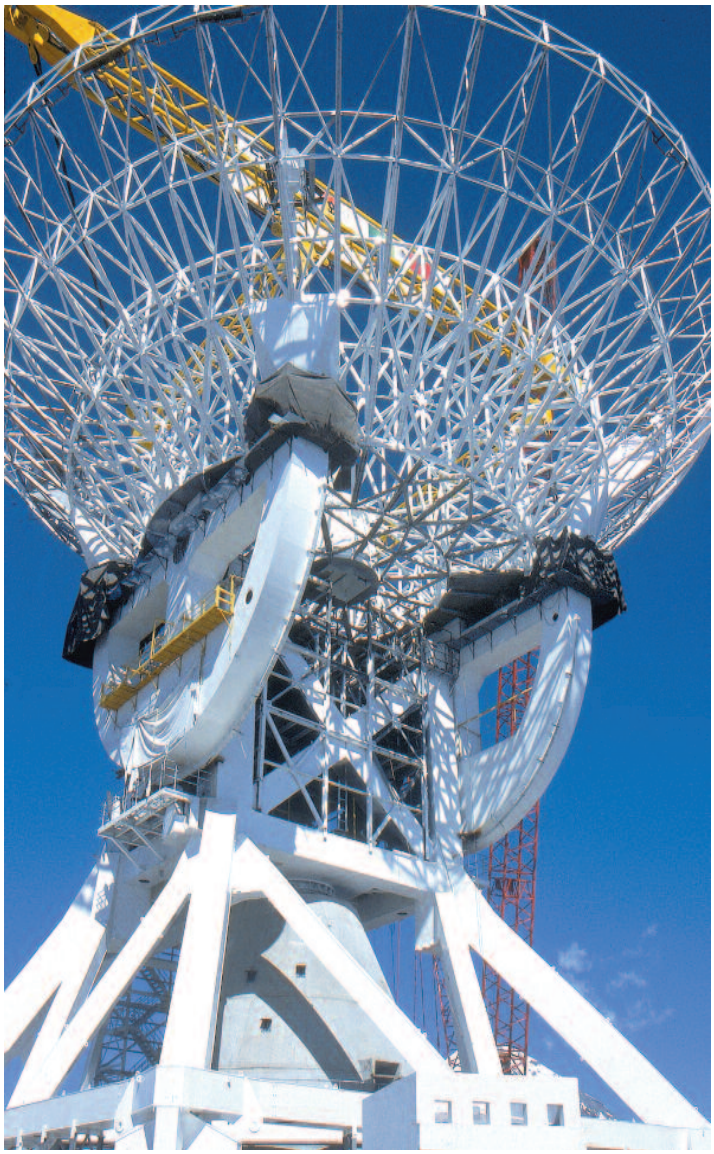
It was in the twentieth century that climbing expeditions multiplied, with four routes to the top. Professional climbers and adventurers from the world over challenge the cold,

the altitude and the rugged terrain, very often without experience, guides or appropriate equipment. Innumerable chronicles of the climb describe the rocky, dusty pathways, the pine forests, the ravines of great sand beds and the intrepid beauty of its glacier brightly reflecting the light as obstacles the mountain puts in the explorer's path to prove whether he/she is ready for anything in order to conquer the summit.

Orizaba Peak's ice and snow
are an unending source of crystalline water for
the rivers that run through deep ravines, smothered
in vegetation, that even in the longest, deepest
droughts maintain a considerable flow.

A Famous Neighbor

On the top of Tliltépetl, also known as the Sierra Negra Volcano, just across from Orizaba Peak, is the Large Millimeter Telescope (LMT), a 50-meter-diameter optimized antenna that, once in operation, will take astronomic readings in millimetric waves. The telescope project is the result of a collaboration between Mexico and the United States, headed up by the National Institute of Astrophysics, Optics and Electronics (INAOE) and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The LMT, the largest and most sensitive of the world's millimeter telescopes with a simple aperture operating between 0.85 mm and 4 mm, will begin scientific operations in 2008. It will research topics as diverse as the composition of comets and the atmospheres of the planets, the formation of planets outside the solar system, the birth and evolution of the stars, the hierarchical growth of galaxies, clusters of galaxies and their large-scale distribution and cosmic microwave radiation and its anisotropies. VM



Elsie Montiel

The Large Millimeter Telescope will begin operations in 2008.

Notes

[1] Information in this section was taken from Rubén B. Morantes, "Túneles de cristal en el Pico de Orizaba," *México desconocido* 226, 1995, consulted online at http://www.mexicodesconocido.com/español/cultura_y_sociedad/actividades.economicas/detalle.cfm?idcat=3&idsec=

Mauricio Degollado

Of Myths and Names

The first name given to the volcano in pre-Hispanic times was Poyautécatl, "he who lives among light clouds," or "the lord of the mist." However, it was better known as Citlaltépetl, which means "hill of the star" (*citlallin*, or star, and *tépetl*, or hill), probably because its large snow cap shone perpetually or because the fire from its eruptions must have looked like a star from afar.

During the colonial period, it was also known as San Andrés Hill, after the town San Andrés Chalchicomula (today Serdán City), located only 19.3 kilometers from the volcano, even closer than the city of Orizaba, from which it received its current name, located 26.4 kilometers away.

According to legend, the volcano was born of the friendship between Nahuani, a woman Olmec warrior, and her advisor, a fishing eagle named Orizaba. Nahuani lost her life in one of many battles, and in reaction, Orizaba rose to the heavens and then let herself fall back to earth to a place where, little by little, a mountain would grow. After a time, Orizaba would remember what happened to Nahuani and erupt in fury on several occasions. To contain her fury, the villagers would ascend to the top of the volcano to worship Nahuani, Orizaba's eternal friend.

Another pre-Hispanic legend says that when Quetzalcóatl left the city of Tula, he did not go to Coatzacoalcos, as was generally thought, to take out a canoe with two intertwined serpents on its bow, nor was he lost forever in the immensity of the sea, as mysteriously as he had arrived. Rather, this wise figure remained in beautiful Ahuializapan (Orizaba) until he closed his eyes forever. On the summit of Citlaltépetl, a funeral pyre was erected that burned the body to ashes; and at the break of day, the ashes rose in the form of a splendorous cloud as a sign that the spirit of Quetzalcóatl, transformed into a quetzal, had arrived to the mansion of the Great Spirit amongst the twittering of thousands of beautiful birds. It is said that a moment later, the rising sun was hidden for four days by the darkness in a sign of mourning. Then, a faint, muted light once again invaded the area. In the place the funeral pyre had been, the Indians gazed wide-eyed at a beautiful blue star. The elders say that that splendid star was the apotheosis of wise Quetzalcóatl who thus announced his immortality to the four corners of the earth. That is why ever since then, Poyautécatl, on whose summit rests the mysterious star, has been called Citlaltépetl, or "hill of the star."

The Córdoba Museum

Enrique Aguilar Zapién*

The Córdoba Museum was founded by local residents for exhibiting art works and promoting cultural activities. The ultimate aim was to bring closer together the cities of the same name in Mexico, Argentina, Spain and Alaska, and found a Museum of the Córdobas, which so far has not been possible.

In 1972, the museum's board had already acquired the building known as "the Portal of the Favorite" as the site for their project. So, when representatives of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) proposed creating a community museum in the city, the board accepted and decided to focus it on preserving and exhibiting archaeological pieces from the region.

The incipient collection would be formed with donations and loans of archaeological pieces from board members themselves, in addition to the contribution of archaeologist Alfonso Medellín Zenil, the director of the Veracruz University Anthropology Institute and of the Xalapa Museum,

* Anthropologist and director of the Córdoba Museum.

Photos by Mauricio Degollado.

The archaeological rooms exhibit pieces from six different Mesoamerican cultures.

The archaeological rooms show objects from the Olmec, Huaxtec and Totonac cultures, which make up most of the museum's collection.

who donated part of the objects found in his excavations in the central semi-arid area of Dicha Tuerta, Nopiloa and Remojadas. These pieces date from the pre-classical period (1200 to 200 B.C.) and the classical period (A.D. 200 to 900). The small initial selection of 46 pieces has grown in size and quality since then: today we have 3,200 pieces representing the Olmec, Huaxtec, Totonac or Remojadas, Teotihuacan, Mayan and Mixtec cultures. In addition, there are many locally-made clay and stone receptacles and figurines, among which are the outstanding sculptures from the Palmillas archaeological dig, recognizable by their facial deformations.

A strong earthquake in the Córdoba-Orizaba region August 28, 1973 cracked the building, originally restored by architect Flores Marini. Despite the damage, the museum continued to promote the city's cultural development by organizing concerts, exhibits, plays, workshops and the traditional Day of the Dead offerings.

Once the building had been restored again and the museography improved, in 1984 the museum put on the exhibit of central Veracruz archaeological pieces, arranged in chronological order beginning in the pre-classical period, followed by the classical, post-classical and historical periods. The exhibit gives preference to objects from the central, semi-arid region where the city of Córdoba is located.

Museum Organization

The museum is divided into six rooms: four for archaeology, a room for history and another for temporary exhibits.

The archaeological rooms show objects from the Olmec, Huaxtec and Totonac (or Remojadas) cultures chronologically, which make up most of the museum's collection on display. Of special interest is the impressive reproduction of Mictlantecuhtli, god of death, depicted seated on his throne in the ninth underworld, or the place of nothing. The original, made of unfired clay, is displayed at the Zapotal archaeological site in the municipality of Ignacio de la Llave.

Tradition has it that Mictlantecuhtli rules over the underworld and the forms

of death, two important aspects of any Mesoamerican culture. Women who died during childbirth and warriors fallen in battle or killed on the stone of sacrifice had the privilege of accompanying the sun on his daily journey. Those who died of common diseases or from old age went to Mictlán, a place where "souls disappear and die." Each October 31, November 1 and 2, the Córdoba Museum celebrates the Day of the Dead by building an altar of offerings to Mictlantecuhtli.

Of the "ax, yokes, palms and padlocks" complex displayed in the rooms, one important example is a palm made of basalt from the early classical period, on the front of which is carved a monkey and on the back of which is a serpent, the animal associated with the night.

On the stairway up to the History Room is a relief depicting two of the most important events in local history: the city's May 21, 1821 battle between the royal Spanish army and the insurgent army fighting at the end of the War of Independence. That same year, on August 24, the last viceroy of New Spain and Agustín de Iturbide, the head of the insurgent or *Trigarante* army, signed the Treaties of Córdoba that stipulated the separation of New Spain from the mother country.

