

VOICES of Mexico

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An Exceptional Election In a No-Longer-So-Exceptional United States

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde
Diana Castillo

Advances and Challenges In Teacher Evaluation In Mexico

María Esther Padilla Medina
José Luis Gutiérrez Espíndola

The Mexican and Chinese Diasporas in the United States Converging Political Challenges?

Silvia Núñez García

Interview with Pierre Alarie, Canadian Ambassador To Mexico

Leonardo Curzio

Tin Tan Mexico's First Postmodern Icon

David R. Maciel

SPECIAL SECTION

Reflections on Canada's October 2015 Federal Elections

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Peloché Barrera, Roberto Zepeda
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Olvera, Carlos Gabriel Argüelles
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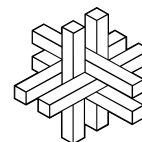
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Rina Lazo assisted Diego Rivera on numerous projects.
Photo courtesy of Rina Lazo.



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OUR VOICE

The long U.S. electoral campaign culminated with Donald Trump being voted into the presidency last November. This has made for a radical turn in bilateral relations with Mexico, but has also shaken up the international community due to the president-elect's visceral attitudes and declarations, which are very far from the "politically correct" kinds of statements that used to characterize the most powerful figure in the world.

The victory of Trump, dismissed by millions both in the United States and abroad, over Hillary Clinton, clearly the U.S. political establishment candidate (who did, however, win the majority of the popular vote), brings with it a political, social, and cultural phenomenon that marks the complexity of the current situation of this great power.

In this issue, we have included two contributions dealing with this scenario. One displays its authors' capacity for summarizing and reflecting on the vicissitudes of the Republican and Democratic Parties and their stakeholders. The second compares the Chinese-American and Mexican-American Diasporas in terms of their organization and political participation at this significant juncture.

We can say that the conditions of the economy and their direct effects on the pocketbooks of the citizenry continue to be decisive for determining U.S. elections. In addition to the objective data, perceptions that could develop in public opinion with regard to greater economic vulnerability will also have an impact on voters' mood.

Thus, the new occupant of the White House lashed out against free trade agreements, among other things, saying that they have essentially been unfair to U.S. workers. The TransPacific Partnership and NAFTA are in the forefront of analysts' minds; this is a reason to read the article by Enrique Pino Hidalgo, which can help us understand the risks that the TPP poses for Mexico.

This issue's Economy section affords me the opportunity to emphasize my conviction that institutions are living organisms that require change so their objectives can respond appropriately to new demands; this is why the CISAN is confirming this vocation. Dr. Claudia Maya is a talented young member of our community, whose research into financial issues allows her to offer up for our readers' consideration a serious argument around the role of the U.S. Federal Reserve to determine the horizons of its monetary policies, forecasting a grave financial crisis.

We must now focus our attention on Mexico to take up a topic that is undoubtedly strategic for our uncertain future: education. We should remember that the current administration's 2013 reform was launched under the banner of significantly improving the quality of our educational system. To lay out for

our readers the difficulties of implementing this reform in the unavoidable area of teacher evaluation, which also runs counter to their labor rights, we have invited two expert colleagues from the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) to contribute. We also want to thank Adriana Dander for taking the time to enrich this issue explaining the characteristics and structure of high school education in Mexico. How are they similar or different from those of our readers' countries?

We are proud to include almost 10 voices to talk about the importance Mexico gives to its proximity and mature friendship with Canada. Its ambassador to our country, M. Pierre Alarie, does us the honor of confirming the reciprocity of this feeling during the interview we publish here. Sprinkled amidst his comments are the big regional issues for North America: NAFTA, security, and energy, as well as also his emphasis on educational exchange as a priority.

This Special Section is also centered on a wide-ranging reflection about the repercussions of different aspects of the last Canadian federal elections. The value added of these articles testifies to the high-level analyses by Mexican Canadianologists, who as outside observers contribute not only to disseminating Canadian studies among our new generations, but also to consolidating and multiplying the links of multidisciplinary work with Canadian counterparts. I would not want to forget to mention that the victory of the Liberal politician Justin Trudeau has sparked certain optimism among Mexican intellectuals, but we will have to wait a little more to assess his actions.

Voices of Mexico continues to be committed to disseminating articles about the arts and culture, thereby signaling their significant contribution to our inherent sensibility as human beings. On this occasion, in addition to talking about Tin Tan and Diego Rivera as great icons of Mexican cinema and painting, we present the extraordinary body of work by Paloma Torres, full of symbolism. Meanwhile, Teresa Jiménez calls on us to visit the interesting El Carmen museum in Mexico City's traditional San Ángel neighborhood, where a collection of mummies even opens its doors to us.

And, since we place our expectations of a better future on the harmony of nature, our readers will be able to familiarize themselves with Mexico's efforts to rescue and preserve our wetlands, which contribute to the list of Mexican species that concentrate between 10 and 12 percent of all the world's biodiversity. A wonderful commitment, don't you think?

Silvia Núñez García
Director of CISAN

An Exceptional Election in a No-Longer-So-Exceptional United States

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*
Diana Castillo**

INTRODUCTION

Hillary Clinton and Donald J. Trump have had very different careers. Hillary has more experience in U.S. government: she was first lady during her husband's presidential terms, senator from 2001 to 2009, and secretary of state during the first Barack Obama administration, after running for the Democratic Party nomination in 2008. Donald Trump, by contrast, is a multimillionaire businessman and real-estate investor who has played minor roles in Hollywood's movie industry and, therefore, is not part of the Republican establishment's main groups.

Since January 19 of this year, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have headed up the polls as the candidates for the Democratic and Republican Parties, respectively. The magnate's absence at the last Republican debate before the primary elections was the main focus of the media the next day, and the most important polling results showed Trump still leading his rivals by 15.6 points. This all marked a trend that would continue until the end of the primaries: Trump was positioning himself as the favorite for the Republican nomination.

For her part, Hillary Clinton, who announced her intention to compete for the Democratic nomination on April 12, 2015, closed the ninth and last debate before the primaries in a growing battle with Vermont socialist Senator Bernie Sanders over issues of public health, education, the economy, and foreign policy.

The presidential primaries and caucuses began in Iowa on February 1, 2016. Even then this election was expected to be



Mike Segar/Reuters

different, since two of the most important contenders, Trump and Sanders, did not belong to the government establishment, and, in addition to doing politics in new ways, they were winning a growing number of followers. Trump reflected the interests of racist, xenophobic, uneducated, low-income U.S. Americans, who for a very long time had not been represented on the political agenda. Sanders, meanwhile, represented the ideals of the Millennials and the middle class that had suffered the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis and wanted to get the economic system to work, making it more inclusive and distributive.

Hillary Clinton was a case apart. Her initial discourse was based on the continuity of the Obama administration's political agenda. This would be key as the primaries advanced since, while Trump obtained the biggest number of delegates *vis-à-vis* all his competitors (mainly Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich), some Republicans decided that they would vote for Hillary if Trump won the Republican nomination.¹ After the first super-Tuesday, March 1, Donald Trump continued to be a favorite of Republican voters, garnering a total of 315 delegates of the 1 237 he needed for the nomination,

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surpassing Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, who had 205 and 106 delegates respectively. Hillary, for her part, was leading her party with strong support from African-American Democrats in Massachusetts and key southern states like Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

What allowed Trump to become the Republican candidate? According to CNN, from the time the primaries began, 57 percent of Republicans trusted Trump more than his rivals on economic issues. In Iowa and New Hampshire alone, he was 40 percent ahead of Ted Cruz, his closest rival.² In addition, a Harvard University study underlines that Trump was the pre-candidate who was spotlighted most in the media, like CBS, Fox, *Los Angeles Times*, NBC, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. This expanded the possibility of his message getting out and being disseminated more than those of the rest of his Republican and Democratic competitors. In fact, from late 2015 to the end of the primaries, no other candidate received the same coverage in the media week after week.³ However, according to an ABC News survey in early March, only 37 percent of U.S. Americans mistrusted Hillary, giving her a big advantage over her main Republican rival, and only 27 percent of those polled trusted Trump to be president of the United States.⁴ In contrast, a *New York Times* poll done three months later showed that both Trump's and Clinton's popularity ratings were the lowest of potential presidential Republican and Democratic nominee hopefuls in all the decades since polls have been done; fortunately for them, however, they continued to be the favorites among their party faithful.⁵

When Ted Cruz and John Kasich dropped out of the race, Trump's possibilities of actually becoming the Republican Party nominee increased, exacerbating fears in party ranks and sparking a—rather fruitless—search for alternatives. By the end of the primaries, Trump's more than 12 million votes was the highest number in the history of the Republican Party, beating George W. Bush's year-2000 record. However, Trump is also the candidate that has had the highest number of votes against him. This means that a larger number of people went out to vote amidst a significant division inside the party.⁶

The Republican Convention, from July 18 to 21, nominated Donald Trump as its candidate after he won 1 543 delegates. This made him the first businessman inexperienced in public office to get the Republican nomination since Wendell Willkie in 1940.

The Democratic Party, for its part, also passed a milestone when its convention nominated a woman as its candidate to

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occupy the White House for the first time in history. In the final vote count, Hillary garnered 2 842 delegates and Sanders only 1 865, who earned 3 742 686 fewer votes at the primary polls than Hillary. That is, 43.26 percent of the Democratic electorate voted in favor of Sanders's political agenda, which meant that Clinton had to include his main platform planks in order to ensure that disappointed Sanders supporters would vote for her next November 8.

After the party conventions, the panorama has changed in Hillary's favor: since late July, the polls show that her acceptance rating has oscillated between 43.7 percent and 47.8 percent, while Trump's dropped to 41.2 percent in August. These changes have been accompanied by an increasing number of Republicans who have decided not to vote for him. According to the latest CBC News poll,⁷ Trump could only count on 19 percent of the Hispanic vote, a much lower number than the 44 percent that George W. Bush received in 2004. In addition, the highest level income group (those with incomes of US\$100 000 and more), which in the last elections favored Mitt Romney, now favors Hillary Clinton, giving her a more than 7-point advantage.⁸ This has put the Republican candidate in a very complicated position because he would have to change his discourse, promoted months ago, bringing him face to face with a very delicate dilemma: satisfying those who have supported him from the beginning or those who he wants to convince nationwide.

HOW DID ALL THIS START?

The Tea Party—and the irrational right—was mistaken in its diagnosis when it warned, through its buffoonish front man Glenn Beck, that “the Marxist Fifth Column” had returned to power with the victory of Obama. The United States continues to be the same capitalist country it has always been, embedded in the liberal democracy that has steered it for more than two centuries. The danger never existed. However, it is that liberal democracy that is threatened by Donald Trump, better known as “Trumpkenstein.” This by-product of the political decomposition of the political system and

some of its members is the second serious mistake on the part of the Republican Party, thanks to letting itself be controlled by a party-within-the-party, the Tea Party, since 2008, until now an inoperable tumor.

The “inevitable candidate” has now become the rotting fish that spoils the aroma of Republican kitchens. The evil-smelling air now being breathed betrays how complicated things will become for them during the campaign since their candidate —the authoritarian, anti-politics, anti-system, anti-liberal, and, also, xenophobic, misogynist, and incorrigible pathological liar that he is—, despite his simulated attempts, does not want —and apparently will not want— to change his narrative of hatred and resentment. It is very unlikely that this discourse, successful in the primaries and supported by more than 11 million followers, will be upheld on November 8 by the more than 200 million who will come out to vote.

Many political actors, even some from the Republican Party like Paul Ryan, John Kasich, and Mitt Romney, have expressed concern about Trump’s extremism and lack of awareness. They are right in thinking that he cannot be “fixed”: some support him with reservations, and others hold him in contempt. After all, his credentials are of no help. His biographers say that after his two divorces, Trump became resentful and ratcheted up his filthy rhetoric against women, whom he has called “pigs” and “dogs.” This candidate, famous for his innumerable affairs, thinks that “it really doesn’t matter what they say about you as long as you have a beautiful, young ass at your side.” This is no minor matter in a time when the defense of women’s dignity and integrity plays a preeminent role on the agenda of any politician who thinks himself worthy of the term.

With regard to the Islamic community that aspires to entry into the United States, Trump has proposed cancelling their universal right, the right that his country honored when his own German and Scots ancestors used it; not to mention his threat to eliminate family members of Muslims suspected of attacking national security.

Prominent members of the Democratic Party, beginning with President Obama, have accused the detested Mr. Trump of being racist. This happened after, drawing on his well of

resentment, Trump accused federal Judge Gonzalo Curiel, of Mexican ancestry, of having a conflict of interest when he found that the former was guilty of fraud in his handling of the now-defunct Trump University —a typical “brand-X” university. The candidate accused the judge of being resentful because Trump maintains his position of building the border wall. The most ferocious attack came from the senator from Massachusetts, Elizabeth Warren, who, in addition to calling him a racist, said he was a national “disgrace.”

What’s interesting about the political process is that while the Democrats accepted Sanders getting on the Clinton bandwagon after her victory, the Republicans have wanted, without success, to bring Trump down off the bizarre victory bus that he has built for himself out of the reach of Republican control. As the process continues, greater and greater dissatisfaction can be seen among responsible Republicans with their party’s recalcitrant rightwing patriots and Trump’s candidacy; even though they have already accepted the impossibility of taming him and getting him to shift to a more moderate position on the issues mentioned above and others, despite recent proposals of moderation. The fact is that he booby-trapped himself when he moved away from moderation on highly sensitive issues. Trump is Trump’s number one enemy.

The Republican Party fears it is one step away, not only from not winning the White House, but from breaking up and, in passing, hugely damaging the entire political system. Their irresponsibility is enormous and apparently they themselves are thinking—and they will surely vote this way—that the only lifeline for their party and the stability of the entire system is a victory for Hillary Clinton, even though this would mean losing the presidency. This is just how grave the crisis the Republicans have allowed to grow is.

THE ESTABLISHMENT IS WOUNDED

In effect, the damage suffered by the U.S. political system over the last eight years has been severe. Since Obama was elected, there has been an all-out battle for power stoked more by right-wing extremist fanaticism than by political reason. The Republican Party’s terminal crisis is an expression of this. Its polemical candidate is another, although in a more grotesque form. While the Democrats have not suffered a similar decomposition, in the primaries they did go through a process of renovation, largely thanks to the appearance of the socialist senator for Vermont, Bernie Sanders.

The Democratic Party also passed a milestone when its convention nominated a woman as its candidate to occupy the White House for the first time in history.

However, despite his campaign's radicalism, far from dismembering the party, it unified it and also ensured that Hillary incorporated into her platform three issues that can transform the United States: stricter measures for Wall Street, the cause of the worst recession of the modern era; free university for important sectors of youth; and a hike in minimum wage, which could go up to US\$15/hour. In the end, Sanders supported Clinton's candidacy and committed to working to defeat Trump. This did not happen in the Republican Party. At the Republican Convention, Ted Cruz took the podium and not only did not support Trump, but encouraged his followers to "vote their conscience": in other words, not vote for Trump. In another demonstration of rebellion, the governor of the key state of Ohio, John Kasich, did not even attend the Republican Party Convention in Cleveland.

Not only has the balance of power in the party been lost, but the Republican Party has also lost its political center, which maintained it as a credible, moderate conservative party. On the other hand, equality in the voting system leaves much to be desired. A good number of states headed by the Republican Party have imposed voting constraints among potentially Democratic voters like African-Americans and Latinos, but this process stopped thanks to a Supreme Court decision. Congress, for its part, continues to reproduce a profitable but delicate relationship for U.S. democracy between special interests and politicians during their campaigns and after they are elected. It should be noted that with unhampered regularity, the National Rifle Association purchases important groups of politicians from both parties, who they suborn through campaign funding and other perks that they then demand be repaid by votes for indiscriminately freeing the purchase and use of firearms. Or, they demand members of Congress oppose any measure—many highly favored after the tragic incidents of gunfire deaths— even suggested by the federal Executive or other political actors to curtail arms sales to people on the FBI's and other security agencies' blacklists. This is just one of the many alarms going off warning of threats against the essential democratic spirit of the U.S. legislature.

All this shows the point to which the U.S. political/electoral system is in a crisis of systemic legitimacy; this crisis that leads us to think that our neighbors are facing a huge challenge that will force them to rapidly implement a profound reform in this area. Given Trump's onslaught and the regressive tendencies his candidacy represents, we get the feeling that thinking about and wanting his defeat in the battle with Clin-

Not only has the balance of power
in the Republican Party been lost, but it
has also lost its political center.

ton constitutes an opportunity for the political system to regenerate. In fact, the U.S. moment is so critical—and the growing Republican dissidence that has tended to support Clinton would seem to confirm this—that only Clinton with Sanders's support and that of the decent political class as a whole will be able to reform both the tainted political/electoral system and the economic model—which is anything but distributive, given that one percent of the population continues to own the majority of the country's wealth.

This may well be a historic opportunity, thanks in great part to the emergence of Trumpism, to recover the essential values of U.S. liberal democracy and in passing completely heal its actions in the face of the extremely complex and varied dangers faced by the international system. It is paradoxical, but true: only the establishment can save the establishment. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ Among these were Rosario Marín, Carlos Gutiérrez, John Negroponte, Rubén Álvarez, Jane Hull, Robert Blackwill, Merom Brachman, David Durenberger, Scott Evertz, Joel Flory, Fred Goldberg, Cindy Guerra, Matt Higgins, Carla Hills, Richard Holwill, Angus King, James Kunder, Jennifer Pierotti Lim, William Sanchez, Timothy P. Stratford, Shirin Tahir-Kheli, Pete Teely, Daniel Twining, John McCain, and Matthew Waeman.
- ² M. J. Lee, Sara Murray, Jeremy Diamond, Noah Gray, and Tai Kopan, "Why I'm Voting for Trump," CNN Politics, January 28, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/27/politics/donald-trump-voters-2016-election/index.html>.
- ³ Thomas E. Patterson, "News Coverage of the 2016 Presidential Primaries: Horse Race Reporting Has Consequences," Harvard Kennedy School, July 11, 2016, <http://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-2016-presidential-primaries/>.
- ⁴ ABC News and *The Washington Post* Poll: Clinton versus Trump, "Challenges for Trump vs. Clinton: Favorability, Attributes and More," March 9, 2016, <http://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1176a2ClintonvsTrump.pdf>.
- ⁵ Karen Yourish, "Clinton and Trump Have Terrible Approval Ratings. Does It Matter?" *The New York Times*, June 3, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/03/us/elections/trump-and-clinton-favorability.html?action=click&contentCollection=Election%202016®ion=Footer&module=WhatsNext&version=WhatsNext&contentID=WhatsNext&moduleDetail=undefined&pgtype=Multimedia>.
- ⁶ Real Clear Politics, 2016, <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>.
- ⁷ Éric Grenier, "Donald Trump Losing Support from Reliably Republican Demographic Groups," CBC News Politics, Canada, August 19, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-uselection-demographics-1.3724980>.
- ⁸ At the time of this writing, several polls, including those of Quinnipiac and Reuters, put Clinton 10 and 7 points ahead of Trump respectively. Real Clear Politics, August 25, 2016, <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>.

The Fed, Monetary Policy, And the Effects on Emerging Economies

Claudia Maya*



At the time of this writing, the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) is the world's most closely watched and feared central bank. Its decisions over the coming months will have direct, adverse repercussions for emerging economies, particularly those most indebted in dollars and in international financial markets. The importance of these decisions resides in the worldwide acceptance of the dollar as the main currency for commercial, financial, and reserve transactions.

All eyes are on what will happen in December and whether the Fed, the world's biggest central bank, will fulfill the much-announced "return to monetary normalcy" putting an "the end to taper tantrum"; this would make for a drop in monthly bond issues and a future rise in federal fund interest rates,¹ which during the Great Crisis have remained close

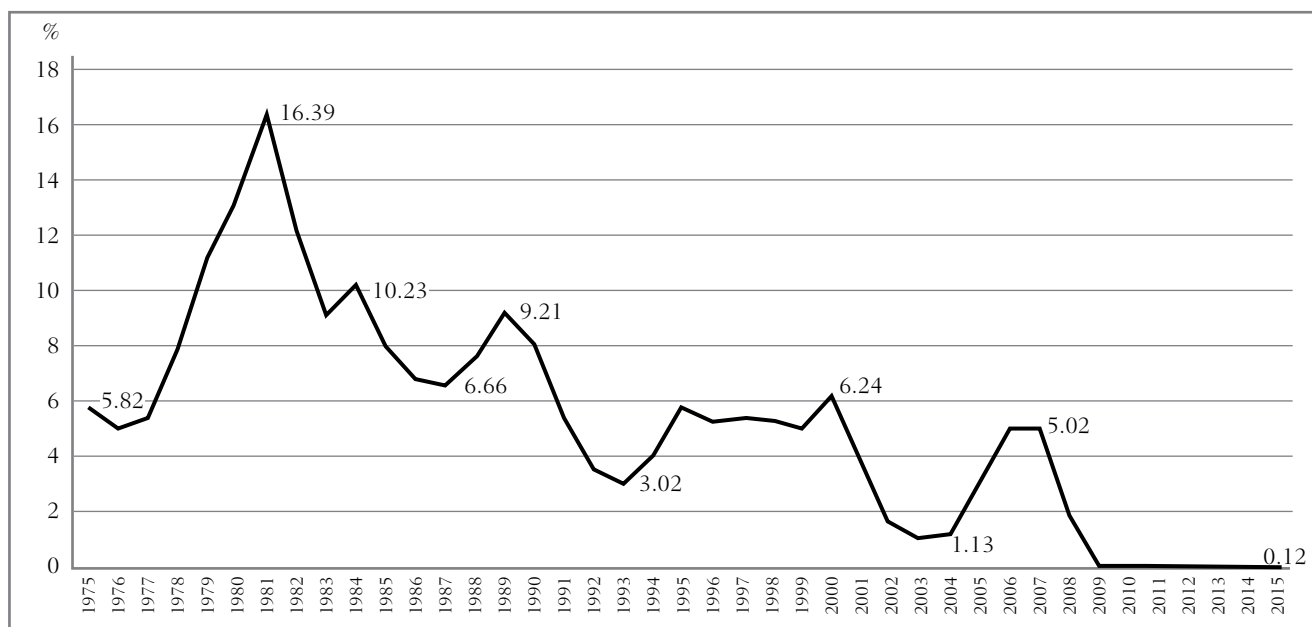
to zero (see Graph 1). This rate lift-off was postponed in June and September of 2015, justified by the weak rise in domestic prices and the country's precarious job and economic growth numbers.²

The expectation is by no means irrelevant. History justifies the fears in the face of an eventual change in the Federal Reserve's economic policy; the Fed has decided to restrict its monetary policy (increasing the interest rate) four times in the last four decades. On every occasion, this unleashed processes that cut employment and production much more than analysts had initially foreseen both inside and outside the United States. Today, given the possible interest rate adjustment, the living memory of financial havoc, particularly in the emerging markets of Latin America, warns of the threat that history could repeat itself, above all in these highly dollar-exposed economies with strong capital flows.

In the last 35 years, the Fed's monetary policy decisions have changed the course of capital flows toward Latin Amer-

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GRAPH 1
FEDERAL FUNDS RATE (1975-2015)



Source: <http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data.htm>.

ica's emerging economies, encouraging massive capital inflows or flight. Graph 2 shows how the 2008 financial crisis sparked huge portfolio investment in the emerging economies, reaching historic records of US\$150.5 billion in 2011 and US\$127.67 billion in 2015.

The facts show the close correspondence between changes in the Fed's monetary policy, mainly interest rate variations, and financial crises in the region. The first episode was the "debt crisis" of 1982, when Paul Volcker, then head of the Fed, promoted the increase in federal fund rates to reduce domestic inflation and avoid "the economy's overheating"; the rate went from 11.2 percent in 1979 to 16.39 percent in 1981, with the resulting financial and economic debacle for Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

The next critical episode came in the mid-1990s with Allan Greenspan piloting the Fed. He promoted the creation of financial instruments known as securities linked to all manner of assets by institutional investors and investment banks, creating a huge bond bubble with expectations of very short-term profitability in local markets like Mexico, thus prompting the first great crisis of financial securities on a world level in December 1994, or the first crisis of the twenty-first century and the successive capital flight and GDP reduction in the second half of the 1990s.

When Greenspan put the brakes on monetary policy, he proved that even a small hike of 0.25 percent in the interest rate could have a huge effect on the prices of short- and long-term financial assets, as well as the costs of local companies holding dollar-denominated debt. The emerging countries were devastated by this action when the corporations with large foreign-currency-denominated debt went into bankruptcy in the 1990s.

The most recent episode was in 2007 with devastating effects mainly for the developed countries, with its epicenter in the United States, as a result of the long process of financial deregulation, added to the commercialization of huge volumes of financial transactions based on the unprecedented securitization of mortgage assets in conditions of high risk and volatility that the Fed's own policies fostered. The big investment banks, institutional investors, and other financial insti-

Fed has restricted its monetary policy four times in the last four decades. This unleashed processes that cut employment and production much more than analysts had foreseen.

The facts show the close correspondence between changes in the Fed's monetary policy, mainly interest rate variations, and financial crises in the region.

tutions brought the world to its knees in the face of global financial collapse.

Although the Fed always talks about putting domestic considerations first, the decision-making with regard to monetary policy is actually carried out in favor of institutional investors and Wall Street. It is obvious that with the dollar as the world's reserve currency, any movement in its value will affect all the economies on the planet. According to the UNCTAD, the 2015 drop in world trade and last summer's financial crisis with the volatility in world stock markets at historic highs, surpassed only by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, forced the Fed to be more cautious in its monetary policy changes.

Last September was the seventh anniversary of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy, which threw into high relief one of the Fed's greatest historic errors, and which, in the opinion of many experts, caused the worst world recession since the Great Depression. After that, the Fed decided to implement an extraordinary monetary policy to reactivate the economy and avoid a generalized collapse. These extraordinary—or less orthodox—measures were implemented in an

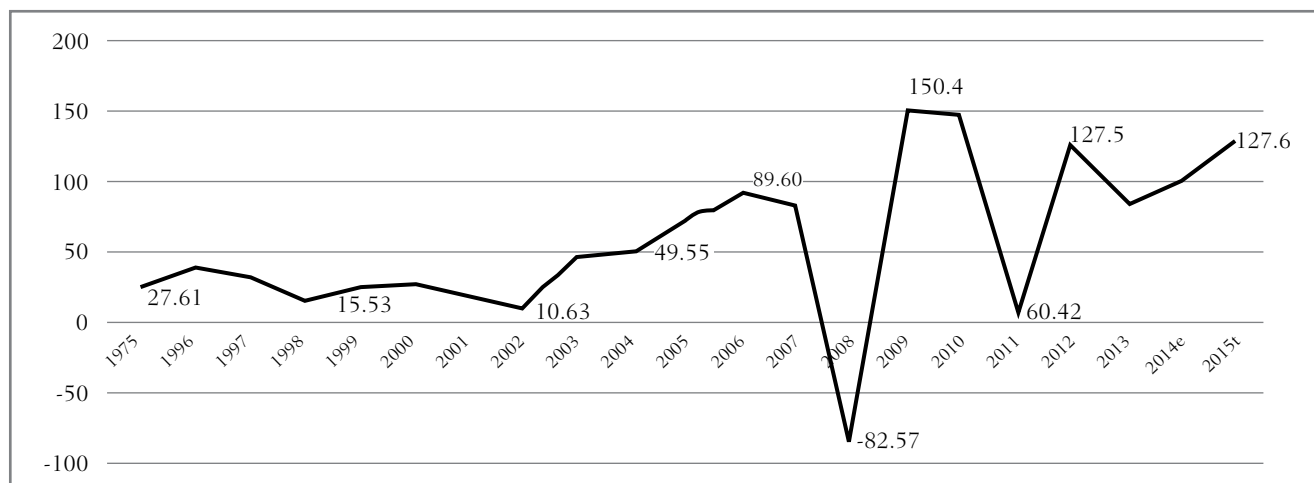
attempt to contain the deflation of assets and a generalized collapse of financial institutions with big problems on their balance sheets due to their interconnections with other firms on the verge of total insolvency.

At the beginning of the crisis, and given the obstruction of financial markets, the Fed channeled enormous quantities of liquidity into the U.S. financial system and cut the benchmark rate to 0.25 in December 2008. Also, the authorities launched different bailout programs for the financial institutions at risk of bankruptcy or insolvency.

Concretely, the Fed implemented three extraordinary measures:

1. Injection of liquidity or quantitative easing. This increased the central bank's balance sheet by upping the monetary base without growing the risk; that is, the central bank injected liquidity by purchasing public debt from financial bodies.
2. Qualitative expansion of the balance sheet. This policy transfers risk to the central bank at the time of purchasing assets from corporations, reducing the possibility of insolvency. That is, the central bank offers "clean" loans to financial institutions in exchange for lower quality assets.
3. Directly purchasing debt from corporations by printing money, thus increasing the amount of currency in circulation and reducing the interest rate starting in October 2008.

GRAPH 2
PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT IN EMERGING MARKETS (BILLIONS OF USD)



Source: <https://www.iif.com/publication/em-debt-monitor/emerging-market-debt-monitor>.

When interest rates were reduced, the holders of that liquidity sought greater yields elsewhere, like the emerging markets, particularly Mexico, to place their capital.

Since that time, the Fed has carried out an extraordinarily accommodative monetary policy, by pumping liquidity into the market and financial institutions as they need it, attempting to maintain the interest rate close to zero, as mentioned above. With this, it has helped preserve the value of financial assets by purchasing low-quality assets and —not very successfully— creating incentives for economic recovery. However, some authors think that its quantitative easing policy has also fostered unprecedented indebtedness of non-financial sectors.

Another big problem created by Fed decisions is the propagation of large pro-cyclical flows of capital as a result of the abundant injection of liquidity. When interest rates were reduced, the holders of that liquidity sought greater yields elsewhere, like the emerging markets, particularly Mexico, to place their capital, giving rise to an accelerated process of trans-

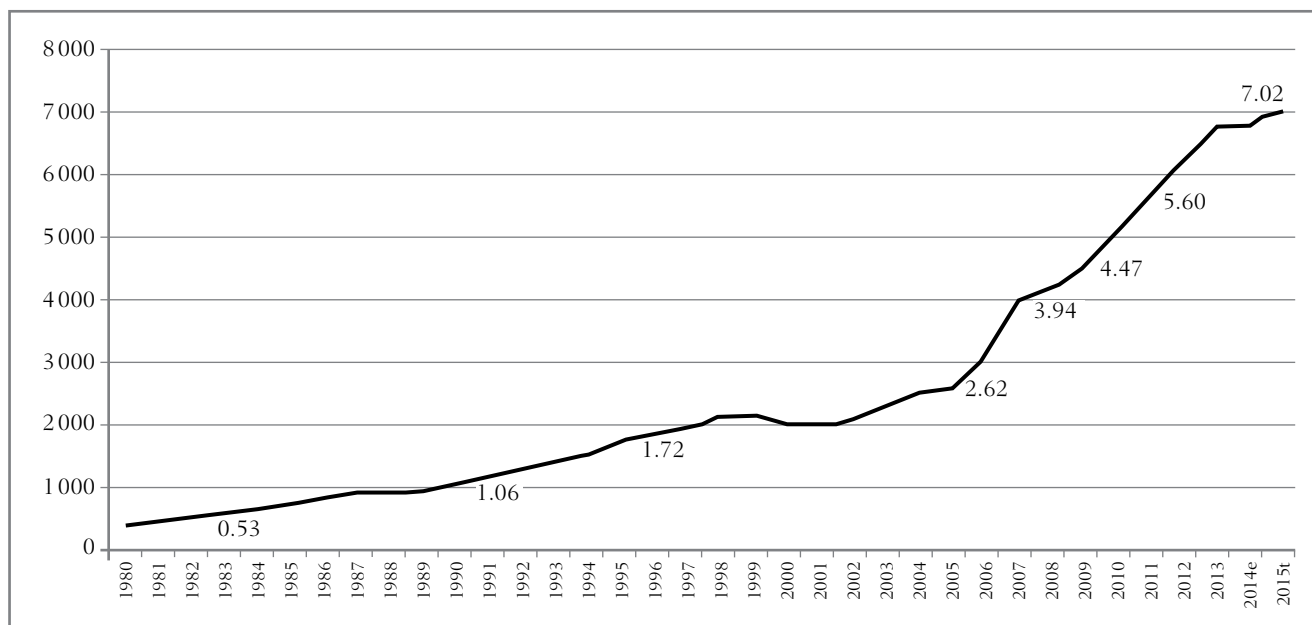
border carry trade. This strategy consists of using money loaned in dollars to fund investments in more profitable assets in other currencies and other markets, taking advantage of exchange-rate and interest-rate, differentials, thus fostering leveraged speculation, financial asset bubbles, and the assumption of risk by financial institutions without those resources being used for loans for productive activities.

For all these reasons, just by announcing a drop in monthly bond purchases and a future hike in the federal funds rate, the Fed has shaken the financial markets fed by these pro-cyclical capital flows that are seeking places with greater profitability, pushed by the conditions of the Great Crisis.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE EMERGING ECONOMIES

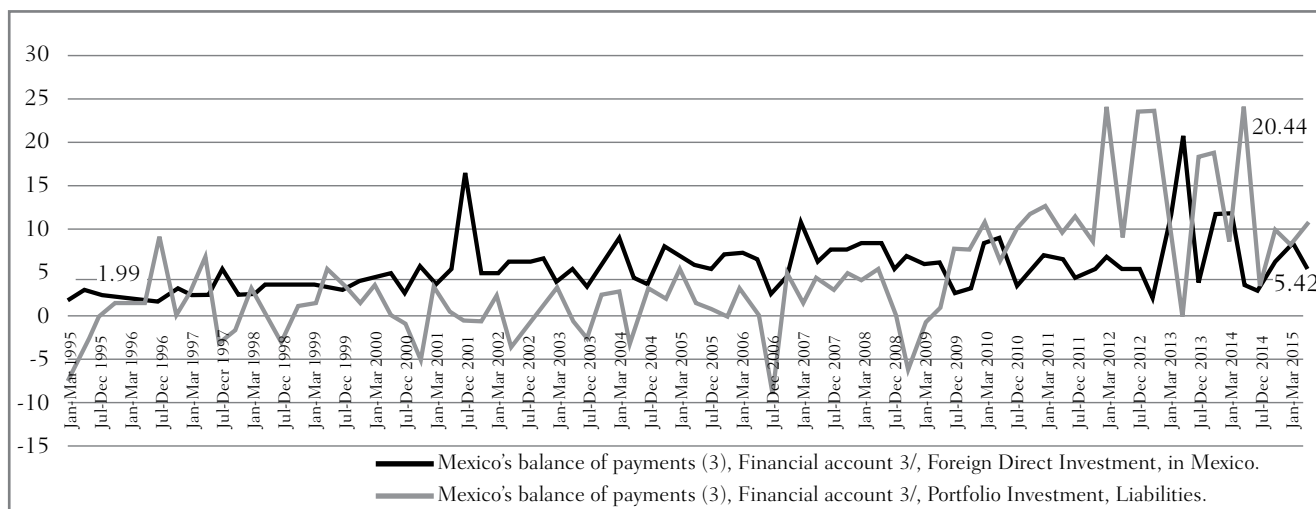
According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as U.S. interest rates rise, the future normalization of U.S. monetary policy has two possible scenarios: in the best of cases —though this is unlikely—, we could expect a relatively harmonious, streamlined withdrawal of capital in an atmosphere of growing financial volatility. The other scenario, which is more likely, would be an abrupt exodus of capital from the emerging economies, encouraged by a rapid rise in yields in the advanced economies, a big strengthening of the dollar, and accelerated

GRAPH 3
TOTAL EXTERNAL DEBT OF THE EMERGING ECONOMIES (TRILLIONS OF USD)



Source: <https://www.iif.com/publication/em-debt-monitor/emerging-market-debt-monitor>.

