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State-Society Relations in Mexico: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Trends
Citizens of the Pyramid: Essays on Mexican Political Culture by Wil G. Pansters; The Paradox
of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico by Kevin J. Middlebrook;
Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism, and Democracy in Tuchitan, Mexico by
Jeffrey W. Rubin; Guerrero Bronco: Campesinos, Ciudadanos y Guerrilleros en la Costa
Grande by Armando Bartra; The Politics of Water: Urban Protest, Gender, an ...

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REVIEW ESSAYS

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN MEXICO: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Trends

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- CITIZENS OF THE PYRAMID: ESSAYS ON MEXICAN POLITICAL CULTURE.*
Edited by Wil G. Pansters. (Amsterdam: Thelas, 1997. Pp. 375. \$35.00 paper.)
- THE PARADOX OF REVOLUTION: LABOR, THE STATE, AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN MEXICO.* By Kevin J. Middlebrook. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. Pp. 463. \$59.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)
- DECENTERING THE REGIME: ETHNICITY, RADICALISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN JUCHITAN, MEXICO.* By Jeffrey W. Rubin. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. 316. \$54.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)
- GUERRERO BRONCO: CAMPESINOS, CIUDADANOS Y GUERRILLEROS EN LA COSTA GRANDE.* By Armando Bartra. (Mexico City: Sinfiltro, 1996. Pp. 196.)
- THE POLITICS OF WATER: URBAN PROTEST, GENDER, AND POWER IN MONTERREY, MEXICO.* By Vivienne Bennett. (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh, 1995. Pp. 232. \$49.95 cloth.)
- A CULTURE OF COLLUSION: AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE MEXICAN PRESS.*
Edited by William A. Orme Jr. (Miami, Fla.: North-South Center Press, 1997. Pp. 159. \$16.95 paper.)
- POLLING FOR DEMOCRACY: PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN MEXICO.* Edited by Roderic Ai Camp. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996. Pp. 186. \$45.00 cloth.)

PLANTING TROUBLE: THE BARZON DEBTORS' MOVEMENT IN MEXICO. By Heather L. Williams. Current Issue Brief no. 6. (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1996. Pp. 53. \$7.50 paper.)

ORGANIZACIONES CIVILES Y POLITICAS PUBLICAS EN MEXICO Y CENTRO-AMERICA. Edited by José Luis Méndez (Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, the International Society for Third Sector Research, and Academia Mexicana de Investigación en Políticas Públicas, 1998. Pp. 498.)

ACUERDOS DE SAN ANDRES. Edited by Luis Hernández Navarro and Ramón Vera Herrera. (Mexico City: Era, 1998. Pp. 238.)

As state-society relations in Mexico continue their agonizing and open-ended transition, analysts of power face the challenge of developing frameworks that can catch up with moving targets. Pro-democracy social, civic, and political counterweights have promoted a new sense of citizenship—"the right to have rights"—but their actual impact on Mexican state actions has so far been tentative.

Most social science frameworks for analyzing relations between the Mexican state and society in the 1960s and 1970s were designed to explain stability rather than transition. The problem now is to explain the contours and pace of Mexico's eclectic combination of continuity and change—its extreme variation across regions, sectors, and social groups.¹ In the process, some analysts are raising serious questions about whether the classic frameworks for explaining continuity might have missed important dimensions of state-society relations, even during periods of apparent stability, and especially for regions that did not fit generalizations developed in Mexico City.

The balance of power between state and societal actors as well as the rules of the game that regulate their terms of conflict and representation have been in flux for three decades now—since long before change in the national political regime was on the agenda. On the civil society side, autonomous social actors have broadened their base and deepened their roots. Meanwhile, state actors have undermined the regime's legitimacy by dismantling much of its post-revolutionary social and economic legacy. Repeated waves of social, civic, and political mobilization have followed a pattern of "two steps forward, one step back" in much of Mexico, although state-society relations in some regions have fallen under the shadows cast by narco-state coalitions and counterinsurgency strategies of "low-intensity conflict." Indeed, the persistent impunity of human rights viola-

1. For one important effort to outline likely transition scenarios, see the introduction to *Mexico's Alternative Political Futures*, edited by Wayne Cornelius, Judith Gentleman, and Peter Smith (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1989).

tors raises questions about the impact of increased political party pluralism on the state.

Post-revolutionary state-society relations in Mexico have long been understood in terms of the fusion between the state and the ruling party. Now, as the relationship between the ruling party and the state is beginning to change, analysts may learn more about how the post-revolutionary system worked all along. Did a hegemonic party control the state, as is widely assumed, or was the system dominated by state managers who coexisted with an electoral-control apparatus called a party? Now that Mexico is developing more of a system of parties, how much do they influence state-society relations more generally? Is the party system leading or following the grinding process of opening up the relationship between the state and society? The nature of the relationship between changes in Mexico's electoral process and the many other ways in which social actors are represented remains an open question.

The actors that lead social change and democratization in Mexico often look new—and many are. But on closer examination, it turns out that many draw on longstanding historical legacies and locally distinct political traditions, as Jeffrey Rubin explains for the Isthmus of Oaxaca and Armando Bartra shows in the Costa Grande of Guerrero. These historical legacies prove to be equally critical for understanding where and why state-society power relations have not changed much, as Kevin Middlebrook spells out for the notable case of organized labor. This essay will review ten volumes that address diverse dimensions of changing state-society power relations in Mexico, including longstanding issues of political culture, state regulation of social conflict, and regional social movements as well as more recent trends involving the mass media, public-opinion polling, nongovernmental organizations, and indigenous rights movements.²

Inherited Legacies

The nature and importance of political culture in strengthening civil society and democracy in Mexico is a subject of increasing scholarly attention from historical, ethnographic, and quantitative perspectives.³ This wave of research is contributing to the broader debate about the relation-

2. In many ways, political scientists and sociologists are now catching on to what historians and anthropologists of Mexico have long emphasized: the centrality of regions for understanding politics.

