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72 Migrantes in Mexico

Peru's Surprising Left Turn

Student Leaders in Chile

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Front cover: A gondola arrives at the top of Pão de Açúcar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
Photo by Cadu Tavares.

Comment

The legendary songwriter Woody Guthrie wrote his now-classic song "Deportee" to commemorate a plane filled with undocumented migrants that went down in flames over Los Gatos canyon just south of San Francisco in 1948. He was outraged that news reports referred to the victims "by no name except 'deportees.'"

Noted journalist Alma Guillermoprieto may have felt the same sense of indignation and gloom over the horrific murders and subsequent anonymity of 72 migrants who were traversing Mexico on their way to the United States. We begin this issue with her article about 72migrantes.com, a moving website she created that seeks "to keep the memory of these victims alive, in the name of so many others."

Alma Guillermoprieto taught a special seminar about being a journalist in Central America for the Center for Latin American Studies and the Graduate School of Journalism during February 2012.

On a very different note, the Latino vote promises to be important, possibly defining, for the 2012 U.S. elections. Cristina Mora looks at the forces that have shaped Hispanic panethnicity, from social movements to Univision, with an important role played by the U.S. Census.

Diego Luna, an exceptional film artist, presented an advanced screening of "Miss Bala," a searing film he produced about the traumas and social corrosion associated with drug violence in Mexico. He discussed many of the issues raised by the film with an overflow Berkeley audience.

We also remember and reflect on the considerable achievements of a Brazilian economic visionary, Antônio Barros de Castro. Peter Evans, a close friend of the late economist, discusses the work and life of a fine scholar and unique public intellectual, pointing out the value of his work "for our understanding of the current global political economy." Antônio Barros de Castro was also a special friend to many of us at Berkeley, who were saddened by his death.

CLAS inaugurates a new collaboration with Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica with "Michelle Bachelet: A Rendezvous With History," an article by Beatriz Manz that first appeared in Spanish in that journal.

Finally, we conclude with a photo of Horacio Salinas, the internationally noted composer and musical director of Inti-Illimani, playing a Patricio Manns song at a CLAS-organized recital. To hear this wonderful music, visit our Facebook page!

— Harley Shaiken

Harley Shaiken and Diego Luna on the Berkeley campus, December 2011.

Photo by Jim Block.

A lone bus traverses the Mexican countryside. (Photo by Lon&Queta.)

MEXICO

72 Migrantes

by Alma Guillermoprieto

In August of 2010, in the northern state of Tamaulipas, some 100 miles from the U.S. border, the bodies of 72 undocumented migrants were discovered. Most had their hands tied behind their backs and had received a bullet to the head. They had been killed in the preceding 24 hours — that much we know thanks to a young Ecuadorean who survived the massacre — but almost every other fact about them was a mystery. No independent organization or journalist was allowed to interview the survivor before he was flown out of the country by the Ecuadorean government, but according to the account provided by the authorities, members of the notorious drug-trafficking group, the Zetas, herded all the victims off a bus travelling to the United States on August 22nd or 23rd, took them to an abandoned ranch on the outskirts of the town of San Fernando and asked them to join their group as henchmen. When the group unanimously refused, they were shot. It remains an uncorroborated story.

What we do know, now that all but a handful of the victims have been identified through DNA samples from their relatives, is that most of the victims were Central Americans (four others were from Ecuador and Brazil) and that, like an estimated 500,000 would-be migrants who make the same journey each year, they were travelling clandestinely through Mexico on their way to the United States to look for work. The news of their murder, which made headlines all across the country, hit Mexicans like the lash of a whip. We are ourselves a migrant nation; hundreds of thousands of our countrymen and women cross the border clandestinely every year, pulled by the magnet of the better wages and easier jobs to be found in *el norte*. The restrictions and humiliations continually imposed by the U.S. government on our aspiring migrants are a daily topic in the news, and now there was this: 72 of the poorest of the poor, the loneliest and most defenseless inhabitants of a region far poorer than our own, had been murdered — by our own.

The massacre created great problems for me as a journalist. The number of victims involved was out of the ordinary, but those of us who live in Mexico are subjected daily to accounts of terrible, gruesome bloodshed. Once the initial shock of the day's number passes, no one wants to hear more about torture, death and suffering. Every day, we are subjected to the headlines — I speak for myself as

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Hermanos en el Camino, a migrant shelter in Ixtepec, Oaxaca. (Photo by Noel Criado.)

Unidentified Salvadoran Immigrant, Victim No. 63
Author: Froylán Enciso
Translator: Tyler King

If my migrant had reached the suburbs of Long Island, it's possible he would have passed me walking down the street. Here, only the new immigrants walk, along with the students and the clinically insane. All the rest have cars, and some enjoy shouting insults at the pedestrians as they drive by. Despite the mockery, I'm sure my migrant would have walked without complaint. At the end of the day, the English nonsense would have simply reminded him that this wasn't home. That is, unless another immigrant told him how in 2008 a group of those odious white kids beat the Ecuadorean Marcelo Lucero to death for fun, just like that, because they assumed that fear of deportation would keep other illegal immigrants silent.

But even if he had walked along fearfully, it's possible my migrant would have found one of those jobs that only pay in cash. He would have sent part of his salary home through one of the money wire businesses run by other, better-established immigrants. He probably would have walked with the rest of the money in his pocket, because my migrant would not have had an ID or a bank card, a cursed status common to all new illegal immigrants. When the petty criminals and crackheads decide to steal, they know that only immigrants carry cash.

If my migrant were assaulted while walking, he would be forced to send less money home in order to pay for taxis so that he would not have to walk to and from work with cash in his pocket.

On October 4th of last year, I shared a taxi with someone who could well have been my migrant.

¿Cómo está camarada, ¿va a la chamba?

Sí, acá nomás voy a los campos del golf.

Qué bueno que no va lejos, voy tarde a la universidad. ¿De dónde es?

Del Salvador...

What did he say? Is he Dominican?

No, he is from El Salvador...

Pregúntele que cuánto es...

He is asking how much?

Six dollars.

The man who could have been my migrant gave the cab driver $10 when we arrived. The taxi driver tried to give him his change... *Así está bien.*

He says it's ok.

Wow, these guys are amazing. They're the best with tips. I know the boss of the gardeners in this place. He treats them like shit.

I thought for a few seconds. A tip? Life insurance? Class solidarity? Trying to avoid feeling poor for two seconds?

El taxista dice que por qué le da tanta propina, si aquí no ganan mucho.

Ha, those fuckers are crazy. Okay, this is the place. Take care.

I arrived at my destination and later walked back. My migrant never arrived. They killed him, and he'll never arrive, but I see him. I cry for him, and I miss his presence in the street.

well — and every day, the victims become merely corpses and then simply numbers, part of an inconceivable statistic. For months, I had been wrestling with this problem: how to write another story about the violence tearing Mexico apart without generating in my readers an uncontrollable impulse to turn the page or click the mouse? How to understand just who it was that died and present it to readers or viewers so that they would care?

In the end, I found that I could not come up with a piece of journalism that could truly evoke the life of each of the 72 victims. I had seen The New York Times' valiant efforts in this direction, both after September 11th and during the Iraq war, and it seemed that by following the same formula for each of the fallen — a headshot, a short bio — sameness was achieved all over again. Also, a journalistic piece failed me emotionally. Like my friends, like so many others I was about to meet, I needed something more — an act of atonement, perhaps, or catharsis or even a prayer. I realized with no little shock that what I wanted was to build an altar, at least partly because in Mexico altars honoring the dead are a comforting and familiar part of our relationship with sorrow. That is how the online altar 72migrantes.com came about.

Initially, I thought of a real altar — I suppose you could call it 3-D — set up somewhere in Mexico City, but the idea didn't last long. I'm neither an activist nor an artist, and I would have had no idea how to begin. Eventually, thinking about all the ingredients of an altar for Day of the Dead, it occurred to me that it might be possible to find an online form for the equivalent of an altar. How do we recognize an altar? It is most often laid out on a black cloth; it has bright orange marigolds; there are pictures of the deceased; we bring flowers, music and the deceased's favorite foods; and we bring our loved ones to life again by talking about them and reviving our memory.

In lieu of conversations about the dead, I thought of short texts by Mexican writers. And so the online altar 72migrantes.com has 72 pages, 72 texts and 72

Junior Basilio Espinoza, Victim No. 34
Author: Miguel Tapia Alcaraz
Translator: Renee Richardson

We all saw it.

Junior Alexander turned five years old as of Tuesday, but he did not receive his gift until Wednesday, after the funeral of Junior Basilio Espinoza, his father. His mother went to buy the cake herself, after saying goodbye to her husband. All of us saw her.

Eleven days before, Junior Basilio Espinoza was murdered in Tamaulipas, Mexico. All of us saw it. Everything. So many photos were in the press. Junior Basilio's mother recognized and was able to identify him from amidst all the other bodies. Her son was wearing the same shirt he has on in the souvenir picture taken the day he left Triunfo de La Cruz, Honduras. His mother showed the picture to the authorities, all of us saw her.

Junior Basilio was 24 years old. Junior had plans. He planned on being employed after being out of a job for six months due to getting laid off from a paint shop because of the economic crisis. He planned on receiving a better salary than at the paint shop. He planned to send his son to a private school when he turned six. All of us saw it: his plans ended terribly alongside those of 71 other people.

All of us saw it? Our unlimited visibility often becomes a sedative fog, our constant proximity a convenient distance. Aimé Césaire's words become more and more urgent — we should all see so:

"And above all, my body, as well as my soul, beware of assuming the sterile attitude of a spectator, because life is not a spectacle, because a sea of miseries is not a proscenium, because a screaming man is not a dancing bear."

Junior Alexander at his father's funeral. (Photo courtesy of 72migrantes.com.)

photographs on a black background, with trim the color of marigolds. Designers and programmers volunteered their services to set up the virtual altar. Seventy-two writers, journalists and human rights activists volunteered to write a story each about one of the victims. It turned out to be impossible to get a picture of all but a handful of those killed. Instead, 16 different photographers sent in photographs of Central American migrants making their journey across Mexico. For the serenade, four musical groups from Mexico, including the beloved rock band Maldita Vecindad and Lila Downs and her band, sent in music related to the border or to the altar, which can be downloaded on a separate page. Instead of food, there is a page where viewers who are travelling through the website can make donations to an overnight shelter in Oaxaca that feeds and provides safe haven to as many as 800 migrants a day. Lastly, there is a page where viewers who may not have money to donate can click on a small rose and add their flower offering to a picture of an altar.

So that was that, or so I thought. We presented the 72migrantes website on the Day of the Dead — November 2, 2010 — and I prepared to move on to other projects. But I had not counted on the need felt by so many to express their sorrow over the terrible things happening in our country. A hundred people had come together in a matter of weeks to put up the altar, but since then offshoots have appeared spontaneously in places we could not have imagined. Most simply, 72migrantes.com's texts and photographs have been reproduced in newspapers and magazines in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, the United States, Italy and Spain, that I am aware of. Next, all the texts and photographs were published as a book. At the launch, on November 2, 2011, at the Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico, the museum's director set up a multimedia altar that is an artwork in itself. Then six of the texts were dramatized and turned into a one-hour play. Perhaps the altar has found its largest audience on the radio. Between April and August of last year, the radio station of Mexico's

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national university broadcast all 72 texts on 72 consecutive days, culminating on the anniversary of the massacre. The station, Radio Unam, functions more or less as the country's National Public Radio; the producers' hope is that as many public broadcasting stations as possible will pick up the beautifully produced series. (Several already have, particularly in Central America and along the border.) We are constantly told of other creative efforts involving texts and images from 72migrantes.com. The two sample texts on the preceding pages give you a small idea of the wide range of narrative forms employed by the altar's contributors.

Since the altar was inaugurated, all but a handful of the bodies found at the ranch in San Fernando have been identified, but almost every other question about the massacre remains unanswered. If the murders were indeed punishment by the Zetas against those who refused to join their group, did the Zetas really intend to recruit the 16-year-old girl and the man in his fifties, who were among the dead? Who was responsible for the murder of nearly 200 other migrants, whose bodies were found in the same *municipio* of San Fernando six months later? After those corpses were discovered, bus drivers from some of the oldest and most reliable transportation companies in Mexico told reporters that for weeks they had complained to police officers at a nearby checkpoint that their vehicles were being stopped on the highway by Zetas, who would then climb aboard and drag out several men at a time. If this is true, how have the investigations proceeded? Of the more than 80 arrests that the government has made since the massacre, most of them over a year ago, how many detainees turned out to be members of the security forces? How many have been put on trial, and when did these trials take place? How many have been declared guilty and sentenced? Who has been accused of the murder of the government investigator who was assigned to the case less than 48 hours after the discovery of the corpses at the ranch in San Fernando and was found dead before his appointment had even been made public?

We may never get answers to these questions. The victims' families may never get the justice they demand. But we can at least try to keep the memory of these victims alive, in the name of so many others.

Alma Guillermoprieto is an award-winning journalist and author. She was a visiting scholar at CLAS during the spring 2012 semester and gave a public talk on February 9, 2012.

Women light candles at an altar for the 72 murdered migrants.

Photo by Lenin Nolly Araujo.

Photo by Asterio Tecson.

Hispanic Day Parade, Fifth Avenue, New York, 2010.

RESEARCH

Hispanic Panethnicity

by G. Cristina Mora

Although terms like the Hispanic/Latino community, the Latino vote and Hispanic culture are common today, panethnicity has not always been a major form of group representation. Indeed, if we were to examine America in the late 1960s, we would find that this community was, for the most part, geographically, culturally and politically disparate. During that period, all the major Mexican-American civic organizations were based in the Southwest, where Spanish-language media outlets imported programming from Mexico, and student activists developed a "Chicano" youth movement. Puerto Rican civic organizations, by contrast, were clustered in the Northeast. Television and radio stations from New York through Philadelphia aired Spanish-language soap operas, variety shows and news programming imported from San Juan. And activists there focused on two main issues: Puerto Rican sovereignty and urban poverty in "Boricua" neighborhoods. Lastly, Cubans and their organizations in the 1960s were primarily based in Florida. There, exiles built close-knit ethnic enclaves that remained intensely focused on the developments of Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution, and Cuban households tuned in to media stations that broadcasted news of Havana.

The disparateness of the period, however, was not simply happenstance. Early attempts to build organized political or cultural bridges between these communities were infrequent and unsuccessful because these groups resisted the notion of panethnicity. Thus, in 1971, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American civil rights activists held a "unity" summit in Washington that disintegrated amid "floor fights" and "shouting matches." In addition, media executives who tried to bridge cultural divides by, for example, providing Mexican programming to Cuban-American audiences — and vice versa — regularly received complaints and

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even threats. "Cubans didn't want to have anything to do with Mexican programming… and the Mexicans would raise hell if we substituted their [Mexican] soap operas with anything else," recalls one former media executive. Indeed, America in the late 1960s had virtually no Hispanic panethnic civic organizations, no panethnic commercial media efforts and, quite simply, no official category in which to conceive of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans as a single community.

By 1990, however, the situation had changed dramatically. By then, prominent social movement groups, such as the National Council of La Raza, had evolved from Mexican American to panethnic organizations and served as political advocates for the "Hispanic community." By 1990, Spanish-language media networks, like Univision Communications Inc., had evolved into national ventures that created "Hispanic" programming and catered to a national, panethnic audience. Equally important, by that time the U.S. Census Bureau had created an official "Hispanic" census category that consolidated Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Cubans into one statistical meta-group.

How did this shift occur? A simple hypothesis might be that organizations adapted to self-identification trends. Indeed, public commentators and journalists have posited that Hispanic panethnicity emerged in the United States as Latin American migration diversified and ethnic groups began living together and developing a common cultural outlook. Social movement organizations, commercial media networks and state agencies, the argument suggests, simply changed their practices to reflect a grassroots shift in identity that started on the ground, in communities.

Yet, immigration scholars have long argued that socioeconomic and citizenship boundaries slice through the purported Hispanic community in significant ways. For example, scholars have found that Cubans' higher socioeconomic status and their political refugee experience give them an outlook on American politics, civic involvement and assimilation that is distinct from the outlook of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. Additionally, cross-sectional data have shown that only a small fraction of individuals in these ethnic communities believe that Hispanics share a common political agenda or a sense of linked fate. More important, several studies

Puerto Rican Day Parade, Fifth Avenue, New York, 1971.

Photo from Associated Press.

have shown that individuals overwhelmingly prefer to identify nationally, for example as Puerto Rican or Peruvian, rather than panethnically. One study even mentions the popular, "Don't Call Me Hispanic, I'm Cuban!" bumper sticker that circulated in Miami during the early 1990s to assert that panethnicity has been an unwelcome form of identification for some. To be sure, there has been a significant increase in Hispanic panethnic self-identification since the 1980s, but this increase emerged well after the organized panethnic turn in the civic, state and market sectors.

My research uncovers the perfect storm that led to the institutionalization of Hispanic panethnicity in the United States. Broadly, I argue that the organized shift toward panethnicity comprised a three-step process. First, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican social movement organizations made claims on the federal government, demanding that the U.S. Census Bureau classify their subgroups as distinct from Anglo Americans. At the time, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican data was mainly classified as "white," which made it difficult for social movement organizations to prove to government organizations and grant-making agencies that these communities were disadvantaged. In a nutshell, activists needed accurately labeled census figures in order to prove that Mexican-American and Puerto Rican communities had high rates of poverty and unemployment and were thus different from Italian and Irish Americans. Media entrepreneurs in the Southwest supported activists' claims, arguing that Spanish-language audiences were culturally distinct from European immigrant groups.

