DEMOCRATIC OPENINGS: ORGANIZED BUSINESS, CONSERVATIVE PROTEST, AND POLITICAL-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN MEXICO, 1970-1986

by

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(Under the Direction of Pamela Voekel)

ABSTRACT

In the latter decades of the twentieth-century, Mexican conservatism underwent an historic transformation. The immediate catalysts for this transformation were the populist rhetoric and policies of Mexican presidents Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-76) and José López Portillo (1976-82), which impelled business leaders and religious conservatives to devise new strategies for subverting the state’s long-standing role as the custodian of public life and contesting the ideologies of one-party rule and state-led economic development. Public officials’ anti-business oratory and secular reproductive and gender policies—including the legalization and promotion of artificial contraceptives and the courting of women’s liberation activists—accentuated conservative anxieties stemming from the rise of urban guerrilla groups, deteriorating economic conditions, and feminist challenges to traditional family and sexual relations. The dissertation examines the protests that responded to these anxieties, tracing Mexico’s neoliberal and democratic transitions to political alliances among entrepreneurs and Catholics dating from the 1970s and the cultural engineering projects that these coalitions championed. Right-wing protests in Mexico were intimately connected to the efforts of global business and religious leaders to decenter the state from social and economic life. Nevertheless,
the movement that emerged was deeply rooted in Mexican politics and culture. Entrepreneurial and Catholic activists, the dissertation argues, linked political and economic opening through a critique of state power as corruptive not only of the economy but of the values and moral norms underpinning civic culture and family life. By subsuming historically unpopular economic doctrines within a democratic vision that garnered widespread support among key sectors of Mexican society, right-wing activists established the political conditions from which Mexico’s market democracy emerged.
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To my wife, Chelsea, and daughter, Lucia. I am forever grateful for your patience and sacrifice.
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Introduction

When an interviewer asked him in 1999 to recount the greatest challenges that businessmen of his generation had overcome, eighty-one-year-old Lorenzo Servitje Sendra had no shortage of experiences to draw from. As a founder and former president of Panificadora Bimbo (Bimbo Bakery) and its parent corporation, the Bimbo Group, one of Latin America’s largest food conglomerates, Servitje was among Mexico’s foremost industrialists. In addition to overseeing the expansion of Pan Bimbo, as the bakery is popularly known, from a modest family business into one of Mexico’s most profitable corporations, Servitje had devoted a large part of his career to the operations of Mexican business organizations.

Now in the twilight of his professional life, he commanded a well-earned reputation as an ardent, and articulate, defender of Mexican businessmen. Like his associates and fellow travelers, Servitje held an abiding faith in the power of free enterprise to improve the economic standing of Mexican society. For Servitje, however, the greatest achievements of Mexican businessmen lay not in the usual metrics of job creation, production levels, or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Gathering his response to the interviewer’s query, he referred instead to an axiom popularized by celebrated Mexican author Octavio Paz. “[B]usinessmen have only interests,” he mused wryly, “they don’t have ideas.” In light of this perception, he marveled, “what has occurred in [recent] years is incredible.”

Servitje credited his friend and associate, Monterrey industrialist Andrés Marcelo Sada, with spearheading a novel strategy for engaging government officials, the public, and Mexican

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entrepreneurs. Sada postulated that the defenders of free enterprise in Mexico could ensure its survival only by transforming public perceptions of businessmen and of the social function of private business. Under Sada’s leadership, explained Servitje, in the late 1970s the Center for Social Studies (Centro de Estudios Sociales, or CES), an influential private sector think-tank, devised a plan known as “Project 2000” (Proyecto 2000).

Project 2000 referred to a multifaceted program to foster public understandings of private enterprise as not only the motor of Mexican economic development but as a value system integral to the formation of a healthy, modern society. Servitje professed that at the time of its inception Project 2000 proposed goals that “seemed impossible.” Proselytizing the moral virtues of market capitalism was a precarious endeavor in Mexico, where endemic social struggles and government praxis had long-ago relegated economic liberalism to the ideological dustbin. The historical improbability of Mexico’s free-marketeering millennial political economy was not lost on Servitje. In concluding his response, he added approvingly: “Many ideas have changed since then.”

But Project 2000 did not, as Servitje suggested, mark the genesis of this little-studied metamorphosis in the ways that organized business interacted with Mexican society and politics. Rather, it was the distillation of strategies that began taking shape nearly a decade before Project 2000 acquired its spirited moniker. When President Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976) entered office in 1970, broad cross-sections of Mexican society – including many students, workers, peasants, and intellectuals – had come to view the “stabilizing development” (desarrollo estabilizador) model of previous decades as a betrayal of the Mexican Revolution.

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2 Ibid.
They targeted private-sector greed and government collusion as the sources of the nation’s ills, demanding more vigorous state intervention to curb widening socioeconomic disparities. Echeverría’s populist rhetoric amplified private-sector angst. The president’s penchant for publicly maligning businessmen hardened an emerging view among business leaders that capitalism in Mexico needed rescuing. In response, an influential coterie of capitalists resolved to reform the public image of businesspeople and the institutions they represented. It was this campaign that later gave birth to Project 2000.

In the early years of Echeverría’s presidency a new generation of businessmen began experimenting with ways to counteract public animosities toward the private sector. Those such as Sada and Servitje sought to transform the ways that businesspeople and corporations communicated their ideas, values, and achievements to the rest of Mexican society. During the 1970s Mexican business leaders developed innovative advertising and public relations campaigns, organized conferences and public symposia, sponsored educational initiatives, founded magazines, formed civic associations, expanded and reoriented business organizations, and enlisted sympathetic intellectuals and opinion-makers to promote their views in the local and national media. The apostles of this approach exhorted Mexico’s captains of industry to put their creative energies to a new kind of test. If private industry was to survive and prosper in Mexico, they insisted, businessmen must learn to market themselves, their businesses, and the free-enterprise system more convincingly to the nation’s wayward citizens.

The response was multifaceted and labored, but determined. Spokespeople for the private sector shed their customary sheepishness before the state. Capitalists, business professionals, and leaders of business associations intervened on an unprecedented scale in the public dialogue over the nature of Mexico’s political system, the viability of its mixed economy, and the rights and
responsibilities of citizens, businesses, and the state. Rarely had members of the Mexican private
sector so brazenly challenged government incursions into economic and social life. Never before
had they so openly and uniformly repudiated the state’s authority as a custodian of societal
values.

For Sada and his contemporaries, parochial concerns over policies and profits were an
inadequate foundation for unified private-sector action. They admonished business leaders to
cohere behind a social vision that counter-posed entrepreneurs’ ostensive commitment to
individual freedoms, honest leadership, and responsible citizenship against depictions of
feckless, demagogic rule, collectivist authoritarianism, and social dependency. The result was a
systematic, if nascent, challenge to the entire moral edifice of PRI rule.

Historical analyses of the ideological contest between Mexican business leaders and
Echeverría’s government remain scant. Studies of business-state relations in post-1970 Mexico
have focused primarily on conventional methods of private sector resistance. Time-honored
tactics such as capital flight, withholding investment capital, and spreading rumors to undercut
government prestige persisted as important instruments of business opposition under
Echeverría. But the overwhelming scholarly emphasis on these dimensions of resistance
suggests a false continuity in business strategies for confronting undesirable policies and

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3 For detailed discussion of capital flight and private sector investment strategies under Echeverría see
James M. Cypher, State and Capital in Mexico: Development Policy Since 1940 (Boulder, San Francisco, & Oxford:
Westview Press, 1990), Chapter 4; Judith Adler Hellman, Mexico in Crisis (New York and London: Holmes & Meier
Martin’s Press, 1988), Chapter 6; and Leopoldo Solís, Intento de la reforma económica de México (Mexico City: El
Colegio Nacional, 1988); On the use of these tactics in earlier periods see Nora Hamilton, The Limits of State
by private sector actors see Samuel Schmidt, The Deterioration of the Mexican Presidency: The Years of Luis
Echeverría (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1991); and Louise E. Walker, Waking from the Dream:
Mexico’s Middle Classes after 1968 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), Chapter 2. Walker discusses the
circulation and of rumors as a tactical common ground among business elites and conservative middle class
opponents of Echeverría.
governing trends. Notable observers writing in the wake of Echeverría’s presidency identified ideological conflict as a central aspect of the rupture between businessmen and the state. Nevertheless, the contours and historical afterlives of this contest remain largely unexplored—a void that is especially troublesome as scholars turn their gaze to the transformations in political and economic thought that attended the neoliberal turn of the late twentieth-century.ª

Satisfactory explication of the shift from state-led development to neoliberalism demands that scholars move beyond interpretations centering on the educational backgrounds and policy preferences of economists and high-ranking PRI officials.ª Enduring transfigurations in social and political consciousness require ontological moorings that take root only gradually. As social theorist Robert Heilbroner observed, “‘powerful’ economic theory is always erected on powerful sociopolitical visions; and that theory retains its power over our intellects only as long as its underlying visions continue to mobilize our moral sympathies.”ª Absent such a vision, Mexico was a most inhospitable sociopolitical terrain for the “new” economic liberalism. To apprehend the longue durée of Mexico’s transition from “nationalism to neoliberalism,” as one scholar has

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ª Miguel Basáñez, La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968-1980 (Mexico City and Madrid: Siglo veintiuno editors, S.A., 1981) is the most detailed treatment to date of public-private sector ideological conflict after 1970. A sociologist, Basáñez makes a compelling argument for the centrality of non-economic factors to the rupture between Mexican businessmen and Echeverría’s government but he does not examine the historical implications of the conflict or how the narratives that emerged from it evolved in succeeding decades to condition relations among businessmen, the state, and society at large. Historian Roderic A. Camp, in Entrepreneurs and Politics in Twentieth Century Mexico (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) also identifies ideological divergence and value-contestation as important elements of the post-1970 business-state rupture. See also Carlos Arriola, Los empresarios y el Estado (Mexico City: Fondo de la Cultura Económica, 1981).

ª Analyses of Mexico’s transition from state-protected to open markets in the latter decades of the 20th century have focused predominantly on the rise to power and influence of free-market oriented, and frequently U.S.-educated, political leaders and professional economists. On the consolidation of Mexico’s free-market technocracy see Sarah Babb, Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Miguel Ángel Centeno, Democracy within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). and

described it, researchers must examine the cultural and ideological work of organized
businesspeople.⁷

Understanding Mexican business leaders’ response to Echeverría requires examining the
transnational pathways through which businessmen encountered and exchanged the strategies
and ideas at its core. Despite their historic novelty in Mexico, the tactics that businessmen
deployed in their struggle with Mexico’s latter-day populists were not entirely home-grown. The
insistence of those such as Sada and Servitje that socioeconomic and political change must
proceed from the realm of ideas was imbricated in a global project among conservative
intellectuals and businessmen to win converts to the free-market cause.

The broad outlines of this project have been well-documented. An extensive body of
scholarship shows that international networks of academics and business elites worked to
undermine the political and intellectual foundations of “embedded liberalism”—the systemic
combination of regulated markets, progressive tax rates, and social safety-nets characteristic of
Keynesian political economies—from the 1940s.⁸ International associations such as the Mont
Pèlerin Society and burgeoning free-market think-tanks bound together a heterogeneous
assortment of anti-Keynesian thinkers.⁹ Significant differences of opinion notwithstanding,
concerns over taxes, inflation, and the creeping expansion of the state united theorists from

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⁷ Babb, Managing Mexico.
⁸ See for example Mark Blyth, Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the
Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, Selling Free Enterprise:
The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960 (University of Illinois Press, 1994); Kim Phillips-Fein,
Invisible Hands: The Businessmen’s Crusade Against the New Deal (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2009);
Angus Bergin, The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets Since the Great Depression (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 2012); Richard Cockett, Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic
⁹ The Mont Pèlerin Society was founded by Friedrich Hayak in 1947 and later led by Milton Friedman.
Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds. The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought
Collective (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Cockett, Thinking the Unthinkable; Bergin, Great
Persuasion.
disparate intellectual backgrounds and diffuse interest groups in a collective assault on Keynesian economic thought. As one historian observes, opponents of the Keynesian order, though politically marginal during the postwar apogee of embedded liberalism, “found ways to nourish their opposition, resist liberal institutions and ideas, and persuade others to join in fighting back.” It was not until the global recession of the 1970s that their efforts achieved notable political success.

Global economic conditions in the 1970s presented economists, businesspeople, and policymakers the world over with a new and seemingly intractable set of problems. Although the causes of economic malaise were varied, hotly debated, and shaped by locally-specific social and political factors, economic trends in oil-dependent countries exhibited fundamental similarities.

Soaring energy costs resulting from the OPEC oil embargo spurred inflation in many parts of the world, generating sharp upward pressures on prices and wages. The rising cost of base industrial inputs in this inflationary climate further increased the price of consumer goods at the very moment when declining real wages were dampening consumer demand. High overhead and saturated markets prompted companies to curtail production, elevating prices even further as supplies foundered, while governments in the Global North and Global South alike struggled to cope with the inflationary cycle.

Further, the increasing cost of goods and services, coupled with losses in real income, fueled social pressures that indirectly accelerated the rate of inflation. Wage increases and

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10 Among the various schools of thought that converged in what would become the neoclassical, or neoliberal, paradigm were monetarists, supply-siders, rational expectations theorists, and public-choice theorists. See Blyth, *Great Transformations*; Bergin, *The Great Persuasion*.


government spending—without which workers and marginalized groups were often unable to subsist—increased the supply of money in circulation. Meanwhile, shortfalls in basic goods encouraged widespread hoarding and price gauging; and, of course, stop-gap measures to disrupt the inflationary cycle further alienated many economists and businessmen.

Government-imposed price controls, while easing the plight of consumers, also squeezed profits, further reducing production incentives. In countries where financial capital was scarce, monetary instruments to slow inflation were largely ineffective, as leading industries relied on foreign credit tied to international lending rates. Even in the United States, whose Federal Reserve was better equipped to counter inflationary pressures, Keynesian levers appeared incapable of adequately reducing the amount of currency in circulation.13 Despite the repeated forecasts of leading public- and private-sector economists that deceleration was imminent, inflation rates hovered well above predictions.14 Inflation’s continued buoyancy in the face of prescribed countermeasures—and the apparent inability of Keynesian predictors to accurately peg its trajectory—greatly eroded the intellectual and political currency of Keynesian thought. Opponents of the Keynesian order were well-positioned to occupy the resulting vacuum.

Scholars have closely examined the intellectual effervescence that remade the economics profession beginning in the 1970s and propelled neoclassical ideas to the forefront of global

13 When the Fed raised interest rates in the 1970s it did not cool inflation, as Keynesian theorists predicted, but resulted rather in the previously unknown economic paradox of stagflation, a combination of economic stagnation and inflation. However, recent scholarship has argued that stagflation resulted less from flaws in Keynesian anti-inflationary instruments than from a failure to properly deploy them. According to this line of reasoning the U.S. Congress laid the groundwork for the inflationary spiral during the boom decades of the 1950s and 1960s by defying Keynesian prescriptions for increased taxes during cycles of intensive economic growth. According to Keynesian anti-cyclical theory, doing so would have reduced the amount of currency in circulation while replenishing government coffers with money to be used to spur growth during economic slowdowns. See Blyth, Great Transformations, 91-96.

14 In the case of the United States, undisclosed costs associated with the secret escalation of the Vietnam War significantly increased the supply of money in circulation, contributing to the appearance that Keynesian economists were incapable of accurately predicting increases in inflation, and therefore of resolving it. Ibid., Chapters 5-6.
development paradigms. In the decades preceding the crisis such renowned free-market luminaries as Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and Milton Freidman took up perches in the world’s leading academic institutions, published treatises, spoke at international conferences, and stocked the intellectual coffers of conservative think-tanks, which recycled free-market ideas for application to an ever-widening array of real and imagined maladies.\textsuperscript{15} Economists, development workers, and sympathetic policy- and opinion-makers underwrote and impelled this changing-of-the-guard through scripts that cast the market as an apolitical, hermetic entity whose various parts interact in predictable patterns unaffected by the messiness of human social relations.\textsuperscript{16} Where Keynesian economic thought rested on the core assumption that markets function poorly and require government intervention to achieve equilibrium, the new prophets of prosperity held the inverse to be true. Market equilibrium occurred organically, they argued; conversely, state meddling, even well-intentioned, was the primary cause of disequilibrium.\textsuperscript{17}

In this narrative, political leaders could best ensure the collective welfare by heeding the advice of those with the intellectual capacity and training to discern market functions; in other words, by keeping politics out of economic policymaking.\textsuperscript{18} This technocratic vision of epistemologically-assured abundance elevated free-market economics to the level of a universal science, justified new and pernicious global interventions, and tilted internal power struggles in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid.; Cockett, \textit{Thinking the Unthinkable}; Bergin, \textit{The Great Persuasion}; Mirowski and Plehwe, eds, \textit{The Road from Mont Pèlerin}.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Free-market thought followed a more halting path and that more strident defense of free market through the categorical rejection of state economic intervention only emerged with Friedman’s later work – which came to fruition in the 1970s. See Bergin, \textit{The Great Persuasion}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ferguson, \textit{Antipolitics Machine}; Mirowski and Plehwe, eds, \textit{The Road from Mont Pèlerin}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
poor nations in favor of those with access to knowledge and expertise produced in the Global North. The path from intellectual production to political application, however, was not a straight one.

An emerging body of work has begun to chart the manifold axes along which the restructuring of the global political economy unfolded. Intellectual sea-changes within the academy, governments, and international financial organizations anchored a global paradigm shift in political-economic thought, but the mechanics of legitimation and enforcement were varied and deeply contingent upon domestic circumstances. Within this literature two themes are particularly important to the Mexican case.

The first relates to the role of business elites in the legitimation process. Recent work on conservatism and the decline of Keynesianism in the United States and Western Europe has shown that businesspeople played a key role in building political coalitions to support the free-market cause. On the one hand, business leaders provided vital funding for lobbying efforts, academic departments, conservative think-tanks, and the political campaigns of sympathetic public officials. Equally important, however, they cultivated the social capital required for successful coalition-building by repackaging neoclassical ideas into narratives with broad cultural appeal. By insinuating market ideology into larger conversations on public morality, individual freedoms, and faith—a process that historian Kim Phillips-Fein styles “fusionism”—business leaders and their allies helped turn esoteric debates over economic policy into an existential cause.

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19 Jackson, Globalizers; Babb, Managing Mexico; Klein, Shock Doctrine; Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism; Dezalay and Garth, Internationalization of the Palace Wars; Ferguson, Global Shadows
20 Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands; Blyth, Great Transformations;
21 Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands; Lisa McGirr, Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001); The most nuanced treatment of the ways that corporate leaders worked to synchronize religious and economic values in the Christian free-enterprise movement is Bethany
As Servitje candidly acknowledged, an analogous, intersecting movement was afoot in Mexico. Yet local businesspeople and the transnational coteries with which they associated remain conspicuously absent from prevailing accounts of economic opening in Mexico and Latin America. Mexicans were generally ill-disposed to the rabid individualism and unqualified devotion of neoclassical intellectual icons to abstract, impersonal market forces. To be sure, figures such as Friedman, Ayn Rand, Hayek, and von Mises had their Mexican admirers—including many of the country’s leading entrepreneurs—but such reverence ran counter to the historical currents of public opinion. In a society where nineteenth-century economic liberalism bequeathed a legacy of socioeconomic misery, political turmoil, and ideological ignominy, market-worship made a poor cause-célèbre.22

The relative absence in Mexico of free-marketeering political crusades resembling those in the Global North has obscured the cultural and ideological work of Mexican business elites and their allies. Consequently, interpretations of Mexico’s neoliberal transition have focused disproportionately on external coercion and government imposition—factors that help explain Mexico’s sudden turn from entrenched nationalist traditions and forms of governance in response to economic crisis, but cannot account for enduring, broad-based shifts in political and economic values.23 As Kenneth Coleman has argued, in the latter decades of the twentieth-century

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22 Gauss, *Made in Mexico*; Babb, *Managing Mexico*

23 Babb, *Managing Mexico*; Centeno, *Democracy within Reason*; Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*

Walker has recently called attention to this gap in the historiography of Mexico’s neoliberal transition. Louise Walker, *Waking from the Dream*. 
Mexican attitudes were uncharacteristically favorable to open markets and privatization, a trend that he attributes largely to the country’s proximity to the United States.\textsuperscript{24}

Yet proximity alone cannot explain such a broad and dramatic shift in civic and economic values. As Geraldo Cadava illustrates, historical linkages along the U.S-Mexican frontier created a culturally and economically cognate, if geopolitically nebulous, region united through transnational interactions and a shared frontier ideology.\textsuperscript{25} This common history undoubtedly supported the kind of value-approximation that Coleman describes. And, indeed, the U.S. Sunbelt, which Cadava aptly rebrands as a Mexico-inclusive “Transnational Sunbelt,” was the epicenter of the neoconservative movement that impelled the triumph of neoliberalism in the United States.\textsuperscript{26} Even where values are conducive, however, enduring political-economic transformations require concerted political and social action.