GRAPH 4
FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN MEXICO (BILLIONS OF USD)



Source: Developed by the author using data from <http://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarDirectorioCuadros§or=1§orDescripcion=Balanza>.

financial instability.³ In fact, liquidity in fixed-income markets both in the United States and other economies could drop.

What is more, as pointed out in the April 2015 edition of the *World Economic Outlook* report, the events in Russia and the Ukraine, the Middle East, and part of Africa could create greater tensions for trade and financial transactions worldwide. Direct financial links could increase the risks of world financial instability, demonstrating that geopolitical risks also contribute to instability.

The continued appreciation of the dollar and a brusque increase in U.S. interest rates, together with the worsening of geopolitical risks could exert more pressure on the currencies of the emerging economies and stock markets. After a prolonged period of capital flows into emerging economies, capital from abroad could abruptly reduce its tendency to take on debt in local currency, thus exacerbating the turbulence and creating difficulties for refinancing public and private debt in foreign currency.

Given the seriousness of the matter, a consensus has developed among the biggest economies and multilateral financial agencies like China, the World Bank, and the IMF, shown in their recommendation to the Fed not to increase its interest rate. The main argument is the slow growth in the developed countries and the stagnation of the emerging economies. Having the dollar as the main reserve currency implies that an increase in interest rates would bring with it a hike in the

cost of international loans and the re-appreciation of the dollar *vis-à-vis* other currencies, as well as the massive withdrawal of capital from the emerging markets and its redirection to the United States in search of higher yields through exchange-rate differentials.

What is clear today is the continual appearance of financial risk and the structural shifts in credit markets toward securitization.³ These developments are transferring attention from risks to the advanced economies toward the emerging economies and from the traditional banking sector to the parallel or shadow banking sector.⁴ For its part, the continual appearance of financial risk due to a quest for greater yields continues to raise the values of certain assets. A context of low interest rates also poses challenges for long-term assets, particularly in Europe's weaker life insurance companies.

One of the repercussions of the Fed decisions is that corporate indebtedness in the emerging economies has increased in the last decade. As Graph 3 shows, the total debt of the emerging economies (China not included) soared from

Continued appreciation of the dollar, a brusque increase in U.S. interest rates, and the worsening of geopolitical risks could exert more pressure on the currencies of the emerging economies.

US\$530.31 billion in 1983 to US\$4.46 trillion in 2008 and 7.02 trillion in 2015. According to the IMF's 2015 report, the debt of non-financial firms in the main emerging markets, including China, reached US\$18 trillion in 2014, when in 2004 it had only been US\$4 trillion. Indebtedness grew in construction and the energy sector, like oil and gas, due to the drop in international prices.

Low interest rates in the advanced economies, particularly the United States, Europe, and Japan, have favored this indebtedness. Companies' leveraging has included a large proportion of liabilities in dollars.⁵ While leveraging can facilitate investment, it can also increase the risk of default and the lack of liquidity. IMF estimates of corporate leveraging show that it underwent an important increase in China, Turkey, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Colombia, the countries most vulnerable in the case of a change in U.S. monetary policy.

Many of the loans have been provided by banks, but, to a large extent, corporate debt has been created through bond issues. The dependence on international financial conditions is a source of vulnerability for corporations and the emerging economies themselves, above all when financial markets are shaky.

Fed decisions have had a decisive influence on capital flows to Mexico. Graph 4 shows how foreign portfolio investment there has increased more than foreign direct investment due to the Fed's 2008 quantitative easing policy. This has accelerated external indebtedness, leaving us highly exposed. On the other hand, since the last quarter of 2014, macroeconomic and financial variables have evolved negatively. Prospects for growth in 2015 and 2016 have contracted, partially as a result of plummeting oil and raw material prices, trends that may continue until 2016. Continual fluctuations in the real exchange rate have generally reflected constant withdrawal of pro-cyclical capital since December 2014, increasing the risk of financial instability in the country.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The threat of another devastating financial crisis continues to exist. Nevertheless, the conditions for it to come about in the emerging economies exist now due to their economic and financial vulnerability, mainly because of their huge foreign-currency private and public debts. A move to raise interest rates by the Fed could bring financial disaster for these economies. We have to be prepared. However, it is imperative that

The dependence on international financial conditions is a source of vulnerability or corporations and the emerging economies themselves, above all when financial markets are shaky.

we put forward a change in the growth model adopted by these emerging economies, leaving behind the dependence on foreign capital at a time that the advanced economies are inhibiting the growth and mobility of that very capital. ■■

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NOTES

- ¹ The federal funds rate is the interest rate that banks charge each other for short-term or overnight loans. It has been used as a point of reference or target rate for monetary policy.
- ² Since then Fed interest rates have risen only twice, the first at the beginning and the latter at the end of 2016.
- ³ IMF, "Global Financial Stability Report 2015," <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/>.
- ⁴ That is, securitized debt and bond issues are increasingly replacing bank loans to corporations.
- ⁵ A deregulated banking system that operates parallel to the regulated banking system.
- ⁶ "Leveraging" refers to an increase in companies' ratio of debt *vis-à-vis* assets.

Myths and Realities of the TPP A Development Strategy for Mexico?

Enrique Pino Hidalgo*



Iván Alvarado/Reuters

The Mexican government's decision to sign off on the TransPacific Partnership (TPP) has sparked concern and questions about its content and repercussions on productive sectors, employment, and consumers. Debate about Mexico's entry into the new regional bloc was scanty and has been limited to the occasional comment by academics, government, and the media. Actually, the TPP initiative is not a concern of the average citizen; as a matter of fact, the project itself and the negotiations are confidential. In any case, the proposal of a trade bloc in the strategic Pacific Basin once again dredged up the old, orthodox liberal arguments that had been brandished about in favor of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

It is a good idea to first of all briefly review the ABCs of the partnership as a trade, investment, and services strategy fos-

tered by Washington since 2002. Today, it has been signed by Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, New Zealand, and Australia; Latin American participation is limited to Peru, Chile, and Mexico; and the last two are Canada and the United States, which, together with Mexico are part of NAFTA. These 12 countries make up a market of 800 million people, 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product, and supposed potential profits of US\$295 billion. But in trade and politics alike, absences also count. And in the case of the TPP, the absence of China, South Korea, Taiwan, Argentina, and Colombia weighs heavily. In 2013, Chinese authorities announced that they would examine the possibility of participating; in the end, they decided to push their own vision and style of trade—that is, intraregional trade—aimed at creating the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) as an alternative to the TPP.

In Mexico, government discourse promotes the TPP as one of the biggest opportunities yet for investment, employment, and growth. It also promises that its launch would necessar-

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Mexico's foreign trade difficulties occur in the exchange with the Asian countries that have refused to be part of the TPP.

Our trade deficit with China is precisely the most complex case.

ily lead to the agreed-upon elimination of tariffs, sanitary barriers, etc., and the negotiation of new rules in the sphere of government procurement and regarding politically sensitive areas like labor rights standard-setting, restricting intellectual property rights, and environmental protection.

Over the course of the negotiations, certain critical issues have come to the fore, such as the opening of the auto-parts and dairy markets, and the extension of patents on medications. In this context of secret negotiation and leaks to the press, the TPP is seen as a threat to the interests of important sectors of industry, agriculture, animal husbandry, unions, and consumers. Statements by autoworkers' unions in Mexico, milk and dairy producers in Quebec, and cancer patients and those affected by other diseases, alarmed at the rising cost of medications and therapies due to new restrictions on property rights, all evidence this concern. These issues are a first level of concerns and criticisms of the TPP, identified as an instrument of the big multinational corporations that will affect Mexico's consumers and producers alike.¹

REEMERGENCE OF THE ORTHODOX
FREE TRADE DISCOURSE

From the government's point of view, Mexico's entry into the TPP is put forward in terms of "forestalling" protectionist measures down the road by other countries in the context of the international recession. However, this regional accord does not cover us effectively for that potential risk if we consider that Mexico's supply of exportable goods is 80.2 percent concentrated in the U.S market, and 2.7 percent in Canada's. The 28 countries of the European Union barely receive 5.2 percent of Mexico's exports (see Table 1). Under these conditions, the TPP will have hardly any significant effect because Mexico's two main trade flows are in North America in the framework of NAFTA, which would not be changed by the TPP.

It is argued that Mexico would be guaranteed preferential entry to TPP member nations' automobile, electrical, electron-

TABLE 1
MEXICO'S TRADE IN GOODS (2014)

	Millions of US dollars
Goods exports	397 506
Goods imports	411 581
	%
Share in total world exports	2.09
Share in total world exports	2.16
Exports by Main Destination	%
1. United States	80.2
2. European Union (28 countries)	5.7
3. Canada	2.7
4. China	1.5
5. Brazil	1.2
Imports by Main Country of Origin	%
1. United States	49.0
2. China	16.2
3. European Union (28 countries)	11.1
4. Japan	4.4
5. Republic of Korea	1.5

Source: WTO, Country Profiles, <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=S&Country=US>.

ic, agro-industrial, chemical, steel, perfume, and cosmetics sectors. However, this is insubstantial because Mexico's trade with Vietnam, Singapore, or Australia is very small, even if it is tending to increase. In 2014, Mexico's trade with Vietnam showed a deficit of US\$1.7 billion. Our country purchases cellular phones, printers, and electrical materials from Vietnam, while it exports goods with lower value-added, such as crustaceous and mollusk flours, dehydrated butterfat, and meat. Actually, Vietnam and Singapore's manufactured exports turn both countries into Mexico's competitors, both in its domestic market and internationally.²

The country's foreign trade difficulties occur in the exchange with the Asian countries that have refused to be part of the TPP. Our country's trade deficit with China is precisely the most complex case. Over the last ten years, Mexican exports to China averaged at about 1.5 percent of total trade, while our purchases remained between 15 and 16 percent of all imports. As a result, Mexico's trade balance with China

has rapidly deteriorated; in 2014, this resulted in a US\$60-billion deficit.³ Something similar, although on a smaller scale, is the case for Mexico's trade with South Korea, which also has shown a more than US\$12-billion deficit over the last five years.⁴ As can be observed, Mexico's most serious foreign trade problems do not involve the new Asian or Latin American partners, but the countries that are not in the TPP.

The official discourse used to market the partnership states that the free trade policy embodied in NAFTA and other trade pacts has allowed Mexico to become a "world class" exporting power. This is only partially true because to achieve this, Mexico became a great importer of inputs, machinery, equipment, and enormous amounts of consumer goods. The final effect of massive imports is that they slow economic growth and job creation.

Mexico's status as a great exporting-importing power translates into a deficit in the trade balance, mainly with the Asian economies that are not part of the TPP. In 2014, exports came to US\$397 billion, while imports came to US\$411 billion, with a negative balance of US\$14 billion. In a context of continuing plummeting oil prices, Mexico's trade balance exerts great pressure on the peso *vis-à-vis* the dollar. But the trade deficit is a symptom of industry's structural weakness, particularly of the export manufacturing sector, characterized by operations with high imports, averaging 70 percent of total inputs. By its very nature, the TPP is not an instrument that can solve this problem in the country's foreign trade.

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM:

LESS COMPETITIVE

MEXICAN EXPORTS

Another objection to Mexico's joining the new regional bloc entered the debate: the loss of competitiveness of manufactured goods assembled in Mexico. Added to this is the small or complete lack of effectiveness of policies to foster trade that have made Mexico's entry into the TPP useless. Let us consider that it is the world's second country in terms of the

The biggest losses in Mexico's trade have been in electrical equipment and the apparel industry, in contrast with the dynamism of exports from the auto industry.

number of free trade agreements; it has signed with 43 countries. But the structure of trade has not significantly changed and, in most cases, its trade balances are negative.⁵

Ineffective government policies and less competitiveness are evidenced by Mexican manufactures being replaced in the U.S. market by products from China. In effect, over the last six years, Mexico has gone from being the United States' second trade partner to its fourth. In 2014, the structure of U.S. imports gave China the lead, with 19.9 percent of the total, followed by the European Union and Canada, with 17.8 and 14.8 percent, respectively. At the same time, imports from Mexico came to 12.5 of the total, putting it in fourth place (see Table 2).

The biggest losses in Mexico's trade have been in electrical equipment and the apparel industry, in contrast with the dynamism of exports from the auto industry. In any case, China continues to be the United States' top trade partner, followed by Canada.⁶

Minister of the Economy and Trade Ildefonso Guajardo has stated that the TPP will strengthen the productive chains

TABLE 2
U.S. TRADE IN GOODS (2014)

	Millions of US dollars
Goods exports	1 620 532
Goods imports	2 412 547
	%
Share in total world exports	8.53
Share in total world imports	12.64
Exports by Main Destination	%
1. Canada	19.3
2. European Union (28)	17.1
3. Mexico	14.8
4. China	7.7
5. Japan	4.1
Imports by Main Country of Origin	%
1. China	19.9
2. European Union (28 countries)	17.8
3. Canada	14.8
4. Mexico	12.5
5. Japan	5.7

Source: WTO, Country Profiles, <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDB-CountryPFView.aspx?Language=S&Country=US>.

of Mexico, the United States, and Canada, turning North America into the world's most competitive region. However, this idea does not seem well-founded if we take into consideration that the break-up of Mexico's industrial supply chains due to so many company closures forces it to import large volumes of inputs and intermediate goods. Actually, the dogma of extreme "free trade" created harsh, unfavorable competition that led to the bankruptcy or disappearance of thousands of small and medium-sized companies. This led to the mass importing of intermediate goods, which represent on average 70 percent of industrial inputs; 15 percent of those come from China and 50 percent, from the United States.⁷

Restructuring the productive chains and re-launching competitive trade cannot be achieved through the TPP. What is needed is a new development strategy based on the design of active policies for financing, nurturing innovation, and science and technology that give impetus to competitiveness and productivity. However, active industrial policies must be accompanied by effective measures to strengthen the domestic market, and leaving behind the model of low wages in place for more than 30 years.

These are the minimum bases required for generating endogenous growth with the capability to re-launch the export sector in the context of a globalized economy. From that point of view, the Transpacific Partnership will not make much of a favorable contribution to the country's development. ■■■

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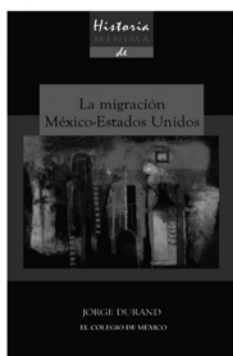
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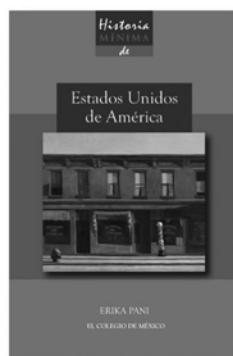
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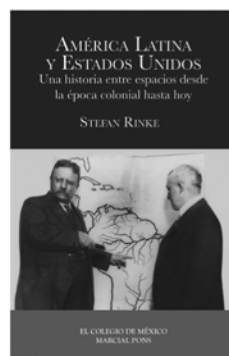
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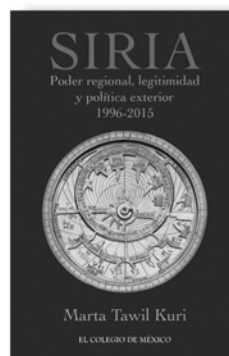
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Advances and Challenges In Teacher Evaluation in Mexico

María Esther Padilla Medina*
José Luis Gutiérrez Espíndola**



El Universal Estado de México

BRIEF HISTORY

The first formal experiences of teacher evaluation in Mexico came out of the National Teaching Career Program (PNCM), created in 1992 to evaluate, among other things, professional preparation. The program did this with an exam that was widely used for 20 years, and the results determined teachers' bonuses.

In 2006, the National Examinations of Academic Achievement in Learning Centers (Enlace) were established; these

were given each year to students from third to sixth grades. The test results were correlated to teaching performance and PNCM economic stimuli. That correlation introduced a perverse incentive: teachers who wanted bonuses concentrated their efforts on preparing the students for the test, ignoring the established curriculum; prevented low-performing students from taking the tests; and manipulated students' responses. This contributed to eroding Enlace test results' credibility.

In 2010, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported on the need to implement a rigorous system of teacher evaluation based on useful, applicable standards that would define good teaching in Mexico. It also called for designing a support system to that end. For this reason, in 2011, the Mexican government took three actions that put teachers at the center of the evaluation: the

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The 2013 reform was not strictly speaking “educational”; it changed the terms of the political pact with the union and modified the relationship of forces.

general PNCM guidelines were adjusted; a universal exam was established to develop a comprehensive diagnostic analysis of teachers’ professional competencies; and the Program of Stimuli for Quality Teaching was created to reward and encourage those rated among the top teachers and whose students advanced significantly.¹

The rigorous PNCM analysis showed that, “from a statistical point of view, salary incentives associated with hiring or promotion show little or no impact on student learning.”² It also noted that the instruments used to gauge student performance and teachers’ professional training were limited in design and implementation.

The universal evaluation sparked complaints from teachers, which is why the powerful National Educational Workers Union (SNTE), with its over one and a half million members, decided to reject the test being given in 2012 and created different controversies. This meant that by June of that year, only nearly 370 000 PNCM-registered public school teachers had taken the test. The rest of the teachers ended up taking the test voluntarily, with the result that only 30 percent of the 260 000 registered primary school teachers took the professional training test.

THE 2013 EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The new federal administration launched the legislative process that concluded with amendments to Articles 3 and 73 of the Constitution in February 2013. Backed by the main political parties in the framework of the Pact for Mexico, as well as by a broad consensus in society, these amendments gave constitutional autonomy to the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE); created the Professional Teaching Service; universalized obligatory evaluation; and established competitions as the only basis for being hired or promoted. The last point *de facto* hit at the heart of the SNTE’s main source of power: control over hiring.

It was no surprise that, in contrast with past experiences, this reform was not the product of a political agreement with

the national SNTE leadership. Quite to the contrary: to move ahead, it was necessary to neutralize the union’s veto power by removing the head of its national leadership. In fact, the reform was publically touted as an effort by the state to recover its control over educational policy, which had been seriously eroded by the alliance between the SNTE and the federal National Action Party administrations between 2000 and 2012.

The 2013 reform was not strictly speaking “educational”; but neither was it merely an administrative adjustment: it changed the terms of the political pact with the union and modified the relationship of forces. This is no small matter, although its real merit will only be possible to measure in light of what it can achieve in terms of:

- a) more solid diagnostic analyses of the state of education based on objective, independent evaluations from a perspective of rights;
- b) the recovery of teaching as a valued profession in society and significant improvements in processes of training, ongoing training, and tutoring for teachers;
- c) the effective establishment of merit as the sole criterion for hiring and promotion in educational services, eliminating corruption and the patronage system;
- d) a significant decrease in educational inequality, expressed on every level, such as infrastructure and equipping according to the kind of school, the quality in the education offered, and, of course, in terms of opportunities and results; and
- e) sustained improvement in all students’ academic performance, regardless of their ethnic origin, socio-economic condition, or other variables.

TEACHER EVALUATION: TRAITS, ADVANCES, AND CHALLENGES

The Professional Teachers Service (SPD) created by the reform stipulates that teachers will be hired and promoted to supervisory positions through a competitive selection process that guarantees that each candidate will have “the ideal knowledge and skills” for each post; also, honors, incentives, and job security will be subject to mandatory evaluation. This has all been regulated in the new General Law on Professional Teaching Service (LGSPD).

One of the aspects of this law that has divided public opinion is the stipulation that teachers who do not pass the

test after three attempts will be suspended from educational service.³ This is the reform's most controversial point since some people have interpreted it as affecting teachers' labor rights, while others think it is indispensable for ensuring quality teaching.⁴

A MERIT-BASED SYSTEM

Today, the SPD decides how teachers move ahead in their careers, and the evaluation system comes under the aegis of the constitutionally autonomous INEE as well as both federal and state educational authorities. The system has been perfected in order to use the evaluation to ensure that every teacher who needs to improve his/her work and students' performance can do so.

Before 2013, the purpose of the evaluation was mainly to create incentives for teachers to improve the quality of education. The rules the SPD is establishing now for hiring, promotion, continuing in their positions, and recognition make merit and capability central and also attempt to reverse the loss of control of the process by federal educational authorities.

We should reiterate that, before 2013, to be hired or promoted, teachers and other education officials depended on the possibility of inheriting or purchasing a post, being promoted by friends, or because of their links to the union leadership; all these practices conferred enormous power on the SNTE, whose control extended to the very nerve-center of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP). The challenge is to cut out any kind of practices in granting positions, promotions, etc., in ways other than the competitive selection process and evaluations.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION PROCESSES

The INEE maintains that the 2015 competitive selection processes and tests were carried out in an atmosphere of social stability and achieved significant legitimacy among those evaluated. There were 360 359 participants, including primary, middle-school, and high school teachers who applied for jobs or promotions, as well as those who were tested so they could remain in their jobs.⁵ However, in several states, the atmosphere surrounding the tests was tense due to the

Teachers who do not pass the test after three attempts will be suspended from educational service: this is the reform's most controversial point.

demonstrations against them and the intimidation suffered by participating teachers on the part of groups opposed to the educational reform.⁶ This led to test venues being changed at the last minute and the deployment of strong police detachments for security. The states with the most adverse conditions were Michoacán, Guerrero, Chiapas, and Oaxaca, where educational authorities to set new test dates.

This makes it all the more necessary to improve coordination, planning, and logistics among local educational authorities, decentralized bodies, the SEP on a federal level, and the INEE. Also, given the operational problems such as mistakes in notifying those who should take the test, it is important to be sure that stakeholders are informed in a timely manner about the different stages of the process so that they have the conditions and time they need. In addition, it will be necessary to review the digital application platform and the facilities in the test venues in order to ensure the appropriate human, technological, physical, and infrastructure resources be available to guarantee participation in equal conditions. No less important is safeguarding participants' security. But perhaps the greatest challenge is to foster a new culture of evaluation among educators, which would in turn give rise to teachers' greater, more decided participation.

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

In 2014, the tests for basic education were printed. This implied a delicate security protocol for their printing and an important outlay of human and financial resources for their transportation and storage. During the testing itself, different problems arose, such as the test books having been printed on red background, making the questions difficult to read. In some cases, the answer sheets did not correspond to the notebooks; personalized materials were given to people who should not have received them; and some participants had to share a single test book. For all these reasons, it was decided that the tests should be given on line in order to guarantee better security and more efficient reporting of test results.⁷

A comprehensive evaluation must be capable of linking the test results with teachers' training, their performance in the classroom, the curriculum, and student performance test results among other issues.

When complaints are made about mistakes or ambiguities in some of the questions on the different tests, a thorough review of the instruments' quality and contents, the technical aspects of their construction and make-up, as well as the mechanisms for applying them is required. The aim of this is to move toward a comprehensive, fair, technically trustworthy evaluation of what each test subject knows considering the complexity of the circumstances in which they teach.

EVALUATION RESULTS

The first results were announced in February 2016; each person could go on line and use his or her personal password to find out his/her result. It is fundamental that they be delivered in an appropriate format, with contextualized information and the analytical and interpretational tools needed to understand them, and that they provide the guidance that will allow teachers to see their strengths and where they should improve.

It is also to be expected that the added information will give educational authorities elements for designing training and professional follow-up programs that will differ greatly from the old ongoing training. The latter were mass-based and formalist because they were related more to getting monetary bonuses than to reviewing teaching practices; also, they had no impact on improving education whatsoever.

Controversy has also arisen around the issue of disseminating the general results of the performance evaluation, with some people invoking the right to protection of their personal data. For this reason, educational authorities have limited themselves to providing aggregate data (how many people took the tests, how many did not, what proportion of test subjects came from each of the different educational levels and performance groups, etc.). However, civil society organizations, notably the group called Mexicans First, under the banner of accountability, have asked for each person's test results to be published. Although at first glance this seems

reasonable, it does not seem to contribute to strengthening an evaluation that has been conceived of essentially as a learning exercise (for improving education) and only secondly as a tool for taking specific action (positive action, such as promotions and incentives, or negative action, such as reassigning teachers or removing them from their posts).

An important number of complaints have appeared in the media and social networks alleging that several of those who took the tests, obtained *suitable* results, and were placed on pre-selected lists have not been hired. This may be due to the fact that hiring does not depend on the test results alone, but also on the needs for personnel at different levels, kinds of work, and workplaces in primary, middle-school, and high-school education, as well as to the nature of the openings, whether permanent or temporary. Nevertheless, it may also be due to the persistence of the old patronage-based practices by officials and union members who are trying to perpetuate their power.

The fundamental challenge for educational authorities, upon which their own legitimacy largely depends, is to ensure that opening the competition process for new hires, the allocation of posts, and assignation of contracts be transparent and unequivocally linked to the results. This implies the need to publish notice of all newly created jobs and the permanent and temporary vacancies that occur every school year, both on a federal and state level, assigning new teachers to the places where they are most required, strictly following the pre-selected lists.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHALLENGES: A COMPREHENSIVE, FORMATIVE EVALUATION

The ultimate aim of achieving quality education depends not only on evaluating teachers, their training, and their performance, but on a series of very diverse factors. For that reason, it is necessary to advance toward a comprehensive evaluation capable of linking in a non-linear way the test results with teachers' training, with their performance in the classroom, with the curriculum, with the conditions in which teaching and learning take place, with educational policies and programs, and with student performance test results. This is the only way will we have diagnostic analyses capable of having an impact on the design of new educational policies oriented to making all children's and young people's right to a quality education a reality. ■■■

FURTHER READING

- INEE, "Informe de supervisión y observación de los procesos de evaluación del Servicio Profesional Docente" (Mexico City: INEE, 2015), https://acrofobos.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/informe_de_supervisi3b3n_10abril2015.pdf.
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- SEP and SNTE, "Lineamientos generales de Carrera Magisterial," Mexico City, 1998, http://www.alianzaviciva.org.mx/guia_transparencia/files/pdf/educacion/14_lineamientosobrecarreramagisterial/lineamientos_carrera_magisterial.pdf.

NOTES

- ¹ See "Programa Nacional de Carrera Magisterial. Lineamientos generales," Mexico City, SEP/SNTE, 2011, http://www.sep.gob.mx/work/models/sep1/Resource/2241/1/images/LINEAMIENTOS_GENERALES_2011.pdf; and "Acuerdo para la Evaluación Universal de Docentes y Directivos en Servicio en Educación Básica," Mexico City, SEP/SNTE, 2011, <http://www.evaluacionuniversal.sep.gob.mx/acuerdo.pdf>; and "Programa de Estímulos a la Calidad Docente," Mexico City, SEP/SNTE, 2011, http://estimulosaianza.sep.gob.mx/docs/Lineamientos_Estimulos_Calidad_Docente.pdf.
- ² Lucrecia Santibáñez, José-Felipe Martínez, Ashlesha Datar, Patrick J. McEwan, Claude Messan-Setodji, and Ricardo Basurto-Dávila, *Haciendo camino. Análisis del sistema de evaluación y del impacto del programa de estí-*

mulos docentes Carrera magisterial en México (Santa Monica, California: Rand, 2006), p. 116.

- ³ It is also one of the most misunderstood stipulations: the only teachers who will be separated from service are those who do not pass the test and entered service after the 2013 constitutional and legal reform was passed. For those who were already employed and who do not pass the test after three attempts, the option will be their relocation within the system in non-teaching occupations. In addition, according to the new legal stipulations, those who have been notified and have not taken any of the tests that are part of the evaluation will also be separated from service without legal responsibility on the part of educational authorities. A little over 3 000 teachers have already been fired for this reason.
- ⁴ It should be pointed out that the Supreme Court has already ruled that the General Law on Professional Teaching Service is constitutional and does not negatively affect labor rights.
- ⁵ INEE, "Presenta el INEE balance sobre las evaluaciones docentes aplicadas en 2015," Press Release 41, http://www.inee.edu.mx/images/stories/2015/calendario_2015/Comunicado41.pdf, p. 2.
- ⁶ Although the educational reform significantly reduced the SNTE's power, its new leadership opted to support it and not confront the federal government, which was only possible after its top leader, Elba Esther Gordillo, was jailed in February 2013. In contrast, the National Coordinator of Educational Workers (CNTE), a strong teachers' union current mainly based in the states of Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas, the historic opposition to the official leadership, strongly rejected the reform. To show that opposition, it has resorted to different tactics, including the boycott of testing.
- ⁷ The tests for indigenous primary and pre-school teachers continue to be printed since, to be able to evaluate their command of the written language, it would be necessary for the computer keyboards to have enough symbols to be able to write in the whole gamut of the indigenous languages' alphabets.

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Diverse and Fragmented High-School-Level Education in Mexico

Adriana Dander F.*

High-school-level education in our country faces many problems, ranging from difficulties in validating course credits from one institution to another in the different systems that offer it, to low graduate achievement levels and high drop-out rates, among others. One of the educational alternatives on this level is high/preparatory school, which originated in Mexico with the foundation of the National Preparatory School in 1867¹ by its first general director, Dr. Gabino Barreda. However, for a very long time, no educational body or authority was in charge of fostering high schools nationwide.²

The prolonged lack of general guidelines for this level of education meant that it grew according to the specific needs of very diverse bodies or institutions. This made it possible, on the one hand, to respond to the specific demand for these educational services, and also contributed, on the other hand, to the existence of a diverse, fragmented series of options created by different public, private, and/or autonomous educational institutions and bodies, all of them called subsystems. Given the specificity of each of their curricula, this makes comparing them and establishing equivalencies difficult.

High schools were originally conceived as preparation for those who wanted to go on to higher education. However, as they developed, other training elements were incorporated with an eye to preparing students for the world of work. In addition, they were not established as an option for everyone. Nevertheless, this perspective changed since it was considered a means for social mobility.



Table 1 shows the huge fragmentation of high-school-level education into different kinds of education and training regulated by bodies that belong to the federal government, universities, and the private sector. Very often, bodies with similar names have curricula that differ significantly. Added to this, the lack of compatibility limits the harmonious, coherent, and effective operation of high-school-level education. The table shows that the existing educational alternatives are managed by different bodies and follow guidelines established by different educational authorities.

These authorities are charged with establishing norms regarding curricula and how they operate on campuses. That is, they define how and which educational option will be offered (see Table 2).

The educational types or approaches can be classified by the structure of the curricula in each institution offering high-school-level education (see Table 3):

1. *General/preparatory high school.* The aim here is to broaden and consolidate the knowledge acquired in middle school and prepare students for higher education in all spheres of knowledge. This kind of education is offered by both public and private institutions.

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TABLE 1
EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Type of Funding	Administration	Subsystems
Public	Centralized by the federal government	General Office for High School Education (DGB) General Office for Technological Agricultural Education (DGETA) General Office for Technological Industrial Education (DGETI) General Office for Education in Ocean Science and Technology (DGECyTM)
	Decentralized (semi-autonomous) agencies of the federal government	National School for the Federal District's Technical/Professional Education (Conalep DF) National School for Technical/Professional Education for the State of Oaxaca (Conalep Oaxaca) Center for Technical Industrial Training (CETI) High School of Mexico (Colbach-México)
	De-concentrated agencies of the federal government	National Institute for Literature and the Fine Arts (INBAL) National Polytechnic Institute (IPN)
	Centralized by state governments	High/preparatory schools under each state's Ministry of Public Education (SEP)
	Decentralized (semi-autonomous) agencies of state governments	Schools for Scientific and Technological Studies (CECyTEs) State high schools (Cobach) High-School-Level Distance Learning (EMSaD) Comprehensive Community High Schools (BIC) Bilingual Intercultural High Schools (BI) National Technical/Professional High Schools (Conalep) Other decentralized subsystems under the aegis of the state governments
Autonomous	Autonomous	High/preparatory schools belonging to autonomous state universities
Private	Private	High/preparatory schools belonging to private institutions

Source: Developed by the author using data from Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE), *Panorama educativo de México. Indicadores del Sistema Educativo Nacional 2014. Educación básica y media superior*, 2015, p. 60, <http://publicaciones.inee.edu.mx/buscadorPub/P1/B/113/P1B113.pdf>.

Bodies with similar names have curricula that differ significantly. Added to this, the lack of compatibility limits the harmonious, coherent, and effective operation of high-school-level education.

2. *General high school with vocational training.* This shares the basic objective of general high school but its curriculum is structured to include subjects that prepare the student for the labor market in the hope that the student will have the training required to generally facilitate his/her entry into the productive sector.
3. *Technological high school.* In addition to broadening and consolidating knowledge acquired in middle school and prepar-

ing the student in all areas of knowledge for going on to higher education, this kind of school trains him/her to participate in economic development through industrial, agricultural, fishing, forestry, or service activities. Borrowing from genetics, this is also called “bivalent,” meaning that graduates also have training in a technical field, thus facilitating their entry into the labor market.

4. *Professional technical education combined with high school.* This is a kind of dual education similar to that of a technical high school.
5. *Technical professional education without high school.* This kind of school offers a specialized education in a great number of mid-level trades or professions. This allows graduates to enter different sectors of production.

But due to their specificity, it remains to be seen where certain other options would fall: military high school, high schools dedicated to the arts and humanities, to bilingual, intercultural studies, or targeting the indigenous population, as well as what has been called “dual education.”

As shown, high-school-level education is offered by different kinds of institutions. Classroom-based systems alone offer more than 100 different curricula; creating equivalency norms for these systems can be complicated, making transferring from one kind of school to another very difficult, given

their different educational and training options. In addition, institutions can offer one or several kinds of education simultaneously, operating in one or several educational modes, be of different sizes (both in terms of number of campuses and in the number of students enrolled), and use differently structured curricula and forms of student organization and management.

It should be pointed out that to analyze high-school-level educational subsystems, in addition to taking into account the foregoing aspects, it is important to identify their source

TABLE 2
TYPE OF EDUCATION

Type	Option	Characteristics
Classroom-based	On-site	Class is given on a campus with fixed schedules and school calendars. It has a teaching staff and follows an established curriculum. It may or may not have digital teaching. The student must take and pass the courses in the curriculum to obtain the corresponding certificate.
	Intensive	In general, this kind of schooling is similar to the on-site option (above); the difference is that the intensive course packs the same curriculum into a shorter period.
Non-classroom Based	Online	Students do not necessarily meet in a common specific space or time. The institution must have specific educational and technological strategies for developing and fulfilling the curriculum. A pre-established curriculum exists. The institution has teaching staff who may work on campus or in other spaces where they have access to information and communication technologies. There is a fixed school calendar with flexible hours. The student must take and pass all the subjects in the curriculum to obtain the corresponding certificate.
Mixed	Self-paced	Schedules and teaching times are flexible. Part of the curriculum is made up of serially numbered courses, while the rest are electives. Teaching services are supplied according to students' needs; however at least 30 percent of learning activities must be supervised by a teacher. Students carry out activities on campus and also under their own supervision. School calendar and times are flexible. Students must take and pass all courses in the curriculum to obtain the corresponding certificate.
	Mixed	This kind of school combines strategies, methods, and resources included in the different options according to the kind of student population, the nature of the academic model, and the conditions of the educational institution. It shares the characteristics of the self-paced option; the difference is that in the mixed option, students must follow a fixed school calendar, although the school day may be pre-established or flexible. At least 40 percent of learning activities must be supervised by a teacher. Students must take and pass all courses in the curriculum to obtain the corresponding certificate.

Source: *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, “Acuerdo secretarial 445,” October 21, 2008, http://dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5064952&fecha=21/10/2008.

TABLE 3
EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Educational Model	Educational Type or Approach
General High School	General high/preparatory school
	General high school with vocational training
Technological High School	Technological high school
Professional Technical School	Technical/Professional education, mixed with high/preparatory school
	Technical/Professional education without high/preparatory course work

Source: Developed by the author.

