The United States and the Americas

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This series is dedicated to a broader understanding of the political, economic, and especially cultural forces and issues that have shaped the Western hemispheric experience—its governments and its peoples. Individual volumes assess relations between the United States and its neighbors to the south and north: Mexico, Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Canada.
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The United States and the Americas

Mexico and the United States
W. Dirk Raat
and Michael M. Brescia

Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas
Fourth Edition

The University of Georgia Press
Athens and London
To Gerry, Kelly, Jon, David, Margaret, Echo, and Gizmo, Nacho, and Pancho. WDR

In Memoriam
Roberto Alducin González (1930–2007)
Hartman H. Lomawaima (1949–2008)
Michael C. Meyer (1935–2007)

To Alejandra, Karina, Mom, Dad, and Keith, con mucho cariño. MMB
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Preface

This history of Mexico is not an ordinary narrative that traces the contours of the past in a geographic vacuum, but one that views Mexico in the context of its relationship with the United States and the global economy. We examine the manner in which the United States has shaped the political economy of Mexico since the nineteenth century while at the same time influencing its political culture and social system. Of course, influence has flowed north of the international border; Mexico has affected the United States tremendously. For example, during the Mexican Revolution of 1910–20, the first social revolution of the twentieth century with international implications, the United States was used as a source of materiel, recruits, and funds for Mexico, which resulted in profound social change and commercial growth for the U.S. Southwest. In the more recent past, the rapid influx of Mexican workers in the United States and the violence that accompanies illegal drug trafficking, as well as the U.S. post-9/11 preoccupation with border security, promises to color the ambivalent views that each country holds of the other.

This history is also an account of the growth of Mexico’s economy vis-à-vis the United States. Part of that story can be found in the demographics of Mexico, the comparative resource base of Mexico and the United States, and the geopolitics of the international community. Spain’s imperial rule bequeathed a heritage that resulted in an economic gap between Mexico and the United States, a gap that was widened by the wars of independence in the early nineteenth century and then by Manifest Destiny, whereby the United States sought to link its Atlantic and Pacific coasts by its invasion and occupation of Mexico in 1846–48. Moreover, since 1870 Mexico’s economy has been subordinate to that of the creditor nations in the world-economy, first Great Britain, and after 1900, the United States. In other words, Mexico’s modern economy has been conditioned by the development and expansion of
the global economy in general and the North American economy more specifically.

Moreover, this is a study in comparative civilizations—the Anglo-Saxon culture of Protestant North America and the Native American–Hispanic society of Catholic Mexico. Mexico’s Indian and Spanish past has made it a very different society from that of the United States, with its capitalist economy and tradition of checks and balances in a republican form of government devoid of multicultural participation in politics until the post–World War II period. A comparative methodology has also been used to demonstrate significant patterns or solve particular historical problems in an effort to go beyond the conceptual limitations of explaining change over time through the lens of the traditional nation-state. For example, a comparative approach can illustrate the differences between British and Spanish imperial policies relating to the frontier and Indian matters or explain why Mexico, which along with Argentina underwent radical modernization upon entering the industrial world-economy of the early twentieth century, followed a violent path to revolution and Argentina did not.

This is also a diplomatic history, but not in the traditional sense of a study of the formal political and military relations between nation-states. In analyzing changes and continuities in the relationship between Mexico and the United States, the “underground” history of U.S. intelligence and covert operations has been considered, not to mention the domestic politics and social dimensions of foreign policy in both countries.

Mexico’s relationship with the United States is important in part because Mexico’s history is unique among Latin American nations in at least two ways. First, only Mexico shares a common border with the United States, the world’s sole military superpower whose massive economy includes industrialization and trade, a flexible service sector, and a technologically savvy labor market. Over time, this proximity has fashioned an asymmetrical relationship: an economically and militarily powerful United States that views Mexico in terms of strategic and commercial interests and geopolitical concerns, and a developing Mexico that seeks to protect its cultural integrity and national
identity while promoting economic growth in tandem with the colossus of the North. On those occasions when U.S. and Mexican interests converge—such as during the Juarista era, World War II, or the debt bomb crises of the early 1980s that facilitated austerity measures and a renewed interest in global free trade agreements—Mexico has been able to promote its own economic interests and cultural identity within a larger geopolitical context sensitive to U.S. notions of exceptionalism.

Second, a shared border means that Mexico and the United States participate in the common history of a borderlands area, a region that is called Mexamerica today and was known historically as the Gran Chichimeca. The history of Mexican-U.S. relations must include this area, along with its frontier past. Neither Mexican nor American nor Indian, this multilingual and multicultural society is of primary importance for policy makers on both sides of the border.

This work has been dependent on many authors for the macroeconomic theory found herein. The ideas of a world-economy have been developed before in the historical works of Fernand Braudel and the sociological studies of Immanuel Wallerstein. Eric Wolf’s ideas on modes of production have also shaped our thinking, as has the notion of “incorporation” developed by Thomas D. Hall in his work on social change in the U.S. Southwest. The historian John Coatsworth has noted the need for plausible macrohistorical studies to substitute for dependency theory, modes of production analysis, and world-system models. Yet, in the absence of suitable alternatives, what must be emphasized is that the important idea contained in the works of Wallerstein and others is that nations are part of a dynamic world-system and that underdevelopment in one area and overdevelopment in another are mutually contingent features of a transnational system that forging economic interdependence and social inequalities at one and the same time. Scholars can agree with Braudel and Wallerstein on the dynamics of interdependency without accepting all of their theoretical arguments. Historical research undertaken since the 1980s has demonstrated sufficient nuance and variation in the Mexican economy; those conceptual questions that had driven world-systems theory are now recast to illustrate how local dynamics push back against the seem-
ingly monolithic global economy. Needless to say, the interpretations and conclusions of this study are ultimately the responsibility of the authors. What better way to temper the embrace of a structural interpretation of change and continuity in the Mexican past than to subject it to the sobering context of historical perspective, one that bridges culture, polity, and economy.
Acknowledgments

Special thanks to individuals who assisted in the first edition of this book: Gary Barber, Don Bush, William Graebner, William T. Hagan, John Coatsworth, James Lockhart, David Weber, John Hart, Friedrich Katz, David LaFrance, Deborah Lanni, Colin MacLachlan, Oscar Martínez, Charlotte Morse, B. W. Wolfe, and John Womak Jr. At the University of Georgia, Lester D. Langley suggested the project and assisted in its development, while Karen Orchard provided valuable editorial guidance.

For the fourth edition of *Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas*, we express our gratitude to the following individuals: Chuck Adams, Alejandra Alducin, Dale Brenneman, Beth DeWitt, Martha Few, Paul Fish, Suzanne Fish, Mark Gaigall, Kevin Gosner, Mary Graham, Beth Grindell, Diana Hadley, Vincent Hayes, Patrick Lyons, Maurizio Marinelli, Barney Pavao-Zuckerman, Verónica Reyes, Michael Riley, Jeffrey Soos, John Super, James Watson, and Phillip Weaver. Our editor, Nancy Grayson, was enthusiastic about the prospect of having a coauthor for this edition. We appreciate her support and encouragement.

WDR, Surprise, Arizona
MMB, Tucson, Arizona
May 2009
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The United States and the Americas

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"Gringos" and "Greasers"

The feeling of solitude, which is a nostalgic longing for the body from which we were cast out, is a longing for a place. According to an ancient belief, held by virtually all peoples, that place is the center of the world, the navel of the universe.

Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*

Most of humanity tends to perceive the world from an egocentric or ethnocentric point of view. Egocentrism is the habit of ordering the world so that components away from “self” diminish in value. Because as individuals we are dependent on others for biological comfort and psychological security, egocentrism can be realized only in part. Ethnocentrism (collective egocentrism), however, or at least the delusion of group self-sufficiency, can be easier to obtain. As members of societies, individuals learn to differentiate between “we” and “they,” between real striking union workers and “scabs,” between our native homeland and foreign territory. “We” are at the center, and as people are perceived as moving away from the center, they are proportionally dehumanized.

The illusion of centrality and superiority is typical of most peoples. The ancient Egyptians believed themselves superior to the nations beyond the Nile. Eskimos thought that their habitat was the world’s geographic center and that early twentieth-century Europeans had come to Greenland to learn good manners. Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States until recently each saw itself as the hub of the world.

In the northwestern part of New Mexico, five cultures maintain their own flattering self-images in spite of geographic proximity to each other and social intercourse between the groups. When asked by an interviewer in the 1950s as to the kind of community they would set up after a hypothetical drought, they responded as follows: The typical Navajo said that “if I was a Holy People, I would first build a good

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hogan.” A Zuni informant indicated that he would ask the Zunis to return “because a long time ago there was a drought . . . but the Zunis worshiped and prayed for rain and made the country good again.” The Hispano said that he would make a community with *la gente*, “with Catholic religion, raising livestock . . . and [with] the *costumbres* [customs].” The Mormons responded that the newly made community would be “under the United Order [of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints]; . . . theirs would be just one people, all of one belief . . . [and] this one belief would be Mormonism.” The typical Texan response was to talk of a community of families, ranches, cows, Protestants, and “movie houses.”

With the age of exploration and overseas expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the idea of Europe expanded in meaning. The style of ethnocentrism that dominated may be called Eurocentrism, a view that gave Europe the symbolic status of being the world’s center. Europe was synonymous with history, race, religion (Christendom), language, and culture; Asia simply was not Europe and had no unity. Thus the European spoke of the Near East, the Middle East, and the Far East. Of course the Egyptians, Arabs, East Indians, and Chinese did not know they were all Asians. Nor did the Aztecs and Incas know that they were inhabitants of the “East Indies,” that is, Asiatic Indians without history, race, religion, language, and culture.

The ancient Mexicano, a member of the Mexica or Aztec confederation, was a proud person. He or she was an urban dweller of México-Tenochtitlán, the etymology of “México” coming from *metztli* and *xictli*, meaning “the town in the navel or center of the moon.” As descendants of the Toltecs (according to official Aztec histories), they were a civilized people whose divinity was Quetzalcóatl, the giver of the arts and sciences and all knowledge. The inhabitants outside the center were uncivilized. “We” are Mexicans, people of Quetzalcóatl. “They,” the nomads of the north, are “sons of the dog,” Chichimecas or “barbarians.” “They” are the Otomí, rustics immediately outside the center. “They” are the Tenime, “a barbarous people, very unskillful, stupid and rude.” To the northeast are the wretched Huaxtecas who stain their teeth black and red and whose men wear no loin cloth.
In the meantime many of the so-called Chichimecas had developed their own cultural characteristics and had no knowledge of being “outsiders.” Some were Anasazi Pueblos, now more commonly called Ancestral Pueblos, who lived in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. Others, such as the Pima, were of the Hohokam culture of Arizona. Then there were the Mogollon, occupying the broken highlands that separate New Mexico and Arizona, and finally a host of others, including Hakatayas, Salados, Yaquis, and Mayos. The descendants of these people, especially the Ancestral Pueblos, include the modern-day Zuni, Hopi, Acoma, and Pueblos of the Rio Grande area of New Mexico.6

Zuni Indians trace their history back to the Anasazi Pueblos of 1100 CE and after. It is likely that their heritage even spans the earlier Basket Maker period. In the 1540s Francisco Vázquez de Coronado encountered the Zuni pueblos that became known as Cíbola, one of the fabled cities of gold that attracted the Spanish north of México-Tenochtitlán in search of precious metals to exploit and additional Indian towns to pacify. At that time there were six villages, but following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, fear of Spanish and Apache reprisals led the inhabitants to abandon their villages and reconsolidate into one village by 1705. This is the modern Zuni pueblo about forty miles west of El Morro National Monument in New Mexico.7

Zunis have a well-developed sense of place. The earth is the center and principal object of the cosmos. Within the earth the compact settlement of the Zunis is the Middle Place. The whole universe is oriented to the Middle Place, and Zuni origin myths are preoccupied with ascertaining the correctness of the location of the center.8

From outside the Middle Place have come foreign forces, first the conquering Spaniards and then the Athapaskan of the sixteenth century, including Apaches and Navajos. This early feeling of hostility seems to be the historical root of the current Zuni prohibition that prevents Spanish and Mexican Americans from witnessing any Zuni religious ceremonials (a prohibition that does not extend to other non-Native Americans) and explains why the Zuni word “apachu,” meaning enemies, applies to all Apaches and Navajos.9
During pioneer times explorers and settlers came to the Middle Place from two directions. From the south came Spanish conquistadors with their Tarascan and Tlaxcalan Indian allies, followed later by Catholic missionaries and colonists. From the east, at a much later time, came Anglo-American explorers, scientists, military men, and settlers. Although a geography textbook might describe New Mexico as a semiarid country, the early visitors perceived it differently, with eyes that had adapted to other values.

The Spaniards, motivated by glory to God and king, did not pay much attention to a land that was not all that different from Old Spain. When Coronado took note of the climate, it was to mark the drop in temperature. In reporting to the viceroy in 1540 he wrote that the people of Cíbola “do not raise cotton because the country is exceedingly cold.” So too did Juan de Oñate speak of the “rigorous winter” of 1599, and Bishop Tamarón, who visited New Mexico in 1760, referred to the ice-covered stream at Taos and the “freezing at dawn.” Spaniards and Mexicans, when moving north into New Mexico, always spoke of the presence of streams. They did not find the country barren—it was cold and wet.

In contrast to the southern Europeans, the Anglos moved into the Middle Place from the humid east. In 1849 Lieutenant J. H. Simpson described the “almost universal barrenness which pervades this [Navajo] country.” J. R. Bartlett, U.S. commissioner of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Commission, called the plains of New Mexico “barren and uninteresting in the extreme.” Traveler Albert Pike, who entered New Mexico in 1831, spoke of this different world with prairies appearing as “bleak, black and barren wastes undulating in gloomy loneliness” and settlers “peculiarly blessed with ugliness.” To Anglos, whether boundary commissioners, military officers, historians, or simply travelers, whether such men as W. H. Emory or Walter Prescott Webb, the Great Plains west of the one hundredth meridian was hot, barren, and arid. Like the early Spanish settlers these Anglo-Americans saw environment and place in terms of their own notions of centrality and superiority.

By the second quarter of the nineteenth century successful independence movements in the Americas against England and Spain had
led to the emergence of two young nations that shared a common yet undefined border. The attitudes and opinions of the Americans and Mexicans toward each other were naturally unfavorable. As contacts between the two nations increased, these attitudes became important elements in producing what one author has called “culture conflict.”

A number of Texas narratives reveal opinions that are racist and bigoted. The major traits of Mexicans as reported by these sources are ignorance, indolence, and cowardliness. For example, Mary Austin Holley’s descriptions as published in her work *Texas* (1833) record that Mexicans in Texas “are very ignorant and degraded, and generally speaking, timid and irresolute; and a more brutal and, at the same time, more cowardly set of men does not exist than the Mexican soldiery. They are held in great contempt by the American settlers, who assert that five Indians will chase twenty Mexicans, but five Anglo-Americans will chase twenty Indians. . . . The Mexicans are commonly very indolent, of loose morals, and, if not infidels of which there are many, involved in the grossest superstition.” It is interesting to note that in this passage Holley constructed a hierarchy of bravery in Texas—first Anglos, then Indians, and finally Mexicans. Even today many Zunis and Navajos view Anglos as superior to Spanish and Mexican Americans in both power and prestige.

When Texans declared their independence from Mexico in 1836, conflict between the two groups erupted openly. The battles of the Alamo and Goliad dispelled any doubts of Mexican cruelty to the Texans, and the later success of Texan patriots at San Jacinto confirmed for Americans the ineptitude of the Mexicans. As one popular fantasy described the scene after the battle of San Jacinto, the buzzards and coyotes refused to touch the dead Mexicans “because of the peppery constitution of the flesh.” Here one can see the beginnings of current border usage in which Mexicans are called “chile peppers” and “greasers.”

Spanish and Mexican attitudes toward Americans are reflected in much of the governmental literature. These works are filled with adjectives characterizing Americans as “presumptuous,” “ambitious,” and “aggressive.” Luis de Onís, the Spaniard who negotiated the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, is typical in his comments. He noted that
the Americans were “arrogant and audacious,” thought “themselves superior to all the nations of Europe,” and believed “that their dominion is destined to extend, now, to the isthmus of Panama, and hereafter, over all the regions of the New World.” This indeed was the idea of Manifest Destiny that came to control U.S. policy. While the Americans talked of “expanding the realm of liberty,” Mexicans complained of empire building and imperialism.

Raymund Paredes, after surveying travel literature in the United States between 1831 and 1869, noted that Americans from different regions had remarkably similar attitudes about Mexicans. These were generally negative and reflected anti-Catholic sentiment, racial prejudice, and hispanophobia. They were also ethnocentric.

This last quality [ethnocentrism] was pervasive among Yanqui [used here to denote simply a citizen of the United States] travelers and thus especially pernicious. Frequently, travelers denigrated Mexicans essentially because they were unlike themselves. The Americans were not satisfied simply to describe the Mexicans, but, secure in their feeling of superiority, wished to stand in moral judgment of them. Yanqui writers seldom understood that it was one thing to suggest that Mexicans did not esteem work as much as Americans, and quite another to label them simply indolent.

It should also be noted that this ethnocentrism came at a time when Americans were unabashedly undergoing a surge of nativism, a major characteristic of the age of Jacksonian democracy that denigrated immigrants and all things foreign.

Modern Mexico was born during the last quarter of the nineteenth century under the direction of Porfirio Díaz, dictator and president for more than thirty years (1876–1911). This period (known as the porfiriat) was characterized by an influx of U.S. and European capital that, when combined with domestic peace, paved the way to modernization. But there were social costs to this economic growth, and the revolution of 1910 was one of them.

Campesinos in the northern high country joined serrano (northern highlander) revolts that sought to protect municipal autonomy in the
face of an expansive, bureaucratic state, while agrarians and peasants in the south, typified by Emiliano Zapata, fought the advances of commercial haciendas. After 1913 urban labor, small-scale artisans and merchants, and middle-class professionals entered the fray. An early result was the establishment of the nationalistic Constitution of 1917, a progressive document that guaranteed the rights of urban and rural workers, reduced the power of the institutional church in education and political affairs, and restricted foreign ownership of property.

To implement the constitution, Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized the British- and U.S.-owned oil fields on 18 March 1938. The expropriation of petroleum resources delighted Mexicans and angered Americans, some of whom called for intervention to halt the emerging “red menace” south of the border. The event immediately became a day of celebration for Mexicans and soon became a national holiday. Editorial opinion in most U.S. newspapers, on the other hand, was harsh and unforgiving.

In 1939 Burt McConnell surveyed the Western press concerning the expropriation, and although his sources were skewed, his study did give a representative sample of corporate U.S. concern. Quoting from the Beaumont (Tex.) Enterprise, he noted that “this seizure of property in Mexico presents a new and novel political philosophy hitherto unknown to democratic nations. It is the greatest blanket seizure of foreign properties since the Russian Revolution.” The Denison (Tex.) Herald was quoted to the effect that “Leon Trotsky recently informed the Communists of the world that President Cárdenas was a ‘better, brainier Communist than Stalin.’” And the editors of the Topeka State Journal were convinced that “communism is confiscating the property of citizens of the United States and getting ready to build on our border a ‘hell’s kitchen’ which will invite the ‘red’ element of the world and challenge us with problems that will become very real.” The Red Scare of 1919 had left its imprint on the U.S. mind, and this would surface again with the McCarthyism of the 1950s.

Meanwhile, John Merrill, while a graduate student at the State University of Iowa, sampled the opinions of journalists and intellectuals in Mexico during the last year of the Eisenhower administration. In
his work, which was eventually published in 1963, Merrill found that of twelve main themes appearing in the Mexican dailies, ten were unfavorable. Included were the notions that the United States needed to improve its Latin American policy, was overly concerned with communism in the Americas, should try harder not to interfere in the internal affairs of Latin America, and was too concerned with money and possessions. When asked to rank characteristics of the typical North American, the informants most frequently checked unfavorable ones: materialistic, discourteous, prejudiced, cynical, paternalistic, and imperialistic. When these journalists gave their opinions in essay form, their remarks noted that Americans had a national psychosis of the dangers of communism, were misled by their own propaganda, and were superficial, domineering, materialistic, and incapable of understanding others. In other words, the American was a “gringo,” an outsider with a displeasing personality.

Among the many derogatory labels and ethnic insults that the American uses to describe the Mexican is the word “greaser.” This term is used along with “wetback,” “spic,” and “pepper belly.” Greaser, as a Texan epithet, has been applied since at least 1836, while many mid-nineteenth-century Anglo writers referred to northern Mexico as “Greaserdom.” Greaser describes both the individual Mexican and Mexicans as a group. It is possible that the word originated when nineteenth-century Anglos first encountered Mexican edibles in the Nueces–Rio Grande area and were struck by the greasiness of the food. Subsequent use of the word focused on the appearance of the Mexican, especially the color and demeanor of the skin and hair. As in most racial insults, this epithet makes reference to physical appearance, diet, and customs that form a stereotyped image of individuals and their cultural identity. It is another example of ethnocentrism.

Not only do Mexicans and Americans suffer from ethnocentrism, but they also tend to view reality differently. For example, several instances can be cited that exemplify the different meanings that Anglos and Mexicans assign to the same word or concept. For illustrative purposes only, three examples will be depicted: “smuggling,” “democracy,” and “national security.”
Smuggling means to move illegal goods across a border, bypassing duties and taxes in the process. Relative to the U.S.-Mexican border, some goods are considered contraband by both countries, others by only one of the countries. Smuggling liquor into the United States is an infraction of U.S. laws, while the illicit transport of electronic goods from the United States into Mexico violates Mexican law.

Both Mexicans and Americans disapprove of the illegal trade in drugs, but Mexicans generally tend to idealize the smuggler, especially the tequileros (individuals who smuggled tequila into Texas during the twenties). The person who disregards customs and immigration laws is not a figure of reproach in Mexico; however, the individual who historically represents law and order on the frontier and fought smugglers, the Texas Ranger for example, is idealized by Texans. And, of course, rangers were notorious for their revenge killings of Mexicans.24

One must look at the nineteenth-century history of the east Texas border area to understand the Mexican attitude toward smuggling. Before the Mexican War this area was the province of Nuevo Santander and included the southern part of Texas and what is the Mexican state of Tamaulipas today. When the international line was drawn along the Rio Grande, it cut through the middle of what had been Nuevo Santander, separating Mexicans on both sides. People who had been neighbors, friends, and relatives were now in different countries.

The preboundary social and economic patterns prevailed, and Mexicans continued to carry farm products and manufactured goods back and forth across the border, while migrant workers also crossed the international line in search of employment. Legally this was smuggling. Folk attitudes eventually developed and idealized the action of smuggling, especially when the smuggler was in conflict with the hated Texas Rangers, those “upholders” of U.S. law. A corrido (ballad) tradition glorified the heroic smugglers in their struggle with rangers, border patrols, customs officials, and other rinches (law enforcers).25 So it is that the bandido and the law enforcer evoke very different images to the American and the Mexican.

The same can be said for the concept of democracy. Contemporary U.S. political traditions resulted from the political liberalism that fol-
allowed the Protestant Reformation and a colonial experience that included various shades of religious tolerance and electoral politics, as well as the nineteenth-century background of Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy. For Hispanics the experience was different, derived as it was from the colonial marriage of “las dos majestades,” or the two majesties of Crown and church, followed by sustained political discord and a series of foreign invasions after independence from Spain.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when Mexicans created their constitutional governments, they imitated U.S. values by superimposing ideas of federalism and liberty on top of personalism and authoritarianism. Today, when Mexicans speak of democracy they may be referring to either the written or the unwritten tradition. The first, as in the Constitution of 1917, establishes Montesquieu’s separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The second reflects the political role of centralism in the history of Mexico, which saw until very recently the immense concentration of power in the hands of the executive branch.

As for national security, the example of U.S. and Mexican policies vis-à-vis Nicaragua between 1979 and 1988 can be cited. Official U.S. strategy under the Reagan administration was to oppose the Sandinista Revolution by contributing guns, munitions, and covert CIA aid to the contras, or “freedom fighters” as they were known in Washington. In addition, U.S. Green Berets provided specialized training for contra patrol commanders. U.S. fears were based on the belief that Soviet and Cuban troops were establishing a beachhead in Nicaragua, which would eventually lead to revolution in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. In general, U.S. policy reflected the traditional concern with the spread of communism in the Americas.

It is no secret that the policy failed. U.S. public opinion, weary of another foreign quagmire similar to Vietnam, refused to support the president. Congress was divided as well. Perhaps the most telling reason for the failure came from a senior U.S. diplomat in Central America who oversaw contra policy. At the height of the conflict, he noted that it was a miracle that the contras survived at all. “I seriously doubt
the United States Government has the capacity to organize and manage a successful guerrilla war. We don’t understand revolutions, the CIA lacks political vision and the Pentagon doesn’t want to touch it with a stick.” And as Eden Pastora, the former Sandinista, noted, “You Americans don’t know how to manage a revolution that depends on the masses. You want to solve everything quickly with dollars.”

To understand the Mexican point of view, one must keep in mind Mexico’s recent history. The first social revolution of the twentieth century in Latin America occurred in Mexico. It began before the Russian Revolution, lasted during its violent stage from 1910 to 1917, and was at first nationalistic and popular, with socialist leanings. It is important to remember that sympathy for revolutions in Latin America has been an outstanding feature of Mexico’s foreign policy since World War II and that Mexico’s experience has been similar in many respects to that in Cuba and Nicaragua.

After World War I, Mexico was not allowed into the League of Nations because it was considered a rebel nation. Mexico was opposed to U.S. involvement in Guatemala in 1954 and objected to the imposition of sanctions against Castro’s Cuba. At a later date it was supportive of Salvador Allende’s Chile, and after the United States aided in Allende’s fall, Mexico opened its doors to Chilean exiles. In the 1980s Mexico gave technical and financial aid to Nicaragua. As recently as 2003, Vicente Fox opposed George W. Bush’s doctrine of preemptive military action, which the U.S. president implemented in the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Obviously national security is defined differently in Mexico than in the United States. As Olga Pellicer de Brody notes, “national security in Mexico acquires connotations different from those frequently encountered in other Latin American countries and from those that prevail in U.S. political thinking. It is defined not in terms of the ‘danger of aggression’ but rather in terms of the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of the great objectives in the Constitution of 1917.” For Mexicans, national security is grounded in social security. This means protection of national resources, creation of wealth, and the equitable division of
income. Failure to achieve the latter is one of the primary reasons why Mexicans leave their homes in search of employment opportunities in the United States.

Having said all of this, perhaps it is time for the American people and their government to realize the limits of ethnocentrism when it comes to shaping attitudes, opinions, and policies. Immanuel Wallerstein once argued that the position of the United States in the capitalist world economy had declined in relation to the rise of other economic powers such as China and India and that since 1967 it no longer dominated the world military arena and political economy. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the U.S. inclination to exercise its military might in light of 9/11 seem to have modified Wallerstein’s assertion, and the financial crisis on Wall Street in 2008 has shown how far and wide the ripple effect can reach when the U.S. economy spirals downward. Perhaps American thinking can no longer assume supremacy in all matters. If recent history is any guide, however, there are plenty of conceptual stumbling blocks to overcome if the more egregious effects of ethnocentrism are to be avoided.

In early 2009 President Barack Obama inherited a foreign policy that tends to see the U.S. way of life through a narrow cultural lens, hence the predilection during the Bush-Cheney years to cast international relations in terms of “us” versus “them.” That U.S. exceptionalism has influenced foreign policy is nothing new, of course. During the Reagan years a bipolar understanding of the world, a Cold War sequel of sorts, informed U.S. diplomacy, with Western-style democracy and access to an abundant supply of consumer goods competing against communism and the heavy hand of military authoritarianism.

What has changed since Reagan left office in 1989, however, is the perception that the new face of globalization has an American hue to it, that the global economy steps to the beat of U.S. culture. In turn, the constituent parts of this mass culture, including entertainment, fast food, sports, and fashion, express the material wealth of U.S. society in myriad ways and, therefore, attract more and more immigrants. Mexican immigration to the United States is part of a larger historical continuum of push-and-pull factors, and the most recent wave to cross
"Gringos" and "Greasers"

La línea has sparked a heated polemic about the role of Mexican culture and values in the evolution of U.S. identity.

In an essay that forms part of a larger work published in 2004, the political scientist Samuel Huntington argues that the United States owes its development and identity to those seventeenth- and eighteenth-century settlers who were overwhelmingly white, British, and Protestant. A critical dimension of U.S. identity has been a timeless adherence to the "creed," what Huntington and the economist Gunnar Myrdal call the principles enunciated in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. (One assumes, as boilerplate, that they mean life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and that Jefferson’s statement "all men are created equal" could be explained away as relative to time and place.) Immigrants who arrived on U.S. shores were attracted to this creed, again the "product of a distinct Anglo-Protestant culture of the founding settlers," and while contributions from these immigrant cultures (Germans, Irish, and Scandinavians) "enriched" the majority white society, the core elements of U.S. identity remained firmly embedded in its original cultural framework.31

While Huntington identifies and skewers a number of groups that he holds responsible for the erosion of U.S. identity—for example, proponents of multiculturalism, CEOs of multinational corporations, and academic liberals—he directs most of his polemic against Mexican immigration. Huntington argues that Mexicans who have come to the United States since the 1980s are less apt to learn English, identity themselves as American, or assimilate into mainstream society. As a result, we are told that the U.S. Southwest, or for that matter any region of the United States with a sizable Mexican population, is turning into an "autonomous, culturally and linguistically distinct, and economically self-reliant bloc within the United States."32

Moreover, Huntington cites remarks made by two recent Mexican presidents to demonstrate how important the Mexican community in the United States has become to Mexico, especially the remittances it sends across the border, which are the second largest source of foreign income after petroleum exports. Ernesto Zedillo commented, "The Mexican nation extends beyond the territory enclosed by its
borders,” while Vicente Fox referred to his supporters in the United States as “heroes” who had allowed him to become president of one hundred million Mexicans in Mexico and twenty-three million in the United States. Even a cursory glance at Huntington’s use of presidential speeches suggests that he is quite troubled with official efforts by the Mexican executive to harness the support of those immigrants living in the United States. The willingness of any Mexican president to speak so publicly of a “greater Mexico,” one that required political attention while nurturing cultural affinity, was a warning sign that U.S. identity and its embrace of the Jeffersonian creed were showing visible signs of fracture.

Huntington sees irreconcilable differences between the values that sustain U.S. identity (hard work, self-reliance, ambition) and those found south of the border. He employs as evidence a string of quotes from a variety of individuals to illustrate his assertions. For example, Huntington cites the president of the National Council of La Raza: “The biggest problem we have is a cultural clash . . . between our values and the values in American society.” Meanwhile, a Harvard professor notes that Mexican Americans are more favorably disposed toward democracy than Mexicans. Finally, Huntington relies on Jorge Castañeda, a respected Mexican academic who served as foreign minister under Vicente Fox, to argue that “ferocious differences” exist between U.S. and Mexican cultural values, including but not limited to different concepts of time epitomized in Mexico’s mañana syndrome, the obsession with the past rather than the future, and the inability to achieve results quickly.

Finally, Huntington cites the work of author Robert Kaplan that contains remarks made by a third-generation Mexican American in Tucson, Arizona, which suggest that no Mexican living in the barrio believes in “hard work and education” as a way to material prosperity. In short, Huntington believes that the American dream, which was created and realized by an Anglo-Protestant society, should be shared only with those who dream in English.

The response to Huntington’s essay was swift and incisive. Some pointed to studies that contradict Huntington’s assertions, espe-
cially those concerning the patriotism of Mexican Americans and the English-language skills of Mexican workers, while others questioned Huntington’s inability to explain in analytical fashion why Anglo-Protestant values are more “desirable features of social life or more conducive to self-realization than other cultural systems,” including those of Catholic Mexico. If anything, Huntington’s frame of reference harks back to a nativist understanding of U.S. values, an understanding rooted firmly in the nineteenth century rather than the twenty-first century. As Louis Menand has argued, Huntington’s depiction of U.S. culture, and by extension his portrayal of Mexican culture, would have been less rigid if he had paid careful attention to the virtues emanating from the Jeffersonian creed—that is, a liberal democracy accommodates social and cultural change not because it is dogmatic but because it is an experiment.36

Although thinking in terms of centrality and superiority may be exemplified by many Americans, it is neither realistic nor pragmatic. Mexicans should realize that there are many complex features to an American personality, not all of them harmful to Mexico. Americans should not conceive of Mexicans as greasers but as neighbors and fellow members of an international community. The public health of nations might be improved if we would only acknowledge that we are all further from the center than we care to admit.
Plains, valleys, mountains: the accidents of terrain become meaningful as soon as they enter history. Each history is a geography and each geography is a geometry of symbols.

Octavio Paz, *The Other Mexico*

In July of 2008 it was estimated that there were more than 303 million persons residing in the United States, a country lying adjacent to Mexico with perhaps as many as 110 million inhabitants. While the rate of population growth in the United States had been relatively high during the “baby boom” years of the 1950s, a decline set in after 1960. During the 1970s the population of the United States slowly increased from 203 million to 226 million. Mexico’s citizenry grew from 26 million in 1950 to today’s 110 million and had an annual growth rate before 2000 of over 3 percent. Even though this tendency has recently slowed, with average annual population growth during the years 2000–2008 at less than 1 percent, the demographic transition remains a work in progress, and Mexico still has a relatively high number of young people. While the colossus of the North has an aging society growing more slowly than its older neighbor to the south, Mexico enjoys a relatively young and aggressive population at its neighbor’s doorstep.¹

By 2008, 45 million individuals, or 15.1 percent of the total U.S. population, were Hispanic. Mexico was the primary country from which close to half of the legal Hispanic immigrants came to the United States. In 2000 about 20 million U.S. residents identified themselves as Mexican, Mexican American, or of Mexican origin. These figures do not take into account the eight or nine thousand Mexicans who enter illicitly on a daily basis or a possible undocumented population in the United States between 5 million and 12 million. It is no wonder that
Californians joke about Los Angeles being the second largest city of Mexico. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, racial minorities (African Americans, Mexican Americans, East Asians, South Asians, etc.) will account for a majority of the U.S. population by 2042; among Americans under the age of eighteen this demographic transformation is expected to occur in 2023, which means that every child born in the United States after 2008 will belong to the first postwhite generation.

The Mexico of yesterday and today is part of a larger geographic and cultural context known as Middle America. At first appearance Middle America looks like a jumble of mountains, valleys, deserts, and jungles. Yet underneath this surface one can see a cultural map of heartlands and frontiers, centers and peripheries, and the ecological zones of contact that bridge these regions.

The heartland territories consist of the densely populated highlands of central and southern Mexico, Guatemala, and their adjacent lowlands. This was the home of the urbane and politically complex Mesoamerican cultures—the Mexica (Aztecs), Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Tarascans, and Mayas. Historically the heartlands have been bounded on the north and southeast by sparsely settled frontiers. The southeastern frontier includes the tropical forests and savannahs of the lowland country and extends from eastern Honduras through Panama. The northern frontier region ranges from the current U.S.-Mexico boundary to the basins of central Mexico and is a vast semidesert plateau that grows increasingly more arid as one travels from south to north (see figure 1).

Economically and politically the most important of these areas has always been the central highland of Mexico. It is often likened to one of the pyramids built by its early inhabitants. As the Mexican essayist Octavio Paz notes, “The geography of Mexico spreads out in a pyramidal form as if there existed a secret but evident relation between natural space and symbolic geometry and between the latter and what I have called our invisible history.” These mountains have massive walls on all sides—an eastern and western escarpment and a southern face that has been cut by the Papaloapan and Balsas rivers. On the northern side the pyramid is bounded by the westward flowing
Fig. 1. Physiography of Middle America
Lerma-Santiago River and the Pánuco River that winds its way into the Gulf of Mexico. The apex of this pyramidal form, at seven thousand feet above sea level, is the five thousand square miles of tableland known as the central valley of Mexico.\(^6\)

Just as the central highland has typically overshadowed the periphery, so too the valley of Mexico has traditionally dominated the highland. Here waters were trapped, lakes were formed, and agriculture flourished. Around the five lakes the Aztecs built their city of Tenochtitlán, a “second Venice” from the Spanish point of view. Then the Spaniards erected their new Jerusalem on the ruins of the Aztec confederation, and the Ciudad de Mexico became the viceregal capital of the colony of New Spain, known also as colonial Mexico. And in 2009 the megalopolis of Mexico City and its environs, teeming with over 22.9 million souls, remained the political, financial, and intellectual center of Mexico.\(^7\)

This mountainous environment shaped the civilizations that developed. Although preservation of water was important and a variety of irrigation projects evolved, the lay of the land inhibited the growth of large-scale irrigation. With no great bodies of water and intramontane basins that shut off open spaces that could be saturated with water, the hydraulic state, so important in the history of Peru and Egypt, did not mature. These same mountains also turned the country into a mosaic of climates, with some areas experiencing the warmth of sun and excessive rains while neighboring valleys were left cold and arid.\(^8\)

Yet this environmental diversity actually made for social cohesion. Each valley was a separate ecological system, producing its own variety of products. For example, in Texcoco in the valley of Mexico, the high ground provided beer and charcoal, the piedmont fruit, and the lakeshore maize. Goods flowed from lowland to highland, from villages to towns, and from valley towns to regional capitals. The most important nodal point was, of course, the valley of Mexico. Here, from ancient times to the present, the population has clustered around this fertile expanse in a country of marginal land.\(^9\)

The pyramid shaped the politics and values of the Mexican people. From the pyramidal apex Mexico has been ruled in turn by the Aztec
tlatoani (the emperor), the Spanish viceroy, the nineteenth-century caudillo, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), at least until the 2000 presidential election that saw the ruling party lose its grip on executive power after seventy years. In spite of the personalism of the caudillo, who sought to cultivate the people’s loyalties through patronage and the spiritual bonds of compadrazgo, it is a centralist tradition, hierarchic and bureaucratic. It is something quite different from the political traditions of North Americans.10

The mind-set of the Aztec king, who exercised his power over the people of Mexico from the top of the political and social pyramid, just like those he ruled, was not one that separated space and time as in the Western world. Ruler and ruled thought and lived in terms of space/time. The Aztec calendar had several combinations of space/time. The Aztec 365-day calendar, called xiuhpohualli, contained eighteen months of twenty days, plus five days at the year’s end, and was used to mark the seasons and organize religious festivals. Another calendar of 260 days was employed that combined the numbers 1–13 with twenty names of objects, animals, creatures, and supernatural forces; this calendrical cycle was called tonalpohualli, and each of its days had a corresponding hieroglyph to denote an animal, force, or object.11 As Octavio Paz notes, “to be born on a certain day was to pertain to a place, a time, a color and a destiny.”12 This space/time consciousness is part of the cultural heritage that Mexicans carry around today, although the context in which they understand it changes from generation to generation.

When Mexico is placed in the larger context of North America, some interesting geographic comparisons can be made. Most of southeastern Canada and the eastern United States fall under the forest category, while much of the central United States is in the grassland climatic region. Yet most of Mexico is either steppe or desert country, with the obvious exception of the Yucatán Peninsula. This means that the temperature, precipitation, and vegetation patterns of Mexico are more akin to the semiarid plains and mountain country of the western United States than that of the humid area east of the hundredth meridian.13

To use the language of a meteorologist, the north central and north-
eastern United States experiences a moist, cold winter, while the south-
eastern and south central area is moist and mild. In this respect central
Mexico is like the southeastern United States, while northern Mexico
and the western United States is dry. Only southern Florida and the
Pacific and Gulf coastal regions of Mexico are tropical areas. The east-
ern United States and central Mexico are areas of moderate to heavy
rainfall. Northern Mexico and the western United States receive only
light rains, less than ten inches annually in many places.14

Like in Mexico, geography and resources shaped the industries of
British America. Abundant rainfall and good soil nourished agricul-
ture, so the common English grains (wheat, oats, barley, and rye) were
developed. However, rocky land, short summers, and long winters
made New England an inferior farming country (although soil was
good in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and suitable for raising tobacco
in the southern colonies). Because of its slender farming base, New
England very quickly developed other resources, especially timber
and seafood.15

As a productive resource, wood was to colonial New England what
coil and iron ore were to the nineteenth-century Northeast, and cop-
pper and oil were to the twentieth-century United States. Wood, from
the virgin forests of oak and pine, was the raw material for ships, pot-
ash, and dyes. It was the source of pitch, tar, and resin, which made
vessels seaworthy, and the fuel for iron and glass manufactures.16

The coastline provided the settlers with inlets and harbors, while riv-
ers linked the coastal plain with seaports connected to Europe and Eu-
ropean goods. Coastal mountains, while retarding western expansion,
provided rivers and falls, a source of transportation and water power for
the people of the coast. As for seafood, there were oysters, crabs, bass,
cod, sturgeon, lobsters, eels, shad, catfish, herring, trout, and salmon—
all to be used locally or in trade.17 It is little wonder that the children
of New England eventually outproduced old England and by 1776 had
declared their own independence from the mother country.

In spite of their many differences, British North America and Span-
ish Mexico did have one more thing in common. They shared the same
frontier zone of what became the southwestern United States and
northern Mexico. It was in this ecological zone of interaction that Mesoamerica first made commercial contact with the Indian cultures of the U.S. Southwest. It was here that Anglos first confronted Spain in the Americas. This was the frontier culture that produced the Tejano-Mexicano conflict. In 1848 an international boundary was created through this area that separated the United States from Mexico. By 1900 modernization and the growth of the nation-state had changed this frontier zone into a border region: a boundary line protected by the armies, immigration officers, and customs agents of two nations. Today this is the United States’ gateway to Latin America, and Mexico’s entry point into the larger North American economy.

Geographers and ethnohistorians refer to this territory as the Gran Chichimeca. The well-known anthropologist Charles Di Peso defined the Gran Chichimeca as comprehending all of that part of Mexico that is situated north of the Tropic of Cancer to 38 degrees north latitude, including Baja and Alta California, New Mexico, southern Utah and Colorado, and western Texas. The northern limits extend from San Francisco (124 degrees west longitude) to Wichita Falls, Kansas (97 degrees west longitude). Mesoamericans called the “barbaric” inhabitants of this area *chichimecas*, a Nahuatl word that translates into the Spanish as *hijos del perro* (“children of the dog”), and the land was the Gran or Great Chichimeca (see figure 2).18

In general, this borderlands country is a craggy, dry land. The Rocky Mountains and Sierra Madres are its spine. One major extension of the Rocky Mountains is the high Sangre de Cristo range of south central Colorado and north central New Mexico, which leads discontinuously through western Texas and emerges eventually as the Sierra Madre Oriental of Coahuila and Nuevo León. Another extension of the Rockies is the San Juan range of southwestern Colorado. These mountains reappear in northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona to become the Sierra Madre Occidental of Chihuahua and eastern Sonora. This spinal ridge forms a continental divide separating the two major watersheds of the borderlands—the Rio Grande del Norte that flows into the Gulf of Mexico, and the Colorado River that drains into the Gulf of California.19
All of these mountains serve as impediments to moisture-laden air, which comes mostly from the Gulf of Mexico. The driest conditions prevail west of the Sierra Madre Occidental, a region that includes the Sonoran Desert and its various components (see figure 3). Throughout northwestern Mexico precipitation is basically seasonal, with winter rains being more variable; summer storms are often intense, causing local floods. Inadequate rainfall, in combination with hot winds, contributes to the aridity of the borderlands and makes deserts of certain areas.20

In the annals of Western Americana the Gran Chichimeca was known as the Great American Desert. As U.S. pioneers learned that corn could be grown in Kansas and sheep raised in Colorado, the Great American Desert retreated toward the west and southwest, shrinking as it went.21 Today only two large-scale desert areas are to be found in North America. One starts at the Laguna district of Chihuahua and Coahuila and spreads throughout western Texas and New Mexico up the Rio Grande beyond Albuquerque. The other is the Sonoran Desert, a region that includes both coasts along the Gulf of California (including most of Baja) and about half of western Sonora, the southwestern third of Arizona, the Mojave portion of California, and about half of Nevada.22 If the quest for fertile land shaped the historical focus of the
Fig. 3. Sonoran Desert
central Mexican highlands, then the struggle for water was and is the main theme of the Gran Chichimeca.

Many of the myths about Mexico’s legendary wealth explode in the face of stubborn geographic fact. A comparative look at agriculture and natural resources in the United States and Mexico illustrates the limits of Mexican growth. In Mexico land is marginal with only 10 percent of the total land mass potentially usable. Illinois counts on more arable land than all of Mexico, as do Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas. In 1960 the farmers of Iowa harvested more from the land than all Mexican farmers combined, even though Iowa had only 8 percent of Mexico’s population. In California, farmers irrigate more land than all Mexican farmers together. Marginal land has dictated settlement patterns throughout Mexico’s history, explaining why more than 50 percent of Mexico’s population has always lived in the fertile core and metropolitan areas of central Mexico.

The rich endowment of North America’s central corridor with natural resources explains in large part the rapid economic development of the United States. Nowhere in Mexico is there a natural navigable system of water transportation akin to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, nor is there an internal waterway like that of the Great Lakes. One cannot find iron ore and coal in abundance and in close proximity to one another, the way that iron ore in the Masabi Range is linked to the coal fields of Pennsylvania by the Great Lakes. A supply of petroleum has made the United States one of the largest world producers of oil. Great resources of gold, silver, copper, uranium, and other metals have aided in making the United States a major industrial and technological power.

Regarding Mexico’s loss of over half its national territory to the United States after the Mexican War of 1845, historian Joe B. Frantz notes,

While the historian’s role is not to indulge in cantina conjecture, one can’t help wondering what the history of the Borderlands would have been if in 1849 gold had been discovered at Sutter’s Mill in Mexico! Or if all the copper in Arizona and Utah, the uranium in New Mexico, the
California timber, lettuce, grapes, and climate and the silver in Nevada had been left under Mexican sovereignty. These resources . . . made it [the United States] a power in the world. Mexico in turn has been fragmented by mountains and dried by desert. . . . It has had to rescue its mineral resources from foreign hands. . . . In many ways the two countries were about equal in the 1840s, but the United States wound up holding a winning lottery ticket which it could cash in for investment and aggrandizement.25

The lotería that Mexican schoolchildren play today is quite different from the “lottery winnings” that Frantz referred to as the financial resources that fueled the expansion and industrialization of the United States.

While geography and natural resources have shaped the histories of the United States and Mexico and account for some of the many differences between the two peoples, it is, perhaps, the Indian factor that best distinguishes Americans from Mexicans. While the Indians left only a minority legacy in the United States, indigenismo has been a dominant theme in Mexican history since Hernán Cortés’s conquest of the Aztec confederation. In Mexico today the Indian component constantly appears—here in the form of Moctezuma, there in the actions of Benito Juárez, yesterday in the cries of Malinche, tomorrow in the hopes of Emiliano Zapata and the social justice that the Zapatista rebels seek for indigenous peoples in Mexico.26

Although figures vary greatly, a reasonable estimate of the size of North America’s aboriginal population in 1492 ranges from 25 million to 30 million, of which 3 million were in Canada and the continental United States and 25 million were in Mexico. Of that total, the Gran Chichimeca may have contained about 813,000 Native Americans. European contact was followed by a demographic disaster, primarily due to European epidemics, particularly smallpox, which reduced Mexico’s Indians from 21 million in 1521 to 3.5 million by 1570. The contemporary Indian population (considered racially, not culturally) of Latin America hovers around 40 million, of which 12 million can be found in Mexico. By 2009 the Native American population of the United States was estimated at 2.4 million.27
The early Native Americans were physically diverse, although European settlers called them all “red men.” Their skin color ranged from yellowish white to light brown, from bronze to copper. The Utes had squat, powerful frames, as did the Maya of Mesoamerica, a small people with broad heads and faces. The Crows were known for their height, as were the long-legged Yaqui, Pima, and Tarahumara of the Gran Chichimeca. Although most Native Americans are related to early Asian peoples, the Otomí of highland Mexico displayed African characteristics.28

These physical variations then combined with hundreds of different spoken dialects and languages. The seminomadic Utes of eastern Utah, so different from the Mexica (Aztecs) of central Mexico, shared the same parent language of the sedentary Hopi and the Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs. The Zuni of New Mexico speak a language so distinctive that it is not related to the speech of either Hopi or the other Pueblo groups and is most similar, interestingly enough, to Japanese. The Mayan language of the lowlands was similar to the Huaxtec spoken along the eastern coast of the Gulf of Mexico but radically different from the Zapotecan languages of southern Mexico or the Nahuatl of central Mexico. The Tarascans, a cultural group living next to the Aztecs, spoke a language of unsure origins not related to that in any other Middle American group.29

Most band and village people were patrilineal, practiced polygamy, and waged war. There were some who practiced little or no war, like the California-Nevada Shoshoni or the Mission Indians of California. The Pápago turned war as a form of insanity; however, the Iroquois, a matrilineal and monogamous people, were very warlike and cannibalistic and treated their prisoners mercilessly. The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice and, according to some scholars, cannibalism to an extent unheard of or unknown in other Native American societies. Aztec warriors saw their victims, who had been captured in battle, as the embodiment of the divine, which meant that the act of cannibalism was seen as a religious ritual that placed them into communion with Huitzilopochtli, the god of war and the sun.30

The indigenous population of the Americas can be generally cate-
gORIZED AS SEDENTARY, SEMISEDENTARY, AND NONSEDENTARY (SEE FIGURE 4). THE IMPERIAL, SEDENTARY SOCIETIES OF THE AZTECS AND MAYAS HAD POLITICALLY COMPLEX, BUREAUCRATIC POLITIES, WHILE THE PUEBLOS, SOME OF THE OHIO MOUND BUILDERS, THE CHIBCHA OF COLOMBIA, AND THE CARIBBEAN ARAWAKS WERE NONIMPERIAL AND SEDENTARY. IN THE SEDENTARY SOCIETIES INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES WERE INTERWOVEN WITH HAMLET LIFE. MEN SHARED FULLY IN PLANTING AND HARVESTING THE LAND. THE CENTRAL SOCIAL-POLITICAL UNIT (IN CENTRAL MEXICO THE *CALPULLI*) WAS A HAMLET GROUP THAT HELD THE LAND COMMUNALLY BUT ALLOTED PLOTS ON AN INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY BASIS.\textsuperscript{31}
The two most important groups in these societies were tax-paying agriculturalists and a directing corps of nobles. In addition, there were craft specialists and a class of people who were auxiliaries outside the normal protection of the hamlet group. The auxiliaries were often serfs who worked the land of others. And, of course, in Aztec and Maya society there were slaves. In highland Mexico these societies developed a complex civilization that was state oriented, urban, and imperial. All of these classes or groups would eventually be used by Spain in developing its own Latin American empire.32

Many indigenous peoples had societies that were intermediate between farming and hunting and gathering. These were the semisedentary Native Americans. Predominantly forest peoples, they had villages and cultivated fields; however, these villages and fields shifted frequently. Hunting and fishing were important pursuits. Unlike in the sedentary groups, the men in these societies left most of the farming and gathering to the women and children while they pursued hunting and warfare. There were no specialized social classes, and all trading was done on a kinship basis (unlike the tributary system of the Aztecs). One large block of semisedentary Indians lived in the woodlands of eastern North America, while another was spread through the tropical rain forest region of South America. Europeans would find it difficult to make permanent contacts with these Native Americans, given the lack of surplus produce, permanent lands, and groups to administer, produce, and channel goods.33

Another form of social organization intermediate between sedentary farming and urban culture, and nonsedentary hunting, gathering, fishing, and raiding societies was the ranchería, a dispersed hamlet that contained extended family units. These semisedentary groups had fixed points of settlement, and groups shifted from one ranchería to another during the course of a year. In the Gran Chichimeca all of these people were agriculturalists and of Uto-Aztecan stock. They ranged along a continuum from the highly scattered Tarahumara of southwest Chihuahua, through the more compact communities of the Akimel O’Odham and Tohono O’Odham of central and southern Arizona, respectively, to the densely settled households of the Mayo and Yaqui of
central Sonora. These latter groups had well-integrated community organizations that gave rise to the skills of warriors and priests.34

Finally, there were the nonresident people of northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest. These were the Chichimecas, known to the Aztecs as “barbarians” and “sons of dogs.” In the greater Southwest the nonresidents included agricultural bands such as the nomadic Navajo and Western Apache, as well as the nonagricultural Apaches in New Mexico. The Seris of northwest Sonora are an example of a nonresident group. They had few cultivation skills and no permanent settlements. A hunting, fishing, gathering, and raiding people on the move, they excelled at warfare and made ready use of the dreaded bow and arrow. Their population densities were low. The Europeans had limited social interaction with these peoples because they had no surplus or economic modes to exploit. The Spanish either defeated them in battle, forced them into missions where they often died, or sold them into slavery. Interestingly enough, messianic movements, which are often the reaction of societies facing extermination, appeared more often among nonresident groups than any other kind.35

To reiterate, the nonresident groups lived mostly in the area of the Gran Chichimeca, between the high cultures of the U.S. Southwest and the higher civilizations of central Mexico. These semisedentary peoples were the ranchería peoples of the Gran Chichimeca and the woodland folk who occupied the humid forests of the northeast. The Pueblos of New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona were a nonimperial, sedentary group. Finally, the Mexica (Aztecs) of the central highlands of Mexico and the Mayas of the lowlands were politically complex, sedentary Indians. Urbanism was more fully developed in the highlands, with the Aztecs having their own political empire, or at least hegemony.

One of the first true urban centers in the Americas was Teotihuacán, a preindustrial city with a population of about 120,000 between 450 and 650 CE. The city was laid out in a grid pattern that extended over nine square miles, with its main thoroughfare approximately 150 feet wide and stretching over two miles through the heart of the city. Its most impressive building, the Pyramid of the Sun, is a truncated temple that measures more than 700 feet at its base and rises about 200 feet. The
archaeological site of Teotihuacán is located approximately twenty-five miles north of the present site of Mexico City. At this time there were more than four thousand single-story apartment houses throughout the city, many of them home factories producing feather work, obsidian items, stone objects, and several kinds of pottery. The Teotihuacanos traded throughout Mesoamerica, including Oaxaca and Chiapas in southern Mexico and the highlands of Guatemala. There were also cultural outposts in northern Mexico designed to protect Teotihuacán from the incursions of the Chichimecas. A Nahuatl-speaking people who engaged in irrigation, food production, industry, and commerce, the Teotihuacanos were Mexico’s first genuinely urban people.36

With the collapse of Teotihuacán after 750 CE, the Toltecs settled Tula (or Tollán) in what is southern Hidalgo today, about fifty miles north of present-day Mexico City. Having earlier been influenced by Teotihuacán, the Toltecs adopted irrigation and terracing, developed municipal and state organizations, and developed an empire that spread to Chihuahua in northern Mexico and to the Yucatán Peninsula in the east. By so doing they pushed the Mesoamerican frontier into the border zone, defending their imperial interests with fiscal and trading colonies. A Nahuatl-speaking people, they participated fully in Mesoamerican culture: religion based on common deities—such as Tláloc, the rain god; Quetzalcóatl, the feathered serpent; and Tezcatlipoca, the god of the night sky—measurement based on mathematics and calendrical science; and an urban lifestyle based on intensive agriculture and the art of writing. When Tula fell after 1150 CE, this heritage was passed on to the Mexica, or Aztecs.37

The agricultural frontier of northern Mesoamerica now contracted southward, and several pretender “Toltec” groups arrived and developed in the central plateau area. One of these bands competing for a place in the Basin of Mexico was the Mexica. A Nahuatl-speaking, semiagricultural group who were originally mercenaries to more powerful tribes, the Mexica eventually emerged to a position of power by the fifteenth century.38

Their capital city, Tenochtitlán, was built in the former marshes of Lake Texcoco and stretched some twenty-five hundred acres. After a
century and a half of labor it had been transformed into a geometric network of canals, earthworks, causeways, dikes, residences, marketplaces, workshops, temples, pyramids, centers, and living quarters. It was the home of more than 150,000 inhabitants (akin to Venice in Italy). The urban center to suburban towns of more than a million people, and the headquarters of thirty-eight tributary provinces, the empire spread from the Huaxteca country in the northeast to Oaxaca in southern Mexico. When the trading ports of western Mexico, coastal Guatemala, and the Gulf of Honduras are included, the Aztec hegemony probably affected the lives of ten million to fifteen million inhabitants.\(^39\)

The locus of sovereignty was the main plaza in the center of the city in which was located the royal residences of the tlatoani (the emperor), his advisers, and the ruling class of nobles (pilli). North of the plaza was the great marketplace of Tlatelolco, where goods from near and far were traded. The pochteca were a special class of traders who traveled to the fringes of the empire to exchange goods, collect tribute, and provide intelligence for the tlatoani. Raw materials like gold and cotton were collected as tribute and then manufactured into jewelry and cloth by a special class of craftspeople.\(^40\)

Supporting this society were the plebeians, members of the local provincial unit who acted as farmers, fishers, porters, gatherers, and workers. In addition, there were slaves, serfs, and auxiliary servants (naboría), whose labor was used by individuals and the state. Of the slaves, the most important were prisoners of war, who were the primary source of sacrificial victims.\(^41\)

A deadly pantheon of bloodthirsty divinities—Tláloc, the water god; Xipe Totec, “our lord the flayed one,” god of goldsmiths; and Huitzilopochtli, the war god, to name a few—demanded that humans donate the life-giving force so that the eternal cycles could be sustained. And, as evidenced by the skull racks of Tenochtitlán, the Mexica practiced human sacrifice far in excess of other peoples and often in conjunction with cannibalism. The victims, reluctant gods incarnate, could award their captor with the prize of immortality. So the victory party partook of the body and flesh of the god, leaving only the torso for the hungry animals of the emperor’s zoo.\(^42\) This then was Tenochtitlán, an
American martial state and a new Venice, home for zealous priests and proud warriors and the dwelling place of poets and artists.