To understand the origins of Mexico’s neoliberal turn, scholars must bring Mexican businessmen and their conservative accomplices more firmly into view. Such an approach not only illuminates how linkages between the transnational movement for free enterprise and endogenous conservative politics shaped Mexico’s neoliberal transition. It is essential to understanding the global durability of the neoliberal paradigm.

A second major theme in the literature on neoliberalism is also germane to the Mexican case. Numerous studies have highlighted the ways that the champions of free enterprise utilized


crises and crisis narratives to impel the advance of the global free-trade system. Political theorist Mark Blyth argues that in periods of crisis previously accepted ideas are called into question, increasing uncertainty as to the causes of and solutions to the crisis and the capacity of existing institutions to cope with it. In such uncertain environments, alternative sets of ideas, nurtured along the margins of the prevailing model until the moment of crisis presents itself, offer a means of diagnosing the crisis, thereby reducing uncertainty. Blyth posits that proponents of these alternative ideas have used them to construct crisis narratives that they deployed as weapons for discrediting prevailing paradigms, while using the “new” constellations of ideas as a basis for constructing new institutions.

Blyth uses this theoretical framework to explain how disparate strands of free-market thought coalesced in response to the crisis of the 1970s. From the international networks and associations that nurtured them, these ideas migrated to national institutions in the United States and Sweden—his case studies—and ultimately to global financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Unlike more conventional intellectual histories of neoliberalism, however, Blyth is sensitive to the interplay between ideas and moneyed interests. Businessmen, he contends, participated directly and extensively in the production and dissemination of neoclassical ideas and the crisis narratives that carried them.

The resulting profusion of free-market thought, dumbed-down for public consumption and tethered to a pervasive sense of crisis, created domestic political climates more favorable to the new paradigm. Although he is primarily concerned with intellectual and institutional

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28 Blyth, *Great Transformations*

29 Ibid., Chapters 6-7
change in the Global North, Blyth’s insights into the ways that economic ideas are bound up with the construction and articulation of crises is especially relevant for Mexico, where crisis narratives were a defining—and virtually constant—feature of the national dialogue in the decades after 1968. If, as scholars have shown, advocates of free enterprise bolstered the appeal of their ideas by blending them with culturally-resonant beliefs, historical circumstances gave critical aid to their efforts. Mexico was no exception to this pattern.

Where local businesspeople have been a neglected topic in studies of ‘structural adjustment’ in the Global South, the concept of crisis has been a central motif. Scholars such as Naomi Klein and David Harvey have identified a pattern in which proponents of neoliberalism routinely exploited major crises in poor countries—from natural disasters to economic and political upheavals—to privatize state assets and dismantle social welfare programs before citizens could recover from the shock. For these scholars, varying combinations of transnational capitalists, academics, and local political elites have colluded to impose structural adjustment programs on prostrate civil societies with little regard for the welfare of citizens.

Other researchers have pointed to the ways that international financial organizations have exploited fiscal catastrophes in poor nations, forcing governments to gut state-run industries and social programs as a condition for securing desperately needed loans. Such works offer compelling evidence that the systematic exploitation of crises in those countries most vulnerable

30 Most recently, Louise Walker has insightfully examined the ways that perceptions of overlapping political, economic, and cultural crises in Mexico in this period shaped middle-class attitudes toward neoliberalism and democratization. Walker, Waking from the Dream.
to them—a process that Klein famously styles “disaster capitalism”—was instrumental to the global advance of neoliberalism. Nevertheless, they offer an incomplete picture of global neoliberal transitions.

Careful examination of the ideological contest among Mexican business leaders, government officials, and their respective allies suggests that the influence of crises and crisis narratives was more pervasive, and more intricate, in Mexico than extant works allow. To be sure, the availability of intellectually-refined economic alternatives, as Blyth illustrates, offered policymakers and their publics an attractive escape route in times of economic emergency. It is equally apparent that major crises in poor countries served as pretexts for wide-ranging, coercive, and devastating external interventions. Crises, however, are not limited to moments of material uncertainty, and the narratives that give them meaning are rarely so confined.

Nor should we reduce their efficacy in the Global South to the itinerate impositions of a transnational capitalist class and political elites. The crises that beset Mexico in the latter decades of the twentieth-century were multidimensional, and the struggles over their meaning reached the most intimate levels of society. Mexicans experienced these crises not as singular events but as a cumulative process, a crisis in perpetuity, with each new layer adding depth and complexity to a quandary that was at once material and existential. Business leaders and their allies struggled amid competing narratives to define Mexico’s impasse in terms favorable to their own interests and ideals.

Crisis narratives promoting politically toxic economic ideologies and incomprehensible theories were, unsurprisingly, inadequate to the task. Champions of free enterprise in Mexico located the origins of the nation’s woes intermittently in the state’s misuse of political and

33 Walker, Waking from the Dream
economic power, the deterioration of traditional values and religious beliefs, and the deformation of Mexican civil society. In each of these regards, however, they placed the blame squarely on the government and the political system. Disproportionate concentrations of power in the hands of the state, they argued, distorted not only the economy but also the social values and moral codes underpinning civic culture and family life.

Business leaders and aggrieved conservatives contended that Mexico’s most intractable problems had a common source: a centralized, hyper-secular state whose clientelist and paternalistic political controls engendered crippling dependency at all levels of society. Consequently, they argued, resolving the country’s developmental inadequacies required decentralizing political life and curtailing the state’s role as a custodian of societal values. It was not until the government had taken full ownership of ‘structural adjustment’ in the early 1980s that this new breed of entrepreneurial leaders publicly acknowledged liberalism, new or old, as a driving ideological inspiration.

The chapters that follow examine the intersecting efforts of business elites and middle-class conservatives to fashion and diffuse an ideologically compelling alternative to state-led development. Beginning in the 1970s, entrepreneurial efforts to reform the image of Mexican businessmen converged with a series of conservative protests over the leftward drift of Echeverría’s government, federal educational reforms, and the imposition of secular reproductive and gender policies. The dissertation appraises conservative protests in the context of escalating radicalism, the countercultural movement, and feminist challenges to traditional family and sexual relations. In light of these developments, government efforts to selectively open the political system to dissenting, predominantly leftist, groups impelled a right-wing political awakening that remade Mexican conservatism. The resulting period of ideological and political
struggle transformed the Mexican right into a formidable political block capable of challenging the legitimacy of the ruling party and the system of government over which it presided.

Fearing a political realignment detrimental to their values and social position, influential groups on the Mexican right promoted a competing vision of national development. These groups decried widespread civic and political apathy in Mexico and the state’s systematic political exclusion of key social sectors, including entrepreneurs, the Church, and ‘confessional’ lay organizations formally linked to the Catholic hierarchy. Religious conservatives and right-wing women joined business leaders in calling for permanent, concerted civic action to arrest the state’s growing influence in public life and challenge a corporatist system of governance through which, they believed, public officials were deliberately empowering the left at their expense. Selectively adapting Catholic social teachings, they championed an alternative to secular, state-led development. Over the 1970s and 1980s, they propelled this alternative to the forefront of public debates over the substance and trajectory of Mexican modernization.

Known as ‘integral development’ (desarrollo integral), this paradigm denoted a holistic conceptualization of development as the cultivation of moral, spiritual, and material wellbeing at the individual, familial, and societal levels. A key feature of this vision involved the decentralization of political and social life through the creation of independent, religiously-inspired civic entities, or “intermediary” organizations—the pillars of a “subsidiary” society. Based on the belief that responsibility for managing societal interests should be delegated in such a way that power resides with the smallest or most localized competent entity, passing to higher or more centralized bodies only when the issue at hand exceeds the capacity or jurisdictional

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34 Conferencia de Oragnizaciones Nacionales (CON), Memorias: I Congreso sobre desarrollo integral de México [ICDIM]: Presencia de los cristianos (Mexico City: CON, 1965); CON, Memorias: II Congreso sobre desarrollo integral de México [IICDIM] (Mexico City: CON, 1968); Pacheco Hinojosa, La Iglesia Católica, 133-163.
authority of subordinate institutions, the principle of subsidiarity was a cornerstone of this sociopolitical vision. In this narrative, the state should participate politically only in matters where civil institutions are inadequate, and must avoid supplanting or competing with the private sector economically.\textsuperscript{35}

Mexican entrepreneurial elites worked to synchronize neoliberal and Catholic principles through appeals to ‘integral development’. They papered over the contradictions inherent in defending unfettered capitalism using Catholic social teachings—which, notably, rejected economic liberalism—with a patchwork of philosophical and intellectual inspirations derived not only from economic doctrine but from psychological and organizational theory. Eschewing public association with economic liberalism, they, too, defined their vision using the terminology of integral development. As this dissertation illustrates, however, business leaders reinforced their claims through appeals to administrative theories that espoused understandings of human nature consistent with Catholic conceptions of the human condition. Social, political, and economic paternalism, they proclaimed, impeded the development of human initiative, morality, and responsibility, underwriting a developmental ideal confined to the fulfillment of material desires.

Of course, emerging human relations theories obscured what one scholar describes as their authors’ “dominant implicit” goal of defending the interests and global influence of large corporations.\textsuperscript{36} In the 1970s and 1980s, Mexican business elites used new communications and

\textsuperscript{35} Significantly, the principle of subsidiarity also applied to various levels of government, where municipal authorities, as the governing entities closest to the community, should function to the extent possible without the intervention of state and federal authorities. Thus, as a political philosophy, subsidiarity was also linked to federalism. See, for example, Yemile Mizrahi, \textit{From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico} (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 22-23.

public relations strategies, business organizations, private-sector think-tanks, and the media to propagate a humanist ideal that used administrative theory as the principal point-of-reconciliation between Catholic and neoliberal values. By redefining entrepreneurial prerogatives in humanist rather than economic terms, they provided an intellectual and ideological defense of capitalism more in line with Mexican culture and values.

The dissertation argues that this project erected the philosophical foundations for lasting alliances among entrepreneurs, religious conservatives, and other disgruntled groups on the Mexican right. Conservative protests and public-private sector hostilities in the 1970s set this alignment in motion, as influential networks of entrepreneurs and religious conservatives dedicated themselves to permanent, effective civic engagement and ideological contestation. These fluctuating alliances crystallized in 1982 with President José López Portillo’s (1976-1982) nationalization of the Mexican banking system, as oppositional protests joined entrepreneurs and conservative civic groups in an open, regionally-grounded revolt against the PRI. This revolt brought long-excluded sectors permanently into the political fold.

New forms of political participation did not in themselves establish the conditions for the emergence of Mexico’s market democracy. Entrepreneurial elites and middle-class conservatives subsumed unpopular market doctrines within a democratic vision that garnered widespread support among key sectors of Mexican society. The businessmen, right-wing women’s groups, and civic organizations fueling conservative protests in the period after 1970 formed the core of the neopanista movement that later brought the conservative National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, or PAN) to power. Though the PAN was the partisan beneficiary of this transformation, it was not its author.
Regardless, the post-1982 ascent of the PAN as a viable political challenger to the PRI provided an indispensable base of political support and legitimation for the neoliberal transition that began in the 1980s. The PRI’s imposition of socially devastating austerity and economic restructuring programs negated long-standing nationalist traditions and eviscerated the party’s ability to maintain political allegiances through the provision of patronage. In this sense, Mexican neoliberalism under the auspices of one-party rule had little staying power. At a time when the ruling party was abandoning its traditional bases of support to the mercy of economic restructuring, neopanistas’ new conservatism provided a broad, democratically-vetted base of support for integrated political and economic opening. Absent that support, the emergency restructuring program that inaugurated Mexico’s neoliberal turn would have been far easier to reverse—perhaps at the behest of a more progressive democratic coalition.
Chapter 1
The Crucible of Echeverrismo

As he peered out through the dense sheets of rain at the largest crowd of mourners ever to gather in the industrial city of Monterrey, Ricardo Margáin Zozaya must have marveled at momentous task before him. It was the evening of 18 September 1973. The day before, leftist guerrillas wielding submachine guns mowed down Monterrey industrial magnate Eugenio Garza Sada in the street along his daily commute to the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc, the brewery upon which he had built his empire. More than 150,000 people turned out for the funeral, including Mexican president Luis Echeverría Álvarez. The momentary quickening of the downpour as Margáin Zozaya prepared to address the crowd foretold the approaching political storm. Sitting quietly in the front row at the funeral, President Echeverría undoubtedly hoped that his personal appearance would calm that storm. Had he known what this speaker intended to say he would not have come.

Margáin Zozaya’s funeral oration was the most direct and highly publicized expression of a conflict that had been brewing since Echeverría assumed the presidency three years earlier. Since coming to office, Echeverría had broken with a developmentalist idiom that reinforced the mutual interests of the state and Mexican business elites, promising instead to lead Mexico into an era of “shared development” (desarrollo compartido). Further, the president advertised his newfound, albeit politically-inspired, social conscience by publicly deriding Mexican capitalists as greedy and unpatriotic. For prominent regiomontanos, as locals were known, the murder of Garza Sada confirmed their belief that Echeverría was rallying Mexicans against them. Now their trusted representative stood ready to challenge a regime that cast them as social pariahs.
Margáin Zozaya moved quickly to implicate Echeverría in the mounting social unrest pervading Mexico. “Señor Presidente,” he prefaced before addressing the crowd directly, paying brief homage to the life and accomplishments of the deceased. “That which alarms us is not just what they did,” he declared referring to Garza Sada’s killers, “but rather why they could do it.” The reason, he averred, was simple: Mexicans had lost respect for authority. He accused Echeverría of deliberately encouraging attacks on the private sector to “foment division and hatred among social classes.” Presidential “declarations and discourses” suggested to disaffected citizens that they could attack Mexico’s captains of industry with impunity. After all their contributions to the country’s progress, Margáin Zozaya repined, Mexican industrialists endured “kidnappings, dynamite explosions, bank robberies, destruction and death.” But Margáin Zozaya’s warnings of impending anarchy formed the backdrop for a larger question that highlighted the deepening fractures in Mexican society. The question to which Mexicans most needed an answer, he implored, was “Where is the nation headed?”[^37]

The question underscored the existential angst that *echeverrismo*, as the president’s political movement was known, engendered in Mexico. Echeverría began his tenure amid a profound crisis of government legitimacy. Spurred by domestic crises dating back to the previous administration, Echeverría struggled to rehabilitate the credibility of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, or PRI), heir to the one-party system that had dominated Mexico’s government for the last half-century. Central to this crisis of credibility were the state’s competing commitments to capitalist development and social equity—dueling ideological cohabitants of a nationalist tradition born of social revolution but reared in the international crucible of Cold War modernization.

For a quarter-century, Mexican political leaders held these incongruous traditions in balance through a statist mythology that cast the PRI-led government as the benevolent, and final, arbiter of social and economic life. When that mythology and the mid-century economic boom that abetted it faltered, latent ideological divisions manifest in widespread popular protests, student upheavals, workers’ strikes, and guerrilla violence. As the chasm between the left and the right expanded, Echeverría attempted to revive an image of the state as the magnanimous custodian of the public welfare. The result was the sharpest leftward shift in presidential rhetoric since the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) thirty years earlier.

Accompanying this shift were policies that portended a political and economic realignment detrimental to the social position of business elites and influential groups of Mexican conservatives. As Louise Walker observes, the events of 1973 were “fundamental to the history of conservative protest [in Mexico], marking the beginning of a middle class and elite rebellion against the PRI.” Nevertheless, a dearth of scholarship on the Mexican right has obscured the contours and consequences of this rebellion.

By the fall of 1973 opposition to Echeverría’s government was swelling. The beginning of the OPEC oil embargo in October initiated a period of economic uncertainty characterized by rising inflation, government indebtedness, and acute price instability. Amid the inflationary spiral, soaring energy costs accentuated economic insecurities across the social spectrum, heightening conservative angst over the political direction of the administration. As Echeverría sought to assuage leftist dissenters, the Mexican right seized on the prevailing instability in a series of campaigns that dramatically altered the future of Mexican society.

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38 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 47.
The chapter that follows traces the origins of this conservative insurrection. It examines the transformation of Mexico’s domestic political climate in the context of international developments that shaped popular understandings of *echeverrismo* and bred new strategies for undermining the president and the system of centralized government over which he presided. For the conservative middle classes, Echeverría’s populist turn incited an anticommunist fervor deeply rooted in Mexican history. But it was the contemporaneous rise of socialist governments in Latin America that created the optic through which many conservatives interpreted Echeverría’s rhetoric and policies. As scholars have discussed at length, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 revitalized anticommunist hysteria in Mexico, a trend that proved its durability over the succeeding decade. It was a more immediate development, however, that crystallized middle-class understandings of *echeverrismo* in the wake of Garza Sada’s murder.

Salvador Allende, Chile’s democratically-elected socialist president (1970-1973) and a close ally of Echeverría, lost his life in a right-wing military coup only days before Garza Sada lost his own. The following discussion illustrates that the debates surrounding this improbable concurrence galvanized public opinion in Monterrey, a bastion of Mexican conservatism and the cultural epicenter of an anti-statist ideal emblematic of northern Mexico. Juxtaposed against popular outrage at Allende’s downfall in Mexico City, Garza Sada’s assassination accentuated regional divisions, impelling a conflict between rival visions of sociopolitical and economic development. The central actors in this unfolding drama were business elites and middle-class conservatives, and the stage, in 1973, was Monterrey.

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Monterrey’s economic elite, meanwhile, pursued interlocking domestic and international agendas. Fearsome anticommunism was genetically imprinted on the city’s leading families, and Garza Sada’s murder intensified fears of escalating radicalization. These concerns provided a vital common ground between entrepreneurial leaders and the middling strata of the Mexican right. Of greater long-term import, however, was a business project to permanently engage policymakers, the public, and entrepreneurs themselves in a far-reaching campaign to renovate Mexican businessmen’s reputation as profit-driven social marauders indifferent to human misery. Domestic conditions were a key impetus for this campaign. More importantly, though, Mexican business elites joined a transnational intellectual and ideological project to cultivate pro-business, pro-market values and political environments the world over.

After his untimely demise, Garza Sada’s descendants launched a campaign to educate national business leaders in the arts of ideological self-defense. Marshalling all the resources at their disposal, they borrowed heavily from the strategies of U.S. business leaders, corporations, and organizations in designing a public-relations campaign whose methods and scale had no precedent in Mexican history. Crucially, the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico (AmCham) provided the institutional nexus linking *regiomontano* industrialists and their elite compatriots to this international project. AmCham leaders encouraged Mexican entrepreneurs to devise new means for achieving private-sector unity and projecting a compelling, uniform public narrative highlighting their contributions to Mexican society. Of course, *regiomontano* elites were well-versed in the cultivation of an Americanized and anti-statist business ideal in their
historically autonomous local preserve. They were, in this respect, the natural point-men for a program seeking the transformation of Mexican political and economic values.

But promoting a distinctly Mexican vision of free enterprise on a national scale under a hostile administration entailed a costly and lengthy process of experimentation. As the following analysis demonstrates, the centerpiece of these efforts involved mobilizing a heterogeneous national business community behind a common set of ideals, strategies, and objectives. With the assistance of AmCham-affiliated U.S. business media specialists, Monterrey’s leading entrepreneurs preached private-sector unity, self-esteem, and social consciousness through novel advertising and public relations strategies; direct, personalized letter-mailing to owners and representatives of Mexico’s leading corporations; and public talks and conferences targeting associates, civic groups, and ordinary citizens. To execute this project and transform it into a permanent, core feature of entrepreneurial engagement with the public sphere, they reorganized their corporations, restructured and reoriented national business associations, and projected their views in local and national media outlets. Among the latter, a budding business press provided a novel and effective medium for Monterrey industrial elites to tutor Mexican entrepreneurs on the importance of their efforts and the values and strategies on which they rested.