Second, these activists, along with select Cuban American political leaders, negotiated a new "Hispanic" data category with census statisticians. At the time, the Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and Cuban-American communities were being courted by the Nixon administration for their votes, which placed pressure on the Bureau to listen to activists' demands. At the negotiation table, census officials and activists agreed that a larger, panethnic category would be ideal, in part because it could yield a meta-group that would capture mixed-Latinos, such as Cuban Puerto Ricans, as well as Latinos who did not identify with Latin American countries, such as the Hispanos in New Mexico and the Tejanos in Texas. Moreover, for census officials, the notion of Hispanic panethnicity would translate into a sizeable category that could be compared to black and white classifications, simultaneously appeasing critics and yielding more reliable demographic information. For

Photo courtesy of the United States Census Bureau.

A woman holds up a 1980 census form, the first to include a "Hispanic" category.

activists, the new category would provide data that could help secure grants for the "Hispanic" community.

Lastly, census officials, media executives and activists worked together to promote the notion of a Hispanic collective identity. Spanish-language media executives had long been interested in the census debates because more accurately defined racial/ethnic categories could help them prove to advertisers that their potential audience was large. They thus joined with activists and began promoting the new Hispanic census category in specially designed commercials and public information programming. One Univision ad even portrayed a woman holding up the 1980 census form and pointing to the new Hispanic question. Once the 1980 census had been conducted and the first Hispanic numbers had been reported, media executives quickly used this information to develop Hispanic marketing manuals and to generate the notion of a Hispanic consumer market.

In effect, the Hispanic category became institutionalized throughout the 1970s and 1980s as activists, census officials and media executives clashed, negotiated and collaborated to promote the notion of a Hispanic identity. Further links emerged throughout the 1980s as activists and media executives assisted one another. Indeed, activists promoting "Hispanic"

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4. COLOR OR RACE

Fill one circle.

If "Indian (American)," also give tribe.

If "Other," also give race.

- ○ White
- ○ Negro or Black
- ○ Indian (Amer.) *Print tribe* →
- ○ Japanese
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Filipino
- ○ Hawaiian
- ○ Korean
- ○ Other– *Print race*

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- ☐ **No,** not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.*

Images courtesy of the United States Census Bureau.

Census questions on race and ethnicity, 1970 and 2010.

political agendas were regular guests on Spanish-language talk shows, and during a moment of economic downturn, media executives helped to connect activist organizations with corporate donors and firms that were advertising on Spanish-language television. Moreover, by the late 1980s, activist organizations were regularly sending members to Census Bureau workshops to learn how to better analyze Hispanic demographic data.

By 1990, a variety of organizations from across these fields had come together to promote the notion of panethnicity. For social movement leaders and media executives alike, the notion of Hispanic panethnicity provided them with new opportunities to mobilize resources. For census statisticians and government bureaucrats, the idea of Hispanic panethnicity produced new, reliable forms of data. And together, these organizations came to promote the idea of a Hispanic minority, a Hispanic consumer market and, most importantly, a Hispanic culture.

But what allowed these organizations to keep collaborating? Their ability to share resources was one factor, but ambiguity was also important. Indeed, at no time did either civic, media or census actors ever fully define what made "Hispanics" Hispanic. While they did consider characteristics such as language, surname and a felt connection to Latin America, these factors were eventually replaced by vague arguments noting that Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and others were united because they shared common family values, worked hard and all had some connection to Spain. It was this ability to mutually invest in a vague concept that allowed organizations that would otherwise not work together to overcome differences and form ties.

With time, these connected organizations also began producing claims that historicized the Hispanic concept. For example, activists claimed that Hispanics had been represented in the American Civil War, even though the term "Hispanic" as such had not been invented at that time. By historicizing Hispanic panethnicity, organizational actors could invoke a sort of collective amnesia and make the notion of a Hispanic culture seem timeless.

In sum, it was not simply the state or civic groups or the media that created the idea of panethnicity. Rather, Hispanic panethnicity emerged out of the complex web of relationships and interdependencies among organizations in these sectors. In the process, organizations developed common vocabularies and ways of representing Hispanic panethnicity. Indeed, the fact that so many actors and interests played pivotal roles in the construction of panethnicity ultimately makes it difficult for the public to pin the construction of the term "Hispanic" on a single event or organization. This in turn creates the illusion that Hispanics have always existed in some way or another.

As with all social constructs, there have been the occasional public commentators who question the validity of panethnicity and argue that it is simply a product of state, political or media interests. And to be sure, the notion of panethnicity is not accepted by all. Yet, these critiques have been overshadowed by the Hispanic policies, data reports, media shows and cultural symbols that claim the validity of panethnicity. Moreover, as major events loom, such as elections or census counts, the networked chorus of state, market and civic organizations amp up their actions and loudly insist on the real existence of the Hispanic vote, the Hispanic market and the Hispanic community.

As new generations of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans and others are born, they too come to believe that Hispanic panethnicity represents a national cultural bond. Not knowing of a time when the census, the media and the political landscape looked differently, these new Americans join Hispanic civic groups, tune into Hispanic media, read books on Hispanic history and fill out surveys that provide Hispanic categories. Although the definition of Hispanic culture remains ambiguous to them, they nonetheless identify themselves as part of a panethnic community that is deep-rooted and that has existed across history.

G. Cristina Mora is an assistant professor in the Sociology Department at UC Berkeley. She is currently writing a book on the development of Hispanic panethnicity in the United States. She spoke for CLAS on September 19, 2011.

Hispanics became a sought-after demographic in the 2008 presidential campaign.

Photo courtesy of Barack Obama.

Billboard featuring a magazine cover announcing the upcoming face-off between Ollanta Humala and Keiko Fujimori.
(Photo by Catherine Binet, The Advocacy Peace Project Fellow, 2011.)

PERU

The Center Could Not Hold

by Tomás Bril-Mascarenhas

Why would a country vote for political change after a decade of dramatic economic growth? Since 2002, Peru has been one of Latin America's most impressive economic "miracles," its GDP growing by around 9 percent in three of the last four years. When Peruvians went to the polls to choose their new president in April 2011, most analysts expected a status quo electoral result ratifying the economic policies of the Alejandro Toledo and Alan García administrations. Surprisingly, however, none of the three candidates backed by Lima's economic and political establishment made it to the second round. Instead, Ollanta Humala, a former military officer who has long been associated with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and was widely perceived as the most economically heterodox of the competing candidates, faced off against Keiko Fujimori, daughter of former strongman Alberto Fujimori and the candidate of the far right. In June 2011, Humala was elected president with 51 percent of the national vote.

Peru's unexpected electoral results have much to do with the remarkable weakness of its state and its political parties, argued Steven Levitsky, a Berkeley-trained professor of Government at Harvard University who has produced path-breaking research on party politics and political institutions. During his CLAS-sponsored talk, Levitsky traced the links between Humala's rise to power and the peculiar nature of Peruvian democracy.

Two decades ago, partly as a result of Alberto Fujimori's 1992 self-coup, the Peruvian party system collapsed. Within a short period of time, traditional parties became electorally irrelevant, opening a space for the emergence of numerous outsiders with little or no political experience. Party identities evaporated, and the political process came to be dominated by personalities with no significant institutional or organizational backing. The result, according to Levitsky, has been elections characterized by high levels of fragmentation and volatility. Under these circumstances, a wide range of outcomes is possible.

The 2011 presidential elections were no exception. None of the five major candidates represented an established party. In a country with stronger parties, the three candidates who supported the continuity of the economic model — Pedro Kuczynski, Alejandro Toledo and Luis Castañeda — would probably have belonged to the same party or would have been more likely to reach an agreement guaranteeing the access of one of them to the second round. The result of this lack of coordination was that the pro-status quo vote split three ways, paving the way for a second-round vote between Ollanta Humala and Keiko Fujimori.

The Lima elite thus faced their worst nightmare, an unimaginable outcome when the race started: having to choose "between AIDS and cancer," as Nobel Prize-winning author Mario Vargas Llosa bluntly put it. Eventually, according to Levitsky, Humala was more successful than Fujimori in moderating his discourse to reach the center of the political spectrum, forming a winning coalition that combined a radical protest vote (concentrated in the interior of the country) with a middle-class, anti-Fujimori vote (concentrated in Lima and the coast). Despite the steady economic growth that marked Peru's neoliberal years, its citizens chose to turn to the candidate that was furthest away from economic orthodoxy.

But the puzzling rise of Humala to the presidency is not just an outcome of the volatile, fragmented and hyper-personalized pattern of political competition that typically emerges after the collapse of party systems. Rather, Levitsky underscored that Peru's "surprising left turn" is also a product of the remarkable weakness and ineffectiveness of the country's state and bureaucracy — the Peruvian *estado* is anemic and incapable even by Latin American standards.

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Photo courtesy of Presidencia Perú.

President Humala mingles with the crowd after announcing the launch of Pensión 65, a program benefiting the elderly poor.

Many analysts have seen the meteoric rise of Humala, a leader whose faith in democracy has been questioned, as a new piece of evidence attesting to Peruvians' preference for caudillos or pure authoritarianism. Levitsky argued convincingly that this cultural explanation is not backed by the facts. Latinobarometer 2010 data show that 61 percent of respondents in Peru agree that democracy is preferable to any other form of government, a figure that equals the mean for the whole region and surpasses that of Mexico and Brazil. When asked about the desirability of having a president who controls the media or bypasses laws, parliament and institutions during difficult times in order to resolve problems, Peruvians clearly lean toward the most pro-democratic pole — responses in Brazil, Chile and in the region as a whole are on average less emphatic about the need to check the power of the executive.

What really distinguishes Peru from its Latin American neighbors is not an authoritarian political culture but, rather, extraordinarily high levels of discontent with democratic institutions. The Latinobarometer survey shows that only 28 percent of Peruvians are satisfied with democracy, well below the regional mean (44 percent) and the percentages of satisfaction in Argentina (49), Brazil (49) and Chile (56). Moreover, Peruvians have by far the lowest levels of trust in congress, the judiciary and political parties.

So, where does this discontent come from? Why do Peru's scores of satisfaction with democracy rank at the very bottom in Latin America, despite the fact that the country's economic performance ranks at the very top? For Levitsky, "this discontent is rooted in state weakness," that is, in the inability of state institutions to carry out basic tasks, such as collecting taxes, building roads, implementing social programs, providing public security and enforcing the rule of law. "When a state is weak, it is almost impossible for a government to govern well, no matter how honest or how well intentioned it may be," he added.

According to Levitsky, the Peruvian state remains one of the weakest in Latin America, especially in the highlands, where the presence of state authority remains minimal. "The rich can live with an ineffective state: they have got private schools, private hospitals, private security, and they have friends to help them with problems in the state bureaucracy." The poor have none of these options available. "This is crucial," said Levitsky. "State weakness generates widespread perception of government corruption, unfairness, ineffectiveness and neglect. Where these perceptions persist over time, voters are very likely to conclude that all political parties are the same, that all politicians are corrupt, that no one in the political elite represents them."

It was precisely in the regions where the Peruvian state is most absent that Humala found his core constituency. His was an electoral victory that began in the periphery, where citizens feel most abandoned, and ended up penetrating the center. The message flowing down from Peru's highlands in 2011 was clear: rising income is not enough to improve the quality of people's lives if the state apparatus is so skeletal that it cannot deliver basic public goods.

During his first 100 days in government, Humala has started to change a Peruvian tradition: instead of breaking campaign promises just after taking office as did Fujimori, Toledo and García, Humala "is doing exactly what he said he was going to do," said Levitsky. The new government increased the minimum wage and expanded Juntos, the conditional cash transfer program. It also launched a series of new programs, including Pensión 65, which benefits the elderly living in poverty, as well as childcare programs for working parents, assistance programs for low-income elementary-school students and scholarships for those attending university.

What should we expect during the coming Humala years? It is probably too soon to tell, especially in a country as volatile as Peru. What is at stake, however, beyond the day-to-day politics of Humala's presidency, is the future of democracy in Peru. It remains to be seen whether Humala and his successors will find a way to overcome the country's long-lasting weaknesses in party institutions and state capacity in order to create a democracy that meets the expectations of its citizens.

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Tomás Bril-Mascarenhas is a Ph.D. student in the Charles & Louise Travers Department of Political Science at UC Berkeley.

Levitsky became famous during the second round of the election for saying, "We may have doubts about Humala, but we have proof about Keiko." A student at an anti-Keiko Fujimori rally agrees.

Photo courtesy of Steven Levitsky.

Photo courtesy of Gobierno Federal.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Mexican President Felipe Calderón and U.S. President Barack Obama at the 2009 North American Leaders Summit.

U.S.–MEXICO FUTURES FORUM

Thinking Continentally

by Robert A. Pastor

So much of North America's history has focused on the differences between Mexico, the United States and Canada that few people on the continent realize how much they have in common. One leader who does is Vicente Fox Quesada, the first genuinely, freely elected president of modern Mexico. His grandfather was a gringo and an evangelical Christian who never learned Spanish but came to love Mexico and marry a devoutly Catholic Mexican woman. "My grandfather," Fox told me, "galloped down from Ohio and found his American dream in Guanajuato."

The stories of anti-Americanism in Mexico and Canada and of U.S. arrogance toward or ignorance of its neighbors are widespread and well-known. Nonetheless, I decided to look closely at public opinion surveys on North American relations in all three countries during the past 30 years. To my surprise, I found that Mexicans, Canadians and Americans like and trust each other and that their values are converging. Of course, there are moments when public opinion turns negative toward each neighbor — usually due to economic hardship, insults or unilateral actions, but on the whole, Fox was right. All three peoples share common dreams and actually want their governments to collaborate much more than our leaders do.

Fox tried to sell his inclusive vision of North America to U.S. President George W. Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, but neither grasped it. However, two decades earlier, Ronald Reagan captured the essence of the North American vision when he said that "it is time we stopped thinking of our nearest neighbors as foreigners."

The Rise and Decline of North America

In the first seven years after the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) took effect in 1994, trade among the three countries of North America tripled, foreign direct investment quintupled, and North America's share of the world product soared from 30 to 36 percent. During this time, 22 million new jobs were created in the United States.

Will Rogers once said that even if you are on the right road, if you sit down, you're going to get run over. And that's what happened to North America. We sat down in 2001, and China ran over us. Although Canada and Mexico remain the most important markets for U.S. goods, China has replaced them as the largest source of imports.

Since 2001, the growth in trade among the three neighbors declined by two-thirds; in foreign direct investment, by half; and the share of the world product sank to 29 percent. Intra-regional trade as a percent of the countries' world trade rose from 40 percent in 1992 to 46 percent in 2001 and then fell back to 40 percent in 2009.

Besides China, what explains the decline? Additional reasons are new security barriers because of 9/11, the lack of investment in infrastructure, noncompliance with some Nafta provisions (e.g, trucking) and no continental strategy or institutions.

During the early period of integration, we began making products together — with parts of our cars crossing the borders many times before being fully assembled. The added cost of 9/11 restrictions transformed the North American advantage into a disadvantage, as China only had to surmount one border.

As integration advanced, many domestic issues — from drug-related violence to immigration, transportation, the environment and regulation — became transnational, meaning that we could no longer solve them without a new level of collaboration. Instead of rising to the new challenge, our leaders reverted to a traditional dual-bilateralism — dealing with one issue, one crisis, one country at a time. Progress was measured by the number of meetings rather than results. This strategy allowed Asia to acquire a new dynamic while the three countries of North America have slipped, blaming Nafta or each other for the problems that they share.

