

PERFORMING ON THE MEXICAN
DEMOCRATIC STAGE:
New Actors, New Scripts

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MANAGING MEXICO: ECONOMISTS FROM NATIONALISM TO NEOLIBERALISM. By Sarah Babb. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001. Pp. 320. \$35.00 cloth.)

MEXICO: THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT. By Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn, with Emilio Zebadúa. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Pp. 382. \$48.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)

MEXICO 2005: THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM. By Michael Mazar. (Washington, D.C., CSIS, 1999. Pp. 200. \$21.95 paper.)

PARTY POLITICS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO: NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL ANALYSES OF THE PARTIDO ACCIÓN NACIONAL. Edited by Kevin Middlebrook. (San Diego, Calif.: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2001. Pp. 278. \$14.95 paper.)

ZAPATA LIVES!: HISTORIES AND CULTURAL POLITICS IN SOUTHERN MEXICO. By Lynn Stephen. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Pp. 445. \$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.)

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ECONOMIC TRANSITION: MARKETS AND DISTRIBUTIVE CONFLICT IN MEXICO. By Heather Williams. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. 254. \$55.00 cloth.)

Since the mid-1990s, a single political feature, the electoral process, has dominated the political landscape in Mexico. Given the outcome of the 1994 national elections, and the creation of a more transparent and equitable playing field for parties and candidates, it is no surprise that the structure and process of elections produced a dramatic shift in emphasis in public perceptions. This perception is clearly shared among academic specialists in Mexico and the United States.¹ Mexican academics first made this shift, especially focused on state and local elections,

1. One of the best books which captures this emphasis, and the new relationships and patterns produced by electoral competition, including the views of numerous younger

the initial locus of democratic change throughout the 1990s, and likely to be the most significant source of additional political patterns in anticipation of the 2006 presidential race.² Naturally, Vicente Fox's victory in July 2000 established a new benchmark for Mexican politics, and for measuring democratic transformation.³ The bulk of the six works under review, however, were researched and written before the actual event, even if incorporating its potential consequences in portions of their analysis.

Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn provide a fruitful setting from which to identify changing behaviors, structures, and institutions, as well as a helpful linkage to other recent works. Theirs is a thoughtful and provocative introduction to all aspects of Mexican democracy, both theoretically and concretely. In addition, they provide an outstanding bibliography and detailed explanatory notes. This book is based on a comprehensive analysis of much of the literature produced since 1980. Levy, who fifteen years ago co-authored an outstanding interpretation of Mexico's political economy with Gabriel Székely, at that time offered one of the few joint American-Mexican scholarly interpretations available.⁴ He intended to replicate the insights that collaboration produced by writing the present text with Emilio Zebadúa, another distinguished Mexican author. Zebadúa gave up his equal authorship role, allowing Levy to collaborate with Kathleen Bruhn, whose work on the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) is the outstanding analysis of that organization, and only one of a handful of books on Mexican political parties, a subject much in need of more analysis.⁵ Two complementary works on the National Action Party (PAN), crucial for understanding the party's background in the Fox victory, can be found in *El Partido Acción Nacional, la larga marcha, 1939–1994*,⁶ and Kevin Middlebrook's collection.

Levy's and Bruhn's previous essay in Larry Diamond's *Democracy in Developing Countries* series, provides a sound basis for *Mexico, The*

scholars, is Jorge Domínguez's and Alejandro Poiré's collection, *Toward Mexico's Democratization: Parties, Campaigns, Elections and Public Opinion* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

2. See my "Mexico, Government and Politics," *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, 59 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), which surveys the literature from this time period.

3. One of the most revealing analyses of why Mexicans voted for Fox and what variables influenced their decisions can be found in Chappell Lawson and Jorge Domínguez, eds., *Mexico's 2000 Elections* (Unpublished manuscript, 2003), based on a comprehensive, national panel survey of voters.