In charting these early efforts, this chapter provides a detailed account of the post-1970 campaign that transformed the focus and instrumentation of entrepreneurial politics in Mexico. The project that emerged marked a permanent departure from traditional patterns of relations among the state, business, and society in Mexico. Nevertheless, the following examination makes clear that these initial experiments were merely a starting-point. They helped achieve a

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40 Alex M. Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite and the Mexican State, 1880-1940 (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1988); Michael Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890-1950 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gauss, Made in Mexico
greater measure of private-sector unity and inculcated a newfound commitment to promoting entrepreneurial values, as opposed to economic interests, as the principal concern of Mexican businessmen. Tellingly, however, the values and morals on which regiomontano elites based their claims remained nebulous. The Mexicanized vision of free enterprise and political decentralization that would animate this project in subsequent years evolved only gradually, as Mexican business elites adapted their strategies and ideals to a confluence of domestic crises in the 1970s and 1980s. 1973 marked a critical point-of-departure for this process, impelling the rise of a new conservative politics that dramatically altered Mexico’s future.

The Politics of Mexican Industrialism: From Monterrey to the ‘Miracle’ (and Back)

In many respects, Margáin Zozaya was following a familiar script. Prior to 1940, the relationship between regiomontano elites and the central state was one of intense rivalry. When the violence of the Revolution subsided in 1920, Monterrey was Mexico’s preeminent industrial city. Despite the undercurrents of socialism that animated official nationalism in the post-revolutionary years, Monterrey was renowned for its conservatism, harmonious labor relations, and resistance to central authority. Historian Michael Snodgrass observes that this reputation...
was grounded in a regional mythology that exalted hard-working, industrious laborers and their benevolent company patrons as the foundation of industrial peace and economic prosperity—a mythology that the city’s industrial leaders assiduously nurtured. Amid an embattled, state-sponsored cultural revolution that sought to transform the productive capacities of traditional groups, Monterrey stood as a beacon of “industrial progress and urban modernity.”

Monterrey industrialists thus occupied a peculiar place within Mexico’s nationalist tradition. For many, they symbolized the excesses of an exploitative economic oligarchy that perpetuated gross disparities in national wealth and left the working masses impoverished. For others, and especially for norteños, as inhabitants of northern Mexico were known, they were the forbearers of national development and industrial modernity. As such, they were at the vanguard of a nationalist vision that promised to lift the country from its perpetual impoverishment and dependence on foreign powers. The place of Monterrey’s industrial magnates in the national imaginary vacillated between these poles depending on the political climate, which moved in tow with the state’s shifting posture toward the private sector.

The stability of Mexico’s government, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI) that controlled it, owed largely to its capacity to adapt its polices and guiding ideology to historical conditions. The legal foundation of this flexibility was the revolutionary Constitution of 1917, which upon its completion was the most progressive in the world. The 1917 Constitution included far-reaching provisions for social advancement and equity, establishing the legal bases for the redistribution of national landholdings; labor organization and expansive workers’ rights; free, mandatory primary school education; and

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43 Michael Snodgrass, “We Are All Mexicans Here: Workers, Patriotism, and Union Struggles in Monterrey,” in Vaughan and Lewis, eds. Eagle and the Virgin, 315.
44 Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance; Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; Abraham Nuncio, El Grupo Monterrey (Mexico: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1982).
sovereignty over land and natural resources. In addition to guarantees for collective social and economic rights, however, the document also included liberal guarantees pertaining to the rights of individual citizens and, consequently, private businesses—guarantees that were often in conflict with constitutional provisions for collective uplift.\footnote{John Tutino, \textit{From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 340; Vaughan, \textit{Cultural Politics in Revolution}, 23, 39, 58, 179-180; Vaughan and Lewis, eds., \textit{Eagle and the Virgin}, 54, 124-125, 142-145.} To negotiate these conflicts, Mexico’s Magna Carta granted the president wide interpretive latitude, allowing him to selectively invoke constitutional provisions, or leave them dormant, in response to specific circumstances.\footnote{Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov, eds., \textit{Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001); 38, 120, 125-126. For an insightful examination of the ways that the public discourse during the ‘Mexican Miracle’ tended to conflate presidentialism and nationalism see John Mraz, “Today, Tomorrow, and Always: The Golden Age of Illustrated Magazines in Mexico, 1937-1960,” in \textit{Ibid}.}

Government rhetoric with respect to the private sector oscillated accordingly. From the 1920s, public officials alternately portrayed Mexican businessmen as villains or partners in a national saga in which popular hopes rose and fell with bipolar severity. Throughout the postrevolutionary era, \textit{regiomontano} economic elites—collectively known as the ‘Monterrey Group’, a familial industrial dynasty under the leadership of the Garza Sada clan—served as the symbolic archetypes of Mexican capitalism. Not only did Monterrey industrialists control some of the country’s largest and most economically powerful corporations. Theirs was the most vocal and autonomous industrial group in the Mexican private sector.\footnote{Nuncio, \textit{El Grupo Monterrey}; Saragoza, \textit{The Monterrey Elite}; Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}.}

Consequently, \textit{regiomontano} elites were perennially at the forefront of public-private sector battles, becoming the primary targets of official criticism and the epicenter of business resistance. When the Lázaro Cárdenas administration (1934-1940) enacted a massive land
redistribution program and a campaign to expand union representation and influence, Monterrey industrialists led a revolt that, among other factors, compelled cardenistas to moderate their program.48 After Cárdenas, they, along with regional industrial groups centered in Guadalajara, Puebla, and Mexico City, negotiated with government officials to forge a new ‘revolutionary nationalism’ rooted in the promise of industrial modernity.49 Yet the nationalist project that emerged did not adhere to regiomontanos’ extreme vision of regional economic and political autonomy.

From the 1940s, state policy shifted decidedly in favor of capital accumulation. As Susan Gauss demonstrates, however, the PRI-led government remained at the center of this new economic paradigm. Mexico’s private sector was comprised of distinct regional variants whose interests and ideals did not always align, and regiomontano industrialists’ non-interventionist stance on business-state relations was not universally representative of Mexico’s business class.50 Gauss argues that under the administration of Mexican president Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) private-sector leaders and the state reached an accommodation that rested on the domestic production and internal consumption of manufactured goods. The resulting “pro-protectionist alliance,” she illustrates, derived largely from the experiences of industrialists and labor leaders in Mexico City, while preserving aspects of local political power and managerial authority in other regional industrial centers.51

48 Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance; Crucially, however, Cárdenas secured and consolidated important advances for laborers, campesinos, and other marginalized groups. See Marjorie Becker, Setting the Virgin on Fire: Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán Peasants, and the Redemption of the Mexican Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Adrian A. Bantjes, As If Jesus Walked on Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution (Lanham and Boulder: SR Books, 1998); Vaughan, Cultural Politics in Revolution.

49 Gauss, Made in Mexico.

50 Ibid. See also Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics; Dale Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy in Mexico (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1986).

51 Gauss, Made in Mexico, 2-5.
Concessions to regional industrialists notwithstanding, Mexico City was the unrivaled political, economic, and cultural center of the new accord. Leaders of the National Chamber of Manufacturing Industries (Cámara Nacional de Industrias de Transformación, or CANACINTRA) and the Confederation of Mexican Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos, or CTM)—dominated, respectively, by industrialists and workers based in the capital—saw government intervention as essential to promoting economic development and suppressing labor radicalism. With the backing of CANACINTRA and the CTM, Alemán’s government grafted a nationalist industrial vision onto traditional notions of mexicanidad, or Mexicanness, rooted in the country’s indigenous and agrarian past.\(^\text{52}\) To be sure, government policies under this accord prioritized the development of private industry. As Gauss points out, however, its cultural and political moorings “enabled the state to pursue types of protected development that justified state economic intervention on a scale never before seen” in Mexico.\(^\text{53}\)

Mexico quickly emerged as a showcase for accelerated development under the political-economic paradigm known as Import-Substitution-Industrialization, or ISI. Adopted in varying forms in countries across Latin America and the Global South, ISI involved centralized control over national development programs through a combination of government subsidies for private industries and comprehensive protections from foreign competition.\(^\text{54}\) ISI was variation of post-World War II modernization theory linked to the structuralist school, and proposed to gradually

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 1-3. On nationalist constructions in the early postrevolutionary era see Vaughan, Cultural Politics in Revolution; Vaughan and Lewis, eds., Eagle and the Virgin; Becker, Setting the Virgin on Fire; Joseph and Nugent, eds., Everyday forms of State Formation.

\(^{53}\) Gauss, Made in Mexico, 4.

\(^{54}\) See Ibid.; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy; For accounts of how these policies were adapted in other parts of the Global South see Prashad, Darker Nations, 399-401; William I. Robinson, Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 30-32.
eliminate Latin America’s dependence on foreign manufactures by prioritizing the development of domestic industry, beginning with basic and intermediate consumer goods.\textsuperscript{55}

Structuralists’ growing influence across Latin America after 1950 dovetailed with the postwar ascent of Keynesianism, giving broad legitimacy to the premise that governments should play an active role in regulating economic life. In the case of nations peripheral to the world economy, this meant spurring industrial development and economic modernization.\textsuperscript{56}

Furthermore, the conservative fiscal and monetary policies characteristic of “stabilizing development” (desarrollo estabilizador), as Mexico’s mid-century developmentalist paradigm was known, followed the prevailing global Keynesian standard. These trends converged with the postrevolutionary ideological bankruptcy of economic liberalism in Mexico to forge the intellectual and cultural foundations of state-led industrialization.\textsuperscript{57}

The corresponding period of rapid economic growth and industrial development became known as the ‘Mexican miracle’. In the quarter-century prior to Echeverría’s presidency, official narratives of modernization and shared community underpinned a tenuous popular consensus embedded in Mexico’s identity as a modernizing, capitalist nation. This formulation bound industrialists and the state as partners in a mutual project of national advancement, a cultural validation that assuaged historic animosities toward the country’s business class.\textsuperscript{58}

Throughout this period an expanding middle class reinforced the ideological legitimacy of the public-private

\textsuperscript{57} Gauss, Made in Mexico, 4-5.
sector compact and the authoritarian political system that maintained it. To ensure economic prosperity and political stability, according to this narrative, the state, as the sole heir of the revolution, must retain its custodianship of socioeconomic and political life.

Miracle-era industrialization, in this respect, was a cultural and political project as much as an economic one. Of course, mythology and reality rarely coincide, and recent scholarship has challenged the veracity of the urban-centric narratives of prosperity and political stability that dominated the public conversation in these years. Yet as Walker affirms, many Mexicans deeply believed that Mexico’s so-called miracle would conclude the nation’s perennial quest after an elusive modernity, bringing material abundance and long-coveted international prestige. When broad swaths of Mexican society began to question this vision of industrial nationalism and the ISI model on which it rested, Mexico entered a period of acute political and existential instability.

The most salient manifestation of this instability was the 1968 student movement. From July to October hundreds of thousands of mostly middle-class students mounted a series of demonstrations that paralyzed Mexico City on the eve the city’s hosting of the first Olympic Games ever held in Latin America. The protests culminated on 2 October 1968, when Mexican military forces and riot police opened fire on a gathering of ten thousand students, workers, and residents in the Plaza de Tres Culturas (Plaza of Three Cultures) in Mexico City’s Tlatelolco district, killing hundreds of peaceful protestors and resulting in thousands of arrests. Occurring

59 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 9-10.
60 Gauss, Made in Mexico, 5-7.
63 For more detailed treatment of the student movement see Elaine Carey, Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); and Herbert Braun,
in full view of the international media, student demonstrations and the ensuing government repression brought the dark side of Mexico’s ostensive miracle into sharp relief. Scholars and public intellectuals have cited the student movement as the primary impetus for Mexico’s slow march toward democracy and the corresponding decline in the PRI’s legitimacy. While the events of 1968 were an undeniable watershed in Mexican history, such accounts have exaggerated their direct impact on long-term political and economic processes. After all, it was not Mexico’s New Left or its political offshoots unseated the PRI.

Students were not the only ones questioning the hubris surrounding the promise of Mexican modernity. By the mid-1960s, Mexico’s impressive mid-century economic growth had begun to slow, and doctors, teachers, and students mobilized to demand better wages and working conditions. Mexican intellectuals, for their part, highlighted the widening disparities of wealth, intractable rural poverty, and massive demographic dislocations that accompanied miracle-era modernization. By the early 1970s, economists, politicians, and industrialists of varying political persuasions were questioning whether the ISI model had reached the point of exhaustion—a perception that, as Walker argues, was politically destabilizing irrespective of its veracity. It was in the context of this creeping political, economic, and cultural malaise that Echeverría assumed the presidency.

65 See Zolov, Refried Elvis; Walker, Waking from the Dream, 11-14.
67 Ibid.; Octavio Paz, The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid (Grove Press, 1972). For a detailed examination of rural life and political dissent during the miracle years see Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata.
In crucial respects, however, Echeverría’s presidency was an outgrowth of the 1968 student movement. As Minister of the Interior to President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) at the time of the massacre, Echeverría was widely believed to be complicit in the violence. As president, he went to great lengths to distance himself from the repression, abandoning the self-congratulatory tone of his predecessors. Echeverría ceased official exaltations of Mexico’s so-called miracle, attacking the “tragic complacency” of preceding administrations, which, he decried, had forsaken the state’s responsibility for ensuring social and economic justice in an overzealous pursuit of industrial modernization. Echeverría was the first sitting president to highlight, or even acknowledge, the failings of Mexico’s economic ‘miracle’. The resulting shift in official rhetoric carried profound consequences for a society in which symbolical linkages as much as institutional ones connected citizens to the government and the larger nation. Tragically, the most transformative consequences of the student movement were both unintended and, in crucial respects, antithetical to the cause they championed.

Beyond the state-centered ideology of revolutionary nationalism, the PRI-led government relied on a collection of large interest groups to maintain social control. Among the most important of these were the National Peasant Confederation (Confederación Nacional de Campesinos, or CNC), which represented the interests of campesinos; the CTM; and the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones

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69 On the ways that Echeverría’s reforms responded to the student movement see Yoram Shapira, “The Impact of the 1968 Student Protest on Echeverría’s Reformism,” Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 19:4 (November 1977), 557-580. As Minister of the Interior, standard procedure would have dictated that the direct order for such an action would have come from Echeverría.

70 Quoted in Adler-Hellman, Mexico in Crisis, 189

71 Scholars excavating these symbolic linkages have termed the state project of national cultural integration ‘Cultural Politics’. See Joseph and Nugent, eds., Everyday Forms of State Formation; Vaughan, Cultural Politics in Revolution; Vaughan and Lewis, eds., Eagle and the Virgin; Joseph, Rubenstein, and Zolov, eds., Fragments of a Golden Age.
*Populares*, or CNOP), for the middle classes.\(^\text{72}\) Official business chambers, in which membership was legally obligatory, represented the interests of industrialists, merchants, and other influential groups within the private sector. The most important of these were CANACINTRA; the Confederation of Industrial Chambers (*Confederación de Cámaras Industriales*, or CONCAMIN); and the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce (*Confederación de Cámaras Nacionales de Comercio*, or CONCANACO).\(^\text{73}\) This sectorial, corporatist system of representation allowed state-affiliated unions and associations to lobby policymakers directly on behalf of their constituents. Crucially, however, it also gave the government the means to ensure their allegiance and compliance with state directives.

With the partial exceptions of CONCAMIN and CONCANACO, official corporatist bodies were heavily dependent on government patronage. For the small farmers affiliated with the CNC, urban and industrial workers in the CTM, and unionized public employees that dominated the CNOP, this patronage generally entailed modest concessions to the material well-being of rank-and-file constituents, ranging from wage increases to government credit and social security benefits. Significantly, the lion’s share of the latter went to urban industrial laborers and public servants affiliated with the CTM and CNOP, respectively. Mexico’s welfare state, in this respect, was severely limited. Organizational leaders, on the other hand, received political influence and opportunities for personal enrichment and upward social mobility.\(^\text{74}\) Meanwhile, CANACINTRA, which represented domestic industries that were generally unable to compete in international markets, required trade protections and a continuous flow of government subsidies.


\(^{74}\) Haber et al., *Mexico since 1980*, 30-31, 37-39
to uphold the interests of its members.\textsuperscript{75} In exchange, leaders of official associations ensured that their members would publicly support official policies and positions and maintain the PRI’s dominance in national elections.

Businessmen in CONCAMIN and CONCANACO also benefited from government subsidies and protections, though they were generally less dependent on the state than those affiliated with CANACINTRA.\textsuperscript{76} They nevertheless derived considerable advantages from their relationship to the ruling party, not least of which were unconscionable tax breaks. As the authors of \textit{Mexico since 1980} point out, private capital in Mexico, despite the frequent laments of business leaders, was effectively untaxed. Taxes on both property and financial assets for Mexico’s leading businesses, they note, were “set at such low levels as to be virtually non-existent… In short, the vast majority of non-wage income (stocks dividends, rental payments, and interest) was free from taxation.”\textsuperscript{77} Thus, even at the height of Mexico’s mid-century boom government revenue as a ratio of GDP hovered at roughly the same levels as that of Guatemala and Honduras, the region’s poorest countries—a factor that largely explains the anemic scale of social security in Mexico.\textsuperscript{78} Yet these tax policies came with important political strings.

Since the 1940s, Mexican businessmen had been largely excluded from formal political participation. Scholars have pointed out that during this period organized private-sector participation in both elections and political parties in Mexico was the lowest of any Latin American country holding regular elections, a trend that was especially pronounced among the

\textsuperscript{75} Story, \textit{Industry, the State, and Public Policy in Mexico}, 86; Shafer, \textit{Mexican Business Organizations}, 31-32.

\textsuperscript{76} Shafer, \textit{Mexican Business Organizations}; Camp, \textit{Entrepreneurs and Politics}; Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business so Organized?”

\textsuperscript{77} Haber, et., al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 38-39.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Ibid.}
owners and top officials of Mexico’s several hundred largest firms. Further isolating Mexican entrepreneurs from political life was the PRI’s exclusion of businessmen from top posts in the executive bureaucracy, a form of indirect representation common in other large Latin American countries. As Roderic Ai Camp argues in his seminal study on entrepreneurial politics in Mexico, the PRI deployed two primary strategies to insulate the party from economic elites: “First, businessmen were not recruited into Mexican political leadership… Second, they denied businessmen any formal relationship with the evolving political institutions of the regime, notably the official party.” Compulsory corporatist bodies such as CANACINTRA, CONCAMIN, and CONCANACO gave Mexican businessmen a measure of access to political decision-makers, but they were legally prohibited from direct political activity.

In light of entrepreneurs’ political exclusion, Mexico’s government required other means of ensuring private-sector cooperation in areas such as investment, employment, and, economic growth. Tax exemptions for Mexican economic elites and corporations were a linchpin of government efforts to demonstrate what economic historian Noel Maurer describes a “credible commitment” to the interests of leading entrepreneurs. Another such measure was to subsidize often risky corporate ventures through government-backed loans from public financial

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79 Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics*, 139; Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business so Organized?,” 79. It is important to note, however, that bankers and businessmen had been a driving force in the creation of the conservative National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional) in 1939 in response to the intense public-private sector conflict under Cárdenas.

80 Such appointments were common in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Colombia. See Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?,” 80.


82 Ibid., 143; Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?,” 80. It is important to note that these involuntary business associations also represented hundreds of local and sectorial associations, but their leaders generally promoted policies favorable to Mexico’s largest firms, often neglecting the interests of their lowlier constituents.

institutions. Mexico’s major conglomerates frequently owned both commercial and investment banks that functioned as the “treasury departments” of their companies. But even where private resources were sufficient, government loans removed the risks involved in investing corporate assets. Though the ostensible purpose of these government-controlled financial institutions was to guarantee credit to ‘small’ and ‘medium’ businesses or the farming sector, in practice they lent primarily to the country’s largest firms.\(^84\) Numerous scholars have highlighted this implicit miracle-era compact, in which Mexico’s political class guaranteed property and profits for business elites in exchange for their political abstention.\(^85\) Over the long-term, however, the state’s ‘credible commitments’ to corporate elites came at considerable cost.