3. See, among others, *Cultura política y educación cívica*, edited by Jorge Alonso (Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994); *Cultura política de las organizaciones y movimientos sociales*, edited by Jaime Castillo and Elsa Patiño (Mexico City: La Jornada and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997); *El estudio de la cultura política en México: Perspectivas disciplinarias y actores políticos*, edited by Esteban Krotz

ship between political culture and democratization. Does a more democratic political culture help to drive the democratization process, or vice versa? Perhaps the arrow goes both ways, complicating efforts to build social science models.⁴

Wil Pansters's substantial collection, *Citizens of the Pyramid: Essays on Mexican Political Culture*, combines primarily historical and anthropological perspectives. An anthropologist who has worked extensively on regional politics in Puebla, Pansters outlines in his introduction two rival political cultural discourses. First, "the political culture of the pyramid is center-oriented, vertically structured, and the 'cement' that holds it together is the culture of personalismo . . . [It] 'produces' subjects" (p. 9). This long-dominant political culture continually subverts Mexico's alternative "liberal-democratic political culture of citizenship," which values individualism, pluralism, the rule of law, and the delegation of power. Much of the book addresses the troubled relationship between the two approaches as well as "their articulation in hybrid political cultural practices."

The first of the three sections of *Citizens of the Pyramid* is historical. It includes Raymond Buve on local government, popular politics, and the "via de hecho" in nineteenth-century Tlaxcala; Allen Wells and Gilbert Joseph on urban clientelism during the Porfiriato in the Yucatán; Alan Knight on the pervasiveness of violence in post-revolutionary Mexican politics at local levels; Adrian Bantjes on the ambiguous relationship between state and popular cultural nationalism; and John Mraz on the politics of twentieth-century Mexican photojournalism.

The second section covers political parties, popular movements, and the state, beginning with sociologist Sergio Zermeño's essay on how globalization is dismantling the social actors constructed by Mexico's modernity (industrial workers, national industry, organized peasants, middle-level bureaucrats) and encouraging disorganization, disorder, and a turn to the private. He sees the proverbial glass as more than half-empty: "the unifying principle in our society is the State rather than social factors: we have not been able to develop social actors with the strength and ability to serve as intermediaries between the State and the dispersed citizenry or masses" (p. 197). His richly eclectic essay is followed by sociologist Rogelio Hernández Ramírez on President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's effort to "refound" (that is, control) the ruling party when "social liberalism" replaced "revolutionary nationalism" in the official statutes. Political scientist Joe Foweraker

(Mexico City: CONACULT and Centro de Investigaciones e Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1996); and *Antropología política: Enfoques contemporáneos*, edited by Héctor Tejera Gaona (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and Plaza y Valdés, 1996).

4. For an important interdisciplinary effort to reconceptualize the study of political culture, see *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*, edited by Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1998).

addresses political culture and popular movements. He notes that Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's classic survey approach recognized a deep ambivalence in Mexican political culture that combined a sense of low "efficacy" with strong support for citizen rights, although they did not acknowledge that this apparent contradiction could be explained by the state's consistent frustration of democratic aspirations.⁵ Foweraker contends, "it is the rise of popular movements, in the context of state reform, that explains many of the recent changes in Mexican political culture."⁶ Marianne Braig is one of the few to explore the political cultures of state actors. Focusing on the often not-so-new state-society relations pursued by the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad, she casts social programs as "arenas of societal bargaining, characterized by both co-optation and empowerment" (p. 261) and reveals conflicts submerged in the state over whether to open up.

The third section of *Citizens of the Pyramid* returns to regions but with a contemporary focus. Anthropologist Rob Aitken explores diverse regional political identities within Michoacán. Anthropologist James Greenberg compares forms of historically constructed caciquismo and local representation in the Chatino and Mixe regions of Oaxaca, pursuing an incisive combination of class and ethnic analysis. Political analyst Tonatiuh Guillén López reflects on the specificity of political culture on Mexico's northern border, followed by Alberto Aziz Nassif's analytical comparison of three northern states.

Readers should keep in mind that Mexican political culture is still widely assumed to be homogeneously national, from Octavio Paz's classics to contemporary official discourse. For example, when a prominent official of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) proclaimed President Ernesto Zedillo's commitment to reform to New York investors and was then pressed about the judiciary, "she replied testily 'Rule of law is such an Anglo-Saxon concept.'"⁷ Such efforts at cultural homogenization obscure other prominent Mexican political traditions that embraced the rule of law, ranging from Benito Juárez and Francisco Madero to Emiliano Zapata.⁸ *Cit-*

5. Foweraker underscores Craig and Cornelius's view: "It is not beliefs that determine participation, but participation that determines beliefs, and it is the political learning achieved through adult activity in a union or neighborhood association that produces a sense of 'mediated political efficacy'" (p. 227). See Ann Craig and Wayne Cornelius, "Political Culture in Mexico: Continuities and Revisionist Interpretations," in *The Civic Culture Revisited*, edited by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1980), 363.

6. The essay builds on his insightful edited collection (with Ann Craig), *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990).

7. Quoted in Suzanne Bilello, "Mexico: The Rise of Civil Society," *Current History* 95, no. 598 (Feb. 1996):86.

8. Zapata's "Plan de Ayala" closed with the often-forgotten slogan "Reforma, libertad, justicia y la ley." Note the revealing clash between Madero's and Zapata's conflicting under-

izens of the Pyramid, like several other works under review here, stresses the diversity embedded in the concept of "Mexican political culture." Perhaps the plural form "political cultures" would have been more appropriate in the title of the book.⁹

State-Society Interaction

Kevin Middlebrook's masterful *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico* combines theoretical sophistication with effective use of comparative and historical methods to trace the contours of state-labor relations from the revolution through the early 1990s. Transcending the limitations of both state- and society-centered frameworks, Middlebrook develops a coherent synthetic approach that captures the role of urban labor in constructing the post-revolutionary state as well as the role of the state in structuring the organization of labor. This framework brings together political economy, ideological, and political-institutional factors to take on the challenge of explaining patterns of conflict and coalition-building between the state and labor and among diverse forces within organized labor.

