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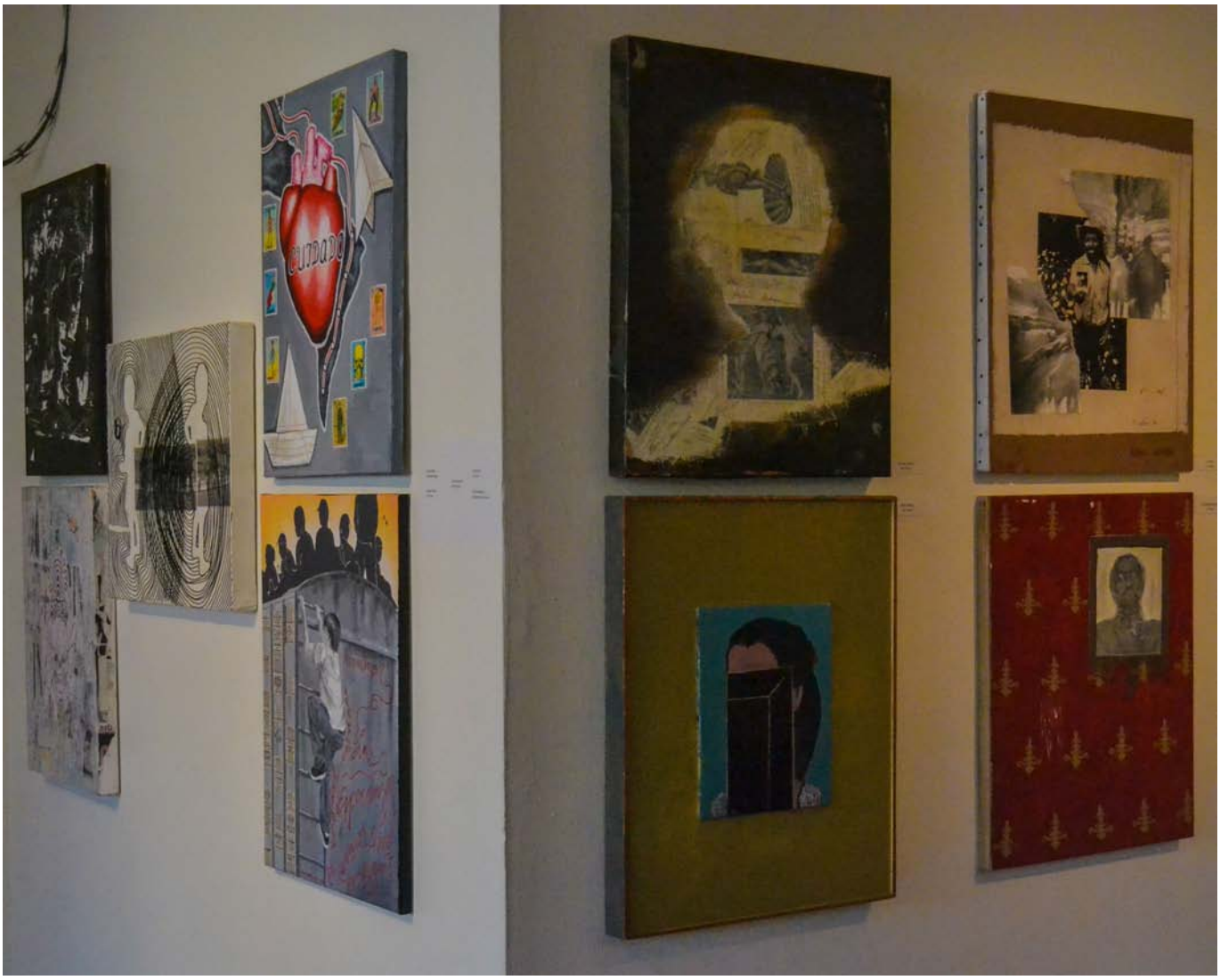
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The painting featured on the cover of this volume originally appeared at the Chicago headquarters of Calles y Sueños (CYS), an internationalist art collective who work to sustain collaboration, dialogue, and cultural exchange between the diverse Latino community in Chicago and La Casa de Arte y Cultura in Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico. CYS has generously offered permission to use work of their members in this journal; all of the art here comes from them. We encourage you to contact CYS with questions or comments, especially if you would like to donate or volunteer!



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[graphic design by Nicholas Gunty & Joshua Gunty]

This product would not have been possible without
the gracious support of several institutions.
From all of us at the Mexico Working Group, **thank you!**

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Table of Contents

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

From its inception, The **Mexico Working Group (MWG)** has striven to open a space for interdisciplinary dialogue at Notre Dame—a space that would include both graduate and undergraduate students. Over the past several months we have had the opportunity to work with a truly extraordinary group of individuals who have helped us make this vision a reality. Thus we would like to open these pages of our second *Journal of Undergraduate Research on Mexico (JUROM)* by thanking those most involved in the production of this journal and the numerous activities we have organized during the past academic year.

First, we would like to thank **Joshua Gunty** (BA 2010, Peace Studies & Political Science), who has not only performed extraordinary editorial work for the papers in this volume but also helped our students realize their potential in research and writing. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank **Rodrigo Castro Cornejo** (Ph.D Candidate, Political Science), who has been a key player in the growth of the MWG. Through his patience and sheer hard work, we were able to bring an extraordinary group of people to campus, organize the first **Mexico Week @ ND**, institutionalize our *Diálogo* series, and open our second **Undergraduate Student Conference on Mexico (UCOM)** to students at universities throughout the Midwest region. Meanwhile **Ted Beatty** (Associate Professor, Department of History), **José Antonio Aguilar Rivera** (Kellogg Visiting Fellow & Professor at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, CIDE), and **Guillermo Trejo** (Associate Professor of Political Science) were key faculty leaders in these endeavors. And last but certainly far from least, we would like to express our gratitude for the generous financial and intellectual support we have received from the **Kellogg Institute for International Studies** and its leadership—**Paolo Carozza, Steve Reifenberg,** and **Sharon Schierling.**

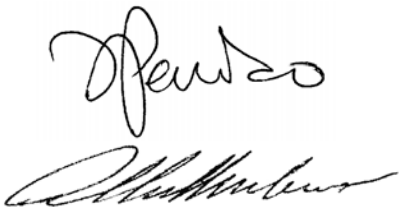
One of the MWG's principal activities is to coordinate UCOM, a biennial undergraduate conference focused on Mexican and Mexican-American issues, bringing undergraduates together to present their research in panels organized and run by graduate students. The second UCOM, ***¿México?***, took place on April 27, 2013 as part of **Mexico Week @ ND**. We received many worthwhile submissions from three different universities (Notre Dame, Northwestern, Purdue), which facilitated lively, in-depth discussions across many academic disciplines to explore the resilient continuities and massive changes for Mexico at the dawn of a new century. In turn, our keynote dialogue punctuated the intellectual sophistication and social relevance permeating UCOM 2013, as Oxford historian **Alan Knight** joined democracy advocate **Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas** to reflect on the conference theme.

Even as it stands among such momentous figures, JUROM is intended to provide a forum for those undergraduate students who produced the most exceptional and original works to publish in the field of Mexican Studies. Our final decision came after difficult debate within the conference committee, but the essays assembled here represent the three leading papers from UCOM 2013: "Youth Rebellion & The Social Imaginary: Recurring Themes of Mexican Expression" by **Bruno Anaya Ortiz** (Notre Dame Class of 2013, Philosophy & Mathematics, awarded **Best Paper on Mexico**); "Through Blood & Fire: The Revolutionary Image of Ricardo Flores Magón" by **William McMahon** (Notre Dame Class of 2015, History); and "*Testimonio* in Action: A New Kind of Revolution?" by **Lucy Jackson** (Northwestern Class of 2013, History & Political Science).

We hope you find the essays in this volume as informative and interesting as we do. We believe that the authors selected for this volume are an inspiration to us all, as teachers and as colleagues. They have demonstrated a mastery of skills and expertise that will surely help them achieve successful, productive careers in whatever fields they pursue after college.

As we look forward to further promoting faculty-mentored research for university students at Notre Dame and beyond, we invite you to join us in the movement. To learn more about the MWG's events, projects, and other opportunities for participation, please visit our website (kellogg.nd.edu/research/mexico), or feel free to contact us using the information below. Until then, we hope you enjoy the fruits of our young scholars' labor.

Saludos Cordiales,



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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

¿oyes tus pasos en el cuarto vecino?
no aquí ni allá: los oyes
en otro tiempo que es ahora mismo,
oye los pasos del tiempo
inventor de lugares sin peso ni sitio

do you hear your steps in the room next door?
neither here nor there: you hear them
in another time that is right now,
listen to the steps of time
inventor of places without weight or space

~ Octavio Paz, *"Como quien oye llover,"* 1986

For philosophers, studies of identity often struggle with the question of persistence: what makes someone the same from one time to another? Meanwhile to poets the question may miss its point—if being in time is more about circles than lines. As for social scientists, chronology reigns key yet the patterns it unlocks often point to non-temporal places, places where ideas comprise reality.

All three articles in this volume explore how the tendency to rebel against dominant power recurs across generations in Mexico. From the personal to the national to the global imaginary, our student authors interpret this pattern by examining the abstract constructions that drive people to assert themselves in opposition to norms of their day. These young scholars see words and images as conduits carrying identities between the steps of time, reproducing dichotomies bound to spark revolt.

Just as words and images construct labels that divide society, we distinguish concepts to make sense of them. We devise categories among human experiences, normative ideologies, and historical phenomena to explain their interactions. Likewise, our authors employ terms such as *youth rebellion*, *anarchism*, and *revolution*. They assess perceptions, beliefs, and actions according to whom shared them where, when, and how.

This approach can help us discern identities of actors in society, but we should be careful not to overlook the identities of labels themselves. What makes a label the same from one time or place to another? Insofar as a label is a categorical concept, we instinctively conceive it to be fixed in relation to other concepts. So each time we invoke or encounter that label, we are tempted to assume it refers to the same concept. As our essays here remind us, however, ideas are more dynamic than categories can capture.

This is a matter not only, for example, whether liberalism means now what it did three centuries ago; it also concerns the variants that fall under the same label across space and time: what is it that makes anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism both *anarchism*? What makes young *fresa* behavior and the Zapatista uprising both qualify as *rebellion*? When we label the events of 1910-1917 in Mexico as *revolution*, we are asserting their qualitative identity with events elsewhere in history—say, 1765-1783 in the United States, or 1789-1799 in France. But beneath lies a question we rarely entertain: is the label itself numerically identical in all three instances? Does *revolution* signify a singular concept? Maybe so, maybe not.

This may appear little more than semantic banter, but I urge you to consider how it reflects the paradoxical predisposition of language. We name things because they appear different from each other, yet we develop ways to speak of them according to the boundless connectivity they manifest.

As Editor, my task is to ensure that our authors' words indicate precisely what they mean to say, and the only way to learn which ideas they wish to portray is through dialogue. In turn my interpretations of their words carry new ideas—concepts that had not occurred to them when writing their conference drafts. Thus the understanding we achieve together both elucidates and transforms the meaning they intend. From there we choose words we believe will best communicate it to you, our reader. Each attempt

to distinguish is an effort to connect. And with that I introduce to you the articles at hand:

First, our 2013 Best Paper on Mexico, Bruno Anaya Ortiz's "Youth Rebellion & The Social Imaginary." As Anaya Ortiz examines how contemporary cultural expressions reconstruct traditional Mexican dualism, try to think of counterexamples that genuinely propagate progressive ideology; what could you do to bolster their mainstream viability?

Next arrives William McMahon's "Through Blood & Fire." As McMahon illustrates how the image of Ricardo Flores Magón has reignited libertarian socialist movements, I invite you to contemplate the role of national symbols in global governance and international civil society.

Finally we have Lucy Jackson's "*Testimonio* in Action." As Jackson combines literary analysis with new social movement theory to revisit Mexico's revolutionary disposition, I encourage you to assess the possibility of nonmaterial revolution.

Whether now is (as) before or phenomena to come, Octavio Paz understood when he listened to rain he was listening to rivers, listening to clouds, listening to tears, all in one moment. He let the cycles of temporality swirl into themselves, swallowing binary structures of language. In studying society we may be apt not to be so readily swept away, but in any case we must remember: steps need neither weight nor space.

In Peace,

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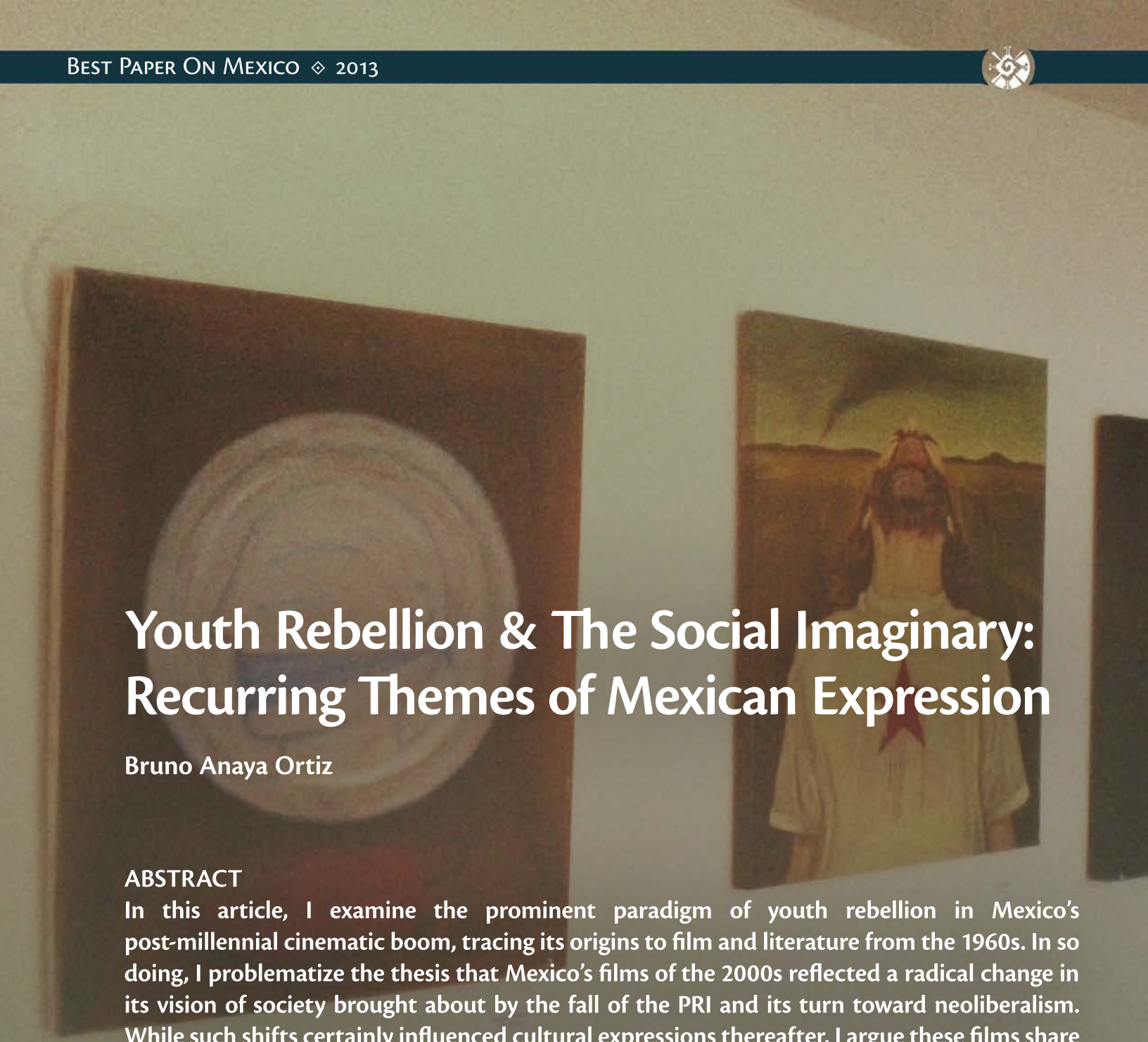


Youth Rebellion & The Social Imaginary: Recurring Themes of Mexican Expression

Bruno Anaya Ortiz

ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine the prominent paradigm of youth rebellion in Mexico's post-millennial cinematic boom, tracing its origins to film and literature from the 1960s. In so doing, I problematize the thesis that Mexico's films of the 2000s reflected a radical change in its vision of society brought about by the fall of the PRI and its turn toward neoliberalism. While such shifts certainly influenced cultural expressions thereafter, I argue these films share a dualistic conception of Mexican society which is fundamentally consistent with the pre-neoliberal social imaginary, whereby only two classes exist—the fresa (higher class) and the naco (lower class). To the extent that these films showcase attempts to overcome class division, their narrative coherence depends on this dualistic paradigm. This model stands against the backdrop of Mexico's rising middle class and cultural diversity, yet it continues to reconstruct the reality it purports.

