

Notes on Mexico in Globalization

Three Looks at the Street

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Kieran Doherty/Reuters

INTRODUCTION

We are in crisis. From the 1929 crisis until today, we have witnessed the world's ups and downs, the waves of globalization, the timing of economic policy, the commodification of life.

The revolution in communications and technologies changes what the world looks like as well as business, culture, entertainment, and daily life: Benetton, Nina Ricci, Nike,

Federer, Nadal, Cristiano Ronaldo, playing golf in China, malls and the consumer society, the Outraged Movement.

In fact, we are moving toward a new civilization, as I have stated in other works; a new civilization and a new global ideology, profoundly unequal, unjust, pyramid-shaped, and multipolar. It would be overwhelming to explain here the structural characteristics of this civilization as the projection and effect of neoliberal capitalist globalization in crisis: the technological systems. I will focus on these key concepts:

1. The BRICS countries (with the addition of South Africa): these countries represent the emerging world

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and its emergencies. An interesting challenge to the club of the great powers;

2. A conceptual approach to the structure and method of Mexican foreign policy; and,
3. The inclusion of Mexico in the New World Order after the magical year of 1989: Berlin, the dismemberment of the USSR, German reunification, and the subsequent U.S. unipolar hegemony.

In this context, Mexico emerged unscathed from the changes and restructuring of the world order, maintaining its subordinate relationship with the United States. The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reaffirmed the commitment to peace at the end of the World War II. An alternative analysis approach that I have mentioned before would be: The national approach, Inter-American relations, and the insertion in the global context. These three levels have pedagogical clarity, although given the complexity of the affairs of Mexico and the world, I chose to take three looks at the street. Today, with the euro crisis and the debacle in Greece —and Spain, Italy, and Portugal— we must examine issues of economic crisis (Keynes, Polanyi) and political crisis: legitimacy, democracy, rule of law, for which Michel Dobry¹ propounded the complex interdependencies between legitimacy and crisis. Not to mention David Easton, Almond and Powell, and Habermas. The 2008 collapse of the financial sector is the strategic variable that summarizes this article, which aims to highlight trends and the main processes of Mexico in the world of neoliberal globalization.

THE FOG OF THE COLD WAR: 1947-1989

George Kennan did not imagine the echoes his 1947 “long telegram” would have, setting out what the main lines of containment policy of the USSR should be in the period of the war between the blocs.

Law and history had much to say about this period. From the standpoint of legal analysis, I can mention great contributions to thinking, civilized, conscious, decent humankind: the United Nations Charter, the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to non-alignment, decolonization, and outlawing war, with its precedent, the Kellogg Briand Pact of 1928.

Although they do not agree, both good and bad historians contribute ideas and provide keys to understanding global realities: Hobsbawm, Niall Ferguson, Tony Judt, Joseph Fontana and others tried to explain the “short” twentieth century, although it is a task of Titans. This article tries to interpret the trends and transitions from industrial society to the knowledge society and scientific-technological civilization.²

The twenty-first century, therefore, should announce a world of progress, peace, and harmony, development and fulfillment: but this is going against the current. The complexity and disorder, barbarism, inequality, the distress of minorities, partial wars, poverty, and looting lead to an unequal, uncertain society: civil society is asleep. It is the case of Somalia, a country still living in misery.

1989: NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The case of Mexico, an interdependent and dependent country, has been studied serenely: Bernardo Sepúlveda, Emilio O. Rabasa, César Sepúlveda, Blanca Torres, Gustavo Vega, Mario Ojeda, Soledad Loaeza, Lorenzo Meyer, and Guadalupe González, at the risk of omitting some names. From these contributions, Mexico was able to advance the construction of international relations and incorporated into its Constitution basic principles like self-determination, non-intervention, peaceful settlement of international disputes, prohibition of the threat or use of force, legal equality of states, international cooperation for development, the struggle for peace and international security. These principles are laid out in Article 89, Section X, of the Constitution.³

Also, in June 2011, the concept of human rights was added to Article 1 of the Constitution, particularly with regard to the *amparo*.

I argue that in the Cold War period, Mexico approached the issue of human rights. With four presidents: Miguel Alemán, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, Adolfo López Mateos (and stabilizing development), and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz:⁴ industrialization;

Guatemala (Jacobo Arbenz) and migrants; the position on Cuba's expulsion from the OAS; and cooperation and conflict, respectively.

In essence, during the Cold War, Mexico was discussed in terms of dialectical development and underdevelopment (Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado, Víctor L. Urquidí at ECLAC in Santiago [1948]): import substitution, integration, autonomy, the fight against marginalization were all part of a project for Latin American development.

Consistent with these ideas, the book edited by Ana Covarrubias offers a scenario of foreign policy in Mexico.⁵ For example, J. Domínguez, mentioned in the article, asks himself if Mexico's foreign policy is the exception. An analysis of three areas, it raises the key variables: geographical location and the nature of the international system proposed by Mario Ojeda, who suggests Mexico is a weak country, determined by its structural condition with challenges from the global system.