The last room is used for temporary exhibitions of painting, sculpture and photography.

Archaeology in the Valley of Córdoba

The Valley of Córdoba is located in the Southern Sierra Madre, part of the eastern mountain ranges crowned by Orizaba Peak, crisscrossed by fertile valleys like Maltrata, Orizaba, Córdoba and Amatlán de los Reyes. Archaeological evidence found in this region leads us to believe that groups of Olmecs occupied it from 1500 B.C. and founded small settlements where they mingled with local cultures. Their main economic activity was working the obsidian mined at Orizaba Peak. This group of settlements became a stopping-off-place for the caravans that united the regions of Mesoamerica, the Cen-

Arranged in chronological order, the exhibit gives preference to objects from the central, semi-arid region where the city of Córdoba is located.

The History Room. Relief depicting the signing of the treaty that made Mexico independent.

Mayan vase, recently donated to the museum.

The museum boasts a very interesting piece shaped like a dog-bat-jaguar, with a bowl on its haunch.

Dog-bat-jaguar.

Palm made of basalt from the early classical period.

tral Highland with the Southeast and the Olmec area with the Mayan. From time immemorial, the pass from the Central Highland to the coastal plains of the Gulf of Mexico and the Southeast where the Olmec and Mayan cultures flourished had been the caravans' natural route. Centuries later, this same phenomenon gave rise to the foundation of Villa de Córdoba in 1618. It would become a bastion that protected the caravans that went from the Highlands to the coast and then to Spain.

In 1200 B.C. during the pre-classical period, groups of Olmecs began to exploit the obsidian mines at Orizaba Peak, and so they opened up trade routes toward the south of Puebla, the valley of Morelos and the Central Highland. This is confirmed by archaeological finds in the region: Olmec-type figurines, known as "baby faces," among other items.

By the middle classical period, the trade and regional intercommunication routes were dominated by Teotihuacan. To strengthen their domination, the Teotihuacans established control posts like Matacapan, where objects typical of that culture have been found: the talud-panel, orange ceramics and candelabra. In this same period, important religious centers were established like El Tajín, Xochicalco and Cacaxtla, which took over trade after the fall of Teotihuacan in A.D. 650. In the Córdoba region, 66 sites from this period have been found: four very large ones, measuring over 100 hectares, like the Toro Prieto Hill; other, medium-sized and small ones boast structures like the bases of pyramids, plazas and ball game courts. There are, in addition, natural sites like caves, springs and underground rivers used for worship, and art work associated to these sites.

When the Spanish arrived, the region of Córdoba belonged to the land of Cuauhtochco, which stretched from the slopes of Orizaba Peak to the plains of the Gulf of Mexico, including the Valley of Córdoba, Amatlán.

The Deities from the Dark World

Other important discoveries in the Córdoba region are the figurines presumably associated with the worship of the deities of the dark world or the depths of the Earth. The museum boasts a very interesting piece shaped like a dog-bat-jaguar (see figure), with a bowl on its haunch. It may have been used to hold grain or perhaps water. Some chroniclers like Bernardino de Sahagún thought that figures of this sort are related to the Mexica conception of the mountains as receptacles for water that are reached through caves in the dry season.

Another example of the importance of the places where rivers spring from the earth for deciding where to settle is found in Atoyac, where an underground

river formed by the Orizaba Peak's melting ice comes out of the ground in hues of turquoise blue. In 1980, archaeologist Ramón Arellanos Melgarejo found pieces of large ceramic recipients, plates, pots and boxes, a flute and some fragments of figurines at the bottom of a well. Of this find, the museum displays two purposely broken yokes. Both represent the toad or monster of the earth from which a figure is emerging. The fact that they are fragmented indicates that before being thrown in, small holes were made in them so that when they sank, the water that entered through them would represent Tlaloc's tears. The same procedure was followed with the recipients. Recently, that same well has yielded smiling little faces and figurines representing Tlaloc.

Worshipping in caves did not disappear with the Spanish conquest of 1521. Some caves are still used to hold the Xochitlalli, a ceremony in which the officiant digs a hole to communicate with the inside of the Earth and ask its forgiveness for having stripped it of its leaves and having burned it and to beg for a better crop this year. Totomochapa Cave, in the Zongolica Mountains is one such place, where objects that make up an offering have been found.

In the late post-classical period, groups of Nahuas migrated to central Veracruz. We can infer that from the ninth century on, many groups of Nahuas migrated to the region, changing the traditional pattern of settlements. The last migration was of the Mexicas, which had a great impact on local groups' cultural development. One product of this contact-domination between the fiefdom of Cuauhtochco and the Mexica empire is a circular basalt sculpture, perforated in the center and with reliefs on the four points of the compass, found in the city of Córdoba. The sculpture has two possible uses: one as an anchor for sacrifice of warriors and the other as a marker for the mobile ball game. VM

Museo de Córdoba
Calle 3, between Avenida 3 and Avenida 5, Centro, Córdoba, Veracruz
Telephone: (271) 405 2326
Visiting Hours: Monday to Sunday, 9 a.m.
to 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Guided tours from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Free admission

Mauricio Degollado

Courtesy of Las Cañadas, Bosque de Niebla

Mauricio Degollado

Courtesy of Las Cañadas, Bosque de Niebla

Las Cañadas Cloud Forest

Ricardo Romero*

Cloud forests are one of nature's most beautiful sights. Also known as mesophilic mountain forests, they are made up of evergreen trees covered with lichen, moss, bromelia and orchids with brightly colored flowers, dozens of kinds of beautiful giant arborescent ferns, enveloped in an almost permanent mist, sparking fascination and respect. Considered an area of transition where species from the north and the south coincide and live together, it is the ecosystem with the greatest biodiversity per square foot in the country and one of the world's most endangered tropical forests.

In Mexico, cloud forests have disappeared in many places due mainly to the cultivation of coffee, cattle raising and demographic pressure. The effect of this deforestation has been soil erosion, greater rural poverty, flooding, a diminishing water supply and the massive extinction of animals and plants. All this alters the ecosystem's balance and causes the irreversible loss of genetic resources.

This is why the 406-hectare community reserve Las Cañadas was born to protect one of the remaining cloud forests in central Veracruz. A private initiative, its aim is to contribute to changing the concept of protecting our natural resources, reverse the damage and inaugurate a different way of living and producing.

Changing Direction

Until 1995, a large part of the area that belongs to Las Cañadas was used for large-scale cattle ranching for producing beef. The effect was clear: severe soil erosion, just like what happened in many other parts of Mexico. In order to reverse the damage, we sold all the cattle and reforested 60 hectares with 50,000 native trees (sweet gum, oak, walnut, ash and beech), and the rest of the meadows were left alone.

Since then there have been great changes between one spring and the next, thanks, in great part, to the "heart of Las Cañadas": an area of about 40 hectares of cloud forest, aided by an army of birds, bats and squirrels, plus the wind, that un-

* Mexican ecologist and director of the Las Cañadas project.

Mauricio Degollado

Las Cañadas was born to protect one of the remaining cloud forests in central Veracruz, reverse the damage and inaugurate a different way of living and producing.

We not only attempt to replace inputs and conventional practices with "alternative" ones, but to redesign our systems, needs, food, children's education and relationship with the communities.

Mauricio Degollado

ceasingly spread the seeds of innumerable kinds of grass, shrubs and trees, sending new blood into the recovering areas.

At first, the aim was to consolidate the project as a conventional green company; that is, at the same time that it respected and cared for the environment, it would grow economically in each of its areas, improve profitability and insert itself into and compete in the market, etc.

However, what we learned led us to understand that more than simply complying with so-called "sustainable development," we are interested in achieving a "sustainable life." That is, now we not only attempt to replace inputs and conventional practices with "alternative" ones, but we also aim to redesign our systems, needs, food, children's education and relationship with the communities. In brief, we aim to redesign our culture.

Goals and Reflections

Our objectives include not only preserving and recovering 365 hectares of cloud forest, but also doing it in such a way as to guarantee the continued existence of the rural communities there sustainably so that the generations that follow us can do the same just as well or better. This naturally implies changing our current life style inherited from Western consumer society to one that does not rapaciously exploit the planet's natural resources. To do this, we began by involving local people (peasants, schools, neighboring landowners, etc.) in the conservation of our resources (the forest, water, soil and culture).

We realized that true sustainable development necessarily requires a change of paradigm. Evaluating whether personal, community, national and world activities really allow for "sustainable development" or if it is all just posturing, a vacant discourse, with no real basis. Above all, we seek to oppose the contradiction of aspiring to "preserve" a place and at the same time live an unsustainable life that ravages resources in many other parts of this globalized world so that we do not directly see —or we do not want or are not allowed to see— the consequences of the life our society encourages us to live.

The Eco-Village

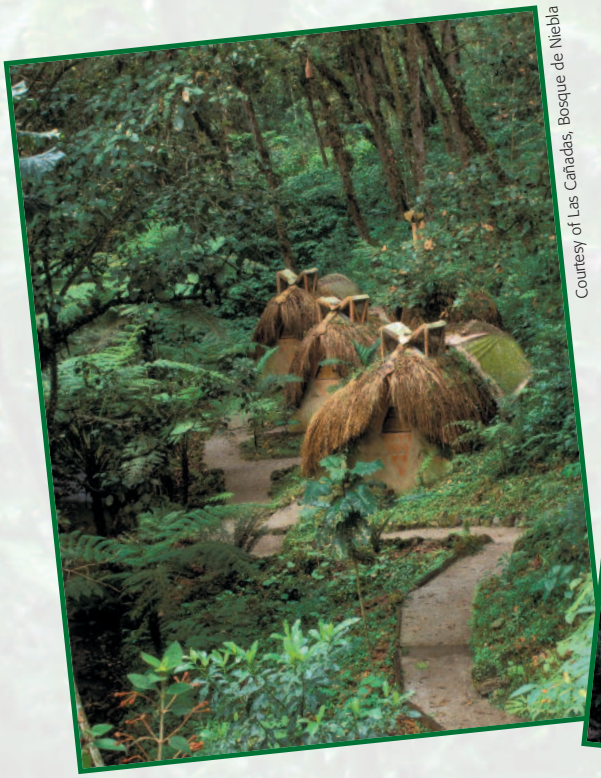
Las Cañadas is organized as a community structure, made up of 13 adults and seven children, called an *Ecoaldea* or Eco-Village. Decisions are made by consensus in the Eco-Village Council, made up of the seven coordinators of the project's different areas who reside permanently on the reserve and share the responsibilities and benefits of this way of life.

