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DRECLAS NEWS

# ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA • FALL 2001

Mexico in Transition



# Mexico in a Nutshell

BY CARLOS MONSIVÁIS

**W**HAT IS MEXICO? TO AVOID REGURGITATING A PAGE FROM THE dictionary or digging myself into a chauvinistic hole, I'll offer some impressions: Mexico is, among other things: ■ a bundle of co-existing forces and limitations unified by a common social, economic, political, and cultural landscape ■ a Republic governed for 71 years by the same political party, which maintained its authoritarianism through its achievements and, for decades, its manifest collapse ■ the semi-dictatorship of corruption (still partially existent) ■ extreme inequality aggravated by demographic fertility ■ customary solidarity among the popular classes—diminished but alive ■ the plunder that ignores future generations, specializing in ecocide (felling forests and wasting water) ■ maximum privatized growth due to neoliberalism ■ the incapacity of the state and social system to retain the millions emigrating in search of the essential utopia: a job to guarantee opportunities for the family ■ popular religiosity: comfort amidst anguish and sacrifices and intolerant practices from a moving aesthetic revolving around an ethnic virgin ■ a history of ritual slaughter and crushing opposition, mixed with slow but sustained advances in democratic sentiment ■ a joyous but ailing popular culture that reached its peak in the early 20th century, with roots in the indigenous population and undergoing *mestizo* fermentation ■ a century of Americanization obligating imitation, suppressing imagination, increasing tolerance, and taking classes in the contemporary world through vigilant observation of *lo gringo* ■ the defenselessness of those on the bottom confronted by the impunity of those on the top, and the lack of understanding of those on the top about the precariousness of life of those on the bottom ■ forced learning of individualism to compensate for the failure of communitarian impulses; the memory of communitarian sentiment before the disasters of individualism ■ the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which governed the country, created the rules for co-existence, permitted advances and the creation of infrastructure, and, when it collapsed (July 2, 2000), had lost effectiveness, convening power, and understanding of national dynamics and historic memory ■ the National Action Party (PAN), a synthesis of the Mexican right with its intolerance for the "eccentric" and the rights of women and gays, glued to conservative tradition and modernization through neoliberalism at its most savage ■ the left, represented in part by the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and by disjointed groups of non-governmental organizations and civil society coalitions. Excelling at internal bickering and facile criticism, the left readily stimulates mass movements, then disintegrates them with arguments and leadership feuds ■ the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which erupted onto the scene in January, 1994, and has maintained a notable presence since then, vacillating between high popularity and near invisibility. Among other things, Mexico owes the EZLN and its leader, Subcomandante Marcos, its recognition of indigenous people and the ensuing understanding of the depth of national racism ■ the great and frequent achievements of all aspects of national culture ■ July 2, 2000, the day the PRI's hegemony ended when, in casting their votes, the Mexican people not only elected Vicente Fox, but overwhelmingly elected themselves.

In 2001, Mexico as it is known and memorized and studied and mythologized is entirely distinct from the country still evoked in novels, political speeches, popular beliefs, soap operas, and films. It is a Mexico whose incessant changes are linked nervously and energetically to the economy and industrial culture of North America—simultaneously modern in its ambitions and the rhythms of its transformations and premodern in the equitable distribution of contemporary visions of the world. Traditionalism, for so long the axis of social life, wins the battle with its veneer of respectability but loses the fight for the definition of modernity. The question is fundamental. Why and how are traditions globalized and who globalizes the past?

The fashion/mandate/urgency of globalization modifies the national perspective. The barriers of localism have been broken—as confirmed by the neoliberal discourse—and Mexico is already moving ahead at planetary speed. We leave behind forever the ranch, the neighborhood, complacency, timidity. And, continue the neoliberals, we stand on the cusp of Year Zero of our era. But *you can't go home again* and we must continue this voyage into the unknown known—while the situation remains unresolved—as modernity in the North American sense of the word, that triumphalist excuse, crushing then resuscitating.

It is not Year Zero. Although not totally satisfying, Mexico has several comparative advantages: ■ the Spanish language, learned at its moment of intense strength ■ the extraordinary Hispanic culture ■ the development of Latin American culture ■ western culture, in its initial version reverential and now constituted by different fusions ■ knowledge, begun in the mid-19th century, of resources and metropolitan wiles, assimilated from the periphery ■ the decision to continue to be a nation.

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## ReVista

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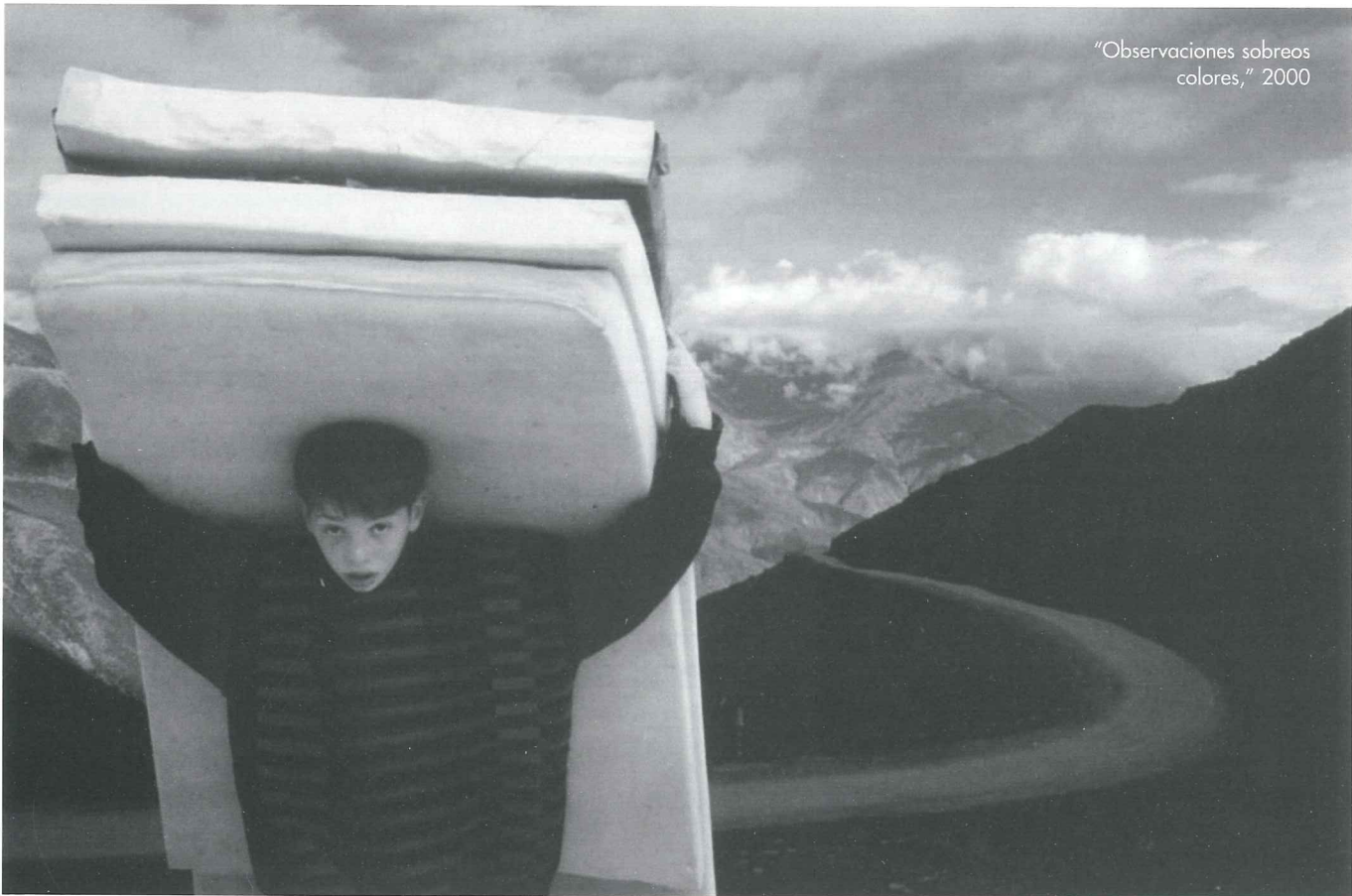
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"Observaciones sobre  
colores," 2000



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# Mexico and the United States

*The Future Needs More Work*

BY JOHN H. COATSWORTH

**I**N LESS THAN A DECADE, MEXICO AND the United States have outgrown the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA. Mexican president Vicente Fox would like to move on to something he has called "NAFTA plus." U.S. president George W. Bush appears to be listening.

The two presidents have much in common. Both come from conservative political parties. Both embraced centrist or "compassionate" agendas (though not always consistently) in domestic politics. Both were elected by a minority of their nation's voters. Both face major problems in getting legislation through their congresses. Both could gain leverage at home with foreign policy breakthroughs. And both recognize that rationalizing and deepening the U.S.-Mexican relationship would be a logical place to do just that.

All this suggests that in the next few years the Mexican and U.S. governments will make rapid progress in improving aspects of the relationship that are controlled by their respective executive branches. This will include cooperation to reduce the dangers faced by undocumented migrants crossing the border, solving a series of NAFTA-related trade disputes (trucks, avocados, tuna, and the like), and improved collaboration between law enforcement agencies (especially in the drug war) and military establishments. In these areas and some others, the two presidents have the power to act without new legislation.

Unfortunately, the agenda of urgent issues that both governments will have to deal with, and very soon, is much longer. Immigration, the border environment and infrastructure, NAFTA extension or separate free trade

agreements involving other countries, and many other questions cannot be addressed without Congressional action in one or both countries. Neither president is well placed to build this kind of consensus.

Thus, the future of Mexican-U.S. relations will be determined by the answers to two key questions. First, how and to what extent will economic trends, future elections, evolving public opinion, and powerful private pressures persuade the two congresses to transform the legal and institutional framework of our relations? Second, how will non-governmental activity—including trade, investment, migration, the media, labor unions, NGOs, and even protesters and their marches—change the context in which both governments make their decisions about the future? Of course, presidents will always be major players in relations between Mexico and the United States,



but they are not the only players nor even the most important ones anymore.

To put current actors and issues in perspective, it may be useful to peer into the future and ask what both countries should be doing now to ensure maximum economic growth, social progress, a clean environment, democratic governance, and the benefits of cultural diversity for their citizens a decade or two in the future? What will U.S.-Mexican relations look like after another generation of cultural, social, political, demographic, and economic changes in both countries? How will changing U.S.-Mexican relations impact, or be impacted, by changes in the rest of the hemisphere or the globe?

### START WITH THE BORDER

THE FLOW OF CAPITAL, TECHNOLOGY, GOODS, and services between the United States and Mexico has become progressively freer since Mexico's turn toward liberalization beginning in 1985 and the further boost from NAFTA in 1994. All that remains is to complete that process—and drop restrictions on the international migration of citizens and residents between all three NAFTA countries. Twenty years from now, the borders between the United States and its two neighbors may have ceased to exist for all practical purposes—like the borders between the European Union countries, where guard posts, immigration controls, and customs inspectors have all disappeared.

Currently, an estimated 450,000 Mexican citizens enter the United States every year, over a third with documents and the rest without. In a U.S. labor force of 140 million, the impact of Mexican immigration is very small.

High wages provide the incentive to move to the United States and the presence of friends and relatives at the end of the journey lowers the cost and the risk of migrating. Average wages in the United States, adjusting for differences in price levels, are three to four times higher than Mexico, though the difference between U.S. wages and the relatively high wages paid in Mexico's border states like Baja California, Chihuahua, and Nuevo León is smaller. The question for U.S. policymakers is how many more Mexicans would immigrate if the United States were to open the border. One way to find out is to open the border slowly and monitor the results.

This is exactly what the U.S. and Mexican governments have agreed in principle to do, possibly by expanding and modifying existing temporary or "guest" worker programs. The commission established by presidents Bush and Fox. At its first meeting in February 2001, the commission established by presidents Bush and Fox, consisting of the U.S. Secretary of State and Attorney General and their Mexican counterparts, recommended a series of changes in U.S. immigration laws, from legalization of Mexicans already in the

United States to a major increase in the number of Mexican citizens admitted to work in the United States. The first big test of the new U.S.-Mexican relationship will come when Congress takes up these issues in late 2001 and 2002.

The movement towards an integrated North American labor market will inevitably raise major issues for all three NAFTA countries. For the United States, at least two questions will need to be faced. First, though legalizing an existing flow of undocumented migrants would have miniscule short term effects, the number of Mexicans seeking to immigrate could begin to increase well beyond current levels in future years. If Mexican immigration rises quickly while U.S. economic growth is slowing down or a recession is in progress, wages in the U.S. could be pulled down somewhat, especially among the more vulnerable unskilled workers. These wage effects would be too limited and localized to produce a major anti-immigrant backlash, but the growing immigrant population could create pressure for major extensions of the federally-funded social safety net, especially in health care and education to help states and communities cope. On the other hand, since immigrants from Mexico are on average much younger than the U.S. population, immigrant contributions to social security and Medicare are already beginning to play a significant role in keeping these programs financially sound and viable.

Second, if the United States moves to liberalize immigration from Mexico, it will have to re-examine its immigration policies toward other parts of the world. Whatever policy the United States adopts towards immigration from the rest of the Western Hemisphere or the world as a whole will be much less difficult and costly to enforce with Mexico's cooperation. And the price of Mexico's cooperation is freer Mexican immigration. Indeed, with relatively free immigration from Mexico, the effective land border of the United States would become the Mexican border with Guatemala. Mexican harbors and airports would become points of entry into the United States and vice versa. Delegating enforcement of immigration laws to the police and immigration authorities of another nation has no precedent in U.S. or Mexican history. To contemplate it is to imagine a level of cooperation and trust that would be equally

### A Note on *ReVista*

You are holding in your hands the first issue of *ReVista*, formerly known as *DRCLAS NEWS*.

Over the last couple of years, *DRCLAS NEWS* has examined different Latin American themes in depth. Topics have included art, women, immigration, Latin@s, food, health, Cuba, social policy, the Internet, environment, education, and economy. And increasingly, readers had been asking, "How can you call something with such substance a newsletter? And how do you pronounce that name anyway?"

After endless contests, constant consultations, and lots of soul-searching, we came up with the name *ReVista*. Our talented designer Kelly McMurray invented the slightly different look to reflect *ReVista's* in-depth and highly visual content.

*ReVista* is a pun in Spanish, meaning both Seen Again or magazine. In English, we hope it conveys the sense of a multiplicity of panoramas, a plethora of perspectives. Here, in this issue on Mexico, you'll find those different viewpoints from the fields of history, government, political science, international development, economics, anthropology, sociology, education, religion, biology, zoology, and health. The authors are professors, visiting scholars, doctoral students, undergraduates, governmental and non-governmental officials, and journalists.

With *ReVista*, we hope to create a magazine-style Latin American review that will create dialogue and understanding among its readers. We also hope that *ReVista*, as the thematic publication of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, will help build community, linking those who are interested in Latin American issues at Harvard and beyond.

—June Carolyn Erlick



unprecedented—though no more extraordinary than the achievement of the historic adversaries that now form the European Union (E.U.).

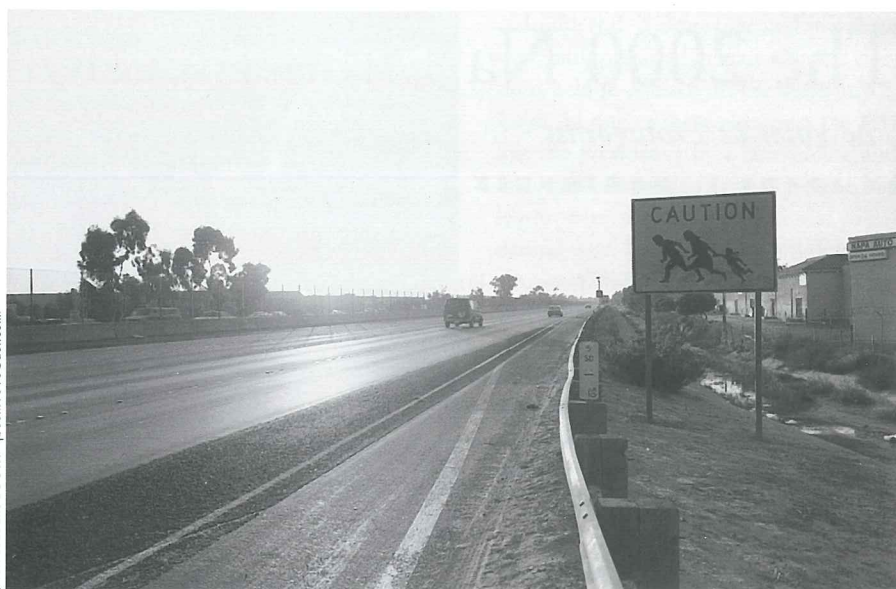
### COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT

NAFTA DOES NOT REQUIRE ITS RICHER MEMBERS to commit themselves to the economic development of their less developed partner. This is an odd omission, since Mexico's attractiveness both as a trading partner and a source of opportunities for private investment for the United States and Canada depends on Mexico's economic success. In the European Union, by contrast, the wealthier members like France, Germany and the United Kingdom routinely provide billions of dollars every year to Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and other poorer members for investment in infrastructure and education. These investments have promoted development—and made the recipients better trading partners.

Spain, to take one example, had a per capita GDP less than two-thirds the E.U. average two decades ago. Until the 1990s, Spanish migrant workers could be found throughout western Europe working in menial jobs in service industries and as agricultural and factory laborers. With E.U. compensation funds fueling growth, Spain has now caught up. Per capita income is now over 90 percent of the E.U. average. Spanish migrant workers have disappeared. And the E.U. subsidies will soon be phased out.

In twenty years, with similar investments in infrastructure and education, Mexico could experience a similar leap forward. If the U.S. economy grows at its usual long term rate of about 1.5 percent per capita, while Mexico achieves a six percent growth rate comparable to Spain the 1990s or East Asia in recent decades, Mexico's GDP per capita would rise from just under 30 percent of the U.S. level to nearly half (43.6 percent) in ten years and two thirds (67.3 percent) in twenty. By the middle of the twenty-first century, at these rates, Mexico's economy would have caught and passed the United States. Of course, these figures are purely hypothetical. If Mexico grew at six percent, U.S. growth would probably pick up. And as Mexico rose closer to the U.S. level, its growth rate would begin to diminish to levels closer to those of the developed world.

The point is that a U.S. commitment to



Moving toward a new future

tries in a generation or so, with huge benefits for both countries. Mexico could virtually end the extreme poverty in which nearly one fifth of its citizens now live (18.6 percent of Mexicans survive on less than one U.S. dollar per day) and move into the ranks of the developed world. The benefits to the United States would be nearly as impressive. From any perspective—economic, political, strategic, even cultural—the United States would profit enormously from having a modern, developed country on its southern as well as its northern border.

### INSTITUTIONS

WITH MEXICO'S ECONOMIC GROWTH ACCELERATING, the United States and Canada might find it easier to develop North American (perhaps even hemispheric) institutions that would look more like the European Union than the nearly institution-less NAFTA. Twenty years from now, Mexico and the United States will probably have ceded decision-making powers on important bilateral (and many other) issues to a series of commissions and courts governed by a dense network of agreements on a broad variety of issues.

As Jorge Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro point out in their excellent new book, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2001, p. 31), "By the late 1990s, some 50 different bilateral commissions were at work on such issues as agriculture, transportation, rules of origin, industrial and

labor, and the environment, among others." Many of these bodies, as the authors point out, were set up to coordinate and communicate, rather than adjudicate or make binding decisions. Many lack funds or authority to be effective. And many important issue arenas are missing or referred to weak hemispheric or other multinational bodies.

As economic integration proceeds, the need to institutionalize and render predictable and law-like many of the informal or consultative arrangements that currently exist could become irresistible. The issues range from financial and monetary coordination (especially if Mexico and others in the hemisphere move closer to dollarization) to human rights and democracy, labor and environmental standards, cultural and educational exchange, and many more. This will not be an easy process, but once started it is likely to prove irreversible. NAFTA locked Mexico into a strategy that ties its economic future to the United States and beyond it to the global economy. Now, as both countries and their Canadian partners appear to agree, something more (Fox's "NAFTA-plus" perhaps) is needed to institutionalize past gains, ensure that they continue into the future, and deepen their impact so that no citizens of any of the three NAFTA countries are left behind.

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# The 2000 National Elections in Mexico

## *The Voter as Protagonist*

BY JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ

**T**HE PROTAGONIST OF MEXICO'S POLITICAL TRANSITION HAS been the voter. Acting collectively, voters shaped the peculiar character and duration of this transition. Unlike in Spain, Brazil, or Chile, no grand elite pact determined the key circumstances of change. Unlike in Poland or Hungary, the transition did not occur suddenly; it took at least a dozen years and it is arguably not yet complete. Unlike in Rumania, El Salvador, or Guatemala, the transition was non-violent.

Mexican voters withdrew their support from the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) only gradually. Before each election since 1988, a significant proportion of voters strongly criticized the PRI and its government officials but nonetheless indicated their intention to vote PRI. The party that had built modern Mexico, these loyal subjects seemed to believe, deserved one more chance. The proportion of PRI-critical PRI voters, to be sure, declined with each election since 1988 but their remarkable patience shaped the pace of the transition.

The dramatic July 2000 election brought to the presidency opposition candidate Vicente Fox, heading a coalition of the National Action Party (PAN), the Green Party (PVEM), and Fox's own unaffiliated supporters. However, the drama resulted from subtle or marginal changes rather than from a wholesale re-making of Mexico's political map. Consider some plausible accounts of this election that are incorrect.

At election time, domestic and international media, as well as many observers, gave the impression that a massive increase in electoral turnout had defeated the PRI. Not true. Turnout rates were not particularly high in 2000. But the composition of the turnout changed. For the first time in Mexican electoral history, turnout was higher in areas where the PAN was strong than in areas where the PRI was strong.

During the election campaign, much attention focused on voters' demographic characteristics. Was there a gender gap in the Mexican electorate, as there had appeared in other countries? Did young voters turn massively against the established authori-

ties? None of these demographic factors mattered much in explaining the electoral outcome.

Mexico's economic performance during the 1980s and 1990s was poor, although signs of economic recovery at last appeared towards the end of Ernesto Zedillo's presidency. Did voters make their decision about whom to support on the basis of any aspect of this past



The Voter as Protagonist: Coal shop, downtown Mexico City

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economic performance? Was there retrospective punishment or reward in response to the economy? Apparently not.

How, then, can the electoral outcome be explained? Mexican voting behavior in each triennial national election since 1988 can be consistently and effectively explained by four factors. First, many Mexican voters are partisans. They vote for the same party again and again, demonstrating levels of loyalty comparable to western European voters. Second, in a strongly presidential system, the electoral behavior of Mexican voters is significantly shaped by how they feel about the incumbent president's performance in office, even though the incumbent is constitutionally prohibited from running for re-election. Third, although Mexican voters may have low levels of education and not be well informed on the substance of issues, they form strong opinions about the likely future direction of the economy; these

opinions also help shape their voting decision. Fourth, a small but decisively important minority of Mexican voters have been strategic voters, that is, they suppress their ideological and policy preferences in order to vote for the candidate most likely to defeat the PRI. In 2000, the percentage of strategic voters was about the size of Fox's margin of victory.

Yet some new specific factors made their appearance in the 2000 election. One of the most important novelties was the change in the political structures that make a fair election possible. The independence and professional competence of the Federal Electoral Institute created the practical and symbolic conditions for such an election. Voters came to believe in the electoral process. The campaign finance law also enabled opposition parties to present their



FROM MEXICO CITY

Angel of Independence on the Paseo de la Reforma

## Mexicans want a transition to democratic politics, not an outcome marked by victors and vanquished.

case to the electorate like never before. Victories by opposition parties during the 1990s in state and local elections had reassured voters that parties other than the PRI could govern Mexicans at least as well or better than the PRI. An international environment favorable to democratization was also probably an enabling condition. The fact that the U.S. government and Wall Street wanted stability meant a much stronger preference for fair elections than for dishonest victory of any one particular candidate or party.

Consequently, the campaign mattered. Voter perceptions of the presidential candidate weighed in much more heavily than in previous elections. This factor, of course, greatly favored Fox and explained much of the change in voting behavior leading to his victory. Voter responses to mass media coverage and political advertising proved significant as well. Candidate choice and choices and partisan strategies counted.

In the end, it almost seemed as if there were multiple simultaneous national elections held in Mexico on the same July 2, 2000. In one of these elections, the PRI lost the presidency by a convincing and uncontested margin; the party earned its lowest ever share of the national presidential vote. In the second simultaneous election, Vicente Fox decisively defeated Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the founding leader and three-time losing presidential candidate of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and its predecessors, for the right to receive the lion's share of the opposition vote against the PRI, thus winning the presidency. In the 1997 congressional elections, for example, the coat-tails from Cárdenas' victorious candidacy for mayor of Mexico City had pulled many other PRD winners nationwide into office; the PRD beat the PAN in the number of seats won in the federal Chamber of Deputies. In 2000, Cárdenas' poor campaign and Fox's well-executed campaign

shaped the outcome of this second battle.

The third simultaneous election on the same day in 2000 was for control of the Congress. The PRI won this election. It remains the largest single party in both the federal Chamber of Deputies and the federal Senate. It also holds the majority of state governorships. Even today Mexico cannot be governed without PRI participation. Mexico transited from single-party rule, whereby the presidency and both chambers had long been controlled by the PRI, to divided government whereby the president lacks a reliable majority in Congress, as became clearly evident during Fox's first year as president.

The Mexican voter remained the prudent maker of Mexico's political transition. In 2000, Mexicans voted Fox into the presidency but deprived him of a majority in Congress. Mexicans want a transition to democratic politics, not an outcome marked by victors and vanquished. Mexicans want politicians engaged in respectful and productive dialogue, engaging those who had long governed Mexico and those who have just earned the legitimate right to do so. The Angel of Independence that graces the *Paseo de la Reforma* in Mexico City might be interpreted afresh not as a marker of warfare but as an elegant monument to independent and discerning voters who successfully enacted a democratic transition.

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# What's New about the "New" Mexico?

*Reflections on the July 2 Election*

BY CHAPPELL LAWSON

ON JULY 2, 2000, MEXICAN VOTERS brought to an end seven decades of one-party authoritarian rule. Just over a year later, Mexico continues to feel the repercussions of this momentous victory. Despite the other issues piling up on Mexico's political agenda—a still unresolved bank bailout, continued conflict in Chiapas, persistent poverty, a weakening economy, etc.—the themes that won Fox his office continue to resonate with Mexican citizens.

I happened to be in Mexico, as an electoral observer, on the day Fox won (It takes a healthy sense of the absurd to "monitor" elections abroad when one's own electoral system is utterly broken). Duly accredited by Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), I was subsequently lured into participating in a quick count sponsored by Mexico's umbrella electoral watchdog group, the Civic Alliance. With no unbreakable obligations in Mexico City, I agreed to be shipped off to the boonies for election day. There, amidst the chickens and the burros, the sun and the dust, I had a worm's eye view of Mexico's peaceful revolution.

MY OUTPOST ON JULY 2 WAS A RURAL-ISH *pueblo* called Santiago Tlacotepec, on the southern outskirts of Toluca. The lower-middle neighborhood around our polling station—normally a schoolyard—looked to me like PRI territory. And as far as I could ascer-

tain, no opposition candidate had ever been elected to so much as dogcatcher.

Balloting started late, owing mainly to the fact that the IFE representative in charge of setting up the station, an affable young man in his 20s, was nursing a Mexico-sized hangover. But by 9:30 a.m., there were two separate voting stations, each staffed by three dutiful citizens, plus two representatives from the National Action Party, four from the PRI, the IFE rep, and, of course, one foreign meddler.

Occasionally, a flying squadron of additional PRI officials would swoop into the schoolyard, talking importantly on a cell phone and muttering instructions to the other PRI reps. Sometimes they harangued voters outside the schoolyard, but once inside the sacred voting area they behaved reasonably well.

The only trouble came around 11 a.m., when one of them tried to have a PAN representative expelled from the voting area for standing too close to the ballot boxes. This proved a mistake. The two PAN reps, it turned out, were a married couple, and they had brought their eight-year old daughter along for kicks. With his wife and child looking on, Señor PAN was in no mood to back down. He puffed out his chest, and the obligatory yelling match ensued. His daughter, a few yards away, promptly burst into tears.

At this point, I thought the *panistas* might

retire. Instead, Señora PAN set down her rather fashionable purse, knelt down, looked her daughter straight in the eye, and said in a firm, maternal tone, "Listen: now is the time to be a brave girl. You must not cry and you cannot go home. They will always try to make you feel afraid, but you have to stand up and fight for your rights."

Whereupon Mexico's youngest *panista* stopped crying, brushed a few strands of dark brown hair away from her face, and marched across the schoolyard to inform a flabbergasted PRI official that she and her mother and her father would stay right where they were, and would not be afraid, and would not go home, no matter how mean he was or how much he yelled.

So Mexico, it appeared, was building a civic culture, one eight-year-old at a time.

ASIDE FROM THAT INCIDENT, THE REST OF the balloting was disappointingly normal (Political scientists, while abroad, generally prefer trouble to calm, as long as the trouble is not directly life-threatening. When there's no trouble, we have to interview people). So the IFE rep and I staked out a spot in the shade to split a beer. This seemed to revive him, and I got to hear at some length about the origins of his abiding interest in grassroots activism, including his past work for—you guessed it!—the Civic Alliance.

The PRI reps, by contrast, were not very





talkative. Mr. Cell Phone proved pleasant enough, but he was soon summoned electronically to pester citizens elsewhere. Most of the PRI reps assigned to the station seemed a bit confused about exactly why they were there. When asked who they thought would win, they smiled nervously, looked down at the ground, and then looked back over their shoulder to see if Mr. Cell Phone was watching.

The one exception was a local school administrator, who was also, conveniently, head of the local teachers' union. She had firm and disapproving views on many things: the Civic Alliance, the IFE, Mexico's new electoral system more generally, my presence in Santiago Tlacotepec, and (I presume) my mid-morning beer. Her function that day was hard to misunderstand. She alternately smiled

and joined the party on the spot. Fox's candidacy had reenergized him. For both of them, making sure the PRI didn't steal the election in their town seemed like a perfectly good way to spend their Sunday.

As it turned out, citizen activism in my little corner of Mexico was not particularly unusual. In 2000, opposition representatives covered approximately 90% of the voting stations in the country for at least part of the day, with the heavy lifting done by the *panistas*. Collectively, Mexico's opposition parties almost matched the PRI's coverage, a remarkable tribute to more than a decade of vigorous civic mobilization.

Voter participation, it turned out, was also typical in my corner of Santiago Tlacotepec. Ballots cast by the registered voters in the area reached about 62%, just a couple

results of the election, and Francisco Labastida would gracefully concede defeat.

And so Mexico's old regime disappeared, not with a bang but an election.

BY THE TIME I GOT BACK TO MEXICO CITY that evening, the party in the streets was already underway. Fox supporters had flooded the area near the famous statue of the Angel of Independence, spilling out for blocks along Reforma Avenue. Cars honked in sign of support, and Fox campaign slogans echoed down the boulevard. *Vicente Presidente, Ya* (Now!) and *Hoy* (Today!) all made their appearance. But the throatiest cheer in my area of the crowd was also the most direct: arriba, abajo, el PRI se va al carajo (loosely translated, "To Hell with the PRI"). Better than anything else, it summed up the rationale and the inspiration for Fox's victory.

By the time Fox, himself, arrived to address his supporters, the crowd was euphoric. But at that point, a new cheer arose: *No nos falle* (Don't fail us!). At the climax of his long campaign, in the same moment he celebrated his victory, Mexico's next president was being warned.

And that was pretty much that. Most of the fiestas—at the Civic Alliance, *Reforma* newspaper, the IFE, and on the streets of Mexico City—petered out early. (It was Sunday night, after all, and *panistas* have to get up and go to work on Mondays).

I couldn't sleep, of course. I had always envied my older colleagues who were lucky enough to be in Berlin when the Wall came down, or in Moscow when Boris Yeltsin rallied his supporters atop a tank. I was even secretly jealous of my father, who in a fit of adolescent idealism had tried unsuccessfully to join the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

## Mexico's Election Day: Here was all the drama of regime change, and without any of the tanks.

and scowled at voters, staring most intently at the ones that had some connection to the school or the municipal government.

Fortunately, she couldn't see what they did behind the little plastic curtain of the voting booth. And as it turns out, the voters seemed to know that.

With the local *cacique* busy trying to save Mexico for clientelism, corporatism, and the PRI, I spent most of the afternoon chatting up los PAN. Señora PAN was active in the Church and had preferred the PAN for a long time, but she had become a true believer only since Fox declared his candidacy. Her husband, a self-employed businessman, had accidentally attended a 1988 rally featuring charismatic PAN candidate Manuel Clouthier

points below the national average. And, as elsewhere, the voting went off without any serious hitch. Cell phones and scowls aside, there were no irregularities. By six o'clock, it was all over, and the only thing left to do was lock the doors and count the ballots.

I have rarely been surprised by a simple stack of papers, but I was appropriately amazed to watch Fox's pile climb high above that of his rivals. When I rushed to a pay phone to call in the results for the quick count, though, I learned that our station was hardly unusual. Television stations were already reporting the results of exit polls in two key gubernatorial contests, with the PAN far in front. Before midnight, President Ernesto Zedillo would embrace the

### WOMEN IN THE "NEW" MEXICO

Women are an integral part of forming Mexico's new civic society. As voters, they helped to put an end to seven decades of authoritarian rule. From left to right: teacher, congressional representative, peasant farmer, street sweeper, senator, editor, factory worker.

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<laleida@solar.net>





But that night was even better: here was all the drama of regime change, and without any of the tanks.

