VOICES of Mexico

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Crisis, Politics and Society in Mexico and North America
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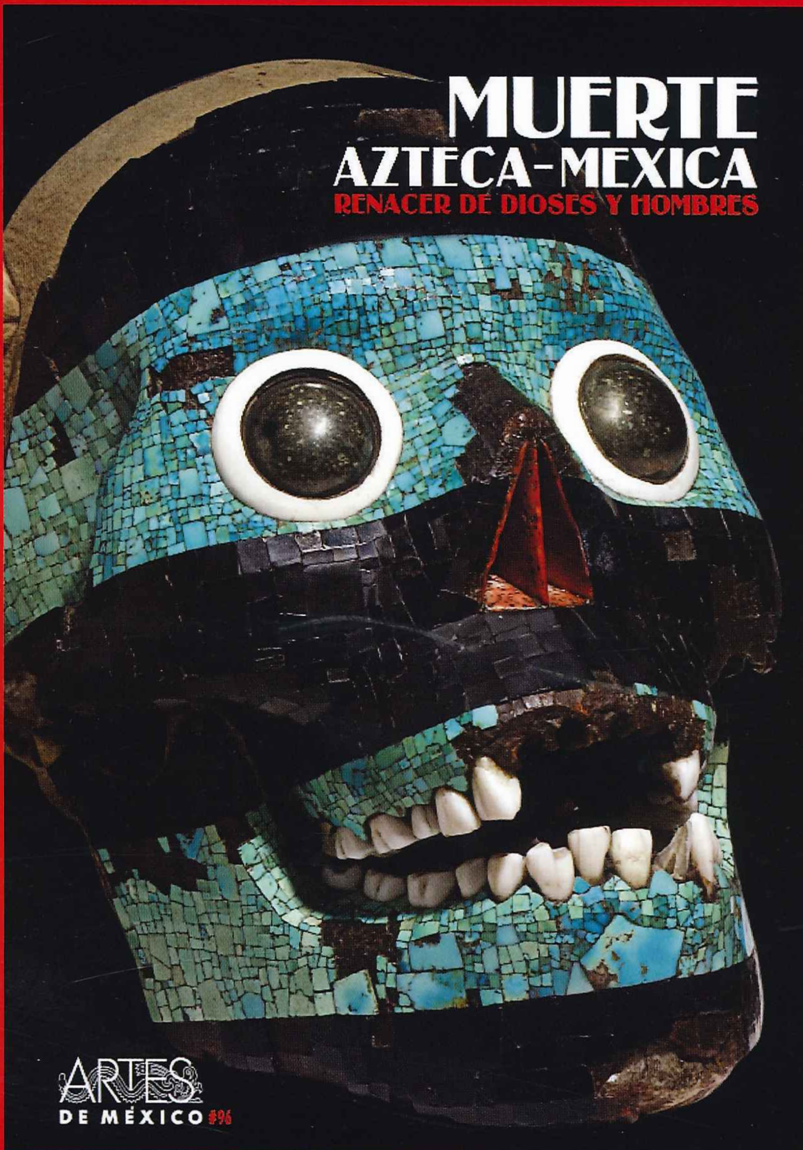

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¿CUÁL ERA EL DESTINO DE ESTOS HOMBRES DESPUÉS DE LA MUERTE? ¿CÓMO ERAN SUS RITUALES MORTUORIOS? UN NÚMERO PERTURBADOR QUE REMUEVE NUESTRAS INQUIETUDES POR EL MISTERIO DE LA EXISTENCIA.

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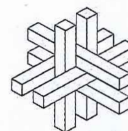

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Cover

Betsabeé Romero, *A Ladder to the Other Side*, variable sizes, 2006 (painted car and mason's ladders joined together). Artist's collection.

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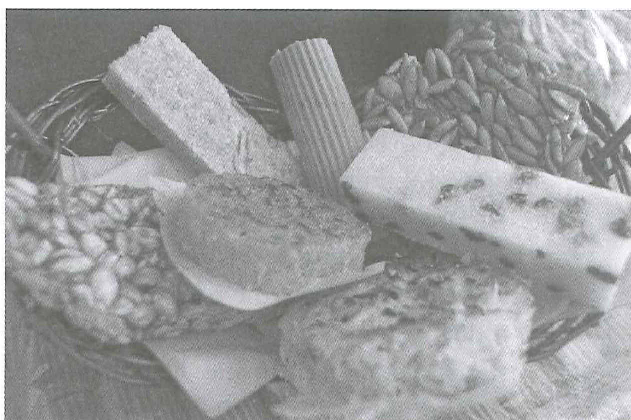

Raquel del Castillo

Our Voice

The global economic crisis has affected the three countries of North America differently: unemployment in Mexico is estimated at 6.3 percent; in the United States, 9.5 percent; and in Canada, 8.4 percent. But the gravity of the overall problems Mexicans face points to increasing asymmetry in relations with our trade partners.

This becomes clear if we note that, in addition to the indicators on violence, growing poverty and exclusion, the country has to deal with errors in political leadership, a fiscal reform for 2010 that threatens to be unpopular and low confidence levels among consumers. The immediate consequences of all this is uncertainty among the population, with pessimism prevailing in society.

Plagued by a myriad of contradictions, Mexico's political actors, beginning with President Calderón himself and followed by members of Congress and the political parties, show signs of continuing to concentrate on a short-term vision.

In this context, the scenario of a country where the figure of citizen has not yet consolidated as the center of the democratic regimen is dramatic. This can be seen in the gap between the citizenry and its representatives.

Increases in the value-added and income taxes that will tend to hit the middle and working classes the most continue to lack any accompanying guarantees that the revenues will be used efficiently and transparently for society. This is particularly the case if they are examined in light of the criteria of austerity set out for earmarking resources for priorities like public higher education, compared to the untouchable, sky-high budget items still reserved for political parties, whose interests continue to center on maintaining the privileges guaranteeing them their quota of power.

Amidst all this, it should be emphasized that the National Autonomous University of Mexico was recently awarded the 2009 Prince of Asturias Prize for Communications and the Humanities for its contributions to culture, science and the arts down through its history. Naturally, this has had an enormous impact on the education of hundreds of generations of young people of different nationalities, enabling many of them to raise their social standing. But, the freedom of thought and expression that the university represented —and particularly in the case of exiled Spanish intellectuals who were given a place to work and thrive— has also provided the opportunity for a renewal of universal thought.

This international prize comes at the best possible moment. In the midst of the unease prevailing in the country, it reminds us that the UNAM is essentially an institution that belongs to the people of Mexico. It is thanks to their endeavors that our institution continues to be vibrant and look to the future, maintaining its vocation of strengthening humanistic, liberal, democratic values.

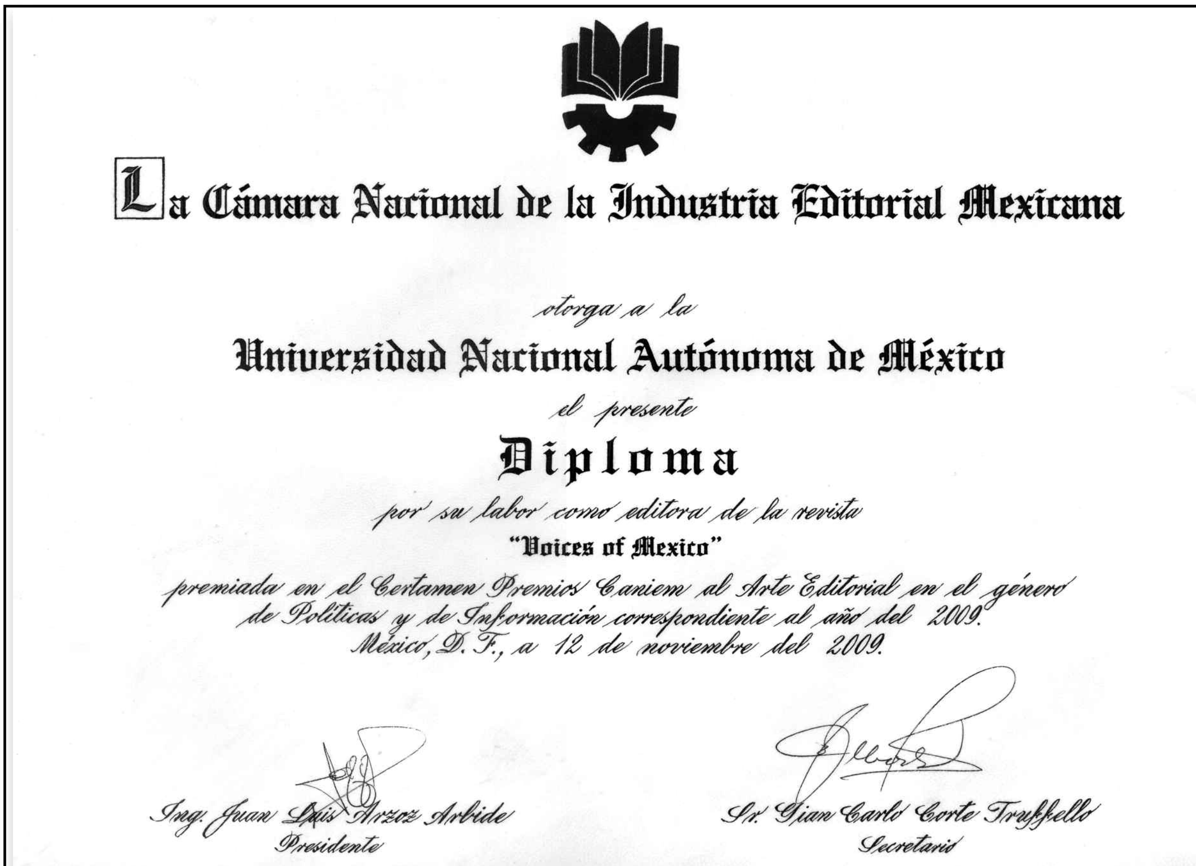
The university community, today made up of more than 35,000 academics and 306,000 students, reminds us that our mission in the information and knowledge age is not only to commit ourselves to excellence in developing our particular spheres of

action, but also to make access to high levels of specialization a right within the reach of all those convinced that it is vital to passionately dedicate their lives to teaching and research. This transcends the current trends of privatizing knowledge promoted by a globalization model that prioritizes the few.

From the work space we share as CISAN researchers, where last September we went through the statutory change in leadership, we will make all due efforts to fully explore the reality of this "new" North America. Our guiding principle will be the fact that building the future involves recognizing optimism as an effort of will.

I cannot conclude without expressing my satisfaction at the fact that in 2009 *Voices of Mexico* has once again been awarded the prize by the National Chamber of the Publishing Industry (Caniem) in the category of political and general information magazines. This distinction encourages and motivates us to continue making greater and greater efforts every day in our task of disseminating among the English-speaking public some of the most transcendental issues in Mexico and the region it is part of through the pens of many of our best voices.

Silvia Núñez-García



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México, D.F., a 12 de noviembre del 2009.

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The Mexican National Chamber of the Publishing Industry confers this diploma on the National Autonomous University of Mexico for its work as the publisher of the magazine *Voices of Mexico*, awarded the Caniem Prize for Publishing in the category of Political and General Information for the year 2009. Mexico City, November 12, 2009.

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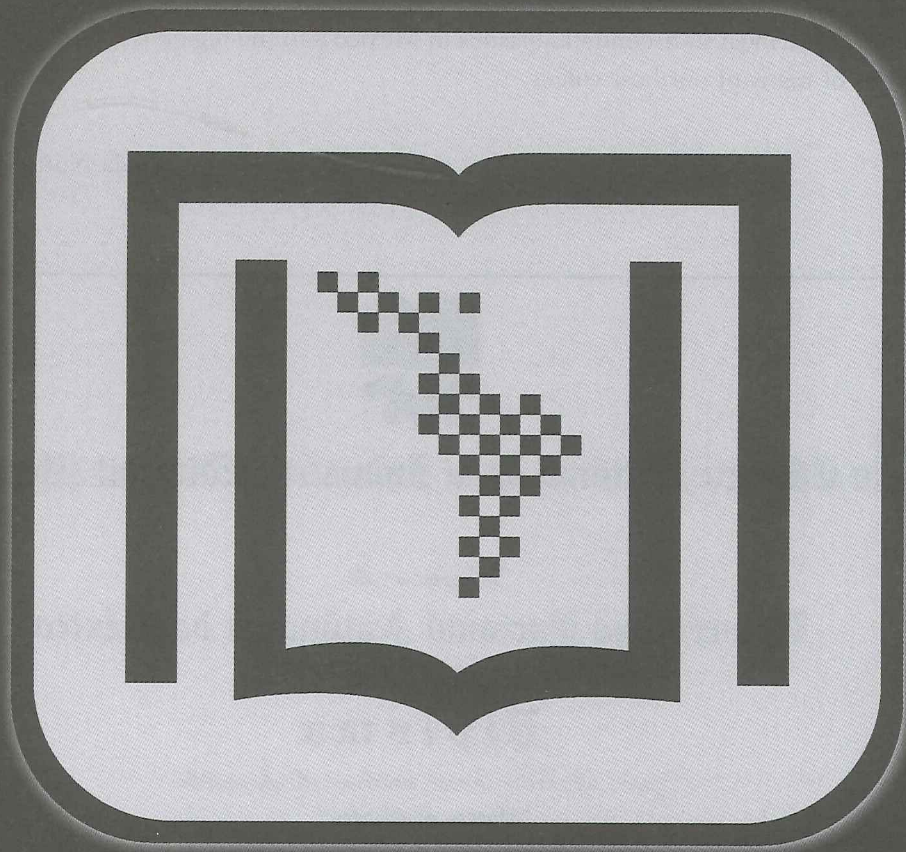

UDUAL

The Economic Crisis Or, How President Calderón Lost The Midterm Elections

Enrique Pino Hidalgo*

Isaac Esquivel/Cuartoscuro

An unprecedented hike in unemployment is one of the most noticeable effects of the current economic crisis.

One of most important factors in the failure of the National Action Party (PAN) in last July's midterm elections (for federal deputies and six governor's seats) was President Felipe Calderón's weak response to the economic crisis and its social and political consequences. This failing can be explained by his economic cabinet's refusal to recognize first the imminence of the crisis in Mexico, and, later, its magnitude and structural causes. The administration's diagnosis is wrong and the anti-crisis policies seem slow and ineffective.

Publicists convinced the president that his party could win the 2009 elections by focusing mainly on drug trafficking, violence and insecurity. However, they forgot that Mr. Calderón had run three years previously as "the employment candidate." Under those conditions, the PAN's defeat at the polls was inevitably the president's responsibility.

In an adverse macro-economic situation due to plummeting investments, job numbers and oil revenues, the PAN was going to have a very hard time winning the elections without dealing with the worst economic crisis in recent years. It lost its position as the largest minority in Congress to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) suffered a severe blow, barely managing to keep its position as the country's third-largest electoral force.

Official polls indicated that one of the public's main concerns was drug-trafficking-related insecurity and violence. This

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Surprisingly, government strategy to overcome the crisis rests mainly on the recovery of the U.S. economy, but takes no notice of the fact that Barack Obama is actually reactivating his domestic market with landmark public investments.

is indeed the case. But, it seems difficult to accept that society was more concerned about this than about 2.5 million unemployed and declining incomes. The result was an overwhelming punishment vote for Calderón, who now has to deal with the new PRI plurality.

Surprisingly, government strategy to overcome the crisis rests mainly on the recovery of the U.S. economy, but takes no notice of the fact that Barack Obama is actually reactivating his domestic market with landmark public investments representing between 13 percent and 14 percent of his administration's deficit. The economic cabinet's conservatism prevents it from launching an anti-crisis plan centered on the recovery of domestic consumption and investment in infrastructure and manufacturing in accordance with the new institutional set-up for dealing with the recession.

In this ongoing crisis, the state and its institutions are recuperating their function as firm regulators —a compensatory role— and, if necessary, the government is expected to intervene extensively to correct the failures and insufficiencies of market economies, so prone to imbalances and social disparities. It is becoming unfashionable to rail against government spending, and concerns about budget deficits must be postponed.[1] This is the lesson of the fight against the crisis in the United States, China, Germany, South Korea, Brazil or Argentina.

President Calderón And His Cabinet's Economic Orthodoxy

At the start of his fourth year in office, the Calderón team's initiatives, particularly its economic policy, looks slow and ineffective. This is because it lacks a long-term vision and the capacity to adapt to a changing economic and political situation; its market fundamentalism does not allow it to accept that all economies go through a sea change based on the redefinition of the market, the state and society. The crisis has re-launched the state and society as regulating bodies over the market's excesses and failures. Thus, economic liberalism as an ideology, plus the executive branch's commitments to big capital, prevent the president from acting effectively and swiftly on economic issues. This is shown by the budgets he has sent to Congress.

Mexico's crisis demonstrates the economic and political autism of Finance Minister Agustín Carstens and Bank of Mexico President Guillermo Ortiz. Both have assured the public that the country was protected against the onslaught of the international crisis. At the Senate-hosted forum "Mexico in the Face of the Crisis: How to Grow?" tycoon Carlos Slim Helú predicted that in 2009, Mexico's crisis-related unemployment would be brutal and domestic production would plummet like never before. The authorities responded by heaping him with abuse and calling him a "catastrophe-monger." Time showed that the Telmex monopoly CEO —one of the main beneficiaries of the neoliberal economic model that privatized public companies— was right.[2]

The authorities finally recognized the gravity of Mexico's economic crisis and formulated a diagnosis postulating that it had operated just fine until it was hit by the international financial crisis and the AH1N1 swine flu health emergency in late April 2009. Actually, however, the collapse had been brewing before the world crisis hit.

Economic Stagnation And Vulnerability Due to the Crisis

The world crisis has had a devastating effect on Mexico's economy, but its impact has been overestimated by the authorities in order to deny the vulnerability of the economy as a whole. This vulnerability can be seen in four spheres:

1. Weak public finances highly dependent on oil and therefore affected by plummeting oil production and foreign currency flows;
2. Excessive concentration of exports to the U.S. market and a growing trade balance deficit due to increased U.S. imports from China, South Korea and Japan;
3. Restrictions on financing for production imposed by an oligopolistic, dividend-hungry banking system controlled by foreign capital; and
4. The long cycle of low growth —or even stagnation— with less than 3-percent annual GDP growth (way below the historic 6 percent average).

One of the factors that explains the stagnation is that manufacturing has been dismantled because of the economy's indiscriminate opening to foreign competition. In the early 1980s, Mexican manufactured goods, as an endogenous growth factor, represented 22 percent of GDP, in contrast with the current 17 percent. This retreat is due to the disappearance of thousands of firms that had sustained productive chains created during the period of import substitution. As a corollary, the massive import of manufactured, intermediate and capital goods has demonstrated dependence on foreign technology and capital. At the same time, these items have replaced domestically produced goods and domestic jobs to the benefit of foreign companies.

From Starvation Wages to Massive Unemployment: Consequences of Economic Stagnation

The National Statistics, Geography and Informational Institute (INEGI) recently published the main economic indicators for the second quarter of 2009: GDP dropped a dramatic 10.3 percent *vis-à-vis* the same period in 2008. It should be remembered that in the great 1994-1995 crisis, GDP contracted 9.2 percent. The monetary value of the 2009 GDP loss is predicted to be Mex$928.2 billion (or approximately US$68.76 billion), or the equivalent of one-third of all federal spending.[3]

A low-growth economy generates severe distortions reflected in the expansion of the informal economy and underemployment, massive migration to the United States and marginalization. Most of the population lives on about US$300 a month because the productive sector cannot absorb the available work force. This indirectly sharpens the oversupply of workers willing to hire on for extremely low wages or to go into the informal sector. They have one last option, however: joining the ranks of the drug cartels and nonorganized petty crime.

Officially, Mexico's unemployment rate is 5.2 percent of the workforce (2.4 million people), a number the authorities consider acceptable compared to Spain's 18 percent and the United States' 10 percent. They try to forget that in those countries the jobless have unemployment insurance and a social security safety net. That "acceptable" number affects families made up of five people on average. Absolute unemployment does not exist, and this is reflected in the rapid expansion of the underemployment rate, which now has reached 11.8 percent of the work force, or 4.8 million people. In 2008, there were 3 million underemployed in Mexico doing badly paid work in bad conditions.

The idea that the collapse of the Mexican economy was due to external factors is only partially true: the debacle was mainly fueled by the liberal, export-oriented manufacturing model.

The idea that the collapse of the Mexican economy was due to external factors is only partially true: the debacle was mainly fueled by the liberal, export-oriented manufacturing model. This means that the crisis actually had an important domestic component.[4]

The Presidential Discourse About Profound Institutional Change

In his third report to the nation, Felipe Calderón announced his administration was going to make a turn "given the choice between managing what has been achieved and continuing with the inertia generated or making profound changes in national institutions."[5] This statement had a big impact on the public and spawned expectations among certain analysts. However, the discourse of change soon showed its limits, particularly with regard to the economy.

Calderón presented 10 programmatic points. One of the most important was "a profound economic reform" to make the economy more competitive and foster growth and job creation. He also proposed a reform of public finances based on austerity and a rational use of funds, the simplification of fiscal red tape, reducing tax evasion and increasing tax revenues by broadening the tax base. A few days later, the administration sent Congress its "2010 Economic Package" with its proposal for both public revenue generation and spending. The package clearly showed the limits of the discourse of institutional change: the cabinet went back to the familiar prescriptions for economic orthodoxy. The proposed fiscal reform confirmed that the president and his cabinet were willing to swim against the current of the lessons learned by other governments about how to extricate themselves from the recession. Given the crisis and the electoral defeat, a sharp turn in economic policy was expected, but it never materialized.

More Indirect Taxes On Consumption and Investment

After the July 5 elections, the authorities announced a program to cut the existing budget by Mex$85 billion in two stages (Mex$35 billion and Mex$50 billion), of which Mex$13 billion were slashed out of communications and transportation. The austerity measures included closing three ministries and laying off 10,000 public employees.

Many analysts and academic observers pointed out that the deterioration of public finances expressed in a Mex$374-billion "fiscal sinkhole" was only the tip of the iceberg if we take into account the fact that current public expenditures increased from Mex$714 billion (about US$52.89 billion) in 2000 to Mex$1.84 trillion (about US$136.30 billion) in 2009. The frenetic expansion of current expenditures is just not backed up by a slow-growing, low-tax-collecting economy (taxes represent 10 percent of the GDP).

In short, the fiscal proposal includes the creation of a 2-percent sales tax on everything, including food and medication; a new 4-percent tax on telecommunications companies, which can be transferred to cell-phone and internet-user customers; an income-tax hike for professionals and companies (ISR) from 28 percent to 30 percent, which will hit a captive tax base; and an increase in special taxes on tobacco, beer and lotteries. With these, the government would bring in Mex$175 billion, Mex$57 billion of which it would distribute to state governments.

Given generally declining incomes, the proposal has been rejected. Analysts from different points on the political spectrum have classified it as regressive and recessive. The 2-percent tax on the sale of goods and services is a badly disguised value-added tax (VAT) with regressive effects for low- and middle-income groups. The proposal would generate Mex$70 billion for the federal government earmarked supposedly to fight the poverty of 34 million Mexicans.

The country's tax system is regressive. It is structured so that wage earners and individual business people and professionals shoulder the largest part of the tax burden, while those with higher incomes (big businessmen) pay proportionately less, given their enormous capacity to influence the government and the legislature. In Mexico, of every 10 pesos the federal government spends, six pesos come from wage earners; 3.7 pesos are paid by individual business people and professionals, and only 30 cents of a peso come from large companies.

Recessive Effects of Calderón's Fiscal Reform

Though the fiscal proposal would increase government revenues, it is recessive because it would make domestic demand contract and create bigger problems for companies, whose retail sales have plummeted. Higher taxes reduce consumption, curb production and increase unemployment and the risk of sharpening the banking system's overdue-loan-portfolio problems. An equitable fiscal reform would have to be based on direct, progressive taxes that would increase as incomes increase. For example, according to the 2006 OECD report, in Mexico, tax on business earnings is 29 percent; in the United States, it is 39 percent; in Canada 36.1 percent; and in Spain, 35 percent. In Mexico, direct taxes on income (both wages and profits) represented only 5.2 percent of GDP, compared with the 13 percent average of OECD countries (see table 1).

Table 1
Corporate Tax Rates throughout the World (2008)

Country	Tasa (%)
India	42.2
Japan	40.7
United States	40.0
Philippines	35.0
France	33.3
Indonesia	30.0
New Zealand	30.0
Thailand	30.0
Australia	30.0
Germany	29.5
United Kingdom	28.0
South Korea	27.5
Malaysia	26.0
China	25.0
Taiwan	25.0
Singapore	18.0
Hong Kong, China	16.5

Note: The earnings used as a basis to calculate taxes due may differ from one country to another.

Source: Australian Government, *Australia's Future Tax System 2008*, at www.business.nsw.gov.au/aboutnsw/climate/.

TAX REFORM AND THE RETURN OF THE PRI CONGRESSIONAL PLURALITY

The PRI caucus in the Chamber of Deputies has urged the federal government to promote a reactivation of the economy and the protection of jobs. It made a public statement warning against the deterioration of the economic model, a thesis very popular in progressive academic circles and the political opposition.[6]

The PRI proposes a fight against tax evasion and the need to ensure fiscal proportionality and equity. Specifically, it rejects the 2-percent tax on food and medication. However, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, the PRI's influential Senate leader, frequently identified with former President Carlos Salinas, has stated that the importance of the 2-percent tax should be reconsidered. In the last two decades, the PRI and the PAN have shown strategic agreement on economic issues; at the same time, big corporations exercise enormous pressure on the debate and negotiations of the three branches of government.

This year's debate about the fiscal reform ended when the PRI and the PAN passed the proposals for government revenues in the Chamber of Deputies. With one exception (the 2-percent tax on medications and food, which was rejected), the decision accepted the most regressive aspects of the administration's original proposal and the fiscal system itself by placing most of the tax burden on the shoulders of the captive tax base through hikes in income tax (up 2 points from 28 to 30 percent) and VAT (up one percent from 15 to 16 percent). The Senate made only a few last-minute changes, so an already irritated citizenry will take this hit. And that is not all: cellular phone and Internet users will also pay a new three-percent tax, plus hikes in taxes levied on beer and cigarettes. VM

NOTES

[1] Paul Krugman, "La crisis paso a paso," Paul Krugman, *La crisis económica mundial* (Bogotá: Editorial La Oveja Negra, 2008).

[2] Jorge Patterson Zepeda, *Los amos de México* (Mexico City: Planeta, 2008).

[3] INEGI, "Boletín trimestral de indicadores económicos" (Mexico City: INEGI, August 23, 2009).

[4] See the interview with Mauricio de María y Campos published in the weekly magazine *Proceso* no. 1712 (Mexico City), August 23, 2009.

[5] Felipe Calderón, "Mensaje del presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Tercer Informe de Gobierno" (Mexico City: Gobierno Federal, September 2, 2009).

[6] "Para enfrentar la emergencia e impulsar el crecimiento económico, el empleo y combatir la pobreza," *El Universal* (Mexico City), September 3, 2009, p. A13.

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The 2009 Elections
Mexico's New Political Situation

Roberto Gutiérrez L.*

Guillermo Perea/Cuartoscuro

Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard (left) and State of Mexico Governor Enrique Peña Nieto (right) are the two front-runners for the 2012 presidential race.

Last July's elections for the federal Congress and a few state and municipal governments marked a turning point in President Felipe Calderón's administration. It was widely accepted that this was going to be a difficult test for his government. In fact, large parts of the public thought it would be key for measuring the degree of support for the policies implemented over the last three years and for pinpointing the balance of forces among the parties in the road toward the 2012 presidential race.

The outcome confirms that in Mexico, what are called divided governments, where the first executive does not have a majority in Congress, which began in 1997 when for the first time the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) did not get a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, are here to stay. That is, it is not likely that the president's party will again control the majority of the legislature.

In light of last July's results, the presidential party's lack of firm control over the Chamber of Deputies is sharpened by the fact that the opposition coalition will have an absolute majority. The PRI's own high vote count and its alliance with the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM) have created an unprecedented political situation. For the first time, the president not only does not have a majority in the lower chamber, but he is also facing a coherent political force capable of blocking his bills and of passing laws and making decisions for itself. This is clear when we look at each party's vote and the number of seats obtained both through district and proportional representation (see table 1).

We can read this new relationship of forces in the Chamber of Deputies in different ways. The first and most obvious is that government performance over the last three years has

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not satisfied significant layers of the population. The National Action Party's low vote indicates that the public policies did not appropriately deal with fundamental problems like unemployment, the high cost of living and insecurity, leading it to be sharply rejected by the citizenry.[1] To be sure, the PAN conducted itself during the campaign as though it supposed —erroneously— that Calderón's personal popularity would automatically transfer to the party, when different previous studies indicated the opposite. PAN leaders also wrongly decided to center their strategy on critiquing the PRI's history of authoritarianism and corruption, believing that emphasizing the fight against drug trafficking would be decisive in turning the tide in its favor.

TABLE 1
2009 BALLOTING FOR CONGRESS

Party	Percent of Overall Vote	Deputyships Won by District Votes	Deputyships Won by Proportional Representation	Total Seats
PAN	28.01%	70	73	143
PRI	36.94%	184	53	237
PRD	12.19%	39	32	71
PVEM	6.70%	4	18	22
PT	3.65%	3	10	13
Nueva Alianza	3.42%	0	8	8
Convergencia	2.46%	0	6	6
PSD*	1.03%	0	0	0

Source: Federal Electoral Institute.
* Loss of registration as a political party.

However, it became clear that the profound negative effects of the economic crisis and of a kind of daily, ordinary violence attributable not only to big organized crime but to deficiencies in public security and the administration of justice counted against a government project that had made job creation, increasing the average wage and family security its central banner. The "dirty war" campaign strategy against the PRI, which had worked so well when competing against Andrés Manuel López Obrador, was completely inappropriate in the kind of diversified election that took place in 300 electoral districts, where it was impossible to personalize and where local factors played a fundamental role.[2]

It is widely recognized that the PAN's electoral collapse was monumental. It not only lost 63 of its 206 federal deputy seats, but not even in the state elections were its results acceptable. Of the six governorships up for election, it only won Sonora,[3] losing traditional bastions like Querétaro and San Luis Potosí. It also lost important municipal elections like Naucalpan and Tlalnepantla, both in the State of Mexico industrial corridor.

The other side of this coin was the overwhelming advance of the PRI. It shot up from 106 federal deputies in 2006 to 237 in 2009, a 106 percent increase in a relatively short period. This made it the largest caucus in the Chamber of Deputies and, to a great extent, the country's main political force. Thanks to its state-level wins, the PRI now controls 20 of the 32 state governorships since, besides winning in Querétaro and San Luis Potosí, it retained Campeche, Nuevo León and Colima. If we add significant municipal wins,[4] it is easy to understand why the PRI's regional and national strength gives it a very powerful platform for recovering the presidency in 2012.[5]

The National Action Party's low vote indicates that public policies did not appropriately deal with fundamental problems, leading it to be sharply rejected by the citizenry.

Nevertheless, the PRI's strategy for achieving this goal is not yet completely defined, and the outcome is neither predictable nor guaranteed. It should be remembered that in the 2003 mid-term elections, the PRI also chalked up major wins, making it look like the winning party for the 2006 presidential elections. Table 2 allows us to make an interesting comparison between the Chamber of Deputies in 2003 and 2009.

As it shows, the panorama in 2003 was not so different from now. Clearly, however, history belied the 2003 predictions, and Institutional Revolutionary Party was not a real contender in the 2006 race for the presidency. Its internal divisions, especially in the legislature, and its particularly objectionable presidential hopeful both played against its aspirations.