INTRODUCTION

During the first decade of the 2000s, Mexican cinema experienced a prolific boom, the likes of which the world had not seen since Mexico's "Golden Age" of cinema from the 1930s to 1950s. In this recent wave of productions, films like *Amores perros* (2000), *Por la libre* (2000), *Y tu mamá también* (2001), *Amarte duele* (2002), and *Déficit* (2007) feature youth protagonists through controversial motifs that surprised critics and spectators alike—from sex and drugs to class conflict and more. Several scholars have interpreted this cinematographic boom in terms of an identity crisis brought about by Mexico's transformation to a neoliberal state and the concomitant fall of its paternalistic Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) after seven decades of hegemonic rule. Ernesto Acevedo Muñoz writes:

> It is as if Mexico's economic and political crisis after NAFTA, the U.S. financial bailout of 1995, and the fall of the PRI's rule of over seventy years all point to a new identity crisis that these new films, and particularly the phenomenal 'crossover' hits *Amores perros* and *Y tu mamá también* need to address.[1]

Likewise, in her analysis of *Y tu mamá también*, María Josefina Saldaña Portillo asserts:

> More accurately stated, the homoerotically charged Oedipal complex that provides the plot device, propelling this 'on the road' film through narrative time and the Mexican countryside, functions as an allegory, presenting the viewer with a cinematic interpretation of the changing nature of Mexican sovereignty, subaltern positionality, and colonial fantasy in the context of a neoliberalism historically represented by NAFTA.[2]

These scholars see the movies of the 2000s as deconstructing the PRI's national identity narrative, which conceived of Mexico as a fairly uniform, mostly rural nation.[3] According to this perspective, by telling the stories of socially, racially, and economically diverse young *individuals*, these films challenge the homogeneously mestizo "Mexico of charros, mariachis, revolutionaries, ranchera songs and melodramas" that had been imagined by Golden Age cinema and other cultural manifestations—such as Diego Rivera's murals and José Vasconcelos's essays.[4] Furthermore these scholars consider the category of youth in 2000s cinema to be a "symbolic repository for ambivalent feelings about the fall of past Mexican social models in the face of new cultural globalization."[5] After a closer look at these films' content and symbolism, however, I will argue that most of their major shared motifs had already appeared in artistic productions of the 1960s, especially in Juan Ibañez's film *Los caifanes* (1966) and the literature of "*La Onda*."

That the dominant themes of 2000s cinema were present in Mexican culture before the dawn of neoliberalism does not necessarily invalidate the observation that neoliberalism influenced expressions of those themes, but it does invite us to make more nuanced reflections about the meaning of Mexican cinema's recent boom and post-PRI conceptions of Mexican identity. With this invitation in mind, I begin by positing the two most prominent themes that underlie youth-oriented cinema of the 2000s: 1) *the rapprochement of higher-class youth to lower classes and its ultimate*

[1] Ernesto Acevedo-Muñoz, "Sex, Class, and Mexico in Alfonso Cuarón's Y tu mamá también," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 40.

[2] Maria Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "In the Shadow of NAFTA: *Y tu mamá ´también* Revisits the National Allegory of Mexican Sovereignty," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2005): 751.

[3] Laura Podalsky, "The Young, the Damned, and the Restless," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 49.1 (2008): 145. She writes "As noted by numerous historians, from the 1930s until the late 1980s, the Mexican state acted as benevolent guardian that successfully 'managed' its citizenry through top-down policies and pro-nationalist rhetoric… As argued by Alex Saragoza and Graciela Berkovich, starting in the 1990s, Mexican films registered this shift through allegorical narratives that comment on the decline of the patriarchal state in narratives about private lives."

[4] Silva Escobar and Juan Pablo. "La Época de Oro del cine mexicano: la colonización de un imaginario social," *Culturales* 7.13 (2011): 25 (my translation); José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 2010). Vasconcelos argued that the peoples of the Americas formed a "fifth race" combining racial and spiritual elements from both native and colonial roots. Thus Mexican identity was constructed by this uniting, homogeneous racial trait. In the same vein, Acevedo-Muñoz writes, "Of special interest is the practice in *Y tu mamá también* of specifically reversing and revising the myth of Malinche in order to compose a new national identity equation in which the historic themes of sex, gender, *machismo*, and the revolutionary ideology are faced with a more brutal, more honest reality" (46).

[5] Podalsky, 146.

impossibility; 2) *higher-class youth, despite their apparent conservative moral background, justifying their indulgence in immoral behavior through the fiction of rebellious activity*. Next, I trace these two themes to the aforementioned works of the 1960s. Finally, I offer an explanation for this continuity of themes based on the evolution of the category of youth in Mexico's social imaginary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a country like Mexico, which conceives itself as and in certain ways *is* young, youth as a category can serve as a barometer of social phenomena. Indeed, Mexico may be understood as young not just in the sense that it, like fellow countries of the Americas, became a nation-state rather recently in comparison to those of Europe; Mexico is also young in demographic terms: in 2005 more than 50% of the population was less than 30 years old.[6] Since our present investigation revolves around the role of youth rebellion in Mexico's social imaginary, our assessments about that role's evolution must account for the youthful composition of Mexican society.

By *social imaginary*, I refer to something which Charles Taylor has articulated well,

> something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations … My focus is on the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends … [W]hat is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society.[7]

So we may understand the social imaginary as a set of pre-theoretical conceptions (images) which provides the foundation for communal living in any given society: common understandings, dreams, expectations, values, beliefs, and mores. It defines boundaries not only between the acceptable and unacceptable but also between the possible and impossible; insofar as the range of things an individual may or may not do is contained within the range of things she may imagine, the social imaginary delimits the spectrum of action for all individuals who share it. At the same time, however, individuals in society are the authors of their social imaginary, which they construct through various means of communication, especially cultural expressions.

Here I have opted to detect and describe the social imaginary by examining these expressions. Our inquiry is therefore not so much about the process of Mexican society shaping itself as it is about conceptions of Mexican identity which have already been constructed—specifically, the roles of lower and higher-class youth in modern Mexico. What do these images tell us about the roles expected and allowed of youth? That said, to the extent that representations of society maintain normative power over its members, our investigation may shed light on mechanisms that have facilitated the images we scrutinize.

THE MILLENNIAL BOOM: REBEL *NIÑOS BIEN*[8] & THEIR *BAÑOS DE PUEBLO*[9]

[6] *Instituto Nacional de Estadística,* "Boletín de estadísticas vitales," *Instituto Nacional de Eestadística y Geografía*, accessed March 4, 2013. http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/continuas/vitales/boletin/2011/702825047429.pdf

[7] Charles Taylor, *Modern social imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 23-24.

[8] In Mexico this idiom commonly refers to affluent young men and women. Deriving from the phrase *estar bien*, we may translate it as "comfortable kid"—whereby money provides comfort. Its connotation is often negative, implying a certain judgment related to the subject's indulgence in luxuries provided by his family's financial position, not his hard work. The *niño bien* is seen as lazy, elitist, and arrogant. On the other hand, those who consider themselves to be rich or high class often reappropriate the term, employing it to describe themselves with elitist overtones. In this sense it is used competitively to distinguish between those who are good and those who are not. Furthermore, a *niño bien* is supposed to be not only wealthy but also well-mannered, well-dressed, well-educated, clean, attractive, and above all respectable. So the adjective "rebel" before *niño bien* creates an oxymoron.

[9] This expression translates literally as a "popular bath" or a "bath into the small villages." In the context of Mexico's classist language and worldview, "*pueblo*" is a euphemism for lower class or any "underdeveloped" area

Before we consider the two primary themes I have identified in Mexican cinema of the 2000s, two clarifications are in order. First, I am *not* suggesting that these two themes are the only cinematic concerns of the decade, nor am I suggesting that every Mexican film from the decade exhibits them. Instead I am suggesting that these two themes stand out for their ubiquity and prominence in films from the decade which focus on *youth*. Second, although I present them as two different themes, they by no means constitute a disjunction. On one hand, rich young men and women who adopt lower class customs may have been motivated by the desire to rebel against dominant moral codes; on the other hand, the perceived immorality of lower class behavior may drive the ultimate impossibility of inter-class rapprochement.

Transcending Class Divisions, or Not

This theme is at the center of many movies from the 2000s (not just the ones discussed here) and is marked by three elements. First, the movies present a binary model of society that conceives of only two classes; nominally these are the rich and the poor, but in fact they seem to be characterized by many traits beyond economic status: style, aesthetic sensibility, education, morality, etc. This conception of society is concomitant with a notion of class irreconcilability because reconciliation depends not only on economic equality but also total cultural transformation. Second, the plot and its setting offer partial snippets of class reconciliation, instilling in the spectator a certain hope that the class gap may close, against all odds. But finally third, some fatal event denies this possibility, confirming the spectator's original intuition that such class rapprochement is impossible.

In *Amarte duele*, this theme constitutes the central driver of the plot. Ulises, whose father sells second-hand clothes from a little market stand in a poor *barrio*, falls in love with Renata, who hails from the wealthy *colonias* of northern Mexico City. Their relationship is presented to the audience as that possibility to transcend class division, but eventually the audience is led to conclude that not even love is strong enough to overcome this duality, for the story ends in tragedy. Renata's jealous ex-boyfriend tries to shoot Ulises with his bodyguard's gun but misses, killing her instead.

The movie communicates its model of Mexican society through characters who embody each class by social types. Renata has white skin, goes to a Catholic nun school, dresses in a checkered schoolgirl uniform, travels in luxury cars, and is escorted by bodyguards. Ulises is darker-skinned, goes to a public high school, and wears an oversized Pumas soccer jersey with baggy pants.[10] The language they each use also distinguishes them. Though she uses some slang expressions associated with higher class (e.g. *¿Qué pedo?, ¡No mames!*), Renata usually employs proper grammar along with a certain intonation involving exaggerated prolongation of the last syllable in words before a pause in conversation (e.g. *¿Enseriooo?, O sseaaa, ¿Y quéee?*). By contrast, Ulises tends to use more vulgar language that is heavily populated by slang associated with the lower class (e.g. *Entonces* sí, *a chingar a su madre*, *¡Mamasita!*, *chsht*. *¡Adiós chiquita!*).

In *Y tu mamá también*, the protagonists, Tenoch and Julio, are similarly characterized as rich and poor respectively, and their great friendship at the beginning of the film inspires hope that their differences may be transcended. By the end of the film, however, the spectator's hope has been crushed by a final fall-out between the two young

outside of Mexico's large cities, while *baños de pueblo* sarcastically fantasizes a phenomenon by which higher-class members undertake an adventure that distances them from the comfort of their wealthy neighborhoods, allowing them to reach the poor.

10. The reader should note that the Pumas jersey is not a subtle reference at all. While devotion to soccer in Mexico is not exclusive to the popular masses, Mexicans stereotypically associate particular expressions of that devotion with the lower class: while wealthier devotees tend to follow European soccer from the comfort of their large screen TVs (usually pledging allegiance to Barcelona or Real Madrid), lower-class devotees cram themselves into Mexico's precarious stadiums to cheer for teams who the Europhilic higher-class considers lesser teams. These stadiums are packed with lower class members wearing those large, often unofficial jerseys, like the one Ulises wears. More specifically, the Pumas come from UNAM, Mexico's *public* university, whose fanfare is often associated with the lower *pueblo*. Regardless of this stereotype's actual accuracy, *Amarte duele*'s references to it stand very likely to resonate with the Mexican spectator's own experience.

protagonists. Meanwhile *Amores perros* presents the stories of a wealthy couple, a poor family, and a vagrant. Their paths crisscross each other in Mexico City, tacitly suggesting they might come together, but not even a violent car accident where they all coincide can produce lasting social interaction between them.

Throughout these films, the middle class is strikingly absent. This contributes to a very particular relationship between spectator and motion picture because most of the cues given to characterize each class above and below the middle are specific to *Mexican* society. These cues are not direct indications of *economic* condition but rather suggest each character to be representative of a completely different sociocultural group, each with different traditions, values, and outlook. The spectator must therefore have antecedent images of society that are generally consistent with those each film presents in order to connect with the story. In this sense, the films themselves are hardly contravening.

Higher-Class Rebels

The second recurring theme is as follows: the movie paints a picture of a higher-class society that dictates a conservative moral code. At the same time, the movie presents characters—labeled as hippy, *morralero*,[11] revolutionary, or rebel—who, despite belonging to that conservative society, superficially deny their class position, thus allowing themselves to violate conservative norms while seldom renouncing their material privilege. In this way, they give themselves license to engage in otherwise prohibited sexual practices and indulge in the use of alcohol and drugs. Implicit throughout is the supposition that moral codes of the lower class are more liberal.

In *Por la libre*, two cousins, Rocco and Rodrigo, both belong to approximately the same upper class socioeconomic stratus, but Rocco identifies himself as a hippy or *morralero* and in this manner justifies his use of marihuana before himself and his bourgeois moral code. Moreover, the trip to Acapulco is a sort of escapade from Mexico City and their family, whose values do not resonate with the values they assert. Once in Acapulco, both cousins have one-night stands, and one ends up in jail. It is as if Mexico City, the so-called "center" of Mexico, represents the traditional, the morally correct, and the dutiful. By no coincidence does the departure from the high-class conservative moral code occur in tandem with departure from Mexico City, as the capital has historically housed higher concentrations of wealth. As such we are invited to believe that when a young man takes a "baño de pueblo," he not only leaves *the* city for a small town but also abandons his bourgeois moral responsibilities to partake in the less restrictive customs of the lower class.

In *Y tu mamá también*, the sequence of events is almost the same: Tenoch and Julio hit the road en route to the beach without telling their parents. On the way, they binge drink, have sex with an older woman, and share a homosexual encounter. Quite tellingly, neither one of the two young men is willing to acknowledge their night in bed together once they get back to Mexico City. It is the home of their family and its upper class morality; only away from there can they behave so "abhorrently," thus revealing the thinness of their rebellion.

Déficit tells the story of two rich siblings, Cristóbal and Elisa. The movie insinuates that their father (on a business trip in Europe) is a corrupt politician. Although Cristóbal seems to happily abide by the dictates of his class paradigm, Elisa is a rebellious hippy. She wears dreadlocks and beaded necklaces. When they discover that both had decided to throw a party in their parent's weekend home in Tepoztlán, they hesitantly accede to share the grounds. A huge party then develops, where drugs, alcohol, and sex are consumed. There are two things to note here: first, both siblings have to

[11] The word *morralero*, a variant of *morral* (a sort of satchel usually worn in the country), literally refers to someone who wears a satchel, and is generally associated with someone who works in the fields and carries her harvest in it. However, because *morrales* are usually made of straw with designs reminiscent of indigenous imagery, some higher class youth who wanted to counter mainstream fashion by going back to indigenous roots appropriated them as backpacks, a part of their urban outfit. Thus *morralero* can be used to refer to someone who belongs to this countercultural wave. It is perhaps a more recent variant of the *jipiteca*, and roughly comparable to the American *hipster* in their spirit to contravene the mainstream.

leave Mexico City in order to have their wild party in the small town of Tepoztlán;[12] second, Elisa, despite continuing to benefit from her father's luxurious weekend home, justifies her drug use by conceiving herself as a hippy. (Meanwhile Cristóbal condemns Elisa's drug use as he opts for alcohol, the more acceptable intoxicant.)