So I amused myself by making a list of all the people, places and things that would disappear in the new Mexico: high-ranking officials I would never have to be nice to again, *Excelsior* newspaper, academics in Mexico and the United States who had linked their fortunes to that of the ruling party, Washington insiders who supplemented their income by opening doors for corrupt Mexi-

things about small business.

If this was the future of Mexico—same food, different government—it was hard to feel pessimistic.

I RETURNED TO MEXICO RECENTLY, AS A SORT of high-priced tour guide for a group of mid-career fellows from MIT's Sloan School of Business. The capital feels a bit different now that Mexico is a democracy. Pollution is down, the peso is up, and the street taxis are slightly less likely to abduct their passengers.

## Mexico's political transition is not yet complete.

### The PRI remains Mexico's largest party.

can officials, the *cacique* in the schoolyard, a system of concessionary capitalism (in which profits were privatized to large enterprises while losses were socialized through government bailouts), long-winded expositions on Mexican sovereignty when foreign governments offered disaster relief assistance, labor racketeering, pictures of the president handing out land titles to duly deferential groups of peasants, who, in the months preceding the election, stenciled the initials of the ruling party on every square inch of wall space...

Some of the items on my list, I must admit, evoked a bit of nostalgia. It was hard for me to imagine, for instance, what function the Civic Alliance might realistically have in an era when the IFE did such a good job of policing elections. And the attractive shirt store downtown, operated as a lark by the mistress of a government crony, probably wouldn't survive his impending salary cut. But at least my favorite taco stand a couple blocks away would do just fine. After all, the PAN had always said encouraging

Casual conversations about politics—with its parliamentary bickering, partisan sabotage, scurrilous gossip, and gloves-off press scrutiny—are more reminiscent of inside-the-beltway Washington talk shows than the tea leaf-reading that went on under the old regime.

People seem positive about their new system, in a diffident sort of way. According to incessant polls by the country's leading independent newspaper, *Reforma*, Fox remains popular. Although several points down since his inauguration in December, he enjoys approval ratings that would turn most chief executives green with envy.

The main reason, of course, is that Mexico's political transition is not yet complete, and the themes that Fox raised in his campaign still command attention. Although the PRI has lost virtually every serious electoral and policy contest since July 2, 2000, it remains Mexico's largest party.

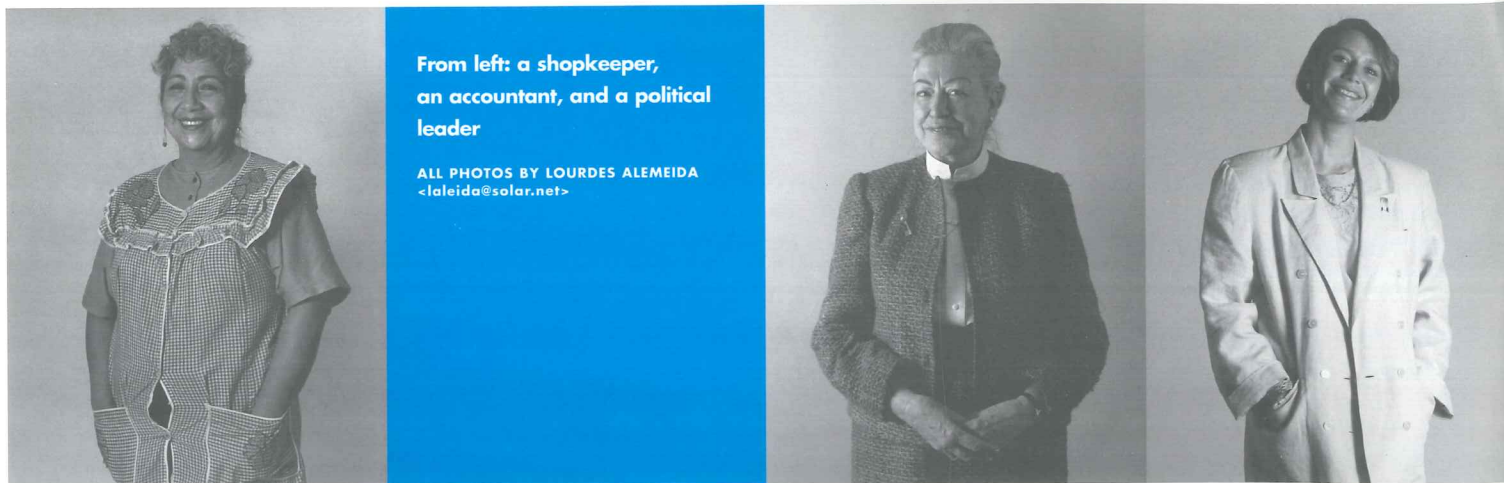
Reflecting on all this only reinforced for me the lesson of Mexico's 2000 election: that most Mexicans continue to detest the PRI

and will reward politicians willing to serve as focal points for their outrage. When Fox launches attacks on the remnants of the old regime, at the state or national level, he reinforces the electoral dynamics that brought him to power and retains support. When he pursues a more partisan agenda, he dilutes that dynamic and loses points. Thus, Fox's most costly decision to date has been to propose extending Mexico's value-added tax to food and medicine (which were previously exempt). And the most disillusioning development—however trivial it may seem—may well turn out to be recent revelations about the purchase of luxury household items in the presidential palace for Mexico's new First Couple.

Also questionable—at least from a political perspective—is the administration's decision to refrain from investigating and punishing former officials for corruption. Ordinary Mexicans, it seems, do not share the Fox administration's policy of forgive and forget. *Reforma's* most recent survey shows that Mexicans favor punishment over reconciliation by a two-to-one margin.

This desire—for an end to impunity, for a definitive break with the past—carried Fox to power in the first place. And in the new Mexico, unfortunately, this desire remains only partly satisfied. One year after his surprise victory, change remains Fox's mandate.

*Chappell Lawson is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at MIT. His scholarly writing (on Mexican voting behavior) is better documented and includes the requisite fancy statistics. He can be reached at <clawson@mit.edu>. His website is <<http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/org/p/polisci/www/faculty/C.Lawson.html>>.*



From left: a shopkeeper, an accountant, and a political leader

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# On Observing Elections and Magistrates' Faces

*Visceral Vicissitudes in Mexico's Democratization*

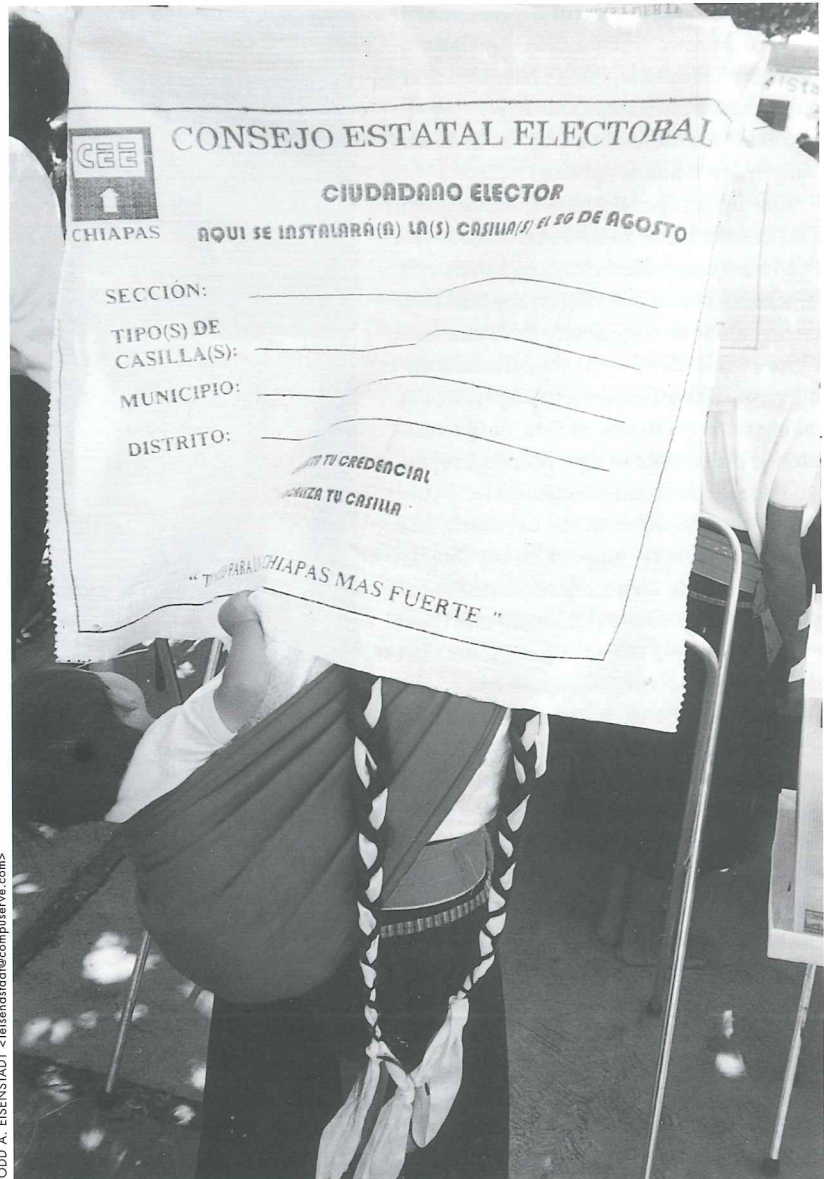
BY TODD A. EISENSTADT

WHERE VOTES WERE TRADED JUST LAST YEAR for brand new bicycles and sewing machines, the 2001 offering price in Yucatán State's May gubernatorial election was rumored to be a pitcher of beer or a half-kilo of meat. Given Mexicans' realization in July 2000 that they could vote for and elect an opposition president, the offerings were paltry indeed. The commercial hub of Mexico's Mayan empire was going modern.

The Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), which monopolized Mexican national politics from 1929 to 2000, would still be power brokers in Yucatán, with a continued strong presence in the state legislature and virtual control of the judicial branch. And in backwaters like Tepakán (population 3,000), where the Fernández family had passed the mayor's sash between father and sons for 15 years, fear of reprisals for voting against the PRI remained. But anti-PRI sentiment beat out vote-buying and electoral fraud, as another of Mexico's state "dominos" fell to the opposition. Even the more leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) endorsed center-right National Action Party (PAN) candidate Patricio Patrón, showing a greater interest in ridding Yucatán of PRI machine boss Victor Cervera, than in who actually took his place.

The ceiling on giveaways of cardboard roof laminate and PRI-poured concrete floors for Tepakán shacks was plainly evident as my party of electoral observers—diplomats, professors, and civil society leaders from Mexico City and beyond—sought to corroborate allegations of pre-election vote-buying. After a couple of hours and a dozen interviews, José Antonio Crespo, a pioneer of Mexican electoral observation, noted that we had failed to catch any red-handed *mapaches* [literally "raccoons"—signifying "electoral bandits" for their masked identities and nocturnal habits]. Instead, we had found only second-hand allegations that mayoral legacy Livia Fernández (the first daughter to hold the post) had gone door-to-door offering soft drinks and Tupperware containers. "After a decade of electoral observation, I'm giving it up," he exclaimed from the back seat of the sedan we drove past bike-pedaling *campesinos*. "There's nothing extraordinary to observe anymore."

Mexico's colorful electoral lingo was disappearing faster than cor-



Tzotzil voters in Pantelhó participate in the historic September 2000 Chiapas state elections, which elected the first opposition governor in that state since the PRI's national consolidation, starting in 1929.

ner stores after NAFTA. "Vote tacos" and "pregnant ballot boxes" had given way to numbered and triple-checked ballots. The "shaved list" had been replaced by a federally-collected and party-audited voter list. Mexico's rural, southern states still needed electoral observation, but strengthened opposition parties had formed their own



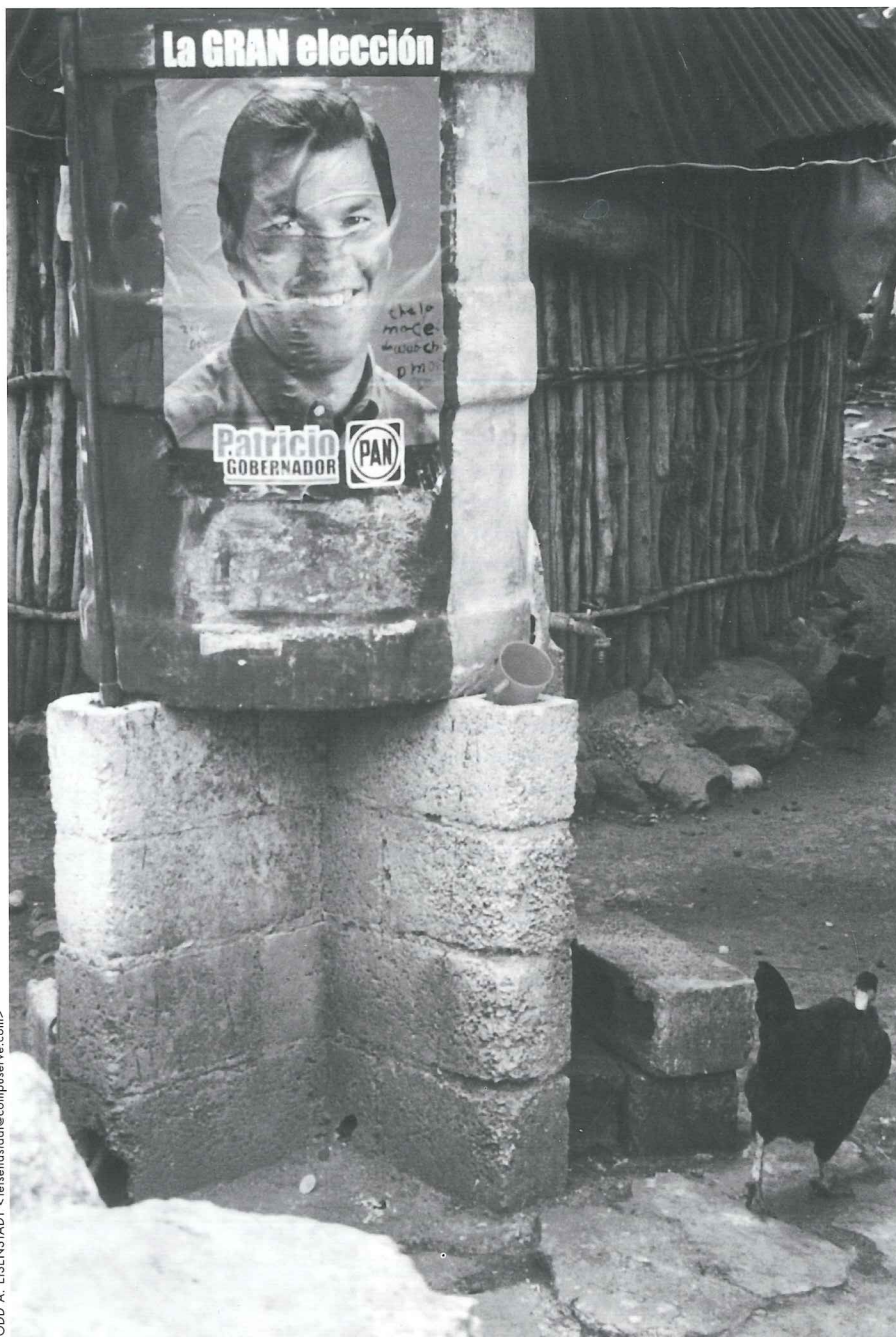
bands of *mapache* hunters. And increasingly, they practiced their craft in Mexico's courtrooms rather than in the country's rapidly-draining political swamps.

FRAUD-FREE BUT MUNDANE ELECTIONS MAY be one fair, albeit procedural, definition of democracy. However, my own best estimate of Mexico's democratic development has been reflected through the eyes of the magistrates I have observed over the last eight years. A researcher in the archives of the federal electoral court since commencing my dissertation research there in 1993, I have seen these gazes change from suspicious to inviting. To me, facial expression opening has been tantamount to political opening.

On my first pre-doctoral summer grant, I sat at the table of a run-down office in one of Mexico City's faded glory neighborhoods. Workload-challenged magistrates and their clerks looked on suspiciously from outer rim offices, which all opened to the central meeting room, where I sat alone for days at a time, taking notes on dozens of files, until I summoned the courage to fight for photocopies.

The electoral court president, a long-time friend of a researcher at my university, had seemingly pledged support for my "harmless" project and even authorized me to photocopy. But since the president's office was out of sight and out of mind on another floor, and his hovering lieutenant looked disdainfully on me with legal eagle eyes, it took me several bureaucratic moves (and well over half of my visit) to translate this paper permission into practice. I did win the respect of some sympathetic law clerks upon winning the copy wars; that and a constant willingness to practice English allowed me to break into Federal Electoral Court water cooler gossip circles, but only during the last of my six weeks.

Returning in 1995 with my Fulbright for a whole year of water cooler ethnography, I found the electoral court president just as positively disposed to my research—in theory—as he had been during my "feasibility" trip. The saccharin-smiled magistrate wrote the requisite letter for my fellowship application, promising access and photocopies to my heart's content. The electoral court had gone upscale; they had a plush new building on the south side of town with landscaping and a fountain, and a remote location the water cooler conspirators argued was to dissuade demonstrators from protesting electoral results outside. The eagle-eyed lieutenant had a new suit, a formal archive to manage, and glistening new high-speed copiers. When I met him again, he made an indirect reference to the sweaty old days at the big table with the pool table green covering. "We're going to get along fine,"



PAN supporters in Tepakán, Yucatán painted even their water tank blue prior to the May 2001 elections there.

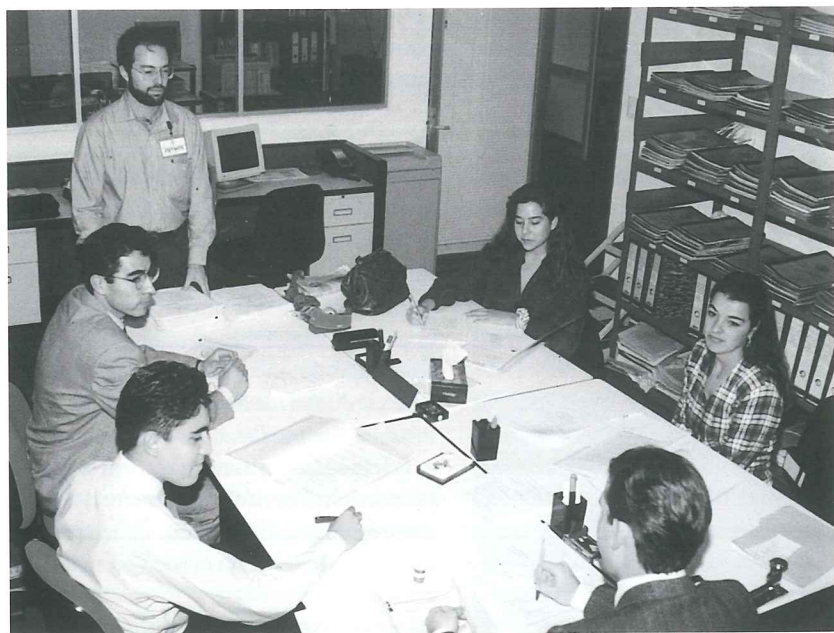
he intoned icily, segueing into Mexico's proximate Day of the Dead.

Again I had permission to use the archive, and had even hired undergraduate research assistants to help me code the all-important quantitative sample of electoral court cases. However, week after week passed with my morning ritual of calling the lieutenant's lieutenants to see when I could start. The president's people always extended just enough hope to keep me from giving up. Six weeks passed as I awaited the all-powerful president's bureaucratic "laying of hands" which would open the archive. My research assistants and I grew restless as the Day of the Dead started blending into the Day of the Mexican Revolution (November 20).

Finally, I called an NGO lawyers' group interested in studying

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the electoral court records and promised to share my findings if their famous emeritus law professor would help me enter the archive. We all had a pleasant coffee with the electoral court president around his private meeting room's majestic stained wood table. The president feigned surprise at my inability to gain physical access (despite the dozens of messages I had left for him), and the lieutenant nodded.

That was the PRI-led federal electoral court of the early 1990s. By 1997, important reforms had further leveled Mexico's electoral playing field, and the *PRIista* electoral court president had found more suitable employment as Sub-Secretary of the Interior, at the epicenter of the regime's internal policing and intelligence-gathering operations. Another judge had left the electoral court and was elected to Congress by the PRI, and still another had used the electoral court as a political springboard to the Supreme Court. The most outspoken magistrates did not win re-appointment. But several others, law

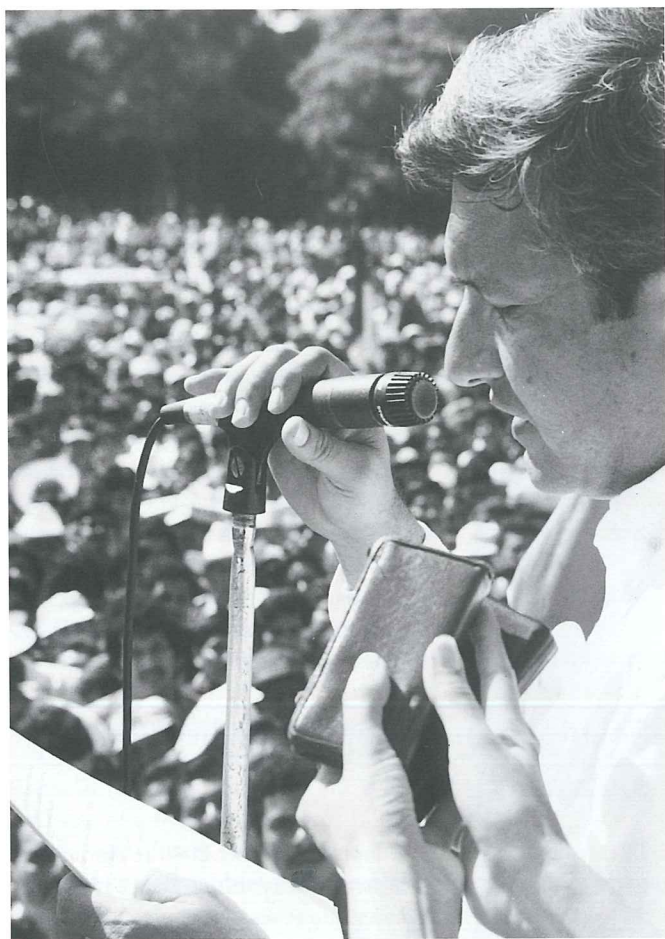
professors who had labored quietly gaveling cases into precedents and doctrine, were reappointed. In fact, their caseloads increased dramatically as the political parties actually started taking them seriously.

A seasoned and unflinching magistrate, originally nominated by the PAN, was named electoral court president for 1997, and the archive was opened by federal law. The water cooler whispers grew into hallway conversations. I continued offering English on demand, and gained a reputation by translating Eagles' song lyrics at archivists' requests. The former president's nodding lieutenant was promoted, and instead, I liasoned with savvy webbed librarians, international relations directors, and a jovial magistrate who ingratiated this researcher with a hearty laugh and a healthy disregard for the formality of Mexico's hermetic legal community.

In one of those moments when things just fall into place, even in government bureaucracies, this magistrate with "soft" gravitas and accountability-exuding eyes was named president of Mexico's federal electoral court in 2000. He has had to formalize his demeanor out of respect for the institution he leads, but unlike the early 1990s, there is an institution to respect. The federal electoral court has withstood challenges to its authority by intransigent governors, and issued landmark rulings which have drawn lines in the sand for the endangered *mapaches*.

From a personal standpoint, the only problem with the court's post-2000 success is that it has left me without a mission. My court-watching activities are being led to Professor Crespo's Yucatán conclusions by the tedious regularity of rulings, the lack of a sporting challenge in the faces I observe, and my own professional imperative to search for more varied phenomena to study. And the dearth of new Eagles' songs hasn't helped.

*Todd A. Eisenstadt, who teaches political science at the University of New Hampshire and consults for the U.S. Agency for International Development, continued studying electoral justice in Mexico as a 2000-01 visiting scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.*



top: Eisenstadt and his law student research team analyze cases in the Federal Electoral Tribunal archive in 1995. After initially meeting with resistance, the researchers were granted access to thousands of complaints filed starting in 1988. In 1997, public access to these records was codified into law; above: PRD leader Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Mexico City's mayor since 2000, addresses tens of thousands of followers in Villahermosa, Tabasco in January 1996.



# The Mexican Congress

*Old Player, New Power*

BY LUIS CARLOS UGALDE

CONGRESS HAS BECOME A PRINCIPAL player in Mexican politics. In 1997, for the first time in its modern history, Mexico experienced a divided government, in which the president's party—the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—did not enjoy an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. That reality began to change the logic and nature of relations between the executive and the legislative branches and led to unprecedented forms of political bargaining and compromise. The July 2000 presidential election produced the second consecutive period during which the country experiences a divided government, this time with a non-PRI president at the helm. Vicente Fox is the chief executive, but his party—the National Action Party (PAN)—lacks a plurality of seats in both houses of Congress. This stimulates unimaginable dynamics between branches of government. What has been the impact of this new plurality over executive-legislative relations? Will Congress become more “productive” to pass legislation? Will stalemate become the name of the game? Will the old player become a new power?

## PLURALITY, INFLUENCE, AND PRODUCTIVITY

THE “NEW” MEXICAN CONGRESS CAN BE analyzed in terms of three variables: plurality, influence, and productivity. Plurality refers to the diversity of political groups and parties inside Congress—how well it reflects the variety of today's Mexico. Influence refers to the ability of members of Congress to influence the legislative process—submitted bills, amendments, control, and oversight. Finally, productivity refers to the capacity of Congress to produce and pass bills.

With regards to plurality, the Mexican Congress is the most representative ever. In the lower house, eight parties are represented, none with a plurality. As recently as the early 1990s the PRI held 65% of the Chamber of Deputies' seats; today, still the House's largest party, it commands only 42% of the seats. The PAN jumped from 17% in

1991 to 41% today, while PRD's historic peak was 26% in 1997.

In the Senate, the arrival of plurality is more astonishing. The PAN had only 1.5% of that Chamber's seats in 1994; today it controls almost 36%. The PRD jumped from 3.1% in 1991 to 12.5% in 2000. That evolution results from greater competitiveness among political parties, and the introduction of electoral reforms. These reforms allow for proportional representation in the upper house, as well as the first minority principle by which 25% of the Senate is elected among those candidates who come in second in every state race.

Greater plurality has had a direct and immediate impact on Congress' influence over policy making and control of the executive branch. For decades, the main obstacle for legislative oversight was the unified control held by the PRI over the presidency and Congress. This allowed the chief executive to command discipline and control over legislators, most of whom were members of the PRI. Since 1997, as plurality emerged to the point of inaugurating a divided government experience, legislative influence and control over the administration increased accordingly. Budget bills have been amended—something unthinkable only years before. In 1999 the bill was approved just minutes before the end of the fiscal year (there was even fear at the time that government could be shut down as no legal dis-

position existed for budget bills not approved before the beginning of the new fiscal year). bill must be approved in its own terms alleging lack of funds for social programs, the approved bill will be substantially different from that submitted by the chief executive. The same goes for the electricity bill, pending since the Zedillo administration in 1999, which proposes private investment in power production. The new administration has signaled its intention to resubmit it but Congress has manifested its opposition to its general guidelines.

Another clear example of the new power exerted by Congress refers to the indigenous rights' bill submitted by president Fox early this year. The chief executive spent weeks lobbying for its passage without amendments, but the bill was amended even with the support of the president's party, PAN. Changes made by Congress to that bill caused confrontation between the president and his party but did not preclude Congress from exerting its influence. Amendments to executive bills and disagreements over policy making, which are normal in other presidential systems, are nonetheless a new *modus operandi* in Mexican politics and reflect vividly the new activism and power of the Mexican Congress.

Finally, the “new” Mexican Congress can be assessed with regards to its “productivity.” The legislative branch has been more active in submitting its own bills, though they are not always drafted with the needed expertise. During the legislature 1991-94, the Chamber of Deputies submitted only 48% of the

## What has been the impact of this new plurality over executive-legislative relations?

position existed for budget bills not approved before the beginning of the new fiscal year).

This legislature (2000-2003) has shown its power in getting its own bills passed, and in blocking those of the executive. The fiscal reform package submitted by Vicente Fox early this year, which includes as its centerpiece an increase to the value added tax (IVA), has been blocked by Congress (as of August 2001). Despite administrative claims that the

bills. From September 2000 to April 2001, 74% percent were written and submitted by deputies. However, simultaneously the rate of passage has declined. In 1991-94, 61% of bills submitted were approved, whereas during this legislature only 30% have been passed. This reflects that congressional activism does not always translate into more legislative production. Such decline is due in part to the greater autonomy of Congress and



the corresponding decrease of presidential control over the legislative agenda. Another reason is the disagreement over policy issues as a result of greater plurality in Congress.

#### CHALLENGES AHEAD

THE CONSOLIDATION OF MEXICAN DEMOCRACY must pass through a second round of political reforms. The first, already completed, refers to electoral reforms that allow citizens' preferences to be translated into votes and elected officials (the input side of democracy). The second round of political reforms must seek to promote effective government once democracy and plurality have been attained (the output side of democracy). Greater plurality and more congressional influence over decision making does not necessarily translate into effective government. Congress has gained a stronger voice, but it still lacks an adequate institutional framework to translate this impetus into actual and effective legislative performance. As pluralism becomes the rule rather than the exception, a new set of standards will be needed to enable Congress to be a professional and effective participant in national politics. In the realm of formal institutions, the following steps need to be taken:

Article 59 of the Constitution must be reformed to provide immediate reelection of deputies and senators, but with established term limits. Since 1933, Mexican legislators cannot run for immediate reelection, and that rule has limited experience and professionalism within Congress.

Rules governing executive-legislative relations must be reviewed to promote cooperation rather than confrontation. The set of rules governing Congress was designed many decades ago when the executive branch had unlimited control over political affairs and therefore that institutional framework does not fit to the new plurality in Congress.

Deputies must be allocated additional financial resources and staff. The average staff size of a Mexican legislator is 3 or 4 people, and that is insufficient for their responsibilities and duties. The Chamber at large requires better access to information and technological resources, and the new oversight body, *Auditoría Superior de la Federación*, needs more human resources as well as technological ones.

The PRI was accused of having distorted congressional oversight efforts during the decades in which it held ample majorities

in Congress. This criticism would have probably been raised against any party that maintained unified control of the presidency and Congress for such an extensive period. Therefore, future political reforms in Mexico should be passed under a "veil of ignorance" in order to formalize a system of checks and balances, regardless of which party controls the presidency or Congress, or both. As soon as electoral reforms have had an impact on the democratization of

Mexico, it will be up to the Mexican Congress to exercise its role in consolidating the country's democracy.

*Luis Carlos Ugalde is a professor of political science at CIDE (Center for Economic Research and Teaching) in Mexico City. He was a visiting scholar at the David Rockefeller Center during the spring of 2001. He can be reached at: <luiscarlos.ugalde@cide.edu>.*

#### MEXICO'S TRANSITION: Reporters' Eyevue

**M**exico's transition from an authoritarian system with a king-like president to today's raucous democracy was a creeping, generational change that lasted many years. In our book, a history of what Mexicans call *El Cambio*, Julia Preston and I are opening our narrative in 1968, when troops massacred student protesters at the Plaza de Tres Culturas, alienating a generation of youth. Some date the transition from the 1977 electoral reform, pioneered by Jesús Reyes Heróles, the Government Secretary, which legalized the communist party and greatly increased the number of opposition deputies in the Chamber of Deputies. Others say there were few democratic stirrings until the aftermath of the 1982 financial crisis, when an angry middle class elected opposition mayors in cities across northern Mexico.

But almost everybody agrees on one thing. Mexicans built their democracy, piece by piece, institution by institution, over many years of struggle.

The process took so long that Julia and I, who are journalists, are having to incorporate the historian's techniques into our professional repertoire, because our bag of tricks as reporters proved insufficient.

We reporters tend to respond to virtually every intellectual question in a knee-jerk fashion. Actually it's an arm-jerk: we reach for the phone and seek an interview. This works well when reporting on this afternoon's fire on Elm St., because the police, the fire chief and the homeowners living on Elm St. will have vivid, reasonably accurate accounts of the fire.

But memories are short. Relying on personal interviews with the participants in Mexico's long transition proved insufficient to our task, because many of the country's democratic pioneers simply cannot remember the details of historic episodes that took place during the '70s and '80s. Take Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. When we interviewed him about his 1997 election as Mexico City's first opposition mayor, his recollections of the scope and details of that historic experience were terrific. But when we asked him to tell us about the still-disputed 1988 presidential elections, we came up short. Although his is a keen intellect, his all-too-human memory did not allow him to recall some details. And the recollections he did have were now a blend of what he had experienced at the time with what he had read about that balloting over the 13 years thereafter. Fortunately, many Mexican scholars realized during and after the turbulent weeks of protest after the 1988 vote that the Mexican political system had reached a watershed, and wrote compelling accounts of those events. It's been our privilege to study them now in libraries and archives, as journalists, enjoying the quiet redoubts of the historian.

Samuel Dillon and Julia Preston were correspondents for *The New York Times* in Mexico from 1995 through 2000. Dillon first visited Mexico in 1981. *Opening Mexico: Making Democracy from Despotism* will be published in 2002 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.