Recovering the Promise of North America

This is the moment to reinvigorate North America and forge a unique community of three sovereign states. In order to further develop the region's economy and compete more effectively with Asia, North America should be more than a free-trade area. It should be a model of collaboration

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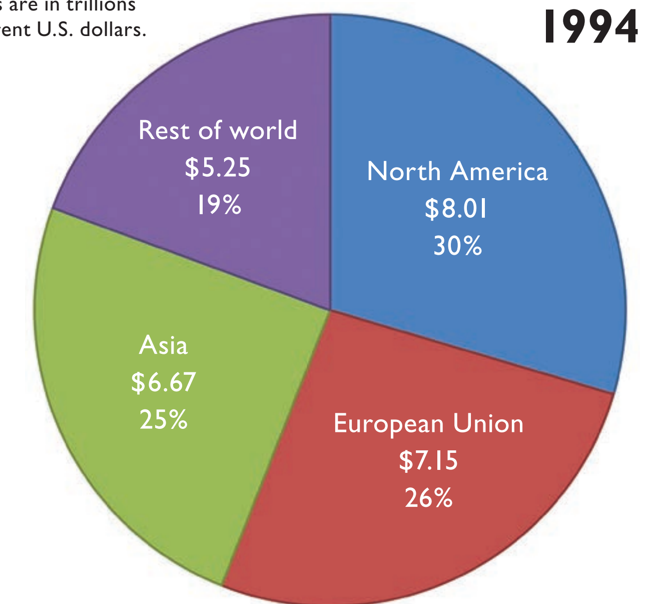
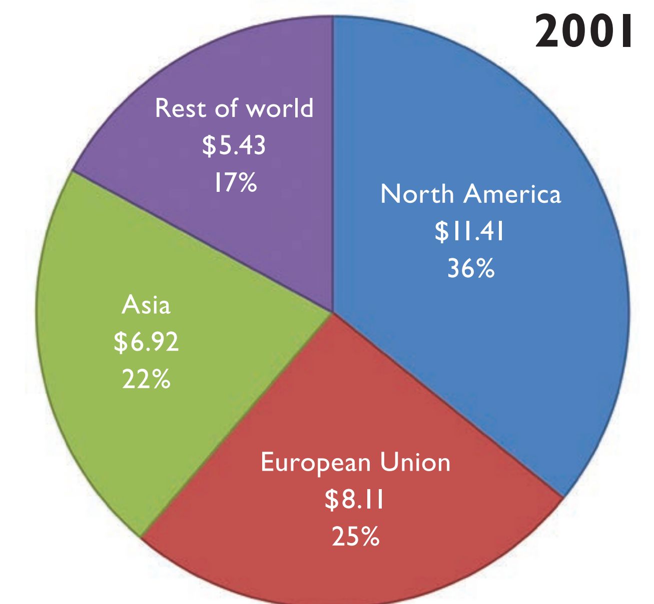
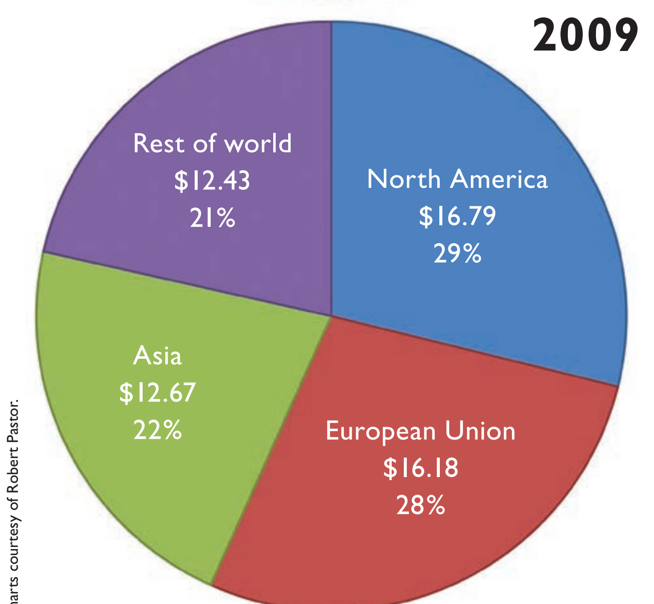
Regional Shares of the World's Product, 1994-2009

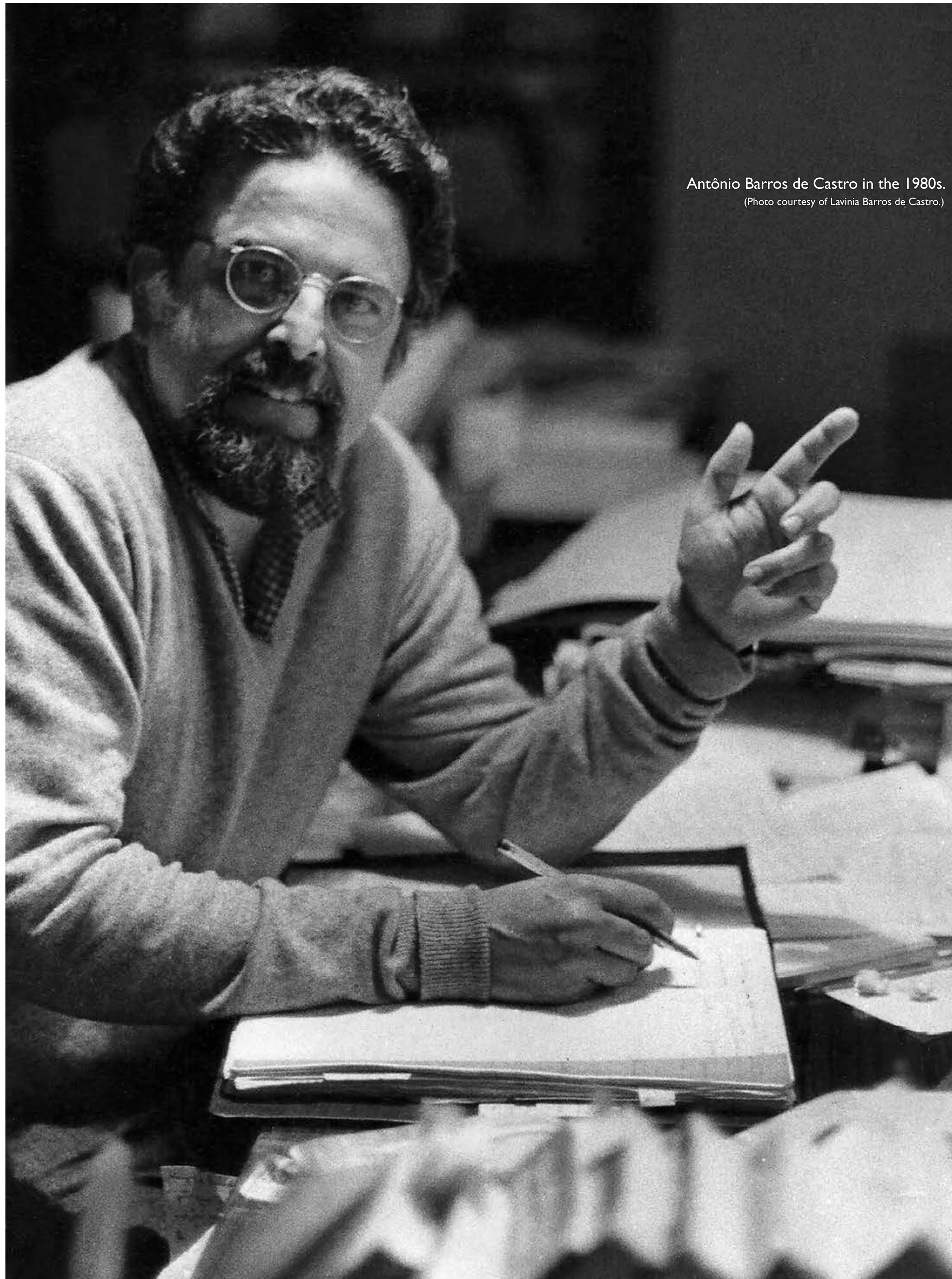
Figures are in trillions of current U.S. dollars.







Charts courtesy of Robert Pastor.



Antônio Barros de Castro in the 1980s.
(Photo courtesy of Lavinia Barros de Castro.)

ANTÔNIO BARROS DE CASTRO

Remembering an Economic Visionary

by Peter Evans

Antônio Barros de Castro was a master economist whose work has powerful implications, not just for our understanding of Brazilian development, but also for our understanding of the current global political economy and the policy responses appropriate to this new context. Castro's arguments were consistently models of analytical rigor. He was a learned scholar, with a vast reservoir of historical evidence always at his fingertips, but never an ivory tower intellectual. Castro's broad vision and extraordinary analytical capacities enabled him to hone concrete proposals that were credible, compelling and feasible. Such a combination is hard to find in any discipline and, sadly, particularly difficult to find in the ranks of the contemporary economics profession.

Comparisons with Albert Hirschman immediately come to mind. Hirschman is the archetype of an economist able to combine a grasp of the empirical reality of Latin America with supple theoretical skills to produce path-breaking, policy-relevant visions of the process of development. Castro's intellectual style was quite different from Hirschman's, but they shared some key traits. Both were deeply committed to figuring out what was happening "on the ground" and learning from it; both were also theoretically ambitious, determined to force an unruly concrete reality to yield useful general lessons. Both loved scholarship, while assuming that research and analysis could and should inform politics and policy choices. Both shared what Hirschman called "a passion for the possible." At a time when the world is desperate for intellectual leadership that can cogently and credibly construct bold but realistic proposals for dealing with our globalized economy, Barros de Castro's untimely death is hard to bear.

Castro was a citizen of the world, fiercely devoted to contributing to the future of Brazil. He lived, studied, worked and taught for substantial periods in France, Chile, the United Kingdom and the United States. While he always located his thinking within a global perspective, the economic growth of Brazil was his passion. Looking back over his career, it is clear that Castro was fortunate to have been Brazilian. Even though he suffered from exclusion during the military regime (along with most progressive intellectuals), Brazil provided him with a setting in which his practical and theoretical bents could flourish in tandem, feeding each other, especially once democratization took hold in the 1980s.

The return of developmentalism to a prominent place in Brazilian politics at the turn of the millennium presented Castro with new opportunities for praxis. The Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social (National Bank for Social and Economic Development, BNDES) offered a particularly felicitous institutional base. Castro served as president of the BNDES in 1992-93 and was director of planning and a key advisor to the Bank during most of the Lula government. His role at the BNDES put Castro exactly at the intersection that he considered most essential to Brazil's development: the engagement of public policy with the logic of corporate investment decisions.

From the very beginning of his career, Castro was convinced that investors' willingness to put their capital into changes that would transform the organization of production was one of the central keys to development. He first explored this issue in his doctoral research, conducted during the military regime, by investigating the unlikely terrain of slavery and the organization of production in sugar mills and plantations in colonial Brazil. In his time with the BNDES, his preoccupation with transformative investment decisions focused on a very different set of objects — modern Brazilian industrial corporations facing global competition. The question, however, remained the same: Under what circumstances were these enterprises likely to make investments that would really transform production, organizationally and technologically?

For Castro, finding an answer to this question started with understanding the logic of the market. He knew too much and had studied the process of industrialization in Brazil and around the world too closely to overestimate the extent to which national policy could override the exigencies imposed on firms by global capitalism. But he also saw plenty of room for agency in restructuring the connection between the logic of the market and investment decisions and, consequently, a potentially crucial role for intelligent public policy. His carefully calibrated assessment of when and how the state might play a developmental role was one of the hallmarks of Castro's work.

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Castro's appreciation of the state's role in promoting industrial transformation wasn't simply a product of his experiences at the BNDES. Rather, his interest in working with the BNDES arose from his earlier analysis of the role of the state in the process of Brazilian industrialization. One of Castro's most important contributions to development debates in Brazil was his 1985 book *A Economia Brasileira em Marcha Forçada,* which credited the industrial policy of the Geisel administration (1974-79) with laying the essential foundation for Brazil's industrial diversification in the 1980s. As Albert Hirschman (1987:15) pointed out, Castro's thesis was doubly iconoclastic. On the one hand, he was against the global orthodoxy that "getting the prices right" was the key to development. On the other hand, he was going against his progressive friends, who were loath to give any credit to policies initiated under the military. (This is, of course, typical of Castro's determined concentration on grounding his analytical positions in the historical record, regardless of conventional wisdom.) It is no wonder that the first posthumous collection of his essays is called *The Nonconformist* (Castro and Barros de Castro, 2011).

Working with the BNDES may not have been the source of Castro's theoretical vision of the role of industrial policy, but it was a perfect place to simultaneously test and try to implement his ideas. In Castro's view, any good company always has a set of plans that are "in the desk drawer." The ideas "in the drawer" are ones that the company considers potentially profitable, and probably feasible, but still a bit too risky to be an appropriate use of scarce capital. They are the ones most likely to move the company in transformative directions, but they are unlikely to be implemented. In this vision, an entrepreneurial public-sector institution like the BNDES can change the equation and, by shifting the calculus of individual companies, have an effect on the overall trajectory of industrial development. It is no wonder that Castro enjoyed his work with the BNDES.

In recent years, Castro focused more and more on what he called the "Sinocentric global economy." As always, his approach was to combine analysis with action. He wrote a series of articles and organized conferences aimed at developing a clear analytical vision of the implications of China's growing importance in the global economy. At the same time, he provided intellectual leadership to

An abandoned factory, Yorkshire, England.

Photo by Tom Blackwell.

Image courtesy of the Michael MacSems Collection.

A Chevrolet ad from the heyday of American manufacturing.

organizations like the Instituto de Estudos Brasil–China (Institute of Brazil–China Studies, IBRACH) and the Conselho Empresarial Brasil-China (Brazil–China Business Council, CEBC), which were engaged in finding concrete strategies for taking advantage of the opportunities that China's growth created for Brazil.

Barros de Castro's analysis of the Sinocentric global economy is worth delving into in some detail, both because it provides a recent example of his impressive analytical talents and because it illustrates the importance of his work for economists and policymakers, not only in other developing countries but in the Global North as well. Castro's 2012 working paper for UC Berkeley's Center for Latin American Studies "In the Chinese Mirror" provides an excellent window onto his recent thinking, and I will draw heavily on it here.

Consistent with his prior work, Castro began with a long-term, historical perspective and moved from there to concrete, contemporary implications. Castro started from the incontrovertible observation that the characteristics of the nation that is politically and economically hegemonic in a given era shape the set of opportunities available to other, less economically and politically powerful countries. Thus, in a world in which the expansion of a nascent capitalism was led by the Netherlands, the set of opportunities available to other countries was different than the opportunities that would become available to these countries once global leadership had passed to England.

More interesting, from Castro's point of view, was the change in the opportunity set created by the transition from British to American hegemony. Britain was, in its heyday, a powerful exporter of manufactured goods, shrinking the opportunities available to would-be competitors in this realm. At the same time, the growth of the British economy generated market opportunities for other countries. Britain was a small country that had already largely exhausted its own natural resources by the time it became a manufacturing power. So, as the 19th century progressed, British hegemony created the opportunity for outward-oriented growth for raw materials exporters around the world, with Latin America being a principle beneficiary. Castro illustrated this point with the case of Argentina, whose exports of beef and wheat allowed its

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citizens to achieve one of the highest per capita incomes in the world by the time British hegemony collapsed.

The United States was different. While it dominated mid-20th-century manufacturing in key sectors like the auto industry, the country's larger internal market made it less dependent on manufactured exports to drive its growth. At the same time, it was a continental nation, richly endowed with agricultural land and a wide range of natural resources. While these endowments did not stop American companies from exploiting natural resources in other locales, U.S. hegemony was not the bonanza for natural resource exporters that Britain's had been. As Castro noted, Argentina was one of the losers in this shift, along with Australia and New Zealand. However, the point of this analysis is not that hegemony is destiny for other countries. Instead, for Castro, the effects of hegemonic shifts are contingent on strategic response: "[T]he result of these shifts is not predetermined, and the choices made by policymakers and business owners (including non-reaction and paralysis) may be decisive." (Barros de Castro 2012, 2) It was the strategic possibilities opened up by China's growth that fascinated Castro.

China, as a potential hegemon, is different from either Britain or the United States. First of all, the growth of its manufacturing capacity has a different character than the manufacturing role of either Britain or the United States. Rather than initially dominating in leading sectors — e.g., textiles for Britain, autos for the U.S. — China's rise was fueled not so much on the basis of technological superiority but on the basis of more efficient production or assembly of labor-intensive goods, such as apparel, toys and, later, consumer electronics. Of course, the Chinese manufacturing sector is changing rapidly. Thus, Castro points out that "businesses and economies that try to reposition themselves following China's bursting onto the scene must understand from the beginning that opportunities and threats will frequently be redefined, and that they will therefore have to shoot at moving targets." (Barros de Castro 2012, 4) Nonetheless, unlike Britain or the United States, China is not at the leading edge of most industrial technologies, and this opens up a different set of opportunities for other countries that have relatively deep experience in manufacturing.

In another key respect, the opportunities created by the Sinocentric world economy resemble those that emerged under British hegemony. Like Britain, and in contrast to the United States, China's resource endowments were quickly outpaced by the needs of its economy almost as soon as sustained, rapid growth took hold. In the first decade of the 21st century, China's voracious appetite for agricultural and mineral inputs has more than replicated the British-

Photo by Dionicia Ramos.

Antônio Barros de Castro at Berkeley, 2003.

driven, late-19th-century commodity boom, reversing the tendency of commodity prices to fall relative to the prices of manufactured goods that had prevailed during the period of U.S. hegemony. Here again, China's rise has created a new set of economic opportunities. These opportunities have sparked a new round of growth in Africa, as well as benefitting Brazil and other Latin American countries.

Finally, of course, China differs fundamentally from both Britain and the United States in terms of the potential global impact of its domestic market. Britain was densely populated but tiny; the United States was large but sparsely populated. In both cases, their populations were a fraction of China's current one-sixth share of the world's population. Thus, China's climbing per capita consumption represents a much greater opportunity for other countries.

Analyzing the complex vector of global economic opportunity that China's rise has created in combination with the threat posed by China to large swaths of the manufacturing industry around the world was precisely the project that Castro was focused on at the time of his death. Trying to figure out what Brazil's optimal strategy might be was, of course, his principle preoccupation, but his analytical insights are eminently "borrowable" by those interested in other national contexts.

Photo by Zhang chi sd – Imaginechina/Associated Press.

Crowds at a job fair in Weifang, China, February 2012.

Castro's first point is a general one. When the threats and opportunities presented by the global economy are in a period of transition, the "strategies of transformation" require concerted, coordinated action. Ad hoc moves on the part of individual enterprises are unlikely to suffice. As he put it, "[A] strategy of transformation makes a difference to the extent that it glimpses opportunities that can only be reached through cooperative and concentrated efforts in the quest for a lucid vision of the future." (Barros de Castro 2012, 13). Thus, "the interplay of public and private efforts becomes highly important." (Barros de Castro 2012, 14).

With regard to sectoral specifics, Castro's position is nuanced. After noting the superficial attractiveness of the thesis that Brazil should complement China's putative role as "the world's factory" by trying to play the role of "the world's farm," Castro concludes that this "makes no sense" as a defining vision (Barros de Castro 2012, 16). Instead, he argues, competition from China, which initially appeared to be devastating to Brazilian industry, has in fact stimulated the growth of Brazil's domestic market, which has in turn created new opportunities for capital investment (Barros de Castro 2012, 16). While he agreed that taking advantage of Brazil's industrial capacity requires specialization, he abjured the construction of a specific formula for specialization, suggesting that, rather than focusing on specific products, it makes sense to look for "broad fields of specialization," complexes of interconnected and technologically interrelated production, with the chain of production relating to bioenergy being a possible example of such a "strategic front."