The Las Cañadas proposal is comprehensive, holistic and aims to:

- reinforce the project's sustainability over time;
- achieve a high degree of food security, producing *in situ* and integrating neighboring producers' lands and others in the bio-region;
- guarantee the supply of potable water from the cloud forest;
- educate our children and our neighbors' children to link up the next generation with the work we have been doing;
- work in the region with the concept of micro-basin;
- have a regional and national impact.

To achieve our goals, we have developed interacting, complementary activities and instruments to create economic, ecological and social stability for the community.

1. *Agricultural ecology*. Research, training and support activities that include local and regional peasant organizations, municipal authorities, giving workshops and a bio-intensive garden.
2. *Environmental education*. Mainly through student and university group visits.
3. *Eco-tourism*. Guided tours of different duration, visits to peasant farms, training and consulting services.
4. *Conservation*. Through protective concepts like an "ecological pledge" and the constant use of eco-technologies like dry toilets, solar panels to generate electricity, biodigesters and the treatment of semi-waste or grey water with aquatic plants, among others. We also foster links with educational institutions, environmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and government authorities of all levels.



Courtesy of Las Cañadas, Bosque de Niebla

Mauricio Degollado

Courtesy of Las Cañadas, Bosque de Niebla

The Ecological Pledge

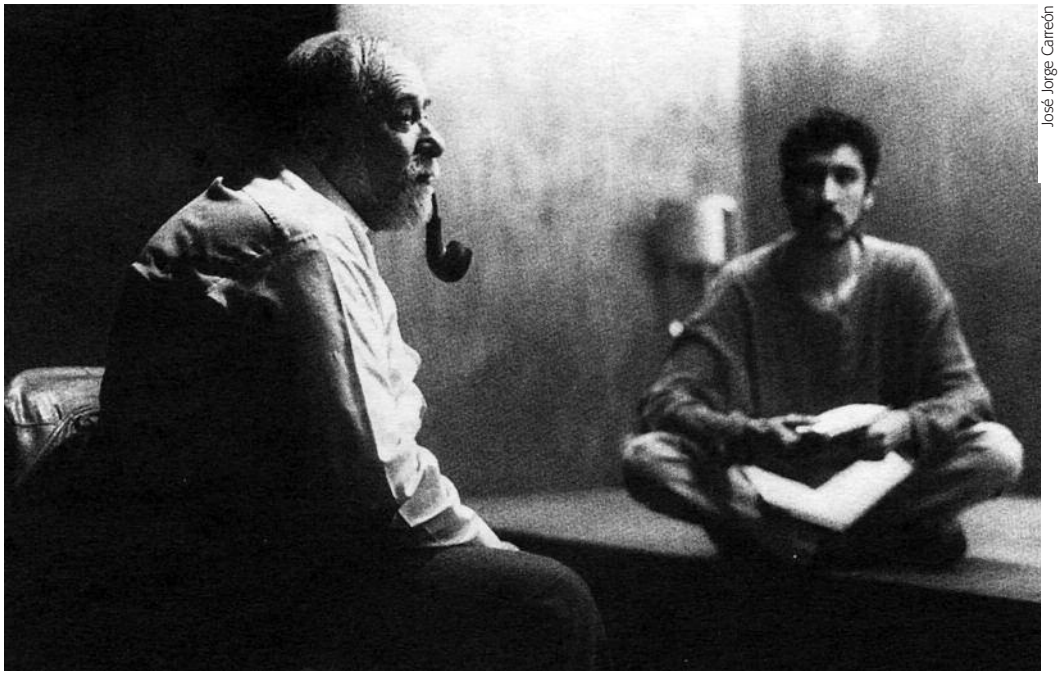
In 1998, together with Pronatura, we constituted the first "ecological pledge" in Mexico. This is a legal mechanism for the conservation of land which limits our use of our own land, so that the forest we are caring for and the areas in recovery will always be an island of cloud forest.

The ecological pledge is a commitment that can be short- or long-term or in perpetuity, as we decided on in Las Cañadas. Through it, the private, *ejido* or commune owners commit to preserving or managing their land in a certain way, creating zoning in accordance with their own decisions. After zoning the land, a document is drawn up before a notary public and registered with the public property registry. An ecological pledge incumbrance is placed on the land for the time agreed upon and this incumbrance must be respected by the children of the current owners or the new owners.

The ecological pledge is entered into by two persons who may or may not be neighbors so that each neighbor monitors the other. Normally, an environmentalist organization can participate to monitor both parties. Because of the way the documents are made out, it is very easily to legally obligate either of the two neighbors (if the case arose) to respect the agreements. The only way in which an ecological pledge can be dissolved is when the property comes under a single owner. At no time during the process does the government or its bureaucracy intervene, although its participation is desirable to create incentives so that other parties also create ecological pledges on their land. Our project managed to involve the owners of neighboring lands to increase the protected surface area and the land managed sustainably. In 2004, 100 more hectares of land were incorporated, also in perpetuity, through the ecological pledge of one of Las Cañadas's neighbors. VM

Ludwik Margules
Master of the Scene[1]
(1933-2006)

Juan Villoro*



José Jorge Carreón

Margules during a rehearsal.

"When I rehearse, I turn into a war machine," Ludwik Margules used to say. He liked to say things that were very often ironic displays of affection. I remember the afternoon he told me about his career as a soccer player. With the endearing tendency of Poles to drop their articles, he said, "I was impassable tank." When he had only recently arrived in Mexico, he had participated in a team made up of theater people. The play he was most proud of was a terrible block that sent a burly forward through the air. "That giant died two years later. When I met his son, I told him, 'I killed your father.'" Ludwik punctuated the story with his black humor laugh. To protect himself from his intense emotions, he liked to boast about his evilness: "If I kick you now, you die in two years."

Few people have been as generous as this player with his outbursts as an ogre. In 1988 he phoned me. He had heard that I was translating Lichtenberg's aphorisms. He asked me to go see him so he could tell me about his Polish commentators. Out of the sessions in which he translated Jelénski emerged a friendship determined by his unflagging interest in other people.

An epicure of excess, he breakfasted on sweetmeat *menudo* soup as though it were yoghurt. If something upset his stomach, he used a terrible experiment to see if he was really sick. I remember the afternoon that he ate three pickled herrings to test his stomach, compensating

* Mexican writer.

with bowl of rice pudding. His wife Lydia watched the whole process with her sweet face, smiling like one who understands barbarous behavior as mischievous.

Ludwik had many interests: the *corrido* song about drug traffickers (or *narcocorrido*) *Camelia la texana*, that he included in his production of Molière's *Don Juan*; the resurgence of anti-semitism in Poland; the intolerance of the dogmatic left ("they never rectify when they make a mistake; on the contrary, they always believe their mistake was not having been sufficiently inflexible"); the town of Tlahuitoltepec in the Mixe mountains, where the children learn to read music before they learn to read words and where he filmed a documentary; the talent of Roger Daltrey, the Who vocalist, performing *The Beggars' Opera*.

Margules understood the theater as a crusade. His students had to display religious fervor for the cause. That is how he created the Contemporary Theater Forum.

His obsession with a production began with the discussion of the script. The smoke from his pipe announced a man with a mission. Ludwik took in all the possibilities to then opt for the essential. A minimalist trapped in the body of someone from the baroque period.

I translated for him Heiner Müller's *Quartet*, based on Laclos's *Dangerous Liaisons*. The text allowed him to talk about the Enlightenment, the insatiable career of the libertines (he had done a magnificent production of Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress*), the Marquis de Sade's mechanical eroticism, Bataille's mystical eroticism, the possession of the beloved, the degradation of affection in an authoritarian environment.

Born into Warsaw's Jewish community in 1933, Ludwik was a child of war, an experience he shared with Müller, a child of the German front. A chronicle of devastation, *Quartet* takes place in a bunker, depicted with frozen perfection by Mónica Raya, a jail for the limits of Eros. The last romance of *Quartet*'s main character happens with his own body, as his cancer metastasizes. While Margules was rehearsing, Müller died of cancer and his wife became gravely ill. "The production is cursed," he said, with the vehemence of someone who understands theater as prophesy.

I admired Margules from the time I saw his production of Harold Pinter's *Birthday Party* in the 1970s, but he was uncomfortable with praise. When I congratulated him for his production of Milan Kundera's *Jacques and His Master*, he answered sadly, "Yes, but in a few months, who's going to remember the theater?" I asked him why he answered complements like this, and he spread his arms wide in resignation, "It's the Slavic soul." To confirm that, he asked me to talk to Slawomir Mrozek on the telephone. Very few people knew that the great Polish writer lived in Río Frío, married to a Mexican woman.

"Tell him really nice things and you'll see that he gets sad," Ludwik said, smiling his Mephistopheles smile. I thought it was ridiculous to talk to the author of *The Hump* to measure the state of his depression.

"He makes jam in Río Frío," added Ludwik, as though compotes sadden men. For the first time I felt what actors under his direction must have felt: that there was no way to contradict him. The conversation with Mrozek was a miniature theater of the absurd. Ludwik looked at me with sparkling eyes, sure that my praise was sinking his friend. The last thing the playwright said was, "I'd like to talk to you when I'm less depressed." Ludwik raised his arms like the boxing champion he had always wanted to be. He had shown that Poles are plants made for the shade.

"Sad but brave" was another one of his mottos. When I went to a photographic exhibit of his production, he looked peevishly at the shot of tequila I was drinking. "Oh, Juanito, you're a cocktail drunk." Then he explained that alcohol drinkers were divided into two kinds: the timorous who sipped a little glass and the brave, who

downed a bottle. "I did that on an opening night and they had to hold my wake on stage," he smiled with the happiness of the tomb.

Margules understood the theater as a crusade. His students had to display religious fervor for the cause. That is how he created the Contemporary Theater Forum. When he took over the Xola Theater, he brought together a group of friends, took his pipe out of his mouth and exclaimed, "We have left the catacombs!" However, that effort, which required a broader audience, did not fit the minority, risky quest of the theatrical explorer. Rodolfo Obregón prepared Margules's conversational memoirs, the indispensable log of that path of passion.

Ludwik got the news of his wife's death during a rehearsal of Janusz Glowacki's *Antigone in New York*. He came late to the funeral home, as he always did, full of pain and life. He talked about his loss without stopping talking about his projects.