# Education Reform in Mexico

*Where Are the Parents?*

BY MERILEE S. GRINDLE

**B**ECAUSE THE SECRETARIAT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS, MORE than any other public building, an edifice of the people, the theme of its decoration could not be other than the life of this same people." So wrote Diego Rivera in a 1925 article about the murals lining the interior courtyards of the elegant old building. And so it is that Rivera's murals depict miners, peasants, artisans, steelworkers, weavers, mothers, and others at their daily labors, as well as communities observing age-old rituals of life and death. Collectively, they speak to the future of the country's common people and to the centrality of work and education to that future. In one panel, a teacher in a rural school sits on the ground, a book in her lap, while children and adults of all ages listen intently. In another, a teacher instructs a circle of children, as workers, peasants, engineers, and soldiers build a new industrial world.

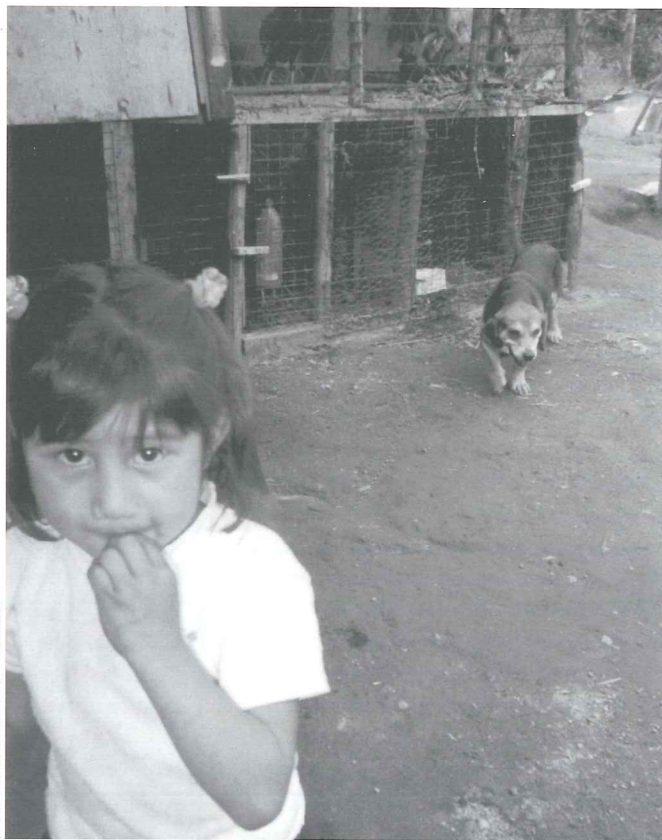
Today, faith in the value of education remains strong in Mexico. In public opinion polls, education usually ranks among the top issues that concern Mexican parents most. Politicians, regardless of party, regularly promise that, if elected, they will give more attention to education (the issue was on the agenda of Vicente Fox as he campaigned for president). Moreover, 94 per cent of Mexico's primary school children are enrolled in public schools. As of yet, it appears that the middle classes have not voted with their feet by giving up on public education—something that is happening in so many other countries in Latin America.

Why, then, as I was interviewing those who participated in the 1992 education reform, did I not hear about parents demanding that the system do a better job of educating their children? Why was there no mention of groups of citizens participating in the negotiations to decentralize the system? Why was there no national education commission leading a public discussion about the state of the country's school system? Why, eight years after the reform, was there not more mention of communities putting pressure on state governors to improve the schools? Answers to these questions suggest that the legacies of a centralized and authoritarian system continue to limit the potential to improve the quality of one of the most important institutions in Mexico, its public schools.

The reform of 1992 decentralized basic education to Mexico's states, introduced a new system for upgrading and rewarding the quality of teaching, and provided for an updated and relevant curriculum. Although efforts to decentralize the country's education system date back to the late 1950s, earlier initiatives were defeated or stalled because of the opposition of the teachers' union, the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE), the largest and probably most powerful union in all of Latin America. After an important change in the leadership of the union, however, the SNTE sat down with the president, officials of the Secretariat of Education, and the country's governors to sign an agreement that allowed decentralization to proceed apace. In fact, almost all of the negotiations leading up to the agreement centered on getting the

support of the union. Even the governors were minor actors in the accord, and a good number of them were not particularly pleased with such weighty new responsibilities.

In 1993, a law put the accord into effect, officially assigning administrative responsibilities for teachers and primary and normal schools to the states. While the reform initiative was notable for the absence of broad discussions, it formally recognized the importance of participation. Social participation councils were to be established at the school level along with new municipal councils to bring together parents, local officials, teachers, administrators, and representatives of business and religious organizations to discuss issues of importance



JORGE GUITZIN MARTÍNEZ PEÑALOZA

The children's images accompanying this story were part of the research project "Photography as a Tool to Understand Communities in Transition," developed by Miren Creixell P., Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City. The children, ages 10-12, took self-portraits, as well as photos of their families and community in the neighborhood of La Pila in southwest Mexico City. Creixell can be reached at <mrscreixell@yahoo.com>.



to the local education system. In fact, however, these councils have never effectively involved parents and other citizens in the schools.

For most of those I interviewed recently, the absence of participation in discussions about public education was easy to explain—it was due to historical and political legacies. “Look,” said one official, “the school room is a closed space in the community. Ever since the Cristero War, the idea of opening the school to parents and communities meant opening them up to the church and conservative elements.” Others mentioned the fear that the classroom could be taken over by the PRI and would become another point for the party to exercise control or that other parties would seek to make it a “space for opposition to the PRI.” Better, they argued, to keep the school “as free of this as possible.” Many people reminded me of how decades of authoritarianism had discouraged autonomous organization around themes of public interest. In education, the long-cemented corporatist relationship between the SNTE, the PRI, and the government meant little opportunity for broader participation in policy making.

At local levels, participation also faces significant impediments. The school councils, indicated one observer, “never had a chance in the face of the union and the power of the school professionals.” One official argued, “Traditionally, teachers have been very jealous of their rights in the classroom... The constitution says the role of parents is to see that their children get to school—that’s all!” According to others, “The teacher decides what happens in the classroom,” and does not invite others to share in such decisions.

Many of those concerned about education in Mexico believe that things are changing for the better, albeit slowly.

“If parents complain or put pressure on the school or the teacher, the teacher will retaliate against the child in the class. The parents know this and are very reluctant to speak out.”

There is, of course, a long tradition of parental cooperation with local schools, a tradition that seems particularly strong in poor rural and indigenous areas of the country, in which parents are called



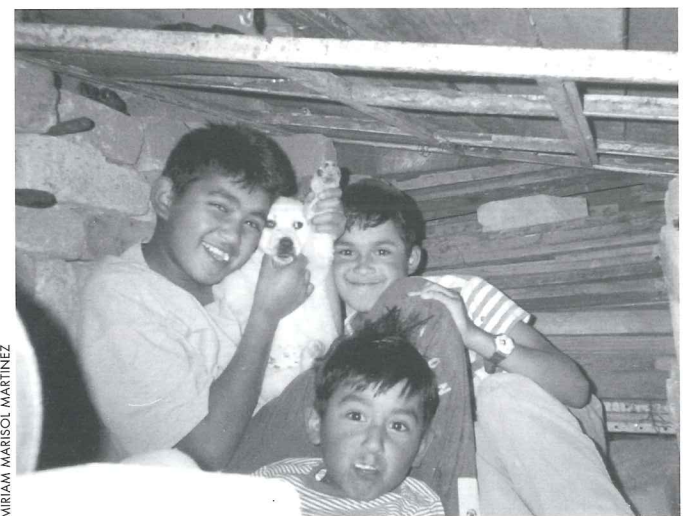
MARÍA DE JESÚS HERNÁNDEZ



MIRIAM MARISOL MARTÍNEZ



MARÍA DE JESÚS HERNÁNDEZ



MIRIAM MARISOL MARTÍNEZ

opposite: untitled —Jorge Quitzin Martínez Peñaloza; clockwise from top left: “My aunt and cousins, My aunt and cousins are at home, I took it because they are family members.” —María de Jesús Hernández; “My grandma, She is my grandma folding her clothes” —Miriam Marisol Martínez; “My cousins smiling” —Miriam Marisol Martínez; “El Colorado, He is my dad’s rooster, he lives near my house and he is like family” —María de Jesús Hernández



upon to provide funds for maintenance, special programs, and special events. But, as one official noted, "cooperation is very different from participation."

And, in fact, there may be little that parents can do locally to influence the performance of local schools. Although state governments currently administer basic and normal education and municipalities were recently given responsibility for the construction of schools, Mexico's education system remains highly centralized. Curriculum is nationally determined; base salaries and benefits for teachers are determined nationally; most of the funding remains national; and the national government maintains its role in setting standards and criteria for educational achievement. The teachers look to national decision makers to tell them what to teach—and how to teach it—and they do not have much leeway for responding to parental demands, even if prepared to do so. Moreover, in a number of states, the SNTE has become a powerful force in determining many administrative issues.

In addition, the decentralization reform has been fraught with ambiguities. As one observer noted, "If you go to the governor or the secretariat of education in the state and complain, they will say, 'No, no, we don't have anything to do with that; you have to

go to the federal government.' If you go to the federal government to complain, they will say, 'No, no, that's the responsibility of the state.'" Given the difficulty of assigning responsibilities, concerned citizens find it difficult to hold officials directly accountable for educational performance.

The designers of Mexico's reform were adamant that the quality of education in the country would not improve until the system was decentralized and the hold of the union over education policy was weakened. Eight years after the law that sanctioned the agreement was approved, however, there is little evidence that the quality of education in the country has improved in general. According to one government official, "The reform is an unfinished one. It is caught in a culture of centralization and the 'pacted hegemony' of the SNTE." Another informant called the 1992 reform "a great missed opportunity."

This is a bleak picture. Nevertheless, many of those concerned about education in Mexico believe that things are changing for the better, albeit slowly. The curriculum has been improved. Information, long monopolized by government, is becoming more available and should be a stimulus to greater public discussion of the challenges of improving the education system. The teachers' union is gradually becoming more concerned about more professional aspects of teaching and some teachers are actively adopting new forms of pedagogy. Several governors, notably those from smaller and more developed states, such as Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, and Tabasco, have committed their administrations to improving public education. They have faced down the SNTE, provided more resources for education, and begun innovative new programs. And in some states, interesting new programs in civic education are being introduced with the hope that future generations will have a greater appreciation of the role of citizen participation in democratic government.

But more could be done to improve public education in Mexico. In pushing for better education, a counterweight is needed to the teachers' union, which continues to be the most powerful determinant of education policy and its implementation. At the national level, public discussions are needed to heighten citizen concern for issues of quality and equity and the importance of education in a rapidly globalizing economy. Wider availability of information from the education secretariat, from independent national and local sources, and from comparative sources would be a welcome addition to more informed debate.

Also central to the future of education is the creation of more spaces in which parents and communities can become active in encouraging and monitoring what occurs in the classroom. In addition, attention needs to be focused on the next step in decentralization—to the municipal or school district level. If public debate and further decentralization occur, presidents, governors, and mayors—along with teachers and school supervisors—may find increased incentives to provide Mexico's children with the kind and quality of education they so clearly need and deserve.

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MIRIAM MARISOL MARTÍNEZ



JOSÉ FRANCISCO MARTÍNEZ PÉREZ

above: "Me in my home, I am in my home and I'm holding onto my tree"—Miriam Marisol Martínez; below: "untitled"—José Francisco Martínez Pérez



# Fiscal Reform in Mexico

*Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you'll be*

BY JUAN CARLOS MORENO BRID AND JUAN ERNESTO PARDINAS

**T**WENTY FIVE YEARS AGO, MEXICO HAD a dream: to fund ambitious State-led industrialization through the use of external debt and its vast oil export revenues and join the ranks of rich, developed countries. When the international oil market collapsed in the first half of the 1980s and the country's access to foreign capital was drastically interrupted, the dream became a nightmare. Economic activity stagnated, consumer prices soared, and Mexico became one of the most heavily indebted nations in the world.

In the aftermath of this failed experiment, the Mexican government decided to abandon its, until then, traditional development strategy based on trade protectionism and a strong intervention of State-controlled firms in the economy. With a budget deficit equivalent to 15% of gross domestic product (GDP)—way above internationally accepted norms—the government found itself needing to increase its revenue and/or cut down its expenditure. Indeed, downsizing of the public sector and slashing of the fiscal deficit began soon afterwards. Today, there are fewer than a hundred state-controlled firms, down from more than 1,150 in 1986. In turn, the fiscal deficit shrank, averaging 1.5% of GDP in the 1990s. These are major achievements. However, Mexico's fiscal structure still has fundamental weaknesses that must be corrected to achieve high and sustained economic growth and to improve the standard of living of its largely impoverished population.

First, the impressive contraction of the deficit was achieved by cutting down public investment. This strategy threatens to bring about a severe deterioration of basic infrastructure and has already eroded the capital stock of key industries where state-controlled firms play a main role (oil, basic petrochemicals, and electricity). In fact, the stringent limits to capital expenditure by PEMEX—Mexico's State-run oil monopoly—have ultimately led to a reduction in oil reserves and an extremely low level of extraction of natural gas which must now

be imported in significant volumes.

Second, about one third of Mexico's fiscal income depends on oil revenues. These highly volatile revenues may lose importance if the international market oil price keeps declining in real terms. Furthermore, this dependence is guaranteed by a rather distorted tax scheme imposed on PEMEX that, in practice, deprives it from all profits and provides no incentive to make oil extraction more efficient.

Third, and most important, Mexico's tax revenues—excluding oil—are extremely small (approximately 11% of GDP). This is the lowest proportion registered by any OECD country and is similar to the tax performance of much poorer countries. Moreover, tax revenues are well below the 15% considered to be the minimum proportion

local governments' debt. To avoid the latent threat of an acute financial imbalance the government will have to make important changes in Mexico's fiscal structure. According to one of the largest banks in Mexico, if all such liabilities are converted into public debt, the government will have to generate a budget surplus for the next 20 years just to keep its finances under control.

The need to raise considerably more tax revenues has been recognized by practically all of the previous presidents of Mexico. There is a big difference, however, between identifying a problem and solving it. Who will pay the new taxes? What will the government do with the increased revenue? These questions require clear answers to convince citizens, organizations, and political parties to support any fiscal reform. Clearly a govern-

**The political challenge of making the fiscal reform acceptable to the public was grossly underestimated.**

of GDP that a government should absorb in taxes in order to provide the public services and basic infrastructure required by a modern society. Such limited revenues are the consequence of endemic tax evasion and an outdated fiscal regime that has significant distortions and fails to cover the activities of Mexico's large informal sector. In Mexico, unlike in the United States, capital gains in the stock market are not taxed.

Finally, although Mexico's fiscal deficit is low, its conventional measure fails to register certain disbursements—so called contingent liabilities—which have grown massively in recent years. In particular, it ignores the billions of dollars provided by the government to avoid the default of the domestic banking sector in the aftermath of the *tequila* crisis of 1994-95. According to some World Bank estimates, the size of this rescue package amounts to approximately 19% of GDP! In addition to this bank bailout, the public sector has other liabilities related to the highway rescue package—to bad loans of development banks as well as to

ment that is perceived as legitimate and democratically elected will be more likely to successfully implement such reform. Unfortunately, in the case of Mexico, where until last year one party, the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*), had ruled for more than seven consecutive decades, such governments have been the exception and not the rule. July 2, 2000 marked a new era in Mexico's political system when Vicente Fox, the candidate from a coalition of opposition parties, won the presidential election. During his campaign Fox said that his government would rule more democratically. In passing, he also stated his intention to carry out a fiscal reform. In his inauguration speech last December, he argued that from then onwards, political power would effectively rest with Congress and not the Presidency.

Keeping his campaign promise, President Fox sent to Congress in April an initiative presenting his detailed proposition of fiscal reform, sparking a far-from-settled national debate. In any case, Congress—and not the President—will have the final word.



According to Mexico's legal system, a majority in both chambers of Congress must approve any change in the fiscal regime. However, agreement won't come easy. No political party holds a majority of seats in the Lower Chamber or in the Senate. Fox's own party, the PAN (*Partido de Acción Nacional*), is 44 votes short of a simple majority in the Lower Chamber and 19 in the Senate.

Therefore, to guarantee votes, President Fox must negotiate with the main opposition political parties: the PRI and the left-to-center PRD (*Partido de la Revolución*

Instead, in April, when the Executive sent the fiscal initiative to the Congress a massive media campaign began to gain public support for the reform. The implicit assumption seemed to be that President's Fox popularity, plus such *blitzkrieg* of TV and radio advertising, would put enough pressure to induce Congress to approve the reform.

However, Mexico's *real politik* had a different opinion. Many politicians and congressmen as well as ordinary citizens were unconvinced by the government campaign. Turning off their TV sets and ignoring the

with that of the United States.

Independently of the rationale behind them, these two measures have been seen—rightly or wrongly—as evidence that the fiscal reform will have a particularly adverse effect on the poor and the middle class. Most of its opponents state that the fiscal reform should be modified to allow for VAT exemptions on food products, medicines, and other key items that are mainly and typically bought by poor families. They also consider that the decision to lower the tax rates for high-income families should be revised.

In any case, it is safe to say that given the current political climate, Congress won't approve the original proposal for fiscal reform without some modifications. A main concern of all parties is avoiding the political blame for raising taxes. In 1995, in the middle of the most severe financial crisis in Mexico's modern history, Congress—then ruled by the PRI—approved a presidential initiative to raise the value added tax rate (VAT) from 10% to 15%. The PRI paid a hefty political price for this decision; to some extent it contributed to its subsequent setbacks including loss of control of the Chamber of Deputies (1997) and the presidency (2000). Undoubtedly Mexico must and will implement a fiscal reform in the near future. How profound will this reform be? How will different sectors and groups in society share the increased tax burden? When will the reform be implemented? All these are open questions that Mexicans are learning to answer through way more democratic procedures than they dreamed of some years ago. This, in itself, is a major achievement.

## In the seventy years of PRI rule, there was no need for negotiation.

*Democrática*). And, most important, he must guarantee the full support of his own party. The problem is that the Mexican political system does not have a long tradition of bargaining between the legislative and the executive branch. In the seventy years of PRI rule, there was no need for negotiation because the President and the ruling party had absolute control over the Congress. Today this need is obvious and the Executive and the political parties are learning to negotiate. Apparently, at first the President took for granted the support of all the deputies of the PAN for his fiscal reform. It was an unwarranted assumption. In his first seven months in office there have been so many frictions between President Fox and the leaders of his own party (PAN) that Demetrio Sodi, a congressman for the PRD, stated, "It seems that radical opposition to Fox's proposals and initiatives comes even from his own party." The PRI and the PRD have heavily criticized the fiscal reform as originally proposed.

Fox's initiative for fiscal reform suggests modification of various policy instruments to strengthen Mexico's tax revenues and create a more efficient fiscal regime. However, independent of the reform's content, strategic mistakes were made in its "marketing" to the public. Essentially, it seems that the political challenge of making this reform acceptable to the public was grossly underestimated.

The first mistake was that the early drafts and ideas of fiscal reform were not sufficiently vetted or negotiated with the different political parties. Such consultation would have helped to gain it support.

President's approval ratings, they expressed strong criticism of the proposal. A few days after the initiative was sent, it was obvious that it wouldn't get enough votes in Congress. The message was clear: no negotiation, no reform! Though there is consensus among the political parties regarding the government's urgent need for higher tax revenues, wide disagreements persist on how to achieve it.

The second shortcoming of the fiscal proposal's marketing strategy was the government's failure to specify expected additional tax revenue use, making it difficult to galvanize support. Some concluded that the resources would be used to redeem government liabilities, while others considered that the revenues should help alleviate poverty. But beyond the adequacy—or inadequacy—of the marketing strategy, the proposed fiscal reform has two particularly contentious elements.

The first is its commitment to eliminate exemptions on the VAT regime. This implies, in particular, that purchases of food and medicines as well as school tuition would now be taxed. To compensate for some of the adverse social effects of this measure, the government would implement a subsidy targeted to cover 5 million households in poverty conditions. Note, however, that Mexico has at least 12 million impoverished households. According to some estimates, more than half of them would not be covered by that subsidy. Second is the reduction of the highest rate of the income tax from 42% to 32%. This reduction will, allegedly, induce higher compliance and help to harmonize Mexico's income tax regime

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*The opinions expressed in this article are the authors' own responsibility and not necessarily those of their institutions.*



These Tzotzil children, whose grandparents were among the first to collaborate with the Harvard Chiapas Project, await the outcome of "*ley Cocopa*."

JUNE CAROYN ERLICK

# Indigenous Law Does Not Make Indigenous Right

*A Look at Chiapas*

BY RODOLFO STAVENHAGEN

IF MEXICO'S WIDELY HAILED DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IS TO be successful, it must serve as a framework for the resolution of the social and political conflict that has pitted the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) against the Mexican government since the beginning of 1994. When Vicente Fox was elected president in July 2000, he declared that he would resolve the conflict, something his two predecessors had been unable to do, and as soon as he took power in December, he submitted a draft "Indian Law" to the Congress.

This bill, also known as "*ley Cocopa*," has a curious history. It was drawn up by a legislative commission comprised of senators and deputies from all political parties represented in the congress on the basis of the San Andrés Accords, an agreement signed by the Zedillo administration and the Zapatistas in 1996. While the Zapatistas generally agreed with the bill, the PRI government did nothing

about the proposal for four years. There was a flood of alternative bills submitted by PRI president Ernesto Zedillo, the PAN (Fox's party), and the Ecological Party, but there was no congressional action. When President Fox dusted off the *ley Cocopa* and sent it to the congress, the Zapatistas believed that the spirit of the San Andrés Accords would be upheld and decided to stage their triumphal march in Mexico City to present their case (February-March 2001). After much wrangling, a handful of deputies and senators agreed to receive them. By that time a number of indigenous organizations, as well as numerous other sectors of the civil society, had declared their support for the bill. The public hoped that with the passage of this law, peace negotiations between the government and the Zapatistas would resume.

Between 1996 and 2000, the two principal actors in the conflict engaged in a silent standoff. The government accused the EZLN



of intransigence and the EZLN blamed the government for breaking its word. The national mediation commission (CONAI), headed by Bishop Samuel Ruíz, was dissolved and other means of bringing the two sides together also failed. For instance, I became a member of the oversight commission of the San Andrés Accords (*Comisión de Seguimiento y Verificación*—COSEVER), made up of representatives of each of the contenders and a number of independent experts. After the first meeting, when it was formally installed in San Cristóbal, the Commission was unable to meet again, because when invited, either the Zapatistas or the federal government were unwilling to take part. Being the chairman of a non-functioning commission is not particularly pleasant—not so much because of the inactivity as the lingering sense of frustration at not being able to make a useful contribution to the peace process.

The new congress is quite different from previous legislatures. For the first time, the legislative branch is not subject to the whims and wishes of the executive. The new independence has resulted in more give-and-take among the legislators from different parties, negotiating issues and making and unmaking voting alliances.

## The Zapatistas, the indigenous organizations, and many others in Mexico are not happy with the result, because they sense that the new text differs on essential points from the original *Ley Cocopa* and the San Andrés Accord.

Still, the old PRI maintains a majority in the senate and a strong plurality in the chamber of deputies. Prospects for the passage of the bill, which both the PRI and the PAN rejected in previous years, was looking dim. President Fox surely knew this, and it is an open question whether he actually wanted the bill to be approved as it stood or expected the Congress to re-tailor it, as it did.

After a short debate, the Senate modified the *ley Cocopa* into a proposal for a constitutional amendment. Now, for the first time in Mexican history, an entirely new Article 2 of the Constitution would be devoted to the subject of indigenous peoples. However, the new amendment talked not about indigenous peoples but about communities, a modification that infuriated many. The senate passed the measure unanimously and a few days later the chamber of deputies approved it by a large majority (only the PRD and a few conscientious representatives voted against it). At least 16 state legislatures are required to approve the amendment for it to become effective. By mid-June 2001 it seemed likely that this would happen.

The Zapatistas, the indigenous organizations, and many others in Mexico are not happy with the result, because they sense that the new text differs on essential points from the original *Ley Cocopa* and the San Andrés Accord. The EZLN has once again broken off contact with the government and the prospects for a resumption of peace talks have receded. The Zapatistas are weighing their options, which may take some time. Even some government officials have voiced their disappointment and concern. The PRD conceded that it made a mistake in voting for the bill in the Senate, but their abstention would not have made a difference, anyway. The indigenous movement has staged protests and declared its opposition to the new amendment, but its impact on the overall situa-

tion has so far been slight. People have asked President Fox to veto the bill, but as some scholars point out, a president has no power to veto a constitutional amendment, which is the sole prerogative of the legislative branch. If the amendment goes into effect, implementing legislation will have to be passed and some people see this as another chance to get back to the original spirit of the San Andrés Accords.

### WHAT IS ALL THE RUCKUS ABOUT?

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IS WORRIED THAT RECOGNIZING "indigenous peoples" as subjects of law and rights (*sujetos de derecho*) would undermine the unity and sovereignty of the state. It therefore prefers to speak, as it always has, of "communities" (more localized units of administration). The Zapatistas, on the other hand, and with them numerous indigenous and popular organizations, insist that any legally recognized rights should go to the indigenous "peoples," a concept which would still have to be defined carefully in the context of Mexico. The indigenous organizations feel that by denying Indians the status and dignity of "peoples," the

Mexican state would continue to keep them subordinate and fragmented in a haphazard assemblage of small villages, thus depriving them of the possibility of playing a major role in national politics.

The same argument holds for the concept of autonomy. The Zapatistas and the indigenous movement would like to see it legally enacted, whereas the government shies away from it,

holding up the spectre of "Balkanization." At best, the new amendment would recognize a degree of local autonomy within existing municipal structures. The Indians, on the other hand, would like to expand municipal limits into larger, viable regional units. Again, the concept is ambiguous and would require careful elaboration by the legislature and the judiciary. The proposed constitutional amendment would leave this to the states, whereas the Zapatistas would like the federal government to legislate directly. As the argument goes, at the state level local vested interests are better able to squash indigenous rights.

Much of the debate centers on land, territory, and resources. The San Andrés Accord foresaw the possibility of indigenous control over their homelands and local economic resources, which are increasingly subject to private economic interests. The new legislation rejects any reference to the collective management of resources and will protect the interests of "third parties" in accordance with existing legislation. In other words, it in no way threatens the large private landholding interests. This runs counter to long-standing demands of peasant and indigenous organizations for restoration of their traditional land-rights under the land reform legislation of the early twentieth century, done away with in the 1992 constitutional reform of the Salinas administration.

Another controversial issue is how the practice of customary law in indigenous communities (*usos y costumbres*) relates to both the administration of justice and the appointment of local authorities. Many indigenous communities claim that the power of the PRI in rural areas is based on its control of municipal functionaries which local state governments had appointed and removed at will for many decades. They insist on more local power of decision-



making based on their traditional non-written codes of social control, customs, and mores. Again, some scholars argue that this would threaten the unity of the state and establish the basis for legal pluralism, which runs counter to the unitary conception of a national positive legal system. Their arguments have convinced politicians that *usos y costumbres* is bad for the Indians and would be bad for the country. Indians, however, think otherwise.

Somewhat less controversial is bilingual and intercultural education, a policy the federal government adopted some decades ago, but which has not received the national attention it deserves. Indians represent about 15% of Mexico's total population and at least 56 different Indian languages are spoken in the country. The constitutional recognition of these languages would have wide rang-

ing policy implications, and the implementation of a multicultural educational policy would be costly and complicated, particularly because so many Indian groups are now dispersed throughout the country (in northern border squatter settlements, large metropolitan areas, and small isolated mountain villages) as a result of migration. Especially because the decentralization of federal services has become normal practice, the constitutional amendment would leave the onus of this problem to local state governments.

Beyond the various technical and legal issues related to the textual variations between the San Andrés Accords, the *ley Cocopa*, and the proposed constitutional amendment, there are a few main questions: What kind of a nation will Mexico be? Will the indigenous peoples become full participants in the polity and the society? Is

Mexican society willing to engage Indian peoples in a tolerant, mutually respectful, and constructive dialogue, or will Indians remain at the bottom of the heap, expecting no more than occasional scraps of welfare, continuing clientelism and an occasional patronizing and opportunistic nod from the entrenched power elites?

Official voices state that the constitutional amendment is a step in the right direction, helping to redress the historical injustices that Indians have suffered. The Zapatistas and the indigenous movement, on the contrary, feel that they have been short-changed once more and that the amendment, as approved, is only a smokescreen for business as usual, making any effective change even harder now that this stage of the legal process has concluded. While some may think that the adoption of the amendment will turn a page in Mexican history, allowing the country to move on to other things, others believe that it leaves the conflict unsolved and will make future peace negotiations—if they were ever to take place—even harder. At any rate, indigenous communities will not see any dramatic improvements in their situation in the near future. It remains to be seen how the Fox administration will deal with this problematique in the years to come. And sooner or later the Zapatistas and the Indian movement (they are not necessarily identical) will make their voices heard once again.

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FRANCISCO LOZA

Igenio Bautista, a Nayarit, displays his handicrafts. The proposed law affects indigenous people throughout Mexico, not just in Chiapas.



# Mexican Philanthropy Breaking New Ground

*The Bajío Foundation*

BY DAVID WINDER

**I**N A VARIETY OF WAYS, MORE THAN 3,000 NON-GOVERNMENTAL organizations (NGOs) throughout Mexico are serving communities. Some provide technical and financial support for community initiatives, while others assist in Mexico's transition to more open and accountable government. Human rights and environmental NGOs have provided protection and support to otherwise voiceless groups. Many of these NGOs have mobilized significant volunteer support. Mexican NGOs have proliferated since 1960, and particularly in the 70s and 80s. In the 90s, however, we see the emergence of a new type of philanthropic organization: one with stronger roots in the community.

In the 60s, 70s, and 80s this expansion of organized civic activity was financed by European and North American funding (private foundations, church organizations, and some bilateral funding). In some cases the debt swap mechanism augmented donor contributions. With Mexico's entrance into the OECD and NAFTA, much of this international funding was diverted to countries with a lower income per capita. NGOs therefore endeavored to bring greater professional expertise to their fundraising and to tap sources of local philanthropy. However, the few existing private foundations restricted support to a limited number of charitable causes, such as the care of orphans and the destitute. Corporate giving was focused, by and large, on support for cultural and athletic events, and was seen primarily as a public relations function.

In the 90s, civil society leaders, often working with progressive business leaders and occasionally supported by state government, created a new breed of community foundations with strong community roots. They saw the existing NGOs and community-based organizations as key partners in their quest to overcome poverty and inequality. They also saw themselves not as program implementers, but as conveners and resource mobilizers for others. There are now about 20 community foundations in Mexico working at both the state and city levels. To get a sense of how they work and what impact they are having, I have taken as an example the Fundación Comunitaria del Bajío, which serves the Bajío region of Guanajuato State, Central Mexico.

## FUNDACIÓN COMUNITARIA DEL BAJÍO

THE FOUNDATION, THOUGH IT STARTED OPERATIONS IN APRIL 1998, formally came into being in October 1997, when the Guanajuato State Government, lead by Governor Fox, inspired a group of local business leaders to create a community foundation to raise funds to help Greater Irapuato. The region around Irapuato had benefited from the rapid development of commercial fruit and vegetable production and the growth of industrial and clothing assem-

bly (*maquiladora*) plants. However, there was concern that more people living at or near the poverty line would be detrimental to the whole community. The Foundation allowed local civil society leaders to promote effective partnerships among the government, business, and civil society sectors. This differed from a few years before, when a foundation would support a few charitable organizations. The Foundation was fortunate to obtain the services of Adriana Cortés Jimenez, a long-term resident of Irapuato and civil society leader, as the executive director. The Synergos Institute has been invited to support the new foundation as part of our efforts to nurture new approaches to community philanthropy throughout Mexico. Early this year, Synergos Institute founder Peggy Dulany and I visited Irapuato, a bustling city of almost 500,000 inhabitants with a central location in the fertile Bajío valley. We assessed the progress to date, the responses of those involved, and the challenges ahead.

Move beyond the core of Irapuato to the periphery, and you see stark contrasts between the gated communities where the owners and managers of the local companies live and the rapidly growing low-income communities that are home to recent migrants.

The Foundation could have launched a grantmaking program to support the NGOs working in Irapuato. Instead, it undertook a survey of all governmental and non-governmental programs. This mapping permitted the identification of a set of priorities and areas of critical need and highlighted the lack of coordination between existing initiatives. As an organization without a vested interest, the Foundation was able to convene sectors, including academic institutions, around a common set of priorities. This set in motion a series of meetings, involving all the major service delivery organizations. The outcome was four Foundation-led networks that are doing much

**In the 90s, a new type of philanthropic organization with stronger community roots emerged.**

to improve the quality of service to the community and to develop new joint initiatives involving civil society organizations and the government. They focus on the needs of children, families of migrant workers, drug addicts, and persons with disabilities.

The survey also enabled the Foundation to identify neighborhoods with the most social and economic problems. The Foundation selected one of them, San Juan de Retana, a densely packed, relatively new settlement of over 30,000 inhabitants, for an intensive local development program. A 1998 survey revealed that 85% of the population had an income less than \$300 a month, 53% below \$100.

Local community leaders, civil society organizations, and government institutions engaged in discussions in San Juan to deter-



mine a set of priorities and an action plan. They decided that the Foundation would help create an independent non-profit organization (PADIC or *Poliasociación para el desarrollo integral comunitaria, A.C.*) to coordinate the efforts of government, NGOs, universities, the business sector, and civil society in the San Juan neighborhood.

During our February visit, Peggy Dulany and I experienced the results of this new initiative. It became clear to us that Cortés Jiménez plays a critical role in encouraging all parties to work together. As a widely respected community activist she understands the local problems and personally knows many community leaders and individuals important in the government and non-government programs.