The Paradox of Revolution focuses on key turning points in national labor politics, such as the 1940s railroad worker insurgency, and provides long-term analysis of government policies of labor regulation. In addition, Middlebrook's dynamic plant-by-plant comparison of varied patterns of democratic labor insurgency in the auto industry in the 1970s skillfully integrates national, sectoral, and plant levels of analysis. This long view shows that although workers have repeatedly mobilized for some degree of autonomy, the post-revolutionary state has retained the capacity to divide and conquer, often by reinforcing its allies among union leaders. The state needs labor allies precisely because of potential challenges from below. The most powerful elite partner in this lopsided governing coalition turns out to be the state rather than the ruling party. But despite its analytical insistence on state-society interaction, *The Paradox of Revolution* explains the relevant state actors less systematically than the trade unions with which they are enmeshed.

Middlebrook's detailed assessment of the state's administrative levers for regulating labor organization is essential to understanding how formal-bureaucratic and informal-coercive controls reinforce one another.

standings of the rule of law in Gildardo Magaña's eyewitness report, "Emiliano Zapata Greets the Victorious Francisco Madero," in *Revolution in Mexico: Years of Upheaval, 1910-1940*, edited by James W. Wilkie and Albert L. Michaels (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969).

9. Guillermo de la Peña also advocated the plural approach in "La cultura política en los sectores populares de Guadalajara," *Nueva Antropología*, no. 38 (Oct. 1990):83-108, as cited in Héctor Tejera Gaona, "Cultura política: Democracia y autoritarismo en México," *Nueva Antropología*, no. 50 (Oct. 1996):13.

Practices that some consider to be sustained by political culture turn out to be more the result of state regulation. For example, the milestone 1931 federal labor law (revised in 1970) does not require that union elections or internal decisions use a secret ballot (p. 67). On this point, some state managers prefer cultural to political explanations. As representatives of the Secretaría de Trabajo recently commented to a Canadian NAFTA official, “un voto secreto no es superior o mejor que un voto abierto.” An open vote is “‘una práctica histórica’ y consistente con la ‘cultura mexicana.’”¹⁰

From a political science perspective, Middlebrook proposes the concept of “post-revolutionary authoritarian regime” to reframe Mexico’s elusive place in cross-national comparison in relation to other post-revolutionary experiences. This promising proposition helps to explain labor’s lagging role in Mexico’s political liberalization and should be explored regarding state relations with other social actors. As numerous academic reviewers have already concurred, *The Paradox of Revolution* is the most important work on post-revolutionary Mexican labor in English and essential reading for understanding twentieth-century Mexican politics more generally.

Ethnicity, Empowerment, and Democratization

Jeffrey Rubin’s *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism, and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico* shifts the focus on state-society relations to the regional level, exploring the pioneering experience with democratization from below of the Coalición de Obreros, Campesinos y Estudiantes del Istmo (COCEI) in Juchitán, Oaxaca. Against the backdrop of a firm command of the political-economic and institutional context, Rubin gracefully deploys many of the most powerful interdisciplinary insights from cultural studies. He blends a narrative political history of regional conflicts and coalitions with original archival research on public discourse and rich ethnography of lived local politics. Rubin carefully assesses the politicization of Zapotec ethnic identity in the context of class and gender relations. Gender helps to explain the tenacity of ethnic identity (p. 37). Rubin’s grassroots ethnographic insights allow him to shed light on the interaction among ethnicity, gender, class, and political culture. Here he succeeds in making a virtue out of necessity, given that COCEI leaders declined to be interviewed for his study. His resulting “view from the market” provides an especially credible assessment of how Juchitecos experience and participate in politics.

In Juchitán, ethnic self-determination became a regional force for democracy back in the early 1970s. Unlike most other radical regional social movements of that period, COCEI chose to compete in the electoral

10. Quoted in Jim Cason and David Brooks, “Señalan canadienses falta de libertad sindical en México,” *La Jornada*, 24 Nov. 1998, p. 16.

arena and eventually won its first victory in 1981. COCEI leaders focused on municipal rather than national electoral politics and sustained an unusually balanced coalition with their national left-wing party allies.¹¹ To account for this puzzle, Rubin details the cultural and social legacies left by repeated waves of resistance in defense of regional autonomy, focusing on ways in which language, culture, and popular expression became powerful political resources.

In contrast to most studies of social movements, *Decentering the Regime* also takes into account the other contending local political forces, such as authoritarian elites and Juchitán's pro-democracy moderate forces. The long historical view shows that municipal elections were an important arena for local democratic initiatives before COCEI, and their frustration helps to explain its emergence. The political climate was also influenced by *El Satélite*, a vibrant independent local newspaper published from 1968 to 1979. These antecedents are revealing examples of the kind of civil society initiatives often left out of Mexico City-centric versions of politics during this period. Rubin also draws on comparisons with other regional experiences in Mexico to bolster his case for the importance of historically inherited local political practices and cultures. Mexico's uneven contours of regional politics today may well be explained by diverse locally specific histories that have been obscured by homogenizing frameworks for political analysis. Analysts still have a great deal to learn from subnational comparison.

Because COCEI was the first radical city government elected in contemporary Mexico (and now longest in office), its importance as a critical case is incontrovertible. But *Decentering the Regime* goes further by showing how the Juchitán experience raises important questions about conventional notions of Mexican politics more generally. Rubin challenges state-centered views with his idea of "decentering": "national politics [should] be understood as something partial and complex that coexists with, but is different from, regional and local politics . . ." (p. 14). This approach clearly demonstrates that for many Mexicans, lived politics and representation have often unfolded outside the structures that have been assumed to be nationally homogeneous. The study reveals that the ruling party came late to Juchitán and sunk few roots. Yet in the book's nuanced explanations of social mobilization, state actors have repeatedly influenced the terrain of conflict and the structure of opportunities for change. State actors have intervened in controversial issues of regional infrastructure, land, and water since the early 1960s and have regulated electoral conflicts since the 1970s. *Decentering the Regime* is a powerful tool for analyzing the emergence of so-

11. Mexican electoral legislation requires local civic movements to affiliate with national political parties if they want to run for local office, a provision that often interferes with balanced relations between movements and parties.

cial actors, but explaining their impact also requires “unpacking” the state’s diverse levels, branches, and factions.