4. *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change*, 2d ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

5. See her *Taking on Goliath: The Emergence of a New Left Party and the Struggle for Democracy in Mexico* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

6. Soledad Loaeza (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999).

Struggle for Democratic Development.⁷ In fact, its overriding theme is democracy. They assess the interrelationship between democracy and five developmental concerns, historical, political, social, economic and international. The historical section provides a helpful grounding in Mexican political history, including the authoritarian heritage, while the international section is an excellent overview of the United States–Mexico bilateral relationship, and the U.S. impact on democratization in its southern neighbor. The heart of this work lies with the three central sections on political, social and economic themes. Critical to the analysis is the belief that Mexico in the 1990s and 2000s was a “semi-democracy,” which parallels Heather Williams’ interpretation. The justification for this label is that it “captures the sense of a system between authoritarian and democratic but at least as democratic as authoritarian, with prospects of a proximate democratic future”(3). The heart of the thematic and theoretical argument can be found in “Difficult Democracy,” where the authors lay out carefully and clearly the components of democracy, fundamentally freedom, accountability, and political equality (112).⁸

The entire text of the book, using semi-democracy as an all-encompassing issue, explores numerous linkages with other actors, new and old. Within the discussion of democratic components, Levy and Bruhn draw a significant distinction between privileged Mexicans who “are more likely to enjoy access to media freedom, organize effectively in autonomous interest groups and in elections, and become part of the decision-making leadership,” and all other citizens (141). It is this leadership group which Sarah Babb explores exclusively in her work. More importantly, both in the introduction (13), and in the central arguments about Mexican democracy today, Levy and Bruhn highlight inequality in all its aspects, political, social and economic. As the authors justifiably argue, “the configuration of inequality is one of the keys to the difficulty of identifying the Mexican political system” (141). Despite the initial euphoria associated with the democratic transformation in Latin America, and most recently Mexico, little evidence exists to suggest that it has produced significant benefits for most Mexicans socially and economi-

7. “Mexico: Sustained Civilian Rule and the Question of Democracy,” in *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America*, 2d ed. by Larry Diamond, et. al. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

8. For a broad, comparative analysis of how Mexicans themselves interpret democracy, and its political and economic consequences, see Roderic Ai Camp, ed., *Citizen Views of Democracy in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), and a special forum in *Mexican Studies*, 19 (Winter 2003).

cally.⁹ Even poor people's political influence in this new-found democracy, as the authors suggest, is limited compared to privileged groups.

A work of this scope covers many issues and themes. It is worth noting that among the themes highlighted, each is taken up in greater detail by the other authors under review, suggesting a strong level of cohesion among academics on the importance of selected political actors or processes. The role of civil society is one of the most important issues the authors address. A panoply of actors compose civil society, but one of the actors which has received little attention in the context of its political activity is the business community. Yemile Mizrahi, who noted the shifting attitude of entrepreneurs, large and small, toward active participation in electoral politics, provided some of the pioneering work on the topic.¹⁰ Other scholars, such as Carlos Alba Vega, who explores this topic during the Salinas era, have documented the business community's political preferences, a focus few have explored.¹¹ Such interpretations are crucial. As Levy and Bruhn conclude, despite the important contributions business leaders made to increased electoral competition in Mexico, and especially the influence they exerted at the state and local levels in specific regions, including the North, it does not follow that the business community necessarily supports democratization. The authors argue that,

it is a tricky matter to calculate whether the gains to stability derived from legitimate democracy are bigger than the tax cost of encouraging governments to cater to popular demands for services. A less controlled labor sector can pressure for higher wages and benefits. The biggest business leaders may also wish to preserve the special access they have when popular organizations are excluded. (85–86)

The broadest political change recognized in *Mexico, the Struggle for Democratic Development*, and elsewhere in the literature, is the rise of competition and the actors it has favored. It would be fair to say that the most significant theme along these lines, and especially noteworthy given its historical, revolutionary importance, is the rise of federalism. This theme owes much to the efforts of Victoria Rodríguez and Peter Ward, who in numerous volumes, edited collections, and essays, have documented such trends locally, regionally, and nationally.¹² Levy

9. For a discussion of this issue, see John Sheahan's lucid "Effects of Liberalization Programs on Poverty and Inequality: Chile, Mexico, and Peru," *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 3 (1997): 7–37.

10. For example, see her "Rebels Without a Cause? The Politics of Entrepreneurs in Chihuahua," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 (1994): 137–58.

11. "Los empresarios y el Estado durante el Salinismo," *Foro Internacional* 36 (January–February 1996): 31–79. The bibliography provided in this essay is outstanding.