Walking around San Juan with Cortés Jiménez, we met a variety of community members and program staff. The integrated education program has achieved greater dialogue between teachers and parents. At one of the poorest primary schools, parents and teachers enthusiastically showed us the nearly completed school dining room and kitchen. With these facilities, support from the government and business community, and sweat equity from the parents, there will be a daily cooked lunch for students. The program will be expanded to all the primary schools and should have a real impact on levels of nutrition. Community members spoke of other new education and health initiatives coordinated by PADIC with the support of the foundation. They mentioned efforts to tackle drug and alcohol abuse through a combination of treatment and prevention. They said that the combination of parent, teacher, and child counseling, youth sporting competitions, and the production of educational materials is starting to have an impact. Cortés Jiménez told us that she involved seven government institutions (federal, state, and municipal), 11 business associations, 7 NGOs, 13 newspapers or TV and radio stations, 6 professional associations, and all the education institutions in this coordinated program.

Next, we met with a cross-section of concerned citizens by the edge of a river that had become an open sewer flowing through the community. The Foundation, the local government, and a citizen's committee have developed plans to build a water treatment plant. Some women suggested that they would apply constant pressure to ensure the work was carried out on schedule, indicating that officials and the Foundation would be held accountable.

Our next stop was a local bakery run by a cooperative of six women. The women explained that they organized themselves to request a loan from the state government to purchase equipment, and had received technical assistance from PADIC. The enterprise produces highly nutritious bread (enriched with soya and amaranth) and cookies for locals. The women spoke of improving their marketing and their modest facility. Once the loan is repaid they will become the owners of the bakery. PADIC staff told us of other

community-based enterprises in the pipeline.

Overall, we sensed that things had changed as a result of the Foundation and the leadership of Cortés Jiménez. This wasn't "business as usual." Local people are given more resources to solve those problems that they, themselves, have decided are the most urgent. They are also willing to contribute resources. In an opinion survey conducted in San Juan last year, more than 50% of the respondents offered to volunteer in one or more community programs (health, education, youth, and women's programs being the most popular).

We also found that the Foundation had allowed young NGO staff members and government officials to have greater impact by working in the context of a more effectively coordinated effort. The Foundation has been a catalyst to mobilizing energy, skills, and resources around the needs of the community. Cortés Jiménez and the Chair of the Board, Gustavo Alonso Zanella Schiavon, have shown particular skill in bringing partners together around the table and coming up with joint solutions. In doing so, they are overcoming the prevailing practice of the past when government was expected to solve all the problems.

Outside the San Juan community, the Foundation is spearheading a new initiative to support the families of migrant workers. The

State of Guanajuato has one of the highest rates of migration to the U.S., and also in recent years to Canada. The Foundation has identified six rural communities close to Irapuato and has put together a cooperation of government organizations, NGOs, and academic institutions to provide programs in health, environmental issues, education, and income generation. The Foundation is hoping to build relationships with the communities of Guanajuato immigrants in the U.S. (there are over 40 nonprofit clubs known as *Casa Guanajuatenses*) and involve them as partners in social projects in their communities of origin.

While \$7.5 million has been raised and channeled to the community in less than three years, more needs to be done. Both national and transnational companies operating in the Bajío region, particularly in exporting industries, could be contributing more assets and resources to the Foundation. However, its work is attracting attention in other parts of the state of Guanajuato, Mexico and Latin America. Philanthropy doesn't have to start from the interests of the donor but can build from the diverse concerns and needs of the community.



San Juan de Retana: Community representatives discuss plans to clean up polluted river.

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# The Mexican Intellectual

## Science and Treason

BY JUAN ENRÍQUEZ

ONE THING MEXICO HAS IN ABUNDANCE is intellectuals. It nurtures some of the world's great writers, poets, musicians, painters, and historians. The historical reviews of Enrique Krauze, the short stories of Carlos Fuentes or Octavio Paz, the operas of Plácido Domingo, and the paintings of Toledo bring joy to life. I have only admiration for each of these great individuals, and for thousands of other Mexican intellectuals. But I am concerned that as a class, they have almost completely ignored science and technology. To remain functionally illiterate in one of the world's dominant languages is tantamount to a dual treason: of the principles that drive humans towards knowledge and of the trust placed in their ability to teach their country. Democracy, development, and social change are not possible without these knowledge components.

Beauty may feed the soul, but much of Mexico remains poor and hungry because components for building a modern economy are absent. At conferences like the Latin American Studies Association, thousands of smart people discuss every subject imaginable...except science and technology. I don't mean every intellectual should head for a lab. But some should, and the rest should be far more supportive of those who do.

Two centuries ago intellectuals read Latin and Greek, a century ago French and/or German. Then English was almost *sine qua non*. Intellectuals must be among the first to understand, debate, create, and transmit a new dominant language. Today the dominant language is Microsoft. Tomorrow's will be genetics.

An intellectual class marginalized from the digital and genomic revolutions can help preserve the past, but it will be hard pressed to build the future. In 1960, when world economic output was one third agriculture, one third industry, and one third services-knowledge, low scientific literacy was not a fatal flaw for a country. There were other ways of making a living. Today, two thirds of all value within the global economy comes from services-knowledge.

Countries that do not generate scientific knowledge become increasingly irrelevant, yet Mexico's intellectuals have abdicated much interest, concern, or support for science and its practitioners. This has not been the case in the U.S., Britain, Taiwan, or Singapore where Nobel Prize winners in physics, chemistry, medicine, inventors with multiple patents, rocket scientists, and gene researchers are widely read, admired, and quoted.

### A LONG, LONG TIME AGO...

MEXICO SHOULD HAVE HAD A SIGNIFICANT advantage in building a knowledge economy. One need only visit Chichen Itza on the day of the equinox to understand the sophistication of Mayan astronomy, mathematics, and architecture. The same is true of Tenochtitlan's canals and drainage systems. Even during the onslaught of the Spanish conquistadors there were idealists building knowledge centers. Franciscans set up the first school for Indians in 1536 (Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco), teaching logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and medicine. The University of Mexico opened its doors eighty-three years before Harvard. Mexico City's first printing press was uncited ninety-nine years before its U.S. colonies' counterpart. By the end of the colonial period, more than 15,000 books in Spanish and nine different indigenous languages, some with print run exceeding one thousand copies, filled libraries throughout the world.

Like most Colonial history, Mexico's contribution to European intellectual life has been buried by a general dislike of things Viceroyal. (Enrique Krauze points out that there is no Mexico City statue of any of the sixty-three Spanish Viceroyalty who governed Mexico). Yet many philosophical works and ideals were on a par with those of Europe. For instance, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas crossed the Atlantic eight times in an attempt to have Indians recognized as human beings. In the process he helped establish a tradition of international law and human rights that culminated with the works of the great Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez.

However, as the Enlightenment coursed through Europe changing the way people thought, Spain and its colonies remained mostly isolated. Besides that of Charles III, there were few attempts to reform educational curricula. Anglo-American productivity increased. Spain continued exporting olive oil, wine, brandy, flour, and dried fruits to its colonies. As Britain grew global textile exports, traditional cotton producers in Spanish America went broke. Quito exported 440 bales of cotton in 1768 and only 157 in 1788. Instead of helping upgrade their empire's technology, in a desperate effort to protect their own declining industrial towns, Spanish kings ordered all colonial textile factories destroyed. On November 28, 1800, a Royal decree prohibited manufacturing facilities in the Americas. By 1805 British cotton was dominant, Spain was getting poorer, and the Colonies were increasingly rebellious.

### FREEDOM... AT A HIGH COST

FEW WHO LED LATIN AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE movements in the early 1800s can be called intellectuals, but some of these caudillos were inspired by scientists. Part of Simon Bolívar's impetuous to return home was his talks with Humboldt. Domingo Sarmiento was inspired by Benjamin Franklin's autobiography. General San Martín's Patriotic Society included leading doctors. Unfortunately this enlightenment was mostly buried: first under the systematic Spanish repression of Creole intellectuals, and later under the pressure of keeping vast new countries together.

Despite continuous turmoil and violence some faith in science and education survived through the end of the XIXth century. Mexico's Benito Juárez demonstrated how far a poor Indian from Oaxaca could get, given a decent education. In 1883-84 Jose Martí was running *Las Américas*, which published the articles, "Recent inventions-five hundred new patents," "Newest telegraph machine," and "The electric brake, a curious invention." Martí concluded that a path to riches and greatness was "planting



chemistry and agriculture."

Though Mexican leaders understood the importance of adopting new technologies, they did little to develop the ethos required to home grow them. Mexico's government began installing electric street lights by companies like Western Electric and Siemens & Halske in 1881, but did not fund electrical engineering in state universities until the end of the 1880s. Applying new technology in places like Monterrey implied bringing in legions of foreign workers. The key

ing, and sculpture. Each was relevant to the history of peoples of Chiapas and Central America, but the agenda ignored that the Mayans living in these areas had also been great mathematicians, astronomers, doctors, and botanists. There was a complete divorce between the intellectual class, the economic-scientific welfare of their constituents, and the intellectual history of the region.

Chiapas, Mexico, and much of Latin America suffer from intellectual amnesia. The Mayans used "zero" before the Hindus or

rarely on the agenda in Mexico, causing it economic crisis after crisis despite decades of economic reform.

Enrique Krauze, begins *Mexico: Biography of Power* by reflecting on why the country remains so strong despite centuries of violence and economic collapse but also why it is so hard for Mexico to focus on the future:

History endures in Mexico. No one has died here, despite the killings and the executions. They are alive—Cuauhtémoc, Cortés, Maximilian, Don Porfirio, and all the conquerors and all the conquered. That is Mexico's special quality. The whole past is a pulsing present. It has not gone by, it has stopped in its tracks.

## An intellectual class marginalized from the digital and genomic revolutions can help preserve the past, but it will be hard pressed to help build the future.

hires at Cementos Hidalgo were from the U.S. Italians and French dominated the Compañía Mexicana de Dinamita y Explosivos S.A. Vidriera Monterrey was mostly run by Americans from Owens and Libbey. However, this last company hints at what might have happened had Mexico better educated its own; the general manager was Roberto G. Sada, an MIT graduate who helped establish Mexico's most powerful corporate dynasty.

The legacy of the Porfiriato was the worst of all worlds, alienating so many that the country bled from a revolution and delegitimizing science led development. Being a "científico" in post-revolutionary Mexico brought little prestige. The brightest flocked towards political analysis, history, music, prose, painting, and poetry. This tendency survives to date. And while science powered U.S. multinationals, Mexican companies remained mostly commodity based.

### THE INTELLIGENCIA TODAY

FOUR YEARS BEFORE THE ZAPATISTA REBELLION broke out, the governor of Chiapas used part of his meager budget to bring together the elite of the intellectual class of his state with that of Central America. Generating new ideas and approaches was important; most people in these regions lived in poverty, faced daily insecurity, had little education, and rarely earned a living wage.

But Governor González Garrido's gathering did not address issues like agricultural biotechnology, computer literacy, or a knowledge economy. The themes covered were literature, theater, music, dance, paint-

Europeans did and created accurate celestial calendars. Centuries later some hope still remained for the rebirth of once great intellectual traditions. Chiapas, for example, remained part of the Capitanía General de Guatemala at Independence and finally chose to secede to Mexico after a bitter debate in 1821. Those congressional records show that a key motivator for joining Mexico was science: "Guatemala has never given this province science, nor industry, nor any other utility, but has seen it with indifference."

The poverty and backwardness of Chiapas is not unique. Latin America as a whole is largely irrelevant in a science-knowledge driven global economy. In 1985 *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Latin America and the Caribbean* dedicated a hundred and forty pages to Latin America's turbulent history, ninety-one to its rich culture, and eight to its pitiful science and technology. Within the hundreds of pages of *The Course of Mexican History*, there is no chapter heading or even index entry dealing with technology; science gets six pages, five of which refer to the pre-Independence period.

### THE FUTURE REMAINS THE PAST...

As technology accelerates worldwide, it is easier to fall further behind. Those who misunderstand or ignore a key technology or a shift in markets may face bankruptcy. Just ask Lucent, Wang, or Xerox. Countries and their governments must be ever more technology-savvy to survive. This requires a clear focus on scientific literacy among the *intelligencia*. Unfortunately, these themes are

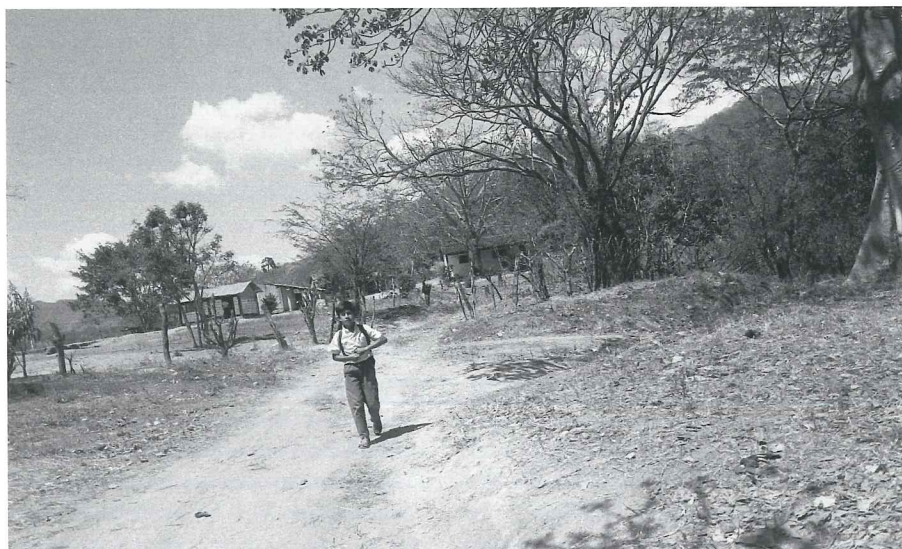
Some countries managed to remember their past while building their future. In 1975 a Korean factory worker earned about one fifth of his Mexican counterpart. But many of Korea's leaders, students, and intellectuals focused on understanding and applying technology. By 1999, Korean patents had increased 27,260% while Mexico's had increased 115%.

By and large, it is understanding and applying science that creates the new billion dollar corporations, pays higher salaries, and raises countries like Singapore, Korea, or Taiwan out of poverty. Yet few Mexicans realize that the green revolution was developed in the state of Morelos, and, despite his Nobel, few Mexicans recognize or include Norman Borlaug when asked to name the great Mexican intellectuals.

The role of an intellectual class subsidized by a poor society should be, at least in part, to interpret, develop, and transmit key knowledge. Mexico should continue to support and revere great historians, musicians, painters, poets, and writers. But the *intelligencia* as a whole has to wake up and foster the development of science and technology within its rarified realm.

*Juan Enriquez is the director of the Life Science Project at Harvard Business School and the author of El Reto De Mexico: Tecnología y Fronteras En El Siglo XXI: Una Propuesta Radical and the forthcoming, As the Future Catches You—How Genomics and Other Forces Are Changing Your Life, Work, Health and Wealth. A former DRCLAS research associate, he is a member of the DRCLAS Advisory Board.*





## Rural Education, Rural Innovation

*A Letter from Gabriel Cámara*

PHOTOESSAY BY SUSIE FITZHUGH

**D**EAR COLLEAGUES, WE WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR experience with Postprimary Centers, an innovation that has brought high quality education to the most remote rural villages in Mexico. For the past three years, these centers have allowed students to certify elementary or secondary school education. Students of all ages and social standing can come to these centers to study what they need or want to learn.

The centers, of which there are 240 in 20 States, reach into tiny villages with fewer than 500 inhabitants. The Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, a branch of the Ministry of Education with an unusual degree of autonomy and 30 years of experience in rural education, provides this service.

The innovation rests on a simple pedagogical axiom that good

education demands both genuine interest in the learner and demonstrated capacity in the teacher. Rigor in securing these two tenets explains the success of the Postprimary program. In practical terms, it means reliance on learner-managed learning—highly qualified instructors insure effective tutorial support.

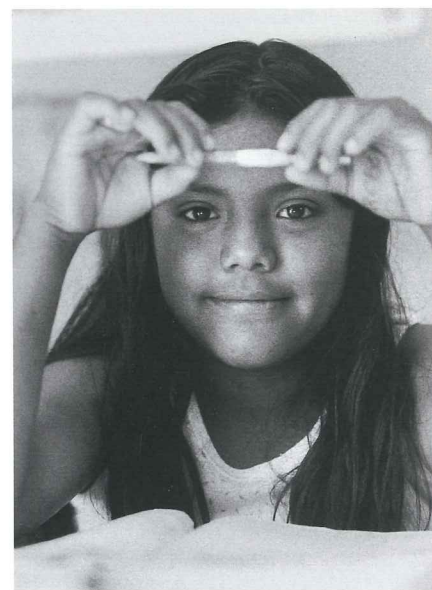
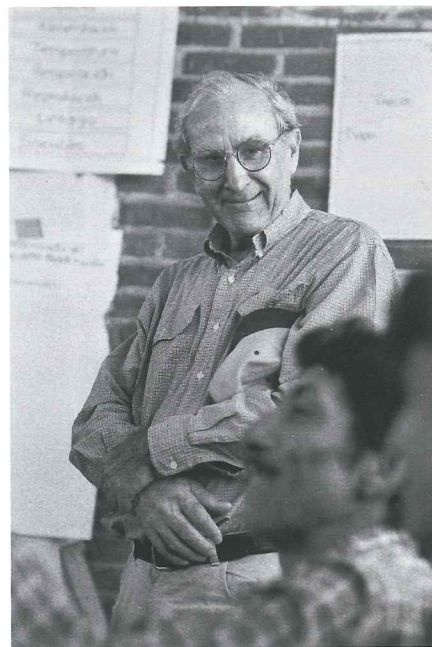
A measure of success is the fact that people come to the Postprimary Centers to study. In poor, scattered, rural communities, even young people do not enjoy the leisure of their urban counterparts. In an impoverished and rural environment academics competes with basic subsistence occupations for time. An internal measure of success is the discovery that it is possible to enlarge the cultural horizon by engaging in dialogue with authors of both the present and past.





clockwise from bottom left: Reading history, a CONAFE posprimaria student in class; Some of the children live over an hour's walking distance away from school; A new computer has been added to the library,

but they are having trouble getting it to work; Gabriel Cámara listens to the presentation of an adult Posprimaria student; The children have little opportunity to see people from the outside world.



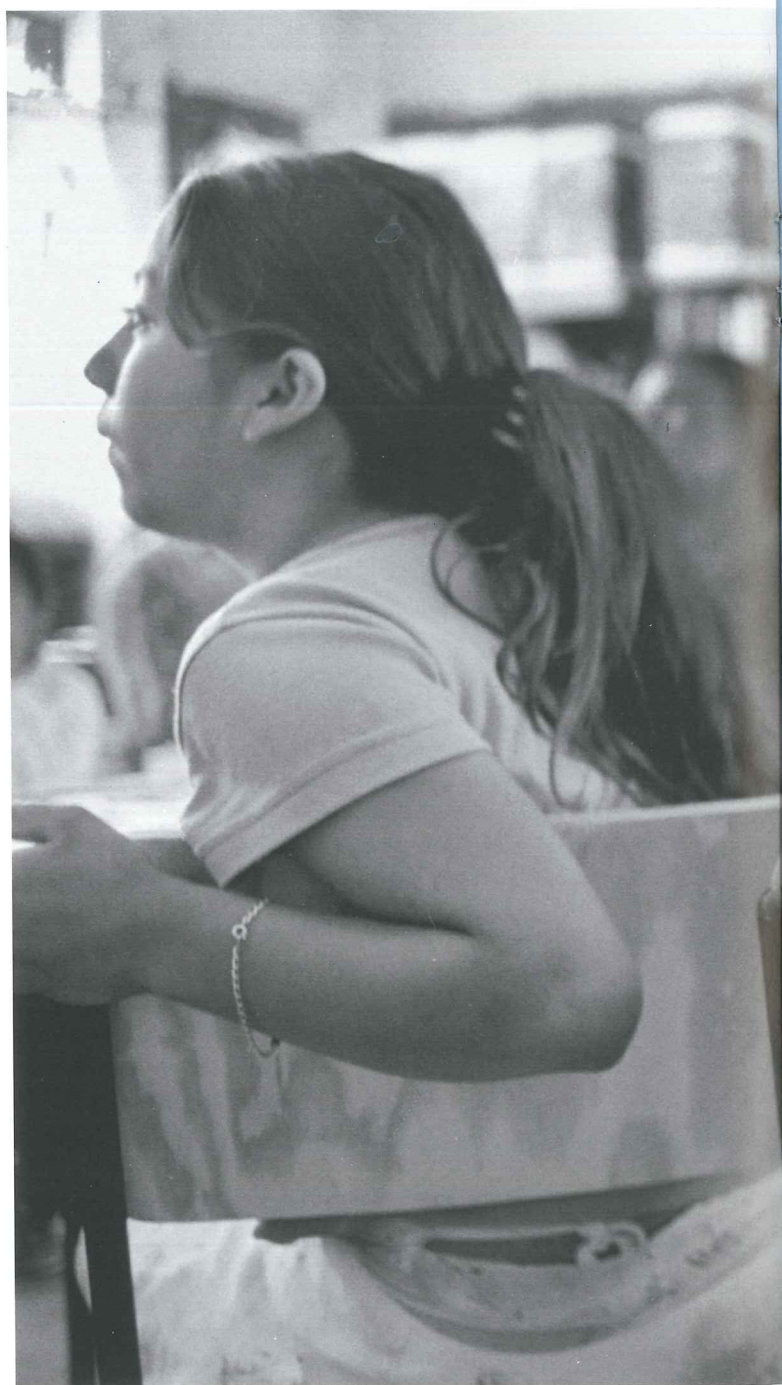
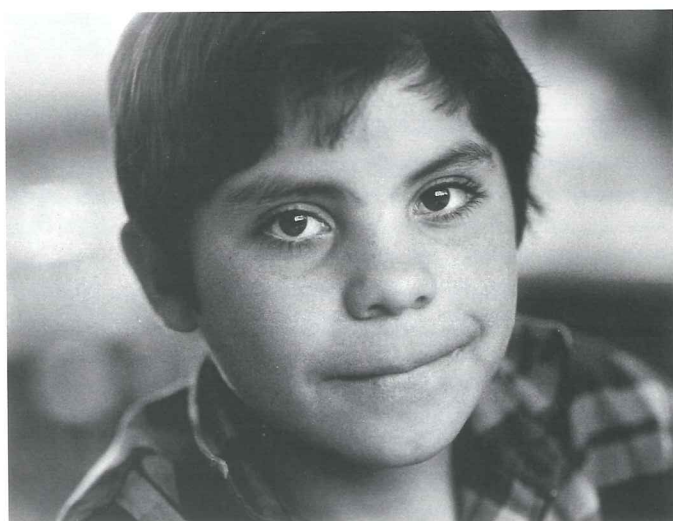
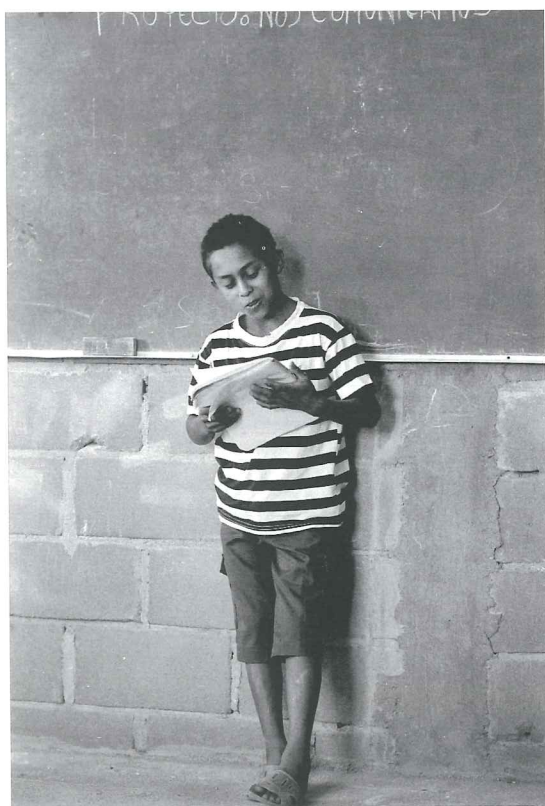
The program involves three basic conditions: instructors are trained in a master-apprentice relationship, centers are equipped with abundant written materials and with the most advanced means of communication (such as computers, satellite connections, and solar power plants), and, equally important, students are free to choose themes according to their interests and proceed according to their possibilities.

Independent learning coupled with advanced technology permits links between academic urban centers and scattered rural communities. This makes it possible to enrich local populations without the necessity of migration to cities. Equity and quality are becoming realities in rural education.

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*Susie Fitzhugh has been a documentary photographer for 30 years. Upon hearing of her interest in photographing education in Latin America, Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor Fernando Reimers led Susie to Gabriel Cámara's Postprimary program. Susie appreciates all the help she got from Fernando Reimers, Gabriel Cámara, and Keren Nes. Susie can be reached at <sfitzhugh@earthlink.net>.*









clockwise from top left: Her daughter is tired, but they must stay through the research presentations; Different generations; all students in CONAFE Posprimaria; The children of Mondlova play "el Lobo" similar to "it"; The adults come to study after their farm work, in the afternoon; One of a large family—mother, father, four boys—who are all students; Sharing research results is an important component of the Posprimaria.



# What Significance Hath Reform?

*The View from the Mexican Barrio*

BY SUSAN ECKSTEIN

THE SMELL OF STEAMING CORN AND FRESH RIPE FRUIT WAFTS past the endless rows of used automobile tires, new CD players, and stylish blue jeans. Mexicans from far and wide shop in this sprawling inner city market that is home to some 10,000 street merchants selling their wares out of portable stalls known as *tianguis*. An additional four permanent market structures—with about 700 stalls each—provide both jobs and shopping opportunities for local residents.

Despite peso devaluations, an earthquake, and new inequities and higher poverty rates linked to neoliberal restructuring, this Mexico City inner city slum neighborhood is thriving. Even non-locals were here seeking market vending opportunities and condominiums built by the government after the earthquake.

When I first began working in Mexico in 1967, I could not have predicted this vitality. Yet even then I found that social scientists, planners, and policymakers incorrectly portrayed shantytowns surrounding cities as “slums of hope” and inner city areas as “slums of despair.” With the exception of Oscar Lewis, they did not study the inner city first-hand or in-depth.

As a graduate student in Mexico City, I explored an old inner city slum, a shantytown on the Federal district periphery, and a government-built housing development officially intended for the “popular” sector. I administered questionnaires, talked with people informally, attended local meetings, and consulted relevant documents. Combining these methodologies, I began to understand the communities, which I visited again several times in the 70s through the 90s.

Over the years Mexico has changed politically and economically. The discovery of large oil reserves, a simultaneous blessing and curse, sent peasants from the relatively unprofitable agricultural sector pouring into the cities or across the border to the United States. The boom fizzled, and the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) resorted to neoliberal initiatives to rebound from a deep foreign debt and economic crisis in the early 1980s. Driven by economic and fiscal considerations, the state became “leaner and meaner.” Political reform slowly accompanied the waning of the paternalistic state.

How did the *gente humilde* in Mexico City experience these changes? I revisited the three communities to get a sense of the neighborhood impact of neoliberal economic restructuring. This longitudinal research provides a unique opportunity to see how changes at the

macro level are experienced at the grassroots level—and why.

## THE CENTER CITY AREA

DESPITE CONGESTION AND POOR HOUSING QUALITY, MOST RESIDENTS in the inner city lived there by choice. By the mid-1980s, heads of households had lived in the district an average of thirty years. When an earthquake then left tenement-dwellers homeless, they fought for the right to stay. They convinced the government to rebuild the community for them. After initially resisting, authorities sold condominium units at cost to *damnificados*, as the earthquake victims came to be known. The area contained vagabonds, alcoholics, drug addicts, and delinquents, but, more importantly, it included people enmeshed in a rich network of ties and was home to a dynamic informal economy. The area even had its own subculture, based on values somewhat at odds with national mores, and its own slang.

In the 1990s, I found that inner city slum residents adapted better to the neoliberal economic restructuring than did low income residents in the two other areas. They were old pros at adapting to “informal sector” alternatives.

Inner city commercial dynamism was rooted in a combination



MATTHEW C. GUTMANN

Selling fruits at the *tianguis*.

of legal and illegal activity. Second-hand goods sold at a local market included recycled stolen items, while factory-new consumer goods sold locally included contraband until the government slashed tariff taxes in conjunction with the neoliberal reforms. Once trade liberalization lowered tariffs, local *comerciantes* continued to have an edge over vendors and shopowners in outlying districts. They could still



sell their goods for less and profit more, because of the volume of their business and the better terms on which they obtained credit.

Vendors could obtain “easy credit” because of their high sales volume, giving them a competitive advantage within the informal commercial economy. One of the most influential local *comerciante* leaders, for example, operated an informal savings and loan association that entitled members to borrow up to three-fourths of the money they paid into the *caja de ahorros* (credit association) with only nominal interest charges (1 to 2 percent). Members were expected to deposit about \$12 per week into the *caja*. In the shantytown, on the other hand, vendors relied on loan sharks and more costly supplier credit. Thus, in the interstices of the informal commercial economy evolved a stratified informal banking economy.

Meanwhile, the informal value of stalls rose over the years, with the transfer price bringing as much as \$12,500 by the end of the 1990s, up from the \$5,000 of just ten years earlier. Locals sometimes sold to outsiders not only their informal claims to vending locations, but also the condos the government built for earthquake victims in response to grassroots pressure. New apartments—built by the government after the 1985 earthquake—rose 15-fold (in current dollar value) in one decade. New owners were often outsiders who used the apartments for commercial storage. Street vendors were required to set up and disassemble daily. The center city experience suggests that poor people need not move to outlying shantytowns to enjoy the economic benefits of home ownership and that inner city areas are not inherently places of blight.

However, the vibrancy of commerce squeezed out local craft production in this former hub of the leather and shoe trade. The remaining shoe activity in the inner city centered on its more lucrative commercialization. Local changes mirrored citywide de-industrialization.

As vibrant as local commerce had become, vendors found their income immediately halved by the 1994 Zedillo peso devaluation, and economic hard times spurred new illegal activity, especially in Mexico’s drug economy. It is estimated that by the latter 1990s, about a third of local youth were involved in narcotrafficking. Drug traffic brought profitable earnings, but also violence, with an average of three drug-related homicides per week. Even families committed to the inner city—who had overseen its renaissance after the mid-1980s earthquake—moved to more peripheral areas, to provide a safer haven for their children.

In sum, the local informal economy offered opportunities that more peripheral areas did not, but, as non-locals increasingly bought their way into the community, local youth, in particular, were “squeezed out.” Market forces, both legal and illegal, were eroding a community that just a decade earlier, after the earthquake, had fought for its own preservation.

### THE SHANTYTOWN

URBANISTS’ OPTIMISM ABOUT SHANTYTOWNS WAS MAINLY PREMISED on home ownership. Yet the shantytown that I came to know over a 30-year period increasingly housed tenants, poorer than the homeowners, contributing to a community socioeconomic downgrading. Moreover, for tenants housing was not an economic asset.

Other homeowners used their property as a *family* asset. As housing prices in Mexico City rose, nuclear family living became a lux-

ury few second-generation local families could afford. Homes not transformed into rental units were over the years increasingly turned into multi-generational abodes.

Urbanists have argued that shantytowns offered not merely inexpensive housing, but economic opportunities as well. Properties could be used for income-generating businesses, and residents could sell goods and services in local markets. However, shantytown vendors lacked access to low interest-charging informal credit associations and faced contracting consumer demand from a poorer clientele, as well as competition from a growing number of itinerant *tianguis* vendors who lived elsewhere but sold locally in the streets certain days of the week.

And even more than in the inner city, shantytown youth were hard-pressed for work, and increasingly looked to both the U.S. and the border area for economic opportunities. Here, as in Mexico City

## The longitudinal research provides a unique opportunity to see how changes at the macro level are experienced at the grassroots level—and why.

in general, decades of rural-to-urban migration began to slow down. As the economic base of the country shifted to the north, more integrated into the U.S. economy. With few economic opportunities, social problems and narcotrafficking proliferated.

Thus, the shantytown had come to be more aptly described as a “slum of despair” than a “slum of hope,” the opposite of what urbanists had theorized. With the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s many residents experienced economic hardship. The community *esprit* among squatters when they first staked claims to the area in the latter 1950s had long since disappeared. Political dynamics eroded collective grassroots activity that might have countered the moral, economic, and social decay.

### THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE BEGINNING, THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITH ITS FREE-standing homes was more prosperous than the other two areas. Indeed, the planned community quickly came to house lower and working class families in only one section, therefore the only section I continued to study in the 1980s and 1990s. The one area contained the smallest and least expensive units.

As in the shantytown, in the poorer area of the government-built development, residents transformed homes designed for nuclear family use into multigenerational households—this was also for economic reasons. Few local families, however, converted their homes into rental units, because of space limitations and less severe economic need.

Though the community was planned, the chief architect had not addressed the most fundamental socioeconomic issue: employment creation. Market forces generated few local work opportunities—in the informal or formal economies. The younger generation, though more educated than its parents, also experienced unemployment and underemployment.

And not surprisingly, in the absence of economic opportunities, here too social problems such as drug addiction and theft set in. Good intentions of the architect to create a socially viable and meaningful community notwithstanding, the planned project proved no more successful than a squatter self-built shantytown in addressing poor



people's economic needs and in creating and maintaining a moral community. Broader market, political, and social forces eroded the positive effects the state-subsidized planned community was to have.

### DEMOCRATIZATION FOR WHOM?

IF THE NEOLIBERAL REFORMS LEFT CITY POOR WORSE OFF ECONOMICALLY than in years past, especially after the 1994 peso devaluation, did the political reforms provide a means to correct market injustices? Residents of the three areas contributed to the erosion of PRI's hegemony that became so transparent by the turn of the century. However, informal political dynamics limited the distributive and redistributive effects of formal democratization.

