

GOVERNMENTS AS PUBLISHERS OF REFERENCE MATERIALS:

Mexico and Brazil, 1970–1980

Ann Hartness-Kane
University of Texas at Austin

Government agencies in many countries are prolific publishers of information in a surprising variety of fields, reflecting their myriad activities, their economic and political interests, and the needs and interests of their constituents. Reports of agencies, transcriptions of congressional hearings, and agricultural extension bulletins are well-known examples, but government agencies as sources of reference materials—publications in a format designed to be consulted for specific pieces of information, rather than to be read from start to finish—are often overlooked.

Researchers seeking up-to-the minute or retrospective information on Latin America can ill-afford to ignore this valuable source of data on a wide spectrum of subjects, both popular and esoteric. Government agencies are frequently the only collectors and compilers of certain kinds of information, and often only they have the funds available for the publication of material that could not be published profitably in the private sector. It is, for example, unlikely that an individual author or private agency would have the means to acquire the data presented in *Sistema educativo*, a detailed state-by-state survey of Mexican education in a tabular format, published by the Secretaría de Educación Pública in a multi-volume set. Nor would it be economically feasible for a commercial company to publish it, given the relatively small potential market for a publication that would necessarily be very expensive. Likewise, the ambitious multivolume compilation, *Mensagens presidenciais*, issued by the Brazilian Câmara dos Deputados, containing the presidential messages sent to Congress at the beginning of each legislative session since 1890, makes an important series of documents readily available, but a commercial publisher would not find its publication a profitable venture.

There are several reasons for the general lack of awareness, even among area specialists, of this type of government publication. First, the availability of these publications simply does not occur to researchers, because our concept of what constitutes reference materials is often limited to the traditional types: the thesaurus, encyclopedia, or almanac found in the library's reference department are usually the publications

that come to mind. This definition is rarely applied to government publications, but when it is, a wide range of materials falls into that category. Even an annual budget, used creatively, can yield the answers to a variety of questions.

A tendency to think of reference books as the province of commercial publishers is a second reason for overlooking government publications in the same category. It is rather common to refer to some of the well-known ones by their publishers' names, rather than by their actual titles (the "Espasa Encyclopedia" is one such case), and often the publisher's name is incorporated into the title (*Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are two examples). Lastly, government-published reference materials usually are not distributed through commercial channels, although this is not a fast rule, especially in the case of books intended for a popular audience. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that more often than not, the types of reference publications that would be most useful to researchers are available only from the issuing agency, and their existence is rarely well publicized.

The reference publications of Brazilian and Mexican government agencies since 1970 are certainly no exception to this rule, in spite of the fact that both governments have been the publishers of a spate of these materials in the last decade. Handbooks, guides, specialized dictionaries, bibliographies, statistical compilations, and other publications in reference format have poured forth from government printing presses at both the national, and in the case of Brazil, the state levels. Indeed, a survey of the reference publications of these governments since 1970 suggests that they represent most of the categories of materials that any Latin American government could be expected to publish. They are, therefore, worth a closer examination, both for a look at the valuable contents of selected publications, and from the general conclusions that can be drawn from this representative group of government-published reference materials.

The purposes for which both the Mexican and the Brazilian governments seem to have published reference materials appear to be similar. As might be expected, they are related to an effort to meet various kinds of information needs and to further government objectives, at least in a broad sense, through making certain kinds of information readily available. Although these purposes will be categorized here for convenience, they are rarely mutually exclusive.

Many reference publications were generated as by-products of a government's own need for information, or by its need to transmit information about itself to its own agencies or to its constituents. For example, it is necessary to identify and locate government departments and leaders. Therefore, organization manuals and directories are published, and numerous publications intended to provide this kind of

information have appeared in recent years. Mexico's Coordinación General de Estudios Administrativos has been a prolific publisher of high quality organization manuals. It issued three editions of its *Manual de organización del gobierno federal*, the most recent being in 1976, and a current one is reported to be in press. It also published *Manual de organización de la administración pública paraestatal 1977*, covering that important sector of activity. Although it is not an organization manual, the second edition of *El gobierno mexicano: su organización y funcionamiento* by José Mijares Palacios, is a useful source for the history of Mexican government agencies, as well as for descriptions of their basic functions.