After the conquest the Spaniards built Mexico City on the ruins of Tenochtitlán—the Aztec capital erected in the likeness of Tula, the Toltec city modeled after Teotihuacán, the first true city on the American continent. Mexico today is a land of superimposed pasts, with each historical period shaped by the rigors of cross-cultural contact and exchange, which in turn have been grafted onto the collective memory of so many Mexicans.

One remarkable culture in modern Mexico is the contemporary Maya of the Yucatán Peninsula and Chiapas—perhaps as many as two million live there today. The Maya are one of the few peoples who have a continuous history from 9000 BCE to the present. Their earliest ancestors were big game hunters. Between 5500 BCE and 3300 BCE they lived in great coastal villages along the Caribbean, dining on lobster and crab while their poorer neighbors ate beans and squash. After 3300 BCE, many Mayas migrated up river valleys and became farmers. By the classic era, 200 CE to 900 CE, they had developed complex societies, intensive forms of agriculture (aided by irrigation systems and fertilizers), and ceremonial centers at sites such as Palenque, Piedras Negras, Bonampak, Copán, and Tikal. A population numbering between twelve and sixteen million spread across one hundred thousand square miles of lowlands through present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize.43

For a long time scholars believed that the classic Mayas were a peaceful people who were preoccupied with astronomy and religion. That they excelled intellectually cannot be denied; they developed and used a highly accurate calendar, a writing system, and the science of mathematics. However, it is now known that they were anything but peaceful, engaging in dynastic quarrels and waging wars with each other. Warfare was accompanied by captive sacrifice and bloodletting ceremonies, which occurred in conjunction with the ritual of royal succession. Bloodletting, combined with drug taking (including drug enemas), induced visions and hallucinogenic experiences that blurred the lines between the supernatural and natural worlds.44
The mystery of the Maya collapse long haunted scholars. In deciphering the Maya calendar and stelae (stone slabs) it was known that as many as nineteen different centers had erected dated monuments in 790 CE, yet by 889 CE the last stelae had been carved. Most of the ceremonial centers were abandoned and some of them left in ruin, suggesting that the Maya collapse was as abrupt as it was complete. Several causes have been given to account for the suddenness and rapidity of the decline, including catastrophic natural disasters, malnutrition and disease, warfare, population stresses, and the limits of milpa (slash-and-burn) agriculture. However, it now appears that the collapse was not so sudden or final. In fact, instead of decline archaeologists talk about transition. Instead of studying society from the top down, one should look at it from the bottom up; in other words, instead of viewing Maya society from the point of view of the priest-king, one should look at it from the viewpoint of the peasant and merchant.

After the fall of Teotihuacán in the Mexican highlands, a new group emerged from the Gulf Coast lowlands that are the states of Tabasco and Campeche today. Archaeologists once identified these people as the Putún, a seafaring merchant group that spoke Chontal Maya, a Mexicanized dialect unknown to the Mayas of the interior. The Putún wandered southward and may have aided in the collapse of cities such as Tikal by interrupting trade along the Usumacinta River, while their travels into and across the northern lowlands contributed to a flowering of that area. According to these earlier assessments of the evidence, the Putún had accepted Maya traditions and even had themselves portrayed on stelae inscribed with Maya hieroglyphic texts. More recent interpretations point to sharp disagreement over the evidence, or lack thereof, particularly in the absence of any archaeologically known ninth-century Chontal city. Moreover, some scholars assign the role of wanderers and invaders to the Itzá Maya, rulers of Chichén Itzá.

The early postclassic period (900–1200 CE) was initially identified as the time when the Toltecs of central Mexico conquered the Maya region in northern Yucatán and established their own city at Chichén Itzá. The Toltecs introduced warfare and human sacrifice to the Maya
as well as central Mesoamerican deities such as Quetzalcóatl, or the plumed serpent. The archaeological record now suggests, however, that the Maya had been engaging in human sacrifice and warfare since the very beginning of their civilization in the preclassic period. And a more nuanced view of the excavations undertaken by scholars has shown that the so-called Toltec traits found at Chichén Itzá are not a late, intrusive development; rather, they overlapped and even coincided with the Maya phase in the early ninth century. Artistic styles once considered Toltec are now seen as part of a broader Mesoamerican style that dates from the late classic period.

By the middle of the ninth century, Chichén Itzá was the most powerful Maya city-state and one of the most influential polities in Mesoamerica. How long its hegemony lasted remains uncertain, but most scholars argue that its power lasted until approximately 1200 when the city of Mayapán eclipsed it in size and importance. Chichén Itzá dominated much of the maritime trade in the Yucatán and other nearby regions. Material culture found in the sacred cenote, or deep well, suggests an expansive trade network that included gold and jewelry from Costa Rica and Panama, copper from western Mexico, turquoise from New Mexico, and carved jade from the southern lowland city-state of Palenque. Moreover, the city-state’s artistic achievements, especially its sculpture and colonnaded buildings, became symbols of power and authority throughout Mesoamerica and were even borrowed by the Aztecs, who were the last major group, as we have seen, to embrace the imperial sensibility.

Through the use of force, Mayapán ruled over a confederation of several smaller northern Maya cities after the decline of Chichén Itzá. The elite lived within the defensive walls of the densely populated city, while merchants traded with nearby Tulum but also with places as far away as Honduras. Once Mayapán fell around 1450, there was never again a centralized polity in the northern highlands. The Yucatán became a series of minor independent states ruled by distinct elite lineages. When Hernán Cortés arrived in 1519, cities such as Tulum were small in scale and decentralized. Although the Aztecs had started to
impinge on Yucatecan trade routes by that time, the Maya remained outside the Aztec imperial grip. The Spanish colonial enterprise would challenge Maya autonomy, however.

During the colonial period the Maya of the Yucatán continued to maintain their indigenous traditions. They were less westernized than their highland counterparts; the peninsula attracted fewer Spaniards. The military conquest started later there and was more prolonged than in central Mexico. The hacienda, when it finally did emerge, had deeper ties to the international market than to local markets. Eventually the hacienda complex evolved into the coffee and henequén plantations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and thus had a rather brief history in the Yucatán. During the bloody fighting of 1847 and 1855, the Maya rebels of eastern and southern Yucatán governed themselves. They called their culture the Cruzob, an indigenous folkway society that was an alternative to Europeanization. The Cruzob tailored Christianity and westernization to their own values and principles and were no less Maya as they adjusted to colonial and postcolonial rule. They simply became the colonial, and later postcolonial, Maya.51

During the preconquest era, Mesoamerican culture was influencing that of the Gran Chichimeca. Over the years the Mesoamerican border had advanced and receded as ecology, geography, and trade relations changed. Around the beginning of the common era the Mesoamerican border extended from the central highlands eastward to the Gulf of Mexico and the Huaxteca country. Seven centuries later Mesoamerican culture expanded into the Gran Chichimeca during the Pax Teotihuanacano and included parts of Sinaloa, Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Durango. With the rise of the Toltecs of Tula, Mesoamerica expanded in the west to include all of Sinaloa and parts of Sonora. However, after the fall of Tula, by 1200 CE, the Mesoamerican border receded, while the Chichimecas increased their territory.52

Perhaps the most important center of cultural diffusion in the preconquest period was a complex society in Chihuahua, Casas Grandes, also known as Paquimé. The region’s prehistory mirrored a pattern that was common to much of the U.S. Southwest and northern Mexico. The first farming communities developed around 200 CE, when most
people lived in small, self-contained hamlets. During the early part of
the thirteenth century, Casas Grandes flourished as one of the most
influential communities of its time in the greater Southwest. The site
is located at the headwaters of the Río Casas Grandes where tributar-
ies emerge from the Sierra Madre Occidental. Agriculturalists were
attracted to a floodplain that was nearly a kilometer wide, with rich
soil and plenty of water. While farming certainly contributed to the
growth of the area, the archaeological evidence also demonstrates that
the development of specialized economic production, such as the ex-
change of macaw parrots and shells, as well as more mundane items
like agave and turkeys, was primarily responsible for the accumulation
of wealth. Excavations of burial sites have hinted at differences in so-
cial status, while other archaeological digs have uncovered rooms with
large amounts of exotic goods, such as shell artifacts and ceramics.

The material remains uncovered at Paquimé show evidence of a dy-
namic ritual life. Much of the public architecture was large and occu-
pied a central role in social integration. Ball courts, which were quite
common in Mesoamerica, are found at Casas Grandes, although schol-
ars are unsure if the inhabitants of the area actually performed a ritual
game for religious purposes. In addition to ball courts, the presence
of stone circles may indicate ritual practice or roasting pits for agave.
At its height, Casas Grandes covered thirty-six hectares and had more
than two thousand rooms, as well as a large and sophisticated series
of canals that carried water from a nearby spring to the site where it
emptied into a reservoir.

All of this came to an end sometime after 1440 CE. Although the in-
terpretations of the material evidence suggest a combination of factors,
archaeologists generally describe an environment where two and a
half generations of people simply sat back and watched the great city of
Paquimé fall into ruin. While a group of artisans continued to make
a sufficient number of marketable goods, the construction and mainte-
nance of public buildings came to a grinding halt. In addition, there is
also evidence of a climatic shift and overuse of lands and water. Some
towns were abandoned, new sites were created, and others reverted
to nomadism. The Hohokam of Arizona had already declined. Some
Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon Chichimecans regrouped into what became the historically recognized Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and Rio Grande Pueblos. Other Pueblos increased their influence in the Great Plains. When Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century, they introduced European diseases to the Native American survivors. Perhaps as much as 75–90 percent of the population suffered death in the Chichimecan villages.57

The dominance in central Mexico of the Gran Chichimeca continued under the Spaniards. The conquest of the northern fringe was spurred by the discovery, development, and continued expansion of silver mining. The Spanish military had to adapt their techniques to the Chichimeca frontier, where most Indians were excellent archers, skilled in surprise attacks, and made efficient use of the horse. As in the conquest of the Aztecs, the Spaniards often used their Native American allies to take the brunt of the fighting. In this case it was the Otomí who were drafted to serve in Spanish expeditions. Forts or presidios, manned by castas (persons of racial mixture) or acculturated Indians (such as the Tlaxcalans), were used to pacify the area. Many Native Americans were killed or enslaved.58

The primary instrument of pacification was the mission—the creation of Native American settlements under the auspices of one of the orders. The Franciscans went into the north central area, including New Mexico. In the seventeenth century they were followed by the Jesuits who moved into Sonora, Arizona, and the western coastal areas. Lay Spaniards followed, attracted by the lure of instant wealth coming from the newly discovered mines. Haciendas and ranches soon developed to support the mines, and the “cowboy” lifestyle eventually extended into what is now the U.S. Southwest.59

The other tool of civilization was the Spanish town. This could have been a political and administrative center like Mexico City, a commercial town like Veracruz, a mining camp like Guanajuato or Durango, or a military garrison on the frontier. Civil authorities insisted on the direct integration of Indians into Spanish life, although in contradictory fashion, Spanish jurisprudence divided Mexico into la república de indios and la república de españoles, two distinct and segregated societ-
ies. The Indian was to be under the control of the local town council (cabildo); forced to develop European work habits in the factories (obrajes), mines, and estates; and fused through intermarriage into the community. Yet the reality was often slave labor in the factories, segregated neighborhoods, and death by disease or exploitation. Cultural survival took many forms, of course, including resistance, flight, and acculturation.

Generally speaking, the nonsedentaries perished. In missions and towns, or enslaved, they either died from disease or became indistinguishable from other Hispanicized Indians. In the mining towns they lost all identity. If they retained their own societies or fled to rugged pockets in the mountains (such as the Tarahumara), they might survive, taking what they needed from the Spaniards such as weapons, horses, cattle, and Spanish as a lingua franca. Even today the Indians of the Gran Chichimeca show less European influence than do their counterparts in central Mexico.

The degree of acculturation and mestizaje (racial mixing) that Indians experienced was predicated upon the relative strengths and weaknesses of their communities in the face of devastating epidemics and the exploitation of Spanish colonialism. As we have suggested earlier, the sedentary Indians provided the Europeans with the most opportunity for contact and conquest. The invading and occupying group required commoners for tribute labor and to deliver goods; Indian nobles could be used as intermediaries between conquerors and conquered, and the dependent groups could become servants and auxiliaries. The Aztecs, Maya, and their neighbors met these needs, as did the Pueblos of New Mexico. The eastern woodland Indians and the Chichimecas did not: they had no compact core territory, very little surplus produce, and no mechanisms capable of delivering and channeling produce and labor.

In the Mexica countryside the Indian village endured. Spaniards of all stripes wanted tribute, labor, and land. The Spaniards transformed Indian elite culture, but popular culture survived. In fact, the tributary system established by the Spaniards was not so different from that developed and used in the pre-Columbian world. Provincial ham-
lets (usually a *cabecera*, or head town, with several kinship groups, or *calpultin*) and their surrounding villages (*sujetos* of one calpulli each) simply transferred their allegiance from an Indian noble to the Spanish overlord, often channeling goods and labor through the same Indian intermediaries. Spanish institutions like the *cofradía* (a confraternity with a patron saint) and the fiesta were enlisted to support the village. While it is true that by the end of the colonial era many villages had been partially Hispanicized, with Spaniards and mestizos living in and around the village, many still retained their indigenous worldview. In spite of reduced populations, shrinking lands, the racism of outsiders, and the outrageous demands for tribute by the colonial state, the community survived.

The raison d’être of the Spanish conquest was the obligation to civilize the Native American. Duty to God and king required that the Indian be converted to Christianity. Idolatry was wholly evil. The setting for civilization must be town life, governed by Spanish law and authority. The first missionaries were the conquistadores, who as *encomenderos* received the right to Native American labor and tribute and the obligation to look after the spiritual welfare of their Indian charges. Many encomenderos hired priests and friars to live in the villages of the *encomienda* (a grant of Indian towns). Sometimes the major Indian town in an area would become the site of the church, while surrounding villages (*visitas*) would be subject to the authority of the church in the head town (the entire entity being known as a *cabecera de doctrina*). Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, and other orders soon established missions in towns throughout Mexico, and the result of this missionary work was a Native American population that practiced syncretic religion, a blending of Indian and Christian belief systems. The first generation of Spaniards took what was originally a Native American provincial unit of a cabecera surrounded by sujetos and transformed it into an encomienda. Usually a mestizo steward (*majordomo*) would live in the area of the encomienda and manage it for the encomendero. Thus goods and labor would flow to the city where the encomendero had his townhouse. By the mid-seventeenth century, the encomienda would be phased out, although it would en-
dure in some frontier areas, and the original provincial unit would become a Native American municipality.65

At the same time, several cabecera-sujeto units would be incorporated into a corregimiento or alcaldía mayor under the supervision of a corregidor or alcalde mayor (district magistrate), who would live in a central Indian town. The towns would have their own Indian cabildos and officials, and tribute would flow from the district magistrate to the city.

It was also at this time that the hacienda appeared, and by the end of the colonial period it made some encroachments on the lands of the villages. Yet hacendados always needed extra labor, especially at peak times of harvesting, and community Indians were a necessary source of that labor. It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that haciendas developed at the expense of villages, and rural Indians became peons, unskilled rural laborers, and small sharecroppers. Commercial agriculture then replaced traditional farming, as capitalism entered the countryside and transformed social relationships and market structures (see figure 5).66

The Spanish conquest also had a sexualized component to it. It was common for Mexican intellectuals in the twentieth century, particularly the celebrated novelist Octavio Paz, to imbue their literary works with sexual symbolism and psychological angst as a way to explain the complexities of Mexican identity in light of mestizaje. For Paz and others, Hernán Cortés, the conquistador who embodied Spanish notions of courage, bravery, and virility, violated la chingada, the Indian mistress Malinche.67 It was inconceivable to imagine their relationship as anything but unequal and violent. More nuanced views of Malinche, however, speak of her multilingual talents, her ability to survive impossible circumstances, including slavery as a child and later the Spanish conquest, and, finally, the way she forged a new identity for herself and her son Martín—the offspring of “the first kiss of love” between Malinche and Cortés—within a rapidly developing colonial society with patriarchal structures.68

The Spaniards arrived in Mexico without their wives, mothers, or sisters, and hoped to find enough gold and other precious metals so
Fig. 5. The Mexican Countryside. Adapted from schemata in James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwarz, *Early Latin America* (Cambridge, 1983), 40, 170.
that they could return to Spain as wealthy men of status. As we have indicated previously, when all the booty had been divided and there were no more treasures to find, they were given an allocation of Indian labor known as the encomienda. Through this arrangement many female servants became virtual slaves and concubines of their Spanish masters. At times Indian chieftains would seek favors from the Spanish captains by providing them with women as tokens of friendship. The result was a new generation of mestizos, or the offspring of both a Spanish and an Indian parent. By 1650 Mexico had more than 150,000 mestizos, a figure that increased to over a million by 1800, or 11 percent of the population. Today, of course, Mexico remains primarily a mestizo nation, a living testament to the pervasiveness of Indian culture despite centuries of change imposed by outside forces.69

In British North America, Indian relations were different. As the Anglo-Americans pushed west, they carried with them stereotypes of Indians as “wild savages,” wanderers who were addicted to warfare. Part of this attitude reflected their Puritan past. The Puritans came to New England to escape the tyranny of Old England and to create a City of God in the wilderness. Their preoccupation with purity and their doctrines of providence, grace, and special election meant that Satan’s sinners would be excluded from their holy community. The indigenous inhabitants of New England were viewed as “devils in the devil’s den,” some of Lucifer’s fallen angels placed in the wilderness by God as a test of their faithfulness. As devils they were to be cast out from the City of God, excluded and exterminated. After the Pequot War of 1637, Increase Mather called upon his congregation to thank God, “that on this day we have sent six hundred heathen souls to hell.”70

In contrast with Spain, colonial Americans had not only no sense of mission to pacify the Native Americans, but no settled policy for “civilizing” the Indians. The British failed to conceive of a colonial empire in America that included the Indians as an integral part of its citizenry. Initially, the early Americans simply attempted to push and drive the Indians westward, not unlike the British practice in New Zealand that allowed for an uneasy coexistence between Maori and whites.71

In general, the U.S. settlers thought in terms of extermination, re-
moval, or forcible isolation rather than Christian conversion. This idea, so different from Spanish policy, soon led to the concept of isolating Indians on the reservation, which became practice after 1850. On the plains, where limited land could not support the Indian habit of hunting and gathering, the U.S. government came to support the Native Americans on a ration basis, and with the Dawes Act of 1887, the reservations were administered by an agent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The entire system was testimony to the Anglo belief that Native Americans were incapable of governing themselves.

Thus, there were many differences between Spain’s Indian policy in the Spanish borderlands and that of Anglo-America in the rest of the North American frontier. The unified church and mission system so prominent in New Spain was lacking among Anglo-American institutions. The demography was also different. In central Mexico large numbers of Native Americans faced a small number of Spaniards, and the encomienda, an institution that would allow a few Spaniards to coerce a large number of Native Americans, was the solution. In British North America, and subsequently the United States, large numbers of white settlers faced relatively small numbers of Native Americans. Greater resources in labor and technology allowed the United States to grow without Indian labor, and isolation and extermination became the reality.

When the Mexican Indians confronted the Spaniards, an uneasy coexistence developed between Mesoamerican civilization and occidental civilization, between what scholar Guillermo Bonfil Batalla referred to as “México profundo” and “México imaginario.” Profound or Deep Mexico is the Mexico of today’s Indian population, its popular culture, and those indigenous values that have been partly assimilated by the mestizo masses—fatalism, communalism, cooperativeness, reciprocity, consensus, and a cyclical understanding of time. Imaginary Mexico, on the other hand, exists in the minds of the Mexican elite and is the product of Western civilization and the colonial past. Its values are those of individual freedom, competition, materialism (consumerism), science, technology, and a linear sensibility in terms of progress and change. More recently, however, historians are less likely to essen-
tialize culture in the same vein as Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, whereby complexity and nuance were reduced to a list of inherent traits and values. The scholarly inclination to romanticize rural poverty colored the real hardships that Indians were experiencing on a daily basis and has prompted some historians to approach cultural persistence as problematic rather than predictable.75

The indigenous and colonial mix created a mestizo culture in which the values of both societies were less than realized. The Mexico of today is an imperfect imitation of Western democracy and economic development. In terms of the Western model, its efforts to embrace modernization have been uneven, with a mixed economy subordinate to the cyclical nature of the global economy, a developing working class, a middle sector of entrepreneurs who look to state patrons for protection and support, and a corporate form of government that is both patrimonial and autocratic. This was and is the heritage of the Indian and colonial past, a tradition shaped by the space/time dimensions of Mexica society and the emergence of the modern nation-state during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
Up and Down from Colonialism

Since the uprising of Hidalgo, and more especially since independence, Mexico has been perennially agitated by revolutions, and the Mint had declined considerably. Instead of finding that immense quantity of gold and silver which used to arrive from every direction, today one only finds copper in that place where, according to Baron Humboldt, there was minted in fifteen days a larger amount of precious metals than could have been extracted from all the mines of Europe put together, and from which has emerged a total of 2 billion hard piastres.

Jean Louis Berlandier, Journey to Mexico (ca. 1825)

The productivity gap that exists between Mexico and the United States today dates from the late colonial era and the early years of the national period, roughly between 1770 and 1870. From its colonial base, the economy of the United States “took off,” while the Mexican economy slowed and then spiraled downward after 1770. In effect, the United States went up from colonialism, while Mexico went down. To grasp the differences between the overdeveloped United States and the underdeveloped Mexico of today, it is necessary to understand this heritage.¹

The differences between New Spain and English North America were partly the result of ecology and climate. The historian Clarence Haring divided the European colonies of the Americas into two groups: farm colonies and exploitation colonies. The former were generally established in temperate zones and produced commodities similar to those of Europe. Immigration to these colonies tended to come from the middle classes at home: small farmers, artisans, and the like. Those who were not middle class, such as indentured servants, became, if they survived, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and smallholders.²
The so-called exploitation colonies were usually settled in the tropics and produced and exported staple articles such as sugar, cotton, indigo, and gold (and in the highlands of Mexico and Peru, silver). Labor was usually compulsory, and since immigrants were not attracted to an area of servile workers, a community of landlords and serfs developed. Obviously, under Haring’s scheme, the northern colonies of English North America were farm colonies, while New Spain (and the U.S. South for that matter) was an exploitation colony.³

Timing, as well as place, conditioned the differences between the two societies. Colonial Mexico was born of a different order and time than Anglo-America. Mexico City was founded by Hernán Cortés in 1521, a hundred years before William Bradford led the pilgrims to Plymouth on their historic voyage in the Mayflower. New Spain was an older fragment of Europe, a quasi-feudalistic and traditional society quite unlike the bourgeois and liberal republic that emerged in North America. From Old Spain the late medieval and early Renaissance worlds were carried outward by conquerors and colonizers to the West Indies, followed by what became New Spain on the mainland.⁴

The epic of Spain in Mexico began before the Reformation and developed in part as a reaction to Protestantism. An absolutist Spanish state imposed a religious, linguistic, and political unity upon the diversity of pre-Columbian Mexico. This patrimonial state fostered a cult of hierarchy in government and religion. In terms of the world-economy, New Spain’s relationship to the core would always be through the semiperipheral area of Spain, an economic satellite of western Europe after 1600 (unlike English North America with its direct ties to the central commercial zone of Europe).⁵

In the Spanish Indies, colonization occurred precisely when the power of the Castilian Cortes (parliament) was declining. It was in Castile that the king had the most success in undermining any institutional opposition to royal absolutism. The conquistadores represented the Castilian king, not parliament (in fact, the Cortes never developed in colonial Mexico). The conquerors, because of the medieval tradition of reconquista (reconquest), had the aristocratic ethos of military ad-
venturers, the Catholic faith of crusaders, and the sensibilities of civil servants. Even the merchants, craftspeople, and professionals took their place in a social system in which values were determined by that earlier generation of encomenderos, friars, and public servants.6

The exploration and early development of Mexico came in the sixteenth century when the Mediterranean region with its Italian city-states was the world-economy. It is important to know that Aragón and other provinces of Mediterranean Spain were oriented toward Italy, North Africa, and the Middle East during the late Middle Ages. In addition, a major theme of Spain’s medieval history was the Reconquista—the reconquering of areas lost to the Muslims after 711 ce. These two legacies, the Mediterranean mercantile capitalism and Iberian territorial reconquest, were twin aspects of the revival of Europe. These traditions merged with the Spanish arrival in America.7

In the Mediterranean the basic unit of mercantilism was the compañía (company), a partnership between a home-based investor and a “factor” who would manage the company in the field and travel overseas. At times the backer providing the capital would be Genoese, while the field manager would be Spanish. Of course, the company was frequently composed of all Italians or Spaniards. Whatever the nationality of the members, their relationships were often familial, with the senior partner the father or older brother and the distant factors sons or cousins.8

Another characteristic of the Mediterranean world was that the company, if designed for commerce, was a factory (fondaci) or trading fort, which provided the factors with a safe place to conduct trade with local people. Factors provided an excellent way in which a permanent commercial presence could be established without the cost of conquest and occupation. If the enterprise was agriculture, it would usually be a commercial activity designed to produce and distribute a staple luxury in demand, most often sugar. The Genoese took the initiative in establishing sugar mills and plantations in the Mediterranean, southern Iberia, the Atlantic colonies of Spain and Portugal, northeast Brazil, and the Caribbean. Three of the largest mills on Hispaniola in the
1540s were run by the Genoese. Their influence in the Caribbean did not begin to wane until after 1550.9

The Iberian tradition of reconquista was based on military conquest and territorial occupation carried out by the compañía, or a band of men. Unlike the Genoese factory system staffed by employees, these men were risk takers who held shares in the company. If the occupation was successful, like the conquest of Cajamarca and Cuzco in Peru, then the individuals were paid in accordance with their number of shares. For example, a knight might receive a share for himself and a share for his horse, while a foot soldier might receive only a fraction of a share. Generally speaking, the Genoese maritime commercial compañías prevailed in the Caribbean, while the Iberian conquest compañías predominated during the mainland phase of colonization.10

The two individuals who epitomize these merging traditions are Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés. When Columbus left Italy he went west as an employee of a Genoese mercantile firm. While in Madeira he worked for a Genoese sugar company and married the daughter of an Italian who was donatary captain of the Portuguese island of Porto Santo, next to Madeira. His best friends were to be found among the Genoese merchant exporters of Seville. When he came to the Caribbean he continued the Genoese maritime commercial tradition.

Cortés followed the traditions of the Spanish reconquista, and when he left Cuba for Mexico he had ideas of conquest and occupation in mind. His hope was not to become a dirt farmer, or even an important merchant, but to become an aristocratic landlord with wealth and status matched only by loyalty to God and king.11 Like Francisco Pizarro in Peru, his expedition was one of subjugation, and his followers were shareholders, not employees. This was the Iberian tradition of reconquista.

Another basic entity of the Mediterranean world was the city-state, province, or town. Loyalty to the patria chica (little homeland) was second only to family. Provinciability loomed larger than nationality to both Genoese and Castilian. The Reconquista reinforced this basic attitude in that it took place on an urban frontier. The towns erected
were military and religious centers that controlled the population of the countryside.\textsuperscript{12}

This urbanity was transferred to the Americas. The first political act of a conquistador was to erect a town (for example, when Cortés founded Veracruz). These new cities were patterned after those in Castile, with a layout that included a central plaza and a grid of streets forming square or rectangular blocks. The city, with its cabildo (town council), was the center of political authority. Here resided the civil and religious authorities, and their jurisprudence spread into the intervening countryside. A Spaniard in the countryside was there doing business for the city. In the Americas, Spaniards established in less than a century an urban frontier that ran from north central Mexico to the Rio de la Plata in South America.\textsuperscript{13}

Once the initial conquest was over, the Habsburg kings sought to extend their royal authority over a frontier society. The patrimony and patriarchy of Spanish society were reflected in the Spanish state. In this neomedieval world, all parts of society were linked with a patrimonial or symbolic center rather than to one another. King and church were united, and any group or corporation (bureaucracy or family estates, for example) formed a hierarchy of graded ranks in which the senior figure was protector and disciplinarian. In government the patriarchal and patrimonial symbol was the king, personified in colonial Mexico by the king’s agent, the viceroy (and the royal court or audiencia; both viceroy and audiencia were established in Mexico by 1535). Even if regional loyalties and institutional rivalries developed, as they did in Mexico, still the ideal was Habsburg absolutism.\textsuperscript{14}

If the pyramids at Teotihuacán, Chichén Itzá, and Palenque represent the material and cultural symbiosis of Mexican antiquity, the legacies of Baroque culture, with Counter-Reformation Catholicism as its most potent manifestation, are pervasive and found writ large and small on the Mexican historical canvass. Even the most casual visitor to Mexico cannot help but notice the architectural expressions of piety and religious devotion that permeate urban and rural space. Cathedrals, monasteries, convents, and missions assault the senses with their extraordinary size and magnitude, not to mention their ability to encapsulate in
stone and mortar the cultural sensibilities of Mexican Catholicism. It is not simply the grand cathedrals and fortresslike monasteries, however, which have offered solace and comfort to sinners and penitents alike since the sixteenth century. Subdued, less intrusive art forms also expressed individual or communal understandings of what constituted faith, even if such forms resided outside the formal parameters drawn by institutional authority. Mexico and the U.S. Southwest are home to thousands of these art forms, including descansos (roadside memorials), ex-votos (votive offerings of thanksgiving), milagros (religious charms), and bultos (devotional statues).

The church in colonial Mexico was under the immediate control of the Crown in all matters outside of religious doctrine and discipline, and even there the royal court had the power to either impede or facilitate the ebb and flow of theological matters. The Mexican church paid homage to the Council of the Indies in Castile, not to the Vatican. The Crown aided in the financial support of the church, gathering tithes and constructing churches and monasteries. In effect, the Catholic Church in Mexico was the imperial branch of health, education, and general welfare: the monasteries and convents established hospitals; the orders dominated scholastic education in the universities and vocational training in the Indian schools; and the clergy instituted charities and orphanages.

The secular hierarchy, from parish priest to cathedral chapter, was distinct from the regular orders of missionary friars and monks. The missionary orders included Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, and were an important part of the frontier landscape. The Holy Office of the Inquisition, or santo oficio, was an instrument of state power and ecclesiastical authority. The tribunal examined accusations of heresy, apostasy, witchcraft, diabolism, sorcery, blasphemy, and superstition to ensure the political integrity of the Spanish Crown and the social stability of the colonial order. Popular images of the Inquisition routinely include burnings at the stake and various torture methods to extract confessions. With a few noted exceptions, the Inquisition in Mexico was more about scribes and notaries recording witness testimony than it was about henchmen in dark robes fanning the flames of the pyre.
Historians have uncovered and interpreted Inquisition documents that speak to the belief systems and complex social networks of ordinary people. The Holy Office focused its efforts primarily on the crypto-Jews and the few unlucky Protestant foreigners who happened to find themselves in Catholic Mexico and were caught. Although Indians fell outside the Holy Office’s jurisdiction, bishops and priests maintained vigilance over their indigenous charges. The male hierarchy, in particular, kept a watchful eye on Indian and *casta* (black, mulatto, and mestiza) women because they exercised power in the domestic sphere by relying on their intimate knowledge of flora and fauna, herbs, potions, and love magic. When this assertion of power threatened to stretch the boundaries of acceptable behavior in a colonial society defined in part by the institutional precepts of the Catholic Church, the Inquisition took notice, albeit with pen and paper rather than fire and brimstone. In most of its activity, in Mexico City or on the frontier, the Catholic Church realized the spiritual needs of the populace and the imperial objectives of the Crown.

As we have previously mentioned, conquest culture in Mexico meant duty to God and king, which in turn required that the conquered be converted to Christianity. The conquest was legitimized by conversion. Thus the Indians, with their own cosmological traditions, encountered a Spanish society shaped by the politics and ferment of the Counter-Reformation. The result was a syncretic religion, one that combined an Indian worldview with Christianity, a blending best described as “idols behind the altars.”

Veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a compelling example of syncretic faith in Mexico. As the missionary effort was getting underway in the sixteenth century, an event occurred that had far-reaching consequences for the formation of Mexican identity. According to traditional belief, a dark-skinned virgin, *la virgen morena*, appeared to a poor Indian, Juan Diego, in 1531 on a hill outside of Mexico City. She asked him to build a place of worship in her name, and the shrine that was eventually constructed in her honor became a major pilgrimage site in North America. Guadalupe personifies the particular religious heritage of Mexico. She is Mary, the mother of God in the Western
Christian tradition, and she is the dark-skinned patroness of the Indian, of the poor and the oppressed in Mexican history. When Mexico fought for independence from Spain in 1810, for example, the movement was led by a parish priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who carried the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe to rally his Indian and mestizo parishioners. Popes have declared her “Queen of Mexico” and “Empress of the Americas.” Interestingly enough, Guadalupe became part and parcel of popular devotion in Mexico only in 1648, decades after formal efforts to evangelize Indians had ended.

Although pre-Columbian Mexico was a mosaic of groups and languages, the Spaniard incorporated the Native American into a unique cultural mix. Originally the Hispanic world in Mexico consisted of European Spaniards and Africans, while the Indian world included the indigenous population living separately in rural villages. Soon, however, acculturation and miscegenation complicated the three-category system.

This process resulted in a multidimensional web consisting of Spaniards, community Indians, Indians-among-Spaniards, and castas. In a social sense blacks, because of their cultural resemblance to Spaniards, were ranked higher than Indians. Yet, because Indians looked more like Spaniards, the Native Americans had the edge as to phenotype. In any case, Indians were usually subordinate to all other groups in any given situation. After three hundred years of colonial rule Mexico was a multicultural society, although in the limited sense that most individuals were Euro-mestizos, Afro-mestizos, or Indio-mestizos.

The economy of New Spain was both domestic and foreign. The domestic economy consisted primarily of agricultural and ranching estates and obrajes, or factories. These produced the foodstuffs and woolen clothing for the colonists, both conquerors and conquered, and supplemented the trade from Europe. The estancias, or ranches, also served the needs of the mining towns. The international or transatlantic economy included silver as the chief export product and the economic motor of New Spain. As a currency, it was the medium of exchange for international merchants who supplied European goods to the colony, including the mining centers.
Mexico’s estates came in a variety of sizes and shapes. A hacienda in northern Mexico might have twenty-two thousand acres and be devoted to raising livestock, while an estate in the valley of Puebla might amount to only twenty-five hundred acres. Yet the Puebla estate might actually be of greater worth because of water access, suitability of soil, and close proximity to the marketplace. Thus, a hacienda is defined as an estate that is engaged in agriculture or ranching and is considered large by local standards. It does not have to be a contiguous unit; it can have ranchos (small one-owner farms) and Indian villages interspersed within the vicinity.23

The hacendado of the seventeenth century, like the encomendero of the sixteenth, was an urban dweller. He may have had his manor house (casa grande) on the hacienda and his economic base in the country, but his social, political, and religious concerns focused on his urban residence, the local city, and Europe. Casta stewards (majordomos) managed his country estate, and he and his family visited only occasionally or during times of economic trouble.

Haciendas furnished European goods for the colonists, such as cereals (wheat, barley, oats), olives, and fruits. They also produced for the Native American market such items as corn and pulque. If the nearby towns required wool for their factories, then the haciendas would raise sheep; if the slaughterhouses were in need, they would provide cattle, pigs, and lambs. In the mining districts haciendas, ranchos, and estancias raised horses, mules, burros, and oxen. Although usually diversified, the hacienda would at times specialize in one crop, such as sugar. Like the other products of the hacienda, Mexican sugar sold only in the markets of New Spain.24

As for the human side of estate history, three periods of labor procurement can be delineated. These are the encomienda of the early conquest period, the repartimiento from 1560 to 1620, and, finally, with the rise of the hacienda, informal individual agreements. The encomienda, in which entire Indian villages were assigned to one Spaniard, allowed the encomendero to monopolize Native American labor for a lifetime. The succeeding repartimiento was a state allocation of Indian labor given to Spaniards on a temporary, rotating basis for specific tasks. Fi-
nally, Indian laborers sought out Spanish enterprises and worked out their own contracts in an effort to enter the wage economy. The overall trend was toward more flexible, individual arrangements; from temporary to permanent labor; and from no pay for encomienda laborers to salaries for contract workers. As for debt peonage, it was neither as common nor as widespread as previous historians had argued.25

The end of the eighteenth century witnessed an increase in the profitability of large-scale agriculture. Demographic increases and migration from the country to the city caused the cities to grow and demand more foodstuffs from the country. This led to additional commercialization of agriculture and more profits for the landowner, while surplus labor brought about declining real wages for farmworkers. In addition, peasants had less access to fertile lands. While hacendados reaped profits from their demesne farms, income from land rentals and sharecropping added to hacienda revenues. In effect, wealth was being transferred from the countryside to the city and from peasant to landlord. The result was agricultural growth, demographic increase, and a decrease in the living standards of the mass of the people. It was social philosopher Henry George’s paradox: poverty in the midst of progress.26

A similar occurrence was happening in the international sector of the economy. After 1546, silver mines could be found in Zacatecas, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Parral, and other areas of the Gran Chichimeca. As time went by, different levels of ore were extracted: first, the outcroppings were exploited in the late sixteenth century; then, the darker ores below the surface until the late seventeenth century; and, finally, the deep ores in the eighteenth century. Since Mexico’s mines were located in the north, away from large populations of sedentary Native Americans, the majority of unskilled and skilled workers were, unlike in Peru, not the product of the encomienda or repartimiento but instead permanently salaried employees. These individuals became acculturated over time into Spanish-speaking mestizos.27

With the discovery of the mercury amalgamation process in the sixteenth century (a process that used mercury and salt to separate out the silver from the ore), the fantastic bonanzas of northern Mexico pro-
vided Spain with the lion’s share of silver coins and ingots then in circulation in the global economy. These, of course, went to Spain’s foreign merchants—Genoese, French, Dutch, English, and even Mexican—and to western Europe. Much of the silver reached Europe through contraband dealings with the enemies of Spain—the Dutch West Indies Company and the English sea traders. Almost all the silver in circulation in the Far East at this time came either directly across the Pacific from Acapulco to Manila in the Philippines or from Europe by way of America, that is, Mexico and Peru.  

Not only did mining maintain the metropolitan economy and Spain’s not-too-certain international position in western Europe, it also provided for the administrative costs of an empire, including the financing of Habsburg foreign wars. One cannot overlook the fact that colonial Mexico functioned as a peripheral segment of the expanding western European economy, financing British, Dutch, and French growth, while at the same time underwriting the costs of Spain’s inflated imperial commitments and military involvements.

By the late colonial period the decay that characterized the rural population was affecting the mining sector as well. Even though silver mining production boomed during the first quarter of the eighteenth century and again in the early 1740s and the decades of the 1770s and 1790s, the late colonial mining industry was in decline by the early 1800s, and definitely ill by 1810. Between 1780 and 1810, the industry faced rising costs due to the poor quality of ore, the depth of mine shafts, and the high costs of labor. By 1810 a scarcity of mercury added to the industry’s problems. Collapse came in 1810 when the Spanish government could no longer afford to provide subsidies to support the industry. The wars of independence only prolonged the colonial heritage into the late nineteenth century. All of this, of course, was quite different from the condition of the British colonies of North America.

The year 1607 looms large in the history of the Americas. As is well known, the English made their first permanent settlement on the U.S. mainland with the founding of Jamestown. What is not so well known is that 1607 was the year Spain declared national bankruptcy, an event that soon led to the failure of the Bank of Genoa. This was the begin-
ning of the end of the Mediterranean economy. Meanwhile, the British success at colonization indicated that the world-economy was entering a new phase.

British colonists brought to the Americas two traditions from England that were critical to the success of the North American experiment. First, there was the experience of the English (and European) Reformation. Secondly, there was the inheritance of a 250-year commercial revolution that took place in England between 1350 and 1600 CE.

In France, Holland, England, and Germany the Reformation established the principle that secular power should preside over the national church. Opponents of these established state churches were exposed to persecution and were more than willing to solve their situation through emigration. The first to colonize America were the French Huguenots who settled Florida in the 1560s. Scrooby Separatists from Holland migrated to Plymouth. British Calvinists, whether Scottish Presbyterians or English Puritans (including Congregationalists), later joined English Quakers and settled in northern colonies. German peasants—Mennonites, Amish, Dunkers, to name a few—went to Pennsylvania. Anglicans settled in Virginia, and Catholics settled in Maryland.

Most of these people were farmers, artisans, and traders. Because they usually could not settle in the Catholic colonies of Spain and France, they sought refuge in the American colonies of England. Thus was laid the foundations of a Protestant society inclined to assert individual rights over external authority and proclaim the rights of the humble to be free from royal and priestly dominance.31

The dominant Protestant tradition in the United States came from the Puritans of New England, and Puritanism affected all phases of U.S. life. While Catholic aristocrats in Mexico were indulging themselves in the cult of the festival and the passion for spending, the Puritans in Massachusetts were living simple and “plaine” lifestyles in accord with the maxim that “God’s altar needs not our polishing.”32

The Calvinist beliefs of providence, grace, and special election, when shorn of their religious aspects, translated into the doctrines of contract, fundamental law, representative government, and the right of resistance. The economic views of Calvin sanctified productive la-
bor, while private property enjoyed a divine sanction. In general the Calvinists approved of business, trade, and profit making. It is not surprising that ministers, lawyers, and merchants in New England all adhered to the same religious and economic credos. “Healthy, wealthy, and wise” Benjamin Franklin, the ultimate capitalist, was just an eighteenth-century secular version of John Winthrop and other Puritan leaders of seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

The popular and familiar procedures practiced by the commercial companies were later extended into the political realm as colonial assemblies. A classic example of this was the history of the General Court in Massachusetts. Originally, in 1630, the charter of Massachusetts lodged all power over the colony in the general court of the company, which in turn consisted of shareholders. Since very few shareholders came to the colony with John Winthrop, several settlers demanded that they be admitted as shareholders of the Massachusetts Bay Company. In 1631 some of the settlers were made shareholders of the company, but only those who were members of an approved Puritan church. By 1634 a representative plan was adopted in which the towns selected deputies to represent them, and by 1644 the General Court had split into two houses: the court of deputies and the court of assistants, each with a power of veto over the other. Through these developments the Massachusetts Bay Company, originally a trading corporation, was transformed into a governing body.

Building on the heritage of the Reformation and the English economic revolution of 1350–1600 (a process that witnessed the liberation of serfs; the growth of towns, trade, and merchants; the development of the wool industry; and the rise of commercial companies), Europeans found in America a less populated virgin land directly facing Europe, endowed with extraordinary resources and a similar climate.

This land of opportunity was exploited by the Puritans and their descendants. The New Englanders made money first from fishing and then industry and trade. Shipbuilding, textiles, cast iron, rum distilleries, and other manufacturing possibilities developed. Before 1776, New York and Philadelphia merchants were found along the entire North Atlantic, through Madeira to the African coast. As Fernand
Braudel notes, “America undoubtedly appeared as a rival from the start and her growing prosperity dented Britain’s own prosperity and worried the great merchant houses of London.”

In the late eighteenth century both royal dynasties—England’s House of Hanover (George III) and Spain’s Bourbons (Charles III)—attempted to extend the rule of the metropolis over the colonies. After 1763, at the conclusion of the French and Indian War, Britain’s thirteen colonies were faced with a series of regulatory acts: the Proclamation of 1763, the Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Quartering Acts of 1765 and 1774, the Townshend Duties of 1767, and so on. Collectively these policies meant that Great Britain was abandoning its earlier tradition of neglect and insisting that the colonists forsake their investments west of the Appalachians to pay for the costs of the empire. These policies principally affected the interests of the colonial elite, such as land speculators, merchants, property owners, lawyers, journalists, and other professionals. These were the groups that filled the ranks of the rebels in Boston and elsewhere. By 1776 independence had been declared.

While the British Parliament was passing the Stamp Act, Bourbon Spain was naming José de Gálvez visitador (inspector) to New Spain. He was charged with implementing a new policy of tax control and making recommendations for reforming the mining sector of the economy. This was the enclave economy of miners and exporters whose profits were derived from exports to the metropolis. Although the reforms that resulted from his recommendations (from administrative decentralization to the remodeling of the military to freer trade) had many effects, the most lasting was the Bourbon decision to modernize and upgrade the mining sector. To seek additional revenue, the Crown issued a royal decree in 1804 nationalizing church properties and forcing the sale of estates. Many hacendados who had mortgaged their properties to the church were now faced with ruin. Thus, in Mexico, Spain’s policy affected that part of the elite, primarily landowners and industrialists (and the lesser clergy), who were not a direct part of the favored enclave economy. These disaffected would follow Fr. Miguel Hidalgo in 1810.
Of great significance for the advancement of the United States after 1783 was the growth of trade with the exmetropolis, a development that took off after the War of 1812. English investment soon followed trade. In the meantime, Hamiltonian principles were creating a banking system and a capital market for George Washington's United States. The years 1793 through 1807 were extraordinarily prosperous ones, characterized by increases in employment, the domestic market, imports, and prices for foodstuffs. International conflict between 1793 and 1814 allowed the United States to enter the Atlantic trade as neutrals. When trade slumped during the War of 1812, idle resources were applied to textile manufacturing. With the revival of an external demand for cotton and rising prices for foodstuffs, the New South and the New West attracted more immigrants. The North not only was able to become a financial center for Southern and Western agriculture but also developed its manufacturing base in flour, cotton goods, lumber, textiles, iron, leather, woolen goods, liquors, and machinery. Although the Civil War interrupted the process, in the long run that war was simply a catalyst for the United States’ industrial revolution.38

At the outset of Mexican independence in 1821, a large portion of the Mexican population was unable to read or write, thought of politics only in a local context, and spoke little if any Spanish. Mexico had none of the cultural homogeneity of the United States and emerged from independence a weak debtor nation, intimidated by powerful creditor nations like Great Britain. Unlike the optimists in the thirteen colonies, where independence was an assertion of economic freedom and political democracy, Mexico’s elites looked backward by declaring independence at Iguala to preserve the traditional privileges of the church and landholding aristocracy, only to be threatened by Spanish reformers and Indian revolutionists. Unlike the emerging United States, Mexico was born affirming the past. Despite a legal break from Spain, many of the institutions, customs, and beliefs (when not Native American) were still early modern, Spanish, and Catholic. Independence had fostered only the integration of Mexico into the European world-economy dominated by London.39

Throughout the colonial era, Mexico, along with eastern Europe, the
southern colonies of British North America, and the rest of Latin America, had been on the periphery of the world-economy. In these peripheral areas, Mexico engaged in agriculture or mining through highly coercive forms of labor (forced cash-crop labor; slavery; *mita* labor in Peru; *desagüe*, or flood control work, in New Spain or colonial Mexico), the profits of which accrued to groups in northwestern Europe, international trading groups, and local supervisory personnel (such as civil servants and hacendados in colonial Mexico). Agriculture tended toward monoculture; political entities were weak; and population densities were low. All social relations became organized around the constraints of the world-economy. Overall, surpluses from the periphery went to meet the needs of the population of northwestern Europe.40

The core of the world-economy was in northwestern Europe, whose organization was more complex than the periphery. Population densities were high, agriculture was diversified and intensive, and labor was more skilled. Although agriculture remained a majority activity, cereals and bullion from the periphery liberated some workers for specialization in other tasks. This resulted in the monetization of rural work relationships, with wage labor and money rents becoming the means of labor control. A stratum of independent small farmers developed. In addition, towns flourished, industries were born, and merchants became an important economic force. In the political sphere, strong nation-states appeared. Generally, the continual accumulation of advantages at the core continued to expand the disparities of the whole.41

Midway on a continuum running from the core to the periphery was the semiperiphery (Spain, North Italy, the northern colonies of British North America). The dominant form of labor in this third zone was something in between the free labor of the core and the forced labor of the periphery, usually including indentured servitude, tenant farming, or sharecropping. Population density was higher than in the periphery and this affected the type of labor. As sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein argues, “when labor is plentiful sharecropping is probably more profitable than coerced cash-cropping.”42

In the case of late medieval and early modern Spain, there developed
a typically colonial infrastructure dependent on the sale in foreign markets of a single product—wool. Such a society, colonial in structure and undercommercialized, invited exploitation by more developed centers of trade, thus, the temptation for Italian merchants and bankers to enter the peninsula. As Braudel points out, the “simplest, if not the best criterion [for determining the economic level of societies outside the central area], is the presence in a given region of colonies of foreign merchants.” Much of America’s mineral wealth went through the semiperiphery of Spain to the developing economies of England, France, and northwestern Europe.

When Europe’s demand for sugar and tobacco increased, agricultural crops evolved in new peripheral areas of tropical America: first sugar in sixteenth-century Brazil and, during the seventeenth century, in the Caribbean, especially Barbados and Jamaica; then, the tobacco and indigo plantations of the southern mainland of British North America. At the same time the semiperipheral areas were changing. With declining revenues from America and increasing expenditures of warfare in Europe, the Spanish state attempted to fill the gap with increased taxes in Mexico and Peru. This was a self-defeating activity that led only to further plunder, fraud, contraband, parasitism, and the further semiperipheralization of Spain.

Yet while Spain was declining, the semiperipheral northern colonies of British North America (New England and the Middle Atlantic colonies) were gaining ground. By 1700 the northern colonies were making great strides as shipbuilders and commercial intermediaries. The various triangular trades were flourishing; the industry of naval stores was thriving. Conditions were being created whereby the northern colonies could first share in the prosperity of the core and by the mid-nineteenth century, as an independent republic, move into the central zone of industrial and commercial powers.

The early postindependence histories of the United States and Mexico continued the trend. While the United States emerged in the nineteenth century with a prosperous economy characterized by full employment, growing imports, developing cotton and foodstuff trades, and an established industrial and financial base, Mexico, as a
poor debtor nation, entered a European world-economy dominated by London fads and Parisian customs. Civil anarchy during the battles of independence forced capital out of Mexico. In addition, Mexico’s mines were flooded, its lands scorched and abandoned, and a large underclass wandered the backstreets of the cities. With independence, the colonial heritage of inadequate transport and inefficient economic structure was now encumbering Mexico with the costs of warfare.48

In conclusion, it is informative to compare the economies of Mexico and the United States during the nineteenth century. In 1800 Mexico’s per capita income was about half that of the United States. By 1877 Mexico’s per capita income had dropped to a little over one-tenth that of the industrial United States. In 1800 Mexico produced a little more than half the goods and services of the United States. By 1877 Mexico had only 2 percent of the production that came from the farms and plants of the United States.49

In 1821 the Mexican Republic was the largest in this hemisphere, nearly twice that of the newly independent United States of America. By 1853 at a little less than two million square kilometers, Mexico fell to one-fourth the size of her northern neighbor. At the same time, the landed area of the United States more than tripled. In 1800 Mexico’s population of six million, many of whom were citizens of cities, exceeded that of the mostly rural United States (just over five million). By 1854 Mexico had only eight million inhabitants; the colossus of the North had twenty-three million. In 1911, at the end of the porfiriato, Mexico’s population was fifteen million while the United States had grown to ninety-two million.50

The Mexico of 1800, although beginning to decline and with many economic problems, was still Spain’s richest colony in America. It had an advanced mining industry exporting huge quantities of processed metals and a significant and diverse internal market based on agriculture and manufacturing. It also had urban areas. For example, Mexico City had more than 150,000 inhabitants, second only to Madrid in the Spanish empire. New York, the largest of the cities of the newly independent United States, had only 60,000 people. In 1800 the United States was still a predominantly agrarian country decades away from
its industrial revolution. Yet half of a century later the economic (and later military) gap that distinguished the developed United States from the developing Mexico was a reality.

Postindependence Mexico was a weak, disunited community dependent on foreign loans and goods. Nearby was the United States ever eager to expand its own economy at Mexico’s expense. Yankee adolescents had moved up from their semiperipheral past, and the would-be giant was now playing in Mexico’s backyard. The outcome of war between the two peoples was initially uncertain. But defeat for Mexico would make the social and economic gap real. In 1835 the future looked bleak. Yet Mexico had taken one faltering step—down and away from Spanish colonialism.
Texas and a Collision of Cultures

The invaders were all men who, moved by the desire of conquest, with rights less apparent and plausible than those of Cortés and Pizarro, wished to take possession of that vast territory extending from Béxar to the Sabine belonging to Mexico. What can we call them? All the existing laws marked them as pirates and outlaws.

Antonio López de Santa Anna

After reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood on American soil.

James Knox Polk

While 1846 may have been a momentous year for Bernard De Voto in his Western narrative entitled *The Year of Decision*, it was 1848 that proved momentous in world history. For Europe it was a year of revolt in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, and Rome. Across the oceans, armies were on the move. The British were arriving in New Zealand, and Texas Rangers were returning from central Mexico. The U.S. invasion of Mexico had ended in February, and by October the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was ratified. The United States had acquired a vast domain at Mexico’s expense.

The loss of territory in 1848 signified the end of any likelihood that Mexico, rather than the former thirteen colonies of British North America, would become the predominant power in North America. The initial unpreparedness of the U.S. military establishment, characterized by divisiveness within the army and between civilian and military authorities, not to mention inadequate medical services, was replaced just in time by a highly efficient war machine and a trained officer
corps capable of victory. The use of breech-loading rifled guns by the U.S. Army and the Texas Rangers during the Mexican War is only one example of the evolution of that machine. Territory lost by Mexico to superior arms was used by the United States to launch its own industrial revolution. A militarized and industrialized United States would extend its empire beyond the continent. Thus, 1848 marked the long beginning of the rise of the United States as a world power, a movement that would culminate after 1945 with hegemony in Latin America, the Pacific Basin, and Western Europe.

The area lost by Mexico to the United States consisted of the northern part of the Gran Chichimeca, primarily those provinces of late colonial Mexico known as Nueva (or Alta) California, northern Sonora, Nuevo México, Tejas, and northern Nuevo Santander (between the Nueces and the Rio Grande). The Hispanic (Spanish and Mexican) frontier in the north was a separate region of Mexico, with its own geography, culture, and history. Its isolation from Mexico City fostered a distinctiveness that gave the area its peculiar character, a remoteness that led the Gran Chichimeca to develop economic ties with the United States a quarter of a century before the military conflict erupted, and an isolation that prompted Mexico City’s politicians to ignore its needs until it was too late.

The frontier and its indigenous peoples modified Hispanic society so that it never mimicked central Mexico. The marginal farmland, low population, and relative poverty of the frontier could not support the elaborate institutions and hierarchical practices of the center. By the late eighteenth century, the church and the military, guardians of tradition elsewhere, were too weak on the frontier to enforce the will of the central government. New Spain’s far north was more democratic and self-reliant than the core, a ménage of municipalities, militias, mining camps, ranches, and missions that established commercial and social linkages as the primary means of dealing with the immense distances between the frontier and the metropole. For example, after 1770 Sonora was populated with well-heeled merchants from central Mexico, artisans, miners, and hacendados who created a regional society that was
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more urban, entrepreneurial, and self-sufficient than the largely rural world of central and southern Mexico.²

Of the various institutional complexes that early modern Spain brought to America, ranching was one of the more important. By the mid-eighteenth century, the inheritance of the plains dwellers had spread through northern Mexico into Tejas (or Texas), especially in the mesquite and plains country along the San Antonio and Guadalupe valleys, between the Nueces and Brazos rivers—an area of lush grasses, belts of timber, and ample water. Here Andalusian cattle, a hybridized offshoot of semiwild, black Iberian bulls and all-purpose, lighter-colored European cows, ran wild and multiplied prodigiously. Eventually, in the nineteenth century, these animals would intermingle with meat cattle from the Carolina coast to produce the Texas longhorn so typical of the western Great Plains.³

Unlike Iberia, the British Isles, and West Africa, the type of ranching that evolved in Latin America, Australia, Anglo-America, and South Africa was, at least in the beginning, open range. Frontier conditions (such as labor shortages and inadequate fencing materials) necessitated letting the cattle run loose. On the periphery of the world-economy, where long distances separated farmers from markets, the rancher put more capital into transportation than into land or labor. Thus a less intensive form of agriculture, like livestock raising, developed. And although ranching on the U.S. Great Plains was of mixed origins, the traditions from Spain and Mexico dominated.⁴

Cattle ranching on the open range involved a variety of activities. The skills of horsemanship included roping, branding, driving, skinning, building corrals, and rounding up cattle. The widespread use of altered Spanish vocabulary by Anglo and black cattle ranchers to identify tools and costumes reflected Hispanic traditions. Take the following words for example: lariat or lasso (lazo), chaps (short for chaparajos), bronc (bronco), corral (corral), ranch and rancher (rancho and ranchero), rodeo (rodeo), and buckaroo (vaquero). Wild and ownerless horses were known as mesteños, from which “mustang” is derived. The Anglos did give one name to the ranching tradition, however, that was not part of the Span-
ish language. Unbranded stray cattle were known by Anglos in Texas as mavericks, named after San Antonio’s most prominent lawyer, Samuel Maverick, the son of a wealthy Charleston, South Carolina, merchant.