We should also notice how the distancing from social norms by youth in these movies is often associated with a distancing from the father. Indeed, while these are stories about youth who are still dependent on their parents, both the father and mother figures are chronically absent throughout the films, thus leaving space for our protagonists to oppose them. In *Amarte duele,* Julieta's "prohibited love" with Ulises transgresses not only her family's bourgeois standards of economic status but also their Catholic codes against fornication.[13] While Julieta remains more steadfast in her opposition than characters like Tenoch and Julio, we are left to wonder whether she would have managed to continue her rebellious stance were she not killed by her ex-boyfriend's determination to keep her from Ulises. How, if at all, might her parents have influenced her ultimate decisions?

Although some of these movies (especially *Déficit*) bear a subtle denunciation of what may be seen as the hypocrisy of rebel *niños bien*, most do not. In any case, we can see a marked distinction between the invariably tragic fate of higher-class characters who attempt to genuinely transcend class division and the happier endings for characters who only relate superficially to the lower class. These movies therefore telegraph the image of the rebel *niño bien* as a valid model of youth culture; insofar as these films moralize, their plots tend to condemn what we may call attempts at genuine class transcendence while validating the more shallow rebel *niño bien*. If we see the social imaginary as offering several viable identity paradigms for youth, these films reveal and perpetuate the rebel *niño bien* as one of them. Since the social imaginary itself possesses important normative force, this indicates that higher-class morality may not be as conservative as the storylines from the millennial boom try to portray. Drug use, alcohol abuse, inter-class relationships, premarital sex, and homosexuality are deemed normal and acceptable from within the confines of superficial rebellion. *A fortiori*, the social imaginary now seems to *invite* higher-class youth to partake in such transient rebellious incursions.

EXPRESSIONS OF THE 1960s

Los Caifanes & Its *Baño de Pueblo*

Written by Carlos Fuentes, *Los caifanes*[14] (1966) is the first full-length film directed by Juan Ibáñez. It is about a couple, Jaime and Paloma, from the rich neighborhoods of Mexico City, who find themselves stuck without a car at their weekend home in Querétaro (about three hours away from Mexico City). When it starts to rain, they jokingly board a car parked on the street. It turns out the car is owned by a group of mechanics who are on their way to Mexico City. They call themselves the *caifanes* and offer the couple a ride. Thereafter ensues an adventure of social classes coming together. When they arrive in Mexico City, the mechanics invite the couple to a cabaret downtown in an area with which the wealthy couple is unfamiliar—a *barrio bajo*, or slum. Pushed by Paloma's enthusiasm and desire to "*vivir intensamente*" [live life to the fullest], the couple accedes to their own sort of *baño de pueblo*, away from the Mexico City they know.

[12] In fact Tepoztlán is less than 30 minutes away from Mexico City, but its role as a *different* place is clear, and more importantly Tepoztlán is clearly a small town with what is imagined to be radically different mores from those of the city. It is conceived as provincial.

[13] In the original Spanish text of this paper I used the term *amor prohibido*, which is also the title and catch phrase of a well-known song by Selena because I knew the phrase would resonate with a certain cliché of Mexican popular culture. Saddened that I was unable to convey the same undertones in this English version, I settled for listening to the song myself. This brought me to closer attention with its lyrics; now I realize they say *amor prohibido murmuran por las calles, porque somos de distintas sociedades* (forbidden love they murmur on the strees, for we are from distinct societies)—yet another manifestation of Mexican dualism.

[14] The word *caifán* was common in the slang of Mexico City's lower class during the 1960s, but much less so today. It derives from a combination of *caer bien* ("to be amicable") and "fine" (*bien*), resulting in the portmanteau *caifán* (Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson, "Vicarious Identities: Fantasies of Resistance and Language in Juan Ibáñez's *Los caifanes* (1966)," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 34.2 (2004): 38-45).

Much like in *Por la libre* and *Amarte duele*, *Los caifanes* relies on presupposed stereotypes to distinguish the characters between rich and poor: attire, values, language, and especially moral codes. Nohemy Solórzano Thompson argues convincingly that *Los caifanes* generates a fantasy according to which there exist two social classes (rich and poor), where only the poor *viven intensamente* and only poor men are "true" men, proper "machos."[15] The world of the rich is portrayed as false, incomplete, and boring, while that of the poor is real and exciting. Thus the female lead of *Los caifanes* must rebelliously approach the lower class to find the intensity and fullness she is looking for in life. Indeed, she finds it through her adventures with the mechanics, culminating at last in a romantic sexual episode with one of the *caifanes*. And although Paloma seems to be sincerely attracted to the *caifán*, when morning comes the two separate to never see each other again. The tacit implication is that they belong to classes that simply cannot interact beyond a single night of adventure.

Parallel to its successors four decades later, here we also see the bourgeois youth's rapprochement to the lower class and the implicit freedom to transgress conservative norms. Many of the same elements that dominate millennial boom cinema are also used here—from youth protagonists to stereotypes that differentiate social class to the conclusion that each class must ultimately live apart from one another. Once again, to the extent that these class characterizations go beyond the economic into the cultural and moral, they must be consistent with the spectator's antecedent image of society, which indicates that the social imaginary conceived of Mexican society as dualistic even before the 1960s.

La Onda Libertines

Just before *Los caifanes* came out, José Agustín's *La tumba* (1964) and Gustavo Sainz's *Gazapo* (1965) had marked the literary beginning of what came to be called *La Onda*. Literature of *La Onda* is best known for its experimentation in form, interweaving very eloquent language and philosophy with vulgar vernacular in both dialogue and the narrative itself. This slang creates a peculiar mélange when mixed with the more elitist language that was usually associated with literature, thus meriting the label *Onda*; the term literally translates as "Wave," yet it also appears prominently in informal phrases among Mexico's urban youth: *¿qué onda?* means "what's up?"; *que buena onda* means "how nice"; ¿qué onda con ella? means "what's wrong with her?"; *¡ese cabrón es la onda!* means "that dude is so cool!"; *ese güey sí que trae onda* means "that guy's got style."[16]

La Onda works incited controversy among Mexico's literary and intellectual establishment because of their unconventional form as well as the purportedly scandalous content of the stories they told. As Inke Gunia notes, these literary producers "contravened a series of conventions inherent to the dominant concept of literary communication between author and reader."[17] Both *La tumba* and *Gazapo* are protagonized by higher-class adolescents, and both concern themselves with the exploration of sexuality, drugs, and alcohol.

Gazapo tells the story of Menelao, a young man who abandons his family after a fight with his father and stepmother. In the adventures that ensue, the reader bears witness to a story of erotic fantasy and adolescent angst. The father figure briefly appears in what is clearly the background of the novel. Before his father, Menelao rebels:

> One night, after a discussion, I put all my clothes in a pile on the edge of my bed. I made my father see that the least he could do was to drive me to the apartment on Artículo 123 Street because it was raining. We were so angry. He came down to the garage to talk to Madahasta, then he came back up and told me that he couldn't take me, that he was very sorry. 'She dominates

[15] Solórzano-Thompson, 38-45.

[16] Some of the English translations here sound more formal than their counterparts in Mexican vernacular.

[17] Inke Gunia, "¿Qué onda broder? Las condiciones de formación y el desenvolvimiento de la literatura de la contracultura juvenil en México de los años sesenta y setenta," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 59 (2004): 23 (my translation).

> you,' I told him and tried to carry everything out…[18]

La tumba tells the story of Gabriel Guía, a higher-class young man who is overcome by an existential crisis, which he tries to resolve with sexual escapades and whiskey. He has ongoing sexual relationships with several women (some of them older, including his aunt), organizes somewhat destructive parties in his parents' house, and is constantly drunk. "Drink whiskey, get red in the face and behave like an imbecile," he writes of himself.[19] The father, a lawyer who is absent but for a few instances, tries to no avail to discipline his son; instead, his efforts always result in conflict. For example, one time when the father reprehends Gabriel for not having come home the previous night, Gabriel responds:

> What does it matter where I've been? You only think that I was with a prostitute so you can feel scandalized like the good Decent Lawyer that you are; so be it then, if that's what you want, I will please you, I went to a brothel and I intend to marry a toothless hooker, just like the witch that you have as a lover![20]

Elsewhere Gabriel again posits his desire to appease the bourgeoisie in similarly sardonic tone: "I hired professional waiters and a tropical music group, in order not to give a bad impression to those imbeciles from the *high* [society]."[21] Here we should note that the Spanish version of the book reads "la high," which mimics the English savvy of higher class Mexicans, thus reinforcing the dualism between rich and poor via cultural cues. Likewise, Agustín capitalizes the non-titular phrase "Decent Lawyer" (*Abogado Decente*) to connote the categorical nature of bourgeois identity and its demand for public respect. Clearly Agustín writes it in a sense of mockery, but his assumption of his audience's ability to detect such sarcasm reveals the presence of that concept in the social imaginary. In this way, the term "Decent Lawyer" reads parallel to *niño bien* ("good youth"), for both attach a binary valuating adjective to an otherwise descriptive social category. These valuated categories only make sense against the backdrop of a society that understands itself in terms of only two possible classes.

Evidently, Agustín and Sainz were very conscious of the relationship between the fiction they produced and the society that housed them. The public could hardly separate their works from their own stories as writers because they propagated their personal narratives through major news outlets and eventually the publication of *Nuevos escritores mexicanos del siglo XX presentados por sí mismos* (1967), a collection of young writers' autobiographies edited by Agustín.[22] Both of them belonged to the higher class their novels describe. For example, since Augustín father was a pilot he frequently traveled abroad and learned foreign languages from a very young age—clear markers of high culture.[23] In *La tumba* Agustín interweaves a great deal of English along with snippets of French and German without translation or any further reference for the reader. This suggests that Agustín imagined his audience would be relatively well educated and affluent.

Nevertheless, Gabriel's plot-driving worry in the novel is to emancipate himself from the higher class conformity into which he was born. In one instance, Gabriel's girlfriend Dora writes him a letter stating: "I understand that I am still a little bourgeois girl (…) but I will come to proletarianize myself—is that how one says it?—and so should you, leave that retrograde life you lead."[24] She uses bourgeois terminology to articulate her commitment to abandon bourgeois values, juxtaposed with the cynical recognition that she has thus far been unable to actually escape them. So too did Agustín and Sainz strive to emancipate themselves from the canons of their class; according to Elena Poniatowska, "On the question

[18] Gustavo Sainz, *Gazapo* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967), 28 (my translation).
[19] José Agustín, *La tumba* (Mexico City: Editorial Novaro, 1968), 41 (my translation).
[20] Agustín, 98.
[21] Agustín, 41.
[22] *Nuevos escritores mexicanos del siglo XX presentados por sí mismos*, ed. Agustín José (Mexico City: Empresas Editoriales, 1967).
[23] *Portal Jóvenes Lectores*, "La tumba," interview with José Agustín, accessed March 4, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqoWtjMvrMQ.
[24] Agustín, 65.

of him doing some acid, some pot, a few mushrooms, [Agustín] has himself declared 'that he tripped them.'" [25] Agustín was even once incarcerated in the infamous Lecumberri prison due to his anti-institutional remarks.[26] And while Agustín's career has allowed him to engage a relatively libertarian lifestyle, his social status as a popular award-winning author has maintained his position in the upper echelons of society. Likewise, Sainz became a prestigious professor at Indiana University. In this way, the authors' own life narratives incarnate this prominent theme of *La Onda*: the affluent young rebel who attempts to escape higher-class confines but ultimately settles into the comfort that this class provides.

DUALISM & YOUTH AS A CATEGORY

The Falling Father

In their analyses of Mexican cinema from the 2000s, critics often employ the metaphor of a paternalistic PRI falling down, associating these films' "youthful indiscretions with the crisis of the patriarchal structures in Mexico." [27] This account roughly suggests that in the 2000s, as the state loosened its grip on cultural production and left such endeavors to the private sector, the nation allowed itself to imagine, explore, and express previously barred topics of sexuality, drugs, class inequality. However, the presence of similar youthful indiscretions in cultural expressions of the 1960s—together with the observation that 2000s cinema is much less critical of society than might appear at first glance—undermine this interpretation to some extent. Still we must acknowledge allusions in post-millennial cinema to the absence of the nation's father figure, thus calling for a more nuanced account of this symbol's role in the Mexican imaginary.

Herbert Braun's account of Mexico's 1968 protests, which revolves around the relationship between student rebels and their paternal President, can shed light on the nuance we seek here. According to Braun, the rebels (mostly higher-class students and intellectuals) made rather soft, specific demands despite their grandiose "hard rhetoric." What the students really wanted, he argues, was to gain political recognition from the paternal state through the celebration of a *diálogo público*, a ritual in which the president and the students would dialogue before public eyes in Mexico City's central square. This would symbolically empower these young rebels as valid political actors. For them it was "a soft rite, one through which they sought not to reject the President and overthrow the state but to obtain restitution and restore justice."[28] Of course, this *diálogo público* never took place, as the Tlatelolco Massacre of October 2 brought the student movement to a halt. Nevertheless, through the mediation process that ensued, these young rebels did gain political (albeit violent) recognition for their generation.

Braun's interpretation of the 1968 student movement helps contextualize the cultural plane we have been trying to level—where the 1960s exhibits a certain struggle for the recognition of youth as an operative category in the social imaginary. If *La Onda* was considered a countercultural movement it is precisely because, at least originally, state-sponsored cultural institutions were too paternalistic to recognize works of *La Onda* as legitimate forms of art, especially given their sardonic representations of Mexican identity. By contrast, before the 1960s Mexican literature and cinema tended to embrace revolutionary ideals and rural culture; seldom did they focus on youth. Thus the 1960s marks an important shift in the imagined model of Mexican society: the category of youth not only emerges but also drives public focus away from the farm, toward the city instead. In this light, we may consider the differing turbulence between the 1960s and 2000s vis-à-vis youth rebellion. Whereas the relatively benign tragedies of youth rebellion in artistic expressions of La Onda appeared scandalous

[25] Elena Poniatowska. *¡Ay vida no me mereces!* (Mexico City: Editorial Planeta, 1985), 198 (my translation).
[26] Lecumberri is the same prison where students and workers who rebelled against the state were sent in the 1950s and 1960s.
[27] Podalsky, 147.
[28] Herbert Braun, "Protests of Engagement: Dignity, False Love, and Self-Love in Mexico during 1968," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 3 (1997): 533.

among Mexico's intellectual elite and fomented into extraordinarily violent tragedies such as the Tlatelolco Massacre, when those same themes of youth rebellion are featured in post-millennial cinema they are extremely well received as mainstream productions with no sense of scandal. By the 2000s, the culture of youth rebellion no longer shakes the social imaginary enough to elicit hard resistance from the state, for it has been tamed by and incorporated into the mainstream.

The Labyrinth of Dualism in Mexico

Some critics of 2000s Mexican cinema also maintain that those films challenge the previously state-sponsored view of Mexico as an homogenous *mestizo* nation, either by portraying Mexico as a pluralistic nation with many different sub-groups or by exposing and denouncing blatant ruptures in Mexican society.[29] According to our analysis of these films, however, the societal model they present is much more dualistic than it is heterogeneous. Rather, our observations around cultural expressions of the 1960s indicate that this dualistic model was already embedded in the social imaginary by the end of the 1950s through mostly the same types of cultural cues we observed in post-millennial cinema. Moreover, the recent films we have discussed do not problematize this dualism any more than do their 1960s predecessors. How, then, to account for this? Did the implied model of society change at all?