TABLE 4
ENROLLMENT AND CAMPUSES BY EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Educational Model	Enrollment	Campuses*
General High School	2 896 761	11 265
Technological High School	1 706 076	2 699
Professional/Technical School	79 499	668
TOTAL	4 682 336	14 652

*Note: Some campuses provide more than one kind of educational option.

Source: Developed by the author using data from Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE), *Panorama educativo de México. Indicadores del Sistema Educativo Nacional 2014. Educación básica y media superior*, 2015, p. 60, http://publicaciones.inee.edu.mx/buscadorPub/P1/B/113/P1_B113.pdf.

of funding and the kind of administrative control they are under. This is because these two elements can have a significant impact on the implementation of specific instructions from the federal government or the state governments themselves.

Today, Mexico's high schools are immersed in two different kinds of reforms: one began in 2008 with the application of the Comprehensive Reform of High-School-Level Education (RIEMS). This was based on a competency approach and creating what it calls the common curricular framework, which, given the context of diversity, seeks to perform as a point of convergence. The other process began in 2013 after the implementation of the General Law on Professional Teaching Services, which stipulates the criteria, terms, and conditions that teachers must cover to be hired, promoted, and receive acknowledgements, as well as to remain in service.

Its fragmentation and functioning based on different, particular decisions and its relatively recent incorporation into educational topics of national interest invite us to think about the limits and scope of the reforms on this level of education.

This overview shows that, on the one hand, high-school-level education has only recently been included on the national agenda. On the other hand, both the lack of a national curriculum and the conditions and contexts in which each institution has covered the need for this kind of education have made diversity and fragmentation its main characteristics.

Its fragmentation and functioning based on different, particular decisions and actions, as well as its relatively recent incorporation into educational topics of national interest invite us to think about the limits and scope of the reforms this level of education is immersed in. It also suggests the need to explore the vast possibilities for reviewing and analyzing high-school-level education, which exists in its many different forms but is not viewed in a comprehensive, overall way, as a significant element for defining educational policy that will have a great impact on our society and economy. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Article 37 of the General Law on Education stipulates that high-school-level education is constituted by high schools and other options for education. In our country, the term "high [or preparatory] school" is specifically used to refer to studies after middle school that prepare the student for university.

² In 2002, the General Coordinating Office for Middle Education was created to deal with aspects of high-school-level education until the Vice-ministry of High-School-Level Education (SEMS) was created in 2005.

The Mexican and Chinese Diasporas in the United States Converging Political Challenges?

Silvia Núñez García*

“The movement that makes worlds go around is made up of the game of differences and how they attract and repel each other.”

OCTAVIO PAZ

The importance that migration has taken on globally allows us to predict that the twenty-first century will be marked by human mobility. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), recently incorporated into the United Nations System, by 2015, an estimated 244 million international migrants existed worldwide. This was a record: 41 percent more than the number registered in the year 2000, without even counting the migrants inside countries, estimated at 740 million. Of these, China heads the list with 150 million people going from rural to urban areas.¹

In this context, one of the ways Mexico and China converge is that they are two of the three countries with the greatest number of immigrants in the United States today.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the size of the Mexican immigrant community came to 11.7 million in 2014, or 28 percent of the entire population born outside the United States.² In 2013, the number of Chinese immigrants came to 2.01 million—the Census Bureau includes people from Hong Kong in this total.³ It is particularly significant to point out that precisely beginning in 2013, China’s new immigrants and those from India began to displace the number of new entries by Mexicans; this trend has continued due to the deportations and voluntary return of Mexicans from the U.S.

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Robert Galbraith/Reuters

In the case of Chinese immigrants, the recent increase is due to young students being attracted: about 300 000. A considerable number of them arrive expecting to settle permanently in the United States, thus breaking with the traditional pattern of providing cheap labor or requesting political asylum.

So, by 2013, 47 percent of Chinese immigrants 25 or older had undergraduate or graduate studies, contrasting with only 28 percent of all immigrants and 30 percent of U.S. Americans.⁴ The difference in this regard with Mexican immigrants is dramatic: only 6 percent of the latter had this level of schooling in 2014.

On the other hand, we should underline that the United States is no exception on the global migratory stage, which seems to be framed with restrictive, exclusionary policies, aimed at combatting uncertainty caused not only by economic cycles, but also by political-electoral periods. The current U.S. presidential campaigns are the best example: they have been enormously controversial due to Republican candidate Donald Trump’s positions on irregular migration.

For this reason, a decisive step for countering these kinds of negative trends has been to speed up immigrants' naturalization as U.S. citizens. To illustrate this in figures, I should mention that of the 11.7 Mexican immigrants in the United States, only 27 percent became citizens in 2014. This figure is very low if we compare it with the 47 percent of all of those born abroad living there who became citizens in 2014.⁵ By contrast, the Chinese are much more likely to apply for citizenship; they surpassed both of the other groups even a year before: 54 percent of them, more than two million, became citizens.⁶

In absolute terms, only 3.16 million Mexicans become U.S. citizens in 2014, partly because of the weight of undocumented immigrants who could not fulfill the eligibility requirements.

The transition to permanent residency in the U.S. for both Mexicans and Chinese does converge,⁷ however, in the fact that the majority of both groups obtain this status through family members who are already citizens (63 percent in the case of the Mexicans, and 33 percent in the case of the Chinese).

Due to the importance of minorities settled in the United States because of their demographic curve and the rapid aging of the general population, it is interesting to point out that Mexican immigrants are younger than the rest of those born abroad: on average, they are 41,⁸ compared to 44 for all immigrants and 45 for Chinese immigrants.⁹

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the Mexican Diaspora in the U.S. comes to a total of 23.2 million, including Mexicans born in Mexico and their children. The Chinese Diaspora comes to about 4.4 million. I should underline the organizational dimension of these two communities, given that both groups need to build spaces for political empowerment to safeguard their interests.

Mexicans have established numerous well-funded, coordinated organizations and clubs throughout the country, including mutual aid societies, migrants' rights defense groups, political action committees, institutions to promote Mexican culture, and professional networks. They have all been strategic in the 2016 electoral process for defending their communities in the face of the critical scenario of xenophobia and racism promoted by the Republican candidate; to do this, they have appealed, among other things, to the imperious need that a greater number of their members move toward citizenship, register to vote, and actually go out and vote. Through the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME) and its extensive consular network, the Mexican government has made an un-

precedented effort to close ranks to support the community. According to the Pew Research Center, today we can predict that the Hispanic vote will favor Democrat Hillary Clinton by 66 percent, thanks to the high concentration of Mexicans who consider her their political option.

Down through the years, the Chinese Diaspora has organized based on an ethnic economy and preserving Chinese education and its language. However, it is important to note that the new generations of young Chinese studying in the United States have a much more cosmopolitan point of view, strengthening new, markedly transnational organizations.

To come back to the U.S. electoral scenario, China, like Mexico, has been the subject of severe criticism by both parties' candidates, particularly for being considered an unfair competitor.

It would not be right to speculate about Chinese-Americans' political preferences in this context, but we should remember that Mrs. Clinton has a record of criticizing China for its growing investments in Africa and its Internet-use policy, among other issues.

However, one of the most delicate matters in this regard was a comment against her was made in Peng Pai News, emphasizing that in China a woman over 55 should stay home and take care of her grandchildren.

So, the question is posed: Can the Mexican and Chinese Diasporas in the United States establish channels for dialogue that would allow them to act in solidarity to fight the prejudices and stereotypes about their origins, at a time of great social, cultural, and economic change that is pushing their host nation to a place where inevitably, in the medium term, there will be no racial majority at all?¹⁰ ■■■

NOTES

¹ IOM, *Global Migration Trends 2015*, http://publications.iom.int/system/files/global_migration_trends_2015_factsheet.pdf.

² Migration Policy Institute, *Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-united-states>.

³ Migration Policy Institute, *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Migration Policy Institute, *Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, op. cit.

⁶ Migration Policy Institute, *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*, op. cit.

⁷ *Ibid.*, accessed October 11, 2016.

⁸ Migration Policy Institute, *Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, op. cit.

⁹ Migration Policy Institute, *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*, op. cit.

¹⁰ See William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion. How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2014).

Interview with Pierre Alarie, Canadian Ambassador to Mexico¹

Leonardo Curzio*

Leonardo Curzio (LC): What is the state of Mexican-Canadian relations?

Ambassador Pierre Alarie (PA): Excellent. The relationship, which goes beyond just the diplomatic sphere, is over 71 years old, and its quality and diversification is optimal. As you know, last October 19, we elected a new government, and Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto was the first foreign head of government to call the prime minister to congratulate him, so the relationship immediately began to renew itself.

LC: Mr. Ambassador, I was in Ottawa by chance when we were celebrating the 60 years of our bilateral relations. Then-President Vicente Fox's speech in Parliament was euphoric, showing our great proximity. Later, I was able to attend the celebration of the seventieth anniversary, although that was perhaps a little less euphoric. Taking that date as a reference, until the commemoration of the eightieth anniversary, do you think that Canadians and Mexicans, both partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and now also in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), see each other differently now?

PA: Yes, our new government has clearly stated that Mexico is of foremost importance for Canada. Today the continental relationship with the United States and Mexico is at the center of everything we're going to do in matters of diplomatic and international relations. I feel that new life has been breathed into this relationship, let's say, although it is true that we had a few difficult years recently.

LC: A bit cold, don't you think?

PA: Cold. Yes, I agree. And I'd like to touch on the issue of the visa, a limitation in our bilateral relations, we have to say



openly. Justin Trudeau, our new prime minister, announced that we're going to eliminate that requirement, and we're working together with the Mexican government on a plan to do just that.

LC: And in the future, we'll have something similar to what the Europeans have *vis-à-vis* the United States, won't we? They call it the ESTA, don't they?

PA: Yes, the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). We're initiating that program March 15, but not with all countries because it's a pilot project, though eventually we will include everyone. We have to be very clear about this: this is not an instrument we're going to impose on the Mexicans, but all countries will have to go through this short two- or three-minute-long procedure on line.

LC: In effect, the imposition of the visa was an irritant; we can't get away from that. It also slowed down our stupendous cooperation in the flow of students and tourists. But beyond the visa issue, which we have talked about on several occasions, I have the impression that it affected the trilateral vision we had when we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of our relations; that is, the project of turning the region of North America into the most competitive in the world, when

*Researcher at CISAN, UNAM.

we had the famous partnerships that included joint work by government, private sector, and universities. In other words, the idea that we were building a region was firmly established, Ambassador Alarie, and the impression I have now is that we have two very strong bilateral relationships: Canada and the United States and the United States and Mexico. On key issues like security, drug trafficking, etc., we each come to understandings with the United States.

So, from a region made up of three countries, we have turned into two strong bilateral relationships. The heart of the issue is to know if, at the end of the day, the three countries (Canada, the United States, and Mexico), despite what Donald Trump might say, are still on the same road, or, Mr. Ambassador, if each pair will go off on their own.

PA: No, no; I think you're right, Leonardo: we are coming back to a relationship of three. A few weeks ago we held a meeting of the foreign ministers of Canada, the United States, and Mexico in Quebec, and they got along very well. This doesn't mean we can't also have very good relations between two of the three parties. Yes, it is true that we have two bilateral relationships, but we also have a continent-wide vision again with regard to climate change, the use of clean fuels, and in terms of security.

LC: So that means that the Canada we have always known is on its way back...

PA: Absolutely. As Prime Minister Trudeau said, "We're back."

LC: Which makes us all happy. Explain something to me, if you would. If there are three of us and we're immersed in a process of reevaluating how much we depend on each other in matters of competitiveness and security, what are we doing with all the guest participants in the TPP? Our family seems to have grown, Mr. Ambassador. How are we going to harmonize all of this?

PA: The truth is that we just signed the TPP with Mexico in New Zealand. Obviously, the ratification process is a challenge for all of us, including Canada. We'll have to have an open, very democratic debate in the Canadian Parliament. I know that the same thing is going to happen here in the Senate. And another pertinent question is what the United States is going to do. Because, naturally, they're at the center of the TPP and it's an electoral year for them. We'll have to see how

Today, the relationship with the United States and Mexico is at the center of everything we're going to do in matters of diplomatic and international relations.

they're going to ratify the TPP. Naturally, Canada firmly believes in free trade, and obviously the debate on this issue in Parliament is going to be very important, but we're already there together with Mexico.

In addition to the TPP negotiations, Mexico and Canada are collaborating vigorously in the automobile sector; this is reflected in some chapters of NAFTA. We work together very well.

LC: In the political sphere, how are bilateral relations moving ahead now? You were saying that President Peña Nieto called Trudeau to congratulate him. We should remember that in 2005, the three leaders of North America signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), which, among other things, stipulates that Canada's prime minister and the presidents of Mexico and the United States will meet once a year. That hasn't happened. I would ask you, is it worthwhile for them to meet? Is there a date set? I understand that Canada is now the country responsible for calling for the meeting.

PA: Of course, relations have intensified after President Peña Nieto's call to Trudeau on election night. They also met up in Turkey at the G-20 meeting and after the APEC meeting in Manila. Our foreign ministers also met three times, in Manila, Paris, and Quebec, and Pedro Joaquín Coldwell has been to Canada twice in the last two months. Minister of Agriculture José Calzada has visited, and Ministers [of the Economy] Guajardo and [of the Environment and Natural Resources] Pacchiano will make a trip in a month. So, there *are* more intense relations; they have intensified on a high level.

And, yes, the leaders' meeting is worthwhile. Clearly, 2015 was not a very favorable year because of the long [Canadian] electoral campaign, and that's why we haven't held it yet. Since the Quebec meeting of Secretary John Kerry, Minister Claudia Ruiz Massieu, and Minister Stephan Dion, we have been thinking that they should meet perhaps this year in the United States, next year in Canada because it will be the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation, and in 2018 in Mexico. So, the intention exists at the highest level for the leaders to meet.

LC: Tell us what the priorities are for the Canadian ambassador in Mexico with regard to trade, in the cultural sphere, and for consolidating political dialogue.

PA: I think trade relations are extremely important; we already do Can\$36 billion in trade. Mexico and Canada are each other's third trade partner worldwide, so this is a fundamental aspect of our relations. That's why I'll focus my work on supporting Canadian exporters who also invest in Mexico. For example, almost 70 percent of Canadian investment is in mining.

LC: Although they've been having a rough time of it lately...

PA: Of course, there are limitations. In any relationship there are always problems. However, I think that in general relations are excellent, although we do have some challenges, for example, in the area of taxes, access, right-of-way, just to name a few. Another is the gas pipeline that we're building. Nevertheless, generally speaking the relationship is excellent. Two million Canadians visit Mexico every year. Considering that Canada has 35 million inhabitants, this means that 6 percent of our population vacations in Mexico every year. So, we have a very important consular program. Obviously, people have accidents; they lose their passports, etc. So that's when the consular program kicks in in Mexico. But we also want to make ourselves over and make Canada more attractive for Mexicans, who we want to visit us more. We received 200 000 Mexican visitors in 2015 alone.

LC: And before the visa requirement, how many went?

PA: More or less the same number. It has taken us eight or nine years to return to the same level. It was a very irritating issue, as I mentioned, but I also think—and it has to be said—that since the slight fall in the Canadian dollar and the Mexican peso *vis-à-vis* the U.S. dollar, Canada is very attractive for Mexicans. So, I supposed that once we eliminate the visa requirement...

LC: Has the red tape become more flexible or is it still very complicated?

PA: It's faster now. The process takes very little time. We have around a 95-percent acceptance rate and you get your visa in four or five days. Also, it's for multiple entries and lasts several years.

We have to develop high levels of tolerance and understanding of other people. That's part of the curriculum in all Canadian schools.

LC: What can you tell us about students? This was thought to be very beneficial for building North America and for better understanding between Canadians and Mexicans. There were those who were going to study high school and also an important number—though quite a bit smaller—of university students. Are you also looking at this issue? Are you working on it, Mr. Ambassador?

PA: Yes, we're pushing this forward very rapidly. It's a priority for our government. Every year, 15 000 Mexican students go to study in Canada.

LC: It's a big educational system.

PA: With a very high level and great quality.

LC: You learn a lot of things. Of course, I'm not going to tell you my family business, but in Canada, you even learn about your way of living together, about community work, about taking others into account, things that young Mexican men and women have not experienced or cultivated by a certain age. Lots can be learned from the way Canadians get along.

PA: Yes, of course. You know that Canada is a multicultural country. We have to develop high levels of tolerance and understanding of other people. That's part of the curriculum in all Canadian schools.

LC: Ambassador Alarie, I want to thank you for this interview, and I must add that it's great news for the international community that the Canadians are back.

PA: Thank you very much. **MM**

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¹ This interview was broadcast on Mexico City's *Enfoque Noticias* radio program, February 19, 2016.



Two women stand out on the pages of this issue of *Voices of Mexico*: Rina Lazo, praised not because she was Diego Rivera's apprentice and collaborator, but because of the light of her own with which she illuminated the visual arts scene in the mid-twentieth century; and Paloma Torres, a visual artist who understands and is committed to her surroundings. Urban and natural scenery are both inspiration and creative material that she uses to weave her art; art that is of today, but with ancestral roots.

These pages also intertwine two stories of visual art that share the topic of Latinos in the United States, with very different styles and in different eras: some, settled there, the so-called Pachucos, who the great comic actor Germán



Valdés, better known as Tin Tan, defended and paid tribute to in several of his films; and others, children and adolescents in transit to the "promised land," whose journey is narrated in a splendid video.

Our youngest contributor has penned a portrait and explained the visual proposals of the painter who has called himself "post-pictorial," Boris Viskin.

Lastly, of all of Mexico's treasures, we share here the natural heritage of our mangroves and the efforts to prevent their destruction, as well as the artistic legacy of several centuries of history safeguarded in the El Carmen Museum.



Shoring for the Soul of Paloma Torres

Luis Ignacio Sáinz*

**The torments of the intellect contain a decency that only
with great difficulty could we find in those of the heart.**

Skepticism is the elegance of anxiety.

E. M. Cioran

*Syllogismes de l'amertume*¹



Totem Pole, 375 x 100 cm, 2010 (Zacatecas clay with clay slip).



Constellation, ca. 2006 (concrete and steel plate).
Private collection in Merida.



Building the Rain, 350 x 520 x 280 cm, 2012 (bronze and brass mesh), Tlatelolco Cultural Center (INAH).

Paloma Torres, all-embracing and expansive, finds her sensitive rationality in her practices and births, and renounces affectation, always emphasizing dual movement in her pieces: from outside to inside, the covering skin, and from inside out, the structure or soul. When doing this, she reconciles in a single mass the basic elements: bones, centering, chassis, remains, canvas stretchers, supports, skeletons, and armatures. With that, she imbues the volumes with originality, meaning, giving the final result transparency and solidity: the re-signification of the material, which articulates the analysis of the

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Photos courtesy of Paloma Torres.

**“Building the Rain
is an utilitarian piece that
joins nature and the city.”**

space and ingredients utilized, her thinking, and, finally, its assembly. Thus, the strategic resides in the movement that ends by illuminating objects-scenarios-markers. The accent, then, resides in thinking and postulating the conditions of possibility of a personalized space, of grasping the context, of making the landscape subjective. In short, in recovering physis (φύσις) in the second degree: natural elements and natural techniques and techniques of Nature that meld, overlap, mutate, with technological factors and mechanisms, inviting their expressive peculiarities precisely in the renovation of constructive traditions without their historic and geo-cultural origins counting at all.

A composite logic that also disdains the dimensions of the works, or —even better— concentrates on the public formats, conceiving the smaller scales to be mock-ups and drafts: pre-formative exercises. This way of perceiving what is real in all its diversity includes her original partiality for painting, little revisited today, and her absolute devotion to print-making. Although these are miniature engravings, their inspiration is colossal, demanding breadth, profundity, and that *je-ne-sais-quoi* capable of giving them a categorical, rounded air, that flees from questions and seduces us, with the label of wishes fulfilled, with their concrete notion of enjoyment and pleasures. An Apollonian ferocity that gives itself over without reservation to the temptations of freehand drawing.

The artist’s discourse robes itself in the intelligence demanded by its very enunciation. She takes it on without sentimentalism, as Cioran, the visionary who lambastes the extremes of being, the distance of the mind, the invasion of emotion, says: the distance of the mind, the invasion of emotion. Her material, formal propositions are located at this mid-point; this is the root of her preoccupation with social use, the softness of her insertion into the urban, the resistance to artifice. Suffice it to remember *Building the Rain* (2015, Canary Wharf, London, made for the Mexico-United Kingdom Dual Year), an almost transparent volume of 3m x 5m weighing 3 tons. In the words of its creator, “It is a utilitarian piece that joins nature and the city. I place a cloud made of bronze wire mesh held up by scaffolding so people can sit in it and inhabit the surroundings. It’s not just object for exhibition; rather, I thought it



Totem Pole with Landscape, 226 x 77 x 49 cm, 2004
(Zacatecas clay with clay slip), De Young Museum.



Chalchihuites Trellis, 300 x 2100 x 30 cm, 2012, Tlatelolco Cultural Center (INAH).

Without prejudices, she is seduced by the physical and/or symbolic circumstance where her vicarious realities exist: the false trellis *Chalchihuites* reminds us of the surviving mystery of the pre-Hispanic world.

should be something that people could use.”² After six months of intense work, Machiavelli’s aphorism was fulfilled: “Fortune offers the opportunity, but only virtue affords the possibility of seizing it.”

To this common stock belong the three pieces in bronze and wire mesh used in the installation *Goyas*, floating in a cube of light-staircase in a building dating from New Spain in Mexico City’s Historic Center —this building houses the Program of University Studies of the City, located at Moneda Street at the corner of Seminario, previously called Arzobispado, and San Sebastián), where the splendor of the Mexica erected the pyramid of Tezcatlipoca, whose basement can be seen through an archaeological window, supplying the last virtual support for the levitating tubular beads, transparent deliriums armed with something more than patience: beauty.

So, since hers is a grammar in waiting and a quest for dialogue with everyday subjects, we can understand her close links to architecture, understood as a spatial preserve for human needs: lodging, transit, comfort, work, service. An even-keeled coexistence with drawing boards and blueprints, models and sketches, surveys, and construction site supervision; cohabitation with project developers, bricklayers, and endless numbers of like professionals: plumbers, electricians, ironmongers, carpenters, tile setters,

plasterers, and painters. The popular saying, “Like father, like daughter,” is true. Our maker of fantastic universes is a worthy heir to architect Ramón Torres,³ a beacon for the best of our architectural heritage built in the second half of the twentieth century. Paloma Torres is a maker *in extremis* of her own undertakings, flights of the imagination that demand her presence in completing the tasks and hustle and bustle of her atelier. A martyr to the sound judgment of the ancients: knowing how to do things. And for that reason she fulfills the saying, “God helps those who help themselves.”

Without prejudices, she is seduced by the physical and/or symbolic circumstance where her vicarious realities exist: the false trellis *Chalchihuites* (2012, Tlatelolco Archaeological Site, Mexico City), its 3 x 21 meters leaning against a wall without capillarity, reminds us of the surviving mystery of the pre-Hispanic world, a threshold that prepares us for unique visibility from any angle of the Plaza of Three Cultures, which brings together the dazzling spoils of the rival-mirror city of Tenochtitlan; the former monastery of Santiago Tlatelolco built on the vestiges of the College of the Sacred Cross, the continent’s first Hispanic academic institution, home to Sahagún’s sources and the site where the *Huehuetlatolli* were compiled; the old Foreign Ministry building, a project by Rafael Mijares coordinated by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez in 1966; and the homage to Le



Goyas,⁵ approximately 3 m long each, 2010 (bronze and mesh), UNAM Today Museum.



The Stone, 220 x 60 x 110 cm, 1991 (marble), monument commemorating The 700th anniversary of the Old Swiss Confederacy, Cumbel, Switzerland.



▲ *Bench*, 2013 (marble), Tecorrales House, Valle de Bravo.

**For the artist as demiurge,
nature is not an object to be represented,
but to be created from consciousness.**



▲ *Installation of Columns*, 5 pieces of different dimensions, 2003 (Zacatecas clay with clay slip), Legoretta apartment.

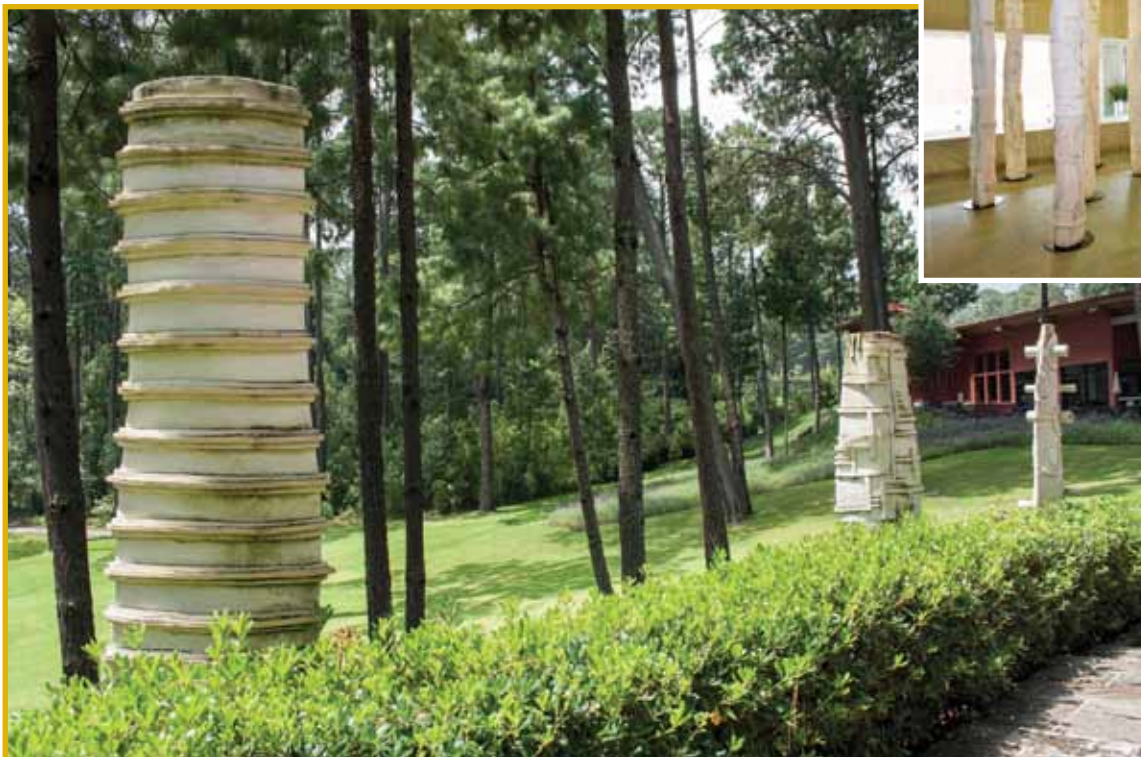
Corbusier, named the Nonoalco Tlatelolco Housing Project, designed by Mario Pani Darqui and Luis Ramos Cunningham in 1964. The green semi-precious stone (*chalcihuitl*) metamorphosed in greyish carbon steel, combined in different sizes in one of its most commonly used forms, that of a disk indicating the high social rank of anyone wearing it as a necklace or pendant and that the ancient Mexicans used as an offering to the gods. Voluptuousness of origin, atavistic beauty.

The amalgam of her three-dimensional compositions included in buildings achieves a notable level of sophistication with her feat in bronze in the form of 4.22 m x 15 m doors, *The Forest Transformed*, flanking and resolving—in more ways than one—the façade of the Elena Garro Cultural Center (2012, La Concepción neighborhood, Coyoacán Borough, Mexico City; a project by Fernanda Canales, and an architectural whim that devours what was a magnificent nineteenth-century Porfirian country villa, including its loggia or *stoa*, *στοά*). The transition from nature to urban scene is ciphered in how trees, once cut down, become raw materials, lumber, arranged in boxes so concrete can be poured, fashioned into shoring, and recycled to act as fused walls, which are camouflaged accesses. Flayed foliage, beautiful notices of destruction and greed.

For the artist as demiurge (Δημιουργός: “he who works for the public”), the ordering principle of pre-existing elements, nature is not an object to be represented, but to be created from consciousness. It summarizes the sensual experience of perception, from a reflexive glance that gives it meaning, that turns the creative subject into someone able to order formless matter and chaos. In this sense, outstanding among her works is the monolith *The Stone* (1991; Cumbel, Switzerland), which won the contest celebrating the 700-year anniversary of the foundation of the Old Swiss Confederacy.⁴ The piece is a huge chunk of marble (220 cm x 60 cm x 110 cm) marked with a route or map, in homage of those forerunners of calligraphy called runes, like those used in the Rök Runestone (Sweden). This luminous, temporally displaced menhir, lost outside its Megalithic era, anchored at the foot of the highway, is perfectly at home in these dense pine forests mottled with edelweiss (the snow flower), adjusting purely and smoothly to the mountainous scenery.

This kind of work is akin to columns or totem poles made of fired clay, which enjoy a structural soul and pay tribute to our Mesoamerican stelae, which act as markers and signs. With the passing decades, these dead living-being forms erect themselves into authentic legions of migrants, trapped in a happy Diaspora, entities disseminated in miscellanea of nations planted in various continents. From being *gardened*, like in the Tecorrales House in Valle de Bravo, to pieces in universities like Georgetown University’s Doha, Qatar campus; or San Francisco’s De Young Museum; the Gunpowder Park in

Installation of Columns, 12 pieces of different dimensions, vestibule of Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Relations. ▶



Columns, 2012, Tecorrales House, Valle de Bravo.



Forest Transformed, 422 x 150 cm, 2012 (bronze), doors of the Elena Garro Cultural Center.



The transition from nature to urban scene is ciphered in how trees, once cut down, become raw materials, lumber, arranged in boxes so concrete that can be poured.

Villahermosa, Tabasco; and temporarily on display in venues in Africa and the Middle East. Paloma Torres's visual art army is shining and advancing, fortunately for us. Those shorings for the soul... **NM**

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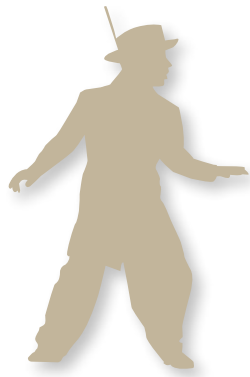
¹ E. M. Cioran, *Sylogismes de l'amertume* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1987).

² This work was part of the collective show "Contemporary Mexican Sculpture," erected in public spaces in Great Britain's capital, along with pieces by Yvonne Domenge, Rivelino, and Jorge Yázpik. An initiative organized by the Art4 association and made of stone, bronze, and resin, it will also be part of the 2016 Mexico-Germany Dual Year.

³ Ramón Torres Martínez (1924-2008) represented the pinnacle of rationalism in Mexico. He partnered with Héctor Velázquez Moreno and was our country's most serious interpreter of Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, also creating his own brilliant, unmistakable style. He has also been connected with Mexico's best project developers: José Villagrán, Mario Pani, Enrique del Moral, and Augusto H. Álvarez. In 1950 as a very young man, Torres Martínez participated in developing University City as chief project developer for the School of Medicine, adorned with a mural by Francisco Eppens Helguera. He was a professor at the UNAM School of Architecture beginning in 1952 and its director from 1965 to 1973.

⁴ In early August 1291, three forest cantons (Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden) forged a *Bundesbrief*, or Federal Pact, to safeguard peace along their mountain trade routes. Little by little, this initial alliance would include urban communities like Lucerne, Zurich, and Bern, in the sphere of the Holy Roman Empire. This was a political convention or founding myth.

⁵ The title of this work refers to the UNAM cheer: "Goya!"



Tin Tan

Mexico's First Postmodern Icon¹

David R. Maciel*

To the memory of Carlos Monsiváis, friend and mentor,
who had the foresight to interpret Tin Tan as the first
Mexican of the twentieth-first century.

The year 2015 marked the centennial of the legendary iconic figure Germán Genaro Cipriano Gómez Valdés Castillo, better known as Germán “Tin Tan” Valdés. He is without a doubt one of the most revered celebrities of the glorious Golden Age of Mexico’s cinema, beginning in the late 1930s and ending in the early 1960s, and is certainly acclaimed as one of the greatest comedians and entertainers of all time. His distinguished career includes over 100 films; 11 record albums; 2 short subjects; 3 Walt Disney voice dubs; and hundreds of sketches and performances in theatres and night clubs.³

As expected, in his centennial year, a wide array of activities honoring him and his legacy were held in Mexico, including lectures and round-table discussions, pictorial exhibitions, a year-long festival of his entire filmography, short documentaries about his life, and scholarly and popular writings about him, including a personal memoir, a book written by his daughter Rosalía Valdés.⁴ There are certainly plenty of reasons for all the attention and recognition that has come his way. Like his fellow actor from Mexico’s Golden Age, the legendary Pedro Infante, Tin Tan has gained much more popularity and acclaim as time goes by. In fact, he has become a truly *bona fide* icon of film and popular culture in Mexico and abroad.⁵

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Photos courtesy of the author.



Still from the film *Some Dead Make No Noise* (1946).



Still from the film *The King of the Hood* (1949).

**Tin Tan was not only an actor who dressed
as a pachuco (*zoot-suiter*) and spoke Spanglish:
he was clearly a cultural novelty.**

But, despite everything that has been written and filmed about him, one essential dimension of his very unique talent and transcendental contributions has only been dealt with very superficially. This brings me to the central idea of this article: that Tin Tan was not only an actor who dressed as a pachuco (a zoot suiter) and spoke Spanglish, but was clearly culturally unique and ahead of his time.⁶

Tin Tan has been labeled the classic pachuco in Mexico; the focus, then, has been almost exclusively on his use of a mixture of English and Spanish, and certainly on his attire: a broad-brimmed hat, drape pants that ballooned out at the knee and were closely tapered at the ankle, an oversized jacket, and, on occasion, a gold or silver watch chain hanging from his pocket. His audiences and critics did not grasp the true, complex significance of *pachuquismo* as a social movement and cultural practice of the borderlands. Writing on pachucos, historian Luis Alvarez states that they embrace an “approach to life that helped them claim dignity in a society that routinely dehumanized them. . . . Their cultural practices, including choices in fashion, music, and dance, claimed honor and the refusal to accept humiliation and a refusal to conform.”⁷

Following along with this hypothesis, I would say that Tin Tan was in fact a pioneer who very creatively captured the rich culture of the U.S.-Mexico border (*la cultura fronteriza*) and served as a bridge to, and an interpreter of, Chicano culture for Mexico. He was particularly sensitive to Chicano (Mexican-American) youth culture and made it his own. From his earliest sketches, performances, and films, Tin Tan expounded and popularized *pachuquismo* in its truest form starting with *El hijo desobediente* (The Disobedient Son) (1945). He clearly understood the real meaning and symbolic nature of *pachuquismo* as part of the youth rebellion and search for dignity and identity for Chicanos and other minorities of color in the United States. That is particularly remarkable considering that in his time, *pachuquismo* was considered a special affront to many sectors of U.S. society who viewed such manifestations as defiantly

“Anti-American.” Institutions, like the police, the armed forces, and even the courts, in an attempt to eradicate *pachuquismo* unleashed violence and confrontations against pachucos wherever they were found, from California to New York, with total disregard for their civil rights.⁸

**THE EARLY YEARS OF GERMÁN VALDÉS
AND THE EMERGENCE OF TIN TAN**

Germán Valdés was born in Mexico City in 1915. When he was 12, his family moved and settled in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, when his father, a customs agent, was transferred there. He thus spent many of his formative years on the border. In fact, Ciudad Juárez is the sister city of El Paso, Texas, and, according to scholars, the cradle of *pachuquismo* and the zoot-suiters.⁹ From early adolescence on, Germán Valdés familiarized himself with both cities’ Mexican *barrios*, the two largest interrelated bilingual/bicultural neighborhoods along the U.S.-Mexico border. That facilitated his exposure and affinity to Chicano youth culture. According to his brother, comedian Manuel “Loco” Valdés, the most significant geographical spaces in his youth were the twin cities of El Paso/Ciudad Juárez and Los Angeles, California.¹⁰ From all these interactions, he learned firsthand from Chicanos/Mexicanos their history, life stories, and issues, and became most sensitive to their plight in the United States. In those decades, U.S. society was totally unequal and segregated into a two-tier system, one for the Anglo-Saxon population and another for people of color like Mexicans/Chicanos. Germán Valdés vividly saw and understood how Chicanos were treated as second-class citizens. He saw that segregation, systematic discrimination, police violence, racial prejudices, economic oppression, and outright racism were the order of the day in the United States. Mexicans were kept in “their place” and would continue to fulfill their designated role as cheap labor with few to no civil rights, and had few avenues for social mobility. The young Germán Valdés

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embellished pachuco culture. The dress, mannerisms, forms of expression, humor, dance and music, the sense of identity, and ultimately the psyche of Chicano youth of the time became an essential part of his being and expressive discourse. About these experiences of Valdés, the late acclaimed writer Carlos Monsiváis wrote,

In addition to spending over a decade in this setting [the border], Tin Tan expanded his cultural horizons by making several trips in the United States, from San Francisco to Laredo. He genuinely became a fellow pachuco in the Mexican/Chicano barrios of those cities. By his own account, he made many close Chicano friends. This experience facilitated having a firsthand experience of the Chicano community in the entire Southwest. Thus, he learned to appreciate Chicano culture and society as no other Mexican celebrity of his time.¹¹

After anchoring the popular radio show *El Barco del Amor* (Love Boat) in Ciudad Juárez, portraying Pachuco Topillo Tapas, the young Germán Valdés was hired by the artistic troupe of impresarios Jorge Maulmer and Paco Miller, which toured and performed in various U.S. and Mexican cities. In his early stage appearances, Germán Valdés played a pachuco in all of his sketches. As his popularity grew, his manager gave him a shorter nickname connected to his musical and comedic skills: Tin Tan.