The ranching industry of Spanish Texas was originally designed to support the mining communities, missions, and towns of central and northern Mexico. It was primarily restricted to hides and tallow. The most important communities of Spanish Texas were Nacogdoches, near the old presidio of Los Adaes on the edge of French Louisiana and deep in the forests of east Texas away from the prairie openings; La Bahía del Espíritu Santo (present-day Goliad) on the lower San Antonio River; and Béjar (or Béxar, today’s San Antonio, named for the nearby mission), one hundred miles north and west of La Bahía on the San Antonio River and the chief center of Texas with a town, presidio, and several missions (see figure 6).

Béjar was on the main trade route between Nacogdoches and Louisiana to the north and east, and Laredo and Monclova to the south and southwest. Silver coins and bars and assorted supplies from San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas moved north in exchange for hides from Texas, either through Saltillo and Monclova to Béjar, or Monterrey and Mier (on the Rio Grande) to La Bahía. From La Bahía the path continued in a northerly direction where it intersected the road from Béjar at the Trinity River. From there the trail led to Nacogdoches. Because of Spanish regulations there was little if any coastal trade.

Béjar and La Bahía were in ideal ranching areas and had been settled by pioneers from the Canary Islands; the northern provinces of Nuevo Santander, Nuevo León, and Coahuila; and central Mexico. Settlement patterns followed the traditions of the Spanish past, with the towns laid out in the standard grid pattern found throughout Spanish America.

However, Nacogdoches, on the edge of the empire, was composed of squatters, smugglers, and Indian traders, with a population that was as much French and English as it was Spanish. In fact, since the late eighteenth century a contraband cattle trade had developed between east Texas and Louisiana despite royal prohibitions. In exchange for livestock, the inhabitants of Louisiana would trade silk shawls, ribbons,
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braids, and other luxury items, as well as once-scarce items like nails. For residents of Béjar, it was cheaper to acquire goods from the French colonists via New Orleans and Nacogdoches than to purchase items that came by way of the overland route from Spanish Veracruz. Thus, Béjar profited from the trade not only with Mexico, but with New Orleans, other areas of Louisiana, and the world at large. In this respect there is an explicit historical link between the pre-1821 Texas cattle drives to Louisiana and the post-1821 mercantile invasion of northern Mexico by U.S. entrepreneurs.9

The distinctive nature of the Gran Chichimeca, a sparsely settled

![Map of Mexico, 1821–1836](image)
and mostly semiarid area based on a trade in hides and tallow, not only made it remote in its relationship with Mexico City but after 1776 pushed it toward the ever-expanding infant republic, the United States of America. After 1821 Mexico’s northern frontier underwent extensive Americanization.

Mexico’s first national charter, the Constitution of 1824, envisioned a federalist republic composed of autonomous states. The promise of political autonomy did not, however, extend to the north where California and New Mexico became territories under congressional control in Mexico City, and Texas was tied to its larger and more populous neighbor to the south, Coahuila, as the single state of Coahuila y Texas. To make matters worse, Mexico City was preoccupied with its own national, not regional, problems and was forced to deal with the multiple threats of fiscal instability, civil war, foreign invasions, army plots, and factious priests.10

In the mid-1830s, Mexico abandoned the federalist system, replacing it with a centralist government. This was the last straw for advocates of local autonomy. Revolts against the central government spread between 1835–38 from Texas and Sonora to New Mexico and Alta California. In the interior the federalist governor of Zacatecas was deposed by Santa Anna, the stereotypical caudillo of Mexican history, both hero and villain, military general and president. In Yucatán, a state that communicated more easily with New Orleans and New York than with central Mexico, the secessionist movement intensified.

The Catholic Church, represented on the frontier by Jesuits and Franciscans, began to decline in the late eighteenth century. In 1767 the Jesuits were expelled, and after the wars of independence against Spain, many Spaniards were forced to leave Mexico, including many Franciscans. Weakened by a lack of funds and power, the bishops of the secular church could not fill the void left by the departing Franciscans. Most of the empty parishes that existed in Mexico in 1828 were located on the frontier. As historian David Weber has noted, “the once-powerful church on the Mexican frontier had become a paper tiger, its temporal and ecclesiastical power greatly diminished by the time of the United States invasion.”11
At the same time Mexico’s political and ecclesiastical authority was weakening, its military supremacy over the frontier was declining. The decades after independence saw relations worsen between Mexicans on the frontier and those autonomous tribes of seminomadic Indians who rejected Christianity and Hispanic culture, or at the very least negotiated how much non-Indian culture they were willing to accept. By the mid-1830s, Comanches kept the province of Texas in a state of constant agitation, while Apaches raided farms and ranches in southern New Mexico, northern Chihuahua, and the Gila Basin in Sonora. In 1845 the Navajos ravaged those nuevas (New Mexicans) living in the upper Rio Grande valley, while the Utes raided as far afield as Alta California to gather mules and cattle for their U.S. backers.12

Much of the breakdown of relations between Mexicans on the frontier and seminomadic Indians was due to the activities of unscrupulous traders from the United States. These dealers furnished whiskey, guns, and powder to the Indians in exchange for stolen goods and captives. U.S. encouragement and firearms permitted the Indians to raid and plunder the ranches, mining camps, and communities of northern Mexico. Indian raids multiplied Mexico’s problems at a time when Texas, and then the United States, was presenting military threats to the far North. Mexico’s underdeveloped military, with demoralized and underpaid soldiers and a politicized officer corps, had to face the United States on two fronts—the Indian and Anglo-American frontiers.13

Perhaps Mexico’s greatest failure was its inability to integrate the frontier into the nation’s economic system. Texas and the northern territories became dependent on outsiders, especially Americans, for manufactured goods. After Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail was inaugurated, linking St. Louis, Missouri, with northwestern New Mexico. Soon the Missouri trade extended to Chihuahua City, the mining center of north central Mexico. In exchange for silver, mules, and wool, U.S. merchants imported clothing, tools, and household items, often underselling their Mexican competitors.14

These venturesome merchants quickly found another source of wealth along the rivulets and streams of the high plateau country—the beaver—and the hunt for pelts and “hairy banknotes” eventually
spread along the river valleys to Sonora and California. Meanwhile, New England maritime merchants made a similar thrust into California, exchanging manufactured articles for otter skins, cowhides, and tallow. In Texas the livestock trade with Louisiana continued. Eventually Texan cotton would also become an important export item.\textsuperscript{15}

The results of all of this trade were many. Imports from the United States were expensive, and \textit{californios}, \textit{nuevomexicanos}, and \textit{tejanos} (as Mexicans living in those provinces were called) often bought on credit or bartered their goods. Specie remained in short supply. The value of manufactured imports always exceeded agricultural exports, resulting in a trade imbalance favoring U.S. creditors. The pull of the U.S. economy reached beyond borders and into the neighboring Mexican frontier, and U.S. economic colonialism quickly supplanted the old Spanish structure after 1821. In general, the commercial orientation of Mexico’s far North was shifting to the United States, with Mexico’s frontier gradually becoming part of the New South and the New West of the expanding U.S. empire.\textsuperscript{16}

The westward movement and expansionism of the United States during the nineteenth century is the other side of the story of why the Mexican North became the U.S. Southwest. The incentives for U.S. expansionism were many, but certainly the commercial and mercantile interests predominated. Merchants, speculators, and attorneys were found throughout the Gran Chichimeca, from San Antonio to San Diego. These were the capital-based and export-oriented elements of frontier society. Mercantile interests also figured prominently in the thinking of President James Knox Polk and his supporters, who purposely sought trade outlets to the Pacific and had their eyes on the coasts, harbors, and bays of Oregon and California.\textsuperscript{17} The British textile industry demanded cotton and stimulated the development of the New South, from Louisiana to east Texas. In 1845 the United States annexed Texas, with its favorable climate and fertile soil, and it climbed rapidly in the list of cotton-producing states, ranking fifth by 1859.\textsuperscript{18}

Anglo Texans had grandiose notions of international trade. The Rio Grande, with its headwaters in Colorado, could connect the Chihuahua–Santa Fe trade with the Gulf of Mexico and the global mar-
ket. In addition, the Rio Grande contributed to the commerce of Matamoros on the lower end of the river. In the 1830s Matamoros was the largest town on the Mexican frontier, an entrepôt of silver, lead, wool, hides, and tallow from Saltillo and San Luis Potosí. It is not surprising that when Texas declared its independence in 1836 it asserted as its boundary with Mexico the entire Rio Grande—a strategic claim that included a river that could rival the Mississippi as the most important trade route of the continent.¹⁹

The ideology that justified expansion for many Americans was Manifest Destiny, a mixture of natural rights, freedom of religion, democracy, republicanism, Anglo-Saxonism, geographic determinism, and other components. Manifest Destiny was a racist doctrine of its time that held that Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture was innately superior to all others and that republican forms of government and democracy must be expanded to “extend the area of freedom.” Many Americans considered Mexican Catholics to be outside of the destined realm.²⁰ Americans believed that no nation had the right to hold soil virgin and rich yet unproductive. This doctrine was originally applied to Indians but was then expanded to include Mexicans and others. As was noted in the U.S. Democratic Review in 1858, “no race but our own can either cultivate or rule the western hemisphere.”²¹

By 1824 when the first U.S. settlers followed Stephen Austin into Texas, the United States was already pursuing diplomacy of a continental expansionist kind. The new U.S. minister, Joel R. Poinsett, proposed to the Mexicans that they relocate Mexico’s boundary from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande so as to be spared the problem of fighting the Indians in the area. In 1827 Secretary of State Henry Clay advised Poinsett to offer a million dollars in compensation for territory up to the Rio Grande. In 1830 the next U.S. minister, Anthony Butler, cunningly argued for a Rio Grande border. After 1835 the United States again offered the Mexicans a million dollars in exchange for moving the border from the forty-second to the thirty-seventh parallel. This would enable the United States to acquire San Francisco. All of U.S. appeals fell on deaf ears as Lucas Alamán, the powerful conservative politician and intellectual, and his cohorts took steps to terminate
Anglo colonization into Texas and then contain the Americans who were already there.\textsuperscript{22}

Before 1830 the influx of Americans into Texas increased. The state of Coahuila y Texas granted permits to developers, Mexican and foreign, and the colonists received their concessions from these empresarios. Most of these permits restricted slavery and required the colonists to be Roman Catholic, but the colonists tended to ignore both requirements. Originally Austin’s group settled San Felipe on the lower Brazos. Then Green DeWitt settled three hundred families in his city of Gonzales on the southwestern side of the Austin colony. Robert Leftwich was permitted to bring in two hundred families, while Hayden Edwards was allowed eight hundred. Martín de León settled about forty Mexican families just east of Goliad at Victoria. Farther south Irish promoters established colonies at Refugio and San Patricio.\textsuperscript{23}

While some Mexicans and Europeans settled in Texas, for the most part the immigrants came from the southern United States—Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri—and brought their slaves with them. Driving their cattle and hogs before them, the colonists came through Nacogdoches and down the old La Bahía road to San Felipe to file for riverine holdings. By 1835 the immigrant population was between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand, including slaves, while the Mexican population had barely passed seventy-eight hundred.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1827 General Manuel Mier y Terán was commissioned to study the problems of the Texas border. To his superiors he expressed his fears that the growing influence of the Americans would result in the loss of Texas. Noting the cultural, educational, and legal differences between the two peoples, he said, “Thus, I tell myself that it could not be otherwise than that from such a state of affairs [of mutual ignorance] should arise an antagonism between the Mexicans and the foreigners, which is not the least of the smoldering fires which I have discovered. Therefore, I am warning you to take timely measures. Texas could throw the whole nation into revolution.” Mier went on to recommend the establishment of more presidios (forts and militias), the colonization of Texas by Mexicans and Europeans, and the creation of customhouses.\textsuperscript{25}
After 1829, in part because of Mier’s suggestions, a strategic plan to strengthen Mexico’s presence in Texas was initiated. On 15 September 1829, all slavery was abolished throughout the Mexican Republic. In 1830 Lucas Alamán promulgated a new colonization law that prohibited the entrance of new U.S. settlers. Between 1830 and 1834, despite resistance from the Anglo colonists, the state of Coahuila y Texas remained intact. However, Texas was divided into three departments, each with a pair of forts, one to be situated along the old Spanish axis, the other on the coast.26

East Texas became the Department of Nacogdoches, with a presidio at Nacogdoches and another at the new site of Anáhuac near the mouth of the Trinity River. The department of Béxar, containing San Antonio de Béxar and Goliad, was created in the south. In between was the department of Brazoria, centered near Austin’s colony at San Felipe. Only Béxar was truly Mexican in both soil and culture. Nacogdoches, which stood on Mexican soil, was in effect a cultural and ethnic extension of Anglo-America. Santa Anna’s decision in 1835 to suspend Texas’s political autonomy provided the Texans with the pretext they needed, and in that year William B. Travis seized Anáhuac, and Sam Houston occupied Texas’s most important city, San Antonio de Béxar. The military phase of the Texas Revolution had begun.27

In May of that year Santa Anna, with a combination of deceit and valor, devastated the federalist stronghold of Zacatecas. Over two thousand civilians, including women and children, lost their lives in the plunder and chaos that followed the destruction of the city. The centralist victory over Zacatecas did not bode well for “Texicans,” as Santa Anna, backed by an immense army of some six thousand troops and military leaders, started to march north.

In February 1836 Santa Anna, ahead of his troops, arrived at the Rio Grande. The bulk of the Mexican army remained farther back, outside Monclova, when a blizzard struck, hitting a group of Maya Indians from the Yucatán the worst. Without shoes, warm clothing, and blankets, these Mayas froze to death. At the rear of the army, soldaderas, female camp followers, and their children huddled together—their frozen bodies found later. Mules and horses froze to death as well. The
army had suffered a tremendous loss, perhaps as much as 90 percent of the original six thousand.28

In March 1836, when Santa Anna finally started the siege of San Antonio’s former Franciscan mission, the Alamo, he had only 600 men. Eventually the number that actually stormed the walls increased to more than 1,800. Many of these were bedraggled Mayan conscripts who did not speak Spanish, had little fighting experience, and had smooth-bore muskets that were outclassed by the Alamo defenders with their rifles and artillery.29

As for the makeup of the Alamo garrison, very few of these 180 men were Texans. Excluding the few Mexicans in the ranks, most came from New York, Pennsylvania, and sixteen other states. But the technological advantage that the protectors of the Alamo had was eventually overcome by the sheer force of numbers. Displaying the blood-red flag of No Surrender, with buglers sounding the degüello (the Moorish refrain that signaled no quarter be shown the enemy), the Mexican army attacked the walls of the adobe fortress for several days. Considered pirates and international outlaws by the Mexicans, most of those inside the Alamo were killed, either in the initial attack or in the executions that followed. A few escaped. It was a terrible loss for the Texans and their U.S. backers.30

While the Alamo is famous in the annals and folklore of Texas, a more significant battle took place several weeks later outside Goliad. There Colonel James W. Fannin had to surrender an army of over 365 men to the soft-spoken General José de Urrea, the commander of 1,200 Mexican troops who had come thundering up from the south. Through mismanagement, Fannin had left his outfit defenseless—his soldiers and oxen without food and water. The prisoners, like those at the Alamo, were considered by Santa Anna to be pirates and therefore subject to the death penalty. Even though his orders were protested by his officers, the entire Texan force was executed. As word of Santa Anna’s butchery spread, hundreds of volunteers ran away to help their fleeing families. In March the Texan army had numbered 1,400 men; by the Battle of San Jacinto in mid-April it was down to 784.31

Good fortune and assistance from the United States finally came to
the aid of the Texans. After the Alamo and Goliad, Santa Anna had the Texans on the run. Sam Houston spent this time both retreating and reorganizing. From New Orleans there came more volunteers and from the U.S. government quasi-official support in the form of arms and money. Santa Anna finally overextended himself, and on 21 April his troops were caught off guard near the San Jacinto River (near today’s Houston) outside the department of Béxar and inside the Anglo-American zone of influence. Two days later Santa Anna himself was captured by one of Houston’s patrols. The defeat at San Jacinto and General Vicente Filisola’s withdrawal made Mexico’s loss of Texas final. The Lone Star Republic of Texas had been born. The Texans chose David Burnet as president and the Mexican populist and radical politician Lorenzo de Zavala as vice president (the latter choice symbolic of the role the tejanos took in fighting for Texas independence).32

The butchery at the Alamo and Goliad allowed the Texas Rangers to justify their own violence toward Mexicans. “Santy Anny” became the favorite villain in Texas. One popular view, which dealt with a scene from after the San Jacinto battle, appeared in several variations by a number of Texan writers. A version is as follows:

The dead Mexicans lay in piles, the survivors not even asking permission to bury them, thinking, perhaps, that in return for the butchery they had practiced, they would soon be lying dead themselves. The buzzards and coyotes were gathering to the feast, but it is a singular fact that they singled out the dead horses, refusing to touch the Mexicans, presumably because of the peppery constitution of the flesh. They lay there unmolested and dried up, the cattle got to chewing the bones, which so affected the milk that residents in the vicinity had to dig trenches and bury them.33

After Texas independence, during the period of the Lone Star Republic from 1836 to 1845, hostilities between “Texicans” and Mexicans would persist, and the forces of U.S. expansion would continue.

During the last days of Andrew Jackson’s administration, in March 1837, the United States recognized the independence of Texas. Both the independence of Texas and the U.S. recognition were repudiated by Mexico. Although not all norteamericanos approved of expansionism,
their voices were drowned out by those who would benefit from cheap grazing lands, fertile cotton-producing soil, free trade with Santa Fe, and commercial access to San Francisco, China, and Japan. Even the Texans were not immune as they claimed New Mexico as their territory and unsuccessfully sent their armies into Santa Fe and Matamoros in 1842. Likewise, between 1836 and 1845, Mexico invaded San Antonio on more than one occasion and attempted unsuccessfully to reconquer Texas. Finally, in the last days of President John Tyler’s administration, a decree was signed annexing Texas to the United States. Mexico considered this annexation an act of aggression, and the Mexican minister in Washington, D.C., broke off negotiations and went home.34

With the expansionist James Knox Polk in the White House, events soon spiraled out of control. Polk was intent on defending the Texas frontier, even if it inadvertently led to war with Mexico. He also desired a West Coast harbor. Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft ordered the U.S. fleet to keep the gulf ports under surveillance, and Commodore John D. Sloat had instructions to take both Monterey (in California) and San Francisco should war break out. At the same time, Polk’s special envoy to Mexico, John Slidell, was given instructions to negotiate the Texas boundary at the Rio Grande and to secure New Mexico and California. In January 1846 President Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to march into disputed territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. During the entire stretch of the colonial period Texas’s western boundary had always been the Nueces River. When the Austin family petitioned for land grants in the early nineteenth century, the Nueces was recognized as the western boundary. The Lone Star Republic, however, identified the Rio Grande as the western boundary, claiming rather disingenuously that the Mexican government had allowed some Anglo newcomers to settle the lands between the Nueces and Rio Grande when Texas was still part of Mexico. Moreover, Texas claimed that when Santa Anna withdrew his troops across the Rio Grande following his defeat at San Jacinto, he was accepting the Rio Grande as its western boundary. The consequence of such a new boundary was clear: a massive swath of territory would fall into Texan
hands, for the Rio Grande flows northwest, and Texans were claiming the river at its source.\textsuperscript{35}

Taylor established himself on the north bank of the Rio Grande and proceeded to construct Fort Texas (later renamed Fort Brown, and today’s Brownsville). On 9 May, Taylor reported to Polk that a skirmish had broken out between his dragoons and the Mexican cavalry, resulting in the death of several U.S. soldiers. Polk could report to Congress that U.S. blood had been shed on U.S. soil. A declaration of war was stampeded through Congress. Eventually, General Winfield Scott would be named commander in chief of the expeditionary forces. In Mexico City the view was different—not only had the United States taken Texas, but it had changed the traditional boundary to twice its size!\textsuperscript{36}

U.S. strategy called for a three-pronged offense by the army with logistical support from the navy. The Army of the Center would take northern Mexico; the Army of the West would occupy New Mexico and California; the Army of Occupation would carry the war into Mexico City (see figure 7). The navy was to escort the transports of both Taylor and Scott, guard their bases from the sea, capture the coastal towns of Tampico and Monterey, maintain a blockade on the Gulf and Pacific sides, and assist the army at Veracruz. The shortage of soldiers was solved by private recruiters who promised their inductees “roast beef, two dollars a day, plenty of whiskey, golden Jesuses, and pretty Mexican girls.” Although the Mexican army included about thirty thousand men against less than fifty-five hundred regulars in the U.S. army, when compared to the United States, their artillery was outmoded, their officers were corrupted by politics, and their men, although brave, were poorly trained.\textsuperscript{37}

As the war progressed, General Stephen W. Kearny, commanding the Army of the West, left Fort Leavenworth in June 1846 with some fifteen hundred men. Nine hundred miles later he arrived in Santa Fe, initially taking the city without firing a shot, but was later harassed by Mexican and Pueblo Indian guerrilla forces. Then Kearny divided his army. Alexander Doniphan led a contingent south to Chihuahua,
while Kearny joined Commodore Sloat in California. After defeating the Mexicans in an artillery duel at Chihuahua, Doniphan’s troops joined Taylor at Buena Vista outside Saltillo.

Meanwhile, Taylor had moved from Matamoros to Camargo and from there to Monterrey. Needing reliable scouts experienced in the rugged terrain and thick chaparral of northern Mexico, Taylor reluctantly accepted Texas Rangers, who he thought “were too licentious to do much good.” Originally the Rangers were mounted riflemen created during the early days of the Lone Star Republic to capture and kill Comanches and Mexican cattle rustlers operating beyond the Nueces River, another example of the Texan acceptance of that river as the natural boundary. Eventually half of Taylor’s army of six thousand
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was composed of such volunteers, those whom the Mexican priests described as “vandals vomited from Hell.” After a three-day struggle and suffering heavy losses, the city of Monterrey surrendered. From there Taylor went to Buena Vista to face Santa Anna’s twenty thousand men. After an initial stalemate, Santa Anna withdrew from the battlefield to resolve a dispute between liberals and conservatives in Mexico City, leaving northern Mexico to the invaders.\(^\text{38}\)

In December 1846 General Scott arrived at Brazos Santiago above Matamoros. Infuriating Taylor, Scott reassigned several thousand of Taylor’s regulars and volunteers who were in Matamoros, Camargo, and Buena Vista to the Army of Occupation. On 9 March 1847 Scott and his ten thousand men made an amphibious landing south of the harbor of Veracruz. For forty-eight hours Scott laid waste to the city, killing more than a thousand civilian inhabitants. From there Scott’s forces outmaneuvered Santa Anna at the mountain pass of Cerro Gordo, rested his troops at Puebla, and eventually fought for control of Mexico City in the battles of Contreras, Churubusco, and Chapultepec. On 15 September, despite heroic resistance from the capital’s citizens, the stars and stripes waved over the National Palace.\(^\text{39}\)

The events at Chapultepec Castle, in particular, have become part of historical memory in Mexico. Built on a large hill overlooking lush vegetation, the castle was run by regular army troops and young cadets enrolled in the military academy. General Scott ordered his men to rush the castle after an intense artillery barrage failed to convince the Mexicans to surrender. As the U.S. troops scaled the walls and engaged in hand-to-hand combat, the young cadets, or as they are known in Mexican history, los niños héroes, stood their ground despite the overwhelming odds. Rather than surrender to the invading Americans, one cadet, Juan Escutia, reportedly wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and jumped to his death. Every year Mexicans commemorate the event and honor the “heroic boys” who made the ultimate sacrifice in the face of foreign invasion. When President Harry S. Truman visited Mexico in 1947, the one-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Chapultepec, he asked to make an unscheduled visit to the monument erected in honor of the young cadets. When asked by U.S. reporters why he had decided
to pay his respects there, Truman replied, “Brave men don’t belong to any one country. I respect bravery wherever I see it.”

On 2 February 1848, at the Villa de Guadalupe, a treaty was signed that ended the U.S. invasion. In addition to confirming the United States’ title to Texas, the treaty ceded the immense territories of California and New Mexico to the Americans. Practically everything west and northwest of the Rio Grande was part of the settlement. The United States paid Mexico an indemnity of $15 million and assumed $3.25 million in claims that U.S. citizens had against the Mexican government. Mexico lost half of its territory, including Texas, although it did manage to save Baja California and have it linked by land to Sonora. Articles 8 and 9 of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed to the Mexicans in the ceded territory the protection of their property and the “free exercise of their religion,” while Article 11 committed the United States to policing the Indians in the ceded area.

The property guarantees of the treaty continue to shape the lives of the descendants of those Mexicans and Indians who suddenly found themselves residing north of the newly established border in 1848. Little known outside of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and California, these protections oblige the U.S. government to respect property rights in the same manner as the Mexican judicial system would have done if the territorial cession had never taken place. In other words, the successors-in-interest of the original landowners (primarily Indians and Hispanics) can seek legal remedy to protect their property. Since land and water were considered property under Spanish colonial and later early Mexican law, the U.S. courts are to act as surrogates for Hispanic property law.

Since the nineteenth century the U.S. judicial system has been inundated with claims, disputes, and lawsuits that require a careful understanding of the complexities of Hispanic property law. Contemporary judicial interpretations of the treaty’s property guarantees have the capacity to either sustain or disrupt the links between today’s descendants of the generation of 1848 and those natural resources essential to their cultural identity and physical livelihood: water for domestic use
and irrigation, land for grazing stock animals, and wood to cook food and heat homes during the winter months.

Anglo common law, of course, still shapes the U.S. judicial system, which inevitably creates a juridical tension in the adjudication of land and water disputes in places like New Mexico and Arizona, especially since the Hispanic civil law of property, derived as it is from Roman Law, contains neither the riparian nor appropriative features of Anglo common law. When Spain was sovereign in North America, for example, a river that meandered through properties did not entitle the owners to use the surface water to irrigate their fields unless the land classification itself conveyed such a right. In the absence of such a classification, property owners had to seek an explicit authorization to irrigate with surface water. In the common law tradition, however, owners have the right to benefit from the waters in a river or stream that run through their land without any additional authorization. Moreover, the “first in time, first in right” sensibility of the common law, which favors those who are seeking to use natural resources based on the premise that they were the first to arrive at a particular place, was antithetical to a Hispanic legal tradition that had emerged over the centuries in arid Spain and later in the arid and semiarid stretches of the Gran Chichimeca.42

A few years after the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Santa Anna would sell the Mesilla valley (today southern New Mexico and Arizona) to the United States for $10 million, and the United States’ destiny would be made manifest (see figure 8).43 The Mesilla tract, known in U.S. history as the Gadsden Purchase, contained thirty thousand square miles of presumably barren Sonoran desert and included both the garrisoned presidio of Tucson and the town of Mesilla. Around 1850, approximately two thousand nuevomexicanos who wanted to live in Mexico moved to Mesilla thinking that they were in Chihuahua. Because Article 5 of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provided for surveying and marking the boundary by commissioners representing the two nations, a line was surveyed from the lower Rio Grande westward to San Diego. Although most of the boundary along
Texas and California was not controversial, that section defining the Chihuahua–New Mexico area was disputed. Lacking precise information about the true location of El Paso del Norte, the commissioners placed the city north and east of its actual position. Eventually, due to the new terms of the Mesilla Treaty and the expertise, cooperation, and good work of both the Mexican commissioners and the U.S. engineers, a satisfactory boundary was established by 1857.44

A perplexing war was over, but its significance for the history of the two nations cannot be underestimated. The results were many and varied and affected the areas differently—whether that part of the Gran Chichimeca that was now “occupied” Mexico, the vanquished nation of Mexico, or the victorious United States.

The Spanish-speaking population of the vast area acquired from Mexico between 1845 and 1854 is estimated to be somewhere between
75,000 and 95,000: perhaps 60,000 nuevomexicanos; 7,500 californios; 1,000 Mexicans in and around Tucson and Tubac (in what would eventually be called Arizona); and as many as 25,000 tejanos. After the war, as many as 2,000 refugees left “occupied” Mexico and settled across the Rio Grande in the older, established towns of El Paso del Norte, Mier, Camargo, Reynosa, and Matamoros; or they moved to new towns such as Mesilla, Guadalupe, or Nuevo Laredo. In addition, black slaves from east Texas escaped their chains by fleeing to the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. Despite these refugee movements, Texas south and west of the Nueces remained predominantly Mexican, with as many as 18,000 Mexicans to 2,500 Anglos. In some places in southern Texas the ratio of Mexicanos to Anglos was twenty-five to one.45

Yet the other side of the coin was the rapidly growing Anglo population. In Texas it quadrupled from 30,000 in 1836 to 140,000 in 1846, an increase that was largely due to Anglo immigration into east Texas. While Hispanics were a majority in New Mexico, by 1850 Spanish-speaking Californians constituted only 15 percent of the state’s population of 380,000. Yet “occupied” Mexico was still a frontier area with a low ratio of inhabitants to lands.46

For some parts of the U.S. Southwest, the Mexican War marked the transition of the economy of the conquered provinces from subsistence cultivation to market production—a change that involved the displacement of the traditional landed elite by the new elite whose base was commercial capital. The freeing of the land from traditional, patrimonial Mexican claims was accompanied by increasing linkages with national and world markets. This transition took longer in New Mexico than in California or Texas, but the result was the same. Anglo-Americans introduced their own standards for the adjustment of land claims and the liberation of entailed property, and the Anglo merchant, lawyer, judge, and sheriff were the agents of this enormous land grab, legal or not.47

Mexicans in Texas, especially north of the Nueces, lost much land through fraud and outright confiscation. In the south and west of the Nueces, however, a system of incorporation occurred. There an accommodation took place between the victorious Anglo elite and the
defeated Mexican elite. Sometimes the U.S. merchant, lawyer, or soldier would intermarry with members of the old elite. These Anglos would be “Mexicanized,” becoming *patrones* and compadres who would sponsor baptisms and marriages. As powerful hacendados they would eventually rule over rancheros, or small landowners, vaqueros, and peones. Legal mechanisms, such as taxation or court-ordered surveys, became the instrument for dispossessing both Mexican elites and rancheros. Eventually all of Texas would be integrated into the national market, and the most exportable item was, of course, the Mexican longhorn. Thus, the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1846 created the basis for a powerful export-oriented upper class whose rules and regulations were enforced by the Texas Rangers.48

Another heritage of the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War was heightened animosity between Texans and Mexicans, especially between that “special breed of men” known as the Texas Rangers and *los fronterizos* (borderlanders). Anglo Texans developed a set of attitudes that have been called the Texan legend, in which the violence of the ranger is rationalized because of Mexican barbarism at the Alamo; the racial superiority of the ranger is asserted; and the cowardly, degenerate character of the Mexican is affirmed.49

The Texan historian Walter Prescott Webb, considered distinguished in his time, was a primary source of the legend. He wrote in his book, *The Texas Rangers* (originally published in 1935), “Without disparagement it may be said that there is a cruel streak in the Mexican nature, or so the history of Texas would lead one to believe. This cruelty may be a heritage from the Spanish of the Inquisition; it may, and doubtless should, be attributed partly to the Indian blood. Among the common class, ignorance and superstition prevail. . . . The Mexican warrior . . . was, on the whole, inferior to the Comanche and wholly unequal to the Texan.”50 And, of course, the Texas legend has its counterpart in the *corridos* or folk ballads of the fronterizos.

The savage behavior of the wartime rangers in Camargo, Monterrey, and Mexico City established their reputation in Mexico as *los tejanos sangrientes* (bloody Texans) and *los diablos tejanos* (Texas devils), and along the Rio Grande as *los rinches de la Kineña* (Rangers of the King
Ranch, the private army of Richard King and other cattle barons). The corridos tell us that the ranger was a Mexican killer who shot first and asked questions later. Rather than a law enforcer, the ranger was believed to be a source of lawlessness who shot innocent Mexicans in the back and raped Mexican women. A common anecdote says that the Texas Ranger always carried a rusty old gun in his saddlebag to use when he killed a Mexican. He would drop the gun beside the dead Mexican to claim he killed in self-defense. Despite the literary license that such stories took, the corridos testify to a continuing heritage of profound mistrust of U.S. authority along the border.51

As for Mexico proper, the war and the ensuing Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brought in its wake the danger of social and political dissolution. Indian and peasant rebellions occurred in northern and central Mexico, in the Huaxteca region of Veracruz, and in the Yucatán Peninsula. In 1847, following an attempt at independence by the sisal producers of Yucatán (who were simply imitating the behavior of their Anglo-Texan brothers), the Mayan peons revolted. Soon a major caste war pitted Cruzob Mayas against their former masters. Only the money secured as part of the war indemnity (as well as funds received later from the Gadsden Purchase) enabled the government to restore social order after 1855.52

It was also no accident that Mexico’s embrace of liberal reform in the 1850s (known as La Reforma) and the French occupation of 1862–67 followed hard upon the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In Mexico City, liberals and conservatives viewed with alarm the impotence of their country in 1847, and both reasserted their national programs as solutions for the country’s ills. Liberals believed that there had been no national resistance to foreign invasion because the Mexican nation was simply a fiction—a confused and ineffective collection of poor Indians, overly taxed and regulated merchants, foreign artisans, a poorly trained military force, and greedy priests. La Reforma, that is, the political attack on ecclesiastical and Indian properties, was the liberal bourgeoisie solution. As for the conservatives, they believed that Mexico’s problems were due to its republican past. Only a return to a constitutional monarchy, such as that which was promised by the Austrian
archduke, Ferdinand Maximilian of Habsburg, could lift Mexico out of its anarchy and sorrow. Under the protection of the French army, Maximilian ruled Mexico until 1867, when liberal resistance gained considerable traction with the help of former Union veterans of the U.S. Civil War and relaxed neutrality laws.

Finally, there was the significance of the Mexican War for the United States. With the exception of the military campaigns against Indians in the West, the invasion of Mexico was the United States’ first major imperial adventure, and the result was the beginning of the militarization of U.S. society. Part of this was facilitated by mechanization. In 1836 the inventor and engineer Samuel Colt registered in Hartford, Connecticut, the patent of the revolving pistol, and from Texas came the first order for shipment. By 1850 the manufacture of small arms was a major New England industry.

Another factor was that the Mexican War was the proving ground for the U.S. Civil War, and the names of those who fought for generals Taylor and Scott amount to a roll call to military greatness: Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, George Gordon Meade, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Stonewall Jackson, to name a few. From the navy saw the rise of, among others, David G. Farragut and Franklin Buchanan. In fact, the decade following the war was a time of expansion for the U.S. Navy—in 1849 there were only seven oceangoing steamers; by 1860, twenty-six. Finally, the penchant that Americans had for electing military heroes to the presidency was renewed, with three of the U.S. officers in the Mexican War attaining that high office—Taylor, Grant, and Franklin Pierce. A fourth, Jefferson Davis, was elected president of the Confederacy.

The Mexican War, like most wars in U.S. history, was divisive. There were some who thought that Manifest Destiny meant that the United States should expand to the Isthmus of Panama and take all of Mexico in the process. Some Whigs in Congress cursed the war and criticized the president, while voting for appropriations for the army and praising the bravery of the soldiers. Nicholas P. Trist, the U.S. negotiator at Guadalupe, believed that continued occupation of Mexican soil could lead to the end of the “Jeffersonian vision” for the United States. Crit-
ics were also aware that imperial commitments might lead to the enhancement of executive authority at home. Polk, by provoking war, manipulating Congress, establishing a secret fund, and holding close, personal control over the military establishment, did not fail his critics. As John C. Calhoun warned, “there is not an example on record of any free State ever having attempted the conquest of any territory approaching the extent of Mexico without disastrous consequences.”

The forbidden fruit of Mexico, when consumed, proved fatal to the body politic, as slavery in the newly acquired territories became the major constitutional and political issue leading up to the Civil War.

In the nineteenth century, territorial expansion (including the Oregon territory acquired from the British in 1846) and the spoils of war added lands, all of which were sparsely populated, to the United States that amounted to almost 70 percent of the national domain. Between 1790 and 1860, the landed area of the United States tripled in size, and population pressure changed from 4.5 persons per square mile in 1790 to 10.6 per square mile by 1860. The existence of abundant, accessible, fertile land attracted thousands of potential wage earners who might have crowded into urban areas of the United States. Scarce labor in the cities and limited immigration translated into higher wage costs that gave incentives to manufacturers to replace labor with machines. The application of capital-intensive technology to production, and the dual role of the West as a source of basic resources and a market for industrialized goods, facilitated the economic development of the post–Civil War United States. As economic historian Stuart Bruchey notes, “in the nineteenth century the American common market was to the United States what the European Common Market is to twentieth-century Europe.”

Material capital accumulations, that is, improved lands, amounted to three-tenths of the rise of the total Gross National Product (GNP) during the 1869–1914 period, or over one-fourth of the increase in output per work-hour. With improved lands and investments in health, skills, education, buildings, and machines, a sustained economic growth became the central feature of U.S. history between the Civil War and World War I. Cotton gins, steel plows, McCormick reapers, machine
tools, locomotives, and so on all pointed to the industrial revolution that was at hand.\textsuperscript{59}

The loss of Texas, New Mexico, and California deprived Mexico of immense natural resources. The gold rush of 1849 was only the beginning, and within twenty years the lost area was producing more mineral wealth than all the fabled silver mountains of Old Mexico. By 1900 the mineral output alone of the lost territories amounted to more than the national income of the Mexican Republic. Unlike the United States, human capital stagnated, especially in education and health. The Mexican economy, half as productive as that of the United States in 1800, was only one-eighth as productive in 1867. The economic gap between the United States and Mexico, originating in the late colonial period, was now well developed and established.\textsuperscript{60}

The capital that accumulated in the United States during the Gilded Age (1875–1900) needed an outlet. It was now time for the ever-expanding United States to invest in lands and resources in that part of the Gran Chichimeca lying south of the Rio Grande and to transform Mexico’s remaining northern frontier into a true international border.
5 From Pueblo to Global Village

It was better that a little blood should be shed that much blood should be saved. The blood that was shed was bad blood; the blood that was saved was good blood.

Porfirio Díaz

British historian Eric Hobsbawm interpreted the history of what he called the “long nineteenth century” (1789–1914) in three works. The first, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*, traces the double breakthrough of the first industrial revolution in Britain and the Franco-American political revolution. The former established the capitalist productive system that penetrated the globe and was rationalized by the ideas of classical political economy (economic liberalism or the doctrine of free trade). The latter created the model for bourgeois society and the creed of utilitarianism (or political liberalism). His second volume, *The Age of Capital*, covers the brief period between the 1848 revolutions and the onset of the 1870s depression. It examines themes introduced in the first book through the lens of the global march of capitalism and the victories of the bourgeoisie and their liberal ideology.¹

The last work of the trilogy, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914*, recounts how the economic and military supremacy of the capitalist countries, the so-called new imperialism, transformed the different regions of the world. This was an era when most of the globe was divided into the informal territories of a handful of powerful states, primarily Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Japan, and the United States. Although capital investments propelled some of this colonial expansion, the most important motive was a search for markets abroad. The overproduction of the 1870s and 1880s led to a widespread export drive throughout the world.²

It was also during the Age of Empire when the United States (and to a lesser extent Germany) was beginning to outpace Great Britain in
terms of iron and steel, while Great Britain, with a slower rate of industrial growth relative to the United States and Germany, was showing the first signs of decline. World trade patterns were changing too. In 1860 over half of the exports of Latin America, Asia, and Africa went to Great Britain. By 1900 the British share had dropped to one-quarter, and non-Western exports to continental Europe were already larger than those to Britain (31 percent). For Americans, it was a time when the United States ceased to be on the semiperiphery of Europe.3

These global trends were an important backdrop to Mexico’s “long nineteenth century” (1765–1910). The economic gap that developed from 1765 to 1870 between Mexico and the United States (both as colonies and nation-states) was a microcosm epitomizing the events of the world in general. In 1750 the per capita levels of industrialization in Europe and the non-Western world were roughly the same, but by 1900 the latter was only one-eighteenth of the former, and only one-fiftieth of the United Kingdom. The respective positions of Europe and the rest of the world, before 1800 and after the industrial revolution, continue to remind us today the tremendous significance of industrialization for world history.4

The industrial revolution in Britain from 1770 to 1860 occurred in several economic sectors simultaneously. By 1820 the British population had increased to twelve million and was almost eighteen million in 1850. This massive demographic revival was caused in part by the use of intensive agriculture techniques in the countryside and the rise of industry. And industry was the outcome of technological innovations (for example, spinning mules, power looms, steam engines, and coke-smelting and iron-refining processes) that were adopted when demand and prices were favorable. Steam power accelerated the manufacture of cotton textiles, the spread of an inland transport system involving turnpikes and iron rails, and a foreign market facilitated by steamships. Iron (eventually steel) and cotton were the bases of Great Britain’s global commercial supremacy. The machine revolution in Britain had far-reaching implications for economic development worldwide.5

Throughout the century, Britain remained Europe’s foremost ex-
porter of manufactured goods and exponent of free trade. Since Brit-
ish manufactures were not particularly competitive in the markets of
the industrializing countries, it was of paramount importance that the
United Kingdom preserve its privileged position vis-à-vis the non-
European world. Without a peasantry at home, Britain relied on the
non-European world for foodstuffs, including cereals, wheat, beef,
cheese, and eggs and in return exchanged finished items. Britain also
dominated the trade in primary goods such as tea, cotton, wool, cane
sugar, and rubber. Free trade was indispensable for maintaining the
symbiosis between industrial Great Britain and the developing world
on which British supremacy rested. However, the most important ex-
port for Britain was capital, especially of “invisible” financial and com-
mercial services.\(^6\)

Although most of Britain’s foreign capital investments went to either
settler colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) or its
former colonies (the expanding United States), the last quarter of the
nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth witnessed a
significant increase of British investments in Latin America. Between
1875 and 1914, British investments in Latin America rose from £85 mil-
lion to £750 million, 50 percent of the total coming in the last decade
alone.\(^7\)

As for the British share of Mexico, its investments during the age of
Porfirio Díaz (the *porfiriato*, 1876–1910) were primarily in government
bonds, public utilities, banks, railways, tramways, rubber, cotton, silver,
and nonferrous metals. After the turn of the century, when Britain’s
navy was converting its energy source from coal to oil, the petroleum
sector became important, especially Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson’s
El Aguila Company, whose oil strike at the Potrero del Llano, Number 4,
site produced more than a hundred million barrels in eight years.\(^8\)

Yet as impressive as British global influence was in Mexico and else-
where, in hindsight it is obvious that the Age of Empire would be a
time when the United States, until then a secondary power, would en-
ter the world stage as a major economic force and a potentially pow-
erful military state. This all began after the Mexican War during the
Gilded Age (1870–90), when the territory acquired from Mexico, the
so-called last frontier of the Great Plains and the intermountain West, would undergo, along with the rest of the nation, an industrial and modernizing revolution.

With the Civil War over, the United States was able to exploit its numerous natural advantages, including rich lands and raw materials. Because the land was vast, labor was always scarce and expensive (in spite of the increase in population). Thus entrepreneurs were motivated to develop labor-saving machines and technology to develop the country’s resources. Meanwhile, foreign and domestic investment capital transformed the nation’s economy at a stunning pace, and the manufacturing revolution took off. By the turn of the century, the United States was the leading manufacturing nation in the world.9

By 1914, with a national income of $37 billion and a population of ninety-eight million, the per capita income of the United States was $377, more than a third greater than Britain’s $244. U.S. steel production, usually a measure of both industrialization and military potential, was 31.8 million tons a year, almost double that of Germany and over four times that of Britain. The United States led all industrial powers in energy consumption of fossil fuels (that is, coal, petroleum, and natural gas) and hydroelectricity.10

Industrialization also altered the traditional trade patterns of the global economy. Prior to the Civil War, the United States had exported raw materials (such as cotton) and imported finished manufactures, but post–Civil War United States exported farm machinery, iron and steel goods, copper cable and wire, electrical supplies, machine tools, and other wares onto the world market. While wheat and other foodstuffs were still being exported, raw materials for the United States’ industry were being imported in ever-larger numbers. At the same time, the northern industrialists’ lobby was powerful enough to ensure that Congress would develop and retain a protectionist tariff policy. By 1910 the sale of manufactured goods was beginning to exceed exports of raw materials.11

After 1880 U.S. economic interests in the form of capital and industrial surpluses extended into Mexico and continued to expand during the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and
Woodrow Wilson. In 1890 total U.S. investment was around $130 million. At the turn of the century, U.S. capital invested in Mexican enterprises amounted to a little more than $200 million. By the Mexican Revolution of 1910, according to figures published by the Mexican government, total foreign capital amounted to more than 2 billion pesos, of which 1.2 billion pesos—or more than $500 million (U.S.)—were U.S. investments.12

Of the largest businesses in Mexico in 1910–11, seven were owned by U.S. interests either outright or as joint enterprises with the Mexican government and other foreign nationals. Anglo-American interests dominated the express, mining, utilities, and petroleum industries, and the American Smelting and Refining Company and the Cananea Consolidated Copper Company were the second- and third-largest concerns in all of Mexico (only the multinational railroad company, Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México, was larger).13

By the end of the porfiriato, foreigners owned over 20 percent of Mexico’s land surface and most of the eighty largest industrial and commercial concerns. Of these, twenty-three were owned by the British and twenty-one by the United States. By 1911 the United States controlled nearly 38 percent of the aggregate foreign investment in Mexico, mostly in railroads, mining, and real estate. In all of Latin America, only in Mexico did U.S. finances, which constituted 45 percent of all U.S. investments in the Americas, exceed the British.14

The foundation for this capitalist invasion of Mexico and the porfiriian economic miracle that followed was laid in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. If investments were to flow into Mexico from the United States, the tradition of violent intervention by foreigners, both citizens and states, had to be curtailed. Between 1821 and 1878, when the United States finally recognized the Díaz government, Mexico had endured foreign intervention, separatist movements, war with the United States, and numerous filibustering attempts by U.S. citizens. The most notorious of these filibusters were active in the decade of the 1850s, beginning with William Walker and his unsuccessful endeavor to conquer Baja California and adjoining Sonora in 1853, continuing through the attempt by Henry A. Crabb to overthrow the governor of
Sonora in 1857, and concluding with Sam Houston’s immodest plan of 1859 to use thousands of Texas Rangers and Indians to establish a protectorate in northern Mexico. Filibustering was yet another part of the history of territorial aggression and expansion by the United States with Mexico.15

The impulse for foreigners to take Mexican land and resources by force was lessened considerably when Porfirio Díaz agreed, as the price of diplomatic recognition in 1878, to grant generous concessions to U.S. investors. This was a kind of payback to South Texas investors, especially Brownsville merchants, who had supported Don Porfirio’s Plan de Tuxtepec, an armed political movement in 1876 that sought to overthrow the Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada government; the Texans supplied rifles, pistols, knives, grenades, monies, and personnel, and Díaz’s revolt was successful. These same U.S. investors (mostly Rio Grande valley bankers and railroad owners like James Stillman and wealthy Texas ranchers like Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy) used their considerable influence to get the United States to recognize Mexico.16

Specifically, the agreement of 1878 allowed foreigners to purchase real estate in border areas and extended the duty-free zone westward from Tamaulipas to Baja California. This meant that northern Mexico and Tamaulipas would be opened to direct U.S. economic penetration, and that U.S. railroad interests would soon be surveying routes from several border towns to central Mexico. Díaz also agreed to reciprocal border crossings by troops in pursuit of hostile Indians and cattle rustlers, and put an end to the attempt by Juan Cortina, the Mexican hero who was considered a cattle thief in Texas, to lay claim to lands north of the Rio Bravo (known as the Rio Grande on the north side of the border). Finally, the agreement provided indemnities for U.S. property owners for damages in previous conflicts. After 1880 the United States would substitute its earlier strategy of physical conquest for one of economic domination through expanded trade and investment.17

Throughout the nineteenth century, Mexican entrepreneurs paved the way for their foreign counterparts. After 1825, when the Mexican state had difficulty in attracting foreign loans, it turned to local merchants or money lenders (agiotistas). In time they took over many
attributes of the state, such as delivering mail, running mines, and purchasing army equipment. In effect, agiotistas were members of an independent Mexico’s first governmental or public bourgeoisie. As they increased their state power, their investments became more diverse to include banking and industry. By the 1850s these empresarios were an important part of the national economy—a group of entrepreneurs who turned commercial capital into financial capital and then took their loan profits and transformed them into industrial capital. After the Reform Era they were rewarded with nationalized church lands and concessions for Mexico’s first railroad, connecting Veracruz and Mexico City. As the historian Barbara Tenenbaum notes, the agiotistas “embraced centralism and national authority as well as the Lerdo law, a strong affirmation of the right of private property, and a dedication to law and order. The empresarios found a home with the liberals of the Reform and [in] the Porfiriato their true roots.” In effect, they established a homegrown base upon which foreign enterprise could be grafted.

As we mentioned earlier, the period between 1855 and 1861 is known in Mexican history as La Reforma. It was an era of unrelenting liberalism in which the rising central government used all of its power to eradicate ecclesiastical and Indian corporate privileges and, at the same time, advance individual liberty. The Reform was led by Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian from Oaxaca, and its main components found expression in the federalist Constitution of 1857. This document abolished ecclesiastical and military fueros, that is, the privilege of priests and army officers to be exempt from ordinary civil and criminal jurisdiction, and prohibited the corporate (church, communal, municipal) ownership of urban and rural real estate.

Although ostensibly federalist, in actuality the national government created by the Constitution of 1857 was strongly centralist, with powers to impeach state governors and invalidate state elections. And, more important, the constitution was silent on the religious question, an omission that meant Roman Catholicism was not recognized as the state church. Enforcement of the liberal ideology created the conditions that led to a three-year civil war between liberals and conserva-
tives. By 1861 the liberal crusade was victorious, the church had lost its property without compensation, and separation of church and state had become a reality.\textsuperscript{21}

The financial woes of the nation pushed President Benito Juárez to issue a two-year moratorium on all government payments to foreign creditors. While his decision was not tantamount to an outright repudiation of Mexico’s foreign debt, it provided the ideal pretext for Napoleon III to satisfy his imperialist foreign policy, which sought in part to reestablish France on North American soil. In 1864 he established a monarchy in Mexico with the French army supporting the installation of Archduke Maximilian of Austria as Napoleon’s choice for the Mexican throne. Juárez eventually defeated the French with U.S. financial and military assistance, abetted in part by the good works of his diplomat Matías Romero in Washington, D.C., and by a covert army of Mexican secret agents who recruited U.S. soldiers of fortune. By 1867, with the execution of Maximilian and the expulsion of French troops from Mexican soil, Juárez was finally free to champion the liberal bourgeois cause.\textsuperscript{22}

Surprisingly, it was during the period of the French occupation between 1862 and 1867 that foreigners, including Americans, first began to invest and speculate in Mexican properties in a serious fashion. With Juárez seeking U.S. public and private assistance against the French interventionists and pursuing investments to further Mexico’s modernization, U.S. businesspeople ventured into mining, agriculture, communications, and petroleum.\textsuperscript{23}

Meanwhile, Santiago Vidaurri, the regional caudillo of Nuevo León y Coahuila and a political opponent of Juárez, developed the cotton industry of the Mexican North and promoted a flourishing trade between the Confederates in Texas and the northern provinces of Nuevo León y Coahuila and Tamaulipas. Piedras Negras, Nuevo Laredo, and other Mexican towns grew as Confederate cotton was shipped to Europe and arms and munitions were sent to Texas via the port city of Matamoros. It was this same commerce and industry that made successful capitalists out of Texans like Charles Stillman and the aforementioned King and Kenedy.\textsuperscript{24}
Even Emperor Maximilian brought infusions of capital to Mexico. French assets gave new life to the textile industry of Puebla. British capital resumed the work of the Veracruz–Mexico City railroad, and a branch of the London Bank of Mexico, the Banco de Londres y México, was established. Generally speaking, the imperial government created policies and passed laws that encouraged European immigration, promoted foreign investments, and guaranteed individual property rights, including those who purchased church property. Thus, the environment of investment was well developed when Porfirio Díaz grabbed power in Mexico in 1876.25

Mexico’s population grew from eight million in 1854 to fifteen million in 1910. The increase, while not as great as that of its northern neighbor during the same period (which went from twenty-three million in 1854 to ninety-two million in 1910), was significant. It signaled the end of an era of slow growth, and, unlike the United States, the demographic growth was not due to immigration but to a natural increase in the Mexican population. (Most immigrants, pushed away by the low salaries of Mexican industry, were attracted to the better living conditions that could be found in the United States.) The northern frontier states of Sonora, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas increased in population because of internal migration.

Economic progress was most noticeable in the export-oriented sectors of the economy, especially mining, petroleum, and agriculture. The developing railway system made possible the growth of these industries. Before the railroads, mule transportation was too expensive for anything but mining for precious metals, mainly silver and gold. With the railroads, production of copper, zinc, and lead soared. Copper production alone increased from 6,483 tons in 1891–92 to more than 52,000 tons in 1910–11.26 As for oil, by 1911 Mexico ranked third among the world’s petroleum-producing nations, thanks to the railroads and the activities of U.S.-owned concerns like Doheny’s Mexican Petroleum Company, the Standard Oil Company, and the Texas Company (Texaco). As we have indicated, the British trust of Weetman Pearson was also an important producer of “black gold.”

To foster railway growth, the Díaz regime allotted grants of land to
foreign and domestic developers. By 1884 land concentration (caused by the purchase of public lands, concessions, outright gifts, and usurpation) stimulated the new commercialization of ranching (cattle and hides) and agriculture and fostered an export trade in cotton, garbanzos (chickpeas), fine woods, henequen, rubber, guayule, coffee, cochineal, ixtle (coarse fiber from maguey or agave), cacao, and chicle. In the process, many peasants lost their land. In his cultural study of the porfiriato, historian William Beezley cites an 1881 account in which a Judas effigy, attached to the headlights of a locomotive by the local campesinos, was exploded. The Judas image, representing the people, was destroyed by the engine. This rite symbolized the rapacious technology of the railroad, a technology that consumed both the peasant and his corn.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the growth of the railroads was phenomenal. By 1884 the National linked Corpus Christi, Texas, to Mexico City by way of Laredo. That same year, the Mexican Central completed its 1,970 kilometers of track from El Paso to Mexico City. Other lines connected Nogales to Mexico City and Eagle Pass to Durango. A trunk line ran from the copper mining center at Cananea, Sonora, to Bisbee, Arizona. Tropical goods were moved by the Tehuantepec Railroad from the Pacific port of Salina Cruz overland to Coatzalcoacos on the Gulf of Mexico. By the time the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910, the railroad system totaled over 24,000 kilometers (14,904 miles), almost twenty-four times the 1880 amount but only a fraction of the 250,000 miles of track that existed in the United States.