To respond these questions, we are inevitably forced to ask ourselves: was dualism new in the 1960s? Probably not. While there is certainly truth to the observation that the post-revolutionary government administered cultural production top-down in an attempt to "create" the nation through a coherent sense of unity, closer scrutiny of these state-sponsored cultural products tends to reveal dualistic conceptions at their core.[30]

Indeed, dualism is present even at Mexico's origins. After the Spanish conquest, a highly complicated caste system took hold, with white *peninsulars* (Spanish born in Spain) and *criollos* (born of Spanish parents in New Spain) on one pole and pure *indios* on the other. In turn, Mexico's foundational myth—that the first Mexican was born the son of Hernán Cortez and la Malinche, an indigenous woman who served as his translator—inscribes Mexico between these two poles. As Octavio Paz reflects, "The strange perdurance of Cortez and la Malinche in the imagination and in the sensibility of present-day Mexicans reveals that they are far more than historical figures: they are symbols of a secret conflict that we have not yet resolved."[31] Even the beautiful murals that enshrine this myth serve to propagate the dualism it implies: José Clemente Orozco's mural in San Ildefonso College famously features Cortez holding hands with Malinche, both of them naked, revealing their contrasting skin colors as incarnations of their symbolic polarity.[32]

Of course, the dualism of Mexican society spans well beyond the racial dimension. Between Independence and Revolution, for example, Mexico's internal political struggles were framed primarily in terms of Liberals vs. Conservatives. Or consider two of the most emblematic films from the Golden Age—*Nosotros los pobres* (1948) and *Ustedes los ricos* (1948)—which carry titles that clearly delineate the economic dimension. Because these and the many other binary notions that shape Mexican identity usually appear in isolation from one another, the overarching trend toward dualism itself often goes unnoticed.

While it may be impossible to capture all prominent Mexican social dichotomies in a single label, nowadays this dualism might best be described using the *naco/fresa* divide, as a part of what Philippe Schaffhauser calls the "phenomenon

[29] Especially Acevedo-Muñoz, though Podalsky posits a slightly more qualified argument in the same vein.

[30] As Juan Pablo Silva Escobar puts it, "the country is invented: the Mexico of charros, mariachis, revolutionaries, ranchera songs and melodramas (…) The Golden Age cinema participated in the creation of a discourse that articulated, through negation and hiding, a ripped and eroded sense of multiculturalism" (25).

[31] Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 86 (my translation).

[32] It is worth noting that although Paz and Clemente Orozco refer back to the Colonial Period, they are both producing in the post-revolutionary period.

of aesthetic discrimination."[33] According to Claudio Lomnitz, the term *naco* was originally "used against the 'indigenous;' that is, against the peasant and any person or attitude associated with the 'backwardness' that shamed 'Mexico."[34] This usage was transformed at some time in the twentieth century as the rural population migrated to the cities; it became part of urban vocabulary to connote "a very particular form of *kitsch*. … The category of the *naco* as our modern *kitsch* is, in fact, part of a system of distinction that no longer places at the lowest point the peasant world: now our system of distinction discriminates everyone who gets tears in his eyes every time he sees the reflection of his own modernized image."[35] In this sense, *naco* is a condemnation against the lack of modern authenticity, comparable to the condemnation carried in the term *nouveau riche*; it only contingently tends to discriminate the poor and the indigenous and can very well discriminate against others. The category is thus extremely porous.

Counterpart is the *fresa*, which, in a 1969 essay Carlos Monsiváis describes as.

> the squares; those who not even from a distance disagree …, who accept themselves as such, live to enter associations, parade in social groups, belong to a neighborhood or a certain street. … They belong, have friends, groups, environmental situations biased in their favor; life has been stolen for them.[36]

In that same essay, Monsiváis describes two other social categories, the *naco* and the *onda*. By *onda* he referrers specifically to those who were described by and identified themselves with the literature of *La Onda*: "the Mexican hippies, the bohemians, the real or fake outsiders."[37] Monsiváis sees the *onda* as an alternative to the binary conception of Mexican society, a third model of identity: "The mold provided by the Onda is effective. At least, it wants to vary the facial destiny of Mexico, contribute to the promiscuity of appearances."[38] At the same time, he recognizes the permeability of each category: "At the end of the day, it is still valid, in a certain way, to define a huge number of *jipitecas*[39] as *fresas* from Monday to Friday."[40] Monsiváis articulates for the *onda* the same hope that motivates characters of *La Onda* literature: to emancipate themselves from the norms of a society that so strictly distinguishes between classes.

The 1960s, therefore, represent something unique. As Braun reminds us, the participants of the student movement, hailing mostly from higher class, nevertheless attempted to incorporate lower class workers into their protests. Unsuccessful as those efforts were, they demonstrate a certain desire to transcend class division. So too do the characters of the *La Onda* literature. So too do the biographies of authors themselves. After all, the countercultural character *La Onda* did in fact incite violent responses from the state—not only Tlatelolco but also events such as Agustín's incarceration, which became increasingly common in following decade. During the 1960s, the youthful will to overcome class dualism gains enough sway to open virgin grounds for identity molds, thus enraging the Father by challenging his imagination.

However, just like the student protestors who became the technocrats that ushered in neoliberalism,[41] just like Sainz and Agustín—the supposed revolutionaries who settled comfortably as intellectual elite—so too did the 1960s' originally subversive volition to transcend dualism tame itself. It became tucked away as one among many

[33] Philippe Schaffhauser, "Etude d'un phénomène de discrimination esthétique : la « naquez » au Mexique," *Revue de civilisation contemporaine Europes/Amériques* 8, no. 1 (2008).
[34] Claudio Lomnitz, *Modernidad Indiana* (Mexico City: Editorial Planeta, 1999), 22 (my translation).
[35] Lomnitz, 23.
[36] Carlos Monsiváis, *Días de guardar.* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1970), 121 (my translation).
[37] Monsiváis, 118-19.
[38] Monsiváis, 119.
[39] Recall that *jipiteca* is a term used to describe a certain incarnation of Mexican hippies. Here Monsiváis invokes it as a synonym for *onda.*
[40] Monsiváis, 121.
[41] Braun writes "The functionaries of the state went back to building, for that is what the functionaries of the state do, and did so together with many of the students who had filled the protest movement of 1968 from below. What emerged through this construction of temporary consent was the revitalization of an old order, hierarchical and authoritarian, with the idealism of the thousands of protestors who have filled the bureaucracy and with the renewed criticism of the state provided by militants and the intellectual elite" (545).

avenues of imagination available to higher-class youth, where privileged pluralism ironically protects dualism at large. Hence we see commercial, *mainstream* films of the 2000s feature that volition in docile form; there is nothing subversive about them. The social imaginary of this recent decade is perfectly comfortable imagining bourgeois youth temporarily deviating from the conservative, higher-class moral norms yet still ultimately belonging to that higher stratum.

We may also note in passing that since bourgeois morality now accepts this paradigm as normal, it is much less conservative than might appear. However, these representations also set limits on the acceptable. For example, of the movies discussed, all but one feature only characters from the higher or lower class. *Amores perros*, on the other hand, features a third category, embodied by *el Chivo*, once a professor at a private university, then turned into a vagrant hitman after participating in the protests of 1968. He attempts at several times to make contact with his daughter, but is simply incapable; he in particular and 1960s leftists in general are portrayed as decrepit, undesirable. *Amores perros* therefore emits a tacit judgment concerning the original spirit of *La Onda*: it has no place in contemporary Mexico. Attempts to transcend the dualistic divide constitute valid imaginations of identity so long as they are superficial and limited, never substantial or national.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Throughout this analysis, one important question inevitably reveals itself: who is the spectator? Is she a *naca,* is she a *fresa*, or is she neither? And by implication, are dualistic representations of society accurate? The answer is likely twofold. On the one hand, although economic indicators show Mexico to have high income disparity and although Mexico's colonization did spawn a society where Spanish and indigenous coexisted under severely unequal conditions, they have been changing at least since the revolution and continue to evolve. Not only is Mexico home to a bourgeoning middle class; it is also a country of immigrants.[42] From Central American migrants to Korean entrepreneurs, Mexico's immigrant population is highly diverse.[43] Political diversity may also be observed at a regional level, for example between the generally left-leaning Mexico City and the more conservative north. Other exponents of cultural expression like music and degrees of religious devotion vary across regions as well.[44]

All of this seems to suggest that the dualistic model of Mexican society is in fact inaccurate. On the other hand, however, the notion of a divided society is so deeply internalized and so constantly present in the public conscience that it continually reconstructs the reality it purports; such is the power of a social imaginary.

When she watches these movies, the spectator, who might otherwise be described as middle class, will identify with one group or the other. She imagines herself to be either *naca* or *fresa*, and so long as she is incapable of imagining herself otherwise—so long as the social imaginary does not offer alternative models of personal identity—she is caught between them. At the same time, these movies owe their success in great part to the fact that spectators already see themselves reflected in the characters. Whether as a *naca* or *fresa*, the spectator will find legitimacy when seeing her reflection enshrined on the screen. Perhaps this explains why these movies so heavily employ individual characters as representatives of *groups*: most spectators will not so readily relate to stories about individuals in genuinely unique circumstances—unless the condition of finding oneself in genuinely unique circumstances is itself a definitive social cue for the group.

This is the modern condition, but Mexico does not seem to be there yet. Still, Mexican pluralism is

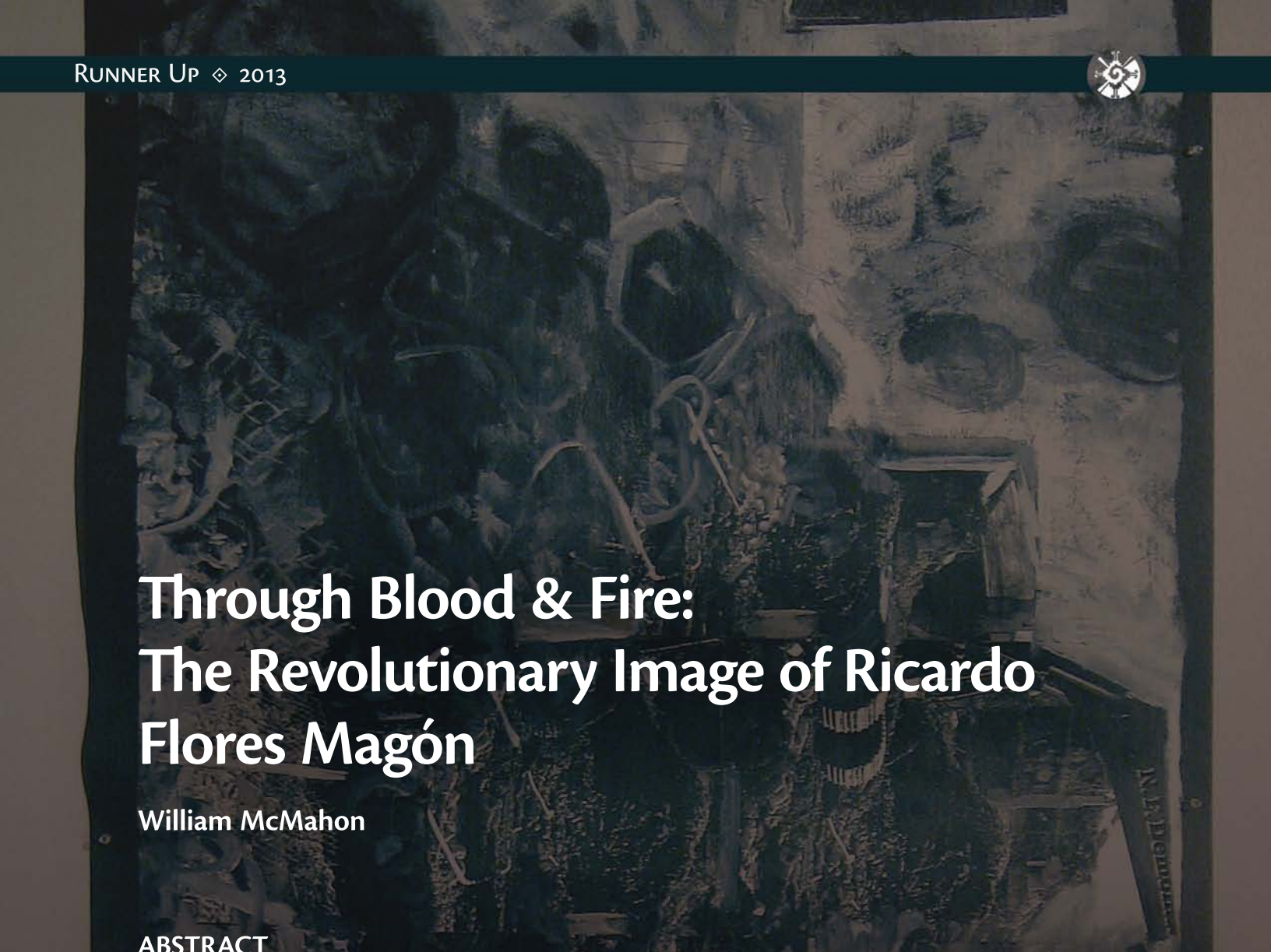
[42] Luis de la Calle and Luis Rubio, *Mexico: A Middle Class Society*, Woodrow Wilson Center, Mexico Institute, 2012, accessed January 14, 2014. http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Mexico%20A%20Middle%20Class%20Society.pdf. According to this report, "53.2% of Mexico's urban population had already achieved middle-class status in 2002" (9).

[43] Damien Cave, "For Migrants, New Land of Opportunity Is Mexico," *New York Times* (New York, NY), September 21, 2013, accessed January 14, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/22/world/americas/for-migrants-new-land-of-opportunity-is-mexico.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

[44] The documentary *Hecho en México* (2012), for example, offers a fascinating survey of Mexico's diverse musical expressions.

on the rise, and dualism prevails *despite* the nation's actual diversity, further reproducing beliefs that not all are equal. Self-identified or not, the *naco* is victim to profound symbolic violence every time these movies play, but in a way so is the *fresa*, for she too is confined. And while the last few years have seen some advancements towards non-dualistic narratives, this dichotomy still fascinates society, as patent by the recent box-office success of *Nosotros los nobles* (2013), yet another rehashing of the same class struggles.[45] In this sense, the question of the influence of neoliberalism on these movies might be turned on its head; instead we may ask: beyond free-market reform, can Mexico ever approach the liberal dream so long as such constraining imaginations remain operative?

[45] *Nosotros los nobles* (2013), whose title is a play on *Nosotros los pobres*, has recently become the highest grossing Mexican movie of all time. *Después de lucía* (2012) is one example of a movie that neither focused on dualism nor inscribed itself in a highly dialyzed conception of society.



Through Blood & Fire: The Revolutionary Image of Ricardo Flores Magón

William McMahon

ABSTRACT

Anarchist labor organizer and journalist Ricardo Flores Magón was among the most radical thinkers of the Mexican Revolution. Following his 1922 death, the Mexican state began co-opting Magón's legacy to construct its institutional narrative, naming him "The Great Precursor" to the Revolution through state-sponsored texts and imagery. Meanwhile leftist groups also made use of Magón's image to embody what they considered more progressive elements of the Revolution. Upon tracing the institutionalization of the Revolution's official history, however, I find that both the Mexican state and the corporatist left have poor claims to magonismo and its ideals. As we explore how new anarchist and indigenous movements have invoked the revolutionary image of Magón to reclaim his anti-capitalist, anti-state ideology, I argue that the resurgence of Magon's image in response to neoliberalism represents and contributes to the deterioration of Mexico's institutionalized revolutionary narrative. Still, since this erosion is incomplete, I call for further research on Mexico's insurgent libertarian socialist traditions with special attention to the role of radical imagery today.

Que a sangre y fuego caiga,
lo que a sangre y fuego se mantiene.

That which is maintained through blood and fire
through blood and fire shall fall.

~Ricardo Flores Magón[1]

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, to mark the coming centennial of its Revolution, Mexico issued a commemorative five peso coin bearing the image of Ricardo Flores Magón, one in a series featuring national figures and revolutionary leaders (Figure 1). It was the state's freshest effort to claim Magón as intellectual precursor to the Revolution, but not without challenge. Just two years before, indigenous groups in Oaxaca struck radical upheaval with Magón's image front and center, representative of a revolution that had never come—a revolutionary idea betrayed. Paired with the Zapatista's continued invocations of Magón nearby in Chiapas, the Oaxaca uprising was the latest, perhaps most glaring blow from an insurgent radical tradition that has held Magón's image as irreconcilably opposed to the state's institutionalized vision of the Revolution. As such, the resurgence of Magón as a symbol of indigenous and worker resistance defaces the state-constructed notion of a unified revolutionary tradition.