As the years went by, Germán Valdés did not change his pachuco persona, which went with him in theatrical performances and his first films. This brought him great success. Amazingly for his time, Tin Tan's performances exemplified great solidarity with his Chicano *compañeros*. He did not fuel or emphasize the oppressive or downtrodden condition of the Chicano community but rather publicized and highlighted the attributes of its rich culture and lifestyle. Viewers will never find a demeaning or degrading joke or sketch at the expense of Chicanos in his films and performances—in fact, totally the opposite.

In his typical insightful and erudite manner, Monsiváis acknowledged this novel and unique aspect of Germán Valdés's self. He further claimed that Tin Tan was “the first Mexican of the twenty-first century,”¹² precisely because of his bold and ageless artistic repertoire and his usage of both languages and cultural patterns; he would therefore precede globalization and postmodern practices in every way.

GOING AGAINST THE TIDE

Tin Tan certainly faced criticism from those who ignored or misunderstood the plight of their compatriots in the United States. Negative stereotypes were constantly reinforced not only by filmmakers but by writers, journalists, and the media. “We don't serve pachucos here,” said Mario Moreno, Cantinflas, in his film, *Si yo fuera diputado* (1952) (If I Were a Congressman). This statement reflected the derogatory view held by important segments of the population in Mexico at the time.¹³



Still from the film *The Same Music as Always* (1956).



Still from the film *Musician, Poet, and Madman* (1947).

As the years went by, Germán Valdés did not change his pachuco persona, which accompanied him in theater performances and in his first films.

In fact, the images of the Chicano in the Mexican cinema of those decades were incredibly inaccurate and full of stereotypes, embodying negative images and messages about them. This is the case of films like *El hombre sin patria* (1922) (Man without a Homeland), *La China Hilaria* (Hilaria the Chinawoman) (1938), *Adiós mi chaparrita* (Goodbye My Dear Shorty) (1939), *Primero soy mexicano* (I'm Mexican First and Foremost) (1950), *Soy mexicano de acá de este lado* (I'm Mexican from This Side of the Border) (1951), and many others.¹⁴ The essential cultural traits of Chicano society such as language patterns, attire, music, artistic motifs, etc., were never appropriately represented or understood in Mexico.

These views have their origins in the first decades of the twentieth century, at the height of Mexican immigration to the United States. A common term widely used in Mexico about their compatriots was *pocho* (an Anglicized Mexican) assuming —falsely— that they consciously assimilated into U.S. society at the expense of their Mexican roots and culture.¹⁵ Later on, the term *pocho* became synonymous with pachuco.¹⁶

Unquestionably, the most emblematic, influential, and harsh pronouncement on this theme came from Nobel-winning author Octavio Paz in his widely read and acclaimed book, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. In the introductory chapter, “Pachucos and Other Extremes,” Paz offers his personal interpretation and perceptions of pachuco/Chicano culture and being:

When I arrived in the United States, I lived for a while in Los Angeles, a city inhabited by over a million persons of Mexican origin. . . . At first sight, the visitor is surprised . . . by the city's vaguely Mexican atmosphere. . . . This Mexicanism . . . floats in the air because it never mixes or unites with the other world. . . . Something of the same sort characterizes the Mexicans you see in the streets . . .; they feel ashamed of their origins . . .; their sensibilities are like a pendulum that has lost its reason. . . . This spiritual condition has given birth to a type known as the

pachuco. . . . The pachuco has lost his whole inheritance, language, religion, customs, beliefs . . .; the pachuco is an impassive and sinister clown whose purpose is to cause terror instead of laughter . . .; the pachuco is impassive and contemptuous allowing all these contradictory impressions to accumulate around him until finally he sees them explode. . . . And then . . . he becomes his true self, his supremely naked self, as a pariah, a man who belongs nowhere. . . . The pachuco tries to enter North American society . . . but he impedes his own efforts. . . . The pachuco does not affirm or defend anything except his exasperated will-not-to-be. I am convinced that his hybrid language and behavior reflect an oscillation between two irreducible worlds —the North American and the Mexican— which he (the pachuco) vainly hopes to reconcile and conquer.¹⁷

Octavio Paz was the best known interpreter of such attitudes, but certainly not the only one in Mexico who shared such views. They were common in the country's popular and academic writings.

Thus, what is so commendable and gratifying in the case of Tin Tan is that, although he undoubtedly heard demeaning academic and popular statements about *pochos/pachucos*, and saw Mexican films containing derogatory images of Chicanos/Mexicanos, he not only did not adhere to such views but in his routines, sketches, films, and stage performances offered and presented a totally opposite —and alternative— representation of the Chicano. He proudly dressed as a pachuco, and stood alone defying all negative conventions of the time. That was the case of his early films, all directed by Humberto Gómez Landero: *El hijo desobediente* (The Disobedient Son) (1945), *Con la música por dentro* (With the Music Inside) (1946), *Hay muertos que no hacen ruido* (Some Dead Make No Noise) (1946), *El niño perdido* (The Lost Child) (1947), and *Músico, poeta y loco* (Musician, Poet, and Madman) (1947).¹⁸ In later films like the classic *Calabacitas tiernas* (Tender Pumpkins) and others, he would also incorporate aspects of *pachuquismo*,

Images of Chicanos in the Mexican cinema of those decades were incredibly inaccurate and full of stereotypes.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

After examining the origins of his artistic career, it becomes clear that Germán Valdés, Tin Tan, as a postmodern representative, provided a revisionist portrayal of Chicano culture, its artifacts, and its discursive expressions. He specifically highlighted and validated the practices and representations of the popular culture of Chicano youth. Moreover, he made this culture visible in Mexico City and other parts of the country, as well as to Spanish-speaking audiences everywhere, in his performances and in several of his films.¹⁹ In doing so, he contributed to forcefully opposing negative views among Mexicans about Chicanos, becoming a seminal bridge and a beacon of light in Chicano-Mexican relations. Thus, not only Mexicans but Chicanos should recognize and admire this pioneering work. Tin Tan, in fact, was the first major crossover icon figure of Mexico, and more than anyone in the artistic world of the Mexico of his time, he displayed a remarkable sensitivity and constant admiration for the Chicano experience and cultural practices, becoming their best advocate in Mexico. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ This article owes much to both the late Carlos Monsiváis, who brought the topic to my attention, and to Alejandro Pelayo, who prodded me to complete the research and present it at Mexico's National Cinematheque.
- ² See the 2005 documentary *Ni muy muy, ni tan tan, simplemente Tin Tan*, directed by Manuel Márquez.
- ³ Rafael Aviña, "Tin Tan. 'El Rey del Tíbiri Tábara,'" *Somos. Cómicos Inolvidables del Cine Mexicano*, year 8, no. 8, August 1997, pp. 22-28.
- ⁴ Rosalía Valdés, *Tin Tan. Todo por amor* (Mexico City: Conaculta/La Caja de Cerillos, 2015).
- ⁵ David R. Maciel, "The Glorious Golden Age of Mexican Cinema," unpublished paper, 2014.
- ⁶ José Andrés Niquert. *Tin Tan y su Trompabulario* (Mexico City: Ediciones Estrada Monroy, 2013), pp. 13-16.
- ⁷ Luis Álvarez, *The Power of the Zoot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 83.
- ⁸ For an insightful and extremely well-researched book of the systematic harassment and brutality directed at pachucos, see Mauricio Mazón, *The Zoot Suit Rioters. The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); and an outstanding book chapter: Luis Alvarez, "Zoot Violence on the Home Front: Race, Riots, and Youth Culture during World War II," in Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, ed., *Mexican Americans and World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), pp. 141-177.
- ⁹ Eduardo Obregón, *Murder at Sleepy Lagoon. Zoot Suits, Race and Riots in Wartime L.A.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 126-145.
- ¹⁰ Cited in Rafael Aviña, "La cultura del pachuco," *Somos* year 11, no. 205, March 1, 2001, pp. 32-39.
- ¹¹ Carlos Monsiváis, "Tin Tan. El pachuco singular," *Intermedios* no. 4, 1992, pp. 34-37.
- ¹² See the 2005 documentary *Ni muy muy, ni tan tan, simplemente Tin Tan*, directed by Manuel Márquez.
- ¹³ David R. Maciel, *El bandolero, el pocho y la raza. Imágenes cinematográficas del chicano* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores/Conaculta, 2000), pp. 84-85.
- ¹⁴ David Maciel, "Los desarraigados: los chicanos vistos por el cine mexicano," Ignacio Durán et al., *México-Estados Unidos. Encuentros y desencuentros en el cine* (Mexico City: Filmoteca-UNAM/IMCINE/CISAN-UNAM, 1996) pp. 165-189.
- ¹⁵ José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, *Nosotros. Arte, cultura e identidad en la frontera norte* (Mexico City: Conaculta, 2013), pp. 13-25.
- ¹⁶ Susan Marie Green, "Zoot Suiters Past and Present," Ph.D. Diss. (University of Minnesota, 1997).
- ¹⁷ Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), pp. 12-18.
- ¹⁸ Emilio García Riera, *Las películas de Tin Tan* (Mexico City: Cineteca Nacional, 1998).
- ¹⁹ Carlos Monsiváis, "The Culture of the Frontier. The Mexican Side," Stanley R. Ross, ed., *Views across the Border* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), pp. 63-64.



Still from the film *News Report* (1953).



Rina Lazo and Diego Rivera at the Lerma Pumping Station.

**Crossing the Boundaries
of Art Practice,
Education, and Gender**

Diego Rivera
and
Rina Lazo
in Context¹

Dina Comisarenco Mirkin*

Since Linda Nochlin famously asked, “Why have there been no great women artists?”² the pernicious effect of the male-dominated educational structures has been widely recognized. In the case of the Mexican mural movement, the exclusion of female artists from artistic training has been particularly harmful and pervasive, leading, as stated many times, to an almost complete male monopoly in the field.

In spite of Diego Rivera’s tumultuous and controversial sex life, when analyzed in his own historical context, it becomes evident that, paradoxically, he decisively recognized and supported women’s active roles within society. Effectively, by accepting female artists as his assistants, Rivera crossed the traditional boundaries of art practice, education, and gender, and as a result opened up important, unprecedented professional opportunities for women artists.

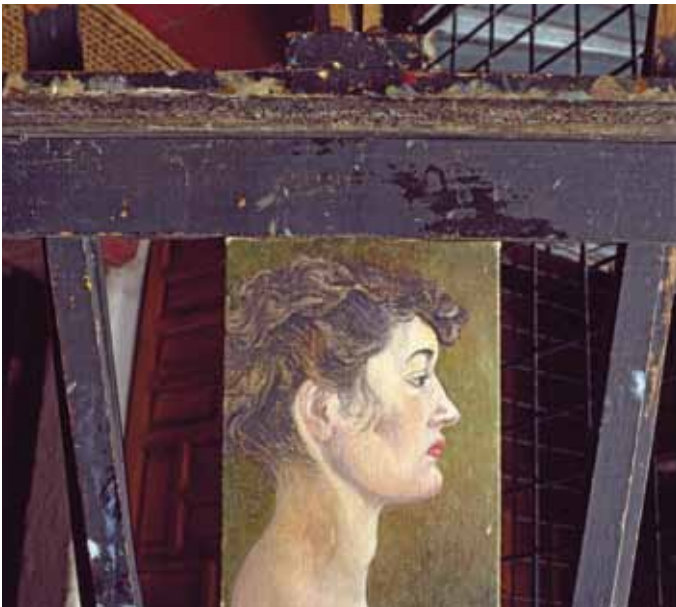
Based on conversations I had with Rina Lazo, one of Rivera’s favorite assistants, his personal friend, and a great artist in her own right, I can argue that the most significant lesson Rivera taught his students was neither his virtuoso fresco technique, nor the lofty hierarchy assigned to mural painting at the time, but his again contradictory but highly enthusiastic political activism, and mainly his profound conviction about the need to create revolutionary art meant to transform society.

Arbitrarily referred to as “collaborators,” “pupils,” or “assistants,” the group of artists trained by Rivera was of considerable size. He is said to have received nearly 20 letters per day from

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Photos courtesy of Rina Lazo.

One of Rivera’s long list of female disciples, Lazo occupies an outstanding place in Mexican art history.



First Self-Portrait, 1946.



Cantaloupes in the Clouds.



Maize Offering, 2001.

Lazo assisted Rivera on numerous projects including his very first fresco at the Del Prado Hotel.

artists from all over the world who wanted to work closely with the internationally famous Mexican master.

It is interesting to note that the considerable list of artists Rivera hired contains a significant and unusually large number of women. Most were from abroad: Americans like Lone Robinson, Marion and Grace Greenwood, Lucien Bloch, Emmy Lou Packard, Mona Hoffman, Aline Rhonie, and Mercedes Quevedo Bazán; Europeans, like Fanny Rabel (Polish), María Luisa Martín (Spanish), and Nicolette Rouy Dupuy (French); and, finally, Latin Americans, like Ana Teresa Ordiales Fierro (Mexican), Violeta Bonilla (Salvadoran), and, of course, Rina Lazo (Guatemalan). With just a few exceptions all of Rivera's female assistants became active artists—not necessarily muralists—, working in various other artistic media, such as photography, engraving, and oil painting. All of them shared the conviction about the important role of art as an instrument for social liberation.

To appreciate Rivera's avant-garde attitude in consistently hiring female assistants, it is interesting to note some of the discriminatory images and comments published in the Mexican press of the time. In the 1930s, a satirical drawing published in *Frente a Frente*, the periodical of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR), in the midst of several humorous scenes meant to criticize Mexican Trotskyism, included the figure of a woman stereotypically characterized, by her language and costume, as a simple and poorly educated housemaid. The caption reads "¡Señor Don Diego, I have already finished the painting, come and sign it!"³ Class identities and political accusations of Rivera's hypocritical exploitation aside, the cartoon speaks to a common sexist prejudice, launched against Rivera's atypical professional association with women artists.

Later, in the early 1950s, and now with regard to Lazo's frequent participation in Rivera's murals, let me specifically note that one reporter, in a special article devoted to the master's team of assistants, pointed out that the female



Rina Lazo in Bonampak, Chiapas.



Rina Lazo.

painter always dressed in jeans and “looked like a young boy.” It also stated that as a woman, “she was always in a hurry to go home earlier than her male co-workers” since “she had to tend to her family and her many domestic chores.” The same article pointed out that as a female, Lazo “adorned” the otherwise masculine group with “a gracious and gentle note.”⁴ Lazo and Rivera ignored all these prejudiced comments so typical of their time and were able to build instead a solid and fruitful professional and personal relationship that lasted about ten years until Rivera’s death.⁵

From Rivera’s long list of female disciples, Lazo occupies an outstanding place in Mexican art history, not just because she was one of the artist’s favorite pupils, but mainly because she is both a political activist and a renowned artist, who



Sale of Sweets at the Rally to Celebrate the Nationalization of the Banks.

“The time flew watching Rivera paint, observing everything he did, listening to what he talked about: politics, art, and current events.”

throughout her lifetime produced a significant and socially engaged body of work, on both small and large scales.

Lazo arrived to Mexico in 1946 with a scholarship from the Ministry of Education of her native country, Guatemala. She recalls that just a few months after her arrival, Andrés Sánchez Flores, Rivera’s chemical specialist for many years and her professor of materials and techniques at La Esmeralda, observing the young student’s discipline, punctuality, and reliability, invited her to work with the muralist. Lazo told me that, to avoid the resentment of her classmates, her teacher discretely handed her the invitation in a tiny written note, because in fact most young students, even though they knew of Rivera’s reputation “as a self-centered perfectionist who worked his assistants until they dropped,”⁶ aspired more than anything else to become one of them.⁷

From that moment on, Lazo assisted Rivera on numerous projects including his very first fresco at the Del Prado Hotel; the murals in the Lerma Pumping Station in Chapultepec Park; the natural rock mosaic at the Olympic Stadium at the University of Mexico; the fresco at the La Raza Hospital; and *Glorious Victory*, a moveable piece painted on linen, to which I will return.

Like some of his other disciples, Lazo confirms that Rivera’s teaching method was mainly based on practice. Her first task for *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park* consisted of grinding pigments. Later on, she was assigned other minor tasks, such as transferring the sketches onto the plastered walls, preparing the pigments, and placing them on the palette. Some time later, Rivera asked Lazo to see some of her paintings, and, once he was convinced of his disciple’s talent, progressively began to ask her for other more delicate and creative chores: painting the unions of the different working *giornata* (a task in which she was particularly skilled), and painting small details in the mural, such as some of the ornaments on the costumes, the leaves on the trees, the letters in the newspapers, the medals of the so-called “General Medals,” and the shoes and socks of the main central self-portrait of Rivera as a child. When the mural





was finished, Lazo witnessed the scandal caused by Rivera's inclusion of the slogan "God does not exist" in it, with the result that the completed work was covered and kept from public view for several years.

Lazo recalls that in assisting Rivera, she also sometimes "held an illustrated book that the artist used to recreate a historical detail, or photographs that he later interpreted in his murals," and other times she "posed for a detail that he needed to observe," an experience that she also enjoyed and made her very proud. According to Lazo, "The time flew watching Rivera paint, observing everything he did, listening to what he talked about: politics, art, and current events."⁸ Lazo remembers that Rivera received numerous very distinguished visitors while he was working on his frescoes, and that he talked to them from the scaffolding, without neglecting his work, telling the most fascinating stories and passionately explaining his highly unconventional worldview. Like most people who personally knew the artist, Lazo attests that Rivera's personal charm and power of persuasion were just remarkable. Through Rivera's conversations with Carlos Pellicer, Antonio Luna Arroyo, Lola Álvarez Bravo, Carlos Chávez, Susana Gamboa, Rosa Rolanda, and many other figures of the artistic and intellectual milieu of those years, Lazo became acquainted with the Mexican School's revolutionary ideals, which have since have since guided both Lazo's life and her work.

To understand the depth of Lazo's beliefs, we should recall, first of all, that in the 1960s there was a very important project involving several contemporary artists, including Lazo's husband Arturo García Bustos, for the creation of murals for Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology. Despite Lazo's experience in the field, she was not invited to take part. However, two years later, the museum organized a contest to decide who would reproduce the pre-Columbian murals of Bonampak. Rina decided to participate; she won the competition, and despite the very difficult working conditions



Reality and Dreams in the Mayan World. Magical Meeting between Men and Gods.



of the commission, almost completely isolated in the jungle and with all sorts of limitations, she did an extraordinary job. Regardless of what one might suppose due to of our own contemporary ideas on the value of individual creativity and originality, Lazo feels no resentment whatsoever. She explained to me that on the contrary, she feels extremely proud of her replicas. Because as a true member of the Mexican School, she does not value individual authorship and personal expression *per se*, and because she deeply loves Mexican indigenous art, Lazo is convinced that her Bonampak facsimiles are very probably more important than the creation of a modern mural. I strongly believe that at least in this specific area, the student outdid her master.

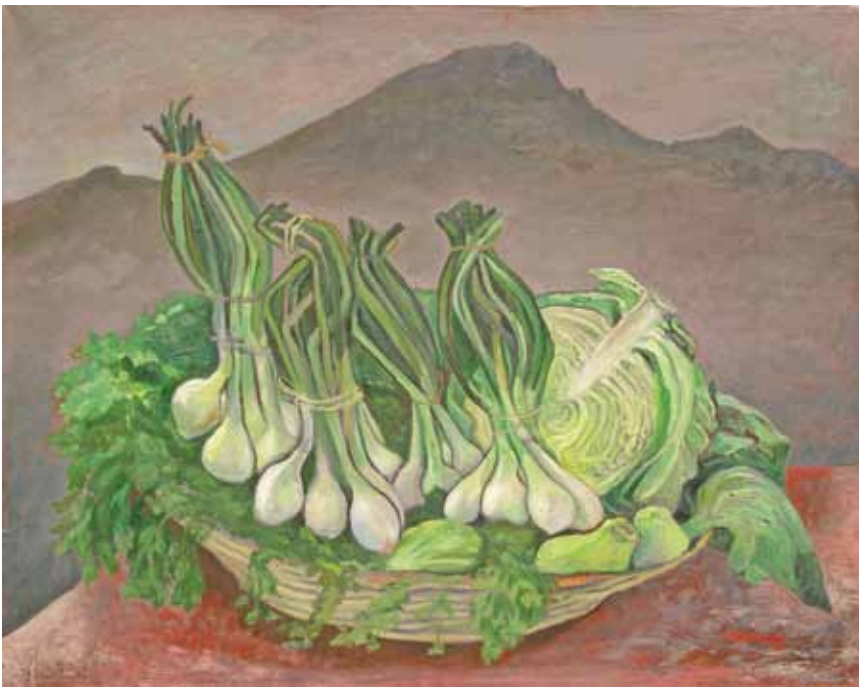
For Lazo and García Bustos, life, art, and politics cannot be separated. They met in 1947 while they were both painting banners for a political rally.⁹ A short time later, the Mexican Communist Party sent them to paint some murals, first for the *ejido* cooperative farm of Atencingo, Puebla, and then for a rural school in Temixco, Morelos, with the main objective of promoting political consciousness among the rural population. Their experiences, particularly the conversations they had with the peasants, the violent repression against the community that they witnessed, and the interruption of the murals due to the personal threats they received, left a permanent mark on the couple.

In 1953, attracted by Jacobo Árbenz's socialist government, one of the few Latin American democracies at the time, the couple traveled to Guatemala, Lazo's native land. García Bustos had been invited to create a print-making workshop, along the lines of the Mexican People's Graphics Workshop, and Lazo, who had already painted an individual mural in Mexico, *The Four Elements* (1949), received her second individual mural commission in Guatemala, a work that she titled *Fertile Earth* (1953-54).

Despite Lazo and García Bustos's enthusiasm and important plans, their Guatemalan adventure did not last long. In fact, a short time after their arrival, a coup d'état ousted the legitimate socialist regime, condemning the country to an atrocious bloodbath.



Bowl with Trumpet Flowers.



The Onions, 2007.

Lazo was also given the rare privilege of painting a whole portion of the masters work, *Glorious Victory*.

The takeover was engineered with the complicity of the CIA, as a response to the socialist government's previous expropriation of the United Fruit Company, an infamous business known for its inhumane, ruthless exploitation of the workers.

As soon as the news of the coup spread through the media, Kahlo and Rivera participated in a public demonstration against U.S. intervention in the neighboring country, where both their students were working as the hideous bloodshed began. Frida went to the protest in a wheelchair, while convalescing from pneumonia, and passed away only two weeks later. García Bustos returned to Mexico immediately after the coup, while Lazo stayed a little bit longer, finishing her mural, and protecting some of her persecuted fellow countrymen and women, disguising them as her assistants.

In 1954, García Bustos produced a series of linocuts, *Testimony of Guatemala*, portraying the condition of the country during the brutal dictatorship of Jorge Ubico, the democracy installed under Jacobo Árbenz, his agrarian reform, and the atrocious military coup that destroyed the democracy that he and Lazo had personally witnessed. Soon after Lazo's return to Mexico a few days after Frida's death, Rivera asked his student to reproduce a part of her Guatemalan mural in his studio.

Later, Rivera began a new monumental work, *Glorious Victory*, depicting the tragic episode of Guatemala's contemporary history that had moved him and Frida so deeply. It is very plausible that this rather infrequent expansion on Rivera's thematic repertoire, moving away from his classical subject of Mexican history to address the realities of another Latin American country, was related not only to the artist's lifelong anti-imperialist stance, but probably was also meant as an homage to his beloved Frida, whose last public political action was precisely her protest against the coup in Guatemala. I believe that the work was also born, at least in part, because, through Lazo and García Bustos, Rivera was able to get a first-hand report that had a deep impact on him. As is commonly the case, the students began to influence the teacher.

Rivera's painting boldly portrays U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles amid bodies and bananas, shaking hands with Carlos Castillo Armas, a Guatemalan officer installed as president by the military coup. The face of by-then U.S. President Dwight





Cantaloupes and Pineapples.

Under Rivera's guidance, Lazo was initiated not only in the art of mural painting, but in the ideological basis for the Mexican School.

Eisenhower adorns a bomb. Lazo, who assisted Rivera during the whole process of producing the painting, was portrayed in the mural as one of the Guatemalan revolutionaries. It is worth noting that she is dressed in a red shirt, just as Rivera had depicted Frida handing out weapons, in one of the sections of the Ministry of Public Education mural in 1928. Lazo was also given the rare privilege of painting a whole portion of the master's work: the prisoners depicted in the upper right of the painting. And she proudly remembers that Rivera even asked her to sign this part of the mural with her own name, thus negating the cartoon's accusation alluded to above.

A few years later, in 1959, two years after Rivera's death, Lazo decided to undertake the theme of the history of Guatemala in one of her own works, that she titled *We Shall Overcome*. She went back in time, to June 29, 1944, when a large demonstration in Guatemala City had been violently repressed by the dictator Jorge Ubico. Like Rivera before her, in her painting Lazo assigned an important role to women, but unlike her teacher, she did not do it in a generic or allegorical way, but through the portrayal of specific real women, like María Chinchilla, a leader of the Guatemalan teachers' union movement and a national martyr for the anti-Ubico movement. On the other hand, Lazo used García Bustos as her model for the dead man hanging from the tree, therefore reversing the more traditional gender role that as a female muse she had frequently played while assisting Rivera.

We can thus conclude that the theme of Rivera as a teacher of female artists very early on in history, in the first half of the twentieth century, is still an important historic debt that has to be paid. In the specific case of Rivera and Lazo, in this brief article I have noted that their advanced social ideas allowed them to overcome some of the pernicious gender prejudices that characterized their time, in order to develop a fruitful professional relationship that had important consequences not just for the student, but also for the teacher. Under Rivera's guidance, Lazo was initiated not only in the art of mural painting, but in the ideological basis for the Mexican School, which she embraced throughout her life and artistic career. For Rivera, Lazo was not just a very helpful assistant and friend, but the main key to opening up his thematic repertoire to address other important contemporary events beyond Mexico.



Tracing in the original Bonampak temple.



In front of the replicas of the Mayan murals of Bonampak.

Exploring Rivera's role as a teacher of female artists can thus reveal yet another facet of his extraordinary, advanced contributions to art and society, dismantling, at the same time, some of our own contemporary prejudices commonly used to judge—or more commonly to miss-judge—the artist. **MM**

NOTES

¹ An earlier version of this text has been presented at the conference Diego Rivera and the Mexican Mural Movement at the Art Institute, San Francisco, USA, in July, 2012.

² Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews*, January 1971, pp. 22-39, re-published at <http://www.artnews.com/2015/05/30/why-have-there-been-no-great-women-artists/>.

³ *Frente a Frente*, no. 9, 2nd period, May 1937, p. 11.

⁴ "Los ayudantes de Diego Rivera entre bastidores," *Nosotros. El Magazine de Latinoamérica*, no. 347, March, 10, 1951.

⁵ It is a well-documented fact that, in the name of an alleged preservation of what he called "high standards of artistic quality," Rivera committed some very questionable acts directed at sabotaging the works, and consequently the professional careers, of some of his fellow artists. We can recall the erasing of parts of paintings created by Ione Robinson and Victor Arnautov at the National Palace where they were assisting Rivera; the destruction of complete panels authored by Amado de la Cueva, Xavier Guerrero, and Jean Charlot, Rivera's assistants at the Ministry of Education, who were then given their first individual commissions that did not survive; and the cancellation of the contract signed by María Izquierdo for the creation of a mural cycle at the Mexico City Government Palace in 1945. However, it is also true that on many other occasions Rivera, this extraordinary and contradictory genius and "monster," as he was commonly called, was also capable of significant generosity and of openly recognizing and stimulating the talent of some of his beloved students. This was the case of Rina Lazo and of her husband, artist Arturo García Bustos, who began his career as a student of Frida Kahlo, and who later also assisted Rivera on several of his public commissions.

⁶ Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff, "Diego Rivera Assistants Remember the Genius," *Ramona's Repository*, November 21, 2009, <http://ramonasrepository.blogspot.mx/2009/11/diego-rivera-assistants-remember-genius.html>, accessed May 22, 2012.

⁷ Abel Santiago, *Rina Lazo: Sabiduría de manos: conversaciones con Abel Santiago (Yínchivi)* (Oaxaca, Mexico: Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas, 1998), p. 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁹ The demonstration protested the Clayton Plan, which had opened the importation of cotton from the United States, threatening the survival of Mexico's textile industry.



Rina Lazo and Eulalia Guzmán.

Boris Viskin Beauty Will Come Later

Carmen Sánchez Cumming*

"Isn't this beautiful?"

And Caspar would answer: "It is beautiful."

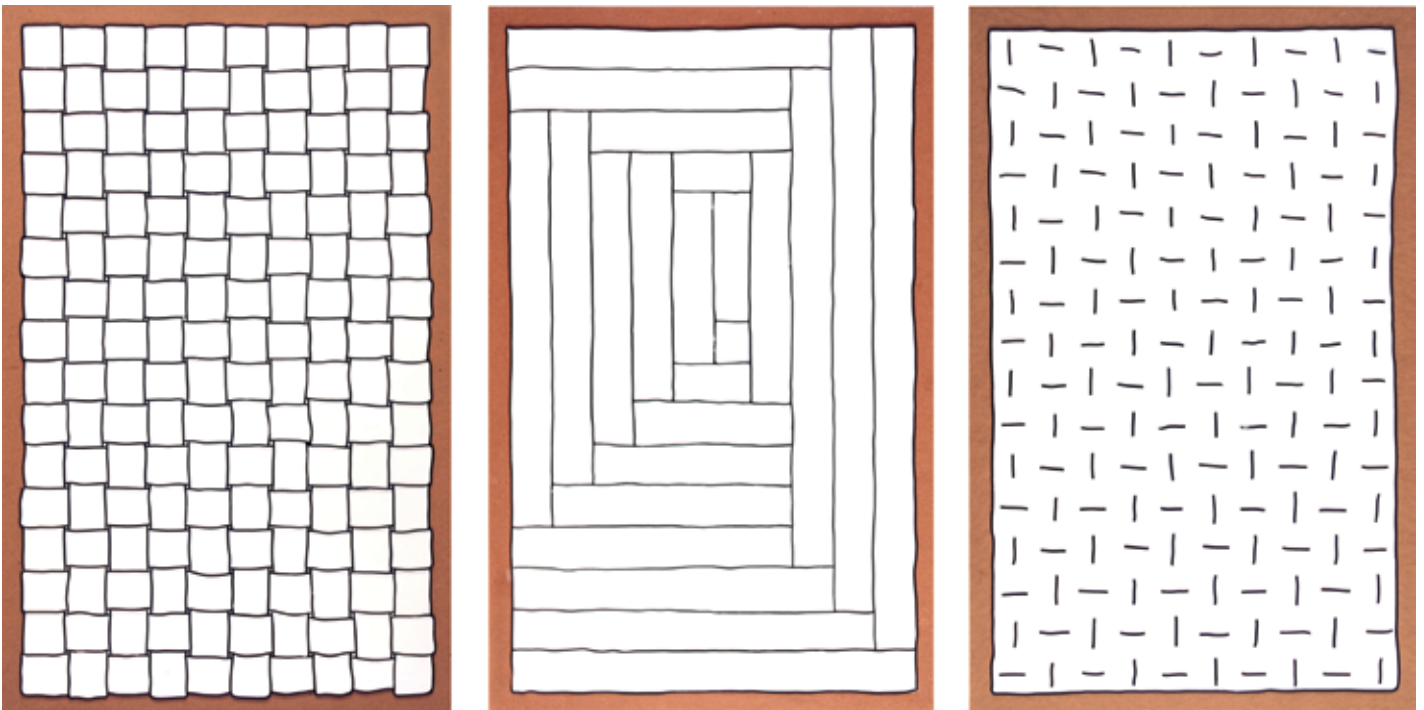
"So solemn, Caspar? So serious?"

"It was only recently that I learnt to see its beauty,"

said Caspar. "Beauty comes last of all."

Jakob Wassermann (1873-1934)

*Caspar Hauser: The Inertia of the Heart*¹



Woven Mats. Remixed, 200 x 180 cm, 2009 (triptych, oil and pencil on canvas). Roberto López Fernández Collection.



Cemetery of Drawings, 100 x 122 cm, 2015 (oil and erasers on wood). Artist's collection.

When entering Mexico City's Modern Art Museum, in the first room to the left, laughter and occasional sighs of indignation displace the solemn murmuring that usually fills the rooms of museums. What's the occasion? Mexican artist Boris Viskin's recent exhibition, where his sense of humor, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes ironic, sometimes innocent, and sometimes not so very innocent, is expressed in the more than 90 pieces on display. This sense of humor is combined with topics like the history of art, politics, music, photography, cinema, faith, the body, and the artist's personal experiences.

The exhibition, curated by Iñaki Herranz, brought together paintings, sculptures, installations, and assembled combinations in relief alluding to philosophers like Plato and Heidegger; writers like Borges; painters like Matisse, Klimt, Toledo, and Picasso; scientists like Einstein; and historic events like the

"Composition and the pictorial elements continue to guide my work, but they come in a little later or are not the central component."