In the 1980s a *Juntas de Vecinos* initiative officially deepened administrative democratization, from the district to the community and block levels. The reform proved to democratize governance, how-

### Informal political dynamics limited the distributive and redistributive effects of formal democratization.

ever, more in form than fact. The administrative reform gave the communities greater input into "who governed," while reelection restrictions constrained incumbents from monopolizing leadership and perpetuating their own rule.

An extension of formal democratizing administrative rights served, in practice, more to regulate the communities than to provide residents with real power, access to resources, or the means to decide how resources were utilized. The presidents of the Residents' Associations, for one, had no budget or decision-making power.

Meanwhile, democratically elected officers relayed information "downward" and sought local support for concerns of their superiors. The principle of "no reelection" also kept community leaders from building up an effective local political base that could strengthen their bargaining position with city and national officials.

The power-dampening effect of the "no reelection" principle could be seen in the center city area. There, the main leaders of street vendors could serve for life and even pass on their leadership position to their children. They owed their position to the people they informally served and represented, not to authorities or to formal political status. Powerful within the informal economy, and commanding as many as 1,000 members, the leaders were in a strong bargaining position vis a vis the government. Their informal clout enabled them to successfully negotiate rights to street vending and community reconstruction after the earthquake.

At the same time, in the housing development and the center city, multiple Residents' Associations impaired community-wide organization for common concerns through formal administrative democratization. In these areas formal as well as informal channels of communication and coordination were vertically structured. The democratically selected Association presidents in the different sections of the two areas only had contact with each other through the district *Juntas de Vecinos* office (and through PRI offices at the district level).

The PRI continued to operate locally in its long-standing "machine-like" manner. It sought to buy votes in exchange for material favors. District offices offered occasional legal, medical, dental, and hair-cutting services, plus meals and gifts on major holidays and during polit-

ical campaigns. PRI officers gave out juice, napkins, T-shirts, pots, and pitchers, and they organized raffles for servibars, bicycles, and gas stoves. Desperate for votes, as other political parties became no longer merely nominal but serious political contenders, PRI district functionaries even paid cadres to go door-to-door. Politics, as one politico noted, became profitable. And in the center city area functionaries reminded vendors that they owed their street location claims to PRI's interception on their behalf.

Accordingly, through spring, 1997, the political and administrative reforms gave a deepening-of-democracy veneer to a system of governance that continued to subordinate local to non-local concerns and that higher-ranking authorities tried to manipulate to PRI's advantage at a time of national PRI decomposition. Under the circumstances residents in the three areas anticipated, just three months prior to PRI's devastating citywide electoral defeat, that lit-

tle would change if PRI lost. They did not view the PRD (Cuauhtemoc Cardenas' reconstituted Democratic Current), a Center-Left alternative to the PRI party, as a solution to their plight. Some were pragmatic and understood

that organizational strength, not partisan politics, was the key to political influence. Reflecting this viewpoint, an activist in a center city *tianguis* association noted that she liked the PRD's goals, but felt the party, "run by intellectuals did not know how to administer." She did not worry about a PRI electoral defeat, though, for she felt that her *tianguis* group would be able to negotiate with whatever party won because, she said, "We're a large force and have tradition in our favor."

Other residents viewed all the parties "as a clan" that did not represent them. In general, the "popular sector," as represented in the three areas I studied, did not feel the electoral democratization to be as significant as did either the middle and upper classes behind the reforms or the political parties. Residents had learned the hard way to be cynical about political change.

Nonetheless, people's attitudes towards voting had changed by 1997. In the 1960s and 1970s the government and the PRI successfully convinced most urban poor that support for PRI was synonymous with patriotism and that voting was not merely a right but an obligation. By the 1990s, though, the electorate came to view voting as a right: including the freedom to abstain or to vote for parties other than the PRI. And they had come to feel they could be public about their non-PRI sympathies without fear of reprisal.

Thus, urban neighborhoods have not had the effects academics and planners believed them to have. My research reveals that, independently of where they live, people with low incomes are increasingly taking history into their own hands, economically within the informal sector and politically through formal channels. In the inner city they also have turned to informal mobilizations to defend their neighborhood rights to both housing and work. Their options are restricted by macro economic dynamics but they are their own best hope for a better future.

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*Susan Eckstein, Professor of Sociology at Boston University, is Past President of the Latin American Studies Association and a DRCLAS Research Associate. She is also the editor of Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements (Updated and Expanded Edition, University of California Press, 2001).*



# Mexican Machos and Hombres

## Challenging Gender Relations

BY MATTHEW C. GUTMANN

“Are any of you married?” I asked the *muchachos*.

“No, *todos solteritos*, all young and single,” said Felipe.

“That bozo’s got two little squirts. He’s the *macho mexicano*,” said Rodrigo, pointing to Celso, the father of two children who lived with their mother in another city.

“What does that mean?” I inquired.

“Macho? That you’ve got kids all over,” said Esteban.

“That your ideology is very closed,” said Pancho. “The ideology of the *macho mexicano* is very closed. He doesn’t think about what might happen later, but mainly focuses on the present, on satisfaction, on pleasure, on desire. But now that’s disappearing

a little.”

“You’re not machos?” I asked.

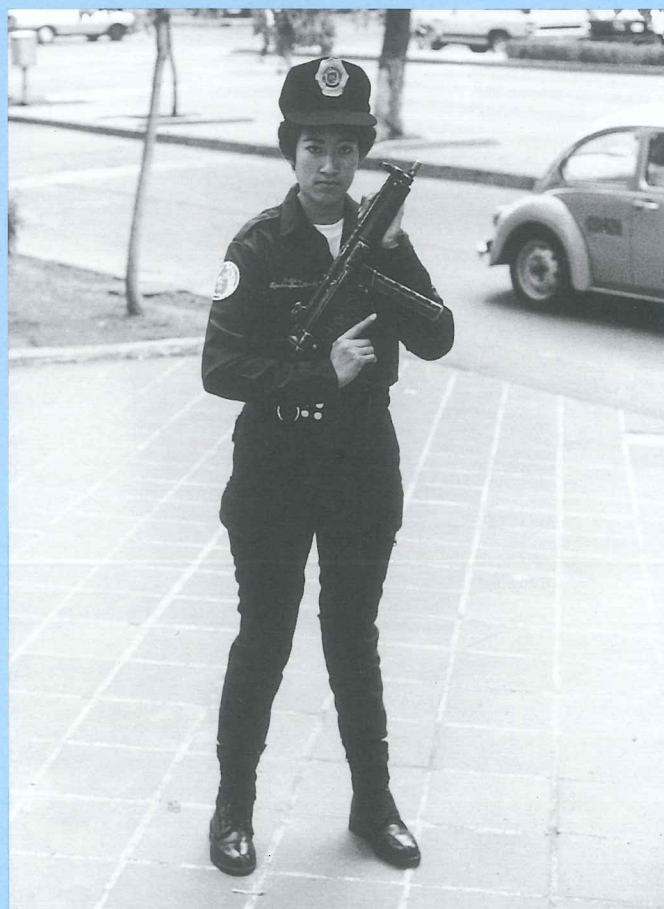
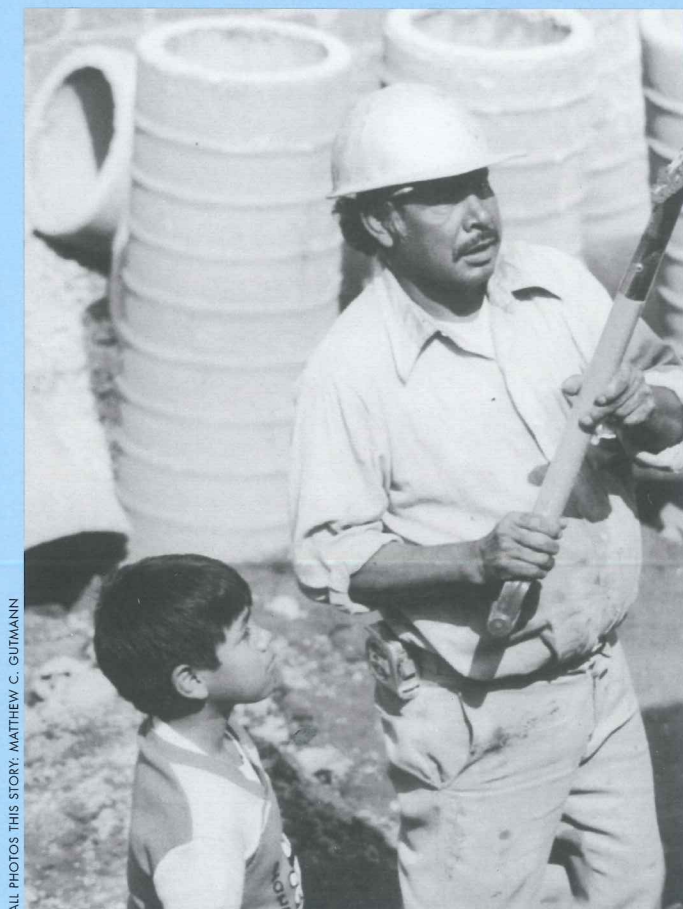
“No, *somos hombres*, we’re men.”

These young men were my neighbors during the time of my ethnographic fieldwork on changing male identities in Colonia Santo Domingo. What it means to be men and women has changed drastically for people of all ages in this working class, squatter neighborhood on the south side of Mexico City, as in other poor areas of the Mexican capital. Such change influences parenting, participation in political movements, paid work, education, sexuality, and more. Women have played a prominent role in this *colonia*, founded by land invasion, so residents have also been challenging gender relations inher-

ited from the past. Women were often called upon to physically defend their community from invasion-busters. In the process, they became leaders and key decision-makers. Gender politics in Mexico is simply not that simple, as my experience in this neighborhood taught me.

Journalists and academics often seem intent on discovering a ubiquitous, virulent, and “typically Mexican” machismo. Such stereotyping stems in part from earlier national character studies in anthropology, as well as U.S. media and social scientific writings, that generalize about Mexican cultural history, including the role played by gender.

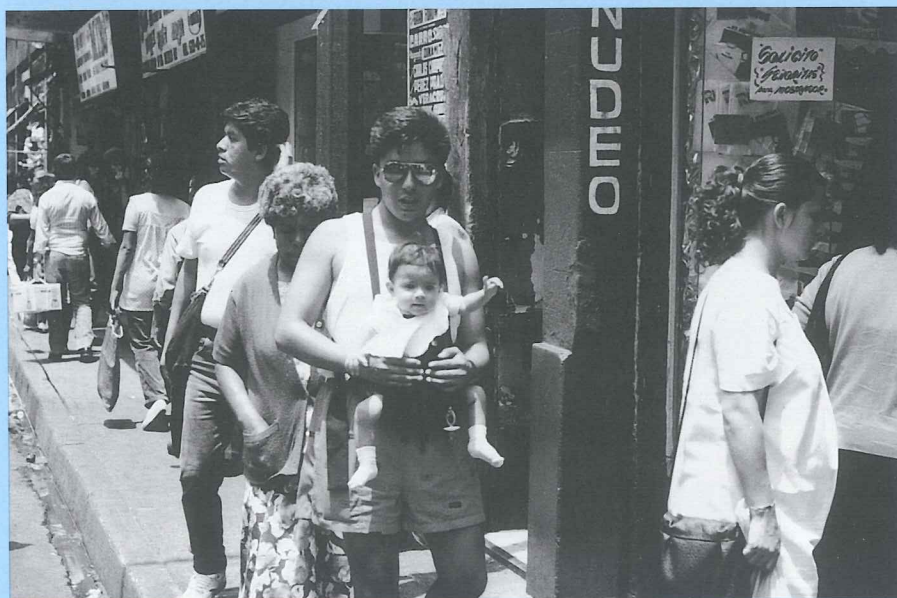
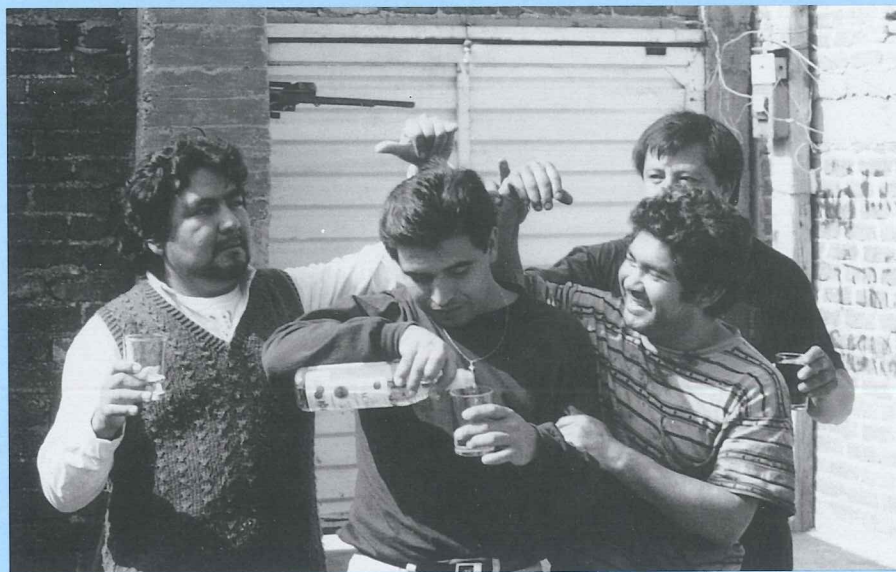
Gender politics are emerging and diverging in today’s Mexico. Women and men in



ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY: MATTHEW C. GUTMANN

left: Man with shovel in Colonia Santo Domingo, Mexico City. Men no longer are able to take their children to work (e.g., to the milpa) as often as they did in the past. This construction worker brought his son to work on Saturdays; right: Woman bank guard. Many bank guards in downtown Mexico City are women, and they carry submachine guns and wear bullet-proof vests.





top: Men having a drink in Colonia Santo Domingo, Mexico City: Man at center with bottle has just resumed drinking after being "jurado" (sworn off alcohol) for one year. He is celebrating with friends; above: Man carrying baby in Snuggli: Men carrying babies in canguros has become more common in urban Mexico.

Colonia Santo Domingo say macho men are not as prevalent as before. Some older men like to divide the world of males into machos and *mandilónes* (female-dominated men), where the term macho connotes a man responsible towards his family. For older men, to be macho more often means to be *un hombre de honor*, an honorable man.

However, younger married men in Colonia Santo Domingo tend to define themselves in a third category, the "non-macho" group. "Ni macho, ni *mandilón*, neither macho nor *mandilón*," is how many men describe themselves. Others may define a friend as "your typical *macho mexicano*,"

while the friend rejects the label, describing his helpfulness to his wife or pointing out that he doesn't beat her (one of the few generally agreed upon attributes of machos). The men don't necessarily agree about what *macho*, *machismo*, and *machista* mean, but most consider them to be pejorative concepts, not worthy of emulation.

These men are precisely betwixt and between marked cultural positions—a clear illustration that, like other cultural identities, notions of masculinity and femininity must be understood in historic relation to other divergent cultural trajectories such as class, ethnicity, and generation.

## ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND THE CREATION OF MEXICAN MACHISMO

BECAUSE OF HIS CRISPNESS, SCOPE, AND vigor in presentation, Oscar Lewis is a central anthropological ancestor for the study of Mexican machismo. His descriptions in *The Children of Sánchez* (1961) and other books form a point of reference for contemporary students. Also, his theoretical formulations are still delightfully provoking, if too often insufficiently developed, as with regard to the concept of machismo.

However, some scholars have utilized details from Oscar Lewis's ethnographic studies to promote sensationalistic generalities far beyond anything Lewis himself wrote. For instance, in David Gilmore's (1990) widely read survey of the Ubiquitous (if not Universal) Male in the World, *machismo* is discussed as an extreme form of manly images and codes. Gilmore sees modern urban Mexican men mainly as exaggerated archetypes, constituting, with other Latin men, the negative pole on the continuum—of machismo to androgyny—of male cultural identities around the world. To make his ethnographic points about Mexican men, Gilmore cites Lewis:

In urban Latin America, for example, as described by Oscar Lewis (1961: 38), a man must prove his manhood every day by standing up to challenges and insults, even though he goes to his death "smiling." As well as being tough and brave, ready to defend his family's honor at the drop of a hat, the urban Mexican... must also perform adequately in sex and father many children. (1990: 16)

But even if Lewis' ethnographic descriptions, compiled in the 1950s, were just as valid decades later, he did not usually generalize in this fashion about the lives of Jesús Sánchez and his children. His anthropology was often artfully composed, and although some of his theories were naive, he generally tried to keep "mere" romance and fancy out of his ethnographic descriptions.

## COWBOYS AND RACISM

MANY ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS writing about *machismo* utilize characterizations like manly, unmanly, and manliness without defining them. They seem to assume, incorrectly in my estimation, that all of their readers share a common definition and understanding of such qualities.

In a brilliant essay published in English in



1971, Américo Paredes provides several clues as to the word history of machismo, and in the process draws clear connections between the advent of machismo and nationalism, racism, and international relations. Paredes explores folklore—a good indicator of popular speech—and determines that in Mexico, prior to the 1930s and 1940s, the terms

and men during times of war—in which men are the main, though assuredly not the only, combatants—is nevertheless not the same thing as noting the full-blown “*machismo* syndrome,” as it is sometimes called. Courage was valued during the Revolution for both men and women, though the terms used to refer to courage carried a heavy male

under the populist presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, the national election campaign of 1940 opened an era of unparalleled industrial growth and demagogic rule in Mexico. Coincidentally, one of the campaign slogans of the ultimately successful presidential Avila Camacho was: “Ca ... MACHO!” As Paredes points out, the president was not responsible for the use of the term macho, but, as he writes, “We must remember that names lend reality to things.”

The word history of machismo is but a piece of the puzzle of the outlooks and practices codified in tautological fashion as instances of machismo. For Paredes, the peculiar history of U.S.-Mexican relations has produced a marked antipathy on the part of Mexicans for their northern neighbors. The image of the frontier and the (Wild) West has in turn played a special role in this tempestuous relationship, with the annexation of two-fifths of the Mexican nation to the United States in 1848, and repeated U.S. economic and military incursions into Mexico since then, undercutting proclamations of respect for national sovereignty.

Paredes reminds us that trade between the two countries initially included the export of the Mexican *vaquero*-cowboy to the United States. In the early 19th century, fron-

## Gender politics are emerging and diverging in today's Mexico. Masculinity is not a fixed identity.

macho and machismo do not appear. The word macho existed, but almost as an obscenity, similar to later connotations of machismo. Other words were far more common at the time of the Mexican Revolution: *hombrismo*, *hombria*, *muy hombre*, *hombre de verdad* (all relating to *hombre*, man), and *valentía*, *muy valiente*, etc. (relating to valor, courage). Despite the fact that during the Mexican Revolution the phrase *muy hombre* was used to describe courageous women as well as men, the special association of such a quality with men then and now indicates certain points in common, regardless of whether the words macho and machismo were employed.

Making a connection between courage

accent. Beginning in the 1940s, the male accent itself came to prominence as a national(ist) symbol. For better or worse, Mexico came to mean *machismo* and *machismo*, Mexico, providing an illustration of what Mary Louise Pratt shows to be the “androcentrism of the modern national imaginings” in Latin America.

The consolidation of the nation-state and party machinery throughout the Mexican Republic and the development of the country's modern national cultural identity took place on a grand scale during the presidencies of Lázaro Cárdenas and Manuel Avila Camacho (1934-1946). After the turbulent years of the Revolution and the 1920s, and following six years of national unification



Line outside tortillería: taken in 1993 in Colonia Santo Domingo, Mexico City. Twenty years ago this line would have been all women and girls.



tiersmen were forging the way for the expanding Jacksonian empire. Their combination of individualism and sacrifice for the higher national good came to embody the machismo ethos. Contemporary popular usage of the term machismo in the United States often serves to rank men according to their supposedly inherent national and racial characteristics, as in, "My boyfriend may not be perfect, but at least he's no Mexican macho." Such statements use non-sexist pretensions to make denigrating generalizations about fictitious Mexican male cultural traits.

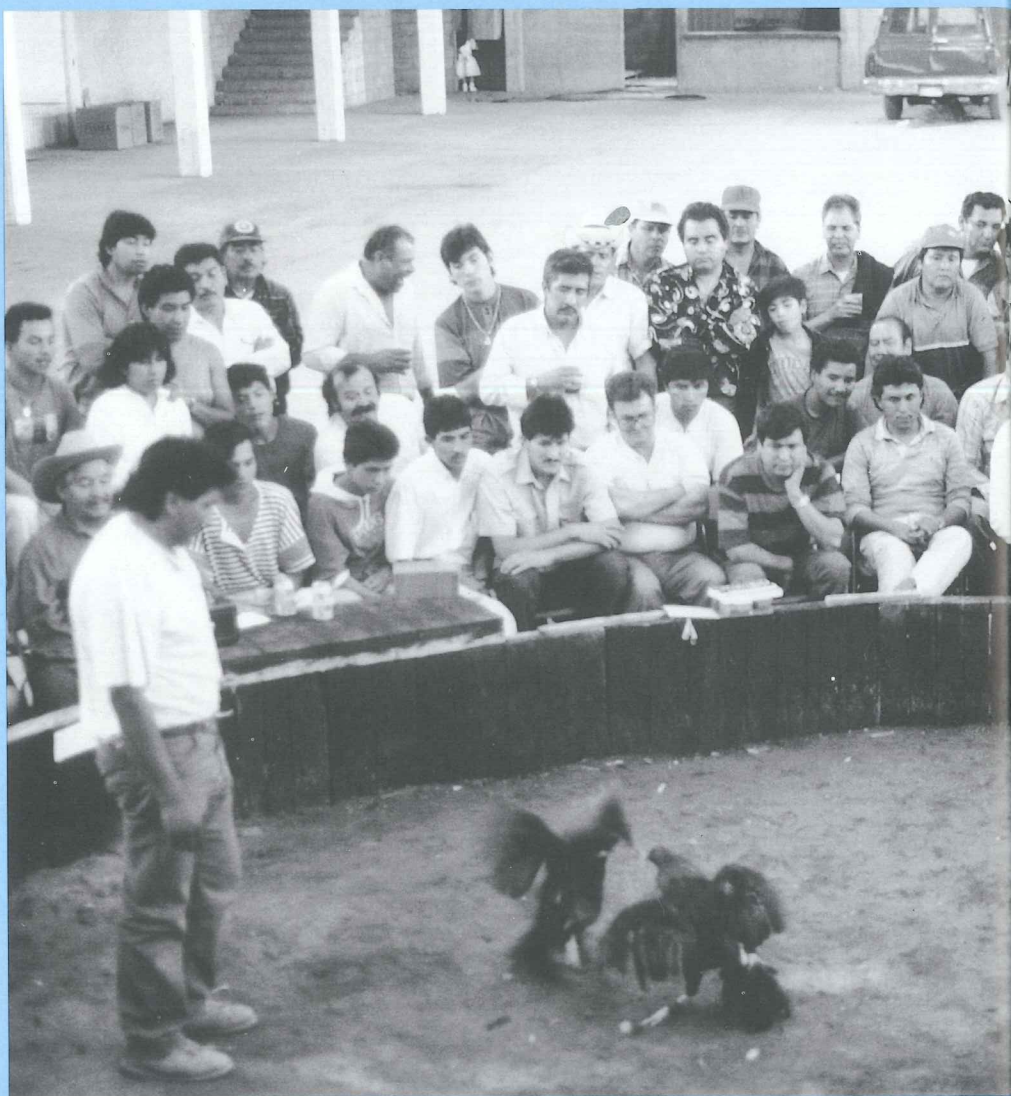
## JORGE NEGRETE AND LO MEXICANO

THE IDEOLOGICAL AND MATERIAL CONSOLIDATION of the Mexican nation was fostered early on, not only in the gun battles on the wild frontier and in the voting rituals of presidential politics, but also in the imagining and inventing of *lo mexicano*, *mexicanidad* in the national cinema. And of all the movie stars of this era, the singing cowboy Jorge Negrete, handsome and pistol-packing *charro*, stood out as "a macho among machos." He came to epitomize the swaggering Mexican nation, singing in *Yo Soy Mexicano*:

I am a Mexican, and this wild land is mine.  
On the word of a macho, there's no land lovelier  
and wilder of its kind.  
I am a Mexican, and of this I am proud.  
I was born scorning life and death,  
And while I have bragged, I have never been cowed.

The macho mood was forged in the rural cantinas, the manly temples of the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema. Mexico appeared on screen as a single entity, however internally incongruent, while within the nation the figures of Mexican Man and Mexican Woman loomed large.

The distinctions between being a macho and being a man were starting to come into clearer focus in the Mexican cinema of the 1940s. In the late 1940s, Octavio Paz dissected Mexican machismo, and his work has come to represent the official view of essential Mexican attributes: like machismo, loneliness, and mother worship. When Paz writes in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, "The Mexican is always remote, from the world and from other people. And also from himself," he should not be taken literally but *literarily*. Part of the reason for the elegance of this book may be that Paz was creating



Cockfight in Pachuca, Estado de México.

as much as he was reflecting on qualities of *mexicanidad*. As he put it in his *Return to the Labyrinth of Solitude*, "The book is part of the attempt of literally marginal countries to regain consciousness: to become subjects again"

Paz writes with regard to men and women in Mexico, "In a world made in man's image, woman is only a reflection of masculine will and desire." In Mexico, "woman is always vulnerable. Her social situation—as a repository of honor, in the Spanish sense—and the misfortune of her 'open' anatomy expose her to all kinds of dangers." Biology as destiny? But there is nothing inherently passive, or private, about vaginas in Mexico or anywhere else. Continuing with Paz, just as "the essential attribute of the *macho*"—or what the macho seeks to display, anyway—is power, so too it is with "the Mexican people." Thus, *mexicanidad*, Paz tell us,

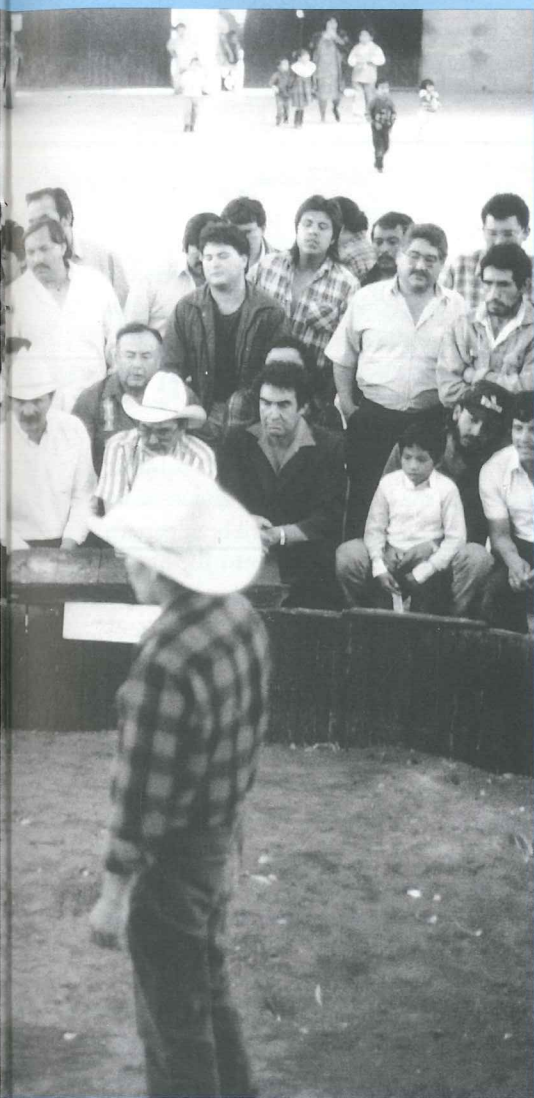
is concentrated in the macho forms of "caciques, feudal lords, hacienda owners, politicians, generals, captains of industry."

Many Mexican men are curious about what it means to be a Mexican, and what it means to be a man. One is not born knowing these things; nor are these things truly discovered. They are learned and relearned.

In Colonia Santo Domingo, in addition to Paz, people use Oscar Lewis in the stories they tell about themselves. Or at least what people have heard about his anthropological writings (Lewis is "remembered" far more than he is read). We anthropologists may well ask where the need to see pervasive machismo comes from, and why so many have used Lewis to prove their own preconceptions and prejudices.

In the dramas which people in *colonias populares* offer about their own and others' marriages, the roles of self-designated machos are





not all playful by any means. "We cheat on our wives because we're men," said one acquaintance. "We want to be macho." What does this mean, "we want to be macho," except that "to be macho" is an ideological stance which can only be sanctified by oth-

### Journalists and academics often seem intent on discovering a ubiquitous, virulent, and "typically Mexican" machismo.

ers—both men and women—and by oneself? In my discussion with the *muchachos*, while one of them said that they were not machos but rather *hombres*, men, Celso insisted that, as men, they were by definition machos. He said that if they needed to call themselves something, *mandilón* and *marica* (queer) were obviously inappropriate. So what else did this leave except macho?

The description provided by Celso makes it appear that the youths rummage around in an identity grab-bag, pulling out whatever they happen upon, as long as it is culturally distinct. One minute these *muchachos* identify themselves as machos, who enjoy bragging about controlling women and morally and physically weaker men. The next minute the same young men express bitterness at being the ones on the bottom.

#### REDEFINITIONS

DELINEATING CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND defining cultural categories—one's own and those of others—is not simply the pastime of ethnographers. While no one in Santo Domingo might explicitly divide the population of men this way, I think most would recognize the following four male gender groups: the macho, the *mandilón*, the neither-macho-nor-*mandilón*, and the broad category of men who have sex with other men. But the fact that few men or women do or would care to divide the male population in this manner reveals more than simply a lack of familiarity with the methods of Weberian ideal typologizing. Masculinity, like other cultural identities, is not confined so neatly in categories like macho or *mandilón*. Identities only make sense in relation to other identities, and they are never firmly established for individuals or groups. Further, consensus as to whether a particular man deserves a label such as neither-macho-nor-*mandilón* is rarely found. He will likely think of himself as a man in a variety of ways, none of which necessarily coincides with the views of his family and friends.

No man in Santo Domingo today fits neatly into one of the four categories, at specific moments, much less throughout the course of his life. Further, definitions such

as these resist other relevant but complicating factors like class, ethnicity, and historical epoch. Machismo in Colonia Santo Domingo has been challenged ideologically, especially by grassroots feminism and more indirectly by the mainly middle class feminist and gay rights movements. But it has also faced real if usually ambiguous challenges in the form of strains of migration,

falling birthrates, exposure to alternative cultures on TV, and so on. These economic and sociocultural changes have not automatically led to corresponding shifts in male domination, in the home, the work place, or society at large. But many men's authority has been undermined in material, if limited, ways, and this changing position for men as husbands and fathers, breadwinners, and masters has in turn had real consequences for machismo in Santo Domingo.

In Colonia Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the Republic, the fate of machismo as an archetype of masculinity has always been closely tied to Mexican cultural nationalism. My good friend César commented to me one day about drinking in his youth, "More than anything we consumed tequila. We liked it, maybe because we felt more like Mexicans, more like *lugareños* [equivalent to homeboys]."

For better or for worse, Ramos and Paz gave tequila-swilling machismo pride a place in the panoply of national character traits. Through their efforts and those of journalists and social scientists on both sides of the Rio Bravo/Grande, the macho became "the Mexican." This is ironic, for it represents the product of a cultural nationalist invention. You note something (machismo) as existing, and in the process help to foster its very existence. Mexican machismo as national artifact was, in this sense, partially declared into being.

In all versions, Mexican masculinity has been at the heart of defining both the past and future of a Mexican nation. Like religiousness, individualism, modernity, and other convenient concepts, machismo is used and understood in many ways. We either accept the multiple and shifting meanings of macho and machismo or we essentialize what were already reified generalizations about Mexican men. Like any identity, male identities in Mexico City do not reveal anything intrinsic about the men there. Their sense and experience of being *hombres* and machos is but a part of the reigning chaos of the lives of men in Colonia Santo Domingo, at least as much as the imagined national coherence imposed from without.

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# Mexican Immigration

... and the Latinization of the United States

BY MARCELO M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO

**T**HE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES WILL BE IN NO SMALL measure linked to the fortunes of a heterogeneous blend of relatively recent arrivals from Asia, the Caribbean, and, above all, Latin America—first and foremost Mexicans.

The English language needs a new word for this extraordinary process of change in the Americas. I propose the neologism *Latinization*. Latinization is reshaping the character of the Americas. Indeed, it shall emerge as the most important vector in U.S.-Latin American relations bar none. Latinization, the product of globalization, is largely driven by the biggest migration flow in the history of the continent. I tentatively define Latinization as the processes of socio-cultural, economic, and political hemispheric change traced to the experiences, travails, and fortunes of the Latin-American origin population of the United States.

Two social facts shape the contours of Latinization: (1) Latin America is in the midst of an unprecedented exodus; those leaving Latin America overwhelmingly choose the United States as their destination, and (2) the United States is undergoing a dramatic demographic transformation. New data make it plain that the United States is becoming a country where the white European-origin population is declining while the Latin American-origin population is growing exponentially. The Bureau of Census claims that in just two generations a full quarter of the U.S. population will be of Latino origin—that is, nearly 100 million people will trace their ancestry to the Spanish speaking, Latin American, and Caribbean worlds.

At the dawn of the new century, the 35 million-plus Latinos in the United States make up roughly 12 per cent of the total population. More Latinos than African Americans are currently attending U.S. schools. Indeed, Latinos may have already surpassed African Americans as the nation's largest minority group (see Figure 1).