***1**. Five-peso coin, 2008-2010*

Here I argue that this resurgence corresponds to the rebirth of *magonismo* as a viable anarchist ideology which has fueled the erosion of the official narrative. To that end, I begin with Magón's political life, emphasizing his relationship to the wider anarchist movement in Mexico, his ideas about the relationship between capitalism and the state, and his opposition to all revolutionary leaders except Zapata. I then draw from Thomas Benjamin on the Revolution's narrative origins to show how the post-revolutionary state used not only language but also images to construct Magón as the "Great Precursor."[2]

Following that story along with the emergence of efforts to challenge the institutional narrative through Magonista imagery, I consider Donald Hodge's take on Magón's ideological heirs to distinguish between general leftism and new anarchism. Whereas mid-twentieth Century (non-anarchist) leftist attempts to co-opt Magón's symbolic power bear striking similarities to those of the state, new radical movements (in response to neoliberalism) have reclaimed Magon's image with philosophies and politics that more genuinely reflect *magonismo* proper. Modern indigenous liberation movements in southern Mexico are reviving *magonismo* by using Magón's image in support of demands that strike against the ideology of the state. Still, while indigenous outcries for autonomy offer fresh blood for anarchism, the lasting impact of their flames remains unclear. Given the ongoing and understudied nature of these questions, I hope to inspire further dialogue and research on the resurgence of Magón and the role of anarchism in Mexico today.

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY *MAGONISMO*

Born to indigenous-mestizo parentage in Oaxaca, Ricardo Flores Magón was arrested for the first time in 1892 at a student protest against the government of Porfirio Díaz. Eight years later he began publishing his revolutionary newspaper, *Regeneración*, but in 1904 he was forced to leave Mexico, indefinitely exiled to the United States.[3] *Regeneración* followed him abroad as he continued anarchist activities with organizations such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, or "Wobblies").[4] By 1906 he had already co-founded the radical Mexican Liberal Party (PLM).[5] Over the

[1] Quote from Figure 9, "El Hijo del Ahuizote."

[2] Thomas Benjamin, *Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).

[3] Ward Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992), 3-5, 28.

[4] Colin MacLachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 6, 35.

[5] MacLachlan, 7. That Magón and his confederates would mask their decidedly radical organization behind the guise of a "liberal party," particularly after the full ideological transition to anarchism, is certainly

next five years the PLM instigated labor strikes and uprisings that spawned rebellious fervor as anarchist communist[6] Magonista forces ultimately gained control over most of Baja California for several months in 1911.[7]

Magón's notoriety as a precursor to the Mexican Revolution can be traced to his early calls for armed revolution against the Porfiriato through the PLM, but in his famous work, *Tierra y libertad*, Magón does not merely condemn the Porfiriato; rather he indicts the very idea of private property, blaming it for the misery and degradation of the human race at the hands of a few.[8] Through such proclamations Magón established a dominant voice within the Mexican left of his time.

This left was not solely made up of anarcho-syndicalists, nor were all anarcho-syndicalists like Magón in practical interpretations of their ideology. As historian Barry Carr notes, the general consensus of those studying the period holds that Marxism came to the fore in Mexico later than anarchism and played a comparatively small role in the period termed the Mexican Revolution. [9] Acknowledging the rather blurry relationship between socialist ideologies in this period, Carr attempts to distinguish anarchism from Marxism by defining it as "that camp which sees the state, rather than the economy, as the fundamental social structure and the basis of proletarian oppression."[10] This definition, while right to focus on the difference between anarchists and Marxists surrounding the nature of the state, suffers from the common misconception of anarchism as a predominantly anti-state ideology.

For Magón, the state was the enemy because it was the enforcer of capitalism; from this view economic structure precedes political structure. In his March 1914 article, "Without Rulers," Magón writes that "government must only exist when there is economic inequality."[11] While it is right to characterize the anarchism of Magón as wholly opposed to the political structuring of society around a state, for Magonistas (and for Mexican anarchists in general) the idea that opposition to the state holds *primacy* over opposition to capitalism is misguided. Rather, *magonismo* sees the state as a necessary extension of economic disparity and demands action that target's the root. In their oft-repeated "Land and Liberty" slogan, for example, Magonistas call for workers' liberation through the seizure of productive property.

Of course, with regard to anarchism during the Revolution, Magón was not the only show in town. Though widely recognized as the dominant theorist of the libertarian socialist movement at the time, Magón's exile and frequent silencing through imprisonment left room for alternative visions of anarcho-syndicalism in Mexico. Mexico City's *Casa del Obrero Mundial*, which enjoyed loyalty from tens of thousands of radical Mexican workers, was persuaded by generous gifts, anti-capitalist rhetoric, and favorable organizing conditions from the Constitutionalist Carranza-Obregón faction to ally against the forces of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.[12] Historian John M. Hart argues that the *Casa* leadership did not actually consider their Constitutionalist alliance to be stable or final; rather it would give them much needed space to grow anarchist influence among workers, to precipitate a workers' revolution once the "reactionary" rural elements (Villistas and

understandable given the repression carried out during the Porfiriato and the political realities of building support amongst Mexican and U.S. workers.

[6] Magón is alternatingly referred to both as an anarcho-syndicalist and an anarchist communist. The former is a method for the organization of industrial labor unions to seize society by economy first, whereas the latter is a proscription on the characteristics—classlessness, statelessness, and collective ownership—of a society so-seized; as such the two are compatible. Indeed, anarcho-syndicalist communists like Magón viewed the organization of a communist society along syndicalist lines, with collective democracy in industrial labor syndicates, as a specific way of structuring what was otherwise a rather broad proscription for social order based on principles of mutual aid.

[7] MacLachlan, x-xii.

[8] MacLachlan, 110; Ricardo Flores Magón, *Land and Liberty* (Sanday: Cienfuegos Press, 1977), 45.

[9] Barry Carr, "Marxism and Anarchism in the Formation of the Mexican Communist Party, 1910-19," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 2 (May 1983): 277.

[10] Carr, 278.

[11] Ricardo Flores Magón, *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader*, ed. Chaz Bufe & Mitchell Cowen Verter (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 259-60.

[12] John M. Hart, "Revolutionary Syndicalism in Mexico" in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: an International Perspective*, ed. Marcel van de Linden and Wayne Thorpe (Hants, UK: Scolar Press, 1990), 185-202, 194.

Zapatistas) had been defeated.[13] While the Constitutionalist alliance did give the *Casa* greater economic sway—to the point where its workers could grind the economy to a halt and regularly win major demands from employers and the state—the anarcho-syndicalists' bid for economic collectivization was ultimately suppressed by the state once they were no longer necessary to fight the Villistas and Zapatistas.[14]

During this alliance between anarcho-syndicalist *Casa* and the Constitutionalist forces, Magón wrote from afar urging the workers to side instead with dispossessed peasants who fought against the forces of Liberalism. In his November 1915 article, "To the Soldiers of Carranza," Magón calls upon workers fighting for the Constitutionalists to join the rebels of Zapata. He praises rural rebels for truly fighting against the owning class and lambastes urban workers fooled by superficial reforms.[15] As historian Thomas Benjamin notes, Magón dismissed nearly all factional leaders as bourgeois agents of the capitalist class, commending Zapata alone as genuinely opposed to capitalists on behalf of the dispossessed.[16]

That said, ideological differences between Magón and Zapata should not be overlooked. Magón saw Zapata as a veritable libertarian socialist but never mistook him for an anarchist. In the *Plan de Ayala*, when he broke from Madero, Zapata outlined his program for returning control of the land to the peasants, in a model that could conceivably be described as libertarian agrarian socialism.[17] Unlike *magonismo*, Zapata's plan prescribed a role (albeit decentralized) for the state once it had fallen under the people's control. Evidently the strategic climate during this period attracted cross-ideological alliances, and these practical compromises began to blur the same factional boundaries which the official narrative would soon aim to erase.

Though both the Magonistas and the *Casa* were anarchist, anti-capitalist, anti-state groups holding to industrial labor organizing methods to precipitate revolution toward a libertarian communist economy, their differences of interpretation and implementation rendered them distinct factions during the Constitutionalist-Zapatista conflict period. Nevertheless, Magón remained a transcendent figure for Mexican anarchism, and the syndicalist *Confederación General de Trabajadores*, which contained many elements of the late *Casa del Obrero Mundial*, demanded President Obregón secure Magón's release from a U.S. prison in 1922.[18] Unwilling to anger the United States and fearful of Magón's sway on the working class, Obregón refused. Despite the split in alliances within the Mexican anarcho-syndicalist movement, Magón had retained his intellectual influence on the radical working class and the legacy of anarchism in Mexico.

"THE GREAT PRECURSOR"

On July 17, 1918, Ricardo Flores Magón was convicted in a United States court for his opposition to World War I and other anarchist activities.[19] Before he could complete his 21-year sentence, Magón died on November 21, 1922 in Leavenworth federal prison of unknown causes under suspicious circumstances.[20]

According to the US Consul-General in Mexico City, Magón's memorial and burial was so widely attended as to appear to be a *de facto* state funeral attended by every sector of society, ripe with decorations donated by President Obregón. Despite the quasi-official nature of the affair, Mexican national flags were strikingly absent; instead there was a profusion of red and black

[13] When I discuss "Zapatistas" in this section, I am referring to the contemporary followers of Emiliano Zapata. When I again refer to "Zapatistas" in my discussions of neoliberal Mexico, I am referring to the modern EZLN.
[14] Hart, 194-9.
[15] Magón, *Dreams of Freedom*, 166-9.
[16] Benjamin, 55.
[17] John Womack, *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York, NY: Knopf 1969), 400-404.
[18] Magón, *Dreams of Freedom*, 98.
[19] The US state attorneys assigned to represent Magón at the trial refused to offer even a single word of defense.
[20] Thomas Langham, *Border Trials: Ricardo Flores Magón and The Mexican Liberals* (El Paso, TX: Western Press, 1981), 58-59.

anarcho-syndicalist flags, complete with a banner that read, "He died for Anarchy."[21] But by 1946 the PRI had reinterred Magón's remains in the National Pantheon of Heroes without reference to the anarchist ideology that had led him to fame.[22] In death Magón suddenly earned the President's honor and welcome, for only then might the Party commandeer his national legacy. Schools and other state buildings were promptly erected in his memory.[23] Now the Mexican Secretary for Public Education's Cultural Information System lists 42 state libraries and five cultural centers bearing the name of Ricardo Flores Magón.[24]

Among the state's most substantial efforts to unify and institutionalize the Revolution's factional history was the 1936 two-volume text, *Historia de la revolución mexicana*. Characterizing Magón as the "precursor" to what Benjamin calls the constructed vision of *la Revolución*, it presents all factions under the banner of a single institutionalized Revolution.[25] The emergent state streamlined revolutionary memory to legitimize itself as the unified product of converging social movements. Following that line, Magón must be the Great Precursor—not the Great Dissident seeking an anarchist revolution which remains unfulfilled. This narrative became so pervasive that the current *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on Mexican history features Magón and the PLM under the heading "Precursors of revolution," blending neatly into the role of wealthy liberal democrat Francisco Madero in campaigning against the Porfiriato.[26]

During its first few decades of rule the new Mexican state sponsored a surge of revolutionary art designed to reinforce its emerging narrative. Compared to Zapata, Villa, or Madero, Magón was rarely featured in these works, but he did occasionally appear in public murals. Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros (rival Mexican Marxist muralists) each reserved minor roles for Magón. Both were avowed radicals who often employed explicitly Marxist imagery, but they usually worked for state commission, institutionalizing its narrative with the same brushes that ostensibly aimed to radicalize their audience.[27]

In Rivera's mural, *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda Central* (1946-7), Magón's face appears hanging over the shoulder of its central figure, Jose Guadalupe Posada (Figure 2). Magón's minor presence in such works represents a safe space artists found for his image to function as a part of the unified narrative, but he was allowed the spotlight when he referenced the Porfiriato's demise. In one major section of his grand mural in the National Palace, *The Epic of the Mexican People* (1929-35), Rivera

2. *From "Sueño de una tarde dominical en la Alameda Central," Diego Rivera*

3. *From "Epica del pueblo Mexicano," Diego Rivera, Palacio Nacional*

[21] Albro, xi.

[22] Benjamin, 80; The PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) would rule under the umbrella of the "revolution" until the year 2000.

[23] Alan Knight, "Popular Culture and the Revolutionary State in Mexico, 1910-1940," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 74, no. 3 (August 1994): 406.

[24] Secretería de Educación Pública, "Sistema de Información Cultural," accessed October 25, 2013, http://sic.conaculta.gob.mx/resultado.php?table=biblioteca&busquedaavanzada=Mag%C3%B3n&menu=1; http://sic.conaculta.gob.mx/resultado.php?table=centro_cultural&busquedaavanzada=Mag%C3%B3n&menu=1.

[25] Benjamin, 145.

[26] Howard F. Cline, "Mexico: Precursosrs of revolution" (May 13, 2013), http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/379167/Mexico/27364/Precursors-of-revolution. To its credit, *Britannica* briefly distinguishes Madero's state reform platform from Magón's anti-state platform.

[27] David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America: 1910-1990* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 37-8, 72-3.

depicts Magón facing down the Porfiriato with bullets draped around his neck, next to a "Tierra y Libertad" sign, clutching a stack of papers (Figure 3). Tellingly, the papers appease the Great Precursor narrative; one is labeled *Regeneración*, another labeled *Revolución social,* but they are all dated between 1905 and 1908 with no reference to his anarchist writings during the Revolution.

Decades later, Siqueiros found a way to use Magón's anti-Porfiriato legacy for more subversive historical references. In his state-sponsored mural, *From Porfirismo to the Revolution* (1957-66), Siqueiros pictures Magón's head among a crowd of peasants and workers (Figure 4). At first glance this appears as usual lip service from a Marxist-Leninist painter who supported Stalin, but next to Magón stand anarchist thinkers Mikhail Bakunin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, both dressed in the way of Mexican peasants rather than European thinkers. While seminal anarchist communist Peter Kropotkin (unpictured) was a greater influence on Magón, Siqueiros' subtle yet radical salute to anarchist icons complicates our usual notions around the institutionalization of the state's narrative. Still, considering that Siqueiros made the mural after the narrative had three decades to solidify—and considering that most Mexicans would not notice the reference to Bakunin and Proudhon—his clever move did not derail the PRI's dominant current.

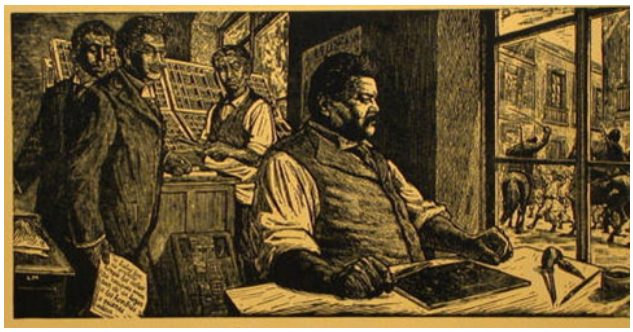
4. *From "Del porfirismo a la Revolución," David Alfaro Siqueiros*

MAGÓN AS AN IMAGE OF THE LEFT

As Siqueiros' imagery indicates, the Mexican left endured even in the shadow of PRI dominance. Historian Donald Hodges argues that *magonismo* has widely influenced the Mexican left at large, distinguishing Magón the anarchist from Magón the general leftist and "proletarian ideologue."[28] Drawing from different periods of the PLM, Hodges details the legacies of *magonismo* through various liberal, socialist, and communist perspectives corresponding to Magón's short, mid, and long-term goals (respectively). The notion that *magonismo* lived on is an appealing one, but Hodges' evidence better demonstrates how Magón the individual maintained influence as a vaguely leftist figure while his specifically anarchist ideology (*magonismo* proper) fell out of favor. Of course, Hodges' 1992 article predates the anti-neoliberal resurgence of anarchism, so his analysis now appears more incomplete than faulty.