Unlike the grid system of U.S. railroads, the Mexican pattern was arranged in radial fashion. Although the Díaz government had hoped that the Mexican railway network would connect the west and east coasts of Mexico to markets in the interior, in reality the main lines ran north and south, linking the United States with Mexico City. The result was that the lines served as a pipeline through which Mexican raw materials flowed to the United States (see figure 9). The raylike pattern meant that goods intended for the Mexican interior often had to go hundreds of miles over an indirect route to reach their market. For example, a shipment of goods from Mazatlán on the west coast intended
Fig. 9. Major Mexican and U.S. Rail Lines, Early 1900s
for the Durango market a hundred miles away would have to travel north to Nogales, east to El Paso, and south to Torreón before reaching Durango—a trip of more than a thousand miles. As we will see, mining camps in Coahuila and Sonora were more intimately connected to the U.S. Southwest than to Mexico City as a result of Díaz’s reform of the mining code.\(^{31}\)

The railroads that facilitated export production and the import of manufactures also allowed for the introduction of agricultural produce from the United States, especially during times of crop failure and drought in central Mexico. Thus, maize was imported to Mexico from the United States in large numbers during the arduous years of 1892, 1896, and 1910, with imports rising to over 10 percent of national consumption.\(^{32}\)

In 1884, when the U.S.-controlled Mexican Central railroad completed its line to Mexico City, the Mexican government created a new mining code that made no mention of the colonial tradition of state ownership of subsoil resources. The omission gave surface proprietors ownership of bituminous and nonmetallic materials. In addition, the tax law was revised in 1887 to exempt coal, iron, sulfur, and mercury from all mine taxes. It also provided for the lowering of freight rates on mineral products destined for export and encouraged concessions to foster new mining enterprises. The Code of 1884 and the Tax Law of 1887 meant that Mexico was moving toward a laissez-faire mining policy.\(^{33}\)

The first result of the new legislation was the development of rail lines to the mining fields. The Mexican Central linked the mining camps of Chihuahua to El Paso and made it possible to process Mexican ores in Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. In the 1890s Robert S. Towne opened the Mexican Northern Railway, which connected the silver-lead ore of Sierra Mojada, Coahuila, with the smelters of El Paso, Texas. After 1900 the Rio Grande, Sierra Madre, and Pacific Railroad of U.S. entrepreneur William C. Greene linked the timber and copper resources of Sonora with Arizona and the U.S. West Coast. Greene’s Cananea Consolidated Copper Company was the most productive copper mine in Mexico, with eight large smelting furnaces and some 3,500 employees.\(^{34}\)
The McKinley Tariff of 1890 and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act aroused U.S. interest in high-grade silver ores and stimulated the building of smelters in Mexico to avoid the new duties that had been levied in the United States. In the early 1890s Daniel Guggenheim built several smelters in the state of Nuevo León; by 1910 his American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) was the largest privately owned business in Mexico. Another U.S.-owned mining corporation, the Anaconda complex, was its nearest competitor. By the end of the porfiriato, U.S. investors held 81 percent of the industry’s total capital, while their British counterparts controlled nearly 15 percent.

An increase in trade with the United States was the primary result of railroads that were overwhelmingly owned and controlled by a consortium of U.S. capitalists. Exports from Mexican mines, forests, ranches, and farms went to the United States. From the United States came finished goods such as chemical products, steel rods and sheets, copper wiring, machine belts and tools, electrical machinery, motors, railway rolling stock, and equipment for mining, agriculture, and local factories. To be fair, not all finished goods were produced on foreign soil. The textile industries of Orizaba and Puebla, although French owned, did supply the domestic economy, as did a host of many other Mexican-owned light industries that produced paper, glass, shoes, beer, and food. Both U.S.- and Mexican-owned ore smelters in Monterrey provided steel for the Mexican economy. Yet, with the exception of the steel and related Mexican industries of Nuevo León, heavy industry in Mexico always lagged far behind light industry.

Industrialization that occurred during the porfiriato established the pattern for the later revolutionary and postrevolutionary eras. Unlike the situation in the United States or Great Britain when they were beginning their industrial development, the Mexicans did not have a home market that could absorb the vast quantities of a modern manufacturing plant. With sophisticated and capital-intensive technology acquired from the developed nations, the industries of Mexico were always producing under capacity. Overproduction and high costs eventually led to concentration of ownership and monopoly. The home industries that produced steel, glass, cotton, paper, soap, beer, cigarettes, dynamite, and the like had to rely on constant government protection
and subsidies to compete in a market that was restricted to the developing economy of Mexico.  

The boards of these industrial oligopolies usually consisted of merchant bankers, often of European descent, who manipulated the market and the state to maintain their position of dominance in the economy. Some of these entrepreneurs included German-born Hugo Scherer; Austrian Adolfo Prieto y Alvarez; Basque financier Antonio Basagoiti; French industrialist León Signoret; Americans Eugene Kelly and Thomas Braniff; and Mexicans Julio Limantour (brother of the finance minister), Pablo Macedo, Juan Terrazas, and Enrique Creel. The Mexicans in the group were included for their political influence. These entrepreneurs used the porfirian state for their own private, economic purposes, acquiring subsidies, tax breaks, and protective tariffs and in turn providing the state with loans and revenues. By so doing, they hindered Mexican industry from becoming self-sufficient, while it became more difficult for the state to govern independently of the industrial class.

The growth of the railroads soon brought the isolated Mexican countryside into contact with urban centers, port cities, and the global economy. Legislation was designed to support elite interests and the expansion of commercial agriculture. The anticorporatist tradition of the Ley Lerdo, coupled with new porfirian land laws that enabled private companies to survey public lands and retain one-third of what they found for themselves, facilitated the expropriation, foreclosure, and seizure of many rural lands. These laws not only expanded new markets and fed the speculative motives of capitalists, but also transformed peasants into laborers and pushed the surplus labor of the countryside into mining camps, emerging industrial towns, or commercial estates. According to the historian Friedrich Katz, communal villages of central and southern Mexico, which controlled approximately 40 percent of all agricultural lands in 1810, held only 5 percent when Díaz was forced from office in 1911. In other words, over 90 percent of Mexico’s peasants were landless because of porfirian modernization and politics that favored foreign interests and local elites. For the period leading up to 1910, this translated into a loss of village autonomy, decreased mobility, new fears and insecurities, and eventually violence.
The porfirián enclosure process was a necessary development in the country’s transformation to capitalism, and U.S. investors were in the vanguard. John Hart observes that “over 100 million acres, more than 22 percent of Mexico’s land surface, came into the possession of American owners.” After 1900 many of these corporate owners subdivided their tracts and sold them to thousands of U.S. colonists who occupied properties in all parts of the country. Americans invested in, worked on, and held more than a hundred properties of between one hundred thousand and five hundred thousand acres. The U.S. publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst alone owned landholdings in Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Chiapas, and Campeche that amounted to more than seven million acres. The Mexican countryside that greeted these new owners was a patchwork quilt. The southern coastal states of Veracruz, Tabasco, Yucatán, and Chiapas, as well as the northern borderlands, were areas of sparse population that soon developed export-oriented agriculture. The north central plateau of the Bajío, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas was populated by large, private estates, while the central and southern highlands remained a stronghold of peasant villages with communal traditions.

Important discrepancies appeared in the agricultural sector in terms of the stage of technical modernization employed in each area. Generally, lands that produced cash crops such as sugar and henequen underwent a technological revolution, while food staples production, although increasing throughout the porfiriato, still utilized antiquated and traditional methods. Though a scarcity of labor may have led to technological advances in the northern borderlands and the southern coasts, Mexico’s abundance of cheap labor in the central zones did not induce much modernization when it came to producing wheat and corn. In fact, one study cited by Katz indicates that in 1911 the cost of producing a similar amount of wheat was the same for the modern U.S. farmer as it was for the Mexican hacendado using cheap labor and primitive technology.

The impact of the railroads was uneven. Railroads meant new markets for the country’s peripheries. The southern coastal states began producing export commodities like Yucatecan henequen or Chiapas coffee, while ranching expanded in the northern borderlands, and cot-
ton farms sprouted up in the Laguna (where Durango and Coahuila come together). In the central state of Morelos, linked to Mexico City and Veracruz by the railroad, production of sugar cane increased. While slave and debt labor were common in the tropics, higher wages and increased mobility were the rule in the Mexican North.

Contrary to conditions elsewhere, the impact of the railroads in central Mexico often meant that hacendados now had new competition from outsiders, and labor was often further restricted with peasants becoming tenants, tenants becoming sharecroppers, and sharecroppers becoming laborers. By the time of the revolution, these differing conditions elicited a variety of responses from the inhabitants. In the Bajío, estate workers and peasants remained passive, while in Morelos and the northern borderlands, peasants and rancheros were rebellious.

A tremendous change took place in the Gran Chichimeca, especially in the northern Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila during the porfiriato. This area underwent transformation from a frontier to a border, a place in which U.S. capital greeted Mexican labor under rules created by politicians and their foreign allies in Mexico City.

The removal of the Apache threat and the arrival of the railroad set the stage for immigration into the Mexican North. More than fifteen thousand Americans came to the area as wealthy investors, landowners, railway workers, managers, and technicians. In addition, three hundred thousand more migrants from central and southern Mexico arrived to work in the mines, smelters, foundries, breweries, textile factories, ranches, and cotton farms of the North. By the turn of the century, the northern borderlands region was the most modern of Mexico.

The North was characterized by high wages, labor mobility, and high technology. Owners of the mining camps in Cananea and Batopilas paid some of the higher wages in Mexico. The Laguna cotton district and the garbanzo fields of the Yaqui valley were equipped with newly designed irrigation systems. Alexander Sheperd’s reduction plant at Batopilas was as modern as any existing at that time in either the United States or Mexico. Modernization spread throughout the North, affecting Yaqui peasants, Tarahumara miners, Baja fishermen, Chihuahua cowboys, and Coahuila railway workers alike.
Another dimension of the northern borderlands was urbanization. Overnight isolated pueblos such as Torreón were changed into major cities, and steel towns such as Monterrey began to swell in population. Monterrey’s development came when the rails linked it to the United States via Laredo, to the seaport of Tampico, to the coal and iron ore deposits west of the city, and to the federal capital, Mexico City. With tremendous hydroelectrical potential, and capital from the United States, Monterrey became Mexico’s leading industrial city by the end of the porfiriato. Monterrey’s two major industries were the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc, a brewery that produced Carta Blanca beer, and the steel factory Fundidora de Fierro y Acero, with its smelters, ironworks, and foundries. These industries spawned related enterprises producing glassware, cement, textiles, pottery, and foodstuffs.48

The porfiriato also witnessed the development of a domestic capitalist class in the Mexican North. Elites like the Sonoran Triumvirate of Luis Torres, Rafael Izábal, and Ramón Corral; the Luis Terrazas–Enrique Creel clan of Chihuahua; the patriarchal Evaristo Madero household of Coahuila; the Monterrey mill owner families; and the Nuevo León hacendados promoted capitalism in northern Mexico. In some ways they constituted a Mexican equivalent to the Guggenheims, Morgans, Vanderbilts, and Rockefellers in the United States.49

Modernization was not only an economic but also a political phenomenon. An important dimension of the porfiriato was the partial emergence of the machinery of a modern state, with its expanded police, judicial, and administrative powers spread throughout the provinces, villages, and municipalities of the Gran Chichimeca. Not only U.S. capital transformed the Mexican North; the political and military arm of Mexico City transformed a frontier into a border. When Díaz became president in 1876 he immediately began consolidating his power.50

Making use of the classic tactics of effective rule, Díaz practiced the politics of divide and conquer with the military, church, and even foreign powers like the United States and Britain. In addition, he added to the security of his regime by influencing the appointment of state governors, approving candidates for the national Congress, dispensing
patronage to his friends, developing a rotation policy in the military command structure, controlling the courts, subsidizing and suppressing the press, and cultivating the support of the church.51

Taking for his political and economic creed the positivist slogan “Order and Progress,” Díaz was determined to curb Mexico’s tradition of anarchy so that economic development and modernization could occur. Aided by the genius of his financial minister, José I. Limantour, Díaz was able to restructure the monetary system, establish a fixed ratio between silver and gold (a consequence of the United States’ return to the gold standard in 1900), balance the budget, abolish the alcabalas (interstate tariffs), acquire new revenue streams (mainly from import duties and taxes on rare metals), and secure new international loans. The laws of Mexico were reformed to meet the needs of the creditor nations.52

A Mexico City clique of politicians, lawyers, bankers, financiers, and industrialists (known as los científicos) advised Díaz on the niceties of scientific management of the economy and rationalized the excesses of technocracy and capitalism that came to characterize his rule. This group acted as intermediaries for foreign companies that wished to penetrate the Mexican economy. Overall they reasoned that foreign wealth (especially European capital because it would act as a counterbalance to U.S. investments) combined with domestic capital would lead to economic progress for Mexico. However, to assure this development, the state would have to protect and promote the interests of the investor.53

The Pax Porfiriana was maintained, in part, by a liberal use of the police powers of the state. Díaz augmented the military budget, established a modern military academy, and bought arms and advice from Saint Chamond and other French suppliers. Aided by the development of the electromagnetic telegraph and the railways, communication and transportation advances facilitated the mobilization and deployment of the army and police. Federal troops moved quickly to pacify the frontier. They were also used to protect the National Palace, guard the federal prisons, and when needed, to break strikes. Díaz also employed the services of the rurales (a rural police force) and specially commis-
sioned gendarmes, such as those led by Colonel Emilio Kosterlitzky in Sonora. These paramilitary forces not only repressed the enemies of the state, but were an important counterweight to the influence of the army. Political rivals were shot on the spot (under the provisions of the infamous Ley Fuga, law of flight), sent to the federal prison at San Juan de Ulúa, or absorbed into an expanding bureaucracy.54

Díaz also developed an elaborate spy system that he hoped would make his regime secure. The Ministry of Gobernación soon acquired a policía secreta, while the War Department developed its own military and police forces that could be used covertly to acquire information on Don Porfirio’s enemies. More important, a bicultural and binational spy and police system was directed by Enrique Creel, who, between 1906 and 1911, had been governor of Chihuahua, the Mexican ambassador to the United States, and the minister of foreign relations. As informal chief of Díaz’s espionage service, Creel secured the cooperation of U.S. authorities, gathered information from thirty-one Mexican consulates in the United States, and employed several U.S. detective agencies (for example, the Furlong Secret Service Company of St. Louis, Missouri) to assist in the arrest and prosecution of revolutionary exiles. He coordinated the activities of these detectives with those of governmental authorities, forwarding intelligence reports to the Mexican vice president, the U.S. Department of State, and the various Mexican consulates in the United States.55

Creel was aided in his attack on those opposed to the porfírian state by members of the United States’ developing spy apparatus. Creel funneled information that had been gathered by private detectives to members of the U.S. State Department, which in turn handed it over to Justice Department marshals and Bureau of Investigation agents (who would eventually become FBI G-men), individuals in the Department of Treasury’s Secret Service, and employees of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. In addition, U.S. military personnel, customs officials, and immigration officers worked hand in hand with private detectives. Most important of all were the consuls. Representing one of the twenty-five U.S. consulates located in Mexico by 1911, the consul was the United States’ major source of political and military intel-
ligence at the time. Thus, the late porfiriato saw the beginnings of an institutionalized spy system in both Mexico and the United States.\textsuperscript{56}

It was on the provincial or state level that Don Porfirio’s modernization had its greatest impact, especially when the national caudillo set out to destroy the near autonomous “kingdoms” that regional caudillos such as Ignacio Pesqueira in Sonora and Luis Terrazas in Chihuahua had established. The office selected for this assault on local autonomy was the prefect, or \textit{jefe político}, traditionally a district administrator with limited authority who was either appointed by a state governor or elected directly by the \textit{municipios}. Under Díaz the office was upgraded, and most prefects now took their orders from Mexico City and exercised increased powers that involved commanding district police forces; naming municipal officers (including mayors); appointing local judges, constables, and, on the hacienda, lords of the domain; and promoting the interests of foreign investors. In addition, Díaz and the governors were successful in reducing the number of municipios in the country and diminishing the authority of the \textit{ayuntamientos} (town councils), especially in Sonora and Chihuahua.\textsuperscript{57}

All of this came to a head in the 1890s in Chihuahua when villagers rose in arms to rebel against the expropriation of lands and the loss of political autonomy. Peasants, peons, cowboys, and Indians participated in violence against the authorities. The most famous instance took place in 1891 at Tomochi in western Chihuahua. There the inhabitants rebelled against the arbitrary actions of the local prefect’s nephew and the mayor’s threat to subject them to the dreaded \textit{leva} (military draft). The rebel leaders were adherents of the Teresita cult of the Saint of Cabora and, believing God was on their side, defeated the first armies that were sent after them. Eventually, the rebellion resulted in the destruction of Tomochi, yet the government suffered nearly five hundred casualties.\textsuperscript{58}

Again, between 1903 and 1907, as one solution to the “Indian problem,” many Yaquis—peaceful (\textit{mansos}) as well as rebellious (\textit{broncos}), men, women, and children—were either killed or taken from their homeland and shipped to the Yucatán or Oaxaca and sold as virtual slaves to henequen and coffee planters. The porfirian state, with its
From Pueblo to Global Village

allies in Sonora, viewed the Yaquis as a major obstacle to the fertile lands of the Yaqui River system. By the 1870s, for example, the Yaquis had become semiautonomous within the state of Sonora, where they had become successful farmers. By the time the Mexican government initiated its policy of repression and deportation, there were approximately 30,000 Yaquis out of a total state population of 220,000 residents. Between a quarter and a half of the Yaqui population was eventually deported by rail to areas south. Other Yaquis went north to Arizona where today they are a federally recognized tribe. Deportation was to be expected from the white population, who for years had been deporting Yaquis (along with Ópatas, Pimas, and Mayos) from their native homes to the seaports, farms, mining camps, presidios, and towns of Sonora. They were a source of cheap labor that could sail boats, dive for pearls, push plows, dig for ore, march in armies, and work as masons and carpenters in the municipios.

While the advent of a partially modernized state was changing the landscape of Mexico, it also meant that the Mexican state was emerging as a force (a secondary force to be sure) in international and hemispheric relations for the first time since the wars of independence. Of course, the genius of Limantour and the importance of Mexico for the global economy gave Díaz and the Mexican state a new status and position in the international community of nations. Mexico could then perform the international politics of a middle power when it came to brokering conflicts with the lesser states of Central America. Most of these actions, such as sending Mexican gunboats to the coasts of Guatemala in 1909, were designed to maintain political stability in Central America in an effort to diminish U.S. influence in the region, especially to soften the impact of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine on the region, or at the very least to prevent a major intervention and occupation of some area in Latin America that would eventually undermine Mexican influence.

Thus, the Mexico of Porfirio Díaz witnessed “order and progress,” with “liberty” tossed aside for expediency. Certainly the political system was orderly. Only a few decades earlier a military opportunist and shrewd politician by the name of Antonio López de Santa Anna had oc-
cupied the office of the presidency no fewer than eleven times and had waged war against Spain, France, and the United States. Then Mexico witnessed the efficient rule of one man, Don Porfirio Díaz (excluding the Manuel González interregnum of 1880 to 1884), which was backed by bureaucratic and military force. In contrast, between 1876 and 1911 the United States experienced eight presidents, eleven administrations, and assassinations of two presidents, James A. Garfield and William McKinley. There can be no questioning the appearance, both real and imagined, of the orderliness of Don Porfirio’s Mexico.

Economic progress and modernization also characterized Don Porfirio’s Mexico. Its middle classes had expanded, and foreign capital found a welcome home there. The railroads boomed, mines were revived, commercial agriculture developed, oil gushers were capped, harbor and dock facilities were constructed, roads were built, and commerce grew. Electric tramway cars replaced the horse and carriage in Mexico City. Limantour’s reforms had changed Mexico’s image abroad. The regime started to receive lavish praise by foreign heads of state. Many agreed with Judge Peyton Edwards of Texas when he said, “Porfirio Díaz is the greatest statesman in the world today.” For the first time Mexico began to participate in international conferences and world fairs; yet there were costs to progress, profound costs with deep social implications.62

After the depression of 1907, many Mexican investors and regional elites found it more difficult to compete with foreign capitalists. At the same time, their political role was diminishing on the municipal and state levels of government as the porfirian state continued to expand. Many rural peasants found themselves intimidated by local hacendados, jefes políticos, and the rurales. The peasants were exploited by foreign entrepreneurs and Mexican loan sharks. Peons on the haciendas were worse off financially than their ancestors had been a century before, with corn and beans costing much more in 1910 than in 1810. Most of the villages in rural Mexico had lost their ejidos, or common lands, and approximately 134 million acres of the best farmland became part of the private estates owned by a few hundred wealthy families. By the time the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910, over one-half of all campesinos and peones worked on these haciendas.63
The plight of urban labor had changed little throughout the last half of the nineteenth century. Workers in the factories and mines were without political rights and suffered from long workdays, industrial hazards, meager pensions, and no compensation. The education, diet, and public health of the lower classes were inadequate. Life expectancy was about thirty years of age (it had been twenty-two for Indians during the colonial era), and infant mortality remained undesirably high.64

Porfirio Díaz had paid too high a price to modernize his country. The material benefits of porfirian modernization trickled slowly, if at all, to the average Mexican, rural or urban. Very quickly the Mexican masses would demand a different reality. Serranos (cowboys, miners, and ranchers from the North) and agrarian revolutionaries, allied with ambitious northern hacendados, merchants, and local elites, would call for the overthrow of the regime.

The internal struggle would have an external cast to it, as the United States competed with the British and other European nations to shape the flow of events in Mexico. The “long nineteenth century” had finally ended, and the United States was now a major economic power that was threatening British hegemony in Latin America. As for Mexico, its nascent modernization did not change its peripheral status in the global community, but its economy was on the periphery of the new core, the United States. Mexico’s dependency, not to mention that of the modernized Mexican borderlands, on the United States was greater than ever. As the residue of progress promoted social conflict and violence in Mexico, the United States found itself strategically important as a source of recruits, munitions, and monies for the revoltosos. The Mexican Revolution found expression in the United States in much the same way the global economy was a vehicle for foreign and domestic capitalists to effect profound economic and social changes in Mexico.
After some months, Pershing returns to the United States. He brings back a long caravan of soldiers fed up with breathing dust, with the people throwing stones, with the lies in each little village in that gravelly desert. From the crest of a hill, Pancho Villa looks down and comments: “They came like eagles and they leave like wet hens.”

Eduardo Galeano, Memory of Fire

Between 1907 and 1908 the world marketplace was in trouble. The banking crisis was started when U.S. speculators tried to corner the market in copper, resulting in the destabilization of banks in London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg. Panic swept Wall Street. Banks closed; 20 percent of them were in Texas. New investment money for Mexico dried up. New York banker and financier J. Pierpont Morgan had to import $100 million in gold from Europe to momentarily halt the hysteria.

Mexico’s dependency on the United States meant that it would not be spared a crisis of its own. The economic growth that had characterized the porfirian years before 1900 was at an end. Government income declined, foreign debt increased, prices soared (especially for corn, beans, and wheat), consumption decreased, labor was cutback, and wages declined. All of this happened in the midst of the social and political unrest of 1906–7, from strikes at Cananea and Río Blanco to factory closings in Mexico City. A happy note in all of this was the visit of baseball’s world champion Chicago White Sox to Mexico City for spring training in March 1907.

As in the United States, the origins of baseball in Mexico are hazy. Diehard baseball aficionados in the United States claim that the sport is
indigenous to the United States and that Abner Doubleday from Cooperstown, New York, was its inventor; these fans-as-historians also tell us that Doubleday, a West Point graduate who served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican War, promoted the game of baseball among the militia units stationed in the Halls of Moctezuma. Supposedly, one Illinois volunteer who captured Santa Anna’s cork leg as a war trophy used it as a bat in one of these contests. What we can assert, however, is that U.S. baseball became popular in Mexico in the 1890s at the same time British cricket began to decline in the elite circles of Mexico City. This change in recreational preferences paralleled the declining influence of the British business community and the rise of U.S. interests. By 1911 the Mexicans had started a revolution that brought down the old regime, and New York entrepreneurs, although unhappy over the World Series loss of New York to Philadelphia in six games, were ready to renew business in Mexico with the new administration of Francisco I. Madero.1

Madero had come to power in May of the year of the New York World Series loss. Just a year earlier, on 18 May 1910, Halley’s comet had brushed the earth with its tail. According to the village shamans, this was a sign that the powerful Old Ones were to come and sweep the wicked away and prepare for the arrival of a new apostle who would usher in democracy. Although democracy would have to wait, an apostle named Madero did arrive to sweep Díaz away. By 1913, after the assassination of Madero, a major civil war developed in which various revolutionaries emerged, fought, and died. First there were Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, then Venustiano Carranza, and finally Alvaro Obregón. Through it all, the Constitution of 1917 was born, a document expressing the aspirations of millions of Mexicans for social justice.

Meanwhile, the United States had emerged from World War I a creditor nation for the first time in its history. New York City, not London, was the financial center of the global economy, and the United States had its own empire in the Caribbean. By 1923 the military and violent phase of the Mexican Revolution was over, and the U.S. influence in Mexico was greater than ever. Once again, however, in 1923 the Na-
tional League’s New York team would lose the World Series in six games, perhaps in its own way an omen testifying to the difficulty of obtaining ultimate greatness.

The events of World War I would be pivotal for the United States. Applied science and engineering were advanced through German and Allied developments. On the German side, trench warfare was eventually overcome with the introduction of the flamethrower, submachine gun, and light artillery. The Germans also used the submarine and torpedo to threaten surface ships. The Allies dealt with the challenges of trench warfare by inventing the tank. Both sides made use of balloons, dirigibles, and aircraft to move supplies, engage in reconnaissance, and combat the enemy. Aircraft posed a serious threat to surface shipping and thus was a complement to the submarine. As for the United States, by 1914 its navy was the third largest in the world, and its regular army had tripled in size since 1900.

It was in the economic arena that the importance of World War I became manifest for U.S. history. The power of a nation-state resides not only in its armed forces but in its economic and technological resources as well. On the eve of World War I, for example, while Russia was a “military” power with a frontline army ten times that of the United States, the latter was an “industrial” society that produced six times as much steel as Russia and consumed ten times as much energy. In 1913 the per capita level of industrialization in the United States was the highest among the Great Powers—greater than Great Britain and over six times that of Russia.

Between 1914 and 1919 the center of world finance moved across the Atlantic as Europe’s international debts increased and the United States became a creditor nation. U.S. aid to France in the form of exported coal, coke, steel, machine tools, foodstuffs, and loans made it possible for French factories to concentrate on armament output. In 1917, with Germany possessing the military advantage after the Russian collapse, the entry of the United States into the conflict facilitated Allied manufacturing production to become more than twice that of Germany and Austria-Hungary—the economic balance was tilted heavily in favor of the Allies. More important, the sheer size of Europe’s trade deficit with
The Mexican Revolution in the United States

The United States (which was supplying Europe with billions of dollars in foodstuffs and munitions but requiring few goods in return) forced Europe not only to transfer gold to the United States but to borrow on the New York and Chicago money markets to pay their U.S. suppliers. Overall, this meant that the Allies were becoming more and more dependent on U.S. financial aid to sustain their war effort. In effect, the global conflict of 1914–18 distorted the usual patterns of world production and trade and accelerated the United States to a position of economic and military might at the expense of European prestige and power in the postwar international community.4

Meanwhile, the United States’ neighbor to the south was undergoing a complex violent struggle known as the Mexican Revolution. The geographic proximity of the United States (with its Caribbean empire) to Mexico, in addition to the developing U.S. role in the hemispheric economy, meant that the Americans and their government would want to intervene and try to shape this Mexican affair that had global features. The cardinal rule for the United States in hemispheric affairs was to create a sphere of influence in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. Within that sphere homegrown revolutionary nationalists who threatened U.S. interests would have to be curtailed, and the influence of competing empires—Germany, Japan, or Great Britain—would have to be contained. Although Great Britain was a U.S. ally on the European front, in the United States’ backyard the British were capitalist competitors worthy of being vanquished.

The United States contributed to the conditions that fostered revolution in Mexico. The economic growth that characterized Díaz’s Mexico had been ultimately, as historian John Coatsworth reminds us, a “modernization from without, not from above.” U.S. capital and markets had created the commercialization of agriculture, the radicalization of the peasantry, and the expansion of an export-oriented economy. To sustain this situation, Díaz was forced to maintain a balanced budget and low levels of taxation. When financial trouble occurred after 1906–7, he lacked both the mind-set and the tools necessary to stimulate the economy or calm the political waters. When Madero and his hacendado, peasant, and labor supporters challenged the porfirian government in
1910–11, they were questioning the role of U.S. imperialism in Mexico and the regime’s relationship to the United States.\textsuperscript{5} The cessation of U.S. silver purchases in 1902, the devaluation of the peso in 1905, and the recession of 1907 combined to weaken Mexican capitalists in relation to foreign investors. Harsh treatment of workers reduced what little influence Mexican labor enjoyed with the porfirian state, while land grabs by thousands of U.S. colonists uprooted the peasantry. In Chihuahua, lands were reorganized to favor U.S. and state elites. In Sonora, intruders from the United States and Mexico City displaced Yaqui and Mayo Indians and developed the newly vacated lands. And in Coahuila and Nuevo León, Madero family interests were losing out to mining, ranching, agricultural, and banking elites from outside.\textsuperscript{6}

Even worse off than the Madero family (which was wealthy and at least had access to the Mexico City elite through its contacts with José Limantour), the hundreds of provincial elites and middle-class groups that were losing economic power to Americans and political autonomy to the Mexican state scrambled to offset their lack of political influences. While alienation among the northern provincial elites was central to the revolution, it was also true that the “offended” were quickly joined by the “oppressed.” The revolutionary crisis of 1910 was the end result—a multiclass movement that involved hacendados, bankers, merchants, schoolteachers, lawyers, journalists, rancheros, workers, and peasants against the old regime—and Francisco I. Madero was its nominal leader.\textsuperscript{7}

From San Antonio, Texas, in November 1910, Madero published his political program, the Plan de San Luis Potosí. Denouncing the recent presidential election as fraudulent, he called for a national insurrection on 20 November and promised democratic elections for a new government. The violence erupted earlier than expected, however, when the authorities in the city of Puebla attacked the home of Aquiles Serdán, leader of the poblano revolutionary movement. As for Madero, he crossed the international border from the United States on 19 November and, much to his chagrin, there were no Mexicans lining up to join his movement. Soon the situation would change. While angry
landlords, farmers, and merchants rallied to his cause, dispossessed peasants in Morelos were attracted by a minor clause in his plan that promised a review of any land confiscations. By May, before Díaz was forced from office, peasant land seizures had taken place in Chihuahua, Coahuila, Sonora, Durango, and throughout the central region of the country. This rising tide of rural unrest was finally halted by an elite arrangement that sent Díaz to Paris and resulted in the election of Madero to the presidency on 1 October 1911.8

Madero’s pro-Texas and pro-U.S. policies were crucial to his revolution. Although relations were becoming strained between the United States and Mexico after 1908, there is no evidence that the U.S. government abandoned Díaz until after the victory of Pascual Orozco’s maderista troops at Ciudad Juárez on 10 May 1911. Since 1908 Díaz and Limantour had been pursuing a pro-European and pro-Asian policy that seemed to favor Europeans and the Japanese over U.S. interests, from foreign loans and leases to oil and railway concessions. But until the victory at Ciudad Juárez, Madero’s supporters in the United States were just another anti-Díaz revoltoso group, often being confused by Justice Department officials with magonistas (disciples of anarcho-communist Ricardo Flores Magón and his brother). By May the ambivalence of President Taft’s policy soon changed in favor of Madero. U.S. neutrality laws and embargo acts were now used to curtail the activity of Madero’s enemies, from the anarchistic magonistas and reformist orozquistas to the more conservative reyistas (followers of Díaz’s ex-minister of war, Bernardo Reyes).9 During Madero’s brief presidency, from October 1911 to February 1913, the Mexican economy was growing. Smelting profits grew, oil production boomed, and agriculture yielded larger harvests. Yet economic progress did not beget political order, and it was the lack of such order that eventually led to Madero’s downfall.10

Madero’s enemies appeared on all sides. In November 1911, disappointed zapatistas issued their own revolutionary Plan de Ayala and declared war on the traitor Madero for his timid approach to land reform. From the Mexican North, the followers of Bernardo Reyes and then later of Pascual Orozco led rebellions in December 1911 and March
1912, respectively, which soon merged with the violence of the countryside. By October, the científicos had organized a revolt around General Félix Díaz, Porfirio Díaz’s nephew. The rebellions and nationwide campesino violence (much of the latter was directed against the United States) undermined the U.S. government’s confidence in Madero. By February 1913 the U.S. ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, in conjunction with several científicos and ex-porfírista generals, especially Victoriano Huerta, had overthrown Madero. On the night of 22 February, Madero and his vice president, José María Pino Suárez, were murdered. Now the maderistas had a martyr and a cause. A few days later, on 4 March 1913, Woodrow Wilson replaced Taft in the White House.

President Wilson, much to the surprise of Huerta, the U.S. business community in Mexico, and the British ambassador, was not anxious to recognize the new Huerta government. Morality and ideology were one and the same for Wilson. The Puritan ethic, for Wilson, sanctioned capitalism and free enterprise, and natural law required free trade, a “natural” international division of labor, and republican institutions. Dollar diplomacy meant the U.S. government would promote industry, commerce, and investments abroad, and that the expanding markets in the Western Hemisphere would be protected by the police powers of the United States. Wilson’s reforms included the development of a strong merchant marine, a downward revision of the tariff (the Underwood Tariff, what critics called free trade imperialism), and laws permitting foreign-branch banking (the Federal Reserve Act). These all reflected Wilsonian morality and a sense of commercialism.11

Unfortunately, Huerta’s military dictatorship was a form of government that, for Wilson, was a throwback to feudal times—a landed oligarchy willing to use the United States’ competitors in Mexico to maintain the status quo. Madero’s overthrow was, in Wilson’s view, a heavy blow to the solutions of Mexico’s problems. Free enterprise and representative democracy were those solutions, and developing countries like Mexico would have to be brought into the Western world of commerce and industry and in the process taught the arts of self-help, self-control, and self-government. In addition, the White House held that Huerta’s coup was a científico counterrevolution designed to fa-
vor British oil interests, especially Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson’s El Aguila, over those of the United States. Huerta would have to go.12

In Mexico, the resurgence of the científicos revived hostilities. A chickpea farmer and politician from Sonora, Alvaro Obregón, organized several state militias into an eight-thousand-strong regular state army. In Chihuahua, Durango, and Zacatecas, several rebels and militia units rallied to Francisco Villa’s cause. In Coahuila, Governor Venustiano Carranza led the resistance and established the Constitutionalist Army. In other parts of Mexico, Emiliano Zapata directed an independent guerrilla war in Morelos to regain for the peasants their lost lands.

Huerta’s government met the challenge of its adversaries by increasing the regular army’s share of the national budget to 30 percent and its size to eighty-five thousand, promoting its officers, expanding the arsenals, and expanding the rurales. In general, Huerta looked to Great Britain, Germany, and Japan for support, while Wilson’s United States tended to support the opposition, especially Villa and Carranza.13

As Huerta’s power grew, the United States became increasingly hostile. U.S. businesspeople in Mexico, especially the oil interests who had originally supported Huerta, now moved closer to his rivals. In 1913 Edward L. Doheny began to advance money to Carranza even before his troops occupied the oil fields of Tampico. Standard Oil’s Henry Clay Pierce had his own negotiations with Carranza. Meanwhile, President Wilson was active. He recalled the meddlesome ambassador Henry Lane Wilson and opened the border to arms shipments to the rebels. After unsuccessfully seeking Huerta’s resignation (with the bribe of a loan), Wilson then threatened to support the Constitutionals if Huerta did not go. By April of the next year, twelve hundred marines and bluejackets occupied the port of Veracruz, poised to move by rail into Mexico City if Huerta refused to resign. Under pressure from Villa and the Constitutionals in the north and Zapata in the south, cut off from European credit by an Anglo-U.S. agreement, and with the military threat of the United States, Huerta resigned on 15 July 1914 and set sail on a German ship into exile.14

Without a common enemy, the anti-huertistas began to divide into
factions. Obregón’s Army of the Northwest joined with the Northeast Corps, an armed force of sixty thousand under the authority of First Chief Carranza. Obregón eventually brought the membership of the radical union Casa del Obrero into the Constitutionalist alliance, with five thousand workers fighting as Red Battalions. Opposing Carranza was Pancho Villa’s Division of the North. Headquartered in Chihuahua and Durango, it consisted of thirty thousand regularly paid soldiers and was the strongest military body in Mexico. Villa’s army consisted of many peasants, miners, cowboys, and bandits and was generally a more heterogeneous group than that of the Constitutionals. Other revolutionary troops clustered around Zapata and the village leaders of Morelos and Guerrero. They were not professionals, received no pay, and consisted of around fifteen thousand regulars and ten thousand guerrillas. After the October 1914 convention of military leaders in Aguascalientes (from which Carranza was absent), a combined force of zapatistas and villistas occupied Mexico City while Carranza retreated to Veracruz.15

In July 1914 when Huerta finally went into exile, the United States soon found itself concerned about another international affair—hostilities were openly declared in Europe. With Europeans fighting each other across the Atlantic, the Americans practically received a mandate from Allied leaders to maintain hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. The world’s shipping was in disarray, and Mexico’s oil exports declined. In addition, the chaos of revolution had left Mexico’s economy in crisis mode, especially the mining, industrial, and financial sectors. From the perspective of Washington, D.C., Mexico seemed in need of U.S. economic direction. What the U.S. government and its business allies wanted was a restored, constitutional government in Mexico that would seek U.S. loans to service its external debt, fund the claims of foreigners for damages, and develop an economic policy favorable to the major corporations doing business in Mexico. Until Pancho Villa’s defeat at Celaya in April 1915, Wilson had viewed him as the man who could best meet the U.S. government’s objectives in Mexico.16

Villa received Wilson’s initial blessing for a number of reasons. The large U.S. companies in Mexico demanded protection of their interests.
This meant no confiscations of property, reasonable taxes, and protection from roving hordes of bandits. In the beginning, Villa was able to finance his revolution by confiscating only large-landed estates with Mexican owners; he did not expropriate U.S. property. In exchange for Chihuahua cattle and Laguna cotton, he was able to get arms and ammunition from the United States. The taxes he levied on Americans were lower than those of other revolutionary leaders, especially Carranza, who preferred to tax foreigners rather than seize the wealth of the domestic oligarchy. Villa expelled organizers of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) from Mexico, prevented rival bandits from attacking Americans, curbed strikers, and did not allow his supporters to engage in anti-U.S. rhetoric. Finally, he had the assistance of two intermediaries who sent friendly messages to Washington, D.C., on his behalf—the U.S. consul in Torreón, George Carothers, and the head of the Southern Command of the U.S. Army, General Hugh Scott.17

The Villa-U.S. relationship quickly turned sour, however. By the end of 1914, Villa’s cattle and cotton resources were exhausted, and unlike Carranza he did not control any oil fields. Villa reversed his earlier policy by taxing U.S. hacendados and putting new pressure on U.S. mine owners to increase production. Conditions worsened as Villa found himself competing with Russia, France, and Great Britain to obtain U.S. arms at increasingly higher prices. Villa became very unhappy with Uncle Sam when the United States, in November 1914, turned over the port of Veracruz with its many warehouses to the Constitutionalists. Not only did this allow Carranza to collect customs revenues and export freely but the armaments (machine guns, rifles, carbines, shotguns, bullets, barbed wire, radio sets, pistols, grenades, and so on) shifted the balance of power from Villa’s army to Carranza’s forces.18

Because of Villa’s military defeat at the hands of Obregón in the Battle of Celaya, and the U.S. fear of German intrigue in Mexico to foment disorder along the border, U.S. policy took a decided turn. In October 1915 de facto recognition was extended to the Carranza government, which, in effect, closed the border to Villa’s trade in arms. In addition, Wilson allowed Carranza to transport his troops from El Paso to
Douglas, Arizona, via the railroad to reinforce the Constitutionalists in Sonora. Finally Villa, in desperation, led his army of 485 men across the border at Palomas, Chihuahua, and assaulted the bleak, sun-baked adobe town of Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916. Although the costs to Villa were heavy, the town was burned and eighteen Americans lost their lives.

The motives for Villa’s actions were many, but most likely he sought retaliation against the Americans for their betrayal of his movement and desired to forestall what he believed to be an alliance between the United States and Carranza that would make Mexico a U.S. protectorate. Following the raid, the clamor within the United States for intervention was loud and immediate and led to the dispatching of a small punitive expedition (originally six thousand men, later expanded to ten thousand) under the command of General John J. Pershing, a hero of past wars against the Apache.

Carranza’s efforts at consolidating the reigns of government were interrupted by the U.S. invasion. Before Villa’s raid on Columbus, U.S. recognition had legalized the importation of arms and ammunition to Carranza’s government, and this was followed by recognition from Germany and Britain. On the strength of the U.S. war boom, the Mexican economy started to recuperate; mining and manufacturing growth provided new revenue for Carranza’s government. To curb the influence of labor, he mustered out the Red Battalions from his army and outlawed independent unions. Estates were returned to their landlords, and businesspeople formed alliances with him. Then the villistas struck, and Carranza had to deal with the embarrassment of a U.S. invasion. To bind the Mexican army to his new government, Carranza made Obregón minister of war (an office Obregón quickly vacated so he could go into early “retirement” on his farm in Sonora).

The punitive expedition lasted from March 1916 to February 1917. Mexican officials believed that the expedition was more than a bandit-hunting force and that an army of pacification could easily be given the new mission of cleaning up Mexico, taking on Carranza’s troops, and shaping the Mexican Revolution in a direction that Wilson approved. In other words, the Americans might use force to bring an end
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to Carranza’s brand of economic nationalism. The U.S. occupation led to several serious incidents, especially at Carrizal and Hidalgo del Parral, any one of which could have escalated into a war (see figure 10). Ultimately, Wilson had to choose his priorities; European war and the deteriorating state of U.S.-German relations took precedence over Mex-

Fig. 10. U.S. Punitive Expeditions into Mexico
ico’s assertion of economic independence. When the last of Pershing’s saddlesore “wet hens” retreated across the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande), the United States broke off relations with Germany. Meanwhile, a new Mexican constitution was being hammered out and along with it came new difficulties in the U.S.-Mexican relationship.  

The constitutional convention that met in Querétaro between November 1916 and February 1917 was composed of individuals (220 delegates and alternates) known to social scientists as petty bourgeois and bourgeois. They were young and middle class. Apart from the twenty-two senior military officers, the delegates were professionals (lawyers, teachers, engineers, physicians, accountants, pharmacists), artisans, merchants, labor leaders, railway workers, and employees. They had very little governmental experience but were politically ambitious and socially conscious. Generally, they supported either the conservative Carranza or the Jacobin Obregón. The 220 delegates represented neither Villa nor Zapata nor any other contenders for the state. But they did share the anti-U.S. nationalism that the punitive expedition had evoked from Mexicans of all classes and factions.

In creating the constitutional charter, the obregonistas succeeded in writing the social and economic sections, especially Articles 27, 33, 123, and 130 (although Carranza won on some issues, such as a stronger presidency and authorization for a central bank). Article 27 evoked the spirit of Zapata by calling for the breakup of large landed estates. It placed conditions on the right of foreigners to acquire real estate and mineral resources, affirmed the principle of state ownership of natural resources, and asserted the right to expropriate private property. Under this provision, the Mexican state had the right to deprive foreign oil companies of the ownership of subsoil reserves. (It should be noted that in 1917 foreigners owned 90 percent of Mexico’s petroleum resources and that Mexico was the third largest producer of oil after the United States and Russia—most oil went to the United States, which enabled it in turn to export fuel to the Allies, especially England.) Article 33 provided for extraditing foreigners without a trial, while Article 123 was literally a worker’s bill of rights, from a guaranteed eight-hour day to the right to unionize and strike. Article 130 guaranteed freedom
of worship and prohibited the clergy from criticizing the constitution or the government. In all, it was a federalist and anticlerical document that evoked Mexican nationalism and subordinated individual property rights to the nation and, if put into effect, would repudiate the established global power structure and Western capitalism, both of which had taken much from the Mexican people, who had little to show in return.23

While President Wilson, with his attention riveted on European affairs, could do little to prevent the promulgation of the Constitution of 1917, perhaps he might prevent implementation of what he considered its more odious provisions. Article 27 was the most troubling to the United States. If it were interpreted retroactively, it would become a major threat to U.S. oil interests in Mexico. During the course of the war, Wilson attempted to prevent Carranza from concentrating too much power that would threaten U.S. property interests. He would have to wait until after the end of World War I to act, and then it would be from a position of strength, or so he hoped.

Meanwhile, Germany wanted to deny Mexican oil to the Allies and, if possible, foment war between Mexico and the United States, forcing the United States to divert troops to the international border. In February 1917 the German secretary of foreign affairs, Arthur Zimmermann, sought a German alliance with Mexico in which, after the inevitable German victory, the southwestern United States (Mexico’s lost provinces) would belong to Mexico as spoils of war. While Carranza refused the offer, it failed to reduce Wilson’s suspicions that Germany would continue to make mischief in Mexico, from generating anti-U.S. propaganda to sabotaging its oil fields. Although after April 1917, when the United States entered the war on the Allied side, Carranza professed neutrality, he still sought German loans and allowed German spies and agents to operate with impunity on Mexican soil. He did not want an alliance that would anger the United States, but he did seek to use Germany as a countervailing influence to limit U.S. power in Mexico. This was not unlike the nationalist policies of the last few years of the Díaz era. Here we have continuity again in Mexican history.

On 11 November 1918 World War I ended, allowing the United States
to deal with Mexico without interference from any foreign state. The United States threatened to withdraw diplomatic recognition if Carranza refused to negotiate on Article 27. Recognizing the realities of power, Carranza suspended earlier wartime decrees that required the oil companies to exchange their titles for state concessions and wisely waited for the Mexican Congress to implement any retroactive interpretations of Article 27.24

Meanwhile, Obregón started organizing his presidential campaign for the 1920 election, receiving much assistance from his supporters in the states of California, Washington, Arizona, and Texas. He was the candidate of the Gran Chichimeca country and was inadvertently aided in his quest of power by Carranza, who successfully plotted to kill their old adversary Zapata. On 10 April 1919 Zapata was shot by carrancistas at the Hacienda de Chinameca in his own home territory. In 1920, when Carranza attempted to name his successor to the presidency, Obregón, allied with his fellow Sonorans, issued the Plan de Agua Prieta and revolted against the Mexican president. In May, Carranza was forced to flee office and was assassinated by a loyal obregonista on his way to Veracruz and exile. Obregón became president.

In the United States there was also a new executive, President Warren G. Harding, a Republican who, even more so than Wilson, knew that his major concern would be that of safeguarding U.S. property rights against Mexican confiscation. Harding listened to his Republican advisers, especially the anti-carrancista secretary of interior Albert Bacon Fall. Through Fall, oil producers such as Edward Doheny and the Oil Producer’s Association successfully lobbied the president to defend their interests. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes refused to give diplomatic recognition to the Obregón government until Obregón would agree to a Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which would prevent Mexico from treating Article 27 retroactively. Obregón refused to agree to the terms dictated by the United States. To have done so would have been tantamount to political suicide. From 1920 to 1923 Obregón was not recognized by the United States.

Before the impasse was settled, Francisco Villa was assassinated in Hidalgo del Parral, Chihuahua. Although evidence is lacking, most po-
litical observers at the time assumed that the assassination was committed with the approval of Obregón and his Sonoran ally, Minister of Gobernación Plutarco Elías Calles. From confidential sources, U.S. military intelligence agents (c-2) concluded that Villa’s death was probably linked to his ties with Adolfo de la Huerta, provisional president in 1920 and a critic of the Obregón regime. It was thought that Villa had intended to lend his considerable presence to the de la Huerta cause. When Obregón and Calles learned of this, they allegedly sent secret agents to Chihuahua to recruit an assassination squad. Thus, one more potential enemy was reduced from Obregón’s list of rivals.25

Finally, during the summer of 1923, the dispute between the United States and Mexico was resolved with the assistance of the Mexican Supreme Court. That court handed down a decision on the retroactive application of Article 27 in which it pronounced the doctrine of “positive acts.” Article 27 would not apply retroactively provided that the owners of oil fields had undertaken, before 1917, some “positive act” (such as erecting drilling equipment) that would assist in the removal of oil from the ground. Moreover, the Bucareli Accords allowed the United States to limit nationalist legislation, and Obregón secured diplomatic recognition without subscribing to the original treaty. When Adolfo de la Huerta rebelled against the Obregón government in December 1923, he was defeated easily. Diplomatic recognition brought U.S. assistance to Obregón in the form of arms, munitions, shared intelligence, and a strict application of the neutrality laws against de la Huerta.26

By 1923 the military phase of the Mexican Revolution was over. Obregón and U.S. business and governmental interests had reached a rapprochement. The Bucareli Accords had momentarily resolved the oil question but at some limited cost to Mexican sovereignty. Several U.S. companies in Sonora and Texas endorsed his rule. Obregón repaid a personal debt to W. R. Grace, the U.S. entrepreneur who had financed many of his earlier military victories. Obregón successfully refinanced the Mexican debt with U.S. banking houses, consolidated his family holdings in Sonora, and outflanked his regional enemies.27 Opponents such as Villa and most of the leading revoltosos were dead, victims of the violence of revolution, class struggle, and power politics. Two
magonistas, Librado Rivera and Enrique Flores Magón, were released from U.S. federal prisons and returned to Mexico, their radical cause exhausted. The Sonoran dynasty of Obregón and Calles was intact.28

Obregón’s seizure of power and consolidation of rule coincided with the victory of the Mexican middle class and its domestic and U.S. corporate backers. A population of around fourteen million, reduced by war and disease, now, more than before World War I, had to do business with the omnipotent neighbor to the north and its vast corporate interests. For example, U.S. oil companies had outflanked the Europeans and were now more powerful than ever in Mexico. In fact, from 1900–1970, Mexican economic history had been largely a function of U.S. economic history (see figure 11).

On the domestic front, the new Mexican revolutionary army was absorbing over 60 percent of the budget. Although society was less stratified socially than it had been under Díaz, lower-class ambitions could be satisfied only from above—labor was not independent, and the peasants were still without land; the hacienda emerged from the revolution intact.29 Moreover, the Mexico of 1923 was still characterized by an industrial structure that enabled powerful barons to monopolize manufacturing and seek protection from government. In many ways the revolution, rather than tearing down the industrial arrangement of the porfiriato, reinforced it.30

The new state acted as the nation’s bourgeois party, reforming from above to diminish any threats to capitalism and national sovereignty. As the historian John Womack notes, for all of the violence, the main historic meaning of the Mexican Revolution was a “capitalist tenacity in the economy and bourgeois reform of the state,” a tendency that helps to explain the stability of the 1930s and Mexico’s discordant growth after 1940.31

In taking a violent path toward modernization, Mexico differed from the rest of Latin America. During the late nineteenth century, most of these countries were, in varying degrees, being integrated into world capitalism. As we have noted, these economic changes brought about the growth of centralized states in not only Mexico, but also Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Modernization meant the rise of state bu-
reaucracies, an expansion of the military, an extension of the power to tax, and more mass participation in politics. In Argentina, for example, traditions of parliamentarianism made it easy for the middle class to seek more economic and political power with a minimum of violence. There, in 1912, the Sáenz Peña law created universal male suffrage, and by 1916 the Radicals (a middle-class party) came to power under Hipólito Yrigoyen. Yet Mexico underwent major violence to achieve a similar effect. Why this difference in the history of the two countries?
Although the causes were multiple and complex, we discern three of the more important factors. First, while anarchists and radicals were repressed in both Argentina and Mexico after 1917, the working class of Buenos Aires consisted of European immigrants who, insecure in their new surroundings and in transit between Italy and the pampas, avoided political action movements and union activity. They were, in general, politically agnostic and less able to participate in politics than their Mexican counterparts. Second, the countryside of Argentina was filled with colonists, foreign-born tenant farmers, and displaced laborers, but no classic peasantry. Land reform would never become the vital issue that it was in Mexico. The absence of a peasantry meant no power bases and coalitions for rural farmers in the political history of Argentina. Mexico had the only peasant revolution in Latin America before 1920, and it was due to the existence of an indigenous, rural population that was angry over the state’s policy of expropriating village common lands while subordinating their inhabitants. Finally, the proximity of the United States to Mexico meant that Mexico could launch its many rebellions from U.S. soil and had easier access to sanctuary, arms, munitions, recruits, and finances than Argentine (or, for that matter, Latin American) revolutionaries. The dominance of border Mexicans in shaping the destiny of the nation throughout the 1920s was an important result of this special geographic location.

In this last respect, the Mexican Revolution was not simply a Mexican event, but an episode in the history of the United States as well. The impact of the United States on the Mexican Revolution is well known (for example, the U.S. alliance with anti-huertista revolutionaries that brought about the end of the porfirian state, or the U.S. campaign to prevent Carranza from reconstituting a powerful new state), but the influence of Mexico on the United States is less well known. Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico (the last two acquiring statehood during the revolutionary era) were, as border provinces, especially affected by events in Mexico. This was where hundreds of Mexicans (and some Chinese) sought refuge from the fighting. One estimate suggests that as many as 1.5 million people migrated into the U.S. Southwest from Mexico between 1910 and 1920.
Racial incidents and labor unrest in Texas and Arizona were exacerbated because of troubles in Mexico. Between July 1915 and July 1916, thirty raids from Mexico into Texas produced several U.S. deaths that led to reprisals against hundreds of Mexicans and Mexican Americans by Texas Rangers and vigilantes. From Sonora, laborers came into the Arizona copper fields to escape the violence and unstable economy of Mexico, and on several occasions—including the infamous Bisbee strike of 1917 (in which twelve hundred miners, many of whom were Mexican, were rounded up, loaded in cattle cars, and shipped to a remote part of New Mexico where they were stranded)—class conflict turned into a quasi-racial war. Racial and ethnic violence could also be found south of the border.

In Sonora an anti-Chinese movement developed that mirrored the general U.S. xenophobia during the Mexican Revolution. By 1916 Governor Plutarco Elías Calles had prohibited further Chinese immigration into his state; soon the National Anti-Chinese League was founded there. Laws were passed to establish segregated residential patterns in the major towns of Sonora. At least a hundred Chinese were killed as a result of anti-Chinese violence. In 1919 the mayor of Cananea ordered some thousand Chinese in his town to close up their shops and leave. President Carranza, not wanting to harm yet another diplomatic relationship, abrogated the mayor’s order.

As for private enterprise, Texans and Arizonans engaged in a profitable arms trade (legal and illegal) with Mexico. Sonora and Chihuahua sent hundreds of cattle to the border cities of Nogales and El Paso, respectively, where the meatpacking industry thrived. Obregón’s skill in organizing the garbanzo growers of Sonora and his work as an import-export agent impressed many Arizona businesspeople. Revolution created big profits as Texas oil producers financed Sonoran strongmen, Tampico bandits, and carrancista forces along the Gulf Coast. In return, they received protection for, and lucrative earnings from, their operations in Mexico.

Politically, events in Mexico affected the United States. Revoltosos, that is, Mexico’s rebels in revolt, were active in the United States between the Immigration Act of 1903 and the end of the Red Scare era in
the early 1920s. These groups, ranging from the radical socialists and anarchists who followed Ricardo Flores Magón (magonistas) to the reactionary followers of Félix Díaz (felicistas), desired to use the United States as a revolutionary (and counterrevolutionary) base. Generally speaking, the Mexican radical rebels, as revolutionary nationalists, were the object of suppression by the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Immigration. Magonistas, orozquistas, huertistas, and reyistas were consistently pursued and harassed by federal and state police, not to mention private detectives.