12. See Victoria Rodríguez and Peter Ward's *Opposition Government in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), and *New Federalism and State*

and Bruhn, similar to Rodríguez and Ward, view federalism, given current structural fiscal constraints, as offering both possibilities to and limits on local governments (107). But in the chapter on “The Rise of Political Competition,” they also note the importance of the Mexican military’s changing role, one that has not received the attention it deserves.¹³ The authors believe that large differences exist among various actors in their response to democratic changes, and that many organizations are still in flux. Levy and Bruhn also suggest that Mexico’s democratic path is by no means assured, and that competition, growth, and stability raise significant questions about its ability to consolidate democratic achievements to date.

Two of the themes Levy and Bruhn touch on, but deserve more attention from Mexicanists generally, are the role of women as political actors, and the changing mission and policy capacity of two central political structures in a federal system, the legislative and judicial branches. Again, Mexican scholarship has dominated this topic.¹⁴ Two recent books are essential for assessing women’s contributions as Mexican leaders and citizens: the edited works of Anna Fernández Poncela, *Participación política: las mujeres en México al final del milenio*, which compiles important data on women’s political involvement; and Victoria Rodríguez’s insightful comparison, across regions and communities, of female political participation, found in *Women’s Participation in Mexican Political Life*.¹⁵ Lynn Stephen provides one of the most revealing interviews about women and gender issues in Latin America this author has read. (187).

As the role of the legislative branch became increasingly significant during the second half of the Zedillo administration, and unquestionably crucial in the policy-making process during the first two years of the Fox regime, the importance of its behavior internally, its posture

Government in Mexico, U.S.-Mexico Policy Studies Report, no. 9, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

13. For several recent assessments, see George W. Grayson, *Mexico’s Armed Forces, A Factbook* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 1999), and Roderic Ai Camp, “The Mexican Military, Marching to a Different Tune?,” in Kevin Middlebrook, ed., *The Dilemma of Mexican Politics in Transition* (San Diego, Calif.: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2003).

14. Recognizing the importance of this topic, a group of Mexico’s leading political scientists produced a book that explores such topics as the legislative branch, the judicial branch, and federalism under the obfuscating title of *La ciencia política en México* (Mexico: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1999).

15. Fernández Poncela (México: El Colegio de México, 1995), and Rodríguez, ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). A brief summary of some of the data in Fernández Poncela’s work can be found in her essay in *Changing Structure of Mexico: Political, Social, and Economic Prospects* (Armonk: Sharpe, 1996), 307–14. Rodríguez has a major book on *Women in Contemporary Mexican Politics* forthcoming from the University of Texas Press, 2003.

toward the executive branch, and its linkages to civil society has grown exponentially. Among the recent essays and books on congress, and executive-legislative relations, the work of Alonso Lujambio stands out. Lujambio, a professor at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico, first explored this topic in a major contribution on the historical evolution of the legislative body, as well as democracy's recent consequences for its revival, in his *Federalismo y congreso en el cambio político de México*, followed by his more recent essays, which focus on the importance of local legislative pluralism, a topic to which Levy and Bruhn give importance.¹⁶ An additional book-length analysis, that provides another valuable Mexican view is Luis Carlos Ugalde's *The Mexican Congress: Old Player, New Power*.¹⁷

Finally, *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development* draws on a theme Levy first explored in his earlier book, namely the relationship between the state and the market, and its impact on democratization, a relationship underlying Williams' work. Levy and Bruhn neither favor nor oppose liberalization trends; rather, they attempt to identify market liberalization's consequences in Mexico. Its impact is viewed as highly contradictory, suggesting,

On one hand, it exposes Mexico to international influences from established democracies, makes individuals and firms more independent of state influence, and may create the resources for popular organization. On the other hand, liberalization of markets has widened the already substantial gap between rich and poor, leaving the poorest Mexicans decisively out of political decision-making even as political liberalization advanced. Neoliberalism may also increase economic volatility and vulnerability to external shocks. If democratic governments cannot protect Mexico from these problems any better than authoritarian ones, Mexicans may change their minds about the value of democracy and conclude that it is not worth the economic pain. (179)

This conclusion echoes the views in most of the published literature.