For this reason, the new relationship of forces in the Chamber of Deputies and, generally, nationwide, should be taken

TABLE 2
CONGRESSIONAL SEATS BY PARTY (2003 AND 2009)

Party	Seats (2003)	% (2003)	Seats (2009)	% (2009)
PAN	224	44.80%	143	28.60%
PRI	150	30%	237	47.40%
PRD	97	19.40%	71	14.20%

Source: Chamber of Deputies.

In a context framed by economic difficulties, job losses, a worn-out political system and the strengthening of organized crime, the political forces should be obliged to present and pass a series of long-postponed structural reforms.

with certain reservations as inputs for predictions about 2012. To a great extent, the probabilities of a PRI success will depend on how well its members manage to forge internal cohesion and establish a legislative agenda that politically benefits whatever candidate they field. Internal alliances will be crucial —for the time being, the negotiation about who would head up their congressional caucus and whether Beatriz Paredes would continue as party president seem to have stabilized them— as will their attitude and statements on a series of issues fundamental to the country's future.

In effect, in a context framed by economic difficulties, job losses, depleted natural resources, a worn-out political system, the strengthening of organized crime and *de facto* powers (businessmen, the Church, unions, the media), the political forces should be obliged to present and pass a series of long-postponed structural reforms.

These include the fiscal reform to broaden out the tax base and increase government revenues; the energy reform to make it possible to explore and better tap the country's energy sources, including water; labor legislation reform to establish new models for worker-management relations that, without injuring workers' rights, would facilitate companies' greater productivity; a political-electoral reform to resolve the crisis of Mexican presidentialism and open up for discussion topics until now taboo like the re-election of legislators and mayors; and a reform of the judicial system to reduce its impressive rates of impunity and corruption. None of these reforms can be postponed any longer without risking the intensification of social discontent and the country becoming unviable.

Naturally, achieving national accords on these and other important issues implies a willingness to deliberate and negotiate that would put on the back burner the pragmatic calculation of what kind of political hay could be made from them. This is where the PRI's strategy and priorities will be crucial. It can risk a series of profound reforms, allowing some of its traditional clienteles and interests to pay the costs, or it can opt for cosmetic tweaking that will allow inertia to maintain the *status quo* without great political turbulence, in a kind of low-profile co-government with President Calderón and his party.

Some analysts think that, even if just for calculated reasons, the PRI would be interested in laying new structural foundations for the country's development in order to win its bid for the presidency in 2010 in less disadvantageous conditions than those that exist today and with greater room for maneuver on different fronts. Others, however, argue that it will use its strength only as a block to legislation in order to further discredit the PAN administration's failed public policies. Only time will tell which route it will take.

The position of the Mexican left also must be taken into account in this overall scenario. As mentioned above, the PRD suffered a very important drop in its vote count if we compare it with 2006. Both the post-2006 behavior of its presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and the increasingly severe internal clashes among its different currents contributed to this. Even in Mexico City's Federal District, its most important bastion, the PRD's electoral base has shrunk significantly. It still heads up most of the boroughs (12 out of 16), but with lower and lower vote counts and with less and less hegemony in the Legislative Assembly.[6]

Mexico's left does not seem to have a very promising future. In 2012, dissension among its currents will certainly sharpen and they will have a very hard time agreeing on a presidential candidate. Up until now, it does not seem likely that Andrés Manuel López Obrador or Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard will withdraw, having already declared their presidential aspirations, and that a socially attractive, cohesive candidacy can be arrived at like in 2006.

With this post-electoral panorama, both public opinion and different sectors of society not organized in political parties will have to play a very important role. Making sure the political forces do not concentrate exclusively on pragmatic strategies and negotiations —the PRI and the PAN recently made a pact for the critical appointment of attorney general, for example— and ensuring that they pay attention to the really important issues for the citizenry and for strengthening institutional structures and public policies the country needs in coming years are crucial tasks that must be taken on collectively.

Regardless of which party wins in 2012, the country's situation requires an enormous effort of analysis, negotiation and forging proposals on different levels and areas of government. The bad reputation of the elites, the degradation of public life and collective existence, the country's loss of competitiveness, the drop in many indicators of government effectiveness, and, above all, the loss of the confidence of broad sectors of the population in the future all require that the new political relationship of forces lead to substantive agreements capable of improving the quality of Mexican democracy and its fruits for society. VM

Notes

[1] Some analysts have correctly commented that the public expressed its dissatisfaction not only by punishing the PAN by not voting for it, but also in high abstentionism and by invalidating their ballots, something numerous civic associations widely promoted. In effect, dissatisfaction with the entire political class and the different parties translated into more than 55 percent abstention and 5.4 percent of invalid ballots nationwide. This last figure is particularly significant because it is more than the total vote for the New Alliance Party (3.41 percent), Convergence (2.36 percent), the Labor Party (3.56 percent) and the Social Democratic Party (PSD), which lost its legal registration when it only got 1.03 percent of the vote.

[2] If Mexico's electoral system did not combine the winner-takes-all and proportional forms of representation, the PRI's victory in 184 of the 300 districts would have given it a very easy absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

[3] Even this cannot be attributed to its own merits, but to the population's outrage at the tragic deaths of dozens of children in a public child-care-center fire, which the previous PRI governor handled inappropriately.

[4] Of the 550 municipal governments up for election, the PRI won 284 (51.9 percent); the PAN, 204 (37.2 percent) and the PRD, 27 (4.93 percent). The rest were won by the other parties.

[5] The popularity and positioning of the governor of the State of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, should also be mentioned here. This is basically attributable to his enormous spending to promote his image on the most important television networks, once again putting on the agenda the need to regulate the role of the media in political-electoral competition.

[6] The PRD won 42 percent of the seats in Mexico City's Federal District Legislative Assembly; the PAN, 21 percent; the PRI, 12 percent; and the Labor Party (PT), backed by the López Obrador faction, 9 percent.

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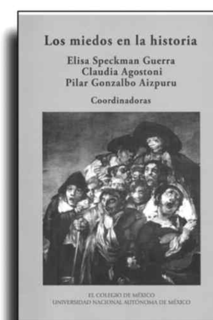

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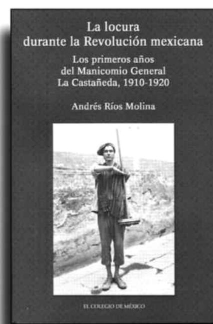

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International Cooperation and Security Mexico and the Challenges Of the Mérida Initiative

Simone Lucatello*

Amaranta Prieto/Cuartoscuro

The waragainst drugs has become one of this administration's priorities.

During their March 2007 meeting in Mérida, Presidents Felipe Calderón and George W. Bush decided to make it a priority to broaden out bilateral and regional cooperation toward common goals in the international fight against organized crime. The Mérida Initiative —or Plan Mérida, to echo the name of Plan Colombia— represents a new, more intense level of bilateral collaboration between the two neighbors. The Mérida Initiative outlines specific actions to:

1) strengthen domestic efforts in the administration of justice in Mexico;
2) strengthen domestic efforts in the administration of justice in the United States; and
3) increase bilateral and regional cooperation to deal with the threat of international crime.

In general terms and for Mexico, international cooperation around security issues is a government priority dealt with on both bilateral and multilateral agendas. The way this cooperation is carried out depends on the degree of overlap in the national interests involved and the specific challenges that must be met. Multilaterally, Mexico participates in developing a multidimensional, international security agenda for cooperation for development, which includes political, economic, social and human facets of security itself. One fundamental point of this international policy is low-

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The Mérida Initiative is often catalogued as a "tied aid" program, highly questioned in the field of international cooperation.

ering the security threats through inclusive paradigms and reducing the use of military force.

Bilaterally, the kind of cooperation between Mexico and the United States on security issues is dominated by the U.S. view based on the old security paradigm and the defense against traditional threats using military force.

International cooperation models include several types of aid from more developed countries to less developed ones. Because it is a bilateral security and military aid model, the Mérida Initiative is often catalogued as a "tied aid" program. This is a notorious technique, highly questioned in the field of international cooperation. Tied aid is that which is given on the condition that the donor country either execute the program and/or supply the goods and services involved.[1] In other words, tied aid consists of linking the decision to offer aid to the receiving country's buying goods or contracting services from the donor country. This kind of earmarking becomes an indispensable condition for getting the aid and is expressly set by the donor.

Although the Mexican government initially rejected some of the stipulations the United States established as preconditions for the assistance package (particularly around the issue of human rights),[2] the Mérida Initiative is essentially a gift of money to Mexico so it can purchase exclusively U.S. military equipment. The other executive arm implementing the initiative is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which will manage funds for following up the Mexican government's accountability and transparency programs.[3]

Despite being officially condemned by financial institutions and the UN because of its harmful effects, "tied aid" has increased globally over the last 20 years.[4] According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports on tied aid to the less developed countries, the United States heads the list of nations using this practice.[5] UN reports state that 84 cents out of every U.S. aid dollar returns to it in the form of goods and services purchased. Almost 75 percent of Canadian aid is tied, while Germany, Japan, France and Australia run a close third behind it.

The United States is notorious as a donor of tied aid, particularly with regard to security and the military in Latin America. Though since 9/11 its military aid models have been changing, it has maintained a very clear structure of military assistance since the end of World War II. Originally, military aid had three main pillars: materials and machinery to increase production of military goods; direct transfer of military equipment; and help in production, equipment use and personnel training.[6]

The same concept is in place today, but the aid's focus has been contextualized in the reality of the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking as the new permanent threats that require strengthening the principles underlying military aid.

It should be remembered that the guiding principles of U.S. military aid have been taken to the extreme since the 9/11 terrorist attacks under the two administrations of President George W. Bush: in the name of security imperatives, Bush justified a preventive war on terror using measures that violate international law (arbitrary presidential decisions and decrees, illegal domestic spying operations, violation of human rights using "legalized" torture in the case of Guantánamo, Cuba, etc.); he then extended these practices to the fight against organized crime. The consequences of these policies included the creation of a scenario of indefinite, undefined war, without spatial or temporal frontiers, and one of the stages of Bush's perpetual war in Latin America has been Mexico. Here, just like in Colombia, U.S. intervention took the form of the war on drug-trafficking-related terrorism through the Mérida Initiative, the sister to Plan Colombia.

At the same time, U.S. bilateralism in the form of tied aid and its security area is an inevitable result of the "securitization" of the drug trafficking and drug-trafficking-related terrorism agenda, which easily positions itself in a regional Latin American context in which there is no strong, consolidated cooperative security regime. This means that the U.S. agenda of militarization in the fight against the drug cartels is imposed despite its clear failure over the last 20 years. Although the magnitude of the Mérida Initiative is unprecedented in Latin America, the cooperation strategy is a model the United States has used on several occasions without any effective results.[7]

This is due to several things. First of all, it is based on a failed strategy that bans drugs and tries to eliminate them on their way to its borders, which has not been successful in controlling violence, much less corruption. It is a form of unilateral cooperation that does not include one of the most

important points in the strategy of the fight against drugs: the reduction of domestic demand. The United States continues to be the world's biggest consumer of drugs.[8] In the second place, the Mérida Initiative provides the tools and training to law enforcement agencies in Mexico when one of the country's serious internal problems is the need for a comprehensive reform of the police and judicial systems to reduce corruption and impunity.

The third factor that should be taken into account in analyzing the initiative involves the fact that the anti-terrorist struggle and 9/11 have increased the "securitization" trend in Official Assistance for Development (OAD), understood as just another foreign policy instrument for reducing the terrorist threat. The United States, the European Union and other developed countries have changed both their geographic and sectoral aid priorities. For example, the U.S. National Security Strategy and the USAID White Book underline that assistance must contribute to security and anti-terrorist strategies.[9]

In the field of international cooperation on security issues, the U.S. doctrine of preventive war and aid has two immediate repercussions. The first is linked to the aforementioned geographical changes in focus for aid. Every state that demonstrates it is "cooperative" in the fight against the threats to national security receives greater economic aid and debt relief from the United States and other donors. Many development agencies have expressed their concern about the growing earmarking of aid for security objectives. Resources that in the early 1990s went to poverty reduction or to foster the defense of human rights have been redirected to rebuilding fragile states, to the promotion of opportunities for people in strategic areas of instability, or to support interventions or bilateral plans like the Mérida Initiative.[10]

Pakistan, for example, stopped receiving aid in the mid-1990s as punishment for its nuclear testing and military regime, but after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it turned into the world's fourth largest destination for U.S. bilateral assistance. Turkey was tempted with offers of debt cancellation and aid in exchange for allowing troops to move through its territory against Iraq during the war, and for permitting the continued existence of NATO military bases within its borders, given its strategic geographical location. At the same time, multilateral funding agencies operate based on these priorities.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee itself changed the definition of OAD, bringing it closer to security. According to the DAC, cooperation can serve the fight against terrorism and drugs if it is oriented toward prevention and tries not to abandon development objectives. For example, this can be made to work by putting funds into achieving stronger, more stable political structures (states), helping moderate reformers create bridges among different communities, collaborating in the restructuring of certain countries' educational systems and combating inequality and exclusion, among other things.[11]

Although the magnitude of the Mérida Initiative is unprecedented in Latin America, the cooperation strategy is a model the United States has used on several occasions without any effective results.

The other fundamental attitude change about international cooperation and aid given the U.S. polarization in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking is linked to the agenda for democratization, human rights and good government. This directly affects Latin America, the region of the world where developing countries have made the biggest advance in the transition to democracy. The new international security scenario once again poses the dilemma between freedom and security, which implies severe restrictions on democratic freedoms. For the international cooperation system, democracy and good government —governance— become the clear criteria for assigning international aid, relatively unrelated to development. New conditions are being imposed on countries for receiving economic aid at the cost of compromising national development goals based on other needs.[12]

These two points condition the fulfillment of the so-called Millennium Development Goals and the goals for poverty reduction.[13] These reflections on the trends in international cooperation in security matters promoted by the United States prompt an important question about the success of the Mérida Initiative: What might the implications be for Mexico of participating in this kind of an initiative in the context of unilateral cooperation that opens up the possibility of the issue's growing militarization as a response to deficiencies of the state instead of offering a paradigm of comprehensive aid cooperation that also touches on the country's development problems?

In this sense, it is appropriate to point out that the Mérida Initiative is by no means a new form of cooperation, for several reasons. On the one hand, it is part of a technocratic security agenda that permeates the U.S. vision and fight

The Mérida Initiative provides tools and training to law enforcement agencies in Mexico when one of the country's serious internal problems is the need for a comprehensive reform of the police and judicial systems to reduce corruption and impunity.

against the threats that it has faced throughout its contemporary history (the Cold War/Communism, drug trafficking, terrorism). Adopting this agenda implies a mountain of practices, regulations, certifications and other instruments that in the U.S. logic are functional to the global fight against terrorism, but, from the standpoint of a receiving, developing country like Mexico, are not.

In the second place, the Mérida Initiative imposes a pattern of international cooperation that is de-contextualized from the practice of international cooperation in security matters. The military aid policy and cooperation proposed by the Mérida Initiative has a clear unethical dimension divorced from the international community's multilateral effort regarding security and that Mexico itself promotes in the world's main international cooperation forums. Since the mid-1990s, all international security initiatives must include the human security paradigm as a working part of the practices in international cooperation and security projects. Clearly, the Mérida Initiative includes none of these aspects. VM

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NOTES

[1] Intermón Oxfam, *La realidad de la ayuda 1999-2000* (Barcelona: Oxfam, 2000), p. 38. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) uses the same term.

[2] The biggest irony in the Mérida Initiative is that the preliminary assistance package included a "human rights" condition, involving guaranteeing that deputy public prosecutors and civilian judicial authorities investigate and judge federal police and members of the military who violate fundamental rights, periodically consulting civil society organizations about implementation of the initiative, enforcing the ban on using statements made under torture or during other degrading treatment, and improving police forces' transparency and accountability.

[3] Antonio O. Garza, "Fluyen fondos de la IM: se otorgan 99 millones de dólares a México a través de la Agencia de Cooperación en Defensa y Seguridad," U.S. Embassy press release (Mexico City), January 7, 2009. Available on line at http://mexico.usembassy.gov/boletines/sp090107_MeridaUpdate.html.

[4] Some effects of tied aid are receiving countries being denied the chance to get the same goods and services at a lower price elsewhere; transferring inappropriate, more costly skills and technologies to the receiver country; lack of responsibility about the control of the weapons sold; and high transaction costs for receiving countries when the donor applies restrictive norms on what is sold.

[5] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *The United States: DAC Peer Review* (Paris: OECD, 2006), p. 32.

[6] Carlos Borrachina Lisón, "La ayuda militar de Estados Unidos en América Latina: permanencias, continuidades e intereses," *Revista fuerzas armadas y sociedad* no. 1 (Santiago, Chile) year 20, pp. 109-140.

[7] The Mérida Initiative will come to a total of US$1.4 billion over the next two or three years. The Bush administration requested US$500 million for the first year (fiscal year 2008) as part of its supplementary budget request for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is more than 10 times the amount of anti-drug aid the United States currently gives Mexico yearly.

[8] The long-term solution for the illicit drug problem includes the reduction of demand in the main consuming country. The United States and the European Union bear co-responsibility for drug-related problems in Latin America since it is their markets that are the biggest consumers of the drugs produced there.

[9] Borrachina Lisón, op. cit.

[10] This priority placed on security objectives in assigning development funds is what is called the "securitization" of aid. José Antonio Sanahuja Perales, "Seguridad, desarrollo y lucha contra la pobreza tras el 11-s: los objetivos del milenio y la 'securitización' de la ayuda," *Documentación social: revista de estudios sociales y de sociología aplicada* no. 136 (Madrid), 2005, pp. 25-42.

[11] Development Assistance Committee, "A Development co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action," OECD, 2003, available on line at http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/4/16085708.pdf.

[12] See, for example, Juan Pablo Prado Lallande, *El lado oscuro de la cooperación internacional. Condicionalidad y sanciones a la ayuda al desarrollo* (Mexico City: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 2009).

[13] "Objetivos de desarrollo del milenio" (New York), 2008, available on line at http://www.un.org/spanish/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2008_SPANISH.pdf.

35 Years of Demographics in Mexico

Paloma Villagómez Ornelas*

Cuartoscuro

An aging population is one of the most complex problems Mexico will have to face in coming decades.

In 2009, Mexico's current population policy has been in place for 35 years. During that time, the 1974 General Population Law has been the guiding instrument for articulating the demographic dynamics of Mexican society with its economic and social development.

The prevalent demographic scenario when the law was passed was the product of four decades of intense economic and social growth. For a very long time, population growth had been encouraged as necessary for development; therefore, in that year, Mexico's population was 58 million and growing at 3.5 percent a year, up to that point Latin America's highest rate.[2]

Previous legislation had stimulated populating the country through incentives for selective immigration, repatriation, marriage and births. Simultaneously, the government promoted health care and founded key institutions.[3] As a result fertility levels rose and mortality rates —both for children and the population in general— dropped notably. In the early 1970s, Mexico had the lowest annual mortality rate in the region (10.5 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants). It was also the country with the seventh highest birth rate (43.2 births per 1,000 persons); and average life expectancy was 64 years. Studies at the time indicated that if the size and velocity of those demographics kept up, the population would double in 20 years, reaching 135 million by the year 2000.

While living conditions had improved substantially, the youth of the population began to exercise important pressure on the country's productive and economic systems, particularly during the second half of the 1970s. Each economically active Mexican had three dependents, particularly teens

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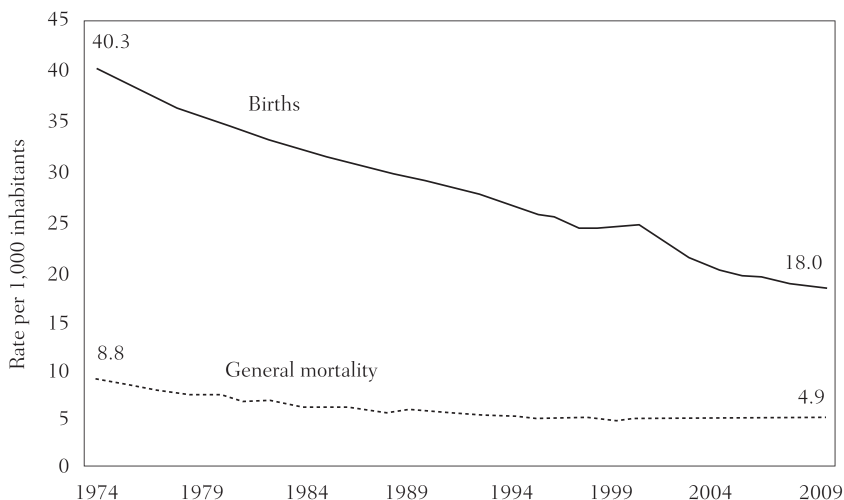
and children under 15. By that time, women's participation in the work force was just beginning and job growth, also transitioning from agricultural to industrial activities, was incapable of expanding at the same rate as the population and of adequately incorporating the workers migrating from the countryside to the cities.

The visible increase of unemployment, under-employment, impoverishment, marginalization and social exclusion stimulated thinking about the need to establish new parameters for the relationship between population and development. Reality was demanding an answer to the question of just how valid the supposition was positively and directly linking the size of the population and development.

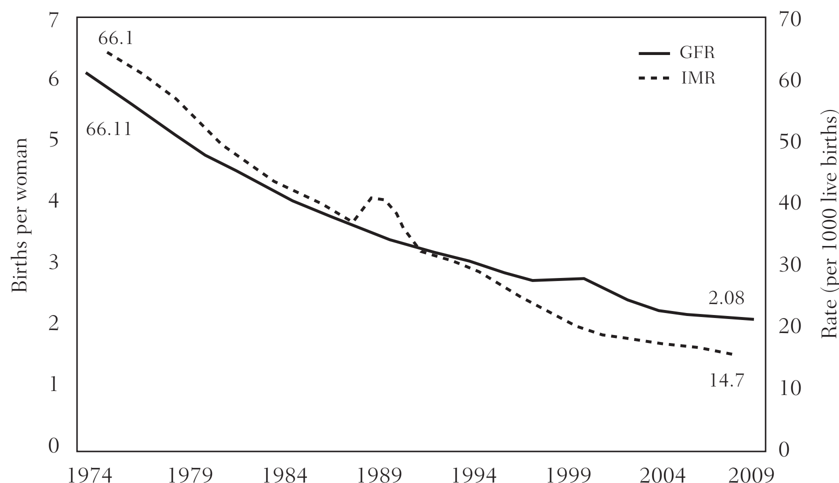
Out of these social, economic and political reflections came the new General Population Law of 1974. Among its main tenets is the full recognition of the need to "rationally regulate and stabilize population growth" through the design and implementation of family planning programs. These called for the efforts of the education and health sectors to contribute to the creation of a new demographic culture that would, among other things, promote a new ideal of the small family while at the same time strictly respecting the rights and dignity of the individual. From that time on, substantive steps have been taken to control the country's demographic dynamic.

GRAPH 1
GROSS BIRTH AND MORTALITY RATES
(1974-2009)



Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

GRAPH 2
GLOBAL FERTILITY RATE (GFR) AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE (IMR)
(1974-2009)



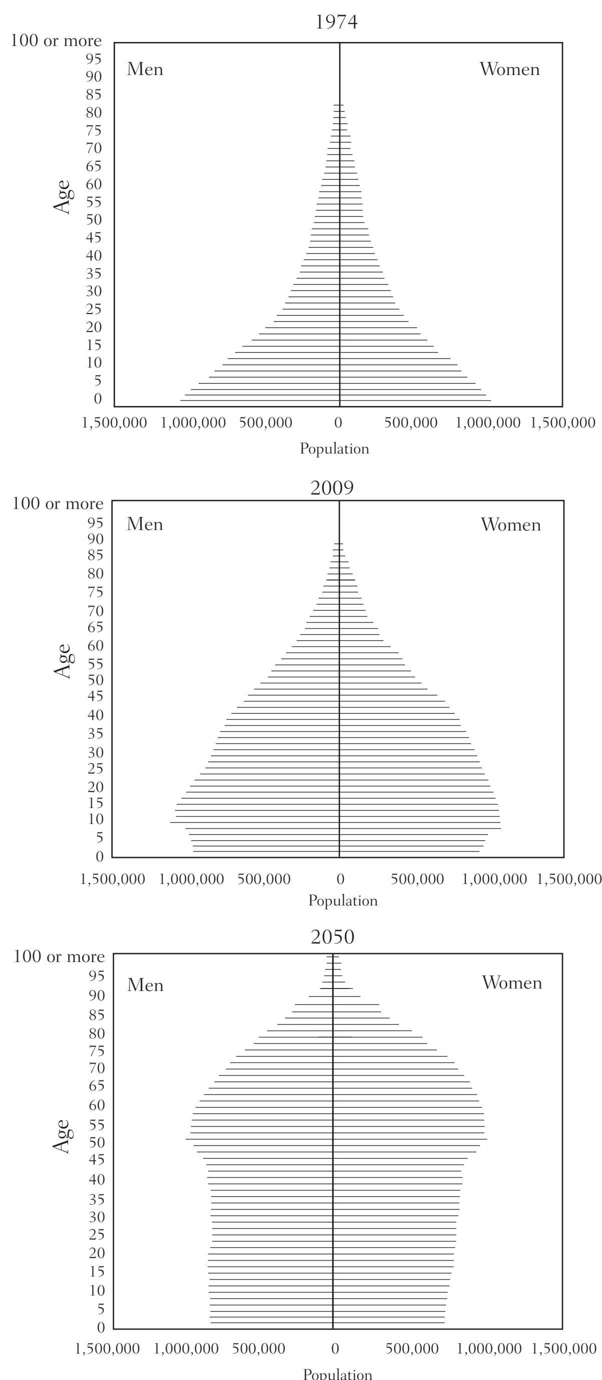
Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST 35 YEARS?

In three and a half decades, Mexico's population has increased almost 88 percent, rising from 58 million to 107.6 million in 2009. In other words, the goal of not duplicating the population, as the projections made in the 1970s said would happen in the 1990s, was achieved.

Today, the population is growing at less than 1 percent a year. The number of births dropped from 2.03 million in 1974 to 1.94 million in 2009. Deaths, on the other hand, rose from 502,000 to 527,000 in the same period, an increase

GRAPH 3
POPULATION PYRAMIDS



Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

due to a great extent to the increased age of the population (see graph 1).

The notable decrease in the birth rate was very swift compared to other countries.[4] The overall fertility rate dropped

In three and a half decades, Mexico's population has increased almost 88 percent, rising from 58 million to 107.6 million. This means the goal of not doubling the population, as 1970s projections said would happen, was achieved.

from 6.1 children per woman in 1974 to 2.08 children in 2009, that is, to less than a third.[5] At the same time, newborns' chances of survival increased, particularly during their first year of life, so that the infant mortality rate declined by more than 75 percent, dropping from 66.1 deaths for every 1,000 live births in 1974 to 14.7 in 2009 (see graph 2).

The combination of the drop in mortality that began in the 1930s, and the drop in fertility that began 40 years later, marked the beginning of Mexico's demographic transition. As a result of this process, the population's age structure has gradually changed, gradually but clearly tending to age. The population over 60 increased almost 35 percent between 1974 and 2009, rising from 6.3 percent to 8.5 percent of the total population. And, it is expected that by 2050, the senior population will represent more than one-fourth of the total (see graph 3).

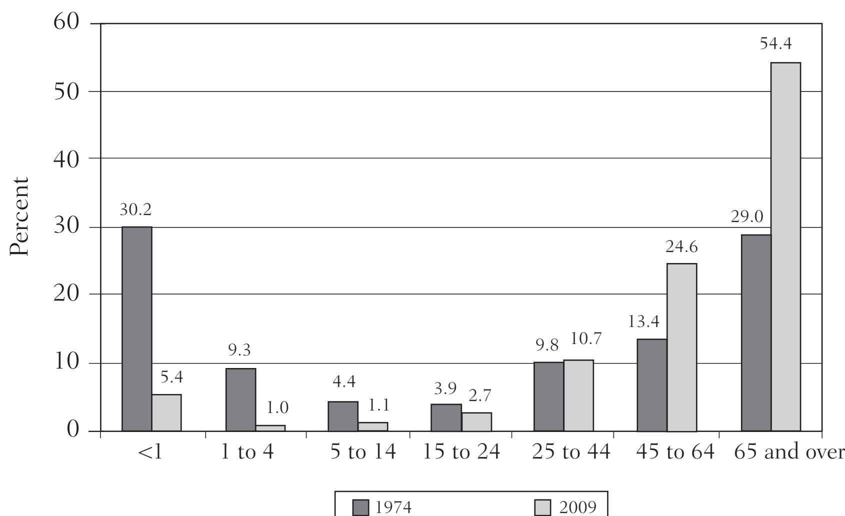
Decreased infertility and substantial improvements in living conditions have changed the mortality structure, both in terms of cause of death and in terms of the age when death occurs. Thus, older adults now account for more than half the total number of deaths. This is one-fifth more than in 1974. Deaths of infants under one year of age dropped more than 80 percent in the last 35 years, an extremely important fact given the close association between infant mortality and the population's living conditions (see graph 4). The infant mortality rate is even considered an indicator for the level of a country's development.

Regarding the causes of death, in Mexico there has also been an advanced process of epidemiological transition.[6] So, the drop in deaths from respiratory infections and parasites has been accompanied by a rise in cardio-vascular diseases and diabetes mellitus, more common among women.[7] It is also important to underline that the conditions of social inequality that persist in Mexico create mixed scenarios in which pre-transitional epidemiological profiles co-exist with post-transitional ones. This means that in marginalized groups, it is common to find respiratory infections among children and diabetes mellitus in the older population.

However, undoubtedly Mexicans live in better conditions today than their predecessors, which has caused an important increase in life expectancy (75.3 years on average, that is, it

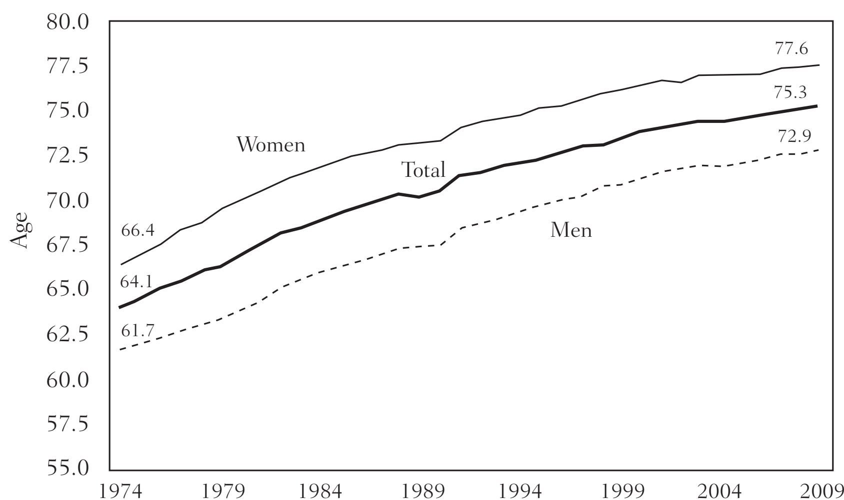
The combination of the drop in mortality and fertility marked the beginning of Mexico's demographic transition. As a result, the population's age structure has slowly changed, gradually but clearly tending to age.

GRAPH 4
DEATHS BY LARGE AGE GROUPS (1974 AND 2009)



Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

GRAPH 5
LIFE EXPECTANCY (TOTAL AND BY SEX)
(1974-2009)



Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

has risen 11 years in the last three decades). It is common knowledge that for both biological and behavioral reasons, men tend to live slightly less than women, and this is reflected in a constant difference in life expectancy of almost five years (see graph 5).