The combination of political exclusion and economic incentives was effective in muting business influence over political life and securing the cooperation of the nation’s largest firms in the economic development process. But over time they produced chronic shortages in government revenue and financial resources, greatly reducing the state’s ability to foster broad-based economic development and social welfare. Further complicating the situation was a fixed exchange rate vis-à-vis the dollar that inflated the market value of the Mexican peso—a policy that subsidized the importation of advanced capital equipment for domestic industries but reduced the competitiveness of Mexican exports, further diminishing federal revenues. These problems fueled the perception that ISI was reaching the point of exhaustion. When Echeverría began his presidency, government debt and trade imbalances had been on the rise for a decade, though they had not yet reached crisis levels.\(^86\)

\(^{84}\) Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980, 52-56.  
\(^{86}\) Walker, Waking from the Dream, 12-18; Haber, et. al., Mexico since 1980
Meanwhile, related economic problems further compounded the PRI’s political predicament. Increasing concentrations of national wealth at the top of society constrained the expansion of domestic markets, leading to market saturation and a consequent lag in consumption, production, and employment. Declining opportunities for aspiring middle-class professionals dampened expectations of upward social mobility and caused widespread disillusionment within a social stratum essential to the legitimacy of ruling party.\(^87\) These factors, combined with growing awareness among Mexico’s middle classes of the abject poverty in which rural inhabitants, slum dwellers, and a growing pool non-unionized, or “free,” laborers remained mired, deepened social instability and ideological estrangement.\(^88\) When, from the late 1950s, the government increasingly met protests and dissent with armed repression and incarceration, it added a new dimension to the PRI’s disrepute.\(^89\) Declining prosperity, widening social disparities, and the increasing visibility of authoritarian political controls eroded the fundamental bases of the ruling party’s power and ideological legitimacy. Mexican intellectuals, workers, and radicalized middle-class groups demanded that Mexico’s political elite honor their purported commitment to social justice, curb repression, and democratize political life.\(^90\)

Echeverría attempted to shore up the PRI’s political legitimacy through two primary agendas: ‘shared development’ and the *apertura democrática*, or democratic opening. Both

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87 Walker, *Waking from the Dream*, Chapter 2
88 Paz, *The Other Mexico*; Braun, “Protests of Love and Engagement”; On the political and social tensions created by an expanding population of non-unionized, non-incorporated urban labor force—often recent transplants from economically devastated rural areas—see Joseph Lenti, “A Revolutionary Regime Must Put the Interests of the Majority First: Class, Collectivism, and Paternalism in Post-Tlatelolco Mexican Tripartite Relations,” *The Latin Americanist*, 4:54, 163-182.
programs, however, came with consequences. In the first instance, the president’s revival of a nationalist script reaffirming the state’s commitment to equitably distributing national wealth alienated economic elites, who were concerned not only with potential economic losses, but also preserving their relative cultural prestige under miracle-era public discourse. Members of the conservative middle classes, for their part, feared that Echeverría’s resuscitation of a narrative glorifying social protest and economic leveling encouraged communist sympathies and fueled domestic radicalism—a moral pathogen, in their view, that threatened their own children. The economic policies underpinning this shift entailed additional risks.

Concretely, ‘shared development’ centered on two core goals: creating publicly-controlled, or parastatal, industries to maintain full employment and expanding Mexico’s welfare state. Both objectives, of course, required massive public expenditures. To obtain the necessary revenues, in 1972 Echeverría attempted to reform the tax structure, increasing corporations’ and economic elites’ share of the nation’s tax burdens. But when business leaders responded by stalling economic investments and moving massive sums of money out of the country through capital flight the president was forced to abandon the tax overhaul. Consequently, he turned to foreign borrowing and printing currency, policies that resulted in ballooning foreign debt, sharp increases in inflation, and the destabilization of price structures. As sociologist Sarah Babb observes, the result was a program of ‘shared development’ that involved much public spending but little ‘sharing’. To be sure, Echeverría greatly increased expenditures on social welfare.

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91 Nora Hamilton, The Limits of State Autonomy; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics
92 Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 1; Zolov, Refried Elvis
93 Haber, et. al., Mexico since 1980, 39-40; Hamilton, The Limits of State Autonomy; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics.
94 Babb, Managing Mexico, 111-112.
‘Redistribution’, however, was a misnomer, and the fiscal and monetary policies that supplanted tax reform haunted the president throughout his term.

The *apertura*, on the other hand, aimed to reassert the PRI’s democratic credentials and distance the party from recent acts of repression. Echeverría pledged to give dissenting groups a greater voice in political decision-making. Through varying means of co-optation, the administration sought to incorporate key sectors of society into the political process, targeting politically influential groups such as Mexican intellectuals and opinion-makers, union members, the leaders of leftist opposition groups, and a burgeoning women’s movement. These efforts took on diverse forms, from granting government posts to supporting union democratization among rank-and-file members to expanding informal consultations with groups historically on the margins of Mexican politics.\(^{95}\)

Yet as many on the Mexican left pointed out, and scholars have subsequently confirmed, Echeverría aimed above all to preserve the existing system.\(^{96}\) The president’s attenuated openness to political dissent targeted those leftist and progressive sectors whose blessings he needed to restore the state’s, and his own, revolutionary credentials. He hoped to strengthen corporatist political controls and maintain the PRI’s monopoly over a severely truncated democratic process. Other excluded groups, including entrepreneurs, the Catholic Church and its

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\(^{96}\) *Perspectiva*, “El Dos de Octubre y la Apertura Democratica,” no.1 (15-30 October 1971). *Perspectiva* was a bi-monthly periodical that published the views of students and intellectuals on the Mexican Left. The edition cited here is available through the NACLA archives reel 526 (?), file 62. See also Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, and Carey Plaza of Sacrifices.
formally affiliated lay surrogates, otherwise known as ‘confessional’ organizations, had much to lose in this selective political opening.

Continued government control over the electoral system meant that the influence of Mexico’s diverse mosaic of competing interests hinged on their relationships to the state. Walker describes the PRI-controlled government as a “negotiating table” that allowed the party to balance those interests. Despite its political dominance, the PRI was not monolithic. Through normalized consultations with an array of interest-groups, institutions, and power-brokers—including formally incorporated bodies, the church, social organizations, and voluntary business associations—Walker observes, the “party held in balance these varied and conflicting interests in the context of regional, national, and international pressures.”97 By expanding the representation and influence of left-leaning constituencies at this negotiating table, Echeverría threatened the interests, ideals, and social position of influential groups on the right. Greatest among these were business elites and middle-class conservatives, groups whose accommodation with the PRI had made the miracle-era project of authoritarian, state-led industrialization possible.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Monterrey emerged as the center of business and middle-class resistance to echeverrismo. Despite what one scholar has described as their “détente” with the central government during the postwar height of ‘stabilizing development’, regiomontano elites never conformed to the statist mythology at its core. On the contrary, to secure their cooperation the government permitted Monterrey’s industrial magnates an unparalleled degree of regional autonomy.98

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97 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 5.
98 Gauss, Made in Mexico; Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance; Nuncio, El Grupo Monterrey.
As in previous eras, they used their influence over local social, cultural, and economic life to promote an antithetical regional variant of Mexican nationalism. Gauss argues that the city’s economic elite “cast regionalism as an alternative nationalist project that epitomized Mexico’s modern industrial future…. [they] created a durable image of the city… as the ‘moral capital’ and nationalist vanguard of not just Nuevo León but the entire country, in opposition to what [they] argued were the revolutionary excesses of ruling-party-directed statist development concentrated in Mexico City.” This nationalist vision had broad purchase in Nuevo León and other frontier regions, where suspicions of central authorities ran deep. With the perceived threat of echeverrismo, regiomontano business leaders began to rescale their efforts and refine their ideological instrumentation for a national confrontation with the state.

Public comments from representatives of the city’s largest industries offer insight into the nature and geopolitical optic of this project. In March 1971 Alejandro Garza Lagüera, director of Cervecería Cuautémoc and son of Eugenio Garza Sada, gave a speech to a group of Mexican businessmen, lamenting what he saw as a pervasive worldwide hostility toward private enterprise. Citing a recent article by Newsweek’s Daniel Boorstein, Garza Lagüera reviled the insidious influence of “abstractions and utopias” in national and world affairs. He argued that obsessing over the idea of a perfect society had distorted people’s sense of history. The resulting discord between expectations and reality, he insisted, fueled popular perceptions of entrepreneurs as the “scourge of humanity.”

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99 On the strategies employed by Monterrey industrialists to maintain control over local social and cultural life see Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; and Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance.
100 Gauss, Made in Mexico, 9.
101 Ibid.; Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance; Nuncio, El Grupo Monterrey; On the prevalence of similar views in other frontier regions see Angus Wright, The Death of Ramón González: The Modern Agricultural Dilemma (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1990); and Cadava, The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland.
102 “Tesis de Garza Lagüera: El Empresario y el Desarrollo,” El Porvenir, 10 March 1971, 1-B and 9-B.
Governments further compounded this injustice, he averred. Political leaders labeled businessmen not as agents of progress but as “foreigners who have exploited the resources of their countries… as native parasites” to be scorned and despised. 103 Denouncing this label, Garza Lagüera appealed to notions of ‘business patriotism’. 104 Invoking regional custom, he called for private-sector unity, proposing that businessmen of varying statures exercise their “unique responsibility” for confronting what he saw as the pervasive demonization of entrepreneurial leaders. 105

As Garza Lagüera’s comments suggest, the worldview and concerns of Monterrey industrialists were of a distinctly international orientation. Their northward outlook and historical ties to the United States led them to identify as global participants in a worldwide campaign championing an anti-statist, market-centered conceptualization of free enterprise. 106 Yet in the early 1970s the global battle between competing visions of capitalist development was tangential to the public conversation in Mexico. For the middle-class Mexicans on whose support regiomontano elites would come to heavily rely, anticommunism and Cold War dichotomies provided a more immediate and comprehensible referent. Little did Garza Lagüera know, these middle-class concerns would crystallize two years later, with his father’s murder. The ensuing debate helped galvanize the very middle-class conservatives that would, in coming decades, bestow political legitimacy to his vision of Mexican free enterprise.

103 Ibid.
104 On Monterrey elites’ historical promotion of “business patriotism” see Snodgrass, “We Are All Mexicans Here,” 318.
106 For a detailed discussion of the ways that Monterrey industrialists economic and cultural ties to the United States conditioned their worldview see Gauss, Made in Mexico, Chapter 6; Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance.
Refracted Nationalisms: Through the Chilean Looking Glass

Scholars and contemporary observers have routinely, and correctly, cited Garza Sada’s murder as the definitive breaking-point in the miracle-era compact between organized business and the state. Seldom acknowledged, though, is the decisive role of international developments in shaping popular understandings of this break and mobilizing conservative opposition to Echeverría’s government. The president’s efforts to curb his government’s dependence on the United States and rebrand Mexico as a leader of the developing world—a foreign policy that he termed tercerismo, or ‘thirdworldism’—exacerbated right-wing fears that Echeverría’s populist turn portended the socialization of Mexico. Public debates in the wake of Garza Sada’s murder accentuated this view, constructing meanings of his death that aroused the moral ire of businessmen and middle-class conservatives across the region. Most were heirs not to Garza Sada’s dynasty, but to the regionalist nationalism he had so aggressively nurtured.

In an unlikely historical coincidence, Garza Sada’s assassination occurred just six days after the military coup that toppled the government of Chile’s democratically-elected socialist president, Salvador Allende (1970-1973), who died in the assault. That each of these towering yet antithetical icons met their demise within days of the other hastened a symbolic convergence of explosive proportions. Echeverría, moreover, designated an official three-day mourning period for the deceased Chilean president, of whom he had been a vocal supporter. As it happened, the first day of official mourning for Allende was the very day of Garza Sada’s

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107 Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 1; Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?,” Carlos Arriola, Los empresarios y el Estado (Mexico City: Fondo de la Cultural Económica, 1981); Basañez, lucha por la hegemonía
108 Indeed, Echeverría unveiled his tercerista manifesto, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (Carta de Derechos y Deberes Económicos de los Estados), otherwise known as the Carta Echeverria, in Santiago Chile in May 1972, at the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development.
assassination. The irony of this concurrence could hardly have been more palpable. The most iconic figure on the Mexican right was murdered by leftist guerrillas amid an officially designated grieving period for the socialist president of a foreign country. This improbable coincidence brought the competing nationalist visions of regiomontanos and echeverristas into sharp relief.

Press coverage from Mexico City and Monterrey offers a glimpse of how middle-class audiences in these competing centers of influence received and understood this ideological collision and its relationship to echeverrismo. As historian Eric Zolov has pointed out, the Cold War in Mexico, often neglected by scholars in favor of the continent’s “hotter” battlegrounds, inspired incendiary struggles between rival visions of the country’s own revolutionary project. For many Mexicans, the timing of Allende’s rise with Echeverría’s leftward turn accentuated the widening fissures in their society. Nevertheless, prior to the death of Garza Sada public comparisons linking Mexico and Chile remained largely implicit.

On 12 September 1973 Monterrey’s ultra-conservative daily, El Norte, featured a front-page article on the military coup that overturned Chilean Allende’s Popular Unity (Unidad Popular) government the day before. At first glance, there seemed to be nothing unusual about the article other than the circumstances for which it was written. Its tone was mostly straightforward, providing details of the coup and Allende’s “suicide,” which the writer predictably accepted as truth. Nor was it particularly shocking that the author deviated from his feigned objectivity near the end of the piece, given the paper’s conservative leanings. His assertion that Allende’s government had created a “hatred which has had no comparison in the civic history of

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110 Eric Zolov, “¡Cuba sí, Yanquis no!: The Sacking of the Instituto Cultural México-Norteamericano in Morelia, Michoacán, 1961,” in Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spencer, eds, In From the Cold.
Chile” was an unmistakable warning against rising class antagonism in Mexico.\textsuperscript{111} Of course, ominous forecasts of impending class warfare were old-hat for Mexican conservatives. Events in Chile imbued their warnings with illustrative power, but they gave rise neither to the sentiment nor the insinuation.

More peculiar was the positioning of the piece directly next to an article reprinted from a daily newspaper in Mexico City. This article, by contrast, relayed Echeverría’s “profound regret” at Allende’s fate and his offer of asylum to any Chilean wishing to “put himself under the protection of the Mexican flag.”\textsuperscript{112} The issue of asylum would become a favored target of regiomontano opinion-makers after Garza Sada’s death, stoking conservative fears that Echeverría was deliberately bringing communist sympathizers to Mexico under the double-aegis of tercerismo and apertura.\textsuperscript{113} For now, however, the implication was subtler.

The format beckoned readers to take notice of Echeverría’s support for a government that had sown “hatred” and division among its citizens, but it did not openly criticize that support. As if to reiterate the challenge insinuated through the juxtaposition of the two pieces, the article sat directly underneath a portrait of the late Salvador Allende. The caption below the picture noted mockingly that Allende had “kept his promise” to surrender office dead or not at all.\textsuperscript{114} In an article for the more moderate \textit{El Porvenir}, local business historian Rodrigo Mendirichaga offered an account that, by the standards of Monterrey’s right-wing press, was relatively sober. Mendirichaga lamented the overthrow of a democratically-elected leader by force of arms, yet he

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\textsuperscript{111} “Allende prefiere morir a dimitir,” \textit{El Norte}, 12 September 1973, 1-A
\textsuperscript{112} “Echeverría Ofrece Asilo,” \textit{El Norte} 12 September 1973, 1-A
\textsuperscript{113} In coming years, the question of Chilean asylum exacerbated education conflicts, as many exiles ended up teaching in Mexican universities, leading to accusations that this “opening” via asylum, was fueling the radicalization of Mexican students. See Carlos Arriola, “El acercamiento mexicano-chileno,” Foro Internacional, 14:4 (April-June 1974), 507-547.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{El Norte}, 12 September 1973, 1-A
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confined his grievances to the breach of democratic tradition. “While we mourn the demise of [Chile’s] venerable democracy,” he averred, “we should not mourn [the coup’s] outcome,” which, Mendirichaga suggested, had likely forestalled open civil war.115

Contrary to repeated laments in the Mexico City press at the overthrow of an elected leader, local reporting in Monterrey attacked Allende’s democratic credentials. “Allende’s crime,” read one piece, was to “transform a free society… into one ruled by the iron statutes of Marxism-Leninism.” The writer contended that Allende never represented a democratic majority, having come to power through a leftist coalition whose thirty-six percent of the national vote, although the highest total of any party, was technically a minority.116 Another piece praised Augusto Pinochet, the general behind the coup, as the defender of the Chilean majority. Pinochet had not intervened in a quest for power, noted one writer, evoking familiar images of social calamity, but rather to save the masses from “chaos.”117

The dialectic taking shape in Monterrey not only forewarned of the dangers that Echeverría’s populist turn posed to social peace. It challenged the cognitive association between socialism and democracy that the Chilean experience had engendered in Mexico. It is unsurprising that Monterrey’s press, which enjoyed considerable autonomy and catered to a largely conservative, middle class readership and the city’s business patrons, looked scornfully upon Latin America’s first experiment in democratic socialism.118 After all, anticommunism was

116 “Sucesos en Chile,” El Norte, 13 September 1973, 2-A
117 “Defienden la mayoría,” El Norte 15 September 1973, 1-A
118 Both El Porvenir and El Norte, Monterrey’s two leading newspapers in 1973, were initially founded by the Garza Sada family as a means of influencing public opinion, but neither remained under their direct control in the early 1970s. The family nevertheless retained considerable power to influence editorial content, including the fact that they were responsible for an outsized proportion of the advertising revenues on which the papers depended. See Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite, on Mont Group’s establishment of El Porvenir; For a detailed, and unapologetically partial and conservative, account of El Norte’s formation and evolution see José Luis Esquivel Hernández, El Norte: Lider sin competencia (Monterrey, Mexico: Cerda Ediciones, 2003).
a staple of regional identity in Monterrey. But to understand the resonance of these debates one
must consider them in the context of Echeverría’s turn from ‘stabilizing development’, his
politically-calculated embrace of leftist leaders in the Global South, escalating radicalism at
home, and the domestic political realignment that accompanied the *apertura*. Oblique analogies
between *echeverrismo* and *allendismo* in the aftermath of Allende’s downfall underscored the
social and existential angst that Echeverría’s proposed structural changes provoked, but the
relative discretion of these comparisons was short-lived. Days later, the murder of Garza Sada
extinguished all pretense of subtlety.

On 18 September, as news of Garza Sada’s murder was just breaking in the capital, a
piece in Mexico City’s *Excelsior* highlighted parallels between the two countries. Titled “Are
we all Allendistas?” (*¿Todos Somos Allendistas?*), the article referred to a massive public
demonstration in the capital in which 30,000 Mexicans flooded the streets in honor of the fallen
Allende. “Few times,” noted the writer, “has Mexican public opinion shown such agreement” or
“unified in a manner so spontaneous and so immediate” as it had in response to events in Chile.
The article extolled Chile’s democratic path to “true socialism.” “[W]hat Allende represents,” it
suggested, “implies a comparison that cannot be avoided.” It attacked members of the Mexican
private sector, asking “How can we believe in the crocodile tears of the Mexican bourgeoisie
who cry for Allende but… resist in the face of the slightest threat of social change?” Even they,
the writer insisted, could appreciate that Pinochet had played the “role of villain.”

Meanwhile, in Monterrey there were no ‘crocodile tears’ to disbelieve. *El Norte* had
already reprinted a piece from Mexico City on the demonstration there, and Echeverría’s support
for it. Local articles, however, made no reference at all to the demonstration or the president.

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119 “¿Todos Somos Allendistas?” *Excelsior* 18 September 1973, 6-A.
Instead, on the very next page, the paper displayed an illustration of an enthralled little boy sitting with his grandfather. “I’m going to tell you the adventures of Pinocchio,” the older man said dutifully. “Better,” the little boy replied, gazing admirably at his grandfather, “that you tell me those of Pinochet in Chile.”