In his childhood, Margules knew the horror of a century of extermination. He did not look for calm in his adopted country where he recently died at the age of 72. "I believe in conflict. I don't believe in anything else," he wrote to his admired friend Heiner Müller. Ludwik made his war among us. The dark hole of the theater was his battlefront. Watching that struggle was our victory. VM

Notes

[1] A version of this article was published in the daily newspaper *Reforma*.

Barking from the Stage[1]

Ludwik Margules, with a long and distinguished career, is considered one of the most brilliant directors in Mexican theater. While we can detect certain recurring topics and obsessions in his many productions, Margules is an untiring explorer of the means whereby he may, as he says, "bark from the stage."…

Ludwik Margules (LM): I came to Mexico at the age of 24. I studied journalism in Poland. At that time, the Journalism Department of the University of Warsaw was very vibrant politically. I'm referring to about 1956, a time of great events... Stalinism, Hungary. It enveloped us all in an atmosphere of great artistic and cultural ferment. There was a great flowering of Polish theater and European theater in general. Brecht in Warsaw. The great Polish theater unfolded thanks to a permanent atmosphere of spiritual growth.…

The experience of the war and the invasion also made for a twisted childhood, or rather, the absence of a childhood in the conventional sense of the term.…

It was because of my skepticism about the goodness of Man that I became interested in a quest for his essential values. During the war, I saw things no one should ever see. That was what turned me into a mature person, I would say, my greater knowledge of the world and the human condition.…

The myth of the "hard man" was propagated by people who are not very demanding of themselves. It is like saying that you are demanding because you try to get the most out of everyone who collaborates in putting on a play, and that's not being hard. Not at all.…

I have always been tremendously attracted by the theater. Perhaps I went into the theater because I couldn't do film. I wanted to do cinema. I think that having been immersed in a theatrical culture also had an influence.

The director creates life on the stage.… The director is really a god, a creator who discovers worlds to shape a fiction through which a poetic fiction is expressed. This is the way the director works.

María Tarriba (MT): How would you define stage poetry?

LM: It is the maximum capacity of synthesis for expressing something. Of synthesis and purity in articulating words and other theatrical elements.

MT: What does the theater give you?

LM: A reason for living...the most important reason.…

MT: You often use the term "organicity" when talking about putting on a play. What does an "organic" performance mean to you?

LM: I mean the lack of ornament, the merger of all the elements in the performance in a single style, a language in itself. It is the preponderance of the structure of the performance, conceived in terms of the maximum economy of means.…

MT: What character traits do you think favor the vocation of director?

LM: First of all, more than character traits, the conditions have to exist. One of these is having something to say about art, the world, and having a vital need —instinctive and necessary for survival— to speak from the stage and to create fictions. Character traits? You need to have poetic imagination, which includes sensibility, wanting to speak truths through the mouths of others and stick to the story, which is very hard. Having organizational ability, leadership and charisma.…

You should never confuse directing with a political event or a fight: in the end, it is an authorship. It is a question of articulating the stuff of the director's dreams through the participation of a group of people.…

MT: What are your obsessions?

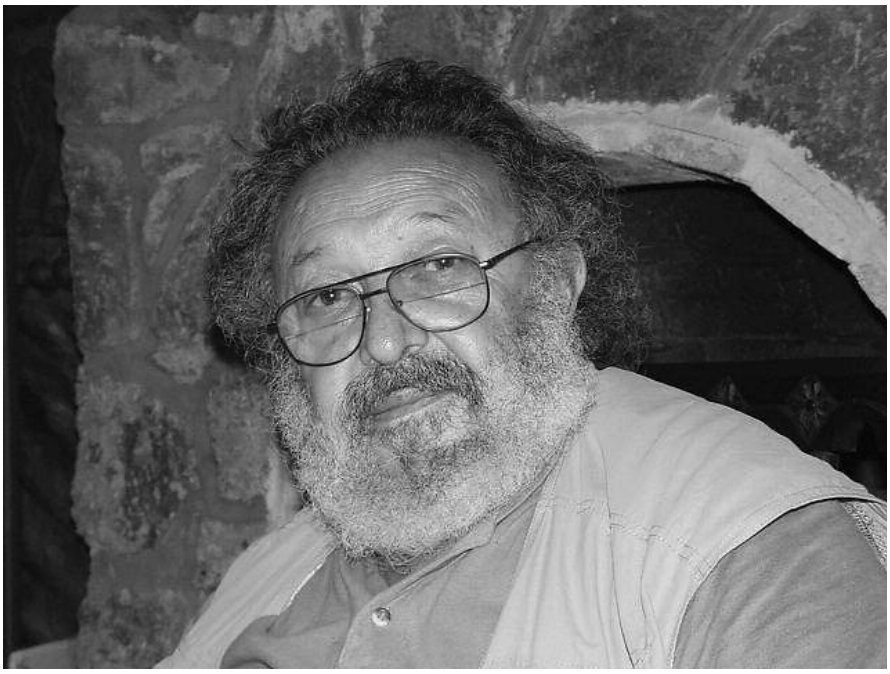
LM: I have always been interested in the grotesque, in human degradation. Obsessions? I would also mention a permanent obsession for speaking in the most precise manner in every play, for avoiding dispersion, avoiding digressions, for communicating the stuff of dreams without ornament, for communicating its essence. I am extraordinarily attracted to the encounter of the tragic spirit and discovering the different facets of its behavior. Sensual things, the erotic world, violence. Trivializing the erotic has always interested me in my productions.…

LM: I am a great enemy of all that. I am an enemy of multimedia in the theater. Sophocles doesn't need multimedia and all that.

MT: Then, what is the theater for you?

LM: Well, it's a staged operation of time and space that requires the presence of actors, movement, space, the script and other elements that create images that condense into meaning.…

[1] Passages of an interview by the Mexican theater critic María Tarriba Unger with Ludwik Margules. "Barking from the Stage. An Interview with Ludwik Margules," *Voices of Mexico* no. 43 (April-June, 1998), pp. 27-32.



Raúl Benítez Zenteno
(1931-2006)

Carlos Welti Chanes*

A few days before he turned 75, Raúl Benítez, a member of a generation who developed demography in this country, died in Mexico City. He was part of a group of citizens who from their institutions called attention to the problems of population growth. They prompted government to design a comprehensive policy to deal with these problems through the General Population Law and to create the bodies responsible for putting this policy into practice.

Raúl Benítez Zenteno was the first Mexican to be educated in the Latin American Center for Demography thanks to a fellowship he was given when he was already a member of the UNAM Institute for Social Research that he would later direct.

His contributions to the social sciences and Mexican society's knowledge were both diverse and very significant. It is worthwhile remembering some of them.

Commissioned by Mexico's Central Bank, together with his colleague and lifelong friend Gustavo Cabrera, he developed Mexico's first population projections, valid for many years and a fundamental input for economic planning.

This scientific work became even more important because he did it at a time when the necessary statistical information was scanty and

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Social Research.

Photo courtesy of Raúl Benítez Manaut.

of low quality. Therefore, he needed to use all the tools of demographic analyses and the suppositions of so-called theoretical populations; through observable relations between fundamental demographic variables in conditions of stability or quasi-stability, like those of the Mexican population until the 1960s, they made indirect estimates about fertility. In addition, what today may be a relatively simple exercise using computer tools and statistical packages that work on practically any personal computer, at that time were demographic calculations that all had to be done by hand, since they did not even have electronic calculators.

The intellectual efforts of demographers like Benítez Zenteno to establish the basis for modern demography cannot be sufficiently appreciated if we do not take into account the conditions in which scientists carried out their work.

Raúl Benítez promoted and participated in large demographic research projects both in Mexico and region-wide. One example is the Program of Comparative Fertility Surveys in Latin America, the precedent for other world programs and a touchstone of the generation of statistical information that made the basis for modern population policies possible.

His idea of a Latin American project to study the relationship between the dynamics of demographics and economic development in order to understand regional history gave rise to a large number of individual projects by researchers in the hemisphere who continue to be interested in the topic.

Raúl Benítez Zenteno was also the general coordinator of the Latin American Population Program (Prolap) and the organizer of different academic meetings that resulted in the publication of a series of books on population issues and the development of an inventory of the research done in the 1990s to plan future activities.

However, his task as coordinator of international research projects was not restricted to demography; it also delved into highly significant sociological issues like the analysis of social classes in Latin America.

His educational activities went beyond his job as a professor at the UNAM and other universities and academic centers in Mexico. He was also the secretary of the Mexican Council of Social Sciences, which supported the creation of graduate programs at universities in different states, thanks to which dozens of master's and doctoral candidates in the social sciences received their degrees and are now part of the teaching and research staffs at nationally and internationally prestigious institutions.

The UNAM bestowed upon him the well-deserved title of researcher emeritus and the Mexican government, under the administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, gave him the National Prize for Demography in 1989. In his acceptance speech, in contrast with some intellectuals at the service of those in power who usually praise whoever is in office, Raúl Benítez called attention to the growing inequality among the social classes, which could be seen in the increase in extreme poverty while a privileged sector took advantage of the conditions offered by the state to enrich themselves, thus putting Mexican society at risk of entering into crisis, which is what finally happened. As Benítez Zenteno read his speech, the president left the room, unable to put up with anyone daring to contradict the official discourse that said that poverty had been "eradicated" in Mexico, which had become "part of the first world."

Lastly, we should remember his editorial work, well represented by his labors as founder and editor of the magazine *Demos. Carta Demográfica sobre México* (Demos. Demographic Letter about Mexico). He edited it for the 16 years before his death, and in each issue brought together the most outstanding specialists in national demographic issues, disseminating our national situation throughout the five continents since the magazine reached practically every country on earth.

When Raúl Benítez Zenteno died, the Population Area of the UNAM Institute for Social Research lost its founder; demographers lost a continual prompter of discussion about the most significant matters in his discipline; and society lost an intellectual whose actions to the end of his days were consistent with his ideas in favor of national development including all social classes. VM

Drug Trafficking And Literature

Miguel A. Cabañas Enríquez*

We are used to hearing polemics in the media about censorship of *narcocorridos*, or traditional *corrido* songs about drug trafficking. Many of us have also seen Mexican, Colombian or U.S. movies in which a drug trafficker is a character or even the lead. We can say that drug trafficking is part of global collective imaginaries. Who has not read or hear about Spanish writer Arturo Pérez Reverte's best seller *La reina del Sur* (Queen of the South)? Who in Mexico and in the U.S. Southwest has not heard some song by the Tigres del Norte about the topic? The thing is, as some people say rather ironically, drug culture is "in". However, that comment trivializes the reality of those people who for different reasons die or have to live with the phenomenon.