The change in the population's age structure has important macro-social effects. The overall aging process offers an opportunity that will not come again with regard to the population's age structure: the number of people of working age (from 15 to 64 years of age) is larger than those not of working age (from 0 to 14 and 65 or older). This window of opportunity is known as the demographic dividend (see graph 6).

As we can see, the country is moving toward the highest point of this dividend, which will continue until 2030, when the increase of the senior population will produce a gradual reversal of this ratio, until there are more economic dependents than providers.

For this favorable demographic ratio to exist and bear fruit, the country must have the socio-economic conditions needed to foster individuals' appropriate insertion into the work force today and in the future. This requires the creation of new jobs and the accumulation of human capital among the population. This is the only way the demographic dividend can turn into an increase in national productivity with sturdy savings systems that together can guarantee sustainable development.

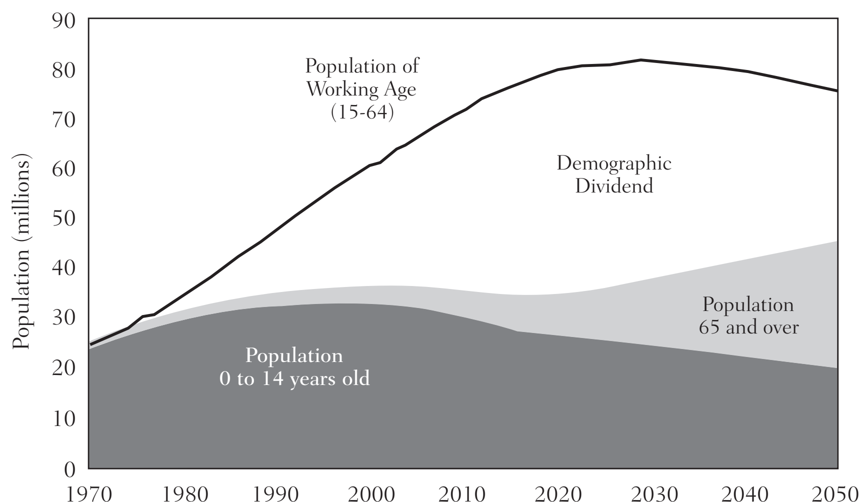
Several years have now passed since this demographic window of opportunity opened up. Unfortunately, the world and national economic situation is experiencing ups and downs that block and even reverse some of the achievements. In coming years, population and development policies will have to act jointly

to move ahead —perhaps to smaller benefits, but still substantial ones given the times. Simultaneously, strategies must be developed to withstand the impact of an aging population with a tight job market, a more complex epidemiological profile and limited social security systems.

In this sense, one of the country's main challenges is emigration, since a large part of the population of productive age that could contribute to taking advantage of the dividend leaves home to seek better opportunities for development abroad, particularly in the United States. In 1974, the net flow of emigrants was 136,000 a year, but that number had tripled by 2009. While men have always emigrated more than women, in the early 1990s, women began migrating much more notably and that trend has continued until now (see graph 7).

One of the country's main challenges is emigration, since a large part of the population of productive age that could contribute to taking advantage of the demographic dividend leaves home to seek better opportunities.

Graph 6
Population by Large Age Groups (1970-2050)



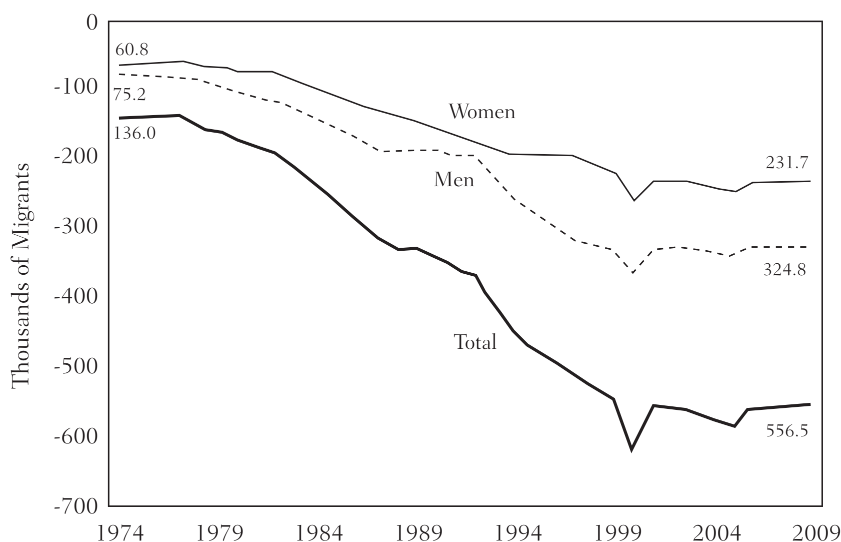
Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

Present and Future Demographic Challenges

Mexico's population profile has changed notably and irreversibly over the last 35 years. These changes have been the result of profound modifications both in the country's social and economic infrastructure and in the behavior of individuals in places as public as the workplace and as private as reproduction and health care. However, certain demographic deficits persist, which, in light of the achievements and in view of their undeniable association with social inequality, are inadmissible, like child mortality or unplanned, unwanted pregnancies.

Currently, two priorities for public population policy must be dealt with jointly through development policy: the reduction of demographic deficits and attention to the new population challenges derived from the demographic transition, among

Graph 7
Net International Migration (Total and by Sex)
(1974-2009)



Source: National Population Council projections for Mexico 2005-2050.

them the population's aging with all its economic and social consequences.[8]

Undoubtedly, overcoming the demographic deficits becomes more complicated when indicators are already low, since the remaining resistance tends to be more severe and complex. However, overcoming socio-demographic vulnerability is a priority given that its persistence favors the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and other forms of social disadvantages.

The country's demographic prospects —a scenario of advanced transition combined with pre-transitional situations— demands attention be paid simultaneously to both the lags and the future demographic challenges. In both cases, the ultimate aim is to guarantee equitable access to opportunities for development and well-being. In this process, previous lessons about the reciprocal, intense relationship between demographic dynamics and broader social processes are fundamental. VM

NOTES

[1] The ideas and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position of the author's employer, Mexico's National Population Council.

[2] Luisa María Leal, *El proceso histórico de la Ley General de Población de México* (Bogotá: UNESCO, 1975), pp. 42-43.

[3] During the Lázaro Cárdenas administration (1934-1940), the Department of Health and the Ministry of Public Assistance were founded. Between 1940 and 1946 the government founded the Ministry of Health and Public Assistance (SSA), the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), the National Institute of Cardiology, the Children's Hospital and the National Institute of Nutriology. Luz María Valdés, "Política de población en México, 1930-1974; antecedentes y un recuento histórico de la Ley General de Población," Luz María Valdés, comp., *Población y movimientos migratorios* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Gobernación/Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 2000), pp. 75-79.

[4] The demographic transition took Europe almost 200 years, while in Latin America and in Mexico in particular, it took only about 50 years.

[5] The overall fertility rate measures the average number of children that a woman would have during her entire reproductive life if the fertility conditions at the time remain constant.

[6] This is defined as the transition from infectious-contagious diseases made up mainly of preventable illnesses treatable at a relatively low cost, to others of a chronic-degenerative type, characterized by a gradual, prolonged process of deterioration of the patient's health and capacities, requiring more costly treatment.

[7] Juan Enrique García and Laura Elena Gloria Hernández, "Mortalidad por causas y ganancias de vida en los últimos veinticinco años," *Situación demográfica de México 2006* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población, 2006).

[8] Other demographic challenges are the concentration of the population in urban areas, together with a highly scattered rural population; the scant diversification of internal migration destinations; and, finally, the high levels of domestic migration.

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SRE

Mexico and the Crisis
Always Waiting for the United States

Alicia Girón*

Daniel Leclair/REUTERS

One of the main effects of Mexico`s recurring economic crises is deeper and deeper poverty.

Today, Mexico is experiencing the result of the great structural change initiated four decades ago aimed at "development with equity." This change, however, actually brought a drop in the gross domestic product (GDP), the volatility of the peso/dollar exchange rate and growing unemployment, all reflected in economic, political and social instability, followed by the current crisis, the deepest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In addition, given the profound economic integration stemming from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Mexican economy has deepened its dependence on U.S. economic cycles.

So, our country is once again immersed in another of the crises that have ocurred out since the Bretton Woods Accords were broken in 1971, resulting in erratic, volatile, weak growth both nationally and internationally.[1]

The 1976 peso devaluation was the precedent for the 1982 debt crisis. To extricate the country from that, the government resorted to nationalizing the banks and three renegotiations with our creditors until the Brady Plan was signed in 1989.[2] The October 1987 stock market crises also hit Mexican investors hard. Later, precisely in 1994, the year NAFTA came into effect, a social movement emerged in southeastern Mexico, capital flight began in the second half of the year and the government contracted considerable debt by issuing currency-linked bonds (Tesobonos) tied to U.S. pension funds. All this took place in a political and social

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Economic Research (IIEc). Member of the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Political Economy.

panorama that marked our country's economic, social and political history.

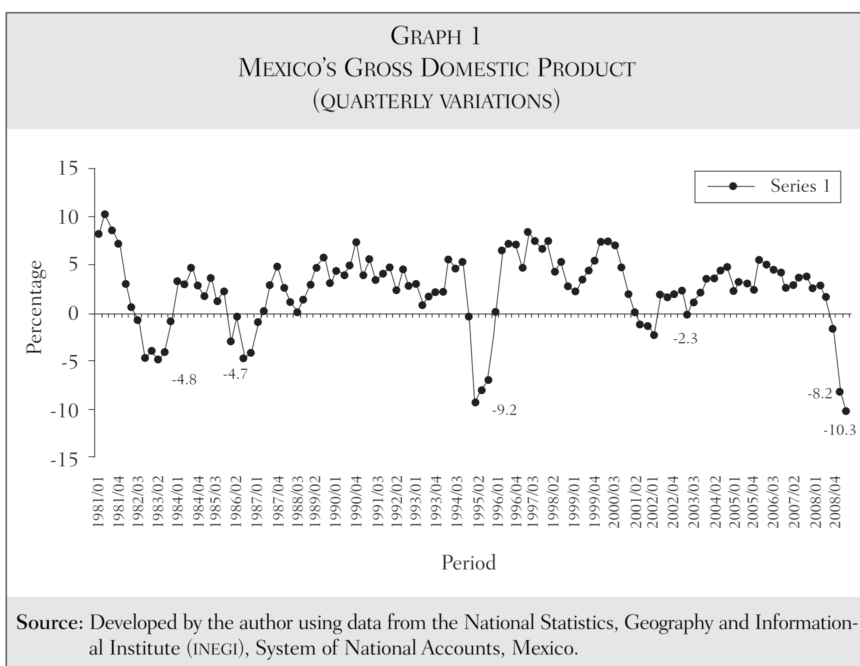
At the end of 1994, a crisis broke out with grave consequences even beyond our borders. Once again, the government had to seek external support from the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Federal Reserve System and the Bank for International Settlements. The reorganization and development alternative that came after this profound crisis led to the privatization of the financial system and, later, to the sale of our banks to the main Spanish and U.S. banks. Not only was the financial system privatized, but so were the large public companies, the mainstays of the import substitution economic model industrialization project.

The 2001 Nasdaq crisis sank the Mexican economy in a recession for several months. In the first years of the twenty-first century, several Latin American countries had higher growth rates than Mexico because our authorities concentrated on maintaining financial stability, thus deterring growth and employment. Naturally, the mortgage crisis affected Mexico's economy starting in 2007, profoundly damaging the productive system, to the point that, the latest IMF estimates predict Mexico's GDP will drop 7.3 percent in 2009, although they project a recovery toward the end of 2010, with 3.3 percent growth.

Four decades of facing different crises made for great economic, social and political structural changes. And this is where we should ask ourselves what economic policies the Mexican authorities pursued that caused the country not to grow, in contrast with other Latin American nations. In the midst of a world crisis, why is it that countries like Brazil do not have negative growth rates?

Like all the other Latin American countries, Mexico undertook very important economic changes in the 1980s and 1990s. These great transformations were made with the consent of the leading class and the state and were not just imposed by international financial agencies. I am referring here basically to the 10 measures of the Washington Consensus. In Mexico, what were dubbed first-, second- and third-generation reforms were implemented starting at the end of the 1970s, taking the country from the import substitution model of development to a model that opened, de-regulated and liberalized the economy.

From one crisis to the next, Mexico applied economic policies that increasingly deepened its dependence on the world economy, simultaneously integrating its productive chains with those of the U.S. It is important to point out that during the import-substitution-model period, Mexico achieved growth rates of over 8 percent a year. During the 1980s, the Mexican economy crumpled because public monies were used to service its onerous foreign debt, and for that reason, average GDP growth during those years was 1.6 percent. In the



GRAPH 1
MEXICO'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
(QUARTERLY VARIATIONS)

Source: Developed by the author using data from the National Statistics, Geography and Informational Institute (INEGI), System of National Accounts, Mexico.

From one crisis to the next, Mexico applied economic policies that increasingly deepened its dependence on the world economy, simultaneously integrating its productive chains with those of the U.S.

1990s, despite the 1994-1995 crisis, average growth was 3.4 percent as a result of increased exports to the United States and a flow of foreign currency due to privatizations. During the current decade, annual growth has averaged 2.2 percent. However, the crisis will cause a severe contraction in GDP in 2009 (see graph 1).

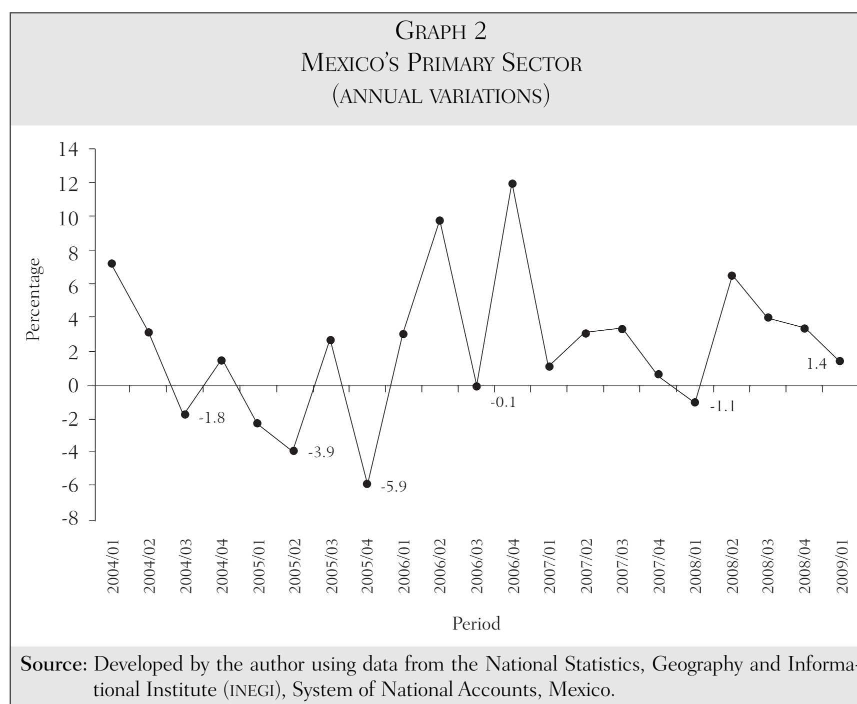
I have already mentioned that from the 1970s until now, the structural changes in our country have led to recurring crises. While it is true that they have an external component, they are also due to the economic policies implemented to be more competitive and achieve higher growth rates. However, the continual crises canceled out the future for several generations, as well as the possibility of a better distribution of income and forming human resources capable of dealing with the changes that any information society requires. Thus, the economic, political and social rights of the vast majority of the population were simply canceled: the right to a job and, in general, to a better standard of living.

The decision was to integrate Mexico more into the world economy and decrease our population's buying power. Policies to stabilize prices and the exchange rate made foreign products cheaper than domestically made ones. The government did not opt for competitiveness based on a monetary policy that would create jobs or for a fiscal policy that would increase public spending on education, housing and public health, or for an income policy that would have better redistributed profits, much less for a financial policy that could encourage saving and avert capital flight.

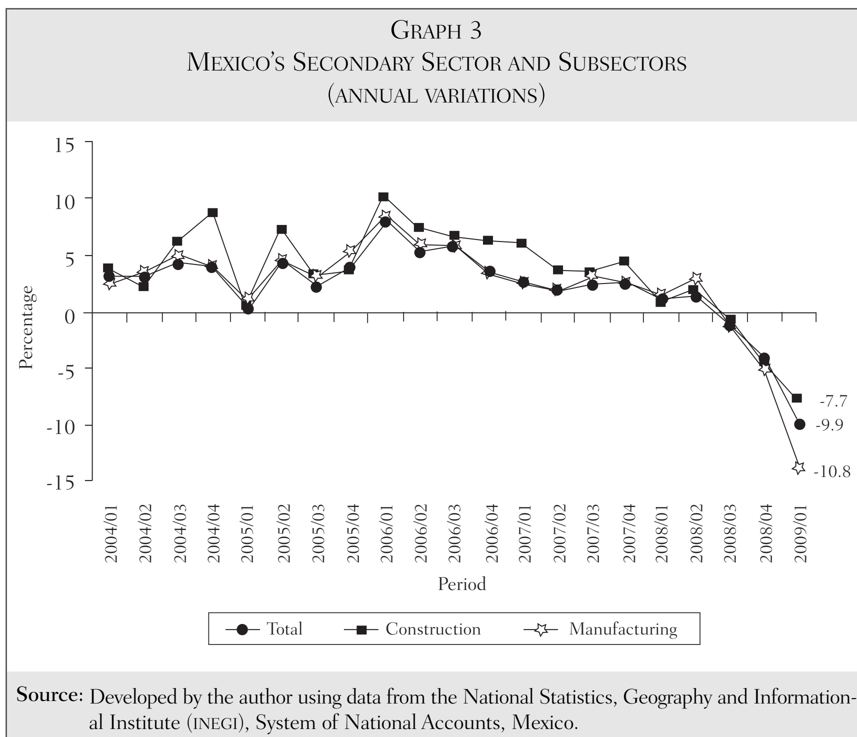
Each of the crises Mexico has gone through in the last four decades has its specificities. For example, the great devaluation of 1976 brought with it a 3.9 percent reduction in GDP, accompanied by 22 percent inflation. The currency, which for 22 years had been worth 12.50 pesos to the dollar, devalued 47.4 percent; unemployment went to 1.5 percent; and the treasury bills (Cetes) rate went to 10 percent. The 1982 foreign debt crisis —or as the minister of finance called it at the time, the "cash-box crisis"— caused the GDP to decrease 4.7 percent; inflation to soar to 96.8 percent; the peso to devaluate 121 percent against the dollar; unemployment to rise to 2.9 percent; and the Cetes rate to go to 57.9 percent. The 1987 world stock market crises led Mexico's GDP to contract 4.2 percent in 1988, inflation to shoot up to 159.2 percent, the peso to devaluate 65.9 percent against the dollar, unemployment to rise to 6.2 percent, and the Cetes rate to soar to 137.4 percent.

The instability in macro-economic variables pushed the Bank of Mexico to establish the basis for a financial stabilization monetary policy that discouraged economic growth and encouraged migration. People began to think that NAFTA would help solve our problems. Then came the crisis of 1994:

Continual crises canceled out the future for several generations, as well as the possibility of better income distribution and forming human resources capable of dealing with the changes that any information society requires.



GRAPH 3
MEXICO'S SECONDARY SECTOR AND SUBSECTORS
(ANNUAL VARIATIONS)



Source: Developed by the author using data from the National Statistics, Geography and Informational Institute (INEGI), System of National Accounts, Mexico.

In 2007 and 2008, the first two years of the Calderón administration, domestic debt reached the highest level of the last three decades. Foreign banks hold an important part of Mexican government debt, demonstrating the rentier character of the financial institutions operating in Mexico.

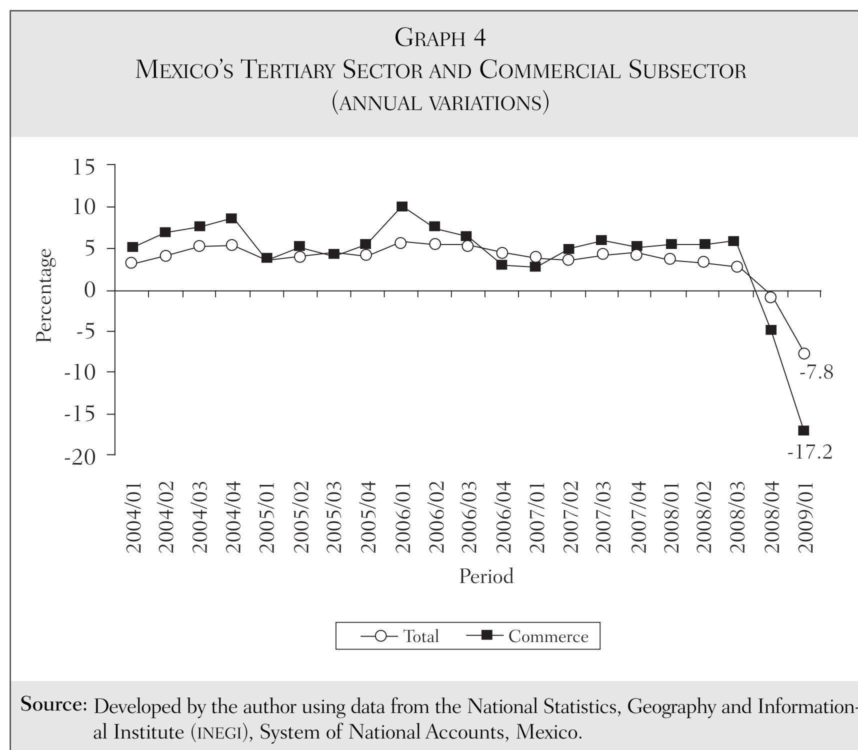
GDP dropped 7.2 percent in 1995; inflation was 52 percent; the peso devalued 90.2 percent against the dollar; unemployment stayed at 6.2 percent; and the Cetes rate went to 47.5 percent. The current world economic and financial crisis has caused a much greater drop in GDP than previous ones (8.2 points); inflation is under control at 5.7 percent, but the peso has devalued 47 percent; unemployment is 6.1 percent, while Cetes remain at a moderate 4.5 percent.

Without exception, all these crises have had an external and an internal component that reflect the vulnerability of the Mexican economy because it accentuated its integration with the United States and due to the degree of opening of both the national financial system and the productive structure, which has broken local productive chains by importing inputs needed for domestic production.

One of the most important characteristics of our country's structural change can be seen in the drop in GDP in agriculture and the secondary and service sectors. While it is fair to say that the primary sector has suffered moderate decreases (see graph 2), the secondary sector has seen drastic drops (see graph 3). During the first half of 2009, the secondary sector plunged 9.9 percent: construction fell 7.7 percent, but manufacturing plummeted 13.8 percent. Commerce took a 17.2 percent nose-dive, even more than the 7.8 average for the service sector (see graph 4). That is, commerce and manufacturing are structurally intertwined with the U.S. economy and therefore, their decline is much stronger than that of the economy as a whole.

The government has made an effort to diminish its indebtedness to achieve fiscal equilibrium, with expenditures equaling revenues, to try to have a "zero deficit." As a result, in 2008, the public sector's gross debt was the equivalent of 6 percent of GDP, a considerable reduction *vis-à-vis* the 1980s and 1990s: in 1994, for example, it was equivalent to 24 percent of GDP.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the internal debt has grown a great deal. In 2007 and 2008, the first two years of the Calderón administration, domestic debt reached the highest level of the last three decades: US$180.19 billion in 2007 and US$184.56 billion in 2008. Mexico's public debt is taken out with subsidiaries of foreign banks that, due to the crisis have been bailed out by central banks and the governments of their countries of origin. The foreign banking sector holds an important part of Mexican government debt, which also demonstrates the rentier character of the financial institutions operating in Mexico. This shows just how attractive it is,



Graph 4
Mexico's Tertiary Sector and Commercial Subsector
(annual variations)

Source: Developed by the author using data from the National Statistics, Geography and Informational Institute (INEGI), System of National Accounts, Mexico.

> Without exception, all these crises have had an external and an internal component that reflect the vulnerability of the Mexican economy because it accentuated its integration with the United States.

particularly for the banking system in Mexico, to hold Mexican government debt and goes a long way toward explaining their high profits in our country. Although the foreign debt has decreased over the last two decades, going from 29 percent of GDP in 1995 to 3 percent in 2008, the internal debt came to 18 percent of GDP last year.

Conclusions

The current crisis has hit Mexican productive capacity hard and has caused a sharp drop of the peso against the dollar despite the sale of dollars by the Bank of Mexico, diminishing our reserves to the current US$75 billion. To shore up the peso, the government also resorted to requesting help from the U.S. Federal Reserve System (to the tune of US$10 billion). Mexico's lack of an appropriate economic policy response to the crisis, the composition and destination of its exports and the degree of integration into the world economy will make its recovery slower than that of the rest of the countries of Latin America according to the International Monetary Fund. Bank of Mexico figures show that in August 2009 there was a US$835 million deficit in the trade balance; however, in the same month of 2008, the deficit was US$2.28 billion. In August 2009, goods exports were US$19.40 billion (US$16.69 billion in non-oil exports and US$2.71 in oil products), 24.9 percent less than in August 2008, with oil exports dropping 50.4 percent and non-oil exports, 18.1 percent.

Mexico's situation in the crisis is a result of the failure of a contractionary monetary policy that has sparked the expulsion of labor to the United States: our country is one of the world's largest exporters of workers. The weaknesses of the financial sector are evident, just as are those of the erratic fiscal policy that serves the financial system's rentier interests and not society's well being, much less dealing with the current recession. What policy-makers are betting on is growth in the United States. VM

Notes

[1] About Bretton Woods, see http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwii/98681.htm. [Editor's Note.]

[2] The Brady Plan, designed by former U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady, was adopted in 1989 to restructure and reduce developing countries' debt with commercial banks. To be able to sign agreements with their creditors and qualify for the Brady Plan, debtor countries had to show a certain degree of commitment and apply the Washington Consensus guidelines. [Editor's Note.]

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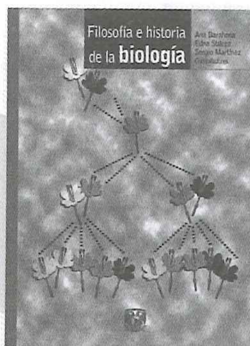

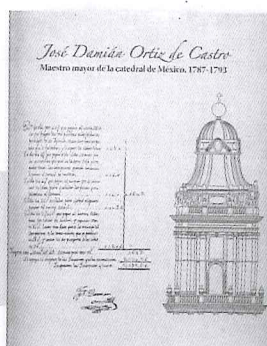

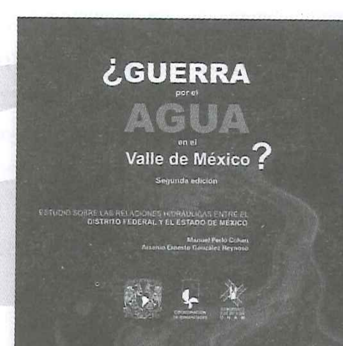

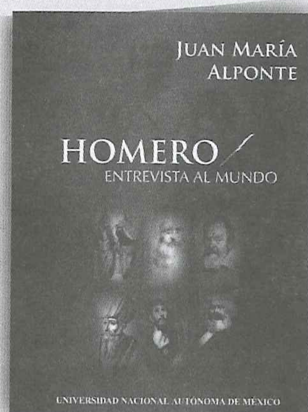

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* Sólo acervo universitario

Migrant, Zapata Canyon, Libertad Neighborhood, Tijuana, 1987.

Elsa Medina
Photography, Accumulated Knowledge

José Antonio Rodríguez*

Sitting in the middle of her studio amidst dozens of shelves with hundreds of negatives waiting to be classified, Elsa Medina, a contemporary photographer we can learn a great deal from, talks about the knowledge photography represents.

Medina has long lent her creative abilities to making images, both in photojournalism and as a free-lance documentary photographer. She is a professional with a singular portfolio and also a teacher who has given workshops in different places, teaching others how to make images. This may not be as simple as it seems, because regardless of technical questions, photography involves a much more complex kind of knowledge, with what we could call profoundly personal, perhaps philosophical, implications.

So, when dealing with a creative person like her, we have to ask how she educates, how she teaches young people to make photographs. This has several meanings because we believe that the way someone transmits knowledge about photography speaks to what they are like as a creator; and also, when the image comes to be considered a true work of art, the photo-

* Historian specialized in photography.

Photos courtesy of Elsa Medina.

graph says a great deal about its author as a human being and as a creative person. Evidently, to know a photographer, we need to know how he or she thinks. And her answer is, "What I try to communicate to them is that what we are seeing is part of what we are….It also has to do with the degree of awareness we have about something."

Elsa Medina began to make a name for herself in Mexican photography with her work for the daily *La Jornada*. Several of those images have become emblematic.

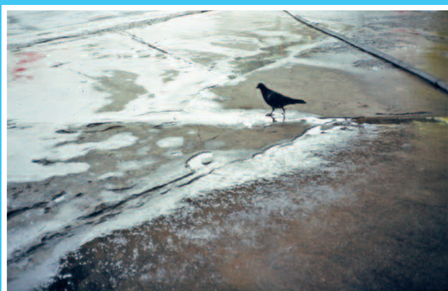
It should not be forgotten that for Elsa Medina, it has been crucial to have been the student of Nacho López, a great Mexican educator and photographer. And also that, to understand photography, at one time she delved into philosophy. She adds, "Whatever one believes just is. We all conceive of the world and value things because we need to be able to hold on to things to be able to live. These are the beliefs we carry along with us. Some are ancient; others have to do with the times we live in, with education, with our social class: everything that your personal imaginary or your beliefs create. Your point of view is determined by your background. What I teach them, what I try to communicate to them is that we are beings conditioned by the historic moment, that we are filled with prejudices, that we have atavistic ideas. Photography is a tool for knowledge. If you are aware that you belong to a world, then you have the ability to question everything."

Elsa Medina began to make a name for herself in Mexican photography because of the work she did from 1986 to 1999 for the daily paper *La Jornada*. And it is no coincidence that several of those images have become emblematic in the history of contemporary Mexican photojournalism. In fact, besides being published originally in the paper, they have been picked to illustrate the covers of historic books like John Mraz's *La mirada inquieta, Nuevo fotoperiodismo mexicano: 1976-1996* (The Unquiet Gaze: New Mexican Photojournalism [1976-1996]) and Olivier Debroise's *Mexican Suite*. A

Hare Seen from Mexico, San Diego-Tijuana Friendship Park, 2007.

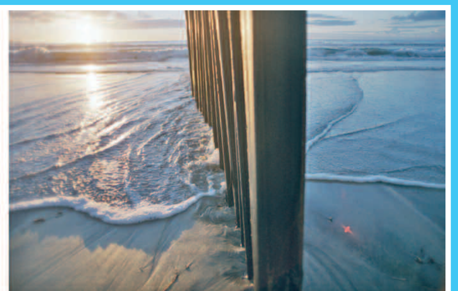
Flip-Flops on Tijuana Beaches, Next to the Border, 2007.

Missile Launched from Vandenburg Air Force Base, California, Seen from Mexico, 1997.



Little Bird Walking Tijuana Streets, 2007.

Discarded Stuffed Toy on Ciudad Juárez Street, 2003.



Border Fence between Mexico and the United States, 2007.

Everyday Life-Windshield Cleaner, Mexico City, 1989.

History of Photography in Mexico. Photos like the one of a jam-packed Mexico City subway detailing anxious hands clinging onto a tube or the one of a migrant in the Zapata Canyon desert are images that speak to unstable circumstances, to despair.

Photos like the one of a migrant in the Zapata Canyon desert are images that speak to unstable circumstances, to despair.