On some occasions, a revoltoso group would be privately supported by the U.S. government to influence affairs in Mexico, such as allowing the felicistas to operate so as to complicate matters for the Carranza government. U.S. domestic politics would be muddled by the constant charge (by Senator Albert Bacon Fall, among others) that revolution in Mexico was spreading sedition in the United States. The general reaction of the U.S. government (for example, arrests, surveillance, imprisonment, forced deportations, illegal searches and seizures), coming in an era of nativism, antiradicalism, and wartime hysteria, was extreme and seriously threatened the older nineteenth-century traditions of humanitarianism and civil liberties.40

The Mexican Revolution provided the United States with several opportunities to develop its own military establishment. Mobilization of troops along the border during the Taft administration, the occupation of the port city Veracruz in 1914, and the Pershing expedition of 1916 facilitated developments that would later aid the U.S. cause in World War I, from training exercises and organization schemes to intelligence operations and improvement of hardware.41

In particular, Pershing’s activities served as a prelude to the larger undertaking of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I. New technological advances came from his mission in Mexico, not the least being aerial surveillance and signals intelligence. The former soon led to the development of an Army Air Service Armed Patrol that secured the border with DH4s (De Haviland two-seater, light-bombing, and observation planes). Some of these planes reached France in early 1918 and saw some combat service. As for the latter, signals intelligence in-
volved the use of codes and code breaking, with mobile radio-intercept stations being deployed along the border to monitor Villa’s radio nets. By 1918 a new Military Intelligence Division (MID) had been created that had a technical capacity unknown to earlier agencies, and a new era in the history of U.S. espionage had started.42

Of all of the U.S. economic interests in Mexico, only oil underwent a boom between 1911 and 1921. For example, although wartime demand increased prosperity for the copper companies, after the war mining and its related enterprises declined in production. However, after 1911 and continuing into the postwar era, the market for petroleum was wide open due to several factors, including the beginnings of assembly-line production in the automobile industry, the conversion of the world’s navies from coal to oil, and the advent of World War I.43

Americans sought to meet this demand by exploring for new oil fields and seeking increased reserves, first in California, Texas, and Oklahoma, and then along the Gulf Coast of Mexico. In spite of the revolution, businesspeople, engineers, geologists, and laborers left the U.S. Southwest for Mexico and participated in bringing Mexican oil yields up to 25 percent of total world production by 1921 (when the initial Texan boom had begun to dwindle). In 1911 U.S. investments in Mexican oil amounted to only 38.5 percent of a total of $51.9 million (U.S.) invested in Mexico, while British participation totaled 61.5 percent. However, by 1921 the situation had reversed itself when U.S. investments amounted to 61 percent of a total of $819.6 million. By the end of the decade, the oil companies had financed the Mexican Revolution in the form of taxes, forced loans, and theft, and in return, U.S. companies had gained preeminence in the industry by having outmaneuvered their British competitors in Mexico. In the process, several individuals made small fortunes.44

One Southwesterner who epitomized the assault of U.S. oil producers on Mexico was William F. Buckley (father of the well-known conservative writer and editor of the same name). A native of Washington, Texas, and resident of Eagle Pass, he obtained his law degree from the University of Texas in 1905 and in 1911 went to Tampico, Mexico, to open a law office with his two brothers. Buckley not only advised U.S.
oil producers on contract matters, but also got involved in a direct way by becoming founder and co-owner of the Pantepec Petroleum Company of Tampico.\textsuperscript{45}

An enemy of the Mexican Revolution, Buckley established a network of agents and informants to spy on alleged revolutionaries in Mexico and the United States. After 1919 he aided the unfriendly senate inquiry of Mexican affairs by Albert Bacon Fall. Buckley forwarded information to the senator on Carranza’s ties to bolshevism and radical labor in Mexico and the United States. The assumption was that revolution in Mexico was spreading sedition in the United States, a popular idea during the era of the postwar Red Scare. In the 1920s Buckley was a bitter opponent of Obregón and sympathetic to President Harding’s hard-line Mexican policy. He was expelled from Mexico in 1922, and like his better-known compatriots Edward Doheny and John D. Rockefeller, he profited well from his pursuit of the “black gold.”\textsuperscript{46}

In spite of the violence of revolution, the Mexican economy continued to react to business cycles in the larger North American economy. Between 1910 and 1920, with the exception of 1915, the bulk of commerce between Mexico and the United States continued to expand. Mexican exports to the United States and U.S. exports to Mexico increased more than threefold during this period. Commerce boomed during wartime when the U.S. market expanded but declined after 1918 in some sectors (copper, for example) when the North American market contracted.\textsuperscript{47}

Legal trade involved imports into the United States such as copper, oil, cotton, ixtle, cattle, and garbanzo beans, and exports from the United States of oil and mining machinery, banknotes, horses, clothing, firearms, ammunition, and explosives. Many arms and munitions were smuggled into Mexico, while the illegal trade from Mexico involved beef and cattle on the hoof, mescal and other liquors, and even Chinese and Mexican workers. New York City remained the leader in exports and imports, but New Orleans and El Paso were also important ports.\textsuperscript{48}

U.S. merchants, creditors, munitions dealers, and import-export agents proved to be Obregón’s major supporters in the United States between 1920 and 1923 when diplomatic recognition of Obregón’s gov-
government was in doubt. In this respect they differed greatly from their counterparts in the oil industry. While Mexican commerce was only a small part of the total trade of the United States in the global economy, it had an important impact on the politics and pocketbooks of those involved.

By 1923 the radical, heroic, epic phase of revolution was over. It was a time of rapprochement with the United States. Uncle Sam now had an economic hegemony in Mexico unseen even in the days of Díaz. Standard Oil had outmaneuvered its rivals and was ready to combat the Mexican government over any attempts to expropriate its properties. A new bourgeoisie assumed power in Mexico and was more than willing to practice the politics of populism with workers and campesinos.

The Mexican revolutionary regime had an army of almost one hundred thousand men claiming over 60 percent of the national budget and of uncertain loyalty. The Catholic Church was ready to resist any attempts by the state to enforce the anticlericalism of the Constitution of 1917. And the large landowners and industrialists were still in evidence. Until 1940 these groups—army officers, priests, landlords, and oil and industrial barons—would attempt to shape Mexico’s destinies. The United States would be more than an interested bystander.
Once’t there was a Bolshevik, who wouldn’t say his prayers, So Kellogg sent him off to bed, away upstairs; An Kellogg heerd him holler, and Coolidge heerd him bawl, But when they turn’t the kiv- ers down he wasn’t there at all. They seeked him down in Mexico, they cussed him in the press. They seeked him round the Capitol, and ever’where I guess.

Parody of a Popular Poem, 1927

World War I intensified the penetration of developing states and societies by the colonial powers. The world economy brought these countries into an expanding global network of commerce, trade, and Western ideas. Yet, in many instances, this contact provoked indigenous reactions that were highly nationalistic and anticolonial. Mohandas Gandhi’s passive resistance movement to British rule in India was only one of many worldwide rebellions that were known collectively as the “revolt against the West.” Others occurred or were brewing in Africa, Egypt, China, Indonesia, Tunisia, Turkey, and Mexico. In Mexico the counterpart to Turkey’s Kemal Ataturk was Plutarco Elías Calles. In the early and mid-1920s, he was a revolutionary nationalist who, like Carranza in 1918 and Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938, asserted that Mexico was equal in sovereignty to the United States and that Mexico had a right to control its own internal resources.¹

The United States confronted a revolutionary Mexico as U.S. relative power in the interwar years vis-à-vis Europe and the USSR was declining. From a relative strong position in the early 1920s, the United States went into a depression in the 1930s that did not end until the resurgence of the wartime market of World War II. As noted, after World War I, the United States was the world’s greatest financial and creditor
nation, holding huge stocks of gold and having a domestic market that allowed massive economies of scale by giant firms. It was the largest producer of manufactures and foodstuffs. Yet the financial collapse of 1929 and the subsequent depression injured it much more than any other advanced economy. By 1933 the nation’s GNP had fallen to half that of 1929, the value of manufactured goods was one-quarter of the 1929 figure, exports had decreased by over 69 percent since 1929, and fifteen million workers were out of jobs. After the panic of 1937, the U.S. share of world manufacturing output was lower than any time since 1910. Although the U.S. economy had tremendous potential, by the late 1930s it was greatly underutilized. Only the giant rearmament programs initiated by the army and navy in 1940 and afterward improved the economic situation.²

Mexico experienced the effects of a world depression three years before the Wall Street crisis of 1929. The crash came early, hit hard, but was over by 1932. Between 1926 and 1932 demand declined, output fell, profits disappeared, and investments evaporated. Political and social unrest paralleled the economic situation with unemployment, labor strikes, peasant revolts, increased emigration, and army rebellions occurring between 1927 and 1929. Along with the economic problems, the political costs of law and order placed heavy demands on the federal budget, especially for military expenses. Mexico possessed a fragile economy that relied on exports to the United States and a mining and hydrocarbon industry to drive it forward. Traditionally, exports had fueled imports into the consumer market and had brought revenues to the government. In 1920 exports peaked. Then in 1926 they began to decline, and after that date they fell drastically, causing a similar drop in government income.³

Oil was the first product to cause problems. Political unrest and rising production costs in Mexico, plus the discovery of easily tapped oil deposits in Venezuela, led to a contraction in output. By 1927 Venezuela’s oil production was surpassing that of Mexico. As of 1932 Mexico was producing only 18 percent of what it had generated in 1922. Duties on petroleum, which represented one-third of all government income in 1921, had fallen to one-eighth of national earnings by 1927.⁴
The contraction in the export sector was not confined to the oil industry. In 1926 the world market price of silver dropped, and Mexican silver exports collapsed. Lead, zinc, and copper followed in 1929, with output in the mining sector losing half its value between that year and 1932. Agriculture also declined after 1928. All of this led to a diminishing in the manufacturing of consumer goods and, as stated earlier, a decline in the consumption of consumer products.\(^5\)

Mexico recovered much faster from the Great Depression than either the United States or Europe. The recovery began in 1933 and was aided by the unorthodox monetary and fiscal policies of the Cárdenas government from 1934 to 1940. After 1940 the wartime demands of World War II assured Mexico’s economic growth. There are at least three explanations for this rejuvenation of the economy: first, the buffering effect of an agrarian sector in the relationship of Mexico to the world capitalist economy; second, a rise in commodity prices after 1932, especially for oil and silver; and finally, the change in government policies after 1933.

In spite of the recent modernization, Mexico in the 1930s was predominantly rural. Almost three-fourths of the economically active population was in agriculture, with many of these people functioning as a peasantry outside of the national economy and therefore unaffected by the stresses of capitalist production and exchange. In the nation’s rural states, these individuals spoke indigenous languages, went barefoot, lived in small villages, and engaged in subsistence agriculture. Cárdenas’s agrarian reforms generally encouraged an even greater reliance on subsistence agriculture. The overall effect was one in which the nation, fortunately in this instance, had a built-in buffer against the impact of world capitalism and the Great Depression.\(^6\)

Mexico also benefited from a relatively diversified group of export items, including fruit, coffee, staple crops, silver, and oil. The volume of these exports was, by 1936, once again on the upswing. In the case of silver, the upswing was due in part to the 1934 silver purchase program, which enabled the United States to acquire large volumes of Mexican silver.\(^7\)

Finally, the Mexican government also played a role in the recovery
by changing its practices from fiscal and monetary conservatism to expansionism. In 1936 the government began to run deficits as an explicit tactic to combat the economic depression and moved away from administrative payments (such as military spending) and toward economic and social expenditures (railroads, irrigation facilities, schools, and so on). The engine of growth of this recovery was the industrial sector, with steel and cement works leading the way, while other industries attracted new groups of entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The result was the end of depression and the beginnings of the economic “miracle” that lasted into the 1970s.8

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department was pursuing a policy designed to end the depression in the United States. Franklin Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy was an extension of New Deal thinking into foreign affairs. Following the practices of his predecessor, Roosevelt wanted an end to “gunboat diplomacy” and military intervention and the creation of an inter-American alliance that would isolate the hemisphere from European and Asiatic troubles. By withdrawing the marines from the Caribbean and Central America, he hoped to substitute trust and confidence for mistrust and fears. (In 1933 Roosevelt did not intervene militarily in the Cuban Revolution, while in Nicaragua the marines were replaced by a homegrown guardia. The marines also left Haiti.)

Roosevelt wanted to fight the depression by stimulating trade and investments in Latin America. To do so, he blocked regional alliances, prevented barter arrangements with extrahemispheric powers, extended credits to Latin nations, and established an inter-American banking system. The United States’ underutilized economy needed customers to purchase its industrial goods and absorb its capital surpluses. Mexico needed a restored market to buy its raw goods and precious metals. This was the inter-American ideal: abandoning force for a cooperation that would be mutually beneficial to both parties—a kind of good neighborliness between Mexicans and Americans.

Inter-American security was not to be abandoned, however, even if the marines were called home. The War Department continued to revise and update a series of contingency plans that called for the uni-
lateral invasion of several Latin American countries. The United States proceeded to issue threats of military intervention, as it did during the Cuban Revolution of 1933. And, as noted, in Nicaragua a Guardia Nacional was created to replace the departing marines, while loans from the President’s Emergency Fund were sent to the Nicaraguan dictator.

In 1935 the FBI received new authority to establish secret service organizations in Latin America. J. Edgar Hoover quickly sent a police mission to Colombia, and by 1940 the FBI’s Special Intelligence Service was instituted in Mexico. In addition, ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph) and Pan American Airways were subsidized by the U.S. government and directed to erect a communications and air transportation monopoly in Latin America. So, under the Good Neighbor Policy, mercenaries and covert police operations supplanted the traditional reliance on military intervention for maintaining internal security and protecting U.S. investments.

The Good Neighbor Policy almost drowned in Mexican oil after the 1938 expropriation. Eventually, however, U.S. military intervention was avoided as agreements were worked out with the Mexicans over the oil question and prevented any further barter arrangements between Mexico and Germany. The Export-Import Bank was also initiated to provide public loans to Latin countries so that they could purchase U.S. exports and improve their own trade structures. By 1946 U.S. policy had succeeded when Mexico’s president Miguel Alemán pledged his support for the Good Neighbor Policy in return for a hundred million dollar loan from the U.S. government.9

The interest of the United States in Mexico during the interwar years was not only governmental. The cessation of revolutionary violence after 1920, the normalization of relations with the United States in 1929, and the construction of new roads linking Mexico with the United States led to a new type of interaction. Many Americans were attracted to Mexico, either as intellectuals enthralled by the fever of the first twentieth-century revolution in the Americas or as tourists seduced by the Mexican countryside. Accounts written by these visitors about pre-Columbian sites, art, and folklore appealed to others. By the 1930s
large-scale tourism had developed, which was reflected by the decision of the Ministry of National Economy to institute a Tourism Office.10

During the early revolutionary period, many U.S. journalists and essayists had been interested in the Mexican struggle, including John Kenneth Turner, author of *Barbarous Mexico* (what some have called the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* of the Mexican Revolution), who invited to his retreat in Carmel, California, other literary luminaries such as Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, and Jack London. All these men penned works about Mexico. The villista movement enticed writers John Reed and Ambrose Bierce to its cause. After Bierce’s peculiar death in Mexico, his writings and life story attracted a following on both sides of the border. In the United States in 1929 alone, four biographies of Bierce appeared, and his works later caught the attention of several Mexican intellectuals, not the least being Carlos Fuentes.11

Throughout the Roaring Twenties and the Dismaying Thirties, the two countries exchanged their creative artists, with journalist Carleton Beals, folklorist Frances Toor, historian Frank Tannenbaum, and photographer Edmund Weston visiting and living in Mexico City. Meanwhile, muralist Diego Rivera and artist Frida Kahlo toured and painted in San Francisco, Detroit, and New York City, and José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros frescoed other walls in the United States.

Rivera’s tour of the United States involved painting murals on several public walls, including the now famous *Making of a Fresco* at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1931. Orozco worked at New York’s New School for Social Research. Their U.S. works, plus the Mexican muralist tradition of the early 1920s in which education, art, cultural nationalism, and public policy were merged, inspired a similar program in the United States. Roosevelt supported the arts as a way to propagandize the values of the New Deal. Like Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco, the U.S. artists expressed powerful scenes that criticized the excesses of capitalism and the plight of the exploited, a style of art known as social realism. This fashion can be seen today in the several murals of Coit Tower in San Francisco that portray California industry and so-
cial conditions in the 1930s. This and other art around the country received funds from the Civil Works Administration, which established the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), an undertaking designed to employ more than twenty-five hundred artists and five hundred workers in a U.S. artistic renaissance.12

Meanwhile, the most significant trends of the interwar years in Mexico included a reduced role for the military in political affairs, the struggle against the Catholic Church, and the curtailing of haciendas and foreign oil enclaves by the new revolutionary state. It was a partial process. Soldiers and priests still have a voice in political affairs; haciendas continue to exist. The U.S. oil companies no longer dominate the Mexican petroleum industry, but dependence on the U.S. economy is greater than ever.

However, the heritage of Calles and Cárdenas was one of overthrowing the military and oligarchy that clung to the fringes of modern Mexico and, through a populist program and the assistance of a corporativist state, paving the way toward the agribusiness and commercial capitalism of today. In this struggle, the U.S. government, with its strategic concerns and economic interests, was an interested observer and participant.13

The importance of Mexico to U.S. strategic interests continued during the interwar years. The original 1911 Contingency War Plan for Mexico was upgraded and revised, incorporating both a cooperative and interventionist approach to Mexico. In 1919 a revitalized Military Intelligence Division (MID) developed a contingency scheme that, when needed, would have U.S. forces seizing oil and coal fields in Mexico, blockading Mexican seaports and sealing the U.S. border, cutting the railway lines from Guatemala, advancing into Mexico City, and eventually replacing U.S. troops with a Mexican constabulary under U.S. direction and control. These goals were constantly updated in a series of Special Green Plans and were not considered obsolete until 1946.14

From 1919 to World War II the MID, through its g-2 “negative” branch, conducted counterpropaganda and counterintelligence in Mexico, maintaining surveillance on labor groups, political radicals, and others. In addition, during and immediately after the World War I
era, agents of the Office of Navy Intelligence (ONI) were sent into Mexico to locate transmitters and offer aid to any pro-U.S. groups that would overthrow provincial governments unfriendly to the United States. After 1935 the United States converted Nazi leaders into informers. With the assistance of the FBI, MID agents penetrated the Communist Party of Mexico and used their influence to affect party policy.15

While “negative” intelligence was preoccupying one branch of the MID, the g-2’s “positive” wing, which included intelligence, translations, maps, photographs, codes, and ciphers, was active in gathering information about Mexico. U.S. military attaches reported on a wide range of topics relating to military affairs (for example, Mexican troop movements, training, and command structures); economic matters (foreign capital in Mexico, debts, monetary and banking matters, the petroleum industry, agriculture, and so on); and domestic politics (such as revolutionary activities, Mexico’s foreign affairs, and communist influences in the government). MID’s activity, always in conjunction with the ONI, was comprehensive and indicated the importance of Mexico for U.S. policy makers.16

On several occasions the U.S. government provided Mexico with military assistance to deal with internal threats. In 1923 Washington sold Obregón’s government eleven De Haviland airplanes (and hired U.S. pilots to fly them), thirty-three machine guns, fifteen thousand Enfield rifles, five million rounds of ammunition, and other military goods to suppress the de la Huerta rebellion. The U.S. government also shared MID intelligence with Obregón and used gunboats stationed at Veracruz and Tampico to thwart the de la huertistas. The price for this aid was the deradicalization of the revolution.17

Later, in 1929, the U.S. government assisted Calles when General Gonzalo Escobar and half of the Mexican army engaged in insurrection against his rule. The United States sent weapons to Calles directly from its army arsenals and stringently enforced its neutrality laws against the escobaristas. Mexico paid more than $1.5 million (U.S.) for planes, arms, and munitions. Purchasing U.S. war materials aided in the modernization of the Mexican army and made Mexico more stable and more dependent on the United States.18 Throughout the 1920s and
1930s the Mexican government, in an attempt to professionalize the army, sent promising junior officers to the United States and Europe for training. During the mid-1940s, U.S. influence increased, with the Ávila Camacho administration restructuring the Mexican military using the U.S. armed forces as its model. U.S. army field manuals were incorporated into the military training program, and major acquisitions of military hardware were made.19

Obregón was the first Mexican president to deal with the problem of the military, a conglomeration of more than one hundred thousand men in the federal army (consuming over 60 percent of the total budget), plus thousands in the militia, hundreds of private warriors, and assorted vigilantes. The revolution had created a corps of independent military chieftains dedicated to the obtainment of self-enrichment. Many were of questionable loyalty and were as willing to follow the lead of a state governor, a local jefe, or a self-appointed savior as they were willing to abide by the rules of the Sonora clique in Mexico City.

Being a realist, Obregón was willing to purchase their loyalty as evidenced in his famous saying that “there is no general able to resist a cañonazo (cannonball) of fifty thousand pesos.” As the partially crippled president was fond of noting, the corrupt generals allowed him to become president because with only one arm (the other was lost in the Battle of Celaya) he would be able to steal less. Allowing the generals to exchange their political independence for material gain, he eventually merged all generals into the regular army.20

In building a national army, Obregón incorporated several generals, colonels, and junior officers into the reserve and discharged all the enlisted men under their command. In three years, from 1920 to 1923, he had reduced the army by forty thousand and cut military expenditures in half. He also increased the number of military districts, overhauled the instruction program of the Colegio Militar in Chapultepec, and sent promising young officers to Spain, France, Germany, and the United States to study modern fighting techniques.21

During the Calles years (1923–29), the modernization and professionalization of the armed forces continued. To initiate these reforms, Calles selected General Joaquín Amaro, a poor Tarascan Indian boy
when the revolution broke out in 1910, as his war minister. Amaro reorganized the whole army structure, reducing the officer corps, their troops, and the military’s share of the federal budget from 36 percent to 25 percent in just three years. He reopened the Colegio Militar and overhauled its curriculum, and the newly commissioned cadets from the academy were assigned to regiments of doubtful loyalty. More important, he developed a civilian counterpoise to the army by mobilizing the agrarian irregulars (volunteer peasant forces variously known as defensas sociales, guardias blancas, or cuerpos de voluntarios) during the rebellions of 1923 and 1929. After the rebellions, the army was ordered to confiscate their weapons, and regional chiefs were placed under the command of the national army. Yet, although their allegiance was to the national government, the defensas sociales retained significant autonomy.22

What Amaro started, Cárdenas completed, first as war minister from 1932 to 1934, and then as president from 1934 to 1940. Under his leadership, the Superior War College was established, a school of intensive training for the most promising officers. New educational programs that focused on technical training were started for the rank and file. Enlisted men also received a 10 percent raise, life insurance, and improved living conditions in the barracks. Military expenditures were kept down by reducing the size of the officer corps, initiating retirement programs, and increasing the army’s public works activities. The military’s share of the federal budget declined to 19 percent in 1938, a downward trend that would continue after Cárdenas left office.23

As a counterpoise to the army, Cárdenas organized militia brigades as proletarian defenders of his regime. In 1938 the uniformed workers’ militia numbered one hundred thousand strong, twice the size of the regular army. However, it should be noted that many of those in the militia had little or no access to arms and arsenals and often drilled with wooden rifles. Finally, the institutionalization of the political system in 1938 created the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) with four sectors—military, peasant, labor, and popular. In effect, the political influence of the army was divided into four interest groups, since individual military men belonged to all of the party sectors. The cre-
ation of a sector militar made it difficult for the army to assume an anti-
PRM posture during the Cárdenas presidency.24

Reorganization of the party threatened the interests of many re-
gional military caudillos. Two months after the PRM reforms, General
Saturnino Cedillo rebelled. A follower of Obregón and Calles, he had
been active in opposing the de la Huerta and Escobar rebellions. A
radical agrarista with a popular following in San Luis Potosí, Cedillo
had a large private army. Unbeknownst to the Mexican public was the
fact that Cedillo was also the leading figure behind the operations of
an opium ring in the United States and Mexico. From the United States
came capital that was sent to plantations in Mexico where the poppies
were grown, and then the opium would be returned to Chinese tongs
in the United States. Others involved in the ring included the chief of
the federal district secret police, the secret police chief of the Minis-
try of Gobernación, and several deputies and senators from the federal
district, Veracruz, and San Luis Potosí. In spite of his resources, Ce-
dillo was no match for Cárdenas, and he was soon defeated. A similar
misfortune happened to General Juan Andreu Almazán in 1940, the
last revolutionary general to threaten the state. The knockout blow had
been delivered—the military would now assume the role of guardian
of the state.25

Simultaneous with the struggle against the army was the state’s
battle with the Catholic Church. This was a church-state rivalry with
roots in the colonial past, as well as in the liberal-clerical struggles of
the nineteenth century. The opening salvo in the Cristero Rebellion
was fired on 21 February 1925 when the government supported the es-
establishment of an Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Mexican Church. This
attempt to set up a schismatic church headed by a dissident priest—a
submissive state-controlled religious corporation—was met with de-
nunciations and riots by angry Catholics.

The earlier anticlerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917, espe-
cially those that secularized education, limited the number of clergy,
and restricted Catholic political activity, were condemned in a pastoral
letter issued by the Mexican bishops. Calles reacted by closing Catho-
lich schools and deporting all foreign-born clergy. As matters came to
a head, church authorities, with the blessings of the Vatican, went on strike and suspended public worship. For the first time since Hernán Cortés attended Mass on Mexican soil, official Catholicism removed itself from society; the religious sensibility that had fashioned the Mexican sense of time, from baptism to marriage to death, was frozen, albeit temporarily. Catholics in various parts of the country reacted strongly by taking up arms and rallying to the battle cry “Viva Cristo Rey,” or “Long Live Christ the King.”

Lay direction of the revolt took place under the auspices of the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty (LNDLR), with passive support from the Mexican hierarchy and the Vatican. Initially, open rebellion spread across western Mexico throughout the states of Colima, Jalisco, Durango, Guanajuato, and Michoacán. After the army crushed the initial rebellions in late 1926 and in January 1927, there followed almost two and a half years of indecisive guerrilla warfare characterized by brutal excesses on both sides, from looting and rape to the massacre of civilians and execution of prisoners. While the Cristeros often made the agraristas (those who participated in the state’s agrarian reform programs) and rural schoolteachers pay, with blood, for their connection with the state, the federales would retaliate by decapitating village priests and burning the property of their followers.

The Cristeros, who numbered more than 20,000 in July 1927, were down to 14,000 when they laid down their arms after the 21 June 1929 settlement between the church and the state. According to Mexican War Department figures, the number of Cristeros killed in Jalisco alone between 1 January 1928 and 31 July 1928 was 3,235. Most of the guerrillas were rancheros, small farmers, and cattle ranchers, while the league’s membership was largely middle class. It was mostly a rural revolt that lacked support from hacendados and urban businesspeople. Although the 1929 agreement, arranged through the intercession of U.S. ambassador Dwight Morrow, allowed the church to perform its own spiritual affairs under its own direction, the spirit of the settlement soon evaporated and religious strife continued for another decade before President Cárdenas finally arranged a permanent settlement.

The reaction of the U.S. government and the U.S. Catholic Church
to affairs in Mexico took place in the context of the postwar Red Scare concerns of the 1920s. By far the most important political event shaping popular politics was the threat of bolshevism. The new communist leadership in Moscow was atheistic and was advocating an international class war against imperialistic capitalists, including those who were profiting in Mexico. In 1926–27, when U.S. marines were sent into Nicaragua and two Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, falsely accused of communism, were convicted of communism, were convicted of murder and executed in the electric chair, the Coolidge administration was concerned with the “bolshevist” government of Calles in Mexico—a government that was unfriendly to U.S. oil interests and was sending arms to the anti-U.S., anti-imperialist, liberal forces of Juan B. Sacasa in Nicaragua. In the U.S. popular press, Mexico was portrayed as a chaotic country led by bloodthirsty and dishonest enemies of private property and the church, men who had no respect for religious toleration and no fear of God. Apprehensive over the bolshevising of Mexico, Catholic leaders and newspapers raised the red specter in an attempt to arouse public opinion against the persecution of the Mexican church.

At the same time, the resurgence of nativism and the Ku Klux Klan in the United States during the 1920s, plus the negative reaction to the bid of Alfred Smith for the presidency in 1928, indicated that anti-Catholicism was again on the rise. In 1926 the Protestant Presbyterian Synod adopted a resolution of sympathy for Calles and his church policy, while Methodist leader George Miller declared, referring to the persecution of the church in Mexico, that “it is delicious to hear our tormenters pleading for religious liberty and conscience.”

When the Cristero campaign began, the LNNDLR coveted the financial backing of U.S. Catholics, but in the final analysis it received only expressions of sympathy. Before the educated classes of San José de Gracia in Michoacán would join the rebellion, they had to be assured, according to historian Luis González, that “the agraristas of the neighboring towns in Jalisco would come with their rifles . . . and that the Catholics of the United States would help with money and military supplies.” U.S. bishops deplored the persecution in Mexico and rendered assistance to Mexican bishops, priests, and nuns who came to the
United States during the crisis. The Catholic Church Extension Society appropriated twenty-five thousand dollars for a Mexican aid fund, while the Knights of Columbus propagandized against the Calles government and raised funds for a Catholic relief charity. But the bishops refused to bankroll a rebellion, and the Knights of Columbus assessed its membership to meet the costs of relief work, not arms shipments. Eventually, a conciliatory viewpoint prevailed from within the church, as Fr. John J. Burke aided the U.S. ambassador in negotiating the settlement of 21 June 1929.33

As for the U.S. government, before 1927 it generally agreed with the viewpoint of the Catholic journal *America* that the religious question was merely “a smoke screen, raised by Calles to conceal from Mexicans his difficulties with us and to make it hard for our State Department to take action on civil matters [oil, mining, and land law issues] without being accused of doing the bidding of the Catholic Church.”34 Coolidge and his secretary of state, Frank Kellogg, were less than pleased with Mexico’s power play in Central America. Yet, the Bucareli Accords of 1923 had indicated that diplomacy could defend U.S. interests. In addition, Protestant arguments in favor of Calles and the general antipathy to intervention by a majority of Americans (as voiced by senators William Borah and Robert M. La Follette Jr.) led the U.S. government to back Calles and seek an honorable end to the conflict. As Coolidge, and later Franklin Delano Roosevelt, knew, only a strong central authority in Mexico could prevent trouble between the two countries.35

As indicated, Ambassador Morrow initiated the original settlement. Yet the first years after the 1929 truce did witness even harsher anticlerical laws and more conflict. In 1933 Article 3 of the Constitution of 1917 was amended to read “education imparted by the State shall be socialistic.” Anticlerics and communists became entrenched in the departments of education and communication of the Cárdenas government. Throughout the 1930s state authorities continued their persecution of the church—in Veracruz the bishop was arrested; the state of Durango issued a decree limiting the number of priests; in Tabasco the churches were closed, religious images forbidden, and priests required to marry.36

Under Roosevelt, however, Ambassador Josephus Daniels quietly
persuaded the Mexican authorities to call off the campaign against
the church and succeeded in countering the negative stereotype of the
government that was publicized by U.S. Catholics during the 1930s.
By 1938 Cárdenas was respectful of Catholicism, and relations with
the church improved. When the government expropriated foreign oil
properties in 1938, it had the support of the church hierarchy. The war
against the church was now over. The Mexican Constitution and the
ultimate power of the state had been upheld, and the government was
now an active force in the educational life of the nation.37

Another heritage of the Calles-Cárdenas era was the attack by the
state against the lords of land and industry. Agrarian reform and cries
of “land and liberty” had shaped the revolution. Article 27 of the Con-
stitution advanced several ideas, including that lands could be ex-
propriated “for reasons of public utility” without compensation and
that the state would “take necessary action to break up large estates”
and develop small holdings and new centers with sufficient land and
water.

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, in spite of the violence in the
countryside, land distributions were minimal. Several peasant leagues
were formed, and while angry peasants in Veracruz, Morelos, and the
Yucatán seized land, Tarascan Indian communities led by Primo Tapia
rioted in Michoacán. Yet, in spite of the occasional concessions to the
peasantry, after 1928 most state assistance, in the form of liberal credit
arrangements and irrigation concessions, went to large, commercial
hacendados. In the context of the economic depression and improved
relations with the United States, Calles agreed with Ambassador Mor-
row that land distributions should cease and the agrarian debt be re-
duced. This was the case until the Agrarian Code of 1934.

The Agrarian Code divided the nation’s agrarian producers into
*ejidatarios*—individuals and families who lived in communities and
worked on state-owned lands in which the *ejido* (community) enjoyed
the right of usufruct—and so-called small landowners (*propietarios
pequeños*), a group that included many hacendados and foreign owners
who were anything but small landowners in spite of how they appeared
on paper. After the Agrarian Code, years of sweeping reform came to
the countryside, with land grants totaling nearly 17.9 million hectares between 1934 and 1940. This was more than two and a half times the amount of land that had been distributed by all previous post-1917 regimes. In addition, consistent with his philosophy of corporativism, Cárdenas incorporated several regional peasant leagues into the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), and made the CNC an integral part of the aforementioned Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM).

Cárdenas’s redistribution program lasted from 1934 until 1937, when labor difficulties, military riots, and bureaucratic corruption put the government in a difficult political position. Ejidos were created in the Yaqui valley of Sonora, the sugar growing areas of Sinaloa, the Laguna cotton district (some eight million acres on the Coahuila-Durango border), and the henequen fields of Yucatán. Some lands changed hands in the older Mexico of the central and south central highlands. Yet, less than 10 percent of all ejido farmers worked on a collective basis (most farmed small parcels within an ejido), and the ejidatarios who did acquire lands often fought with the peasants, peones, sharecroppers, and migrant workers who had received nothing.

By 1940 over 60 percent of the cultivable land was in parcels of more than 1,000 hectares, with over 40 percent being large haciendas of 10,000 or more hectares. Small private landholdings also increased in number between 1930 and 1940. As had happened earlier, many hacendados benefited by state actions that provided them with access to capital, technology, and markets, and a legal code that allowed them to exempt 150 hectares of irrigated land from expropriation. Although about fifty U.S. settlers were adversely affected when ejidos were created in the Yaqui valley of Sonora, and Cárdenas’s reforms distressed U.S. property owners in Chihuahua and Baja California, most primary producers in Sinaloa (such as the United Sugar Company), the Laguna district (twelve corporations, 70 percent of which were foreign owned), and the Yucatán either evaded the law outright or were purposely excluded from its effects.

Ultimately, the agrarian reforms destroyed only those landlords who were unable or unwilling to modernize and, while allotting some parcels of land to ejidatarios and hacienda peones, opened the way
to monopoly agriculture and a new class of entrepreneurial farmers, mostly northerners, who could control credit and markets and knew the benefits of technology, fertilizers, tractors, and a college degree for their children. In 1940 scarcely an ejido could be found in Sonora, but there were highways and irrigation programs that represented over one quarter of the public investment that had been expended during the previous decade and a half. Obregón’s dream had come true—Sonora and the North had begun to implement a Mexican variation of U.S. agriculture.42

By the early 1930s the failure of the attempts to assimilate the indigenous population intersected with a political shift to the left under Cárdenas that created several programs designed to advance indigenismo in new directions.43 A new professional corps of social scientists heralded Indian empowerment and pluralism, and deemphasized cultural uniformity and assimilation. New institutions were created, such as the Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas (Department of Indian Affairs), while regional indígena congresses were called to discuss the gap between promise and reality in the lives of Mexican Indians. Interestingly enough, the efforts that began under Cárdenas to integrate Indians and other social segments into the corporativist state paved the way for one-party rule (PRM, then the PRI) in Mexico, as the postrevolution generation of Indian leaders sought to leverage government largesse for the benefit of their communities. In turn, a moral economy developed, one that was reminiscent of the colonial pact between royal authorities and Indians, whereby Indians supported the local expressions of official government control in return for security and material benefits.

Meanwhile, the lords of the petroleum industry were making threats from behind their barricades on the oil fields. The struggle between Cárdenas and the oil companies, like the Cristero Rebellion, had its origin in the Constitution of 1917, especially in those clauses of Article 27 that enunciated that “the nation shall have at all times the right to impose upon private property such restrictions as the public interest may require,” including the prerogative to confine concessions to Mexican citizens and to own and exploit natural resources. In effect, the revolution had returned Mexico to pre-porfirian days when subsurface rights
were the property of the nation and not of individual entrepreneurs or corporations.

As previously discussed, in 1918 President Carranza, who privately did not seek to make an issue out of oil, nonetheless declared that Article 27 would be interpreted retroactively. Companies that had developed during the porfiriato, such as the U.S.-owned Standard Oil and the British Royal Dutch-Shell, would be adversely affected by this decision. After 1920 the U.S. government refused to recognize Obregón’s government until he agreed to the terms of the Bucareli Accords of 1923. In 1925 Calles initially took a tough stance with the companies, requiring them to exchange perpetual ownership rights for those limited to fifty years. By 1927, however, after a long process of bargaining, Calles and the Mexican Supreme Court held that those properties on which “positive acts” had been performed before 1917 could be developed to perpetuity. Thus the matter stood until Cárdenas came to power.44

Until 1938 various Mexican administrations had been unable to effectively apply Article 27 of the Constitution and carry out the nationalization of the subsoil. In the end, foreign corporations, backed up by the U.S. government, had held their ground. Yet, by 1938, conditions were favorable for Cárdenas to act against the companies. As President Cárdenas himself stated,

Various administrations since the Revolution have attempted to do something about the subsoil concessions being enjoyed by foreign firms, but up until now domestic problems and international pressure have mitigated this effort. Today, however, the circumstances are different: there are no internal struggles going on, and a new world war is about to begin. It is a good time to see if England and the United States, which talk so much about democracy and respect for the sovereignty of other countries, will in fact stand up to their spoken convictions when Mexico exercises its rights.45

And on 18 March 1938, conditions were right. Cárdenas issued a decree nationalizing the surface possessions of sixteen oil companies, including the properties of Standard Oil.46

As in the struggle against the army and the church, labor syndicates
and unions were used as allies of the state. Encouraged by the sympathy of the chief executive for the working class, the petroleros, on 15 August 1935, organized the National Petroleum Workers’ Union (STPRM), which merged the next year into the Mexican Confederation of Workers (CTM). In 1938, of the six hundred thousand affiliated workers of the CTM, fifteen thousand worked for the oil companies. Late in 1936 the petroleum workers demanded a new contract with higher wages and benefits. When negotiations between management and workers broke down, the union called a strike in May 1937. In August the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration issued a report in favor of the workers and critical of the companies. Following a company appeal, the Mexican Supreme Court, in March 1938, denied the appeal and backed the decision of the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration. When the companies still balked at the decision, the order of expropriation was delivered on 18 March 1938.47

Acting under the authority of the Mexican expropriation law of November 1936 (which had been used in 1937 to expropriate the Mexican National Railways), Cárdenas nationalized the almost wholly foreign-owned oil industry. On the evening of 18 March President Cárdenas read an address over the radio announcing his actions:

It is evident that the problem which the oil companies have placed before the executive power of the nation by their refusal to obey the decree of the highest judicial tribunal is not a simple case of the execution of a sentence, but a definitive situation which must be solved urgently. The social interests of the laboring classes of all the industries demand it. . . . It is the sovereignty of the nation which is thwarted through the maneuvers of foreign capitalists who, forgetting that they have formed themselves into Mexican companies, now attempt to elude the mandates and obligations imposed by the authorities of this country.48

Cárdenas then established a public corporation composed of labor and government to operate the new national industry. Founded earlier in December 1933, for social rather than economic ends, Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) would be used in the post–World War II era for developmental purposes—subsidizing energy, assisting the petrochemical
industry, and in general providing technology for the overall growth of the economy.\textsuperscript{49}

As to be expected, the companies responded aggressively to the expropriation. Trained engineers and geologists were called home, and a boycott was established preventing Mexico from acquiring machinery, chemicals, and transport for its industry. A vicious propaganda campaign was carried out in the United States through company-subsidized magazines such as Standard Oil of New Jersey’s \textit{Lamp} and in such periodicals as the \textit{Atlantic Monthly}. Mexicans were accused of being thieves, debased thugs, fascists, and bolshevists.\textsuperscript{50}

It was alleged that Cárdenas was a captive of the Communist Party, which supported socialistic labor movements against foreign capitalists (some congressional critics went further to suggest that the Roosevelt administration had encouraged the establishment of communism in Mexico).\textsuperscript{51} This was in spite of the fact that the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) had been officially suppressed after the Escobar revolt of 1929, and by 1930 diplomatic relations had been terminated with the USSR. Although Cárdenas ended the persecution of the PCM in 1934, he did not restore relations with the USSR.\textsuperscript{52} When, in 1938, he allowed Leon Trotsky asylum in Mexico, many of his opponents in the United States and in the Military Intelligence Division of the U.S. Army interpreted this as an act friendly to the communist camp.\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Cardenismo} was a statist doctrine, a philosophy of corporativism in which Cárdenas controlled the party—the party did not control him.

For several reasons the campaign against Cárdenas failed. The oil workers and the Mexican people in general, including the church, supported the expropriation and had a united will to resist foreign pressure; 18 March 1938 became a national holiday. In the United States, many investors, mining proprietors, and manufacturers opposed a policy of intervention that would seemingly aid big oil producers at their own expense. Roosevelt and his ambassador to Mexico, Josephus Daniels, did not want to see the Good Neighbor Policy “drown in Mexican oil.” Although the U.S. government could have joined the boycott and refused to purchase silver from Mexico as a form of economic pressure, to have done so would have caused a bankrupt Mexico to
cease purchasing U.S. goods and services altogether. Finally, the threat of Germany and a European war meant that Roosevelt wished to curry favor with the strategically situated southern neighbor.  

Consequently, by late 1941 a general agreement was signed between Mexico and the United States that compensated U.S. firms. The oil barons, chiefs of a once domineering foreign enclave, were finally slain. They would join the corpses of ambitious army officers, rash priests, and feudal landlords. Mexico was to become a modern state.

In spite of reformism and nationalism, Calles, as a member of the Sonoran dynasty, and Cárdenas, a radical from Michoacán, pursued policies of capitalist development and state-aided private enterprise. They created a heritage of economic corporativism, government intervention, labor reform, civilian rule, state supremacy (especially over the church), and agrarian reform. In addition, Cárdenas initiated deficit spending in his fight against the depression. He also attempted reconciliation with all groups—the church, the oil interests, and hacienda owners—who had lost lands to peasants. He banned some, but not all, foreign capitalists from power. The communists were never incorporated into the government party and were excluded from positions of political authority. Cárdenas eventually espoused the Grand Alliance and supported the war against fascism. He was the great modernizer who led Mexico toward corporate capitalism and the economic recovery of the next era—an economic “miracle” that would last from World War II to the 1970s.

To speak of a Calles-Cárdenas heritage and of the continuity of capitalist development is not to deny the differences that existed between the decades of the 1920s and 1930s. Certainly the problems created by the Great Depression and the rise of Nazi Germany caused the PRM of 1938 to face unusual circumstances not present when the Party of the National Revolution (PNR) was first formed in 1929. Corporativism in the 1920s was a system that appealed to democratic socialists in Germany and England, and even to Hoover Republicans in the United States. However, after 1934 corporativism became increasingly associated with fascism and Nazism—ideologies opposed to either the traditions of Mexican revolutionary nationalism or the egalitarianism of
the New Deal in the United States. The distinguishing features of the 1930s—a depressed economy, industrial unionism, Communist Party activity, and so on—resulted in the creation of a powerful minority voice critical of and resistant to capitalism. Cárdenas, as national caudillo and patriarch of all Mexicans, gave a sympathetic ear to the cries of the underclass. This call for social justice continues today in Mexico—a quasi-corporativist *grito* that the name of Cárdenas, father or son, still evokes today, although it has taken on quite a different sound since the advent of NAFTA.\(^{56}\)

In the final analysis, when the career of Cárdenas is viewed through the wartime era of the early 1940s, Cárdenas was not so different from FDR, the New Dealer, who also wanted to save capitalism and make the hemisphere secure from the inroads of fascist dictatorship. Thus, the diplomatic agreement of 1941 signaled a new era of cooperation in the history of the United States and Mexico, a cooperation that would be tested by the realities of a global war.\(^{57}\)
Preening and Ruffling the Serpent’s Plumage

As long ago as 1986, Treasury Secretary James Baker was privately predicting that “the day is not far off when an American president is going to devote more attention to Mexico than the Soviet Union.”

Newsweek, 8 January 1990

Immanuel Wallerstein, famed sociologist and architect of the world-system theory, argues that 1967–68 was a pivotal time in the history of the world-economy. Until then, the United States dominated the military arena and the political economy. After 1967, a steady process of erosion of the hegemonic position of the United States in the world-economy occurred. Wallerstein notes the tremendous psychological shock to U.S. political and business leaders in response to events of 1967–68: the currency and gold crisis (in which the price of gold fell below the official price of thirty-five dollars an ounce by 1970), signaling the tumble of the U.S. dollar from its pedestal; the Tet offensive against South Vietnam in which a small country appeared to be thwarting the military will of the United States; the student protests at Columbia University, Paris, Tokyo, Prague, and Mexico City.¹

During the early 1970s the United States entered a period of decelerated growth in which relative decline could be measured in terms of productivity figures, exports to and shares in the world market, research expenditures, currency strength, rates of inflation, and unemployment. By the 1980s the uncompetitiveness of U.S. industrial goods and the declining sales of agricultural exports produced immense deficits in the “visible” trade. The trade deficit, in turn, was affected by the national debt ($2.8 trillion in 1990; more than $10 trillion by 2009) and a $455 billion federal deficit (in fiscal year 2008). To finance this debt,
the United States was not able to rely on earnings from “invisibles” (as Great Britain’s banks and insurance houses did before 1914). Instead, the United States was forced to import ever-larger sums of capital and in the process was transformed in a few years from the world’s largest creditor to the world’s largest debtor nation. New York, London, and Toronto now shared their monetary power with Tokyo/Yokohama—as of 2007 a megacity of more than thirty-four million people that was fast becoming the world’s leading financial center.2

The late sixties and early seventies was a critical season for Mexico as well. Politically, there was the 2 October 1968 incident at Tlatelolco Square in Mexico City in which soldiers and secret police were responsible for the deaths of hundreds, the wounding of hundreds more, and the arrest of at least fifteen hundred student and worker demonstrators. This was followed by the Corpus Christi massacre of 10 June 1971 when at least fifty student demonstrators were killed by porristas (paid provocateurs posing as students) and halcones (falcons, or paramilitary troops sponsored by Monterrey capitalists and trained by Federal District police). These political events marked the end of the Mexican “miracle” of postwar economic growth and the beginning of social justice and political democracy movements in Mexico.3

In simple terms, Mexico’s contemporary economic history can be divided into three periods. In the Mexican miracle phase from World War II to 1970 the government sought, through import-substitution industrialization (ISI), to create new wealth and promote economic growth. In the shared development pattern of the Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo administrations (1970–82) social spending and rural development programs were instituted along with a shift away from ISI toward export-oriented growth, with the corresponding rise of the maquiladora industry in the North. And in the period since 1982, first Miguel de la Madrid (1982–88) and then Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–94) moved to “belt tightening,” as Mexico abandoned ISI to enforce an IMF austerity program in which export revenues were used to repay the interest on Mexico’s national debt.4

Between 1940 and 1970, while the U.S. population was growing from 131.6 million to 203.2 million, Mexico grew from 19.6 million to
50.4 million. During the same period, Mexico became an urban area, with the proportion of people living in regions of more than ten thousand increasing from 22 percent in 1940 to 42 percent in 1970 (and over 55 percent in 1990). By 1950 Mexico City had only 3 million inhabitants, but in 1970 it had swelled to 9.2 million, a growing process that has continued so that by 2007 the capital had 21.3 million and was the world’s leading megacity. Similarly, northern Mexico had become a major urban zone. Most of these population shifts and growths started during World War II and continued throughout the Mexican miracle phase, when the economy grew at over 6 percent per annum.5

Wartime cooperation between Mexico and the United States signaled the beginning of a new era in diplomatic relations. Not since the age of Benito Juárez and the U.S. Civil War—a time when the liberal and nationalist aspirations of Juárez were supported by the United States—had the two countries seen their interests become so reciprocal. After June 1941 it became clear to Mexico that there would be no final German victory in Europe. By the end of May 1942, after German submarines had sunk Mexican tankers, the United States and Mexico became formal allies.6

The United States considered Mexico to be geographically strategic, as well as an important source of raw materials and cheap labor for its war effort. Mexico, moving away from its revolutionary past to the economic orthodoxy of its new president, General Manuel Ávila Camacho, desired foreign capital to finance its industrial revolution, either in the form of public and private loans or direct foreign investment (DFI). This was an open invitation to North American bankers and investors. Thus, a “neo-porfirian era of good feelings” was initiated.7

In early 1942, after Mexico had broken diplomatic relations with Germany but prior to its alliance with the United States, the Mexican-American Joint Defense Commission was formed. Ávila Camacho also created a Pacific Military Region consisting of all the states from Baja California to Chiapas. This placed the West Coast, then seemingly threatened by the Japanese, under a coordinated defense plan commanded by ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas, an antifascist who also had a reputation as a staunch defender of Mexican sovereignty. The com-
mission eventually oversaw the installation of a series of radar stations in Baja California and, under the Lend-Lease Act, funneled millions of dollars of military assistance to Mexico, resulting in new aircraft for the air force and a mechanized ground division for the army. U.S. aid meant that the Mexican military could develop without taxing the resources of the state and the national budget. A modernized air force squadron of three hundred men was eventually sent to the United States for training and, by 1944, was transferred to the Pacific. Mexico’s 201st Squadron saw service in the Philippines.  

To counter the operations of a Nazi Fifth Column in Mexico, the United States appointed Gus Jones—a veteran FBI agent who since 1921 had been the special agent in charge (SAC) of the San Antonio office—to the office of U.S. counterspy chief in Mexico. A member of J. Edgar Hoover’s Special Intelligence Service (SIS, created in mid-1940) for Latin America, Jones acquired diplomatic cover in the U.S. embassy in Mexico City as a civil attaché. He worked in conjunction with Secretary of Interior Miguel Alemán; Colonel Alvaro Basail of the Secret Service (attached to the Ministry of the Interior); General Maximino Ávila Camacho (the president’s brother and minister of communications); and the postmaster general, General Fernando Ramírez. Together these individuals succeeded in eliminating subversive activity in Mexico.

In the United States, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the cryptographic section of the FBI aided the process by intercepting and decoding Nazi messages. In fact, Mexico was the first Latin American country to allow Radio Intelligence Division agents of the FCC to employ mobile radio detectors on its soil. Eventually, the NSDAP (Nazi Party) in Mexico was broken up, and the Abwehr’s V-men (German military intelligence agents) were unable to operate. Gestapo officers Werner Georg Nicolaus and Karl Hellerman were arrested. Clandestine radio stations relaying messages to German submarines in the Atlantic were uncovered, including the ham operation of Carlos Retelsdorf in Coatepec, Veracruz. The legacy of wartime cooperation of Jones and SIS-Mexico was continued afterward, with today’s Mexican secret police operations (for example, the campaign of
the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in Mexico) being dependent on the United States for technology, training, and equipment.\textsuperscript{10}

Equally important were the strategic war materials Mexico provided for the Allied war effort. In 1941 the United States agreed to buy all Mexican production of copper, lead, zinc, graphite, mercury, and cadmium, as well as hard fibers. Formal trade agreements were signed that reopened the U.S. market to Mexican oil following the 1938 nationalization. The treaty also encouraged the export of cattle and agricultural products, and enabled the United States to acquire at fixed prices Mexican surpluses of rubber, henequen, and other items, including opium, a narcotic that contains morphine, from which heroin is derived. Morphine, of course, was used chiefly in medicine as a painkiller and sedative.\textsuperscript{11}

Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Ávila Camacho also agreed to allow Mexican workers to serve as temporary laborers (\textit{braceros}) in the U.S. West, in part to replace the U.S. farmworkers who had been drafted into the armed forces. Eventually, braceros were also used in the railroad industry. By July 1945 there were some fifty-eight thousand braceros in agriculture and another sixty-two thousand working on the railroads—not to mention thousands of undocumented workers. This wartime contract-labor program was continued into the postwar era until 1964, when, curiously enough, the maquiladora industry began a new phase in the history of cheap labor production.\textsuperscript{12}

By 1943, 90 percent of Mexico’s foreign trade was with the United States; the European market was lost because of the war. To cope with the demand from the United States, Mexico had to improve its internal transportation system and open lines of credit with its northern neighbor. By the end of Ávila Camacho’s administration, Mexico had obtained $90 million (U.S.) in credit. The international loan market, closed to Mexico between 1913 and 1941, was now reopened.\textsuperscript{13}

Credits from the Export-Import Bank in the United States were followed by private investments from both Europe and the United States. While the Mexican government promoted its own statist interests in the communications, transportation, fishing, and entertainment industries, private foreign capital flowed into the manufacturing and trade
sectors of the economy (even though after 1944 foreign ownership was legally limited to 49 percent control of any enterprise, with 51 percent of the enterprise to be Mexican—a rule that was breached more often than enforced). Because of the wartime demand, new Mexican industries were initiated while older concerns expanded and increased in number. The range of industries included textiles, chemicals, food processing, beer, and cement. Electrical capacity rose and steel production grew. Industrialization created new wealth, with the national income almost tripling during the war years from 1940 to 1945.14

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Mexico embarked on the road toward import-substitution industrialization (ISI), a strategy that attempted to substitute domestically manufactured goods for commodities traditionally imported from abroad. The goal was to not only meet the needs of the domestic market, but produce a surplus of manufactured goods that could be exported to Latin America. To initiate ISI, Ávila Camacho replaced Marxist labor leader Vicente Lombardo Toledano with the much more conservative Fidel Velázquez. The administration was able to shift resources from labor to capital. As predicted, labor became the first victim of ISI thinking, as wages did not keep pace with cost of living increases. In addition, during the war, Velázquez curtailed the use of strikes as a corrective for social wrongs. Along with a tamed labor movement, ISI initiatives involved incentives to business such as subsidies, tax exemptions, and tariff protection. The Nacional Financiera, a government-owned bank, was created to provide loans to industry and supervise the industrial process.

Under Miguel Alemán (1946–52) and Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952–58) the Mexican program of industrialization became an irreversible process. Like Ávila Camacho before him, Alemán (the first civilian president since the revolution) reduced land distribution to a trickle and restricted it to small families and private owners. He also reorganized the official party, renaming it the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), made up of three sectors: peasant, worker, and popular (the military being merged into the other sectors). The party now became the dominant political force that gave direction to the state’s ISI program, and under PRI guidance public works projects boomed. In addition to
modernizing the railways, Alemán’s administration oversaw the construction of dams and highways, promoted tourism, constructed the new University City, and expanded the activities of PEMEX (now receiving private loans from the United States) from building new pipelines and refineries to developing the new industries of petrochemicals and fertilizers.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1954 the Mexican government initiated a monetary and economic strategy generally known as stabilization development, a hard-money, low-inflation strategy to set an exchange rate and then manage the economy in a conservative manner to maintain that rate. The overvalued peso was devalued from 8.65 pesos to the dollar to 12.5 pesos to the dollar. As a result, prices were stabilized, inflation decreased, exports were stimulated, tourism increased, and Mexico became attractive to foreign investors.\textsuperscript{16}

U.S. capital flowed into the country. The signs of corporate North America were everywhere: General Electric (of Mexico), Ford, General Motors, Dow Chemical, Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, Colgate, John Deere, Goodyear, Sears and Roebuck, and Proctor and Gamble, to name a few. Direct foreign investment, most from the United States, increased 60 percent between 1952 and 1958, and almost half of it (\$497 million) went into industry. Direct U.S. investments increased from \$922 million in 1959, to more than \$1.3 billion at the end of the Adolfo López Mateos administration in 1964. In addition, funds from the Inter-American Development Bank, plus earnings on exports (78 percent of Mexico’s total foreign trade was with the United States in 1955) and remittances from Mexican workers in the United States, produced additional capital that aided the industrialization effort.\textsuperscript{17}

The Mexican miracle was not unique to Mexico, as developing countries in general experienced expanding growth rates, increasing their share of total world manufacturing production from 8.5 percent in 1963 to 9.9 percent in 1973 (and 12 percent in 1980). In the postwar period, Germany, Japan, and other industrialized nations were booming, and their demand for primary products led to faster growth rates and increasing industrialization for the less-developed countries (LDCs, or as the State Department calls them, NICs—newly industrializing
countries). Mexico was now a relatively wealthy “peripheral” country, under Argentina and Venezuela in terms of GDP per capita, but akin to Brazil and Poland. The productivity gap between Mexico and the United States had, in fact, narrowed slightly between 1950 and 1980, as the U.S. GDP per capita, which was 4.31 times that of Mexico in 1950, was only 3.10 times greater in 1980.\(^{18}\)

Yet, in terms of quality of life (literacy rates, infant mortality, life expectancy, and so on) for the early 1970s, Mexico ranked well below the rich core countries of Europe and North America (as well as Japan). In this category, Mexico was similar to the developing nations of Asia, such as the Philippines and Thailand (countries with lower GDP per capita figures than Mexico). In fact, even in economic terms, while the average core economy grew by 231 percent between 1950 and 1980, the average economy of developing countries had grown by only 92 percent. On a global scale, the gap in wealth that existed in 1950 was even bigger by 1980.\(^{19}\)

Even more disturbing was the distribution of wealth. As previously noted, Mexico’s population by the early 1970s was more than fifty million, growing at an average annual rate of 3.3 percent. In spite of economic growth, in real terms there were more impoverished people in Mexico in 1970 than before the Mexican miracle began. Between 1950 and 1970, the income share going to the poorest tenth of the Mexican population dropped from 2.43 percent to 1.42 percent (0.35 percent in 1975). Meanwhile, the richest tenth increased their share of national income from 49 percent to over 51 percent. With twelve million Indians suffering from malnutrition, it looked as if Mexico’s miraculous growth had increased only the unequal distribution of income. Once again it would appear that the mystery of la virgen de Guadalupe was the only miracle most Mexicans would experience.\(^{20}\)

The political shortcomings of the promise of the Mexican Revolution during the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz administration (1964–70) and the lack of social justice reflected in the Mexican miracle led to the collision between a PRI-modern state and its citizens at Tlatelolco in 1968 and Corpus Christi in 1971. The government’s reaction to these problems was the shared development strategy of the Echeverría–López Porti-
llo years (1970–82), in which Echeverría attempted to share the wealth by establishing rural development programs to assist the campesino while curtailing the quick profits of the industrialists. This program was slightly amended by López Portillo who, with the benefit of newly discovered oil reserves, attempted to create wealth for the few and share wealth with the many.