Social versus Civic Mobilization: Forced to Choose

Armando Bartra’s *Guerrero bronco: Campesinos, ciudadanos y guerrilleros en la Costa Grande* is an incisive essay in political history by one of Mexico’s major analysts of Mexican popular culture, regional history, and peasant politics. His analyses of strategies of rural social movements and public policy have long influenced pro-reform Mexican audiences inside and outside the state.¹² Bartra’s *cronista* style combines analytical force and highly original research with extraordinary literary grace. He opens *Guerrero bronco* with an important conceptual discussion:

En el México posrevolucionario la acción popular ha transcurrido por dos vertientes: movilizaciones sociales reivindicativas y combates cívicos por la democracia política. Pero hasta ahora, los procesos gremiales y los despliegues ciudadanos han seguido cursos divergentes. . . . Este desencuentro está condicionado por el hecho de que la democracia política y la justicia socioeconómica son instancias distintas—aunque complementarias—y configuran dos caras de un mismo sujeto; en una el pueblo aparece como contingentes de ciudadanos políticamente actuantes, y en la otra, como sectores y clases gremialmente estructurados. (Pp. 10–11)

This approach reveals a pattern found far beyond Guerrero, where tensions between civic-political and socioeconomic-interest-based organizing have created fertile terrain for state initiatives to keep challengers from civil society off balance, as in the case of the Solidaridad program.

Bartra reveals the Costa Grande’s repeated cycles of mobilization for electoral democracy, accountable governance, and community-based economic development. Broad regional movements for electoral democracy started with the successful election of the Partido Obrero de Acapulco in the early 1920s, followed by the Partido Socialista de Guerrero in the 1930s, the mass civic movements of the early 1960s, and the Cardenista upsurge of the late 1980s. Autonomous movements for socioeconomic change also began with the rural influence of the Partido Obrero de Acapulco, followed by the agrarian reform of the 1930s, the broad-based *coprero* movement of the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the smallholder coffee movement of the 1980s and to a lesser degree the community timber *ejidos*. Historically as well as currently, the more sophisticated government response has been to

12. See, for example, *Los herederos de Zapata* (Mexico City: Era, 1985). Unfortunately, only two of Bartra’s essays have been translated into English so far: “The Seduction of the Innocents: The First Tumultuous Moments of Mass Literacy in Postrevolutionary Mexico,” in the pathbreaking *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, edited by Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, 301–25 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994); and “A Persistent Rural Leviathan,” in *Reforming Mexico’s Agrarian Reform*, edited by Laura Randall, 173–84 (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996).

offer incentives to movements to sacrifice their civic agendas in favor of their social agendas. At the same time, each radical reform movement was cut short by government official repression, which in turn explains the Costa Grande's parallel cycles of armed peasant resistance from the Partido de los Pobres in the 1960s to today's Ejército Popular Revolucionario.

In spite of the wave of new regional political histories, Guerrero has received remarkably little analysis. *Guerrero bronco* addresses only one of the state's distinct regions.¹³ Guerrero is nevertheless well known for political conflict, although Bartra's important study challenges the common assumption that the state is characterized by an imputed "culture of violence." Instead, he shows that Guerrero's popular political culture includes inherited memories, repertoires, and aspirations that have helped drive repeated waves of mass mobilization for democracy and social justice, despite the government's consistently violent response.¹⁴

Gender and Protest Impact on the State

Vivienne Bennett's *The Politics of Water: Urban Protest, Gender, and Power in Monterrey, Mexico* also applies long-term historical analysis of state-society interaction in a regional context. Bennett explains the puzzle of how low-income women's protests managed to encourage massive public investment in water services for poor residents of Mexico's third-largest city. Her study analyzes three interlocking topics: the history of Monterrey's city water services, the response of the urban poor to longstanding water scarcity, and the state's response to their protests. Class and the gender division of labor help to account for sustained waves of women's protests, and Bennett's nuanced institutional and political economy analysis explains when and why these protests managed to influence the state. The study also includes introductions to key contextual issues of urban access to water and gender relations in Latin America more generally.¹⁵

Monterrey's experience challenges Mexico City-centric views of

13. For a new study of one of Guerrero's indigenous regions, see Jane Hindley, "Indigenous Mobilization, Development, and Democratization in Guerrero: The Struggle of the Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas against the Tetelcingo Dam," in *Subnational Politics and Democratization in Mexico*, edited by Wayne Cornelius, Todd Eisenstadt, and Jane Hindley (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1999).

14. Recent coalition efforts to democratize the Costa Grande region's development process have expressed concern about the lack of "democratic culture" as a counterpoint to their own broad-based initiative to promote transparent, participatory, and accountable governance. See the main journal covering Guerrero's rural community-development movements, *Autogestión* 13, no. 4 (25 Nov. 1998).

15. Bennett builds on the literature of the middle to late 1980s regarding the relationship between "practical" and "strategic" gender interests, a discussion that has since evolved significantly. See, for example, Lynn Stephen, *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

state-society relations in many ways, starting with the autonomous power of the city's private sector, expressed in this case by the private sector's (failed) direct management of city water services from 1909 to 1945 and again from 1971 to 1976. Unlike the situation in other cities, the women's water protest emerged independently of both the official party and the city's better-known urban popular movement.¹⁶ None of the usual factors were involved, such as a context of electoral competition, leftist leadership, or citywide organization. Instead, waves of uncoordinated mass direct action—nonideological but highly disruptive—peaked in 1978–1980 and 1982–1983 and gained leverage from the federal government's interest in supporting Monterrey industrial elites.

Bennett's analysis of the protesters' gendered public strategies and repertoires of direct action is especially sophisticated, explaining why authorities tolerated radical actions that have often provoked repression in other contexts and how protests taught officials how to administer limited water supplies most effectively. In short, "by the late 1970s . . . , civil society had made itself an important social actor in Monterrey" (p. 98). Like many such movements for tangible material goals, this one subsided once the initial demands were won. Bennett converges in *The Politics of Water* with Middlebrook and Rubin to show how the impact of the protest was related more to politics within the state than to the ruling party. Although the three subjects that they consider differ—industrial workers, urban-popular women, and radical Zapotecs—each of these three studies finds state actors more important than the vaunted ruling party, raising questions about the applicability of the widely used concept of corporatism.