In the days after Garza Sada’s funeral, *Excelsior* responded forcefully to Margáin Zozaya’s address. A likely retort to the lawyer’s inference that Echeverría had “misuse[d]” the occasion of Allende’s overthrow to “favor and assist all those having a relation to Marxist ideas,” one writer stressed a kinship between Mexico’s revolution and Chilean socialism. Rising above “emotional reactions” that created divisions among Mexicans, he maintained, were the “daily revolutionary actions” which “bring us to a humane and democratic socialism.” The article lamented Garza Sada’s murder but denied that presidential provocations incited it. Rather,

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120 *El Norte*, 15 September 1973, 2-A.
the attack was a response to the social injustices threatening to destabilize the country, and thus to those who resisted the president’s appeals for structural reform.122

Another piece attacked Margáin Zozaya for publicly disrespecting the president, who represented the “only… possible center of national cohesion.” “In the Republic of Chile,” he continued, the “powerful forgot this the moment Allende came to power.” It was this “deliberate oversight” that had created the crisis in Chile. The writer acknowledged the limited scope of Echeverría’s accomplishments but attributed his ineffectiveness to reactionary resistance, asserting that “those who reproach [Echeverría]… are those who most resemble the ones who impeded Salvador Allende.” Margáin Zozaya’s call for a “firm hand” in dealing with dissidents, he argued, constituted an attack on freedom of expression “very similar to the Chilean guerrilla coup.”123 Echeverría, however, had provided his right-wing opponents with potent ammunition with which to rally conservative sympathizers.

Many regiomontanos interpreted the president’s declaration of official mourning for Allende, an honor that he did not bestow on the deceased Garza Sada, as a deliberate slight of a Mexican national icon. In the days following Garza Sada’s death, shops closed throughout Monterrey, their windows painted black. Incensed at the officially-sponsored outpouring of support for Allende in the capital, thousands of regiomontanos took to the streets, exhibiting their sense of loss, and nation, in a display of competitive grieving. Journalists, civic groups, and businessmen joined the chorus of public laments that the president chose to honor a foreign

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122 “Combatir el terrorismo: Cegar las Fuentes de Injusticia,” *Excelsior* 19 September 7-A.
socialist over one of Mexico’s own.¹²⁴ For many, it was the symbolic execution of the Mexican miracle.

On 20 September El Norte published a series of public announcements attacking the president’s decision to officially honor Allende as anathema to national values. “It is the sentiment of the vast majority,” declared one such announcement by a member of the Garza Sada clan, that official mourning should be reserved for the “most illustrious Mexicans.” The announcement condemned Echeverría’s support for “foreigners with strange ideologies, outside of our culture and needs.” The Mexican government had chosen to promote ideals “foreign to its own history” rather than honoring one of its own.¹²⁵ The disorder resulting from Echeverría’s social provocations, insisted another such announcement, threatened the very “Institutions that the Revolution created.”¹²⁶ Still another lambasted the president for supporting the “sowers of discord and class hatred.” Echeverría, so the message went, had forsaken Mexico in defense of a “minority of the Chilean people,” bringing his own country to the “most profound political, social, and economic abyss in its history.” Official provocations, the ad went on, criminalized the “imagination and capital” so central to the nation’s progress in favor of the “misleading allure of socialism.”¹²⁷

The confrontation over the president’s decree of official mourning for Allende intersected with another debate over the admission of Chilean exiles to Mexico. Contributors to Mexico City’s Excelsior defended Echeverría’s policy. Insinuating that opponents of asylum were

¹²⁵ Public announcement by Adrián G. Garza Salinas, El Norte 20 September 1973, 9-A
¹²⁶ Public announcement by Florentino Garza Salazar, Secretario General del Comité Regional Campesino de Cadereyta, El Norte 20 September 1973, 6-C
lackeys of U.S. imperialism, articles from the capital correctly placed the policy of asylum within Mexico’s diplomatic tradition of defying the reactive forces of more powerful nations. Such articles, of course, exaggerated the state’s ideological commitment to diplomatic asylum, muting the reality that such policies had more often served to shield the state from popular reactions to the inconvenient truth of its alliance with the United States.\(^{128}\) Predictably, conservative *regiomontanos* were foremost among opponents of the policy.

Monterrey’s press responded by intensifying its red-baiting campaign against the president. In one lividly satirical illustration entitled “Adopt a Chilean!” \(\text{[¡Adopta un Chileno!]}\), *El Norte* displayed an image of a menacing Chilean holding a smoking gun in his hand. Meanwhile, the outstretched arm of another man (presumably Echeverría) grasped the exile’s forearm, raising the weapon in the air triumphantly as if celebrating a victorious prize fight. The agitator’s exposed forearm revealed a tattoo of the Soviet sickle, underscoring the ‘foreignness’ of official policy. The caption adjacent to the illustration charged that Echeverría had “changed the values” of Mexicans. Denying the honor of official mourning to the “giant” Eugenio Garza Sada, the president now gave “welcome to Chilean Marxists… Super reds” who came to inseminate Mexico with their pestilence. “Does he want a country of bandits,” it inquired, “Is this structural change?”\(^{129}\)


\(^{129}\) “¡Adopta Un Chileno!,” *El Norte*, 23 September 1973, 1-B
With one of the most turbulent months in recent Mexican history behind him, on 1 October a columnist for *Excelsior* reflected once more on the events that had thrust Chile into public conversation on *echeverrismo*. Referring openly to the conflict between the state and Monterrey elites, he decried the latter’s resistance to structural change. “I realize,” he posited, “that in writing these lines… I am reflecting on a Mexican problem.” Nevertheless, he continued, “I can’t get events in Chile out of my mind.” Admonishing Mexicans to learn from the Chilean experience, he warned against the counterrevolutionary impulses that had nullified Chile’s democratic process. “After this September,” he surmised, the logical question was “Will Mexico follow the same path traveled by Chile?”130 On the contrary, Mexican businessmen and their conservative sympathizers would opt for a very different approach.

Garza Sada’s murder brought smoldering tensions between Mexican businessmen and the state to a decisive rupture. That his death coincided so closely with the fall of Allende, whose

130 “Septiembre Agitado: Poder de los Multinacionales,” *Excelsior*, 1 October, 7-8A
socialist regime many Mexicans saw as an analogue of Echeverría’s populism, sharpened the ideological divide between Mexico’s president and his detractors. Ensuing debates refracted conservative anxieties over echeverristas’ developmental prerogatives, domestic political realignment, and geopolitical orientation through the lens of Chilean communism, galvanizing middle-class conservatives in Monterrey and beyond. The understandings that these debates engendered would shape Mexico’s right-wing insurgency in important ways. At its core, however, the battle that emerged was not between capitalism and socialism, but between two rival models of capitalist political and economic development. The weaponization of ideas, not arms, would determine its course.

Transnationalizing Business Politics in Mexico

In response to Echeverría, business leaders began transforming the ideological and sociopolitical function of Mexican business organizations. Scholarship on business associations in Mexico has tended to treat private-sector organizations as distinct interest groups whose power—and limitations—in influencing national policy derived from two primary characteristics of the Mexican political system: the state’s stratagem of apportioning formal, corporatist representation to compulsory sectorial organizations, including CONCANACO, CONCAMIN, and CANACINTRA; and the presidential practice of consulting informally with national business elites and the leaders of private-sector associations. Of the two, the latter was the greater source of business influence and, prior to 1970, gave prominent industrialists an outsized role in the design of economic and industrial policy. As business leaders’ access to public officials diminished and anti-business sentiment grew under Echeverría, entrepreneurial elites began to reconceive the role of private-sector organizations in Mexican society.

131 Schaefer, Mexican Business Organizations; Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy.
At the heart of this reconceptualization was a shift in power and influence from CONCAMIN, CONCANACO, and CANACINTRA to voluntary associations. Among Mexico’s most influential voluntary business organizations were the Mexican Employers’ Confederation (Confederación Patronal de la República de México, or COPARMEX); the ultra-elitist Mexican Council of Businessmen (Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios, or CMHN), comprised of thirty to forty of Mexico’s wealthiest businessmen from among Mexico’s major industrial regions and economic sectors; and, after 1975, the newly-formed Businessmen’s Coordinating Council (Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, or CCE), an economy-wide peak association encompassing entrepreneurial organizations from all regions and economic sectors. Although the CCE was technically a voluntary association, once established most other Mexican business organizations, involuntary or voluntary, came under its purview. Membership may not have been obligatory, but the potential costs of exclusion were such that membership became nearly universal. Thereafter the CCE had the ultimate authority for representing the collective interests of Mexican business associations before the state.

Unlike compulsory associations, these organizations had no formal affiliation with the state. As business historian Ben Ross Schneider argues, Mexican business elites’ dedication to voluntary entrepreneurial organizations was “anomalous… in both Latin America and among developing countries. Big business in Mexico invest[ed] far more time and money in voluntary… associations than [did] the business sectors in other countries of the region.”

133 One notable exception to this was CANACO, Mexico City, which refused to join in the late 1970s and 1980s over objections to the CCE’s expanding influence in the provinces and its hostile stance to state-subsidies for uncompetitive industries. Notably, CONCANACO, of which CANACO, Mexico City was the most powerful regional branch, joined the CCE despite the objections of its most influential subsidiary.
134 Ibid.
this disparity, he contends, were germane to the taciturn nature of business-state relations in postrevolutionary Mexico.

While the historic strength of these organizations in Mexico is difficult to quantify, they emerged from three principal characteristics of public-private sector relations. First, the systematic political exclusion of Mexican business meant that voluntary associations gave business leaders and independent voice and means of consultation with political elites. In addition, alternating periods of conflict and accommodation between government and business leaders—the other primary impetuses for business leaders’ investment in these organizations—favored the expansion of voluntary organizations for the purposes of defending private-sector interests against hostile administrations and, in times of cooperation, giving business elites’ informal access to policymakers.¹³⁵ Monterrey’s industrial oligarchs played a central role in the formation and functioning of these organizations.

One cannot understand the evolution of voluntary business associations in Mexico without considering the activities of Monterrey’s leading entrepreneurial families. “Big Monterrey firms in northern Mexico,” Ross Schneider argues, “have been stalwart supporters of all forms of business organization, ready to open their checkbooks and fly frequently to Mexico City for meetings.”¹³⁶ Under the leadership of the Monterrey Group’s founding father, Luis G. Sada—the father of Eugenio Garza Sada—regiomontano industrialists founded COPARMEX in 1929 as a counterbalance to an emerging alliance between Mexico’s incipient revolutionary government and the labor sector.¹³⁷ In 1962, the city’s economic elites also spearheaded the formation of the CMHN in response to the perceived hostility of the Adolfo López Mateos

¹³⁵ Ibid. 78-80; Story, *Industry, the State, and Public Policy*; Derossi, *El empresario mexicano*
¹³⁶ Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business so Organized?,” 82.
¹³⁷ Saragoza, *The Monterrey Elite*. 
administration (1958-1964). And when open conflict with Echeverría’s government erupted in the wake of Garza Sada’s assassination, regiomontano business leaders promoted the establishment of the CCE, with the goal of uniting Mexican businessmen behind a common set of interests and ideals. Monterrey’s fiercely independent business class participated continuously and decisively in the organization, programing, and financing of each of these organizations from their respective establishments onward.138

Yet prior to the 1970s corporatist associations dominated the institutional landscape of Mexico’s private-sector. Not only were CONCAMIN, CONCANACO, and CANACINTRA rich and well-staffed, their members numbered in the hundreds of thousands, including hundreds of local and sectorial organizations. Further, their institutionalized access to political decision-makers gave them a built-in advantage.139 Business leaders’ waning influence over the design of industrial policy under Echeverría, however, diminished the returns on these organizations. More importantly, the president’s assault on the ideological esteem of Mexican entrepreneurs heightened the appeal of COPARMEX’s more militant approach across the private sector.

In the 1970s, COPARMEX and the CCE reoriented the mission of Mexican business associations toward the goal of proselytizing not only to their constituents and public officials, but to the public at large. In light of what Roderic Camp has identified as a “negative self-image” among Mexican entrepreneurs stemming from their protean status in Mexican society, this newfound dedication to broadcasting entrepreneurial values signaled a cultural and political sea-change.140 Rather than defending specific sectors and corporations, these organizations initiated a far-reaching defense of the free-enterprise system.

138 Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business so Organized?,” Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics
139 Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business so Organized?,” 78-79.
140 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 52.
In addition to the nearly universal opposition of Mexican businessmen to Echeverría’s government, this new focus grew out of a larger international project. Global business leaders and their intellectual and political allies had for decades worked to shift the ideological foundations of global capitalism from a Keynesian to a neoclassical, or neoliberal footing. Camp has observed that COPARMEX’s response to Echeverría bolstered its prestige in Mexico, as the confederation’s more militant and ideological brand of interest group representation provided a template that other business associations emulated. According to former CCE president Claudio X. González, COPARMEX emerged as the undisputed “conscience of the private sector.” COPARMEX’s militancy and ideological orientation had been a pillar of its identity since its founding, genetically encoded by its progenitors and nurtured in the regional womb of Mexican conservatism. Beginning in the 1970s, however, the confederation’s strategies, mission, and scale underwent dramatic transformations. Domestic conditions were a vital catalyst for these changes, but their contours followed a familiar global pattern.

Scholars of entrepreneurial politics in post-1970 Mexico have frequently pointed to the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico (AmCham) as an inspiration for COPARMEX’s more militant brand of business activism. AmCham’s power in Mexico reached historic highs in the mid-1970s, in terms of both total membership and economic weight. The organization

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141 Moreton, To Serve God and Wal-Mart; Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands; Fones-Wolf, Selling Free Enterprise; Blyth, Great Transformations.
142 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 165.
144 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 166; Basañez, lucha por la hegemonia, 97; Erwin Rodríguez Díaz, “La Camara Americana de Comercio,” Estudios Políticos: Revista del Centro de Estudios Políticos (April-June 1975, 33-63).
145 Rodríguez Díaz, “La Camara Americana de Comercio,” 43-44. Between 1967 and 1974, AmCham’s total membership increased from 1,130 members to more than 2,800. In 1975, AmCham’s corporate members accounted for 26% of Mexico’s GDP and comprised 85% of companies manufacturing goods for export. Though 60% of AmCham members were Mexican companies - or companies for which Mexican capital represented at least
asserted its influence in uncharacteristically vocal challenges to Echeverría’s rhetoric and policies, breaking with a tradition of non-intervention in Mexican political affairs dating from AmCham’s founding in 1917. But AmCham’s newfound militancy was no isolated response to Echeverría’s populist revival. More importantly, it replicated new forms of business activism taking root in the United States and pioneered by AmCham’s parent organization, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCOC).

The clarion call for USCOC’s new approach was the so-called “Powell Memorandum.” Drafted by Richmond, Virginia attorney Lewis Powell for his close friend, USCOC Education Chairman Eugene Sydnor, in August 1971, the memo circulated widely among USCOC members and corporate executives in the United States. The Powell Memo laid out a detailed blueprint for U.S. business leaders to move the political needle through planned, coordinated, and well-funded initiatives targeting the media, education system, public opinion, organized labor, and government officials in an effort to promote pro-business, pro-market ideals and to discredit their detractors. Predictably, AmCham-Mexico’s leaders disseminated the memo internally among its members.

When public-private sector tensions in Mexico came to a head in 1973, AmCham president and CEO of DuPont, Mexico, Frank B. Loretta, goaded Mexican business leaders to take a more aggressive approach. Loretta warned that socialist sympathizers the world over were of total capital invested 51% - AmCham’s leadership was wholly controlled by leaders of US multinational corporations.

146 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 166; Basañez, lucha por la hegemonía, 97-99.
149 Ibid. See also Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands, 162-163.
gaining influence by successfully harnessing the press, intellectuals, and “the pulpit” in an ideological assault on free enterprise. Loretta implored Mexican business leaders to revamp the private sector’s public relations resources and to enlist allies in civic organizations, religious groups, and the media in a systematic challenge to the moral authority of Mexico’s one-party state.\(^{150}\) Loretta, who was also an advisor to COPARMEX and a member of the Mexico-U.S. Business Committee, wielded considerable influence. He and other high-ranking members of the chamber actively promoted Powell’s prescriptions among Mexican business leaders.\(^{151}\) Unsurprisingly, Monterrey’s industrial titans provided a receptive audience.

Following the lead of Monterrey industrialists, private sector leaders, associations, and corporations in Mexico adopted many of the measures outlined in the Powell Memo. They organized well-publicized conferences and symposia examining pressing political, economic, and social issues; elicited the cooperation of friendly media members; founded magazines and other publications espousing pro-business, pro-market views; and devised novel public relations and advertising campaigns extolling the benefits of free enterprise.\(^{152}\) In addition, they systematically promoted the formation of, in Powell’s own words, “staffs of eminent scholars, writers and speakers [to] do the thinking, the analysis, the writing and the speaking” and who were “thoroughly familiar with the media, and how most effectively communicate with the public.”\(^{153}\)

\(^{150}\) Basañez, *lucha por la hegemonía*, 97; *Tribuna de Monterrey*, 23 August 1973.

\(^{151}\) Rodríguez Díaz, “La Camara Americana de Comercio.” See also Basañez, *lucha por la hegemonía*, 97-99.

\(^{152}\) These activities will be discussed in greater detail below.

Unsurprisingly, then, the most conspicuous hub for this new business intelligentsia, the magazine *Expansión*, was founded by U.S. business media specialist John Christman in 1970. In the early 1970s, Christman served simultaneously as an editor of *Expansión*, Vice President of AmCham, AmCham’s director of public relations, and an editor of AmCham’s monthly publication, *Mexican American Review*. *Expansión* targeted a select readership, including business executives, government functionaries, and “opinion-leaders.” But the magazine’s stated mission was to instruct its readers in how to shape public opinion more broadly. As the “conductor[s] of currents of public opinion and the actions of groups,” noted one advertisement, the “high position in social, economic, and political life made [these subscribers] the object of special attention” in the public conversation.

In this respect, Mexican business leaders collaborated with and borrowed strategically, if selectively, from their U.S. counterparts.

In 1975, the Christman-led *Expansión* named 44-year-old Monterrey businessman and ideologue Andrés Marcelo Sada, nephew of Eugenio Garza Sada, as its “Man of the Year” for his efforts in leading the ideological defense of Mexican business. Sada was the president of Cydsa (*Celuloso y Derivados, S.A.*), one of the Monterrey Group’s four major holding companies established in the wake of Garza Sada’s assassination and a leading figure in COPARMEX; and, eventually, the CCE. *Expansión*’s editors praised Sada for his public efforts to rehabilitate the tarnished image of Mexican entrepreneurs in the face of Echeverría’s attacks. Over the remainder of Echeverría’s presidency, Mexican business leaders consolidated this

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project, permanently altering relations among business, government, and society in Mexico. Sada and a key network of allies emerged as the primary drivers of this new approach.

Camp identified business efforts to promote entrepreneurial values among broader cross-sections of Mexican society, including among businessmen themselves, as a major innovation of the post-1970 period. Nevertheless, few details of this project have emerged. Expansión christened Andés Sada as the “principal driving force of the [Mexican] entrepreneurial world regarding the analysis, before diverse public forums, of the achievements and concerns of the private sector.” Or, as Sada himself put it, “[w]e aim to rescue and strengthen the image of the private sector in Mexico… or any country.” As a consequence of businessmen’s exclusion from Mexican politics, Sada postulated, they suffered a “lack of aptitude for public debate, which impedes their capacity for [self] defense.” Sada insisted that the only solution was a “vigorous and continuous program in support of the entrepreneurial role” in Mexican society. Mexican business leaders, he acknowledged:

> do not have the custom of doing this, it’s true. We have not progressed sufficiently in the areas of communications at the business level. We have to learn new paths. We have to believe that our achievements and our contribution have incalculable benefits for all of society, which we have to communicate. If we resolve to disseminate this information in [an] organized and creative fashion, I am certain that the great value that free enterprise has for society will be understood and recognized by all.

“If we do it,” he prophesied hyperbolically, “free enterprise will survive.”