Echeverría’s agrarian development program guaranteed price supports, improved marketing and credit facilities, attempted to insure subsistence crops against failure, and provided social services to the rural poor. The National Staple Products Company (CONASUPO), a decentralized state agency, purchased basic foodstuffs at guaranteed prices from the farmer and distributed them at low prices to the urban poor. This agency forced down retail prices and undercut the profits of intermediaries. Many private businesspeople were unhappy with this competition from the state. Costs for the new bureaucracy to implement these initiatives were borne by the government.21

Echeverría’s industrial policy moved Mexico away from ISI and protectionism. Import duties originally intended to protect domestic industry were to be reduced to force Mexican producers to improve the quality of their goods. Subsidies and tax waivers were to be phased out. Only those industries producing goods for the popular market would receive government assistance. The 1973 Law to Regulate Foreign Investment required foreign investors to put their factories in underindustrialized areas and place their capital into job-creating areas. The restrictions led to a decline of direct foreign investment from the United States between 1970 and 1977. A more attractive alternative proved to be indirect foreign investments (for example, bank loans) as commercial institutions replaced individuals as the major source of Mexico’s investment capital by 1981.22

The Echeverría administration implemented a foreign policy similar to that of the earlier government of López Mateos (1958–64), derived from the tenets of economic nationalism. The president attempted to broaden the political and economic horizons of Mexico by traveling to thirty-six countries and concluding 160 international agreements. He sought to break the dependency of Mexico on the United States by
forging new trade agreements with Canada, Japan, China, the Soviet Union, and Western and Eastern Europe. He also attempted to expand Mexico’s trade in manufactured articles with the LDCs of Central and South America.\textsuperscript{23}

The realities of a multipolar world changed the Mexican-U.S. relationship. The Vietnam War had not only been a military defeat for the United States; because of the involvement of the mass media, it had been a personal and psychological tragedy for Americans. Above all, it demonstrated the limits of military power, nuclear or conventional. The CIA’s economic indicators revealed a decline of the U.S. share of world GNP between 1960 and 1980, dropping from 31.5 percent in 1960 to 25.9 percent in 1980. While the Soviet Union’s economy was also in relative decline, other powers were rising, especially Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, China, and the European Community. While the passing of the European Age apparently occurred in 1950, by the 1980s it appeared that some of the promises of the Thousand-Year Reich and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere were being realized, not through warfare, but through the peaceful acts of trading states.\textsuperscript{24}

One reaction to the brave new multipolar world was the attempt by Mexico to broaden its commercial landscape through presidential trips, new trade arrangements, and the international agreements outlined earlier. The 1973 Law to Regulate Foreign Investment was another example. In the diplomatic arena, the growing warmth of Mexico’s relationship with Cuba signaled a new era, one in which the Mexican president visited that country for the first time. After the United States engaged in its destabilization program for Chile, an action that eventually led to a CIA-backed coup and the overthrow and death of Salvador Allende, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the military junta that assumed power, denounced the dictatorial nature of the new regime, and gave asylum to many of Allende’s followers. All of this was an assertion by Mexico of its long-standing principles of nonintervention in the hemisphere, self-determination of peoples, and solidarity with Latin America. The Mexican proclamation was hostile to the United States and an affirmation of Mexico’s intent to strengthen its
hemispheric and world economic position. For Mexico, it signaled the end of Cold War politics, that is, bipolar politics, in the hemisphere.25

Since World War II, the United States had been accustomed to pursuing its anticommunist and anti-Soviet actions throughout Latin America, in spite of Latin reservations. At the close of the war, with the division of Germany and the loss of Japan’s colonies, the United States and the Soviet Union were the only military powers of the first magnitude. While the U.S. GNP had surged by more than 50 percent in real terms during the war, Europe (minus the Soviet Union) had slipped by 25 percent. In Latin America, the United States retained wartime institutions and connections to funnel and foster its Cold War (bipolar) concerns—spreading anticommunist propaganda throughout the hemisphere and attempting to get the countries of Latin America to expel communists and break diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.26

Mexico was always in the vanguard in resisting the interests of the United States and in maintaining the traditions of revolutionary nationalism and economic sovereignty. This was one heritage of Mexico’s revolutionary past. Although willing to support the United States in the United Nations in key confrontations with the Soviet Union, there were limits to Mexican support. After the war it did not break diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (reestablished during World War II) or send troops to Korea. In 1952 it was the only country of Latin America not to sign the Inter-American Reciprocal Aid Treaty, a U.S. military assistance pact. In 1954 its OAS (Organization of American States) delegation, meeting at Caracas, defended the principle of non-intervention when the United States sponsored a CIA overthrow of the Guatemalan reformer Jacobo Arbenz. The 1959 Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro once again increased tensions between the two countries, with Mexico maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba and openly condemning the U.S.-backed invasion by exile forces at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) in 1961. Although Lyndon Johnson sent troops into the Dominican Republic in 1965, the relationship between Mexico and the United States normalized in the late sixties as Mexico disap-
peared into the background while the United States was preoccupied with Asian affairs and the Vietnam War.

It must be admitted that Mexico’s independent policy in the Americas, while a source of unease for many Washington bureaucrats, did not seriously impair bilateral relations. It is true that during the early Castro years direct U.S. financial and economic aid to Mexico was minimal, perhaps one effect of Mexico’s autonomous policies. Yet the Mexicans benefited when the United States closed its market to Cuban sugar and increased its trade with Mexico. Although travel back and forth between Havana and Mexico City was permitted, some travelers were placed on a blacklist and had their goods confiscated. It was obvious that the Mexican and U.S. police agencies were cooperating in antirevolutionary actions. In addition, the Mexican military continued to send individuals to the United States for training in counterinsurgency warfare. And, finally, with rumors of a military coup circulating in 1973, Echeverría gave the army a 15 percent pay hike, promoted midlevel officers, and became an official booster of these “professional patriots” with their Brazilian and U.S. ties.27

By 1976, at the end of the Echeverría years, Mexico was in the midst of a political and fiscal crisis. Under attack by the conservatives who constantly reminded Echeverría of Allende’s fate, as well as leftist rural and urban guerrillas, the president made concessions right and left. His rhetoric was louder than his reforms, and the result was unfulfilled expectations for the poor. Echeverría’s attack on ISI and his attempt to diversify markets had only changed the dependency from U.S. investors to transnational corporations (TNCs) operating in an international market. They did not reduce the national debt or increase the domestic demand for manufactured articles. Mexico was still dependent on foreign imports for capital goods and high-technology industry.28

This situation was not unique to Mexico, for Brazil, Argentina, and other Latin American countries faced a similar situation, exacerbated in the mid-1970s by worldwide inflation and recession. Yet, ultimately the president’s unorthodox economics had led to bankrupt steelworks, increased unemployment, a balance-of-trade deficit, and a decline in
the output of basic foodstuffs. When the 1976 statistics were in, inflation stood at over 30 percent, and the accumulated public debt was near the $20 billion (U.S.) mark. The last act of surrender was the devaluation of the peso by 60 percent, changing it from 12.5 pesos to the dollar to more than 22 pesos to the dollar. A depreciation process had been started that would continue throughout the 1980s.29

José López Portillo, the unorthodox minister of treasury in the previous administration, assumed the presidential office in 1976 and immediately announced an alliance for profits between the public and private sectors. The discovery of new oil fields in the Gulf of Campeche, verified in 1981 as 72 billion barrels (placing Mexico second only to Saudi Arabia in terms of reserves), opened Mexico’s doors to international credit without the restrictions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement that had been first negotiated by the Echeverría government. Oil production rose steadily but sensibly during the López Portillo administration, growing from about 80,000 barrels per day in 1976 to 2.3 million barrels a day in 1980. By 1981 Mexico became the world’s fourth largest producer of oil in the world.30 Petrodollars created by oil exports enabled Mexico to forgo the austerity program of tight credit, wage freezes, and low public spending so dear to the hearts of industrialists, bankers, and managers of transnational corporations.31

As director of PEMEX, Jorge Díaz Serrano oversaw a massive undertaking to develop the oil fields. Thousands of rigs were built, platforms constructed, deep water ports dredged, tankers leased, and Texas “roughnecks” brought in to assist the project. Private banks overloaded with OPEC deposits eagerly loaned capital to Mexico. At least one-third of them were from the United States, such as the Bank of America, Citibank, Manufacturers Hanover, Chemical Banking Corporation of New York, and Chase Manhattan.

In its haste, the Mexican government made some miscalculations, such as the ambitious project to build a 1,350 kilometer gas pipeline from Cactus, Chiapas, to the northern border at Reynosa, Tamaulipas, to feed six U.S. companies with gas at a price eight times higher than
that of the Mexican domestic market. When the Jimmy Carter administration opposed the plan, the project came to a sudden halt. The only problem was that the Mexican government had not waited for final approval from the U.S. government before starting construction of the pipeline. Not learning from its history of bilateral relations with the United States, the Mexicans assumed that the U.S. oil companies were allied with the U.S. government, a situation that was not true on at least two prior occasions—the 1927 oil dispute of the Calles years and the 1938 oil expropriation incident.32

During the López Portillo years, Mexico’s role as a leading oil producer allowed it more independence in its foreign policy. In 1978, while refusing to allow the Shah of Iran to reenter Mexico, the Mexican government broke off relations with the Anastasio Somoza regime of Nicaragua. That next year it recognized the revolutionary Sandinista government and offered it technical and economic assistance, including oil. In 1980 PEMEX entered into a protocol with Cuba in which the former agreed to use Mexican technicians to explore Cuba’s sea platform in search of oil. The San José Pact of 1980 allowed the countries of the Caribbean and Central America to purchase Mexican and Venezuelan oil at below market prices with long-term, low-interest loans. Finally, in August 1981, the Mexican and French governments circulated a joint statement recognizing the insurgents in El Salvador as “a representative political force.”33

Needless to say, these acts of oil diplomacy by Mexico ran counter to the United States—an energy-hungry country that feared the results of black gold blackmail—and its interests in the hemisphere. While private groups spoke of the creation of a North American Common Market that would allow Mexican hydrocarbons free access to the U.S. economy, the government of Ronald Reagan (1981–89) talked of free enterprise and maintaining the framework of existing international organizations (in which the United States had a dominant voice). For his part, President López Portillo, in his annual report of September 1981, reiterated his government’s support for Cuba, Nicaragua, and the leftist forces in El Salvador by saying that by “tightening the links of
friendship and cooperation that bind us with the revolutions of Cuba and Nicaragua, we have underscored Mexico's attachment to the political principle of the free determination of peoples.34

The promise to Mexico of becoming a major leader of other developing countries around the world vanished in June 1981 when the price of oil took a drastic drop. A surplus world supply of fuel changed what had been a seller's market into a buyer's market. The origins of the price drop go back to 1978–79, when the Iranian Revolution supposedly resulted in a worldwide oil shortage. More likely, the U.S. and British concerns manipulated the situation to increase the price of oil and thereby make their operations in the North Slope (Alaska) and North Sea profitable. In 1979 U.S. companies began drawing down inventories, cutting back their domestic production, and exporting oil overseas, all while the U.S. administration was deploring the oil scarcity. By 1981 the new oil wells of the United States and the United Kingdom were flowing, and this oil, along with petroleum from the USSR and Mexico (as well as the OPEC countries) created the surplus and the downward trend in prices. Mexico had pinned its hopes on oil, but the pins were loosening much sooner than anyone had expected.35

In 1982 the inflation rate in Mexico exceeded that in the United States, and the peso was once again overvalued in relation to the U.S. dollar. Wealthy businesspeople began to withdraw their money from Mexico and invest it abroad, especially in banks north of the international border. Events transpired so quickly that when the central bank tried to halt the flight of capital, it was too late. The peso lost one-third of its value, and by the summer of 1982 it had sunk to its lowest value ever at the time (100 pesos to the dollar). Despite President López Portillo’s pledge to defend the peso “como un perro,” or like a dog, the currency crisis showed how fragile the Mexican miracle had become in the face of the global oil glut.36 The government devalued the peso nearly 100 percent. Mexico’s financial community panicked as Mexicans began to convert pesos to dollars, and capital took flight. By July 1982 Mexico’s officials told the U.S. Treasury that it could not meet the payments due in August on its $83 billion (U.S.) debt. Mexico was near bankruptcy. Alarm spread throughout the offices of the international
banks, including those in the United States that had financed most of Mexico’s debt. The Federal Reserve, working with international institutions (mainly the IMF), restructured the loan with billions of dollars of credit. Mexico received $1.8 billion from the United States and an additional $3.85 billion from the IMF.37

The price of the bailout was high, as Mexico agreed to deliver the bulk of its prospective gas and oil to the United States at a favorable price and to multiple exchange rates in the future (a process of minidevaluations interspersed with periods when the peso exchange rate is frozen). The government also agreed to an IMF-instituted austerity program that meant wage controls and a cut in government expenditures; price increases for goods and services provided by government agencies like CONASUPO; a move toward opening the market to international competition and eventually seeking membership in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); promotion of exports via the maquiladora industry along the border; a flexible interpretation of the 1973 Foreign Investment Law to encourage foreign investment; and an agreement to reduce by more than 40 percent the number of public sector firms. On 1 September 1982, in his final State of the Nation address, López Portillo nationalized the private banks. A shrinking, if not zero-growth, economy faced the Harvard-trained Miguel de la Madrid (1982–88) as he took the presidential office in December.38

The immediate result of austerity was Mexico’s first favorable balance of trade in many years—$5.5 billion (U.S.) in 1983. Initially, the rate of inflation was reduced, as was the public sector deficit. Between 1983 and 1984, the country’s international reserves increased by more than $4 billion. Then a devastating earthquake hit Mexico City in September 1985. By 1986 the economy worsened as a drastic plunge in oil prices translated into a drop in oil revenues for the state.39

The decline of oil revenues and the continuing economic problems forced Mexico to retreat from its earlier assertive and direct oil diplomacy and cede its role as a power broker in Central America and the Caribbean. The concerns of supporting the Sandinista government, seeking a negotiated settlement in El Salvador, and establishing global initiatives to relieve tensions remained the same, but the methods
were now multilateral and indirect—for example, the creation of the Contadora group (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama) in 1983 to promote a negotiated settlement that would bring peace, avoid an East-West conflict, and indirectly reduce U.S. hegemony in the region.  

These goals of Mexican foreign policy, although tempered with the niceties of diplomatic language, still placed Mexico at odds with the U.S. position in Central America and the Caribbean. In October 1983 U.S. troops invaded Grenada (only forty-eight hours after 241 U.S. marines and sailors were killed in Beirut), and throughout the Reagan era, the United States continued to support counterrevolutionary troops operating in Honduras against the Nicaraguan government. After peace talks broke down in the Mexican resort town of Manzanillo in

Fig. 12. Editorial cartoon by Tom Toles that appeared in the 19 December 1989 Buffalo News
1984, the Reagan administration initiated a destabilization program for Nicaragua that involved extralegal covert forces (outside of and, perhaps, even unknown to the CIA), laundered drug money, and violations of congressional rules concerning aid to the Nicaraguan insurgency (eventually resulting in the Iran-Contra scandal of 1985).

When George H. W. Bush became president in 1989, the contras had tired, Soviet expansionism had declined (a portent of the 1991 disintegration of the USSR), and a conservative government was on the verge of replacing the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Yet, as the December 1989 military invasion of Panama (ostensibly to arrest Manuel Noriega) demonstrated, the United States was unwilling to peacefully relinquish its hegemony over Central America. Again, between January and March 1991, the United States went to war against Iraq, a relatively weak nation (at least by U.S. standards). These actions again increased Mexico’s suspicions of its northern neighbor.

Despite the economic and diplomatic setbacks between 1983 and 1988, the government of de la Madrid continued its program of reconstruction. Exemptions were made to the 1973 investment law in an attempt to attract foreign capital. In opposition to many of Mexico’s businesspeople, Mexico was admitted to GATT in July 1986. And most surprising, the Mexican government sold, liquidated, or transferred more than two hundred “low-priority” state enterprises to private concerns. On the target list were many well-known enterprises, including the Nacional Hotelera chain of five-star hotels, Vehículos Automotores Mexicanos and Renault de México (automobile concerns), Mexicana airlines, the Monterrey foundry, and in 1988, the state-owned copper mine at Cananea. Expected to be sold to an industrial conglomerate for $910 million (U.S), the mine had been a symbol of revolutionary nationalism since the June strike of 1906.41

Following the fiscal crisis of 1982, the private and public members of the U.S. financial community were hyperactive in their attempts to assist Mexico’s economic recovery and maintain in the process their own solvency. In 1984 Mexico negotiated a second agreement in which the banks agreed to multiyear rescheduling. In 1985, their negotiating stance boosted by the Mexican earthquake and with support from the
U.S. government, the Mexicans agreed to the Baker Plan (named for then secretary of treasury James Baker), a “gentler” (than IMF) austerity plan that combined loans and easier repayment terms with promises to privatize state-owned businesses. After the 1986 plunge in oil prices, the IMF and the World Bank recognized the need for compensatory finance with a $2 billion contingency fund that linked Mexico’s growth rate to the amount of money they were willing to loan. Mexico also received lower interest rates than any hitherto charged to LDCs. Then, after the CIA in late 1986 alarmingly warned about destabilizing trends in Mexico, Washington made available a $3.5 billion bridge loan after the Mexican election of 1988. Finally, in early 1990 the Brady Plan was announced (developed by U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady), in which the United States renegotiated Mexico’s public sector debt to some 450 commercial banks around the world.

The social costs of de la Madrid’s program were very high. The burden of austerity had fallen on the working class and the poor—the majority of Mexicans. During the period 1982–86, Mexico’s real GDP per capita dropped 17 percent. Real wages and the purchasing power of the working poor deteriorated. Steep increases in controlled food prices meant that the Mexican people were consuming fewer proteins and calories than ten years earlier, or that in 1982, 47 percent of a family’s salary was spent on food, while in 1985, 64 percent was committed to food expenses. Mexico’s employment problem was aggravated by the stabilization program as well. One estimate suggests that during 1985 about 11 percent of Mexico’s twenty-four million workers were either underemployed or unemployed. It is not surprising that the rate of undocumented immigration to the United States increased during the 1985–86 period.

In the final analysis, then, the benefits of what is euphemistically labeled “austerity” went to the creditor nations in general (Japan and the European Community) and the United States in particular—member states of the IMF and World Bank. More specifically, private capital in Mexico and the United States profited from the financial crisis. Foreign capitalists were invited to ignore investment laws that forbid foreign control of more than 49 percent of a company, and were the recipients,
along with their Mexican counterparts, of over two hundred state-owned companies that had been turned over to the private sector. Mexico facilitated the expansion of foreign corporations such as Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, and Nissan. Mexico’s membership in GATT reflected the new directions of the PRI technocrats who placed high value on free-trade forces with the United States in an effort to seek access to U.S. markets. Finally, in early 1990, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari agreed to entertain the idea of Mexico’s entry into a North American free trade zone, a notion considered ludicrous a decade before.44

Unlike the early 1970s, Mexico’s elites in 1982 could not respond to the financial disaster by attracting foreign loans, nor, as in the late 1970s, could they use oil exports as collateral for foreign indebtedness. As scholar Jeffrey Bortz notes, Mexico’s elites turned to the policy they knew so well from past emergencies, “making the working class pay for the crisis.”45

One justification for the attentiveness of the United States to the Mexican debt crisis was the stake the United States had in maintaining political stability in Mexico, since economic problems in Mexico carried over to the United States. A major reason the United States negotiated a $3.5 billion bridge loan with Mexico was to signal its satisfaction with the results of the 1988 election (in which Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the leftist National Democratic Front were defeated) and to assure the new Salinas administration of U.S. cooperation.

With Mexico attempting to promote export substitution, that is, to diversify its exports away from oil and toward export manufactures, imports were cut drastically. Also, the Mexicans attempted to achieve a favorable balance of trade (exports over imports). In the 1980s economic interdependence translated into fewer U.S. exports to Mexico. For example, exports from Texas to Mexico were, in 1983, one-tenth of what they were in 1981. The failure of Mexico to purchase U.S. goods resulted in the loss of jobs of hundreds of thousands of Americans—from feedstock farmers and Boeing employees to workers at Dow Chemical and the laborers at Caterpillar Corporation of Peoria. In turn, recession in the United States (as in the early 1980s) led to a de-
cline in the ability of the United States to purchase Mexico’s exports, as well as a decline in tourism in Mexico. Again, as we noted before, the economic plight of Mexico’s workers led to an increase of undocumented workers to the United States. Finally, it was not coincidental that cultivation of drug crops expanded greatly after massive public debt crunched Latin America’s traditional economies. The economic tragedies of the 1980s were expressed in the cocaine boom and the flow of cocaine (along with Mexican opium and marijuana) through Mexico to the United States.46

Opium production was legal during World War II, and by the late 1940s the Mexican heroin industry was well established. The opium trade became illegal after World War II. During the 1960s and 1970s, illegal harvesting of opium poppies was initially centered in the Golden Triangle area of the mountains of Sinaloa-Durango-Chihuahua. The import of opium and marijuana to the United States led the Nixon administration to create the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in 1973. During the Echeverría years, money, supplies, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and DEA agents and pilots flowed into Mexico to assist the drug eradication campaign known as Operation Condor.47

Initially, the heroin business was monopolized by Jaime Herrera Neva res, a Durango patriarch who controlled the “heroin trail” between El Paso and Chicago. Across the Sierra Madre in Sinaloa was Pedro Aviles Pérez, a gunslinger whose marijuana network extended from Culiacán to Mexicali and Tijuana. When federal authorities raided Sinaloa in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Aviles Pérez’s apprentices moved the operation inland to Guadalajara. Under the Guadalajara mafia, the production of marijuana became big business, operating large plantations with modern equipment and fertilizers.48

When DEA officials successfully cut off the flow of cocaine through Miami in the early 1980s, the Colombian dealers sought new channels to the U.S. market through Puerto Rico and northwestern Mexico. In Mexico, cocaine traffickers channeled their illegal goods through the established networks in which marijuana and heroin moved. The narcotics traffic made multimillionaires out of cartel members as nar-codólares and firearms in the United States were exchanged for brown
heroin, marijuana, and cocaine (and a crystalline form of cocaine that can be smoked called “crack”) from Mexico. With the drug money and illegal trade, a growing number of Mexican public officials turned corrupt—politicians, high-ranking police officers, and members of the military.49

Between 1982 and 1984, a combined force of DEA agents, the Mexican army, and members of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (MFJP) carried out raids on marijuana fields in Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, and Los Bufalos, Chihuahua. The success of these forays had two results: marijuana growers retreated from the exposed foothills to the inaccessible mountainous interior of the Tarahumara country of Chihuahua and Sinaloa, and to deter future raiders, the drug cartel in Guadalajara planned a series of attacks on Americans, including one that led to the kidnapping, torture, and death of DEA agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena outside of Guadalajara in February 1985.50

The death of Camarena and the torture of another DEA agent, along with the initial unwillingness of the Mexican authorities to investigate the murder and harassment of agents, led to an outcry in the U.S. Congress. In 1986 congressional Mexico-bashing resulted in legislation that would enable the U.S. president to refuse financial aid (including favorable loans) to any country unwilling to actively pursue drug traffickers. Given Mexico’s financial problems, this was a form of leverage that could not be dismissed.51

After the Camarena affair, Rafael Caro Quintero, a member of the Guadalajara drug cartel, was arrested and convicted for crimes related to drug trafficking. Consequently, nineteen people were charged with kidnapping, drug trafficking, and murder in connection with the Guadalajara slaying. Several hundred federal police officers were fired, and the major agencies were eventually dissolved.52 But, the major dilemma remained: the problem was as much one of demand as supply. The street value of drugs in North American cities continued to decline, indicating that drugs were more available than ever to meet what was evidently an increasing demand (with the single exception of marijuana in which demand was declining while higher potency varieties were being grown in greenhouses, basements and attics,
and national forests across the United States). Even when the cocaine supply was temporarily limited during the summer of 1990, the immediate result was not less drug use but more gun smuggling and gang fighting in the inner cities of the United States.

By 1989 President Salinas de Gortari promised Mexican cooperation in the struggle against the drug lords, noting for the first time the national security concerns of Mexico in which drug kingpins fielded their own armies and threatened the integrity of the state, either through military actions or bribery of public officials. As the Manuel Buendía and Camarena incidents of 1984–85 revealed, Salinas’s apprehensions about outlaw police and corruption in the highest level of government were all too real. In June 1989 José Antonio Zorrilla Pérez, ex-chief of the Federal Directorate of Security (DFS), was implicated in the 30 May 1984 murder of Mexico’s leading journalist, Manuel Buendía. Buendía, whose daily column appeared on the front page of Excelsior, was shot and killed as he left his downtown office. He had been highly critical of the CIA and the DFS, an internal security political police force assigned to the Ministry of Interior and at that time under the direction of Zorrilla.53

Again, on 1 February 1990, Manuel Ibarra-Herrera, the former head of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (an elite police force under the Attorney General’s Office that specializes in espionage and arms and drug trafficking), was indicted by a federal grand jury in Los Angeles on charges of murder in the 1985 death of DEA agent Camarena. Whatever the constitutional issues and legal rights involved, the fact remained that the security forces were out of control and police corruption had penetrated the inner circle of the Mexican government. And corruption, among the police or other groups, was the major political issue of the 1980s, in the gubernatorial and senate elections of 1985 and 1986 and the presidential election of 1988.54

The state elections of 1986 in Chihuahua spread far beyond the boundaries of the state, becoming a kind of referendum on the legitimacy of the ruling party, PRI. The opposition National Action Party (PAN), a conservative group that had its origins in the late 1930s, was strong in Mexico’s North, especially Chihuahua, and was split between
a traditional, proclerical faction and the “neo-panistas” who favored free trade, private business, and political struggle. PAN’s candidate for governor was Francisco Barrio, a panista victor in the earlier mayoral race in Ciudad Juárez. With the world’s press in attendance, it was commonly believed that PRI would have to run a clean election and could not risk the bad publicity of a rigged contest. When the returns came in, PRI candidate Fernando Baeza had defeated the PAN candidate by 59.6 percent to 34.4 percent. PAN cried fraud and immediately sent its followers to the streets to demonstrate against a contest allegedly characterized by prestuffed ballot boxes, police raids, and the expulsion of PAN poll watchers from their stations.55

This set the stage for the controversial presidential election of 1988. PRI’s candidate was U.S.-educated Carlos Salinas de Gortari, a man who desired to continue the policies of the de la Madrid administration and represented the internationalist wing of the bourgeoisie, plus some of the newer technocrats in the party. The free-market PAN, strong in the northern private sector and supported by the conservative Monterrey industrialist group, chose neo-panista Manuel Clouthier as its candidate. A coalition of leftist groups, including the Democratic Current that split from PRI, formed the National Democratic Front and its nominee was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, governor of Michoacán and son of the former president, Lázaro Cárdenas.56

Cárdenas represented the Echeverría wing of PRI, a faction that included traditional politicians, the PEMEX union leadership, the army, a part of the public sector bourgeoisie, and Mexico City’s federal bureaucrats. The National Democratic Front opposed the IMF austerity plan, called for restoration of protectionism and state enterprise, and generally opposed the rule of Mexico by bankers. Cárdenas, the priista turned reformer, wanted a new and easier repayment schedule of Mexico’s $100 billion foreign debt, and with revenues spared from the debt, he urged government spending in the areas of social security, health, education, and housing, with additional credit for campesino farmers. His critics called his program socialistic and communistic, the intellectuals called it populism, but Cárdenas knew his father would call it revolutionary nationalism.57
The national results—50.4 percent for PRI, 31.2 percent for Cárdenas, and 17.1 percent for PAN—very likely understated the strength of the opposition. Although PRI won the election as expected, its strength was weak in the panista North and almost nonexistent in the Federal District. Mexico City, containing one-fourth of the nation’s population and the traditional power center of the country, gave Cárdenas 49.22 percent of its vote, with another 21 percent going to PAN. *Chilangos* (people born in the Federal District), now allied with the reform wing of PRI, were opposing de la Madrid’s program of federal decentralization: participants once again in the perennial urban-rural struggle that has characterized the history of Mexico City with its provinces.58

As Salinas, the young bureaucratic infighter who had previously been the minister of planning and budget, faced the future, he was confronted with a variety of dilemmas. How could he manage a society that was becoming more urbanized every year with a party that was losing its urban base? Could he further the democratization process and still expect PRI to maintain power? If, however, he continued the traditions of cooptation and repression, would not political instability and revolutionary nationalism be the result? And how could he implement the IMF austerity plan without either increasing social unrest or becoming a captive of the international bankers?

And what about the conservative challenge from PAN and the panista stronghold in northern Mexico? Was this not in microcosm a North-South rivalry that reflected the realities of the conflict between the United States and Mexico? Once again, the borderlands mirrored the differences between *ricos* and *pobres*, creditor and debtor, gringos and greasers. Much of Mexico’s future depended on events in the Gran Chichimeca—that halfway house for a transit Mexico of poor workers, drug traffickers, maquiladora laborers, and other assorted “Mechicanos.”
9 Mexamerica

The cities [such as El Paso and Ciudad Juárez or Calexico and Mexicali] couple like reluctant lovers in the night, embracing for fear that letting go could only be worse.

Tom Miller, *On the Border*

That region of North America where the two societies of Mexico and the United States come together and overlap is known as Mexamerica. Historically, it has been a shifting cultural zone, known to the Aztecs as the “land of the uncivilized dogs,” or what the Spaniards called the Gran Chichimeca. That area has been called the Spanish borderlands during the later colonial period, El Norte and La Frontera during the days it belonged to Mexico, and the Greater Southwest (from a U.S. perspective) or Greater Northwest (from the Mexican view) in more recent history. The last terms attempt at least to express the notion that this is a geographic region with some unity and reflect traits of both parent cultures. These traits are collectively known as “border culture,” a reference to the twin societies that have developed along the 1,952-mile international boundary legally separating the United States from Mexico.¹

As a geographic zone, Mexamerica defies precise definition. If one considers demography, then Mexamerica is much more than the series of twin cities that dot the border; much more than the populations that are found on both sides of the barbed wire and wall dividing Sonora from Arizona, or along the Rio Grande (or Río Bravo as the Mexicans know it) boundary. If Mexico City is the civic center of the populated heart of central Mexico, then Los Angeles (along with the Tijuana–San Diego corridor), with the second largest population of Mexicans outside of Mexico City, is the urban nucleus of Mexamerica.

As historian Lester Langley notes, the northern limits of Mexamerica can be delineated with a “swathlike brushstroke” that meanders
“across southern California, through central Arizona and New Mexico” and then plunges “across the arid Texas west toward San Antonio on to the Gulf,” with its southern boundary the populated regions of central Mexico. Again, and no more precisely, it is the borderlands of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas in the United States, and the six Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. Indian Mexico presses from the south to remind Mexamerica of its cultural and historical roots; the industrial United States pushes from the north to shape its economic realities; and migrant workers from every corner of Mexico head north for a small share of the material wealth generated by the U.S. economy. The result has been the emergence of conflicting forces that have collided in the state of mind known as Mexamerica, a cultural reality that harbors psychological and material components best reflected in the self-portrait by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo in her 1932 depiction of the borderlands (see figure 13).²

The popular culture of Mexamerica reflects this blending of Mexico and the United States. Old Spanish architecture is an important part of the heritage, mythology, and tourist industries of the southwestern United States. Anglo-Americans enjoy the chimichangas and gorditas offered by Taco Bell and other “Mexican” restaurants (such as the fast food restaurants in southern California called Macheezmo Mouse—trendy places that merge fitness madness with a “Disneyesque” atmosphere to serve low-fat, low-cholesterol fajitas and burritos). Mexamerica is a culinary region based on the beef culture of Mexico’s northern plains, from carne asada and wheat tortillas in Sonora, to the green and red chiles of New Mexico, to the tacos de camarrón of Baja California, to the new Mexican bistro scene in Tucson, Arizona, which offers fusion dishes that include a burrito stuffed with mole poblano. In terms of other forms of popular culture, the cowboy as a U.S. icon has deep roots in the ranching traditions of the Spanish borderlands. The cowboy is a combination of the ranchero and vaquero of northern Mexico with the six-shooter and Stetson hat of Texas fame. Together they have provided a gendered tradition of the frontier for both societies. The Texas Tornados, a pop-rock-country group of Texan and Mexican musicians, put Tex-Mex music on the map in the 1990s.³
Although the term Mexamerica suggests an area that has undergone an organic process of bilingualism, biculturalism, and binationalism, the interpenetration of both U.S. and Mexican social and economic influences within the border region has not been that complete. University of California professor Raúl A. Fernández has suggested that to call the borderlands area “Mexamerica” is to engage in hyperbole, and he may be correct if by so doing a false impression of homogeneity is created. As Fernández notes, the region is the place where the ebb and flow of tourists, trade, workers, and information between the two countries has created a bicultural economy, but an economy characterized by dependency as well as interdependency, by populated urban centers as well as by dispersed rural towns.

At least three distinct geographic and economic zones can be distinguished—northwest (Baja and Sonora), central (Chihuahua), and northeast (Tamaulipas). Each is tied to its U.S. counterpart but has few links to central Mexico and practically no integration with each other. These enclaves point to the lack of a uniform degree of acculturation throughout the borderlands, a condition as true for the pre-Columbian Gran Chichimeca as it is today.4

Yet Mexamerica is a region of interborder activity and intraborder commotion—of hustle and bustle, of negotiated chaos, of legality and illegality. A description of Mexamericana in early 2009 would include a wide variety of peoples. The proud Mixtec Indians—the Cloud People of Oaxaca—speak little English or Spanish and work without appropriate paperwork in the fields of faraway California so that their earnings can be sent to the town hall in Tequixtepec to pay for municipal services. A retired couple from Michigan live in a trailer park in Texas designed for the over-fifty-five community; these “snow birds” eat hamburgers with jalapeños from the local McDonald’s and, while resenting the Mexican influence of the area, employ a chicana maid and shop for discounted items in Reynosa. A Polish American executive from Buffalo, New York, who works for the Trico Products Corporation leaves his home in Brownsville, Texas, every weekday morning to commute to the company’s assembly plant in Matamoros. A Mexican citizen living in Ciudad Juárez commutes each workday to El Paso, where he has a full-time job in a department store and resident status in the United States. A black bow hangs in the town hall of the central Mexican farm community of Pabellón de Arteaga, home of seven of the eighteen undocumented workers who suffocated in a boxcar in Sierra Blanca—victims of the Texas sun. A Tarahumara Indian abandons his cave dwelling near Yoquivo in the Sierra Madre Occidental and travels several hundred miles to Ojinaga to barter for ax heads made in the United States. A pilot from Tucson delivers guns to his contacts in Sahuariapa, Sonora, flying on to the rugged Barranca de Cobre country of Chihuahua to make a hemp pickup and returning with his load to a remote landing strip near Hermanas, New Mexico. And cowboy capitalists in Phoenix and Chihuahua City, one Anglo and one Mexican, form a partnership to furnish northern Mexican cities with satellite
dishes, made from parts assembled in Tijuana, so that Casas Grandes entrepreneurs can receive NFL football games on Sunday.ª These scenarios reflect the diversity and dependency of the region—the result of an almost six-hundred-year process in which Mexamerica, as a peripheral area, has been incorporated into the global economy. Incorporation began in pre-Columbian times when several trading centers developed in the Gran Chichimeca. There items were channeled, swapped, bartered, and exchanged between nomadic bands and sedentary folks living in the basins and on the ranges and plains of the Gran Chichimeca and those living in the western and northern reaches of Mesoamerica.

Political and cultural developments in Mesoamerica did not occur on the same scale in what we are calling Mexamerica. Among the Indians of the greater U.S. Southwest and northwest Mexico, there was little differentiation in material and living conditions.© The Gran Chichimeca is defined culturally, therefore, by what was present at the time the Spaniards first arrived there and by what was absent. We have already discussed some of the elements that were present, including agriculture, pottery, aggregated multiroom pueblos, dispersed hamlets (rancherías), and in some places public architecture.

Absent were state-level governments and bureaucracies, well-defined social classes, writing systems, densely populated urban centers, and large public architecture similar to that found in Teotihuacán, Monté Alban, and Palenque. The indigenous peoples of the Gran Chichimeca developed their basic cultural patterns through a combination of their own invention and acceptance of some dimensions of Mesoamerican culture, including but not limited to basic crops, pottery designs, and religious traditions, adapting these to a landscape that was as ecologically diverse as it was arid.© After 1300 CE, the trading centers of the region declined, and Gran Chichimeca life became increasingly less complex. Before the Spaniards came in the sixteenth century, Athapaskan bison hunters appeared and made trade contacts with the surviving Pueblo villages around the Pecos basin. By the time of Spanish contact, there were more than a hundred Pueblo villages, including today’s Hopi, Zuni, and Acoma Pueblos.

Best known of the Athapaskans were the Navajo and Apache. The
Navajos settled northwest of the Pueblo heartland and soon acquired Spanish traits from their Pueblo neighbors. They were particularly successful in making use of the livestock, especially the *churro* sheep that the Spaniards had introduced into New Mexico. The Navajos developed a pastoral life, centered on sheep raising and agriculture—the women owned and cared for the sheep, and weaved woolen garments on the vertical loom (the latter a gift from the Pueblos), while the men adopted the horse as a means of transport and a vehicle for warfare. In the seventeenth century the Plains Apaches also adopted the horse for hunting, raiding, fighting, and trading. The livestock herds of Spanish presidios and missions beckoned the Apache. Slave raids increased. More trade goods translated into an expanded need for Spanish wares by the Pueblos to meet the increased demands. The spiral of dependency had been started.

While the Apaches were raiders, not all of the fighting was initiated by indigenous groups (despite what the Spanish sources tell us). Slave raiding was done as much by the Spaniards as by the Apaches. Many of these Indian slaves, Apache and otherwise, were forced to labor in mining camps, haciendas, and towns. Ethnohistorians and archaeologists generally agree that the relationship between the Athapaskans and the Pueblos was essentially commercial in nature before the coming of the Spaniards, and not predicated on warfare or raiding. The Plains Apaches provided many commercial items for the Pueblos, including buffalo hides, antelope skins, and dried meat. Most of the fighting that took place during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680–92 was done by the Pueblos, without the direct participation of the Navajos or Apaches. Even after the Pueblo Revolt, relations between the Athapaskans and Pueblos, and to the southwest the Pimas (of southern Arizona and northern Sonora), remained good. It was the Spanish policy of divide and rule that eventually destroyed these friendly relationships.

The Comanches form an interesting contrast with the Apaches. Throughout much of the eighteenth century, until the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763 (when the French “lost” North America to the British), the Comanches reigned as lords of the plains. Located on the southern plains, with the French to the northeast and the Spanish to
the southwest, the Comanches were strategically situated between the gunpowder and equestrian frontiers. Armed with firearms and horses, they were highly skilled fighters who soon dominated the raiding and trading of the plains. Exchanging buffalo skins, captives, and guns for Spanish horses, they established extensive trading connections in New Mexico.

While Comanche fortunes improved, some Pueblo villages were abandoned. Meanwhile the Apaches were wedged between permanent Spanish settlements near Santa Fe to the north and Chihuahua to the south. Suffering the consequences of a Spanish policy that encouraged the Comanches and Utes to wage war on them, the Apaches were forced off the plains and into the range and basin country of southern Arizona, Sonora, and Nueva Vizcaya. Comanche intrusions made it difficult for the Apache to acquire either guns from French traders or horses from Spanish merchants. As conditions worsened, many Apaches were used as forced labor in the mines, factories, and farms of northern New Spain. Remaining Apaches engaged in counterraiding against Spaniards, Pueblos, Comanches, and other indigenous groups. An era of endemic warfare ensued.

Toward the end of the Spanish period, between 1780 and 1820, the region of the Gran Chichimeca changed from a marginal to a dependent periphery, with trading relationships no longer based on kinship ties but unequal exchange—that is, one trading partner (the Spanish) taking advantage of disparate values for some products. Spain initiated what Eric Wolf calls an advanced tributary mode of production. Its most telling feature was the use of the military apparatus (presidios and militias) and the church (missions and the policy of reducción, or congregating dispersed Indian settlements into one area) to coerce and control the indigenous population.

Spain’s so-called Bourbon reforms lowered the costs of defense and administration on the frontier and brought peace to the region. This was the result of a variety of policies and practices, including the creation of “a fund for allies” that induced peaceful behavior from the more nomadic groups with bribes of gifts, rations, liquor, and low-quality weapons for hunting; an alliance with Comanches that led to
the military reduction of the Apaches; a “divide-and-rule” policy that created Spanish allies who suppressed other nomadic peoples and increased Spanish control over all Indians; and the “tribalization” of Indian groups, or put another way, the exercise of political centralization so that a variety of bands were forced to unite under a cacique who mediated the relationship with the Spanish.

The initiation of peace accelerated trade. From Chihuahua came tools, arms, fabrics, boots, clothing, shoes, chocolate, tobacco, sugar, and liquors; from New Mexico came sheep, raw wool, hides (antelope, buffalo, deer), salt, pine nuts, El Paso brandy, and captives. Many Indian bands were destroyed; some, such as the Comanche, were reduced into bands and subdued. New Mexico became increasingly dependent on Old Mexico, a periphery of a periphery.

During the Mexican period, from 1821 to 1845, the Gran Chichimeca underwent a transition from a dependent fringe to a full-blown periphery. Initially, the influence of Mexico City was weak, which allowed the region to gradually become economically incorporated into the developing U.S. economy. The rise of trade between Independence, Missouri, and Santa Fe, New Mexico (via the Santa Fe Trail), meant that manufactured articles (such as cotton clothing) from the United States would eventually displace productive goods from Chihuahua. Mules and specie poured out of Mexico to pay for the new wares coming in from Missouri.

As the historian Andrés Reséndez has argued, the inhabitants of the Gran Chichimeca, particularly those living in the far north, came in contact with U.S. expansionism in the guise of a powerful economic and cultural phenomenon that proceeded to transform their daily lives and their loyalties. As fronterizos began to participate in a market economy that was largely dependent on the United States, they began to make individual and communal choices that would acquire significance by the time the United States invaded Mexico in 1846. During the Mexican period, whole provinces such as Texas and New Mexico gravitated toward the U.S. orbit; at the end of the day, local elites and regional power brokers saw their fortunes linked more concretely with the United States, especially those whose wealth was tied up in land
and commerce. At least in economic terms, the transition from remote Mexican province to U.S. territory was not as unsettling to many fronterizos despite the territorial cession.10

With the conclusion of the Mexican War, the northern half of Mexico was transformed into the vital expanding economy of the United States. Indigenous trade declined, Indian bands were destroyed or concentrated into reservations, and the practice of raiding and endemic warfare ceased. The Comanche Indians were forced by 1867 to settle in a small part of the Indian Territory (Oklahoma); the Apaches were pacified by 1886 when Geronimo was captured, and he and his Chiricahua Apache followers were sent to penal colonies in Florida where they were imprisoned until 1913. Nomadic and seminomadic existence ended with Indians coming under the jurisdiction of the state—first U.S. and later Mexican (during the porfiriato). By 1900 the Mexican frontier had been transformed into a border, politically influenced by the centralized state in Mexico City but economically dependent on the United States. The Gran Chichimeca was fully incorporated into the capitalist market of the United States, and Mexamerica became the meeting ground between U.S. capital and Mexican labor.11

Mexamerica is the home of several ethnic groups. The majority population on the U.S. side is Anglo (the so-called white population for census purposes). In 1980 whites outnumbered nonwhites by 4 to 1 in Arizona, 3 to 1 in California, and 2 to 1 in Texas. However, in New Mexico the number of Anglos to non-Anglos (Hispanics, blacks, and Indians) in 1980 was 695,203 Anglos to 604,765 non-Anglos, or about a 1.2 to 1.0 ratio. When all of California was considered, there were about 28 million Anglos living in the border states by 1980. Asians, especially the Chinese, played an important role in the history of California and Sonora. California is also home to large numbers of people of Japanese and Filipino ancestry. In 1980 blacks were 7 percent of the population of California, and 12 percent of the inhabitants of Texas (about 1.7 million in each state).

By 1990 it was estimated that there were 22.4 million Americans of Hispanic background in the United States, with California and Texas ranking first and second, respectively, as the states with the largest
number of Hispanics. In 2005 the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the Hispanic population at almost 43 million, surpassing the African American population as the largest minority group in the United States. Hispanics constituted 14 percent of the total population of the United States, not including the almost 4 million residents of Puerto Rico. And as we mentioned in chapter 2, just over 15 percent of the total U.S. population was Hispanic by 2008, or 45 million people.

The rate of growth has been sharp, and the numbers impressive; sociologists and demographers are still crunching the statistics as they try to flesh out their social significance. For example, about one of every two people added to the U.S. population between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005, was Hispanic; the U.S. Census Bureau is projecting that the Hispanic population will constitute 24 percent of the total population by 2050. The number of U.S. household residents (age five and older) who speak Spanish at home numbered more than 30 million, constituting a ratio of more than 1 in 10 household residents. The growth of the Hispanic population in the last two decades, as we have seen, is due to increased birth rates, lower death rates, and the massive influx of migrant workers.

As for American Indians, there are currently 154 tribes recognized by the federal government that are located in the border states, totaling nearly nine hundred thousand individuals out of a total U.S. Indian population of nearly 2.5 million, with the Navajo nation being the largest group. On the other side of the international boundary, the Mexican borderlands has some of the smallest indigenous-language-speaking populations in the country, with Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila having less than 1 percent native speakers. The second largest indigenous community of Mexamerica (after the Navajo) is the Tarahumara of Chihuahua (over sixty-five thousand).

Of all the groups in Mexamerica, Indians find themselves on the bottom of the social ladder, whether in the U.S. Southwest or the Mexican border area. When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, Native Americans inhabiting the border area were required by the new rules to refrain from crossing a political line that had little or no meaning to them. For example, in 1853 the Gadsden Purchase cre-
ated an international boundary line that ran through Tohono O’Odham (Pápago) traditions lands, leaving half in the Pimería Alta (Arizona) and half in Sonora, Mexico. In 1874 the first Tohono O’Odham reservation was established, making the O’Odham in the United States wards of the U.S. government, while Mexican O’Odham became acculturated second- and third-class citizens.

While most Indian communities in the Gran Chichimeca were reduced in size and number (some like the Hopi and Maricopa, or Pee Posh, Indians lost population due to diseases such as smallpox and malaria, others by drought and food shortages), most were changed or destroyed by the encroachments of Anglos pushing west and Mexicans moving north. Perhaps the most serious was the treatment of the Navajo in 1863 when their lands were destroyed by Kit Carson and the U.S. Army. Carson pursued a scorched-earth policy that forcibly removed the Navajos from northeastern Arizona to Fort Sumner (Bosque Redondo) in central New Mexico. In 1865, 80 percent of the 148 slaves enumerated in one inventory of the New Mexico Territory were listed as Navajo (many of whom were children). Other incidents included the slaughter of Mohave warriors by soldiers from Fort Mohave in 1859; by 1890 the Mohave were living in abject poverty.

In 1871 Yavapai, who were called “roving Apaches” by the Anglo settlers, were first moved to the Rio Verde Reservation in 1871, and four years later were forced to march 180 miles to the San Carlos Apache Reservation where they joined their fellow “forced reservation” companions from the Tonto, White Mountain, Cibecue, and Chiricahua Apache communities. At the same time, the Hualapai of Grand Canyon country were removed to the Colorado River Indian Reservation after years of hostilities. After 1860 the Havasupai were gradually pushed out of the Grand Canyon and adjacent lands of Arizona, a situation that did not improve until the 1970s. Meanwhile U.S. farmers were using and wasting irrigation water from the Gila River, causing a clash of cultures between Anglos and the Akimel O’Odham, while Mormon settlers were moving into traditional San Juan Southern Paiute territory.

Two groups were able to use the boundary to their advantage: many
Yaquis fled from Mexican exploitation in Sonora to refuges in Arizona, while the Kickapoos were able to find deliverance from their Texas persecutors by establishing themselves across the boundary in Coahuila at their Nacimiento colony. Yet both peoples today live at the edge of U.S. or Mexican society.\textsuperscript{15}

As a people who successfully resisted assimilation into the majority “white” culture, the Yaqui of Sonora exceeded all others. Yaqui resistance to the \textit{yoris} (the white men) and to \textit{yori} domination followed three patterns—accommodation, rebellion, and incorporation into a larger political movement. Accommodation has occurred twice in their history: first was the long period in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when they were missionized and under Jesuit tutelage; the second came after 1940 and continues to this day. When the Jesuits reduced the eighty widely scattered hamlets of the Yaquis to eight pueblos, they consolidated and redefined Yaqui cultural pride. The Yaqui developed an allegiance to the missionaries, who in turn protected them from Spanish outsiders. During this period, the Yaquis became economically self-sufficient, working on communal lands, producing the new crops of wheat and cotton, and developing a new ranching industry, and, at times, loaning their labor to the mining camps. Even when the Jesuits were expelled in 1767, the Yaquis were able to maintain their independence. By contrast, Yaqui acquiescence to the Mexican state today—working and living on a reduced reserve of land—has been the result of a forced submission.\textsuperscript{16}

The second type of Yaqui response was rebellion. Their first autonomous rebellion was the 1740 uprising, aided in part by their southern neighbors, the Mayos. In 1825 Juan Banderas cleared the Yaqui valley as a protest against levies of troops and produce. Banderas’s call for a separate Indian republic came close to realization when José María Leyva Cajeme organized and governed a Yaqui state-within-a-state from 1875 until his death in 1886. During the porfiriato (1876–1911), the Yaquis entered the final phase of rebellion by developing the tactics of guerrilla warfare. As we have seen, the state responded by sending many Yaquis into virtual slavery on the henequen plantations of the Yucatán. Many escaped the terrors of captivity by fleeing to Arizona.\textsuperscript{17}
Finally, after 1910, the Yaquis were incorporated into the Mexican nation because of the Mexican Revolution. They became national revolutionaries, especially gaining fame as the fierce fighters of Alvaro Obregón and Adolfo de la Huerta. Unfortunately for the Yaqui, the goals of the Mexican Revolution were modernization and nationalism, not autonomy for traditional groups. Today they are treated just like any other peasant group, even though they still maintain their identity.

As for the Kickapoos, in the seventeenth century they were an Algonquian-speaking group that lived around lower Michigan, between Lake Michigan and Lake Erie. They had been driven there by the Iroquois and other eastern Native Americans. In the eighteenth century, they were at times allies, and on other occasions enemies, of the French, British, and Americans. During the French and Indian Wars, the Kickapoos defended the Ohio-Mississippi perimeter of New France and allied themselves with the Ottawa Indian leader Pontiac. They later switched their allegiance to the British, and after 1779, the Americans. However, during the War of 1812, they were arrayed with the British and the Shawnee chief Tecumseh against the Americans. Throughout this period, the Kickapoos followed fur trappers of various nationalities, and the result of forced movements, broken treaties, and continuous warfare was fragmentation and dispersal.

Some of the bands moved to the Osage River in Missouri, others went to eastern Illinois, while still others went on to Arkansas and Texas-Coahuila. When the Texans gained their independence from Mexico, the Kickapoo were again dispersed because of the Anglo fear that they would side with the Mexicans to regain their lost territory. By 1864 a contingent of Kickapoos had arrived in Mexico from Oklahoma to occupy land abandoned by the Seminoles. This was the Hacienda El Nacimiento, their current home. Between 1865 and 1885 the Mexican Kickapoos raided Texas ranches for mules and horses.

During the Mexican Revolution, the Kickapoo fought with Victoriano Huerta, thereby earning the enmity of Venustiano Carranza and his forces. Hiding out in the sierra at night, they were not able to return to their tranquil existence until 1920. In the mid-1980s a small band of
Kickapoos made their home beneath the International Bridge connecting Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Coahuila. What had originally been an eastern woodlands Native American group was now a permanent member of the “Club de Chichimeca.”

A current trend is illustrated by the sixty-five thousand Tarahumaras who live today in the canyon valleys, foothills, and eastern plains of the Sierra Madre Occidental of Chihuahua, an important remnant of the semiagricultural people who inhabited this area in the sixteenth century. Originally, like the Navajos, their lands lacked utility for outsiders. The early intrusions by Spanish miners, farmers, ranchers, and missionaries were met by violence and passive resistance. Eventually, the Tarahumaras adapted the goat to their agriculture (“a gift of the gods, not the Spaniards”) and withdrew to the mountain interior to find more fertile lands and to escape the Spaniard. The Jesuit reductions were not completely successful in the Sierra Tarahumara, and the Jesuits themselves were expelled from New Spain after 1767. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Spanish and Mexican resources were too limited for frontier activity in the Sierra, and therefore, the Tarahumara regained some lost autonomy over their lives.

The modernization of the twentieth century witnessed a new mining era, the development of the railroad, and a forestry industry that pushed the Tarahumara into marginal lands insufficient for adequate maize production. Being forced to supplement their agricultural incomes, the Tarahumara have left the Sierra to work for non-Indians. Those who remain have been pushed farther west and south, with the best lands being occupied by mestizos and outsiders. Tarahumaras, who in 1900 were equal in numbers to outsiders, are now outnumbered by mestizos more than six to one. Today the Tarahumara suffer from a 60 percent infant mortality rate, and more than four-fifths of them have tuberculosis. They are indeed the new poor of the Gran Chichimeca.

Borderland Mexican Americans (also known as Latinos in California, Hispanos in New Mexico, and Chicanos elsewhere) face the dilemma of living in a microsociety in which the political and economic forces
are controlled by Anglos, but their cultural, religious, and spiritual life (not to mention the realities of their Indian past) bind them to Mexico. Their nineteenth-century heritage has been one of being foreigners in their native land, where Anglos and Mexican Americans have clashed over property rights, religious freedom, and personal liberty, with the Mexican Americans, more often than not, coming out on the short end. This conflict has led to eruptions of violence, with Mexican Americans suffering discrimination, harassment, land invasion, rape, theft, murder, and lynching (in spite of the promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo). On several occasions, Mexican Americans have fled the United States for the safety of Mexico, the most recent and best known movement being the expatriation of over a half-million Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression. Most Mexican Americans are not what Octavio Paz called *pachucos*—people without a culture—although the question of identity has been a complicated one for many of them, should they identify with the majority Anglo culture or their “*hermanos y hermanas*” south of the border, or combine those features that are the most appealing.25

The legacy of a militarily superior English-speaking society imposing an international boundary over what had been a part of Mexico continues today. Language is one barometer of the changing Mexican American reality. Traditionally, many Mexican Americans were punished for speaking Spanish in the public schools, with officials inflicting sanctions on Spanish speakers. In the process many Mexican Americans became ashamed to identify with either Mexico today or their Spanish-speaking past. The advent of bilingual education in the 1970s, an event illustrative of a certain degree of enlightenment, was opposed by many members of the Anglo majority. Part of the opposition came in the form of English-only groups that moved to make English the official language in several states.26

One association clustered around former Senator S. I. Hayakawa from California, who succeeded in 1986 in making English the official language of that state. Like Hayakawa, many of the English-only crowd believed a conspiracy was afoot to divide the country into a bilingual and bicultural society. Yet, as a recent Rand Corporation study
indicates, 95 percent of the children of Mexican immigrants can speak English, and by the second generation more than half can speak only English. And perhaps, as the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes notes, when there is a proposition to make the English language the official language, it means one thing—“that English is no longer the official language of the state of California.”

Hispanic ambivalence is increased when borderland Mexican Americans visit Mexico and are unable to converse in Spanish, or at best they speak “Spanglish,” a mixture of Spanish and English. Many learn to their horror that most Mexicans consider them culturally corrupt—show-offs who act superior with their flashy clothes and cars, imitating the worst features of U.S. materialistic society, while either not speaking the language of the mother country or speaking a mongrelized version.

For their part, Mexican Americans also have inconsistent attitudes about Mexico and its sons and daughters (Mexican immigrants). Many, especially in working-class ranks, although sympathetic to the Mexican poor, see Mexican migrants as unwanted rivals and support those Anglos who want to increase quotas and employer sanctions. Many Mexican Americans, while looking south of the border in search of cultural heritage, feel contempt for the corruption of the Mexican government and its unwillingness or inability to solve its many economic and social ills. This ambivalence in the Mexican American community is in part generational, with first generation Mexicans attached to Mexico, the second generation seeking acculturation and integration into the majority culture, and a third generation stressing ethnic revival. Likewise, the Mexican government has shown its own ambivalence in its attitudes and relations with the Mexican American community by seeking and opposing aid in its attempt to influence U.S. policy toward Mexico, although President Vicente Fox made it a top priority of his administration (2000–2006) to succor the favor of all Mexicans living north of the international border.