In the area of state government, the publication by Nuevo León, *Manual general de organización: poder ejecutivo del estado, administración central*, is an excellent example of a good organization manual, combining text with graphic representations. Even government departments can be the subject of such manuals: *Estrutura e organização da Secretaria de Estado de Educação e Cultura do Rio de Janeiro* presents a detailed picture of one such agency and the units reporting to it.

Various kinds of directories are sources of information about government activities, agencies, and leaders. The *Catálogo dos editores oficiais brasileiros* serves not only as a list of government agencies which publish, but also as a general directory, providing the addresses and telephone numbers of those listed. *Siglas de entidades brasileiras*, issued by the Instituto Brasileiro de Informação em Ciência e Tecnologia, and its predecessor, *Siglas brasileiras* are complementary reference tools, indispensable for identifying the thousands of acronyms in use, not only for government agencies and programs, but for banks, educational institutions, associations, and other entities, and for physically locating them.

In Mexico the Coordinación General de Estudios Administrativos issued its useful *Directorio de la administración pública centralizada y paraestatal 1978*, which identifies the administrators and describes the services or products of each agency included. The publication of the Brazilian Câmara dos Deputados, *Deputados brasileiros*, identifies congressmen, beginning with the 1967–71 legislative body. This ongoing directory has been issued for each successive legislative session.

Promulgation of its laws is another aspect of government effort to communicate information about itself. Editions of the complete civil or criminal codes are common, but there are also many compilations of laws on specific topics of interest to a wide public, which are perhaps more useful for quick reference. Two recent examples from Brazil are *Café: legislação brasileira, 1952/1977* and *Legislação do petróleo*. The colorful covers, readable formats, and detailed subject indexes of these two works suggest that they are intended for an audience wider than the legal community. *Constituição federal e constituições estaduais*, a collection of the texts of the Brazilian federal and state constitutions, makes mate-

rial that would normally require the consultation of numerous publications easily accessible in one place.

Last, but certainly not least, governments are interested in recording their own pasts and in transmitting the memory of the past to contemporary generations. The Brazilian compilation of presidential addresses to Congress, *Mensagens presidenciais*, has already been mentioned. The Empire is evoked in a similar compilation of the speeches of the emperors that opened and closed the legislative assemblies, *Falas do trono desde o ano de 1823 até o ano de 1889*, issued by the Instituto Nacional do Livro. The publication of the Arquivo Nacional, *Exercício da presidência da República, 1889–1975*, is a chronological list of all presidents and acting presidents with brief biographical data and portraits for each one. *Deputados brasileiros, 1826–1976* provides information about legislators from the time of the Empire to the present.

The Mexican state of Nuevo León also remembers its leaders in the second edition of *Gobernantes de Nuevo León, 1582–1979*, by Ricardo Covarrubias. Leaders of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the government are listed in chronological order, with an index of names to facilitate access to the listing.

Mexico's diplomatic history is recalled in two reference works that form part of the "Serie documental, Colección del Archivo Histórico Diplomático Mexicano" published by the Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores. *Secretarios y encargados del despacho de relaciones exteriores, 1821–1973* is a chronological listing, including the dates that the secretaries assumed and vacated the office. *Representantes diplomáticos de México en Washington, 1822–1973* also lists individuals in chronological order, and outlines their diplomatic careers in the United States. Another publication in the same series, *La expropiación petrolera*, edited by Juan Barona Lobato, records an important event in twentieth-century Mexican history through the documents related to it; not only Mexican government documents, but related correspondence from the United States and British governments are available here.

A second major purpose of government-published reference works is to supply information needed by the constituents of the government in question. This group is comprised of both popular clientele wanting general cultural information, and very specific clientele, needing in-depth information on certain topics. Very often these two types of clientele are not discrete—their information needs overlap. Nevertheless, some generalizations about their differing needs can be made.