More than being "in", drug trafficking is not alien to international economies or policies or to transnational societies. Moreover, this phenomenon extends to the global market of legal products and is associated above all with money laundering.

* Assistant professor of Spanish at the Michigan State University Department of Spanish and Portuguese.
Drawings in this section by Héctor Ponce de León.

The novels of the genre
we are dealing with here maintain a border
and regional vision of the theme,
delving into the relationship between
drug trafficking and power.

Also, recently, several Mexican authors have been dealing with the issue and developing it systematically, saying what the media has been unable to say and what *narcocorrido* composers have not been able to fit into their short narrations. Writers from Sinaloa like Élmer Mendoza, César López Cuevas, Juan José Rodríguez and Leonides Alfaro, as well as writers living on the northern border (Eduardo Manuel Parra and Gerardo Cornejo, among others), pen fiction thrillers that come dangerously close to everyday realities.

Mexico has experienced a kind of a boom in detective and spy novels. Examples are *En busca de Klingsor* (Seeking Klingsor) by Jorge Volpi (1999), *Espiral de artillería* (Spiral of Artillery) by Ignacio Padilla (2003) and Paco Ignacio Taibo II's innumerable novels, among others. The examples of this genre may have multiplied thanks to the paranoia produced by Salinism[1] and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) "democratic dictatorship." Thus, these novels offer us stories that, in their own way, analyze Mexico's past and future, as well as showing up what happens in the margins of the shadows.

Nevertheless, the novels of the genre we are dealing with here maintain a border and regional vision of the theme, delving into the relationship between drug trafficking and power. As Federico Campbell has pointed out in *Máscara negra* (Black Mask), "What we have here is one of the phrases from *Política y delito* [Politics and Crime, by Hans Magnus Enzensberger] most often quoted in political essays of recent years: 'There is an old, close, dark dependency between murder and politics. This dependency is situated on the foundations of all power up until now: power is exercised by whoever can kill the subjugated. He who governs is the *survivor.*'"[2]

The theme of drug trafficking is not alien to this continual debate about society, not even when dealt with in literature, since literature is a reflection of the thirst for self-knowledge to which any good writer aspires to also profoundly understand his/her society, his/her world. Thus, this kind of novel presents drug trafficking not as isolated from the processes of hegemonic power, but rather as part of the historical and transnational complexities that these processes involve.

In the case of Colombia, as illustrated in works like *Rosario Tijeras* by Enrique Franco (1999) or *La virgen de los sicarios* (The Virgin of the Assassins for Hire) by Fernando Vallejo (1994), the assassin for hire has begun to be a main character. So many novels have been written using this theme that Colombian writer Héctor Abad Faciolince has called this kind of narrative *sicaresca*, a play on words in Spanish making the word "sicario" or assassin, rhyme with "picaresque", a kind of narrative whose main character is a rogue. This leads us to reflect about the function of social criticism that this character plays in the contemporary Colombian novel.

In Mexico, we are beginning to encounter main character-narrators who are assassins for hire or gunmen, such as in *Un asesino solitario* (*A* Lone Assassin) by Élmer Mendoza (1999) and in *Nostalgia de la sombra* (Nostalgia for the Shadow) by Eduardo Manuel Parra (2002). These characters represent marginality and keep to the shadows, but in contact with the legal, legitimate world with which they do their "business." *A Lone Assassin* recreates the voice of the assassin of a presidential candidate —which may sound familiar— although the important thing is that we are offered the other side of the coin: the assassin's association with personages who have dark, disreputable links with political power and an ambivalent relationship with the drug world. Thus, Sinaloa language, in the voice of the gunman, takes on a leading role in the novel, and the gunman

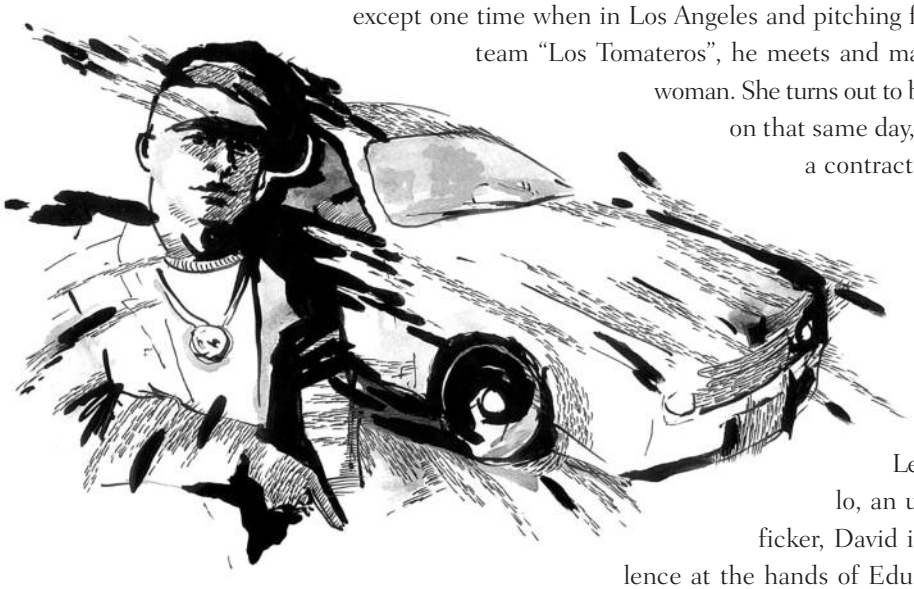
lets us enter into his world of ambiguity and shadow so we can discover and be surprised by the fact that he is a charismatic, consummate man, just a cog in the machinery of a socio-political system.

One of the novels of northern literature that best condenses the historic networks of power and crime is *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Janis Joplin's Lover) by Élmer Mendoza (2001).[3] The author manages to bring together the ambiance of repression during the 1970s revolutionary movements, linking it with the regime's repressive forces lending a blind eye to the budding drug trafficking. If *A Lone Assassin* —also by Mendoza— can be considered a 100-odd-page *corrido*, *Janis Joplin's Lover* establishes a cultural clash between two genres of music: rock and Mexican northern music; that is, global versus local; marginalized ideology versus marginalized practice; the transnational social revolution versus the business of drug trafficking.

On the one hand, *Janis Joplin's Lover* looks at the beginnings of the influence of drug trafficking and the corruption of the political and legal system, and on the other hand, it examines urban and rural guerrilla movements and the state government's repression through the anti-guerrilla group "The Dragons", the historical equivalent of "The Hawks." The novel's perspective makes us think about the origins of the social, political relationships between repression and what Mexican sociologist Luis Astorga has called "narco-liberalism."[4] According to Astorga, narco-liberalism "is sanctioned by the legal structure with the legitimate monopoly over establishing the rules of the game," but is not eliminated because of its economic, "entrepreneurial" power.[5]

It can be said, then, that the novel presents the problems Mexico has gone through in the last 30 years. As Mendoza said in an interview, "The time frame of the novel does not budge from 1970, but ... given the comments I have heard, there is a very clear projection to today, above all regarding the administration of justice, the resurgence of the idea of clarifying the [cases of] the disappeared-detainees, the strength of drug trafficking and corruption."[6]

Janis Joplin's Lover tells the story of David Valenzuela, a young man described as the town fool in a Sinaloa mountain village, who gets into trouble because of his naivete. At a town fiesta, David is attracted by a flirtatious young woman who has been "reserved" or forbidden contact with other men by the younger son of an influential local "*gomero*" or drug trafficker.[7] When the young man attacks David for dancing with the girl, David kills him in self-defense by throwing a rock at his head. Shortly after the incident, David escapes to Culiacán to go into hiding with his uncle. These circumstances launch him on a series of adventures in which he is always the victim, except one time when in Los Angeles and pitching for the Culiacán baseball team "Los Tomateros", he meets and makes love to a mysterious woman. She turns out to be Janis Joplin herself, and on that same day, the Dodgers offer David a contract.



Despite the fact that he tries to continue his life and get away from his cousin Chato, who has become a member of the guerrilla group "September 23 Communist League", and his friend Cholo, an up-and-coming drug trafficker, David is the object of state violence at the hands of Eduardo Mascareño of "The

Dragons." While Chato represents the Marxist ideology typical of the guerrillas, Cholo becomes a metaphor for the development of the illegal business and the expanding economic system, not because he is intrinsically evil, but because of his great adaptability. In fact, in the end, he is the only character who is left standing after state repression, thanks to his money and influence. According to the novel, pragmatism is productive and the ideological struggle becomes an overwhelming obstacle.

María Fernanda, David's cousin, shows several times how excessive force against ordinary people creates resistance because it breaks the law. She says so, for example, when the family is attacked and beaten by "The Dragons" who are looking for Chato: "We cannot stand for this kind of mistreatment. Just imagine, they violate our civil rights; the next thing you know they'll do whatever they want with us....Of course we can [stop these outrages.] Why should we let the police and the rest of those lowlifes break the law? Just think of the violence that's going to cause."[8]

Don Gregorio, Chato's father, who dies from the mistreatment he suffers at the hands of the anti-guerrilla police, several times notes the defenselessness of peaceful citizens with no access to economic power. The novel subtly sketches the excessive institutional violence and the emergence of drug trafficking. This makes us think about the use of ideological and practical violence to avoid the real democratization in the country, at the same time that it allows drug traffickers to penetrate all spheres of Mexican society.

In that context, Chato the guerrilla's idealistic discourse is clearly beaten by the drug trafficker's pragmatic argument. This is summarized in a conversation between Cholo and Chato:

> Cholo, you don't know about this shit. You're a drug trafficker, you son of a bitch. You can't understand that we want a more just system, a government of the people and for the people. Well, you're gonna eat my dick because you're not going to get anything. Who says so? The government, the bankers, the industrialists? I'm saying it, brother. I don't know jack shit about politics, about imperialism or any of that crap, but you're not gonna win. I'll cut off my balls if you win. We're going to win, Cholo. The future is ours. That's a fucking pile of bullshit. Before this country goes socialist or communist or whatever, I'll bet you my balls everybody will turn into a drug trafficker like me. People don't want land, Chato, or factories. No fucking way. People want cash. They want make to some dough and to drive cars like this one.[9]

The novel clearly makes Cholo's discourse come out the winner, and the revolutionary discourse is metaphorically murdered and thrown into the sea (as Chato ends up), or jailed and finally co-opted.