Political Culture and the Politics of Polling

Roderic Ai Camp's *Polling for Democracy: Public Opinion and Political Liberalization in Mexico* addresses changing state-society relations from a wholly different perspective. The editor reviews the volume's state-of-the-art analyses of the increased importance of polling in Mexico. Raúl Trejo Delarbre and Juan Carlos Gamboa insightfully address the controversial relationship between the mass media and polling in the 1994 presidential election (the first one in which polls played a key public role). Trejo Delarbre reports that the 1994 polls proved remarkably accurate, based on the co-

16. This mass organization, the Frente Popular "Tierra y Libertad," focused mainly on land and housing issues. By the late 1970s, it could draw support from 5 to 10 percent of the city's residents, according to Bennett (p. 15). This once neo-Maoist organization later became a core group in the Partido del Trabajo. When the distraught former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari briefly sought refuge in one of their *colonias* after his brother was first arrested (during the ill-fated hunger strike), he symbolically underscored Solidaridad's project of creating direct state-society partnerships that bypassed the ruling party. He also highlighted the movement's limits.

incidence between the prediction and the final tallies. Here again, however, regional political variation raises questions about assumed national homogeneity. In regions where political freedoms are not respected, exit polls may well reflect how people actually voted but not necessarily how they would have voted under democratic conditions. Fear matters. Recall that Alianza Cívica's observers in 1994 found violations of ballot secrecy in 38 percent of the polling places surveyed nationwide (rising to 68 percent in Chiapas).¹⁷

Polling for Democracy also includes a series of contributions that use survey research to assess changing Mexican values. Linda Stevenson and Mitchell Seligson suggest that Mexico's post-revolutionary legacy helps to explain how the regime has remained relatively stable despite extreme inequalities. They explore whether this fear of instability and violence—a political resource for the regime—is eroding as memories of the revolution fade. The authors looked for hints in a 1978 survey of a small sample of *maquila* workers. They found inherited stories of past political violence, but the Guerrero experience suggests that such legacies can have double-edged implications for political behavior.

James McCann assesses survey findings on Mexican levels of “political engagement” in comparison with those in the United States and Canada, drawing on 1988 and 1991 surveys by Gallup Mexico. These polls were notable for reportedly avoiding the urban bias so common in Mexican polling, even though most of the questions involved a narrow range of topical political opinion rather than underlying values. In contrast to other contributors, McCann mentions pro-government media bias only in passing and as an opposition accusation rather than an obvious fact (p. 92). Many of his key questions involve perceptions of economic policy options, where media bias looms large enough to wonder how well they actually measure “the extent to which citizens are psychologically involved in the electoral process” (p. 100).¹⁸ Neil Nevitte compares Mexican and Canadian attitudes toward trade and integration from 1981 and 1990 surveys, pointing to evidence that the shared context of U.S. hegemony sometimes creates more commonality than one might expect. Because free trade had only been seriously debated in Canada in 1990 and not yet in the United States or Mexico, the NAFTA-related conclusions are a bit of a stretch. This section of *Polling for Democracy* leaves the impression that mass surveys may be more adept at measuring political opinions than underlying values.¹⁹

17. For further discussion of the importance of the guaranteed secret balloting for revealing electoral preferences, see Jonathan Fox, “National Electoral Choices in Rural Mexico,” in Randall, *Reforming Mexico's Agrarian Reform*.

18. The 1988 election analysis is also undermined by McCann's confusion of Cárdenas's 1988 electoral coalition, the Frente Democrático Nacional, with the “Frente Cardenista,” a “parastatal party” that unilaterally changed its original name (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores) to take electoral advantage of the presidential candidate's popularity (see pp. 91, 92).

19. Trejo Delarbre observes at the beginning of the volume that polling at its best captures

The two final chapters focus on the politics of Mexican opinion polling. Leading pollster Miguel Basáñez, whose work is featured regularly in *Este País*, assesses the methodological issues surrounding the presentation and analysis of survey results in the context of the 1994 election experience. Mexican pollsters debated how to interpret undecided voters' views and whether in-home or street interviews would produce more reliable results. Basáñez argues that street interviews can take sampling considerations into account while avoiding the possible element of fear associated with in-home surveys. He also draws attention to the need for more consistent public transparency about sponsorship, sampling methods, and margins of error of opinion surveys. Alejandro Moreno's concluding essay shows that the popularity of Salinas's policies, such as Solidaridad, enhanced the ruling party's performance in the 1991 congressional elections.

Building Independent Mass Media

The question of the degree to which public opinion surveys reach deeper to reveal underlying attitudes and values is inseparable from the issue of access to reliable information about public issues. The tension between Mexico's state-led authoritarian legacy and repeated efforts to express democratic aspirations is reflected as much in the mass media as in the rest of the institutions of civil society. Mexican television has only slowly and recently begun to open up, especially after the unexpected 1996 national broadcast of the dramatic videotape revealing that the Guerrero state government had massacred seventeen unarmed peasants at Aguas Blancas. Yet both Rubin's and Bennett's studies point to remarkably independent local newspapers far from Mexico City dating back to the 1970s. William Orme's *A Culture of Collusion: An Inside Look at the Mexican Press* brings together diverse news media analysts and journalists to provide "an inside look at the Mexican press." This collection, sponsored by the Committee to Protect Journalists, provides a nuanced assessment of the threats still faced by Mexican journalists, especially in the provinces, and of the corruption of much of the mainstream media. Orme recognizes the impressive consolidation of "honorable exceptions" such as *Proceso* (Mexico City), *El Norte* (Monterrey), *Reforma* (Mexico City), *El Financiero* (Mexico City), *La Jornada* (Mexico City), *Siglo XXI* (Guadalajara), *El Diario de Yucatán* (Mérida), and *Zeta* (Tijuana) (p. 10). His introduction attempts to focus U.S. business attention by arguing that free trade requires a free press.