In this brief essay I offer some reflections on the most powerful force behind Latinization: Mexican immigration to the United States. There are now more than 20 million Mexican-Americans in the United States—constituting 58 per cent of the Latino population (figure 2). They are at once among the “oldest” and “newest” Americans—in the provincial rather than hemispheric meaning of the term. While the Mexican-American population goes back several centuries (after all there were Mexicans here *before* there was a U.S.) the majority of the Mexican-origin population of the United States is either immigrant or first generation U.S. born. Indeed, roughly seven million of them are Mexico-born. Today, in the midst of the largest wave of immigration in U.S. history, roughly one in four immigrants in the United States is a Mexican.

Large-scale immigration from Mexico, along with newer flows from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, defines the tendencies of what U.S. scholars of immigration now call “the new immigration.” Three distinct social formations describe this new Latino immigration: (1) a more or less uninterrupted flow of large scale legal (as well as undocumented) immigration from Mexico,

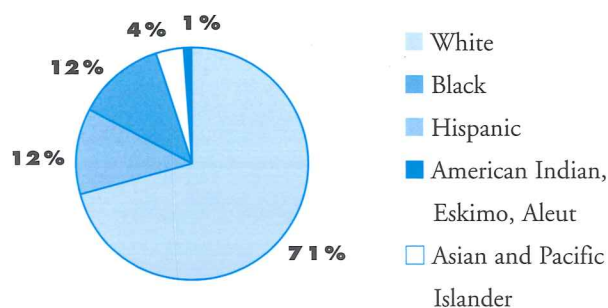
rapidly intensifying after 1980 (by the last decade of the Twentieth Century, there were more legal immigrants from Mexico *alone* than from all of the countries of Europe combined), structured by powerful economic forces and socio-cultural practices, which seem unaffected by unilateral policy initiatives, (2) more time-limited “waves” (as opposed to uninterrupted “flows”) of large scale immigration from Central and South America—by the early 1980s, El Salvador and Guatemala replaced Cuba as the largest source of asylum seekers from the Spanish-speaking world, and (3) a Caribbean pattern of intense circular migration typified by the Puerto Rican and Dominican experiences in New York—where Dominicans are now the largest immigrant group.

Mexican immigration to the United States is at once paradigmatic of a new globalized immigration system—dominated by large numbers of peoples from the “south” moving to wealthier centers in the “north”—and unique. The fact that Mexico lost roughly half of its northern territory to the U.S., the joint U.S.-Mexico border, the critical mass of Mexican citizens and Mexican-Americans now residing in the U.S. side of “the line,” and their heavy concentration in a handful of states, suggests a phenomenon that is quite distinct from other immigration to the United States. The large presence of undocumented Mexican immigrants (by some estimates nearly 40 percent of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today are Mexicans) also separates their case from that of other immigrant groups—though perhaps not from the experiences of Central Americans.

Over the last two decades, Mexican immigration to the United States has undergone significant transformations. Immigration scholars Wayne Cornelius, Jorge Durand, and others have noted that in the past, U.S. immigration policies, market forces, and

FIGURE 1

Resident Population estimates of the U.S. by Race, and Hispanic origin

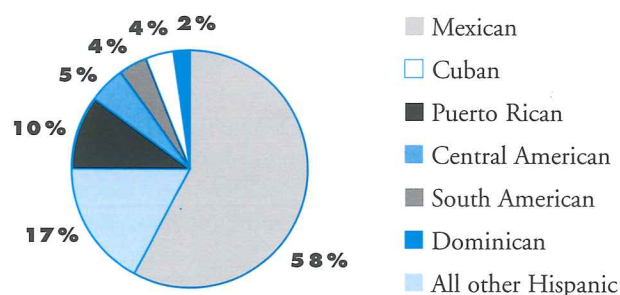


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, October 2000



FIGURE 2

## Latinos, by Type of Origin



Source: Survey, 2000

the social practices of Mexican immigrants did not encourage their long-term integration into American society. A sojourner pattern of (largely) male-initiated, circular migration, seeking to earn dollars during a specific season, dominated the Mexican experience for decades into the 1980s. After concluding their seasonal work, large numbers of Mexicans typically headed south of the border—and eventually started the cycle again the following year. In that context, Mexican immigrants engaged in dual lives, displaying the kinds of proto-transnational behaviors now more fully developed among Caribbean Latinos. Like Puerto Ricans and Dominicans today, the Mexican immigrants of yesterday lived “here” and “there.”

All of this has changed. Over the last two decades, new data suggest the intensification of a momentum to permanently settle in the U.S. side of “the line.” This can be explained in part by the maturation of the Mexican migration cycle. But it can also be explained by the intensification of the border control initiative at the U.S.-Mexican line. The current border control campaign at an estimated two billion dollars the largest undertaking of its kind, ever has resulted in large numbers of Mexican immigrants (especially those without papers) remaining in the United States rather than seasonally returning home. It has also made the crossings more costly, dangerous, and deadly—as suggested by the deaths in the Arizona desert of 14 Mexican immigrants early in the summer of 2001.

Over time, Mexicans in the United States have become transnational citizens. They are emerging as important players in U.S. society while remaining powerful protagonists in the economic, political, and cultural spheres in the country they left behind. For every million people in the diaspora there are a billion dollars in remittances every year. This underscores the economic clout that the Mexican-origin population in the U.S. has in Mexico. Last year, the seven million Mexican citizens living in the United States remitted approximately seven billion dollars to Mexico. Politically, Mexicans in the U.S. are also becoming increasingly relevant actors with influence in political processes both “here” and “there.” Mexican politicians have recently “discovered” the political value of the more than seven million Mexican immigrants living in the United States. Mexican President Vicente Fox underscored a new official atti-

tude towards expatriates when he toured the border region in December 2000 to personally welcome back a few of the estimated one million Mexicans traveling south for Christmas. The Mexican dual nationality initiative—whereby Mexican immigrants who became naturalized U.S. citizens would retain a host of political and other rights in Mexico—is also the product of this emerging transnational framework.

Three features characterize the new Mexican immigration to the United States. First, a growing body of research suggests that economic restructuring and the sociocultural changes taking place in the Americas virtually insure that Mexican immigration to the United States will be a long-term phenomenon. Globalization and economic restructuring have intensified inequality in Latin America, generating unemployment and underemployment, and with it new migratory pressures.

Second, in the U.S. side of “the line,” there is a voracious and enduring demand—indeed, addiction might be a more appropriate term—for Mexican immigrant workers in various sectors of the economy. The extraordinary Mexican-origin population growth in Nevada, Georgia, Arkansas, and North Carolina during the 1990s is tied to the explosion of new jobs in construction and service, meat, and poultry industries in those states. Although the extremely high flows of Mexican immigration to the United States during the last two decades will probably decrease eventually—especially as Mexican fertility rates continue to sharply decline—it is safe to assume that Mexicans will continue to dominate immigration to the United States over the next decades.

Third, new data suggest that the immigration momentum we are currently witnessing cannot be easily contained by unilateral policy initiatives—such as the various border control efforts and

### Over time, Mexicans in the United States have become important transnational players.

theatrics that intensified over the last decade. Transnational labor recruiting networks, family reunification, and wage differentials continue to act as powerful contexts for Mexican immigration to the United States.

The Mexican presence in the U.S. is largely defined by immigration. The vast majority of Mexicans in the U.S. have been directly or indirectly touched by the experience of immigration. It is part of a shared experience and history that brings together the various distinct paths Mexicans have taken in their journey to the U.S. Although there have been differences in modes of incorporation and patterns of immigration, Mexicans in the United States share the experience of settling in this country and engaging in a process of social, economic, and cultural adaptation.

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# View from New England

## *A Preliminary Portrait*

BY CARLOS RICO F.

**T**HE MEXICAN DIASPORA HAS REACHED New England. Mexicans living in the region today include many types of migrants, long-term and temporary, documented and undocumented. The traditional face of the Mexican presence is rapidly changing as a result. Will this growing population become a true Mexican community in the foreseeable future? This essay seeks to illuminate this question by providing a first (disposable camera, perhaps?) snapshot of the present mosaic.

Mexicans in New England constitute a diverse, heterogeneous population. Traditionally, they have included distinguished representatives of the best educated and most socially privileged segments of Mexican society, whose enrollment in the region's academic institutions has in fact tended to increase in recent years. This population, concentrated in metropolitan Boston, has for a long time been one of the better identified, albeit also smallest, components of Mexican presence here. In recent years, an increased number of high school students and part-time ESL and continuing education students have added to the mix. Increased attention to Mexico in

many different states and, along with the small group of Mexican nationals detained in state and county jails throughout the region, constitute a micro-component of the mosaic with very specific needs and characteristics.

However, workers definitively constitute the largest and fastest growing component of New England's Mexican population. From Boston's Big Dig to the shift in agricultural production to non-traditional produce such as broccoli in northern Maine, labor markets have created employment opportunities throughout the region for Mexican and other recent migrants, whose growing presence was at least partially reflected in the U.S. 2000 Census. Mexican origin population in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont grew by 75.9%, from 20,856 in 1990 to 36,689 last year, according to the figures for the five New England states covered by the Consulate of Mexico in Boston. Connecticut, covered from New York, isn't even included in these numbers.

Massachusetts (22,228), Rhode Island (5,881) and New Hampshire (4,590)

ican origin population (14.9%) and only 2,756 persons of Mexican origin registered in the 2000 Census, provides interesting examples of both these flows. Relatively stable groups of Mexicans live in the state's smaller cities and towns like Auburn, Lewiston, Milbridge or Turner, employed in such activities as seafood processing and egg production. However, every year Maine also hosts a large and increasing number of Mexican temporary workers, not fully accounted for in those census figures. Some come from Mexico under the H2A and H2B visa programs to work in agriculture, landscaping or forestry. Others toil without documents. Some are permanent residents recruited in California for relatively short periods of time. Others are migrant agricultural workers who every year follow the seasons from the South Texas Valley to Aroostook county on the Canadian border, bringing along their families and children, some of them U.S. born. All play a significant role in such traditional and more recent staples of Maine's economic life as the harvesting of blueberries, asparagus or broccoli.

Perhaps more so than in any other region of the United States, Mexicans in New England, particularly those who live in densely populated areas of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, are immersed in a much larger and diverse Hispanic community. During the last decade the number of Mexican origin residents grew considerably faster than the 62.1% increase of the region's Hispanic population. The percentage of that wider population that they represent, however, remained relatively stable (and quite small) during the nineties: from 6.09% in 1990, it only grew to 6.61% in 2000. Maine and Vermont, the two states with the smallest Mexican origin population, are relative exceptions, with Mexicans accounting for a much larger proportion of their Hispanic population: 29.4% and 21.3%, respectively. Only in New Hampshire are Mexicans a significant component of both the Mexican origin population in New England (12.51%) and of that state's Hispanic community (22.4%).

## Mexicans in New England are immersed in a larger diverse Hispanic community.

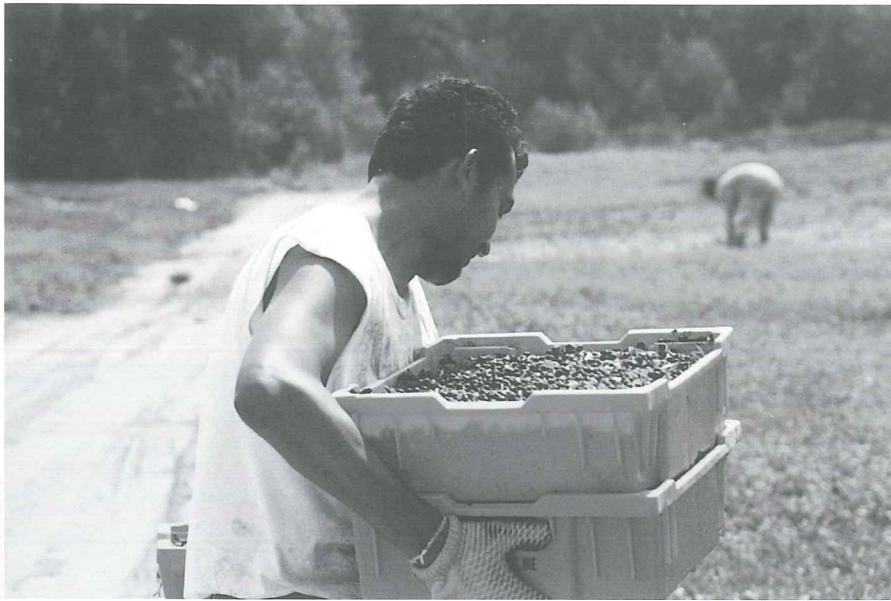
New England's academic circles has contributed a steady flow of researchers and post-doctoral fellows to this normally transient population. A slow process of drop by drop sedimentation linked to these and other flows has also added a more permanently settled group of Mexicans that includes professionals (university professors, physicians, e-entrepreneurs, etc.), a sprinkle of business owners, and spouses of either Mexican or American citizens.

At the other end of the spectrum, a number of federal convicts have been brought into the picture with the 1999 establishment of a Medical Center in Devens, Massachusetts, by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Often chronically ill, these Mexicans come from

account for the vast majority of Mexican origin population in these states, with only three highly populated eastern Massachusetts counties (Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex) representing 37.2% of the total. Significant concentrations also exist in other urban areas such as Nashua-Manchester in southern New Hampshire and Central Falls-Pawtucket-Providence in Rhode Island. In fact, the highest growth rate in the region (159.4%) took place in Rhode Island, home to 9.97% of the five state's total population and 16.02% of their Mexican origin population.

Mexicans in New England, however, reach the region's furthest corners as both long term and temporary migrants. Maine, the state with the lowest growth rate for Mex-





MARICRUZ MATEOS

Blueberry Harvest at Cherryfields, Maine, 2001

The three characteristics of the Mexican origin population in New England I have summarized help explain a fourth one: its quite limited degree of organization. Reflecting some of the previously discussed additions to the Mexican population in the region, change has also taken place in this area. A handful of organizations established during the nineties in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire by its more stable components have joined the associations of Mexican students that exist in the most prestigious universities of the Boston metropolitan area. Single issue groups dedicated to the defense of migrant workers have been created in Maine. Most importantly, an effort to establish a *Federación de Organizaciones Mexicanas de Nueva Inglaterra (FOMNI)*, in which all these different groups may find common ground, has continued, on and off, since 1998.

Only a very small part of New England's Mexican population, however, is linked to any of these initiatives, which have still to reach and incorporate, for example, the working class Mexicans who live in the region's urban areas. The limited presence of formal organization in turn contributes to an also very limited ability to influence political decisions. With very rare and notable exceptions, the more privileged segments of New England's Mexican population have not joined the region's political or judicial circles. Furthermore, with the limited exception of the Mexican Association in Rhode Island, community-based organizations have almost no

contacts with local political elites.

The still quite limited number of Mexicans living in the region or the splintered nature of their organizations accounts only partially for this absence from most of New England's decision making circles. Several other factors seem to be at play: Some of the most distinguished Mexican residents in the area, who might otherwise spearhead local political efforts, often focus on the Mexican political arena instead. While only a few are U.S. citizens, enabling them to participate in electoral processes, others even have yet to "adjust" their immigration status. A particularly interesting, and somewhat paradoxical, situation seems to happen when a significant number of the Mexican population living in a given area comes from the same Mexican locality: Sombrerete, Zacatecas, in Manchester-Nashua, El Refugio, Jalisco, in East Boston, or Alfajayucan, Hidalgo, in Central Falls-Pawtucket. In those cases, both the lack of formal organization and the resulting constraints on political influence may sometimes be related to the existence of *de facto* communities, with established communication channels and accepted leadership roles for day-to-day needs and activities, whose members may not have perceived any need to formalize such schemes in the relatively hospitable economic and political climate of the immediate past.

As is the case with most of the content of this essay, these and other issues deserve more attention and rigorous analysis. The image of New England's Mexican population that

begins to emerge, even from the preliminary description thus far presented, is certainly richer than the perception of a student-centered community, still prevalent in some circles of both Mexico and the United States. Mexicans in New England constitute a diverse and heterogeneous population, dispersed throughout the region and subsumed in the wider context of the Hispanic community in those urban areas where it tends to concentrate. These three characteristics are likely to remain in the foreseeable future. Might the limited degree of organization and influence associated with them change?

There are interesting challenges and opportunities ahead. While diversity and heterogeneity may hamper attempts to establish umbrella organizations such as FOMNI, they also open possibilities for mutually beneficial support among the different components of the Mexican mosaic. The pattern of geographic distribution associated with such diversity complicates efforts to reach all its pieces. At the same time, however, it creates the potential foundation of a truly regional voice. The contextual factor represented by the wider Hispanic community with which the Mexican population shares many problems and concerns may sometimes complicate the perception of a specifically Mexican set of relevant demands, which might help consolidate a sense of common identity. It, however, also offers extremely useful resources for any attempt to communicate with the Mexican population. The support and collaboration of Hispanic community leaders are, in fact, crucial in this regard, since it is frequently only through the pan-Hispanic electronic and printed media that Mexicans may be reached.

New England's Mexican population has started drifting towards community. Whether this journey is completed in the foreseeable future will in good measure depend on the efforts of those community and other leaders who have decided to build on the opportunities just recalled in order to face up to the specific challenges of this regional setting.

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*A Ph.D. candidate at Harvard's Government Department, Carlos Rico has been Consul of Mexico in Boston since 1999. He would like to acknowledge the very able help of Carlos Yescas and Jorge Torres in reviewing the 1990 and 2000 Census statistics.*



# Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula

*Or Simply LA...the View from Los Angeles*

BY FELIPE AGREDANO-LOZANO

**I**N 1999, ON RETURNING HOME TO LA AFTER FOUR YEARS AT Harvard and in the Boston area, I ascended to the city of Angels for the annual gala dinner of the premier civil rights firm: the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, MALDEF. At our table were a federal judge, his wife, and several recent Yale and Harvard law school graduates. I found myself surrounded by what I had missed so dearly in New England: Latinos. I was at ease not having to explain, over and over, where was I *really* from. The pride that buoyed the gathering had been entirely absent in my experience in New York and Boston. Here, we were Latinos in the majority; we were Mexicans in Los Angeles.

Since its founding on September 4, 1771, Los Angeles has known diversity. Historian Richard Griswold Del Castillo (*The Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890*) lists the city's founding fathers and mothers: 8 Mulattos, 9 Indians, 2 Negroes, 1 Mestizo, and 1 "Chino." Today, LA constitutes the largest assemblage of Mexicans outside of Mexico. Numbers do not translate necessarily into political or economic power. My Chicano Studies professor at East LA College, Frank Gutiérrez, was the first to suggest to me that East LA is the largest reservation in the U.S. Though it seemed far-fetched, it also made sense—the Indian features, skin color, and blood. I pondered this idea years later in cafes and bookstores. Essayist Richard Rodríguez expressed a similar thought: "Kevin Costner would have you believe the Indians disappeared. Nonetheless, as I drove through the streets of Los Angeles today, I saw the Aztecs, Mayas, and Chichimecas." Rodríguez' description of LA pedestrians, day laborers, street vendors, and Latina soccer moms matches my own observations. I, too, see brown folk. Indigenous to the land, both to Mexico and to Los Angeles. Los Angeles has become, in the view of its inhabitants, the new world center. Like a New Yorker's view of the world, spilling over to the rest of the nation. The nation is becoming like LA: Latino.

## MEXICANS IN LOS ANGELES

FORGET NASHVILLE, THE NATION FINDS ITSELF CONSUMED WITH THE latest Latino beat. The city of angels has been busy composing, recording, and producing heavenly music sung in Spanish with occasional English or Arabic. Jalapeño-relish fills McDonald's dispensers in LA (I can't decide if it tastes better on a Quarter Pounder or a breakfast burrito wrapped in a cold pasty tortilla). Menudo and horchata on Sizzler's menu surprised me, but then again this is Los Angeles. Jorge Castañeda, Berkeley's visiting professor and Mexico's current Secretary of Foreign Affairs, suggested that the border has always been seen by Mexicans, in LA and abroad, as a Yankee imposition and stubbornness. Proposition 187 was the last official attempt



JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

## Making Mexican Angels

to deny the reality. The border is vanishing before our eyes. Los Angeles led the effort decades ago; the nation has followed. In LA, remnants of the border have been practically erased, like a persistent stain, almost gone.

Half a century ago, while visiting Berkeley, Mexican author Octavio Paz wrote about his compatriots, Mexicans in East LA. Paz' portrayal of the colors, sights, and sounds of East Los Angeles was accurately detailed, almost prophetic. Bright colored graffiti, neon lights, and homes described in detail, the *pachuco* who had a defiant attitude and demeanor. She is now called a *chola-gangsta*, a homie. The aesthetic portrait was an identical split image even today. Yet Paz' analysis was as superficial as his upper class Mexican background. He described Mexicans in LA as tainted and contaminated with America, devoid of roots to the motherland. Paz, although familiar with Siqueros, Orozco, and Rivera, had somehow overlooked Mexican resiliency. The loss of our roots was central, like original sin to Catholicism. Reading his thoughts was painful for me even as a college student. Displaced by choice or by luck, Mexicans in economic exile have always created a new song and a new culture. Paz did not have a notion of this new global multinational economy and the experience that came along with it. Today, Mexicans are part of the LA dialogue on business, education, and politics. Fifty years later, several *pachuco* descendants have run for mayor, sit on the county board of supervisors, and decide state and federal policy. Paz means peace in Spanish; LA is making its peace with Paz.

## BILINGUAL, BICULTURAL, AND TRANSNATIONAL

IN 2001, MEXICANS IN LOS ANGELES HAVE CAPTURED THE MARKET,



media, government, and private sectors by understanding the language and culture of Iberia and Latin America, as well as that of the United States. Agents of America's penetration by Latin America and the world. California has replaced the United Kingdom as the fifth ranked economy in the world; Mexican LA fuels a third of California's economy.

The infamous angelino district of Hollywood is in the business of production, reproduction, and the packaging of American pop culture. California has constantly remade itself. Our pioneering ideas continue to inspire America to change. LA charms and dazzles California, and arguably the world. Mexicans are its backbone. Previously, our gifts to the world were Coke, jeans, and Rock & Roll. Corona, guayaberas, and rock en Español are now more common in LA than in Tijuana.

#### QUETZALCOATL'S SHEDDING SKIN: TRANSFORMING ANGELINO SPIRITUALITY

TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTENDOM AND THE FOUNDING of the city, Los Angeles is busy erecting a monument. Harvard Graduate School of Design's Rafael Moneo was commissioned to design a Cathedral to our Lady Queen of the Angels. The Los Angeles Archdiocese boasts the largest body of Catholics in the U.S. Nuestra Señora, built to withstand five hundred years of California's earthquakes, is intended to endure until 2502, a millennium and a decade after Columbus' arrival. Historically, the greater challenge for Los Angeles has always been the social one: urban riots, or even worse, the hemorrhage of the faithful. Mexican Catholics

are fleeing the mother church in alarming numbers.

As America and Latin America become urban, LA becomes pentecostal at the margins of modernity. Religious demographers predict that it will become Protestant by mid-century. Like any major metropolitan center and crossroads of the world, Los Angeles has had its collection of urban faith communities: storefront churches, mystical and syncretic centers of faith, and other forms of neo-Christian sects common in the history of all frontiers. *Curanderos* (healers) and *sobadoras* (folk chiropractors) maintain a highly complex and culturally comprehensive health system that links the practices of the village to the urban jungle.

#### DECIDING THE FATE OF HEAVEN: LA POLITICS...

METROPOLITAN LOS ANGELES—WITH MORE THAN 15 MILLION people—constitutes a third of the state's population. LA's vote is necessary to win any California race or to secure California's coveted 54 electoral votes. After the passage of proposition 187, the Mexican-American vote and its activism plays a vital role. Mexican nationals became U.S. citizens in record numbers in reaction to the proposition's exclusionary practices. At the state level, the Mexican-American vote aided a Democratic clean sweep of the state legislature and governorship, a damaging setback for the California Republican party. During Mexican President Vicente Fox's first visit to California, he met with Mexican-Americans at yet another fancy MALDEF event, where he stressed outreach and renewed promises of trust. In recent Mexican elections, many nationals living in LA set out to vote in cities that border

### DEMOGRAPHICS AND CULTURAL PRIDE: A Reporter's Eyevue

**A**t first, the concept seemed a stretch to me: Fernandomania a harbinger for a demographic and cultural revolution? My assignment was to explore this notion. By the way (for non-baseball enthusiasts and those not residing in southern California 20 years ago), Fernandomania refers to the crazed reaction to the spectacular start in 1981 by Fernando Valenzuela, a native of a Sonoran hamlet plucked from the obscurity of the Mexican leagues by the L.A. Dodgers.

Caravans of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans trekked to Dodger Stadium when the pitching prodigy manned the mound, boosting attendance by 10,000 or more. The soft-spoken Valenzuela won his first eight games, an extraordinary five by shutouts, allowing no runs. Indisputably, Valenzuela heightened ethnic pride among a fast-growing population invigorated with new immigration yet overlooked by much of the majority culture.

But, viewed through the prism of time, did this baseball phenomenon really represent the early stirring of a reborn Hispanic identity—a character all but demolished during decades of settlement by English-speaking migrants? The more I asked around, the more I began to buy the thesis. "He [Valenzuela] gave people a reference of success, without having to sell your cultural soul," Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, an anthropologist at the University of California Riverside, told me. Valenzuela's seeming old-country values and modesty—and his distinctly non-Hollywood appearance—resonated deeply with the largely working-class Latino multitudes.

My article ran on the July 9, 2001 front page of the *Los Angeles Times*. The varying reactions indicate something about where this community stands—at a point when Census 2000 data shows that Latinos (the great majority of Mexican ancestry) make up roughly half of

L.A.'s population. A Latina engineer who was reared in Watts wrote in praise, saying Valenzuela's visit to her high school years earlier had been inspirational.

But such sentiments were far from unanimous. A woman left an anonymous telephone message denouncing me as an "illegal immigrant lover" and concluding, "Shame on you." An even nastier reaction came from an e-mail correspondent who wrote, "I find nothing to indicate 'character' and nobility in Mexico's virtual occupation and seizure of the city I was born in." I was reminded that the Latino ascendancy, now so often celebrated in the press, is not a cause for delight in all quarters.

Patrick J. McDonnell, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, was a 1999-2000 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He was also a panelist at the 1998 DRCLAS journalists' conference on covering Latino immigration.



California such as Tijuana, Tecate, and Mexicali, to participate in the election that made Vicente Fox victor—bringing about the defeat of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI.

Tuesday, June 4, 2001 marked the end of two years of a campaign for the next mayor of Los Angeles. Angelinos of Mexican ancestry made history by running the first Mexican-American in modern times for the city's top post. Although ultimately defeated at the polls, Antonio Villaraigosa mobilized more than 6,000 volunteers to vote for him to be the next mayor of LA. I yearned to understand why the marriage of the old liberal Democratic Black vote in South Central and the Republican conservative-leaning white vote of San Fernando Valley abruptly ended, for now, any chance of a Mexican-American becoming mayor of Los Angeles. With my Harvard Divinity School advisor, Cornel West, I discussed the election and the role of race, American democracy, and evil. It didn't help that Villaraigosa was brown, indigenous, and cholo-looking. West whispered to me, "Racism is deeper than logic."

Yet Mexican-Americans can be effective Mexican power brokers. Richard Polanco is one such broker to run Latinos at the state

level, outside of the barrios of the city of angels. His success at electing moderate democrat Latinos in non-Latino majority districts has built a powerhouse, bringing significant clout to Mexican LA. Mirroring state demographics, the Latino Caucus is made mostly of elected officials of Mexican ancestry, followed by elected officials of mixed Central American ancestry such as Congresswoman Hilda Solis.

I certainly don't know who LA's next mayor will be, but I have a good hunch she must be Our Lady of dark Indian features. A Latina! Perhaps it will be Gloria Molina, the first Mexican female in the State Assembly, in the LA City Council, and on the County Board of Supervisors. The sophistication of the Mexican electorate in Los Angeles should not be taken lightly.

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# The Poblano Subdiaspora

*The View from New York*

BY SANTIAGO CREUHERAS

**M**ORE THAN 600,000 PEOPLE FROM Puebla, Mexico, call greater New York home. Poblanos—as those from Puebla are called—make up an immigrant population about half the size of Boston. They give New York City and its surroundings the feel of a “little Puebla,” with an abundance of companies like Puebla Foods, Tortillería La Poblana, Que Chula Es Puebla Carnicería, and México Lindo Bakery.

The lack of opportunities for Poblanos in Puebla has created a wave of immigration to the United States. Puebla, Mexico's fifth most populous state, had an estimated population of 4,700,000 in 1995. The Government of the State of Puebla estimates that about a million Poblanos work in the United States on a permanent or temporary basis.

Poblanos have produced successful businessmen like Felix Sánchez, the “king of tortillas,” who came from Puebla in the 1970s. Although he faced obstacles common for immigrants, Sánchez soon realized that the Mexican community had created a demand for Mexican food products. With his savings, he purchased a used industrial tortilla maker

from Mexico and started a small business.

Today, Felix Sánchez is one of the most important Hispanic entrepreneurs in the United States. He has branched out into new ventures such as a cheese factory and a large bakery in New York, as well as a chili factory in Puebla. Sánchez, who has built a very strong relationship with the government of the State of Puebla, is also working to develop programs for helping Mexican immigrants in New York and surrounding areas.

On the other side of the economic scale are the many flower vendors from Puebla.

**Within the United States, tougher anti-immigrant laws in California caused Poblanos to seek safe haven with friends and family in the northeast.**

Around-the-clock and on the rainiest days they sell beautiful bouquets of orchids, daisies, roses, and tulips. They can be found in the New York subways or pushing supermarket carts filled with festive flowers through crowded streets.

Immigration scholar Robert Smith sug-

gests that flower vending allows immigrants a measure of dignity. Women, with limited options for employment, sometimes prefer the flower business to work in garment factories. After all, when selling flowers they do not have to tolerate being “ordered around.” Men, too, often find more dignity in the informal economy of flower selling than in restaurant work.

About 60 per cent of the northeastern Poblanos live in New York City, especially in the Jackson Heights neighborhood in Queens. Successful Poblano immigrants in

the United States have played an important role in their sub-diaspora's organization, integration, and development. They remain members of communities in the state of Puebla in Mexico, while cultivating new relationships in their adopted U.S. communities.

Unlike other Mexican sub-diasporas in



the United States, the Poblano sub-diaspora is attempting to develop new programs for the assimilation of its members in the United States. The most successful Poblano immigrants in New York lead development committees, which, as documented in their detailed records, are very active in the community.

Poblanos came to New York in the same way as many Mexicans, with guides called coyotes leading them across the border. The history is a long one. At the beginning of the twentieth century, retailers from the Yucatan made constant trips from Progreso and Havana to New York, generating the first contacts of Mexicans in New York and founding the Mexican Center of New York.

Maurilia Arriaga, fondly known as Miss Maurilia, led the first wave of Poblanos in the 1940s. Migrating to New York to work as a cook for a retired American diplomat, she brought a slew of nephews, nieces, and friends to the Big Apple in the 1950s.

In the 1960s came a second wave of Poblanos, many of them from the same small Puebla villages. At the end of the 1960s, when there was much employment in manufacturing and in the restaurant industry, the weekly income of the immigrants ranged from U.S.\$50 to \$80, considerably more than back home. Industrialists assisted Mexican workers in obtaining temporary "resident permits" for employment, but numbers remained small. However, New York Poblanos promoted migration to their friends and families back home. Within ten years, there were 6,000 New York Poblanos, and by 1980, 25,000.

The 1982 and 1994 economic crises, as well as the 1985 earthquake, generated an exponential growth in migration to New York. Within the United States, tougher anti-immigrant laws in California caused Poblanos to seek safe haven with friends and family in the northeast.

Although initially caught up with trying to earn a living, 10 years later, some men have attempted to reconcile their New York lives with their Puebla origins, for example through the transnational projects of



ANNA LEVINE, FROM CROSSINGS

Tacos from Puebla in New York.

painting the church or building sewers in their hometown. Often a sort of ancestral racism has emerged, such as in the Puebla municipalities of Chinantla and Piaxtla. Poblanos from Chinantla, with its deeper indigenous roots, typically work in basic agriculture and cattle ranching, while the inhabitants of Piaxtla are cattle traders. These differences become emphasized in New York, and Piaxtecos develop greater entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Piaxtecos organize informal religious, civic, and sport celebrations, generating confidence with people of other Hispanic-American ethnic groups, including local politicians, as though belonging to one local elite group.

Although the most successful rarely participate actively, they generally contribute funds or sponsor celebrations, religious parades, dances, and events. Often, personal conflicts develop between the organizers and the sponsors, and accusations of graft and corruption lead to even more divisions. The Poblano community in New York has found group integration to be extremely difficult.

Even social development projects in the community of origin provoke tensions. For instance, say a local community collects

funds to paint the hometown church. Then, three community members travel for a weekend to their hometown to give the funds personally. Three months later, the town asks for more money to complete the job. The community in New York returns to collect more contributions and they send them to their hometown again. The committee in New York returns to the town to supervise the works done with its contributions, and they find that the community did not do the painting. The parish priest had to contract painters to do the work. Probably, one of the local members of the committee took part of the money to pay for a celebration or to cover personal necessities. Or, in the worst case, the municipal and parish authorities do not recognize the economic contributions that the migrants made. Consequently, the migrants are reluctant to support another project of social character, resulting

in the dissolution of the group. Because they send money home, Poblano immigrants assume leadership roles in their communities of origin, generating division within those communities. Culturally, migrants often break with traditions, some religious, generating a subculture of expression and way of life. They speak "Spanglish," and so do their U.S.-born children.