The space of Sinaloa is enormously globalized despite the fact that the turn of the phrases in the language is totally regional. The novel establishes this tension between Sinaloan and U.S. symbols and space: on the one hand, David lives only to marry Janis Joplin; Don Gregorio is always watching his favorite baseball team, the New York Yankees; Cholo has an enormous Grand Marquis, and the music they listen to on the radio is mostly in English (the Rolling Stones, Janis Joplin, the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Bob Dylan). On the other hand, after Cholo becomes a drug trafficker, he starts listening to *corridos* "because it's a man's music," and María Fernanda likes popular balladist José José. Mexico is also represented as a liminal point and the political pivot between the Nicaraguan revolution, Cuba and the United States. Chato explains this, saying, "I don't know. Sometimes this is a pile of shit. Usually you don't know shit. You can't plan. Lots of dudes emigrating to Nicaragua. We've got the Cubans breathing down our necks, the Tupas. We're infiltrated by the CIA. Almost everything's concentrated in Mexico City; even in that we're centralists."[10]

This kind of novel presents drug trafficking not as isolated from the processes of hegemonic power, but as part of the historical and transnational complexities that these processes involve.

It is well known that the U.S. government used drug money to finance arms for the Nicaraguan Contra, and Culiacán then became the center for these new conflicts and crisis that resulted from military, economic and political globalization. On one occasion, Cholo says —not without irony— that "A gringo without pot is a crazy gringo,"[11] as though that were the motto of his new business. And the book reminds us of the context of the war in Vietnam and the student movements as the point of departure for an increase in consumption in the United States, symbolized in the novel by Janis Joplin's tragic death from an overdose.

Perhaps the most significant thing is that drug trafficking is the link between these worlds and, as a result, the new parallel power, strengthened by the impunity promoted from within the state, which eliminates opposition through violence and its iron-fisted control over the citizenry. Actually, the criminalization of drug trafficking, which already existed spurred on by U.S. consumption, became more severe after the murder of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in 1985.

Janis Joplin's Lover reveals the gradual commercialization of existence and the clashes of social values viewed through the lens of the capitalist meaning of money. The city and the countryside appear fully in the networks of globalization, and violence emerges from the transnational repression against ideologies that question that economic globalization. The novel also audaciously questions the hypothesis of political corruption by drug traffickers,

One of the novels of Mexican northern literature that best condenses the historic networks of power and crime is *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Janis Joplin's Lover) by Élmer Mendoza (2001).

although the novel's hypothesis may be that socio-political corruption predates the arrival of the turbulent forces of drugs.

Peasants appear already inserted in global capitalist networks, while inhabitants of the polis gradually lose their rights. A foreshadowing of voracious neo-liberalism and impunity; the beginning of the crisis of the nation and the end of the great narratives that proposed progress and liberty. The novel becomes the memory of the student movements and its sinister outcome in Tlatelolco, while from the viewpoint of victorious economic pragmatism, it presents the story's ironies. It also reminds us that abuse of its characters did not end in Mexico City, but extended to the periphery. All the states in Mexico become protagonists of international reality. Faced with a black-and-white reality presented to us by the media, faced with amnesia, *Janis Joplin's Lover* discovers the twists and turns and the intersections of legality and illegality, leaving the reader to reflect about these murky connections.

Mendoza gives us a glimpse of that upside-down world where government officials do more damage than "the revolutionaries" or "the traffickers." In the book, the *narcocultura*, the trafficker culture, becomes fashionable because it offers protection and ways out and creates status for people who would never have achieved it under other circumstances. If in some milieus individuals become commercialized, in other milieus, violence comes from the centers of power, including the state. In both cases, the results are wretched for ordinary characters-citizens. Violence and memory; crisis of the legitimacy of the state and consolidation of the power of the drug-bourgeoisie; revolution and repression; local products and global products; commercialization of death and humanization of the murderer. These are some of the paradoxes these texts offer us.

The trafficker culture may be fashionable because it has become a source of illegal profit worldwide. Undoubtedly, the legal world interacts in a complex way with this illegal industry: banks launder money; construction companies use investment flows; and governments mount anti-drug campaigns to renew the state's monopoly on violence.

Meanwhile, in an atmosphere of politization and censure, literature —in a different way from other media— tries to shed light on the issue, making a call to debate about how violence creates social inequalities and impunity in the post-national, global world. VM

NOTES

[1] All things related to former Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. [Translator's Note.]

[2] Federico Campbell, *Máscara negra: crimen y poder* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1995), p. 102.

[3] Élmer Mendoza, *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Mexico City: Tusquets Editores, 2001).

[4] Luis A. Astorga A., *Mitología del "narcotraficante" en México* (Mexico City: IIS-UNAM/Plaza y Valdés, 1995), p. 31.

[5] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[6] Eduardo Castañeda H., "Élmer Mendoza: Pasión por el filo de la navaja," p. 4 of the document at http://www.puntog.com.mx/2001/20011214/ENB141201.htm, consulted December 4, 2003.

[7] "*Gomero*" has been a colloquial term used for decades to describe drug traffickers, and refers to the people who clandestinely extract and commercialize opium gum or *goma*. Today, given the diversity in the production of drugs, people prefer the generic abbreviation "*narco*". [Editor's Note.]

[8] Mendoza, op. cit., p. 30.

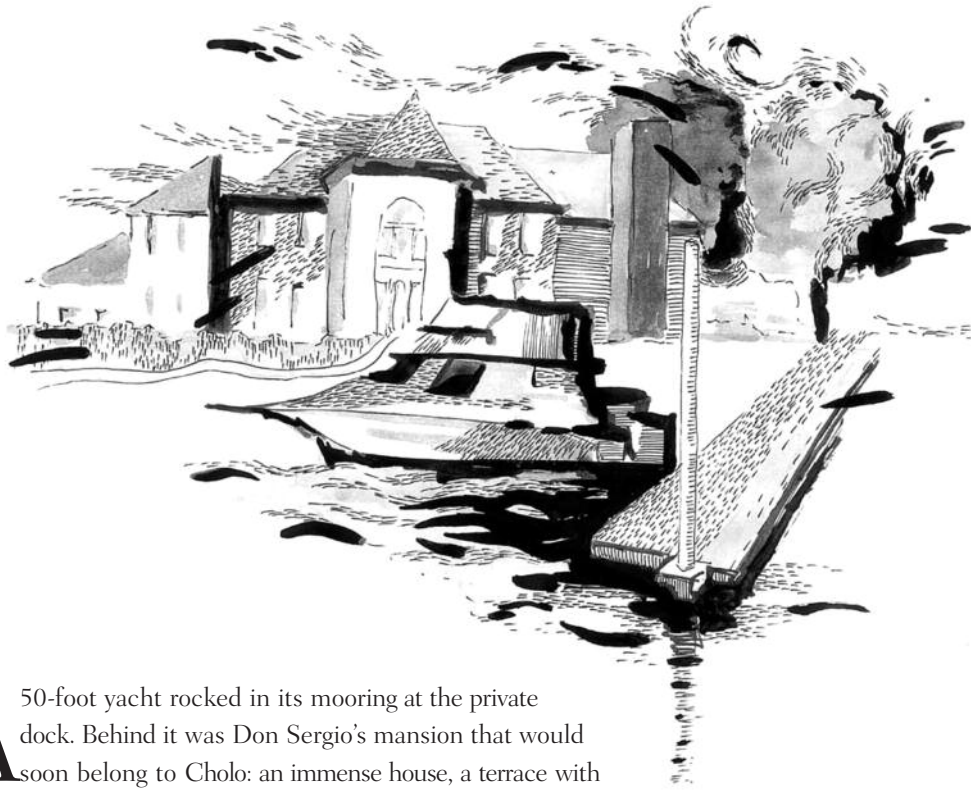
[9] Ibid., p. 148.

[10] Ibid., p. 147.

[11] Ibid., p. 120.

Janis Joplin's Lover[*]

by Élmer Mendoza



A 50-foot yacht rocked in its mooring at the private dock. Behind it was Don Sergio's mansion that would soon belong to Cholo: an immense house, a terrace with a view of the beach, a swimming pool and a pool house with a living room. Gregorio Palafox Valenzuela, alias Chato, alias Commander Fonseca, was meticulously inspecting the entryways, the patio and each room. Cholo, who was euphoric, didn't give a hoot about security, and David adapted without much fuss. They used only the left wing, three of the seven bedrooms.

From the day he signed the papers, Cholo was completely involved with the family. In just a few days, he showed Carvajal that he hadn't made a mistake: he bought, packed and sold as though he had been born for it. Soon, he won the respect of his partners and the government people he had to negotiate with. He became known as expedite: one day he was escorting a shipment and they were stopped as they entered Sonora. The dump-truck was filled to the top with Acapulco Gold; it was impossible to hide so much marijuana. Where are you coming from? asked the PGR federal narc. Just Culiacán, bro. What you carrying? Tomatoes. Got your permit? No, but we got

* Fragment of the novel by Élmer Mendoza, *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Mexico City: Tusquets, 2001), pp. 113-118. The editors of *Voices of Mexico* thank the author, his agent and his publishers for their permission to translate and reprint this text.

five hundred dollars. And they got through with no trouble. As part of his metamorphosis, Cholo wore a thick gold chain around his neck and a grotesque man-bracelet with his name on it. You, you son of a bitch. Next you're gonna put diamonds in your teeth. Chato made fun of his style but fell short of insulting him: Santos was his best friend and he owed him a lot of favors. On his way back from one of his trips to Las Vegas, he had managed to bring in the most important shipment of arms for the guerrilla movement: Smith & Wesson pistols and Kalashnikov rifles, ready for the assault.