These examples say a great deal about Elsa Medina's career, since she is part of a generation that practiced a new form of photojournalism. Historian Mraz mentions it in his book, writing that the new Mexican photojournalism originated in a complex, multi-faceted process, although its beginnings are intimately linked to the first signs of the end of the "official" journalism that dominated Mexican society and culture from 1940 on.[1] And, in effect: the years that Medina was at *La Jornada* are precisely the times of grave national economic crises, profound social changes (the years that so-called civil society emerged, from the 1985 earthquake to the appearance of the Zapatista National Liberation Army [EZLN] in the mountains of southeastern Mexico in 1994), when critical photojournalism had to become the full image of what was going on in the country.

That is when the new genre, gestated from the end of the 1970s and appearing first in the *Unomásuno* daily, offered up the gloomy face of life in the cities and the countryside. That is, they showed daily existence using images that became fully symbolic of our fragility; what Medina calls a "synthesis" of it. But, Medina's work contains an exception to the rule: the image that was published on the front page Wednesday, March 29, 1995, of a young man bathing nude in a public fountain, photographed from behind. In the heat of March, it was a surprising, playful image —many women readers called it sensual— because it was taken in the street, despite the fact that at that time we were going through yet another economic crisis in Mexico.

But Elsa Medina had to abandon the craft of photojournalism to channel a profoundly more personal

Hurricane Gilbert, Cancún, 1989.

Mariana, Tijuana, 2005.

vision. "The camera gives you the perfect excuse for being in the middle of what's happening," she told journalist Angélica Abelleyra. "All those years were a huge responsibility because your craft turns you into the newspaper's eyes, something we're not always aware of. Of course, I lived through a great time in journalism, but I think that now newspapers aren't as concerned about safeguarding each photographer's personal vision. There are better professionals than there are media outlets to publish in."[2] That is where we can pinpoint her decision to move away from the daily assignments at the newspapers, to move away from the craft that, while fascinating, does not leave much room for personal projects.

However, we should not forget that the newspaper trade gave Medina a humanist vision, a legacy that to a great extent comes from her time as a disciple of Nacho López. Her time as correspondent in Tijuana (1997-1999), a place that through her lens seems to be the sum of all our fears and despair, allowed readers of *La Jornada* to understand better that Mexico is a country of migrants seeking hope. Through her critical gaze, the border desert revealed itself as a land populated only by the abandoned.

Her time as correspondent in Tijuana showed readers that Mexico is a country of migrants seeking hope.

Something —or a great deal— has changed since Medina began to spend her time on personal projects: in her daily wanderings, a process of creation has taken shape based on a new kind of making documentaries with photographs. For example, those polyptyches that she makes of her friends or loved ones, like multiple paintings of customs, micro-stories of affection and the times divorced from spectacle, that recreate warm moments. Or, the landscapes of Tijuana that, it their luminosity, either subtly or openly have born witness to nature and the beings that inhabit it, putting to one side the prophecy associated with those who wander through deserts accompanied only by the photographer. The sea and the sky are now a permanent presence in her images. Quiet seas of metallic luminosity, impetuous, never threatening (*El mar y sus orillas*, or The Sea and Its Shores); the sky

ELSA MEDINA

Everyday Life, Three Poles Lagoon, Acapulco, 1993.

Everyday Life-A Fixed Game, Mexico City, 1996.

at sundown, with imposing clouds —closely akin to the abstract forms of Alfred Stieglitz's *Equivalents*—wuthering or as luminous as they are infinite. Without a doubt, landscapes that now recreate a peaceful gaze.[3] Images without turbulence, without unease. And then there are also the objects left randomly behind, the animals that populate her pictures (cats, dogs, parrots), all the fauna that speak of a full existence together. Given this, it would seem that Medina has returned from many experiences, that she has managed to observe in many ways and narrate her stories in sequences of images in her own way. All together, they create a chain of sensations, which also reveals that she has been capable of looking at the essence of things, and achieved a wisdom in which what others see as fleeting or is imperceptible to them takes on a new dimension within the image.

It would seem that Medina has managed to observe in many ways: she has been capable of looking at the essence of things.

But, how is this achieved? "You nourish yourself," says Medina, "with everything that has gone before…it's cumulative knowledge. I read that in the book *Vida y muerte de la imagen* [Life and Death of the Image]. Using the photograph, we learn to see another way." This is a change that, in the case of our photographer, there is no longer any way to reverse, because it is there in her images: an entire life that accumulates until it overflows. VM

Notes

[1] John Mraz, *La mirada inquieta, nuevo fotoperiodismo mexicano: 1976-1996* (Mexico City: Centro de la Imagen, 1997).

[2] Interview with Angélica Abelleyra, *La Jornada* (Mexico City), July 20, 2003.

[3] The author is referring here to Alfred Stieglitz (Hoboken, New Jersey, 1864-New York, 1946) who sought photographic "equivalents" to express his vision of life. These images, photographs of clouds without any reference point, taken as simple motifs or the play of light and shadow, are part of his 1931 book *Equivalents*. [Editor's Note.]

Chewed-Up Symbol, 150 (diameter) x 49 cm (wide), 2005 (engraved tractor tire incrusted with pieces of flavored chewing gum). Artist's collection.

Bread Is Destiny, 65 x 15 cm, 1998 (car tire rim, wire mesh and bread). Edgardo Granado Collection.

Tutti Frutti, 60 x 15 cm, 2006 (gum). Artist's collection.

For Sacred Paths II, 62 x 15 cm, 2008 (rim, wire frame and feathers). Artist's collection.

Hanging from a Thread

By Betsabeé Romero

Fragile skins of memory,
tattooed and scarred,
epithelia codified by the oldest rites,
by the most atavistic symbols,
stars, polygons, crosses and pointed
arches of Gothic vaults,
of Islamic arcades unfolded
geometries dismembered stones
multiplied, polyphonic
pre-Hispanic idols
with a polyhydric, baroque center.

Signs that, far from being
forgotten, hurt us and shove
us out into the cold,
papers, fragile skins
hanging by a thread.

Containers of long, hard stories.
Like their cuts and their shadows.
Drawings in the foreground
shadows in the background.

Lattice of crossed slats of cultures,
techniques and fragilities.

Meeting of such distant
iconographies
proving that in culture, dialogue is
always possible,
while in politics and the economy,
what's worthwhile is dispute:
the deformed gaze.

The Mystery of the Capitels, diameter of 220 cm, 2008 (graffito on cut paper). Artist's collection.

Betsabeé Romero
Black Tears

Paloma Porraz*

A key figure in contemporary Mexican and international art, Betsabeé Romero's work reflects her interest in themes like identity, human migration, the environment, history and Mexico's culture and art.

More than 30 individual shows in the United States, Spain, France, Brazil, India, Egypt and Australia have made her work transcend Mexico's borders. Her urban interventions have taken place in contexts that have demanded she incorporate local techniques, languages and iconographies.

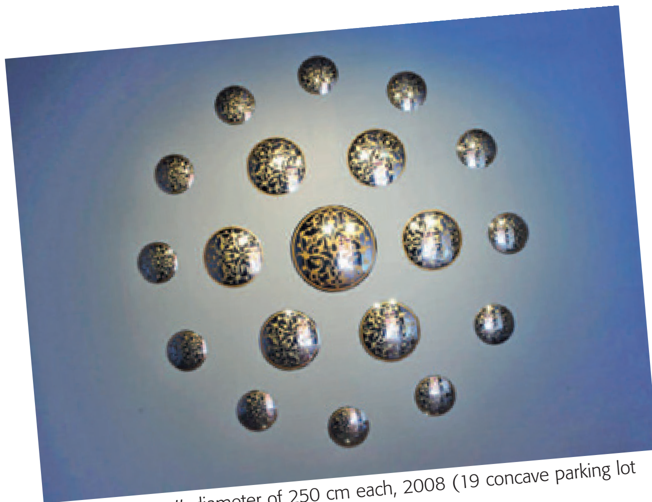
Betsabeé Romero says that the recurrent use of automobiles in her work has the aim of being "part of a reflection about the contradictions of the consumer society in countries like Mexico….The automobile is a mass produced object, typical of industrialization, high technology and globalizing corporations, and is closely associated with the American way of life. Also, a discourse has been very clearly constructed in accordance with the 'other side of the car.' A car that

* Director of the Old San Ildefonso College.
Photos courtesy of Amparo Museum, Puebla.

does not move or change our socio-economic level, a car as refuge, as second home, as an extension of the body, as a space for a first sexual encounter, a space of fragility, the place of an accident and a kidnapping, the place of intimacy." Automobiles and tires, more than themes, are the underpinnings for dealing with these thematic concerns, which unite Romero with an entire artistic current called "relational aesthetics."

Romero has frequently intervened in tires since, as she has pointed out, when they stop being useful, they are unwanted waste; when they no longer have treads and everything has been erased from them, that is when she is interested in drawing and engraving on them the

The House of the Track, 200 x 250 x 200 cm 2004 (engraved bricks, wood, corrugated sheets of metal and engraved tire). Artist's collection.



Urban Rosettes II, diameter of 250 cm each, 2008 (19 concave parking lot mirrors with gold leaf).

A house made of bricks
With traces of that family that runs,
That runs away dangerously,
That has been run over many times.

Betsabeé Romero
From "The House of the Track"
(fragment)

White Tracks, 110 x 15 cm each, 2006 (4 engraved strips of tire treads incrusted with mint gum). Artist's collection.

architectural and cultural memory they have left along the way. They are also the prototype of velocity and power, although, in her work, to the contrary, they are an archaeological symbol of memory.

"Betsabeé Romero. Black Tears" exhibit curator Julián Zugazagoitia says that for artists of Romero's generation, "moving around and contact with other artists and cultures, far from having created an 'international style' of art, have fostered a search for their own roots, dealing with the global based on a personal perspective that has come to be called 'glocal.'"

The exhibition, currently on display at the Old San Ildefonso College, organized originally by Puebla's Amparo Museum, presents more than 80 works: installations, sculptures, photographs, videos, scale models and documentation of her main projects produced between 1997 and 2009.

This retrospective covers more than 10 years of artistic creation, with emblematic pieces. Outstanding among them is *Maguey-Fiber Car* (1997), which was a turning point in her artistic production since for the first time she worked in collaboration with a community: the Libertad Neighborhood of Tijuana. She transformed a 1955 Victoria Ford, covering it in fabric made from maguey fiber, painting it in oils with nineteenth-century Marian motifs and filling it with 10,000 dry roses. Based on Mexican images and craft techniques, *Maguey-Fiber Car* was exhibited in the "InSite 97" project on the border between Mexico and the United States. In Zugazagoitia's words, "This work expresses the lines of exploration followed by this artist: the cultural contexts; the ephemeral nature of the artistic event; art as a deliberate urban intervention, with the participation of the community; and her concern for documenting her own processes of artistic production."

Another representative work is *Sugar Skin* (2004), presented in the Puerto Rico Triennial, and made of sugar

Skin of a House, from the Accident and Miracle Painting Series, 105 x 130 cm, 2001 (oil on a car hood). Artist's collection.

A car buried
as if fallen from the other side
rejected
Stuck next to the fence
on the edge of
the "OTHER SIDE."

BETSABEÉ ROMERO
From "In the *Avate* Car"
(fragment)

Exodus I, 125 x 220 cm, 2007 (photograph). Artist's collection.

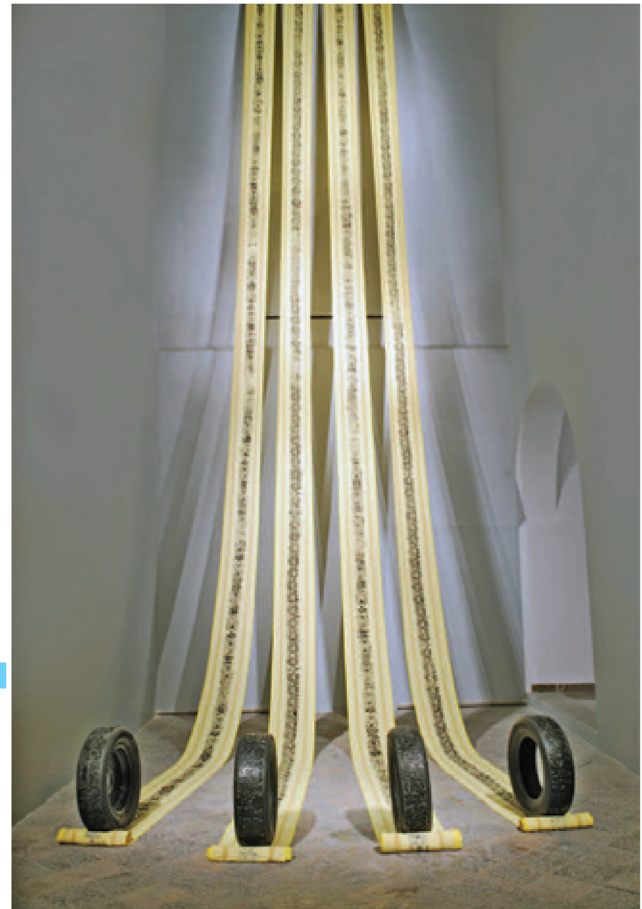
Border Line, 125 x 220 cm, 1997 (photograph). Artist's collection.

and tires covered with iconographies in graffito referring to the Taina culture from the pre-Hispanic Caribbean.

To adapt it to San Ildefonso, Romero managed to integrate into the exhibition a new work inspired in architectural motifs from the surrounding area of the Historic Center of Mexico City, and a frieze on one of the museum's cornices. These motifs were carved in a tire and printed like a track along the way the visitor will walk so as to not miss any work in the show, creating a unique piece printed on the hallways themselves and that now coexists with other pieces.

In her installation *Hanging from a Thread*, Betsabeé produced 10 anemones of light based on glyphs and figures from the Templo Mayor, transforming the space into a sublime environment. The artist takes us step by step through her reflections; her thoughts emerge like a revelation in a discourse that makes us change our way of looking at things.

Using cut paper, a fragile and at the same time resistant material, she builds a print of time, interlacing Mudéjar, colonial, pre-Hispanic and Gothic motifs like in a stained glass window.



Cities that Leave, various sizes, 2004 (4 engraved tires and prints on cloth). Artist's collection.

In this visual encounter, the elements incorporated into the work retain the identity of each inspiration, each culture, at the same time creating harmony among them. Betsabeé achieves an inclusive conjunction in her work. It is a symphony of light and shadows whose reflections on the walls and floors captivate us.

Like many of the great Mexican artists who have gone before her, given the influence of foreign cultures, Betsabeé has managed not only to drink from her own, but also to pick essential elements of others to create a new form of art: encouraging, unifying and representative of the new Mexican culture.

Betsabeé's work gives us the opportunity of reviewing details of our history in the present, in the same way that the past and the contemporary constantly co-exist in the San Ildefonso Museum. VM

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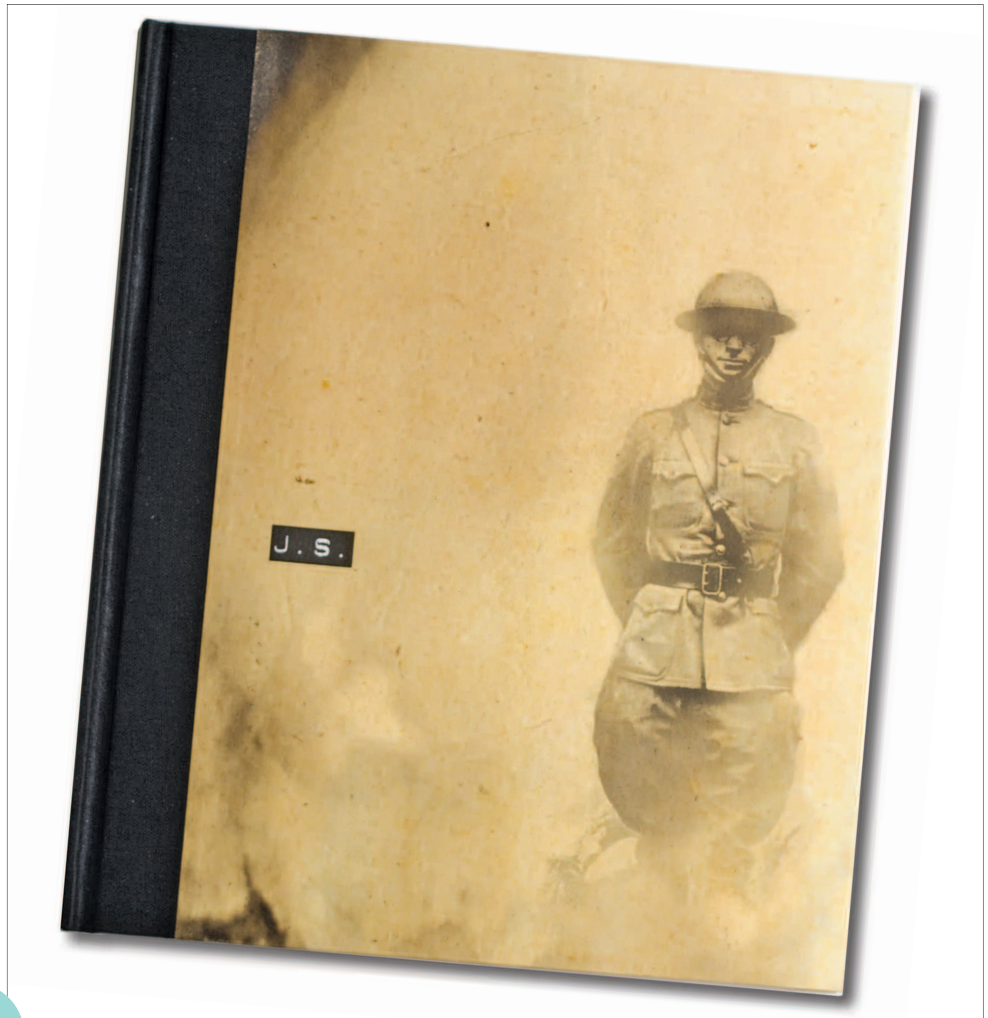
You and I, 120 x 110 x 100 cm, 2006 (upholstered VW driver's seats). Artist's collection.

Urban Mosque, various sizes, 2007 (halves of used, engraved bus tires, incrusted with gold leaf). Artist's collection.



Prize for Book Prototype, Mexico
Juan Antonio Sánchez Rull
Jorge the Soldier,
19 x 22 cm, 2009.

Illustrated account of how, on returning home after an endless war, a soldier inexplicably begins to disappear. War and Hell are the same.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN A BOOK

Ireri de la Peña*

This year, devotees of Fotoseptiembre, one of Mexico's main photographic festivals, organized by the Center of the Image, had a chance to go to the first International Artist's-Book Fair. Gloved in cotton, visitors leafed through and savored more than 200 one-of-a-kind volumes (called "uniques") or small, numbered, hand-bound editions laid out in a large room of the Mexico Library. So, for the first time in Mexico, artist's books of Mexican photographers' work, as well as by photographers from the guest of honor country, Argentina, were exhibited in a single venue.

These handmade books contain little stories, sometimes autobiographical, sometimes the reflection of personal obsessions or intimate manifestations of the author's vision. Gen-

* Mexican photographer.

Silvia Castro
Ask Me If I Saw It
On the Navel of the Moon
12 x 19 cm, 2008.

Fragments of a journey around the Mexico of today.

Clara Rosson
Afternoon
15 x 20 cm, 2009.

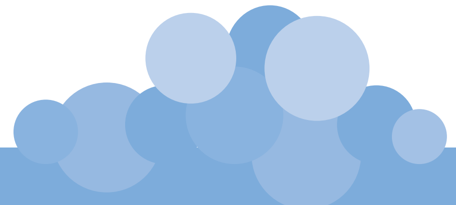
The artist and her family's story about her father's disappearance under Argentina's last military dictatorship.

Julieta Escardó
N# 002
18 x 13 cm, 2009.

Photographs of beloved places.

Eugenia Rodeyro
Box of Candy
25 x 20 cm, 2008.

A small-format collection of photographs of trips to Mexico and Argentina.



erally they enjoy very limited circulation and exhibiting them involves risks since, in order to see what is inside, visitors have to be able to handle them: that is the only way they can discover how photographers of different schools and generations construct intimacies and fictions, how they capture their surroundings and their metaphors and how they delve into reality.

Fair curator Mariana Gruener, herself a young Mexican photographer, says that these books' richness is that they "take on the most diverse forms and, compared to photographs hung on a wall, they create an experience closer to the reader-viewer because he/she can touch, handle and feel them. In these artist's books, the stories take on meaning because the physical form contains a discourse in space-time sequences." Also, the freedom of format allows the photographer to create a complete project, while conventional photography exhibitions very often are insufficient to show the entire work.

The idea is not new. It was born in Argentina eight years ago, in a small independent space called Espacio Ecléctico (Eclectic Space). Explaining its origins, Julieta Escardó, one of its curators, says, "It has to do with how to foster an encounter between the book and people. At one point, we asked ourselves how to make the books of many artists known to people, so that people could see them and enjoy them at their leisure. For the first fair, we invited several photographers who up to then had only circulated their work among a very small group of friends. We got a pick-up truck and went around to the houses of our acquaintances, emptying them of their armchairs, beds and chairs, and with that,

Maia Debowicz
Eroticism, Advertising's Hidden Language
18 x 16 cm, 2008.

Nothing more necessary for selling a product than creating consumer desire.

Vivian Galbán
Two at a Time
12 x 8 cm, 2008

A story of two.

Patricia Lagarde
K
33 x 21 x 2 cm, 2007

I ask myself: in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, what did the only portrait hanging in the room look like? Did Gregorio ever see a nude woman? What could you see out the window?

Marta Tradatti
On the Road
15 x 23 cm, 2008

Shots of a trip to Japan combined with subtle sketches, an encounter with the other. Being on the road is not just a fact, it's an attitude, a permanent window.

we set up an immense living room that was really very cozy. We thought up a system of librarians who passed out and collected the books so that we could be sure they wouldn't be damaged: the authors themselves. They acted as librarians, making it possible to establish a dialogue between the author and the public."

The first fair was a grand success, even though it only lasted three days. With time, both the number of participating authors and the number of visitors grew, but the idea has been to always try to preserve the initial spirit: a warm space, with armchairs and tables to be able to enjoy the books. Also, since it is a private space, the books can be sold, thus fostering collecting.

The Mexican fair was the brainchild of Alejandro Castellanos, the director of the Center for the Image, who eight years ago attended the first Artist's-Book Fair in the Espacio Ecléctico. The experience convinced him that a similar project would be feasible and well accepted in Mexico's photographic community. Given the experience garnered by the Espacio Ecléctico's curators after eight fairs, Argentina was invited as the first guest country to bring a selection of 100 books.

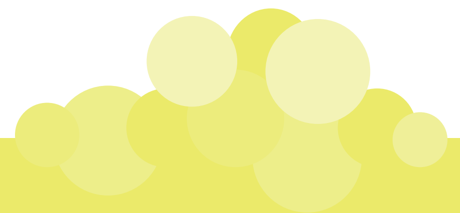
When planning her work, curator Mariana Gruener sought to bring together Mexican artists from different generations and schools to reflect about what is currently happening in photography in Mexico. The fair presented the public with a total of 235 artist's books: 108 in the guest hall, 27 selected by open competition, plus the 100 Argentinean volumes. "I was asked to create the guest hall using my own criteria. I managed to bring together 108 volumes. Also, we made a

HONORABLE MENTION, BOOK PROTOTYPE
Eduardo Carrera
Museum of Love
20 x 20 cm, 2005.

Stories and mementos of love and its disappointment, its contemporary forms and expressions. Exhibited with other objects in display cases to resemble a "real" museum.

Mariana Pardal
Japan, I Love You
20 x 25 cm, 2009.

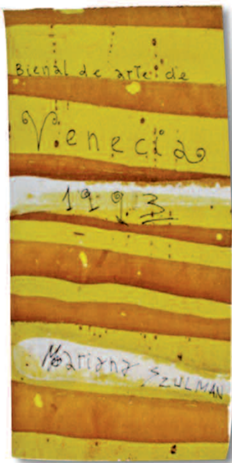
Photographs of a trip to Japan.



call nationwide so no interesting projects would be left out. We created a national panel of judges, which picked 27 projects. The call was made a month before the deadline, and 80 entries were sent. With more time, we certainly would have received many more. The idea is that the next fair be prepared at least a year ahead of time."

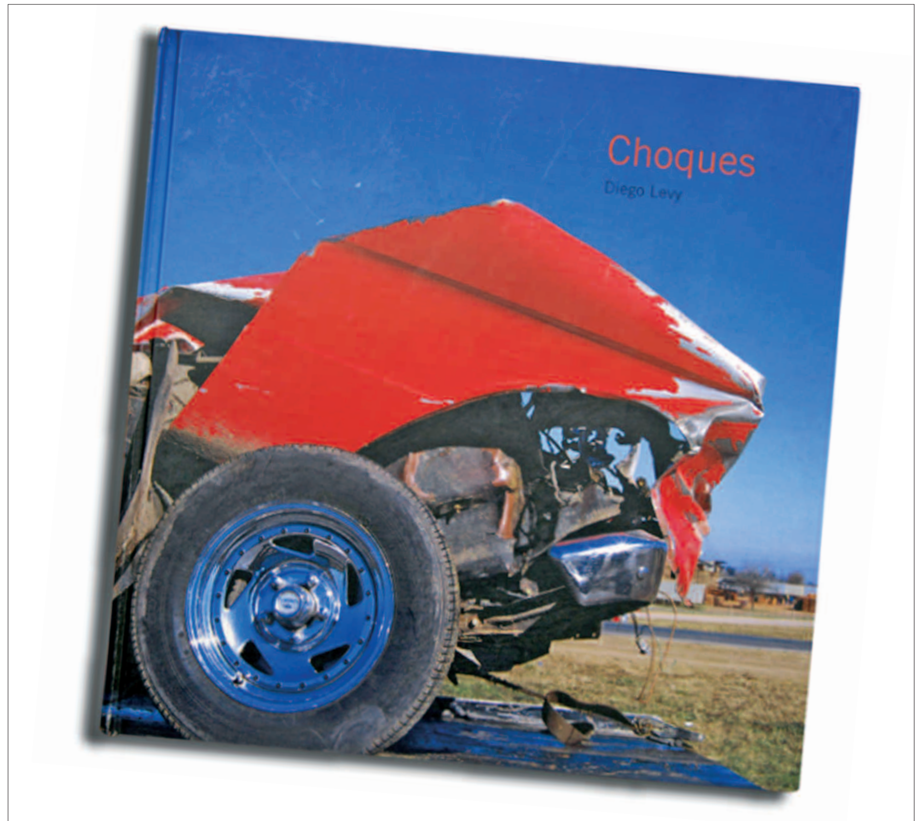
In Mexico, artist's books, particularly of photographs, are only rarely exhibited. It is hard to know which photographers actually use this format as the ultimate goal of their projects, which is why the large number of works at the fair is surprising. Even more enthusiasm resulted when the quality, wealth and creativity of many proposals emerged. The exhibition was organized around five themes: constructions and fictions, intimacies, documentaries, the surroundings and their metaphors and inquiries. It opened the door to something *sui generis*, volumes forged in the classic format of a printed book next to pieces in the form of a concertina or that were almost sculpture. Kitch boxes in pastel colors sat side by side with sober or playful or minimalist or frankly transgressional volumes; there were also aestheticist volumes or others that were a kind of tropical baroque typical of our latitudes. There were limits: they could not be larger than two meters across once opened up, and they could not weigh more than 10 kilograms, just enough to allow for truly alternative books.

In addition to presenting the public with the rich, varied production of artist's books, the fair's other goal was to foster greater proximity between authors and possible publishers, as well as to encourage sales of some of these works as collector's items. This is why prototypical books, already



Mariana Daniela Szulman
Venice Biennial 1993
15 x 20 cm, 2009.

Photos, texts and quotes from the 1993 Venice Biennial.



PRIZE FOR BOOK PROTOTYPE, ARGENTINA
Diego Levy
Collisions
30 x 30 cm, 2008.

Photo essay about traffic accidents in Buenos Aires.

set up and capable of being printed in larger runs, were differentiated from those whose format made them one-of-a-kind, unrepeatable pieces. This division led to two prizes being given. In the category "book-object," the judges picked a work by Sebastián Friedman from Argentina, *Family and Maid* as the winner. In the category of "book prototype," two works tied: *Jorge the Soldier*, by Mexican Juan Antonio Sánchez Rull, and *Collisions*, presented by Argentinean Diego Levy. Six honorable mentions were also given out.

The Center of the Image invited a large number of publishers, representatives of cultural institutions and Mexican private collectors to look at the works shown. The next fair will be opened up to international publishers and collectors to foster greater dissemination and presence of Mexican artists in global forums. Mariana Gruener adds that the fair must aim to be something more than a place to enjoy and see our artists. "Two main things [should be fostered]: collecting artist's books, which doesn't exist in Mexico or is very rare, given that many people don't understand why they should pay a large sum of money for a book that you can't hang on a wall, even if it's a work of art, a collectable piece with a limited edition.... And the other aim is to foster the publication of more books of photography, since today only three or four publishing houses in the country are interested in the topic." VM

A Very Expensive Gift Mexico's Scientific Diaspora

Camelia Tigau*

Tami Chappell/REUTERS

INTRODUCTION

For years, the only general truth in an ocean of statistics on international migration was that the average migration rate for educated individuals had risen with globalization. Recently, this truth has ceased to exist. Figures on the financial crisis that started in 2008 show its effects on migration: fewer people leave their own homes to study or work abroad, especially in well known cases of sending countries like Eastern Europe, Turkey and Mexico. According to a report by Fix, et al., these declines are quite severe: annual flows from Mexico to the United States dropped from 1 million to 600,000 between 2006 and 2009.[1]

With this new situation in mind, there are two preliminary considerations to note about the Mexican talent problem. First, before the current economic crisis, the tendency in Mexico and Central America was different from the overall migratory flow, with more unskilled than highly skilled workers leaving their countries.[2] With recent cuts in its science and technology budget, Mexico will send fewer and fewer scholars abroad because there will be fewer brains to drain.

Second, difficulties in the country's ability to deal with organized crime, poverty and the AH1N1 virus have given Mexico a dreadful image abroad. Countries like China even temporarily closed their borders to Mexicans. Foreign investment and tourism have drastically declined in Mexico and as one public relations Golden Rule says, a bad image is always hard —if not impossible— to repair.

So, herein lies the main question: could the Mexican skilled diaspora provide the country with a different image of "talented" and "skilled" people, as opposed to the poor, sick, outlaw Mexican stereotype? Even though this question may offend the supporters of the brain drain perspective, that was always a point to start with. Even more pertinent: is the brain drain a problem for Mexico, and if so, how big?

Brain drain is defined as the permanent emigration of skilled persons from one jurisdiction to another. A brain drain normally refers to two types of problems: 1) structural: retention, repatriation and diaspora communication issues, and 2) technical: immigration regimes, taxation, science-and-technology legislation and accreditation of qualifications. In this sense, Mahroum asks himself the ethical question as to whether or not an economy should get a "free ride" by im-

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> The repatriation programs still have to contend with the lack of jobs for qualified researchers. Also, they have not created enough networks to connect the diaspora and stimulate the circulation of knowledge.

porting human capital that has been produced abroad and financed by others.[3]

Still other scholars object to the alternative of closed border policies in the age of globalization. The work of Docquier and Lodigiani shows that the diaspora is important because it creates or replaces trust in peak international legal environments; also, it provides market information or supplies matching and referral services.[4] The positive effect of large countries' diasporas on foreign direct investment is that they reinforce the potentially beneficial effect that prospects for migration have on human capital formation. Small countries, on the other hand, are less likely to benefit from skilled migration both in terms of human and physical capital.