The current debate is centered on the topic of whether a country is part of the BRIC, or not. It is by no means pointless to inquire about Mexico's virtues in relation to other emerging nations: resources, environment, tourism, seas, oil.

FIRST LOOK

MEXICO AND THE BRICS: MANY ARE CALLED;
FEW ARE CHOSEN

First of all, I must explain what I mean by an emerging country. In fact, there are several criteria or sets of elements to take into account. For example, the BRICS, a term coined by Goldman-Sachs, have four characteristics that allow them to emerge: territorial size, magnitude, size of the economy, and structural capacity. These elements would enable them to access power.⁶

In previous work, I proposed the concept of broad technological power (BTP), to refer to the array of variables that a developing country or BRIC country should have. Also, the BRICs themselves had been talking about Indonesia or South Africa as future emerging countries. Emergence is a complex concept. To it should be added the ideas in Kenneth Waltz's book *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, which analyzes the patterns of international power.

Mexico has "weaknesses," which, for now, prevent it from being an emerging country: insecurity, weak relations with the United States (asymmetric and unequal), the poverty of

52 million people, poor educational levels, and technological backwardness.

In Mexico, the style of work is also based on improvisation and the work ethic, according to Weber's concept, is limited.

SECOND LOOK: MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY STRUCTURE AND METHODS IN GLOBALIZATION

Attempting to make notes about the essence of Mexican foreign policy on the stage of globalization is not easy.

Beginning with the seven foreign policy principles embodied in the Constitution in 1988 and strengthened by the addition of human rights to Article 1, we must add the ever-increasing acceptance and legitimacy of the Inter-American Human Rights System: several human rights cases have been accepted and submitted to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and Court. The importance—sometimes formal—given to the rights of indigenous peoples and migrant workers supports my words.

Thus, foreign policy has a quite pronounced formalist bias. This is the case of femicide in Ciudad Juárez: many complaints, many convictions, few solutions. This is, mainly, a domestic policy matter. However, it took on an international character when the United Nations and the international community sent observers: rapporteurs went, films were made, and seminars held.

This transnational dialectic between the internal and external penetrates the outer bases of the political regime, many committees, and non-governmental organizations, obtaining poor results and entailing a great deal of expense. At the end of the day we have to deal with the issue of sovereignty. Traditionally, the country experienced "historic isolation," especially regarding sovereignty and human rights. The noble functions of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and the Inter-American Human Rights Court came late. Similarly, the international human rights regime was only accepted gradually. Ana Covarrubias has studied it pro-

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foundly:⁷ lawless frontiers, arms trafficking, and drugs, transnational situations, as Philip Jessup wrote. A constant interaction between global cities and the real world.⁸

A virtuous relationship between nation-states in Latin America and the world system must exist: human rights equality, non-discrimination, tolerance, respect, as key issues for the twenty-first century. The ECLAC called it “time for equality” in a 2010 study.

The excellent study by Natalia Saltalamacchia and Ana Covarrubias supports this interpretation.⁹ In the case of Mexico, the sustenance of human rights policy seems to be revolutionary nationalism. The authors note three stages: a) the classical phase: the tension between global patterns and national attitudes, such as sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention; b) the interaction between international regimes and legitimate actors; and finally, c) the development of an active foreign policy on human rights,¹⁰ which I wrote about in my book, *América Latina: relaciones internacionales y derechos humanos* (Latin America: International Relations and Human Rights) (1991), in which I propose a structural view of human rights from a certain conception of development.

THIRD LOOK: MEXICO AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

For Timothy Ferris, the world stage can be understood in three phases: the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, and the Enlightenment. He argues that science is the theater of liberty. As he said himself: “Science is experimental testing.”¹¹ The inexorable transition from science to technology admits multiple (and strong) interpretations. Herein lies the essence of this strategic variable: the power of ideas dictated since Napoleon, the militarization of science, the DNA revolution.¹²

In Mexico, the National Council of Science and Technology (Conacyt) says that the production of knowledge is closely linked to economic growth and development: the flow of goods, services, information, and goods and people between

regions, the heavier industries and high technology exports, and the use and application of information technologies (ICT) in production and the organization of business.¹³ This is a diagnosis of Mexico’s situation *vis-à-vis* the knowledge economy. Actually, we should consider the broader notion of knowledge society: solidarity and access to new technologies.

The key is broad technological power (BTP): invention, innovation, transfer and equal access to knowledge, resources, goods, services, people, and capital. A strategy to access the knowledge society: escape the prisoner’s dilemma. The predominance of the immaterial: a necessary, abstract and diffuse (until now) equation to change the space-time interaction: Albert Einstein’s theory of everything.¹⁴ The right of the intangible heritage of humanity in its various meanings.