The dramatic impact of civil society as both a product of and influence on the Mexican democratic transformation is developed extensively in Heather Williams' *Social Movements and Economic Transition: Markets and Distributive Conflict in Mexico*. Similarly to Levy and Bruhn,

16. *Federalismo y congreso* (México: UNAM, 1995); *El poder compartido: un ensayo sobre la democratización mexicana* (México: Océano, 2000). His essay, "Entre pasado y futuro: la ciencia política y el poder legislativo en México," *Estudios Filosóficos Históricos y Letras* 54 (Autumn 1998): 21–40, is an outstanding overview and bibliography of published and unpublished sources on Mexico's congress. Caroline Beer, who has researched the role of state legislatures and the impact of power sharing on state politics, has a forthcoming book on this topic with many fresh insights entitled *Electoral Competition and Institutional Change in Mexico* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003). Jeffrey Weldon's articles on congressional committee structures, reelection, and legislative-executive relations are equally noteworthy.

17. *The Mexican Congress* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2000), also published in Spanish.

Williams also wants to explore the impact of economic neo-liberalism and the political crisis on Mexico, but Williams focuses exclusively on their impact on civil society. She seeks to

illuminate how Mexico's crisis and market transition have altered the way groups pressure the state for distributive reforms. Rather than constructing the political economy merely as a landscape of opportunity affecting the choices of individuals or firms . . . this discussion focuses on the way that Mexico's shifting political economy has affected the way groups challenge the state for resources. (6)

Written before Fox's electoral victory (although aware of this event in her preface), Williams considers Mexico's democracy to be characterized by what she labels "illiberal dimensions of governance" (x). She argues, therefore, that over the next decade civil society will participate in contentious cycles and distributive conflict, as distinct groups make their demands on the state.

To test her assumptions about how economic change affects civil groups' organizational abilities, and the methods through which their demands are exercised, she went into the field to explore two case studies in different regions and settings. These cases involve privatization's influence on workers and marginalized people associated with the former state steel complex in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, and the impact of trade liberalization on grain farmers in Zacatecas. Her general conclusion about market forces is that although their introduction in an environment such as Mexico's "destroys much in its wake, . . . at the same time it knocks open spaces in structures of control," thus leaving a vacuum by which groups can reorganize and make demands on the state (56).

Williams analyzes some of civil society's techniques in a chapter aptly titled "The Insurgent's Toolbox." She introduces the Zapatistas (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional—EZLN) as an influence on the behavior and presence of other groups in Mexico, drawing intriguing comparisons between a small guerrilla army and other, more traditional civic organizations. Despite the EZLN's influence on Mexican society broadly, she notes significant limitations on the political weapons at its disposal. On the other hand, the same can be said for other types of social movements. Based on her analysis, she concludes that political and economic structures condition, but do not determine, the outcome of social movements. Equally important, the distributive ideology of the state, and the specific characteristics of the local setting where the social movement emerges, affect the characteristics the movement uses to make its demands (86). Furthermore, market transitions do not "ultimately determine who protests and to what end" (219).

Williams' analysis of the workers in Michoacán and the farmers' movement in Zacatecas generates a number of conclusions useful for

understanding more than her two cases. An important commonality that emerges from several of the books under review is the importance of understanding and identifying local conditions, whether one considers political parties, civic organizations, social movements, state legislatures, or municipalities.¹⁸ National generalizations and cross-national comparisons, critical for advancing broader theoretical interpretations, often ignore equally useful contributions to theory by automatically subsuming distinctive local behavior under broad, amorphous characteristics. Williams makes an important point that many civic groups remain independent of political parties, and indeed are fiercely opposed to incorporation into national organizations. She also cites Judith Hellman's convincing argument that scholars have not addressed the level of internal democracy within social movements, and that it is unclear just how democratic such movements are in terms of their own decision-making processes.¹⁹ Williams concludes that "Some, but certainly not all, distributive movements decentralize leadership and democratize decision-making" (216).