5. *"Ricardo Flores Magón," Alberto Beltrán, El Taller de Gráfica Popular*

Prior to anti-neoliberalism, radical uses of Magón's image in Mexico appear in the vein of general leftism. For example, let us consider the two mid-Century prints from artist collective El Taller de Gráfica Popular featuring Magón. In the first, a work by Alberto Beltrán of unknown date simply titled *Ricardo Flores Magón*, our revolutionary figure gazes off into the distance (Figure 5). In the second, a 1960 work by Leopoldo Méndez featuring its titular figure, José Guadalupe Posada, Magón stands behind Posada, staring at the artist intently with documents in hand (Figure 6). In both instances, the leftist collective invokes Magón to stand for uncorrupted ideals of the



6. *"José Guadalupe Posada," Leopoldo Méndez, El Taller de Gráfica Popular*

[28] Donald C. Hodges, "The Political Heirs of Ricardo Flores Magón," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 17, no. 33 (1992): 97.

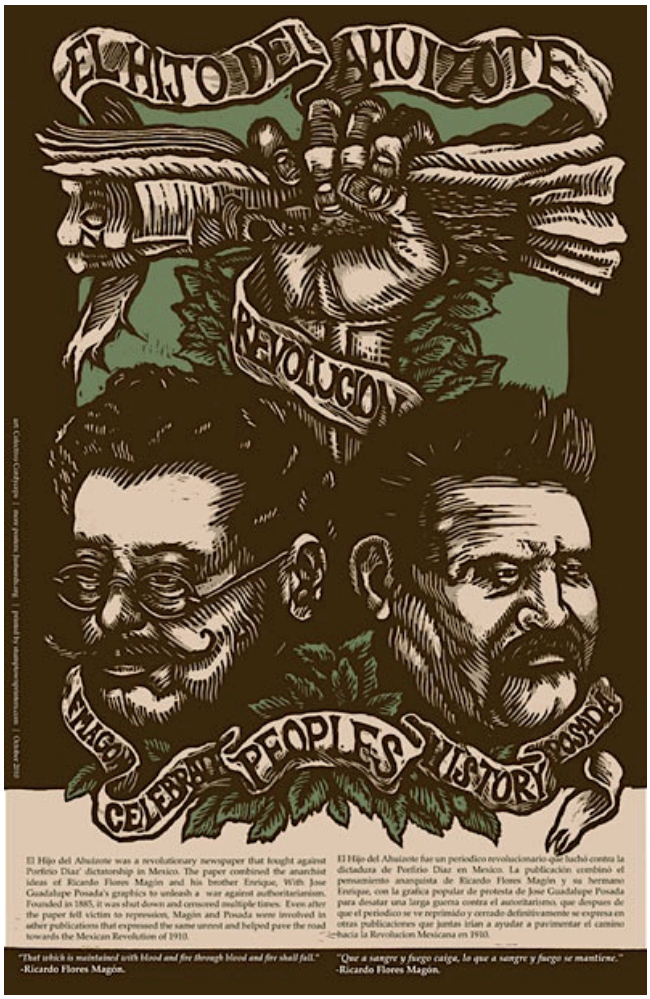
Revolution, but El Taller's political activity focused on implementation of the official narrative's ideals, not reviving *magonismo's* forgotten revolutionary ambitions. In light of the support both Méndez and the collective at large lent to President Cárdenas following his nationalization of the oil industry, we may view El Taller's use of Magón's image as strikingly parallel to the regime's own strategy by overlooking revolutionary factionalism in favor of homogeneity.[29] And while it is always difficult to apply a dead thinker's ideas regarding past situations to one beyond their time, Magón's anarchist ideology would certainly not entrust the state with the workers' total dependence (even as it certainly would condemned the private owners weakened by nationalization).

While El Taller gained traction in Mexico, the Chicano Movement bloomed in the US with comparably general leftism. One image produced by The Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH) features an imprisoned Ricardo Flores Magón holding out one of his manifestos (Figure 7). As a Mexican immigrant jailed for advocating workers' rights and "land and liberty", Magón was a potent symbol for the Chicano movement, but not one tied to Magón's anarchist ideology—not threatening to the institutionalization of the Mexican Revolution.

7. *"El arte por el arte mismo," MARCH*

Even after the turn of the century, art collectives such as Justseeds and Taller Tupac Amaru continue to propagate the image of Magón in this vein of general leftism, but these contemporary radicals have represented his anarchist origins more than their pre-neoliberal predecessors. Justseeds—24 artists in Mexico, USA, and Canada "committed to making print and design work that reflects a radical social, environmental, and political stance"—draw from many leftist ideologies around the world with relatively little attention to anarchism overall.[30] Similarly Taller Tupac Amaru's mission is to bring about a resurgence of screen-printing as a means for revolution, and in their 2005 calendar Magón appears as one of many radical figures from various traditions (Figure 8). Meanwhile Justseeds' Santiago Armengod's 2010 poster, *El Hijo del Ahuizote*, salutes a newspaper which boasted

8. *"Ricardo Flores Magón," Taller Tupac Amaru*



9. *"El Hijo del Ahuizote" Santiago Armengod, Justseeds*

[29] Deborah Caplow, *Leopoldo Méndez: revolutionary art and the Mexican print* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 140.

[30] "Who We Are," http://justseeds.org/about/who_we_are.html, accessed December 14, 2012.

contributions from Magón and Posada (among others) to rebel against Porfirio Díaz, but then departs from the Great Precursor narrative by explaining how the publication represented the Magón brothers' anarchism (Figure 9). Another Justseeds piece, *Ricardo Flores Magón Writes* by Thea Garh, shows Magón writing between scenes of the land and peasants for whom he spoke, which at least focuses on the anti-capitalism of *magonismo* (Figure 10). The collective's Pete Yahnke Bailand even created a print (undated) of Magón's image overlaid with the anarchist circle-A (Figure 11).

10. *"Ricardo Flores Magón Writes" Thea Gahr, Justseeds*

11. *"Ricardo Flores Magón" Pete Yahnke Railand, Justseeds*

ANTI-NEOLIBERAL ANARCHISM

Just as international networks provided new avenues for artists to reference Magón's anarchism, Magón's international networks, especially with the IWW, contributed to a lasting anarcho-syndicalist legacy beyond the institutionalized Mexican state.[31]

12. *"Ricardo Flores Magón Branch," IWW Logo*

Before his death in prison, Magón was housed next to famous Wobbly Ralph Chaplin, who composed the labor anthem "Solidarity Forever" and was deeply impressed by Magón's intellect and character.[32] Such fond memories have endured as the Wobblies have claimed Magón one of their own, especially by propagating his image. For example, the Los Angeles branch of the IWW is named the Ricardo Flores Magón Branch, featuring Magón's image for its logo (Figure 12). In this image, Magón overlooks the globe and three iconic IWW stars. Another piece of Wobbly material features Magón together with another IWW hero, Joe Hill, unifying the workers of the world (Figure 13). Here, then, are uses of his image beyond the directly institutional version of the Mexican state or the still problematic uses by the non-anarchist left.

13. *Joe Jill with Ricardo Flores Magón*

Beyond the IWW, avowedly anarchist groups in the modern anti-globalization movement have consistently used Magón to propagate their ideology. In the city of Los Angeles, there is a particular weight to Magón, whose image appears on the mural "Anarchists of the Americas" in front of the Bound Together Anarchist Bookstore (Figure 14). In September of 2012, Ford Amphitheatre in Los Angeles held a public variety show entitled The Ballad of Ricardo Flores Magón, featuring musical and dramatic readings of Magón's manifestos, songs in his honor, readings from his trials, and general glorification of his life as tied to Mexico and anarchism—peppered with leftist staples such as "All you fascists bound to lose."[33] Designed to provide a unique experience and to educate the

14. *"Anarchists of the Americas" at Bound Together Books, Los Angeles*

[31] Albro, 127, 142-9; MacLachlan, 6.

[32] Albro, 149-50.

[33] "VARIEDADES: The Ballad of Ricardo Flores Magon," http://www.fordamphitheater.org/events/details/id/554, accessed December 14, 2012.

public about Magón and anarchism, the show was an expression in radicalism and revolutionary thought.

The expression of international solidarity implicit in The Ballad of Ricardo Flores Magón—presented largely by and for Mexican-Americans growing interested in radicalism and anarchism as answers to the problems of the world—aligns with the spirit of Magón's ideology and life work and challenges the nationalist version of Mexican Revolution. By presenting him not as a primarily *Mexican* figure but rather a transient figure that appears wherever there is a need for worker solidarity (a point hammered home by the Ballad's staging in the very Los Angeles neighborhood in which Magón worked), these contemporary radicals construct Magón as a dynamic, present force rather than a myth of the past.

After the 1999 anti-globalization protests at the World Trade Organization in Seattle, it was widely noted that a "new anarchism" had emerged in the global left.[34] While this narrative caught on a tipping point, the resurgence of anarchism was already underway in Mexico. Two years earlier, anarchists distributed posters for an event, bearing Magón's image along with overtly anarchist symbols such as the circle-A and the Black Rose (Figure 15). In the modern Mexican anti-neoliberalism movement, screen-printing and digital revolutionary art continually pair these symbols with Magón (Figure 16). In their poster *Justicia y Libertad*, for example, as humanity reaches up to the heavens and modern technology Magón remains by her side, with a skull reminiscent of Posada in one hand and a Black Rose pen in the other. Meanwhile an anarchist sun rises over a land in which shackles are breaking off another, larger Black Rose (Figure 17).

15. *Anarchist Poster, Mexico City, October 1997*

16. *Anarchist Magón*

More recently, a pro-Magón internet artist created the "Magónymous" mask as a play on the Guy Fawkes mask, which anarchists have used since 2006 to symbolize "Anonymous" (Figure 18). Once again, this shows the flexibility and durability of Magón's image, but it also indicates the trend toward reviving its anarchist origins. As the anti-globalization movement continues, anarchist imagery has become a central vehicle for propagating its contentions. In the words of sociologist Ronaldo Munck, "[t]he limits of anarchism today would lie mainly in the limitations of a strategy based on telling the truth to power."[35] For Mexico, the increased use of Magón's image to this end has contributed to the erosion of the institutional revolutionary narrative, for it fundamentally challenges any state's claim to Magón, let alone a state rife with institutionalized oppression.

[34] David McNally, *Another World is Possible: Globalization & Anti-Capitalism* (3rd. Winnipeg: ARP, 2009), 345.

[35] Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Contestation* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 71.

17. *Justicia y libertad*

RICARDO FLORES MAGÓN

18. *"Magónymous" mask*

MAGÓN IN MODERN INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

Being among the most oppressed populations in Mexico, modern indigenous groups have been attracted to Magón as a libertarian socialist of indigenous blood to support their resistance movements, which arose even before the international anti-neoliberalism movement solidified. The Zapatistas, officially the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), emerged on January 1, 1994—the day the North American Free Trade Agreement was implemented—with their mysterious spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos, espousing a dream of "another world, an honest world, a world decidedly more fair than the one in which we live now."[36] According to Zapatista ideology, the peoples of the world are now embroiled in "the Fourth World War" in which neoliberalism, emerging victorious from the "Third World War" (the Cold War), is using every tool at its disposal for complete political, social, and economic domination. [37] In the words of Subcomandante Marcos, it is a "war against humanity," in which the future is "up for grabs in every corner of each of the five continents."[38] This call for (or recognition of) an international, decentralized struggle against capitalist exploitation speaks directly to the libertarian socialist tradition of Magón in a way that has challenged the Mexican state in an organized, revolutionary manner.

The Zapatista program of a "radical understanding of citizenship, collective rights and democracy," as Daniela di Piramo puts it, is indisputably descendent from the same strand of decentralized, autonomous libertarian socialism represented by *magonismo*.[39] However, the EZLN intentionally eschews political labels, so it would be problematic to designate them as anarchist. Further, their resurrection of Zapatismo again raises the differences between Magón and Zapata, as they adopt an ideology which reserves a role for the state in a socialist society. Nevertheless, the Zapatistas have championed Magón's image. Thus, the Zapatistas draw legitimacy in use of Magón's image through both the alliance of Zapata and Magón and the parallel modern need to build a

[36] Charles Lindblom and José Pedro Zúquete, *The Struggle for the World* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 11-12.
[37] Alex Khasnabish, *Zapatistas: Rebellion from the Grassroots to the Global* (New York, NY: Zed Books, 2010), 169.
[38] Khasnabish, 170-1.
[39] Daniela di Piramo, *Political Leadership in Zapatista Mexico: Marcos, Celebrity, and Charismatic Authority* (Boulder, CO: First Forum Press, 2010), 107.

revolutionary coalition.

Much like the relationship between Zapata and Magón, the EZLN's relationship with Magón's legacy is complex. On International Workers' Day in 1994, a Zapatista communiqué decried the Mexican state for usurping "the just demands of the Flores Magón brothers."[40] Here we see the EZLN tie together Zapata's agrarian movement with Magón's labor movement to appeal to all of the Mexican laboring classes. Less than two weeks later, however, Subcomandante Marcos completed an interviewer's list of ideologues who try to claim the Zapatistas for their own by saying, dismissively, "The anarchists say that we are anarchists." Later in the same interview, Marcos associated those who now use the term "*magonismo*" with rigid orthodoxy, clarifying that it was not these hardline anarchists he hoped to attract with rhetoric about Magón but rather the urban workers who remember Magón for his radical labor movement.[41] Still, the Zapatistas have employed Magón's image with far greater intellectually consistency than the institutionalized Mexican state or mid-Century general leftists, thus contributing to the resurgence of *magonismo* proper.

The Zapatistas channel much of Magon's work through their rhetoric on the conflict between money and humanity and resistance to a neoliberal war waged upon peoples of the world. In turn, their art deepens the reference (Figure 19). In Chiapas, the entrance to a Zapatista settlement called "Nueva Jerusalem" bears the name and likeness of Ricardo Flores Magón, commemorating his contributions to what the Zapatistas see as the genuine nature of the Mexican Revolution (Figure 20). Furthermore, the EZLN flag is red and black. Though Yvon Le Bot argued a connection with Cuba's 26th of July

19. *Portion of Zapatista mural depicting Magón*

20. *Zapatista welcome sign for Nueva Jerusalem*

Movement, Marcos himself stated that red and black were chosen as a symbol of past Mexican liberation struggles, a clear reference to the red and black flags of Magoniista movements.[42]

Recently, Marcos and the Zapatistas have again complicated their relationship to anarchism. While I have been drawing from early EZLN images, Marcos' November 2013 communiqué, "THE BAD AND NOT-SO-BAD NEWS," includes a section entitled "SPECIAL CASES: the Anarchists" in which he addresses criticisms from "the well-behaved left united in a holy crusade with the old right" regarding the acceptance of anarchists at Zapatista-run schools. [43] Marcos rails against capitalism, arguing that it is ridiculous to criticize the anarchists for trying to destroy it; they "are part of the SIXTH."[44] Finally he declares that anarchists will always be welcome with the Zapatistas. Marcos may consider anarchists to be distinct from Zapatistas, but *magonismo* appears to be the thread that binds them.