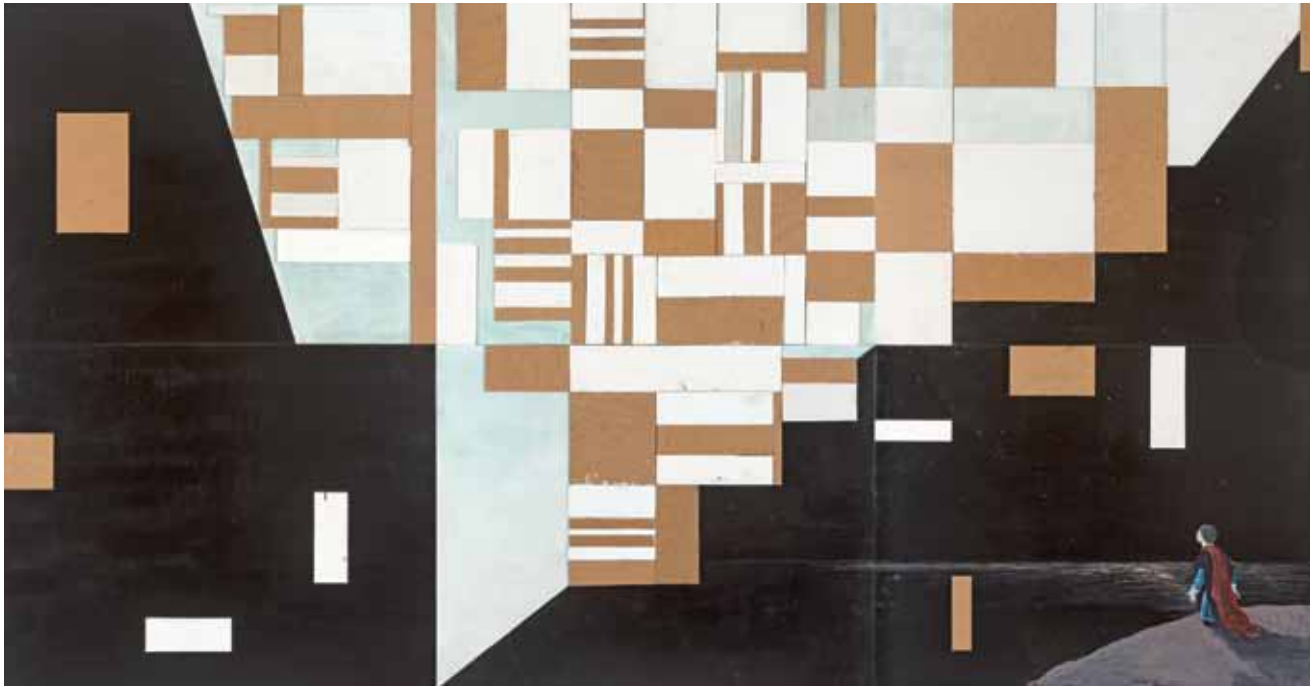
Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima, and the fall of the Twin Towers. All of this leads to Boris Viskin's vast political, cultural, and artistic repertory.

Among the variety of techniques, materials, and themes, the name of the exhibition, "Beauty Will Come Later..." is the crosscutting thread among the pieces and serves to define Viskin's attitude toward art for the last 15 years of his artistic career: "We [Herranz and Viskin] decided to start with the year 2000, a crossroads in my career because I stopped working only, or primarily, oil on canvas and moved into other materials and languages. The exhibition brings together the works that deal more with the final result than with beauty as such. This is something that interests me: composition and the pictorial elements continue to guide my work, but they come in a little later or are not the central component."¹

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All photos courtesy of the Modern Art Museum,
National Institute of Fine Arts.



Chair Looking at Its Parts (between Plato and Heidegger), square on the wall, 200 x 240 cm; chair, 80 x 40 x 50 cm, placed approximately 240 cm from the square; 2008. Artist's collection.



The Appearance of Modern Art, 190 x 366 cm, 2015 (oil on wood). Artist's collection.

He uses humor as something that motivates him, a language that allows him to create airily and naturally.

For this artist, the essential component is to be moved as he was moved on his first encounter with art, by a book of Renaissance painting. Beauty undoubtedly comes into view, but the painter/sculptor explains that the most important thing about his work, the reason he makes art, is a desire to surprise himself and surprise the viewer, in that order. Viskin achieves this through his sense of humor, a constant reflection about the creative act, and dialogue and contact with the materials—he admits that lately, he has been hammering and putting in screws more than painting.

He uses humor as something that motivates him, a language that allows him to create airily and naturally. “Humor has always been present in my work. Perhaps not in the first years when I had to radiate a certain seriousness, but starting in the 1990s, it’s been something that has interested me very much. From very innocent jokes that remind me of my childhood to more aggressive ones. I feel that jokes often bring into play realities and truths. You risk falling into mere quips or just leaving things on that level.... But if you go beyond that, I think it creates better communication with the viewer.”

Almost all the pieces in the exhibition are accompanied by fact sheets with fragments of Viskin’s writing, texts that he has written while making the piece and that replace technical or conceptual explanations. In the installation *Crates* (2000), for example, the artist asks the wooden barrier, his postmodern Coatlicue, or mother of the gods, to protect us from Donald Trump, from the self-styled Islamic State, and the deputies of Mexico’s Green Party. In *Troy* (oil and collage on wood, 2011), a piece that includes the signatures of Matisse, Picasso, Torres García, and Girolletta, Viskin points to a feeling of being closed in and limitations due to what he had already created, that will never be new again and that in a certain way limits his

own artistic endeavors. In *The Mask vs. Long-Hair* (wood, cement, and painted resin object), a small figure of a wrestler holds up two long columns of wood, and in the description of the piece, the painter writes about how he was thinking of Japanese kamikazes taking vengeance for Hiroshima and Nagasaki as he watched the September 11 attacks on television.

The work by this Mexican artist includes other kinds of art that go beyond the thematic and references: even though Viskin is first and foremost a painter and sculptor, he combines the artistic processes of writers, photographers, and film-makers. This creative intersection can be seen in the notes referring to literature. With regard to photography, he explains that many of his works start off as portraits: of 10 or 100 ideas, a single one ends up being used to transform it into an object or a painting or a sculpture. In *Sonata for a Cyclical Night* (oil, toys, and collage on wood and canvas, 2007-2010), a series of 124 small canvases that begin and culminate with primitive art, the viewer feels like he/she is watching a film.

But perhaps the most important common factor in the show, in addition to the priority of message over aesthetics,

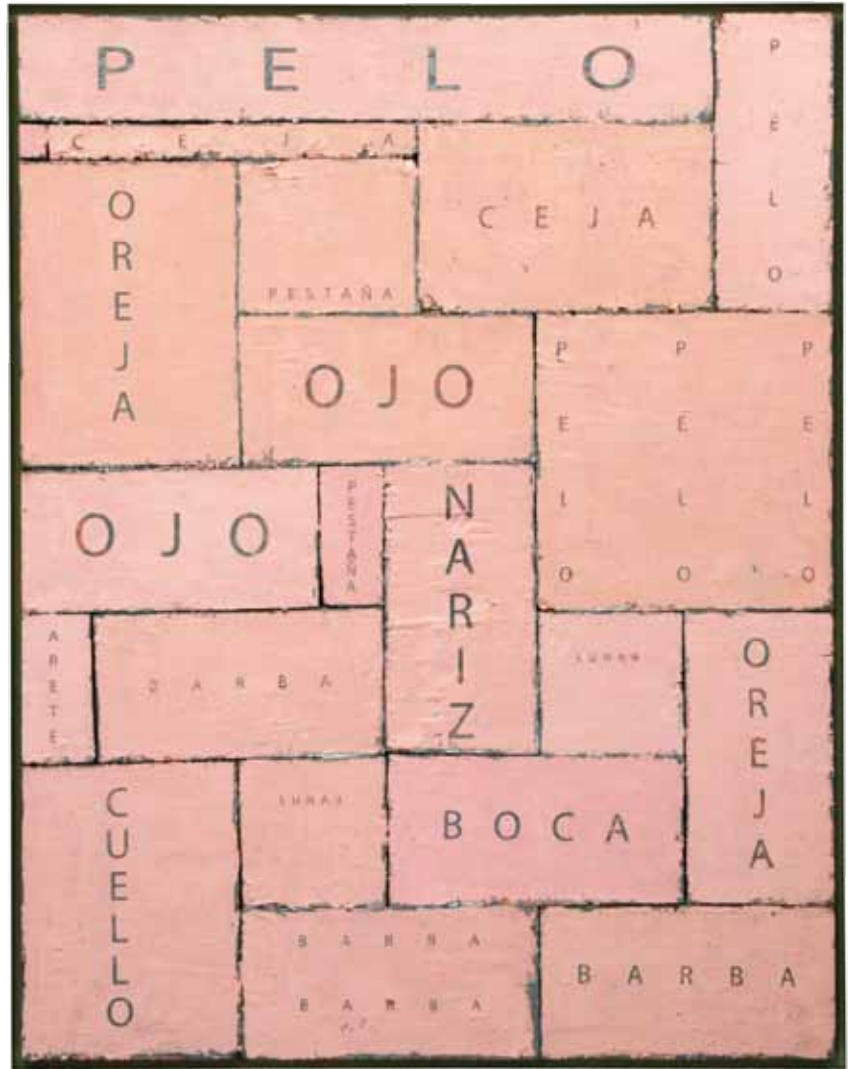
is the presence of the artist. Viskin's personality is materialized in each of the pieces, making it a show that becomes a continual conversation between the painter and the viewer, a conversation in which —like in all the best conversations— the most innocent and silly meets up with the most sophisticated and profound.

“With these pieces, in which I include photos of my grandmother or of myself, at first it might seem that I distance myself from viewers because it's so personal, but sometimes that gets to people more.” Viskin is right. The personal nature of the pieces does not alienate visitors from the exhibition. On the contrary, the viewer has the feeling of sharing an inside joke with the artist, to the point of feeling like an accomplice. In *My Granny by Klimt* (oil, enamel, gold leaf, photograph of my Granny, and collage on wood, 2015), for example, the painter alludes to Gustav Klimt's famous portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, except he replaces the face of the rich socialite with a black-and-white snap of his grandmother. Thus, Boris's grandmother (and as a result, Bloch-Bauer) becomes everyone's granny.



Mexico 2012, from the series "Treasures of the Rijksmuseum," 36.5 x 29 cm, 2011-2015 (collage over reproduction). Artist's collection.

The viewer has the feeling of sharing an inside joke with the artist, to the point of feeling like an accomplice.



Constructive Spoken Self-Portrait, 190 x 150 cm, 2013 (oil on wood). Artist's collection.

It seems completely natural after talking to Viskin for a while that he includes his personal world in his pieces, that he resolves humor with the solemnity of religion and history, and that he has the flexibility of making art with so many materials, so many techniques, and so many themes. This artist is not very concerned with classifications, or rather, he is very concerned: "In the 1990s, people talked a lot about the division between painting and concept, and I would love those divisions to be done away with; I would love for us to be able to dialogue with what [artists] want to communicate, the aesthetics or the presence of the work, and that there not be so much emphasis on how it's made.... I'm don't care much if they catalogue me as a painter or not, or if it's a painting, or it's an object, or it's something assembled.... Iñaki [the show's curator] is the one who will deal more with these terms."

At the end of the day, the important thing is the message. **NM**

NOTES

¹ Jakob Wassermann, *Caspar Hauser: The Inertia of the Heart* (London and New York: Penguin, 1992), p. 324.

² All quotes from Viskin are from an interview by the author in Mexico City, June 29, 2016.



A Documentary of Unaccompanied Central American Children Migrants

Susana Vargas Evaristo*

The documentary *VOCES: Cipotes, Patojos y bichos migrantes y refugiados en México* (VOICES: Migrant and Refugee Kids, Urchins, and Little Buggers in Mexico) was produced by anthropologist Abbdel Camargo Martínez in 2015.¹ His aim was to disseminate the reasons little boys and girls and teens would travel without the company of an adult from their countries of origin to Mexico and the United States.

This audiovisual material is novel and original. It tells the story of four migrant minors from Central America who were interviewed at the Migratory Stations in

Tapachula, Chiapas and Mexico City. It also includes Guadalupe Sánchez's presentation of an animated cartoon that uses sensitivity and emotions to take the viewer by the hand to understand what the characters in this story of migration go through, leading you to a place of profound reflection.

In addition to the video's ability to sensitize viewers, the material also presents concise information, the result of long academic research, specifying some of the main reasons that push these children to leave. It is, then, an audiovisual document that looks at a sensitive topic in a systematic, informed way. All of this serves to expose the enormous problem of social inequality on a transnational level represented by these social actors.

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Illustrations by Guadalupe Sánchez Sosa.



THE NUMBERS

Migration of little girls and boys and teens traveling alone from Central America began rising in 2009. By 2014, more than 60 000 children were traveling alone toward the Mexico-U.S. border, turning this into a recognized humanitarian crisis. Getting to the United States through Mexico is the main intention spurring these youngsters on to withstand the violation of their human rights on the way.

In addition to the risks they have experienced in their places of origin, the spiral of violence continues and is expressed with every step they take on their journeys. The chain of events that endanger them spans everything from theft, tricks, and harassment to human trafficking. All these factors cause constant stress, accompanied by the obsessive idea of arriving to the United States as the only possibility for safety.

The figures for Central American child migrants travelling alone speak for themselves: between 2013 and 2015 alone, Mexican and U.S. authorities detained more than 95 000 of them.² Of this number, 90 percent were children and adolescents from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. As a result of pressure brought to bear by the United States on countries involved in child migration, Mexico implemented the Southern Border Plan, whose aim is to turn the country into a huge restraining wall and to deport migrants

These Central American migrants are mainly between the ages of 12 and 17.

back to Central America.³ One criticism of this government response is that it is not based on instigating the preventive and protective measures this particularly vulnerable group requires, but rather aims for criminalization, rejection, and return.⁴ In 2015, Mexico's Ministry of the Interior reported a 54.6-percent increase in the number of unaccompanied children and teens brought before Mexican authorities *vis-à-vis* the previous year and a decrease in detentions by U.S. authorities of up to 42 percent, according to Border Patrol data.⁵

Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador were the countries of origin of 98 percent of migrant minors (a total of 26 566) detained by Mexican immigration authorities between January and October 2015. In that period, 6 210, including 2 379 girls, were from El Salvador; 12 649, 4 417 of whom were girls, were from Guatemala; and 7 707, 3 338 of whom were girls, were from Honduras.⁶

One item of particular interest is that these Central American migrants are mainly between the ages of 12 and 17. The Guatemalans are the most often accom-

panied, followed by the Salvadorans, while the Hondurans tend to travel unaccompanied by any adult.

REASONS FOR LEAVING

The stories presented in the video came from the report “Arrancados de raíz” (Pulled Out by the Roots), produced by the Mexican office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (or UN Agency for Refugees, as it is also known) (UNHCR).⁷ It presents the splendidly illustrated stories of adolescents, taken from interviews done directly in the Tapachula, Chiapas, and Mexico City Migratory Stations.

The study “Niñez y adolescencia migrante en Centroamérica” (Children and Adolescent Migrants in Central America), carried out by the Regional Group of Organizations to Protect Migrants’ Human Rights (Gredemig) in 2006, includes interviews with Central American chil-

dren and teen migrants about the causes of their migration; 54 percent of them said they had left due to economic conditions, and 39 percent, to rejoin their families.⁸ The third cause they mentioned was insecurity, defined by a culture of violence born in the family itself, which motivates many children and teens to leave their homes and migrate. The same study pointed out that for Salvadoran children, the first cause of migration was to rejoin their families, while for Guatemalans and Hondurans, it was due to economic conditions.⁹

The 2014 ACNUR study “Arrancados de Raíz” recognizes these factors as part of the causes of this kind of migration, but looks at them from a more precise, micro-social perspective. First of all, it explains that the displacement of unaccompanied minor migrants is multi-causal and that the factors are interrelated. Secondly, it shows that the children’s subjective view is important to take into account since it is constructed and consolidated along with their life experiences. Thirdly, it also shows that we cannot talk about a single type of violence; what we are dealing with here are *mul-*

**Returning to their countries
and communities of origin means facing
violence and death threats again.**



multiple types of violence that these minors are subject to in their countries of origin.

The violence ranges from battering, intimidation and threats, to insecurity as the cause for leaving; this explains how completely unprotected these children are.

In the fourth place, the violence has different specificities according to their place of origin and the child's gender. Finally, the study concludes decisively that this segment of the population requires international protection.

DIEGO, AGE 17
(GUATEMALA)

Diego's story shows how the children in his place of origin grow up fast and are forced to deal with day-to-day situations like helping support their families or making decisions to resolve threatening conflicts stemming from youth gangs. Different factors come into play in this context like violence, poverty, and migration by family members, particularly parents.

JONATHAN, AGE 17
(EL SALVADOR)

His dream is to bring his family, scattered in different places, back together again. He expresses the emotions that come from having to deal with abandonment, flight, and crossing borders, and those that emerge both between the relatives who stay in their country of origin and those who are spread around Mexico and the United States. Jonathan says that he would like his life to be like it was when he was seven years old, and "not like it is now, where my whole family is flung far and wide."

RUBY, AGE 17
(EL SALVADOR)

Ruby tells us about the sexual violence experienced in her home, joined to the abuse from the gangs. Early

Jonathan's dream is to bring his family, scattered in different places, back together again.





Family reunification is the driving force behind the children and teens' need to journey away from their places of origin.

pregnancies and early parenting in the framework of violence are components that are unleashed and worsen women's day-to-day lives. This makes them prefer to disappear to save their lives and those of their children in the face of death threats, which almost always come from a man.

One constant in the stories is the idea that each person has about the existence of a relative or acquaintance in the United States, even when there is no strong emotional bond. For the migrants, this becomes a fundamental factor that helps them in the desperate circumstances they face in their places of origin. It makes traveling to the U.S. the most viable solution they see.

However, given that Mexican immigration authorities have implemented a return mechanism as the way to preserve unaccompanied minors' security, the truth is that returning to their countries and communities of origin means facing violence and death threats once again, the very thing they journeyed north in the first place to escape. Ruby says that "going back would be the worst" that could happen to her and her baby. The

return worsens the risks for child migrants because the reason they left in the first place was linked to escaping to a particularly risky situation like intimidations from relatives or gang members.

JOSUE, AGE 15
(HONDURAS)

Lastly, Josué's story adds an example to the documentary of the migrants' need to be able to apply to Mexican immigration authorities for refugee status, which could make them "safe" from being returned and having to confront the violence at home. However, this mechanism is not always an option for them, since the rush to cross the border between Mexico and the United States leads them to deprive themselves of this right due to the uneasiness and uncertainty of the process itself.

The "Arrancados de Raíz" study shows that information about refugee status is not always adequately communicated to these unaccompanied minor migrants; 30 percent of those interviewed who received no information in a timely manner said they would be interested in applying. This implies that the Mexican government makes mass deportations of unaccompanied minors who actually require greater protection.

To conclude, we can also say that gender is a recurring risk factor that affects females, both adult and minors, given the ominous possibility of being harassed both in their country of origin and in the transit countries, Mexico among them.

The violence is generalized, but is greater among young Central Americans. This is one of the crosscutting themes the documentary deals with through the stories of the adolescents who have faced the gangs linked to organized crime.

Ethnicity and cultural origins are also aspects of the Central American child exodus. This is no minor consideration, as shown, on the one hand, by the challenge the children and teens face when crossing linguistic barriers, and on the other hand, their forced abandonment of rural and community life, all to save their lives.

Family reunification is the driving force behind the children and teens' need to start the journey away from their places of origin. Searching for their relatives in the United States implies finding a solution to a series of events charged with violence and insecurity that have been part of their lives.

To disseminate the need to protect these Central American children and adolescents beyond the sphere of academia, the creator of the original idea of the documentary managed to transform a long, important piece of academic research into a visual document accessible to all interested audiences. **MM**

Watch the documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uotemh80HBs>

COMPOSER ALBERTO DELGADO ON WRITING THE SCORE FOR THE DOCUMENTARY

“Initially, I intended to recreate the music played in Central America. But, as we listened to the narration, we made certain variations that musically softened the real story, which is very brutal. Throughout Central America, people listen to *son* in 3/4 and 6/8 time. And if you listen to the music in the documentary, it’s in those tempos.

“Composing the score for this video was an enormous responsibility for me, a way of contributing something to changing this situation. I’m Mexican, and these atrocities happen in my country. It’s very painful for me to see what we Mexicans have turned into.”

NOTES

- ¹ “*Cipote*,” “*patojo*” and “*bicho*” (loosely, “kids,” “urchins,” and “little buggers” are colloquial terms for little boys and girls in the three countries in question. They are not pejorative, but, rather, terms of endearment. [Translator’s Note.]
- ² Unidad de Política Migratoria, Secretaría de Gobernación, “Menores migrantes en México Extranjeros presentados ante las autoridades migratorias y mexicanos devueltos por Estados Unidos,” <http://www.politica migratoria.gob.mx/work/models/SEGOB/Resource/2510/1/images/Menores%20migrantes%20feb%202015%2014042015.pdf>, accessed August 16, 2016.
- ³ Initially, the Southern Border Program was put forward as a mechanism to help regulate migratory flows and diminish the risk to the Central American migrant population; however, in fact, it became the main mechanism for containing migratory flows.
- ⁴ Pablo Ceriani Cernadas, comp., “Niñez detenida: lo derechos de los niños, niñas y adolescentes en la frontera entre México y Guatemala,” (Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico, and Buenos Aires: Ed. Fontamara/Universidad Nacional de Lanus, Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías/Ford Foundation, 2012).
- ⁵ Secretaría de Gobernación, Unidad Migratoria, “Menores migrantes resumen estadístico mensual, octubre, 2015,” <http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/work/models/SEGOB/Resource/2473/1/images/menores%20migrantes%20resumen%20oct%202015%2018122015.pdf>, accessed March 5, 2016.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 5.
- ⁷ UNHCR, “Arrancados de raíz. Causas que originan el desplazamiento transfronterizo de niños, niñas y adolescentes no acompañados y/o separados de Centroamérica y su necesidad de protección internacional,” report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mexico, <http://www.acnur.org/donde-trabaja/america/mexico/arrancados-de-raiz/>.
- ⁸ GREDEMIG, “Niñez y adolescencia migrante en Centroamérica. Marzo 2006,” Juan Carlos Rivas, July 3, “La triste historia de los niños migrantes,” *Vértice*, <http://www.elsalvador.com/vertice/2005/030705/repotaje1.html>.
- ⁹ Carolina Escobar, *Los pequeños pasos en un camino minado: Migración, niñez y juventud en Centroamérica y el sur de México*, (Guatemala City: Consejería en Proyecto, 2008), p. 119.



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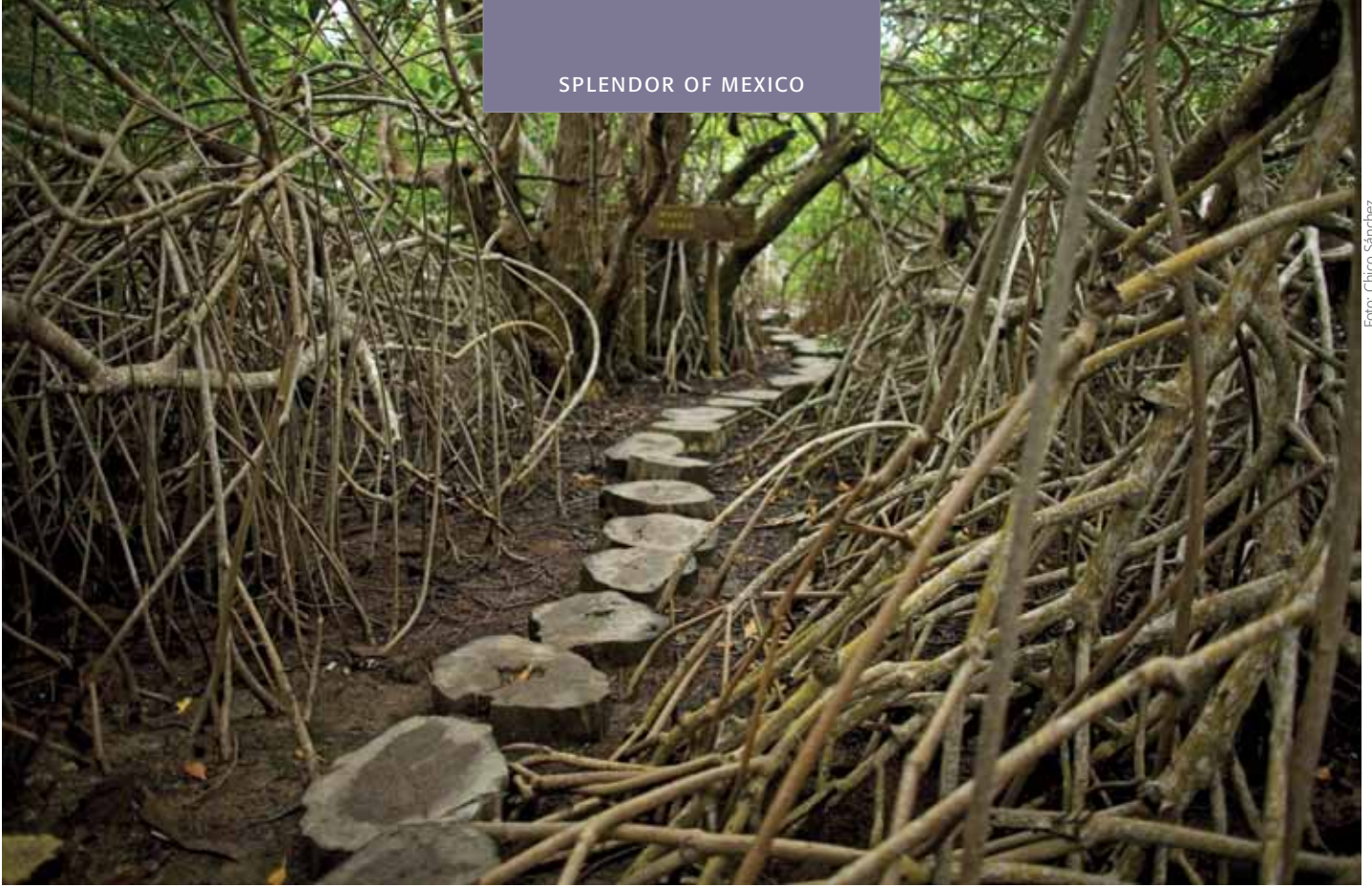
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Mangroves

More than Just a Postcard

Environmental Recovery of Mexico's Mangroves

María Teresa Gutiérrez Mercado*

Coastal wetlands are areas where ocean salt water and fresh water from streams and rivers come together; they are made up of different species of trees able to grow in soil waterlogged with salt water, mainly mangroves.

These ecosystems represent very important environmental goods, values, and services. In one year, each hectare of mangrove forest produces about 12 tons of fallen

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Photos courtesy of the Fund for Communication and Environmental Education.

leaves that provide food for many forms of coastal life, and captures about 17 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, mitigating the effects of climate change. Under their roots are deposited enormous quantities of organic matter and sediment that trap contaminants, cleaning the river water before it flows into the sea.

Although the mangroves' brackish water is a difficult habitat for plants, a great diversity of animals live there. Tropical fisheries depend to a great extent on these important carbon sinkholes, since they offer food and refuge for hundreds of larvae, fish, mollusks, and crustaceans with high commercial value, such as red snapper, snook, mullet, and others. The mangroves help stabilize the coastlines and diminish damage from storms and hurricanes as well as provide fuel. They are both beautiful and venues for recreational activities; they act as natural flood- and erosion-control systems and improve the quality of the water by functioning as a biological filter.

Undoubtedly, they are one of the planet's most productive ecosystems. That is why they are protected by the General Law on Wildlife and Natural Vegetation.

Fishing, aquaculture, the extraction of hydrocarbons and minerals, agriculture, extensive cattle ranching, and tourism exert great pressure on these fragile environments, a source of huge biological diversity. Despite their importance, the size of mangroves has shrunk notably worldwide.

Mexico is home to 5 percent of the world's total acreage of mangrove forests, putting it fourth on the list of the 125 countries that enjoy this ecosystem.

Before the year 2000, estimates of their size differed widely. In that year, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that there were 440 000 hectares of mangroves worldwide,¹ while Mexico's Ministry of the Environment and natural Resources (Semarnat) reported almost 890 000 in the same year.²

In 2005, there were still no trustworthy estimates of how fast the country's mangroves were changing, and the factors causing those changes were unknown. For this reason, the National Commission for the Use of Biodiversity



The mangroves help stabilize the coastlines and diminish damage from storms and hurricanes.

The problems in preserving the mangroves arise from a vision that neither understands nor values the environmental services they offer.

(Conabio) initiated the System for Monitoring Mexico's Mangroves; according to this system, in 2015, Mexico had 775 555 hectares of mangroves.³

This Conabio study created the knowledge needed to better plan and manage this kind of ecosystem nationwide.

The problems in preserving the mangroves arise from a vision that neither understands nor values the environmental services they offer. The only way of reversing this is to develop an environmental culture that promotes appreciating those environmental services.

Since 2008, the Fund for Communication and Environmental Education (FCEA) has been contributing to the environmental recovery of the Alvarado Lake System and the Tuxpan-Tamiahua Biological Corridor, both areas that contain important mangroves in Veracruz state. We have developed a program of education and environmental recovery financed by Petr6leos Mexicanos (Pemex), Mexico's state-owned oil company, and the Veracruz Environmental Fund.

Both these locations are recognized as internationally important sites for the conservation of wetlands by the Ramsar Convention. Signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, the Wetlands Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that is the framework for national action and international cooperation to preserve and encourage rational use of wetlands and their resources. This convention is the only global environmental treaty specifically covering one type of ecosystem. Today, 159 countries have signed it, and, by 2015, 2 186 wetlands of international importance had been designated. Our country is vitally important in the conservation of wetlands because its 142 designated wetland areas make it the nation with the second largest number of sites in the world.

Community involvement is indispensable to recovering the mangrove forests. That is why the FCEA is carrying out an environmental awareness campaign in these regions, to communicate to the population the goods, values, and services that their ecosystems provide. The ultimate aim is to promote pride and create the basis for carrying out environmental restoration projects in surrounding mangroves





that would have the community's esteem and protection.

Three community nurseries have been set up that have produced more than one million native plants, mainly of the four species of mangrove present in our country: the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), the black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), the white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), and the buttonwood or button mangrove (*Conocarpus erectus*), used to reforest both private and collective *ejido* land. More than 30 women have been trained and are in charge of their operation, and more than 800 hectares of mangrove swamp and low jungle have been reforested.

Nurseries set up at the Alvarado Lake System and in Tuxpan provide appropriate vegetable matter to establish new plantations and maintain them. In addition, they will contribute to improving the economic condition of those involved in managing them. The nursery's contributors, all women, select and transfer the mangrove seeds, prepare the substratum, and sow, water, and transfer the seeds and seedlings. But above all, the nurseries are a place to create environmental awareness for the inhabitants of these communities.

The reforestation is done using mangrove species native to the region, and they are located at sites with an optimum terrain and environmental micro-topographical profile.

A mechanism of payment for environmental services for five years has been established in three *ejido* plots of land, where the workers labor to guarantee the conservation of 500 hectares of pristine mangrove forest.

In local schools, an awareness and training program is being implemented among students and teachers, promoting significant learning and the building of a culture of caring for and sustainably developing their forestry, fishing, and tourism resources. This will bear fruit in the form of a better quality of life.

The students carry out environmental conservation campaigns oriented to observing and getting to know their surroundings, as well as ensuring the population recognizes the environmental impact of their own activities and the alternatives for sustainable development. They delve into topics linked to the dynamics of the basin, availability,

Community involvement is indispensable to recovering the mangrove forests.



The nurseries are a place to create environmental awareness for the inhabitants of these communities.

the uses of and contamination of water, the hydric footprint, invasive species, and the wealth and importance of, as well as the threats to, the mangrove forests.

More than 70 schools in these regions have participated in the environmental education and reforestation program in their plots and neighboring areas; and more than 700 teachers and parents have trained in the environmental education program.

In addition, a system has been set up to monitor the reforested, preserved parcels of land, where the *ejido* members and their children record the birds they have observed, the state of the structure and coverage of the mangrove reforestation (the density of individuals, distribution, connectivity, and presence of clearings). This gives them an educational and life experience of contact with their surroundings.

In addition 15 women have been trained as micro-business owners to produce crafts using the water lily (*Eichhornia crassipes*), an invasive species in the Veracruz wetlands. This creates additional sources of income for the region.

The project's communication and dissemination strategy makes it possible to document, disseminate, and replicate the lessons learned in other areas. This kind of initiative can spark social processes that in the medium term will ensure the communities take responsibility for their resources, diversify their sources of financing, and preserve their natural heritage, on which important environmental services that benefit millions of Mexicans depend. **MM**



NOTES

¹ M. L. Wilkie and S. Forest Fortuna, *Status and trends in mangrove area extent worldwide*, Resources Assessment Working Paper no. 63 unpublished, (Rome: FAO Forest Resources Division, 2003).

² Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, *Compendio de estadísticas ambientales, 2002* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, 2003).

³ See <http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/ecosistemas/manglares2013/manglares.html>.

Yesterday Is Today at the El Carmen Museum

Teresa Jiménez*

Centuries ago it was a large fruit orchard in the town of San Ángel. Today, it is a traffic-clogged thoroughfare in southern Mexico City. Here, in the midst of daily chaos, the El Carmen Museum emerges like bookends enclosing chapters of history.

Built in the seventeenth century — 1615 to be exact — by Friar Andrés de San Miguel to hold the College of the Discalced Carmelites of Our Lady of Santa Ana, El Carmen was this religious order's home, school, and monastery. The Carmelites had their origins in ancient hermits who lived in a community on Mount Carmel in Palestine around the thirteenth century. Later, they spread to different countries. Some of them established themselves in Spain, and the order was reformed by Saint Teresa of Ávila, which is when they took the name of barefoot or discalced Carmelites. That is, they renewed their order under a mandate of austerity and asceticism. Like other religious orders such as the Jesuits or Dominicans, the Carmelites traveled to spread the Gospel, and in the seventeenth century, they established themselves

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All photos, courtesy of the National Institute of Anthropology and History.





Aqueduct patio.



El Carmen's domes.



Student's patio.



Crypts.

The religious art's purpose was not to be sumptuous, but rather to serve the worship of the divine.



Cloister with Talavera-tile-covered fountain.

in different places in Mexico and what is now Mexico City, in Desierto de los Leones and El Carmen, where they built their monasteries.

Going inside the El Carmen museum/monastery today is to enter into the presence of change and permanence, moving through three centuries of the art and history of Mexico. From the point of view of history, this building projects the ideological and economic power the religious orders possessed in New Spain during the Viceroyalty, as well as the enormous influence they exerted on education through their teaching of the Christian Gospel.

While it is true that in their daily lives the Carmelites followed the precepts of austerity and even poverty, this was no impediment to their possessing large tracts of land, monumental buildings, and works of extraordinary artistic value. The purpose of these goods was neither accumulation nor profit, but a way to guarantee this religious order's consolidation and area of influence in the "New World." It should also be pointed out that the religious art's purpose was not to be sumptuous, but rather to serve the worship of the divine.

A witness to the viceregal period, El Carmen also tells the story of Mexico's independence, which was the beginning of its end. The Carmelites had to abandon the monastery due to the Law on the Disentailment of Ecclesiastic Goods passed by the Liberal government in the late nineteenth century. A large part of their land was sold to private citizens, and the majority of the goods confiscated; El Carmen was abandoned and sacked, left to fall into ruin. In the time between when it was abandoned and when it was recovered by the Ministry of Education in the third decade of the twentieth century, El Carmen was occupied by different people and institutions: at one time, it even served as a jail. At the end of the 1920s, the National Institute of Anthropology and History began restorations, finally closing the splendor-abandonment-recovery triangle. From that time on until today, important restoration work has been carried out both on the buildings themselves and the art works in the museum, be they paintings, sculpture, or frescoes.



Photo: Michel Zabé.

Juan Correa, *Saint Teresa, Pilgrim*, seventeenth to eighteenth century (oil on canvas). El Carmen Museum Collection.