CONCLUSIONS SO FAR: THE TRANSITION TO THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Bill Gates, in his November 2011 report to the G-20 in Cannes, presented a diagnosis of the current situation. He began with health: during his life time, he said, innovations in business, technology, and science have driven the global market and economy in unprecedented ways; the world economy is 500 percent bigger than before and science and technology and innovation have become key drivers of growth.¹⁵ Gates’s report relates the diagnosis of the world situation with the UN Millennium Development Goals, and he was successful in doing so. The UN resolution on this subject, from October 19, 2010, sets out the objectives for 2015:

1. Alliance for development
2. Good governance and rule of law
3. Poverty eradication
4. Sustainable development
5. Peace and security
6. Transformation of the global environment
7. Universal access to basic services
8. Right to development
9. South-South cooperation
10. Climate change risks
11. Support for least developed countries.

The UN Conference in Istanbul in 2011 stipulated the need for respect, promotion and protection of human rights, linked to the Millennium Goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Gender equality
4. Promote global public health
5. Reduce child mortality
6. Improve maternal health
7. Establish environmental sustainability.

In view of the Millennium Development Goals, the concept of broad technological power (BTP) acquires strategic importance: the key to development and competitiveness. This should become a state science policy proposal, dearly lacking in Mexico. For now, we must mention the following BTP areas:

1. Cultural factors: access to education, reading levels, quality schools per capita, free education, and ethics;
2. Political and evaluative factors: democracy and participation, a human rights project, respect for minorities, and others;
3. Economic factors: basic income, development level, growth rate, an increasing employment structure, satisfaction of basic needs, and others; and
4. International factors: proper integration into the global system, increased exports, international trade, emergence of new technologies, international autonomy, and others.

RESEARCH NOTES

These are a set of preliminary suggestions about the uneven and unbalanced inclusion of Mexico in the global context. A partnership for equality, achieved through universal basic income, is imperative. In the case of Mexico, the August 1982 crisis marked a fundamental turning point in the country's economic direction. As Víctor L. Urquidi noted, this crisis was the result of adverse domestic and international fac-

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tors:¹⁶ the country lost important options for improving its international position.

Through NAFTA, free trade grew exponentially.¹⁷ In 2000, trade flows reached US\$263 billion. However, the emergence of China as a strategic partner and rival for the United States created difficult and complex relations with this country.¹⁸ On the road to being an emerging economy, Mexico will come across many obstacles and complexities. As Albert Einstein wrote, do not expect different results if you always do the same thing. **MM**

NOTES

¹ See Michel Dobry, *Sociología de las crisis políticas* (Madrid: CSIS, 1968).

² See Luis T. Díaz Müller, *Derecho de la ciencia y la tecnología* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1995).

³ See Emilio O. Rabasa, comp., *Los 7 principios básicos de la política exterior de México* (Mexico City: IJ-UNAM, 2005).

⁴ See Rafael Velásquez Flores, *Factores, bases y fundamentos de la política exterior de México* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2005).

⁵ Ana Covarrubias, comp., *Temas de política exterior* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2008).

⁶ This can also be checked in Arturo Oropeza García, *Las emergencias del mundo ante el reloj de la historia* (Mexico City: IJ-UNAM, 2010).

⁷ Ana Covarrubias, comp., "Los derechos humanos en la política exterior de México: ¿En defensa propia o de los valores liberales?" *Temas de política exterior* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2008), pp. 303 on.

⁸ Saskia Sassen, *Territorio, autoridad y derechos* (Madrid: Katz Editores, 2010).

⁹ Natalia Saltalamacchia and Ana Covarrubias, *Derechos humanos en la política exterior: seis casos latinoamericanos* (Mexico City: Miguel Ángel Porrúa/ITAM, 2011).

¹⁰ Gustavo Vega Cánovas, comp., *Bernardo Sepúlveda, juez de la Corte Internacional de Justicia* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2007).

¹¹ Timothy Ferris, *The Science of Liberty* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).

¹² José Manuel Sánchez Rinn, *El poder de la ciencia* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2011).

¹³ Conacyt, *México ante la economía del conocimiento* (Mexico City: Conacyt, 2010).

¹⁴ Richard Lacayo, *Albert Einstein: The Enduring Legacy of a Modern Genius* (New York: Time Publications, 2011).

¹⁵ Bill Gates, *Innovation with Impact: Financing 21st Century Development: A report by Bill Gates to G20 leaders*, Cannes Summit, November, 2011, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Policy/G20-Report>.

¹⁶ Víctor L. Urquidi, *Otro siglo perdido: Las políticas de desarrollo en América Latina (1930-2005)* (Mexico City: FCE, 2005).

¹⁷ Reynaldo Yunuén Ortega Ortiz and Gustavo Vega Cánovas, eds., *Poder y política en los estudios internacionales* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2011).

¹⁸ Guadalupe Paz and Riordan Roett, eds., *La presencia de China en el hemisferio occidental: Consecuencias para América Latina y los Estados Unidos* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Forzál, 2009).