Castro did not pretend to have a blueprint for dealing with the transformation of the world economy. Nonetheless, his vision presents a refreshing contrast to that of his confreres based in the Global North. Policymakers and opinion leaders in the United States are happy to use "unfair" competition from China as yet another excuse for America's generation-long inability to improve the living standards of average citizens. Even progressive economists of extraordinary intellectual accomplishment and talent like Paul Krugman are more inclined to rail against China's efforts to keep its currency overvalued than to think about how the United States might best adapt its economic strategy to a Sinocentric global economy. A positive, creative response to current

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global realities of the sort that Castro offered is almost completely lacking.

Castro may have been fiercely focused on the strategic possibilities that the contemporary global political economy opened for Brazil, but the lines of analysis that he pioneered have equal relevance for any country interested in confronting global challenges to national well-being. As Brazilians mourn the fact that they will no longer be able to draw on Barros de Castro's brilliant contributions to development theory and practice, policymakers and economists in North America and Europe should mourn their lack of comparable intellectual figures. Even more important, as they struggle to right their floundering political economies, they would do well to undertake a careful reading of Barros de Castro's work. The United States may not have its own Castro, but that shouldn't prevent us from making use of the insights he offered.

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The Brazil Pavilion at Shanghai's World Expo, 2010.

Photo by JJ Hoong Ng.

Photo by Mario Tellez Cardemil.

Leaders of the Chilean student movement: Camila Vallejo, Giorgio Jackson and Camilo Ballesteros, September 2011.

CHILE

Student Leaders Reinvent the Protest

by Ernesto Muñoz-Lamartine

Describing Chilean public education as one of the most segregated systems in the world, in a country were meritocracy does not exist, Giorgio Jackson, one of the leaders of the 2011 Chilean student movement, delivered a powerful and trenchant criticism of democratic governance in Chile, while laying out his vision for a new social compact in the South American country.

Speaking at an event organized by CLAS, Jackson, the president of the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Católica de Chile (Catholic University's Students Association, FEUC), criticized the current center-right government's response to the most powerful and widespread national protests in a generation. Dubbed the "Chilean Winter" by the international press, the months-long, student-led movement took the country by storm. Though previous demonstrations were seen in the first half of President Piñera's four-year term, most notably against the approval of a hydroelectric project in Patagonia (HydroAysen), the sheer number of those involved, the ingenuity displayed by the protestors and the support for their demands by a majority of Chileans have represented a clear test not only to the current administration, but also to the political and economic establishment in one of the more stable democracies in the region.

This is the first time in the last 20 years that a powerful social movement has challenged the consensus-based politics at the core of Chile's successful democratic transition. Neoliberal reforms enacted during Pinochet's authoritarian regime (1973-90) have remained largely unchanged by the center-left Concertación coalition (1990-2010), and therefore, the fundamentals of the Chilean "Washington Consensus" model were maintained and, in some cases, further entrenched. The current education system, with its emphasis on a subsidiary role

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for the state, was built on the same pro-privatization theoretical foundation as the Chilean pension, health and public utilities systems. Therefore, when students criticize the educational model, they also stand against the broader legacy of Concertación policies, which is why the opposition has found it so difficult to articulate a coherent response to their demands.

In his talk, Jackson painted a bleak picture of education policy in Chile. He described it as a system in which inequities are found from the start, with segregation beginning early in primary school. "The whole system is financed with vouchers, no fixed costs and no expansion plans for public schools." Vouchers reach 93 percent of the population served, with half of them accessed through subsidized private operators that retain the right to select students. The vouchers are linked to per-pupil enrollment, and fixed costs are not covered. Since families can pay over the voucher value for what they believe are better schools, the result is what an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report called one of the lowest degrees of socioeconomic integration in the world.

The current education system, Jackson argued, is effectively undercutting public education by allowing private operators to "compete" under unfair rules. Though the system was designed to use the market to drive quality, increase choice and foster innovation, the educational outcomes have been the source of much debate by researchers.

Other indicators confirm the trend described by Jackson: Chilean higher education is one of the most expensive in the world, consuming up to 40 percent of the budget of a middle-income family. At the same time, public expenditure per student is the lowest among OECD countries at $3,500 a year compared to the OECD average of $8,831. Public expenditure on higher education as a percentage of GDP is also well below the OECD average of 4.6 percent. Public spending on tertiary education as a proportion of GDP is one of the lowest in the world at 0.5 percent. Finally, Chilean college students graduate with one of the highest rates of debt relative to future income in the world (174 percent).

Although higher education was liberalized during the 1980s, the number of universities exploded during the Concertación's time in office: from eight in 1980 to more than 60 in 2011. While regulations formally prevent colleges from being "for profit," tuition has increased by 60 percent in the last 12 years, making Chilean universities among the most expensive in the world. Despite the benefits of increased coverage (seven out of 10 students are the first in their families to go to college), huge differences in quality remain among universities, and they tend to replicate the patterns of segregation observed in primary and secondary education. The state has not retained a significant role in regulating and enforcing minimum standards.

Students protest by dragging their desks into the school quad during the 2006 "Penguin Revolution."

Photo by antitezo.

Photo by Fabiola Torres.

Chilean police respond to a student demonstration with tear gas, August 2011.

For all the striking figures, however, this situation was nothing new in Chile. So one of the important puzzles about the student-led mobilization is: Why now? As Jackson explained, various elements can be seen as contributing to the scope and success of the movement. Its leaders — both Jackson and Camila Vallejo, the president of the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile (University of Chile Student Federation, FECH) — were rapidly elevated to the status of public figures, surpassing opposition leaders both in media appeal and credibility. A well-organized confederation of student associations was able to mobilize large numbers of college and high-school students through street protests and the occupation of public buildings. Social media were also used, as in the "Arab Spring" movement, to coordinate activities, protests and innovative "flash mobs."

As a sociological factor, Jackson pointed to the fact that his is the first generation "without fear." They were young enough to not have had any personal experience with Pinochet's authoritarian regime, having been born around the time of the democratic transition. Also, his generation participated in one of the handful of public mobilizations during the Concertación's rule: the 2006 "Penguin Revolution" — so-called because of the protestors' black-and-white school uniforms — that arose during President Bachelet's first year in office. The high-school students marching in 2006 were protesting many of the same policies that students are confronting today. While they did make some gains under President Bachelet, overall they were disappointed with the outcome. The latest student movement gives them a chance to try again with different tactics. Under a right-wing government, the symbolic weight of the coalition that defeated Pinochet was not there to deactivate the protest movement through negotiation. The political indecisiveness and several public blunders of the Piñera administration may have also played a role in the length

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and strength of the Chilean Winter. To date, two education ministers have fallen as a direct consequence of the movement.

All of these factors taken together help explain why the student movement took root in 2011. However, the key insight presented by Jackson, one that is confirmed by several opinion polls, is that the student movement is an expression of widespread dissatisfaction among Chileans with the political and socioeconomic status quo. Despite an economic situation that is stable by most standards (7.3 percent unemployment, 5.2 percent GDP growth, 3.3 percent inflation increase in 2011), a 2011 Latinobarómetro report shows that satisfaction levels with the democratic system fell by 24 points from the previous year to 32 percent. Additionally, only 1 percent of the population thinks that the country's best public policy is in education, compared to an average of 33 percent in Latin America.

Chileans certainly seem to be dissatisfied with their political leaders. In December 2011, the Centro de Estudios Públicos reported that President Piñera's approval ratings had sunk to a new low of 23 percent. His handling of education policy was rejected by 67 percent of Chileans, and a majority supported the student protests (62 percent), while rejecting "for-profit" universities (75 percent). Piñera was not alone in facing the public's wrath. The Concertación's approval ratings also fell to an all-time low (16 percent), while the governing coalition saw its support reduced by half, to 20 percent. Widespread disaffection with the available options is also evident in the declining number of Chileans who identify themselves with a political coalition: fully 60 percent were unaffiliated in 2011. Furthermore, 30 percent of citizens believe democracy in Chile functions badly or very badly, while only 16 percent believe it works well or somewhat well.

Photo by Aliosha Marquez/Associated Press.

A march in support of educational reform, Santiago, August 2011.

The movement, therefore, appears to have crystallized a growing disaffection among Chileans with the political and economic system. This is exactly what Jackson outlined when he discussed the student movement's objectives: "We demand no more cosmetic changes in the Chilean education system but structural reform that leaves behind the 'consensus politics' that characterized Chilean politics in the last 20 years." According to Jackson, the center-left's "obsession" with protecting the status quo is at the root of the current systemic failure. Students are asking for a structural change that includes ending the decentralization of education to local governments ("de-municipalization") and a radical transformation of the financing structure to reflect a true commitment to public education. Another important demand is the end of "veiled for-profit education" with the implementation of free public education at all levels.

The politics of reform remain uncertain. Jackson described the government's unwillingness to take part in meaningful negotiations as part of a strategy aimed at waiting for the movement to lose its force. He rejected the government's tactics, such as labeling the students' demands as "radical." "The only thing truly radical" Jackson argued "is the government's defense of this segregated system." To the students, he emphasized, "the system is morally bankrupt."

Many of the students' demands have been met with skepticism, not only by government officials but also by opposition leaders and policy analysts, who argue that they are unfeasible, because the country is not prepared to increase public spending to the levels required, and also inequitable, because free education would mean transfers to the wealthiest in society. Jackson maintained that the way to make universal free education both sustainable and equitable is to obtain funding through a tax reform on corporations and the rich. This proposal has been supported by mainstream economists in Chile, and it is seen as the next "big battle" for the movement.

Describing the student movement as part of a larger effort to increase the quality of democracy in Chile, Jackson said that the current administration's refusal to bend to overwhelming public pressure is similar to governing with a "blank check" for four years. This way of understanding governance could help explain the alienation and widespread disaffection among Chileans, especially the young, with the political system. Seeing political stability as a problem, Jackson spoke about the need for increased democratic representation. He argued that direct democracy mechanisms, automatic registration and especially a reform to the binomial electoral system that has benefitted both political coalitions,

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while preventing smaller parties and independents from gaining representation in Congress, are key to improving the quality of governance and rebuilding Chileans' confidence in their democratic institutions.

For all the strength showed in the streets, at the close of 2011, the record of the movement was mixed. Protestors had succeeded in moving education reform to the top of the political agenda, and it is unlikely that the newly appointed minister (a technocrat with experience in education) will continue to reject all of the students' key concerns. On the other hand, the hyper-presidential Chilean political system allows the ruling coalition to control the terms of engagement and block any major change. During 2011 budget discussions, Concertación parties were unable to extract any concession from the Piñera administration, despite holding a majority in the Senate. Their opposition to the education budget, which contained no increase in funding for public education, was reduced to a symbolic stance, and the proposed bill passed without major changes.

Although protests will likely continue in 2012, without real connections to opposition parties or alternative avenues to influence policy making, students will find it hard to maintain the vigor of the 2011 protests. At a time when the specter of former President Bachelet's possible candidacy in the 2013 elections looms large in the Chilean political landscape, much of the future of this "winter of discontent" will depend on the students' ability to institutionalize their demands by constructing coalitions with other social actors and by participating in the political arena. In January 2012, Jackson himself took the first steps in this direction by founding a new political organization called "Revolución Democrática" (Democratic Revolution) with other social actors, workers and popular leaders.

Giorgio Jackson was president of the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Católica de Chile (2010-11) and one of the key leaders of the 2011 student protests. He spoke for CLAS on November 30, 2011.

Ernesto Muñoz-Lamartine is a Ph.D. student at the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley.

Giorgio Jackson speaks in a discussion moderated by Professor Beatriz Manz.

Photo by Megan Kang.

Photo by Jim Block.

Diego Luna on the Berkeley campus, December 2011.

U.S.–MEXICO FUTURES FORUM

Holding a Mirror to Mexico

by Harley Shaiken

"Miss Bala," a riveting film by Mexican director Gerardo Naranjo, opens in a parched, dusty area of Tijuana where the intense sun burns brightly, but prospects for residents are notably dim. Laura (Stephanie Sigman), a striking 23-year-old, shares a small house with her younger brother and father, who ekes out a living from a clothing stall. Trapped in an impoverished world, Laura views her beauty as a possible ticket out and enters the Miss Baja California pageant to seize her chance.

Instead, she becomes enmeshed in Tijuana's murderous cross currents, as drug cartels fight ruthlessly to carve up territory and each other. Laura winds up in the wrong club at the wrong time and witnesses a massacre between rival cartels that also cuts down U.S. drug agents. Before the bodies are cold, her world becomes frighteningly real and disturbingly surreal simultaneously. A simple act of decency — trying to find her friend who was also caught in the crossfire — sucks her into the bowels of the cartel, threatening her life and the lives of everyone around her. Nothing is as it seems. When Laura seeks help, a corrupt policeman delivers her instead to the drug boss. Later, a courageous act to save a high official's life causes her to be subjected to vicious beatings and new death threats under his orders.

The violence bleeds into official corruption and impunity at all levels, corroding everyday life. The beauty contest, for example, is decided not by the judges or the desires of the audience but by a nod from the drug boss. Laura realizes her dream only to enter a nightmare.

The journey into this maelstrom is told convincingly, and hauntingly, through Laura's eyes, but in the process, the film illuminates the traumas savaging Mexico and its citizens. Filmed in Aguascalientes, the director takes us down mean streets and holds us there. Naranjo's skills as a director are impressive. His camera unflinchingly captures the horror and humiliation of the violence, while at the same time drawing viewers into Laura's world and making them care deeply about her future and the future of her country.

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And it is a future inexorably linked to the United States. The film's toxic mix of violence and corruption blurs borders. While "Miss Bala" doesn't deliver an explicit political message, it unmistakably shows the conflict as a bi-national entanglement, not simply a Mexican drug war. Although the story unfolds in Tijuana, the license plates are from California, the currency is dollars, the guns are imported from across the border, and the principal drug market is the United States. The carnage, however, remains in Mexico.

The message is that we are in this together. We slowly realize that we are not simply witnessing a tragic story but, rather, are complicit in the web that has entrapped Laura. She endures unspeakable horrors, and the ending is far from happy. Nonetheless, her will to survive and her decency endure. After seeing this searing film, one leaves the theater not so much with a sense of hopelessness as with a sense of urgency. The status quo is more than horrific: it is unsustainable for both Mexico and the United States.

CLAS organized an advance screening of "Miss Bala" in December 2011 for an overflow crowd of more than 700 in Wheeler Hall, with hundreds more unable to get tickets. Without question, the excitement at Berkeley went into overdrive due to the presence of the film's producer, Diego Luna, who is also among Mexico's most gifted actors and directors. After the screening, Luna engaged in a dialogue with the audience. "[The film] confronts you with your reality, with your fears, with your demons," he said. "And I agree with the idea of urgency. This has to stop."

Luna rooted part of the problem in the economic desperation many Mexicans confront. "The amount of money you can make in a second, as soon as you start learning how to use a weapon," he said, "it changes your life. It gives you everything you have been dreaming about, and many people would definitely choose a few years of that life [rather] than 20, 30, 40 years of having nothing and seeing their families, their people, their loved ones starving."

When asked about the Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad (Movement for Peace With Justice and Dignity) — the organization created by Mexican poet Javier Sicilia, whose son was murdered by the cartels — Luna responded that he found it deeply moving. "I think it is the purest way of a movement to start," he said. "It is just victims asking for justice, asking for people to join on their struggle, to share their fear, their loss." He added, "I hope you don't have to wait until you are a victim to do something. I think that we say today that the whole country has been a victim of what is happening, and we have to react and get together."

Continued on page 37 >>

Diego Luna addresses students in "The Southern Border" course taught by Professors Beatriz Manz and Harley Shaiken.

Photo by Jim Block.

"Miss Bala"

"The journey into this maelstrom is told convincingly, and hauntingly, through Laura's eyes, but in the process, the film illuminates the traumas savaging Mexico and its citizens."

The images on this and the following pages are from the film "Miss Bala."
(Courtesy of Canana Productions.)

"(The director's) camera unflinchingly captures the horror and humiliation of the violence, while at the same time drawing viewers into Laura's world and making them care deeply about her future and the future of her country."

While Luna avoided simple solutions during the discussion, he pointed out that both the United States and Mexico would be better served by money invested in development rather than walls. "The wall is obviously not working," he commented. "What if that money were invested in development in Latin America? Things would change, for sure."

While on campus, Luna also visited "The Southern Border," a class with 400 students taught by Professor Beatriz Manz and myself that focuses on the relationship between the United States and Latin America, with a particular focus on Mexico. Luna engaged in a wide-ranging discussion with students on what it means to be an actor and filmmaker today, as well as the issues that Mexico faces. He also may have inadvertently demonstrated the power of social media. While following the discussion with rapt attention, at least a few students clearly sent a tweet or two since 50-plus unfamiliar "guest" students showed up and occupied every available seat and bit of floor space.

On a more serious note, Luna spoke passionately about his next project: directing a biopic that focuses on the early years of the legendary labor organizer César Chávez and his emergence as a leader of the United Farm Workers union. The producers of the new film, Russell Smith and Lianne Halfon — who have produced a range of critically acclaimed films including "Juno," "Young Adult" and "Which Way Home?" — accompanied Luna to campus.