Over the preceding two years Sada had devoted “hundreds of hours” and untold resources to this task, effused the writer of the piece. He traced the origins of this project to Cydsa, from where Sada directed a concerted effort to combat ideological trends that sought the “weakening

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158 Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics*.
of the private sector.” Citing the “near total absence of a uniform criteria within the private sector,” the Cydsa president initiated a crusade “to achieve a realistic and unified trajectory among Mexican entrepreneurs… through public talks in diverse cities of the country, [including discussions of] new publicity concepts.” Sada insisted that this was no corporate campaign to promote the interests of his company, but rather the first stage in a project to educate Mexican businessmen on how to “project a different image of the private sector.” “Our next campaign,” he averred, “will be applicable to all of the private sector; it will be of a more general nature.”

In another candid interview with Expansión, Sada and other Cydsa spokespeople detailed the outlines of this nascent project. At the core of these early efforts were advertising and public relations campaigns directed at businessmen, government officials, and the general public, for which Cydsa had created two internal public relations companies, and another charged with overseeing a massive direct-mailing campaign. The mission of these companies, Sada insisted, was completely distinct from traditional corporate advertising. They focused not on marketing company products, but on promoting the social contributions of private businesses and the free enterprise system to Mexican society. Mexican businessmen, Sada proclaimed, were “awakening to the necessity of greater communication, and that this communication must be undertaken with a distinct focus. [We] need to communicate with another language,” he implored.

One aspect of this new mission involved a series of promotional campaigns focused on “educating” various audiences on Cydsa’s accomplishments. These announcements highlighted the company’s contributions to job-creation, national development, worker training, environmental protections, and other areas of public concern. Yet as Sada and other company representatives insisted, they designed these company-specific paens to corporate virtue as

161 ibid., 26-29.
templates for other Mexican corporations to follow. For several years, explained a writer for *Expansión*, the corporate giant had been designing ads promoting not only Cydsa but the whole of Mexico’s private sector, publishing them in major newspapers in the capital and across the provinces. Sada, relayed the piece, “repeatedly urged all of the country’s entrepreneurs to publicize the achievements of each of their businesses.”

Cydsa circulated copies of its public relations materials widely among business executives and public functionaries. Tellingly, these mailings included a personal note from Sada himself explaining the motivation of the campaign and urging recipients to “dialogue more,

163 Ibid.
participate more, and project themselves,” as business leaders, in a more unified manner.\textsuperscript{164} Company representatives such as Adán Elizondo acknowledged that it was difficult to gauge the impact of these initiatives. But he cited positive feedback from other business leaders and the high percentage of responses to Cydsa’s letter-mailing campaign from leading entrepreneurs, many of whom pledged to take similar measures, as a positive, if anecdotal, indicator. “I do not want to say that this is due to our campaign,” Sada interjected with disingenuous modesty. “Maybe it is a simple coincidence. But it is what must be done, what should have been done beginning many years ago.” Or, as Cydsa’s director of programing and administration, Lázaro H. de la Garza, put it: “one of the responsibilities of private business is to inform public opinion concerning the functions” of business in society. “Private business,” he adjured, “should not be so private.”\textsuperscript{165}

De la Garza’s comments offer important insights into the nature of this project and the role of Cydsa and other Monterrey conglomerates in its conception. In de la Garza’s estimation, Cydsa’s primary audience was the business community itself. He envisioned Cydsa’s initiatives as opening a “bridge of communication” with other corporations and business leaders, to disseminate among entrepreneurs themselves the “function and works [of private enterprise] in society.” This, he insisted, was the “first step” to improving the public image of entrepreneurs.

Mexican business leaders were alarmed at the level of popular and official hostilities directed at them, to be sure. But the crux of the emerging project involved teaching Mexican entrepreneurs to value their role and, equally important, articulate those understandings in a compelling and accessible manner. Sada described historical deficiencies in this area as a “vicious circle.” [T]he entrepreneur himself,” Sada repined, “lacks a vision of his own of… what

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
the private sector really is, of what modern business is, and [if] he is not conscious of what he represents, he cannot project his true image.”

In the end, internal efforts to reform businessmen’s self-image were among the most consequential features of the new entrepreneurial cultural politics.

Yet such internal initiatives intersected with and reinforced a much larger project. Like their U.S. counterparts, Mexican business leaders decried what they saw as widespread economic ignorance among the general populace. Beginning in the 1970s Mexico’s leading businessmen built up the economic research capacity of private-sector organizations. Tasked with developing an “irrefutable” factual and statistical foundation for challenging populist economic policies, organizations such as the Center for Economic Studies of the Private Sector (Centro de Estudios Económicos del Sector Privado, or CEESP) conducted wide-ranging studies of macro- and micro-economic conditions in Mexico, which business leaders used to negotiate with public officials and inform public opinion.

Shortly after its establishment, the CCE incorporated the CEESP, which predated the CCE, into its organizational structure. The CCE-CEESP merger increased the resources available to the CEESP and allowed it to disseminate its findings to a much broader audience. Thereafter the think-tank, under the continued direction of its founder and president, Gastón Azcárraga Tamayo, made its services more readily available to entrepreneurs, government officials, and the public through newspapers, synopses circulated internally among members of local, regional, and national business organizations, and proliferating business publications. In addition to

166 Ibid.
Expansión, other offshoots of the Christman-led Expansión Editorial Group, including Análisis Económico (Economic Analysis) and Síntesis Económica (Economic Synthesis), which published more detailed economic analyses, diffused the CEESP’s findings among influential segments of the business, political, and academic establishments. Economic analysts working with the CEESP depicted inflation, price instability, and government indebtedness as grave threats to Mexico’s economy—views derived from ascendant theories of neoclassical economists in the United States and elsewhere.

Nevertheless, neither businessmen, sympathetic opinion-makers, nor private-sector economists in Mexico publicly endorsed classical liberalism or its voguish neologisms. Regardless of their economic allegiances, Mexican economic elites and their allies understood all-too-well the political perils of identifying with an economic paradigm antithetical to prevailing nationalist sentiment, a paradigm widely, and wildly, despised among Mexican citizens. First and foremost, they aimed to rehabilitate the image—internal and external—of Mexican entrepreneurs as beneficent social actors whose concerns extended beyond profits to the holistic betterment of Mexican society. Glorifying impersonal market forces as the best means of securing a just society was antithetical to this goal.

**Conclusion**

Scholarly claims that Mexican business elites’ strategic borrowing from their U.S. counterparts brought about the Americanization of entrepreneurial politics in Mexico overlook

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168 "El vicio circulso," 14 April 1976, Expansión 8:188.

169 Notably, these views were in line with those of a growing number of government economists in the more conservative Banco de Mexico (Mexico’s central bank) and the Finance Ministry—affinities that would become more increasingly important over the coming decade. On the internal conflicts among government ministries and economists in Mexico see Babb, Managing Mexico; and Centeno, Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico.
crucial distinctions. To be sure, Mexican business leaders went to great lengths to shape public understandings of Echeverría’s populist turn and developmental prerogatives in a manner consistent with their interests and ideals. They stoked middle-class fears of communism and social decay, sponsored the production and dissemination of economic expertise with increasing urgency, and used that expertise to refute populist policies, negotiate with government officials, and inform public opinion. Most importantly, they inaugurated a permanent, concerted campaign to restore the social and cultural prestige of Mexican entrepreneurs.

Yet their efforts produced little in the way of the free-marketeering political crusades that arose from similar projects in the United States. Indeed, the relative absence in Mexico of contemporaneous movements extolling the intrinsic virtues of abstract market forces has shielded these initiatives from scholarly scrutiny. But if business efforts to reorient national economic ideals were less obvious in Mexico, they were no less pervasive. Public relations strategies gleaned from the U.S.-led project to undermine the intellectual and ideological foundations of global Keynesianism gave Mexican business leaders important tools with which to wage their battle. For those tools to be effective, however, they had to draw their power from endogenous values. Wealth, power, and influence Mexico’s leading entrepreneurs had in abundance; numbers and moral cachet they did not. They needed allies among broader swaths of the Mexican citizenry, and they tailored their strategies to this purpose.

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170 See Basañez, *lucha por la hegemonía*; Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics*. 
Chapter 2
Managerial Revolution in Mexico: Toward a Social Philosophy of Business

In March 1979, a writer for the business magazine *Expansión* announced the arrival of a new era in business administration. Reporting on the I International Symposium on Productivity and the Quality of Work Life (*I Simposio Internacional de Productividad y Calidad de Vida de Trabajo*), convened the previous month in Monterrey, the columnist declared that “the conception of work… is undergoing an important change—perhaps radical” as a result of business efforts to improve the quality of work life. Organized by the Monterrey Productivity Center (*Centro de Productividad de Monterrey*, or CPM), an affiliate of the Nuevo León Chamber of Manufacturing Industries (*Cámara de Industrias de Transformación*, or CAINTRA), the state branch of CANACINTRA, the symposium brought together renowned administrative thinkers, including Eric Trist of the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business and Harvard University’s Leonard Schlesinger, and representatives from such U.S. and Mexican corporate giants as General Foods, Hylsa (Hojalata y Lamina, S.A.), Cydsa (Celulosa y Derivados, S.A.), and Resistol. These “North American theorists and Mexican businessmen,” the writer observed, were “convinced that the industrial methods inherited from Frederick Taylor… have passed into history.”

The reference to Taylor underscored a fundamental shift in prevailing philosophies of corporate governance. Often described as the “father” of business administration, Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) was a pivotal figure in the evolution of corporate management practices. For much of the twentieth-century, Taylor’s theory of “scientific management” exerted

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171 “Congreso in Monterrey: La calidad de la vida,” *Expansión*, vol. 11, no. 260, 7 March 1979, 44.
an outsized influence on the theory and practice of corporate governance. Taylorism, as the practice of scientific management was known, had long been a pillar of workplace relations in Mexico’s largest industries. Nowhere was its influence more apparent than in Monterrey, whose industrial forebears introduced scientific management in the early decades of the twentieth-century. While the article undoubtedly overstated the degree to which practices associated with Taylorism had been displaced, it highlighted an ongoing transformation in the ways that businessmen in Mexico understood their endeavor, and the terms through which they and their fellow-travelers portrayed it to the public.

The first in a series of well-publicized conferences on the subject, the symposium outlined a humanist turn in managerial philosophy, for which its participants were enthusiastic boosters. Roberto Rodríguez Puente, president of the CPM and Cydsa’s director of internal relations, summarized the new managerial approach to work for those in attendance. Work, he asserted, should be the “measure of man.” In addition to providing a source of income, it should “put in play all of one’s ability and creativity.” The resulting “satisfaction obtained from work,” he added, would also bring “better economic results.” A representative of General Foods, Mexico, Rebeca Castro de González, echoed this sentiment, affirming that companies should prioritize the fulfillment of workers and the “social and individual needs that motivate them.” The emphasis on creating a work environment that allowed corporate employees to attain inner satisfaction reflected evolving views on the sources of human motivation and its bearing on the productive process.

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173 “Congreso in Monterrey: La calidad de la vida,” *Expansión*, vol. 11, no. 260, 7 March 1979, 44.
Cydsa president and business evangelist Andrés Marcelo Sada took the ideal of worker fulfillment a step further. “Nothing is more just than to facilitate the growth of the working man,” he declared. “People,” however, “cannot grow in their sense of responsibility from the outside-in.” So that workers might acquire this sense “from the inside-out,” industry must provide the “conditions and motivations” to encourage employees’ identification with their employers and their work.\textsuperscript{174} Paeans to individual responsibility and company loyalty were true-to-form for Sada. After all, he was heir to Monterrey’s industrial pioneers, the architects of Mexico’s most comprehensive system of company paternalism.\textsuperscript{175} Nevertheless, the new breed of managerial humanism that he endorsed diverged sharply from the forms of workplace relations embodied in scientific management. For those preoccupied with improving public perceptions of business, the message was an appealing one.

Both the symposium and the view of corporate labor practices that it endorsed grew from a confluence of internal and external circumstances over the previous decade. The campaign to rehabilitate the image of private business in the eyes of the public—a campaign that Sada himself ignited—provided a strategic rationale for promoting a more favorable view of corporate hierarchies and internal relations practices. Crucially, however, this rationale coincided with two other developments that amplified the sweep and substance of the campaign.

First, in the 1960s Mexico’s largest firms began consolidating their holdings into large, diversified industrial groups, a process that accelerated in the 1970s and increased corporations’ reliance on professional managers. Continued family control of Mexico’s largest industries meant that the turn to professional management was piecemeal.\textsuperscript{176} As Roderic Camp observed,

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\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{175} Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}; Saragoza, \textit{The Monterrey Elite}; Gauss, \textit{Made in Mexico}.
\textsuperscript{176} Unlike in the United States, where the transition to diversified, professionally-managed conglomerates generally followed the dispersal of ownership through public stock offerings, in Mexico the formation of large
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“Mexico’s family-controlled firms have been an obstacle to public ownership and professional management.” Nevertheless, by the 1970s expanding companies had begun looking beyond the family to acquire needed expertise. The transfer of control over resources and decision-making was sluggish and incomplete, but Mexican businessmen grudgingly accepted that broadening the role of professional managers was a requisite of corporate modernization.

As president of the *Modelo* brewery Juan Sánchez Navarro affirmed in 1970, “Mexico is experiencing a transitional epoch between family administration and the managerial revolution.” This perception greatly expanded the demand for knowledge pertaining to administrative theory and practice.

The second intervening development was a global paradigm shift in managerial thought. As the symposium signaled, the world’s leading organizational theorists were increasingly dissatisfied with the precepts of scientific management. Widely credited with the “de-skilling” of the industrial labor force, Taylor, a mechanical engineer, had attempted to resolve the problems arising from mass production by breaking each task in the production process into simple segments which could be easily taught and replicated. Consequently, managers were able to


177 Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics*, 207.
178 *Ibid.*, 206-208
180 The dislocations that accompanied the triumph of mass production posed serious problems for the organization of work. At the turn of the twentieth-century, factory managers struggled to maintain production levels in the face of high workforce turnover, powerful unions of skilled workers, and hostilities between unskilled workers and their skilled counterparts, whose protectiveness of their tradecrafts and privileged position within the
largely exclude workers from the planning process. This separation of “planning from doing” was the central tenet of scientific management, and it gave managers unprecedented authority over the organization of work.\textsuperscript{181} In the 1930s, however, Harvard professor Elton Mayo began formulating what would become human relations theory, providing the basis for broader challenges to scientific management.\textsuperscript{182}

By 1970, the heirs to Mayo’s line of questioning had developed various influential alternatives to scientific management. The theories that they formulated went beyond offering practical solutions to the technical tasks of corporate organization. At stake, rather, were questions concerning human nature, the validity of bureaucratic authority, and the principles governing the interaction of individuals, groups, and societal institutions.\textsuperscript{183} To be sure, theorists were principally concerned with how to organize work and authority in such a way as to maximize productivity and efficiency. But their prescriptions reflected what sociologist Mauro Guillén describes as “organizational ideologies,” which their proponents used to inform workforce posed an obstacle to the upward mobility of other manual laborers. Divisions between skilled and unskilled laborers often corresponded to ethnic or racial divisions and hindered workplace cooperation and knowledge transfer within the workforce, with negative consequences for productivity and efficiency. By fragmenting, routinizing, and mechanizing the tasks performed by workers, scientific management reduced the skill requirements of workers and the time needed to train them. On the transition from the craft to the factory system of production see Daniel Nelson, \textit{Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975). See also Daniel Nelson, \textit{Frederick W. Taylor and the Rise of Scientific Management} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

\textsuperscript{181} For Taylor’s formulation of scientific management theory see Frederick Winslow Taylor, \textit{The Principles of Scientific Management} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).

\textsuperscript{182} In broad terms, Mayo’s core contribution was to challenge the conceptualization of labor relations as an exclusively economic contract by emphasizing the social needs of workers within the corporation. For an in-depth formulation of early human relations thought see Elton Mayo, \textit{The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization} (Cambridge: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1945). For an earlier formulation of Mayo’s ideas see Mayo, \textit{The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization} (Cambridge: Harvard, 1933).

\textsuperscript{183} My understanding of these aspects of managerial theory is based largely on the works of Mauro Guillén and Stephen Waring. Guillén, \textit{Models of Management}; and Waring, \textit{Taylorism Transformed}. 

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perceptions and justify administrative authority.\textsuperscript{184} Guillén argues that national elites’ selection of managerial paradigms was less dependent on proven scientific validity than on elite mentalities and perceptions and the “mobilization… of all sorts of capital… economic, social, cultural, symbolic, and political.”\textsuperscript{185} This insight provides the key to understanding Mexican business leaders’ embrace of new administrative philosophies in the period after 1970.

Seeking new modes for conceptualizing authority and the role of individuals in a ‘society of organizations’, leading entrepreneurs turned to a school of thought that Stephen Waring labels “post-Mayoist corporatism.”\textsuperscript{186} Corporatist thinkers promoted particular understandings of human psychology and bureaucratic authority that reinforced private-sector challenges to government paternalism and labor radicalism while appealing to the sensibilities of conservative Catholics.\textsuperscript{187} Further, corporatists’ insistence on the importance of business social responsibility as a counterbalance to market forces fit comfortably with businessmen’s ongoing efforts to rebrand Mexican corporations as custodians of social wellbeing.\textsuperscript{188} Of course, Mexican public opinion was ill-disposed to the market-centered ideologies gaining influence in the United States and elsewhere. The discussion that follows suggests that administrative psychology acted as a

\textsuperscript{184} Guillén, Models of Management, 3-4. Similarly, Waring likens managerial theories to philosophies of governance operating under the common assumption that “the best government is a managed government.” See Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 7.

\textsuperscript{185} Guillén, Models of Management, 20-21.

\textsuperscript{186} Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 7. It should be noted that in light of the general kinship in the ideas and concerns of organizational thinkers, classification is subjective. Guillén, for example, divides Waring’s corporatists into separate schools of thought—human relations and structural analysis—corresponding to their technical prescriptions for the internal organization and administration of corporate operations. Waring’s categorization highlights a philosophical affinity and common understanding of human psychology which more aptly reflects the ways that Mexican businessmen used managerial ideas to garner public support and foster internal private sector cohesion.

\textsuperscript{187} On the Catholic affinity for the modes of human interaction and institutional organization proposed by corporatist thinkers see Guillen, Models of Management, 25-26 and Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 78-80. I will discuss this relationship as it concerns the Mexican context in greater detail below.

\textsuperscript{188} Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 93-94
vital point-of-reconciliation between the ostensibly illiberal values of conservative Catholics and a vision of free-enterprise derived from a global neoliberal project.

Mexican business elites tempered their defense of industrial capitalism by borrowing from an intellectual tradition that proposed alternative means for advancing the same goal. As Guillén argues, the “dominant implicit theme” of leading organizational theories was defending the system of free enterprise and the role of large business firms. If the embrace of new administrative concepts had an ambiguous effect on the distribution of power within Mexican corporations, its impact on social logic of businessmen was conspicuous.

The following chapter explores the ways that businessmen and their supporters used new organizational ideologies to articulate business-friendly solutions to problems both internal and external to corporations. It argues that Mexico’s leading corporations, entrepreneurial associations, and a budding business press integrated new organizational ideologies into a nascent social philosophy of business. Like many observers, business spokespeople interpreted rising anomie as the product of a widespread loss of faith in the ability of contemporary authorities and institutions to promote social wellbeing. In addition to revising understandings of business’ social function, leading entrepreneurs, borrowing from psychologists and

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189 Guillén, Models of Management, 14. Significantly, Guillén was describing the implicit trajectory of what he labels the “structural analysis” school, of which Peter F. Drucker was the most influential advocate. Guillén distinguishes proponents of structural analysis from human relations theorists such as Douglas McGregor, Frederick Herzberg, and Chris Argyris, whom I will discuss in greater detail below. In using the classification of “corporatist,” I am following the schema proposed by Stephen Waring, who viewed the above thinkers as part of a single intellectual and philosophical tradition. This categorization is more apt for analyzing the ways that Mexican business leaders distilled organizational ideas in their public defense of private enterprise.