The brief essays in *A Culture of Collusion* address both print and broadcast media and conclude by emphasizing human rights issues. Lead-

"a snapshot of an instant in the life of a society" (p. 54). He avers that polls "are not capable of synthesizing all positions, beliefs, ideologies and knowledge that comprise the values of a society into one single opinion" (p. 39).

ing journalist Raymundo Riva Palacio begins with an insightful analysis of self-censorship and press collusion with the state. In his view, "the concept of conflict of interest doesn't exist in Mexican journalism" (p. 23), and he predicts that the press will continue to lag rather than lead the process of democratization (p. 30). TV Azteca news director Sergio Sarmiento follows with a less critical assessment of press coverage of the major events of 1994. Former *Mexico Journal* editor Joe Keenan unmasks those all-pervasive "gacetillas," the paid inserts that masquerade as news in even some of Mexico's most distinguished independent newspapers. Mexico-based reporter Barbara Belejack documents the biased television coverage of the 1994 presidential elections, drawing on the comprehensive monitoring of the Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos. *Los Angeles Times* reporters Marjorie Miller and Juanita Darling profile the founder of the Televisa empire, Emilio Azcárraga, who declared in 1991, "Televisa considers itself part of the government system, and as such, supports the campaigns of PRI candidates" (p. 65). Former National Public Radio correspondent América Rodríguez reverses the cross-border frame with an impressive analysis of "Televisa North: Spanish-Language News in the United States." Univisión television reporter Bruno López reinforces Rodríguez's insights with his practitioner's perspective. The concluding essays on human rights include a comprehensive overview by longtime Mexico correspondent Lucy Conger, an essay by lawyer Mary Moynihan summarizing the U.S. State Department version of human rights, and an assessment by Joel Solomon of Human Rights Watch of the thorny problems of documentation. He reports that only about one in ten cases of murdered journalists involves clearly political motives (p. 123). Noted political analyst Jorge Castañeda closes the collection by addressing the prospects for press freedom, contrasting the relative openness of print news in comparison with television news. He notes "the often undetected paradox: when it doesn't really matter, the media are relatively open. When things really matter, the media are totally closed" (p. 138).

"Newer Identities" and Older Interests

While studies of regional social and civic movements are making important strides, academic research has lagged behind the emergence of "newer" social movements. For example, few book-length studies are yet available on Mexico's grassroots environmental, human rights, popular feminist, gay, and cross-border immigrant movements.²⁰ "Newer" does not necessarily imply strictly identity-based, however. Many of Mexico's most

20. On women's movements, see Esperanza Tuñón, *Mujeres en escena, de la tramoya al protagonismo: El quehacer político del Movimiento Amplio de Mujeres en México (1982-1994)* (Mexico

significant newer social actors are driven by material demands, like the urban and rural debtors' movement, El Barzón. In other cases, the mobilizing power of identity is embedded in conflicts over material and territorial resources, as with many local environmental and indigenous movements. Some "new-style" mass movements also focus on classic democratic rights, such as the campaigns against human rights abuses, for electoral democracy, and for immigrant rights to absentee voting. Yet both indigenous rights and immigrant voting movements are highly identity-based insofar as they contest notions of national identity that have long dominated state and society. Both kinds of movements call for the state to respect their right to be treated as full Mexican citizens, equal although different.²¹

El Barzón followed an unusual path, transforming a regional farmers' movement into a broad-based, primarily urban and middle-class mobilization and staging radical protest actions that were rarely repressed by the state. The class base of the movement was diverse, although limited to those with access to bank credit (including many borrowers who were seduced by promises in the Salinas era that Mexico had reached the gates of first world prosperity). Heather Williams's compact and effective monograph, *Planting Trouble: The Barzón Debtors' Movement in Mexico*, traces the emergence of the movement from well before the peso crisis in December 1994 through its subsequent spread nationwide. She finds that the movement was able to harness middle-class rage because of its capacity to mobilize the previously unorganized through innovative recruitment and media strategies. When skyrocketing interest rates caused "similar problems for urban and rural producers in vastly different circumstances, the Barzonistas were able to frame their efforts in such a way as to convince normally quiescent citizens that participation in the movement was honorable, safe and worth their time and money" (p. 12).

City: Miguel Angel Porrúa and Colegio de la Frontera Sur, 1997). On grassroots rural environmental movements, see the comprehensive *Semillas para el cambio en el campo*, edited by Luisa Paré, David B. Bray, John Burstein, and Sergio Martínez Vásquez (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997); Víctor Alejandro Payá Porres, *Laguna Verde, la violencia de la modernización: Actores y movimiento social* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora and Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1994); and Velma García-Gorena, *Mothers and the Mexican Antinuclear Power Movement* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999).

21. Sociologist Luin Goldring is one of the few analysts to have framed the study of cross-border immigrant civic and political participation in hometown and national politics in terms of broader questions of state-society relations. See Goldring, "From Market Membership to Near-Citizenship: The Changing Politicization of Transnational Social Spaces," in *L'Ordinaire Latino-Americain* (July-Dec. 1998), nos. 173-74 (published by GRAL and the University of Toulouse).

Organizaciones Civiles and the State

The changing relationship between state and civil society in Mexico also involves the rise of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), although they did not become major actors until the early 1990s, long after their emergence in many other Latin American countries. This lag may have been due to the weakness of Mexico's progressive Catholic Church or to the fact that much of the Left often found some degree of refuge in the state's revolutionary nationalist legacy.²² The Mexican state's remarkably persistent capacity to intervene, regulate, and occupy spaces that NGOs fill in other societies is also a major factor. Explaining this dilemma would require more systematic comparative study, in Mexico and cross-nationally. In the meantime, *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas en México y Centroamérica* makes a very good start in offering the most comprehensive overview of Mexican NGOs published so far.²³

The volume concentrates on NGOs focusing on service provision and the public interest. Some chapters also address membership organizations, which are most usefully considered as distinct from NGOs. Editor José Luis Méndez begins with a thoughtful introduction that prefers the newly invented and more positive-sounding term *organización civil* over *organización no gubernamental* (ONG). Blanca Torres follows with a review of English-language literature on NGOs. Martha Schteingart assesses the weak links between NGOs and academic researchers. Manuel Canto's overview of NGO participation in public policy frames much of the subsequent sectoral discussion and reviews a case from Jalisco, which is governed by PAN (Partido Acción Nacional).