Social movements, as broad civic actors, have received sophisticated attention compared to other civic players, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A considerable number of descriptive articles on individual NGOs abound, but fewer works have emerged about their theoretical role in determining Mexican public policy, or their impact on national decision-making processes under altered executive-legislative branch relationships. José Luis Méndez's collection *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas en México y Centroamérica*, contains a chapter by Blanca Torres Ramírez, who has contributed numerous articles on NGOs. She lays out a theoretical framework, which is then followed by individual contributions that explore such diverse topics as the relationship between NGOs and academics and the influence of philanthropic foundations. All of these articles directly address this deficit.²⁰ These latter organizations have been largely ignored. The only major work exploring their role to date is Levy's *Building the Third Sector*.²¹

The most distinctive social movement in the 1990s, of course, is the EZLN, which is inherently significant in terms of its impact on national

18. A number of imaginative studies have emerged focusing on local politics. Among them are Rodolfo García del Castillo's *Los municipios en México: los retos ante el futuro* (Mexico: CIDE, 1999), which may well be the most comprehensive published data set on municipalities. Based on a national survey, the data provides numerous perspectives on local leadership and municipal performance. A second work, one of the few to explain the behavior of state governors, is Adriana Amezcua and Juan E. Pardiñas, *Todos los gobernadores del Presidente: cuando el dedo de uno aplasta el voto popular* (Mexico: Grijalbo, 1997).

19. "Mexican Popular Movements, Clientelism, and the Process of Democratization," *Latin American Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (1994): 124–42.

20. *Organizaciones civiles y políticas públicas* (Mexico: Porrúa, 1998).

21. *Building the Third Sector* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

politics, and because it encouraged and spawned additional groups in civil society.²² Several excellent studies by George Collier and Carlos Montemayor appeared relatively soon after the initial uprising,²³ but Lynn Stephen's examination of the EZLN, both historically and in terms of its contemporary political role, provides many helpful insights for understanding the movement within the larger setting of revolutionary and state-generated Zapatism. Similar to Williams' study, but reversing the focus to the opposing side of developmental policy-making, Stephen wishes to show how the regional or local contextual setting and culture influence state policy outcomes, and especially, "what goes on at the margins of the state, particularly where its legitimacy is in dispute" (82).

Significantly, Stephen goes well beyond the original movement in Chiapas to explore its influence, and that of Zapatism historically, on neighboring *ejidos* in Oaxaca. Interestingly, she does not explore its extensive impact on other actors, such as the media and the military, and all but ignores its extensive use of the internet, which David Ronfeldt analyzes in one of the most imaginative books to emerge from these recent events.²⁴ Similar to what Williams discovered in her analysis of the economic transformation's consequences, Stephen concludes that the Zapatistas created political space for other movements (176). A major conclusion of this work, that political "analysts seeking to understand Mexico's political future should not underestimate regional and local diversity in exploring how political positions are formed," echoes similar observations by Levy and Bruhn, Williams, and Middlebrook (315).

Kevin Middlebrook has assembled one of the most insightful books available on the PAN and its crucial recent role in Mexican politics, locally and nationally. His excellent introductory chapter, which iden-

22. The literature on the Zapatistas is more than generous, but most are collections of documents or interviews. Few provide the theoretical focus and detailed field research found in Stephen's work. Among some of the better, recent collections are Iván Molina Jiménez, *El pensamiento del EZLN* (México: Plaza y Valdés, 2000), and a scholarly compilation on elections in highland Chiapas, covering a wide range of original topics and electoral data: Juan Pedro Viqueira and Willibald Sonnleitner, eds., *Democracia en tierras indígenas: las elecciones en los Altos de Chiapas, 1991–1998* (México: El Colegio de México, 2000).

23. Collier provided the most detailed analysis of the guerrilla uprising and the different factions within the larger context of the theoretical literature in his initial interpretation "Structural Adjustment and New Regional Movements: the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas," in *Ethnic Conflict and Governance in Comparative Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 1995), 28–50. For an early Mexican view, see Carlos Montemayor's *Chiapas, la rebelión indígena de México* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1998).

24. *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1998) is basically a case study of the concept of electronic warfare, and how the Zapatistas' success produced numerous consequences for the Mexican armed forces and elsewhere.

tifies numerous weaknesses affecting the party's future electoral fortunes, is followed by four case studies from important states and three chapters on the party's changing mission and leadership. Among the contributions are Alonso Lujambio's convincing analysis of the PAN's strategy from its founding through 2000, whose interpretations differ from previous scholars; Steven Wuhs' explorations of the ideological divisions and factionalization within the party; David Shirk's view of the party as an organization; and Tonatiuh Guillén López's essay, one of dozens over the last decade, which makes a major point about the party's partisan strategy creating different intergovernmental structures.