190 One of the most influential articulations of this view was Daniel Bell’s The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, in which he argued that the consumer abundance of modern capitalism had created cultural conditions in which rising expectations for instant gratification of consumerist desires undermined the respect for authority and institutions on which societal commitments to long-term common goals depended. See Daniel Bell The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (New York: Basic Books, 1976). This perception was also an inspiration for the work of leading organizational theorists, including Peter Drucker, whose contributions I will discuss in greater detail below.
managerial theorists, proffered alternative principles for ordering societal institutions of all kinds. Examining the intellectual, strategic, and ideological framework of this project sheds new light on businessmen’s efforts to transform their relationship to Mexican politics and society in the period after 1970.\textsuperscript{191}

At the forefront of this campaign were entrepreneurs and business professionals affiliated with the Monterrey industrial clique and the Social Union of Mexican Businessmen (\textit{Unión Social de Empresarios Mexicanos}, or USEM). USEM was an elite-led association dedicated to harmonizing business ideals and practices with Catholic Social Doctrine, and it remains the least studied of Mexico’s voluntary entrepreneurial associations. The following analysis reveals that collaboration among Monterrey industrialists and USEM was a defining feature of the post-1970 transformation in private-sector political and public relations strategies. Monterrey’s leading corporations and the business groups they controlled worked closely with USEM to fashion a sociopolitical vision that sidestepped politically untenable claims that impersonal market forces could alone convert private vice to public virtue. In the face of escalating tensions with labor leaders and public officials, these businessmen strategically adapted the ideas of administrative thinkers to win the sympathies of workers and the public. Equally important, they sought to inculcate new understandings of entrepreneurs’ social function among Mexican businessmen themselves. Their efforts signaled the emergence of a systematic project to nurture and reinforce ideological affinities among Mexican entrepreneurs and religious conservatives.

\textsuperscript{191} It is important to note that my sources and approach in this chapter leave important topics relating to the influence of new administrative ideas on Mexican business culture for further study, including the impact of curricular reforms in Mexico’s major business schools. In the 1970s, Mexico’s premier business schools, including the Monterrey Technological Institute (ITSE M), the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM), and the Pan-American Institute of Upper Management (IPADE), began reorganizing their curricula to reflect the growing association between business administration and the humanities and social sciences. See "Debate sobre las carreras administrativas," \textit{Expansión}, 22 April 1970, vol. 2, no. 33, 39. Cristina Puga, \textit{Empresarios y poder} (Mexico City: Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1993), 111.
Both Taylorism and the ‘new’ managerial theory that the symposium advertised rested on particular assumptions about the nature of human motivation. Though they squabbled over the minutiae of managerial practice, the new vanguard of administrative theorists shared a deep dissatisfaction with Taylor’s conception of human psychology. For all of his engineering acumen, Taylor’s blueprint for managing workplace relations was captive to the ghost of *homo economicus*. As his critics were quick to point out, Taylor viewed people, and laboring classes most of all, as inherently disinclined to work. To ensure maximum output, Taylor contended that worker productivity must be rigorously monitored. But the oppressive nature of the Taylorist work regime—premised as it was on the endless repetition of mindless tasks at a pace determined by machines and monitored by exacting managerial overlords—required a carrot to soften the stick of managerial control. True to classical notions of economic rationality, Taylor proposed that companies raise wages in-step with production increases, and discipline those who failed to keep up.

Following World War II, the assumptions underlying Taylor’s prescriptions were the subject of intense criticism among a new generation of organizational theorists. Inspired by the ideas of psychologist Abraham Maslow, these thinkers—among the most influential of which were Peter F. Drucker, Douglas McGregor, Frederick Herzberg, and Chris Argyris—rejected Taylor’s conclusion that humans shared an intrinsic distaste for work. Nor did they accept that worker motivation could be easily aroused with monetary incentives. On the contrary, they observed that workers resented being treated as factors of production. Taylorism’s materialistic

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Taylor’s writings exhibited disdain for the laboring classes of his day, likening the intellectual and cognitive capacities of industrial workers and field hands to those of common beasts of burden. For detailed discussion of this aspect of Taylor’s work see Waring, *Taylorism Transformed*, 90-98
conception of human aspirations and authoritarian managerial practices, they contended, dehumanized employees, generated worker dissatisfaction, hindered workplace cooperation, and stifled innovation. For these theorists, workers’ conditional acquiescence to corporate objectives, a key achievement of Taylor’s wage-based formula, was no longer sufficient.\(^{193}\) The survival of modern conglomerates, with their litany of increasingly specialized and fragmented functions, required an active commitment to company goals.

According to this school of thought, such a commitment could only be attained through a humanistic approach to worker motivation. Borrowing Maslow’s idea that human psychology obeyed a “hierarchy of needs,” progressing from “lower” physiological and security needs to “higher” needs associated with self-fulfillment, these theorists proposed that companies help employees achieve “self-actualization.”\(^{194}\) If human motivation resulted from unsatisfied needs, they argued, then corporations could boost production and spur innovation by helping employees attain psychological and emotional fulfillment through work. Adherents of this school, which historian Stephen Waring labels “post-Mayoist corporatism,” advocated a decentralized corporate hierarchy, a more democratic style of leadership, participative forms of management, robust internal communications, and the incorporation of employee values and aspirations into company planning.\(^{195}\) Implemented correctly, they postulated, such an approach would bring a new era in industrial relations.

\(^{193}\) It should be noted, however, that Taylorism was most often implemented in conjunction with some iteration of company and later state welfare systems, which provided non-wage benefits that were vital to the political viability of Taylorism.

\(^{194}\) Self-actualization was the highest tier of Maslow’s hierarchy. Maslow argued that at this stage of psychological development people ceased to be motivated by subsistence or “deficiency” needs, which he associated with the desire for esteem and recognition, and were able to unlock motivations linked to innovation and creativity.

Of course, much disagreement remained as to whether such a rosy bureaucratic vision was attainable. As Waring observed, theorists sparred over whether “Druckerism’s” restructured corporate hierarchy was the benevolent vehicle for meeting worker needs that Drucker himself envisioned it to be. Corporate executives, for their part, often complained that the new managerial ideal was too permissive and thus incompatible with the larger imperative to turn a profit. And while a 1974 survey of Fortune 500 executives concluded that over half of the representatives surveyed believed that their companies adhered to Drucker’s notoriously confounding managerial technique, “management by objectives and self-discipline,” closer inspection revealed that only a minority had applied it correctly. Indeed, corporatist thinkers, and Drucker especially, were reputed for their theoretical inconsistency and imprecision in translating theory to practice.

Yet there is no denying the power of their more cooperative vision of corporate organization. In fact, Waring argues that “lack of precision undoubtedly enhanced the popularity of their methods; managers could define participation in as syndicalist or manipulative a way as they pleased.” But it was not just managers who were seduced by the abstract allure of the new managerial ideal. By 1977, over seven-hundred books, articles, theses, and dissertations had been written promoting or evaluating Drucker’s formula, and Drucker’s magnum opus, Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practice (1974), temporarily surpassed The Joy of Sex on the New York Times best sellers list. As the movement to mend the image of Mexican business gathered steam, new managerial concepts became a central feature of a campaign to convince workers and the public that the interests and ideals of businesses were compatible with those of their

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196 Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 94-96
197 Ibid., 193-194.
198 Ibid., 78-79
employees. Due in part to their conceptual plasticity, Drucker’s writings were more widely circulated and referenced in the Mexican business literature than those of related theorists. More commonly, however, the intellectual authors of new administrative approaches went unreferenced. Mexican businessmen and their supporters put the ideas of corporatist thinkers to creative use.

*Moralizing Management: Business Catholicism and the Value of Work*

The growing demand for emerging works on administrative theory and practice was evident in the amount of space and attention that Mexican business publications devoted to them. *Expansión* reproduced lengthy articles on the subject from the *Harvard Business Review* at the end of every issue, a feature that remained constant through the 1970s and 1980s despite numerous renovations to the magazine’s organization and content. Although such pieces frequently addressed the intricacies of business operations, *Expansión*’s editors were keenly attentive to changes in business ethics and philosophy.

One of its earliest issues reproduced an essay by Drucker, “Management’s New Role.” Rather than leaving it to readers to draw their own inferences, the editors included the article as the focus of an editorial titled “New Values.” The piece highlighted a rehabilitated view of business as an instrument for realizing “fundamental social values, beliefs, and purposes” and achieving the “full satisfaction of the individual.” In the years that followed, *Expansión* printed scores of essays espousing the new managerial philosophy, as well as regular pieces

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199 The Spanish translation of this title was “La Nueva Función de la Dirección Empresarial.” This was the second of Drucker’s articles to appear in the magazine’s first fourteen issues. The first was “Managing for Business Effectiveness.”

evaluating its implications for Mexican corporations and their employees. If business leaders harbored doubts as to the practicability of such a comprehensive approach to industrial relations, they seldom appeared in the pages of *Expansión*. The overriding message intimated that the modern corporation was acquiring the administrative capacity to organize work to the holistic benefit of workers, companies, and society at large. As one observer put it, the purpose of work was to “develop the working person… so that, through work, he becomes more, is worth more.”

Nowhere was this understanding conveyed more explicitly, or repeatedly, than it was in the business magazine *Revista USEM*. In its very first issue, *Revista USEM* reprinted Drucker’s “Authority and Choice” from the Italian business magazine *Operare*, along with another essay, “The Human Responsibility of the Business Leader,” from the same magazine. The author of the latter article, Henri François Tecoz, decried the “psychosis” of production and “manufacturing techniques” that encouraged the treatment of humans as factors of production. Rather, he insisted, it was “precisely productivity, production and economic life” that were “factor[s] in the improvement of the human condition.”

Though Tecoz was clearly indebted to the writings of organizational thinkers, the article never referenced its source of intellectual inspiration. In what was common practice for the boosters of Mexican business, and customary for *Revista USEM*, the article recycled the ideas of

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202 José Morales Mancera, “Los economistas están divididos,” *Expansión*, vol. 9, no. 230, 7 December 1977, 84. The original quote reads “desarrollar a la persona que trabaja… para que, mediante el trabajo, sea más, valga más.”

psychologists and managerial theorists into a philosophical truism. “Man,” its author insisted, had an innate “need to progress… to the maximum of his individual capabilities.” In light of this “essential aspect of man,” he insisted, it was vital to the health of society that managers facilitate the personal growth of workers and employees.\textsuperscript{204} Variations on this theme appeared in virtually every issue of the magazine for the first decade of its existence, and often in multiple articles per issue. Although the emphasis was partly due to the growing popularity of new managerial concepts in Mexico, the magazine’s patron organization also had an ideological stake in the variety of managerial humanism that corporatist theorists proposed.

Founded in 1957, USEM sought to harmonize business practices with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. A running body of church teachings dating from the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Catholic Social Doctrine proposed a “third way” between capitalism and socialism. Though avidly capitalistic, USEM’s founders disavowed the “anti-values of economic liberalism and the socialist model.”\textsuperscript{205} In place of “false values” linked to liberalism and socialism, both of which prioritized economic and material considerations over moral and spiritual ones, USEM, in the words of one former president, endorsed a “conception of life, which could be like a soul that reanimates society, economic life, politics and dehumanized businesses.” USEM’s code of business conduct included commitments to the just remuneration of workers, the benevolent exercise of authority, and fostering “mutual understanding and sincere collaboration among all the members of the business.”\textsuperscript{206} Points one and two of the code, however, were devoted to the efficient production of quality goods and to turning a profit, respectively. Catholic understandings of authority, human nature, and the cooperative relationship of individuals to the

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{205} Juan Manuel López Valdivia, “Visión USEM,” \textit{Revista USEM}, vol. 263, no. 36 (January-February 2005), 4-5
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., 2.
collective had much in common with the organizational and psychological concepts advanced by Drucker, Maslow, and others. And, as it was for USEM’s founders, administrative theorists held production and profits to be the priorities of first order.

USEM’s affinity for ‘corporatist’ administration is partially attributable to the fact that Catholic corporatism was an inspiration for Drucker’s own work, which was a key referent for subsequent theories of management.\textsuperscript{207} Like the authors of Catholic Social Doctrine, Drucker was searching for a cure for those features of industrial capitalism that fueled worker alienation and radicalism.\textsuperscript{208} Seeing radicalism as an escapist mechanism for coping with the loss of traditional values and institutions, Drucker sought to ameliorate alienation by creating a business corporation that could nurture communal harmony without infringing on business’ ability to create wealth, which he viewed as the base function according to which all other corporate objectives must align.

While insisting that only profitable businesses could serve the needs of society, Drucker envisioned a corporation whose internal organization would function as an extension of the family and community. By inscribing an “ethic of mutuality” into the structure and managerial ethos of corporations, Drucker aimed to create a “non-economic society” that would provide workers with status and engender a sense of purpose and belonging within the corporate family.\textsuperscript{209} As Waring described it, Drucker aspired to “make capitalism corporative and corporatism capitalist.”\textsuperscript{210} The philosophical kinship of his vision to Catholic teachings led to considerable cross-fertilization in the hands of USEM’s constituents and collaborators.

\textsuperscript{207} Waring, \textit{Taylorism Transformed}, 78-80.
\textsuperscript{208} Guillén, \textit{Models of Management}, 14.
\textsuperscript{209} For a detailed discussion of the intellectual and philosophical influences that shaped Drucker’s ideas see Waring, \textit{Taylorism Transformed}, 78-103. See also Mauro F. Guillén, \textit{Models of Management}; and Elizabeth Haas Edersheim, \textit{The Definitive Drucker} (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007).
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid, 79.
Although its roster of members and former members included some of Mexico’s most influential businessmen, USEM has been little-studied. The relative absence of scholarly interest likely stems from the fact that the organization exerted little direct influence on economic policy or public-private sector relations. It had neither the formal ties to the state of official business organizations nor COPARMEX’s commitment to adversarial politics in defense of private enterprise.\textsuperscript{211} With only 1,500 affiliated members distributed across seven Mexican cities as of 1966, USEM was considerably smaller than COPARMEX, and minute compared to compulsory business associations. As Robert Shafer put it, “USEM frankly works with the business elite.”\textsuperscript{212}

But it would be a mistake to discount USEM’s importance based on its selective membership, lack of formal ties to the body politic or subdued public profile. USEM members organized frequent conferences and other gatherings, which prominent businessmen and leaders of business associations regularly attended. More importantly, prior to the establishment of the CCE, it was the only business organization in Mexico aside from COPARMEX that was explicitly devoted to examining economic problems as part of a holistic social equation.\textsuperscript{213} As historian Roderic Camp observed, prior to 1970 Mexican businessmen showed little interest in questions of social responsibility, and those who did endorsed a narrow definition limited to medical and welfare provisions for their own workers.\textsuperscript{214} USEM’s efforts to articulate and diffuse a comprehensive understanding of the private sector’s social function, and of the kind of society in which it could most effectively fulfill that function, placed it at the vanguard of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{211} This was more a difference of style than philosophy. USEM leaders endorsed very similar views on social, political, and economic issues but shied away from COPARMEX’s aggressive tactics. COPARMEX more openly advocated policies associated with economic liberalism.
  \item \textsuperscript{212} Shafer, \textit{Mexican Business Organizations}, 97-98
  \item \textsuperscript{213} As public-private sector relations deteriorated sharply after 1973, COPARMEX was the most vociferous organizational proponent of entrepreneurial social responsibility. See Camp, \textit{Entrepreneurs and Politics}, 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{214} \textit{Ibid.}, 42-43.
\end{itemize}
business initiatives to redefine the private sector’s relationship to Mexican society. Unlike COPARMEX, however, USEM’s non-combative style did not invite government reprisals or public criticisms, making it a safer haven than its contentious cousin for the gestation and exposition of ideas. In this sense, USEM acted as an incubator for a business-friendly language and social vision that was free, on the surface, of the ideological baggage associated with unpopular market tenets.

USEM’s formal disavowal of market liberalism did not entail support for government economic intervention or social reforms. On the contrary, many of the principal architects of the new business approach to politics and public relations in the period after 1970 refined their ideas through their involvement with USEM. Business leaders such as Andrés Marcelo Sada, Manuel Clouthier, Lorenzo Servitje, José Luis Coindreau, Alejandro Chapa, Jorge Chapa Salazar, Gastón Azcárraga Tamayo, and José María Basagoiti had all been active in USEM prior to assuming leadership positions in COPARMEX, the CCE or both at the height of private-sector militancy in the 1970s and 1980s. As scholars have pointed out, Mexican businessmen during this period became more unified than ever before, overcoming historically-entrenched regional and sectorial divides to mount a common defense. While external factors provided the impetus, the understandings on which the private sector’s defense came to rest did not emerge from a vacuum. USEM played a key role in formulating and disseminating the ideas underpinning the newfound cohesion of Mexican business.

Basagoiti, a past president of both USEM (1967-1968) and COPARMEX (1982-1984), viewed USEM as a key training ground for COPARMEX’s brand of business activism.

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215 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 26; Basañez, lucha por la hegemonía, 19; Arriola, Los empresarios y Estado en México

216 Basagoiti was also the president of Mexico’s largest tobacco company, Tabacalera Mexicana, S.A,
Basagoiti described USEM and COPARMEX as “intimately connected,” noting that USEM “contributed many of those [members] who, having passed through USEM, ended up preaching and practicing ‘el Evangelio’” at COPARMEX. One wonders what sort of evangelism Basagoiti referred to given that COPARMEX, despite its professed commitment to Catholic social teachings, staunchly defended liberal economic principles. Nevertheless, he clearly saw the two organizations as kindred ideological spirits. USEM, for its part, was “infused with Christian Social Doctrine” and comprised “of very good people, great thinkers,” but “lacking in action.” When asked about his decision to serve as president of COPARMEX, Basagoiti pointed to the paths of his friends and collaborators: “Manuel [Clouthier], Andrés Marcelo [Sada] and José Luis [Coindreau] had belonged to the USEM,” he noted, “it seemed the logical step.” Closer examination of the organization’s message and activities sheds new light on the ways that entangled conceptions of capitalism and Catholicism underpinned the transformation of Mexican business culture in the latter decades of the twentieth-century.

In 1970, USEM initiated the publication of Revista USEM, its quarterly magazine. The magazine’s principal founder and director, president of Panificación Bimbo, S.A., Lorenzo Servitje, envisioned Revista USEM as the “historical memory of [USEM’s] quotidian work.” Selective though such memory may be, Revista USEM provides a useful chronical of the association’s evolving philosophy in the context of the deteriorating public image of the private sector and business efforts to mend it. As former director of USEM’s Department of Economic and Social Research, Manuel Loza Macías, later recalled, the inspiration for the magazine

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217 On the origins and evolution of COPARMEX in relation to the particular brand of economic liberalism endorsed by the leaders of Monterrey industry, see Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; Gauss, Made in Mexico, Chapter 6; Basañez, La lucha por la hegemonía en México.

218 Setenta años al servicio de México: Historia Parte III: Se impone la Defensa,” (COPARMEX, 1999), 13-14

derived from the conviction that “entrepreneurial activity was not sufficiently appreciated” and that it was incumbent upon business leaders to repair the “maliciously deformed image of its work.”

But the magazine’s founders were also looking inward. In addition to restoring business prestige from without, Revista USEM’s founders sought to inculcate a new language and social philosophy to help businessmen better understand the nature of their relationship to society and how to articulate this understanding in their own defense. As Servitje described it, the magazine was to be an “organ of diffusion and social-ethical formation” promoting “integral human development through the education in values” and “entrepreneurial social responsibility.” He identified three principal objectives of Revista USEM: disseminate Church Social Doctrine by illuminating its relevance to contemporary economic life; normalize the conduct and views of Mexican businessmen; and instill a “professional consciousness in the businessman that establishes the foundation for the effective practice… of Catholic Social Doctrine.”

In light of this mission—and Servitje’s abiding commitment to reconciling “ethics and social principles with productivity”—it is unsurprising that Revista USEM placed a high premium on new developments in business administration.

More telling was the way in which magazine contributors and USEM spokespeople customarily subsumed the ideas of theorists within universalizing statements that rendered religious and intellectual influences indistinguishable. The mission statement printed in Revista USEM’s first issue suggests the extent to which administrative theory informed USEM’s philosophy. It asserted that the “old pretension that the economic can live in a world apart, with its own particular laws, has vanished,” requiring businessmen to ground their activities in

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220 Ibid., 2.
221 Ibid., 4-5.
222 “Testimonial de Don Lorenzo Servitje Sendra,” Setenta Años al servicio de México: Historia, última parte (COPARMEX, 1999), 5
broader currents of “social thought… professional ethics, administration, communications, and business philosophy.” The statement echoed the contention of theorists that the “economic man” of classical liberalism had given way to “psychological man,” with psychosocial needs and motivations that transcended material ones. Although it did not extend to business profits, this denial of the primacy of material concerns was central to USEM’s message, and it allowed the association to assimilate the ideas of management theorists into its organizational identity.