In the section on social policy, María Luisa Tarres's analysis of women's rights NGOs, "De la identidad al espacio público," is one of the most comprehensive and original contributions to *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas*. It notes the rise of pragmatic advocacy coalitions, such as

22. Analytical studies of the Catholic Church and grassroots movements in Mexico are remarkably rare. For an insightful comparison of the dioceses of Ciudad Juárez and the Oaxaca Isthmus, see Víctor Gabriel Muro, *Iglesia y movimientos sociales* (Mexico City: Red Nacional de Investigación Urbana and Colegio de Michoacán, 1994).

23. Although chapters on Central America are included, the volume does not include a comparative focus, either cross-nationally or across sectors within Mexico. The chapters on Central America include América Rodríguez on pilot participatory education programs in El Salvador, which involved little NGO participation. Abelardo Morales and Carlos Soto assess environmental policy and government-NGO relations in terms of "*concertación insostenible*" (p. 255). Orlando Mendoza writes on the politics of food donations in Nicaragua and the displacement of native corn by wheat. The logic for including Central American cases appears to have been more geographic than analytical. The region's experience with NGO participation in the policy process is difficult to compare with that of Mexico because of the large role played by U.S. foreign aid, the legacy of the civil war, and the region's historically weak states.

the campaign that reformed the sex crime law in 1991 (p. 125). René Coulomb and Maria Emilia Herrasti detail Mexico City's long experience with housing NGOs. In contrast to the widespread post-earthquake image of this sector as a relative success story of NGO impact on the state, these authors' balanced assessment finds that policy innovation and reform were marginal exceptions, even in the case of the Fondo Nacional para las Habitaciones Populares (FONHAPO), the most pro-reform government housing agency.²⁴

The environmental policy section of *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas* opens with Víctor Urquidí's general policy recommendations to NGOs, followed by a substantive contribution on the impact of environmental NGOs by Patricia Avila. In this area, NGOs have achieved some notable influence on policy discourse. Environmental Secretary Julia Carabias comes from one of Mexico's most distinguished university-based NGOs, but evidence provided of tangible impact on policy implementation is limited. Nor are all cases cited as examples of impact convincing. The tenacious Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio certainly fought for environmental policy reforms in the NAFTA context, but that fact does not demonstrate leverage. The environmental side agreement was driven primarily by the Clinton administration's need to win over mainstream U.S. environmental organizations before a close congressional vote.²⁵ The essay's strength consists of the Michoacán case studies of the campaign to defend Lake Pátzcuaro and the contrasts between semi-governmental and independent statewide NGO networks.

Sara Gordon begins the section of *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas* on economic policy with a study of the private-sector-led Fundación Mexicana para el Desarrollo Rural, located "between philanthropy and the market." Founded in 1963, the FMDR's goal has been to spread "entrepreneurial culture" among the campesinos, offering technical assistance and leveraging government credits. FMDR targets not the poor but producers who might be considered to be "lower-middle-class" in rural terms. Gordon finds "modest results." In contrast to this case of NGO service provision to individual producers, cooperative rural producer organizations are studied by Manuel Roberto Parra and Reyna Moguel. They compare two indigenous smallholder coffee co-ops in highland Chiapas, focusing more on group responses to government policy than on their in-

24. They also draw readers' attention to one of the few studies of the urban popular movement that has taken appropriate account of the role of external social actors. See Oscar Núñez, *Innovaciones democrático-culturales del movimiento urbano popular* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco, 1990). For comprehensive background on housing policy, see José A. Aldrete-Haas, *La deconstrucción del estado mexicano: Políticas de vivienda, 1917-1988* (Mexico City: Alianza, 199).

25. See John Audley, *Green Politics and Global Trade: NAFTA and the Future of Environmental Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997).

fluence on policies.²⁶ This study of community-level decision-making finds diverse responses to the challenge of state withdrawal and globalization, with one of the two organizations gaining autonomy from the state. The Majomut co-op's initial consolidation was supported by grants from the Inter-American and Rockefeller Foundations to encourage the growing of organic coffee. Such backing leads the authors to wonder about a possible "reconversion of dependency" toward new funders (p. 362).²⁷ Editor José Luis Méndez and Rogelio Ríos study ADMIC (Asesoría a Microempresas), an NGO founded by Monterrey Group business leaders in 1979 to support industrial micro-entrepreneurs. As with the FMDR, it turns out that a private-sector-led NGO has managed to leverage significant funding from the Nuevo León state government (as well as from the Inter-American Development Bank and Acción Internacional). As in the FMDR case, government agencies provided significant support for their projects, but there seems to be less evidence of broader policy impact. The concluding essay by Gabriela Pérez Yarahuan (a ranking government official) and David García Junco addresses the controversial debate about whether the Mexican government should revise its legislation governing NGOs and compares a service-providing NGO with the mass movement Alianza Cívica. Overall, despite the many sectors and strategies assessed, the cases in *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas* suggest that NGOs have had remarkably little impact on public policy so far.

The Right to Equality and Respect for Difference

One of Mexico's oldest social actors is also "new" in that the indigenous rights movement has gained national scope and presence for the first time. It seeks to alter the balance of power between state and society and gain recognition of rights to be both equal and different. This movement's most tangible impact on national policy produced the Acuerdos de San Andrés sobre Derechos y Cultura Indígenas, signed by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) and President Zedillo's representatives in

26. The coffee case is notable because it is the only sector where smallholder organizations that networked nationally managed to affect economic policy in the 1990s. See Luis Hernández Navarro and Fernando Celis, "Solidarity and the New Campesino Movements: The Case of Coffee Production," in *Transforming State-Society Relations in Mexico: The National Solidarity Strategy*, edited by Wayne Cornelius, Ann Craig, and Jonathan Fox (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1994); Richard Snyder, "After the State Withdraws: Neoliberalism and the Politics of Reregulation in Mexico," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1997; and "After Neoliberalism: The Politics of Reregulation in Mexico," *World Politics* 51, no. 2 (Jan. 1999):173–204.