David was determined to go back to Chacala. His friends were having a hard time convincing him not to go look for his money at the house on the hill. Cholo even had to lie to him: Look, you son of a bitch, I already went for them. The neighbors were having a party and there were a shitload of SUVs, *banda* and beer. I had to jump over the back fence and I went right to the hiding place. I found the hole next to the bougainvillea, but there wasn't nothing there: it was empty, my man Sandy. I already told you that the judicial cops searched the whole place. So, Cholo, lend me some cash for the ticket. Neither Chato nor Cholo were going to let him go to Chacala, but they couldn't tell him that directly: Look, cousin, I think you won't be able to get rid of my uncle's murderers. They're armed and probably they'd beat you to the punch. Besides, what's up, my man Sandy? Don't you want to see Janis again? In a month I'll get paid and I'll pay for your ticket to Los Angeles. Don't accept, whispered the reincarnateable part of him that he had been listening to a lot lately. You can't postpone vengeance. Get them to loan you the money you need and that's it. Cholo, he said, buy me the ticket to Chacala. Jesus, you're stubborn, said Cholo, changing tactics. Okay, count on it. I'll also lend you some for the return trip. But just one thing: you can't take the risk with the rocks. Tell Chato that he should teach you to shoot and that he lend you a pistol. Great idea, approved his karma. It has to be quick.

Chato took three days trying to get David to learn the different parts of the pistol. Despite his inner self's anger, he couldn't manage to memorize the necessary instructions. He often forgot to take off the safety and when he shot the gun it would jam. On the fourth day of his indoctrination, Chato gave up: You're not made for this, cousin. Go back \to baseball. Every time he could, David reviewed Chato's lessons, pushed by his inner voice, which knew a lot about it. The bad thing was that his desperation was driving him nuts. Sometimes he'd go through the new house, water the plants, sweep and cook after working with Don Danilo, who thought it was great that he had two jobs. It's not a bad idea that you work as a night watchman. From the time he heard about his father's murder he hadn't even been able to rest by thinking about Janis. Whenever he took out the clipping, the reincarnate-able part of him berated him: How can you forget your father's death? Don't think about her anymore. If you fall into that woman's clutches you're not going to get revenge. He didn't know what to do. He would have liked to talk about it to someone, but who? He didn't trust Rebeca enough. He was embarrassed to talk to the old man about it. When Chato was in the house, he spent his time sleeping, and Santos Mojardín only showed up from time to time, with his increasingly sibylline bleary-eyed gaze, radiating that mistrust proper to criminals.

The only thing that allowed him to keep his balance was fishing and his dates with Rebeca. David continued his routine, in the daytime, he was a fisherman; in the afternoon he saw his friends; sometimes at night he went to the boat to wait for Rebeca, always taking Janis's photo. Danilo's daughter was no longer the same. Even if she didn't want to accept it, the break with Rivera had driven her over the edge. At first it was all the same: she made a date with him at the boat; she came on

strong and aggressive; she used blackmail to seduce David, but then she would stand him up or treat him like trash: My dog, don't you realize what I did for you? I left Rivera, sent him to hell. David was confused. He liked going out with Rebeca, smelling her aroma and watching her dance. But he didn't want to be unfaithful to Janis. With blind faith, David trusted that destiny would unite him with the singer, and little by little, Rebeca's animosity dwindled. The girl had no lack of people to have fun with. Actually, everybody was dying to be with her and not an afternoon went by that somebody couldn't be seen slinking over to her house behind old Manzo's back. Only David was unavailable, and that's why he interested her.

By the middle of August, everything came to a head. One day, Chato woke Cholo before dawn. I have to scram, bro. Can you take me to Navolato to the bus station? I'll take you wherever you want, bro, to hell itself if you want. Just there is fine. You need anything? Money, guns, weed? Nothing. Just take me to Navolato before it gets light. It won't be long before the rain clears up. They went in the Marquis. David felt very alone: they had killed his father; Cholo was changing; his cousin was changing. He was the only one who was still the same, and there were the heavens that didn't change either. Were there nine planets? Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars…

His loneliness was not going to last very long. That same week it became known that the cell led by Commander Fonseca had made three hits in the state: they held up three banks and took over a toll booth for ten minutes under the nose of the police. Mascareño was a wild man. His superiors threatened to fire him or put him in jail for conspiring with the guerrillas. He was nervous and got an ulcer that didn't stop bleeding. We demand results, commander. Declare a state of siege. As a result, they increased surveillance and the number of checkpoints. They even detained two of Don Sergio Carvajal's drivers and closed the highway with no explanation. Right now we can't work. The government is negotiating certification with the United States and that complicates everything, explained Ugarte. All we can do is wait. With the highways being watched and Mascareño's team working at a fever pitch, both Cholo and Chato had to stay at Altata. Chato arrived ready to plan the assault on the military barracks. Cholo just wanted to relax. Every time he came back from fishing, David found his friends talking unconcerned. One said Chato was one of the

most wanted guerrilla fighters. What? Where? The other said that Cholo was one of the young up-and-coming drug dealers and somebody wanted to waste him. What do you mean? When? They got quietly drunk as though nothing was going on; they enjoyed the pool and laughed themselves silly under the yellow umbrella. What do you say, Sandy Koufax? Where have you been? Did you see your girlfriend? Oh, so you've got another squeeze. Janis ain't gonna like that for shit. I'm not up to anything with her. You'd better not be, you son of a bitch. You don't play around with Janis. You want to marry her, don't you? Yes. Well, behave, then. And if it works out, I'll throw you the party.

Okay, whoever chickens out loses. When have I every chickened out, you bastard? Whatever I say when I'm drunk, I maintain when I'm straight. You just better believe that we're brothers following this son of a bitch: he wanted to go live in the middle of nowhere and there we went. He wanted a house at the beach and here we are. We shouldn't say anything more about it. No reason to, bro. I already said so. VM

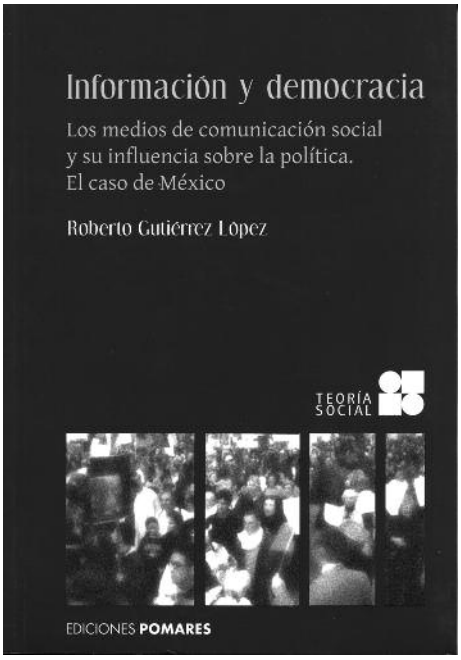
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Élmer Mendoza was born in Culiacán, Sinaloa, in 1949. He is the author of three volumes of short stories, *Mucho que reconocer* (A Lot to Recognize) (1978), *Trancapalanca* (Seesaw) (1989), *El amor es un perro sin dueño* (Love Is a Dog without an Owner) (1992); two chronicles of drug trafficking, *Cada respiro que tomas* (Every Breath You Take) (1992) and *Buenos muchachos* (Good Fellas) (1995); and the novels *Un asesino solitario* (A Lone Assassin) (1999), *El amante de Janis Joplin* (Janis Joplin's Lover) (2001), *Efecto tequila* (The Tequila Effect) (2004) and *Cóbraselo caro* (Make It Expensive) (2005). He is also a playwright. He teaches at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa and is a constant promotor of reading. He was awarded the José Fuentes Mares National Prize for Literature in 2002.

In the view of Tijuana-born writer Federico Campbell, since Mendoza's first novel, *A Lone Assassin*, he has become known not only as "the first narrator to deftly portray the effect of drug trafficking culture in our country," but also as the author of a penetrating, lively linguistic exploration of Mexico's underworld, turning it into rigorous literary material.

Mendoza was born in the Popular neighborhood, or Colonia Popular, which he mentions in his work as "Col Pop", where some scenes, for example from *A Lone Assassin* and *Janis Joplin's Lover*, take place.

Reviews



Información y democracia.
Los medios de comunicación social
y su influencia sobre la política.
El caso de México
(Information and Democracy. The Media and Its Influence on Politics. The Case of Mexico)
Roberto Gutiérrez López
Ediciones Pomares
Mexico City, 2005, 239 pp.

The media's decisive role in forging public opinion and influencing citizens' political preferences has become a challenge for democracy. Candidates and public officials increasingly need the media, particularly the electronic media, to promote and legitimize their political proposals. This gives the media and those with the economic resources to access it growing power, distorting the exercise of democracy when media strategies are subordinate to private interests and inequitably favor one position over another. In this scenario, the media impoverishes pluralism and misinforms society instead of informing it. Under these conditions, citizens' votes and public opinion lack solid bases for making political decisions in the public interest.

To deal with this challenge, the regimen of social communications must be reformed to simultaneously guarantee freedom of expression, the right to information and the media's democratic responsibility. In Mexico, this kind of reform is being debated, so much so that one of the pending issues on the national political agenda is the limitation of the media's excessive power. As a result, there is great interest about the role it plays in our democratic life. One example of this is an article by the presidential spokesman Rubén Aguilar Valenzuela, "El papel de los medios de comunicación en la consolidación de la democracia mexicana" (The Role of the Media in Consolidating Mexican Democracy).[1]

Academia has made important contributions to the study of the relationship between democracy and the media. Among the most recent are those of Roberto J. Gutiérrez López, well-known specialist in political culture in general and of Mexico in particular. Gutiérrez received his doctorate in social sciences from the Autonomous Metropolitan University (UAM) and is currently the director of the UAM's Azcapotzalco campus Division of Social Sciences and Humanities. He has published research results about the relationship between the media and democracy in the now defunct daily newspaper *El Nacional* from 1995 to 1996, in magazines like *Casa del Tiempo*, published by the UAM, *Voices of Mexico* and *Metapolítica*.[2] Now he has produced the book *Información y democracia. Los medios de comunicación social y su influencia sobre la política. El caso de México* (Information and Democracy. The Media and Its Influence on Politics. The Case of Mexico), put out by a publishing house with a market both in Spain and Latin America.

This book honors its title in two ways: by dealing with the relationship between communications and democracy based on first-hand theoretical, legal and journalistic documentary sources, and by presenting a critical

analysis of the positions of the nation's political actors with regard to the system of social communications from the perspective of democratic ethics. In other words, Dr. Gutiérrez's book informs the reader about the state of the debate and legislation in our country with regard to the relationship among the state, the media and society, doing so with a clear commitment to democracy.

This study is interdisciplinary and uses political sociology as its theoretical-methodological platform. The book is enriched with elements of political philosophy and has a clear historiographic and journalistic vocation. Just as the author himself did at his book launch at the UAM venue Casa del Tiempo, the text narrates an unfinished story: that of Mexico's democratic transition *vis-à-vis* social communication.