Luna, Smith and Halfon spent time that afternoon in the university's Bancroft Library, intently listening to two tapes of Chávez speaking on the UC Berkeley campus during the early years of the movement. One of the talks coincidentally took place in the same auditorium as the screening for "Miss Bala" on Cinco de Mayo 1975.

Luna concluded the conversation following the screening of "Miss Bala" with a tribute to the university. "I have to say, what I have witnessed today, and the whole experience of being here in Berkeley, has been inspiring, amazing," he stated. "It makes sense that we keep doing these films because there is an audience that is willing to take risks with us." He linked filmmaking and citizenship in an unusual and thoughtful way: "This is the feeling of freedom," he said. "Just remember that by choosing to see a film or not watch a film, you are making a choice that defines the world we live in."

Many in the audience seemed to agree. He received a sustained standing ovation.

Diego Luna is a Mexican actor, director and producer. He discussed the film "Miss Bala" on December 1, 2011.

Harley Shaiken is the chair of the Center for Latin American Studies and a professor of Geography and Education at UC Berkeley.

Lianne Halfon, Russell Smith, Diego Luna and Harley Shaiken outside the Bancroft Library.

Photo by Jim Block.

The Ambassador Bridge connecting Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario.

Photo by Di Bedard.

Thinking Continentally

continued from page 17

among nations at three levels of the international system. It should start with a vision based on three core principles:

- **Interdependence**. The essence of a community is that each member has a stake in the success of the other, and all pay a price when one fails. When a neighbor's house is vandalized, then all the houses in the community are in danger. When the value of a neighbor's house rises, it lifts the value of the other homes. This means we need to address transnational challenges together and help each other to succeed.
- **Reciprocity not unilateralism**. Each nation should treat the others as it wants to be treated. The United States — because of its overwhelming power — has tended to insist on its way or the highway, or it can be courteous but unresponsive. Neither approach is appropriate in a community where each country should learn from and listen to the others and adjust its policies accordingly.
- **A community of interests**. Instead of seeking a quid for a quo, all three governments together should define shared problems and decide what each can contribute to solving them. If the paramount challenge in North America is to narrow the development gap with Mexico, all should decide what needs to be done to achieve that goal, and each should decide how it can contribute.

These basic principles — interdependence, reciprocity and community — seem obvious, and all three leaders often use the language and refer to their "shared responsibility," but they rarely act on these principles. If the United States did, it would not permit 7,500 gun shops on the U.S. side of the border to sell assault weapons to the drug cartels. Instead of promoting "Buy American" or "Buy Canadian or Mexican," all three would advertise "Buy North American" products.

Because the European Community became the European Union, some confuse the two terms and fear that a similar evolution might occur in North America. North America is not Europe, and it will not emulate the European Union. Indeed, the larger problem is that the desire to be different from Europe might lead policymakers to ignore the EU's mistakes as well as its successes. The wise course would be to learn from Europe's experience, avoiding the policies that failed and adapting those that succeeded.

A North American Community is decidedly not a North American Union, which is a unified state with a central government. Nor is it a Common Market where labor can move freely. At some point, the United States and Canada might permit their two peoples to move freely because the difference in the standard of living is not wide enough to generate a significant population shift. Of course, this is not the case with Mexico, and while some professionals, farm workers or unskilled laborers might be permitted freer movement, a Common Market is out of the question, until the income gap narrows significantly between Mexico and its northern neighbors.

The word "community" refers to a group in which the members feel an affinity and a desire to cooperate. It is especially appropriate for North America because it is flexible: it leaves space for all three countries to define it. It can be as limited or as expansive as its members choose, and it can change over time as the countries change and the region's comparative advantage becomes clearer. Like the people and states of North America, the term "community" is eminently pragmatic. North Americans will choose their future based on their best judgment of what is likely to work.

A Blueprint

As the market enlarged to the size of the continent, the three countries of North America found themselves facing a domestic and continental agenda, while the institutions charged with dealing with the issues remained local or national. The immigration issue is shaped by people in small towns in Mexico in search of a better life; employers in the United States seeking reliable, hard-working and inexpensive labor; and other Americans worried about their jobs and culture. The trucking issue is driven by the U.S. Teamsters Union, but it also has consequences for Mexico and the credibility of the U.S. government. The "Buy American" issue is driven by America's fear of the growing strength of China, but its most serious effect is on Canada and Mexico. What is needed is a comprehensive approach to the full gamut of continental issues organized around four broad goals: invigorating the North American economy; enhancing national and public security; addressing the new, transnational agenda; and designing effective tri-national institutions.

The Idea

The three governments have been working on most of these issues in a quiet, incremental way in two parallel groups. Occasionally, they will offer a declaration or an "action plan," as they did in December 2011. The

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U.S.–Canadian and U.S.–Mexican Action Plans were similar and were checklists of studies they intended to do, not a summary of actions. Actual progress has been hard to discern. The problem is that special economic or bureaucratic interests oppose changes to the status quo, and there are few political incentives to overcome these groups. That is why the effort needs to begin with a "North American Idea," the premise that a new relationship is essential to stimulate the economy, ensure greater security and define a model for the world.

It is unrealistic to expect these ideas to become policy in a short time. Big ideas take time for the body politic to absorb. When American women convened a meeting in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 to seek the right to vote, who would have thought it would take 71 years to succeed?

Still, this does not mean we should give up or slow our efforts. A compelling idea — like North America — and what it means for the people of all three countries could eventually mobilize a nation to overcome the forces arguing for the status quo. It will take time and leadership. It could start with representatives from the border regions because they have the largest stake in building a community. The two presidents and one prime minister could articulate the vision and educate their citizens. They could begin with a few, inexpensive initiatives, which nonetheless could raise consciousness. They could merge the two sets of parallel working groups on borders and regulations into a single North American group. They could ask their ministers of transportation to develop a North American Plan in a year. They could allocate just $15 million for scholarships and research centers for North America. This would be a good start.

The 18 proposals I set forth (see box at right) are all aimed at the three central challenges of North America — to narrow the development gap and to stimulate all three economies; to create lean, but innovative institutions to propose and monitor North American plans; and to foment a new style of global leadership for the world's strongest power. None of the three challenges can be achieved by a single country, working on its own, and that is the real message of the North American Community. Mexico cannot lift itself from poverty without the help of its neighbors. Canada can design North American institutions, but it cannot implement them without the agreement of its neighbors. U.S. leadership depends on Canadian and Mexican cooperation and a new mechanism to organize the U.S. government so that it can address domestic issues with the Congress and its neighbors at the same time.

These challenges are not even on the agenda of the three governments. The reason is that the leaders have not begun to think continentally, and as long as they focus on bilateral relationships, they will be blind to the promise and the problems of the entire region. At base, today's problems are the result of the three governments' failure to govern the North American space. Once they visualize "North America" and decide to approach their problems from a continental perspective, solutions will appear that were previously invisible.

None of the many proposals that have been advanced for the region can be achieved without such a vision. Americans and Canadians will not provide funds to a North American Investment Fund to narrow the development gap with Mexico without a convincing vision of how Mexico's growth will benefit their countries. There is little prospect of reaching an agreement on labor mobility, harmonizing environmental standards, forging a transportation plan or most any proposal that would cost money or change the status quo, unless there is a vision of a wider community that could attract the support of the people and their legislatures. A vision can inspire nations to redefine themselves and imagine a different future. "North America" could be that idea.

Robert A. Pastor is a professor of International Relations and the founder and director of the Center for North American Studies at American University. He is also the author of *The North American Idea: A Vision of a Continental Future* (Oxford University Press). He spoke for CLAS on September 19, 2011.

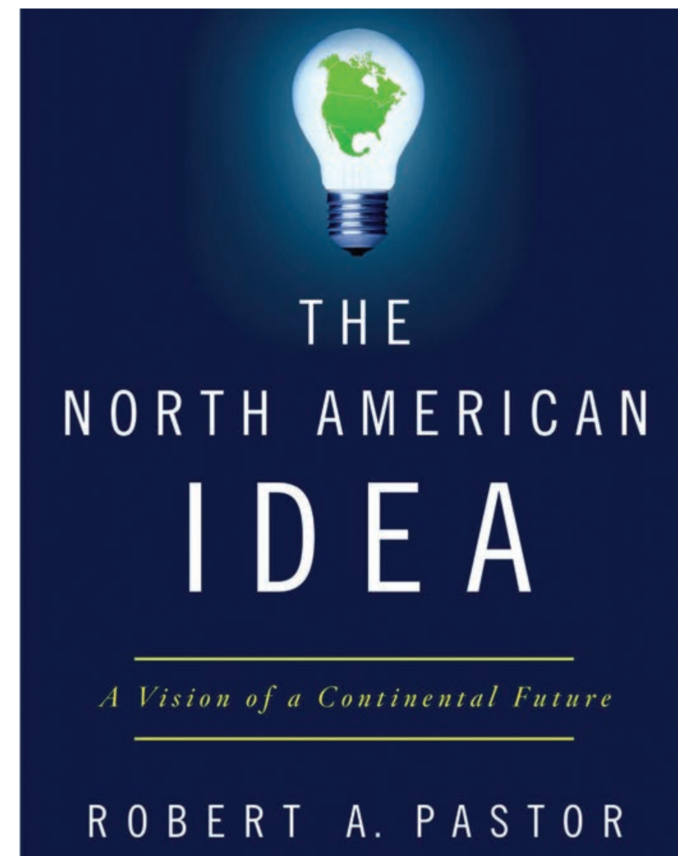

Image courtesy of Oxford University Press.

Pastor's Blueprint for North America

To invigorate the North American economy, the three governments should:

1. Create a North American Investment Fund to narrow the development gap by investing in infrastructure — roads, railroads, communications — to connect the poorest parts of Mexico to the thriving markets to the north.
2. Design a North American plan for transportation and infrastructure that will reduce transaction costs, relieve congestion and promote trade and new links among all three countries.
3. Conduct routine consultations among the key economic policy agencies — Treasury, the Central Bank, Budget — so that they can anticipate and coordinate rather than undermine one another's economic policies.
4. Negotiate a customs union with a common external tariff in order to eliminate costly "rules of origin." That would remove an inefficient and exorbitant "rules of origin" tax on all North Americans, which was estimated to be as high as $510 billion in 2008, and the funds from the common tariff could be used for the North American Investment Fund.
5. Promote regulatory convergence to improve environmental, health and labor standards on the continent without adding costs or unfairly protecting certain firms.

To enhance national and public security, the three governments should:

6. Integrate their approaches to the drug problem as both a "health" and a law enforcement issue, ban the sales of assault weapons and tightly restrict the sales of weapons in border-area gun shops.
7. Enhance interagency and international cooperation to manage the border more effectively and strengthen counter-terrorism without impeding legitimate travel and trade. This will require sharing intelligence, harmonizing visa and customs procedures and unifying "trusted traveler" programs with a single, jointly approved "North American passport."
8. Improve collaboration and response to natural disasters and pandemics.
9. Reorganize the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and integrate the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) so that it includes representatives from all three countries on behalf of a unified defense plan. Develop a common approach to assisting Central America and the Caribbean with counter-narcotics activities.

To address the new transnational agenda, the three governments should:

10. Grant preferential access for immigrants from North American neighbors and pledge to treat all immigrants — whether legal or illegal — with fairness under the rule of law. Among the elements of a comprehensive plan for the United States are the following: stronger enforcement in the workplace with a biometric card to identify job applicants; a path to legalization for the 11 million people in the country without documents; a temporary worker program to be managed in accordance with the labor demands of the economy; acceptance of more immigrants with higher skills; and a program to narrow the income gap with Mexico.
11. Adopt a formula that balances the region's interest in energy security with the necessity of curbing carbon emissions. Such a formula has eluded each nation working on its own; perhaps it would be easier for the groups within each state to accept if all three countries agreed.
12. Seek a social charter that would identify the rights of workers in each country, set North American standards and adopt a plan of action for achieving those rights.
13. Modify textbooks to include a section on North America and more on the other two countries, provide scholarships for studying in universities in the other two countries and fund research centers on North America.

To design lean but effective tri-national institutions, the three governments should:

14. Hold annual summit meetings.
15. Establish an independent North American Advisory Council composed of a diverse group of leaders from all three countries with a research capacity and a mandate to propose North American initiatives in every area for the summit meetings.
16. Merge the U.S.–Mexican and the U.S.–Canadian Parliamentary Groups into a North American Parliamentary Group to help the three legislatures understand the tri-national dimension of the issues and forge common approaches.
17. Strengthen existing Nafta institutions like the North American Free Trade Commission, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the Commission for Labor Cooperation and the North American Development Bank.
18. Create new North American institutions, notably a Permanent Tribunal for Trade and Investment, a North American Competition Commission and a North American Regulatory Commission.

Photo courtesy of Gobierno Federal.

President-elect Obama greets President Calderón, January 2009.

U.S.–MEXICO FUTURES FORUM

Missed Connections

by Sarah Krupp

President Barack Obama inherited a financial calamity. Mexican President Felipe Calderón assumed leadership of a country in the grip of organized crime. With both leaders mired in their respective conflicts, visions of a collaborative U.S.–Mexico policy have fallen by the wayside.

Yet, under different circumstances, the two presidents might have taken U.S.–Mexico relations to an unprecedented level, benefitting both countries, argued Calderón's former foreign policy advisor, Rafael Fernández de Castro.

"We know [Obama] understands the importance of Mexico," said Fernández de Castro in his CLAS talk, "but… he cannot really deliver to Mexico."

In Obama's only meeting with a foreign leader before his inauguration, the president-elect told Calderón, "that he was here in the presidency because of Mexicans… He knew that because of the Latino vote, he had become president of the U.S."

The tone of the meeting was warm and friendly. Obama was receptive to Calderón's proposals on security, health care, immigration and regional competitiveness. Yet, looking back, Fernández de Castro said that if he had foreseen the violence that would ravage Mexico, he would have recommended that security dominate Calderón's agenda with Obama. Stopping the illegal flow of assault weapons from American smugglers to Mexican cartels has since become a top priority for the Mexican government. Some 90 percent of the weapons seized by Mexican authorities were purchased in the United States, he said.

Whether placing greater emphasize on security during the presidents' initial meeting would have had any real impact is another matter. There has been little progress on the initiatives that, at the time, seemed to have traction, such as health care collaboration and improving the conditions of Mexican immigrants in the United States.

Calderón proposed that the U.S. government permit its seniors to receive Medicare benefits in Mexico, where health care is much less expensive. Encouraging Americans to retire in Mexico, Fernández de Castro said, would decrease U.S. government expenditures on health care for elderly citizens while providing a boon to the Mexican health care industry. About 1 million retired Americans live in Mexico now, but if U.S. citizens could continue to receive benefits abroad, an estimated 4 million more would immigrate there, he said.

As for improving the welfare of Mexican immigrants in the United States, if anything, conditions have deteriorated on Obama's watch. The weak economy has triggered a backlash against immigrants and ever-more discriminatory laws in states such as Alabama, where, as Fernández de Castro put it bluntly, "they are treated like criminals." National legislation that would have offered a pathway to residency and citizenship for undocumented students did not receive congressional approval. Barred from most public assistance, undocumented immigrants are often unable to afford college in the United States. Yet, they may also find it impossible to attend a college in Mexico, according to Fernández de Castro, because the Mexican university system does not recognize their U.S. high-school diplomas.

When asked by a member of the audience about the record-setting number of deportations of undocumented immigrants under the Obama administration, Fernández de Castro conceded that, "Obama, on immigration issues, has been a big disappointment. Let's face it. We know he doesn't have the political capital anymore to go about reform, but he has done too little. A lot of people feel disappointed."

Though Fernández de Castro insisted that the, "number one, number two and number three priority for Mexican foreign policy is the U.S.," he outlined four additional agenda items.

Developing a Free Trade Agreement With Brazil

Combined, Brazil and Mexico make up two-thirds of the Latin American market. "If these two giants get together, we can really make a difference in the Latin American market, but it's proven difficult," said Fernández de Castro. He faulted Mexico's private sector and opponents in the Mexican administration for thwarting the expansion of commerce between the two countries.

Strengthening Economic Links With China

By linking its economic fate almost completely to the United States, Mexico has watched from the sidelines

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Latino families move out of their Alabama homes after the passage of immigration law HB56.

Photo from The Washington Post/Getty Images.

as Brazil, Peru, Argentina and Chile have profited from China's growth. Mexico currently has a trade deficit of $42 billion with China and yet, China is "not investing even $1 million in Mexico." Fernández de Castro said he often tells his compatriots that when the authoritarian Chinese state becomes the world's largest economy, "we are going to miss the U.S. We are going to miss the good old days.'"

Aiding Central America With Development and Security

The drug war has dealt an additional blow to Central America, a region already strained by violence and poverty. The isthmus is now a major artery for drugs trafficked from Colombia to Mexico on their way to the United States, as well as a haven for cartels evading the crackdowns in Mexico and Colombia. Mexico must do more to aid its neighbors, Fernández de Castro said, as well as to protect their citizens, who pass through Mexico on their way to the United States. Central American transmigrants are increasingly targeted for exploitation by drug traffickers. In 2010, 72 migrants were slaughtered in San Fernando, a town in northern Mexico.

Asserting Itself as a "Middle Global Power"

Fernández de Castro believes that Mexico should take on a larger role in global politics. As an example, he cited the part Mexico played in the global discussion of climate change, a cause about which Calderón, an avid environmentalist, is passionate. Fernández de Castro said that Mexico should take a more public position in global forums as well as improve relations with the international media.