27. The Acteal massacre showed that Majomut faced a much greater threat from government-backed paramilitary organizations. Curiously, this study mentions the region's political and military conflicts only in passing.

February 1996. The broad-based process of negotiating this political agreement galvanized an extraordinary degree of consensus throughout Mexico's diverse indigenous civil society. The Zedillo administration's subsequent withdrawal of support, however, reflects the persisting Mexican political stalemate on the issue of indigenous rights.²⁸

Acuerdos de San Andrés provides a state-of-the-art introduction to the Mexican indigenous movement by framing the key historical documents with several insightful analytical essays. Co-editor Luis Hernández Navarro opens the volume by tracing the history of the Mexican indigenous movement. Built on more than two decades of regional agrarian, civic, ethno-political, and economic organizing, the movement first became a national force in 1994 in response to the Zapatista rebellion. Co-editor Ramón Vera Herrera follows with a perceptive account of the emergence of the Congreso Nacional Indígena (CNI). The accords take up the middle section of the book, along with many related documents from the CNI and the EZLN. The book concludes with the co-editors' analyses of the political conflicts since the agreements were signed and with an essay by Mixe lawyer Adelfo Regino Montes, "San Andrés, el lugar de las muchas verdades y de los muchos caminos."

The mainstream of the independent indigenous rights movements in Mexico pursues goals that are remarkably resonant with an array of other Mexican social actors: participatory democracy, accountable governance, and respect for their autonomous capacity for self-representation. The indigenous demand for the right to be different is based on their demand to be respected as full Mexican citizens: their goal is to be included in a democratic state rather than to secede from it. Indeed, the CNI's main demand is "Nunca más un México sin nosotros." While many sectors of Mexican society are uncomfortable with the new public recognition of Mexican racism, the demand for autonomy has also gained widespread legitimacy. An array of Mexican urban-popular, peasant, and trade-union movements pioneered their own visions of autonomy from the state and the political parties since at least the late 1970s.

Stepping Back to Look Forward

Perhaps the safest generalization that can be made about changing state-society relations in Mexico is that the process is marked by extreme diversity. Autonomous social movements, civic organizations, and non-governmental organizations are active throughout much of Mexico, but their levels of consolidation, their scale and scope, and the cohesion of their

28. The San Andrés Accords have been published in English for the first time in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1999), together with essays by leading Mexican advocates of indigenous rights.

coalitions remain extremely uneven (not to mention their levels of impact). In the resulting patchwork quilt, some regions or social groups remain under entrenched authoritarian rule while others have carved out veritable democratic enclaves that experiment with alternative economic development, self-representation, and accountable governance from below. In between these extremes, much of Mexico has taken on various shades of gray, including hotly contested “dual-power” situations between democratic and authoritarian forces as well as less overtly violent areas where rising social and civic movements have yet to overcome the partnership between patronage and the police that stands in their way.²⁹ Despite the flourishing of regional historical and anthropological studies, systematic comparison of political dynamics across Mexican states, regions, or municipalities remains rare. More systematic comparison of different state apparatuses and their factions would also enhance our understanding of how and why state actors respond to some initiatives from civil society with concessions, to others with repression, and to still others with indifference.

State and social actors are often locked in a tense embrace. While social and civic actors are becoming increasingly autonomous, their consolidation and spread often depend on the broader political opportunity structure, which is only partially subject to their influence.³⁰ Meanwhile, state actors pursuing reform, including newly elected opposition leaders, may attempt reform initiatives whose fate depends significantly on the response from civil society. The growing body of literature tracking the experience of how opposition parties govern at state and municipal levels will shed much light on the degree to which changes in subnational regimes actually lead to changes in the state.³¹ Whether opposition parties are in or out of office, relations with autonomous social movements are both a source of tension and an arena for creative innovation. The relationship between opposition party governance and deeper changes in the state will be revealed by the outcome of efforts by human rights advocates to restrain police and military forces.

29. For a conceptual discussion of pathways to variation, see Jonathan Fox, “How Does Civil Society Thicken? The Political Construction of Social Capital in Rural Mexico,” *World Development* 24, no. 6 (June 1996):1089–1104.

30. For a persuasive application of the “political process” approach to Mexican state-society relations, see Maria Lorena Cook, *Organizing Dissent: Unions, the State, and the Democratic Teachers Movement in Mexico* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1996). Political identities organized around distinct regions within states can be crucial even for trade-union struggles that presumably involve broader shared interests. For example, the banner held by the Oaxaca contingent in a recent teachers’ protest in Mexico City read “Regiones unidas jamás serán vencidas” (photo in *La Jornada*, 20 Jan. 1999, p. 44).

31. See Cornelius, Eisenstadt, and Hindley, *Subnational Politics and Democratization in Mexico*; and *Opposition Government in Mexico*, edited by Victoria Rodríguez and Peter M. Ward (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

One of the biggest challenges for analysts of state-society relations may be to assess the degree to which social and civic actors are actually constructing their own new political practices involving increased internal accountability, transparency, and informed rank-and-file participation. Protest movements can have democratizing effects on the state without necessarily democratizing civil society. Conversely, actors in civil society can be internally democratic without influencing the state. For decades, the word *democratic* was used as a synonym for “opposing the state” rather than as a description of actual political practices. Recently, however, the reproduction of clientelistic and authoritarian political practices within civil society and opposition party ranks has been subjected to public scrutiny and debate, thanks in part to the independent media. Thus even when movements broaden and deepen their democratic practices, consolidation is far from inevitable.

Mexico’s multiple political cultures clearly provide resources for further democratizing democratic forces. For example, the Mayan-derived concept that the appropriate role of leadership is “*mandar obedeciendo*” has been widely disseminated. More generally, analysts have made a great deal of progress toward explaining where political cultures come from and how they are deployed, also illuminating the sometimes uneasy relationship between discourse and practice. Yet the analytical articulation between broad patterns and local specificities often remains ad hoc. Since Antonio Gramsci at least, analysts have been grappling with explaining the dynamics through which hegemonic political cultures are contested and alternatives spread. There is still a long way to go.