Whatever the result of this 160-year-history of Mexicano-Anglo relations, most Anglos and Mexican Americans view the future with both hope and apprehension. One estimate suggests that in twenty years,
at the current rate of growth, people of color will be in the majority in California. The same estimate suggests that minorities will be the majority in the United States within fifty years. Whether these projections are correct or not, it is obvious that a major issue for all Americans will be whether the future of America’s minorities will be one of repression or accommodation.

A third group living in Mexamerica is made up of the Mexican borderlanders who dwell south of the international boundary in the Mexican North, the norteños or fronterizos. Unlike the Mexican American population in the United States, Mexico’s North has few American Mexicans apart from assorted wealthy entrepreneurs who have “californicated” the Baja and Sonora, and those few Mormons who have sought Jehovah in Chihuahua (in 1960 only sixty thousand persons of U.S. birth lived in Mexico’s six border states). Yet, the cultural and economic influence of the United States on the Mexican North is far greater than that of Mexico on Anglos in the U.S. Southwest (apart from New Mexico). The dominance of the North American economy has made the Mexican North a distinctive region of Mexico, so much so that Mexicans from the interior refer to the region as pocholandia or gringolandia (a cheap imitation of the United States). The pocho, or northerner, is, as Américo Paredes says, “a poor soul wedged between the pyramid and the skyscraper.”

Generally speaking, the norteño lives in a relatively autonomous region of Mexico. Traditionally, remoteseness from the central government has fostered regionalism and independence. The degree of autonomy has waxed and waned over the years, with the power relationship of the provinces to the central government changing over time. The first northern resurgence began in the nineteenth century during the wars of independence (1810) and ended with the modernization of the state by Porfirio Díaz (after 1876). The chaos and violence of the Mexican Revolution (1910–23) witnessed a second era in the development of norteño particularism, with the rise of the North and the successful conquest of the Mexican state by norteños. Paradoxically, the Sonoran dynasty created a national party system and rebuilt the state bureaucracy, which had the effect of concentrating even more power in
Mexico City. Finally, the end of the Mexican “miracle” and the financial problems of the 1980s facilitated another period of political and economic revival in the Mexican North.31

The political awakening is evidenced in the activities of the conservative National Action Party (PAN). In 1983 PRI’s dominance was challenged when PAN won the mayorships in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua City, and Durango. The next years saw PAN victories in congressional races throughout Chihuahua. Only PRI’s blatantly fraudulent practices prevented PAN from claiming governorships in Nuevo León, Sonora, and Chihuahua in the mid-1980s.32 As we will discuss in the epilogue, PAN has made great strides in the Mexican world of politics, winning the presidential elections of 2000 and 2006 and thus breaking the PRI stranglehold on executive power after seventy years of one-party rule.

The general economic upswing in the North is confirmed by a growing mining industry, a vibrant cattle sector, a booming drug industry (legal and illegal), increased tourism, a swelling auto parts business, and expanding trade in winter vegetables. Leading the way, of course, is the maquiladora program of border industries. All of this activity has led to an increased dependency on the United States, from the “culture of sin” of brothels, gambling houses, and bars that was exported to the Mexican border during a period of reform and prohibition in the United States, to the population growth of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, which has been fostered by the U.S. desire for cheap labor. For the longest time, Tijuana was the gate city for undocumented workers to enter the United States, while Ciudad Juárez was the leading maquiladora site. Since the 1990s the border between Sonora and Arizona has become the gateway for many migrant workers. In any case, northern particularism is a constant reality and a concern for the powers in Mexico City.33

The relative wealth of the people of Mexamerica is a subject of much controversy, with many U.S. governors of border states arguing that the borderlands constitute a drain on their overall economies, even though there is no direct evidence for this contention.34 The area is unique in that nowhere in the community of nations is there a boundary separating two nations with a greater degree of economic dispar-
ity than that which exists between the United States and Mexico. As for the border towns, U.S. border cities are generally less prosperous economically than comparable nonborder cities. The Texas regions (especially Starr County) and the New Mexico counties tied to El Paso have relatively low levels of per capita income. San Diego, on the other hand, a border city not symbiotically tied to Mexico, has a higher per capita income than the national average. As for the Mexican border cities, they tend to have higher per capita incomes and greater economic productivity than comparable interior cities. Yet the tremendous redistribution of wealth during the 1980s in the United States and Mexico, due to Reaganomics, supply-side economics, trickle-down theory, IMF austerity measures, and monetary devaluations, resulted in relatively less money for many and greater affluence for few, in and out of the border region. Maquiladora workers in particular suffered a decline in real standards during the last few years, while the transnational corporations increased their profits substantially.

Until 1982 Mexico’s North was undergoing accelerated growth as an industrial and agribusiness zone. A long period of overvaluation of the Mexican peso, added to the oil bonanza, led to a closer interaction of the two border economies. The overvalued peso allowed border residents to have increasing access to U.S. commodities, while U.S. border businesses sought to service more oil-rich Mexican consumers. Meanwhile, Mexican agriculture was transformed after World War II, so that garbanzos, winter vegetables (especially tomatoes), cotton, citrus crops, grapes, and strawberries were produced with the assistance of the federal irrigation program and grown mainly to serve U.S. markets for fresh produce and to provide inputs to the agribusiness sector.

This kind of growth was dependent on markets and capital inputs from the United States. Granted, some local capital was accumulated with Mexican businesspeople owning a few maquiladoras, modern farms, and cattle ranches; maquiladora facilitators (what Leslie Sklair calls the “comprador bourgeoisie”—Mexican bankers, lawyers, accountants, politicians, and land developers) became wealthy; and there has been a general upgrading of personnel in maquiladora management ranks. Yet most maquiladoras were foreign owned and managed. And
while they expanded the industrial employment base in border cities in Mexico, they usually had no connections with other Mexican firms. In addition, the large assembly plants employed a semiskilled transitory pool of cheap, female laborers who, until the devaluation of 1982, spent a high proportion of their earnings on the U.S. side of the border.37

The various border subregions mentioned earlier had few backward linkages with the productive activities of central Mexico and no integration among themselves. The pattern of regional development in the United States between 1950 and 1990 was the most important force affecting the changes between the Mexican subregions. For example, the contrast between the manufacturing city of Tijuana, which was influenced by metropolitan Los Angeles, and the less developed cities of Mier and Reynosa across from South Texas and far from populated centers, was striking. (Economic growth in Texas has been tied to the capital-intensive oil fields in the north away from the border.) Since the 1980s and 1990s, the result has been to increase the dependency of the Mexican border area on the United States rather than to integrate it more closely with the Mexican economy.38

In the mid-1980s, there were about seven hundred maquiladoras that employed more than seventy-seven thousand people scattered along the two-thousand-mile border with the United States, with about one-fourth of them in Ciudad Juárez, and large numbers located in Tijuana, Mexicali, and Matamoros. Most are U.S.-owned industries with labor-intensive assembly plants in Mexico. For example, Trico Products Corporation of Buffalo, New York, assembles windshield wipers in Matamoros; Louisiana-Pacific Company takes redwoods from northern California and mills them in El Sauzal, between Tijuana and Ensenada; Fisher-Price assembles toys in Tijuana, Matamoros, and Acuña; Buffalo China casts teapots and sugar bowls in Ciudad Juárez; Zenith erects television sets in Reynosa and Matamoros.39

Interestingly, not all foreign enterprises are U.S. owned. For example, Hitachi, the electronics company, taking advantage of loopholes in U.S. trade laws, is one of several dozen Japanese companies operating maquiladoras in Tijuana. There are also border assembly plants
owned by Mexicans, as well as factories formed around Mexican labor cooperatives.\(^{40}\)

In 1985 maquiladora industries had become Mexico’s second largest source of income from foreign exports (oil was the first). By the end of the twentieth century, the industry accounted for 25 percent of Mexico’s gross domestic product (GDP), and 17 percent of total employment. Since 2000, however, globalization in the form of competition from Central America and Asia has led to a decline in the Mexican maquiladora program. Approximately 630 maquiladoras were closed in 2002. Despite this decline, as of 2006 maquiladoras accounted for 45 percent of Mexico’s export trade, and there still remained more than 3,000 maquiladoras along the U.S.-Mexico border in 2009.

Whether the maquiladoras have a positive or negative effect on the total Mexican economy is difficult to access. After a careful study of the industry, Leslie Sklair concludes that, while the maquiladora strategy of development has achieved a measure of success, it can really be understood only in a global context and from that point of view, “unless the Mexican government and the TNCs [transnational corporations] can work out ways of transforming it into a more potent instrument for the development of Mexico and the advancement of its people, Mexico is better off without it.”\(^{41}\) On the other hand, El Paso scholar Ellwyn R. Stoddard concludes that most of the negative images of the industry are due to mostly inaccurate popular stereotypes. He notes that “multinational corporation maquiladoras provide more extra-wage benefits, a better workplace (safety and comfort), and better worker relationships than do Mexican-owned factories or those formed around labor cooperatives.”\(^{42}\)

In the larger context of Mexican economic development, the maquiladoras are only one dimension of the Mexican program. Like other parts of the economy and the Mexican North in general, they are dependent on the U.S. market for capital inputs and product distribution. As for some of the specific criticisms of the program, many of the newer plants are excellent examples of good working environments. For instance, Trico’s assembly plant in Matamoros has excellent health,
educational, and recreational facilities; air conditioning; brightly colored walls; a modern assembly plant; and an up-to-date water refinery works.  

Many of the maquiladoras in Tijuana, Mexicali, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Juárez, taking advantage of Mexico’s cheap labor and lax enforcement of environmental laws, exploit female workers, and inundate with hazardous chemicals and untreated sewage the Tijuana River, the New River (stretching eighty miles from Mexicali into the Imperial Valley of California), and the Rio Grande. Most have replaced U.S. workers with cheap Mexican labor, with resulting unemployment and plant closings in the United States. Perhaps the maquiladora issue is not one of “calamity or catalyst?” as Stoddard frames it, but of “calamity and catalyst.”

A catalog of social problems can be constructed for the border area, mostly the result of the tremendous population growth of the last thirty years. Not only have Mexican border cities been growing twice as fast as their U.S. twins, but approximately 30 percent of the 1990 population of the Mexican border state population lived in border towns and municipalities. The largest “twin city” area is Tijuana–San Diego with 5 million persons, and Ciudad Juárez–El Paso is in second place with about 2.2 million inhabitants. The adjacent cities form in many ways a binational metropolitan zone, especially in the larger urban zones of Texas and Chihuahua-Tamaulipas (Ciudad Juárez–El Paso or Matamoros-Brownsville).

Unsettled economic conditions in the interior have pushed Mexicans to the border, attracted by employment opportunities in the north and by job possibilities and higher salaries of the U.S. Southwest. Migration to border communities (and high birthrates and low death rates) has resulted in urban crowding and its corollary: the social problems of crime, poverty, underemployment, congestion, air pollution, diminishing water resources in an arid zone, insufficient housing, meager health services, inadequate communications, a poor transportation network, and limited waste management facilities. As binational metropolitan zones, these problems, caused by an expanding population with limited resources, can be solved only by national and, at times,
international authorities. However, national leaders more often than not look at these problems as matters to be solved by regional politicians and local governments.\textsuperscript{46}

One problem somewhat peculiar to the border culture is the phenomenon of the border underworld. The laws of unequal exchange apply with a vengeance to an area intersected by an international boundary, which in turn dictates differences in price and currency structures between the United States and Mexico, generally dividing a rich nation from a poor one. These disparities of wealth and income create many opportunities for crime and illicit exchange in a network that includes legitimate as well as illegitimate businesses.\textsuperscript{47}

Many of these exchanges are conducted by organized crime groups with kinship ties to old border trading families that possess power and legitimacy in their communities. Examples of such organized crime syndicates would be the Syrian-Lebanese gang in El Paso, the Herrera family of Durango, and the Arellano-Félix organization, also known as the Tijuana cartel.\textsuperscript{48}

Other underworld characters include narcotics traffickers, cargo transporters (pilots and truck drivers), contractors (intermediaries who link the underworld with the legitimate world), and salaried employees who carry the contraband across borders. The “upperworld” players include financiers (bankers, businesspeople, etc.) who launder money and provide capital to the underworld elites, and attorneys, judges, politicians, and law enforcement officials whose support is rewarded by the border underworld. A cross-border service economy of contraband smuggling has evolved in which as much as one-fifth of all border trade may be in contraband goods.\textsuperscript{49}

From the United States to Mexico come firearms, stolen cars and trucks, pornography, DVD players, flat screen TVs, iPods, electronics equipment, laundered money, and a host of unregulated manufactures. From Mexico coyotes move their human contraband (undocumented workers) northward, while narcotraficantes and their “mules” (teenagers and others hired by the traffickers) smuggle cocaine, marijuana, and heroin across the border into the United States. Mexican contraband ranges from relatively innocent items like pharmaceutical drugs,
cheaper gasoline, cigarettes, pirated DVDs and CDs, exotic birds, and cattle, to more serious elements such as prostitutes, unregulated liquor and drugs, and counterfeit currency.\(^{50}\)

Despite these difficulties, it would appear that the solution for Mexico’s problems lies outside of Mexico in the global economy. Unlike the fictionalized Mexamerica of Carlos Fuentes’s novel *Christopher Unborn* (in which Mexamerica is an independent nation thriving on its own), the real Mexamerica is intricately connected with Mexico and the United States, and maybe even all of North America. The Salinas administration proposed reforms that were designed to win the favor of the Mexican North—especially the reduction of subsidies to industry, privatization of state-owned property, promotion of free trade, and rapprochement with the Catholic Church. All of these measures were well received in the north. In addition, in a break with Mexico’s traditional policy of economic nationalism, President Salinas promoted negotiations for a free-trade agreement with the United States in the form of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).\(^{51}\)

The results of economic globalization kept pouring in during the 1980s and 1990s, and global trading blocs were becoming a reality in the form of the multination European Economic Community and the Japanese-led Pacific Rim Alliance of commercial partners. With the unification of Germany absorbing that country’s energy and capital, and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe presenting Mexico with a whole new set of rivals for global dollars, Mexico found itself desperate to attract foreign investors. For those supporters of the neoliberal model of economic development in Mexico and the United States, it seemed quite logical that a North American free trade zone would enable the continent to compete with the other blocs, while allowing Mexico to solve many of its development problems.\(^{52}\)

Back in the early 1990s when Mexican, Canadian, and U.S. diplomats negotiated the terms of free trade, NAFTA was seen as a reasonable approach to uniting a population of 360 million consumers in a $7 trillion economy that was independent of European and Asian competitors. The proposal would bring together the rich resources and technology of Canada and the United States with the oil reserves and vast worker
population of Mexico. Salinas and his team of U.S.-educated (Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Stanford) advisers speculated that U.S. capital would be attracted to Mexico to act as a platform for launching trade to the U.S. market. U.S. capital would also solve the undocumented worker problem by creating in Mexico a domestic industrial base that would attract Mexicans to Mexico, not to the United States. While Canada and the United States would benefit from cheap labor and oil, Mexico would attract the capital it needed to develop the Mexican economy.53

Needless to say, the idea of NAFTA had many critics, mostly intellectuals, labor leaders, and nationalists in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, when it took effect on 1 January 1994.54

The ten-year anniversary of NAFTA in 2004 produced a flurry of reports that either hailed the free trade agreement or denigrated it. In terms of exports the figures are striking. Between 1993 and 2003, U.S. export growth to NAFTA partners outpaced exports to the rest of the world. In all, U.S. companies exported a total of $651 billion (U.S.) in 2003, including $83 billion to Mexico. Moreover, since NAFTA loosened decades-old trade restrictions on investments in Mexico, U.S. investment there swelled by 242 percent from 1994 to 2002, compared with 148 percent growth in U.S. investment in the rest of the world. Conversely, Mexican investment in the United States increased 280 percent from 1994 to 2002, while investment in the United States by non-NAFTA nations increased by 185 percent.55

In Mexico economists began to wonder why foreign investment in the manufacturing sector of the economy, particularly in light of NAFTA, has not been a more powerful engine of growth for the rest of the economy. Some have suggested that Mexico changed its policies regarding foreign trade and investment without fully opening up its economy; inconsistent efforts to liberalize the economy raised the cost of doing business in Mexico. Another variable has been the tax system, which remains largely the same as it was when the PRI controlled the government. This has had a large impact on public investment in such areas as education and infrastructure, forcing Mexico to compete against other developing nations solely on the basis of low wages and its geographic proximity to the United States. Finally, there is still a
credit crunch in Mexico that restricts the growth of small business and hinders entrepreneurial activities, which are fundamental to the local economy.\textsuperscript{56}

So it is in the Gran Chichimeca, a place that integrated trade and people during the pre-Columbian past. In the colonial period, the Gran Chichimeca evolved as a frontier zone remote from, yet partially dependent on, Mexico City, the viceroyalty of New Spain, and northwestern Europe. During the nineteenth century the borderlands became dependent on the expanding economy of the United States, and today perhaps on the North American market. The current phenomenon of the maquiladora reflects the reality of a global market, in which the destiny of Mexamerica, Mexico, and the United States is, for good or ill, linked with the ecology of the world and the economy of the globe.
Epilogue:  
The Rediscovery of Mexico

“These Gringos are terrible people,” says the first Mexican—“cheaters, liars, and robbers.”  
“Sure, compadre,” says the second Mexican, “Look what they did in 1846. They took half our national territory.”  
“Yes, compadre,” says the first, “and the half with all the paved roads.”

The compadre story as retold by Américo Paredes

Every half century or so, New Yorkers rediscover Mexico. In 1940 all things Mexican were the rage. The Museum of Modern Art, under the direction of Nelson A. Rockefeller, hosted “Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art,” an exhibition of five thousand selections of ancient and modern Mexican works. A calendar of cultural and social events accompanied the exhibit, including a concert by Carlos Chávez and his orchestra and Mexican-themed museum parties featuring such guests as Greta Garbo and Georgia O’Keeffe. Even Macy’s got into the act with its own show of contemporary Mexican paintings. Much of Europe was already at war, and Americans, for security reasons, needed the friendship of their hemispheric neighbors. The celebration of Mexican culture by New Yorkers was one token of that friendship.¹

As in 1940 the early 1990s witnessed another revival of Mexican culture and the arts in New York City. On 10 October 1990 the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened an exhibition entitled “Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries,” featuring works of Maya and Aztec sculpture, early postconquest manuscripts, popular religious and devotional paintings, and modern art ranging from 1000 BCE to 1950 CE. During the same period there were exhibits at thirty other New York museums, galleries, and cultural institutions that surveyed three thousand
years of Mexican art, including shows at the National Academy, the Americas Society, the Museo del Barrio, and the IBM Gallery of Science and Art.2

During the same month as the “Mexico” exhibition, Octavio Paz, a member of the Mexican advisory committee to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (who was in New York City to assist the museum), received the Nobel Prize in Literature, proving that Mexico’s high culture was being recognized on all fronts.

The Metropolitan show did indeed exhibit several Mexican splendors. Juxtaposing a chacmool (a sculpture of a warrior with a sacrificial bowl on his stomach) from Chichén Itzá with one from Tenochtitlán strikingly revealed the Mexican tendency to elaborate on previous art forms. Several works from colonial Mexico testified to the blending of Indian and European ideas, materials, and techniques: for example, the atrial cross from Tepeyac, a column base with earth monster relief, the cornstalk-paste sculpture of a crucified Christ, a gilded Virgin of Guadalupe of oil and mother-of-pearl inlays, and the depictions of racial mixtures reflected in Miguel Cabrera’s eighteenth-century oil paintings. Modern art reflected the subject of indigenismo, as in Diego Rivera’s Tortilla Maker, as well as the truly dramatic and universal themes of lost salvation and human solitude à la José Clemente Orozco’s Christ Destroying His Cross and Frida Kahlo’s Self-Portrait with Monkeys.3

Even though Mexico was alive once again in the minds of the U.S. literati, one must wonder about the accuracy of the Mexican image that was being portrayed. The Metropolitan exhibit followed a rather safe scheme, not unlike the 1940 show, depicting the grandeur and continuity of the Mexican tradition. Yet, for all of its immensity, the exhibit said nothing about the contemporary world of Mexico or the contributions of anonymous folk artists over the centuries.4 A display that was the brainchild of Emilio Azcárraga, the chair of Mexico’s Televisa network, and Friends of the Arts of Mexico based in Los Angeles that had the backing of Mexican president Carlos Salinas and the Ministry of Tourism and was produced by the cultural aristocracy of New York City could not help but present the elitist view of Mexico—an impressive assortment of artwork and sculpture with interpretations
that reflected a politically agnostic view of Mexican history and Mexico’s contemporary reality. The safe and familiar trumped alternative visions of the Mexican past and present.\(^5\)

Nothing in the show spoke of the current realities of Mexico: the political tragedy of Tlatelolco; the financial crisis of 1982; the governmental corruption of the mid-1980s; the ecological disasters, from the earthquake damage of 1985 to the air pollution of contemporary Mexico City; the deaths of Manuel Buendía and “Kiki” Camarena; or the endless drug wars and vigilante justice of the army and police. It was as if the Mexico of the early 1990s was straining its neck to look past the “lost decade” of the 1980s and the social and political unrest of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many talented Mexicans living in rural towns, pueblos, or the big cities had expended much creative energy to express the social, cultural, and political dimensions of their México profundo. The results of their efforts would have seemed awkward on top of a chacmool or hanging next to a Rivera mural.

Nowhere could be found the papier-mâché skulls of Jaime Garza from Matamoros, a border craftsperson whose surrealist folk art is not recognized by the Mexico City art community, which considers norteño culture irretrievably pocho. The ceramics of Olivia Domínguez Rentería from Mata Ortiz, Chihuahua, near Casas Grandes, were missing, as was the folk art of María Victoria, a Tarahumara potter from Rarámuchi, near San Ignacio. And what would be more típico than a Judas effigy from Guerrero in which Ronald Reagan was Judas! Of course, that was not in the exhibit.\(^6\)

U.S. interest in all things Mexican was in part a reflection of the United States’ need for Mexican oil and closer trade ties with Mexico and Canada, notwithstanding the genuine appreciation in some quarters for the diversity of Mexican aesthetics. With the U.S.-educated advisers of President Salinas advocating a modernization program that glorified the privatization of property and bourgeois democracy, it was expected that the U.S. response would be warm and supportive of Mexico. As for Mexico, the country struggled with an “image problem” in the United States because of its drug violence and corruption, and in 1990 the Mexican government desired a free trade pact that would at-
tract even more U.S. capital and introduce a bevy of financial services and technology transfers, not to mention additional tourists. It made good diplomatic sense to use the art show to help improve Mexico’s image and pave the way for a new alliance.⁷

Thus, the Metropolitan exhibit not only celebrated Mexican art history and identity but also testified to the fusion of interests of Reagan-Bush elites in the United States with priista technocrats in Mexico. What was put on display for the U.S. public, therefore, was Mexican art geared toward U.S. tastes.

These “smiling aspects of Mexican life,” so well displayed in the Metropolitan show, were also exhibited by Salinas during the first years of his administration. Salinas-style modernization meant stressing the themes of electoral reform, debt reduction, improved productivity, privatization of property, a larger role for U.S. capital, and realignment with the church. This meant that Mexico was going to continue the neoliberal directions first started by the de la Madrid government in 1982. This path of economic development became the new secular faith for priista technocrats, while many conservative pundits and policy makers in the United States welcomed the Mexican embrace of their “old-time religion.”

In his inaugural address after the election of 1988, Salinas called for a revision of the electoral code to bring about honest elections and return government to the people. Attacking corruption on all fronts, he spent his first year in office dispelling any image of ineffectiveness as he dramatically moved against corrupt PEMEX officials, dishonest brokerage agents, and well-known drug traffickers.

Until 1988 the PRI had not lost an election for state governor. In July 1989 the conservative opposition, the National Action Party (PAN), won the Baja California statehouse, and after the February 1995 election in Jalisco, PAN controlled four state governments and more than 150 municipal councils. Although panista (members of PAN) candidates were not always successful in Michoacán, Chihuahua, or Guanajuato, results there favored private enterprise and a decline in the hopes of the left-leaning, socialist Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

The national election of August 1994 revealed a continuation of this
trend, with PRI presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León receiving barely 50 percent of the vote, while PAN gathered 29.5 percent. This reflected a major panista gain since the previous election of 1988. Equally important, the fortunes of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas fell as the PRD collected a paltry 16.2 percent. The election was relatively honest with only modest irregularities. Because Salinas had spent his years making overtures to business and church leaders, in other words becoming more panismo in approach and outlook, this election, while dividing Mexican leftists, supported the developmental policies of the PRI and the private enterprise ethic of PAN, not to mention the U.S. banking community.8

The huge foreign debt inherited from the de la Madrid years continued to be a major problem for Salinas during his sexenio (six-year term of office). By July 1989 Salinas was able to announce an accord with a committee of international bankers that reduced the debt to commercial banks. By the early 1990s this strategy effectively reduced Mexico’s internal debt. Yet Mexico’s foreign debt was still more than $101 billion (U.S.) in 1991, although $25 billion less than when Salinas took office. Only foreign private investment allowed Salinas to meet the costs of debt service and imports. If investment stopped, the debt problem would rise to the surface again, which it did in December 1994.9

Unabashedly progrowth, Salinas eagerly sought developmental capital by instituting tax reforms and modifying the regulations of the 1973 investment law to favor foreigners. He also eliminated many government regulations, froze prices, and declared that the reforms of the Mexican Revolution had run their course. Most importantly, he pushed the de la Madrid privatization program, selling off banks (nationalized in 1982), TV networks, Teléfonos de México, and highway construction. CONASUPO warehouses and supermarkets were privatized. By 1992 over 85 percent of Mexican companies had been sold back to the private sector. And in February 1992 the heretofore sacrosanct ejido was attacked by an amendment to the constitution that allows campesinos to mortgage, rent, trade, or sell their lands. It seemed as though Mexico had come full circle, returning to a neoporfirian state that was trying feverishly to integrate Mexico into the global economy.
Maquiladoras and the auto industry were favored. New Ford plants were established in Chihuahua and Hermosillo, and General Motors became Mexico’s largest private employer. IBM received special concessions as Guadalajara became Mexico’s Silicon Valley. Not all the development came from foreigners, as Vitro, traditionally Mexico’s leading glass manufacturer, and Cemex became international corporations with operations in Florida, Texas, California, Europe, and Japan. By 1994 Salinas could note with some satisfaction that Mexico had the third-largest economy among the developing countries (after India and Brazil) and the eleventh-largest in the world.

During the 1992 U.S. presidential elections, it was obvious that Salinas was favoring the reelection of George Bush. When Bill Clinton won the election Salinas made the most of the situation. Soon after, he met with Clinton in Texas. There, Clinton not only backed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) but also expressed support of Salinas’s policies.

NAFTA creates a single market in Mexico, Canada, and the United States by eliminating barriers to investment and trade. Today the continental free trade zone services a population of more than 450 million with a gross domestic product of over $7 trillion. The agreement reduces tariffs and quotas over a ten- to fifteen-year period. While it is usually thought of as a free trade arrangement, it is more of a financial arrangement that establishes ground rules for tariffs, investment, and services; some detractors argue that NAFTA is set up to protect U.S. investment in Mexico and Canada. On the other hand, the idea that access to the U.S. market would create enormous investment opportunities in Mexico had been the driving force behind President Salinas’s staunch support of the treaty. Others argued that bankers, consumers, and high-tech industries in the United States would be favored by the NAFTA agreement, while labor-intensive industries, such as textiles, sugar producers, and citrus growers, would be hurt. In Mexico small manufacturing firms as well as general agriculture, including corn production, would suffer from the accord. Mexico and the United States spent most of 1993 debating the pros and cons of NAFTA. In late 1993 President Clinton, employing presidential muscle and aided
by House Republicans, won congressional support for the agreement. Shortly thereafter it was approved by the Mexican Senate. NAFTA became a reality on 1 January 1994.

It was said in Mexico that when Salinas went to bed on New Year’s Eve 1993, he thought he would wake up a North American. Instead, due to the actions of Maya Indians in Chiapas, he woke up a Guatemalan. On New Year’s Day, Subcommandante Marcos and his skimasked indigenous followers took over San Cristóbal de las Casas and issued their “Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle,” a manifesto declaring opposition to the Mexican state, its land policies, and NAFTA: “The [Salinas] government has tried to portray Mexico as a First World country . . . but behind the picture is the real Mexico, the Mexico of the millions of Indians who live in extreme poverty. We have helped to peel off the mask to reveal the real Mexico.”\(^\text{11}\) The rebel action was timed to coincide with the enactment of NAFTA and to attract the attention of the international press to the plight of the Maya peoples of Chiapas, a place where cattle ranchers and coffee producers have traditionally pushed Indian peasants off their lands. It was feared that massive imports of U.S. corn would force Mexican maize off the market and that North American capital would buy up privatized communal ejidos and campesino lands.\(^\text{12}\)

The rebellion initially led to conflict between the national army and the insurgents, known as the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). According to most press reports, the first few weeks of fighting led to the death of more than 150 people, both Zapatistas and federal troops. The popularity of the subcommandante and his cause, especially in important centers such as Mexico City, soon led Salinas to declare a cease-fire and seek a political solution to the crisis. Unlike their Maya brothers in Guatemala, the Chiapas rebels spent most of the year in a nonviolent dance of threats and negotiations with a government that wanted to avoid bloodshed.\(^\text{13}\)

The years 1994 and early 1995 were filled with setbacks for the Mexican people and the new president, Ernesto Zedillo; 1994 produced a series of shocks. First, the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio occurred on 23 March in Tijuana. Colosio had been handpicked by Salinas as the
PRI’s presidential candidate. At the time of Colosio’s death Mexico was still mourning the killing of Cardinal Jesús Posadas Ocampo, who, along with six others, had been gunned down in front of the Guadalajara airport in May 1993. Salinas scrambled to pick another successor, and Ernesto Zedillo, his former education secretary, another Ivy League technocrat, fit the bill. Then on 28 September, a month after the 1994 presidential election, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the former governor of Guerrero and PRI’s secretary general, who was divorced from the younger sister of Carlos Salinas, was assassinated in Mexico City.

Investigations in February and March 1995 soon led to allegations that these deaths were masterminded by well-known politicians with links to drug traffickers. Complicity with drug traffickers by Guadalajara and Mexico City officials was a factor in the death of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo. Individuals involved in the killing of Colosio were linked to the PRI hierarchy in Baja California and drug families in Tijuana. Then on 24 February, Raúl Salinas, the brother of Carlos Salinas, was arrested and charged with arranging the murder of his former brother-in-law, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

A few days later, the former deputy attorney general, Mario Ruiz Massieu, was charged with impeding the investigation into the death of his own brother. It was alleged that the Gulf cartel, headquartered in Tamaulipas, was angry with José Ruiz Massieu, who, while governor, jailed a cartel associate and delayed the construction of an Acapulco resort in which Raúl Salinas was involved. Similarly, Colosio had vowed to crack down on drug traffickers. The former deputy attorney had been linked to both the Gulf and Tijuana cartels and reportedly had refused to arrest wealthy associates who were traffickers. Instead, he received payoffs to provide his drug friends with protection and favors and impeded any investigations into their illegal behavior. Finally, in early March, Carlos Salinas was forced into exile in the United States and settled in Boston, where he had formerly attended Harvard University. He eventually relocated to Ireland where no extradition treaty existed between Mexico and the Emerald Isle.

The complicity of high government officials in drug deals and po-
litical murders was certain to taint the image of Mexico in the United States. Contrary to U.S. public opinion, the Mexican government has been relatively successful in its drug eradication program since the mid-1970s. Marijuana production in 1981 and 1982 was one-third of what it had been in the late 1970s, and opium production in 1980 was reduced to more than one-third of the 1976 figure as well. Similarly, in 1991 Mexico boasted of the impressive statistics concerning the confiscation of marijuana, cocaine, and firearms. In addition, forty-five thousand people were arrested for drug violations. In fact, the prisons of northern Mexico were overcrowded with prisoners who were jailed on drug-related charges.\(^\text{15}\)

Yet, even though Mexican marijuana was nearly eliminated from the U.S. market, as of 1981 and 1982, other suppliers in Colombia, Belize, Jamaica, and the United States had filled in the gaps. The same was true for opium and heroin; the southwestern Asian nations of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran supply U.S. markets now that opium from Mexico has been eradicated. The current drug situation was further complicated by the involvement of the Cali cartel in Mexico, which continues to channel cocaine through the Tijuana and Gulf cartels into the United States. By the early 1990s more than 70 percent of the marijuana and cocaine supply imported into the United States originated in Mexico, reversing previous downward trends in supply. Thus burning drug crops and jailing drug offenders has not been entirely successful. Obviously, the U.S. government’s efforts to curtail production of illegal drugs in Mexico have failed to reduce the supply in the United States to date.\(^\text{16}\) Moreover, hard-line sentencing guidelines, passed by the U.S. Congress over the years, have done little to reduce demand on the consumption side of the equation.

By 1995 the most dismaying setback was the financial crisis that the Zedillo administration faced. The debt crisis resurfaced in late 1994 when foreign investors withdrew capital from the Mexican market. During the last week of December the peso began to fall precipitously against the U.S. dollar. This was followed by weeks of indecision that sent the devalued peso plummeting to new lows. Finally, in early
March 1995, the Mexican government adopted a tough stabilization plan that presented a bleak picture of recession, unemployment, austerity, and personal hardship as the price of recovery.

Zedillo’s austerity plan of 1995 continued the tradition of belt-tightening that characterized previous presidents, most notably de la Madrid and Salinas. To initiate fiscal reforms that included a boost in consumer sales taxes, a rise in the price of gasoline and electricity, and restrictions on wage increases, Zedillo’s government needed a loan from the United States. To respond to this need, President Clinton attempted to push through Congress a Mexican bailout package worth $40 billion (U.S.). He was met with congressional opposition from an anti-NAFTA coalition of organized labor, environmental and human rights groups, anti–Wall Street populists, and newly elected Republicans who were less committed to free trade than their predecessors. The political blowback was intense enough that Clinton reduced the bailout to $20 billion, although he had to seek a joint executive branch–IMF venture, thus bypassing an intransigent Congress. Like other recent events in the bilateral relations of Mexico and the United States, the NAFTA polemic mixed domestic politics in the United States with foreign affairs. With the refusal of the U.S. Congress to cooperate, the administration switched tactics. To the relief of many in Clinton’s administration, in January 1997 Mexico repaid the remaining $3.5 billion loan it had borrowed from the United States, thereby undermining the dire predictions of those vehemently opposed to the bailout.

New economic problems agitated the undocumented worker problem as well. Since the 1990s, as job creation in Mexico remain stagnant or decreased, the number of undocumented migrant workers entering the United States has increased. These migrants often face real predicaments, such as abuse by the U.S. Border Patrol and illegal smugglers called coyotes, as well as specific hostility by borderland citizens and general resentment by most of the U.S. population.

U.S. public opinion has not been sympathetic to the plight of the Mexican immigrant. In 1986 the Overseas Development Council conducted a telephone poll in which 71 percent of the public agreed with the statement that “the United States should limit the number of im-
migrants entering the country because they compete with Americans for jobs.” In 1994, when the citizens of California were experiencing the beginnings of economic recession (the results of the downsizing of defense contractors in the post–Cold War era), they voted in favor of an ordinance to limit immigration and halt the flow of so-called illegals into the United States. Proposition 187 prevented undocumented residents from having access to education, welfare, and health services allegedly because taxpayers could no longer shoulder their rising costs and because these benefits only attracted more “illegals.” Although implementation of Proposition 187 was delayed by lawsuits, the anti-immigration issue was embraced in the mid-1990s by most Republicans running for elected office as well as by the Democratic president, Bill Clinton. The result was new legislation in 1997 that stiffened the requirements for political asylum and facilitated deportation decisions. Meanwhile, large numbers of Mexicans living in the United States without the appropriate paperwork, hoping to avoid deportation, rushed to apply for their green cards (permanent residency) or U.S. citizenship.

In 1996 Mexico itself passed a constitutional amendment providing for dual nationality. Mexicans are now allowed to maintain their Mexican nationality even if they adopt the nationality of a foreign country. Moreover, Mexicans who had lost their Mexican nationality when they became citizens of another country are given the opportunity to recover it. And children who are born abroad can assume the Mexican nationality of their Mexican parent or parents by registering with the local Mexican consulate. While the amendment did not convey the right to vote in Mexican elections while out of the country, it set the stage for such voting rights in the 2006 presidential elections. In any case, like the politics of NAFTA, domestic concerns mixed with foreign affairs on both sides of the border.

In the mid-1990s, as Colombian traffickers pushed cocaine through Mexico into the United States, the illegal drug trade persisted in causing bilateral difficulties for Zedillo and Clinton. The arrest and deportation to the United States in 1996 of Juan García Abrego, an infamous drug lord, by Mexican authorities aided the Clinton administration in
approving the annual congressional certification of Mexico. Without certification Mexico would have lost several aid programs, and bilateral cooperation would have suffered as a result. The next year, however, the drug issue emerged again. As in the Salinas years, several top officials of the Mexican government were tainted by their association with illegal drugs and traffickers. The arrest in February 1997 of army general Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, Mexico’s drug czar, was especially embarrassing to his U.S. counterpart, General Barry McCaffery. Anti-NAFTA groups in the United States once again rallied against certification, using cries of corruption and drug money as verbal props. Shortly before the deadline for certification of 1 March 1997, the U.S. government presented Mexico with a list of drug-related demands. Satisfied that the Zedillo government would take the necessary action (including extradition of drug traffickers and prosecution of the same under money-laundering laws), Clinton recommended that Mexico be certified (while Colombia would not receive comparable certification). Although Congress, again led by anti-NAFTA groups, voted to overrule Clinton’s decision, the threat of a presidential veto eventually led to Mexico receiving certification.20

Yet during the last three years of the Zedillo administration, Adán Amezcua, a notorious methamphetamine manufacturer and trafficker, was arrested and released three times. Again, the dangers of illegal drug trafficking came home to Mexico’s middle class when Francisco “Paco” Stanley, a popular television comedian, was gunned down alongside a Mexico City freeway in 1999. Authorities alleged that he was killed by order of Luis Amezcua, older brother of Adán, who was angered that Stanley owed him money for cocaine.21 Although rare in Mexico’s history, the power of public opinion, as expressed in the mainstream press, was beginning to surface during the latter years of the Zedillo administration. A relatively free press, combined with stronger opposition parties, was holding the administration responsible for its behavior, including the release of Adán Amezcua and his allies. High-level corruption was an electoral issue as Mexico approached the July 1997 midterm elections, and the Amezcua affair only exacerbated
that trend after 1997. Together these events foreshadowed what was to come in the 2000 presidential election.

As historian Susan Kaufman Purcell notes, “the July 1997 midterm elections in Mexico marked a turning point in Mexico’s transition to democracy.” That election saw the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) lose control of the lower house of Congress for the first time in its history, while Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a founding leader of the leftist PRD, was elected mayor of Mexico City. In addition, in 1998 panistas scored major victories in two governorships (Querétaro and Nuevo León). Several events in Mexico’s recent history facilitated the outcome of the 1997 midterm elections, including the economic reforms of the Salinas years that had created more privatization at the expense of state power; the creation of NAFTA, which increased the influence of global economic and political forces on Mexico (particularly that of the United States); electoral reforms instituted by Zedillo that made the voting process more open and honest (including a role for foreign observers); the distribution of political power and public funds to opposition parties; equal television coverage for opposition groups; and, as noted before, the rise of public opinion as a political force. All of these trends set the stage for the stunning victory of Vicente Fox Quesada in 2000.

In the July 2000 presidential election, PAN candidate Vicente Fox and Mexico’s modernos, that is, the younger, urban, better-educated, mostly male, private-sector, and self-employed Mexicans, achieved the impossible by defeating the long-entrenched PRI that had dominated Mexico’s executive branch since 1929. While PAN has traditionally been known as the conservative, Catholic party, since the 1980s it has stressed pragmatism and liberal-democratic principles, making significant political gains in various state houses and municipalities. In 1987 PAN controlled no state governments. Ten years later PAN had six state governors and 223 mayors. At the time of the 2000 election, PAN politicians governed over twenty-seven million inhabitants through municipal and statewide offices, nearly a fourth of the national population.

Mexicans who sought profound political change, and in 2000 profound political change meant ousting the PRI from the executive
branch, expressed both the regional character of the PAN and its eco-
nomic orientation. Many lived in the Mexican North, with its close 
proximity to the international border, while others had strong ties to 
the industrial, commercial, and banking sectors of the economy. To-
gether they delivered the victory to Vicente Fox, including a panista 
plurality in both houses of Congress and two governorships. When 
PAN was finally declared the victor, Fox had defeated the PRI can-
didate, Francisco Labastida, by over 7 percentage points, 42.8 percent to 
35.7 percent (Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the so-called leftist Alliance 
for Mexico received 16.5 percent). While Fox had campaigned among 
the estimated ten million Mexican nationals in the United States, they 
were unable to vote in this election (the right to vote was implemented 
in the 2006 presidential election). Candidate Fox, who had been gov-
ernor of Guanajuato from 1995 to 1999 and the former head of Coca-
Cola de México, dressed in Western-gear boots, cowboy hat, and giant 
belt buckle—and reveling in his rough-rancher image—did not hesi-
tate to question his rival’s manhood, calling Labastida “shorty” (Fox is 
6’ 6”), a “transvestite,” and a “sissy.” Not since William Henry Harrison 
championed the frontier myth against the Europeanized and “sissified” 
Martin Van Buren has democracy witnessed such a campaign. A few 
months after Fox’s victory, George W. Bush and his Republican lawyers 
sent Al Gore to the Tennessee woodshed, and the cowboy-governor of 
Texas became president and was eager to greet his Mexican analog—
“compassionate conservatism” met up with “political humanism.”

Before the two rancher-cowboy presidents met, however, Fox hoped 
to quell the continuing Zapatista insurgency in Chiapas. He spent most 
of his first year dealing with the Zapatista Rebellion, only to have his 
settlement proposals rejected by Marcos. Heady with victory and as-
sured of his own competence, four days after the election he declared 
“that he could solve the Chiapas rebellion in fifteen minutes.” In hind-
sight, the statement reflected political naiveté on the part of Fox; the 
ew president was perceived by some political pundits as having an 
overinflated view of his abilities. On 18 July Fox once again expressed 
his desire to meet with Subcomandante Marcos. The invitation was de-
clined, and shortly after the December inauguration Marcos sent an
insulting letter to Fox reminding him that Zedillo had promised peace and then sent troops, and that Fox’s identification with neoliberal doctrines would turn Mexico into a “megastore that sells human beings and natural resources at prices dictated by the world market.”

In March 2001 Marcos snubbed Fox again when he came to Mexico City in conjunction with an indigenous rights movement and refused a presidential invitation. Then in May of that year the Mexican Congress passed a so-called indigenous-rights law that stood in stark contrast to what the Zapatistas had been demanding since 1994. Instead of the restoration of the traditional ejidos, the new law restricted communal rights to land and allowed for private ownership, which essentially duplicated Salinas’s 1992 agrarian reform. The new law also limited the regional autonomy of Indian communities. This was followed by a movement of land developers who sought to uproot the Zapatistas and make room for ecotourism and luxury hotels, and by the paramilitarization of priistas by the reform governor of Chiapas. Conflict continued up to the early months of 2003 when twenty thousand Zapatista rebels took over the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Since Fox showed no signs of dropping his embrace of the neoliberal model of economic development, it appeared that guerrilla unrest would likely continue. By the end of his sexenio, the prospects of a face-to-face (or as one writer called it, face-to-mask) meeting between President Fox and Subcomandante Marcos remained highly unlikely. The election of another PAN candidate to the presidency, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa in 2006, has thus far produced little in terms of a negotiated settlement that offers solutions to the extreme poverty and discrimination that so many Indians and mestizo campesinos face on a daily basis.

But Fox did have the occasion to meet with his fellow urban cowboy George W. Bush in the ranching and mining state of Guanajuato in February 2001. As a former governor of Texas, President Bush had political awareness of border problems and an understanding of the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Fox, for his part, suggested that NAFTA arrangements be revised to permit a freer flow of labor between Mexico and its northern neighbor and to create legislation that would legalize the status of the millions of Mexicans living
in the United States (including a guest-worker program and a change in visa procedures). While Bush was sympathetic to the Mexican president’s position and eager to attract Mexican Americans to the Republican Party, he also had to deal with the intense rhetoric of the anti-immigration wing of his own party.\textsuperscript{30}

In any case, the convergence of the two leaders created an unprecedented opportunity for the two countries to set a new agenda. They agreed to form a high-level working group, composed of Colin Powell and Santiago Creel (of the U.S. Department of State and the Mexican Ministry of Interior, respectively), among others, that established initiatives for future collaboration. Among the initiatives were programs to eliminate risks to migrants (with special attention to the deaths of people lost in the Arizona desert), public safety campaigns to alert migrants to the imminent dangers of crossing the border, plans for the rescue of migrants in unsafe areas, and coordination among law enforcement agencies to fight coyotes and smugglers on both sides of the border. These recommendations were discussed by the two presidents when they met one week before 11 September 2001.\textsuperscript{31}

With commerce between the two countries peaking, and U.S.-Mexico trade increasing at 25 percent a year from the previous decade (and Mexico becoming the second most important country for U.S. exports) optimism was at an all-time high. Mary Ryan, the assistant secretary for consular affairs, could say during the summer of 2001, “I would go so far as to say that this is the golden age of U.S.-Mexico relations. . . . Now is the time to explore migration programs and contemplate creative solutions for those currently here without status.” On 11 September, the optimism was doused by Al-Qaeda terrorists who brought their brand of Islamic extremism to U.S. shores.\textsuperscript{32}

Understandably, the events of 9/11 distracted the Bush administration, making it less inclined to make the border more permeable. The administration’s reluctance to pursue talks on migration unsettled Fox’s agenda for Mexico’s “special” relationship with the United States. The disappointing results of his migration policies not only disillusioned his audience of Mexicans residing in the United States, but also led to a personal split between these cowboy-presidents from Texas
and Guanajuato. The erosion of Fox’s once friendly relationship with Bush was apparent during the October 2002 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Los Cabos, Baja California. After a formal handshake, the two presidents, who had visited each other’s ranches, sat far apart from and studiously avoided one another. Fox was obviously unhappy over the lack of progress on his immigration initiatives, while Bush was displeased with the lack of support coming from Los Pinos (the Mexican White House) for his doctrine of preemptive war, which the U.S. president wanted to apply to Iraq and was seeking allies to his cause in late 2002 and early 2003.33

Meanwhile, conditions for migrants became worse. More deaths occurred in the desert of Arizona as Mexican migrants found out that they had to worry about not only the demands of the coyotes and the tactics of the U.S. Border Patrol, but also the wrath of Mother Nature, as the western borderlands underwent a four-year drought. If this were not enough, citizen groups appeared along the border, including Chris Simcox’s Tombstone-based Civil Homeland Defense group. Simcox called his group of armed volunteers a “militia,” which he led on patrols near the border. In his “message to the world,” Simcox warned, “Do not attempt to cross the border illegally; you will be considered an enemy of the state; if aggressors attempt to forcefully enter our country they will be repelled with force if necessary!” When the United States intervened militarily in Iraq in March 2003, his group monitored the border daily, turning over, he alleged, hundreds of illegal border crossers to the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.34

As for the U.S. war against Saddam Hussein, Fox did not win any friends in the White House by his public opposition to that conflict. Not only did it continue to hurt his immigration policy, but his opposition left many in the immigrant community in the United States with ambivalent feelings. Some Mexicans, especially those with business and professional careers, supported the war effort and disagreed with Fox. Others, with activist roots, wanted no part of the Bush-Cheney war with Iraq. The situation was not aided when the Bush administration hinted at possible reprisals if Mexico did not support the U.S. position in the Security Council of the United Nations. In addition, the
International Court of Justice advised the United States to drop execution dates for Mexican nationals on death row in U.S prisons. Finally, many Mexicans in Mexico were becoming disillusioned with the way that Fox’s migrant effort in Mexico was evaporating. The high expectations generated by the 2000 election dissolved as the *padrino* program, designed to identify twenty-two microregions in Mexico that would be developed with migrant labor returning from the United States, entered a limbo stage.35

Yet the heat that radiated from the desert, so harsh to many migrants, started to thaw by the summer of 2003. Mexico’s interior minister, Santiago Creel, while visiting Tijuana in April, called for the United States to reopen the immigration talks that had stalled since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He noted the participation of Mexico in Operation Centinela, in which eighteen thousand military troops and twelve thousand federal police officers were used to guard Mexico’s northern and southern borders, airports, seaports, oil platforms, utility grids, communities with a large U.S. presence, and the U.S. embassy. The objective was to secure areas of strategic interest to the United States and prevent terrorists from crossing the northern border. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, who was meeting with Creel, signaled his agreement with his Mexican counterpart about the need to reopen negotiations. That same day the editorial page of Phoenix’s *Arizona Republic* called for a guest-worker program and a plan to address the status of undocumented workers in the United States. It headlined its editorial with the words “It’s time to end desert deaths with border reforms.” Perhaps the political thaw would lead the two nations into a fertile relationship; then again, thaws sometimes end in drought and barrenness.36

Meanwhile, the Fox administration was active in changing the culture of corruption in law enforcement, an issue important to both the Mexican people and the U.S. government. Plans were instituted to restructure the Attorney General’s Office, where relationships with drug traffickers and high-level corruption have diminished respect for the administration of law. Fox appointed as attorney general Rafael Macedo, an army general who had used the military to enforce the laws against trafficking. Results soon followed with the arrests
in March 2002 of Benjamin Arellano Félix, a Tijuana drug lord (and brother of Ramón Arellano Félix, who was himself fatally shot by police in Mazatlán in February), and Gulf cartel leader Adán Medrano. Cocaine kingpin Jesús Albino Quintero Meraz and methamphetamine pusher Adán Amezcua were arrested in May, and kidnapping chief Pedro Barragán in June. Less than a year later, in March 2003, Tamaulipas drug lord Osiel Cárdenas Guillén was captured in a shootout with Mexican troops in a border city. The militarization of the drug war as a long-term solution is difficult to ascertain, if, as the former foreign secretary Jorge Castañeda notes, the solution “is to create civilian police forces with cultures of honesty.” In any case, as Castañeda says, “Fox has made headway against ‘a culture of impunity.’”37 The major kingpins and big capos with aliases such as the Lord of the Skies or Lord of the Tractor Trailers, and their organizations, appeared to have been fractured.38

While Fox was worried about migration policy, corruption, and drug trafficking, the loyal opposition was licking the wounds it suffered in the 2000 election. The old guard of the PRI, known as the dinosaurios (dinosaurs) had been furious at Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo for supporting free-market economic reforms that widened the gap between rich and poor and made the party drift away from its revolutionary roots. They also disliked their embrace of democratization that threatened to undermine years of co-optation, intimidation, favoritism, and blatant fraud. Yet these same electoral reforms opened the door to a possible political comeback for the PRI since the party would, like the other main contenders, have access to public funds and access to commercial time in the mainstream media.

On 9 March 2003 the legislative and municipal elections in the state of Mexico were considered a forerunner for the 6 July midterm elections. As fate would have it, PRI gained ground on PAN, with 35 percent of the legislative seats and 34 percent of the municipal posts going to PRI, while PAN received only 29 percent and 28 percent, respectively. The third party PRD also improved its position slightly. Fox may have succeeded too well, as multiparty democracy was alive and well in Mexico. Some Mexico watchers wondered if the midterm elections
of 2003 foreshadowed a resurgence of the PRI in the 2006 presidential election.39

While Fox’s contribution to the history of Mexico may be his support of democratization, the right to free speech component is obviously incomplete. In 2003 the history textbook by Claudia Sierra entitled History of Mexico: An Analytical Approach suggested more openly than usual that the Mexican army fired on student protesters in Mexico City on 2 October 1968. It stated candidly that Mexican soldiers killed dozens of largely peaceful students demonstrating at Tlatelolco in Mexico City. Fox’s secretary of education, Reyes Tamez, ordered the book pulled from the shelves (he later recanted and called for the book to be reviewed by “objective” experts). The incident reveals that the PAN had also struggled with reconciling Mexico’s optimism for the future with the historical memory of state violence and bureaucratic authoritarianism. While the PRI traced its origins to 1929, and to the social democracy and state capitalism of the Cárdenas-Alemán years, the panista party of Fox and then Calderón preferred to identify with Francisco Madero’s political democracy and liberal capitalism. The new rallying cry seems to mirror a much older mantra embraced by Madero and before him Porfirio Díaz in 1872–76, that is, “sufragio efectivo, no reelección,” or effective suffrage, no reelection.40 The right to vote in an open and transparent election is fundamental to the panista platform, while the neoliberal model of economic development buttresses that platform.

While dislodging authoritarianism and perfecting an imperfect democracy remain a major chore for the new panistas, globalization and Mexico’s asymmetrical relationship with the United States must be emphasized. As historian John Hart has noted, “Yet even as the global division of wealth between Mexico and the United States remains extreme, the introduction of American elite and popular culture has brought an even greater diversity to Mexico, and a corresponding Mexican influence continues to flourish in the United States.”41 As Mexico was adapting to democracy, the U.S. government under Bush-Cheney was seeking, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the preemptive war against Iraq, to curtail civil liberties, limit due process for so-called enemy combatants, and corral antiwar demonstrators into
clearly marked “free speech zones.” The line between national security and homeland security was becoming sufficiently blurred that the government seemed prepared to reinterpret the Bill of Rights as a way to respond to internal and external threats. In the old days, when Mexico was expected to be authoritarian and the United States democratic, the entire region of the United States was supposedly a “free speech zone” and “home of the free.”

In the last year of his presidency, Fox had to deal with a divided Congress, a peasant rebellion in Chiapas that had no end in sight, protection of Mexico’s white-corn farmers from U.S. yellow-corn importers, an illegal drug trade that became more violent with each passing day, and a Bush-Cheney administration that wavered between sympathy and arrogance. Despite these obstacles, most Mexicans were still proud of the progress they had made toward democratization.

PAN-style democratization was tested in the presidential election of 2006. While the PRI wanted to restore the seventy-year-old tradition of victory that it had lost in the 2000 election, the PAN wanted to maintain its hold on Los Pinos. Supporters of the PRD, particularly those in the federal district and other areas of central Mexico, were anxious to regain the political support their party used to enjoy with the electorate. On 2 July 2006 Mexicans experienced some of the political drama of recent U.S. presidential elections when the official count was too close to call. After two months of protests, civil disobedience, and sporadic episodes of violence, the Federal Electoral Institute declared the PAN candidate, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, winner of the election with 35.89 percent of the vote, while the PRD candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, garnered 35.31 percent. That the PRI candidate, Roberto Madrazo, languished consistently in third place in the polls during the campaign suggested that most Mexicans were hesitant to return the PRI to the executive branch.

Although supporters of López Obrador accused Calderón and his party of stealing the election, international observers stated quite firmly that they had not found any substantial irregularities in the vote, although several reforms were put forward for the next general election. Democratization appeared, at least on the surface, to have passed the
2006 electoral test. An intriguing sidebar to the presidential election of 2006 has been the political division of Mexico into blue states and yellow states, with the former representing the strength of the PAN in areas north of Mexico City and the latter support for the PRD in Mexico City and areas south of the Federal District. These divisions mirror the blue state–red state divide in the United States that characterized the 2000 and 2004 general elections, with red-state Republicans supporting George W. Bush and blue-state Democrats supporting Al Gore and John Kerry, respectively. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 has modified the U.S. political map. Mismanagement on Wall Street and a sustained housing slump, together with President Bush’s dismal approval ratings, including public disapproval of the Iraq war that as of 2009 cost Iraq over ninety-five thousand civilian fatalities, paved the way for the first African American to become president.

The Obama administration faces several challenges as it seeks to cast its stamp on U.S.-Mexico relations. For one, during the 2008 campaign, Obama employed populist rhetoric when discussing trade issues. He suggested that he would renegotiate NAFTA as a way to strengthen its labor and environmental standards. Media scrutiny followed when one of his advisers reassured the Canadian consul in Chicago that Obama’s statements regarding NAFTA were more “reflective of political maneuvering than policy.” Candidate Obama later clarified his position by declaring himself a free trader, but one who wanted free trade “to work for all people.” Given the dire economic news of early 2009, it seems unlikely that President Obama will seek to renegotiate the treaty in its entirety.

In general, the global economic downturn of 2008–9 will ultimately shape President Obama’s approach to Mexico. For example, after weakening 20 percent in 2008, the Mexican peso fell to a record low in February 2009 (14.4 pesos to the dollar), with economists predicting another 3.8 percent drop by the end of the fiscal year. Not since the so-called tequila crisis of 1995, when the peso lost over 30 percent of its value, has the Mexican currency taken such a beating. The U.S. recession and declining oil prices have hurt Mexican exports and government revenue. Mexico’s central bank predicted that the economy
may contract as much as 1.8 percent in 2009; gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded only 1.5 percent in 2008, after enjoying 3.2 percent growth in 2007.  

