Portico

We are pleased to be able to begin this issue with Enrique Romero Leal's analysis of transnacional influences on Mexico's democratization, among them the indirect effects of North American economic integration. Based on multiple secondary sources, he maintains that, while the economic liberalization that gave rise to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could not have happened without the authoritarian regime that existed at the time, a second, more "pluralist" phase began in 1997, a year in which electoral tensions climbed, as did the weight of society *vis-à-vis* the state. And although the main factors driving that change were domestic, the increased concern of a multiplicity of non-governmental actors in the United States about political processes in Mexico created a favorable situation for Mexican civil society's demands to be heard nationally. The author also weighs the importance of the "democratic clause" the European Union demanded as a condition for signing its agreement with Mexico, as well as the growing importance of the Organization of American States in fostering democracy in the entire Latin American region. To the extent that democracy has not yet been consolidated in this country, transnational factors still have a role to play in supporting local forces.

The second essay, by Gian Carlo Delgado, deals with the relationship between science and technology and U.S. competitiveness. Surprisingly, the balance sheet is negative, since science and technology have been hijacked by the military, which imposes its own priorities, alien to civilian applications. Also, arms manufacturers raise costs at the expense of the public coffers to ensure their profits, since their goods are usually sold under contract even before they have been made. More than an economic analysis, the article is based on the U.S. political sociology of authors like C. Wright Mills, William Domhoff, John K. Galbraith, and Seymour Melman, about the "power elite," "the ruling class," "technostructure," and "Pentagon capitalism," respectively. It demystifies the ideological basis on which an irrational faith in this system was built. The author also questions the dismantling of this apparatus during the two Clinton administrations, arguing that, while it did reduce its share of the

gross domestic product, the accelerated growth of the time made it possible to maintain spending in absolute terms, and to continually increase thereafter. All of this caused the United States to lag behind in civilian science and technology compared to other nations and has led to the questioning of its hegemonic role in the world economy *vis-à-vis* China and the European Union.

Jeremy Slack and Scott Whiteford, the authors of the last essay in this section, use the novel concept of "post-structural violence" to analyze undocumented migration. They use the term to refer to the gamut of human responses to the structural violence that leads a growing number of people to move toward a clandestine space between Mexico and the United States, where human smugglers have allied with drug lords, and the militarization of the border creates deadly dangers. Sometimes migrants end up working as drug mules when they cross the border, making them criminals by virtue of simply arriving at their destinations. This also makes them more likely to become involved in other criminal activities, partially as a reaction to their marginalization and partly because their circumstances place them at extreme risk, leading them to seek out new ways of surviving and bringing them into direct conflict with the state. This is a study of the violence that exists behind the options of the individuals involved, in which sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between victims and perpetrators. This is a new focus that neither idolizes nor condemns migrants; rather, it explains the perverse dynamic that poverty and the unforeseen consequences of immigration policies has forced them into.

Our "Contemporary Issues" section begins with a serious study by Manuel Chavez, Scott Whiteford, and Jennifer Hoewe of the way in which major U.S. newspapers negatively slant their articles about Mexican immigration to influence public policymaking. For example, the authors state that more than 50 percent of articles published dealt with issues related to crime, followed by the economy and, in third place, legislation-related matters. They are all structured to produce the greatest impact possible. The general public is only barely beginning to understand this practice, based on the science that the mass media dominate perfectly well.

Maximiliano Gracia Hernández offers us a retrospective look at the results of NAFTA to identify the Mexican export sectors that have been successful in taking advantage of the tariff reductions the agreement brought about. After explaining several general definitions of economic integration, in addition to the conditions and stages involved in the process, Gracia Hernández centers specifically on the analysis of the regional integration agreements. He suggests that their signatories have asymmetrical economic, labor, and legal conditions, and that therefore the most vulnerable of them should be accorded special treatment to be able to benefit from them. After comparing fluctuations in exports and imports between Mexico and Canada and Mexico and the United States, he concludes that North American

economic integration is far from complete. Nevertheless, at least for Mexico, NAFTA has brought benefits that it would not have obtained if it traded with countries from the South.

In honor of Carlos Monsiváis, we have decided to offer our English-speaking readers a translation of one of his essays. With the critical humor that was so much his own, Monsiváis enumerates what the United States means and has meant in the Mexican imaginary, and then goes on to discuss Mexico's process of Americanization beginning in the early twentieth century, before the era of globalization. He cites the effect it has had on Mexican traditions –which, like all traditions, are invented– on daily life, on holidays, on cultural production, like cinema or comic books, or on Anglicisms. Americanization has spread throughout the world, but neither uniformly nor equally, thus making it possible to speak of the "Mexicanization of Americanization," a creative process wherein U.S. cultural phenomena are adapted to local needs and dynamics. This uneven progression can also be traced to the economic realities that are a barrier to the modernization of Mexico. Syncretism seems inevitable, given that cultural imperialism speeds up as a result of new technologies; and the attempts to define a Mexican identity or protect the Spanish language have failed. Presenting a plethora of examples, Monsiváis describes the Americanization of Mexican society, from the political class to the elites, to rock musicians, and the mass of consumers who are by no means nostalgic for a cultural purity that has never existed. Critical of some of the phenomena that are assimilated, like the self-help culture and the use of merchandising tools in politics, he also celebrates the fact that the same process has brought with it certain freedoms, increased tolerance, and the discourses of several social movements.

Anna Kaganiec-Kamieńska's article in our "Critical Notes" section analyzes Oklahoma's November 2010 referendum establishing English as the state's official language, ostensibly protecting minority languages. After mentioning several similar previous pieces of proposed legislation and their diverse outcomes, the author points to the existing law, refuting the arguments used to defend it. What is interesting is that generally speaking, this kind of action is linked to increased immigration, such as in the case of California. But, Kaganiec points out that in Oklahoma, only 3.8 percent of residents are foreigners, thus weakening the argument that U.S. identity is endangered by immigration. Fortunately, the measure has its opponents, among them indigenous peoples' organizations, who have waged a long fight to defend their cultures and languages throughout the United States. These groups interpret the referendum differently, including it among the many discriminatory measures that this and other administrations have presented to solve the problem of undocumented immigration, but without much success. In fact, they may intensify xenophobic feelings and even have a negative impact on the state's economy.

A little studied phenomenon involved in migration and economic globalization is the intense circulation of intellectuals and technicians, highly-skilled immigrants, who have spread over the world in all directions, not only South to North. Amarela Varela Huerta presents her comments on two recent texts about this issue whose crosscutting themes are the construction of comparative perspectives among studies that subscribe to the perspective (or paradigm) of the "brain drain," predominant in different international bodies and local governments (those who work with the notion of "academic mobility" and those who favor the concept of "scientific networks"). The aim is to understand the forces that expel intellectual workers, the social, economic, and personal effects of this, the dynamics, risks, and benefits of this migration for receiving and sending countries, and the lack of correspondence between public policies involving the production of knowledge and intellectuals' academic aspirations. Varela Huerta identifies two questions guiding these texts: How should public policy respond to this phenomenon? And, what are the benefits and disadvantages that these relocations cause for sending and receiving countries for these skilled migrants? Without a doubt, these questions should be dealt with by a country like ours, whose investment in research and development is insufficient, which lacks comprehensive, long-term public policies for fostering research, and which also does not guarantee the people it educates professional success and job security.

Nattie Golubov and Monica Gambrill