The government of Puebla has sought to overcome some of these ingrained tensions by engaging in a systematic State Development Program 1999-2005. The program seeks to assist Poblanos living in the United States and to generate opportunities for the communities exporting labor from Puebla to the United States. The state government has created the concept of "Casas Puebla" in several U.S. cities with a concentration of Poblano migrants. A "Casa Puebla" will advise Poblanos on immigration policy, consular matters, and customs. In addition, it will inform Poblanos of their rights as residents in the United States and increase their bonds and ties with their families in Mexico. Moreover, a "Casa Puebla" will promote respect for fundamental rights of immigrants and develop campaigns promoting



ethnic and social awareness.

The first Casa Puebla in the United States was inaugurated in May 1999 in New York. A non-profit organization with a board of directors, it worked with established Poblano associations, sponsoring education, health, culture, and athletic programs, as well as promoting tourism. New York's Casa Puebla also promotes programs in which the successful Poblano immigrants invest in their communities of origin in Puebla, creating sources of employment and improving life conditions in the region.

Culture is also an important focus. Well-known singers such as "Los Tigres del Norte" and "Ana Bárbara" performed at Cinco de Mayo celebrations at Madison Square Garden. The Day of the Dead, the Virgin of Guadalupe celebration, Christmas "posadas," and Mexican art and craft exhibits are becoming an integral part of the New York landscape.

It has been sixty years since Puebla's Miss Maurilia first caught sight of the Statue of Liberty. New York has been coming home to Puebla for years; now, amidst a prolifer-

ation of taco trucks and flower vendors, Puebla has come home to New York.

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## Two Countries, One Future

*The View from Texas*

BY PATRICIO SAMPAYO

THE ELECTIONS OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AND MEXICAN President Vicente Fox have created an unprecedented opportunity along the 2000-mile-long U.S.-Mexico border. Since the inception of NAFTA in 1994, the border region has shown a noticeable increase in jobs and earned income. Now, private and public sectors have begun to reassess the challenges facing the border to continue that growth. Among their top priorities are economic development, education, and technology.

The border is not a foreign place to me; I crossed it every day during my childhood to go to school. However, it wasn't until this summer that I realized the enormous potential behind the border. As an intern at Imbran, a real estate development firm in Tamaulipas, I had a first-hand look into the future of the border.

One of the events I attended while in Tamaulipas was the U.S.-Mexico Border Governors Conference in Tampico. The conference featured the governors of all nine U.S. and Mexican border states. All of the speakers presented individual objectives for the border, but there appeared to be one common goal: economic growth.

**The border needs more than just manual labor; it needs "educated" labor and training.**

Since the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, Mexico's export business has been booming. This year, Mexico is expected to pass Japan as the second-largest supplier of foreign-made goods to the United States, with more than \$120 billion in exports moving across the border. Exports account for nearly one-third of Mexico's \$500 billion economy and at least half of the three million jobs created since NAFTA took hold. Overall, the value of Mexico's exports has risen from \$61 billion in 1994 to an estimated \$165 billion this year—more than the combined exports of all South American countries.

The maquiladora industry has been a large contributor to this growth. As corporations face greater competition, the demand for a skilled but more competitively priced workforce has increased. Mexican labor is sought out for its high quality and low cost. Most maquiladora workers get paid anywhere from one to two U.S. dollars per hour in Mexico, compared to an average rate of 12 to 15 USD in the U.S. When you consider that most factories have about 100 employees, on average that amounts to an additional \$1000 per hour, \$40,000 per week, and \$2,000,000 per year. With the recent slowdown in the U.S. economy, these numbers may begin to lure more corporations across the border.

Maquiladora exports are growing three times faster than the GDP's growth rate and the industry accounts for 18% of new jobs nationwide. Consistent increases in workforce productivity since the 1970's have attracted higher technology industries to Mexico. In fact, 60 % of the maquiladora industry is located on the border with the United States. "Tamaulipas is geographically positioned to capitalize on the industry's growth. However, the rapid growth within the maquiladora industry has made it increasingly difficult to find available land sites with the necessary infrastructure required by the high-technology industry," says Matamoros mayor, Homar Zamorano. Reynosa and Matamoros in Mexico have been growing at explosive rates, causing stress on the citizens, the infrastructure, and the environment. A new "master-planned" city may be a solution to provide adequate space and services.

One such project is underway on the Texas-Tamaulipas border. The location is sometimes called the "Texas Tropics," because the balmy Rio Grande Valley is a popular tourist destination. But it's what's on the other side of the Rio Grande that interests corporations the most. Labor availability at reasonable cost, strategic location for distribution, and land availability have prompted companies around the world to view Mexico as an attractive alterna-



tive in their relocation decisions.

Impulsora Industrial los Indios, also known as I3, has plans to create a "master-planned community" by the name of Lucio Blanco. As with other industrial parks, Lucio Blanco will allow companies to manufacture in Mexico using inputs from the U.S. at no extra cost. The project is unique because it will concentrate on "smarts" rather than smokestacks. "We want to push the maquiladoras into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by moving away from the traditional textile and furniture industries and toward the high-technology companies in the computer software, microelectronics, and biomedical industries," says I3 executive Juan Carlos Montalvo, adding that the company wishes to concentrate new ventures Silicon Valley-style to stimulate self-sustained growth. In fair disclosure, another of the founders of the project is Ramón H. Sampayo, my father.

Because of the family connection but, in particular, as a result of my internship, I've come to see technology as the key to economic growth. However, new technopolises have grown too fast in recent years, causing spiraling real estate prices and rampant air and water pollution. A regional solution is needed to address the growing demands required to attract, develop, and sustain technology industries in the South Texas/Northeastern Mexico Border Region. Jorge Reyes Moreno, secretary of economic development for the state of Tamaulipas, observes that planned communities "will do away with many of the unexpected problems that cities, such as Matamoros and Reynosa, face due to the recent growth in border cities."

Education was another primary concern at the Border Governors Conference. The border needs more than just manual labor; it needs "educated" labor, so education and training must be prioritized before growth companies commit to projects similar to Lucio Blanco. Texas Governor Rick Perry has appointed a special commission to examine such issues as accessible and affordable higher education, the integration of technology into the college experience, and meeting the evolving workforce needs of Texas. Plans are already underway to train students for technology-oriented jobs. The governor says he is determined to continue reform in public schools, increasing attention to the critical fields of math and science.

In addition, regional studies are being made by the IC<sup>2</sup> Institute from the University of Texas at Austin as part of the Cross Border Institute for Regional Development (CBIRD) project. Created by the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), the University of Texas (Austin & Brownsville), and the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), CBIRD seeks to prepare a highly trained labor force to attract and sustain high-tech industries in the border region. Together, I3 and CBIRD aim to prepare students through advanced educational facilities and work closely with all sectors of the border economy to satisfy workforce needs.

Telecommunications infrastructure seems to be the final step for the border. Tamaulipas governor Tomas Yarrington pointed out the importance of technological improvement in the advancement of the border economy. With the help of Governor Perry, both states are committed to making sure that the Texas-Tamaulipas region is at the forefront of the digital revolution. Offi-

cials are already working on landing DSL lines and fiberoptic cabling in the Rio Grande Valley and across the Rio Grande into Matamoros and Lucio Blanco. In addition, the United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce (USMCOC) has already implemented its "Wiring the Border" project to increase sustainable economic development along the U.S.-Mexico Border. The project will create a virtual network from San Diego/Tijuana to Brownsville/Matamoros connected with Electronic Commerce Research Centers or Nodes. USMCOC is working with IBM, Telmex, CompUSA/Prodigy, Roadway, GE, Globe-1, Boeing, Delphi, To2.com and Banorte to assure the success of the project.

As an intern here in Tamaulipas, it seems to me that the U.S.-Mexico border is one of the most dynamic regions of the world. Both countries have come a long way as independent nations; there is no telling what they can accomplish together.

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*Patricio Sampayo is a Harvard University economics concentrator with a special interest in Latin America; he received a DRCLAS internship this past summer to work with Imbran, a real estate development firm that concentrates on promotion, sales, and marketing services. Sampayo, who lived in Mexico for 18 years prior to leaving for college, crossed the U.S.-Mexico Border daily to attend grade school and high school. He can be reached at <sampayo@fas.harvard.edu>.*



AL RENDON

Strolling on the Texas border



# A New Golden Age for the Silver Screen?

## *The Mexican Film Industry*

BY JENNIFER LIU

MEXICAN MOVIES ARE TERRIBLE, DON'T WATCH THEM, THE taxi driver told me when I first arrived in Mexico City last summer. Mexican movies are terrible, and also tasteless, reaffirmed my Spanish teacher, Ramón. Don't watch them, he said: they are full of sexual innuendo—not the kind of Spanish I should be learning. My landlady, Emma, responded with equal disinterest. "I saw *Como agua para chocolate*. I didn't really like it. What about that American one with Liz Taylor? Now that was a movie!"

Watching the film *Amores Perros* turned my initial impression on its head. The film premiered in Mexico City in mid-June of last year amid a deluge of publicity about the Mexican film industry, following its award at the Cannes Film Festival. The long, snaking lines of eager spectators coiled around the theater hallways impressed me as much as the show. *Amores Perros* demonstrated to me that the popular opinion of the Mexican film industry was off the mark. Not only was the movie technically accomplished and thematically powerful, but it was also a huge commercial success. In the United States, *Amores Perros* continues to generate box office buzz with its Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film and numerous other awards at film festivals across the world.

The gap between popular opinion and the increasingly high quality of Mexico's films underlines the Mexican film industry's many incongruities. Half a century ago, Mexico had one of the most prestigious film industries in the world; now it commands little respect even from its own citizens. Mexico also has a world-class film school

and an internationally respected pool of film technicians. Despite this vast reservoir of potential, however, the country produces very few films each year, and only a few films of merit.

As in almost every other industry in Mexico, the Mexican state has much to do with the history of the film industry. From the beginnings of film in Mexico to the present day, the Mexican government has played a central role in the development of the industry. Its involvement has run the entire policy gamut, from a near-total nationalization of the industry to its near-total abandonment.

### THE GOLDEN AGE OF MEXICAN FILM

MEXICO'S INDUSTRY HAS OF COURSE BEEN VULNERABLE TO THE TIDE of global economic and geopolitical factors. The famed "golden age of Mexican film" occurred only in the context of global depression and then global war. During the 30s and 40s, Mexican filmmakers took advantage of favorable global conditions and catapulted their products into theaters across the world. At its peak, cinema became Mexico's third largest export and its sixth largest industry. Mexican movies and movie stars won international acclaim and commercial success. Actors such as Pedro Infante and Cantinflas became household names across Latin America and Spain; María Félix enjoyed as much fame as Elizabeth Taylor.

Despite spectacular growth rates in the Mexican economy during the 50s and 60s, the film industry began to stagnate. American businessman William O. Jenkins had amassed a virtual monop-

# More than Popcorn

## *Mexico's Cinemex*

BY JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

MIGUEL ANGEL DÁVILA LOVES MOVIES. Yet, ever since the '93 Harvard Business School graduate returned to Mexico, he almost never watches them—at least not in movie theatres.

It just seems too work-related. That might be better understood once one realizes that 35-year-old Dávila and his two partners are responsible for a Mexico-City headquartered company known as Cinemex, which has 317 movie screens in 21 theatre complexes. The chain—primarily located in malls—has captured 52 per cent of Mexico City's movie theatre market, and 23 per cent of the nation-

al market, Dávila said in a telephone interview from Mexico City. Earlier this year, Cinemex, with 2,100 employees, was named International Exhibitor of the Year at the National Organization of Theatre Owners' Show West in Las Vegas.

"I wasn't going to be in the movie business. It's not what I imagined for myself," Dávila admits, citing his experience as an analyst at McKinsey and several Mexican government agencies. "I went to Harvard Business School because I thought I'd be in the government, in the bank or treasury, and wanted an understanding of business. I never

thought I'd start a business myself."

It all began at Harvard Business School. Dávila and Matthew Heyman met each other as they ran to class their first morning at Harvard. Dávila and Adolfo Fastlicht became acquainted at weekly poker games organized by HBS Mexican students. The three soon-to-be partners came from very different backgrounds, says Dávila. Heyman, who had worked for the Toronto-based film exhibitor Cineplex Odeon, was toying with the idea of a chain of movie theatres outside the United States. Fastlicht's family was well-known in Mexico City in real estate development and construction. Dávila liked the idea of running a business right out of school.

HBS has a second-year field study requirement, and Dávila, Heyman, and Fastlicht used it to create a business plan (which won the HBS business plan competition that



oly over the exhibition sector, limiting film production to only those products that would ensure box office success. The result: a glut of low-cost, simplistic films.

President Luis Echeverría's administration (1970-1976) stimulated a brief but spectacular resurgence in Mexico's film industry. Echeverría, whose brother was a well-known actor, took a special interest in film and undertook large-scale intervention in the industry, amassing a vertical monopoly. The unprecedented attention and funds allocated to the industry succeeded in producing a body of work unparalleled since the "golden" days.

Nelson Carro, film critic for the Mexico City publication *Tiempo Libre*, discusses the Echeverría period with mixed feelings. While massive state support facilitated the production of high quality films, it also left filmmakers unprepared to fend for themselves. The next presidential administration drastically curtailed its film interests but did nothing to help filmmakers find new sources of funding. By the late 60s, both the quantity and quality of Mexican films had begun to ebb.

#### THE INDUSTRY TODAY

WHEN CARLOS SALINAS DE GORTARI ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY IN 1988, the film industry had long fallen victim to its own decadence. State-owned production companies had become cash-sucking machines, siphoning their budgets off to inefficient waste, administrators' back pockets, and the production of low-quality, tasteless films. State-owned distribution and exhibition companies were also riddled with inefficiency and corruption, and those that had not already gone bankrupt were on the verge of doing so. Most absurdly, the industry's only legal regulation was an antiquated and ineffectual law dating back to 1949.

Salinas overhauled the framework of the entire industry. Inefficient bureaucracies were

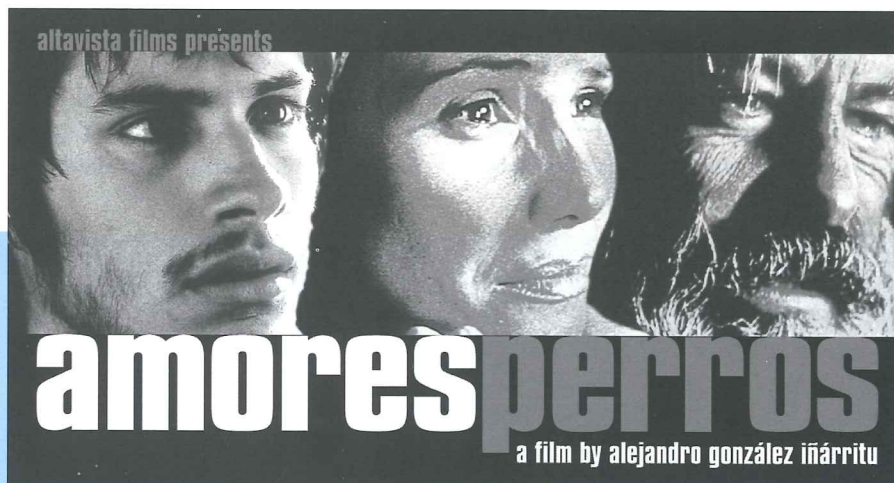
reorganized, state-owned enterprises were liquidated and privatized, and new, market-oriented policies were drafted and passed into law. His administration restored profitability to the distribution and exhibition sectors and cut the pork out of the production sector. Production statistics fell precipitously during his administration, from 76 films in 1988 to 28 films in 1994, but these numbers do not reveal that most of the films no longer produced were of abominable quality. Many internationally acclaimed films were produced during his term, including Alfonso Arau's *Como agua para chocolate* and Jorge Fons' *El callejón de los milagros*.

However, Mexican filmmakers usually speak of Salinas with acrimonious contempt. While Salinas encouraged the production of high quality films, his 1992 reform to the Federal Film Law crippled the production sector of the film industry. Among other measures, the reform liberalized ticket prices and reduced the screentime quota for Mexican films from 50% to zero over four years. Producers no longer had secure sources of funding or outlets for distribution. When the peso crisis of 1994 shattered the Mexican economy, most filmmakers were left unable to produce films. Production fell to 17 in 1995, to 16 in 1996, and to 13 in 1997. In 1998, with only 10 films produced, national production fell to its lowest point since 1932.

Filmmakers were unable to change the law until 1997. In that year, popular discontent with the ruling party led to electoral defeat in the midterm congressional elections. For the first time in its history, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) no longer held a majority in the lower house of Congress. María Rojo, a prominent actress known for her roles in *Rojo Amanecer* and *La Tarea*, won elec-

year). The 93-page plan recommended an emphasis on customer service, continuous showings of films, quality control, theatre comfort, and employee training. The plan also anticipated advance ticket purchases by phone and automated monitoring of concessions and ticket sales. Unlike large U.S. chains, Mexican movie houses at the time tended to show films only three times a day and had few creature comforts.

The three embarked on an ambitious plan to find financing. Right before graduation, while they scrambled to get the necessary backing, Dávila was holding on to a job offer from Goldman Sachs and McKinsey, Fastlicht one from Pepsico, and Heymann one from Blockbuster Video. After many false starts, the project was underway, becoming the largest venture capital startup in Mexican business history.



*Amores Perros* is popular on both sides of the border.

"Harvard Business School principally gave us the networking," says Dávila. "We met each other and we met other people who helped us with fundraising and the plan. This was fundamental. But there was also the exposure to other businesses, to the way of thinking of the faculty. It was a combination of factors that helped us grow."

He adds, "It was also a lot of luck and good timing."

The good timing for Cinemex was bad timing for most everyone else in Mexico. The

three HBS'ers launched their movie business just as the 1994 Mexican devaluation hit. Although the company lost financial capacity to expand as fast as anticipated, the devaluation drew up foreign competition and left national competitors decapitalized.

"We were essentially going into a virgin market," says Dávila.

This coming year, the company plans to add 30 new screens in three theatre complexes, an investment of \$30 million. In 2003, it has a contract for another 120 screens.



tion to the lower house as a deputy from Mexico's left-of-center party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Working together with the National Action Party (PAN), Mexico's conservative party, the filmmaking community succeeded in passing a new Federal Film Law that better protected filmmakers' interests.

The reform efforts, however, sparked a contentious and ugly debate between the three sectors of the industry. The production sector's most controversial demands were the reinstatement of a screentime quota of 30% for Mexican films, a production fund through the taxing of exhibition companies, and the maintenance of the prohibition on the dubbing of commercial films. Not surprisingly, the distribution and exhibition sectors vehemently opposed the suggested changes. The final law called for a 10% quota, but revoked the concept of taxing exhibitors' profits to pay for filmmaking. A fund would be created, but would be funded directly by the government. The prohibition on dubbing, however, was maintained.

### FUTURE PROSPECTS

TODAY, GOVERNMENT FUNDS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN REVIVING THE industry. Through the Mexican Film Institute, the government has supported the production of over 30 films since 1998. Moreover, now that filmmaking is once again a profitable industry, new private companies are moving into the business. Altavista Films, the company that produced *Amores Perros*, is the result of a joint venture between Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim and live-entertainment mogul Alejandro Soberanes. Their company, Estudio México, owns a distribution arm, Nuvisión, in addition to Altavista. This new combination of Mexican-owned companies that both produce and distribute may circumvent some of the common problems that Mexican producers face with American-owned distribution companies. Argos Cine is another prominent private production firm. *Sexo, pudor, y lágrimas*, a feature film release by Argos in 1998, came in third at the national box office, trailing only *Titanic* and *Tarzan*.

Although Cinemex has expanded into Toluca and Guadalajara—and has 100 per cent of the market share in Cuernavaca—the focus is on domination in the Mexico City market. Concentration in the Mexico City market leads to economic savings in many areas, including film rentals, Dávila says.

"Mexico City is the largest city in the world," he observes. "Why fight for Monterrey and Guadalajara?"

Technology is also helping the company grow and increase friendliness to the consumers. Although only 3 1/2 per cent of tickets are ordered over the phone, the phone line's thousands of calls every week for information are an indication of consumer responsiveness. Internet sales are "not significant, but they are growing," indicates Dávila. There are 100,000 registered users, and two million visitors to <www.cinemex.com> every

week, he says. The site gives film synopses, a chat room, and even cyberposters.

Low employee turnover, stimulated by incentives for lower-level staff to become managers, also boosts customer service, according to Dávila. Employee loyalty also helps promote customer loyalty, not only because of customer attention, but also because of word-of-mouth recommendations to family and friends.

The chain's emphasis is on details such as freshly-made popcorn and highest-quality projection and sound equipment. Each of the partners has a different area of responsibility. Adolfo Fastlicht—whose father, Mark, became Chairman of Cinemex—is responsible for real estate, construction, and marketing. Matthew Heyman concentrates on product management, including film distribution. "Matthew watches all the films to

The Hollywood-dominated distribution sector continues to push the line on the dubbing issue. Unsuccessful in the legislative branch, it has moved its efforts to the judicial realm. In 2000, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled in favor of the distributors. Columbia Pictures has already begun the dubbing of American films into Spanish, although considerable resistance to dubbing may prevent dubbed films from reaching the market anytime soon.

The dubbing issue aside, the film industry as a whole is well-poised to regain some of its former glory. With a new legal framework, better economic conditions, and the interest of private capital, production companies already have dozens of projects in the works.

In August of last year, I traveled to Guadalajara to meet with Emilio García Riera, a historian of the Mexican film industry, to hear his opinions on the current state of the industry. When I asked him where he thought the industry was going, he repeated one of his well-known quotes: "Mexico will never again have a golden age of film in the absence of a worldwide depression or World War III." Given the worldwide hegemony of Hollywood, his sobering remark is probably right. While cinema may never become the crown jewel of Mexico it once was, the determination of filmmakers to persist at their craft will ensure that Mexico continues to have its own film industry. With a more balanced legal framework in place, the industry has begun to function once again, bringing films with Mexicans as well as Americans to the silver screen.

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*Jennifer Liu graduated from Harvard University this June with a B.A. in Social Studies and a Certificate in Latin American Studies. This article is based on her senior thesis, a look at how recent political changes in Mexico have affected its film industry. She would like to thank the many Mexican filmmakers, businessmen, and cinefilos-at-large who aided her in her research and hopes that Mexico is indeed entering a new golden age in its film industry.*

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decide what goes into the theatres," says Dávila. Dávila is in charge of human resources and customer service, seeking to make the theatre-going experience enjoyable to Cinemex patrons. "When I go to the movies, I can't enjoy myself," he admits. "I keep thinking about the customers, and am always looking around to see what's good or what's bad."

His favorite recent film was *Amores Perros* by Mexico's Alejandro González Inarritu.

But, Dávila reluctantly says, he didn't watch it at the movie theatre.

Blame it on Harvard Business School....

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*June Carolyn Erlick is publications director at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. She spent 14 years as a correspondent in Latin America and is now working on a biography of disappeared Guatemalan journalist Irma Flaquer.*

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# The Origins of the Pristine State in the Americas

*Investigations of the Royal Palace of Teotihuacan*

IN FEBRUARY OF 1999, LINDA MANZANILLA Naim, from Mexico's National Autonomous University and Leonardo López Luján, from the Mexican Institute of Anthropology and History, invited Harvard Anthropology Department Chairman William Fash, Bowditch Professor of Central American and Mexican Archaeology and Ethnology, and Barbara Fash, research associate in the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, to join the excavation of the Xalla compound at the ruins of Teotihuacan, Mexico.

Though the origins and demise of Teotihuacan have been the subject of endless scholarly inquiry and speculation over the past century, this one critical piece of the picture has been missing until now. The Xalla compound is believed by Manzanilla Naim and López Luján to have been the first administrative royal palace of Teotihuacan, and home to its ruling class. The project will focus on the documentation,



left: Hypothetical reconstruction of stone mosaic sculpture of a supernatural feline, recovered from Structure 2, on the east side of the monumental plaza at Xalla. The feline has goggle eyes like those associated with the Storm God (known as Tlaloc to the later Aztecs) and a feathered-finge arc around the head with starfish, indicating his associations with the sea and the larger cosmos; right: Excavation of the central shrine structure in the monumental plaza of Xalla, looking south. This structure was rebuilt four times after its original construction at the time the Xalla compound was constructed, indicating its importance in ritual activities in the plaza. Just south of the excavated shrine structure is the unexcavated Structure 3; in the right background is the Pyramid of the Sun.

investigation, and conservation of the Xalla Compound, which was built at the same time as the Sun and Moon Pyramids and is located equidistant between them.

This work, made possible in part by a

grant from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, promises to reveal much about the origins of the pristine state at Teotihuacan, as well as about its development and eventual demise.

## Mexican Amphibians

*A New Age of Discovery*

BY JAMES HANKEN

MEXICO TRULY IS A BIOLOGICAL "HOTSPOT." WHAT IS MOSTLY unappreciated, however, even by many professional biologists, is that much of the biological diversity of Mexico remains undocumented. It is virtually certain that many new species await even initial discovery, while many known but unnamed species remain to be formally described. Much of my current research, as well as that of my students and colleagues, seeks to reveal the hidden diversity of Mexico as it pertains to one group in particular: amphibians. Over the years, I've specialized in salamanders—especially one unique type that is among the tiniest vertebrates alive in the world today.

Mexico holds a special place for biologists, and for good rea-

son. Straddling the bio-geographic boundary between the northern temperate zone and the New World tropics, and with terrestrial habitats ranging from sea level to elevations above 5700 meters, Mexico offers a range of habitats and climatic regimes that is matched by few other countries anywhere in the world. Responding to this tremendous ecological opportunity, animals, plants, and other organisms have, over millions of years, diversified to a spectacular degree.

I began my research on Mexican amphibians in the mid-1970s, as a second-year graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley. My major advisor suggested that I initiate a study of the biology of a unique group of salamanders of the genus *Thorius*, which is found in the pine-oak forests that define the southeast-



ern edge of the Mexican plateau in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guerrero. What makes these salamanders unique is their size. Adults of some species measure less than an inch in length, and more than half of that is tail! In *Thorius*, miniaturization has promoted the evolution of several highly unusual anatomical features, allowing them to function and behave normally at such a small body size. The teeny animals were interesting and little-

Throughout much of its natural habitat, *Thorius*, which at one time was arguably the most abundant tropical salamander, is hard to find.

researched, offering what seemed to be a fertile field for a graduate research project. What I was also really looking for was a manageable and limited research topic that I could complete for a Masters' thesis, since I was very unsure as to whether I was interested and willing to pursue a Ph.D., let alone embark on a career as a professional biologist. Little did I—or my major advisor—realize at the time that, more than 25 years later, I would still be focused on these same critters.

What took me so long? Well, besides the predictable minor setbacks and blind alleys that typically slow research, the basic fact is that earlier biologists had grossly underestimated the diversity of even this one relatively small genus. When I began my studies, only ten species of *Thorius* had been formally described, although there were indications from isolated specimens in museum collections of a few additional, new species that needed to be named. Now it is clear that there are at least 25 distinct species, with several more on the way. Indeed, on each field trip that students, colleagues, and I make to southern Mexico to look for *Thorius*—and these days we make about two trips a year—we discover an average of one or two new species in need of formal description. In our work we employ sophisticated molecular tools, which can distinguish species that may differ in anatomy only slightly, if at all. This accounts in part for the differences between our results and those of earlier taxonomists. However, other new species look very different from those seen before. These new species went undetected for so long simply because they live in remote montane localities that have never been adequately inventoried, or even visited, by field biologists. Some of these localities are almost a full day's drive

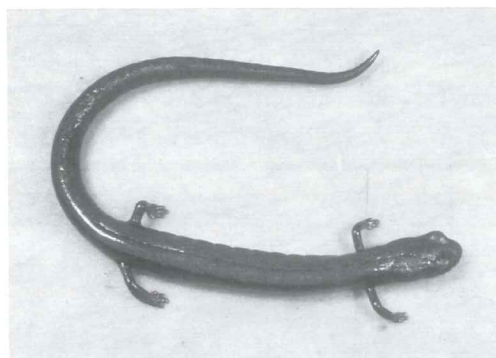
from the nearest paved road; others can be reached only on foot or by horseback. Despite these efforts, it is likely that it will be another several years before we are even close to knowing how many species of *Thorius* there really are.

The above story, with its message of cryptic biological diversity, is being repeated in group after group of Mexican animals and plants. Tragically, at the same time that biologists are beginning to get a more realistic handle on the true size and richness of Mexico's flora and fauna, the diversity is being severely eroded as a consequence of large-scale human impacts on the natural environment. The recent decline of amphibian populations is a global phenomenon that impacts

many countries, and Mexico is no exception.

Throughout much of its natural habitat, *Thorius*, which at one time was arguably the most abundant tropical salamander, is hard to find. Indeed, there already are examples of new species that appear to be going extinct even as they are being formally described. We still know relatively little about what exactly is causing these declines, and increasingly our field work is being used to monitor the status of once-healthy populations of these and other amphibians. One can only hope that such impacts are minimized quickly, and before they extract an even more severe toll on the spectacular biological heritage of Mexico.

*James Hanken is Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology and Curator in Herpetology at Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology. He received a 2000-2001 DRCLAS faculty research grant to further his investigation of Mexican salamanders.*



Left: *Thorius* San Felipe minute salamander; right: James Hanken looking for salamanders in a road bank near the village of Santo Tomás Teipan in southern Oaxaca, the only known locality of a second species, *P.T. minutissimus*. Until he visited this locality last summer, this species had not been seen alive in more than 30 years.



# Fundación México en Harvard

*Mexico at Harvard; Harvard in Mexico*

BY JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

**E**DGAR KELLY GARCIA, A '98 GRADUATE OF HARVARD BUSINESS School, is busy wiring schools in his native state of Sinaloa, Mexico. After graduating from HBS, he founded an Internet company to provide computerized courses in the Sinaloa public school system. Some 500,000 students in this largely rural region may eventually profit from basic English instruction through this technology.

Miguel Alonzo, who graduated from HBS a year after Kelly Garcia, is also making a difference in his native Mexico. As general director of "Endeavor," a non-profit organization, Alonzo is contributing to the economic, social, and cultural development of Mexico by promoting startup business enterprises.

Meanwhile, back at Harvard, Ernesto and Germán Treviño (not related), two Mexican doctoral students at the Graduate School of Education, are planning to return to Mexico after their studies to work on community development and issues of poverty.

## The Fundación ensures that promising Mexican students do not decline admission to Harvard because of insufficient financial resources.

And Mara Hernández, who is planning to graduate next year (2002) with a masters in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government, is the new president of the Harvard University Mexican Association (HUMA). She worked as a liaison with Mexican migrants during Vicente Fox's presidential campaign, designing strategies to influence the families of 20 million Mexicans living in the United States. Before that, she founded Enlace Educativo, a non-governmental organization that sends college students to work with indigenous children in rural communities. She has also worked as a researcher and analyst on economic and social policy for the National Action Party.

These are just five of the 323 Mexican students who have studied at Harvard University with the assistance of the Fundación México, which has disbursed \$1,864,520 in financial aid since it was started in the 1980s. The number of Mexican students admitted annually to Harvard University has more than doubled since the 1989-90 academic year, and the Fundación provides financial assistance for 40% of those students.

In the 2000/2001 academic year, 31 Mexican students received financial aid from the Fundación México for Harvard post-graduate programs. The Fundación also awarded the Fundación México en Harvard-Kennedy School Scholarship, a complete scholarship covering all expenses, to two Kennedy School candidates who will return to Mexico to work in public service.

In addition, the Fundación supported six Harvard doctoral candidates doing thesis research in Mexico.

Overall, the students for this past academic year come from nine

different public and private universities in the Republic of Mexico.

"For the sake of the future of the country and the careers of the intelligent young men and women admitted to Harvard from Mexico, the Fundación will see that these promising Mexican students do not decline admission to Harvard due to insufficient financial resources," comments Fundación México executive director Barbara Randolph. "The second goal is to encourage a larger number of Mexican students and scholars to apply for admission to Harvard University by assuring them of the economic means to pursue this education. The Fundación is proud that, as of this date, no Mexican student admitted to Harvard has declined admission for financial reasons."

Fundación Financial support to students takes two forms: approximately 70% is given in the form of scholarship assistance, and approximately 30% is given in the form of loans. The Fundación has recently increased assistance given to US\$8,000 per student.

This figure represents 17% of the average total cost of education. Loans are given to students in the programs of Business, Law, and the Kennedy School of Government, and grants are awarded to students of all other programs.

Loan repayment begins after a one year grace period after graduation. If a student does not return to Mexico, loans and grants are repayable on demand.

In addition to funding graduate students, the Fundación has also aided visiting scholars. For example, Visiting Scholar Teresa Bracho, who focused her research on educational inequality and the formulation of educational policies in Mexico, was awarded a scholarship to cover a sabbatical semester through the generosity of the Fundación México and Antonio Madero.

Erika Pani, a historian conducting research on "Constructing Political Citizenship in the New World-1776/1917," served as the Fundación México-Madero Visiting Scholar for the 2000-2001 academic year. The Fundación also enabled Mexican scholar Carlos Tello Díaz to continue his work on "La Rebelión de las Cañadas," a book recalling the events that converged in the insurrection in Chiapas, Mexico.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**F**undación Mexico en Harvard provides scholarships and loans to citizens of Mexico admitted for graduate study at Harvard. For further information, prospective Harvard students should contact: Barbara Rodríguez, Fundación México en Harvard A.C., Monte Pelvoux #220, Piso Lomas de Chapultepec, Mexico DF 11000, Tel. 525-202-5544, Fax: 525-202-6604, e-mail: <brandolph@sanluiscorp.com.mx>.