From that perspective, Gutiérrez demonstrates that our prolonged political transition has created a gap between the democratic transformation of our institutions and the continued existence of our old regimen of social communication. The right to information has been a by-word since the 1970s, but it was not until recently that it was concretized in the Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Governmental Public Information and the creation of the Federal Institute for Access to Information (IFAI). However, as the author points out, regulating the media through the reforms needed in the Federal Radio and Television Law and the creation of a Federal Law on Social Communication is still pending. Gutiérrez explains this disparity by citing the ambiguity of the political parties, which recognize the power wielded by the private media, particularly the Televisa-TV Azteca television duopoly, and the need to limit that power, but which also fear the media magnates' influence on public opinion.

The way the author deals with the socio-political effects on the media of the lack of regulations is noteworthy. In his third chapter, he warns of the danger of the citizenry being at the mercy of the way the media reports on public issues, which it does favoring private criteria and interests instead of being an open window on what is going on in society and not only in government offices, becoming a space for pluralistic debate and open pro-active deliberation about the national agenda used to design solutions to common problems in the public interest.

Gutiérrez's reflections about the rules of the communications game are no less important: his philosophical, practical proposal is oriented to the media finding a balance between the principles of freedom and responsibility consisting of limiting the former in favor of the latter to the benefit of society. To argue this proposal, the author resorts to the most outstanding elements of modern political philosophy, wielding a conception of freedom as the responsible exercise of autonomous thought and as a source of the plurality of opinions, a value consubstantial to democracy.

Together with its theoretical rigor and precision in information management, Roberto Gutiérrez's book puts forward a very timely topic for discussion which the author places in the context of the political reform of the state. This unfinished reform process today re-emerges both from the ranks of civil society and the government itself.

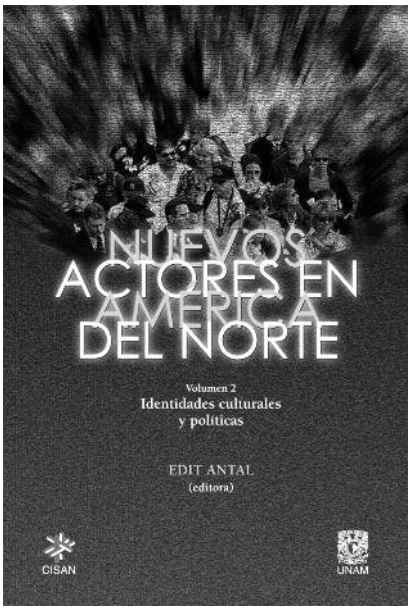
For all these reasons, this book is a very lively, intriguing, provocative text which, as the author says in his prologue, points to creating a demand for regulating the media in Mexico. It is clear that if this reform does not happen, our incipient national democracy will be endangered and will run the risk of becoming a "mediocracy", an empire of the media. VM

Rubén R. García Clarck
Director of Mexico City's Electoral Institute Training and Development Center

NOTES

[1] Rubén Aguilar Valenzuela, "El papel de los medios de comunicación en la consolidación de la democracia mexicana," *Este País* no. 174 (Mexico City), September 2005, pp. 4-8.

[2] See the articles by Roberto J. Gutiérrez López, "La reforma del Estado y el régimen de comunicación social," *Casa del Tiempo* no. 51 (Mexico City), April 2003, pp. 2-8; "The Media in Mexico Today: Politics as Spectacle," *Voices of Mexico* no. 70 (Mexico City), January-March 2005, pp. 16-19; and "Las coordenadas normativas de la comunicación social: libertad y responsabilidad," *Metapolítica* no. 40 (Mexico City), March-April 2005, pp. 77-89. Gutiérrez is also the author of specialized articles about political culture in the magazine *Sociológica*, produced at the UAM's Azcapotzalco campus, the essay *Identidades políticas y democracia* (Political Identities and Democracy), published by Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute in 2001, and the booklet *Cultura política y discriminación* (Political Culture and Discrimination), put out by the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Conapred) in Mexico City in 2005.



Nuevos actores en América del Norte. Identidades culturales y políticas (vol. 2)
(New Actors in North America. Cultural and Political Identities [vol. 2])
Edit Antal, ed.
CISAN-UNAM
Mexico City, 2005, 216 pp.

Volume two of *Nuevos actores en América del Norte* (New Actors in North America), edited by Edit Antal, continues the analysis of new non-state actors who are forging new forms of political and social organization in the region. Under the general topic of cultural and political identities, the book presents different social realities, particularly local ones, that speak to the emergence of different forms of political, social and cultural action in North America.

Like in volume one, this book presents multi-disciplinary work by 12 authors about four issues linked to the configuration of cultural and political identities: 1) the role of immigrants or minorities in the production of film and literature; 2) indigenous movements, a diverse experience; 3) the empowerment of the Latino minority in the United States; and 4) civil and social rights in North America.

In the first section, Graciela Martínez-Zalce, Laura López Morales and Claudia Lucotti focus their articles on identity in Canada based on the analysis of Canadian film and literature, explaining how minorities use these discourses to recognize themselves in a multi-culturally complex society. In the case of film, Martínez-Zalce's topic, the bi-cultural nature of the Armenian minority is central to understanding the recovery of personal identity through a relationship that must be constructed in space.

Laura López and Claudia Lucotti contribute an article historically reconstructing literary production in Canada in order to understand the transformations experienced by two important groups: the Quebecois and women. While López centers on Quebecois literature and its utilization for understanding change and the insertion of this minority in Canada's political, economic and cultural development, Lucotti reviews women's English-language poetry in the light of identity. In both cases, literature helps us to understand the movements of identity and, as Laura López points out, writing becomes the means *par excellence* to give body to the reflection and the formulation of demands and expectations.

In the second section, about indigenous movements, Radha Jhappan, Juan Anzaldo Meneses and Natividad Gutiérrez Chong analyze historically the indigenous struggle around cultural identity. These articles deal with the situation in the region's three countries and the authors agree that respect for indigenous identity is the only way to achieve autonomy for indigenous peoples. Given the clear differences in the scope and advances of the rights won by the indigenous communities of Canada, the United States and Mexico, many paradoxes continue to exist about these communities' status and their insertion in the national societies they belong to. Thus, for example, even though Canada may be the most advanced country with regard to conferring certain constitutional rights to indigenous peoples, it is not as advanced as it tries to equate indigenous self-government with local government. In the United States, indigenous peoples have a similar situation of limited autonomy, particularly with regard to tribal governments and the management of natural resources, a source of tension with the federal government. In the case of Mexico, says Anzaldo, times do not seem to have changed for indigenous peoples and communities.

In the three cases, despite the differences, the authors point to a revitalization of the indigenous struggle's political and social action and organizations, beginning with a reformulation of their relations with the state and non-indigenous society.

The third section, perhaps the best theoretically and empirically concatenated of all, presents articles by Bar-

bara Driscoll, David Díaz and César Pérez Espinosa about the power of Mexicans as a political minority in the United States. These contributions emphasize the efforts of the Latino or "Chicano" movement to achieve greater political representation within the U.S. system. Driscoll does a historical review of the politization of Mexicans living in the United States, using as her starting point the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s when Mexicans took on the concept of "Chicano" to dignify it and turn it into a symbolic weapon of the political struggle, when they began to organize socially and politically and learned a very important lesson for their quest for greater representation: using the democratic and legal instruments of the U.S. political system itself instead of confronting it. Only in this way can we understand the recent increase in Chicano representation in U.S. legislatures and administrations.

A paradigmatic example is Antonio Villaraigosa's successful mayoral campaign in Los Angeles, California. In his article, David Díaz describes the context of the 2001 mayoral election and the push that Villaraigosa meant for empowering Chicanos. This politician's political-electoral strategy is interesting, including breaking with traditional forms of campaigning and going beyond Latino barrios to get support from other social groups, for example environmentalists, feminists and the Jewish community, among others. Although Díaz does not say so because his article is situated in a previous time, in effect resorting to the values and tools of U.S. democracy served this candidate in good stead for a victory in the 2005 Los Angeles mayoral race, also aided by the politization of the Chicano labor movement. According to Díaz, the Villaraigosa effect has fostered an important change in the patterns of political representation of the Chicano community both because of the increase in its electoral participation and because of the political victory of candidates from this minority for elected posts.

César Pérez, for his part, talks about the fruits of this growing electoral participation by examining Mexican-origin legislators in the U.S. Congress who seek improvements in the quality of services to the Latino community.

Finally, the last section of the book touches on a topic that is important for democracy in North America: the struggle for civil and social rights. Margaret Andersen and Silvia Núñez García study two cases of marginal groups in the United States, while Jennifer Stoddart deals with the importance of the right to information in Quebec and Canada in a context of broadening out democratic rights.

In her interesting article, Andersen describes the theoretical, methodological and practical focuses of feminist action. Concerned with the marginal status of women of color —whom she categorizes as anyone not of European descent— the author analyzes the patterns of social links among races and genders. These patterns have been transformed by the actions of certain social movements, but mainly by the economic-productive restructuring of U.S. society. Pro-actively, Andersen proposes that multiracial feminism, which she clearly defines, is a way to overcome the structures of domination that pervade these marginalized women's daily lives.

Silvia Núñez develops a small case study of the National Coalition for the Homeless in order to deal with the topic of community participation by marginalized actors. Her analysis shows how a small local organization in New York City proves the complexity of the organization of civil society in the United States, and how it has the ability, although limited, to influence national decisions through lobbying Congress. The important thing in this case and the previous one is the empowerment of marginalized groups through social reorganization. In any case, as Núñez points out, these kinds of movements for organized social action help evaluate both the quality of U.S. democracy and the progressive vitality of its civil society.

New Actors in North America. Cultural and Political Identities complements the analysis in volume one and demonstrates the complexity inherent to social and political action undertaken by very different actors in contradictory socio-political contexts that also exist in democratic countries, particularly the United States and Canada.

Despite the heterogeneous quality of the articles and the fact that some of the figures are out of date —their update would allow us to more precisely understand the region's situation— this book edited by Edit Antal is an interesting effort to present the reader, whether he or she is familiar with these issues or not, with a broad panoramic view of the reconfiguration of the societies and the political and cultural and identities of North America through the discourse of film and literature or the study of social or political movements. VM

Bibiana Gómez and Esther Ponce
Internationalists

Juan Soriano