In 1929, the doors to the past were closed, and El Carmen opened as a museum. In honor of its artistic and historic value, in 1932, it was declared a historic monument. Visitors are called upon to focus their attention on two main aspects: the Carmelite architecture and the viceregal art collection. The combination of the two makes it easy to get an idea or mentally reproduce the day-to-day existence of the Carmelite friars, as well as the aesthetic-religious codes of the viceregal period.

BETWEEN WALLS AND GARDENS

Despite the building's sobriety and simplicity, the construction is monumental. All the monastery's spaces and corners also have a function and make sense for the monks' living, working, dedication to the religious life, and learning. When entering the museum by the concierge's hall, you can still detect vestiges of the murals that covered the roof and walls, and in some cases, the underlying images have benefited from the stupendous work by other artists, the restorers. This is the case, among many others, of the fresco on the walls of the main access portal, which portrays three figures significant for the Carmelites: their founder and prophet, Elijah, and the order's reformers, Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint John of the Cross. Once inside, you can see the different architectural techniques of the period used in its construction and



Photo: Michel Zabé.

Anonymous, *Apology of the Carmelite Order*, second half of the eighteenth century (oil on canvas). El Carmen Museum Collection.



Cristóbal de Villalpando, *The Vessels*, seventeenth century (oil on canvas). El Carmen Museum Collection.

When entering the museum by the concierge's hall, you can still detect vestiges of the murals that covered the roof and walls.

its later remodeling. A visit includes the cloister, with its Baroque fountain covered by seventeenth-century Talavera tiles from Puebla; the Patio of Arches; the Patio of the Aqueduct —the monastery had a water supply system fed by the Magdalena River at the time—, used to irrigate the orchard; the reading room; the sacristy; the domestic chapel; the ossuary; the crypts where the remains of monks and benefactors were deposited, including mummified bodies; the monks' lavatorium and cells; as well, of course, as the pleasant stroll through what was once the orchard, where a small number of fruit trees have been preserved.

THE COLONIAL ART GALLERY AND OTHER OBJECTS

Upon recovering the art collection, it was decided to store a great deal of the New Spain iconography in this museum,¹ which is practically synonymous with religious and Baroque art. Not all the pieces come from El Carmen because works from other churches, convents, and monasteries are also on display here. While some of the artists or works cannot be situated chronologically because they are not signed —at that time, anonymous or collective production



Photo: Michel Zabé.

Anonymous, *Our Lady Maria Auxiliadora*, seventeenth century (oil on canvas).
El Carmen Museum Collection.



Photo: Michel Zabé.

Anonymous, *Our Lady of Carmen*,
seventeenth century (Talavera ceramics from Puebla).
El Carmen Museum Collection.

were frequent—, it is possible to easily recognize the school that each belongs to. This is the case of the painting *Cybil, Patriarch of Alexandria*, attributed to Miguel Cabrera’s workshop-school, if not by the master himself, or the painting of Friar Severino Francés, attributed to Luis Juárez. The collection also includes works by other celebrated New Spain artists like Juan Correa (*Saint Teresa, Pilgrim*) and Cristóbal Villalpando, who painted the polyptych *The Passion. Saint Joseph with the Child* and other works.

In addition to paintings, the museum exhibits other kinds of work from the period: some are parts of the furniture and others are ornamental, like sculptures, multi-colored wood carvings, silver items, altarpieces, and ceramics. Together, they testify to the monastic life and viceregal spirit.

EL CARMEN AND THE INHABITANTS OF SAN ÁNGEL

The residents of the San Ángel neighborhood are a living part of the museum community, and every year they participate in the events that recreate Mexican folk art.

**Visiting the
El Carmen Museum
is a way to see
first-hand a privileged
document-witness
to the history of Mexico.**

Just as centuries ago, in July, San Ángel residents participate in the flower fair in honor of Our Lady of Carmen. This celebration brings together neighbors —and others, of course— to take part in flower arranging contests, flower sales, a fair, and artistic exhibits.

In November, El Carmen’s famous altars for the Day of the Dead usually pay homage to important San Ángel residents who have passed away. In 2015, for example, the altar was dedicated to the mummies in El Carmen’s crypts, thought to have been friars and benefactors of the Carmelite order.

The traditional Nativity scenes close the year in December. These pieces bring together the best of Mexico’s folk art as well as that of other countries that the El Carmen Museum invites to share their Christmas festivities.

Visiting the El Carmen Museum is a way to see first-hand a privileged document-witness to the history of Mexico. In addition, it has one of the most outstanding catalogues of New Spain sacred art, with works dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Plus, participating in its fiestas is a pleasure, a luxury we can still give ourselves in this chaotic area of Mexico City. **MM**

El Carmen Museum
Avenida Revolución s/n,
San Ángel Mexico City,
C.P 01000
Phone: +52 55 5616 1504
Open to the public
Tuesday to Sunday,
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

NOTES

¹ The country’s main colonial art gallery is the National Viceroyalty Museum located in Tepotzotlán in the State of Mexico.



Prior's cell.

Photo: Michel Zabé.

Problemas del DESARROLLO

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Reflections on Canada's October 2015 Federal Elections



Canada's most recent federal elections offered uncommon scenarios due to the level of confrontation between the contenders. A large part of these clashes involved attacks by the New Democrats and the Liberals against the Conservative Party and then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who, after a little over nine and a half years in office had made a series of changes both domestically and internationally, changing to a great extent social practices nationwide and Canada's image in the world.

The overwhelming victory of the Liberal Party and its leader Justin Trudeau in the House of Commons creates a series of expectations inside Canada and abroad, particularly because he has a majority. Thanks to this, he is able to make changes without being blocked by the parliamentary opposition, reinforcing the vertical nature of power in Canada, which resides fundamentally in the head of state.

In this section, various specialists review the main challenges facing the new Canadian government domestically and abroad. The authors ask if conservatism has really retreated or if it will adopt new forms of action. They also review how civic commitment and participation are fundamental for understanding Canadian democracy, and they analyze the impact in each province of the increased number of seats in Parliament after the last elections, a change intended to allow better representation for the provinces with higher population density.

The chance to take new positions on delicate matters like global change, migration, or refugees are unequalled opportunities for Trudeau to present a different, more empathetic image to international public opinion. This will make it possible to adopt new styles of cultural diplomacy both inside and outside Canada, and, of course, toward Mexico.

Oliver Santín Peña
GUEST EDITOR

Canadian Foreign Policy

The Justin Trudeau Approach

John M. Kirk*



The election of Justin Trudeau on October 19, 2015 constitutes an enormous sea change in Canadian politics. It was “time for change in this country. . . . Real change. We beat cynicism with hard work. We beat negative, divisive politics with a positive vision that brings Canadians together.”¹ But what exactly is that vision, and how does it apply to Canadian foreign policy?

In the months since Justin Trudeau was elected there have been several indications that significant changes in Canadian foreign policy are pending. Some are symbolic, such as dropping the name of the foreign ministry (now known simply as Global Affairs Canada) and replacing in its foyer a large portrait of the queen with two paintings by Alfred Pellán, reversing a Stephen Harper’s decision four years ago.

Others are more concrete. Canadian bombing missions against ISIL were stopped within a week of Trudeau taking

office, and Canada will not take part in any military missions unless requested by the United Nations. A commitment to multilateralism, unlike the unilateral approach favored by the Harper government, will now be the order of the day.

DEALING WITH THE HARPER LEGACY

While the election of Justin Trudeau and his approach to politics are seen as a refreshing change by most Canadians, a complex legacy of challenges has been left by almost a decade of Harper government. In 2006, for example, Canada was the only country among 47 to express opposition to the new UN Human Rights Council. In 2010 it failed in its bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, losing out to Portugal. In 2011, it was the first country to leave the Kyoto Accord, an action condemned by the Liberal Party at the time. In 2012 the government broke diplomatic relations with Iran.

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Canada will not take part in any military missions unless requested by the United Nations. A commitment to multilateralism, unlike the Harper government's unilateral approach, will now be the order of the day.

In Latin America, the Harper approach to strengthening ties was particularly short-sighted. The prime minister had a Manichean understanding of regional politics, supporting countries of a conservative or right-wing nature (for example, Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Peru), while often criticizing those with socialist or social democratic bent, like the ALBA countries. He enthusiastically supported Canadian mining companies, despite their often controversial records in human rights, environmental degradation, and community dislocation.

This rather simplistic approach to Latin American politics can best be seen in Mr. Harper's role in the Summits of the Americas, and in particular his rejection in Trinidad and Tobago and Colombia of Cuba's participation in the meetings, despite the overwhelming support from every other country apart from Canada and the United States. His caustic comments on the Venezuelan government after the death of Hugo Chávez and support for the 2009 coup in Honduras that saw the overthrow of Manuel Zelaya also illustrate this aspect of foreign policy.

It can also be seen in his fervent support for the governments of Israel and Ukraine and his strong words of condemnation for Palestinian and Russian authorities. In part this can be explained by domestic politics, given Canada's large Ukrainian (1.2 million) and Jewish communities. But it also reflects his strong personal relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu and Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and his belief in their conservative political approaches. Significantly, Justin Trudeau also does not shirk from criticizing Vladimir Putin: "That's why Canada needs to once again re-engage as a robust and helpful member of the international community. That's where we have to turn it around by re-engaging as a strong partner in international efforts to hold bullies like Vladimir Putin to account."²

In short, while 31 percent of Canadians supported the Conservative Party and arguably held to these values, an overwhelming majority (with a high voter turnout of 68 percent of eligible voters) was opposed. While most of that opposition

was based upon concerns about domestic policy and Harper's authoritarian style of government, many were also disturbed at his foreign policy, and in particular his rejection of multilateralism and desire for military solutions. It now remains to be seen how Justin Trudeau can generate enthusiasm for a reinvigorated foreign policy.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM THERE?

There are so many demands for a reinvigorated Canadian foreign policy, so many initiatives that need to be pursued, that it is difficult to know where to begin. The months after the election were particularly busy ones for the incoming government, with the G-20 summit in Turkey and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, both in November, followed by the Commonwealth summit in Malta, and then the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (December). In addition to participating in those meetings and showing Canada's dramatically new image, many substantial changes have also taken place in Canadian foreign policy.

Prior to the election Justin Trudeau promised to bring 25,000 government-sponsored Syrian refugees to Canada, and this process has already started. Extra funds have also been provided for refugee assistance and resettlement. In addition, a new approach to immigration is in the works, expanding the family sponsorship immigration program. Finally, healthcare benefits to those awaiting immigration hearings have now been restored after being cut off by the Harper government. The immigration file is starting to move very smoothly.

The appointment of Stéphane Dion as foreign minister is particularly significant, since it illustrates the importance that environmental matters will now have in foreign policy. A former minister of the environment and chair of the UN Conference on Climate Change held in Montreal in 2005, his first order of business was the December 2015 conference in Paris, where Canada played a leading role. Ottawa invited the premiers of all Canadian provinces to attend, emphasizing the need for a national cooperative approach to environmental issues by the newly-minted Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. The question of climate change, the minister informed journalists after the first cabinet meeting of the new Liberal government, was "the most important of the century," and he promised "to make sure that Canada will be a part of a solution to give this world a sustainable development."³

One major challenge is a Canadian government position on the TPP. It offers massive market potential to members, but is a threat to farming and automotive interests in Canada.

Canadian-U.S. relations had suffered during the Harper years, with obvious tensions between the prime minister and U.S. President Barack Obama. These difficulties are typified by the question of the Keystone XL pipeline, for which Harper had tirelessly—and at times rudely—lobbied, only to be rebuffed by Washington. A priority for the Trudeau government will be to shore up the diplomatic relationship, particularly during the short time left for the Obama presidency. Both men are widely travelled, with a sophisticated understanding of international politics and a commitment to multilateral politics, and undoubtedly bilateral relations will improve.

The thorny issues of defense and peacekeeping will change radically under the new government. It has pledged to scrap plans to buy the new F-35 stealth fighter plane, a popular Harper government policy. The traditional Canadian commitment of peacekeeping, for which the Liberal government of Lester Pearson won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1957 after organizing the UN Emergency Force that resolved the Suez Canal crisis, will be reinstated. In 1990, Canada was the largest single contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, with 1 002 soldiers, whereas nowadays there are only 116, placing the country in sixty-eighth place, between Paraguay and Mali.

Canada will probably be less bullish on military missions abroad, preferring to provide local military training and financial support for local civilian populations. Greater funding will also be offered to support UN efforts in mediation and conflict resolution. The ending of bombing missions against ISIL within days of the election illustrates this new approach.

Development assistance, heavily politicized by the Harper government, will be refocused. The view that aid should be given mainly as a tool to assist Canadian investment will be replaced with a more traditional Canadian approach of reducing poverty. Aid to Africa will probably become a priority. The much-vaunted Canadian government support for a maternal and child health program worth Can\$2.85 billion will continue, but will broaden in scope, funding all reproductive health services. (At present only 1.4 percent focuses on contraception measures, and no funding is given to pregnancy terminations, reflecting the fundamentalist Harper government mindset.)

One major challenge to be faced is a Canadian government position on the—extremely complex and multifaceted—Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This offers massive market potential to members, but is also a threat to farming and automotive interests in Canada, while also potentially affecting intellectual property and pharmacology interests of Canadians. Prior to the election, the Liberal Party adopted a cautious position, stating that in principle it favored the agreement, but would study it in detail and seek Parliament's support before approving it. The Liberals are also on record as supporting free trade agreements with the European Union and the TPP, as well as for pushing for an agreement with India. This is a complex issue that could potentially affect the daily lives of millions of Canadians, and to date the government has been notably unsure of a direction to take.

IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA?

On September 28, 2015, the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs organized a debate on foreign policy. All the leaders of the major parties took part, and a spirited discussion ensued. The debate was important for what it covered: the war in Syria, the situation in Iraq, Russian aggression and the Ukraine, the need for better relations with the United States, the refugee crisis, the threat of terrorism, the war against ISIL, Arctic sovereignty, relations with the European Union, and the need to protect "Canadian values." But it was also important for what was not discussed: China, Latin America, Africa, and the TPP.

Trade and security were clearly the two dominant themes in the discussion, and particular attention was paid to the possible threat posed by ISIL. Trade was examined to a lesser degree, which was somewhat surprising, given the fact that Canada is an extremely significant trading nation: foreign trade is responsible for about 45 percent of GDP. Table 1 illustrates the major trading blocks Canada participates in, and it is immediately evident how trade with the United States and China dwarf trade with Latin America.

Government officials of course maintain that Latin America is extremely important for Canada, but the data obtained from Statistics Canada show that this claim is rather exaggerated. In fact, only two Latin American countries, Mexico and Brazil, are among Canada's top trading partners. In 2014, for example, in dollar terms, Mexico imported Canadian goods for a value of Can\$6.75 billion, while exporting to Canada mer-

chandise worth Can\$17.24 billion. This, it must be remembered, is based upon generous tariff releases resulting from NAFTA. For Brazil, the corresponding figures were Can\$2.28 billion and Can\$2.84, respectively.⁴ No other countries from Latin America or the Caribbean are included in this table.

TABLE 1
CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL TRADE (2014)
(BILLIONS OF CAN\$)

United States	653.51
Asia/Oceania	155.18
Europe	107.43
Latin America	59.29
Others	26.88

Source: <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/tdo-dcd.nsf/eng/Home>.

Due to several geographical and economic factors, Canada's relations with Mexico are clearly the most significant. Canadian mining interests are the largest in the country, and according to a list of foreign companies with mining projects there, 181 of 241 were Canadian.⁵ Canadian tourism continues to grow, with approximately 1.5 million tourists a year, while an estimated 50 000 Canadians live in Mexico. In addition, approximately 25 000 temporary workers from Mexico are employed in Canada each year.

Before the election, in an interview with the author, the Liberal spokesman on foreign affairs, Marc Garneau, made it very clear that the relationship with its two North American neighbors was particularly important. The decision by the Harper government to insist that Mexicans visiting Canada apply for visas was particularly unfortunate, he claimed, since it stifles Mexican tourism to Canada. This would be revoked by the Trudeau government. Also important was the revival of the "three amigos" summits, cancelled by Stephen Harper in January 2015.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Everything to date indicates that, rather than follow a megaphone diplomacy approach as his predecessor did, the Trudeau government will follow a more proactive and compassionate foreign policy, one less dominated by a limited conservative ideological filter. To a certain extent, the new approach will

"Time for change in this country...
Real change. We beat cynicism with
hard work. We beat negative, divisive
politics with a positive vision
that brings Canadians together."

follow the traditional Pearsonian philosophy of multilateralism, adopting a more constructive and engaged role in world affairs. There is a clear move back to presenting Canada as a pragmatic yet sensitive middle power, an "honest broker" as it was seen for many years. Moreover, Trudeau will undoubtedly develop the respect owed to the Canadian foreign service, scorned in recent years by the Harper government.

Speaking at a rally shortly after the election, Justin Trudeau sought to present this message to Canadian allies: "Many of you have worried that Canada has lost its compassionate and constructive voice in the world over the past 10 years... Well, I have a simple message for you: on behalf of 35 million Canadians, we're back."⁶ His jubilant claims were well received by most Canadians, eager to put the Harper years behind them. At the same time others might remember similar claims made by Barack Obama when he was first elected, only to see his optimism ("Yes we can") overtaken by the cold hard facts of a faltering economy, a fiercely partisan Congress, and changing world circumstances. We will have to see if the exuberant, hopeful tone of Justin Trudeau's message succeeds in inspiring a rejuvenated, balanced foreign policy that the country so badly needs. But at least it has started well, and looks promising. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Cited by Mark Gollom in his October 20, 2015 CBC report, "Justin Trudeau Pledges 'Real Change' as Liberals Leap Ahead to Majority Government," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-elections-2015-voting-results>.

² "Trudeau Promises to Sign Arms Treaty, Swings at Harper's Foreign Record," *The Globe and Mail*, October 7, 2015.

³ John Ibbitson, "Trudeau Aiming to Rebalance Foreign Policy," *The Globe and Mail*, November 5, 2015.

⁴ See Statistics Canada, "Imports, Exports and Trade Balance of Goods on a Balance-of-payments Basis, by Country or Country Grouping," <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/gblec02a>.

⁵ General Direction of Mining Development, "Companies with Mining Projects in Mexico," portalweb.sgm.gob.mx/...economia/en/mexico-mining-companies.html?tmpl=component&print=1&page=.

⁶ Jim Bronskill, "'We're Back,' Justin Trudeau Says in Message to Canada's Allies Abroad," *National Post*, October 20, 2015.

Canada's 2015 Federal Elections A Retreat from Conservatism?

Oliver Santín Peña*



Christine Muschi/Reuters

INTRODUCTION

The results of Canada's October 2015 federal elections expressed most of the population's weariness with the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, who had governed the country for nine years and nine months. Only 31.9 percent of the electorate voted for the Conservative Party, while 68.1 percent chose a different option, adhering to the ABC (Anything-But-Conservative) maxim. This included Liberal voters (39.5 percent), and those who cast their ballots for the New Democratic Party (19.7 percent), the Bloc Québécois (4.7 percent), the Greens (3.4 percent), and independents (0.8 percent).¹

These figures show a more progressive trend with regard to the Canadian citizenry's political preferences, reflected in

the plural, multicultural nature of its own society, where the center-left seems to be the majority option, as shown in election results for the last three decades. The officially center and left parties (the Liberal, New Democratic, and Green Parties) have concentrated 51.9 percent of the entire national vote in all nine federal elections held between 1988 and 2015.² For its part, since it first participated in federal elections in 1993, the Bloc Québécois has garnered an average of 9.8 percent of the vote.

These figures demonstrate an electoral trend against the recent years' conservative party options (the Reform Party, the Conservative Progressive Party, the Conservative Canadian Alliance, and today's Conservative Party of Canada); all of these together managed to win an average of 36.5 percent of the national vote in the same period (1988-2015).

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This reveals that there is a hard conservative voting base oscillating between 30 and 40 percent of the national electorate, undoubtedly strengthening its position in the face of the rest of the parties that usually divide the vote among them. This electoral practice of tactical—or useful—voting has generally benefitted the Liberal Party, traditionally considered the strongest contender against Canada’s conservatives. This is borne out by the average 33.8 percent of the national ballotting that they have managed to win in the last nine elections.

As I already mentioned, this shows that, in general Canada’s electorate is progressive. However, its political and electoral system shares characteristics that down through the years have cemented a profoundly conservative structure that prevents the implementation of new, innovative mechanisms, like coalition governments. At the same time, it reaffirms rigid electoral systems like awarding the win to the first past the post, which in practical terms turns the votes into parliamentary seats by electoral district, throwing all the votes to the winning candidate. At the same time, this reduces the rest of the candidates to nothing, as well as those who voted for them, even if they actually concentrate the majority of votes in that district, but divided among different candidates.³

In practical terms this means that if we consider that the Conservative Party won the 2006, 2008, and 2011 federal elections with an average of 37.8 percent of the popular vote, 62.2 percent of the population was governed for almost 10 years by a party they did not particularly empathize with—in fact, they were rather hostile to it.

CANADIAN NEOLIBERALISM SINCE THE 1980S

Ronald Reagan’s election to the U.S. presidency in 1981 and the consolidation of his English counterpart, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who governed from 1979 to 1990, imposed an overwhelming economic, political, social, and cultural model in the West; its main objective was to weaken the socialist option brandished by the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe. In the Americas, Canada and Mexico were the first countries that would use institutional measures to implement this free market economic model fostered by U.S. think tanks, which aimed at gradually dismantling the Keynesian paradigm put into practice in the West in the 1940s.

In the Canadian case, the crisis in oil prices in the late 1970s led politicians to debate about the relevance of continuing with a welfare model that was already being harshly

questioned by Washington. That was how positions openly critical of the state playing an active role in the economy began to take shape, suggesting it be replaced by private enterprise. In this context, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Brian Mulroney, took office in Canada precisely in 1984, unfurling a discourse about reducing state intervention in public life and strengthening private enterprise in several areas.

After almost 10 years of government, Mulroney made way for his Liberal opponents, Jean Chrétien (1993-2003) and Paul Martin (2003-2006), who did not significantly contrast with him on economic and social issues. This was pointed out at the time by the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP), which denounced the similarities in the practices of Liberal and Conservative governments since the 1980s with its traditional slogan “Liberal, Tory, same old story.”⁴

Amidst the global whirlwind pressuring to decrease state attributions and slim down social programs, the Ottawa governments put their own neoliberal and neoconservative stamps on their power dynamics, attempting to arrive at a more balanced administrative design between a right wing that demanded less of a state role in the economy, and a left that demanded higher public spending. However, a gradual decline in investment in social spending and slimming down of public companies, like what happened with Petro-Canada in the 1990s, was clear.

Likewise, the firm efforts of the Paul Martin government in the first decade of the twenty-first century to not increase public spending, despite the need to establish parliamentary alliances with the New Democrats in order to stay in office, ended up costing him the 2004 federal elections. This is only one example that shows the conservative nature of Canadian politics in recent years, whether under Liberal or Conservative governments.

In this regard, Martin himself writes in his memoirs that, by the end of his government, the New Democrats were more interested in coming to parliamentary agreements to increase resources for public health (known as Medicare) than in any-

In general Canada’s electorate is progressive. However, its political and electoral system shares characteristics that down through the years have cemented a profoundly conservative structure.

We should understand that Trudeau will come up against a profoundly conservative political set-up that does not allow for new, more inclusionary parliamentary arrangements.

thing else. And, as prime minister, he could not guarantee that, since it was an issue that had to be analyzed in detail before coming to any governmental decision.⁵

Precisely this apparent contradiction of the Liberals in office at the moment of favoring a series of proposals designed to further conservative trends on economic, political, and social issues came together with profound internal rifts that cost the Liberal Party the elections in 2006 and 2011. This ended by strengthening a new version of the Conservative Party and a prime minister, Stephen Harper, with a more conservative, reactionary government agenda than those promoted by his Tory and Liberal predecessors.

STEPHEN HARPER AND THE CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN CONSERVATIVE PARADIGM

The three electoral wins of the Conservative Party and its leader, Stephen Harper, in 2006, 2008, and 2011 expressed not only the victory of the more traditionalist compact sectors in the West, but also served to launch a government practice oriented to changing many of the country's traditional domestic and external foundations. This Canadian neo-conservatism fostered from the offices of the federal government in Ottawa included domestically a series of reforms and budget cuts with regard to migration and refugee status, education, retirement, labor, sustainable development, health, and scientific research, among others. This was done to fulfill the campaign promises of not increasing taxes, despite the clear need to increase public funds to cover social requirements.

Abroad, the failed 2010 attempt to obtain a seat on the UN Security Council may have been the paradigm for the international rejection of the Harper Conservative government's foreign policy, which was also followed by other polemical decisions such as Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011, its breaking-off of diplomatic relations with Iran in 2012, its unrestricted support for Israel despite interna-

tional criticism of its excesses against the Palestinian civilian population, and its disconcerting activism and confrontational discourse against Russia and in favor of the Ukraine. These are just some of the foreign policy positions that Canadian conservatism chalked up for itself in recent years.

NEW TIMES?

This profoundly conservative trend in Canada seems close to being overcome with the election of Liberal Justin Trudeau. However, we should understand that Trudeau will come up against a profoundly conservative political set-up that does not allow for new, more inclusionary parliamentary arrangements, but does allow for the operation of old, dysfunctional mechanisms like the Senate, which, by the way, in the twenty-first century, continues to be a non-elected body. He will also have to face a rigid Liberal Party structure, whose foundations are not designed to facilitate the arrival of new political actors into office, as was demonstrated when the party elites refused to form a coalition government in 2008 with the New Democrats to oust the Conservatives from office.

It is important to point out that coalition governments are perfectly legal and sanctioned by the Canadian parliamentary system. In fact, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand use them as an expression of openness and innovation. However, Liberal and Conservative leaders alike have insisted that this option is not well-received by the Canadian public, which is a profound contradiction: as we have seen, this society is certainly more progressive and open to change than its political class.

In this sense, we should ask ourselves what it is that Liberals and conservatives would lose if they formed coalition governments in the future. One probable answer is that perhaps they would not be willing to lose the monopoly of power that they have exercised for 150 years of uninterrupted governments of these two parties; a coalition government would emphatically mean the access of new political actors to power, in this case, the New Democratic left. If that happened, then, clearly the main loser would be the conservative movement that is firmly entrenched in Western Canada, and that, time after time, in moments of crisis, expands its presence and flows like a huge wave over the central and Atlantic provinces, even forming majority governments, although they are not representative of the majority, as happened with Stephen Harper from 2006 to 2015.

And it is precisely this political traditionalism determined to maintain the old way of functioning of the Canadian electoral system that puts in the forefront the first-past-the-post system (single-member district elections), benefitting the political parties with the most resources and presence on a national level. This makes it impossible for new actors to come onto the stage, and at the same time limits voters' choices to two or at most three real options at the ballot box. Naturally, this forces the citizenry to accept a system that, in essence, offers limited real possibilities for representation.

SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACING TRUDEAU

Despite his majority victory in the recent elections, it remains a fact that the majority of the House of Commons may not be enough for Trudeau to be able to fulfill a series of promises made before and during his election campaign. Why? The profound systemic changes he proposed would put in check many of the old foundations of the country's political system, such as, for example, replacing the first-past-the-post system with another, more representative one.⁶ This proposal that Trudeau made in mid-2015 would change the face of Canada's political system. The big question would be, how is he going to do it? Seemingly it would not be enough to have the parliamentary majority and a large part of civil society on his side; fulfilling this promise would effectively mean weakening his own party in future elections, since Canada's current electoral system favors so-called "false majorities." As an example of this, suffice it to point to the fact that today, 39.5 percent of the national vote gave the Liberal Party 54.4 percent of the seats in the lower house, a majority.

The reform of the Senate is another front Justin Trudeau opened up a year before the election campaigns began. As prime minister, he will have to push through a profound reform to make picking senators more efficient by committing them more to their constituencies and the country's policies. However, because of the conservative institutional trend in Canada, the reform Trudeau is proposing does not formally include actually electing them, which further feeds this Canadian propensity toward pragmatic conservatism.

At the end of the day, Trudeau's victory represented a defeat of a conservative—and to great extent, reactionary—movement that former Prime Minister Harper launched. It should also be pointed out, however, that the October 2015

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election results also constricted the parliamentary weight of Canada's most progressive left, the NDP, by returning them to their traditional third place in the House of Commons. This step backward for the left in Parliament dispelled the prospect of a series of ambitious reforms that included the abolition of the Canadian Senate.

To conclude, we can say that Canada is a country with a progressive, open, multicultural society, but a rigid, conservative political system. It is worth asking, then, if Canada can stop being conservative country. Would Justin Trudeau be willing to go down that road? And if he is, can he make it to the end?

Time will tell for Mr. Trudeau. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Parliament of Canada, "Electoral Results by Party," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/parlinfo/compilations/electionsandrindings/ResultsParty.aspx>, accessed in November 2015.

² This data does not include the Bloc Québécois since its electoral niche is limited to the province of Quebec; in addition, its ideological positions are not center-left; rather, it opts for nationalist, sovereignty-oriented positions, whose complexity deserves an analysis all its own.

³ Different classic studies have analyzed this particular trend in parliamentary democracy. Outstanding among them are those by Maurice Duverger and Jacques Chastenet, who have dealt with these and other systemic characteristics of parliamentarianism of British origin in their works. For more information, see Maurice Duverger, *Los partidos políticos* (Mexico City: FCE, 2012), and Jacques Chastenet, *El parlamento de Inglaterra* (Buenos Aires: Argos, 1947).

⁴ Tom Flanagan, *Harper's Team. Behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power* (Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), p. 187.

⁵ Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water: My Life In and Out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart-Penguin Random House, 2008), pp. 436-437.

⁶ Rosemary Barton and Trinh Theresa, "Justin Trudeau Vows to End 1st-Past-the-Post Voting in Platform Speech," CBS News, June 16, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-vows-to-end-1st-past-the-post-voting-in-platform-speech-1.3114902>, accessed in November 2015.

Civic Engagement And Public Participation in Strengthening Canadian Democracy

Mary Carmen Pelоче Barrera*



Andy Clark/Reuters

Democracy is the most representative form of government on all the continents. This is possible because it coexists equally with presidentialist, parliamentary, or directorial republics and with constitutional monarchies. *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's 2014 "Democracy Index" annual report lists 24 countries of the world as full democracies. Among them is Canada, as the world's seventh best democracy, and the foremost in the Americas, with a 9.08 rating. This was its second recent rise on the index: in 2013, it came in in eighth place, and in 2007, it was ninth.

The index is built using variables like elections, pluralism, and political participation and culture; this shows the importance of involving the citizenry for any democratic system to work. In Canada's case, governmental effectiveness, the elec-

toral system, and respect for civil liberties are the underpinnings of its high ranking. Political participation and culture, on the other hand, are where it scores lower, coming in at 7.7 and 8.7 respectively. Despite these results, the October 19, 2015 elections revealed Canadians' growing commitment to public life; voter turnout increased considerably *vis-à-vis* the previous elections, rising 7.1 percentage points, from 61.4 percent in 2011 to 68.5 percent last year.

However, Canada has one of the lowest public participation percentages for elections on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2015 Better Life Index: it comes in as number 28 of the 36 member countries.

Of a total of 11 variables that make up this index, civic engagement is where it ranks second worst, only slightly better than for income, as Table 1 shows.

The civic engagement variable on the Better Life Index is made up of electoral participation, the impact of gender in-

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TABLE 1	
<p>OECD</p> <p>Better Life Index</p> <p>Ranking for Each Variable</p>	<p>Safety:</p> <p>Satisfaction:</p> <p>Health:</p> <p>Environment:</p> <p>Community:</p> <p>Employment:</p> <p>Housing:</p> <p>Education:</p> <p>Life-work Balance:</p> <p>Civic Engagement:</p> <p>Income:</p>

Source: Developed by the author using data from OECD, “Crea tu índice para una vida mejor,” 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/es/>.

equality and income disparities on electoral activity, as well as the degree of involvement in civic consultations for drafting regulations. According to the 2015 results, men and women participate equally in elections, not only because there is universal suffrage, but also because actual voting patterns show that 1.02 men participate for every female voter. However, the occupation by women of elected posts continues to be low: only one out of every four seats in Parliament is held by a woman. To deal with this disproportion and foster gender equity in public life, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government announced after his win that his cabinet will be 50 percent women: of 31 ministries, 15 will be headed up by women. Outstanding among them are Carolyn Bennet, for indigenous affairs; Chrystia Freeland, for foreign trade; and Jody Wilson-Raybould, as minister of justice.

The OECD came to the conclusion that income can have a decisive effect on electoral involvement. Among its member countries, the mean difference in the participation of the wealthiest 20 percent of the population compared to the poorest 20 percent is 13 percent. However, in Canada, income is not a determining factor because the difference there is only 3 percent. This reflects a high degree of social inclusion in electoral activities. Finally, the last aspect of the civic engagement variable is the consultation of the citizenry in drafting regu-

The number of women in elected posts continues to be low. To deal with this, Trudeau’s government announced that his cabinet will be 50 percent women: of 31 ministries, 15 will be headed up by women.

lations, where Canada scores fourth out of 36, surpassed only by the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Poland.

Based on the OECD’s Better Life Index, we can observe that, while Canadians are not exceptional in terms of coming out to vote, they do get significantly involved in civic consultations about issues on the public agenda. For example, in 2007, a consultation was carried out about health services. Listening for Direction: A National Consultation on Health Services and Policy Issues was carried out to identify 10 priorities in health service provision management that would benefit from an investment in research.

Another example is the 2001 National Consultation with Victims of Crime, which aimed to find out the public’s opinion about proposed changes in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, as well as to reforms in services provided to victims.

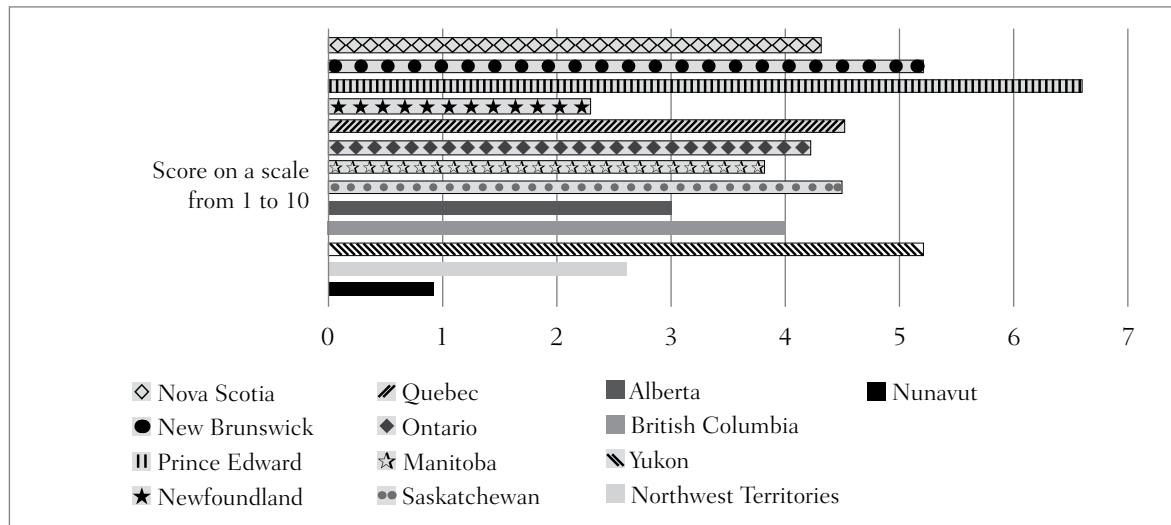
WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE PROVINCES

Despite the harmonization in terms of civic engagement with regard to income and gender, the same is not the case if we measure civic participation by region. Canada has 13 provinces that are very different in terms of population, geographical size, political practices, and even ways of life, above all in cases like Nunavut, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. These differences are reflected in the level of civic engagement, which varies from one region to another, as shown in Graph 1.