All of the authors under review, especially Levy and Bruhn, Williams, and Stephens, have focused on economic neo-liberalism as an essential component of the altered social and political setting in Mexico since 1989. For Sarah Babb, a young sociologist, the question is not its impact on Mexican politics, which is a given, but did an underlying shift in the study of economics provide a welcome environment for such a sea change in economic philosophy. The author, relying on imaginative field research, has reconstructed the evolution of economics as a profession from the 1930s through the late 1990s.²⁵ Within the larger literature on "world culture theory," Babb makes the argument that "national systems of expert knowledge are shaped by constituencies—organizations and social groups that provide professionals with resources" (209). She documents (the bibliography is outstanding) the decline of the public National School of Economics and the rise of the private Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM) as the producer of future economic leadership. It is the best analysis available of ITAM's economic curriculum and impact, as well as the connection between a private university and the government, specifically the Bank of Mexico. This is a fascinating relationship, and Babb demonstrates how the Mexican government created a U.S.-styled economics program, and how such a linkage eventually contributed to a wholesale transformation in government economic ideology and macro-economic policies.

Her work strongly complements several recent essays by Veronica Montecinos and John Markoff on the importance of economists in public policy, the broader literature on technocrats, and the role of expert knowledge.²⁶ Babb correctly views this economic philosophy's influ-

25. The best early work on professions generally, and the role of experts, in Mexico are Peter Cleaves, *Professions and the State: The Mexican Case* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), and David Lorey, *The Rise of the Professions in Twentieth-Century Mexico: University Graduates and Occupational Change since 1929* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1994).

26. See their "The Ubiquitous Rise of Economists," *Journal of Public Policy* 19, no. 1 (1993): 37–68, and "From the Power of Economic Ideas to the Power of Economists," in

ence continuing with Fox's appointment of Francisco Gil Díaz as his finance minister; but equally significant, because it reflects the involvement of international organizations in these trends, was Fox's designation of a career economist at the World Bank as his economic development minister.

Because they completed their respective books prior to Fox's victory, the authors attempted to make some predictions about Mexico's political future. Michael Mazaar, on the other hand, produced an entire work on this topic, *Mexico 2005, The Challenges of the New Millennium*, without knowing the electoral outcome. This book is one of the most interesting and unique interpretations ever produced on Mexico. It confirms the often-repeated observation that a non-specialist can add distinctive insights to a topic. What makes this work extend well beyond the observations of the other books under review is its scope. It is part of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' New Millennium project, which analyzes long-term trends and six issues that shape global capabilities, including human psychology, human resources, and new authorities. If readers wanted to consider what the application of new technology, such as the internet, might have for Mexico, they are likely to encounter an interpretation in this book. A provocative text for introductory students, it is valuable for the comparisons it draws, and for suggesting alternative developmental scenarios.

As Mexico embarks on an exciting, yet unpredictable political and social path, these works collectively leave us with several significant conclusions. First, Mexico by no means is characterized as a functional democracy. The specialists cited provide many helpful insights about how Mexico arrived at the critical juncture in July 2000, whether focused on elections, parties, government leadership, or social movements. We know far, far less, however, about if or how further democratic transformations after 2003 will occur. Second, the political and economic transformation definitely has altered the role and importance of traditional as well as recent actors on the democratic stage. The consequences of those influences have been well described for certain groups or organizations. Yet we continue to have only a limited understanding of other actors, some of whom already have contributed significantly to the transformations into the new century, including clergy and religious institutions, the armed forces, and international influences, such as higher education and multi-national organizations. Third, and finally,

Miguel A. Centeno, ed., *The Other Mirror: Essays on Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). The two best collections are Miguel A. Centeno and Patricio Silva, eds., *The Politics of Expertise in Latin America* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), and Jorge Domínguez, ed., *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

in the quest to identify cross-national patterns, scholars have ignored the value of local differences, many of which, according to the findings of these studies, explain group behavior, political interactions, and organizational decision-making. Similar to connoisseurs assessing a country's contribution to world-class wines, we need first to understand each individual vineyard's climate, ingredients, and vintners before offering accurate, national and cross-national generalizations.