WEIGHTING THE MEXICAN BRAIN DRAIN

With these details in mind, we can now take a look at figures on the migration of Mexican talent and corresponding government policies.

Licea, et al. estimate that between 1945 and 1970, 30,000 to 40,000 Mexicans, mostly from upper-middle-class families, graduated from U.S. universities.[5] Seven thousand more were estimated to have done graduate studies in France during the same period. The National Council on Science and Technology (Conacyt) awarded 24,000 scholarships to study abroad between 1971 and 1995; of these, 9,800 were fellowships leading to a doctoral degree.

Lozano and Gandini show that the Latin America and the Caribbean was the region with the highest growth in the migration of the skilled workforce (155 percent) between 1990 and 2007, followed closely by Asia and Africa with 145 and 152 percent, respectively.[6] Among the Latin American countries, Mexico and Brazil are the largest exporters of highly skilled emigrants.

The main destination for both highly skilled and unskilled Mexicans is the United States. As a matter of fact, Mexicans living in the U.S. are one of the largest immigrant populations in the world. According to Adams, 16.5 percent of Mexicans live in the U.S.[7] In 2000, 895,515 Mexicans with tertiary education resided in the U.S., of whom 6.67 percent had done graduate work.

In 1998, the number of Mexican students at U.S. universities was almost the same as the number of members of the National System of Researchers in Mexico. Ten years later, Waldinger did a study with Mexican migrants in the U.S. according to which a great majority of Mexican respondents have taken at least one trip home;[8] however, their ties with the home country were attenuating, as fewer than one-half sent remittances and almost 80 percent plan to stay in the U.S. for good.

WELCOME HOME POLICIES

A few initiatives by the Mexican government should be remembered. In 1991, Conacyt created a program to retain and repatriate Mexican researchers and reverse the brain drain. Between 1991 and 1997, the program achieved the repatriation and retention of 1,859 researchers, a number equivalent to almost half the research fellows and one third of the members of National System of Researchers. The majority of those repatriated came from the U.S. (40 percent), France (15 percent), Great Britain (13 percent), Spain (9 percent), Canada (5 percent) and Germany (5 percent), the main destinations for Mexicans who study abroad.

The 2002 Science and Technology Law launched a special program to create networks among Mexicans living abroad. In 2003, the Institute of Mexicans Abroad was created. In 2005, the Chamber of Deputies passed a law to help former Mexican migrant workers.

The repatriation programs still have to contend with the lack of jobs for qualified researchers. Among other problems, they have not created enough networks to connect the diaspora and stimulate the circulation of knowledge.

WHO GETS WHAT

Due to the new circumstances of the global financial crisis that has also hit the U.S., conditions for foreign scientists in general and Mexicans in particular, may have changed. We only have to remember that in July 2009, professors at several California educational institutions were paid with a kind of IOU (checks that could not be cashed until months later).

On the other hand, Mexico is not only a source of foreign talent for the U.S., but also a destination for highly skilled workers. Down through history, it has been known for receiving refugees from Europe (Spain in particular), as well as foreign students and workers from places like China, Eastern Europe and even the U.S. Also, Mexico is the country with the largest population of Americans living abroad: about 1 million.

Discussions about who loses and who gains from migration are therefore complex enough, even when examined statistically.

The Need for Transmigrants

To conclude, we must remember that internationalization has long been recognized as a prerequisite for sustained participation and access to global science. It can take place through international scientific organizations, international facilities, programs, collaborative agreements between research institutions or at a personal level. Internationalization can be a strong driver of talent from overseas as it stimulates local research communities to become better known across the world.

In this sense, two needs are created: 1) networks among scientists and 2) transmigrant scientific workers. First, networks may serve as a possibility to stimulate productive processes such as joint research, publications and products. Second, transmigrants are persons who, having migrated from Mexico to another country, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state, such as for instance, economic entrepreneurs or political activists.

Compared to other types of migration like immigrants who leave home to settle somewhere else or travelers, for whom displacement is temporary and hence never put down roots, transmigrants are transnational and have the capacity to generate an important flow of information and goods. Even when they are not representative of the population of Latin American origin living in the U.S., an increase in their number could benefit several countries at once.

Mexico's skilled work force should be allowed this type of transnational arrangement that benefits their home and host countries and opens up doors for new cooperation levels in scientific institutions and companies. Brain drain policies —if they are to be called this, or to use a better term, talent management— must also start to move toward the international sphere, along with the individuals they deal with. First, because brain drain is not a national problem for Mexico, but it is an issue to be dealt with starting at least at a bilateral level and opening up to multinational spheres of action. And second because "talents" or "brains" —whatever you call them— are both concepts that refer to individuals with the freedom to choose from multiple options the one that best suits them. In this sense, policies may have only a limited impact. VM

Transmigrants, having migrated from Mexico to another country, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state.

Further Reading

Tejada Guerrero, Gabriela, and Jean-Claude Bolay, "Impulsar el desarrollo a través del conocimiento: una mirada distinta a las migraciones de los mexicanos altamente calificados," *Global Migration Perspectives* 51, available on line at www.gcim.org.

Notes

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[2] William J. Carrington and Enrica Detragiache, "How extensive is the brain drain?" *Finance & Development*, 1999, p. 49.

[3] Sami Mahroum, "The international policies of brain drain: A review," *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 17:2, 2005, pp. 219-230.

[4] Frédéric Docquier and Elisabetta Lodigiani, "Skilled Migration and Business Networks," part of the research projects *People and Firms* and *Sustainable Development in a Diverse World* (Milan: Centro Studi Luca d´Agliano, University of Milan/Springer), 2008.

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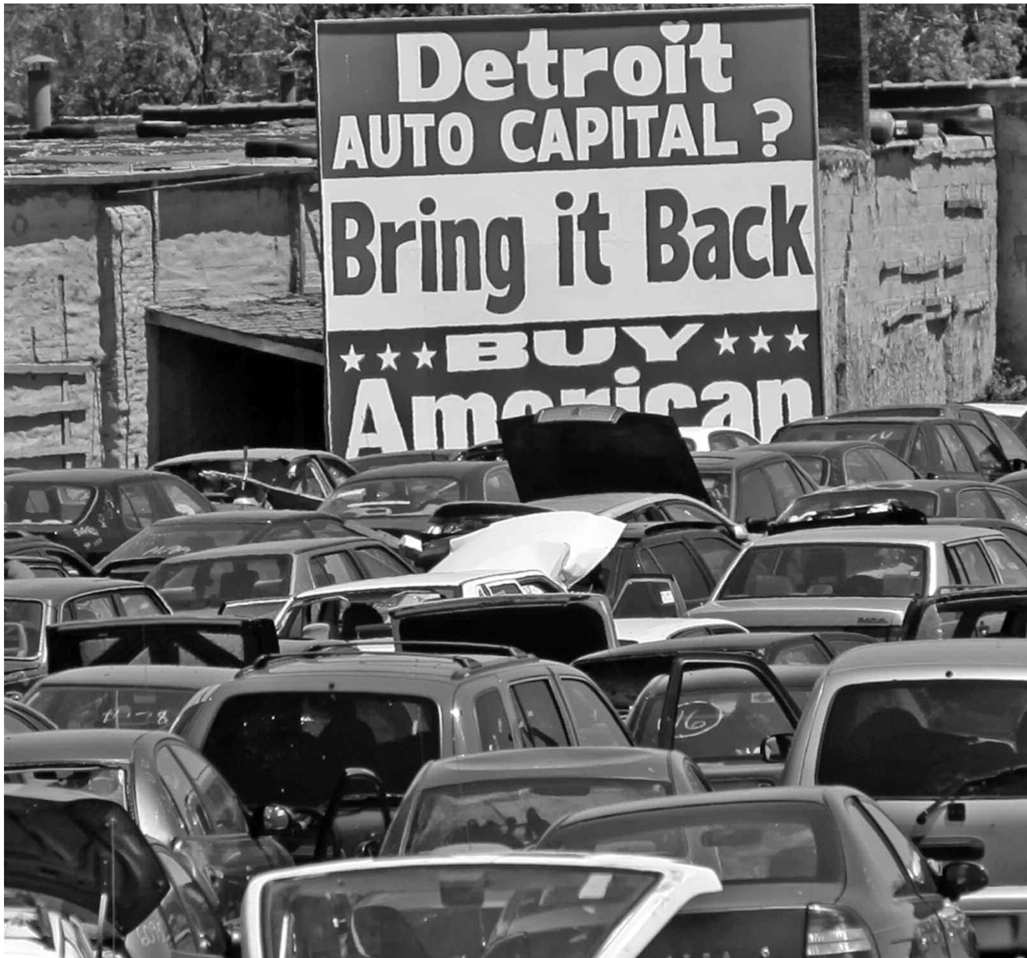
[6] Fernando Lozano and Luciana Gandini, "La emigración de recursos humanos calificados desde países de América Latina y el Caribe. Tendencias contemporáneas y perspectivas," report by the International Organization for Migration, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, 2009.

[7] R. H. Adams, Jr., *International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain: A Study of 24 Labor-Exporting Countries*, Policy Research Working Paper no. 3069 (Washington, D.C.: Grupo para la Reducción de la Pobreza, Banco Mundial, 2003), p. 3.

[8] Roger Waldinger, "Between 'Here' and 'There': Immigrant Cross-Border Activities and Loyalties," *IMR*, vol. 42, no. 1, p. 25.

North American Integration In Times of Economic Crisis

Bibiana Gómez Muñoz*



Rebecca Cook/REUTERS

The "Buy American" clause can hardly be considered in keeping with the spirit of NAFTA.

Traditionally, the notion of economic crisis has been linked to the success or failure of regional integration experiences. In the Latin American case, for example, economic conditions during crises have been an obstacle to the advancement and even the existence of regional agreements. This is what happened during the 1980s with the so-called "debt crisis," which stymied many of the region's integration projects. Elsewhere, such as in the European Union during the 1973 oil crisis, economic downturns contributed visibly to the stagnation of the community's integration until well into the 1980s.

But it has also been during economic emergencies that countries have fostered new forms of economic cooperation or integration: this is what happened in the late 1990s with the emergence of ASEAN+3 in southern Asia, whose aim was to achieve financial stability after the severe crisis that hit the region in 1997. Certainly, economic crises have accompanied regional integration processes since the second half of

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In the North American case,
the crisis has affected the three countries,
prompting their governments
to concentrate on national priorities
instead of the regional agenda.

the twentieth century, affecting their economic performance, delaying their consolidation or, to the contrary, opening the doors for cooperation among governments.

In this context, North America has not been exempt from periods of economic crisis that have revealed the capabilities and limitations of the process of integration itself. We should remember, for example, the financial crisis that hit Mexico in 1995 that required a U.S. government bail-out package, or the region's loss of competitiveness due to the 2001-2002 U.S. recession, just to mention two experiences prior to the current crisis that has seriously affected the region.

Though economic turbulence seems to have direct repercussions on performance in integration processes, we should ask ourselves how these economic difficulties have impacted the course of integration in the North American case. This is particularly true today, when ostensibly the crisis has affected the three countries, prompting their governments to concentrate on national priorities instead of the regional agenda, because the way countries assume the costs and leadership in the face of these kinds of events seems to be a decisive factor.

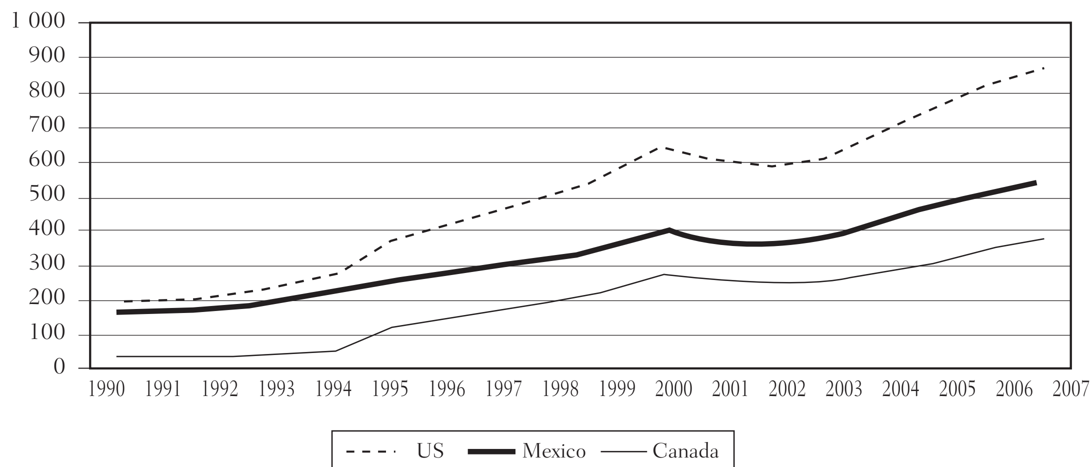
THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISES ON NORTH AMERICA

As a region, North America has been affected by three important economic crises: Mexico's 1995 financial crisis; the 2001-2002 U.S. recession; and the current international crisis that began in the second half of 2008. Naturally, each of them had different causes and effects for integration.

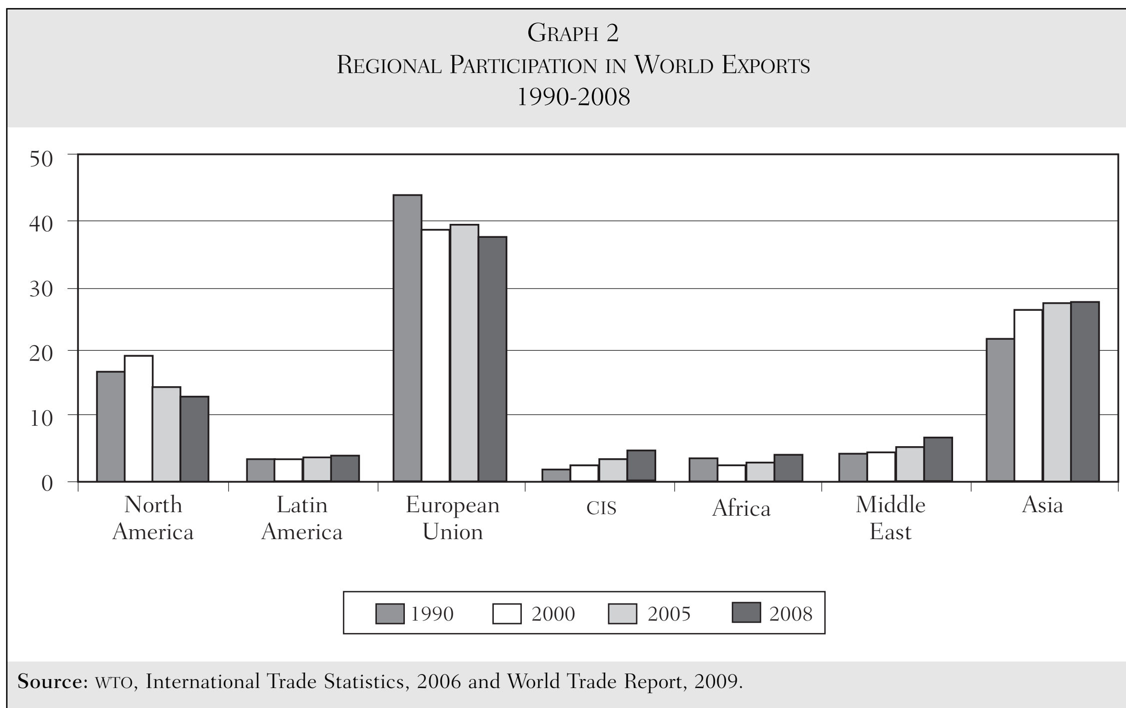
Mexico's financial crisis broke out in late 1994, during the first year the North American Free Trade Agreement was in operation. Naturally, this affected the Mexican economy considerably, but, given the magnitude of the impact on Mexico and the pressure and instability of financial markets, in January 1995, President William Clinton decided to offer Mexico a credit package for a little over US$50 billion, which included US$20 billion from the Exchange Rate Stabilization Fund.

Because of the two economies' interdependence even before NAFTA came into effect, the financial bail-out had several aims: to contribute to the Mexican economy's recovery and the stability of the U.S. financial system itself, as well as to avoid the situation's undermining U.S. world leadership.[1]

GRAPH 1
TOTAL TRADE AMONG NAFTA PARTNERS (1990-2007)
(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (Census Bureau), Statistics Canada and Mexico's Ministry of the Economy.



Source: WTO, International Trade Statistics, 2006 and World Trade Report, 2009.

The Mexican economy's swift recovery in 1996 coincided with an expansion of the U.S. economy. This is why trilateral trade increased exponentially until 2000, positioning North America as a highly competitive region internationally.

In contrast with the 1995 Mexican crisis's effects on the region, the U.S. economy's 2001 recession brought a qualitative decrease in regional trade and, of course, also for each NAFTA economy. Regionally, for example, the impetus of the agreement's first years contrasted with the 2001 and 2002 drop in exports *vis-à-vis* their main competitors. Even though improvements were visible by 2005, in that same year the region's exports represented 14.5 percent of the world total, while in 2000, they had been 19.5 percent. Of course, the three countries also experienced a considerable decline in their intra-regional exports, as graph 1 shows.[2]

The 2001 U.S. recession clearly showed that one of the direct results of an economic crisis on a region's performance is precisely a decline in trade, particularly when this affects or originates in the dominant economy the other economies are closely linked to. Here, it should be pointed out, however, that, in addition to the economy as a precondition for integration, other factors determine its progress, like governments' willingness to move ahead toward new stages of cooperation, as will be better explained in the next section.

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE REGION'S FUTURE

As everyone knows, the aftershocks of the failure of one of the United States' most important banking institutions, Lehman Brothers, in September 2008, have been highly damaging not only for the U.S. economy but also for the international financial system and the dynamics of world trade. Consequently, the economic performance of the United States' main trade partners —with Mexico and Canada high on the list— has been seriously affected. Suffice it to mention the negative growth in the last months of 2008 and the first half of 2009 and the jump in unemployment in the three countries.

But this sluggish performance by all three countries' economies should be placed in a much broader context. In the first place, we should point out that in an integration process like North America's, the role of the hegemonic country is vitally important. This is particularly the case when there is no nucleus of institutions capable of dealing with the consequences of intergovernmental or supranational interdependence; and even if such a nucleus existed, individually, the countries have to deal with events with their own resources.

In the region, the centrality of the United States is indisputable. This was shown in 1995 when it aided the Mexican

North America's performance as a region has been marked by the three countries' lack of interest in advancing the integration process to a new stage. They have concentrated on resolving domestic problems.

government to extricate itself from the financial crisis; without that bail-out, it would have affected the U.S. financial system and the beginnings of trade integration. For its part, the effects of the 2001 U.S. recession coincided with the other emergency that occupied all the Bush administration's attention: the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This led to the implementation of an anti-terrorist policy that became his administration's priority, imposing security as the cross-cutting theme for relations among Mexico, the United States and Canada, in order to guarantee compliance with domestic policy.

In North America, these emergency situations, whether economic or of other kinds, have had an important effect on the course and significance of trilateral integration. Since 2001, the regional integration project has been subject to putting domestic policy priorities ahead of regional ones. Graph 2 shows that, beginning in that same year, the economic crisis has caused a decrease in the region's international competitiveness, the leitmotif of NAFTA, something that could sharpen during the current financial crisis affecting all three countries. In 2008, North America's participation in world trade in goods did not grow even 2 percent, while imports dropped almost 3 percent.[3]

In this context, North America's performance as a region has been marked by the three countries' lack of interest in advancing the integration process to a new stage. They have concentrated on resolving domestic problems, although they have increased cooperation on important issues, as was seen recently in U.S.-Mexican cooperation on border security.

This disinterest was patently clear at the most recent North American Leaders' Summit hosted in Guadalajara last August. Without any major expectations for the region's future, the summit showed the three leaders' enthusiasm about the course the region should take. Protectionism seemed to hover in the air, however, with economic recovery contingency measures like the U.S. administration's implementation of a "Buy American" clause hardly in keeping with the spirit of NAFTA. In addition, in the framework of his programmatic foreign policy vision, Barack Obama has shown little interest in North America.[4] Rather, he has concentrated his efforts on resolving the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and on redirecting the anti-terrorist policy.

It should be pointed out that the United States is not the only one that has pushed North America to the back burner as a regional project: the foreign policies of both Mexico and Canada have contributed little either. In the case of Mexico, it has paid little institutional attention to the matter, centering instead on questions like the Mérida Initiative; in Canada's case, the government has sought to consolidate its bilateral relations with the United States to the detriment of trilateralization.

Since the beginning of the decade, the integration of North America has been at an impasse; the actors have sought to overcome it through intergovernmental negotiation and dialogue that have set the pattern for integration through institutional mechanisms capable of controlling the three countries' domestic agendas. In today's times of economic crisis, it is to be expected that regional integration will slow, both because of the negative effects of the economic emergency and because of the United States' change of priorities. This will increasingly undermine North America's economic competitiveness and productivity *vis-à-vis* the European Union and Asia, which seem —particularly the latter— to be in better shape to get out of the pressing economic crisis and consolidate as central actors in the world trade regimen. VM

Notes

[1] Alicia Girón, Édgar Ortiz and Eugenia Correa, *Integración financiera y TLC. Retos y perspectivas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1995), pp. 9-20.

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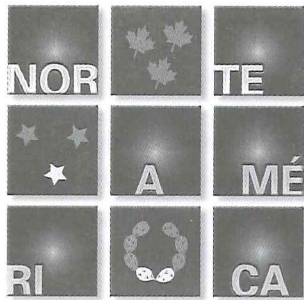
[3] WTO, *World Trade Report 2009,* available on line at http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/anrep_e/world_trade_report09_e.pdf.

[4] Last July 15, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a speech to the Council of Foreign Relations about President Obama's main foreign policy guidelines. The speech honed in on the priorities of nuclear disarmament, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, peace in the Middle East, the recovery of the global economy, the fight against climate change, a clean-energy policy and the fight for human rights. Her only reference to the region was the acceptance of responsibility in the fight against drugs in the case of Mexico, but as part of the recognition of the U.S. government role in resolving transnational problems. Available on line at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/ 126071.htm.



NORTEAMÉRICA
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CALL FOR PAPERS

The National Autonomous University of Mexico's Center for Research on North America (CISAN) and the American University's Center for North American Studies (CNAS) invite the national and international academic community to send contributions for its biannual journal, ***Norteamérica***, dedicated to the study and reflection about the political, economic, social and cultural situation of North America. Contributions must conform to the following

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

SECTIONS

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

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- Only articles based on scholarly research will be considered. These two sections will not publish articles on current events or opinion pieces.
- The articles must include relevant, up-to-date source citations.
- Articles must be accompanied by 4 to 6 key words and a 100- to 150-word summary or abstract.
  Length: 20 to 40 pages.

Reflections

Interviews

- The interview will be with an outstanding figure from the academic, political, social and/or cultural world.
- Each interview will include between 5 and 10 analytical and comparative questions.
  Length: 15 to 20 pages.

Critical Notes

- Academic reflections about a polemical, current issue.
  Length: 10 to 15 pages.

Bibliographical Notes

- Essays that review, compare and analyze in depth from 2 to 5 recently published books on the same theme.
  Length: 10 to 15 pages.

Chronologies

- They will deal with the most important events in North America and the rest of the world and their reciprocal impact.
  Length: 20 to 30 pages.

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All manuscripts must comply with the following norms:

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

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

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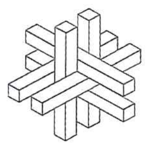

Latin American Migrant Markets In North America "Ethnic and Nostalgia" Products

Bernardo Olmedo Carranza*

One productive sector that has fallen behind in Latin America and the Caribbean is micro-, small and medium-sized companies. Given the growing gap between this sector's economic performance and that of large companies, the market for so-called "nostalgia" and "ethnic" products opens up an opportunity. A place can be carved out in the migrant markets taking shape in the world, particularly in the United States, the main destination for Latin American migration.

Danny Moloshok/REUTERS

Selling Mexican food in Los Angeles, California.

This opens up possibilities for Latin American economies. On the one hand, it is an incentive for producing and exporting goods and services that are being lost at home because of emigration. This will help create jobs and also recover traditions and productive processes and technologies native to our countries, as well as get support for innovating and preserving traditional products, revitalizing national, state, municipal, regional, local and community customs and traditions. This can be part of an effort to maintain and recover original identities as one of the many responses to the globalizing effects of the world economy, which tends to harmonize consumption and production patterns.

On the other hand, it opens up the possibility for certain goods and services to be distributed, sold and eventually produced by Mexican immigrants in the United States itself. This could happen if they set up their own micro-, small and medium-sized businesses, thus creating an extraordinary source of legal job creation and the possibility of exporting to Canada. It would also make it possible to disseminate the enormous, diverse culture of Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of a growing process of "Latin Americanization" of U.S. society and its economy.

What Are "Ethnic" and "Nostalgia" Products?

According to the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "nostalgia" products are the

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goods and services that are part of consumption habits, culture and traditions of different peoples and nations.[1] The term comes from the idea that the social groups that emigrate —and I would add here those who migrate to other parts of their own country— tend to miss certain products that are part of their daily lives and are hard to find in their new homes.

"Ethnic" products are those associated with a country but that, abroad, are consumed both by nationals of that country and other parts of the population and that, in a certain sense, have managed to penetrate larger markets. This definition seems too general to me. I would add that these kinds of goods and services have other attributes and specificities, among them their autochthonous nature, including the meaning of "national" belonging. In this context, "national" alludes to lifestyles transmitted socially and not only concepts like "race" or "people," but also other "ethnic characteristics" like a social group's religious and linguistic specificities, the pigmentation of the skin, national or geographical origins, a socially transmitted lifestyle, etc.[2] In short, these are goods and services without which Latin American migrants cannot —or find it very difficult to— continue their consumption patterns, customs, traditions and forms of social reproduction. Along with other factors, this makes up their historic, cultural, regional, local and community identity and even that of their families.[3]

In terms of what the ECLAC study terms "other groups of the population" that consume ethnic goods, it is possible that it is referring not only to Latin American migrants, but also to groups of very diverse origin who have assimilated certain consumption patterns linked to these kinds of Latino-origin goods and services. I am referring to foreigners who have come to our countries as tourists or for business reasons, and also to segments of the destination-country population who have contact and relations with Latin Americans and for that simple reason, become potential consumers of these goods and services. This is the case of the North American market.

Thus, I would like to make it clear that not all nostalgia products are ethnic products, but that all ethnic goods and services are a product of nostalgia, since they make it possible to mitigate migrants' pain and melancholy.

This gives us an idea of the importance of the so-called ethnic and nostalgia markets, not only in terms of their economic size, but also the scope of the concept both at home and abroad.

Migrants' impact has turned into the driving force of growth and economic development in several states of the United States, particularly those with high Hispanic and Mexican migrant populations like California, Arizona, Texas and Illinois.

WHICH ONES ARE THEY?

They are goods aimed at highly differentiated markets. As such, even though they have to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary norms, they are free from what could be understood as international quality standardization. By their very nature, they do not require sophisticated technological —much less costly— innovation. If anything at all, the biggest innovation can be in their color, some of the materials used and in their design and packaging. One interesting innovation, however, would have been finding new target markets or new niches to "attack."

In general, the ECLAC study considers that one of the virtues of some of these products is precisely that they are produced by craftsmen and craftswomen; so, if the changes needed to comply with norms, particularly health norms, are introduced, they could occupy an important market niche in the United States —and I would add, the entire world. Other products are made using industrial processes with a heavy dose of craftsmanship. Examples are alcoholic beverages like tequila, mescal, *bacanora* or even canned *pulque,* which has taken decades to be commercialized because it is a naturally fermented beverage that does not keep very well.

Products come from different sectors of the economy and some are derived from the trade between Mexico and the United States and Canada, our NAFTA partners. Among them are those from the food, beverage, furniture, crafts and clothing sectors; others are derived from music, iconography, and different festivities (both popular and religious). But nostalgia products also include detergents, soaps and even multinational soft drink brands made with cane sugar instead of yellow-corn fructose, giving them a different flavor from those made in the U.S.

The potential for these goods and services is in the possibility that owners of micro-, small and medium-sized businesses could move into the ethnic and nostalgia markets with an attractive offering that could overcome the restrictions of what has been called the Bioterrorism Act, focused on

Our migrants, both documented and undocumented, make up a market with a higher growth rate than that of the U.S. economy itself, even in times of recession.

specific foods and pharmaceuticals.[4] In the case of the latter, the restrictions would apply to natural products utilized in our region for healing, nutrition, rituals and/or everyday uses, such as the coca leaf, essential since ancient times in the daily life of countries like Bolivia and Peru.

Size of the U.S. and Canadian Latino and Mexican Markets

The Latino market in the U.S. and Canada has been expanding, particularly since the region's economic-financial crisis in the early 1980s.

For this reason, the Hispanic —or Latino, as it is also known— population has grown in the United States until it is now the largest ethnic minority. Our migrants, both documented and undocumented, make up a market with a higher growth rate than that of the U.S. economy itself, even in times of recession.

The Hispanic market is estimated at more than 42 million; this community is about 30 percent larger than the entire population of Canada and would represent the fifth-largest economy in the Americas after the United States, Canada, Mexico and Brazil.[5] In 2005 alone, its gross domestic product was about US$700 billion, almost the size of Mexico's annual GDP for that same year. It is estimated that between 68 percent and 72 percent of the U.S. Hispanic market is made up of Mexicans and so-called Mexican-Americans, who are Mexico's greatest potential market for ethnic and nostalgia products: this segment is estimated at about 30 million people, the equivalent of about 30 percent of the total population of Mexico.

This community represents not only potential as a market, but also, part of its U.S. income is sent to Mexico as remittances, which currently exceed US$20 billion a year, and in 2008 came to about US$25 billion. This makes Mexico the world's third-largest destination for remittances after India and China. This is more than the earnings from tourism and oil sales; unfortunately, it is not used for funding production, but just becomes part of the household expenditures of migrants' relatives.

This important mass of resources could be used for local productive projects to supply the U.S. market with ethnic and nostalgia products by creating micro- and small companies, and even medium-sized companies. Remittances could also be used to fund production cooperatives and community companies based on systems that have been developed in our country and used to commercialize different products like organic coffee, which in Chiapas has allowed thousands of peasants and smallholders to sell their coffee at prices above the national average and position it in increasing quantities and prices on the international market.

Migrants' impact does not stop there. It has turned into the driving force of growth and economic development in several states of the United States, particularly those with high Hispanic and Mexican migrant populations like California, Arizona, Texas and Illinois, an influence that has expanded to other states like North Carolina. Eighty-five percent of the Mexican migrants in the U.S. live in those five states, although another five have high concentrations, and in eight counties, Mexicans make up more than 50 percent of the population. One exceptional case is Huntington Park in Los Angeles County, where 97 percent of residents are of Mexican origin.

According to Mexico's foreign trade bank (Bancomext) figures, in 2006, there were more than 2.1 million Latino-owned establishments in the United States with sales of over US$218 billion. Of these, about 612,000 are firms in California and 358,000 in Texas.

There are fewer Latino migrants in Canada, but their number is still significant: 850,000, of whom 110,000 are of Mexican origin.[6] Mexicans make up less than 10 percent of all migrants from all countries and are concentrated in six cities: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Ottawa. By province, Ontario is home to almost 25 percent of Hispanic migrants; Québec to 10 percent; British Colombia, a little over 5 percent; and Alberta, 2 percent. The entire Hispanic community has about Can$100 million in purchasing power a year. About 2,500 Hispanic-owned businesses are registered in Canada in different sectors, mainly food distributors; travel agencies; consultants, lawyers and accountants offices; restaurants; workshops, etc. Many other people are part of temporary farm worker programs. Overall, the number of Hispanic migrants in Canada is on the rise, and in the

Despite the precariousness
of the conditions Mexican migrants
face in the U.S. economy,
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more than double
Mexico's average annual per capita GDP.

case of those from Mexico, they are increasing by 20,000 a year on average, a growth of between 10 percent and 15 percent. Recent visa restrictions levied by the Canadian government on the entry of Mexicans will probably not significantly slow this important flow of migrants.