Many of the reference materials on traditional subjects are intended for a general audience. Bibliographies, indexes, and guides are common components of this category. Brazilian government agencies at both state and national levels have been active in publishing bibliographic aides on a wide variety of topics. The Biblioteca Nacional has

promoted the bibliography of Brazilian literature through its publications. Two outstanding contributions to this field are *O conto brasileiro e sua crítica: bibliografia (1841–1974)* by Celuta Moreira Gomes, and *Modernismo brasileiro (1918–1971)* by Xavier Placer. The latter work encompasses literature, the fine arts, and architecture. Brazilian drama is the subject of the *Índice de autores e peças da dramaturgia brasileira*, which is being issued in a multivolume set by the Serviço Nacional do Teatro. This agency's *Anuário do teatro brasileiro*, while not a bibliography, is a state-by-state register of theater activity, and as such is a source of information about plays. *Periódicos brasileiros em microformas: catálogo coletivo*, another publication of the Biblioteca Nacional, lists 175 current and retrospective periodicals, with their places and dates of publication, along with information on libraries in Brazil and abroad which have them in microform.

State agencies have produced bibliographies focusing on their own geographic areas and more general ones too. An example of the latter is Cristina Argenton Colonelli's *Bibliografia do folclore brasileiro*, an unannotated bibliography, including more than 4,900 citations, published by the Conselho Estadual de Artes e Ciências Humanas of São Paulo. State publications with a local orientation are legion. A recent example is the *Bibliografia piauiense*, by José Airton Gonçalves Gomes, encompassing books about the state of Piauí, or by its citizens, published by the Fundação Centro de Pesquisas Econômicas e Sociais do Piauí. Economic development in Pernambuco is the subject of *Pernambuco: uma bibliografia básica sobre desenvolvimento*, issued by the state Conselho de Desenvolvimento.

In Mexico, government-issued bibliographies and guides have tended to concentrate on the holdings of specific institutions, with less emphasis on general bibliography, although there are examples of the latter to be found. Mexican history and anthropology are the focal points of many of the publications. The Archivo General de la Nación has had an active publications program, issuing indexes and catalogs to its various *ramos*, with approximately forty titles already available and others projected. The *Catálogo del Ramo de Bienes Nacionalizados*, published in 1979, is but one of a number of recent examples. Some of the others cover the *ramos* of Diezmos, Indios, Expulsión de españoles, Misiones, Provincias internas, Real fisco, Tributos, and Universidad. The *Guía descriptiva de los ramos que constituyen el Archivo General de la Nación*, while not a catalog or bibliography, is a helpful general guide to the holdings of each section of the Archive.

The Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia has also been active, publishing such ambitious works as the two-volume *Bibliografía de códices, mapas, y lienzos del México prehispánico y colonial*, by Virginia Guzmán. The *Bibliografía general de historia de México* by Orozco and

Platas is a useful, selected and annotated bibliography intended for use by students at the university level. The regional centers of INAH have produced publications focusing on local areas, such as the *Bibliografía antropológica del Estado de Oaxaca*, by María de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, and the *Inventario e índice de las Misceláneas de la Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco*, by Dorantes, Muría, and Olveda.

An interest in the cinema, both as entertainment and for educational purposes, has manifested itself in Brazil in the publication of filmographies. The *Filmografia do cinema brasileiro, 1900–1935*, by Jean Claude Bernardet, published by an agency of the state of São Paulo, gives an historical view of the early days of Brazilian cinema as it was reflected in information published in *O Estado de São Paulo*. Feature films, documentaries, and news features are listed in chronological order of exhibition. Contemporary documentary and educational films are the subject of the *Catálogo do filmes* of the Departamento de Filme Cultural of the Empresa Brasileira de Filmes.

Specialized dictionaries addressing a variety of subjects comprise another category of traditional reference works published by governments, and the selection following is representative of this variety. Provincialisms are the subject of *Vocabulário pernambucano*, by Francisco Augusto Pereira da Costa, issued by the Secretaria da Educação e Cultura of Pernambuco, while *Dicionário de tupi moderno*, by Max Boudin, published by the Conselho Estadual de Artes e Ciências Humanas of São Paulo, covers an indigenous language. The historical usage of words is the subject of *Vocabulario: explicación de algunos términos y conceptos usados en documentos históricos*, prepared by the staff of the Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico). *A B C do café*, produced by the Instituto Brasileiro do Café, defines the terms related to a particular agricultural product. *Terminología usual en las relaciones internacionales*, published by Mexico's Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, deals with the terms related to such topics as international organizations, international law, and diplomatic law in the small volumes that make up the series.

Numerous handbooks, directories, and statistical compilations also fall into the category of general reference works. *Geografia do Brasil*, a five-volume set, covers geology, climate, vegetation, hydrology, population, transportation, energy, agriculture, industry, and urbanization, region by region. The second edition of Manoel da Costa Honorato's *Dicionário topográfico, estatístico e histórico da Província de Pernambuco*, makes a regional reference work, first published in 1863, once again available.