The graph shows the direct correlation between civic engagement in a region and its geographic location and number of inhabitants. So, for example, Prince Edward Island, the smallest province, located in the country’s Southeast, with a population of 150 000, is the region with the highest level of civic engagement in Canada, with a score of 6.6, which is above the national average. By contrast, Nunavut, the northernmost region, with 31 000 inhabitants, scores the lowest, with 0.9.

These numbers allow us to infer that the bigger the territory, the lower civic engagement, or, inversely, higher demographic density breeds greater participation. We could also deduce that higher degrees of participation can be found in the southernmost provinces. However, although something similar can be observed for the rest of the provinces, exceptions do exist. Quebec is the second-largest province and has more than 8 million inhabitants, but a score of only 4.5, quite a bit below the national average. Another atypical case is the Yukon,

GRAPH 1
CANADIAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, 2015



Source: Developed by the author using information from OECD, “Crea tu índice para una vida mejor,” 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/es/>.

While Canadians are not exceptional in terms of coming out to vote, they do get significantly involved in civic consultations about issues on the public agenda.

located in the Northwest, bordering on Alaska, with barely 33 000 inhabitants, but comes in second in terms of civic engagement, tied with New Brunswick.

As a result of its geography and the historic evolution of the territory as an independent state, Canada’s population is highly diverse. This is reflected in the lack of cohesion among the provinces. In fact, the Canadian Federation is a complex society composed of provinces that enjoy great autonomy, a diverse population that includes many ethnic groups, two official languages, and 57 aboriginal nations, each with its own national identity.

This diversity and lack of inclusion is very clear in the composition of Canada’s government. Despite having announced the construction of an inclusive government, 17 of the 31 posts in Prime Minister Trudeau’s cabinet are filled by public servants from Ontario (11) and Quebec (6). Three are from British Columbia, two from Alberta, two from Manitoba, and one from each of the rest of the provinces; the Yukon and the Northwest Territories have no cabinet posts.

Despite the fact that Canadians are not characteristically as highly politically active as citizens from other OECD member countries, we cannot conclude that civic engagement is low in Canada. We should remember that this indicator includes involvement in public issues like dealing with needs arising out of community life. In this sphere, Canada is one of the countries with the greatest civic commitment, according to the 2015 World Giving Index. Developed by the Charities Aid Foundation of America, this index classifies civic engagement based on three indicators that measure people’s behavior: helping a stranger, donating to a charity, and spending time volunteering.

The 2015 World Giving Index ranks Canada fourth out of the 145 countries studied, at 60 percent. In addition, the report includes a global ranking for each of the indicators. So, in measuring the percentage of the population who helps a stranger, Canada came in fourteenth, at 69 percent, tied with Zambia and the United Arab Emirates. For the second indicator, donors to charity, Canada is in tenth place, with 67 percent, lower than countries like Thailand and Indonesia. Finally, for the third indicator, the percentage of people who do volunteer work, Canada is in slot number 5, with 44 percent, following only Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Liberia, and New Zealand. Graph 2 shows the global score, as well as each of the three indicators compared to the three countries with the highest global score.

The index findings for all 145 countries are that 48.9 percent of people are willing to help a stranger; 31.5 percent donate to charity; and only 21 percent volunteer. For all three indicators, men participate more than women. Finally, when examined by area of the world, the Americas come in in second place in terms of helping a stranger and volunteering, after Oceania, but in fourth place in terms of donations to charity, surpassed again by Oceania as well as Europe and Asia.

Another element that contributes to measuring the citizenry's involvement in society is private development assistance (PDA). The international organization Civicus: World Alliance for Citizen Participation defines PDA as "finance from private sources given voluntarily through formal channels, including civil society organizations (CSOs), and transferred across borders to promote international development and reduce poverty."

According to Civicus's *2015 State of Civil Society Report*, Canada is the world's fourth provider of private development assistance, after the United States, which represents 67 percent of the global total, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Monies from Canadian companies and organizations go mainly to development projects in Latin America and Africa. The same report states that donations from middle class people have increased due to the directly proportional relationship between increased national rent and individuals' donations. Proof of this is that in Canada, private donations have grown

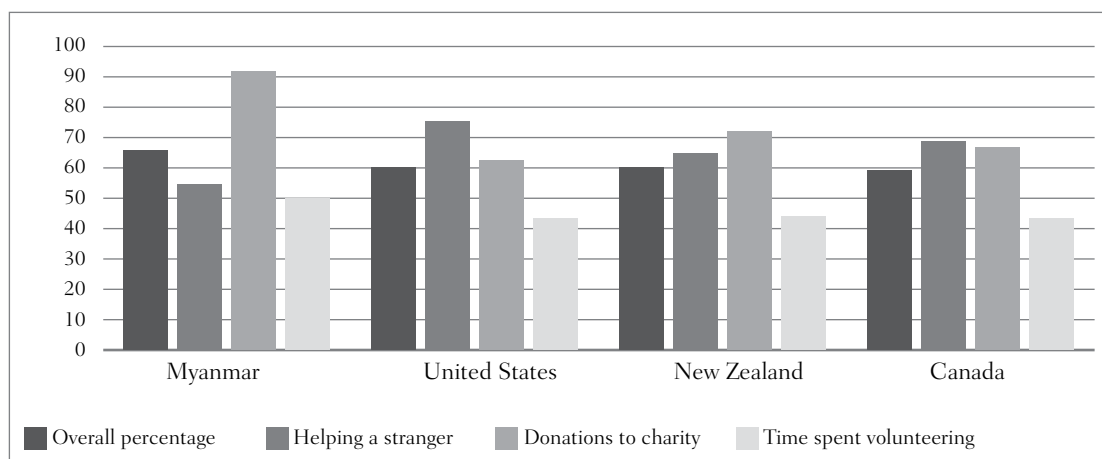
more rapidly than the gross domestic product over the last 25 years.

One interesting piece of data in the report is that countries with high levels of private development assistance have a considerable percentage of Muslims in their populations. This is because one of the pillars of Islam is the annual *zakat*, or alms payment, a fraction of each person's income earmarked for charity and helping the poor. Canada's Muslim population of one million represents approximately 2.8 percent of its total inhabitants. And the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Resource Center estimates that by 2030, the Muslim population will rise to 2.7 million, or 6.6 percent of the country's total population.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As can be seen throughout this article, the size of electoral participation in Canada is not significant compared to the region and other democracies throughout the world, even though the October 2015 elections did register a considerable increase, with a higher voter turnout than those observed over the last 20 years. However, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) data base shows a downward trend starting in 1958, when it reached a historic peak of 80.5 percent of voters at the polls.

GRAPH 2
WORLD GIVING INDEX 2015
TOP FOUR COUNTRIES RESULTS (% OF POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN...)



Source: Developed by the author using data from *CAF World Giving Index 2015, A Global View of Giving Trends*, November 2015, http://www.cafamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/1755A_WBI2015_Report_WEB_V2_FINAL.pdf.

However, it is only fair to mention that Canada is not the only country that has experienced this trend; plus, at the same time a high degree of social engagement can be observed. Internationally, the trend is toward less political participation and more social participation, as a result of the different political and social contexts that generate disillusionment with government among the citizenry.

Civil society and its level of involvement are fundamental pillars of any state that calls itself democratic. The level of both political and social engagement by citizens says a great deal about the quality of a country's democracy and the degree of maturity of its political and social institutions. From outside, Canada is seen as a state with a strong, participatory civil society due to civic engagement around social issues

and its cooperation for national and international development through civic organizations and associations. However, it still has a long way to go to recover and strengthen the tie of trust between the government and the citizenry. ■■

FURTHER READING

Lenard, Patti Tamara, and Richard Simeon, *Imperfect Democracies: The Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

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Electoral and Political Implications Of a Larger Canadian Parliament

Roberto Zepeda Martínez*

This article deals with the recent increase in the number of seats in Canada's Parliament from 308 to 338, and how it impacted the outcome of the 2015 federal elections. Although the adjustment was made in 2012 and 2013, it actually came into effect with the 2015 elections. One reason for it is that Canada's population has grown in recent decades. Taking into account 2015 data, I estimated the number of votes per district in each province, as well as the representation of each in terms of population and the number of parliamentary seats. Then I analyzed the implications of this redistribution with regard to the role of the provinces in national political dynamics.

In the process of adjusting the electoral boundary lines in Canada, the following items are of interest:

1. The number of seats in Parliament increased from 308 to 338, or 10 percent, while the country's population rose 14 percent between 1999 and 2012.
2. In this process, the province most benefited was Ontario, which saw the number of its districts go up by 15, from 106 to 121 seats. The province least benefited was Quebec, whose representation in the lower house rose only by 3, from 75 to 78 seats. Alberta and British Columbia each saw an increase of 6 seats, the first going from 28 to 34 and the second, from 36 to 42. The rest of the provinces and territories' representations remained the same: Saskatchewan (14), Manitoba (14), Nova Scotia (11), New Brunswick (10), Prince Edward Island (4), Newfoundland and Labrador (7), and the territories of the Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories, one seat each.

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3. The assignation of new seats was done under the aegis of an independent commission, in accordance with electoral legislation. However, the determining criterion for the reconfiguration was the population growth in each province and specifically, each district. In addition, district or riding boundary lines were redrawn by different independent electoral commissions (one in each province), thus preventing the federal government or any political party from influencing the process in their favor.
4. Nevertheless, some analysts suggest that the number of seats was increased to favor the then-Prime Minister Harper's Conservative Party. For example, if Canada's 2011 federal elections had been carried out using the newly drawn riding boundary lines, the Conservative Party would have won 22 of the 30 new seats, the New Democratic Party, 6 seats, and the Liberal Party, only 2.¹
5. The implications of this political reorganization for each of Canada's provinces are different. In the first place, the province of Quebec has seen its power and influence decline since its representation in Parliament has dropped with its slow population growth. In the second place, the western provinces have been strengthened, particularly Alberta and British Columbia. In the third place, although the Atlantic and Prairie provinces continue to have the same number of seats, they have lost a slight percentage of their overall representation. Finally, Ontario has extended its power and influence.

MORE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT

The adjustment and redistribution of seats in Parliament have been carried out according to the national census. According to Canada's Constitution, federal electoral districts must be revised every 10 years to take into account changes in the census.² This means that the provinces with the greatest population will have the largest number of seats. However, the senatorial clause of the Constitution Act of 1867 guarantees each province will have at least the same number of members of Parliament as senators, and the "grandfather clause" provides that each will have at least the same number of members as they had in 1985.³ As we will see, this benefits



STR New/Reuters

Some analysts suggest that the number of seats in Parliament was increased to favor Harper's Conservative Party. But the implications of this political reorganization for each of Canada's provinces are different.

the smaller provinces, particularly the Atlantic provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

The most recent federal boundary adjustment process began in 2012 and concluded a year later. It was headed by independent commissions that worked separately in each province to set each district's boundaries. In the case of the

TABLE 1
SEATS IN CANADIAN PARLIAMENT (BY YEAR)

Year of Announcement of Increase in Number of Seats in Lower House	Number of Seats	Population (millions)
2011	338	34.3
2001	308	30.0
1997	301	29.6
1987	295	26.1
1976	282	24.2

Source: Developed by the author using data from Statistics Canada, "Estimated population of Canada, 1605 to present," 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm>, accessed November 20, 2015; Elections Canada, "House of Commons: Seat Allocation by Province," <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/red/allo&document=index&lang=e>, accessed November 5, 2015; and Robert Marleau and Camille Montpetit, *House of Commons: procedure and practice* (Montreal: Chenelière/McGraw-Hill, 2000).

TABLE 2
CANADA'S POPULATION BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY (2001-2011)
(THOUSANDS)

	2001	2007	2011	2001-2011 (%)*
Canada	30 007	32 112	34 342	14
Newfoundland and Labrador	512	503	525	3
Prince Edward Island	135	136	144	7
Nova Scotia	908	915	944	4
New Brunswick	729	730	755	4
Quebec	7 237	7 641	8 007	11
Ontario	11 410	12 394	13 263	16
Manitoba	1 119	1 157	1 233	10
Saskatchewan	978	965	1 066	9
Alberta	2 974	3 391	3 790	27
British Columbia	3 907	4 177	4 499	15
Yukon	28	31	35	25
Northwest Territories	37	42	43	16
Nunavut	26	30	34	31

Source: Developed by the author using data from Statistics Canada, "Estimated population of Canada, 1605 to present," 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm>, accessed November 10, 2015.
*Percentages calculated by the author.

TABLE 3
SEATS IN CANADIAN PARLIAMENT BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY
(2001-2011)

	2001	Increase	2011	2001-2011(%)*
Canada	308	30	338	10
Newfoundland and Labrador	7	0	7	0
Prince Edward Island	4	0	4	0
Nova Scotia	11	0	11	0
New Brunswick	10	0	10	0
Quebec	75	3	78	4
Ontario	106	15	121	14
Manitoba	14	0	14	0
Saskatchewan	14	0	14	0
Alberta	28	6	34	21
British Columbia	36	6	42	17
Yukon	1	0	1	0
Northwest Territories	1	0	1	0
Nunavut	1	0	1	0

Source: Developed by the author using data from Elections Canada, "House of Commons: Seat Allocation by Province," <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/red/allo&document=index&lang=e>, accessed November 5, 2015.
*Percentages calculated by the author.

three territories, no commissions were needed since each has a single seat in Parliament and their inhabitants make up less than one percent of the entire population.

The process not only involved increasing the number of seats for the country's most populated provinces,⁴ but also implied a territorial redistribution of the seats in all the provinces, taking into account population density. In fact, only 44 of the 338 districts were left unchanged following the 2011 elections.⁵

An analysis of recent decades shows the dimensions of the increase in the number of seats in Canada's Parliament. For example, around 1976, the lower house had 282 seats. By 1987, the number had risen to 295; by 1997, to 301; and in 2001, to 308. That is, between 1979 and 2011, the number of seats had increased four times. However, the most recent modification has been the most significant in Canada's history (see Table 5): in 1987, the number of seats rose by 13; in 1997, only by 6; in 2001, by 7; and most recently, by 30 (see Table 1). From 1979 to 2011, Canada's population grew a

little over 40 percent, rising from 24.2 million to 34.3 million, while the number of parliamentary seats expanded only 20 percent, going from 282 to 338.

POPULATION LEVELS AND PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

It is pertinent to contrast the rise in population and the increase in the number of parliamentary seats since the latter depends on the former. The province with the most inhabitants is Ontario, followed by Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta; then Manitoba and Saskatchewan; the Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island, which are among the least populated;

The process increased the number of seats for the country's most populated provinces, and implied a territorial redistribution in all of them, taking into account population density.

TABLE 4
SEATS IN CANADIAN PARLIAMENT BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY (2001-2011)

	Population (2015) (thousands)	Number of Seats	Population per Seat (thousands)	Percentage of the Population	Percentage of Seats in Parliament*
Canada	35 851	338	106	100	100
Newfoundland and Labrador	527	7	75	1	2
Prince Edward Island	146	4	37	0	1
Nova Scotia	943	11	86	3	3
New Brunswick	753	10	75	2	3
Quebec	8 263	78	106	23	23
Ontario	13 792	121	114	38	36
Manitoba	1 293	14	92	4	4
Saskatchewan	1 133	14	81	3	4
Alberta	4 196	34	123	12	10
British Columbia	4 683	42	112	13	12
Yukon	37	1	37	0	0
Northwest Territories	44	1	44	0	0
Nunavut	36	1	36	0	0

Source: Developed by the author using data from Statistics Canada, "Population by Year, by Province and Territory (Number)," 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/demo02a-eng.htm>, accessed November 5, 2015; and Elections Canada, "House of Commons: Seat Allocation by Province," 2015, <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/red/allo&document=index&lang=e>, accessed November 5, 2015.

*Percentages calculated by the author.

TABLE 5
SEATS IN CANADIAN PARLIAMENT (TOTAL AND BY PROVINCE) (1867-2015)

	Canada	Ontario	Quebec	N.S.	N.B.	Manitoba	B.C.	P.E.I.	Sask.	Alberta	Nfld.	NwT	YT	Nun.
1867	181	82	65	19	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1870	185	82	65	19	15	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1871	191	82	65	19	15	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1872	200	88	65	21	16	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1873	206	88	65	21	16	4	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
1882	211	92	65	21	16	5	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	215	92	65	21	16	5	6	6	-	-	-	4	-	-
1892	213	92	65	20	14	7	6	5	-	-	-	4	-	-
1902	214	92	65	20	14	7	6	5	-	-	-	4	1	-
1903	214	86	65	18	13	10	7	4	-	-	-	1	1	-
1905	221	86	65	18	13	10	7	4	10	7	-	-	1	-
1914	234	82	65	16	11	15	13	3	16	12	-	-	1	-
1915	235	82	65	16	11	15	13	4	16	12	-	-	1	-
1924	245	82	65	14	11	17	14	4	21	16	-	-	1	-
1933	245	82	65	12	10	17	16	4	21	17	-	-	1	-
1947	255	83	73	13	10	16	18	4	20	17	-	-	1	-
1949	262	83	73	13	10	16	18	4	20	17	7	-	1	-
1952	265	85	75	12	10	14	22	4	17	17	7	1	1	-
1966	264	88	74	11	10	13	23	4	13	19	7	1	1	-
1975	265	88	74	11	10	13	23	4	13	19	7	2	1	-
1976	282	95	75	11	10	14	28	4	14	21	7	2	1	-
1987	295	99	75	11	10	14	32	4	14	26	7	2	1	-
1997	301	103	75	11	10	14	34	4	14	26	7	2	1	-
1999	301	103	75	11	10	14	34	4	14	26	7	1	1	1
2004	308	106	75	11	10	14	36	4	14	28	7	1	1	1
2015	338	121	78	11	10	14	42	4	14	34	7	1	1	1

Source: Developed by the author using data from Robert Marleau and Camille Montpetit, *House of Commons: procedure and practice* (Montreal: Chenelière/McGraw-Hill, 2000); and Elections Canada, <http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>.

and finally the three territories, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Nunavut.

Between 2001 and 2011, the pan-Canadian population increased 14 percent. This as an important jump, since in the 1990s, it grew 11 percent. The province with the highest percentage growth was Alberta, with 27 percent; followed by Ontario, with 16 percent, and British Columbia, with 15 percent, both of which were over the 14-percent national average. These were followed by Quebec (11 percent), Manitoba (10 percent), Saskatchewan (9 percent), Prince Edward Island (7 percent), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (4 percent each),

Voting in Canada is unpredictable:
the results of one federal election do not always
define the outcome of the next.

and Newfoundland and Labrador (3 percent). That is, the four provinces whose number of seats in Parliament grew were those whose populations grew the most in the period (see Table 2).

In percentage terms, the new electoral arrangement gave the biggest hike to Alberta (21 percent), followed by British Columbia (17 percent), Ontario (14 percent), and lastly, Quebec

Canadian voter trends in recent elections reveal that their electoral decisions are based more on momentary issues than on their identification with a particular political party.

(4 percent). The rest of the provinces and territories experienced no changes (see Table 3).

On the other hand, recent data from 2015, shows that the representation of the provinces in terms of population corresponds closely to their representation in Parliament, taking into account the number of electoral districts *vis-à-vis* the total. So, Ontario represents 38 percent of the country's total population and has 36 percent of the parliamentary ridings. Quebec represents 23 percent of the population and has the same percentage of parliamentary seats. British Columbia is home to 13 percent of the population and has 12 percent of the seats; Alberta has 12 percent of the population but only 10 percent of the federal ridings. For the rest of the provinces and territories, the percentage of parliamentary seats coincides with their share of the country's population, except for a few relatively sparsely-populated provinces like Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Labrador, and New Brunswick, whose representation in Parliament is slightly greater than their population percentage (see Table 4).

POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS

Some analysts think that the reconfiguration of the electoral districts was supposedly going to favor the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his party.⁶ However, the Liberal Party won the majority of parliamentary seats, putting Justin Trudeau in office as prime minister.

This shows once again that voting in Canada is unpredictable: the results of one federal election do not always define the outcome of the next. The choices of a significant number of voters in Canada cannot be predicted, and, while in 2011 the Conservatives won the majority of Ontario ridings, particularly in the Toronto metropolitan area, in 2015, the Liberal Party won hands down in that same province. A review of Canadian voter trends in recent elections reveals that their electoral decisions are based more on momentary issues than on their identification with a particular political party.

CONCLUSION

Increasing the number and redrawing the lines of Canada's electoral districts is a process that is carried out periodically, based on national census results. As pointed out above, Ontario was the province most favored by the recent expansion of Parliament. Equally, British Columbia and Alberta saw their seats in the lower chamber increase, while Quebec was the least favored and the rest of the provinces did not get any new seats. Based on the data analyzed here, we can underline that the provinces whose populations grew the most were those whose number of seats increased. It is possible that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government did exert a certain amount of influence in redrawing the electoral district boundaries in order to create more districts in areas where he had won in past elections. However, the unpredictability of Canadian voters turned around the results in the 2015 elections, favoring the Liberal Party in places and provinces that had been Conservative Party bastions, particularly under Harper. **MM**

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Trudeau's Climate Policy A Chance to Go Beyond Business as Usual

Marcela López-Vallejo Olvera*

In the October 19, 2015 elections, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party won the majority of seats in Parliament (184), defeating then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative Party (99 seats) and the two other parties that traditionally are legislative counterweights, the New Democratic Party (with 44 seats) and the Bloc Québécois (10).¹

The incoming government's priorities are expected to change radically, with the agenda looking more like that of its Liberal predecessors on historically traditional issues like climate change. From the early 1990s, then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, together with his minister of foreign relations and trade, Lloyd Axworthy, backed the issue in the United Nations, which managed to establish a climate regime, inaugurating its first Conference of the Parties (COP) in 1994. That regime's main achievement was the Kyoto Protocol (KP), which came out of the COP 3 in Japan and included clear commitments to reducing or limiting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Since then, the Liberal Party has backed this regime as one of its platform planks. Jean Chrétien's successor, Paul Martin, continued in that tradition. In 2006, Stéphane Dion made it the center of his electoral campaign, but he lost to Stephen Harper.

Under Harper, climate change was pushed into the background, mainly due to pressure from Alberta province to not fulfill Canada's commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. The country had committed to reduce its GHG by 6 percent *vis-à-vis* its 1990 levels. However, when the U.S. Congress reneged on its 7-percent commitment in 2001 by not ratifying the protocol and therefore exempting itself from fulfilling its goal, Canada began to question the possibility of its own com-



pliance. Since the United States is its main trade partner, Canada ran the risk of not being competitive in U.S. markets that based their growth on burning fossil fuels regardless of climate change.

Despite this, Canadian Liberal governments continued trying to fulfill their commitments. However, in 2011, Harper also withdrew Canada from the Kyoto Protocol. Different arguments were used to justify this decision and put the issue on the back burner nationally. The first was that to overcome the 2008-2009 economic crisis, it was necessary to produce regardless of any other consideration. In other words, strategic Canadian sectors like Alberta's oil industry had to be fostered. The second argument Canada presented internationally was that it only emits 1.5 percent of the global absolute GHG, a percentage similar to countries that had not committed to reducing emissions, like Mexico or the BRICS.

The response of Canadian and international civil society was not long in coming. Organizations like the David Suzuki Foundation, the Pembina Institute, the Climate Action Network, or Greenpeace Canada opened up the discussion about sustainable growth, green investment, the development of renewable, clean energy, and the decarbonization of the economy through market or regulatory instruments by sector (incentives or taxes), with the energy sector as the prime target, followed

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by transportation. Some provinces supported these initiatives and began including them on their public policy agendas.

Despite Canada's no longer being a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol, the Harper government continued to participate in the conferences held by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. But what was the aim of that participation? What has the country committed to given that it could not fulfill its prior goals? Will Justin Trudeau be able to get Canadian climate policy back on track and clean up its international image?

CANADA'S CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS

One of the Warsaw 2013 COP19 agreements was to draw up a new, binding document in 2015 to take the place of the Kyoto Protocol. To do that, each member country would have to clearly set its aims in what has been called the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). The Canadian government's INCD sets a reduction goal for 2030 of 30 percent of the *absolute* amounts of GHG emissions *vis-à-vis* 2005 levels. If we compare this to its original commitments in the Kyoto Protocol (-6 percent *vis-à-vis* 1990 levels), the goal Harper proposed surpasses them in the long term and is consistent with what Canada proposed at the Copenhagen 2009 COP15 conference.

Graph 1 shows a peak in 2007 and a drastic reduction in 2008 and 2009. This can be explained by two factors: on the one hand the economic-financial crisis in the United States in those years, which had a direct repercussion on Canada; on the other hand, the shut-down of coal plants in Ontario, which contributed heavily to the reduction of GHG emissions by the electricity sector. After the economic/financial crisis, production began to recover, and with it came an increase in GHG emissions. Although at Copenhagen in 2009 Canada committed to reducing its GHG emissions by 17 percent *vis-à-vis* 2005 levels, it was not able to reach that target. From the economic recovery until now, emissions have continually increased, going from 699MT CO₂eq in 2009 to 726MT CO₂eq in 2013. In the face of this, the Harper government decided to leave the Kyoto Protocol.²

This is also reflected in per capita emissions. Canada has one of the world's highest per capita GHG emission rates, putting it fourth place among OECD countries from 1990 to 2014 and among the top 15 in the world.³ I should underline that the historic increase dates from the Liberal period in the

The Canadian government's INCD sets a reduction goal for 2030 of 30 percent of the *absolute* amounts of GHG emissions *vis-à-vis* 2005 levels.

1990s when per capita GHG emissions were at 22 TCO₂eq, rising to their highest point in 2000, when they reached 24 TCO₂eq. With the economic/financial crisis, levels dropped to 20 TCO₂eq in 2009 and remained constant until 2013. What helped maintain these numbers were efforts by the provinces and federal regulations to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks by 50 percent by 2015.⁴ This regulation was taken very seriously in Ontario and British Columbia, which significantly decreased this kind of emissions; this was not the case in Alberta, where they actually rose.⁵

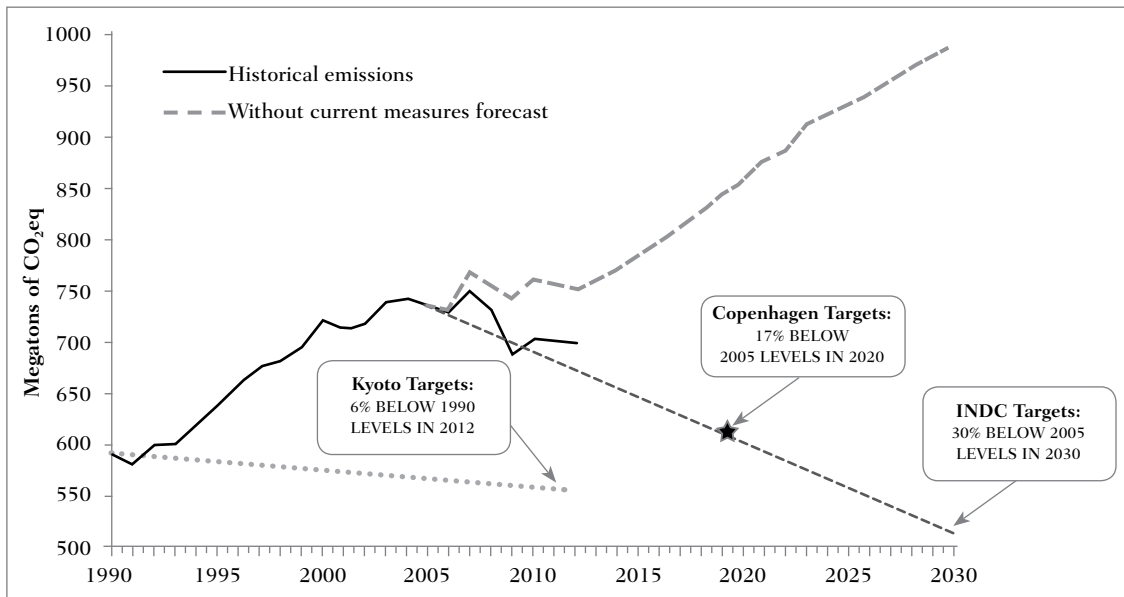
In contrast, with regard to *intensity* (GHG emissions/GDP), Canada has done a good job. Between 1990 and 1995, GHG emissions were keeping up with GDP. From 1995 until now, there has been a more than 30-percent drop in intensity, despite the fact that 80 percent of emissions come from activities related to the energy sector.⁶ This can be explained by the technological change incentivized by federal and mainly regional programs to encourage investment in efficient energy, clean technologies, smart grids, and renewables.

JUSTIN TRUDEAU AND THE INCD GOALS

During his first week as prime minister, Trudeau came under pressure from organized society. The environmental movement Climate Welcome (members: 350.org, Council of Canadians, Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, environmentalist associations, and indigenous communities) organized a four-day vigil outside his residence in Ottawa to demand decisive action on climate change and the transition to a clean-energy-based economy. Concretely, they demanded an end to the development of Alberta's oil industry and various oil pipelines underway (Keystone XL and Northern Gateway).

The Harper government—and now Trudeau's—have not had much to say about the Keystone XL pipeline, since the U.S. government makes the final decision. Last November, President Obama decided to reject its construction arguing that it caused environmental damage and the benefits would be minimal. It should be pointed out that Trudeau

GRAPH 1
CANADA'S HISTORICAL GHG EMISSIONS (MTCO₂EQ) VS. REDUCTION TARGETS



Source: Adapted from United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Canada's INDC Submission to the UNFCCC*, <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Canada/1/INDC%20-%20Canada%20-%20English.pdf>, accessed November 4, 2015.

supported the project a few years ago, although he made a small shift in his recent campaign to include environmental restrictions and investment in clean energy projects as conditions for its construction and operation.⁷

To ease this situation and send out a good pro-environmental signal, the new prime minister's strategy has been twofold. First, he appointed Member of Parliament Catherine McKenna to lead the recently renamed and reorganized Environment and Climate Change Ministry. Trudeau also has the support of diverse environmentalist groups and leaders like the Sierra Club, Green Party Elizabeth May, and Stéphane Dion himself. The second action Trudeau has taken is to establish a national plan to put a price on carbon and foster the development of clean technology. For him, COP21 in Paris was the ideal forum to present his environmental plan and clear his country's name internationally. The Liberal government's pan-Canadian plan will set national GHG-emission reduction targets and allow provinces and territories to design their own climate-change mechanisms and set carbon prices to reach their targets.

Along these same lines, during his first days in office, Trudeau promised to provide federal subsidies to help in reaching national targets.⁸ However, he is faced with a federalist set-

Canada has one of the world's highest per capita GHG emission rates, putting it fourth place among OECD countries from 1990 to 2014 and among the top 15 in the world.

up that makes the provinces the owners of natural resources, as well as the power to manage them and handle environmental and energy policies. Canadian provinces have a great diversity of productive activities and energy mixes that create unequal GHG emissions, as shown in Graph 2.

To establish a national target under these conditions, two routes could be followed. The first would be to set very low national targets so the "dirty" provinces like Alberta and Ontario could reach them. In this scenario, other provinces would have little incentive to change their climate plans even if they surpass certain international targets. Others would have to adapt their regulatory and market frameworks to national guidelines. In other words, a low target would tend to look like business as usual for many provinces.

The second route would be to opt for an approach like the European Union's: each country contributes according to its possibilities and others compensate for that. However, to crystallize this option, institutional innovation is required

Trudeau has established a national plan to put a price on carbon and foster clean technology. COP21 in Paris was the ideal forum to present his plan and clear his country's name internationally.

to create the regional and national platforms to establish the compensation, whether through the market or regulations.

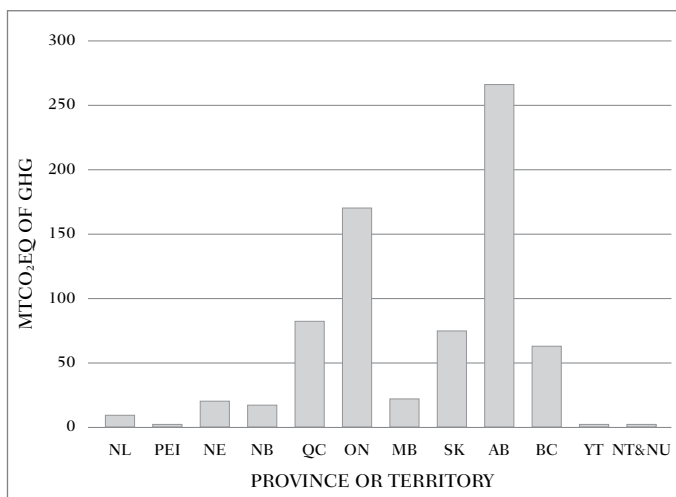
Another challenge Justin Trudeau faces will be to integrate already existing regional policies into his plan. For their part, Québec, British Columbia, and, surprisingly, Alberta already have carbon pricing schemes, although they are very different from one another. British Columbia has levied a tax on carbon through fiscal neutrality; that is, the government keeps none of the revenues that come in under this budget item; it is all invested in mitigation, adaptation, and local clean technology. This tax has been efficient because the price is very high and covers all industries (US\$30 per MTCO₂eq). Alberta, the country's most polluting province, also has a carbon price scheme that includes mandatory fines for not reaching the targets. However, the price had been quite low considering the levels of GHG emissions (Can\$15 per MTCO₂eq). A scheme of this kind does not create the incentives needed for change, and it has not worked as expected. How-

ever, starting in 2017, the price will be set at Can\$20 per MTCO₂eq, and by 2018, at Can\$30 per MTCO₂eq. For its part, Québec has one of the world's most efficient carbon markets together with California, which had its first joint auction in 2015. Ontario recently joined this market; it had already taken a big step in 2005 by closing all its coal-burning electricity plants. This sparked an important drop in the province's emissions, as well as the entire country's absolute levels.

It will therefore be necessary not to forget that some Canadian provinces have been leaders on this issue for several years. For that reason, the McKenna/Trudeau strategy must include the different provincial strategies and goals, particularly those of Alberta, which will require ways to finance technological innovation in energy production from tar sands. For provinces like Québec and British Columbia, whose energy mixes are almost completely based on hydroelectricity, setting GHG emission reduction goals is simple. However, the plan must also include other like Saskatchewan, which oppose carbon pricing. The rest of the provinces with low GHG emissions, especially those on the Atlantic, will have to design climate change adaptation plans, provinces, to prevent flooding; the Prairie provinces, to prevent drought; and the North, to guarantee and make energy consumption more efficient during the long winters.

The strategy will have to take into account the different energy realities of the provinces to avoid one of the main problems of global climate change governance: assuming that states all have the same circumstances regarding energy mixes, industries, energy production and consumption, institutions, capabilities, political culture, or environmental preferences. Differentiating reduction targets based on these criteria will make it possible for a country as huge geographically and as diverse as Canada to reach its regional goals with innovative institutional mechanisms. In this context, Justin Trudeau has the opportunity of getting his country's federal climate policy back on track and clearing its name on the global stage. ■■■

GRAPH 2
GHG EMISSIONS FOR CANADIAN
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Source: Environment Canada, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Province and Territory," Ottawa, <https://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=en&n=18F3BB9C-1>, accessed October 20, 2015.

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The 2015 Federal Elections' Impact on Canada's Foreign Policy¹

Carlos Gabriel Argüelles Arredondo*



Patrick Doyle/Reuters

INTRODUCTION

A new government always brings with it the hope of change for the country. This happened in Canada after its October 2015 federal elections, which represented new opportunities in many aspects of public life. The Liberal Party victory, headed by Justin Trudeau, opens new prospects for the country, leaving behind nine years of Conservative domination in the federal government.