MICRO- AND SMALL-BUSINESS ETHNIC PRODUCTS ON THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET?

The figures cited give us an approximate idea of the size of the market for ethnic and nostalgia products in North America.

In the case of Mexico, the issue deserves special attention since every year, emigration to the United States comes to more than 400,000, a figure calculated during the Vicente Fox administration (2000-2006), which created almost no jobs.

Despite the precariousness of the conditions Mexican migrants endure in the U.S. economy, their average annual income is more than double Mexico's average annual per capita GDP. Most are undocumented and work as agricultural laborers, as domestic servants, in construction or are employed by wholesalers who take advantage of their situation to pay very low wages and not sign them up with social security.

My proposal is that in the United States itself, micro-, small and medium-sized businesses be set up, created and headed by documented Mexican migrants who have even become U.S. citizens, to be able to commercialize, distribute, produce and generate ethnic and nostalgia products and services destined for the Hispanic market, but also for the broader U.S. market and migrants from other places. This would allow these companies —among them the producers— who would be importing raw materials and semi-prepared products from Mexico, to be able to produce goods and services and commercialize and distribute them completely legally.

In other words, it would be possible to employ undocumented Mexican migrants, who could be hired by legal firms owned by documented migrants. The aim would be to foster changing the employees' status, allowing them access to social security and the possibility of legalizing their migratory status. This is particularly important given that there is little expectation that the United States and Mexico will reach a comprehensive immigration agreement. These companies would also become exporters of these products to Canada and other markets.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The critical economic straits of the Latin American and Caribbean countries forces increasing numbers of their inhabitants to seek a better quality of life abroad. This means that the migrant market is a considerable source of income, by no means negligible for micro-, small and medium-sized firms with the business profile capable of satisfying it.

Beyond the interest in serving a specific market, this would also make it possible to preserve our historic cultural identity through the reproduction of consumption and production patterns. Nevertheless, this effort can have a projection beyond our borders in a process that we could call the "Latin Americanization" of the societies where these products can open up a niche.

The cultural wealth and diversity of our peoples are widely recognized the world over. The challenge for Latin Americans —and particularly Mexicans— is to take over those markets and make them grow. VM

NOTES

[1] ECLAC, *Pequeñas empresas, productos étnicos y de nostalgia: oportunidades en el mercado internacional. Los casos de El Salvador y México* (Mexico City: LC/MEX/L.589, December 26, 2003), p. 4.

[2] J. Gould and W. L. Kolb, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 243.

[3] According to UNESCO, the ethnic group, insofar as it is a concentration of complex, socially assimilated elements, is to a great extent subordinated to social life and can only be understood as a function of the social dimension. No ethnic group can exist without society. The ethnic group defines a natural group of mesological origin characterized by its own historical, language and cultural properties. The notion of ethnic group has the privilege —or advantage, if you will— of apprehending a people in its entirety, or, better said, in the diverse modes of unity of which it is capable. Salustiano del Campo et al., *Diccionario UNESCO de Ciencias Sociales,* vol. 2 (Barcelona: Planeta-Agostini, 1987), p. 841.

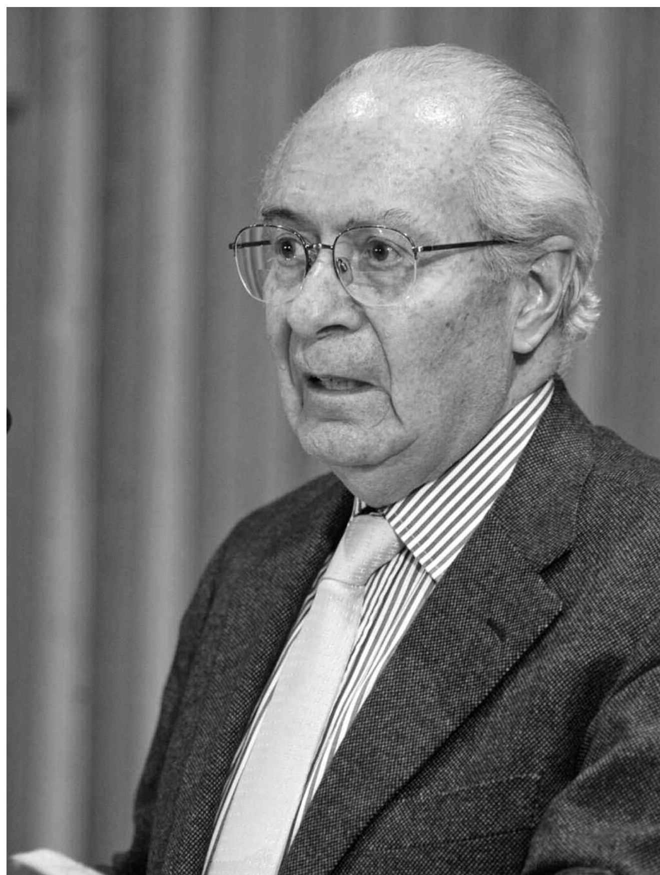
[4] This is the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, better known as the Bioterrorism Act, passed in the United States in June 2002.

[5] Carlos J. Bello Roch, *El mercado de Norteamérica* (Mexico City: Bancomext, 2006). In some cases, the ratios and comparisons are by the author.

[6] Ibid.

Pablo Latapí Sarre
Sketch of an Educator (1927-2009)

Lourdes M. Chehaibar Náder*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Pablo Latapí Sarre (Mexico City, 1927-2009) had a full professional life, committed and productive in several areas: intellectually, he pioneered educational research; he promoted institutions and networks; as a teacher, he educated researchers; he was fascinated by the links between educational research, public policy design and decision making; and he was a national and international disseminator of knowledge.

With his solid intellectual discipline, training in the humanities and philosophy and social and ethical commitment, from the early 1960s, Pablo Latapí promoted opening up a new field of research in education. He conceived of this as the crossroads of many disciplines, demanding conceptual, analytical and methodological rigor. His perseverant, productive research work engendered more than 35 books and 100 specialized articles.

He untiringly promoted institutions and initiatives that contributed to maturing the field of educational research and colleagues' specialization. In 1963, he

* Director of the UNAM Institute for Research on Education and the University.

founded the first institution dedicated to this field, the Center for Educational Studies (CEE), which he headed until 1973. This was followed by the creation or promotion of *La Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos* (Latin American Journal of Educational Studies);[1] the civil society organizations Educational Information Meetings, University Prospective and Mexican Association for the United Nations; the Mexican Council for Educational Research (Comie), and its national congresses; and the Citizens' Observatory for Education (OCE).

He also spent time exploring the impact of educational research on public policy design. He was an active, critical witness of national educational development, working as an advisor under four different ministers of public education (Fernando Solana, José Ángel Pescador, Miguel Limón and Reyes Tamez Guerra).

His research activities were accompanied by intense activities to disseminate information and knowledge, first in the daily newspaper *Excélsior* and later in the news weekly *Proceso*, as well as on radio and television. In these efforts, he combined academic knowledge, political savvy, perceptiveness and a civic position to contribute critical, well-documented points of view about educational development. His aim was always to defend and improve public education and seriously analyze the gap between rhetoric and reality in education.

He was also very active in congresses and seminars nationwide and throughout Latin America, Asia, Africa (Zaire and Kenya), the United States, Canada and Europe. He participated in different initiatives, offering consulting services to the Ford, Rockefeller and Inter-American Foundations, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), UNICEF and the UNESCO, where he was Mexico's ambassador from 2005 to 2006.

One thing stands out in all his work: a concern for examining and dealing with the inequalities in Mexican society from a profoundly humanist point of view, unhampered by political ties, with conceptual and methodological rigor and convinced of the transformational capability of education.

All his achievements brought him a large number of prizes and honors: from 1985 on, he was a level-three member of the National System of Researchers; he was named researcher emeritus in 1996 and national

> His research was accompanied by intense dissemination of information and knowledge. In these efforts, he combined political savvy, perceptiveness and a civic position to contribute critical, well-documented points of view about educational development.

researcher of excellence in 2003. He received the UNESCO and Czech Republic's Comenius Medal for his contributions to the quality of education in 2001; the Mexican government's 1996 National Prize for Science and the Arts in the area of history, social sciences and philosophy; the University of Colima named him Distinguished University Professor (1996) and gave him an honorary doctorate (2008). He also received honorary doctorates from the Autonomous University of Sonora (2002), the Autonomous Metropolitan University (2007) and the National Polytechnic Institute's Center for Advanced Research and Studies (CINVESTAV) (2009); the University of Veracruz's Medal of Merit (2003); and Special Recognition from El Colegio de México (2007).

He came on board at the UNAM's Institute for Research on Education and the University (IISUE, previously known as the Center for University Studies) in 1995. He donated his personal archives to this institute, his last home in his tenacious, brilliant academic career, so that the UNAM's Historic Archives could protect them and make them available for researchers to use.

The IISUE has announced the establishment of the Pablo Latapí Sarre Educational Research Award, for which a call will soon go out for candidates. The aim of this award is to promote and foster educational research nationwide and to honor Don Pablo's memory and legacy.

To further honor his work, we must work rigorously to continue opening up fields of inquiry and action in education, seeking equity and justice in solidarity with the dispossessed majorities, taking on ethical responsibilities in the transformation of education and society. That is what Pablo Latapí Sarre did. VM

Notes

[1] In 1971, it was originally called *Revista del Centro de Estudios Educativos* (Journal of the Center for Educational Studies).

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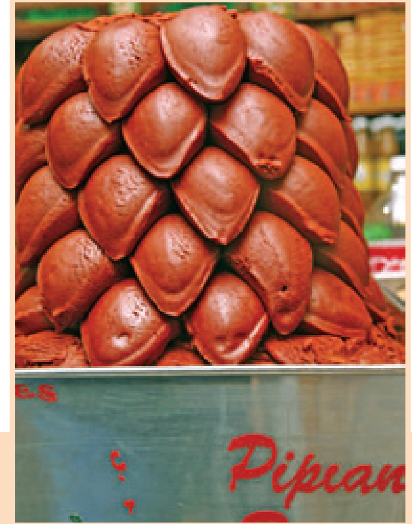
Mole Sauce Flavor and Livelihood Of Atocpan

Isabel Morales Quezada*

Chocolate tablets.

Ancho chili peppers.



Pipián paste.

> **Besides being the stuff of legend, what the stories about its origin reveal is the experimental nature of *mole* sauce. Each region of the country created a different kind.**

After visiting Atocpan, it is easy to imagine how a little town can be the main supplier of one of Mexico's most emblematic traditional dishes. The town name comes from the Nahuatl word *atocli*, meaning "on fertile earth," referring to the bountiful land that allowed the indigenous peoples to grow basic food crops like corn, lima beans and beans. Today, though, the main local occupation is not working the land, but making and selling the *mole* powder and paste used to make *mole* sauce.

San Pedro Atocpan belongs to Mexico City's Milpa Alta borough, and its full name reminds us of both its pre-Hispanic and colonial past. Its first inhabitants called it Atocpan, but when the Spaniards arrived, one of their most effective methods for colonizing was spreading the Christian Gospel. So, it was the Franciscan friars who added a Christian name to the town, turning it into San Pedro Atocpan.

When you arrive, the first thing you see is the large number of businesses selling different kinds of *mole* in both powder and paste form and the ingredients for making it. The pervasive smells come mainly from the chili peppers for sale, kept in large baskets. Going into any of the stores, you are immediately struck by the aroma, colors and textures of all the ingredients. Mixed together, they become one of Mexican cuisines oldest dishes. The best way to describe *mole* sauce is as a fusion of flavors.

But, we cannot leave out the historic events that made this dish possible: the mixture of its ingredients could well be a metaphor for the mixture of the Spanish and indigenous cultures. *Mulli* was the Nahuatl name the indigenous people used in pre-Hispanic times for the sauce they made with different kinds of chili peppers and ingredients like peanuts, chocolate and tortillas, and served over rabbit, hen, turkey or fish.

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* Staff writer.
Photos by Daniel Munguía.

Legends tell of the way the *mole* changed over the years. Many attribute its origin to the colonial city of Puebla's convent kitchens, famous for the appetizing dishes they prepared to tempt the palates of the viceroys. The nuns were not alone in the kitchens; they learned from the indigenous women to make this sauce of pre-Hispanic origin, and it is thought that they added different ingredients to the dish to make it less spicy.

Besides being the stuff of legend, what these stories reveal is the experimental nature of *mole* sauce. Each region of the country created a different kind, with certain common ingredients, but each place has added others that change the flavor. The sauce was further transformed by the arrival of products from Europe and Asia like anise, cloves, cinnamon, coriander and sesame seeds.

Today, *mole* can be found almost anywhere nationwide, though the states of Puebla and Oaxaca, and, of course, San Pedro Atocpan, are particularly outstanding producers. The interesting thing about San Pedro Atocpan is that it is precisely a tiny town that has grown and progressed economically because of its *mole* production.

San Pedro Atocpan
is a tiny town that has grown
and progressed economically
because of its *mole* production.
Mole Sauce with almonds has
become its specialty.

The History of *Mole* in Atocpan

The tradition began in the mid-twentieth century when some of the families who specialized in making *mole* sauce decided to sell it in Mexico City markets. The quality of their product made it a success and, like elsewhere, more families decided to start making it. Little by little, production increased and diversified until it became the town's

Sanctuary of Our Lord of Mercies Church.

main economic activity. In May 1977, Rodolfo Borja took the initiative to organize a *Mole* Fair to promote what had become the town specialty: *mole* sauce with almonds.

Since then, the fair has been held every year in October. Atocpan producers and local restaurants all participate; exhibits of different varieties of the dish are mounted; and stands are set up where visitors can taste all the different kinds.

The fair shows that the main source of jobs in Atocpan is *mole*, which means that many town activities are organized around it. The stores that sell all kinds of chili peppers also offer the different kinds of *mole* that exist nationwide: red, black, green and yellow. In most of the shops, you can practically touch the dried *mole* powder in the air because it is all open to the public. But in Juan Caballero's shop, each kind is kept in a glass case to keep it from scattering throughout the store, as the owner proudly explains.

Asked about *mole* with almonds, Caballero just says that it is made with three kinds of chili peppers: *mulato*, *pasilla* and *ancho*, also all on display in his store, each with its own sign to avoid confusion. *Mole* has been generous to him, he says: despite the fact that in his youth he was a boxer and never thought he would specialize in it, today, now that he is retired, he owns a tidy store that offers him a living.

Besides the shops, around the plaza and its kiosk, Actopan has places to eat *mole* dishes, including, of course, *mole* with almonds. One noteworthy restaurant is Las cazuelas de Actopan, whose name refers to the clay pots the dish is traditionally made in, which, of course, can also be bought in the town at a street stand across from the plaza. They come in all sizes.

Las cazuelas de Atocpan restaurant is the best example of progress: it is one of the oldest in the town and has evolved to the point of having what looks like a mini-supermarket downstairs where a great variety of Don Pancho-brand *mole* sauces are sold in buckets of up to 10 and

The stores that sell all kinds of chili peppers also offer the different kinds of mole: red, black, green and yellow. You can practically touch the dried mole powder in the air because it is all open to the public.

20 kilograms. And not just that: in the back of the restaurant and store are the mills where the powder to make *mole* sauce is ground in large amounts Monday through Saturday. The company is a cooperative started 25 years ago by only 20 partners, who have now grown to 100, making it one of the most productive firms in San Pedro Atocpan.

Different kinds of *mole* are prepared here, but the most typical is *mole* sauce with almonds served over turkey, as pointed out by restaurant supervisor Agustín Retana, knowledgeable about *mole* and his town's customs. He talks about the ingredients that make the "special almond" *moles* distinct, like banana; or the green *mole*, made with squash seeds; or the chocolate, characteristic of the red *mole*; or the "sweet *mole*" which includes even more chocolate. Agustín even mentions the effort being made today to produce a special *mole* for diabetics, and says that there is already a special mixture for foreign visitors who are not used to highly seasoned, spicy foods.

Efforts are being made today to produce a special *mole* for diabetics, and there is already a special mixture for foreign visitors who are not used to highly seasoned, spicy foods.

The *mole* at Las cazuelas de Atocpan is not only served over meat and rice, but can also be garnished with bean tamales, served around a little pot of sauce. Although this way of arranging the dish seems a little unusual, it was not created by the restaurant, but is a popular tradition in every home in town.

Finally, visiting this restaurant shows how *mole* production has evolved over time. In the past, all the ingredients had to be ground by hand on a stone mortar or mealing stone, making a recipe already complicated by the number of its ingredients even more laborious. Today, producers have modern grinders to facilitate production and make it possible for Atocpan *mole* to be sent all over the country and even abroad, where it is not known as *mole*, but as a generic "salsa," which detracts from its sophistication.

The *Mole* Fair, which takes place around October every year, is a good opportunity to learn more about this dish and Atocpan itself, which though it is near the city, retains its country air thanks to its beautiful surroundings. A lovely panoramic view can be seen from the Sanctuary of Our Lord of Mercies Church, at the highest point in the town, a modern building finished in 1977, accessed by a long stairway. Lower down, in contrast with the modern church, next to a little garden is the Yencuitlalpan Chapel, one of the first Franciscan buildings dating from approximately 1560.

There is no doubt that San Pedro Atocpan is a traditional town, dedicated to preserving the most Mexican of the country's mestizo culinary traditions even though it is also part of one of the world's most chaotic urban sprawls. But its determination to take the tradition even further is also surprising, showing that its evolution as a dish has no limits. Atocpan is well worth a visit to discover why *mole* became the main livelihood of an entire town. **VM**

Amaranth From the Sacred to The Everyday

Isabel Morales Quezada*
Raquel del Castillo*

Mexican Salad with Amaranth Seeds

Ingredients
1 pear
1 lettuce, washed and disinfected
150 grams amaranth seeds
30 grams hibiscus flowers
1 jícama
goat cheese to taste
balsamic vinegar
olive oil
honey

To prepare:
Cut the pear and the jícama into wedges.
Boil the hibiscus flowers for 10 minutes and then sauté.
Cut the goat cheese into very thin slices using a string.

In the salad bowl, mix the lettuce with a little olive oil, the balsamic vinegar and the honey; add the goat cheese, the hibiscus flowers and the amaranth seeds.

This is a contemporary recipe that is part of what is currently known as "Mexican haute cuisine" because of its mixture of pre-Hispanic ingredients like amaranth seeds, and those from other places: hibiscus flowers from Asia, goat cheese from France and olive oil and honey from old Spain.

Amaranth seeds can be very versatile in cooking because their neutral taste allows them to be used in both sweet and savory dishes. Ground, toasted or baked, they are always nutritious and a good reason to follow tradition from breakfast to supper.

Tulyehualco, located in the borough of Xochimilco, is part of Mexico City's great urban sprawl. But there is still a whiff of the pre-Hispanic in its traditions, particularly the one involving a plant that has breathed life into this little town for more than 600 years: amaranth. The most surprising thing is to discover that, for Tulyehualco residents, amaranth is just as important a food as corn is for Mexicans as a whole, and, like corn, it is used to make a wide variety of dishes.

Street stalls selling an infinite variety of sweets made with amaranth abound here. To those of us who grew up in Mexico City, they are very familiar, because they have always been sold on the street, in subway stations, and even in department stores. But here, we can also discover the history and origins of amaranth dating back to pre-Hispanic times.

The people of this little southern town are descendents of the Xochimilca tribes who lived around the lakes, surrounded by flowers and vast reaches of vegetation in pre-classical times. Their deities Amitl and Atlahusa went with them on their journeys through the *chinampa* floating fields, while the goddess Chantico helped them make their lands more fertile, guided jewelers in the art of goldsmithery and artisans in making "the Lord's" volcanic stone slabs.

Like with all the pre-Hispanic cultures, their cosmic vision was linked to agricultural cycles. In this view, the cultivation of amaranth was fundamental: its seed was associated with the sacred. The *huauhtli* (amaranth seed in Náhuatl), an important part of their religious celebrations, was used in offerings and was one of the main ingredients, together with red prickly-pear juice, for making the large figures that represented some of their gods and were consumed as part of the ritual.

Amaranth fields.

The sacred character of the *huauhtli* was precisely the reason it almost disappeared. When the Spanish came to spread the Catholic Gospel, indigenous rites were banned, condemned as pagan acts. Since amaranth was a central part of them, the Spaniards lost no time in banning its use also, and its consumption decreased

* Staff writers.
Photos by Raquel del Castillo.

When the Spanish came to spread the Catholic Gospel, indigenous rites were banned, condemned as pagan acts. Since amaranth was central to them, they lost no time in banning its use.

notably among the population. However, the non-religious uses of the amaranth seeds and their nutritional value allowed it to survive until today.

As part of the daily diet of pre-Hispanic times, amaranth was used in making *atole* drinks, tortillas and tamales. Later, indigenous peoples experimented with it and created other dishes. This culinary mix also had a happy result: the *alegría*, or "joy," one of Mexico's most popular sweets even today. It is said to be the creation of Friar Martín de Valencia, the first to mix toasted amaranth seeds with honey. It was given the name *alegría* because of the joy it gave anyone who ate it.

Even though today most Mexicans associate amaranth with *alegrías*, for Tulyehualco residents, its special value continues to be its past, the fact that its use in the sacred rites and daily life of their ancestors has turned it into a historic food to be celebrated. It is sacred in the collective imaginary not only because it reminds them of their indigenous roots, but also because a great deal of the value they place on the seed is anchored in its preservation down through history.

Just talking to any of the amaranth-product vendors shows how important its role has been in the town's traditions. María del Carmen Mendoza, the owner of a small sweets stall where she sells *alegrías, pepitorias* and amaranth cookies, says that making *alegrías* is a family tradition; she even seems to remember —or perhaps she dreamed it— her great-grandmother making amaranth candies. Her life story also reveals the importance of amaranth as a source of work and survival. She learned how to make *alegrías* as a child, and by the time she was 15, she was selling her sweets outside the church. Today, she speaks nostalgically and proudly about her children, who have gone to university and no longer earn a living making amaranth products.

Amaranth cookies.

One of Tulyehualco's most important festivities, when local residents have the chance to sell their wares, is the Amaranth and Olive Tree Fair held every year in October. José Luis Velázquez, who makes mainly amaranth cookies and has served as president of the fair, explains that it was first held almost 40 years ago so merchants could sell their products in the town itself, since at that time, they were sold in the surrounding areas, particularly in Mexico City.

Velázquez talks about the new dishes made with amaranth, their success at the fairs, particularly in pastry-making, and reminds us a little about the seed and its indigenous roots. He remarks that the Spaniards thought that the red prickly-pear juice mixed with the amaranth seed was blood, which is what alarmed them and led them to ban its consumption. He tells us how delighted the indigenous were when they found that the seed popped when thrown into the fire. He also underlines the importance of caring for the land their ancestors left them since it is the source of life, and of the Teuhtli volcano overlooking the town, where he works as a forest ranger guarding the natural areas and fields of amaranth.

In Tulyehualco's traditional landscape, the urban and nature coalesce. A few of the houses still have the stone mills from the viceregal period when olives were ground there, another important activity for the townspeople. In addition, in the downtown area, the Santiago the Apostle Parish Church retains valuable examples of sacred art from the viceregal period. Although

part of this treasure has been looted, both this church and the new one still have figures carved in wood and ornamented with natural hair and teeth, wine glasses, candelabra and two more than three-meter-high carved wooden planks painted with gold covered with oil paintings of Biblical scenes.

Tulyehualco's completely urbanized streets contrast with its traditional landscape, but some of the streets lead to the highest part of the town where you will find the fields of amaranth and the olive trees. Also an important resource for the town, olive oil is sold in the street stalls next to the *alegrías* and amaranth cookies.

It is said that the *alegria*'s creator, Friar Martín de Valencia was the same person who taught the indigenous to cultivate olive trees in 1531, since the land here is very similar to Spain's Andalucía province, thus favoring excellent production of olives and olive oil.

It is an extraordinary experience to see amaranth fields so close to Mexico City and to see the plant itself, since very few people have ever seen it or the place it comes from. The leaves are a beautiful iridescent color, and the panicle, much like a corn cob, can be as big as 50 cm to a meter long; the panicle can be crimson, white or yellow and is formed by ears on which the flowers that hold the amaranth seeds grow. It is said that the nutrients that the Teuhtli Volcano spewed out when it erupted favored the cultivation of amaranth.

The natural scenery on the skirts of the Teuhtli is a constant reminder of the traditions rooted in this land, and Tulyehualco residents know how important it is to care for it and preserve it because they live off its fruits. Amaranth is many things at the same time: a historical legacy, a nutritious food, a plant whose medicinal uses are recognized today, and, above all, a form of expression and the economic sustenance of an entire town. Honey and chocolate *alegrías*, cookies, cakes, hors d'oeuvres, soft drinks and even amaranth *pulque* are some of the delights sold here, born of a single ingredient. And everything seems to indicate that it will continue evolving thanks to the creativity of those who cultivate and appreciate it. VM

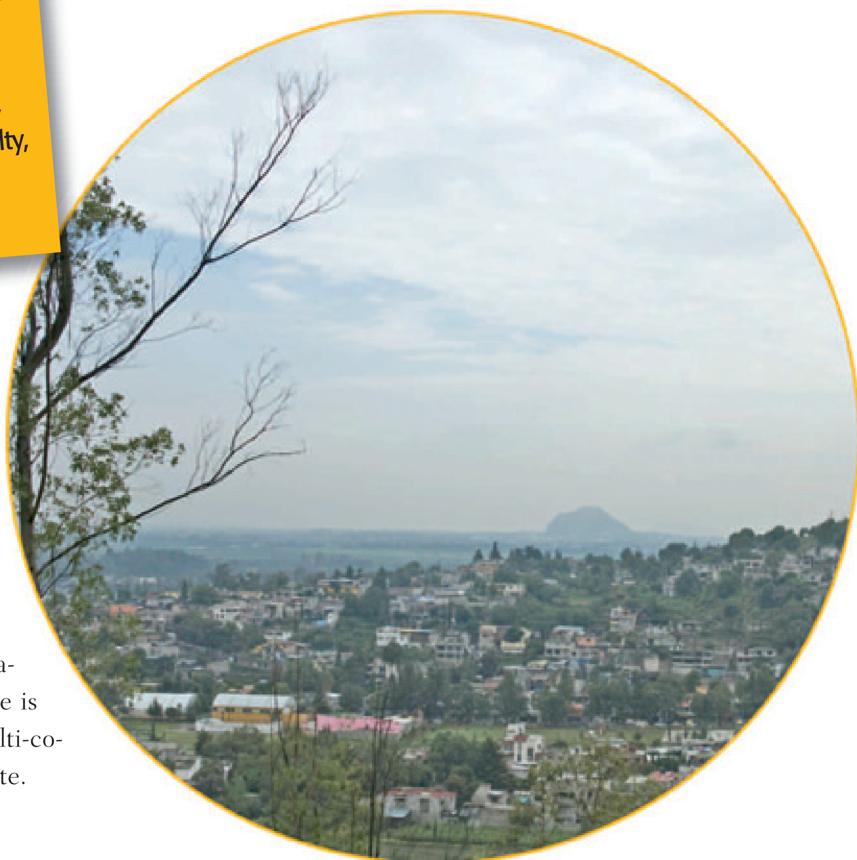
It is an extraordinary experience to see amaranth fields so close to Mexico City and even to see the plant itself, since very few people have ever seen it.

The Santiago the Apostle Parish Church.

Santa Cruz Acalpixca's *Sweet Tradition*

Raquel del Castillo*

Santa Cruz Acalpixca is known for a very special craft: making candied fruit. A large number of residents, organized by family and specialty, make their livings this way.

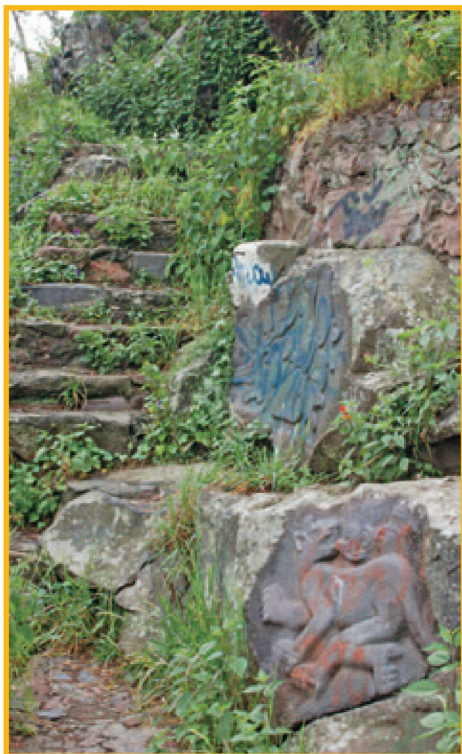


Xochimilco is a town with character and pride in itself. This lake region was populated in pre-Hispanic times by warriors from mythical Aztlán, amidst plentiful water, good fishing and generous harvests. Here, towns were founded that exist to this day, complete with their indigenous traditions and customs. One of these is Acalpixca, known today for its multi-colored sweets, a delight to the palate.

Origins

Seven tribes of Nahuatlacas ("people who speak clearly" in Náhuatl) left Aztlán on a pilgrimage to the Anáhuac Valley. The ones known as Xochimilcas were the first to leave, in the "year of the Lord 820" (the tenth century A.D.), and settled on the Cuahilama Hill in the old Xochimilco Lake area. They built their ceremonial center atop the hill, from where they could survey the movement of canoes, fend off attacks and care for their crops. Figures carved in stone representing their gods in the form of animals and other symbols remain there, tracing the path to the top called the Great Boulevard. The ceremonial esplanade still shows vestiges of the Nahuatl conception of the universe: stones carved with the glyph of Nahui Ollin, who represented the so-called fifth sun,[1] and an *ocelotl* (jaguar) playing with flowers and butterflies.

By A.D.902, the Xochimilcas were settled around the lake. Their *chinampas*, or floating fields, were protected by the goddesses Amitl and Atlhua. Considered leaders, they continued to expand until the thirteenth century, when they were taken over by the people of Culhuacán and later by the Mexicas in 1378 during the reign of Acamapichtli, the lord of Tenochtitlan.



Figures carved in stone representing their gods remain.

* Staff writer.
Photos by Raquel del Castillo.

Candying food is a process more than 100 years old. What the imagination is capable of seems incredible. The artisans have the freedom to create different products depending on the season and their fancy.

By 1428, Acalpixca was one more town paying tribute to the great Tenochtitlan, and its territory was considerably reduced. These were the times of Tlacaelel, the prince who served as a powerful counselor to several Mexica rulers. This was when it was ordered that a boulevard be built to unite Xochimilco and Tenochtitlan, as well as an aqueduct. The subjects also had to provide construction materials (stone) for the Mexica temples and warriors for the military incursions into other regions. When the conquistadors arrived, they defeated the Xochimilcas, who, despite their resistance, suffered the same fate as the great Tenochtitlan.

That was when the town took the name of Santa Cruz Acalpixca, and in 1535, the townspeople began construction of the first Catholic church under the direction of Franciscan missionaries. Completed in 1559, it has a single nave with a tower and four bells. The floor is noteworthy, covered in tiles from Puebla, as is a monastery annex dating from 1770. A market is still held on the esplanade where local producers sell what they grow on their plots, plus plants and prepared

food, a tradition that has not been lost since indigenous times. Despite pillage down through the centuries, the Santa Cruz Acalpixca Church still preserves beautiful, unique examples of eighteenth-century sacred art. Among the pieces are wooden carvings depicting the *Sacred Burial*, an *Ecce Homo*, *Christ as the King of Mockery* (a bloodied Christ with natural teeth and hair) and a *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. There is also art from later centuries, like the nineteenth-century neo-Gothic bronze candelabras and an oil of Our Lady of Guadalupe dated 1919 and signed by Cipriano Flores Benavidez.