There also seemed to be a more personal agenda behind Fernández de Castro's talk. Although he no longer works for the president, having returned to his former post as chair of the International Studies Department at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), a leading private Mexican university, it was clear that he hoped to bolster the Mexican president's image. Internationally, Calderón is known for his failing war on drugs. His attack on the cartels provoked a scourge of violence that has claimed more than 45,000 lives in less than five years — with no end in sight. To be sure, Calderón does not deserve all the blame. He inherited a corrupt government, a weak police force and an inept justice system. The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI), which ruled Mexico from 1929 to 2000, had incorporated organized crime into its tight fold. Yet critics contend that is all the more reason Calderón should have strengthened institutions and social programs before launching headlong into an offensive against the cartels.

Fernández de Castro spoke of a side of Calderón that the public rarely sees — his intelligence, commitment and integrity. In stark contrast with most of his predecessors, the president is refreshingly "stingy," treating public money "as if it were coming out of his own pocket," said Fernández de Castro. In Los Pinos (the Mexican equivalent of the White House) parties are paid for with private money and a placard details "who paid for the *carnitas*, the *chicharrones* and the drinks," he said. Calderón, Fernández de Castro maintained, is a man of principle; sometimes, as when he decided to meet with the Dalai Lama at the risk of a fallout with China, of too much principle.

"I think that was a mistake," said Fernández de Castro. "Foreign policy is not about principle. It's about interests."

A Nicaraguan soldier inspects a helicopter abandoned near the Honduran border by suspected drug traffickers.

Photo by Elmer Martinez, Getty Images.

Rafael Fernández de Castro is the founder and chair of the Department of International Studies at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) and the co-convener of the U.S.–Mexico Futures Forum, an annual conference hosted by CLAS and ITAM. He spoke for CLAS on September 22, 2011.

Sarah Krupp is a graduate student in the Latin American Studies Program at UC Berkeley.

Photo by Mark Lennihan, Associated Press.

An officer patrols New York's Washington Heights neighborhood, 1998.

MEXICO'S DRUG WAR

Lessons From New York?

by Celeste Kauffman

The 40,000-plus, drug-related murders that have rocked Mexico over the past six years are not a necessary result of drug trafficking. Furthermore, U.S. strategy, which seeks to end narco-violence by eliminating the drug trade, is misguided. So argued noted legal scholar Frank Zimring during his talk for the Center for Latin American Studies. Taking New York City as a model, Zimring proposed that a crime prevention strategy that concentrates resources on limited priorities and specific geographic areas could control the violence that has ravaged Mexico.

During the early 1990s, violent crime exploded in New York, linked to the rise in cocaine as an urban recreational drug. At the height of the violence, there were some 600 drug-related deaths in the city each year. The dramatic rise in drug use and the accompanying crime wave led to a societal debate on how to address the problem. Hardline "drug warriors" insisted that only massive reductions in drug use could decrease the violence, and therefore, the war on drugs should target absolutely every drug, every use and every sale. At the other end of the spectrum were harm reductionists. Their strategy focused on identifying the most problematic impacts of drug use, such as the violence that often accompanied it, and concentrating resources on those specific problems, rather than fighting the entire universe of illicit drug use.

Ultimately, the harm prevention strategy proved more effective than the war on drugs. In New York, officials chose to focus on reducing drug-related violence by shutting down open-air markets on the streets, rather than focusing on drug-use reduction. As a result, while drug use has remained stable, drug-related violence in New York has

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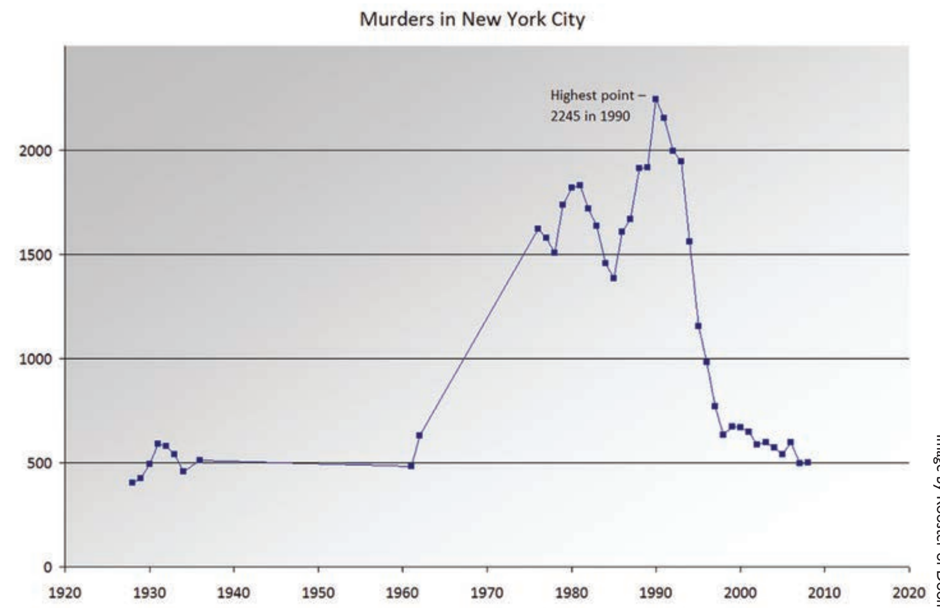

Image by Rooster of Doom.

Trends in New York City homicides.

declined more than 90 percent. In fact, New York experienced one of the steepest drops in violent crime ever recorded: in 2009, the homicide rate was 18 percent of the 1990 rate, while robbery and burglary dropped to 16 and 14 percent, respectively.

According to Zimring, the harm-reduction policy that proved so successful in New York is simple, and includes two steps. The first requires a conceptual focus, a decision to concentrate resources on one or two problems. In New York, the focus was on eliminating open-air markets on city streets. In the second step, officials must prioritize geographically, zeroing in on hot spots and concentrating resources in those areas until the prioritized problems have been addressed. Thus, in New York, police went in force to the most dangerous areas and stayed until violent crime rates plummeted.

Given the success of this strategy in New York, and the failure of both Mexico and the United States to control drug violence, Zimring believes that both governments should adopt the New York model to curb narco-violence in Mexico.

Mexican drug cartels currently dominate the transport and wholesale supply of drugs to the United States. It is an immensely profitable industry. Wholesale drug sales in the United States are believed to total somewhere between $13 and $48 billion annually. An estimated $8.3 to $24.9 billion in drug proceeds are smuggled back into Mexico every year.

While the drug trade has always been a rough game, narco-violence in Mexico has skyrocketed since 2006, when President Calderón announced his crackdown on drug trafficking and sent 6,500 federal troops to Michoacán to combat the cartels. The traffickers responded by waging war on government troops and rival gangs, leading to a downward spiral where cartels react to crackdowns by increasing the amount and severity of violence. Because of this cycle, there are now some 45,000 federal troops involved in Calderón's campaign to control the drug trade, and more than 40,000 people have lost their lives in the conflict.

Despite the immense resources that have been directed at battling the flow of drugs north and weapons and drug-money south — the United States alone has invested more than a billion dollars to help the Mexican government control drug and weapons trafficking — both governments have made remarkably little progress in interrupting this trade. Meanwhile, drug-related violence, human rights abuses and lack of accountability among crime-fighting units have spiraled out of control.

In analyzing the failure of both governments to stop the spread of violence, Zimring pointed to a fundamental flaw in the strategy adopted by the United States: the false assumption that the violence can only be contained if the drug trade is halted. New York proved the inaccuracy of that assumption in the 1990s. According to Zimring, if the attempt to eradicate drugs was bad in the United States, it is poisonous in Mexico. If anything, the efforts of the past five years have intensified the violence that continues to grip border cities and expand across the country.

Instead of combating drug trafficking, Zimring suggests an alternative. Given the state of emergency, in the short term, officials need to concentrate their resources, both thematically and geographically, on the most troublesome aspects of the drug trade and resist the temptation to try to address the entire universe of illegal drug trafficking. Thus, while New York focused on eliminating open-air markets on city streets, in Mexico, Zimring believes the top two priorities should be to reduce drug killings and corruption. Second, just as New York police targeted the most dangerous areas, Mexican officials should concentrate their resources in overwhelming strength on one particularly violent city. Success in one region would be an important demonstration of the will and capacity of Mexican law enforcement to contain and combat violence.

Photo by Felix Marquez, Associated Press.

Mexican marines take over policing in the city of Veracruz after the entire police force was disbanded in an attempt to root out corruption.

Zimring is not blind to the vast differences between New York City and Mexican hot spots like Ciudad Juárez that may make his strategy inappropriate to Mexico. Drug sales in New York were small-scale and handled by disorganized dealers and small gangs. Mexican cartels, on the other hand, run the most sophisticated and dangerous organized crime syndicates in U.S. law enforcement history, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Large gangs operate without major opposition, and broad geographic areas are run by narco-trafficking groups. In addition, New York has a large, developed and reliable police force, while Mexico's crime-fighting infrastructure is ineffective at best and corrupt at worst, leaving 95 percent of crimes to go unsolved. New York also has a functioning criminal justice system; in Mexico, corruption and epic inefficiency have left the criminal justice system so crippled that even the most notorious criminals have not been prosecuted.

Zimring has two responses to this critique. First, these are emergency measures to halt the seemingly unstoppable violence that threatens to rend Mexico's social and economic fabric, rather than a solution to drug trafficking. Second, this strategy was successfully implemented in New York without regard to the underlying social or economic forces driving either the violence or the drug trade; it was focused exclusively on regaining control of the city.

While federal troops and drastic measures are necessary to combat the horrific violence metastasizing along Mexican drug routes, Zimring recognizes that this solution is a short-term band-aid rather than a long-term cure. In order to truly address the entire universe of drug-trafficking, Mexico needs a complete restructuring of many of its social institutions. Mexico's law enforcement structure needs to be redesigned in order to address issues of corruption and poverty in the police force; inefficient courts require reform; and viable alternatives to drug trafficking need to be developed for the poor. However, such reforms take time, and Mexico cannot afford to wait for these changes to take root before addressing the violence ravaging the country.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS EN ESPAÑOL

Michelle Bachelet: A Rendezvous With History

by Beatriz Manz

Michelle Bachelet is a person who has had a rendezvous with history. In 2006, she became not only the first woman elected president of Chile but also the first woman in the Americas to gain that post without a link to a husband. Underscoring her penchant for breaking barriers, two years earlier she had been named the first woman defense minister in the hemisphere. While breaking the "glass ceiling" of reaching the presidency was historic, her lasting legacy is governing with unusual skill and distinction.

How did Bachelet reach this point? She has had a passion to make a difference for a long time, first as a student activist and, later, as a pediatrician. Surprisingly, in retrospect, elected office, let alone the presidency, didn't appear to be a particular goal. When polls began to show high approval ratings for Bachelet's work as defense minister, however, her passion for constructive change moved her into the political arena. In a country many characterize as socially conservative, Michelle Bachelet defied all typical categorizations for a presidential candidate. She was a divorced, openly agnostic, pro-choice, single woman raising three children. But she was able to flatten these presumed roadblocks into speed bumps. Her compelling personality and her background certainly played a role. Bachelet was perceived as honest, open, likeable, empathetic, intelligent and having great charisma. Women especially could see her as "one of us."

While these personal qualities were noted and appreciated, she likewise put forward an inspiring vision and a compelling political program. She built on the achievements of the Concertación — the center-left coalition that had governed for the previous 16 years — but she put her own distinctive imprint on her government. She emphasized that economic growth and social equity were not mutually exclusive but, in fact, deeply intertwined. Together they laid the basis not simply for a strong economy but also for a more just and vibrant democracy. And she displayed the energy, skill and indefatigable determination to move in that direction. As President Obama, among many other world leaders put it, "I find her one of the most compelling leaders that we have, not just in the hemisphere but around the world."

Her biography provided her with a broad perspective from a young age. Belonging to a military family, she moved frequently within Chile as she was growing up. Her father, Air Force General Alberto Bachelet, moved the family to the United States when he became attached to the Chilean embassy in Washington, D.C. Being in the United States as the 1960s began to unfold provided a window onto history. This was a period of emerging political and cultural change and growing social mobilization. The civil rights, student and antiwar movements were beginning to transform U.S. society, and the culture was headed in new directions. She was also taken with the music of that period, with singers like Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. In late summer 1963, Martin Luther King delivered his inspiring "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial to hundreds of thousands of people, who in turn carried the message throughout the country. She returned to Chile in 1964 to finish her secondary education, excelling academically and becoming class president, a small harbinger of things to come. Comments in the high-school yearbook praise her as person with a "a strong and defined personality," who was "respectful, adapted to the course and the school." She was said to be perseverant and to "possess the traits that would allow her to triumph in her aspirations." When she entered the university, she became active in the Socialist Youth.

Years of Exile, Return and the Beginning of Political Life

The brutal military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet in 1973 was profoundly tragic for Bachelet and her family. Her father opposed the coup and was arrested and tortured. He died in prison. Bachelet and her mother were detained, imprisoned and tortured. She eventually went into exile, first in Australia and then in East Germany. There, she studied medicine, becoming a pediatrician. When she was allowed to return to Chile, she focused her work and efforts on health issues.

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A Bachelet banner over the entrance to La Moneda.
(Photo by Daniel Alvarez Valenzuela.)

Photo by Gilles Bassignac/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.

Michelle Bachelet (left) with her mother Angela Jería.

President Ricardo Lagos tapped her to become heath minister when he took office in 2000. She was given a daunting, if not impossible, assignment: fix the long-standing disarray in public health services within 100 days. She impressed her colleagues and detractors alike with her innovative approach, engagement and energy. While she narrowly missed the 100-day target, she had more than made her mark. President Lagos' selection of her as defense minister was a bold, path-breaking move and, for some, astonishing. Although she had been interested, even immersed, in military issues for some time, she was the first woman to hold that position in Chile and one of the few female defense ministers in the world. Within Chile, a person who had paid an incalculable price as a result of the coup would have control and authority over the troops and the generals.

Once again, she excelled and performed well beyond expectations. It became clear that she knew the institution and the needs of military families and was determined to look forward to a democratic future without forgetting the past. Seeing her in control of the military, leading the traditional national independence day parade and taking charge of a natural disaster in the south, Chileans began to see her both as a compassionate and effective health promoter and also as a strong, no-nonsense defense minister. Thus, to many Chileans, this unusual combination of humanity and solid leadership in the toughest of circumstances began to recommend her as a potential president.

First Woman President

Bachelet's political rise was so meteoric that she made it appear effortless. That impression, however, was highly misleading. The road ahead was far from easy. The gender barriers didn't simply disappear, she had to dismantle them. During and after the campaign, she commented on the different expectations and standards that women face. For example, she would point out that if a male president got a bit teary-eyed and choked up, people would say: "Oh, how good to have a president who is sensitive." But, were she to do the same, people would cry: "Oh, she is a hysteric! She can't control her emotions." She would also mention that journalists would ask her: "Tell me, do you have to take your children to a psychiatrist?" a question it is hard to imagine being asked of a male candidate, let alone a president.

In the first political debate with three other candidates — all male — Bachelet did very well. Polls, in fact, indicated that viewers thought she came out on top. Newspaper articles the next day commented on her confidence and competence. She was both calm and forceful and, as a result, consolidated her frontrunner position. She embraced innovative, at times audacious, ideas, ranging from pension reforms to Latin American economic integration, especially in infrastructure and energy. Regarding the United States, she looked toward a constructive relationship but indicated that she would maintain the Lagos administration position against the war in Iraq. Bachelet emphasized that poverty, inequality and the resulting social instability were fundamental issues that needed to be addressed not only in Chile but also more generally in Latin America. She avoided easy solutions and emphasized tackling the issues vital to Chile's future. As she would later say, she wanted programs that would be popular without a false populism. As the campaign concluded, her candor, charm, intelligence and leadership fused into a message that inspired. She built on the strong political leadership that preceded her and put forward a set of programs emphasizing economic growth and social inclusion.

When Michelle Bachelet put on the presidential sash, she faced high expectations and a rocky beginning. All political transitions at this level tend to be difficult, and in her case, because she was a historic figure — the first woman president — there were many ready to term any stumble a "historic failure." She faced daunting problems almost immediately ranging from student demonstrations to a meltdown in the new urban transportation system — the Transantiago — which affected about one-third of the country's population. The flaws in the design, planning and implementation of the system all flowed into outsized political problems for the new president, despite the fact that the issues preceded her term. Nevertheless, instead of celebrating her first anniversary, some commentators termed the crisis the most severe that the Concertación had faced and began writing her political obituary. Others ascribed any shake-ups in the cabinet — customary in any new administration — to the fact that a woman president had appointed women as half her ministers. In some cases, inexperience was an issue, but that can be a problem regardless of gender. Complicating the situation was a new structural constraint that, for the first time, Chile's

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Michelle Bachelet inspects a submarine as Chile's Defense Minister, 2003.

Photo by Mychele Daniau/Getty Images.

presidential term was going to be four years rather than the traditional six.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of Michelle Bachelet's political death proved to be greatly exaggerated. Even skeptics began to concede that "la Presidenta" could show extraordinary resolve, resilience and intelligence in addressing the toughest of issues. She didn't shirk blame, she sought to solve problems. She had a new leadership style and had promised new faces in the cabinet, giving gender parity and creating a *gobierno ciudadano* (citizen's government). She wanted to create a "more-inclusive society" and began moving effectively in that direction.