# Tec de Monterrey

## *A Successful Model for Distance Learning*

BY MARÍA TERESA MARTÍNEZ

**T**HIRTY YEARS AGO, WHEN RAFAEL Garza's father studied at Mexico's Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, all courses were taken in a traditional classroom setting and papers were written in solitude. Today, Rafael is a student at the Tec, and his experience is far different from that of his father. Information technology is an integral part of his courses, enabling team teaching and collaborative work unheard of a generation ago. Through the technological innovations implemented at the Tec, Rafael is able to work with professors from all over the world, establish collaborative teams with students from many other countries, and hear through videoconference systems the opinions of those participating in his classes via distance learning.

### THE TEC DE MONTERREY SYSTEM

CLEARLY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HAS enabled fundamental changes to occur in the teaching/learning process. Over the last two decades, Tec de Monterrey has made a remarkable transition from a faculty-centered to a student-centered environment supported by electronic communications. The Tec's new mission is two-fold: to conduct research and outreach relevant to Mexico's sustainable development and to educate students to be individuals who are committed to the social, economic, and political development of their communities and are internationally competitive in their professional fields. Tec de Monterrey's academic activities are designed to develop honest and responsible leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators guided by a spirit of personal development.

Tec de Monterrey is a vast system, with 6,200 faculty members and nearly 80,000 students based at 30 campuses in Mexico and nine centers in other Latin American countries. To help ensure quality and consistency across the system, networks of faculty members working in the same discipline collaborate in the design of curricula and the improvement of teaching methods.

Quality is also maintained through an online evaluation system that uses a variety of indicators to assess faculty participation in program development, student scores on standardized comprehensive exams, and student opinions on faculty, administrators, library and information services, and quality of the infrastructure, among other concerns.

Technology is also used to facilitate interaction among students and faculty. The Tec has 21,303 computers, of which 17,934 are for student use—a ratio of four students per computer. A continuously increasing number of Tec de Monterrey courses involve web-based home pages and online homework and course materials. The various campuses are linked by a private communications network with both Internet and satellite connections.

The Tec de Monterrey system includes the Virtual University, which provides classes—especially in core curriculum, postgraduate studies, and continuing education—to institutions in Mexico and in Central and South America via video, satellite, CD-ROM, and the Internet. When developing distance learning courses and programs, Tec de Monterrey faculty and administrators have paid careful attention to the traditional education process, to the ways in which technology can enhance that process, and to the importance of applying to distance education the same theories of collaboration and student-centered learning that guide other aspects of the Tec.

One recent example of these theories and innovations at work was the Financial Leadership Program in Higher Education, a seminar offered jointly by the Virtual University of the Tec, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and LASPAU: Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas (a Harvard affiliate). The seminar, which took place from March 10-June 30, was designed to train Latin American and Caribbean university administrators in strategic financial planning, fundraising, financial administration in planning and cost control, and financial information system management. It combined both distance learning and traditional class-

room instruction, and engaged faculty from Tec de Monterrey, Harvard University, and other Mexican and U.S. universities.

### FACULTY

IN THE TRADITIONAL MODEL FOR EDUCATION, faculty members teach in classrooms using discussion, visual aids, and books as tools. In the new model, faculty may choose to teach via any one of a host of recently developed media. Decisions can be made as to which format to use, how to present the information in the chosen format, and whether to personally design the presentation.

When developing course content, Tec de Monterrey faculty members are assisted by instructional designers or trained in the new models. Regardless of which learning medium is used, faculty members benefit from professionals who help prepare the materials: video production teams, graphic designers specializing in print or virtual materials, and individuals trained in the development of CDs and other media.

### STUDENTS

WHILE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM LEARNING requires the presence of students and faculty at a particular time and place, courses incorporating online materials, web-based assignments, and other technological innovations encourage students to make their own decisions as to when to study and whether to work alone or with others. To succeed in the new learning model, students must possess technological skills and the self-discipline and motivation needed to respond to the constant and varied challenges the process presents.

### COURSE CONTENT

TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT REPLACE THOUGHTFUL course preparation. Whether presented electronically or in a classroom, a successful course facilitates the acquisition of knowledge while developing skills and encouraging diverse perspectives. Tec de Monterrey faculty members are required to clearly define the contents, objectives, methodology, and presentation format for each



course—all of which are detailed in materials distributed during the course selection process so that students can plan their programs of study with a thorough understanding of what they are going to be taught and what they are expected to achieve.

### EVALUATION

EVALUATION SYSTEMS ARE CRITICAL TO SUCCESSFUL teaching and learning. At Tec de Monterrey, computer software designers work with faculty members to produce web-based programs that enable students in each course to provide feedback on their own performance as well as that of fellow members of group projects. The system provides faculty members with a more comprehensive view of group and individual efforts than they might otherwise be able to obtain. The evaluation software includes the capability to compile results in order to provide the professor with data for determining both individual grades and grades for group projects.

As with traditional classroom courses, distance learning programs assess knowledge acquisition through exams and through homework assignments and papers submitted to professors. However, with potentially large and physically separated groups of students, it is difficult for faculty to supervise every assignment or to track the development of student skills and attitudes. The evaluation software is thus also valuable in ascertaining the methods students use to complete assignments and the perspectives they have acquired through a course. Along with helping faculty members to more accurately evaluate students, the process of defining issues and achievements encourages students to be thoughtful about their efforts.

### PROGRAM ENRICHMENT

STUDENTS NOW ENJOY A WIDE ARRAY OF resources available to enrich course content. They may be asked not only to consult books or periodicals in a library but also to look on the Internet for additional references. In addition, students may be expected to share such information with classmates or faculty. In traditional education, this exchange of knowledge would only happen during the scheduled class time. In the new model—using email, distribution lists, or other electronic means—this information can be shared at any time within a timetable that is considered appropriate by the professor and teaching assistant.

### COLLABORATION

WORKING COOPERATIVELY IS A DEMAND OF globalization. Students no longer depend exclusively on their professors but also increasingly on their classmates and on their own resources and capabilities. They must learn to collaborate with people from other countries, which means familiarizing themselves with other ideologies, other work systems, and even other languages.

When Tec de Monterrey began investing in distance education ten years ago, it trained specialists in education, computing, and communication, among others. More than 200 people now support the faculty who are preparing distance learning installations throughout the continent. These staff members produce academic programs, schedules, course content, videos, CD-ROM and satellite sessions, interactive software, and printed and web-based materials for students.

In establishing the distance learning program, Tec de Monterrey administrators made it clear that no single individual's work would be enough. They were expected to collaborate—with precision, rhythm, and harmony—in order to develop courses for

people throughout Latin America. Thanks to information technology, the distance between people has lessened—not only physically, but also culturally and socioeconomically. Tec de Monterrey students across the hemisphere may have diverse languages, economic conditions, and resources, but they are able to work together toward the common goal of developing their countries to be prepared for the new century.

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*LASPAU, a Harvard-affiliated organization that designs and implements academic and professional exchange programs to benefit Latin America and the Caribbean, has collaborated with Tec de Monterrey for more than twenty years. María Teresa Martínez, a Tec de Monterrey representative, worked out of LASPAU's Cambridge offices to develop joint LASPAU/Tec de Monterrey programs and to represent the Tec in the northeast United States. While the LASPAU/Tec collaborations historically have involved more traditional exchanges, many of the programs currently being implemented have a distance learning component.*

## BEATING POLLUTION Air Quality in Mexico City

**F**lying into Mexico City, one cannot help but note its heavy air pollution. Mexico City suffers from air pollution as severe as in any major city in the world. Now, with the "Project for the Design of an Integrated Strategy for Air Quality Management in Mexico City Valley 2001-2010," Harvard University has involved itself in assessing the problem and trying to figure out solutions.

The interdisciplinary—and interuniversity—project was begun by Massachusetts Institute of Technology Nobel Laureate Mario Molina in early 2000. It involved scientists and engineers from several Mexican institutions, MIT, and Harvard. A sector of the Harvard School of Public Health, the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, assessed health risks posed by current and anticipated levels of air pollution in Mexico City, and estimated the economic benefits of the improvements in health likely to result from cost-effective cleaning of Mexico City's air quality.

The research team has worked with Mexican policy makers to begin to develop strategies for reducing health risks. Collaborating with such counterparts as the Metropolitan Environmental Commission and the Environmental Trust Fund of Mexico City, it is working towards a ten-year plan for improving air quality in Mexico City.

The first phase of the project was recently completed. The Harvard team recommended that greater emphasis be given to control of emissions of inhalable particles and that efforts continue to reduce ozone levels. A second phase of the project is currently underway which will involve field studies in the valuation of health benefits; better characterization of health risks and current levels of uncertainty in such estimates; and analysis of the likely benefits of additional research on exposure to and health effects caused by exposure to air pollution in Mexico City.



# Bringing the Latin American Imagination to Harvard:

*David Carrasco Named Rudenstine Chair*

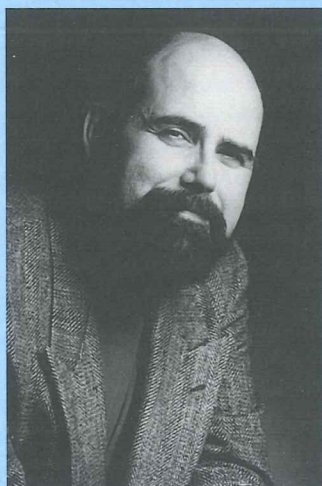
BY CHRIS TIRRES

SOMEbody ONCE SAID, "THE good thing about *Nueva York* is that it is so close to the United States." With the recent appointment of David Carrasco, historian of religions, as the inaugural Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of Latin American Studies, Harvardians can say with *gusto*, "The good thing about Harvard is that it is now even closer to Latin America and to the heart of *Aztlan*!"

In the fall of 2001, Carrasco will begin joint appointments in the Department of Anthropology and the Harvard Divinity School. As David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies director John Coatsworth notes, "David Carrasco's appointment as the Neil L. Rudenstine Professor marks a turning point for Latin American and Latino Studies at Harvard. His scholarship, energy, commitment, eloquence, organizational savvy, and principled leadership will make a huge difference for Harvard students in every part of the University, for faculty colleagues in many disciplines, and for all our efforts to reach out to broader communities here and elsewhere."

The Rudenstine chair is the first of six new professorships in Latin American studies that form part of the DRCLAS endowment. "My fervent hope is that the remaining chairs will be filled with scholars just as distinguished, engaged, and provocative as David Carrasco," adds Coatsworth.

Carrasco grew up in and



David Carrasco

around Washington D.C. and comes from an admired El Paso, Texas family of teachers. His grandfather, Miguel Carrasco, left Mexico during the Mexican Revolution and started a school for young Mexican-American men and women at the American Smelting and Refining Company in El Paso, Texas, building the schoolhouse with his own hands. His father, David L. Carrasco, a native of El Paso, became the first Mexican-American head basketball coach at a major U.S. university (American University in Washington D.C.). He also led coaching clinics throughout Latin America and served as the first Olympic games attaché at the 1968 Olympic games in Mexico City. Later, he founded the El Paso Job Corps Center, a nationally recognized vocational training center. His mother, Marji Carrasco, an award winning artist in El Paso, specializing in Tarahumara Indian portraits and mar-

ketplaces, has served as a resource for Carrasco's interest in images.

Carrasco received a bachelor's degree in English literature from Western Maryland College. Then, after a year at Drew University Theological School and a summer at the Centro Inter-cultural de Documentación in Cuernavaca, Mexico, he entered the University of Chicago, where he earned a masters of theology, followed by a masters of arts in the history of religions. His masters thesis dealt with the religious dimensions of the Chicano movement. In 1977 he earned a doctorate in the history of religions with a specialization in Mesoamerican religions as well as in method and theory in the study of religion. The University of Chicago's alumni association just awarded Carrasco its Professional Achievement Citation for his scholarly excellence and contributions to his community.

As a University of Chicago graduate student, Carrasco studied the history of religions and the nature of urban life under Mircea Eliade, Paul Wheatley, Charles Long, and Jonathan Z. Smith. While in graduate school, he was also deeply involved in Chicano and Puerto Rican movements for social liberation. Among other groups, he collaborated with the Young Lords Association, the Latin Kings, and BASTA (the Brotherhood Against Slavery to Addiction), and worked in projects of cultural renovation at Casa Azt-

lan in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

Carrasco has taught at the University of Colorado at Boulder and at Princeton University, both of which were home to his Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project. The Mesoamerican Archive contains a collection of over 10,000 transparencies and photographs of excavations and sites, architecture, artifacts, and pictorial manuscripts, as well as a library with over 3,000 articles, books, and conference papers pertaining to the study of pre-Hispanic, colonial, and contemporary Mesoamerican cultures.

Established with a grant from the Raphael and Fletcher Lee Moses Trust, the archive has also enabled Carrasco to organize an international, inter-disciplinary group of scholars and students who are interested in interpreting sacred space and ritual performance in Mesoamerican religions. Among others, Carrasco has a long-standing collaborative relationship with one of Mexico's leading archeologists, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, and as a testament to his expertise, Carrasco recently served as the editor-in-chief of the three volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*, which involved over 300 scholars from sixteen countries.

Carrasco is author of numerous other works, including the prize-winning *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition*, *Waiting for the Dawn: Mircea*



*Eliade in Perspective, Religions of Mesoamerica: Cosmovision and Ceremonial Centers, Moctezuma's Mexico: Visions of the Aztec World, and City of Sacrifice: the Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization.* In 1984, he received an honorary doctorate from his undergraduate alma mater. For the last five years Carrasco has been working with Chicano artists and scholars on the religious dimensions of *mestizaje* and wrote the introduction, "The Future is Mestizo: We are the Shades," to the new

of a Mexican-American scholar is a long overdue acknowledgment of this important dimension of diversity at Harvard."

Carrasco brings to Harvard his interests in religion, cities, race, and Latin America (its diaspora and borderlands included). "His combined expertise in religion, Latin American history, anthropology, and the urban culture of the Aztecs in Mexico forms a unique and stellar constellation that contributes to many areas of scholarship and teaching," says Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, pro-

ico City. Similarly, his work on Chicano art and politics is creating collaborations between such figures as film producer Edward James Olmos, musician and activist "Dr. Loco" José Cuelar, and muralist George Yepes.

Prior to his appointment to Harvard, Carrasco delivered several lectures at Harvard, the last of which was a groundbreaking discussion on Black/Brown race relations with Cornel West, Alphonse Fletcher, Jr., University Professor. There, moderator Doris Sommer, professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, noted, "It is hardly fortuitous that our two distinguished guests—Professor Cornel West and Professor David Carrasco—are among, many things, teachers of religion. It's a measure of their longstanding involvement with popular-based spiritual and social movements."

"There's nothing like him in the academy," says West. "He is able to bring together such intellectual sophistication, on the one hand, and his deep, wise insight, on the other, and it's so alive and vital and vibrant because he existentially enacts the intellectual sophistication that he puts forward, and that is a rare thing in the academy."

Other faculty share West's enthusiasm. "Carrasco comes to the University at a great time," says Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, professor of education, co-director of the Harvard Immigration Projects, and chair of the Interfaculty Committee on Latino Studies. "He joins Harvard just as we are mobilizing to create an ambitious interdisciplinary and interfaculty effort to locate Latinos in the U.S. in a trans-American and interdisciplinary context. It is a great day for Harvard."

And Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity Harvey Cox expressed his pleasure about the Carrasco appointment, "My (own) experience among Latin Americans and in Latin America has been almost entirely urban. David brings a degree of historical and anthropological acumen to this area of interest from which I will learn an immense amount."

Adds Cox: "He is also a marvelous person as a colleague and teacher. He will greatly strengthen us."

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*Chris Tirres is a graduate student in the Study of Religion and is founder and previous coordinator of the DRCLAS Latin American and Latino Art Forum.*

## "There's nothing like Carrasco in the academy."—Cornel West, Alphonse Fletcher, Jr. Harvard University Professor

version of Father Virgilio Elizondo's, *The Future is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet*.

"The appointment of David Carrasco to the Harvard faculty is of signal importance," says Ron Thiemann, professor of theology and former dean of the Harvard Divinity School. "Building on existing strengths at the Divinity School and Anthropology Departments, Carrasco will establish Meso-American studies as a major research field at the university. And the appointment

fessor of theology. An award winning teacher, Carrasco has taught a wide range of courses from "American Indian Religions" to "American Classics" to "Religion and Latin@ Imaginations" to "Religion and Archaeoastronomy." At Princeton, he initiated a course on "Religion, Race, and Imagination in the Americas," a complement, in part, to the conversation he organized between Toni Morrison, Carlos Fuentes, and Gabriel García Márquez in Mex-

# HIV/AIDS Prevention in Brazil

*John R. David receives the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz Medal*

**D**R. JOHN R. DAVID, RICHARD PEARSON STRONG PROFESSOR IN THE Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Harvard School of Public Health and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, received the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz Medal at the annual meeting of the Brazilian Society of Tropical Medicine in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this past March.

In presenting the medal, Dr. Mitermayer des Reis, Director of the Centro de Pesquisas Gonçalo Moniz (CPqGM), the branch of the FIOCRUZ in Salvador, Bahia, described the enormous impact

of David's work on understanding and helping to control the diseases of schistosomiasis and leishmaniasis in Brazil over the past 20 years. He also said that because of widespread publicity in Brazilian media, David's collaborative program with CPqGM had a major impact on acceptance of condoms as part of Brazil's successful control program against HIV/AIDS. Through HSPH and the Department of Tropical Public Health, Dr. David sent 200,000 condoms in 1995 and 220,000 in 1996 to Salvador, and developed a method to distribute them with the CPqGM, using such varying



techniques as music groups and local health centers. The Brazilian government has been distributing over a million condoms at Carnaval in Salvador ever since and has begun similar programs in other Brazilian cities.

This is the third time John David has been honored for his work in Brazil. He received an Honorary Doctoral Degree from the University Federal of Ceara in 1991 and the Emilio Ribas Medal from the Brazilian Society of Infectious Diseases in 1996. He also received a medal this year from the Instituto Pedro Kouri (IPK) in Havana for enhancing the interactions of faculty and students between the IPK and Harvard.

Left: Dr. Mitermayer des Reis, Director of the Centro de Pesquisas Conçalo Moniz, the FIORCRUZ branch in Salvador, Bahia; center: John R. David; right: Donald Harn, professor in the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at HSPH



## Election Monitoring in Peru

### *A Class Experience*

**W**E HAD HARDLY ARRIVED at Harvard as freshmen when we began to think about a class trip to Latin America. Sylvia Maxfield, a lecturer on Social Studies at Harvard, was teaching the fresh-

man seminar, "The Contemporary Political and Economic Landscape of Latin America," and our class consisted of 14 students. When we proposed a trip to observe the April 8, 2001, presidential elections in

Peru, Maxfield responded enthusiastically. We applied for five grants (the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for International Devel-

opment, the Harvard College Research Program, and the Ann Radcliffe Trust), and received just enough money to cover all of our expenses.

It wasn't an ordinary trip. To prepare, ten of us got together every Tuesday night to discuss Peru and any articles we had found over the week about contemporary Peruvian issues. We met with Steven Levitsky, an assistant professor in Harvard's Government Department, and his Peruvian journalist wife Liz Mineo. Levitsky reviewed the history of Peruvian democracy in the 20th century, and with his wife, a former journalist with one of Peru's leading newspapers, shared insights into the upcoming elections. We met with DRCLAS Visiting Scholar and election specialist Todd Eisenstadt to learn about being election monitors. Maxfield had contacted a Peruvian non-governmental organization, Transparencia, which agreed to sponsor us as official international observers. Maxfield committed hour upon hour to arranging



At the Transparencia Office in ICA, Perú, back row: Andrew Kelin, Jesús Garcia; front row: Fabiana Silva, Leah Tucker, Riley Mendoze, Jessica Berwick, Sylvia Maxfield



our itinerary in Peru until, finally, on April 4th, we boarded a Lima-bound plane.

Felipe Cebrecos, along with several other members of the Harvard Club of Peru, met us at the airport and brought us to

parencia, a team of academics at the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, members of APOYO, a well-respected polling agency, and a professor at a Lima university. We asked taxi drivers whom they would vote for, try-

## We learned more in one week in Peru than we could have ever anticipated.

Hotel-Apart San Martín in Miraflores. Over the course of the next week, we met with the current Minister of Justice, the Swedish Ambassador to Peru, the Foreign Minister under Fujimori (who had negotiated the peace accord between Peru and Ecuador), two journalists, the international observers with Trans-

ing to better gauge the informal sector's attitudes towards the candidates and the elections. On the evening of April 7th, we took a bus to Ica, a town three hours south of Lima. Election monitors with Transparencia greeted us, took us to our hotel, and described the events of election day. The following morning, we met at the Trans-

parencia headquarters, split into pairs, and went with Transparencia volunteers to districts around Ica. We began monitoring the elections in the morning, taking pictures as voters dipped their fingers in ink to prevent them from returning to the polls. When the polls closed at 4 PM, most of us were able to watch the counting of the ballots. We returned to Lima later that evening, and spent the remaining two days in follow-up meetings about the elections.

There seemed to be, throughout our class and among the academics we spoke with after the elections, a consensus that the events of April 8th had been transparent and free of fraud.

Although the nation was deeply divided about the candidates and seemed to have little faith in the honesty of the government, the elections themselves appeared to be clean. We, as students of Sylvia Maxfield's freshman seminar on Latin America, learned more in one week in Peru than we could have ever anticipated.

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*This story was reported by Jessica Berwick, Rachel Bloomekatz, Jesús García, Andrew Klein, Riley Mendoza, John Rivera, María Luisa Romero, Leah Tucker, Denis Schweder, and Fabiana Silva, students in Sylvia Maxfield's Freshman Seminar. It was written by Jessica Berwick.*

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# Harvard's Latin@ Community

## Thirty Years and Counting

BY JEANNETTE SORIANO

AS A RECENT HARVARD COLLEGE GRADUATE AND ACTIVE LATIN@ student leader, one would think that an article on "the history of the Latin@ community at Harvard" would be a breeze. However, as I quickly realized, an entire tome, much less a short article, could not hope to do justice to the diversity of experiences, opinions and issues that have affected and been championed by Harvard Latin@s over the years.

Prior to the civil rights era, most institutions of higher education did not actively recruit students from all economic classes and ethnic backgrounds. It was not until the 1970's that Harvard would see more than one Latin@ student admitted per class. Hugo Morales '72, J.D. '75 found himself the only Chicano in the Harvard College 1972 class. He literally did not have contact with a single undergraduate Latin@ student during his first two years of college, although he would actively seek them out, asking random people in Harvard Square whether they were Latin@ or spoke Spanish. A Mixteco Indian from the Mexican state of Oaxaca who came to the United States at the age of nine and lived on a farm labor camp until he came to Harvard, this truly was the greatest culture shock for him, he says. It was not until his junior year, when taking a class taught by then graduate student Rogelio Reyes Ph.D. '76 on Boricua/Chican@ history and politics, that he met many of his peers.

Sylvia Balderrama '74-'75, hailing from New Mexico, was the

first in her family to even consider going out-of-state for college and came to apply to Radcliffe almost by chance. Accompanying a friend to a recruiting session given by a Seven Sisters representative, Balderrama was caught by surprise when asked her own choice. Not wanting to seem uninformed, she looked down at the brochure she had been given, and quickly blurted out the first name that caught her eye, "Radcliffe." In a quite incredulous tone of voice, the college representative informed Balderrama that Radcliffe's application process was rather competitive and that she should apply to other schools as well. Balderrama, feeling compelled to keep to her word, asked her father for the \$20 application fee, a significant sum for her family. After mailing in her application, taking the SAT's in a town 30 miles away, filling out extensive financial aid forms and learning from her principal that Radcliffe had called to ask him whether she "could make it" there, she finally received her letter of admittance. She would soon find that Radcliffe, the only school to which she applied, eagerly awaited her arrival.

Balderrama and Morales recall their time at Harvard University as a series of "first and only" moments. Morales was actively involved in WHRB, the campus radio station, and became the first to host a radio show dedicated to Chican@/Latin@ music. On Saturday nights he would play a wide range of music reflecting his experience, from songs in Spanish to the music of Chican@ rock bands.



On Sunday nights, he would bring in members of the Boston Latin@ community (which at the time was mostly Boricua) to play the salsa and merengue tunes that were missing from the airwaves. He became the first undergraduate to have an office at the Kennedy School of Government's Institute of Politics, and coordinated a speaker series on Chican@ politics, with speakers like organizers Bert Corona and Cesar Chavez.

Although Balderrama found a friendly welcome at Radcliffe, she soon realized the need for extensive student recruitment to render the "first and only" phenomena obsolete. She recalls that the Chican@/Latin@ students at Harvard Law School and the Graduate School of Education had pulled together to create a Boston-wide Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (M.E.Ch.A.) group with students from 20 other universities in the Boston area. Balderrama met other Latin@s in the area, especially when M.E.Ch.A. began picketing and passing out flyers on behalf of farmworkers. The connections she made through M.E.Ch.A., especially with married graduate students, helped her adjust to college life through newfound family.

During Balderrama's freshman year, in 1970-1971, she and 13 other Chican@ students, along with a Boricua freshman that Morales invited, met to discuss the creation of a social support group. Out of these discussions RAZA was born, the first group specifically focused on the culture and issues of the Latin@ students at Harvard. Morales felt that this group should be all-inclusive, because of the limited number of Latin@ students, and suggested the name "Raza Unida." However, most of the students present vetoed his idea, fearing that he might be trying to create a chapter of a political party of the same name. Thus, by nature of a sheer majority of its members (and the insistence of some students) RAZA became a support group primarily for Mexican-American students at Harvard College.

The "first and only" generation witnessed many advances for women and people of color, especially within Latin@ organizations. Balderrama cites her senior year when she, along with Morales, were elected the leaders of the Boston chapter of M.E.Ch.A. Not only was she the first undergraduate to be elected to this position, but was the first woman as well.

## The passage of Proposition 187 in California in November, 1994, proved to be a catalyst that brought the greater Latin@ community together.

Fast-forward fifteen years and the Latin@ community was still fighting many of the same battles, albeit in greater numbers and with more diverse backgrounds. David Moguel M.P.P. '90 looks back to his involvement with the Hispanic Caucus (now Latin@ Caucus) at the Kennedy School of Government as one that was focused on initiatives to bring more faculty of color to Harvard University. Although some classes brought Latin@s at the Law School and School of Education together, there weren't too many opportunities for undergraduates. New student groups began forming, such as the Cuban American Undergraduate Student Association (CAUSA), Fuerza Quisqueyana (now Fuerza Latina), Latinas Unidas

and Concilio Latino. It was the lack of communication and connection opportunities between these student groups that led to the creation of the latter organization.

When Isela Morales '98, first came to Harvard from Chicago in 1994, "RAZA, Latinas Unidas and Fuerza Quisqueyana (Dominican) were the only active organizations. 'La O' (La Organización Borinqueña) had become defunct largely due to the inability of Puerto Ricans from the mainland and the island to get along (as relayed to me by upper-class students). Cuban students, although they did not interact for the most part with the wider Latin@ community, had a somewhat active organization, as well." She felt at first that as a Puerto Rican student she would not fit in with the members of RAZA. She cites Latinas Unidas as a space where she could meet Latina students of Central and South American backgrounds who often did not feel as comfortable in the established ethnicity-specific groups.

Although Concilio Latino was created in the early 1990's as the umbrella organization for networking between the Latin@ groups across the university, the Latin@ community was somewhat fragmented and communication between student groups was sporadic at best, according to Armando de la Libertad M.P.P. '96 (née Ramirez). According to de la Libertad, the Law School's La Alianza played a key role in hosting social events that connected Latin@s from different schools. Electronic mail promotion of events expanded dramatically from 1994 to 1996. The passage of Proposition 187 in California in November, 1994, proved to be a catalyst that brought the greater Latin@ community together. "Latin@ students at Harvard (and throughout Boston, really) held a candlelight vigil in Harvard Yard," he recalls. "Students from many states, ethnicities, and nationalities participated in the vigil. It was a time of unity and communal mourning."

A pivotal event in the history of the Latin@ community at Harvard was the 'Reunión,' a conference entitled "A Strategy for the Future: Building a Latino Agenda at Harvard," organized by Concilio Latino and the Kennedy School of Government at the suggestion of Eddie Duque M.P.P. '96. Almost a hundred students from across the University attended the 1996 conference, which spawned the creation of five 'Action Teams' to develop long-term plans to "mobilize action and build unity" for the Latin@ community at Harvard (Concilio Latino archives). These Action Teams were: Alumni, Communications, Community Outreach, Diversity, and Structure. The idea for Latin@ Welcome Day grew out of these action teams, and the first was held the Fall after the Reunión. "You could really see a more cohesive community," Isela Morales observed. Christopher Tirres M.Div. '97, now a Religion department doctoral candidate, adds, "We are still reaping the benefits of the Reunión: an informal Latin@ alumni group has been created, several Latin@ hires have been made, and the Concilio Latino e-mail listserv has helped to keep us all in better touch with each other's events."

A faculty-sponsored Latin@ Studies Initiative was created due to the realization that the U.S. Latin@ community is becoming an influential presence. With feedback from the Latin@ student community, a conference entitled "Latin@s in the 21st Century: Setting the Research Agenda," brought together some 50 leading scholars from throughout the country, a historic encounter that will result in an edited volume entitled "*Latin@s!*" (DRCLAS/UC Press, 2002).

In addition, the persistence and foresight of Nueva Generación



members at the Divinity School, among others, have led to advances in diverse faculty hires. A dialogue that began between students and administration at HDS in December 1994 encouraged the recent appointment of David Carrasco to the newly created Neil Rudenstine Chair (see article, p. 58).

Progress has also been made in the scope and variety of Latin@ cultural events students are able to organize. In addition to Latin@ Welcome Day, Concilio Latino has facilitated networking events such as Café Viernes, a community talent showcase, and Latin@ Happy Hour. The Medical Students of Las Americas (MeSLA) organized a Latin@ Heritage extravaganza in conjunction with Concilio Latino's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Latin@ Heritage Month Calendar which prompted Latin@ student groups to organize sooner for the benefit of new members to the community. Comunidad Latina at the Graduate School of Education recently launched their organization's web-site as an attempt to work past the barrier a one-year Master's program presents to community-building efforts. The 5th Annual Latin@ Graduation Celebration held on June 7th, 2001, the evening of Commencement, was a tremendous success thanks to the pooling of resources that only the continually developing network of Concilio Latino could provide with relative ease. Support from various Harvard offices and centers, such as the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS), the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, and Faculty Diversity and Development programs, has made many of these events possible.

As the Harvard Latin@ community makes its way into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must applaud ourselves for the enormous progress we have made since the days of the "first and only" moments. However, many of the issues that faced the Latin@ community as it first crystallized continue to be of utmost importance. Latin@s may constitute 5% of the student body University-wide, yet this figure has remained stagnant since 1995 (Harvard Factbook, earliest year available) while the United States Latin@ community continues to grow. This reality, in turn, obliges us to work with the University to recruit, admit and retain more Latin@ students at all educational levels. Some advances have been made in Latin@ Studies course offering such as a well-attended "Latino Cultures Seminar" co-taught by Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Doris Sommer. However, I can personally attest as a Hispanic Studies concentrator who attempted to focus on Latin@s in the U.S., a patchwork of visiting professors and a scarcity of experts in the field make for a frustrating and difficult attempt at innovative and fulfilling scholarship. Harvard needs to achieve the cutting edge in Latin@ Studies scholarship, perhaps finding a model in the strategy used to build the "Dream Team" of the African-American Studies program.

The Harvard Latin@ community, taking many forms over the years, has essentially remained a convergence of students searching for and finding support from others who could empathize with their struggles and appreciate their accomplishments. As in all arenas in life, personal politics and societal factors have occasionally caused us to disagree with each other, but it is imperative that each Harvard Latin@ student stop "fighting for the crumbs." We must look beyond our personal ideologies and learn to mutually respect and work with each other to increase our share of the pie. As the future leaders of our communities, Harvard Latin@s have the potential to create change and improve the environments where we have developed and grown, both here at Harvard and at home, be it rural California, inner-city Grand Rapids, or the suburbs of Miami.

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*Jeannette Soriano '01 was Co-Chair of Concilio Latino de Harvard from 1999-2001. She is taking a year off to travel, gain work experience and decide which Harvard graduate school she would like to attend. For more information on the Harvard Latin@ Alumni Mobilization, please contact her at <Jeannette\_Soriano@post.harvard.edu>. Check out Concilio Latino's web-site at <<http://hcs.harvard.edu/~concilio>> for current information on the Latin@ community at Harvard.*

## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe to our calendar, **DRCLAS DATES** (New England area only), or our three-time yearly publication **ReVista** by emailing <[drclas@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:drclas@fas.harvard.edu)>, filling out an electric form at <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>, or picking up a form at 61 Kirkland Street. Subscriptions are free to individuals, but donations of \$25 (professionals) or \$15 (students) are encouraged.

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Visiting Scholar Program

For non-Harvard university professors and researchers conducting research while in residence at Harvard University. Applicants should have completed their doctorate or the equivalent, be fluent in English, and have a substantial publication record. Contact Tanya Pérez-Brennan: <[tperez@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:tperez@fas.harvard.edu)>. Website: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/pages/tabpages/acandpro/visiting scholars.html>>

### Art Forum

DRCLAS exhibits the work of Latino/a artists, artists from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, and artists exploring themes related to Latin America. All styles and traditions considered. Contact José Falconi: <[falconi@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:falconi@fas.harvard.edu)>. Website: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/pages/tabpages/events/art/artforum.html>>

### Latin American Libraries and Archives Program

Awards small grants to Latin American archives and libraries to improve the conditions under which their collections are kept or to expand access to their research holdings. Contact Dan Hazen at <[dchazen@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:dchazen@fas.harvard.edu)>. Website: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/pages/tabpages/acandpro/plalaeng.html>>



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