Both Mexico and Brazil issued one-volume statistical compilations summarizing data from the 1970 census. Mexico's Dirección General de Estadística published *IX Censo de población, 1970 . . . resumen general abreviado*, and the Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística

published *Censo demográfico: Brasil*. The Fundação IBGE has also issued the *Sinopse estatístico do Brasil* periodically since 1971, summarizing statistics in the fields of demography, economics, social and cultural conditions, education, and politics in a ready-reference format.

The preparation of guides to library resources has been a concern of both governments. The sixth edition of *Directorio de bibliotecas de la República Mexicana*, and the *Guia das bibliotecas brasileiras 1976* provide similar information about all types of libraries. University libraries are the focus of *Guia de bibliotecas universitárias brasileiras*, published by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior.

Specialized maps and atlases are also available from government agencies. Two interesting examples are the *Mapa das linhas: sistema ferroviário nacional*, issued by the Rêde Ferroviário Federal, incorporating maps of the railway routes in the six administrative districts of the national railway system of Brazil, and the *Atlas da fauna brasileira*. The latter is a good example of a reference work intended to provide information for both a general audience and several specific clienteles. It is a colorful, easy-to-read publication, which could be used by anyone seeking information on the topic it covers. Yet it was published jointly by four government agencies, each with its own clientele, reflecting very different interests: the Ministério de Agricultura, the Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal, the Ministério da Educação e Cultura, and the Fundação Nacional de Material Escolar.

The publication of materials for specific clienteles is an important aspect of government-issued reference works, with many examples to be found among those published in Mexico and Brazil in the decade under consideration. Many publications intended to provide information for the commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors of the economy fall into this category.

As might be expected, mining and other extractive industries have received much attention in Mexico. The *Directorio de la minería mexicana* provides information on producers, exporters, and importers of mineral products, including petroleum. The *Anuario estadístico de la minería mexicana* issued by the Consejo de Recursos Minerales, and *Estadística minerometalúrgica* published by the Dirección General de Estadística, provide quantitative data on production, exportation, value, and prices in this important sector of the Mexican economy.

The Brazilian effort to expand its foreign markets for manufactured and semimanufactured products was reflected in its government publications in the 1970s. The Divisão de Estudos e Pesquisas de Mercado of the Ministério das Relações Exteriores played a major role in the preparation of reference materials designed to encourage and assist prospective exporters. *Mercados para produtos selecionados da exportação brasileira*, a market analysis in tabular format, presents data on external

markets for 240 nontraditional exportable products. Brazilian consulates in cities around the world prepared a series on potential markets for specific Brazilian products under the general title "Série Mercados para o Brasil." For example, the Consulate General in New York produced a handbook entitled *Estados Unidos: produtos alimentícios*, providing a quantitative market analysis, information on principal competitors in the market, major producers and their associations, distribution and business practices, legal factors, and the tariff structure. Each of the forty-six handbooks in this series provides similar data.

A second series entitled "Série Como Exportar" was prepared by the trade promotion sections of embassies and consulates in various countries. This series focused on general information about the countries that would be useful for potential Brazilian exporters. Data for each country included facts on population, language, climate, principal cities, natural resources, the economy, the financial system, foreign trade statistics, the structure governing foreign commerce, transportation and communications facilities, and principal importers. *Senegal* is only one of the dozen or so titles making up this series.

Even states with an important economic stake in foreign trade have published handbooks intended to promote exports, as in the case of the Secretaria de Economia e Planejamento of São Paulo, which issued *Exportação*, a handbook designed to facilitate export activity for its constituents. Many states also issued directories of business and industry, such as the *Anuário das indústrias do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul*.

Mexico has also been concerned with the expansion of foreign trade. The *Directorio de importadores y exportadores de la República Mexicana*, published by the Instituto Mexicano de Comercio Exterior, records the names and addresses of the importers and exporters found in the Registro Nacional de Importadores y Exportadores de la República Mexicana, with an index of products facilitating use of the directory.