Her Presidency Takes Off: The Most Popular President in Chile's History

From the second year forward, conditions started to improve, and Chileans began to embrace Bachelet's leadership style: gentle and accessible yet also strong and determined. She embraced markets but understood that, for markets to work effectively, the state had to play an important role; she realized that strong economic growth was vital but that social inclusion would fuel that growth, not hold it back. Her values were firm, but her style was pragmatic. Poverty levels that stood at 40 percent when the Concertación took power in 1990 were down to 13 percent by the time she left office — the culmination of two decades of economic progress — and extreme poverty was reduced from 20 percent to 3 percent. She also delivered on her promise of social protection and gender equity: housewives would get pension benefits, and the poor would be protected from "cradle to old age."

Bachelet clearly saw the challenges that Chile faced in the global economy and wanted to lay the basis for her country to prosper rather than stagnate or even decline. As part of a broad set of counter-cyclical policies, Bachelet set aside windfall copper revenues from the commodities boom — a move that was far from popular at the time. Many observers had endless, at times even worthwhile, priorities on which to spend that money, but Bachelet insisted on saving the surplus for a rainy day. When the economic thunderstorms flooded many countries throughout the world in 2009 — far sooner than most had foreseen — Chile was able to increase its social spending by 7.8 percent, just at the moment when those funds were socially vital and economically critical.

Another visionary program Bachelet instituted was Becas Chile, which has allowed thousands of Chilean students to pursue graduate degrees in universities around the world. She was also the driving force behind the reestablishment of the Chile-California agreement, which was started in 1963 and suspended after the military coup a decade later. This new relationship will once again promote technical cooperation between Chile and California in areas such as agriculture, education, renewable energy, water resource management and highway transportation. During Bachelet's term, troubled relations with Chile's neighbors, especially with Bolivia, were improved. As a goodwill gesture, she invited President Evo Morales to her inauguration. At the end of her term, Morales publically thanked Bachelet for her advice and friendship, saying that he had learned much from her. She also often thought in terms of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region, viewing economic links as essential. For her, the larger regional whole was potentially less volatile and, in fact, greater than the sum of its parts. Interdependence could be the foundation for economic strength, not a sign of weakness. Central to her vision was the notion that opportunities and aspirations should be available to all, not just the privileged few.

While Bachelet's vision was focused on the future, she was determined not to forget the past. In January 2010, she inaugurated the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. Located in a broad, open plaza, visitors walk past the articles of the International Declaration of Human Rights inscribed on one wall. At the entrance to the museum are the words of Michelle Bachelet: "*No podemos cambiar nuestro pasado, solo nos queda aprender de lo vivido, esta es nuestra responsabilidad y nuestro desafío.*" (We cannot change our past, we can only learn from what we experience in life, this is our responsibility and our challenge.) Inside the modern building, one engages the legacy of the coup and the 17-year dictatorship. In March 2012, the Museum displayed 37 paintings and drawings from Fernando Botero's critically-acclaimed Abu Ghraib series on loan from the University of California, Berkeley.

Despite an uncertain start followed by a sputtering global economy, Chileans expressed feelings of optimism about the direction of the country by wide margins. And while Bachelet's term was short, Chileans overwhelmingly viewed her as an effective president. Her poll numbers soared past 84 percent approval ratings when she left office, a new record. What even these poll numbers don't fully convey is the passion with which people embraced her. Less scientific, but perhaps as important, is the reception she receives walking down the street or sitting in a café in Santiago. Strangers often emotionally express their gratitude for what they achieved under her presidency and for that intangible hope in the future that she inspired. But, as she would be the first to admit, social inequalities remain, especially in education and economic access.

Photo by Cristobal Palma.

Chile's Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos.

However, that is the challenge going forward, not the end of the story.

Dialoga, the foundation Bachelet created soon after stepping down as president, aims at impacting Chilean society with fresh ideas. Its objectives are to contribute to social and political thinking and to promote leadership and dialogue. While the foundation organizes meetings, panels, roundtable discussion and workshops, it remains practically unknown, even in Santiago. Like many foundations in Chile, it does not have much resonance or presence so far. The impact is yet to be felt.

Executive Director, UN Women

Bachelet's new position as the founding director of a mega United Nations agency, UN Women, puts her on a global stage. When she accepted the position in September 2010, she understood that it was an enormous undertaking. While it's clear to many women's rights advocates that, as Bachelet has often stated, women's empowerment and gender equality provide the shortest route to addressing the toughest global problems, it can nonetheless be a complicated path. She affirms that women and girls have vast untapped potential but understands that unleashing their potential means removing many entrenched constraints.

Her own life experience and unique vantage point — from exile to former president — provides her the confidence that the future holds great possibilities for women and society. Ever optimistic, she inspires with her words and her example. While remaining conscious of universal issues confronting women, there are, of course, regional realities and differences. Added to these are the bureaucratic hurdles faced by a global organization like the UN. A key challenge for UN Women is forging gender equality and female empowerment in a way that allows women to improve their lives and define their futures. This challenge means addressing and respecting cultural, social and religious differences, while seeking meaningful change. It requires cultural sensitivity, humanity, political skills and determination — all qualities that Michelle Bachelet has amply demonstrated.

UN Women confronts the enduring discrimination faced by women around the globe: gender gaps in education, employment, salary and security among other long-standing, seemingly intractable issues. Women tend to hold more economically vulnerable and marginalized jobs and are more likely to be relegated to poverty and poor health. There are also recurring snags with maternity leave, sexual harassment and domestic violence. Women suffer directly, but the entire society loses in the process.

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Profound gender inequalities are hardly something Michelle Bachelet can solve during her term as head of UN Women. But, when UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wisely tapped her for the position, he knew the unique qualities that she would bring. She understood that the deplorable position of women was an issue of justice and equality and that bold, serious action needed to be taken. He understood that she could inspire and make things happen; he saw the ways in which she exercised strong leadership and sought consensus, unusual skills that could breathe life into UN Women. The result could help millions of women and girls throughout the world to improve their lives.

"Women's rights are human rights," as then-first lady Hillary Clinton famously proclaimed at the United Nations Women's conference in Beijing, on September 5, 1995. "It is time to break our silence," she said, "…it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights." Despite her stirring call for action, it took many years to create UN Women, the most important organization dedicated to women's rights worldwide.

Often people ask what Michelle Bachelet is like when she is not on stage. What is she like when she is not fulfilling the role of president or head of UN Women? The simple answer may be that she is comfortable and unpretentious. Her humanity is at the heart of her being, and people tend to recognize and relate to that special quality. A case in point is her most recent visit to the Berkeley campus in April 2011. She was clearly at ease and enjoyed being around both students and faculty. She could also be disarmingly irreverent. Her spirit and personality showed when, at a public talk, a student asked her: "When you get free time to relax, what do you do?" (The moderator had mentioned that she was only briefly in Berkeley between a trip to Nigeria and an early flight to Panama the next day.) She repeated: "Free time?" and then smiled and paused, almost as if to reflect on the meaning of that concept, while the public laughed. "Not much," she continued. "I have to do laundry. I may be a former president, but I am a normal person, and I have to do everything you have to do." What the future will hold for former president Michelle Bachelet is an enigmatic question. It is obvious that she has great stamina and a desire to affect change. The United Nations position has given her a new banner and a new focus for her acute sensibilities and skills. Whatever she chooses to do, the world will likely be a better place as a result.

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Michelle Bachelet and Hillary Rodham Clinton at a high-level UN meeting for women political leaders, 2011.

Photo courtesy of UN Women.

Photo by Jim Block.

Gil Cedillo on the UC Berkeley campus.

IMMIGRATION

Reclaiming the Dream

by Kevin Escudero

Upon graduation from high school, undocumented youth who want to pursue to college have long found themselves in a precarious situation: unable to afford tuition but also unable to work or receive financial aid. While many have hopes of continuing their education and some are accepted to prestigious universities, these students face significant obstacles to accessing post-secondary education. Since the Supreme Court's 1982 decision in Plyler v. Doe, undocumented youth have been entitled to a K-12 public education. However, even those who earn high grades and excel in extracurricular activities find it difficult to pursue their academic dreams at the college level.

Gil Cedillo — a California assembly member from Los Angeles and the lead author of bills AB 130 and AB 131, together known as "the California Dream Act" — commented on the exceptional character of "Dreamers" during his UC Berkeley talk: "[These] students are extraordinary. They are children who arrive here by no choice of their own… learn a language within one generation, go to school under difficult circumstances… and yet excel and become part of the best and brightest of this state and this nation."

According to a 2007 report by sociologist Roberto Gonzales of the University of Chicago, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school each year but only 5 to 10 percent continue on to higher education. The California Dream Act was designed to facilitate the transition of undocumented students from

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Photo by Juan David Gastolomendo

Undocumented students participate in a DREAM graduation ceremony in Washington, D.C.

high school to college by providing much-needed financial support. It builds on AB 540, a 2001 law that granted undocumented youth the right to pay in-state tuition when attending public colleges and universities. AB 130, signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in July 2011, allows undocumented students to access institutional aid derived from nonstate funds, while AB 131, signed into law in October, permits eligible students to receive noncompetitive, state-funded financial aid. AB 130 is set to go into effect in January 2012, while AB 131 will not take effect until January 2013.

In his talk, Cedillo emphasized the potential contribution of Dreamers to the California economy as they enter the workforce and begin paying taxes, noting that they provide an already-integrated, untapped labor force and represent some of the most promising young people today. Addressing the question of how undocumented graduates will be able to participate legally in the state economy, Cedillo stated emphatically that "education is for life… nobody can take that from you." Legal status, on the other hand, can change. "So the question is," he added, "when your legal status does change, where are you going to be in terms of preparing yourself?"

The introduction of the California Dream Act this year and its separation into two discrete bills, was both intentional and strategic. In December 2010, immigrants' rights advocates endured two setbacks: the defeat of the federal Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in the Senate by five votes and Governor Schwarzenegger's veto of the previous version of the California Dream Act. "We needed a victory, and that victory was AB 130," noted Cedillo. "We needed something we could move quickly through the legislative process." By splitting the California Dream Act in two, Cedillo and immigrant rights activists sought to gain swift passage of the less-controversial AB 130 in the hopes that it would increase the social acceptance of Dreamers and allow more time to mobilize voters, building momentum for the passage of the second bill, AB 131. After intense mobilization and lobbying efforts, undocumented youth held Governor Brown to his campaign promise that if the bill made it to his desk, he, unlike Governor Schwarzenegger, would sign it into law. On October 8, 2011, Governor Brown fulfilled his promise. UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau and undocumented student members of Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education (RISE) and Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights through Education (Aspire) publicly thanked the governor in a press conference held on October 10, 2011.

Though opponents have raised concerns about the California Dream Act due to the current shortage of funds for public higher education in California, Assemblyman Cedillo assured the talk's attendees that the passage of the act would not adversely affect citizens: "Not one [citizen] student will lose a scholarship because of this program. Not one student will be displaced." The reason for this is that AB 130 deals exclusively with private scholarships, and AB 131 applies only to noncompetitive grants. In addition, undocumented students make up an extremely small proportion of those in the state's higher education system, so the bill for the new law will represent only 1 percent of total Cal Grant funds. While opponents have threatened to challenge the new law in court, to date no case has been filed.

During the discussion, Cedillo answered a wide range of questions, with many students asking what the next steps should be. According to Cedillo, the next steps are to lobby the president and Congress to pass the federal DREAM Act, providing students a path to citizenship and legalization. The federal bill, however, has also been criticized within the immigrant rights community because an estimated 67 percent of undocumented youth nationwide would not be eligible to benefit from the bill, due either to not having been in the country long enough or because they are not college-eligible. Many community-based organizations, activists and educators, including the Association of Raza Educators, have voiced concern about the legislation's military service component, which they argue will further exacerbate the current overrepresentation of youth of color in the U.S. armed forces. Thus, while the California Dream Act is a step towards greater incorporation and increased rights for undocumented immigrants, such legislation is ultimately limited in scope.

With the United States facing an uncertain economy and a presidential election, comprehensive immigration reform and the federal DREAM act are likely off the table for at least the next year. This lack of federal action is compounded by the hard line being taken by states such as Arizona and Alabama against undocumented immigrants. In this environment, the efforts of Assemblyman Cedillo and others are especially admirable. Due in no small part to his legislative efforts and the activism of undocumented young people, California is one of the states working to build upon the federally guaranteed right to education established in 1982. Support for the state Dream Act and for Cedillo at UC Berkeley was very much in evidence given the high turnout for the discussion.

Assemblymember Gil Cedillo represents the 45th district of California and and was instrumental in the authoring and passage of the California Dream Act.

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Gil Cedillo talks with UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau.

Photo by Jim Block.

CINE LATINO

Sand in the Gears of Impunity

by Sarah Weber

They tortured; they murdered; they raped. Their victims included men and women, seniors and newborn babies, activists and priests, leaders and poor peasants; everyone was suspected of being subversive. The killers? The U.S.-backed Guatemalan military. Thirty-six years of civil war and terror left 200,000 people dead, of whom 50,000 were "disappeared." State forces and related paramilitary groups were responsible for 93 percent of these deaths. Their scorched earth strategy, targeting primarily Mayans living in the countryside, resulted in 626 massacres and the destruction of 440 villages in what the United Nation's Historical Clarification Commission called a genocide.

How does a country recover from such a devastating experience? In "Granito: How to Nail a Dictator," director Pamela Yates tries to answer that question as she interweaves the stories of 10 Guatemalans and foreign professionals who have been working together, each adding their *granito de arena* (grain of sand) to the struggle for justice in Guatemala.

In part a documentary about the Mayan genocide case and in part Yates' personal reflection on her role and trajectory as a filmmaker, the film is split into three segments. The first, "A Chronicle Foretold," shows Yates' first involvement in Guatemala, shooting footage for "When the Mountains Tremble." Motivated by her anger at the United States for being on the wrong side of so many conflicts, Yates went to Guatemala in 1982 in order to make a documentary about a hidden war, not realizing that what she would be filming was genocide. Over a period of six dangerous months, Yates succeeded in documenting not only military operations but also the armed uprising of the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (Guerrilla Army of the Poor, EGP).

The EGP and other guerrilla forces began an armed revolution in Guatemala in 1960, a time when peaceful change seemed impossible. Guatemala's democratically elected government had been overthrown in 1954 in a CIA-orchestrated coup, justified in the Cold War context by the claim that the country was becoming communist under President Jacobo Arbenz. The generals who came to power revoked the reforms enacted during 10 years of democracy and began to militarize the country. As a result, in the words of Gustavo Meoño, a former guerrilla leader interviewed for the film and one of the founding members of the EGP, "the path of armed struggle became my only option."

With the Sandinistas in power in Nicaragua and a strong revolutionary movement in El Salvador, change in Central America seemed possible, and Yates found that support for the Guatemalan insurgents was extremely widespread. However, this optimism was soon crushed as the military stepped up its violence into full-blown genocide. "None of us imagined how extreme the reaction of the system would be," Meoño says, "how far they would go, attacking entire communities to preserve the status quo."

According to Kate Doyle, the forensic archivist working on the genocide case and an expert in declassifying secret government documents, the Mayan genocide was caused by racism, fear and greed for power and land. And while she believes it was "fundamentally a Guatemalan product," the United States "helped create the machine that would go on to make the massacres" through its training of and economic aid to the Guatemalan military. CIA documents prove that the U.S. government was aware of the actions of the Guatemalan military, Doyle asserts in the film, adding that General Efraín Ríos Montt, president of Guatemala from 1982 to 1983, issued orders that his soldiers were "free to apprehend, hold, interrogate and dispose of suspected guerrillas as they saw fit."

What that meant on the ground is made clear by a soldier who laughingly tells the camera, "We've got a list, and if they appear on this list... they die." If an entire village was suspected of subversive activities, everyone was killed, and the village itself was burnt to the ground.

In order to document this brutality, Yates worked her way up the military chain of command, finally gaining permission from General Benedicto Lucas García to join him on an army helicopter mission to the highlands. Shot down by guerrilla soldiers, their shared near-death experience convinced General García that Yates had, as she describes it, "earned the right to go out with the army on their field operations." There, she was able to directly film military violence throughout the countryside until the situation grew too dangerous, and she had to stop filming.

The resulting documentary, "When the Mountains Tremble," became part of an unsuccessful campaign to stop U.S. involvement in Central America. Unsatisfied with the result, Yates still wanted to see the perpetrators brought to justice. Her chance came in 2005, when she was contacted by Almudena Bernabeu. A lawyer at the Center for Justice and Accountability, Bernabeu became the lead counsel on the Guatemalan genocide case because, as she explained in her talk following the documentary, "I was the only suicidal lawyer." She thought that footage from "When the Mountains Tremble" could provide evidence for the genocide case. Beyond showing military brutality, two of the defendants in the case, General Ríos Montt and General Lucas García, were interviewed in the documentary.

Photo by Dana Lixenberg.

A Mayan family in front of their home in the Ixil highlands of Guatemala.

The second segment of "Granito," entitled "Genocide on Trial," chronicles the building of the genocide case. The peace agreement that ended the civil war stipulated that the United Nations would create a truth commission to investigate human rights violations perpetrated by both sides during the conflict. On February 25, 1999, the UN published a report finding that "agents of the state committed acts of genocide against groups of Mayan people" and that "state forces and related paramilitary groups were responsible for 93 percent of the violations documented." Due to a blanket amnesty agreed upon during the peace process, the report named no names and included no mechanism to bring the perpetrators to justice.