Marcos' hospitality to anarchists emerged amid further indigenous resistance in southern Mexico. In 2006, state repression of a strike leveraged by some 70,000 teachers in neighboring Oaxaca sparked a libertarian socialist movement. Local radicals invoked past libertarian struggles by declaring the "Oaxaca Commune"—a reference to

[40] *Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution (December 31,1993—June 12, 1994)*, (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1994), 282.
[41] *Zapatistas!,* 289-95.
[42] di Piramo, 86.
[43] Zapatista Communiqué, "THE BAD AND NOT-SO-BAD NEWS" (November 5, 2013), http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2013/11/05/the-bad-and-not-so-bad-news/. Accessed November 27, 2013.
[44] A reference to the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, which set the current program of the Zapatistas, focusing on collaboration between indigenous or otherwise oppressed Mexicans and an internationalist mission.

the Paris Commune of 1871.[45] Indigenous workers organized the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) with the ultimate goal of autonomous community democracy. [46] Seizing control of the Oaxacan capital, APPO rebels barred police reentry to the city from June to October of that year. [47] Not fixated on taking over the institutions of state, the APPO aimed to be a non-hierarchical, stateless anti-capitalist movement espousing direct radical democracy.[48] In tandem with its labor dispute origins, the APPO laid genuine claim to *magonismo* by openly embracing anarchist imagery.

In fact, the APPO's claim to *magonismo* appears natural in light of its 1980s predecessor—the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca - Ricardo Flores Magón (CIPO-RFM), an anarchist organization which has endured to present day.[49] On their website CIPO-RFM explains the reasoning behind their name:

> We chose the name Ricardo Flores Magón because he was a libertarian, indigenous, and even though he was born in Oaxaca, his heart, thoughts and work were for the freedom of all people. Following his principles means fighting without seeking material wealth or any personal profit, struggling to evict egoism, leaders and lies, and living without aspiration for power or its imposition on anyone. We keep as basic principles reciprocal aid, solidarity, non-violent direct action, autonomy and self-government as the way to freedom. The members of CIPO-RFM are also called Magonistas since magonismo is the way we intend to fight.[50]

21. *Oaxan mural (upper), Arturo Bustos*

From the founding of CIPO-RFM to the 2006 uprisings and beyond, this commitment to Magón's message resonates through material propaganda among Oaxacan radicals. Muralist Arturo Bustos included Magón several times in one mural, with his head above the scene, his full body holding up a "Tierra y Libertad!" banner while being attacked by devils, and a young boy holding a Magonista manifesto in one hand and *Regeneración* in the other (Figures 21-22). Meanwhile, graffiti of Magón appears regularly

22. *Oaxan mural (lower), Arturo Bustos*

[45] Gustavo Esteva, "Oaxaca: The Path of Radical Democracy," *Socialism and Democracy* 21, no. 2 (2007): 74.

[46] Gustavo Esteva, "The Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca: A Chronicle of Radical Democracy," *Latin American Perspectives* 34, no. 1 (2007): 130.

[47] Esteva, "The Asamblea," 131-4.

[48] Esteva, "Oaxaca," 74-5, 90-4.

[49] Raúl Gatica, "An Interview with Raúl Gatica," int. Sonali Kolhatkar, *Z Magazine* (May 1, 2006), http://www.zcommunications.org/an-interview-with-ra-and-250-l-gatica-by-sonali-kolhatkar (Accessed Dec, 14 2012).

[50] "Our Story 'CIPO-RFM,'" http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/ourstory.htm, Accessed December 14, 2012.

upon town walls. Oaxacan radicals even broadcast "Radio Ricardo Flores Magón", advertised once by a poster spreading news that a Zapatista caravan would be in town—complete with circle-A (Figures 23-24).

23. *Magonista graffiti in Oaxaca*

24. *Poster for "Radio Ricardo Flores Magón"*

The EZLN's rebellion against the Mexican state over the NAFTA drew in Magón as an associate of a more libertarian vision of the Mexican Revolution. Meanwhile the indigenous movement in Oaxaca invoked Magón's image with explicit, ideologically consistent anarchism that has further punctuated how Magón stood for societal transformations that are far more dramatic than the Great Precursor narrative admits. As such, Magón's intense visibility throughout indigenous movements in neoliberal Mexico indicates the erosion of the Revolution's official history. Whether Magonista challenges have the power to fully dissemble the dominant narrative has yet to be seen, but it is clearly faltering as *magonismo* resurges.

IMPLICATIONS

Though my scope is firmly set on the image of Magón, I do not wish to argue that he is alone in fueling the deterioration of the institutionalized narrative. As my discussions above indicate, Zapata (among others) holds great weight in the process. And while I cannot explore that deeply here, it is worth noting that while the narrative erosion surrounding Magón and Zapata may have similar effects, the meaning of this erosion differs fundamentally between the two.

The final straw which prompted the Zapatista rebellion—NAFTA—brought a halt to land reform programs which had long been upheld as Zapata's contribution to the 1917 Constitution. Previous to this, the state's failures around faithfulness to Zapata's legacy were primarily failures of execution; the PRI proclaimed Zapata's original values—it just never truly pursued them. By contrast, the state never incorporated Magón's original ideology. *magonismo's* explicitly anti-state character, paired with anarchist economic principles of mutual aid and the abolition of private property, rendered *magonismo* fundamentally irreconcilable with the post-revolutionary state. The resurgence of Magón's image, then, strikes at the very foundation of the Revolutionary myth. Put simply, if the Mexican state's ultimate departure from the ideals of Zapata (after a period of indefinite infidelity) was complete by 1994, its departure from the ideals of Magón was complete in 1917, before the ink was dry.

To enrich the dialogue I have centered on

Magón, further research examining the deterioration of the Mexican state's hold on the image of Zapata—from the movement of Rubén Jaramillo to the EZLN and beyond—could deepen our understanding of libertarian socialist challenges to the official history. Additionally, while the work of Gustavo Esteva has been invaluable, there simply has not been enough investigation about the Oaxacan uprising in 2006. Likewise, in light of *magonismo's* revival, reexamination of libertarian socialist and anarchist undercurrents among indigenous groups over the past century is due.

When Enrique Peña Nieto took office as President on December 1, 2012, the Popular Magonista Army of National Liberation (EPM-LN) released a communique announcing its existence.[51] The group claimed to reside in multiple states, which it did not name, foreshadowing "Magonista" activities to come. According to the communiqué, the EPM-LN formed to "put a halt to the repression that advances rapidly, in terms of political murders, forced disappearances, the criminalization of social protest and of social activists–it is for this reason that we emerge, to arrest by means of our political and military action the growing repressive wave against the people and their organizations." [52] Approximately one year later, the EPM-LN's potential remains uncertain, but it does elucidate a central truth about their hero: if Magón is a great precursor to revolution in Mexico, revolution has yet to come.

[51] "Surge el Ejército Popular Magonista," http://www.eldiariodecoahuila.com.mx/notas/2012/12/2/surge-ejercito-popular-magonista-329843.asp Accessed December 14, 2012.

[52] "National: Public appearance of the Popular Magonista Army of National Liberation," http://sipazen.wordpress.com/2012/12/07/national-public-appearance-of-the-popular-magonista-army-of-national-liberation-epm-en/ Accessed December 14, 2012.

Testimonio in Action: A New Kind of Revolution?

Lucy Jackson

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, evidence from post-industrialist countries has challenged traditional Marxist strains of revolutionary theory, as "new social movement theory" (NSMT) has emerged to explain revolutionary struggles that behave beyond the logics of resource mobilization, class reductionism, and relative deprivation. In light of Mexico's turn to neoliberalism, I revisit a classical assessment of Mexico's revolutionary potential in the 1980s to test how it stands next to NSMT. I place special emphasis on microtheoretical factors of revolution through a comparative analysis between testimonios from revolutionary movements before and after the decade in question. As we explore Alberto Ulloa's take on Mexico's Dirty War (1970s) alongside Subcomandante Marcos' reflections on the Zapatista movement (1994-present), only the former exhibits consistency with traditional models of revolution. Turning to NSMT, I argue that radical movements failed during the Dirty War while the Zapatista movement continues to grow primarily due to their respective historical contexts and ideologies. More than just shedding light on subaltern voices, these testimonios enrich the structural narrative of NSMT by encouraging us to reflect on the role of individual radical actors in constructing viable alternatives to dominant systems in Mexico and beyond. Indeed, by pursuing immediate value-based goals that may produce long-term material transformations, Marcos reveals the potential for a new kind of revolution.

INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1987, the *Journal of International Affairs* published Allison Percy's award-winning undergraduate essay, "The Revolutionary Potential of Mexico in the 1980s," where she proposes a hybrid theoretical model to assess whether Mexico was ripe for revolution at the time. With its focus on resource mobilization, class reductionism, and relative deprivation, Percy's model synthesizes two dominant schools of thought: structuralism and microtheory. Ultimately she concludes that 1980s Mexico lacked structural and micro-level elements crucial to spark revolution.[1]

While Percy's reliance on traditional theoretical paradigms works well to explain the nature of revolutionary movements prior to her publication, her model does not account for more recent movements. The "new social movement" theories which have emerged to explain resistance in post-industrialist neoliberal societies eschew traditional Marxist principles like those engaged by Percy. In Mexico, the activities of the *Ejército Zapatista para la Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) over the last 20 years provide a powerful example of this new kind of movement; coupled with increased scholarly discussion surrounding new social movements, it merits revisiting Mexico's revolutionary potential.

According to Percy, because 1980s Mexico featured neither a viable opposition group nor a two-class agrarian system, it was highly unlikely for revolution to occur.[2] Of these two factors, however, only the micro-factor (viable opposition) coalesced with the Zapatista uprising. In fact, as the Zapatista movement has grown globally over the past two decades, Mexico has only become further removed from a simple two-class society. The fact that this structural factor did not impede a successful revolutionary movement (indeed, I will argue it actually *facilitated* the Zapatistas) suggests that other factors may outweigh those Percy invokes. And while much of the third-party literature on revolutionary movements focuses on structural-institutional context, *testimonios* produced by revolutionary actors themselves may fill a void by offering insight into microtheoretical factors that now appear quite significant.

To assess the validity and longevity of Percy's analysis, I employ *testimonio* literature from the Zapatista movement along with a revolutionary movement that predates her vantage point. Alberto Ulloa Bornemann's *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir* exemplifies the latter, while Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos' *Our Word is Our Weapon* covers the former. I find that Ulloa's reflections on 1970s Mexico are consistent with the logic Percy employs, whereas Marcos describes a movement which is far better explained by the logic of new social movement theory (NSMT). As I draw from NSMT to assess each *testimonio*, I argue that Ulloa's movement failed while the Zapatista movement continues to grow due to differing historical contexts and revolutionary ideologies. Beyond illuminating history through subaltern perspectives, my application of these first-person narratives tests Percy's theoretical evaluation while simultaneously performing an empirical analysis that demonstrates the utility of NSMT for studying revolutionary movements in Mexico.

THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Literature on revolutionary theory in general and on Mexican revolutionary movements in particular abounds. Both strands of scholarly discussion are heavily influenced by traditional Marxist theories of revolution but have more recently included alternative theories that may better explain what theorists dub "new social movements." These traditional theories based on economic and class reductionism tend to fall in one of two camps: microtheories which consider the expectations and frustrations of the populace as the primary causal factor in producing revolution, or structural theories which give greater causal weight to the structural-institutional context of a revolutionary state.[3] Percy delineates these models separately

[1] Allison Percy, "The Revolutionary Potential of Mexico in the 1980s," in *Journal of International Affairs* 40 (Winter-Spring 1987): 373-85.
[2] Percy, 384-5.
[3] Percy, 375-6.

before combining factors from each into her own hybrid theory of revolution. She asserts that on a micro-level, the relative deprivation of the populace combined with their questioning of the ruling authority's legitimacy are necessary conditions to spawn revolution, while structurally the state must be a two-class agrarian society incapable of coopting or repressing the demands of dissenters. Furthermore she asserts that, for a revolution to achieve success, it must incorporate both urban and rural groups into a viable opposition group with a cohesive, alternative ideology.

Whereas Marxist revolutionary theories hinge on class relations, theories of new social movements respond to changes that emerged in post-industrialist societies like neoliberal Mexico. According to sociologist Steven M. Buechler, these theories necessarily diverge from the previously dominant paradigm of resource mobilization theory, for the term "new social movement" itself "refers to a diverse array of collective actions that have presumably displaced the old social movement of proletarian revolution associated with classical Marxism."[4] More politically inclined NSM theorists focus on revolutionary strategy and instrumental action as the ultimate goals of revolution, while cultural theorists emphasize symbolic expressions of collective identity that challenge the instrumental logic of systemic domination. Despite a wealth of debates among NSM theorists, Buechler identifies several common themes that pertain to the study at hand. First, NSMT emphasizes civil society as an arena for collective symbolic action in addition to more traditional modes of action within the state-market arena. Similarly NSM theorists have noted how nonmaterial values can take precedence over material resource conflicts. NSMT also underscores the importance of revolutionary processes that seek autonomy and self-determination rather than maximization of power or influence within the current system. On this point political scientist Richard Stahler-Sholk argues that these movements hinge in part on shifting the locus of political struggles away from direct contestation for state power and instead toward opening up new spaces that contest top-down power at large.[5] Moreover, NSM scholars recognize the often volatile processes of identifying group interests and constructing collective ideology rather than assuming these features to be structurally determined.[6]

Notably, many of the predominant themes in new social movement theory relate to micro-level cultural and symbolic factors; however, inherent to NSMT is the recognition of changing structural elements brought on by the political and economic evolution of societies. The notion of civil society as a space that fosters political mobilization hinges on a more complex structural understanding of ruling apparatuses than Percy's model provides. Similarly, though theorists disagree over the extent to which class reductionism still has a place in explaining new movements, they generally recognize that, unlike more traditional proletarian revolutions, socially constructed collective identities complicate the role of class in post-industrialist societies. As Buechler puts it, "the attempt to theorize a historically specific social formation as the structural backdrop for contemporary forms of collective action is perhaps the most distinctive feature of new social movement theory."[7] Bearing that in mind, let us consider the evolution of structural factors for revolutionary movements throughout 20th Century Mexico.

SHIFTING STRUCTURES

After overthrowing the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 eventually resulted in the creation of a dominant, centralized political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which maintained a quasi-authoritarian grip on power for about seven decades largely through

[4] Steven M. Buechler, "Social Movement Theories," in *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (Summer, 1995): 442.

[5] Richard Stahler-Sholk, "Resisting Neoliberal Homogenization: The Zapatista Autonomy Movement," in *Latin American Perspectives* 34, no. 2 (March 2007): 48.

[6] Buechler, 442.

[7] Buechler, 443.

its corrupt corporatist and clientelistic practices.[8] Dissenting groups that had fought for various demands during the Revolution found themselves incorporated into the ruling apparatus with limited ability to bargain with the government, appeased through handouts and mostly unsubstantial reforms. Indeed, scholars have referred to Mexico's post-revolutionary state as a "growing Leviathan." In the words of historian Jeff Gould, this Leviathan "aimed to stamp out any vestige of indigenous or peasant cultural, political, or economic autonomy."[9]

During the "Mexican Miracle" period of the 1940s and 50s, the country experienced incredible economic growth and stability. Despite minor rises in the incomes of the population's poorest third, however, most of the economic benefits were enjoyed by a wealthy few.[10] The golden era of the PRI not only created vast economic inequality but also failed to carry out many of its promises to marginalized groups. As the regime grew increasingly repressive in the 1950s and 60s, leftist organizations sprang up.[11] As Arthur Schmidt and Aurora Camacho write in their introduction to Ulloa, the Dirty War period was the result of a "collision between a restive society and an increasingly anachronistic and repressive ruling system," one that was finding it increasingly difficult to appease its constituencies.[12] From 1964 to 1970, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz fiercely stamped out leftist groups and their protests, culminating in the Tlatelolco massacre of October 1968.[13] The country's income inequality remained a pressing issue, and external factors such as resistance and youth movements abroad heightened leftist sentiments at the time.