The agricultural sector has also received its share of attention. The need for bibliographic control of the host of publications related to both the technical and the economic aspects of agriculture has resulted in bibliographies designed to identify them. The thorough *Bibliografia agrícola nacional, 1946–1970*, citing 23,700 items published in Mexico and abroad, was published by the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrícolas in 1973. Brazil has undertaken ongoing coverage of agricultural bibliography with the serial publication, *Bibliografia brasileira de agricultura*, prepared by the Empresa Brasileira de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural. Periodicals in the field were covered in the *Catálogo coletivo de publicações em ciências agrícolas e naturais*.

Education is another area in which many reference works intended for use by a specific clientele are published. The Mexican *Sistema educativo*, mentioned earlier, is one example. Although it contains in-

formation that would be of general interest, much of the detailed data would most likely be needed by professionals, including planners, in the field of education. Statistical tables on education at all levels, maps charting illiterates by *municípios*, and information on the distribution of free textbooks, are only a few examples of the types of data that it contains. Brazil, likewise, has published similarly detailed works, such as the *Catálogo de entidades de ensino supletivo*, providing in-depth data on adult education programs throughout the country, and the *Catálogo de cursos de pós-graduação no Brasil*, covering graduate courses in all fields of study offered by forty institutions of higher learning.

Information promoting tourism is another field of publication for a specific clientele. The Empresa Brasileira de Turismo issued its *Brasil: calendário turístico*, an annual chronological list of events of interest to the tourist: exhibitions, competitions, conventions, and festivals are covered in the Portuguese and English text. Consulting this calendar in conjunction with the *Calendário cultural do Brasil* of the Conselho Federal de Turismo gives a good idea of activities for the tourist in Brazil. Although the very interesting *Calendario de fiestas tradicionales* from Mexico's Dirección General de Arte Popular is not specifically intended for tourists, the information that it provides about 2,500 *fiestas* serves a similar purpose. Even travel agents have not been overlooked. The Brazilian state of Paraná prepared a reference work intended to assist them in planning trips for their clients, *Paraná para agências de viagem*.

Although business, industry, education, agriculture, and tourism are among the areas of activity most frequently served with information through government-published reference books, publications intended for other clienteles are common. The *Calendário de eventos técnico-científicos realizados no Brasil*, issued by the Instituto Brasileiro de Informação em Ciência e Tecnologia, is a useful source of information about events and activities in one field of endeavor. A publication of the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Nutrición, *Valor nutritivo de los alimentos mexicanos: tabelas de uso práctico*, presents a nutritional analysis of foods for professionals in the fields of nutrition and food processing in easy-to-use, tabular form.

Meeting the information needs of foreigners is a third important purpose of government-published reference materials, with the texts typically being published in the language of the group to be reached. Materials designed to promote and facilitate foreign investment and tourism are common. The bilingual *Brasil: calendário turístico* has already been mentioned. An outstanding example of a handbook of interest to the tourist and investor alike is *Brazil*, published by the Ministério das Relações Exteriores, and containing data in English on Brazilian history, administrative and political organization, geographical and climatic characteristics, demography, social and economic conditions, sports, and tourism. This handbook was also published in a Spanish edition in

1972, while a French edition was issued in 1964. The most recent edition in Portuguese appeared in 1979. A statistical profile of Brazil is available in the English language edition of *Sinopse estatística do Brasil*, which has been published periodically since 1972.

Brazilian state agencies have been especially concerned with the dissemination of information to potential foreign investors, and they have produced many investors' handbooks as a result. The São Paulo Secretaria de Economia e Planejamento issued its third edition of *Handbook for the Foreign Investor in Brazil* in 1977, while the Secretaria da Indústria e Comércio of Rio Grande do Sul promoted its own state in *Investor's Handbook: Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil*. Mexico's Subsecretaria de Industria prepared *Instruments for Industrial Promotion*, a handbook for the foreign investor containing laws and other instruments related to industrial development in English translation.

The eighty reference books published by Mexican and Brazilian government agencies, which have been discussed here, are only a small sample of the large number of such works that have been published in the last decade. As such, they represent the diversity of subjects and the types of formats that comprise the universe of government-issued reference publications, and they reflect the major purposes for which governments publish reference materials. They are also representative of the types of works that have been published in other Latin American countries. These publications serve as a reminder to researchers and scholars in all disciplines, from the most traditional to the newest, of the importance of government agencies as sources of published information, much of which may not be available elsewhere.

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