Another legacy of the more recent past is the continuing drug war between the Mexican government and the well-armed cartels with deep pockets. The level of violence, bloodshed, and corruption has reached alarming levels, even by borderland standards. Violence is nothing new, of course; the intensity of violence began in the late 1980s when the implicit and longtime agreement between the PRI and the narcotraficantes began to unravel. Electoral democracy had its costs, and for Mexico this meant the end of the arrangement with the drug cartels. In the early part of 2005 it was estimated that over 110 people had died as a result of the fighting between the Sinaloa and Gulf cartels. The government under Fox was generally passive about the drug trade, but official passivity soon ended in December 2006 when Felipe Calderón took office. He sent 6,500 troops to his home state of Michoacán to put down the drug violence that had ravaged so many towns. Mexico observers consider Calderón’s decision to send the military into combat as the starting point of the war between the Mexican government and the cartels. Since late 2006 as many as 36,000 troops have been involved in Calderón’s war on drugs, with 5,376 gangland killings in 2008, a 117 percent increase over the 2,477 killings in 2007. Most of the violence and murders have taken place in the border states of Chihuahua and Baja California, as well as Sinaloa, home of one of Mexico’s most powerful cartels.

As the warfare has escalated, the cartels have become more sophisticated in their attacks. For example, members of Los Zetas, a private army composed of former elite military soldiers, act as the enforcement arm of the Gulf cartel. Cartels now make good use of military hardware, ranging from insurgency training, body armor, and helmets, to semiautomatic assault rifles (AR-15s and AK-47s), grenades, sniper rifles, machine guns, and small caliber arms. The audacity of the cartels is reflected in their recruiting campaigns that involve openly posting advertisements on public billboards. The drug traffickers argue in these ads that their organizations will supply better training, equipment, and
food than the Mexican military. Most of the guns and ammunition are smuggled into Mexico from the United States, with the cooperation of corrupt border and customs officials on both sides of the international boundary. Cartels pay big money to those who obtain guns at U.S. gun shows and shops and then smuggle them across the border. Dallas, San Diego, and Phoenix are major ports for the smuggled items. According to U.S. federal law enforcement agents, however, the number one firearms marketplace in the country is Houston, Texas. Apparently Mexican gangsters love Houston because of its numerous gun shops, its proximity to the border, and its established network for smuggling illegal narcotics into the United States.46

Each cartel tries to outdo the other with their gruesome methods. Such terror tactics include decapitations, the use of acid to dissolve the bodies of victims, kidnappings, and indiscriminate shootings in public places like restaurants, schools, malls, and movie cinemas. One cartel rolled the heads of its victims like bowling balls into a wedding reception, while others have hung their victims from bridges and overpasses. Although rival gang members have traditionally been the target of drug violence, recently the prey has included police officers, physicians, and journalists.47

A worrisome development in the last half of 2008 and early 2009 has been the indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians. In August 2008, 13 people were killed at a family gathering in the mountains near Creel, Chihuahua, including several teenagers, a four-year-old, and a sixteen-month-old infant. AK-47s left 17 people dead in Tijuana, while grenade attacks in Morelia killed 8 civilians and wounded more than 100. Ciudad Juárez had a death rate that was five times greater in 2008 than it was in 2007. On average, 7 people are gunned down every day in Juárez. In November 2008, 184 people were executed in El Paso, Texas, with 7 U.S. citizens among the dead. While the results of this kind of violence are death and injury, the costs are not only physical or even financial but also psychological. Many Mexicans will no longer eat in public restaurants, while young women are afraid to turn down overtures coming from local drug kingpins, and young men are cautious when a Hummer pulls beside them at the intersection. Although
not completely paralyzed with fear, thousands of Mexicans are living cautious lives in the face of escalating drug violence.48

Historians interrogate the past and identify patterns of violence that pose grave challenges to the structural integrity of the Mexican polity, including the Spanish conquest of the Aztec confederation, the wars for independence from Spain, the U.S. invasion, the war of La Reforma, the French occupation, the porfiriato, and the Mexican Revolution of 1910–20. In each occasion Mexico emerged not quite the same but not altogether different. Persistence and malleability accompany reaction and change. What makes this recent round of violence and bloodshed so unpredictable is its ability to seek cover and hide when it has to do so—with the direct assistance of corrupt government and military officials—while carving out a quasi-political niche for itself in a global economy that sustains it with an ever-abundant supply of consumers, capital, and guns.

As we noted earlier, the U.S. government has expressed interest in the drug wars, but the occupation of Iraq and continuing crises in the Middle East have dominated its foreign policy concerns. In June 2008 the U.S. Congress passed legislation to provide Mexico and Central America with $1.6 billion (U.S.) in aid as part of the Mérida Initiative. Its intent is to assist these countries with a three-year plan that calls for law enforcement training and equipment. Yet the possibility of Mexico losing the drug war and becoming a failed state should be a major concern of the U.S. government. If Mexico were to become another Pakistan, the fallout, including new terrorist threats, would be dangerous for the United States. If the new Obama administration decides to integrate dealing with the Mexican drug war and its accompanying violence as part of a larger effort to improve bilateral relations, it will have to come to terms with the serious social problems within its own borders. More emphasis is needed, for example, on drug treatment and prevention programs in tandem with law enforcement. Illegal munitions trade with Mexico requires new ways of approaching gun-control legislation.

Yet another legacy of the immediate past is the immigration polemic. As former president Vicente Fox discovered, the U.S. government’s
preoccupation with Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 ter-
rorist attacks, not to mention the resurgence of a nativist streak in U.S.
politics, scuttled any attempt to pass immigration reform. Members
of President Bush’s own party led the charge against the immigration
bill that was making its way through the halls of Congress. In lieu of
meaningful reform for those living in the shadows, the federal govern-
ment decided to build fences and walls along portions of the interna-
tional border, increase the detention and deportation of undocumented
workers, raid workplaces and housing units, and launch criminal pro-
ceedings against workers with stolen or false papers. In Mexico, this
fanned an anti-Bush, anti-Republican sentiment, which sometimes
was expressed as anti-American. Americans must keep in mind that
immigration is not only a concern for the United States, but a top prior-
ity for Mexico and its relationship with the United States.49

The number of undocumented Mexicans entering the United States
has slowed considerably in the past few years, falling below the num-
ber of those entering the country with the appropriate paperwork.
The Pew Hispanic Center, a think tank in Washington, D.C., estimates
that there were approximately 11.9 million immigrants in the United
States as of March 2008, which is a drop of 500,000 from the center’s
estimate in 2007. Increased border security, hostility to non-English-
speaking migrant workers, and a sharp decline in the U.S. economy
have contributed to this dip.50 In January 2009 one of Mexico’s larg-
est banks, Banamex, predicted that remittances would drop in 2009 by
2.5 percent. It estimated that 2008 remittances had dropped 2.0 percent
to $23.5 billion (U.S.), the first annual decline since the bank started to
keep records thirteen years ago. Such a drop hurts the Mexican econ-
omy and the average household that depends on this reliable stream of
cash. Remittances are Mexico’s second largest source of foreign income
after petroleum.51

Perhaps the election of Barack Obama will signal a change in the di-
rection of U.S.-Mexico relations. If so, such a change will have to toler-
ate the critical eye of U.S. image-makers. Most of the image-makers in
the United States, especially such prestigious publications as the New
and *Wall Street Journal*, tend to judge Mexico’s performance in terms of what the United States claims to endorse, that is, honest elections and benign capitalism. Even a cursory glance at the history of Chicago, New Jersey, or West Virginia politics reveals that honest elections and benign capitalism are elusive even in the United States. As we have indicated in chapter 1, Mexicans have not always defined democracy in the same way as Americans have done (even though the definition has become closer during the Fox and Calderón years). Often, as in the case of the Hollywood film industry, Mexico has remained a stage or backdrop for stories about U.S. exceptionalism, valor, and superiority.52

Mexico’s image problem in the United States, of course, is not one-sided. Some Mexicans have been mistaken and shortsighted in their views of Americans. The tendency to homogenize all Americans as “gringos” and to assume that U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East or Latin America enjoys the support of every American are just some examples. And at times, as in the Metropolitan exhibit of October 1990, the Mexicans projected only a very narrow image of their culture for U.S. consumption. The quandary of ethnocentrism (see chapter 1) is still with us.

This ethnocentrism has led two writers, Jorge Castañeda, a former professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the minister of foreign relations under Vicente Fox, and Robert A. Pastor, a professor at American University in Washington, D.C., to publish the book *Limits of Friendship*, in which they argue that even with well-intended efforts to communicate, Mexicans and Americans often speak across each other—resulting, more often than not, in misunderstanding and confrontation.53

If there are limits to the friendship between Mexico and the United States, Americans can still learn something about themselves in the image that is reflected back to them off the waters of Lake Texcoco. In curbing their ethnocentrism, they can learn that language, customs, ideas, and habits differ between people and that one set of values is not necessarily superior to the other. A sensitivity to the Mexican heritage in the United States will make most Americans hesitate to sing the U.S. Marine Corps anthem line “from the halls of Montezuma” when
touring Chapultepec Castle. The gradual decline of the U.S. empire (inevitable, as all empires eventually decline) relative to the rapid rise of China and India as economic powers, should remind norteamericanos that there are limits to U.S. military and economic strength. The character Dionisio in Carlos Fuentes’s *The Crystal Frontier* encapsulates in literary fashion how Mexicans perceive U.S. ethnocentrism: “For the record, Dionisio said he wasn’t anti-Yankee . . . even though every child born in Mexico knew that in the nineteenth century the gringos had stripped us of half our territory . . . . The gringos didn’t even remember the war, much less its unfairness. Dionisio spoke of ‘the United States of Amnesia.’ . . . Now . . . we were on the way of recovering it, thanks to what could be termed Mexico’s chromosomal imperialism . . . since the gringos had screwed Mexico in 1848 with their ‘manifest destiny’ so now Mexico would give them a dose of their own medicine, recovering [the territories] with the most Mexican of weapons, linguistic, racial, and culinary.” In the best of worlds it is unlikely that gringos can make happy yeoman farmers out of a nation of proud Mexica Indians, while Mexicans are well on their way to making the international border superfluous.
Notes

1. “Gringos” and “Greasers”

2. Ibid., 31–33.
14. Vogt and Albert, *People of Rimrock*, 81. Many nineteenth-century travelers noted that the Zuni were more industrious than the Mexicans. The Doniphan expedition chronicler, John T. Hughes, went so far as to describe the Navajo as “a highly civilized people . . . of a higher order . . . than the mass of their neighbors, the Mexicans” (Raymund Paredes, “Mexican Image,” 17).


21. Ibid., 12–19, 22, 35–42.

22. “Gringo” might originally be a corruption of *griego* (Greek), so a gringo was one who spoke Greek or some other language not intelligible to a Spanish speaker. One can catch a glimpse of this meaning in English when one hears, “I don’t know what he said; it’s all Greek to me.” Although border Mexicans trace the term to the U.S. occupation of Mexico City in 1846, it is doubtless much older than that. Contemporary references to gringos allude only to North Americans and usually, but not always, in an unfavorable way. More recent studies have looked at other social groups in addition to journalists—including government workers, businesspeople, and intellectuals—and at popular opinion as reflected in corridas or ballads. While making allowances for diversity of beliefs and ambivalent attitudes, the general view is that Mexicans are often yankeephobes. At the very least, the United States is not universally esteemed in Mexico. See, for example, the article by Michael C. Meyer, “Mexican Views of the United States,” in *Twentieth-Century Mexico*, ed. W. Dirk Raat and William H. Beezley (Lincoln, Nebr., 1986), 286–300.

23. Most white North Americans would use a “Europeanization” scale in determining the status and rank of individuals—with the English rated ahead of Eastern Europeans, and Argentines ranked higher than Mexicans. For this and other stereotypes, see Américo Paredes, “The Problem of Identity in a Changing Culture: Popular Expressions of Culture Conflict along the Lower Rio Grande Border,” in *Views across the Border: The United States and Mexico*, ed. Stanley R. Ross (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1978), 69–70, 79–81. For a living example of the all-too-real differences between gringos and mexicanos, see the exchange that occurs between Robert A. Pastor and Jorge G. Castañeda in *Limits of Friendship: The United States and Mexico* (New York, 1988).


25. Ibid., 72–75.


32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. The best synopsis of the critique leveled at Huntington can be found in Louis Menand, “Patriot Games,” *The New Yorker*, 17 May 2004. We have borrowed from the online version of the article found at www.newyorker.com (accessed February 4, 2009).

2. Space/Time in the Tierra de la Mexico


3. These statistics, including those of the Census Bureau, are cited in Hua Hsu, “The End of White America?” *Atlantic* 303 (January/February 2009): 48.


6. The symbol of the pyramid is also used to describe the geography of Mexico in Eric Wolf, *Sons of the Shaking Earth* (Chicago, 1967), 3.

7. Ibid., 3–6. This population estimate comes from www.citypopulation.de, although official Mexican estimates dating from 2005 put the figure at 19.2 million inhabitants in the greater metropolitan area. See www.conapo.gob.mx (both sites accessed January 15, 2009).

8. Ibid., 16–17.

9. Ibid., 17–19.


16. Ibid., 147.

17. Ibid., 147–48.


22. Thornthwaite, “Climates of North America,” 652–53. See also Roger Dun-
bier, The Sonoran Desert: Its Geography, Economy, and People (Tucson, Ariz.,
1968), 1. There are also other smaller desert areas in the western United
States, such as the southern San Joaquin Valley, the Great Salt Lake Desert
of western Utah, and the southeastern Utah desert.

11, 14.


across the Border: The United States and Mexico, ed. Stanley R. Ross (Albu-
querque, N.Mex., 1978), 45.

26. Moctezuma II was the Aztec emperor at the time of the Spanish conquest.
Doña María, or Malinche, was the multilingual Indian mistress of the
conqueror, Hernán Cortés. Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian, was the re-
form president of nineteenth-century Mexico. Emiliano Zapata, although
a mestizo, became the symbol of indigenismo for twentieth-century peas-
ants and revolutionaries. In 1994 Subcomandante Marcos, a white, upper-
middle-class Mexican, raised a rebel army of Maya peasants and mestizos
against NAFTA and the Mexican government’s neglect of the rural poor.

27. For estimates of recent and past Indian populations in the Americas, see
William M. Denevan, ed., The Native Population of the Americas in 1492 (Mad-
ison, Wis., 1978), esp. 7, 291. From the Denevan work we constructed the
figure for the Gran Chichimeca area as follows: 540,000 for the northwest,
100,000 for the northeast, 60,000 for Baja California, 41,000 for the southern
plains of the United States, and 72,000 for New Mexico and Arizona—a
total of 813,000. The figure of 21 million for Mexico does not include the
113,000 of the southern plains, Arizona, and New Mexico. The 1570 figure
comes from Lyle N. McAlister, Spain and Portugal in the New World (Min-
neapolis, Minn., 1984), table 1. The more recent population numbers come
from the Web site www.xmission.com (accessed January 16, 2009). For the
demographic disaster, see Magnus Morner, Race Mixture in the History of
Latin America (Boston, 1967), 31–33; Alfred W. Crosby Jr., The Columbian Ex-
change: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport, Conn., 1973),
35–63; and Alfred W. Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion

Hagan, American Indians (Chicago, 1979), 3; Wolf, Sons of the Shaking
Earth, 29.


33. Ibid., 52–55.


35. Ibid., 55–56, 288.


37. León-Portilla, “Mesoamerica before 1519,” 11–13; Helms, *Middle America*, 88–98. For an in-depth treatment of the Toltecs, see Miguel León-Portilla, ed., *Historia de Mexico*, vol. 3 of *Periodo posclásico* (Mexico, 1978). Mesoamerican culture did have some glaring omissions, such as no domesticated
animals (apart from the dog), a lack of the technology of the wheel, and until 950 CE, no metallurgy.

38. Helms, Middle America, 98–99.
39. Ibid., 103–4; Jacques Soustelle, Daily Life of the Aztecs (Stanford, Calif., 1961), 5–9. Helms argues for a more conservative estimate of 60,000 to 120,000 inhabitants for Tenochtitlán, while Soustelle contends that the range was from 500,000 to 1 million (Helms, Middle America, 101).
41. Ibid., 70–78; Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America, 71, 91.
44. See Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art (Fort Worth, Tex., 1986), esp. chaps. 4, 5. An account based on recent interpretation is Linda Schele and David Freidel, A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya (New York, 1990).
48. Ibid., 69.
53. Our discussion of Casas Grandes draws heavily from the scholarship


55. Ibid., 39.

56. Linda Cordell, Archaeology of the Southwest, 2nd ed. (London, 1997), 413.

57. For an assessment of the impact of demographic collapse, see Daniel T. Reff, Disease, Depopulation, and Culture Change in Northwestern New Spain, 1518–1764 (Salt Lake City, 1991), 5–9.

58. Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America, 290–93. See also Marc Simmons, “Tlascalan in the Spanish Borderlands,” New Mexico Historical Review 39 (April 1964): 101–10. It is equally true that the Anglo-Americans enslaved Native Americans; for example, the Puritans sold hundreds of Narragansetts into slavery in the seventeenth century, most of them ending up in the West Indies.

59. Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America, 293–96.


61. Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America, 298.

62. Ibid., 42, 52–53, 56.


66. See the several schemata that appear in Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America. For the structure of Spanish American society and the dynamics of social change, see James Lockhart, “Social Organization and

67. For a literary analysis of this phenomenon see the chapter “The Sons of La Malinche” in Paz, Labyrinth of Solitude, 65–88.


69. Population data from Lyle McAlister, Spain and Portugal, p. 131, table 1; p. 344, table 6; Lockhart and Schwartz, Early Latin America, p. 338, table 4; p. 342, table 5.

70. Quoted in Hagan, American Indians, 13.

71. Walter Russell Mead, Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition (Boston, 1987), 7. As Mead notes, the policy in the United States was not as bad as in Tasmania where British misfits were encouraged to practice extermination in an attempt to round up and kill every last native.


3. Up and Down from Colonialism

1. For the history of this economic gap, see W. Dirk Raat, Spain and England in the New World: A Note on Colonialism and the Global Economy, Occasional Papers in Latin American Studies, no. 4 (Storrs, Conn.: University of Connecticut, November 1988), 1–7; and John H. Coatsworth, “The Economic Historiography of Mexico” (paper presented to the American Historical Association, Chicago, Ill., 29 December 1986). The gap was created in the period between 1770 and 1870. Mexico’s per capita income grew at roughly
the same rate as the United States between 1880 and 1950. During the period of the Mexican “miracle” from 1950 to 1970, Mexico made some gains in reducing the gap between the United States and itself. A comparison of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the two countries in 1975 indicates that the Mexican GDP was 988 billion pesos, or $67 billion (U.S.), while the United States had a GDP of $1,518 billion. This averages out to approximately a per capita income of $957 (U.S.) for each Mexican, and $7,590 (U.S.) for each U.S. citizen. While the per capita income for Mexico in 1877 was one-tenth that of the United States, by 1975 it had changed to a little over one-eighth of the U.S. per capita income. This comparison is based on information in *International Financial Statistics* [a publication of the International Monetary Fund; English edition] 32, no. 2 (February 1979): 254–57, 386–89. See also chapter 8, n. 18. A more conservative estimate is given by Daniel Chirot, who argues that the GDP per capita of Mexico in 1980 (in 1985 U.S. dollars) would be about one-third to one-fourth the U.S. per capita income. See Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in the Modern Era* (San Diego, Calif., 1986), 204–5. It should be noted that GDP measures only productivity, not distribution of income.

2. See C. H. Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America* (New York, 1963), 27–37. Some of Haring’s observations need tailoring. For example, the northern colonies of America attracted not only proper middle-class farmers but also British misfits, paupers, and dissidents. And, as Eric Wolf has noted, in English North America between 1607 and 1776, only two out of ten indentured servants attained the status of independent farmer or artisan. Most died before their contract was over or joined the pool of day laborers and paupers. Finally, the flip side of British middle-class settlements, for all their positive features, was their hostility toward and exclusion of indigenous populations, whether in North America, Tasmania, or New Zealand. India, which was colonized later, was an exception mostly because the natives were too numerous to exterminate or exclude. For a comparison of indentured servitude with African slavery, see Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, Calif., 1982), 201–4.

3. Ibid. Although most farm colonies were English and exploitation colonies were usually Spanish (or Portuguese), the English plantation colonies of the West Indies were exploitation colonies, while the Spanish communities in Chile were farm colonies. It is also true that the English tried to exploit their farm colonies through restrictive legislation and navigation acts and that some exploitation colonies, like Virginia for example, started out
as farm colonies and did not develop slavery until late in the seventeenth century. As can be seen, Haring’s categories are less than precise.


12. Ibid., 3–4; Johnson, *From Reconquest to Empire*, 8–9.

13. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 65–68, 125–32. It is generally true that cities in Spain were less nucleated than in the Americas, but all the tendencies of the Spanish American city find their antecedent in Spanish cities.


18. Ibid.


24. Ibid., 157–63.

25. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 132–42. Debt peonage appears to be a function of demography, with the practice increasing when landowners needed to monopolize labor in times of labor shortages and decreasing when the Native American population was increasing. In many instances, owners owed their workers back wages. Generally speaking, peons were the best paid and most acculturated segment of the rural work force and were seldom retained on the land through debt peonage. Debt peonage was always regional and localized and probably more characteristic of the nineteenth century than of the eighteenth.


28. Using official figures for the year 1785, Fernand Braudel estimates that goods and bullion from Latin America to Spain amounted to 63.29 million pesos (of which gold and silver accounted for nearly 70 percent). Adding in Brazil’s 6.25 million pesos in exports, he calculates that America sent Europe 69.54 million pesos of goods and bullion in 1785. Exports in the other direction, from Spain to America, were worth 38.3 million pesos. Thus, Europe was taking out of America at least 31 million pesos, or in pounds sterling, at least 6 million pounds. As Braudel notes, “So Latin America (about 19 million inhabitants) was sending back to Europe every year four or five times as much as India (about 100 million inhabitants). This would certainly make it the greatest treasure-store in the world” (421–22). It was this kind of decapitalization that helped to create the gap between the developed and undeveloped parts of the world today. See Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World*, vol. 3 of *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th–18th Century* (New York, 1984), 405, 491. See also Wolf, *People without History*, 151–54.


32. Anyone disbelieving this claim need only compare the ornamental and glittering interiors of the ultrabaroque cathedrals that dot Mexico’s landscape to the straight lines and unadorned architecture of a New England town meeting hall.


34. Lang, *Conquest and Commerce*, 222.


40. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System 1: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974), 100–103, 112, 349. Deságüe labor was a form of highly exploitative flood-control work. In Mexico City it involved thousands of Native Americans working to build dikes, drainage works, and tunnels during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For Wallerstein, “coerced cash-crop labor” is a system of agricultural labor control wherein peasants are required to work at least part of the time on a large domain producing some product for sale on the world market (ibid., 91). It is one form of serfdom. Wallerstein argues that encomienda labor, in which Native Americans were used in agriculture, mining, and ranching, was another type of serfdom. The allocation of Native American labor by the state, known as the *mita* in Peru and the repartimiento or *cuatequil* in New Spain (colonial Mexico), was a form of coercive labor most often used in the mines of Peru and in agriculture in New Spain. It is true, however, that there were some noncoercive forms of labor in New Spain at this time, including the use of *gañanes* (independent Native American laborers), sharecroppers, and wage workers (especially in the mines). Concerning landholding, colonial Mexico had *minifundia*, and *latifundia*, smallholders (*rancheros*), as well as hacendados.

41. Ibid., 100–102, 112, 116, 355.

42. Ibid., 102–8. The quote is from page 105. As Wallerstein notes, sharecropping was known in other areas but was primary in the semiperiphery. It was not the *only* type of labor. Sharecropping was characteristic of certain regions of New Spain, especially in the late colonial period.

43. Johnson, *From Reconquest to Empire*, 10–11.


46. Ibid., 150–51.

47. Ibid., 179, 237–41. Sweden and Brandenburg-Prussia were also semiperipheral areas that improved their relative status at the same time as the United States (ca. 1600 to 1750). Within the core the Dutch were declining, and England and France were succeeding to the top. For a survey of the North American colonial economy, see North, *Growth and Welfare*, 35–49.

49. Ibid., 81–83.


4. Texas and a Collision of Cultures

1. Because of plagues of smallpox and syphilis, U.S. forces suffered a higher mortality rate during the Mexican War than Northern troops did during the U.S. Civil War. The United States lost 15,000 lives during the war, of which only 1,733 were battle deaths—the rest died of diseases or disappeared.


5. According to Terry Jordan, “buckaroo” may be derived from the African buckra; the South Carolinian variant of the African word was bockorau. See Trails to Texas, 6, 14–16. See also Jack Jackson, Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721–1821 (College Station, Tex., 1986), 9–10; and David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986 (Austin, Tex., 1987), 44.

6. Meinig, Imperial Texas, 23–28. La Bahía was renamed Goliad after 1828 as
an anagram for one of the heroes of the Mexican wars of independence, Miguel Hidalgo.


11. Ibid., 6–8.


15. Ibid., 130–41.


36. Ibid., 298–99.


43. Meyer, Sherman, and Deeds, *Course of Mexican History*, 303–4; Vázquez and Meyer, *México frente a Estados Unidos*, 47–50. During the nineteenth century, the Mexican peso and the U.S. dollar were equivalent. After 1895 the price of silver fell, and by 1905 the peso was worth half the U.S. dollar. The Mexican view of the Mexican-American War can be found in Cecil Robinson, ed., *The View from Chapultepec* (Tucson, Ariz., 1989), esp. xii-lvi. See also


**5. From Pueblo to Global Village**

8. For a listing of 170 major foreign companies in Mexico during the porfiriato, see José Luis Cecena, Mexico en la órbita imperial (Mexico, 1975), 868–94. Some major British businesses in Mexico at the time of Porfirio Díaz’s administration were Compañía Ferrocarrilera Mexicana, Mexican Light & Power Company, Monterrey Railway Light & Power Company, Banco de Londres y México, Banco de Montreal, Mexican Tramways Company, Oro Mining & Railway, San Francisco del Oro Mining Company, Mazapil Copper Company, Michoacán Railways & Mining Company, Guayule Rubber Company, Lower California Development Company, Land Company of Chiapas, Mexico Cotton Estates of Tlahualilo, Soconusco Rubber Plantations, Mexican Mahogany and Rubber Corporation, and Veracruz Land & Cattle Company. See also Michael C. Meyer, William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds, The Course of Mexican History, 8th ed. (New York, 2007), 390. The Real del Monte-Pachuca silver mining company of Hidalgo was, perhaps, the most impressive British mining venture in nineteenth-century Mexico. Although it was declared a financial failure in 1849, its heritage of steam engine drainage proved profitable for later mining operations. In 1906 the Real del Monte mines came under U.S. ownership. See Robert W. Randall, Real del Monte: A British Mining Venture in Mexico (Austin, Tex., 1972).
10. Kennedy, Rise and Fall, 199–201, 243n.
11. Ibid., 244.
12. Bernstein, Foreign Investment in Latin America, 7–8. For Mexican government statistics, see Montgomery Schuyler (Mexico) to the Secretary of State, 9 December 1912, microcopy 274, file 812.60, Record Group 59, Microfilm Publication, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, National Archives, Washington, D.C. See also Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos: Un ensayo histórico, 1776–1980 (Mexico, 1982), 109. Data supplied by the
U.S. consulate were slightly higher, estimating a total of $642.2 million for U.S. investments in Mexico in 1911.

13. Cecena, *México en la órbita imperial*, 86. In addition to those mentioned, some major U.S. interests were Intercontinental Rubber Company, Ferrocarril Sud Pacífico, Pan American Company, Batopilas Mining Company, Moctezuma Copper Company (Phelps Dodge), Yaqui Land and Water Company, Guanajuato Amalgamated Gold Mines, Río Plata Mining Company (Chihuahua), Pacific Smelting & Mining Company, Michoacán Power Company, Aguila Sugar Refining Company, American Bank (Mexico City), and American Bank of Torreón.


16. For an excellent discussion of the Tuxtepec uprising in which Díaz seized power and the U.S. role in backing Díaz, see John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987), 105–31. Other influential individuals who worked for U.S. recognition of Díaz were National City Bank’s James Stillman; railroad tycoon Colis Huntington; Edward Lee Plumb, secretary to the U.S. Legation in Mexico (who eventually controlled the Mexican National route from Laredo to Mexico City); and Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York.


22. Bushnell and Macaulay, Emergence of Latin America, 200–202. Favorable relations between Juárez and the United States had begun earlier during the era of La Reforma when the U.S. Navy assisted Juárez in his struggle against enemy warships and when the United States and Juárez agreed to the Ocampo-McLane Treaty that would have, had it been ratified, provided the United States with a right of transit across the isthmus of Tehuantepec. See Vázquez and Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos, 69–70; and A. B. Belenki, La intervencion extranjera de 1861–1867 en Mexico (Mexico, 1972), 174–76. An interesting sidelight of the Juárez era was the activity of Matías Romero, the Mexican ambassador to the United States. Not unlike the first U.S. minister to Mexico, Joel R. Poinsett (who was notorious for intervening in the domestic affairs of Mexico between 1824 and 1830), Romero tried to oust Secretary of State William Seward and unseat Abraham Lincoln. He also played a peripheral role in the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. See Thomas D. Schoonover, ed., Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington 1861–67 (Lexington, Ky., 1986), 31–49, 114–15.


25. Bushnell and Macaulay, Emergence of Latin America, 201.


28. For the railroads and the usurpation of Native American village lands, see John H. Coatsworth, Growth against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico (De Kalb, Ill., 1981), 149–74.


34. Ibid., 21. See also Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, 141–42. For Cananea, see W. Dirk Raat, *Revoltosos: Mexico’s Rebels in the United States, 1903–1923* (College Station, Tex., 1981), 68–69. The latter appears in Spanish as *Los revoltosos: Rebeldes mexicanos en los Estados Unidos 1903–1923* (Mexico, 1988). Two large mining operations of the 1880s and 1890s in which railroads were not a major factor were the French-owned copper works of El Boleo at Santa Rosalia, Lower California, where the mines and town were serviced by sea with a small company-owned fleet, and the silver mines of Batopilas developed by Alexander R. Shepard, ex-governor of Washington, D.C. From Batopilas, mules were used to transport the silver ore 120 miles from the rugged canyonlands to wagons and carriages in the upland country. From there they would cross the foothills and plains another 115 miles to Chihuahua City. By the mid-1930s a line ran from the U.S. border to the Sierra Madre Occidental within 105 miles from Batopilas. In 1961 the route from Chihuahua to Los Mochis was completed with the Chihuahua al Pacifico Railway going from Chihuahua City through Creel and the Copper Canyon country of Chihuahua to Sinaloa.
39. Ibid., 63–102.
42. Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution*, 287.
44. The complexity of the countryside is surveyed in Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution*, 288–325.
50. Political modernization under Díaz involved extending national authority over the church, regional oligarchs, and state and municipal politicians. The porfiriato witnessed the growth of the state bureaucracy, an expansion of the police and army, the development of a spy system, an extension of the tax powers of the government, and state involvement in the economy. To be sure, these measures were partial and did not amount to the kind of political modernization that characterized Mexico after 1920; nor was political participation broad enough to include the newly emerging social groups that accompanied the growth of the economy. These groups of workers, peons, and petty bourgeoisie were blocked from political participation by Díaz, and as a result civil war and violence soon followed his departure from government. For a discussion of the theory of modernization and its application to the Mexican Revolution see the classic work by Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn., 1968), 1–92, 264–324.
53. For los científicos, see W. Dirk Raat, *El positivismo durante el Porfiriato* (Mexico, 1975), 107–42.
58. Katz, “Mexico,” 46–47. See also Francisco Almada, La rebelión de Tomochi (Chihuahua, 1938).
60. Ruiz, People of Sonora, 162–82.
63. Meyer, Sherman, and Deeds, Course of Mexican History, 398.
64. Longevity data are from W. Dirk Raat’s interview with Michael C. Meyer, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 2 February 1989.

6. The Mexican Revolution in the United States

4. Ibid., 257–74, 280–82.


19. For the motives behind Villa’s attack on Columbus, see Friedrich Katz, “Pancho Villa and the Attack on Columbus, New Mexico,” American Historical Review 83 (February 1978): 101–30. Villa’s motivation is also treated by Charles Harris III and Louis R. Sadler in an essay entitled “Pancho Villa and the Columbus Raid: The Missing Documents,” in Border Revolution (Las Cruces, N.Mex., 1988), 101–12. For a colorful regional account of the event that contains interesting photographs, see Bill Rakocy, Villa Raids Columbus, N. Mex. Mar. 9, 1916 (El Paso, Tex., n.d.). Explanations range from the simple story of Villa wishing to settle a score with townsperson
Sam Ravel for his alleged lack of delivery of war supplies to a conspiracy theory that alleges that the U.S. government paid Villa to have the raid take place so that complacent Americans would be willing to arm for war in Europe.

26. Vázquez and Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos, 149–51. U.S. military aid to Obregón (including eleven airplanes) is documented in the J. W. F. Dulles Mexican Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin. See especially Dulles, interview of Jorge Prieto Laurens, 9 Nov. 1955, Dulles Mexican Papers 4, no. 21. For de la Huerta’s view see Dulles, interview of Adolfo de la Huerta, 6 June 1955, Dulles Mexican Papers 4, no. 49.
33. Ibid., 76; Katz, Secret War in Mexico, 5–7.
35. This is not to say that the question of the extent and nature of U.S. influence during the Mexican Revolution is not being debated. A major issue is the question of economic nationalism in the countryside and the extent
of anti-Americanism associated with it. The leading advocate of the anti-Americanism view is Alan Knight, who argues that “foreign interests did not figure as victims of the Revolution to anything like the extent argued or assumed in many studies. . . . To put it at its simplest, the idea of a virulently nationalist popular revolution was largely a myth” (see Nugent, Rural Revolt, 27). John Mason Hart argues that the crisis of the Mexican countryside erupted in violence due to structural inequalities that pushed peasant and local elite groups to resist the intrusive growth of foreign-controlled (mostly American) commercial agricultural estates. Much of the debate centers around the idea of nationalism and the confusion between nationalism and xenophobia. Knight correctly points out that much of the popular resistance was directed against Spaniards and not Americans. Hart, for his part, has documented hundreds of anti-U.S. land seizures. It is obvious that at least in the Mexican North anti-Americanism was virulent. Knight’s views can be found in several places, including his two-volume work The Mexican Revolution (Cambridge, Eng., 1986). See also Alan Knight, “Interpreting the Mexican Revolution,” in Texas Papers on Mexico (Mexican Center, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, Austin), no. 88-02; and his U.S.-Mexican Relations, 1910–1940: An Interpretation (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, San Diego, Calif., 1987). Hart’s argument can be found in his book Revolutionary Mexico. For the best expression of both points of view plus those of other critics, see Rural Revolt, ed. Nugent. Anyone doubting anti-Americanism in Chihuahua need only look at the chronology in Eugenia Meyer and Graziella Altamirano, Museo Histórico de la Revolución en el estado de Chihuahua (Mexico, 1982).


40. The complete story of the revoltosos can be found in Raat, Revoltosos.
41. Hall and Coerver, Revolution on the Border, 44–77.
43. Hall and Coerver, Revolution on the Border, 93–125.
44. Ibid., 93–95; Lorenzo Meyer, Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917–1942 (Austin, Tex., 1977), 7, 10.
45. Hall and Coerver, Revolution on the Border, 96.
46. Ibid., 97. For evidence of Buckley’s covert activity, see the reports from agent “no. 16” (who was probably a private investigator for the Fall Committee) during October and November 1919, folder 164 of the William F. Buckley Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.
48. Ibid., 152–57.
49. Public opinion and the popular press had a positive effect on the campaign for diplomatic recognition of the Obregón government. For this dimension, see C. Dennis Ignasias, “Propaganda and Public Opinion in Harding’s Foreign Affairs: The Case for Mexican Recognition,” Journalism Quarterly 48 (Spring 1971): 41–52.

7. Soldiers, Priests, and Lords of Land and Industry

1. In Latin America this nationalistic assertion of equal sovereignty is known as the Calvo Doctrine, named for the Argentine diplomat Carlos Calvo. For the Calvo Doctrine, see Robert Freeman Smith, The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916–1932 (Chicago, 1972), 27–29.
2. Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (New York, 1987), 282–91, 327–33. The 1940 authorization alone doubled the navy’s combat fleet, created seven thousand combat aircraft for the Army Air Corps, and resulted in an army of over a million men.

5. Meyer, “Mexico,” in *Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Bethell, 179–81; Haber, *Industry and Underdevelopment*, 153–70. Peculiarly enough, the manufacturing of producer goods by Mexican firms did relatively well during the depression. This was partly due to government spending on construction projects that increased the demand for steel and cement.


12. Masha Zakheim Jewett, *Coit Tower, San Francisco: Its History and Art* (San Francisco, 1983), 27–30. See also Laurance P. Hulburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1989). Hulburt argues that the United States’ first great national school of art, that of abstract expressionism, grew out of the Mexican mural movement. As for the PWAP, it should not be confused with the Federal Art Project (FAP). The FAP was under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and was characterized as a “relief project for starving artists.” The PWAP, however, solicited the works of artists by regional committees.

13. By “corporativism” we mean a state that, through the apparatus of the official party, creates a political machine that manipulates class organizations (e.g., workers, peasants, or corporations) through populist slogans, conces-


16. Raat, “U.S. Intelligence Operations,” 624–31. For the MID in Mexico, see Dale Reynolds, ed., *U.S. Military Intelligence Reports, 1919–1941* (Frederick, Md., 1984), 9 reels [hereafter cited as *MIR*]. These are microfilmed copies of documents from Record Group 165, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.; and Files, MID, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Mexico. For a general study, see Bruce W. Bidwell, *History of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of the Army General Staff, 1775–1941* (Frederick, Md., 1985).


18. Ibid., 443. See also Vázquez and Meyer, *México frente a Estados Unidos*, 158.


23. Lieuwen, *Mexican Militarism*, 118–21. By 1946 the military share of the federal budget was 10 percent; by 1952, 7 percent. For an excellent study of the Cárdenas era, especially the army, see Alicia Hernandez Chávez, *La mecánica cardenista*, vol. 16 of *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexico, 1980).


25. Ibid., 59–60. The drug ring information came from g-2 Report no. 3394, 12 June 1931, Military Attaché, Mexico City, MIR. The end of Almazán and the triumph of Camacho in 1940 eventually led to the dissolution of sector militar influence in the party.


37. For the role of Daniels in seeking a solution to the church-state controversy, see E. David Cronon, *Josephus Daniels in Mexico* (Madison, Wis., 1960), 82–111.
43. Our discussion is based on the perceptive analysis of Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson, Ariz., 2004), 152–53.
46. Some writers, such as Lorenzo Meyer (ibid., 169), refer to the act of 1938 as nationalization rather than expropriation. Expropriation is an act directed at a particular firm usually followed by some effort at compensation. Nationalization is a generalized action by the state to bring about a basic change in the economy. Confiscation, however, is a seizure of property without effective compensation. Expropriation is acceptable international practice; confiscation is a violation of international law. Throughout the controversy the Mexican government spoke of “expropriation,” while the oil companies and the U.S. State Department called it “confiscation.”
Notes to Pages 156–161


48. Quoted in “All Property of Oil Companies Expropriated by President Cárdenas,” G-2 Report no. 8373, 22 March 1938, Military Attaché, Mexico City, MIR.

49. For the role of PEMEX after 1940, see Michael Tanzer, *The Political Economy of International Oil and the Underdeveloped Countries* (Boston, 1969), 288–303.


51. For Roosevelt’s U.S. critics, see Cronon, *Josephus Daniels in Mexico*, 232–33.


53. “Nazi-Communist Influence in Mexico,” in Roscoe B. Gaither (New York City) to War Department, 1 October 1940, Military Attaché, MIR, Mexico City.


56. Many of these ideas were suggested to Dirk Raat in correspondence from John Womack Jr., 29 January 1990.


8. Preening and Ruffling the Serpent’s Plumage


8. Ibid., 182–84. The military’s share of the national budget continued to decline during this period. From 30 percent in 1930, the military’s share had been reduced to 7 percent in 1952 and was only 1 percent of the 1980 budget. See James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditures and Social Change since 1910* (Berkeley, Calif., 1967), 102–3, and Francisco Carrada Bravo, *Oil, Money, and the Mexican Economy: A Macroeconomic Analysis* (Boulder, Colo., 1982), 43.

9. Dirk Raat, “Gus T. Jones and the FBI in Mexico, 1900–1947,” (paper presented to the American Historical Association, San Francisco, 29 December 1989). Much of the material in this paper was taken from FBI files and also the unpublished manuscript by Gus T. Jones, “The Nazi Failure in Mexico” (Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, California).

10. Ibid. See also Leslie B. Rout and John F. Bratzel, *The Shadow War: German
Espionage and United States Counterespionage in Latin America during World War II (Frederick, Md., 1986), esp. 79.

11. Vázquez and Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos, 185. For the legalized production of opium in Mexico during the war, see Elaine Shannon, Desperados: Latin Drug Lords, U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can’t Win (New York, 1989), 34, 63.


13. Vázquez and Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos, 185–86.


15. For the PEMEX story, see Michael Tanzer, The Political Economy of International Oil and the Underdeveloped Countries (Boston, 1969), 288–303.


17. Vázquez and Meyer, México frente a Estados Unidos, 197–98, 201, 206; Meyer and Sherman, Course of Mexican History, 646; José Luis Ceceria, México en la órbita imperial (Mexico, 1970), 210–12.


20. Skidmore and Smith, Modern Latin America, 239.


23. Hellman, Mexico in Crisis, 195.

24. Kennedy, Rise and Fall, 404–9, 413–37.

25. Congress, Senate Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Covert Action in Chile 1963–1973, 93rd Cong., 2nd sess., 18 December 1975. See also Errol D. Jones and David LaFrance, “Mexico’s Foreign Affairs under President Echeverría: The Special Case of Chile,” Inter-American Economic Affairs 30 (Summer 1976): 45–78. Consistently inconsistent, Echeverría, to appease the Right, quietly sent his minister to Santiago that next year (May 1974) to pursue trade relations with the government of General Augusto Pinochet.
28. Ibid., “Mexico’s Foreign Affairs,” 77–78.
34. Ibid., 221.
39. Ramirez, *IMF Austerity Program*, 7. For the political fallout from the earthquakes, see Steve Frazier’s article “Nation in Jeopardy: Aftermath of the Earthquake Points up the Weaknesses of Mexico’s Leadership,” *Wall Street Journal*, 15 October 1985. Not helping the administration’s public image was the discovery of eight bodies of tortured victims in the ruins of the basement of the Judicial Police building.
United States and Mexico, ed. Richard R. Fagen and
Olga Pellicer (Stanford, Calif., 1983), 119–33; Mario Ojeda, “Mexican Policy
toward Central America in the Context of U.S.-Mexico Relations,” in Fu-
ture of Central America, 135–60.

41. John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, Megatrends 2000 (New York, 1990),

42. Jackie Roddick, The Dance of the Millions: Latin America and the Debt Cri-
sis (London, 1988), 114–18. The CIA report and the $3.5 billion bridge loan
are noted in the 19 October 1986 issue of the New York Times. See also the
report by Peter Kilborn on world debt in the 23 October 1988 issue of the
New York Times. James W. Wilkie comments on the Brady Plan in his report
“Refocusing Interpretation on the Mexican Political Economy,” in Mexico

43. Ramirez, IMF Austerity Program, 8–12.

44. Roddick, Dance of the Millions, 116; New York Times, 29 March 1990. For the
classic statement on the IMF and the World Bank and imperialism, see
Teresa Hayter, Aid as Imperialism (Middlesex, Eng., 1971).

45. Jeffrey Bortz, “Long Waves, Postwar Industrialization, and the Origins of
Mexico’s Economic Crisis” (paper presented at the Mexico in Crisis: Past,
Present, Future conference, Bishop Center, University of Connecticut,
Storrs, 22–23 April 1988, 39–40; conference cosponsored by the University
of Connecticut and Brown University). Bortz places the Mexican crisis of
1982 in a global historical perspective, noting from GNP data that, for the
entire period from the late nineteenth century to the present, Mexican and
U.S. growth phases have tended to coincide.

46. Robert A. Rankin, “How the Latin Debt Crisis Affects Americans Di-

47. Shannon, Desperados, 70, 73–75, 122, 412–13. See also Scott B. MacDonald,
Dancing on a Volcano: The Latin American Drug Trade (New York, 1988),
69–87. Allegations have been made that U.S. equipment was sent to Mexico
not only to fight the drug war, but that the drug war was actually a cover
to allow the United States to equip the Mexican army.
48. Ibid., 64–68.
49. Ibid., 67–68.
54. For the accusations against Ibarra-Herrera, see “Former Mexican Police Head Indicted.” An analysis of Mexico’s internal security forces, including the MFJP and the DFS, is found in James D. Rudolph, ed., *Mexico: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 360–70. Corruption continues to characterize the Salinas era. On 21 May 1990 the president of the Sinaloa state bar and head of the Commission on Human Rights, Norma Corona Sapiens, was killed in Culiacán. It was hinted that federal judicial police were involved in her assassination. Also in May the former governor of Jalisco and current attorney general was implicated in drug trafficking while governor of Jalisco. See “Mil policías tras el asesino de la Dra.,” *Excelsior*, 23 May 1990; and “Testifica agente de la DEA que el procurador Álvarez del Castillo estuvo ligado al narco cuando gobierno Jalisco,” *Diario de Chihuahua*, 31 May 1990. The general issue of police corruption is treated in an entertaining fashion in Dick J. Reavis, *Conversations with Moctezuma* (New York, 1990), 83–89. The issue of corruption is two-edged. Certainly the U.S. government had a variety of forms of corruption under
the Reagan administration—for example, the corrupt public officials who ran the Housing and Urban Development agency (HUD), the Iran-Contra secret warriors, the bankers (and their congressional friends) of the savings and loan industry, and the Deaver-Meese-Nofziger scandals. For both sides of the story, see William Branigin, “A Stinging Indictment of High-Level Mexican Corruption,” Washington Post, 13–19 February 1989; and William F. Weld, “We Greatly Underrate the Power of Corruption in U.S.,” Buffalo News, 1 May 1988.


9. Mexamerica


Notes to Pages 188–193


6. Our discussion is based primarily on Linda Cordell, *Archaeology of the Southwest* (San Diego, Calif., 1997), 4.

7. Ibid., 4–5.

8. See, for example, the scholarly contributions to volume 1, *Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands West of Columbian Consequences,* ed. David Hurst Thomas (Washington, D.C., 1989), especially the essays by Katherine A. Spielman and John L. Kessell.


11. The history and theory of incorporation is the subject of Thomas D. Hall,


13. Ibid.


18. Ibid., 9–12.


20. Ibid., 8–20.


22. Tom Miller, On the Border (New York, 1981), 65. As a personal note, when Dirk Raat traveled to Piedras Negras during the summer of 1987, the Kickapoos were nowhere to be found, having been relocated by the Mexican government.

23. Cambell W. Pennington, The Tarahumar of Mexico (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1963), 13–18.


27. Bill Bryson, The Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way (New York, 1990), 239–41. The quotation by Fuentes is found in Bill Moyers, A World


33. Ibid., 114–19; Williams, “Resurgent North,” 313, 318.


41. Sklair, Assembling for Development, 238.


43. Interview of B. W. Wolfe, President of Trico Corporation in Texas and Mexico, by W. Dirk Raat, Brownsville, Texas, 1 July 1987.


45. Pick, Atlas of Mexico, 47, 49.

46. A catalog of border problems can be found in Stanley R. Ross, ed., Views across the Border; and César Sepúlveda and Albert E. Utton, eds., The U.S. Mexico Border Region: Anticipating Resource Needs and Issues to the Year 2000


48. Ibid., 64–65.

49. Ibid., 59, 64–66. A recent example of underworld and upperworld ties can be seen in the story of the tunnel that was discovered in 1990 connecting Agua Prieta, Sonora, with Douglas, Arizona, and was used for smuggling cocaine. Francisco Rafael Camarena, who claimed to be an attorney and investor from Guadalajara, was a drug runner who needed an outlet for a cocaine-smuggling tunnel in Mexico. He arranged to purchase two parcels of land in Douglas from Cochise County justice of the peace Ronald J. “Joe” Barone. The U.S. end of the tunnel was found to be on property Barone had sold to Camarena. Barone made a huge profit on the deal, netting a profit of 472 percent on his investment. Incidentally, Barone was godfather to Camarena’s son and thus a compadre of Camarena. See Paul Brinkley-Rogers and Keoki Skinner, “Land Deal Staining JP’s Life,” *Arizona Republic*, 24 June 1990.


52. The literature of NAFTA is vast, but an excellent analysis is found in Larry Rohter, “Stop the World, Mexico Is Getting On,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1990 (reproduced in Spanish in *Diario de Juárez*, 4 June 1990). See also “Comercio libre con EU y Canada,” *Excelsior* (Mexico City), 22 May 1990. On oil and the common market, see Manuel R. Millor, *Mexico’s Oil: Catalyst for a New Relationship with the U.S.?* (Boulder, Colo., 1982), 189–91. A number of professional groups in the United States have held meetings on the topic, including the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, meeting in cooperation with Yale University at New Haven on 15 March 1989. Even the National Football League was talking in 1990 about a World League
of Football that would include Montreal, Mexico City, and several U.S. cities.


54. Canadian Liberals, New Democrats, and labor leaders fear an exodus of manufacturers seeking low-cost labor and a flood of cheap Mexican goods inundating Canada. They oppose the U.S.-Canada free-trade pact as well. U.S. labor leaders dislike NAFTA too, usually arguing against any moves that would lead to a loss of jobs in the United States. U.S. leaders in the environmental movement also oppose the idea of NAFTA. Mexican intellectuals and politicians generally argue that since the relationship between the overdeveloped United States and underdeveloped Mexico is asymmetrical, NAFTA will simply reinforce an unequal relationship with the United States. The United States will get the economic reforms that a creditor nation needs and will use its power to maintain the existing Mexican political system (allegedly undemocratic and corrupt), while Mexico will continue to stay underdeveloped and dependent on the United States. Before there can be interdependence between the United States and Mexico, argues Carlos Fuentes, Mexico must be independent (which it is not). See Barbara O’Brien, “Envoy Calls Canadians Sour on Free Trade,” *Buffalo News*, 29 March 1990; James T. Madore, “Mexico Could Ruin City’s [Buffalo’s] Free-Trade Boom,” *Buffalo News*, 6 May 1990; Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, “For Mexico, Freedom before Free Trade,” *New York Times*, 1 April 1990; Interview of Carlos Fuentes by Bill Moyers, *World of Ideas*, 4; and Charles F. Bonser, ed., *Toward a North American Common Market* (Boulder, Colo., 1991).


**Epilogue: The Rediscovery of Mexico**

2. *Vogue* (New York City), October 1990. See also Jack Flam, “Mexican Art over Three Millennia,” *Wall Street Journal*, 9 October 1990; and “Sending New York 30 Centuries of Splendor,” *World Monitor* (November 1990): 10. Also scheduled for this time in New York City were a symposium on pre-Columbian Mexican culture that accompanied the Metropolitan exhibit, and an ongoing series of lectures on U.S.-Mexico relations at the Bildner Center, City University of New York graduate school. In addition, there were related exhibitions throughout the city on Mexican scientific research, engineering, architecture, literature, film, and coinage. There were also performing arts, such as rarely heard sixteenth- to eighteenth-century music, under the heading “Mexico, A Work of Art: Music.”


4. The Museo del Barrio’s exhibit, entitled “Through the Path of Echoes: Contemporary Art in Mexico,” did focus on paintings, prints, photographs, and sculptures created in the 1980s by young Mexican artists. See *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 October 1990, b64. Popular culture, unlike folk art, was represented in the exhibit with colonial *retablos* (altar screens), the prints of José Guadalupe Posada, and the populist works of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. When the Metropolitan show traveled to San Antonio, Texas, for its 6 April 1991 opening, the exhibit was appended by the San Antonio Museum of Art’s own collection of folk art. Obviously, someone was listening to the New York show’s critics. See “Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries,” *San Antonio Express-News*, 31 March 1991.

5. When asked why the 1990 show featured art only from the 1950s and earlier, William S. Lieberman, chair of the Metropolitan’s department of twentieth-century art, explained that “some of the Mexican advisers were opposed to showing the contemporary work.” See Carlos Monsiváis, “The Splendors of Mexico,” *Artnews* 89 (October 1990): 151. See also John Phillip Santos, “3000 Years of Mexican Art,” Calendar, *Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 1990; and “Mexico on Five Galleries a Day,” *Newsweek*, 29 October 1990, 70–71, 74.

6. For the art of Jaime Garza, see Alan Weisman, *La Frontera: The United States Border with Mexico*, with photographs by Jay Dusard (San Diego, Calif., 1986), 11–12, plate 1 (following p. 30). For the Reagan effigy, see either


10. Ibid., 177–229.


20. Ibid.


23. Ibid., 120–25.


Bibliographical Essay

This essay considers a wide range of works that speak to the history of Mexico, including monographs, general histories, and reference matter. Its main concern, however, is the history of the relationship between Mexico and the United States within the context of the global economy. Students and scholars seeking specific items, such as archival or other primary sources, should consult the notes.


Aids for the study of the Greater Southwest are plentiful. A very recent and thorough aid is Borderline: A Bibliography of the United States–Mexico Borderlands, edited by Barbara G. Valk (Los Angeles, 1988). See especially “Archaeology” and “History,” 49–145. See also Ellwyn R. Stoddard, Richard L. Nostrand, and


Cultural and anthropological studies that compare the civilizations of the
Americas have become the concern of a few writers. A general interpretive work by Edmund Stephen Urbanski has been translated from Spanish by Frances Kellam Hendricks and Beatrice Berler and is entitled *Hispanic America and Its Civilizations: Spanish Americans and Anglo-Americans* (Norman, Okla., 1978). A comprehensive treatment of comparative cross-cultural encounters is found in John E. Kicza, *Resilient Cultures: America’s Native Peoples Confront European Colonization* (Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2003).


There are several good surveys of the general history of Mexico–United States relations. A recent study by two Mexican historians is Josefina Zoraida


Native American studies have attracted the attention of several investigators. The foremost work that contains basic materials on prehistory, linguistics, physical anthropology, ethnology, ethnography, and ethnology of Native American communities of Middle America, past and present, is the fifteen-volume series called the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, edited by Robert Wauchope (Austin, Tex., 1964–75). For the American Indian’s contributions to world history, see the very readable book by Jack Weatherford, *Indian

The topic of Indians and the Spanish conquest, as well as the history of Indian-European relations, has been developed in a number of studies. For the conquest, see Nathan Wachtel, “The Indian and the Spanish Conquest,” in Cambridge History of Latin America, vol. 1, edited by Leslie Bethell (Cambridge, Eng., 1984), 230–37. Hugh Thomas offers the best narrative history of Hernán Cortés’s encounter with Moctezuma in Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico (New York, 1993). An assessment of the Spanish conquest that seeks to break down misconceptions is found in Matthew Restall, Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest (New York, 2003). The best study of Aztec-Spanish relations remains Charles Gibson, The Aztecs under Spanish Rule (Stanford, Calif., 1964). In the Gibson tradition is the study by Nancy M. Farriss, Maya Society under Colonial Rule (Princeton, N.J., 1984). On the northern frontier two comparative studies are worth noting, that of Edward H. Spicer, Cycles of Con-


Bibliographical Essay


Literature on the Mexican Revolution is unending. What follows is a small sample of what is available. A good survey essay is John Womack Jr., “The Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920,” in the *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 5, edited by Leslie Bethell (Cambridge, Eng., 1986), 79–153. The most recent synthesis that is useful to students is Michael J. González, *The Mexican Revolu-


The photographs by Jay Dusard that are found in Alan Weisman’s *La Fron-
Bibliographical Essay

tera: The United States Border with Mexico (San Diego, Calif., 1986) provide visual delights for the interested reader. Southwestern photographer Otis Aultman is featured in Mary Sarber’s Photographs from the Border (El Paso, Tex., 1977). A photographic work of contemporary Mexico that integrates historical photographs with explanatory text is the published collection of Gustavo Casasola, Historia gráfica de la Revolución Mexicana, 1900–1960, 5 vols. (Mexico, 1965–1971). Those who wish the rare experience of viewing Mexico from the air will do well to pick up Mexico, A Higher Vision: An Aerial Journal from Past to Present (La Jolla, Calif., 1990). The photography of Michael Calderwood is accompanied by an introduction by Carlos Fuentes and text by Michael Calderwood and Gabriel Brena. Finally, the best overview that expresses modern Mexican history through compelling photographs and images is Mexico: A Photographic History, by Rosa Casanova and Adriana Konzevik (Mexico, 2006).
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