Although the PRI adopted a more neo-populist approach in the 1970s and early 80s that lifted the veil over some of the secrecy and brutality of the prior decade, its new policies further reinforced corporatism; the effects of President Luís Echeverría's land distribution and other populist concessions were marginal at best. Meanwhile, whereas the leftist movements of the 1960s such as the Student Movement of 1968 were widely visible in public media, Echeverría kept radical movements of the 1970s away from the public eye through clandestine military interventions, as Ulloa experienced first-hand. Furthermore, Echeverría's minimal handouts were often accompanied by the introduction of state agents into rural and indigenous lands, disrupting local autonomy and traditions. Still, as political scientist Neil Harvey puts it, these neo-populist policies did "create new legal and institutional terrain for state-peasant relations in subsequent years."[14]

In 1982, Mexico endured a devastating financial crisis that resulted in the devaluation of the peso and subsequent recession, along with skyrocketing rates of inflation and economic hardship.[15] Economic policies directed at mitigating this crisis unsurprisingly hit the lower classes hardest, as the government slashed public spending in an effort to reduce the national budget. According to Harvey, the PRI's increased focus on modernizing production and marketing in the early '80s marked an attempt to "regain the confidence of the private sector," an important stepping stone toward neoliberalism.[16] As Mexico grappled with economic austerity and a booming population, the

[8] The PRI has its roots in the National Revolutionary Party (PNR, 1929). It changed its name in 1938 to the Mexican Revolutionary Party and, in 1946, to the PRI. The PRI lost the presidential elections for the first time in 2000.

[9] Jeff Gould, Review of "Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán by Jennie Purnell," in *Social History* 26, no. 1 (2001): 125. On recent critiques of the post-revolutionary state, described as a "leviathan," see, among others, Tanalis Padilla, *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata: The Jaramillista Movement and the Myth of the Pax-Priísta, 1940-1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); and Jaime M. Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[10] Wouter von Ginneken, *Socio-economic Groups and Income Distribution in Mexico* (London: International Labour Organisation, 1980), 17-19.

[11] Alicia Hernández Chávez, *Mexico: A Brief History*, trans. Andy Klatt (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 295.

[12] Arthur Schmidt and Aurora Camacho de Schmidt, "Translating Fear: A Mexican Narrative of Militancy, Horror, and Redemption," in *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir*, Introduction, ed. and trans. Aurora Camacho De Schmidt Arthur Schmidt (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007), 4.

[13] Fernando Herrera Calderón and Adela Cedillo, "Introduction: The Unknown Mexican Dirty War," in *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982,* eds. Fernando Herrera Calderón and Adela Cedillo (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 6.

[14] Neil Harvey, *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 76.

[15] Forrest D. Colburn, "Mexico's Financial Crisis," *Latin American Research Review* 19, no. 2 (1984): 220.

[16] Harvey, 131.

government necessarily possessed fewer resources to manage and coopt dissenters as it had mid-century. Although the PRI's corporatism-based clientelistic operations remained in effect, the economic crisis combined with new forces of globalization actually decreased direct political repression and increased opportunities for mobilization.

The regime's neoliberal focus placed Mexico on a global stage, and the opening up of the state made democracy and civil society more possible and apparent—structural elements which scholars like Henry E. Vanden suggest may help create new political space for social movements to grow.[17] Indeed, by the time the PRI was ready to commit to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), indigenous radicals had organized thousands of armed insurgents to take control of their land in the southern state of Chiapas, complete with a formal declaration of war against the Mexican state as a collective entity called the EZLN. And whereas the inability to completely overthrow the Mexican military led Dirty War insurgents to give up their weapons and abandon their efforts, the Zapatistas continued to propagate their revolutionary ideology as their words replaced their guns.

What explains this fundamental difference between Dirty War revolutionaries and the Zapatistas? Insofar as Percy's model does not account for the EZLN's continual growth and influence, we may look to NSMT for further insight. And given NSMT's microtheoretial emphases on the role of non-traditional social actors, we can expect to gain substantial explanatory insight from the stories and perspectives of revolutionaries themselves.

REVOLUTIONARY *TESTIMONIOS*

Intuitively, the selected *testimonios* appear as rich primary source material, but we should take care to further examine their validity as supplements to existing historical records. Central questions regarding the historical value of *testimonio* literature involve verifiability, context, motivation, transparency, and style. Previously untold narratives invite criticism and speculation, as their sometimes-unverifiable accounts require a higher degree of reader scrutiny. Still, the potential benefits of these works are easily identifiable; Gugelberger and Kearney note they are a "corrective effort" that can be used as tools to take off the "white, hetero, Western blinders" that often dominate history and popular discourse.[18] As Nelly Blacker-Hanson suggests in one review of Ulloa's book, the value of such a memoir lies in its ability to add to the limited existing record: she deems the work a "welcome addition to the near-empty shelf of contemporary study of Mexico's Dirty War."[19] In this way, though we have no ideal way to fully verify first-person accounts, applying them as historical documents opens unique access points to inherently incomplete stories.

Ulloa's *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War* openly evaluates his actions and those of fellow revolutionaries. His style is straightforward as he recounts his participation in the clandestine resistance of leftist organizations and subsequent stints in infamous prisons. One scholarly review of his work asserts that the "candid memoir is obligatory reading for anyone interested in the dark history,"[20] while another praises it as a "valuable primary source."[21] His narrative is self-critical rather than romantic: "I've got to say I wasn't sure then, nor am I now…" By engaging not just the government's flaws during the period but also his own and those of the revolutionary movement, Ulloa reinforces his credibility.[22] Another book review calls it a "highly critical portrait of the

[17] Henry E. Vanden, "Social Movements, Hegemony, and New Forms of Resistance," in *Latin American Perspectives* 34, no. 2 (March 2007): 20.

[18] George Gugelberger and Michael Kearney, "Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (1991): 5, 12.

[19] Nelly Blacker-Hanson, Review of "Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir by Alberto Ulloa Bornemann" in *The Americas* 64, no. 1 (2007): 116.

[20] Adrian A. Bantjes, Review of "Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir by Alberto Ulloa Bornemann," 116.

[21] Blacker-Hanson, 716.

[22] Ulloa, 42.

armed left and the people who participated in it."[23] Ulloa's trustworthy illustration addresses a wealth of micro-level factors that contributed to his movement's failure. It is through these details that Ulloa achieves what one scholar deems a "dauntingly honest exploration of power, resistance, and resolution" [24] —one that can, according to another scholarly review, "offer great insights into the weakness of the Mexican revolutionary left during the 1960s and 1970s."[25]

Meanwhile, though Marcos' *Our Word is Our Weapon* is not strictly a memoir, it qualifies as a *testimonio* insofar as it is a collection of his own writings that provides a first-person window into the revolutionary perspectives propelling the EZLN movement. Written without critical distance from his subjects of reflection, Marcos' take on the EZLN struggle is a fresh, unadulterated look at history in the making; *Our Word is Our Weapon* presents the ideology and messages that constitute the Zapatista movement. In this way, it is even more useful to identify micro-level factors surrounding the movement. Nevertheless, through his narration of the present Marcos still represents subaltern voices, thus fulfilling the role of a *testimonio* author. What distinguishes Marcos is his choice to write history as it happens. This not only lessens the possibility for inaccuracies to occur but also allows the text to serve a more urgent function, inciting immediate action to support the marginalized perspective he voices. Indeed, *testimonio* scholar Isabel Dulfano has called for the genre to shift from its "introspective and redemptive gaze toward a more outwardly focused view," which is exactly what Marcos achieves.[26]

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Ulloa's and Marcos' texts both provide narratives surrounding revolutionaries' interactions with each other, the state, and public audiences. By using the authors' own descriptions of their actions to weigh the relative failure of Ulloa's movement against the relative success of Marcos', we may identify factors that inhibited Dirty War revolutionaries as well as those that allowed or promoted EZLN growth. With the help of new social movement theories, we will be able to account for the success of the Zapatistas despite the lack of structural conditions in neoliberal Mexico required by Percy's model.

The revolutionary movement in which Ulloa partook differed vastly from that of Marcos twenty years later, a reflection of its operational context and strategies, and Percy's model explains how these factors led to failure. Ulloa's *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War* highlights the PRI's shift to a more repressive style in the midst of rising inequality and a growing population of youth influenced by revolutionary movements abroad. The domestic and international contexts of the mid-1900s created disillusionment and unrest across many sectors and regions of Mexico as its formerly two-class system dispersed into modern compartments. Consequently leftist groups during the Dirty War were highly factional, and Ulloa chiefly blames these internal divisions for the revolution's failure.

In discussing ideology, Ulloa relates Marxist, Maoist, and socialist thought, seemingly unsure as to how they represented his own stance or the leftist movement at large. In Cuba, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro had created what appeared to be a successful revolutionary model, a sort of grassroots guerrilla movement to overthrow the authoritarian Fulgencio Batista, which served as a promising example for revolutionaries throughout Latin America. This influence is clear in the memoir, seen both in Ulloa's trip to Cuba and in his admission that "Che's idea of sacrificing everything, even my life, served as my guide."[27] With Ulloa's unabashed deference to the Cuban model, we catch a glimpse of the fundamental lack of collective identity or organization among Dirty War revolutionaries; at

[23] Margaret Power, Review of "Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir by Alberto Ulloa Bornemann," in *Latin American Politics and Society* 50, no. 2 (2008): 210.
[24] Blacker-Hanson, 117.
[25] Power, 212.
[26] Isabel Dulfano, "Testimonio: Present Predicaments and Future Forays," in *Woman as Witness: Essays on Testimonial Literature by Latin American Women,* eds. Isabel Dulfano and Linda S. Maier (New York, NY: P. Lang, 2004), 89.
[27] Ulloa, 103.

many points throughout the memoir it seems they are fighting for the mere sake of resisting rather than the realization of shared goals.

Ulloa's status as an educated member of the middle class who ultimately abandoned his radical allegiance also demonstrates the plurality of perspectives present within this resistance movement. His memories of guerilla leader Lucio Cabañas' inability to appeal to workers and his own inability to relate to peasant groups reveal some of the problems inherent to such wide ideological variance. Writing in retrospect, Ulloa identifies errors of their ways: "We were committing political and ideological mistakes," which stemmed chiefly from insufficient organization across pockets of resistance.[28] In fact, *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War* speaks to the lack of any cohesion to the movement whatsoever; while some were convinced that "soon it would be possible to coordinate everyone's efforts in order to launch a new revolution," Ulloa writes time and again of internal conflicts, mismatched values, and stubborn leadership stymying collective action.[29] Lacking a true plan of attack or any binding ideology other than disapproval of the PRI, the leftist groups failed to realize their goals, however undefined they may have been. Here Ulloa supports Percy's contention about viable opposition groups with cohesive ideology.

To a certain extent, Marcos' reflections also follow Percy on this point. Though the EZLN confronts a different incarnation of the PRI in a more open society, it differs from Dirty War revolutionary efforts largely by its collective ideology and organizational style. Whereas motivations for radical resistance during the Dirty War were vast and uncoordinated, the EZLN banded together indigenous communities, peasants, and other left-leaning groups in a clearly defined battle for land, autonomy, and democracy.

With a closer look, however, we can see how Marcos complicates Percy's understanding of revolutionary theory: in the case of the EZLN, the absence of a simple, two-class agrarian system appears to foster the development of their collective ideology. Indeed, the pluralistic, globalized neoliberal system has been paramount to Zapatista mobilization strategies by expanding the pool of people who can identify with their struggles in Chiapas in ways that would be impossible from a simple two-class society. As historian John Womack puts it, the true novelty of the EZLN is that it "reconceptualizes those struggles in broader terms of democracy and citizenship rather than restricting their scope to local struggle…" [30] Indeed, Marcos' ability to articulate the indigenous and rural plights of Chiapas as the plights of marginalized groups everywhere is impressive. Marcos always frames the struggle as "ours" or that of the people, and numerous points in his text speak not just to unity across Mexico but to global unity as well.

This strategy of creating solidarity across borders both within Mexico and beyond is central to NSMT conceptions of modern revolutionary movements. Assertions such as "behind us, we are you," and "the Zapatista defiance is a global defiance" characterize the international appeal of EZLN resistance.[31] While the leftist organizations of the Dirty War era operated in secret and fundamentally lacked communication, the EZLN has capitalized on modern technology to make communication its greatest strength. Employing internet, domestic, and foreign media alike, Marcos has generated widespread visibility to strengthen and protect the collective voice he represents. *Our Word is Our Weapon* constantly reflects this global awareness; transcripts from meetings with international delegates, addresses to a world audience, and letters to individuals and groups abroad facing injustices as a show of solidarity all indicate how expertly Marcos navigates public relations.

Despite Marcos' thorough attention to global networks, his revolutionary goals remain rooted in

[28] Ulloa, 47.
[29] Ulloa, 59.
[30] John Womack, *Rebellion in Chiapas: An Historical Reader* (New York, NY: New Press, 1999), 26.
[31] Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, *Our Word is Our Weapon,* ed. Juana Ponce de León (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2001), 103, 90.

his homeland. Every piece of his text is authored "from the mountains of the Mexican Southeast," always by the EZLN, and only sometimes does he sign his own name. Through each declaration and communiqué Marcos articulates and expands upon their grievances and demands, often using allegory to make various points about the nature of Mexico, the PRI, the EZLN, and capitalism. In a letter dated March 17, 1995, Marcos writes:

> We, the first inhabitants of these lands, the indigenous, were left forgotten in a corner, while the rest began to grown and become stronger. … that's how this part of history arrived, and it seems like a joke because a single country, the country of money, put itself above all flags. When they uttered, "Globalization," we knew that this was how the absurd order was going to be called, an order in which money is the only country served and he borders are erased, not out of brotherhood but because of the bleeding that fattens the powerful without nationality. The lie became the universal coin, and for a few in our country it wove a dream of prosperity above everyone else's nightmare.[32]

Marcos contrasts the brutal realities of the country of money with the humanitarian results the Zapatistas achieved when they governed the mountains of Southeastern Mexico. He validates their collective commitment to "democracy, liberty, and justice" with concrete examples, suggesting that the realization of citizenship rights in Chiapas depends on restoring indigenous autonomy.[33] This speaks to threads of NSMT that emphasize the shift from clientelism to citizenship, from negotiating one's place within the system to realizing one must dictate its own relationship to it or stand outside of it entirely to achieve constructive change.[34] Marcos' understanding of this is evident throughout his work, as he consistently calls for a new style of governance. In the meantime, however, Marcos leads the EZLN to utilize various pockets of civil society to continue its revolutionary struggle. For example, during the 2006 presidential campaigns, Marcos launched "The Other Campaign," traveling throughout Mexico by motorbike to develop partnerships with myriad leftist groups.[35] With thousands of supports greeting him in each town, Marcos upheld his consistent yet adaptive revolutionary vision—a progressive approach he had pinpointed a decade before: "Our words don't fit in the present, but are made to fit into the puzzle that is yet to be finished."[36]

A NEW KIND OF REVOLUTION?

As my case studies of Ulloa and Marcos suggest, we need to look beyond traditional theories of revolution to understand the revolutionary potential of Mexico today. While Percy's hybrid theoretical model appears adequate for cases that predate it, the Zapatista case suggests that she overlooked the dynamic relationship between structural-institutional context and capacity for ideological cohesion and collective action among dissenting groups.

The EZLN case study may convincingly problematize older, class-based theories of revolution, but several questions remain for Zapatistas and for future revolutionaries alike. Though the EZLN has seen success, can it ever achieve the kind of full-scale, class-molding societal transformations we tend to associate with traditional revolutions? Should new revolutionary movements even hold that as a goal, or is it enough to measure their success in terms of redefining their identity and relationship to the state by their own social constructions? In a globalized world of post-industrial societies, what kind of lasting change can be expected from radical movements?

In Mexico, the Zapatistas have been able to sustain a prolonged revolutionary movement in which they have further democratized Mexico and forced the state to openly acknowledge their

[32] Marcos, 259.
[33] Marcos, 260-1.
[34] Harvey, *The Chiapas Rebellion*, 22-3.
[35] Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo and Victoria J. Furio, "The Indigenous Movement in Mexico: Between Electoral Politics and Local Resistance," in *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 2 (2006): 116, 128.
[36] Marcos, 280.

collective identity. Certainly, their progress challenges Percy's 1987 approach to revolutionary theory, but it remains to be seen if they carry the drastic transformative power Percy seems to have imagined of "true revolutions." If not, the EZLN may mark the emergence of a subtler form of revolution—one that achieves immediate, radical value-based goals to engender material transformations gradually over time.