However, a few months before the report was released, the Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón had begun experimenting with the limits of universal jurisdiction, which Yates explains as "the right to prosecute the worst crimes, even if they take place in another country." On October 10, 1998, he indicted former Chilean strongman

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Augusto Pinochet for his role in the human rights violations carried out by his regime. Seeing an opening, Guatemalan human rights activist Rigoberta Menchú used the truth commission's findings to initiate a genocide case in the Spanish National Court in 1999.

After the case was saved on appeal, litigation began in 2006. The legal team led by Bernabeu, which had conducted an in-depth investigation in Guatemala, brought 30 witnesses and experts to Madrid. There, they gave more than 60 hours of testimony in order to convince Judge Santiago Pedraz that genocide had indeed been perpetrated against the Mayan people. What proved to be more difficult, however, was establishing that high-level military generals, including Ríos Montt, were responsible for the genocide so that arrest warrants could be issued.

The first half of this problem was solved when Yates found outtakes of her interview with Ríos Montt in which the general takes full responsibility for the military and its actions. While denying allegations of army repression, he goes on to state that "our strength is in our capacity to make command decisions. The army is ready and able to act, because if I can't control the army, then what am I doing here?"

The last evidence needed came from Doyle, who was anonymously given a collection of papers documenting Operation Sofia, a counterinsurgency sweep that took place in July and August of 1982 in central Quiché, the region that suffered the worst violence. In these papers, the operation's mission is clearly stated to be the "extermination of subversive elements in the area." In addition, the papers include patrol reports which, according to Doyle, prove that there was a "two-way flow of information" and "that the high command were [sic] not ignorant of what the patrols on the ground were doing."

Armed with Yates' footage from "When the Mountains Tremble," Doyle's analysis of government documents and forensic findings from Fredy Peccerelli's excavation of a mass grave in La Verbena cemetery in Guatemala City, Bernabeu presented systematic evidence that the genocide had occurred — further substantiating what the witnesses had chronicled in their testimonies — and clearly linked responsibility for the crime to the military high command. As a result, Judge Pedraz issued six arrest warrants, including one for Ríos Montt, believing that "the case is moving forward to a sure conclusion, above all to get the people ultimately responsible for the crimes." Similarly, Bernabeu was entirely certain that, when Ríos Montt was confronted with the evidence during trial, he would be unable to escape justice.

General Benedicto Lucas García, head of the Guatemalan Armed Forces, 1982.

Photo by Susan Meiselas.

One last hurdle remained: bringing Ríos Montt and the other defendants to Spain. That proved difficult, however. Back in Guatemala, Ríos Montt was still powerful enough to convince the Constitutional Court to block the Spanish arrest warrant. "When the Spanish case was blocked, it felt like all was lost," narrates Yates at the beginning of the third segment of the documentary, "Grains of Sand."

Though unsuccessful in convicting high-level generals, the genocide case in Spain was not a failed effort. It started "a process that is now fueled by thousands and thousands of families who are not going to be scared anymore, who are not going to be pushed into being quiet anymore," Peccerelli comments in the documentary.

Indeed, some of those families initiated national cases, making use of the pressure that the genocide case in Spain had placed on the Guatemalan justice system to stop impunity. Evidence for these cases remained sparse until 2005, when a trove of police archives was found. The archives contain police records from the early 1980s, when the police were used as an instrument of terror and repression by the Guatemalan government. They are meticulously detailed, Doyle says, and similar to the intelligence files of the Stasi (Ministry for State Security) in East Germany.

Photo by Newton Thomas Sige.

Pamela Yates during the filming of "When the Mountains Tremble," 1982.

The clear documentation within these archives began "to have practical and concrete outcomes in the justice system," according to Meoño, the former EGP leader who now is the director of the archives. The first case to successfully use this evidence concluded on October 28, 2010, when two members of the National Police were sentenced to 40 years in prison for the disappearance of Fernando García, a student leader in the early 1980s. This landmark case marked the beginning of a formal movement within the state system towards justice. Since then, the active promotion of human rights trials by Guatemala's Attorney General, Claudia Paz y Paz, has led to the indictment of 48 other military leaders.

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The most recent — and dramatic — indictment was of Efraín Ríos Montt himself. In January 2012, a Guatemalan judge ordered the former dictator to stand trial on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity based in large part on evidence that was first presented in the Spanish case.

"The intention of the Spanish case was always to precipitate prosecution in Guatemala," Bernabeu said in a March 2012 interview. Although, she admitted, "I didn't expect it to be this fast."

While it remains to be seen what will come out of the Ríos Montt trial, many people in Guatemala continue to push forward, each adding their piece to the transformation of society. In the narration at the end of the film, Yates sums up their efforts as "a lifetime of working at what you can contribute, an idea called granito de arena." A metaphor that permeates the film, granito de arena "means to say, I alone can't change things, but I can help to change things," Rigoberta Menchú explains. "Because what I give is only a tiny contribution, a grain of sand, because there is so much sand." "Granito: How to Nail a Dictator," show Yates' grain of sand joining with many others in the struggle to rebuild Guatemala into a nation defined by justice, equality and respect for human life.

"Granito: How to Nail a Dictator" was screened by CLAS and the Berkeley Law School on November 2, 2011. Almudena Bernabeu, the lead counsel on the Guatemalan genocide case and a lawyer at the Center for Justice and Accountability, introduced the film. UC Berkeley Professor Beatriz Manz was one of the expert witnesses who gave testimony in Spain.

Sarah Weber is a graduate student in the Latin American Studies Program at UC Berkeley.

Almudena Bernabeu (far left) with the Guatemalan witnesses who traveled to Spain to testify.

Photo courtesy of Pamela Yates.

Photo by Sarah Krupp.

A worker tends cacao seedlings.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Cultivating a Coca-Free Future

by Sarah Krupp

Now that residents of Rescate Las Varas have uprooted nearly all their illegal coca crops, the fear is gone. But so is the money.

In this village in Pacific Colombia, there are soccer matches again; children are learning traditional dances; and residents can now leave their homes at night without fear. There is hope that, in time, the newly planted cacao crops will replace some of the lost income that coca had reaped. And, Kella Calleno, 19, says she is no longer afraid that paramilitaries will hurt her family.

Las Varas is the only village of the 14 rural black communities, called *consejos comunitarios*, in the municipality of Tumaco that is free of illicit crops, and it is among the few not threatened by armed groups. Tumaco has the most coca cultivation, and one of the highest homicide rates, in Colombia.

Calleno wants to be a police officer, a measure of just how transformative the process of rebuilding the community, creating legal opportunities and eradicating coca has been — and the vital role that security forces have played. Perversely, the economic consequences of eradicating coca mean that Calleno's family has barely enough money to live on and certainly not enough to pay for her to attend the police academy. So, she works in a makeshift restaurant that her mother opened in Las Varas, serving lunch to a handful of school teachers several times a week. She plans to eventually move to a city, Bogotá or Cali.

"I don't want to stay here," she said. "What can I do? What job can I have?"

Her predicament represents the hope and the frailty of Las Varas' success. The community of nearly 7,000 is

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at once a beacon of change in the region — and perhaps even in the floundering drug war — and a testament to the challenges of creating sustainable development in areas long marginalized by the state.

The residents of Las Varas decided to stop growing coca after paramilitaries shot three people dead on September 7, 2008. At that time, the killings were not unusual in the region. By the mid-2000s, violence had engulfed the once-peaceful, rural Afro-Colombian villages. Coca growers, driven from other parts of the country by Plan Colombia's offensive tactics — aerial spraying of herbicides and military force — moved to ever-more isolated regions. Enter Tumaco: a sweaty, ramshackle port city surrounded by lush countryside in a region so remote that the city center didn't have running water until the 1980s, and the rural areas still don't.

The black communities have lived for centuries among the mangrove-enshrouded rivers that stem from the Pacific Ocean. Beginning in the 1990s, they were granted semi-autonomous rights as consejos comunitarios under an elected council, or *junta*, and collective title. However, unlike a city, they do not receive state transfers or have the ability to generate revenue. Besides clean water, they lack basic services, such as garbage disposal and sewage systems. Of the 14 consejos comunitarios, only two (including Las Varas) are connected by road. The others can only be reached by boat. Until the introduction of coca, residents had few options besides subsistence agriculture and fishing. Some found seasonal agricultural work on plantations. Those who wanted more moved away. When coca growers migrated to Tumaco, they seemed to offer a solution.

Within a few years, the paramilitaries and guerrillas had followed the coca, terrorizing villagers whenever it seemed necessary to maximize their drug trafficking profits. All too often, corpses were found in the rivers. But in Las Varas, which had come later to coca and had remained relatively untouched by violence, the 2008 murders jolted the community. The next morning, hundreds gathered in the central plaza and decided to eradicate coca throughout the territory.

It has been — and still is — a long and difficult slog as the community has sought to uproot coca from the soil and from its culture while generating other means of income in a destitute region.

When I arrived in Tumaco to research the efficacy of joint U.S.–Colombian strategies for eradicating coca — alternative development projects designed to coax farmers to give up coca for legal crops combined with aerial spraying of herbicides to kill the coca — I wanted to understand why Las Varas was unique.

Nearly all the consejos comunitarios had at some point been part of an alternative development project, most of them sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. The U.S. funding for these projects is funneled through Plan Colombia, the security and counter-narcotics policy that has cost the U.S. more than $7 billion since 2000. Although primarily a military policy, a small percentage of Plan Colombia funds go to USAID for rural development.

Las Varas has become the poster child for USAID projects. But in the other communities, similar projects have done little to diminish coca, while leaving many community members embittered.

The original intent of my research was to compare USAID projects, and this myopic focus prevented me from understanding why Las Varas had such different results until months after I left Tumaco. The reality is that USAID had very little to do with it. A combination of community will, a partnership with a government entity and road access explain Las Varas' comparative success. USAID was an actor but not the protagonist.

"We made the decision," said Fanny Rodriguez. "We said as a consejo comunitario, no more!"

Profits and Social Costs

Long before the shootings, a growing number of Las Varas residents had decided that the social costs of coca were too high to justify the material gain, especially given that the profits were dwindling. Marco Antonio Quintero was one of them. He grew up in Las Varas, but like many, he left to find work. Quintero returned to Las Varas in 2000, when he heard that farmers were prospering with coca. Some coca growers earned as much as $2,000 to $3,000 a month, a fortune considering that the monthly minimum wage is about $320, and few villagers earn that much from legal work.

Quintero had just 40 coca plants and was making about $600 a month. Instead of cultivating more, within a few years, he stopped growing coca completely. He said he "saw the fear that it was creating in the community" and how it affected the young people, especially men, who began to "drink too much" and "develop bad vices."

The young men who were involved in coca production readily admit that they spent much of their earnings on booze, sometimes pointing to the poor condition of their home or vehicle — if they were lucky enough to have one — as proof. Infidelity also became a source of conflict, as men used their coca profits to woo other women.

Photo by Sarah Krupp.

A woman removes impurities from cacao beans.

Although the tension over coca within the community had been mounting, it was not until after the 2008 shootings that residents united in opposition to the illicit crop and the groups that traffic it. Amid the outcry, the 15-member junta insisted that addressing the situation would have to be a communitywide struggle: each of the *veredas* (hamlets or neighborhoods) would have to commit.

"It is easy for an armed group to disappear us (the junta) one by one and for things to continue to be the same," Las Varas President José Felix recalled telling the roughly 300 residents at the meeting.

Partnership and Community Building

The junta's initial tasks were twofold: expand community leadership beyond themselves and partner with an institution that could help them with the resources and capacity-building they lacked. Recognizing that the community could not end coca cultivation, resist the armed groups and rebuild its social structure alone, they requested assistance. The department of Nariño (departments are similiar to states in the U.S.), which had already been working with an indigenous community in a similar capacity, agreed to help.

The department's regional office has assisted the process at every step and secured a patchwork of funding — nearly $3 million — for Las Varas. Under then-governor Antonio Navarro Wolfe, himself a guerilla in the 1980s, the government wrested two important concessions from the state: the constant presence of state security to quell the violence and discourage illegal activity and a temporary ban on aerial spraying of herbicides, permitting the villagers to uproot the plants with their own hands. The community, with coaching from the department staff, strengthened the elected committees in each of the veredas. They also created youth and women's committees as well as task forces charged with coordinating the cultivation and commercialization of cacao.

In 2010, two years after Las Varas residents began to remake their community — and when most of the coca was already gone — USAID spearheaded an alternative development project through a contractor. It began with food security, financing small vegetable gardens for each family, a plan that flopped. More importantly, it launched a cacao cultivation project designed to increase production and improve quality. Hundreds of families participated.

The agency and various government and international entities also invested in adult education and badly needed

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Photo by Sarah Krupp.

Las Varas, Colombia.

infrastructure projects: foot bridges that allow children to get to school and farmers to transport their crops when high tide swells the rivers; improvements to the dirt road that connects Las Varas to the municipal highway; a combination basketball-soccer court; and a project to build a water system. The department staff helped the leaders negotiate and administer the projects and funding, filling a crucial void. Since consejos comunitarios do not have a sustained source of revenue, they also have no staff, leaving junta leaders — some of whom do not have a high-school education — to assume roles for which they may be ill-equipped, such as managing finances and overseeing engineering projects.

The Other Communities

In contrast with Las Varas, development assistance in the other consejos comunitarios was limited primarily to agricultural projects. They received less funding per capita and little in the way of leadership training and community building. Leaders of many of the communities said that the projects did not reflect their desires.

"The projects were not created by the community. They were created by people in Bogotá who didn't know what we needed," said Ari Ledesma, a junta member of the Consejo Comunitario Gualajo, where several leaders said the USAID project did more harm than good.

Unlike Las Varas, the other communities did not choose to eliminate coca and ask for assistance. They were selected by the Colombian government. The exchange was simple: coca eradication for aid. If authorities found coca still growing, the project was suspended until the plants were removed. The result was often stalled projects that impacted just a small portion of the community.

In spite of these setbacks, there is still a growing desire among Tumaco residents to get out of the coca trade. They are tired of the aerial spraying that kills food crops along with coca. They are tired of the violence and fear inflicted by armed narcotraffickers. Many also said that coca is no longer as profitable. Armed groups have claimed certain territories and formed drug trafficking alliances — the Rastrojos, a paramilitary gang, have allied with the guerillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC) — which has reduced violence in the rural areas but has also eliminated price competition.

In the years following the USAID project in Gualajo, leaders were able to eradicate much of the community's coca, although they insist that they did this despite — not because of — USAID. They convinced many residents to stop growing coca partly in the hope that the Nariño government would also partner with them, but the cash-poor department was unable to take on another community.

Now Gualajo — and the other consejos comunitarios — are awaiting a second round of projects that USAID has proposed for the entire region. Securing the communities will be a crucial first step, and the state has indicated that it will deploy public forces in the zones where armed groups have the most significant presence.

USAID has signaled that the new projects will be more holistic, addressing community building and infrastructure deficits. But resources are limited and not likely to allow these communities to mimic Las Varas' development without the department of Nariño's assistance or the extensive patchwork of funding that it helped leverage. Additionally, transportation is arduous, costly and only possible during high tide. According to Tumaqueños, traveling by boat is about four times more expensive than by land, making it harder to sell their products in town at competitive prices. The more difficult-to-reach communities are harder to secure and, precisely for that reason, are where armed groups find refuge.

Nor has there been a firm commitment to stop spraying, a fact that many community leaders have cited as a major obstacle. In the consejo comunitario Alto Mira, farmers returning home from a USAID-sponsored workshop several years ago learned that U.S. pilots paid with U.S. funds had sprayed their farms while they were away. The fumigation, which targeted coca, also killed the cacao crops planted partly with U.S. dollars.

"The project was allowing us to every day substitute coca. We were removing it little by little," said community president Gilmer Ganaro García.

Ganaro said the spraying seeded distrust among the community, effectively ending the project.

Yet, the Alto Mira president believes that the new development projects, if done correctly, could begin to create decent livelihoods and restore peace to his community. For Ganaro, who fled to the city after receiving death threats, it would also mean that he could come home.

Sarah Krupp is a student in the Latin American Studies Program at UC Berkeley. She received a Tinker Summer Research Grant to travel to Colombia in 2011.

A young girl stands among the cacao pods.

Photo by Sarah Krupp.

Vuelvo

Lyrics by Patricio Manns
Music by Horacio Salinas

Con cenizas, con desgarros,
con esta altiva impaciencia,
con una honesta conciencia,
con enfado, con sospecha,
con activa certidumbre
pongo el pie en mi país.

Pongo el pie en mi país
y en lugar de sollozar,
de moler mi pena al viento,
abro el ojo y su mirar
y contengo el descontento.

Vuelvo hermoso, vuelvo tierno,
vuelvo con mi esperadura,
vuelvo con mis armaduras,
con mi espada, mi desvelo,
mi tajante desconsuelo,
mi presagio, mi dulzura,
vuelvo con mi amor espeso,
vuelvo en alma
y vuelvo en hueso
a encontrar la patria pura
al pie del último beso.

Vuelvo al fin sin humillarme,
sin pedir perdón ni olvido:
nunca el hombre está vencido,
su derrota es siempre breve,
un estímulo que mueve
la vocación de su guerra,
pues la raza que destierra
y la raza que recibe
le dirán al fin que él vive
dolores de toda tierra.

Horacio Salinas, the internationally renowned musician, composer and musical director of the beloved Chilean ensemble Inti-Illimani, taught a class for the Center for Latin American Studies during fall 2011. While at Berkeley, Salinas also gave a recital for CLAS on November 1, 2011.

(Photo by Jim Block.)

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A sculpture by Sophia Vari in Cartagena, Colombia.
Photo by Nicky Hamilton.

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