In the late nineteenth century, during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, Acalpixca was Mexico City's source of water. To get it there, an aqueduct was built from Xochimilco to the Condesa Station, and from there to the Dolores tanks to supply the city's downtown with clean water. Some of the pillars that were part of this structure are still standing.

Besides general destruction, the Mexican Revolution brought with it the pillage of churches and private homes, in this area carried out by the Zapatista troops. From these raids, a series of myths arose about treasures buried in the adobe walls

and in the *chinampas*. There are still those today who say that if something glimmers in the mud it is because there is a jewel, gold coins or some other precious object hidden by its owners for safekeeping.

Sweet Forms of Expression

Today, the town is known for a very special craft: making candied fruit. A large number of residents, organized by family and craft, make their livings this way. It is said that the practice dates to the viceregal period when the Spanish introduced French pastry-making techniques. Using sugar cane, they began to experiment in pasty shops, candy shops and cloisters to make fruit into a dessert and find ways of preserving it longer.

First, you have to immerse the fruit or vegetable in slaked or pickling lime to harden it. Then, it is cooked in syrup in large copper pots at different temperatures. The whole process takes from three to seven days.

The craft has been handed down from generation to generation in Santa Cruz Acalpixca, creating a communal activity that has forged unity among local inhabitants and given them a seal of identity. The candy workshops are usually in their homes because it is a family business, even when some of the family members have to hold down other jobs to supplement their income.

Candying food is a process more than 100 years old. First, you have to immerse the fruit or vegetable in slaked or pickling lime (calcium hydroxide) to harden it so it retains its shape. Then, it is cooked in large copper pots at different temperatures in syrup made of water and sugar. The whole process takes from three to seven days. What the imagination is capable of seems incredible. The artisans have the freedom to create different products depending on the season and their fancy. Fruit like sliced cantaloupe, *guanábana* and guava and vegetables like nopal cactus leaves, tomatoes and carrots are just a few of the products that take on new shapes and flavors in this process.

The town also produces coconut candy (grated coconut mixed with sugar), caramel candies, wafers festooned with squash seeds and honey and tamarind paste. Many people come from Mexico City and the State of Mexico with big hand-woven baskets to buy these sweets and re-sell them in the markets and streets of their hometowns. One of Santa Cruz Acalpixca's most impor-

tant workshops is La Hija de la Morena ("the brunette's daughter"). Owners Juana Alarcón and Luis Cortés even have apprentices from other families because their aim is to preserve the town's tradition. The candy is sold right there and in popular markets like La Merced in downtown Mexico City. In September and December, during the Independence Day and Christmas holidays, they take over Mexico City sidewalks, flooding them with their colors.

During the Independence Day and Christmas holidays, candy sellers take over Mexico City sidewalks, flooding them with their colors.

In addition to the candies, Acalpixca has its own local cuisine. One dish is called *cuatatapa*, and includes broken beans, pungent *epazote* herbs, nopal cactus leaves and *xoconostle* prickly pears; another is *tlapique*, a fish tamale; *auatle*, known as Mexican caviar; and *michimole*, a fish stew. One of the most popular beverages is *chileatole*, made with grains of corn and squash flowers.

Your visit to the town is not over after tasting its famous gastronomical fare. Another must is the visit to the Lázaro Cárdenas Plaza, with its large market where locals come to sell what they have grown themselves. Another curiosity for the visitor —although for residents, it is commonplace— is the community laundry, where you can see the women of the town scrubbing their clothes, which they then load on a burro to carry home. A museum housed in the old pumping station from the Porfirian age and restored in 1985 holds 11,405 local archaeological finds, though not all are on display. The curious collection includes petroglyphs representing flowers and butterflies together with alligators and jaguars, jewelry, musical instruments, grinding stones, vestiges of vanilla beans, bones, ceramics and a ball game ring.

Acalpixca's rustic atmosphere is one of those treasures still preserved in the enormous metropolis of Mexico City, to the benefit of capital residents, who do not have to go far to discover it. VM

Notes

[1] The Legend of the Fifth Sun is a Mesoamerican myth about the creation of the world, the universe and humanity. It says that the Earth has gone through five different stages since its creation, each stage ruled by a sun. Nahui Ollin is the fifth sun; the first four correspond to the four points of the compass and the fifth sun is in the middle, a fifth point, and is attributed to Huehuetéotl, the old god of fire, because the fire on the hearth is at the center of the house. The fifth sun ruled during the time of the Mexicas.

The Interactive Economics Museum (mide)

Juan Amael Vizzuett Olvera*

The building was born of a religious order's vocation for hospitality; it prospered during the opulent years of New Spain's capital and began its decline when the world that gave birth to it disappeared. Later, the city center's hard-working citizens adapted it to turn it into dwellings, spawning links to the community and housing thousands of life experiences. Today, back to its former splendor, the five-times-award-winning Museo Interactivo de Economía (Interactive Economics Museum, or MIDE) combines historical memories with cutting-edge technology in its permanent vocation to put play and education together.

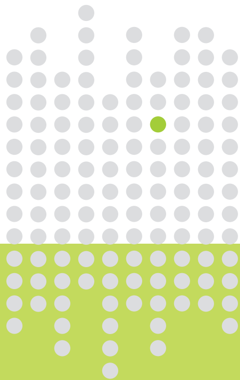
Precursors of Medical Care

Like colonial aqueducts, this building made of red *tezontle* stone and light-colored granite links us to the Latin world, the empire of the Caesars. Arranged around square patios, its corridors ornamented with semi-circular arches create intimate open-air gardens, protected from the voices of

* Columnist at the *El Sol de México* newspaper and news editor of *Boxer Motors* magazine.

Photos courtesy of the Interactive Economics Museum.

The award-winning Interactive Economics Museum combines historical memories with cutting-edge technology to put play and education together.



the world and the gaze of outsiders. An ancient inhabitant of Pompey would recognize here the same world that Vesuvius buried two millennia ago.

"The order of the Bethlehemites took their name from Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ. Their crest bears the star announcing the nativity and the three crowns of the kings of the Orient," the affable young hosts tell visitors. They talk about the Blessed Pedro of San José Betancur, who founded the order in 1687 in Guatemala, with its mission of helping the poor, children and the sick, not only to cure them, but also during their convalescence. The order thus became the precursor of modern medical care.

The Bethlehemites arrived in New Spain in 1674. In 1694, they built their monastery, one of the largest buildings in Mexico. In 1786, the friars commissioned an innovative architect from Granada, Lorenzo Rodríguez, with enlarging the structure. Rodríguez, also responsible for the magnificent tabernacle adjacent to Mexico City's Metropolitan Cathedral, designed the patio of the novices with the classical lay-out inherited from Rome and Mudéjar art, with their cells flanking the patio. His original touch adorned the *tezontle* rock walls with a noteworthy geometric pattern that remained hidden for generations.

Rewards for a Rescue

If the viceregal Bethlehemites could see their main patio now, they would have no trouble recognizing the arches, the ornamented *tezontle* and the restored frescoes. But only two decades ago, nothing would have seemed familiar.

The museum has a photographic record of its own restoration so that all its visitors can remember it, too, both from what the hosts tell them and from the spectacular audiovisual projected on the

The museographers conceived of the museum as a series of playful, surprising spaces to give visitors a different experience every step of the way.

main archways: after the suppression of the Bethlehemite order in the nineteenth century, the building operated as a military headquarters and a school of medicine, until part of it was turned into tenement apartments and the other part into a hotel.

The adaptations required that the arches be bricked up; the *tezontle* and the granite were hidden behind layers of plaster and paint. The same fate awaited the frescoes. Guests, visitors and residents could see nothing of the ancient splendor. The building continued to deteriorate during the twentieth century, even when in 1950 it was declared a historical monument. Fortunately, action was taken in time to save this undeniably priceless legacy. In 1989, the Banco de México (Mexico's central bank) purchased it and began one of the longest, most complex restoration jobs in recent history. It was also one of the most fruitful: Xiuhtecuhtli, the god of fire, was found during the excavations.

The God of Fire

The central patio has a huge mechanical awning covering it for the projection of a documentary about the palace's history. Many screens drop from between the arches and the entire patio becomes the narrator of urban memories. The god of fire, whose effigy was found here, reminisces about the glory years of the great Tenochtitlán, a city that Bernal Díaz del Castillo said, "looked like those enchanted things the book of Amadis of Gaul talks about." Older residents reminisce about when this was a huge block of tenement apartments and the kids played in the patio, safe from the traffic that was increasingly heavy on Tacuba and Bolívar Streets. Then finally, the narration of the restoration starts.

This project took about 15 years of meticulous work by many specialists in different disciplines like architecture, engineering, history, archaeology and restoration. The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) rigorously supervised the entire process from start to finish.

Interactive Economics for Everyone

The museographers in charge of the MIDE project conceived of the new building as a series of playful, surprising spaces so that visitors would have a different experience every step of the way, keeping their interest and curiosity alive.

The activities are so much fun that by the end of the visit, everybody gets a clear idea of what economists' terms mean.

Interactive museums have always been very well received by the Mexican public ever since the Federal Electricity Commission Technological Museum opened in the early 1970s in the second section of Chapultepec Forest Park. Because of its location on Tacuba and Bolivar Streets, the MIDE was destined not only to offer information accessibly to visitors but also to contribute to the restoration of the Historic Center of Mexico City.

The fact that the specialists were right is proven by the interest and attention that visitors of all ages show —but particularly children and young people— as they operate the systems and closely follow the explanations given, which are always pithy, but also brief and easy to understand.

Through a system of audiovisual recordings, new arrivals can see what economic concerns other visitors have, as well as express their own views. The procedure is to answer a relaxed but significant survey about economic concerns. The activities are so much fun that by the end of the visit, even non-specialists gets a clear idea of what terms economists use mean: inflation, movement of prices, monetary policy, fiscal policy, scarcity, the production process and commercial transactions are just a few of the expressions the public assimilates by watching cartoons and videos and playing with machines and games.

In the section about financial institutions (the stock market, banks, insurance companies), visitors themselves select the topics on a large moveable screen. The real directors of these institutions come up on the screen to explain their day-to-day activities in a friendly, accessible way. One clip demonstrates the process of production of goods, while an animated segment —on two levels of difficulty: one for adults and another for teens— poses a series of decisions to participants, each of which will have consequences for their free time, resources and future.

The colonial decoration, the historic coining machine used for generations and the museum shop are other attractions.

One of the most exciting areas is the one dedicated to families from all over the world who experience daily the consequences of their respective nations' levels of development. Together with the economic data (literacy rates, access to potable water and health services, etc.), large-scale portraits of these families show them next to their traditional food. In the case of Mexico, the abundance of bottled soft drinks is very noticeable. All the information can be stored on visitors' tickets and downloaded and printed or sent to any e-mail address.

A Little Time Tunnel

You can't leave without evoking the days when the original store fronts housed several of the old capital's best-known establishments, like the El Águila gentlemen's store, and the Vergara Photographic Studio. Anyone who goes through the threshold of the El Águila feels like they're entering a time tunnel: on the walls are huge advertisements that used to appear in the press, testifying to how prestigious the establishment was.

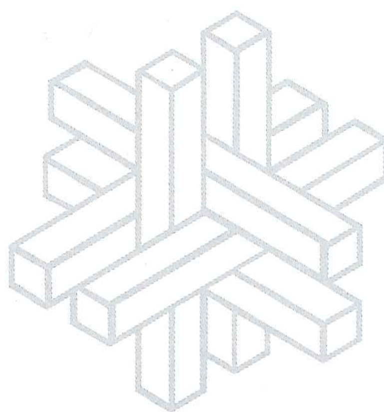
On the counter, the monumental cash register reigns supreme. Behind glass doors, bow ties and silk handkerchiefs for jacket pockets can be seen in perfect order; shirt collars, which for generations were sold separately; collarbands or yokes that kept the knot of the tie perfect and in place, plus giving a gentleman's dress the final touch; goatskin or woolen gloves; white shirts, cufflinks, scarves and other accessories that defined the dandy.

A roll-top desk from the time of Porfirio Díaz holds a typewriter typical of the golden 1920s: it has straight lines like a Model T, a black matte finish that make its nickel pieces (like the rings around the keys) shine in the face of an admiring little girl who cannot believe that once, such artifacts reigned supreme in all the offices on Earth. When she saw the wall telephone with the silk cable, the same little visitor asked how you could dial a number without a keypad. You get the vivid sensation that at any moment a linen-clad customer wearing a straw boater hat is going to walk in the door.

Next door, over the Vergara Studios' wallpaper are the faces of Mexicans of yesteryear, people who considered getting their portrait taken a ceremony that you had to go to in your best dress because, after all, that's how they were going to look forever in their family albums.

The visit shows us why the Interactive Economics Museum has won several awards in the short time since it opened to the public in 2006: the Miguel Covarrubias Prize for the best project of its kind, given by the INAH; the Gold Museum Award 2007, given by the American Association of Museums with a special mention for the Market Simulator; the Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award, from the Association of Science-Technology Centers; the ID Icons of Design award; and the prize from the International Council of Museums for interactive station development. VM

Museo Interactivo de Economía
Tacuba 17, Centro Histórico, Distrito Federal
Open Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
www.mide.org.mx Phone: (52) (55) 5130-4600
General admission: Mex$55; teachers and students with valid ID: Mex$45



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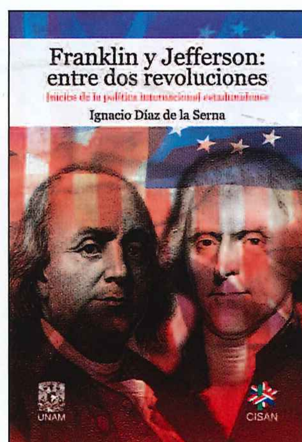
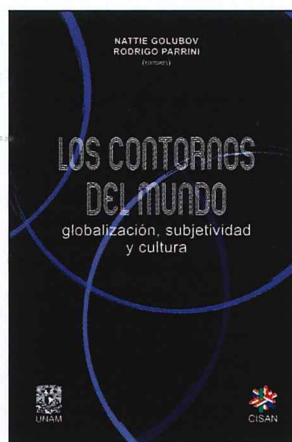
Franklin y Jefferson: entre dos revoluciones. Inicios de la política internacional estadunidense

Ignacio Díaz de la Serna

Until the early nineteenth century, the United States performed an astute balancing act between its own interests and those of France and its former colonial master, Great Britain. This book analyzes the conditions in which it carried out that policy based on the diplomatic achievements of its two main architects, Franklin and Jefferson.





Los contornos del mundo, globalización, subjetividad y cultura

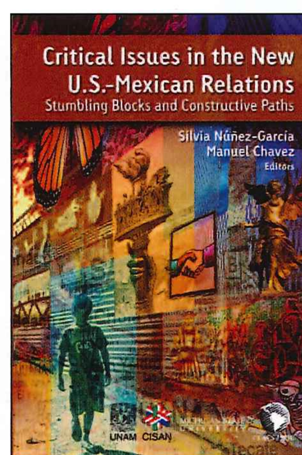
Nattie Golubov y Rodrigo Parrini, editors

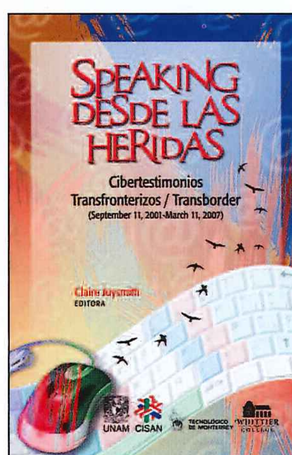
Traders and narcissists, intersexed people and Newyoricans, the dead and the "living," migrants, consumers, borders that move, entrepreneurs of their own lives, Zapatistas and social-justice-fighter cybernauts: these are all actors in this book. Its aim is to respond to a substantive question: what are the relationships among the process of globalization, subjectivity and culture? The result is complex, contradictory and surprising.

Critical Issues in the New U.S.-Mexico Relations Stumbling Blocks and Constructive Paths

Silvia Núñez-García and Manuel Chávez editors

This work's multidisciplinary approach provides a broad spectrum of analysis: it not only deals with issues that have caused frequent tension on the bilateral agenda such as migration and the economic impact of maquiladora plants, but also other, more recent topics. Among these are national security, the adjustments the international situation demands of both countries' foreign policy and the role of the mass media. It also covers contemporary issues like the emergence of new transnational actors and the regulation of genetically modified organisms.





***Speaking desde las heridas** Cibertestimonios Transfronterizos / Transborder September 11, 2001-March 11, 2007*

Claire Joysmith, editor

After the 9/11 attacks came turmoil and desolation, and later, reflection. This book takes a critical, creative, razor-sharp, profound look at the results of the latter. It offers the reader reflections and retrospectives distilled over a period of five to six years, using the very malleable, unpredictable discursive method of testimonies.

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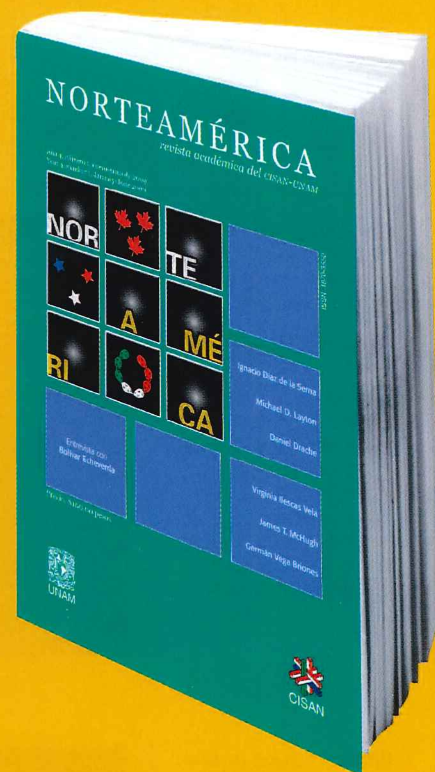

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Eduardo Lizalde
Sketch-Artist's Rendition of the Poet (With Poetry's Wild Beasts)

Carlos Pineda*

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To Hilda Rivera,
with the admiration that respect demands.

It is better to present one image in a lifetime than to produce Voluminous works.
Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect" (1918)[2]

The Poet and His Circumstance

The genesis of a poet, just like that of any poem, is more often than not something that only the demiurges of myth know for certain. So, there have been poets for whom, like Rimbaud, adolescence marked the end, not the beginning, of poetic exploration. Others, like the one we celebrate here, had to wait until the fourth decade of life to see his voice, his true poetic voice, express itself fully from the intimate margins of writing.[3]

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Very early on, however, around 1948, Mexican poet Eduardo Lizalde did involve himself in ground-breaking poetic experimentalism when he founded, together with Enrique González Rojo and Marco Antonio Montes de Oca, the movement they dubbed "poeticism." Disenchantment soon followed, and he hurriedly distanced himself, to the point of later disowning the work published under that name.[4]

However, despite the glum opinions of the poeticist movement's former members, and at the risk of its being considered a kind of ghost inhabiting the limbo of Mexican poetry, it is worth including in the history of our literature. As writer Evodio Escalante said, "It attempted to renovate the procedures of poetic creation from their very foundations, establishing complicated rational schema that would be useful to create enormously original images and metaphors."[5] But, as was the case of most avant-garde aesthetic programs, these guidelines rarely went beyond being a well-intentioned recipe. That is why the majority of its poetic "products" were of a rather modest quality, asphyxiated by the dogmatic application of artificial parameters that sought to have total control of the poetic event, a little in the manner that ultra-orthodox serialism attempted to do with musical composition in the mid-1900s.

Once the poeticist stage was over —"a deadly trap for more than one book and less than one poet," as he called it—[6] Lizalde looked to philosophy and its relationship with language and the latter's relationship with the thing named. This ontological concern with unraveling the intimate relationships underlying reality and its linguistic abstraction matured poetically in what Lizalde considered his first "legitimate" work: *Cada cosa es Babel* (Each Thing Is Babel) (1966). This utopian and poetic tower with paper foundations would be the quarry from which the foundation stone of Lizalde's poetry would be hewn, since it is in this volume, as Luis Ignacio Helguera so aptly comments,[7] that the poet appropriates the word in such a way that he achieves with "an almost Cartesian clarity and precision…the manufacture of poetic concepts, images and metaphors in which deliberate, pre-directed semantic polyvalence [predominates]."[8]

The year *Cada cosa es Babel* appeared could be merely occasion for celebration, but it is also a year for bewilderment. We should remember that in that same year, Octavio Paz, Alí Chumacero and José Emilio Pacheco achieved one of the publishing paradigms of modern Mexican poetry: the anthology *Poesía en movimiento* (Poetry in Movement). But one of the great absences from its pages was one of the most solid

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voices of current Mexican poetry: I am referring, in effect, to Eduardo Lizalde. One of the reasons for this absence is that by the time the intellectual threesome summed up Mexican poetry, Lizalde had published only a handful of poems inspired in poeticism that did not make it possible to guess the great poetic voice that they foreshadowed.

I mention this only to show how true poetry will get where it belongs despite the fact that the unwritten laws of the literary dictatorship —whether by omission or by treachery— exclude from the canon the voices that from the sidelines demand their place in history. Lizalde is conscious of this, as he is of the relativity of writing and its intrinsic value. This is why he asks the question, "Why ink up the presses of the world with a poem that may have already been expressed —and perhaps better— by other authors?"[9]

As other commentators of Lizalde's work have noted, there is no doubt that Ezra Pound's imagism is a strong presence in the "intellectual" conception of *Cada cosa es Babel*. However, emotionally, Lizalde is completely original. He himself, together with writer Gabriel Zaid, considers this long poem thwarted.[10] Perhaps it is, if we look at it as an organic entity that should maintain a balance among form, rhythm and content. But I'm not sure about it if we read the text not as an attempt at a long poem (in the style of Valéry, Paz or Gorostiza), but more as a group of premises/images that, in the mode of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*,[11] seeks in fragmentation to form a probable melding of meanings rather than a linear "landscape" in which poetical concepts are consistently and logically linked together.

THE TIGER IN THE SCORE OF THE WORD

Having overcome the experimental phase and tested the possibilities of the poem as a receptacle for philosophical and metaphysical ideas, Lizalde recognized his voice in one of the most emblematic animals of literature: the tiger. That is why in his most renowned —among both critics and readers— book of poems, *El tigre en la casa* (The Tiger in the House)

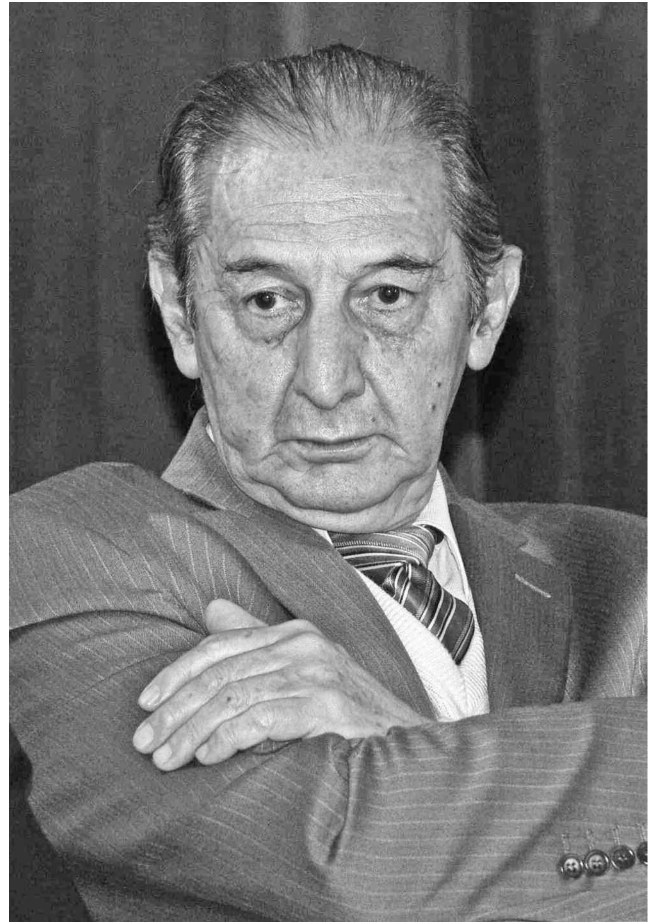
The tiger as emblem, as generative metaphor and poetic subject, also becomes the synthesis of the activity of writing and, perhaps, of that almost godlike moment in which the poetic "idea" is expressed for the first time in some fortunate language.

(1970), he alludes to and interiorizes the cat beyond its mere symbolic value. His tiger is an intimate animal, an *animal* in the purest etymological sense of the word,[12] with which death, dreams and bed are shared. However, it is also the beast that is hunting, that hunts the poetic in daily language, that seeks the musical dimension —and not just the sonorous kind of music— of the word that is verse, versicle, a blank page, that hunts in the home, from the inside, of a being that questions its today and its circumstances.

Like for Neruda and his sea of "seven green tigers," for Eduardo Lizalde, the tiger is/inhabits each poem, while the poetry that in turn inhabits it does involve astuteness, loneliness, mimicry, the hunt for the word against-itself. Thus, the tiger as emblem, as generative metaphor and poetic subject, also becomes the synthesis of the activity of writing and, perhaps, of that almost godlike moment in which the poetic "idea" is expressed for the first time in some fortunate language.

Lizalde's obsession for this cat that he says "smells of blood even through the glass," may not only be a legacy of his readings of William Blake and his penchant for living among the book-loving stripes of the Borgean tiger, but a necessary consequence of his undergraduate studies in philosophy at the UNAM and of music (as a baritone) at the National Conservatory of Music. Is not the zoological *Panthera tigris* a kind of random philosopher? And, what about that stringed instrument it carries on its sides? Regardless, the tiger in the house is also death, our own deaths, death with a name and face that —in the sense of Heidegger— *is* for death.

Thus, Lizalde's most celebrated volume of poems is offered to us beyond the philosophical sphere of *Cada cosa es Babel* (Each Thing Is Babel) as a lyrical continuum, plethoric of broad symbolism of experience which, using the poetic as its starting point, with all due certainty arrives to the sphere of the metaphysical. But Lizalde's tiger, like any emblem, is entirely the power of meaning, an alchemist's meld because it is still impure, and not "poetic science," but the protean occasion for surprise and therefore, for love. Love, yes, but useless and destined to fail. In it, the idealized beloved co-exists



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At the national celebration of his eightieth birthday.

with the unforgettable whore, with the sinful prostitute who fascinates us because she is what we would like to be: spirits free of lust. Then love is only an idea, not something concrete; possibility, not reality; poetic motif and perhaps never truth.

OUT OF THE TIGER'S CAGE/CLOSE TO "THE GREAT CROCODILE" EFRAÍN HUERTA

The extremely strong presence of the tiger in Lizalde's poetry —and perhaps despite it— has distracted readers and more than one critic from the rest of the registers the poet often touches on in his work. One example is the cynical, bitter satirical vein that runs through his books after *El tigre*, in which the poet on occasion becomes a modern Goliard singing the praises of human beings' "basest" impulses. In effect, beginning with *La zorra enferma* (The Sick She-Fox) (1974), *Caza mayor* (Big Hunt) (1979) and, particularly in

Not everything in Lizalde is skepticism and critical disappointment. There is also erotic celebration that, in turn, celebrates the individual, the mystery of *being* and "feeling" that invites us to be aware of the wonder implied in having felt.

Tabernarios y eróticos (Tavern Denizens and Eroticists) (1988), Lizalde seems to become more earthy in the sense that the things he alludes to in his poems are not only enunciated metaphorically or symbolically, like in his first books of poems, but are poetic "objects" that, thanks to poetry, become subjects of the enunciations and "victims" of the poet's mockery. Lizalde is a silent practitioner of acidic, black humor that greatly highlights his proximity to the man who was his mentor and friend, "The Great Crocodile" Efraín Huerta. Just as a sample of this is the following brief poem from *La zorra enferma* (The Sick She-Fox):

Will and Testament

I, François Villon,
Frenchman, poet,
father of all men,
patriarch, god,
thug and pimp and murderer,
the most golden dregs of Paris
and here, under this gallows,
I crumble and die and masturbate
before all
for the glory of Europe.

But Lizalde not only shares his mocking guffaw with Efraín Huerta. He shares his love/hate for Mexico City, which he analyzes and questions in a devastating portrait: "Tercera Tenochtitlan" (The Third Tenochtitlan), a poem in which Humboldt's highfalutin "City of Palaces" is just a "seedy little town that has spread/without Haussman, gracelessly/…the tips of the undersized palaces/pruned from its heaven by a decayed tribe of barracks/flocks, clotheslines of dirty wings/that wave over the roofs of the sky-blue back of the beast." Only three years after Lizalde published this poem, and after the September 1985 earthquakes, finally, the putrid skeleton of its innards seemed to come to the surface and force those of us/them who say we "inhabit it" to really inhabit it, beyond the poetic schism it had been the object of.

But not everything in Lizalde is skepticism and critical disappointment with reality and the vain things that are everything that is this world. There is also erotic celebration that, in turn, celebrates the individual, the mystery *being* and "feeling," that invites us to be aware of the wonder implied in having felt. Or doesn't any work of poetry imply an erotica of the tongue and the senses?

Eduardo Lizalde: intellectual of vast registers; skeptic and lyrical philosopher (in the strict poetic sense of the term), music enthusiast who often lends the language an unheard-of rhythm learned from the best Erik Satie or from the audacities of John Cage lover of silence-that-is-sign; but above all, poet, stubborn, who could have stopped with his first poetic attempts, watching from the anonymity of the Mexican Language Academy, in which, to the solace of the other academy, since May 2007, he has occupied the XIV Chair. We celebrate here and now, with the reading of that (his) poetry, which attempts to transcend the language it is written in, his eighth decade of life. Congratulations, poet! VM

Notes

[1] The author has published, among other works, the two collections of poems: *Imago* (Mexico City: UAM, 1997) and *Escenas en el proscenio* (Scenes on the Proscenium) (Mexico City: UNAM, 2000). He was awarded the Rubén Bonifaz Nuño National Prize for Poetry in 1998, and is currently a professor at the UNAM and the Anáhuac University, South. [Editor's Note.]

[2] *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (1918) (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1954). See the whole essay at http://www.english.illinois.edu/Maps/poets/m_r/pound/retrospect.htm. [Editor's Note.]

[3] *Voices of Mexico* participates here in the national celebration of the eightieth birthday of Mexican poet Eduardo Lizalde (Mexico City, 1929). This year the National Fine Arts Institute has awarded him the Fine Arts Gold Medal, and the San Luis Potosí state government has given him the San Luis Prize for Literary Merit during the Fifth International Festival of Letters held in the state capital. [Editor's Note.]

[4] These works are collected in Eduardo Lizalde, *Autobiografía de un fracaso* (Mexico City: Martín Casillas Editores/INBA, 1981).

[5] Evodio Escalante, *La vanguardia extraviada* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2003).

[6] Lizalde, op. cit., p. 40.

[7] Luis Ignacio Helguera (Mexico City, 1962-2003) was a well known essayist, editor and musical critic. [Editor's Note.]

[8] Luis Ignacio Helguera, *Eduardo Lizalde* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1989), Material de Lectura Collection: Modern Poetry no. 147, p. 5.

[9] "Eduardo Lizalde: la poética imprescindible (Como el Tigre)," interview by Eduardo Milán, "El Semanario," *Novedades*, November 2, 1986, p. 6.

[10] Eduardo Milán, op. cit., p. 2.