The aim of this article is to relay a series of reflections about the impact of the 2015 elections on Canadian foreign policy.

I will touch on some background, the difference between Conservatives and Liberals in foreign policy, and will ask if it will change or remain the same. I will also draw a balance sheet of bilateral and multilateral relations in some areas, particularly with the United States, Latin America, and, in that context, with Mexico.

THE 2015 ELECTIONS

As pointed out above, the 2015 elections put an end to nine years of Conservative government, opening up new perspectives for change both domestically and abroad. Justin Trudeau

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staged a comeback despite negative polling results published during the longest campaign in recent history: 78 days.² The Liberals, self-defined as center-left, won a parliamentary majority in Canada's lower house.³

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS ON FOREIGN POLICY

Historically, the dispute for power in Canada has been between Liberals and Conservatives. These two parties have alternated in federal government in recent years. Although Canada has a multi-party system, these two parties have had a parliamentary majority, accompanied by a minority party. The minority party generally does the work of balancing power;⁴ today it is the New Democratic Party (NDP).

The Conservatives prioritize economic and trade interests and international security on their foreign policy agenda. These premises guided the outgoing Conservative government in relations with the world, as it maintained a strategic economic relationship with the United States, the G-7, and the European Union; Latin America came after these regions. Although Canada behaved like a middle-sized power during the Cold War, the Conservatives tried to take advantage of that image to maintain a strategic relationship with the great powers.⁵

The Liberals' foreign policy is pragmatic. In contrast with the Conservatives, theirs is more conciliatory, more tolerant on religious matters, such as in the case of the clothing worn by Muslims in Canada. The new Liberal prime minister has announced that he will strengthen the United Nations, continue to participate in peacekeeping missions in conflict areas, and distance himself from Israel.⁶

CHANGE OR CONTINUITY?

When the Organization of American States (OAS) was created in 1948, Canada decided to remain on the margins and not become a full member, above all to avoid unnecessary friction with the United States. However, to gradually grow closer to Latin America, Pierre Elliot Trudeau decided in 1972 that Canada would become an observer nation at the OAS. Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, however, decided to make Canada a full member in 1990. This decision was due to several circumstances, particularly because of the

The Liberals' foreign policy is pragmatic, more conciliatory, more tolerant on religious matters, such as in the case of the clothing worn by Muslims in Canada.

regional and international situation at the time of the breaking apart of the Soviet Union and the strengthening of the single-power world led by the United States. It is also probable that with this decision, Mulroney sought to differentiate his administration from the Liberal governments that had preceded him; foreign policy can be considered an exercise in the international arena that can help a government strengthen its domestic legitimacy.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has already announced foreign policy changes, and I deduce that, like Mulroney, he is also trying to differentiate himself from the Conservative government that preceded him for nine years. Clearly, Trudeau is also going to take on an out-and-out battle with regard to climate change, compared to Stephen Harper, who in 2011 decided to withdraw Canada from the Kyoto Protocol. Harper's argument was that, if the country had continued as a signatory, it would have to pay a series of fines for not reaching the greenhouse gas emission targets promised by his Liberal predecessors.

CANADA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY

If the trend holds, like his father Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Justin will continue fostering multilateralism and positioning Canada as a modern, medium-sized power, open to trade and to strengthening international political institutions. Newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphane Dion will seek to renovate Canada's relations with the regions of the world by presenting multilateral forums with proposals for key issues on the world agenda like the promotion of democracy and human rights, taking action around climate change, promoting international security, and lending aid to refugees from countries in conflict. Similarly, Canada's new Liberal government is expected to continue fostering free trade and the Transpacific Partnership. Suffice it to remember that Justin Trudeau said that he himself would take charge of repairing Canada's relations with the Obama administration.⁷

CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

With the Liberal government, new prospects open up for relations with the United States, Canada's main political and trade partner, since under the Harper government, bilateral relations were cool and distant on specific issues like the Keystone Pipeline. Trudeau has already made it clear that, while he openly supported the pipeline, he respects Washington's decision to reject and definitively cancel it.

It is important to underline that this relationship has continued to be firm in other institutional spheres like trade and security. Other sectors for fruitful bilateral cooperation are transportation and aerospace, both hugely strategic for the region. Proof of this real cooperation is that Trudeau appointed Marc Garneau as transportation minister, the first Canadian astronaut and veteran of three space flights; Trudeau based his decision on the collaboration between NASA and the Canadian Space Agency, projects that will definitely continue in the future. In one of his first speeches, Trudeau pointed to relations with the United States as a priority:

The Canada-U.S. relationship has changed over the years. We Canadians are more confident about ourselves than we have ever been. People from my generation in particular see no contradiction between a strong national identity and an economic interdependence that brings greater prosperity to all of us. But the Canada-U.S. relationship is no less definitional for us today than it was 100 years ago.⁸

WILL TRUDEAU MAKE LATIN AMERICA A PRIORITY AGAIN?

In the 1960s, then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau opened up a new relationship with Latin America launching the so-called "white book" and the "third way." He strengthened political and economic ties, and to do that, made several working trips there, meeting with various heads of state in the region. Pierre Elliot Trudeau spoke Spanish fluently, something that definitely helped him establish strong ties with more than one head of state, like Fidel Castro in Cuba. These were all important pieces in pumping up relations with Chile, Argentina, Cuba, and Mexico, key countries on Canada's foreign policy agenda in Latin America.

With the new opening of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, "it may establish greater communications with Mexico and the world, with a more humanitarianism —and solidarity-based leading role in the international context.

In relations with Cuba, Justin Trudeau will now be able to reinforce its place in the region, just as his father and other Liberal prime ministers did, like Jean Chrétien, who decided to invest in the renovation of the José Martí International Airport in Havana. Canada could also support Cuba's greater participation in hemispheric meetings like the OAS Americas Summit. This time, with the normalization of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, this would not at all be a remote possibility.⁹

RELATIONS WITH MEXICO

Canada and Mexico established diplomatic relations in 1944, and for the last 70 years they have been consolidating them. In fact, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau was the one who encouraged them the most in the 1970s when he dubbed his Mexican counterparts nationalist politicians like himself. Now under Justin Trudeau, relations will tend to strengthen, since during his campaign, he announced that he would re-launch the North American Leaders Summits ("The Three Friends") and eliminate the visa requirement for Mexicans that Harper imposed in 2009, which Trudeau considers an insult.

Since Mexico is Canada's third-largest trade partner, and its largest in Latin America, when NAFTA was negotiated in the early 1990s, Canada opened up the possibility of broadening its relations with other countries of the region. This is already happening today, since its mining industry has the world's biggest presence in the region.

Canada has already launched free trade agreements with Chile and Costa Rica. In addition, it has fostered very dynamic forms of trade with other nations of Central America. With the new opening of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, "it may establish greater communications with Mexico and the world, with a more humanitarianism —and solidarity-based leading role in the international context."¹⁰

During their campaigns, the Conservatives continued in the same tenor about relations with North America, but Justin

Trudeau has announced that he will strengthen the United Nations, continue to participate in peacekeeping missions in conflict areas, and distance himself from Israel.

Trudeau announced that his diplomacy *vis-à-vis* the United States and Mexico would change. So, relations got off on to a good start: Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto congratulated Trudeau on his victory, saying that it heralded a new era in bilateral relations, strengthening the historic economic, political, and social ties that join our two countries. The two heads of government even had bilateral meetings when they coincided at the G-20 summit in Turkey and at the APEC meeting in the Philippines in November 2015, where they reiterated their intention to strengthen ties between the two countries.

CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing some of the aspects of the impact of the Liberal electoral victory on Canada's foreign policy, changes are clearly in the works that will draw a dividing line between the new Liberal government and its Conservative predecessor. The diplomatic practice that gave Canada such good results is expected to be renewed, strengthening its neutral, conciliatory position in the international arena. We will also have to wait to see how national interests are posed since, domestically, the federal government will have to once again deal with Quebec's special dynamics and its status as a distinct society since, like Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, Quebec is one of those that most contributes to the country's economic prosperity and has its own international relations.

With regard to its relations with the world, Canada will have to deal with certain essential issues, like the Mideast crisis, climate change, the crisis in oil prices, the disputes over the Arctic, and its relations with the Asian Pacific region. Its links to the United States will certainly become stronger with the passing months, marking a clear difference with its Conservative predecessor. The elimination of the visa requirement for Mexican visitors to Canada and the re-launch of bilateral contacts seem to be the big challenges. We will have to wait to see what Canada's real position and behavior will

be with Justin Trudeau at its head *vis-à-vis* the United States, Latin America (in particular its partner, Mexico), and with the rest of the world. Good luck to him. ■■■

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Trudeau and the New Immigration And Refugee Policies Implications for Mexico

David Rocha Romero*

Canada's Liberals won the October 19, 2015 elections with 39.5 percent of the votes, giving them 54 percent in the House of Commons (184 seats); this, after winning only 34 seats in 2011. The Conservatives lost their majority, dropping from 166 to 99 seats with 31.9 percent of the votes. The New Democratic Party also lost ground, declining from 103 to 44 seats.

The Liberals won their majority mainly in Ontario and Quebec.¹ Canada is thus living proof that only democratic elections can change the political course of a nation peacefully. With this win, Justin Trudeau, the second-youngest prime minister in Canadian history and son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968-1979 and 1980-1984), sparks great expectations in Canada's political, social, and economic spheres.

He will have to face issues that span everything from legalizing marihuana—as soon as possible—, taking in 25 000 Syrian refugees, maintaining a commitment to women's right to choose, and improving relations with Canada's neighbors in North America. In other words, his is a very ambitious agenda, committed to the voters.

To start off, Trudeau has managed to create a talented multi-ethnic cabinet that will be a pillar for fostering the different reforms his government has proposed, supported by his parliamentary majority. The opposition, then, will not be able to do much to interfere with the decisions of this new Liberal government.

VISAS FOR MEXICANS

On the campaign trail, Trudeau said that the Conservatives, led by Stephen Harper, had "soured" Canadian-Mexican rela-

tions by imposing a visa for Mexicans in 2009, which to a great extent was due to the large number of "bogus refugees." The visa did seem to bring down the asylum requests, which dropped from 7 594 in 2009 to only 651 in 2011.² The new Liberal government promised to eliminate the visa requirement, arguing that Canada accepts refugees from all over the world when they are persecuted for different reasons. At the same time, it has said that, as members of the North American Free Trade Agreement, there should be no barriers to traveling between the two countries, saying that processing refugee applications can be done in other ways.³

Without going into what the new procedures would be if the visa requirement were eliminated for Mexican travelers, it may well happen in the coming months and very probably Canadians would think it a positive thing. At least at the start, Justin Trudeau offers a more conciliatory, alternative, and broader vision.

In accordance with his discourse, Trudeau changed the name of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, which he appointed John McCallum to head up. McCallum is an academic with a doctorate in economics and has been a member of Parliament since 2000. However, this should not be considered a simple name change, since what is intended is to make this ministry an institution that will reopen Canada's doors to those who want to contribute to the country's development.

In other words, the idea is to create a ministry that reflects Canadian values and is open, understanding, and generous, qualities that must be part of immigration policies. Among the new government's strategic actions is making the necessary efforts to receive 25 000 Syrian refugees; double the number of immigrants' parents and grandparents granted entry to 10 000 a year; offer additional points through the Express Entry System to provide applicants with brothers or

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Trudeau will have to face issues that span everything from legalizing marihuana, taking in 25 000 Syrian refugees, maintaining a commitment to women's right to choose, and improving relations with Canada's neighbors.

sisters in Canada with more opportunities; reduce the wait period for processing citizenship or visa applications; and change the temporary foreign worker program by eliminating the Can\$1 000 Labour Market Impact Assessment fee for hiring caretakers. In addition, the ministry will work with the provinces and territories to develop a system of companies registered to hire family caretakers and to facilitate the entry of low-risk travelers, including investors, as well as to eliminate the visa requirement for Mexico.⁴

It should be underlined that it is a faculty of the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship to determine which countries are considered safe, since they offer broad protection by the state and, as a result, should not be the point of origin of a considerable number of refugees. Mexico has been in this category since 2013.

I should add that when people from a safe country request refugee status, their applications are usually denied without right to appeal. Mexican refugee-status seekers have been pointed to as liars and abusers of the Canadian system, and the vast majority have been turned down.

Under the outgoing Conservative government, the decisions of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration about categorizing these countries were discretionary. That is, they were not based on a consistent explanation, and it was not very clear how the decisions were made. The transformation of the ministry will not necessarily change Mexico's classification as a "safe" country, but the process and decision-making in this regard will be more transparent. Trudeau himself proposed extending the right to appeal to asylum seekers from "safe" countries, and even taking away the ministry's power to determine which countries are safe, putting that decision in the hands of a panel of experts.⁵

HUMANITARIAN RATIONALITY AND MEXICO

It is important to point out that Trudeau's discourse during his campaign and now that he has taken office as prime minister,

does not describe the Mexican state as unable to protect its citizens who say they have had their human rights violated. Doing so would mean Canada's doors should be opened to asylum seekers for Canada to afford them the protection they do not have in their own country. Rather, his discourse is about compassion and support for all those who suffer persecution in the world, guided by an interest in the highest level of cooperation.

Certainly, the prime minister has neither said he is concerned about the state of human rights in Mexico, nor that he expects that it will be taken off the list of safe countries. That could be considered a step backward in bilateral relations, which clearly the new Canadian government is interested in strengthening. For that reason, it is expected that it will find the mechanisms needed to unblock this part of its bilateral relationship.

In the same vein, it is also to be expected that it will promote the defense of human rights of minorities —among its priorities is reestablishing dialogue with Canadian First Peoples—, of diversity, and of free choice. The government is also not expected to openly condemn the worrying situation that has existed in Mexico over at least the last 10 years, enmeshed as it has been in an open war against organized crime that has endangered the human rights of thousands of people.

Taking into consideration that Mexico is a member of NAFTA and, of course, the enormous weight of the United States, Trudeau may think it unnecessary and politically incorrect to point out the domestic situation of one of its most important trade partners, Mexico. However, restraint is a sign of his political ability, although this might be misinterpreted by human rights defenders both in Canada and in Mexico. It could therefore also be thought that these same groups would consider the anticipated goodwill gesture of eliminating the visa requirement for Mexicans as part of a political strategy of economic and trade positioning in the region.

Naturally, I think the humanitarian intentions of the Liberal Party and its leader are more genuine than those of the previous Conservative government. Nevertheless, there will always be those who question them. That is precisely what the new Trudeau government is going to have to deal with in the future.

I should also point out that Trudeau's favorable place in public opinion could very quickly be reverted if his campaign promises disappear amidst the activities of governing and a rapid change is not quickly perceptible. If that happens, how far will the charismatic Liberal prime minister get with his

The ideas of multiculturalism have been handed down to the new prime minister from his father, who in the 1970s established the basis for a model of social organization open to ethnic diversity, integrating immigrants into Canadian society.

progressive ideas? This is on the table because he is putting them forward in a country where legalizing marihuana, achieving gender equality, reforming the political system, extending the enjoyment of human rights, and fostering sustainable development, among other things, would not seem to earn him all the allies he needs, at least not for the time being.

The previous government's position on the visa for Mexicans can be linked to anti-immigrant views influenced by xenophobic political currents from Canada's southern neighbor. However, it can also be understood in a context of cooperation, exchange, and economic competition. The Conservatives probably saw the visa as a bargaining chip for future economic negotiations with Mexico. This is by no means beyond the stretch of the imagination since the day it was imposed, the same was done with the Czech Republic, which also had a high number of asylum seekers, particularly Roma.

By the end of 2013, during the negotiations of the free trade agreement with the European Union, the old continent saw the visa as a barrier for economic negotiations, and the Czech Republic promised to not ratify the trade agreement if Canada did not change its position. In the end, the visa requirement was eliminated. The matter of Roma refugees faded into the background and economic interests prevailed. We will never know now if the Conservatives thought of the visa for Mexicans in the same way.

Very probably, the elimination of the visa requirement will make the number of asylum applications by Mexicans increase. This would presuppose more active communication between the two governments, since Ottawa would have to use every means to express its concern to the Mexican government, prompting a responsible response from the Mexican side, which has only been offered to Washington, but for different reasons.

CONCLUSIONS

We can say that the visa issue plays an important role in economic negotiations: if it is eliminated, it will make for a rapid

increase in Mexican tourism, which will benefit certain business and leisure sectors in Canada. At the same time, however, it is an issue that also opens up space for more profound reflection about human rights and insecurity in Mexico, about organized crime, or about a government, like Mexico's, that has been overwhelmed because it has not been able to guarantee the security of its own citizens within its own borders.

Analyzing the role of political positions to understand and deal with an important social phenomenon leads to thinking about the extent to which Canada's Liberal government can innovate using politics as a mode of dialogue.

The ideas of multiculturalism have been handed down to the new prime minister from his father, who in the 1970s established the basis for a model of social organization open to ethnic diversity, integrating immigrants into Canadian society without forcing them to adopt a single identity, with a less utilitarian vision of accepting only those who contribute economically to the country, as Stephen Harper's Conservative government did.

The challenge is huge for the Trudeau's new government. And while we will not see Canadian government pronouncements about human rights in Mexico before it lifts the visa requirement, we should not discount the possibility of finding appropriate channels for institutional collaboration with the aim of decreasing the number of Mexicans requesting asylum in Canada. Those requests, however, will undoubtedly tend to increase in coming years after the Canadian government eliminates the selective requirement for Mexicans who want to or must visit Canada. ■■■

NOTES

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Will Cultural Diplomacy Be Reborn?

Graciela Martínez-Zalce*

According to Evan Potter, public diplomacy is the effort made by one country's public institutions to influence public opinion in another through the media.¹ The aim is to communicate with a foreign public so they can understand your ideas, your ideals, your culture, your goals, and your policies.

To cite just one example, Canada's most intense years of public diplomacy in Mexico were more or less the ten years after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In that period, as Bélanger points out, cultural diplomacy could be considered to have been the third pillar of Canadian foreign policy.²

But to carry out such an ambitious project, you have to have a budget.

A document prepared for the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the Canadian Arts Coalition, and the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, *Budget 2014: Culture and the Arts – Still Smarting from Budget 2012 Cuts but Better Times on the Horizon? Annual Analysis of the Federal Budget from the Perspective of the Cultural Sector*, states that, despite the fact that no more cuts were made that year in cultural institutions' budgets, they were barely recovering from the restrictions of previous years. It goes on to say,

The Canadian Heritage portfolio sustained close to [Can]\$200 million in permanent cuts between 2012-13 and 2014-15, the majority directed at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation ([Can]\$115.0 million) and the Department of Canadian Heritage ([Can]\$46.2 million), with Telefilm, the National Film Board and Library and Archives Canada also experiencing major cuts. These cuts come on top of the fact that for several years now, the government has not provided funding for inflation on goods and services, which has had an important impact, particularly



USA Today Sports/Reuters

on large organizations like the CBC or the Department of Canadian Heritage, which have a large number of employees.³

Let's look at the example of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), one of the bastions of the creation and export of very high quality Canadian content.⁴ Created in 1939 with the mission of producing and distributing films that would help Canadians from all over the country understand the ways of life and problems of their compatriots across the vast expanse of its territory, it operates today under the aegis of Heritage Canada. Since its founding, Canadians and Quebecois have spearheaded the training of great artists in animation and documentary-making. Many of these, committed to social and political causes, after the founding of the Challenge for Change program (1967-1980), would follow a strict ethical code that forbade the exploitation through filming of people whose daily lives they shot.

With the passing of the decades, the aim of the NFB has changed, both due to technology and because of budget cuts.⁵ For example, in 1996, after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect, its mission was reevaluated, together with those of Telefilm Canada and the CBC. It continued in its role as a publically-owned production company; however, its activities were rationalized to focus on the renovation and dissemination of production, mainly through television.

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In 2002, a strategic plan was drawn up to reduce the impact of the 1990s budget cuts and to rebuild the NFB “brand,” renew its connection with Canadians, and commit it to producing and distributing audio-visual content that would be culturally diverse, challenging, and relevant, and would provide both Canada and the world with a singular Canadian perspective. The most recent reform, made in 2008, involves dissemination strategies in the digital era and attempts to return to the institution’s roots, supporting artists, putting imagination and creation with social commitment first, regardless of the technological medium. The results will be accessible to all Canadians, and some will also be available to the rest of the world.

In short, today, the mission of the National Film Board is to reflect Canada and the issues that interest Canadians, aimed both domestically and internationally, through the creation and distribution of innovative, distinctive audio-visual works based on *Canadian points of view and values*. As a result, in addition to producing and training audio-visual artists, the entire NFB archives are being digitalized.

It is expected that by 2018, the NFB will become an important player in the world of globalized audio-visual media. That is, it will once again be competitive and noteworthy in the sphere of the world’s cultural institutions and of publicly-funded film production.

The hope that this will be attained depends on Justin Trudeau’s fulfilling his campaign promise, explained in September 2015 in Quebec, one of the provinces most concerned with these issues. For this to be possible, he will have to support the minister of Canadian heritage, lawyer Mélanie Joly.⁶ Trudeau’s proposals include a series of points to reverse the effects of the Conservative government’s approximately Can\$45 million in cuts, among them:

1. Invest Can\$150 million in new annual funding for CBC/Radio-Canada;
2. Double investment in the Canada Council for the Arts to Can\$360 million per year;
3. Restore the Promart and Trade Routes international cultural promotion programs that the Conservative government has cut;
4. Increase funding for Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board; and
5. Increase funding for the Young Canada Works program to help young people prepare to work in the heritage sector as part of the Liberals’ investment in social in-

frastructure of nearly Can\$6 billion over the next four years.⁷

If this is achieved, these measures would return Canada to its outstanding role not only as a producer, but also as an exporter of high-quality content. This would mean, in turn, that the country would recover the intensity of its cultural diplomacy, on hold during the Conservative government, which seemed to believe that art and culture were expensive ornaments unworthy of investment. ■■■

NOTES

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³ *Budget 2014: Culture and the Arts – Still Smarting from Budget 2012 Cuts but Better Times on the Horizon? Annual Analysis of the Federal Budget from the Perspective of the Cultural Sector*, December 2014, http://www.canadianartscoalition.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Budget_Analysis_2014_en.pdf, p. 3, accessed January 6, 2016.

⁴ See the institution’s web site at <http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/en/about-the-nfb/organization/mandate/>.

⁵ Waugh, Baker, and Winton, in the introduction to their excellent volume about the Challenge for Change/ Société nouvelle program, denounced Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s cuts, which they considered scandalous, not only to the NFB budget, but to many other very important programs, based on his assertion that ordinary Canadians were not interested in art. These authors considered these cuts equivalent to those made by Brian Mulroney in the mid-1980s. Thomas Waugh, Michael Brendan Baker, and Ezra Winton, *Challenge for Change. Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), pp. 3-4.

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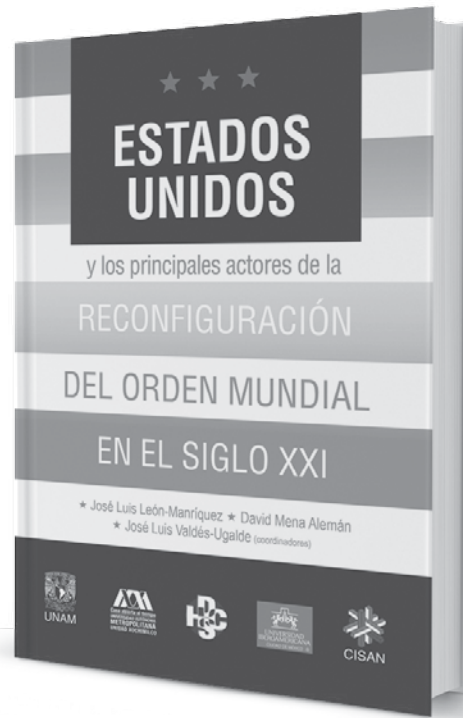
Estados Unidos y los principales actores de la reconfiguración del orden mundial en el siglo XXI

(The United States and the Main Actors in Reconfiguring the Twenty-first Century World Order)

J. L. León-Manríquez, D. Mena Alemán and J. L. Valdés-Ugalde, comps.

CISAN, UNAM/UAM/UIA

Mexico City, 2015, 365 pp.



This book is an indispensable reference for understanding the evolution of the United States during the second decade of the twenty-first century. It is the result of coordinated efforts by the National Autonomous University of México's Center for Research on North America, the Autonomous Metropolitan University's Xochimilco campus, and the Iberoamerican University.

It offers the reader an in-depth study from different perspectives about the preponderance of the United States worldwide and the implications of its relations with the rest of the international stakeholders. It also delves into its hegemonic capability for establishing a world order in different spheres after its ascent following World War II, as well as how, since the beginning of the current century, it has gradually been losing strength in the face of the reconfiguration of this order.

The first chapter, written by Luis Maira, looks at the debate between the position that the U.S. is in decline and another that points to its defense of its hegemonic power in the face of the onslaught of the deep economic crisis beginning in 2008. The article by José Luis Valdés-Ugalde complements this by showing how the United States faces the challenges of increasingly polarized domestic politics marked by dissension and how President Obama's administration has attempted to establish a political agenda based on cooperation and dialogue with an increasingly insular Republican Party concentrated on its most conservative, intolerant elements.

The U.S. political system is also the object of a comparative analysis by David Mena Alemán that questions the success

of exceptionalism cemented in what he dubs "a counter-majority democracy." This author's stance is that the system's main characteristic is its high maintenance cost and the low benefit for its citizens, particularly for minorities. Mena also underlines that U.S. democracy can be seen to be surrounded by agendas and interests of power groups whose priorities are often contrary to the public interest, thus generating high political and social costs.

A country's hegemony is measured by its influence on different aspects of the international sphere. Monetary issues are part of that equation, and Víctor M. Cuevas carries out a quantitative study to explain a panorama of the U.S. dollar's prospects as the dominant currency in the international exchange-rate market over the coming decades. Based on different equations, Cuevas compares this currency with others, mainly the euro, explaining that, despite the huge aspirations for internationalizing the euro, the results have been much lower than expected. He concludes that the U.S. dollar will continue to be a reference for financial and capital transactions.

Another chapter, by Laura Zamudio González, offers us a vivid portrait of the role the United States has played in the multilateral arena and its presence in the world's main international organizations. As this essay's title suggests, Wash-

ington's relations with the different international bodies is ambivalent and complex, in what the author characterizes as a highly institutionalized international system that aims to serve the interests of the hegemonic country. Finally, she evaluates both quantitatively and qualitatively the U.S. role not only in the UN System, but also with regard to the different inter-governmental organizations that exist in all fields of the international sphere.

The second part of the book deals with the United States' role *vis-à-vis* the emerging world. Articles like the one by Arturo Santa Cruz show us the path followed by relations between Washington and Beijing under the George W. Bush and Obama administrations. Santa Cruz offers an objective view of why China, despite its trade expansion and economic opening, is far from achieving a level of international leadership capable of unseating the United States. This is to a certain extent due to its human rights record as well as its issues of internal democracy and the environment. But more importantly, above all it is due to the fact that China has said that its expansion will be peaceful. The author suggests, then, that Washington's should cooperate with Beijing.

Another outstanding issue is what Juan José Ramírez calls "an uncomfortable strategic alliance" between the United States and the Democratic Party of Japan's administrations. Ramírez's essay deals with equality between strategic allies, the Japanese government's military sovereignty, and Washington's concessions to what has been dubbed the right to collective self-defense in the face of the domestic problems of a highly hierarchical and bureaucratized Japanese political structure.

The relationship between the European Union and the United States, traditionally based on cooperation in security matters, poses enormous challenges in the face of a bloc that is working more as a common front for defense, sometimes distanced from Washington's interests. As Armando Rodríguez Luna points out in his essay, trans-Atlantic relations between the United States and the EU oscillate freely increasingly between cooperation and political realism, with vague allusions to a strategic alliance to deal with the economic crisis, relations with Russia, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, more recently, Syria. This author's argument is that the United States will continue to maintain a pragmatic presence in favor of its interests in the trans-Atlantic hemisphere, with NATO as the instrument that will continue to watch over these objectives.

The last chapter of the second part of the book deals with one of the essential issues for understanding the U.S.

role in cooperation and its influence over a large part of the world. For different reasons, relations with Russia have been characterized by constant confrontations, from the time that the Soviet Union existed through its fall in the 1990s. The chapter looks at the vicissitudes of that relationship, the behavior of each of the actors in different scenarios, such as the 2013-2014 crisis in the Ukraine, and their actions in the central and northern parts of the eurozone.

Lastly, the third part of the book analyzes relations between the United States and Latin America. According to José Luis León, currently, the relationship has been characterized by ambivalent interests, coercion, consensus, and neglect. A first approximation deals with the role of the United States in the region *vis-à-vis* China's activity, its growing presence in South America, and Washington's continued preponderance in both the region's economy and its politics. A brief review of the history of that relationship looks at the loss of U.S. presence *versus* China's thriving economy and its attempts to penetrate the region's markets.

The last three chapters are dedicated to understanding Washington's relations with its nearest neighbors, Mexico and Canada, with regard to three key issues on the regional agenda. In a first article, Leonardo Curzio looks at Mexico-U.S. bilateral relations seen from the perspective of different administrations on each side of the border: the agreements and differences that have characterized each of the stages of Mexico's governments, from Carlos Salinas de Gortari to the then-recently inaugurated Enrique Peña Nieto, and from the first President George Bush to the re-election of Barack Obama.

Curzio deals with fundamental issues on the bilateral agenda like security, migration, integration, and trade. His article segues easily into the following analysis by Federico Novelo, who introduces the reader to the possible future of NAFTA, making his central argument the negative and positive balance sheet of the 20 years since the agreement came into effect. Finally, Leticia Calderón Chelius examines one of the most prominent issues in the U.S.-Mexican relationship: migration, which she thinks is a kind of regulator of relations between the two countries, the result of a century of experiences that have impacted not only on the economy, but also society and culture. In the face of those impacts, she offers keys for understanding the overall picture. ■■■

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Más allá de la maquila. Contribución de la subcontratación internacional al desarrollo de China

(Beyond the Maquila. The Contribution of International Outsourcing to China's Development)

Monica Gambrill

CISAN, UNAM

Mexico City, 2016, 192 pp.



Today the People's Republic of China is one of the levers of economic power spurring trade and investment worldwide. For this reason, many countries have become more interested in establishing economic and trade ties to China, using different strategies for international insertion. Its economic opening and modernization began in the 1980s and have made it an economic power. But, what have been the development policies its government has used to join the international economy? How has it diversified its exported goods and services? What has its successful industrial strategy been? The objective of this book is to analyze how China "has utilized international outsourcing to accelerate its development through a strategy both for trade and for industry, through which it has promoted its economic opening as well as the country's incorporation into global productive chains" (p. 9).

International outsourcing has not only brought economic and industrial development; it has also had an impact on the development of research centers, higher qualification of the work force, and better, though regionally diversified, wages. This way of producing involves a sub-contractor and the outsourcing company located in different countries. The outsourcing company maintains control of the productive process and stipulates the specifications to the sub-contractor in the contract. On occasion, the outsourcer provides the machinery and inputs to the sub-contractor and acquires the goods it produces. If those goods are for final consumption, it resells them under its own brand, but when they are components, they

are used to assemble a different good in global productive chains, which in turn may be outsourced. In services, the outsourcer uses the services to save on costs or hire labor with higher technical skills that give it greater productivity.

The central government of the People's Republic of China established basic goals for development that continue to be valid today, although they have adapted along the way to new requirements. According to Gambrill, the aim of this strategy is to create an incentive for "the trade opening and industrial modernization through subsidies to promote the absorption of foreign direct investment; technology transfer; in-country research and technology development; as well as the expansion of international outsourcing to developed regions in the country's central area and West" (pp. 83-84).

Throughout the book, the author develops the components of the general hypothesis guiding her work, whose corollary is the central government's development strategy, that is, that China "has taken advantage of international outsourcing to promote internal industrial and social development because, in contrast with other developing countries, it has oriented it more inwardly than outwardly, using it to begin the reconversion of local companies into suppliers to the sub-contractors, increasing more and more the value added to exports" (p. 10).

This is the main difference between the way international outsourcing operates in the People's Republic and the way it is done in most of the underdeveloped world. That is, in the

latter, focus has been on assembling and re-exporting traditional goods using low-skilled labor, without incorporating industrial scaling or local inputs, adding little value. In the People's Republic of China, industry has been scaled up to the assembly of high-tech products, introducing contracts to supply foreign and local companies; this necessitates the training of more qualified labor as well as greater investments in science and technology and in industrial development.

Gambrill's book is divided into three sections, each one of which stands alone. However, I suggest following the author's order because it allows the reader to understand the important of customs regimes for the "old" and "new" types of development zones, which have the participation of the central, provincial, and local governments as well as foreign and national capital. The first chapter, "Customs Regimes and Their Contribution to the Development of the People's Republic of China," proposes a typology of the zones, clearly defining their functions: regimes for processing and assembly, processing with imported materials, for logistical goods by special control customs area, for customs warehouse commerce, for imported equipment or material as investment for foreign-owned companies, for equipment imported to be processed, and for assembly and equipment imported into the special controlled customs area.

In the second chapter, "Types of Development Zones and Their Contribution to the Development of the Southeast," Monica Gambrill bases her ideas on the customs regimes explained in the first chapter to document the development zones' patterns of evolution. She analyzes the zones the central government created for the first experiments in economic opening and industrial reconversion in the 1980s, as well as the newer ones, more closely linked to private capital. To do so, she narrates how the Southeast developed, specifically the provinces of Guandong, Fijuan, and Hainan.

China has seven types of development zones: free trade zones (FTZ), export processing zones (EPZ), economic and technological development zones (ETDA), high tech and new technology development zones (HTNTDZ), logistical parks (LP), business parks (BP), and private industrial zones (PIZ).

In the Southeast, there are general patterns in the distribution of these types of zones. Of these, 201 135 (67.2 percent) are economic and technological development zones (ETDZs); 88 percent are supplied by local investment and 16 percent by national investment. Nine are export processing zones (EPZs) and twelve are free trade zones (FTZs). The enormous number of ETDZs shows their importance for pro-

vincial and city governments, in accordance with the central government's opening and modernization objectives.

Since the provincial governments were in charge of expanding the ETDZs in the 1990s, the central government had its hands free to create incentives for high-tech activities through foreign direct investment to promote change for the manufacturing industry's technological scale up. To do this, they used the high and new technology development zones and, later, the business parks, which have acted as incubators for companies with private national capital, together with the logistical parks and the private industrial zones. The objective was to promote exports orienting their development inward, not outward, given that the strategic objective continues to be the modernization of China's economy.

In the third chapter, "Development Zones and Their Contribution to the Development of the Other Regions," Gambrill analyzes the rest of the zones, showing the differences and similarities *vis-à-vis* what happened in the Southeast. Undoubtedly, one of the book's biggest contributions is that it emphasizes the importance of the customs regimes for considering international outsourcing as one of the instruments that the central government used dynamically to create incentives for economic development, industrial scale-up, and the transfer of technology and research in the People's Republic of China.

* * *

This review is an homage to my beloved advisor, Dr. Monica Gambrill. Like any academic, when she did research and published it, she did it to help people understand the object of study. This book achieves that and more and can be considered a reference point for understanding how China has managed to insert itself into the international economy by developing its own economy through international outsourcing. Thanks to this research, it is possible to make a comparative analysis with other emerging and developing countries like Mexico. I transcribe here the dedication the author wrote in my copy, extending it to all potential readers of this research: "I share the book with you in the hope that it will be useful in your work about China." **MM**

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Doña Rosita Ascencio, voz de la medicina tradicional purépecha

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