[11] Lizalde will return to this philosophical text in his collection of poems *Al margen de un tratado (1981-1985)* (Outside a Treatise [1981-1985]).

[12] The word "animal" is derived from the Latin word "*animalis*," meaning "the living," and from "*animus*," which means "gifted with breath or the breath of life," also known as "*anima*." That is, "animal" would be a being blessed with *anima*, or the breath of life.

Selected Poems

By Eduardo Lizalde

I. Sketch-Artist's Rendition of the Wild Beast

2. The Tiger

There's a tiger in the house
that rips the insides of whoever looks at him to shreds.
And he only has claws for those who spy on him
and he can only injure on the inside,
          and he's enormous:
longer and heavier
than other corpulent cats
and smelly butchers
of his kind,
and he loses his head easily,
he still smells the blood through the glass,
he can sense the fear from the kitchen
despite the sturdiest of doors.

Ordinarily, he grows at night:
he puts his tyrannosaurus head
on the bed
and his maw hangs
over the covers.
His back, then, squeezes into the hallway,
from wall to wall,
and I only reach the bathroom by crawling against the roof,
as though through a tunnel
of mud and honey.
I never look at the solar hive,
the blackened, murderous hornet's nest
that are his eyes,
the furnace of tainted saliva
of his gullet.
I don't even smell him,
so he won't kill me.

(From *El tigre en la casa*, or The Tiger in the House)

IV. Boleros of the Resentful One

9. Simmons, Goodbye

Today, Simmons bed,
today, foal of torture for her,
I bid you farewell, I dream of your breasts
and I warm my cotton thighs
like the beaches of an island
about to be lost.

I enter the sea.
I forget immense nights
in which the flesh wandered alone between the sheets
barely knowing it.

Today bed, oh Simmons,
I touch your springy hips
I kiss your beloved feet,
I swim in your fine beast fur
as though on a flock of sheep,
and I caress the small of a back
that rubbed the sheets smooth,
cooled down with its firefly in my breast
and deplumed its wings on my lizard skin.

(From *El tigre en la casa*, or The Tiger in the House)

In the Manner of a Certain Pound

If I could say all this in a poem,
if I could say it, if I really could,
if say it I could,
if I had the power to say it
What a poem, Lord!
Who's stopping you, boy?
Go on: strip down. Why any more priggishness?
What kind of gummy hypocrite do you want to be?
Throw the rhyme and morality into the toilet,
Go on, circulate.
What a great poem,
what a huge poem it would be!
If I could, if I could just, if I could
write down the first letter,
Lasso that first idea like a cow,
If I could start it,
If I could just, damn you,
at least take up the pen.
What a poem!

(From *La zorra enferma*, or The Sick She-Fox)

VI

I stay, tiger, alone, satisfied,
hungry at times,
here in this cantina
where time does not exist.
At this same table
at the La Curva beer hall
where we used to spend our paychecks and our time
my friend Marco Antonio and I,
grave and gravid poets.

I order a beer. I write like I did then,
for what,
a few more or less jolly lines.
But I think about death,
a course humor blows, running like a cold,
it smells of tannin, like fermented time,
a sick wine.
I understand that someone is pursuing me,
someone takes aim,
somebody lies in wait, hunts me,
as though I were a deer, a tiger, he destroys.

I order another beer.

(From *Caza mayor* or Big Hunt)

XXV

I translate from what language and into what tongue
when I write these lines:
they are words of a tiger
whose articulated roar
comes to the ear of the poet
like a mother tongue
—Does Keats, terrified, read an angel?—
The translation, beasts, polygraphs, poets,
of that unknown, rough speech is this:
"I kill, I drink, I sing,
I suffer more than my victims."

(From *Caza mayor*, or Big Hunt)

Bravado of the Vainglorious Man

I'm no beauty, but I have a beautiful instrument.
That's what four or five nymphs and artful niaids swear to —as the man from Jerez would say—[1]
all valid witnesses in the matter
and unbiased judges.
One of them, very cultured and well-traveled, says
that my cross-bow genitals
should be photographed and large-size prints
hung in the subway
instead of those hypocritical ads for sexy men's underwear.
And she adds that this well-proportioned, majestically designed
graceful lance
—her words—
should be sculpted and placed
in an honored plaza,
an obelisk, just like the Napoleon's in the Place de la Concorde,
or Trajan's Column
in that forum that rhymes with his name.[2]

I myself don't believe these flowery compliments,
but I am profoundly touched on receiving this homage
from all these delicious girls.
I celebrate.

(From *Tabernarios y eróticos*, or Tavern Denizens and Eroticists)

NOTES

[1] The poet refers to a phrase from the poem "Tierra mojada" by the Mexican poet Ramón López Velarde (Jerez, Zacatecas, 1888-Mexico City, 1921). [Editor's Note.]

[2] In Spanish the "Columna de Trajano" rhymes with the "Foro Romano" or "Roman Forum." [Translator's Note.]

Elena Poniatowska On Her Latest Book[1]

Interview by Claire Joysmith*

Jorge Silva/REUTERS

Elena sits comfortably in her living room at home, surrounded by an immensity of sunlight, lots of bright yellows and whites that draw light to the sofa, cushions, paintings, and flowers —real and painted. She is also surrounded by many books that can barely squeeze into several floor-to-ceiling bookcases, books that spill onto several tables, where they sit in little stacks.

Always a kind and welcoming host, she offers tea in dainty cups and talks about her latest book, *Rondas de la niña mala* (Nursery Rhymes of a Bad Little Girl), which includes 30 of what she calls *rondas* (an equivalent of sorts to nursery rhymes).

* Researcher at CISAN.

"I have called them *rondas* because that's a kind of style in itself and because I think this is not really like poetry. I have no intention of claiming to be a poet. I would love to be one, but I'm not."

But if one were to call them poems? Writing poems doesn't necessarily make someone a poet. Or does it?

"Well, you can call them poems if you like, but I used *rondas* in the book so people wouldn't think I felt in the least like a poet. Well, if others call them poems, that makes me happy. I like the word *rondas*, though. And this book has a lot to do with children's *rondas*, wouldn't you say? Just like in that [Mexican] *ronda* that goes 'Naranja dulce, limón partido…' [Sweet orange and cut-open lime…]. This is perhaps akin in many ways to the English language nursery rhyme "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's…."

Partidos los limones
verde es la esperanza,
el agua que la baña
proviene de la luna
que rige nuestra casa.

(Limes cut open
hope becomes green
its bathing water
comes from the moon
that governs our home.)

There is, of course, a whiff of nostalgic childhood memories in the use of *rondas*, sung by children and associated with children's play. This is the sense Elena Poniatowska brings out in *Rondas de la niña mala*. Although there is, of course, the additional allusion to the *niña mala* (the naughty or bad girl) which gives these *rondas* yet another slant.

Obedezcan, niñitas,
¿qué hacen allá arriba?

La maestra, en el suelo,
estremece y sacude
del cristal de sus risas
el árbol que da niñas.

(Little girls, obey,
what are you doing up there?

The teacher, below,
shivers and shakes
from the glass of their laughter
the tree that grows girls.)

The very titles of these *rondas* are evocative of childhood memories, of early adolescence, and, indeed, their aura is unquestionably autobiographical: "Fruncida estrella" (Wrinkled Star) "El árbol que da niñas" (The Tree that Grows Girls), "Ángel de la guarda" (Guardian Angel), "La sopa" (The Soup), "Primera sangre" (First Blood), "El rompecabezas" (The Jigsaw Puzzle), "Otra vez mi hermana" (Again My Sister), "El armario" (The Wardrobe), "Pan con mantequilla" (Bread and Butter), "Mi madre, mi hija" (My Mother, My Daughter), "Magda lava nuestros calzones" (Magda Washes Our Panties), "Mi hermano" (My Brother), "Mi padre toca el piano" (My Father Plays the Piano), and so on.[2]

La niña tiende en el piso
los hilitos de sus piernas,
su globo rojo se ha ido
a casarse con la luna.

(The little girl lays on the floor
the strings of her legs,
her red balloon gone
to marry the moon.)

These *rondas* were written "quite some time ago," Elena muses. And she remembers: "there is even one that Octavio Paz made corrections to a million years ago….It's called "Paulette" and is dedicated to my mother." Her memories continue: "I have them somewhere….Yes, he made the corrections in his own handwriting."

What kind of time-span do these *rondas* bridge? "Well, they're from when I was young, from the early '50s, I believe, up until my father died and then my brother, who died in '68; so they must span about 20 years, because that's when my brother died."

And Elena adds, "I have them. I can show you. I have a huge bagful of poems."

So how come these *rondas*, as she calls them in the book, have been brought to light at this very time? Elena responds with unflinching sincerity, "I happened to come across them, that's all. And if I find more stuff I might also bring it out….But I think it was old age that really got to me, and

I said to myself, well, I'd better bring them out, yes, I might as well, as if I were cleaning out stuff….The thing was whether they would actually want to publish them!"

> Niña de pechos planos,
> algo sucede en ella,
> culposo, inexplicable
> como andar por la vida
> equivocada.
>
> (Flat-breasted child,
> something happens inside,
> guilty, inexplicable
> like wandering through life
> mistaken.)

In these *rondas*, the texture of feelings and perspective is not unlike those in *Lilus Kikus,* published in 1954, although Elena mentions she wrote it years before, since this is "stuff I wrote when I was a *chavita*, when I was very young."

In *Lilus Kikus*, childhood is poetically evoked through the innocent yet shrewd and un-awed perspective of Lilus, the young protagonist who finds the adult world to be not so much confusing as confused. *Lilus Kikus* is in many ways autobiographical, isn't it? "Well, of course, one always has those childhood memories and stuff one keeps through the years."

And what kind of connection is there between the poetic voices in *Lilus Kikus* and *Rondas de la niña mala*? "Well, I feel there's a kind of secret link there because there are many things that burst inside a kid. It's about a young girl's awakening to life. *Lilus Kikus* is obviously that, too, and these poems also have to do with that, with love, with curiosity."

> Enséñame tu ombligo,
> anda, suena, es un timbre,
> tintinea de risa,
> toco, vienes a abrir
> y me dices que pase.
>
> (Show me your belly-button,
> c'mon, it rings, it's a doorbell,
> it tinkles with laughter,
> I ring, you come open
> and ask me to come in.)

The book's dedication is "To my sister." "Yes, the entire book is dedicated to Kitzia. It's also a tribute to her because she's had a son with paralysis for a zillion years —over 40 years now— and this was a way of telling her that I love her very much and that I admire her."

In *Rondas de la niña mala*, Elena's sister Kitzia becomes a character whose unique presence and strong personality come across in several *rondas*. "Yes, she was very strong, not so much dominant as strong, very strong. So, she comes across as a great character? I'm glad of that. My sister is no doubt a great character in real life." And did both of them get along as siblings? "Well, she's my only sister, the only sister I have."

> En el armario, los vestidos sonríen,
> su perfume nos toma por asalto.
>
> (Inside the wardrobe, the dresses smile,
> their perfume takes us by surprise.)

Both *Lilus Kikus* and *Rondas de la niña mala* have been published in Spanish by the Mexican publishing house ERA. And both contain wonderful illustrations by British-born painter and writer Leonora Carrington, who arrived in Mexico in 1942, considered by many one of the major figures in the surrealist movement, although her own surrealist approach, particularly as a woman painter, is unique.

Whose idea was it to have Leonora Carrington do the illustrations for the books? Elena responds readily, "That was me. First for *Lilus Kikus* and now for *Rondas de la niña mala.* Yes, I asked Leonora to do that. There were thousands of illustrations for *Lilus Kikus*. In fact, she gave them to me and now my daughter Paula has them in Mérida. But the ones she did for *Rondas* were mostly engravings she had already completed. Except for one which she did especially for me. There are also some illustrations by her son Pablo."

Elena smiles graciously with her kind eyes and announces the end of the interview and the beginning of an informal conversation. VM

Notes

[1] Elena Poniatowska, *Rondas de la niña mala* (Mexico City: ERA, 2009). Illustrations by Leonora Carrington and Pablo Weisz Carrington.

[2] The titles and the *rondas* have been translated into English by the interviewer.

Elena Poniatowska
Princess of Mexican Letters

She was born in France in 1932. Her full name is Hélène Elizabeth Louise Amélie Paula Dolores Poniatowska Amor, and she is the daughter of Prince Jean Joseph Evremond Sperry Poniatowski, a direct descendant of King Stanislao II Poniatowski of Poland, and Paula Amor Escandón, a Mexican citizen of French ancestry. In 1941, Paula fled World War II with her daughters and took refuge in Mexico. Elena Poniatowska inherited the title of princess of Poland –something that matters very little to her, and, which in addition to spending very little time with her European family, has earned her the soubriquet "The Red Princess."

Elena, known for her unpretentious personality, critical spirit and enormous sensitivity to social issues, is the author of a large body of literary work. In it, she particularly gives voice to the people most ignored by society: the poor, the displaced, the young, opponents of the regime, women who are not part of government power circles, and children, among others.

She has been awarded honorary doctoral degrees by institutions of higher learning in Mexico and abroad, like the Autonomous University of Sinaloa (1979); the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico (1980); New York's New School of Social Research (1994); Florida Atlantic University (1995); the Autonomous Metropolitan University (2000); New York's Manhattanville College and the UNAM (2001); and, most recently, the Autonomous University of Puebla (2002). In 2007, the Mexico City government's Ministry of Culture established the Elena Poniatowska Interamerican Prize for the Novel. She has also been given many other prestigious awards, among which are the 1970 Mazatlán Prize for her book *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (published in English as *Here's to You, Jesusa!);* the 1970 Xavier Villarrutia Prize for *La noche de Tlatelolco* (The Night of Tlatelolco, published in English as *Massacre in Mexico*) –a prize she rejected to emphasize her position about the events of October 2, 1968; the 1978 National Prize for Journalism, making her the first woman to receive it; the 1992 Mazatlán Prize for *Tinísima*; the 2001 Alfaguara Prize for a Novel for *La piel del cielo* (The Skin of the Sky); the 2002 National Prize for Science and the Arts (in the field of linguistics and literature); the 2004 Columbia University María Moors Cabot Award; and the 2007 Rómulo Gallegos International Prize for the Novel for her book *El tren pasa primero* (The Train Goes By First).

Among her most outstanding works are the following:

Novels and short stories: *Lilus Kikus* (short stories, 1954); *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (novel, 1969); *De noche vienes* (novel, 1979)*; La piel del cielo* (novel, 2001); *Tlapalería* (short stories, 2003); and *El tren pasa primero* (novel, 2006).

Chronicles: *Palabras cruzadas. Crónicas* (1961); *Fuerte es el silencio* (1980); *Amanecer en el Zócalo. Los 50 días que confrontaron a México* (2007).

Testimonios: *La noche de Tlatelolco. Testimonios de historia oral* (1970); *Gaby Brimmer* (1979);[1] *Nada, nadie. Las voces del temblor* (1988).

Essays: *¡Ay vida, no me mereces! Carlos Fuentes, Rosario Castellanos, Juan Rulfo, la literatura de la onda* (1985).

Interviews: *Todo México I-VII* (interviews done between 1991 and 2002).

Biographies: *Tinísima* (1992); *Octavio Paz, las palabras del árbol* (1998); *Juan Soriano. Niño de mil años* (2000); *Mariana Yampolsky y la buganvilia* (2001).

Her books have been translated into English and French. Published in English are the following:

- *Massacre in Mexico* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1975).
- *Nothing, Nobody. The Voices of the Mexico City Earthquake* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).
- *Tinísima* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998).
- *Here's to You, Jesusa!* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001).
- *The Skin of the Sky* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004).
- *Las Soldaderas: Women of the Mexican Revolution* (El Paso, Texas: Cinco Puntos Press, 2006).
- *Lilus Kikus and Other Stories*, with drawings by Leonora Carrington (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).
- *Gaby Brimmer: An Autobiography in Three Voices* (New Hampshire: Brandeis University Press, 2009).

Recently, Poniatowska, who has worked in almost all the genres of literature, surprised her readers with the magnificent volume of poetry *Rondas de la niña mala* (Nursery Rhymes of a Bad Little Girl) (2008), which she talks about at length with Claire Joysmith in this issue of *Voices of Mexico*. A woman of her time, Elena Poniatowska offers all those interested in dialoguing with her, her Face Book page at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Elena-Poniatowska/28038002741. VM

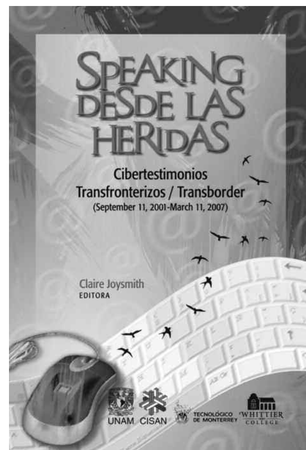
María Cristina Hernández Escobar
Assistant Editor

NOTES

[1] This book was made into a film titled *Gaby: A True Story* by Mexican director Luis Mandoki in 1987.

Reviews

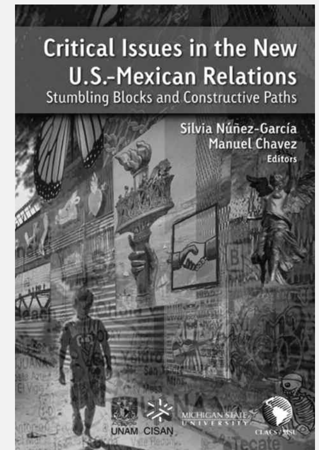
Speaking desde las heridas.
Cibertestimonios transfronterizos/Transborder
(September 11, 2001-March 11, 2007)
Claire Joysmith, editor
CISAN, UNAM/Whittier College/ITESM
Mexico, 2008, 652 pp.



September 11, 2001, or 9/11, as it is commonly called, is a date that marks a major shift in history, and yet, a date can be easily erased and mean nothing for future generations, one more thing to remember for the exam, and nothing else. I am thinking of other September 11s, in Chile and South Africa, or of "2 de octubre no se olvida" (October 2 Will Never Be Forgotten). "It will never be forgotten" only applies to those who were there, bearing witness. History as told by those in power becomes a very effective form of censorship: those who want only certain things to be known (the official story), which usually means simplifying things in the style of former President Bush's discourse ("them, the evildoers," or "you're either with us or against us"). *Speaking desde las heridas*, breaks with this one-sided way of retelling, allowing for multiple reflections on and echoing what thousands of us witnessed on the screen "of intruding memory."[1]

I remember when editor Claire Joysmith sent me an e-mail eight years ago (when I was still living in the United States), asking if I had written something in response to the collapse of the Twin Towers. That was the beginning of *One Wound for Another*, a compilation of testimonios by Latin@s, gathered through "cyberspace," in response to 9/11.[2] Five years later, Ms. Joysmith decided to expand the scope of the transborder context in that first book, and the result is an amazing 652-page collection of testimonios, where the wound clearly appears as one collective, political pain which "shatters the world and, along with it, the idea of the world."[3]

Critical Issues in the New U.S.-Mexican Relations.
Stumbling Blocks and Constructive Paths
Silvia Núñez-García and Manuel Chavez, eds.
CISAN, UNAM/CLACS, Michigan State University
Mexico, 2009, 155 pp.



The U.S.-Mexican migration corridor is by far the world's largest. It has been estimated that from 1976 to 2006 the number of persons born in Mexico who reside permanently in the U.S. increased 15 fold to approximately 12 million, and that at least 85 percent of them entered the country without documents every year since 2000. These are some of the most striking findings of Elaine Levine, one of the co-authors of the recently published *Critical Issues in the New U.S.-Mexican Relations. Stumbling Blocks and Constructive Paths.*

The book offers an excellent series of seven chapters on the main problems in Mexican-U.S. relations. Its basic assumption is that culture is the clue and may also be a solution to the complex U.S.-Mexico relations. So, public diplomacy, whether understood as an instrument to facilitate understanding, mutual respect and cooperation or as mere cultural diplomacy, needs "to be reconsidered and implemented as a permanent feature of the binational relationship." As a matter of fact, according to the editors, misperceptions and reinforced negative attitudes about the "other" have made symmetrical cooperation difficult. Consequently, the relation follows "a complex model of interdependence where decisions made on one side of the border have significant and immediate repercussions on the other." Actually, Mexicans living in the U.S. may be seen as "cultural hybrids."

Just from reading the title, questions emerge: how can one "speak a wound," let alone speak it bilingually? What is a *cibertestimonio transfronterizo*? Joysmith immediately answers these and many other questions in her introduction: "The aim from the outset was to make historical remembrance and amnesia more poignant, and to take a critical look at the complexities and the to-be dismantled inside/outside, near/far, us/them dichotomies."[4] The call for responses, and the results of that call, were all done by e-mail, hence the cyber element; the experience was no longer limited to the Latin@s in the U.S., and many "national" boundaries were crossed (hence, "transborder"); and *testimonio* was chosen (once again) as a "means of recovering and documenting lost stories…stories of lived experiences that might otherwise have been ignored, erased from historical memory."[5] Every testimonio, "the small voice of history,"[6] is followed by a self-identification, showing how intricately complicated their (our) ethnic backgrounds really are: "Soy defeña…de madre de origen libanés…y padre yucateco"; "nepantlera, spiritual activist, mixed-race person"; "inner border born o mexicano agringado," and so on.

Some collaborators from the first compilation are here again, like Sandra Cisneros, Norma Alarcón and Ariel Dorfman; "new" collaborators stand out like Raúl Salinas, Carlos Monsiváis, Berta Hiriart, and José Emilio Pacheco. But, even when the majority of them are not necessarily "well known," their insight and depth of knowledge of the gashing wound born out of Historical Trauma, make their testimony more powerful and meaningful.[7] As Oliver-Rotger states, "The language of these testimonios is clear, emphatic and direct because it emerges from the soul and contrasts with the vague phraseology of global media and political language."[8]

In the movie "11'09'01 September 11," in the segment by Egyptian filmmaker Youssef Chahine, a dead soldier tells him, "You can see me because you are affected by the things that happen… I live in your mind." The artist responds that he feels furious that people do not think enough about the others. And the soldier responds, "You did nothing to make yourself be heard." With more than 100 voices in this book, we would expect to be heard, at least a little bit more, even though it would seem but a whisper, the history of human cruelty filling up more volumes than its kindness. *Speaking desde las heridas* is, indeed, a good attempt at counterbalancing this disparity, longing to recover the "conocimiento"[9] lost along the way. Just as men found out that the Earth is

Why is this? History explains everything, as the past speaks for itself. In her article "Mexican Migration to the United States," Elaine Levine recalls elements of the past that help us understand the current state of the Mexico-U.S. relationship. Migration has been commonplace ever since Mexico was forced to cede half its territory to the U.S. after losing the 1848 war. For many years after that, movement between the two countries was entirely unregulated and relatively small scale. In 1924, the U.S. began controlling and restricting entry for the first time. Ever since, the control of migration has gradually increased along with the Mexican population living in the U.S., which is nothing if not an economic paradox. At present, the Mexican-origin population has the highest participation in the U.S. work force of all migrant communities: 68.4 percent in 2005.

In his contribution to the book, Manuel Chavez correctly observes that very little is said in the media about migrants' contributions to the U.S. economy, the type of jobs they do and their independent relationship with labor markets in the service, hospitality and agricultural sectors. His point is fully explained in Levine's piece: barriers to economic mobility are not rooted in labor markets, but in the nation's public school systems. To her, the segregation of winners and losers in U.S. society still has a high correlation to race and ethnicity, but most of the segregating occurs before people look for their first job. The public school system is preparing Mexican children for the same kind of low-skilled, low-paying jobs their parents do. Recently, efforts have been made to strengthen migrants' ties to their homeland. Dual nationality was approved, and hometown associations are actively promoted and supported.

This idea of building networks between the two neighbors is taken up by Silvia Núñez García, who emphasizes the undeniable role of social networks today in determining new spheres of influence. These networks are articulated beyond national borders and have the potential for transnational influence.

SECURITY: THE TURNING POINT OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The largest part of the book is dedicated to security, a hot issue in U.S. foreign policy and an even more worrying one in Mexico's domestic policy.

not flat, now it is our turn to understand that she is, indeed, alive, as we are, and "our bodies and psyches are internalizing the pain of the larger socio-political body…our …bodies are also occupied territories in which other wars are taking place."[10]

In another segment of the aforementioned film,[11] a teacher tries to explain to dozens of Afghan refugee children living in Iran what had just happened in New York. It seems an impossible task, when they cannot even begin to understand the concept of a skyscraper. But the rest of us, in so called "civilized" countries, in this day and age of instant global connection where news, movies, Internet —in one word, information— is so readily available, with images that can help us understand and actually make us all instant witnesses, why can't we empathize with the "others," those who have been left without a home, or live in a town with no men (or men without legs or arms), and that are desperate enough to travel across thousands of miles to try and find a better life so far from their own people, their own language, to a place where they will be seen as the dark invaders? "The demon mythologies of the brown body transfer from race to race, from country to country. Memories, like attention spans, are short and mutable. Color, like disease, is contagious."[12]

Babel was the name of a tower where no one understood anyone else. How ironic that in New York the towers contained immigrant workers from more than 40 countries, so many and distinct languages and cultures, and yet the U.S. corporate powers that be saw it as an affront to their "freedom" (and their whiteness). Even if the readership of this volume were limited to artists, students and academics, it would, indeed, be a step toward discarding from our vocabularies useless dichotomies, including our blaming the state. As John Beverley says, "What we do as cultural workers and educators is to make, unmake, and remake hegemony; in that sense we have to work *with* the nation-state, at the same time that we try to transform it."[13]

Speaking desde las heridas is one of many potential tools toward this transformation, which implies transforming our daily ways to inhabit the world, like when Patrisia Gonzales counsels which herbs to use for healing grief and wounds, to calm the brain, and heal the liver and the heart. With utmost humility, she ends by saying, "The plants will know what to do."[14]

It also implies changing the vision we hold of our future. John Brown Childs retells a pre-colonial story told by the

The opening article, "Foreign Policy and Governance in Mexico. A Conceptual and Operational Dilemma," by José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, describes how Mexico's 2000 elections signaled the beginning of a transformation of a political regime dominated by a non-democratic political tradition and a political class without a coherent long-term political project. Mexico was a country with a closed, single-party, relatively authoritarian political system. After 2000, there was hope that Mexico was going to play a prominent role in international affairs, a vision that never materialized. The chapter discusses the basic aspects of the not-always-felicitous relationship between domestic and foreign policy. It also explains the Mexican Paradox: for the first time in the history of Mexico since its 1910 revolution, foreign policy has acquired great importance and has been more closely linked to the success of domestic policy. For the last two presidential terms, Mexico has sought to be present and participate more in multilateral discussions and negotiations as the economy became the central focus of its foreign policy.

As the country internationalized, it has had to abandon its anti-U.S. stance, opt for cooperation instead of conflict and forge a partnership mainly in economic but also in political terms with the U.S. and Canada. Mexico's foreign policy ambivalence, expressed in the so-called "agreement to disagree," shaped Mexico-U.S. relations for decades, in the sense that it was the only arrangement that allowed a margin of relative independence without endangering Mexico's most important bilateral relationship, and without officially compromising with any of the parties involved.

From a similar point of view, well-known Mexican specialist Leonardo Curzio offers several reflections on the reactions of the Mexican people after 9/11. Mexico reinforced its borders especially in relation to the so-called restricted nationalities and has accepted supporting the concept of intelligent borders. Furthermore, Curzio addresses the issue of identity. While other regions of the world like Europe have developed an emerging supranational identity and at the same time preserved their national particularities, North America has not moved beyond the free trade level, and, since 2001, the gap between Mexico and the U.S. has grown. Far from developing more trust between the two countries, the agreement has maintained the flow of people

Haudenausaunee people, where the Peacemaker tells the Mother of the Nations that "all peoples shall love one another and live together in Peace," to which she responds, "Thy message is good but a word is nothing until it is given form… what form shall this message take?" And he replies, "It will take the form of the longhouse, they will all live under one chief mother. They shall have one mind and live under one law. Thinking will replace killing."[15] Echoing these words in his testimonio, José Skinner defines the war in Iraq as "a direct indictment of conservative thinking, which actually is not thinking at all, but thoughtless reaction." This echoing and weaving of voices makes this book such a beautiful and powerful way to approach history in the making. As Julio Ortega wrote, "What can memory be but a major project? … Because violence is the same, yet each victim is different because their suffering is inadmissible. Because the value of the pronoun arises alive in the tower we each make stand. There, where no one is illegal."[16] VM

Pilar Rodríguez Aranda
Translator, writer and video maker

NOTES

[1] Or TV, as defined by Cristina Rivera-Garza in her prologue to *Speaking desde las heridas*, p. 95.
[2] *One Wound for Another/Una herida por otra. Testimonios de Latin@s through Cyberspace (11 de septiembre de 2001-11 de marzo de 2002)*, Claire Joysmith and Clara Lomas, eds. (Mexico City: CISAN/Colorado College/ Whittier College, 2005)
[3] Cristina Rivera-Garza, prologue to *Speaking desde las heridas*, p. 95.
[4] Claire Joysmith, introduction to *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 27.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[6] Title of John Beverley's prologue to *Speaking desde las heridas*, p. 77.
[7] Historical Trauma is defined by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart as a "cumulative, collective wounding across generations 'emanating from massive group trauma'," and is quoted in Patricia Gonzales' testimonio, in *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 329.
[8] María Antonia Oliver-Rotger, prologue to *Speaking desde las heridas*, p. 99.
[9] A term used in Spanish by Chicana theorist and writer Gloria Anzaldúa, which literally means knowledge, and quoted in Joysmith's introduction; the "searching, inquiring and healing consciousness," p. 20.
[10] Guillermo Gómez Peña, "Border Hysteria," *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 307.
[11] By Iranian filmmaker Samira Makhmalbaf.
[12] Gómez Peña, *op. cit.,* p. 302.
[13] Beverley, prologue, *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 81.
[14] Patricia Gonzales, *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 330.
[15] *Speaking desde las heridas*, pp 214-217.
[16] Original in Spanish: "¿Qué puede ser la memoria sino un mayor proyecto?…Porque la violencia es la misma, pero cada víctima es diferente porque su sufrimiento es inadmisible./Porque el valor del pronombre se alza vivo en la torre que cada uno pone en pie./Allí donde nadie es ilegal." Julio Ortega, *Speaking desde las heridas,* p. 475.

and workers. Cooperation was not been oriented toward building bridges, but toward building borders, controls and even fences. The author provides a forecast for U.S.-Mexico relations: if we consider the next 50 years, and we use our political will to overcome the prejudices each side has toward the other, U.S. security will inevitably be formulated from a perspective that unquestionably includes Mexico.

BIODIVERSITY VS. SECURITY

The book closes with an excellent piece on "The United States and Mexico in the Face of Scientific Uncertainty: Regulating Genetically Modified Organisms," by Edit Antal, an expert in science and technology. The author analyses two different conceptions of risk assessment in the case of genetically modified seeds, especially corn. The differences in the conception of risk assessment between the U.S. and Mexico unfold in the context of NAFTA, which, while it does not directly regulate GMOs, does promote the harmonization of regulatory policies in many ways.

Antal makes her point taking into account that companies like Monsanto have arrived from the U.S. and tried to introduce genetically modified seeds into Mexico. The debate has been huge, especially with regard to corn. However, the author centers her analysis on a more objective basis, that is, risk assessment and discourse analysis of the main actors active in each country's genetic engineering policies.

As she correctly observes, parameters differ in the two countries. In the U.S., the main interests are economic growth, international competitiveness and the right to be informed, while in Mexico, the issues are food security and the defense of biological and cultural diversity. This idea may be generalized as the book's common question: what can Mexico do to achieve more symmetrical cooperation with the U.S. and make a point in the global political culture? VM

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