Corporatists’ quest after what Drucker dubbed the “non-economic society” fit neatly with the Catholic insistence on subjugating material pursuits to spiritual ones. Even as USEM’s leadership continued to define the organization’s mission in religious terms, blending administrative concepts with religious teachings contributed an air of intellectual legitimacy that appeals to faith could not have accomplished. Further, relating Church teachings to practical business operations, and the latter to larger social questions, allowed for narrative constructions that resonated among those less inclined toward a religious view of business’ social function. As a former USEM president pointed out, one of the primary obstacles confronting the organization was that many businessmen “did not understand very well [the concept of] a Social Christian Doctrine association.” From the magazine’s earliest issues, administrative theory was a primary mechanism through which Revista USEM promoted the formation of a “professional consciousness” that would allow businessmen to put Catholic social teachings into practice. On the other hand, appeals to a ‘non-economic’ or social capitalism was simply good politics in a country where Friedman’s ‘morality of the market’ made a very poor cause célèbre.

224 The most comprehensive formulation of this idea can be found in Peter F. Drucker, The End of Economic Man (1939)
In this context, the interpretive elasticity of managerial corporatism lent itself to some creative reconditioning. One contributor to *Revista USEM* described Drucker’s management-by-objectives as a panacea for the problems of modern citizenship. “[M]odern principles of administration,” contended the author, were effective not only for businesses, but for “all class of entities to which there are men connected.” Everywhere management-by-objectives had been applied, “always we find that…the entity transforms itself little by little into a community of persons, continuation of the family.” Gone, however, was the language of “self-actualization” and personal development. In its place, the author repackaged notions of individual growth into a metaphor of masculine maturation. “[B]usinesses,” he argued, “have an obligation… to make adults.” As “former[s] of men,” companies that have “introduced the modern systems [of administration]… make all those connected to the entity more adult.” By contrast, executives who resolved company problems paternalistically relegated their subordinates to a state of perpetual childhood.226

Such tropes formed an important subtext of *Revista USEM*’s editorial stance and the larger narrative of which it was a part. Not only did the message extrapolate managerial concepts into an infantilizing allegory on the substance of modern civics. It conflated new forms of paternalism with its absence. As Drucker’s critics argued at some length, the supposition that wise administrators could shepherd workers from their existential limbo to the promised-land of self-actualization was hardly the egalitarian elixir that its proponents made it out to be.227 Nevertheless, over the coming decade supporters of Mexican business would invest heavily in a

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227 Organizational psychologist Harry Levinson was perhaps the most vocal critic of Drucker’s idea that reformed corporate hierarchies could serve the needs and values of workers. See Harry Levinson, “Management by Whose Objectives?,” *Harvard Business Review*, (July-August 1970), vol. 48, no. 4, 125-144.
narrative strategy that contrasted modern business practices with depictions of government paternalism as a kind of developmental molasses. The seeds of this message were abundant in *Revista USEM*.

The insinuation that paternalism in Mexican institutional life impeded civic maturity illuminates the distinctive valence of ‘corporatist’ managerial theory in Mexico, where public officials and opinion-makers had for decades defined national hopes, achievements, and fears in relation to modernization and underdevelopment. As they struggled to respond to the accelerated process of social change that was transforming Mexico’s political landscape, Mexican business leaders confronted a vexing paradox. On the one hand, student protestors, hippies, and middle class *guerrilleros* exposed the corrosion of the patriarchal values on which the business-friendly ‘stabilizing development’ model had been built. On the other, the revival of state paternalism in labor relations under the aegis of “shared development” not only threatened the economic interests and political influence of Mexican business. It challenged the supremacy of capital accumulation as the motor of national development. Caught between the outright rejection of patriarchy, which raised fears of disruptive challenges to authority both in and outside of the workplace, and the unnerving, if illusory, specter of organized labor’s blind

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228 For detailed discussion of the ways that understandings of modernization and development inflected Mexican cultural nationalism and politics in the period after 1940 see Joseph, Rubenstein, and Zolov, eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age*.

229 On the challenge that these groups posed to traditional forms of patriarchy see Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices*, Zolov, *Refried Elvis*; Walker, *Waking from the Dream*; Chapter 1. For detailed discussion on the anxiety of cultural conservatives over challenges to traditional forms of patriarchy see Anne Rubenstein: *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, & Other threats to the Nation: A Political History of Comic Books in Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). For an extensive discussion of the challenges posed by student protests and the resistance that it engendered, see Pensado, *Rebel Mexico*.

devotion to a demagogic politics of class, business leaders and their sympathizers sought new modes for conceptualizing authority and the relationship of individuals to the social body.

Leading entrepreneurs were increasingly convinced that the future of Mexican development hinged on their ability to reorient the nation’s social values away from both state paternalism and class politics. In late September, 1973, with rancor over the murder of Eugenio Garza Sada still fresh, Lorenzo Servitje addressed a meeting of marketing executives in Chihuahua City. “Today,” he observed, “there is no structure, system, institution or custom that is not scrutinized, questioned or impugned.” Servitje proposed that amid so many changes the “one constant” was that “today the man of all latitudes is an unsatisfied man,” whether a “miserable campesino” or “student accommodated to the consumer society.” He argued that the rule of political expediency in government institutions and parastatal industries barred their ability to satiate this disaffection. Private businesses, however, were free from undue “political compromises” or “pressure in the election of bosses and workers.” In a “society in which state action has more and more weight,” he effused, modern business was becoming a “nucleus of liberty” where “all of its men express themselves with confidence, develop their initiative, participate in its decisions and have the opportunity to fully actualize themselves.”

Servitje’s comments reflected an emerging view among Mexican business leaders. If dissatisfaction with societal institutions was the root of modern social pathologies, they believed, then institutions must develop the cure. And, as former president of USEM’s Mexico State chapter, José Mendoza Fernández, wrote, no institution “can develop men if it is mistaken about man’s true nature.”

231 Lorenzo Servitje, ”La búsqueda de una nueva empresa,” Revista USEM, vol. 4, no. 25 (May-June 1974), 17.
Nor, according to USEM spokespeople, were labor unions equipped with the requisite understanding to ameliorate rising anomie. Basagoiti, for example, enthusiastically advertised new managerial concepts as an anecdote to class conflict. He endorsed “modern business concepts” as a response to “fallacies and sophisms of equality.” He argued that the prevalence of class politics in Mexico “made a prisoner of the human being, substituting his true aspirations” with “false ideas about the dignification of work.” By “decentralizing the capacity and jurisdiction” of corporate decision-making, he proposed, business administrators eroded “chimeras” which aimed to “deceive men with the possibility of [absolute] equality.” Beneath the veneer of this misguided quest, man desired only his “own self-actualization.”

Such statements not only challenged class politics as a means of advancing workers’ interests. New psychological and administrative concepts both conditioned and lent credibility to a philosophy of human nature that rejected social class as a legitimate basis for human identity, transfiguring class consciousness as false consciousness. In this Maslow-eats-Marx portrait of the human condition, business’ true contributions to its employees lay not in salaries and benefits, but in the “opportunity for development that it gives to members… the incentives of participation.” One’s intrinsic desires, postulated Basagoiti, sought only “that which corresponds to him, and that which by definition corresponds to him is the use of his aptitude to think.” If companies were allowed to nurture this aptitude free of external interference, he implored, “we would have an adult society.”

While illustrating Mexican business leaders’ penchant for repurposing managerial theory to bolster their social vision, such statements were easily reconciled with the claims of theorists.

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234 Ibid.
Proponents of job-enrichment, most notably Douglas McGregor, Chris Argyris, and Frederick Herzberg, saw Maslow’s insights as a way to resolve the problem of worker alienation. They felt that by commodifying labor and reducing employment to a monetary transaction Taylorism had sown distrust between labor and capital that would only dissipate with the reintegration of production planning and performance. As one scholar described it, “They would eliminate alienation by making industrial work fulfilling, reconciling labor and capital, and creating a capitalism without class.”

Drucker, for his part, avidly promoted managerial innovation as the key to modernization. He rejected the commonly accepted thesis that corporate management was the upshot of economic development, arguing instead that “management is the prime mover and… development is a consequence.” Effective management, in his view, was “fast becoming the central resource of the developed countries and the basic need of developing ones.” Though the intent of such statements related to management’s potential to channel the individual talents of company employees toward corporate economic objectives, with the aggregated result of economic development, adherents of “Druckerism,” job enrichment, and related theories viewed managers’ effectiveness as derivative of their ability to cultivate “corporate citizenship.”

Thus, Drucker’s assertion that “there are no underdeveloped countries. There are only undermanaged ones” had a malleable logic in the hands of Mexican businessmen.

Others described new managerial practices as a palliative for perceived moral ills associated with consumerist modernity. At USEM’s national congress in 1971, the manager of

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235 Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 141
237 Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 82.
the Monterrey-based steel company Hylsa’s Puebla plant, Benito Leal Cuen, averred that developmental disparities between the Global North and Global South resulted from a “Managerial Gap.” He added, however, that the consumer abundance of the former had been accompanied by moral and spiritual decay, evident in the “loss of familial integrity, the excess of all pleasures, [and] birth control.” “Thousands of hippies wander throughout the world protesting,” he continued. “The traditional values of respect for authority, for the woman, for country, and for religion have broken down.” As a result, Cuen concluded, the “old economic formula,” in which happiness derived from the proportional relationship between desire and material consumption, no longer applied to developing nations. To bypass this materialist malaise, he posited, a new kind of business was emerging to meet the particular needs of developing nations:

The business that begins to emerge in our underdeveloped countries must not… copy the model of American or European businesses. It is necessary that they avoid incurring the errors of the dehumanization of work. We are at the time to educate the workers in the dignity of the self. To foment in them responsibility, integration, cooperation and the sense of common good. The businessman must comprehend that to train his personnel and make them participate in the decisions which affect them, is to establish the bases so that the worker obtains satisfaction from his work, actualizes himself as a person and identifies with the business.

Workers who embrace this metamorphosis and “cultivate [themselves] in the disciplines of the spirit,” Cuen suggested, would leave the “sterile dependency” of previous eras behind. Thus, he concluded, would new forms of management “overcome the egoisms of groups and classes” to foster a more humane and moral modernity.239

Concerns over the relationship between spiritual poverty and material abundance ran deep in Mexico, and the cultural upheavals of the previous decade only exacerbated those

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But linking class politics to materialism had a number of subtler advantages as a narrative strategy. Where religious and social conservatives decried materialist pleasure-seeking as the love-child of consumerism run-amok, class politics emphasized the social advancement of workers via wages and other material benefits that enhanced their position as consumers. By contrast, business spokespeople portrayed corporations a vehicles for meeting the intrinsic needs of the “spirit” or psyche—concepts that the juxtaposition of industrial psychology and religious doctrine rendered interchangeable—while redefining those needs in a way that privileged values associated with production over material advancement. Thus, companies could boost production, reduce costs, and satisfy the needs of workers through managerial strategies that, according to their proponents, also checked class conflict and immoral behaviors by fostering a sense of belonging within the social corpus of the company and providing, as Servitje described it, “an education in values.” More than educating entrepreneurs in how to apply Catholic Social Doctrine to company needs, the emerging script indicated to the faithful that business practices were consistent with Catholic values.

The pretense that managerial techniques could reorient the values of workers toward less consumerist, more productive occupational objectives linked the anxieties of religious conservatives to the supply-side arguments of Mexico’s business elite. Business leaders denounced Echeverría and labor leaders for neglecting the accumulative needs of capital in favor

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240 For detailed discussion of the cultural transformations of the 1960s and the resistance that they engendered see Zolov, *Refried Elvis*; Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies*; and José Agustín, *La Tragicomedia Mexicana*, vol I. Fears concerning the potentially negative moral and cultural effects of materialism had been a defining feature of political culture and ideologies across Latin America since at least the turn of the twentieth-century. Perhaps the most influential distillation of this sentiment was Uruguayan author José Enrique Rodó’s essay, *Ariel* (1900), which became a foundational reference in the formulation of Latin American political values in opposition to U.S. cultural dominance in the region. See José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900).

241 Revista *USEM* (Jan-Feb 2005), vol. 36, no. 263.
of demand-side policies meant to preserve worker purchasing power, arguing that redirecting business profits toward labor costs spurred inflation and reduced industry’s capacity to contribute to national development. As economist and advisor to AmCham-Mexico Redvers Opie put it before a U.S. Senate hearing, there was “too much money going to consumer rather than capital needs.”

USEM’s brand of business Catholicism integrated moral objections to secularism and consumerist excess into a productive philosophy favorable to business but absent liberalism’s reliance on impersonal market forces as the principal enforcer of the common good. Unions and politicians, so the message went, could only assuage worker angst by feeding secular prurience with the spoils of development. Private business, according to one businessman, could “more easily fulfill the aspiration of its men to live, within the workplace, the virtues of fraternity and solidarity… friendship and affection.” At a time when liberation theology was moving Catholic sentiment leftward, the contention that the moral foundations of social wellbeing grew organically from the organizational structure, values, and goals of private companies tilted the interpretative arc of social Catholicism back toward the needs of capital.

Managing Conflict with the ‘Medicine of Work’: Administrative Strategies and Anti-Paternalism in the Labor Debate

If social and cultural effervescence provided the initial impulse for insinuating new administrative concepts into a social philosophy of business, the deteriorating relationship between labor and capital provided the operational incentive. As business scholar Carlos Arriola

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observed, winning the allegiance of workers was central to the larger goal of rehabilitating the image of private enterprise.  

Although publicly accessible company sources are scant for this period, Mexico’s business press provides useful insights into the nature of such efforts. Where *Revista USEM* avoided becoming directly involved in labor debates, *Expansión* was less squeamish. Significantly, *Expansión* founder and editorial director, John Christman, had recently been named Vice President of AmCham in an administrative overhaul meant to refocus the chamber’s activities on the public defense of U.S.-based multinationals and the free-enterprise system.  

Although AmCham’s leadership was reluctant to openly disparage union politics, they were not without a public voice in ongoing labor debates. Under Christman’s leadership, *Expansión* assumed a forward position in promoting common strategies for placating workers and communicating a more favorable image of corporate labor practices.

After Echeverría’s annual *Informe* [presidential address] in September 1974, *Expansión*’s editors expressed regret at the president’s fanning of antagonisms between labor and capital. Responding to Echeverría’s pledge to “fight at the side of workers” and revise the federal labor code to allow the annual renegotiation of minimum wages and collective contracts with employers, they encouraged business leaders to accept that the current government would always side with labor over employers. More important than the outcome of tripartite negotiations, however, was the “attitude that the businessman must take to better define his relation with the workers.” For the sake of companies, workers, and national development, they urged, businessmen must “demonstrate irrefutably that the interests of business do not contradict the

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245 Arriola, *Los empresarios y el Estado*, 60.  
248 Previously, the renegotiation of wages and collective contracts occurred biannually. See *Ibid.*
interests of its employees.” The key, stated the editorial, was to “create awareness among [workers], among the unions and… at all levels, that a good administration necessarily translates to social and economic wellbeing.”

The call came in the midst of a tumultuous period for Mexican labor relations. From 1972 to 1975 the number of strike petitions submitted by official unions, the largest and most vocal of which was the Mexican Workers’ Confederation (CTM), increased nearly three-fold. Although relatively few strikes materialized among syndicates with formal ties to the state, resolution often required companies to increase salaries or other benefits. More importantly, union demands for increases to the national minimum wage and the implementation of a forty-hour work week, combined with stinging public criticisms of the private sector by labor leaders and public officials, put mounting pressure on Mexican businesses. Echeverría added to this pressure through favorable responses to labor demands, reducing the work week to forty hours for federal employees and issuing repeated decrees for emergency increases in the minimum wage.

Business leaders were also alarmed at the growing influence of and tacit government support for independent unions that broke from the CTM and other official syndicates. Notwithstanding a certain delight at the sight of labor tsar and CTM general secretary Fidel Velásquez with mud on his face, business leaders expressed alarm over the unpredictable nature of independent unions, which in 1974 mounted a series of disruptive strikes in the automotive and metallurgic industries. Further, many observers estimated that the rise of independent

249 “Las precisiones implican decisiones,” Ibid., 4.
250 Middlebrook, Paradox of Revolution, 164.
251 Ibid., 222-225.
252 On the rise of independent unionism under Echeverría, see Middlebrook, Paradox of Revolution, 222-254; Snodgrass, “How Can we Speak of Democracy in Mexico?,” 159-173; On the revival of state paternalism in
unionism pressured Velásquez into making unreasonable demands on businesses in order to shore up his support base. In response to these developments, executives at some of Mexico’s largest employers intensified their efforts to rehabilitate the image of corporate labor practices.

At the forefront of this campaign were capitalists and corporate executives from Monterrey’s leading companies. The scions of Monterrey’s industrial pioneers inherited a long tradition of advertising magnanimous labor practices as a defining characteristic of their corporate philosophy and the system of regional social relations that emerged from it. Over the course of the twentieth-century, Monterrey’s leading families developed Mexico’s most comprehensive company welfare system. The Cuauhtémoc brewery, for most of the century the Group’s most important business, established the Sociedad Cuauhtémoc y Famosa in 1918 to provide educational and financial services to workers in affiliated companies and their families, and later expanded non-wage benefits to include housing provisions and cultural, recreational, and sporting activities. Although other Mexican employers provided non-wage benefits to their workers, as historian Michael Snoggrass observed “none did so with greater enthusiasm, resources, and self-promotional panache than the pillars of regiomontano industry.” As they campaigned to redeem the public image of Mexican business, the heirs to this tradition had a wealth of experience to draw on.

While the forebears of Monterrey industry exhibited a genuine concern for the wellbeing of their workers, they disguised the historical impetus for regiomontano welfare capitalism behind a humanist mythology that attributed its development to enlightened altruism. The

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Mexican labor relations under Echeverría see Lenti, “‘A Revolutionary regime Must Put the Interests of the Majority First,’” 163-182, and; Lenti, “Collaboration and Conflict”.

253 See “No está el horno para bollos,” Expansión, vol. 6, no. 141, 26 June 1974, 7-13.


255 Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance in Monterrey, 54.
Monterrey industrial clique purchased much political and social capital with claims that business leaders had developed the system voluntarily, independent of external pressure.\textsuperscript{256} But the provision of benefits through the company welfare system was voluntary only in the sense that it preceded and often exceeded the requirements of government-mandated reforms. The development and subsequent expansion of the company welfare system coincided with punctuated periods of labor militancy and federal interventionism.\textsuperscript{257} Though it did not respond to legislation or federal decree, industrial paternalism in Monterrey emerged from the perceived need to forge a pliant workforce resistant to the advances of official syndicates.

The most commonly cited inspiration for Monterrey’s brand of company paternalism was Social Catholicism. As with the individuals and industries affiliated with USEM, civic boosters and corporate spokespeople in Monterrey avidly publicized their reforms as a reflection of social Christian principles.\textsuperscript{258} A friendly and, for much of the twentieth-century, industry-controlled local press, as well as company literature such as the \textit{Cervecería Cuauhtémoc}’s bi-weekly publication, \textit{Trabajo y Ahorro} [Work and Savings], which was distributed free-of-charge to company workers, proclaimed Catholic principles to be the guiding philosophy of the city’s leading businesses.\textsuperscript{259} Although a generation of scholarship reinforced this perception, Susan

\textsuperscript{256} Saragoza, \textit{The Monterrey Elite}; 90-91, 140-144; Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}, 54-61. For a more hagiographic articulation of this idea see Nemesio Garcia, \textit{Una industria en marcha} (Mexico City, 1955). Though Monterrey’s company patrons promoted the belief that the city’s leading industries were the first to introduce company paternalism in Mexico, anticipating the social reforms later implemented by progressive post-revolutionary administrations, numerous precedents existed. For pre-revolutionary examples of company paternalism see William French, \textit{A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico} (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), and Tony Morgan, “Proletarians, Politicos, and Patriarchs,” in William Beezley, et. al., \textit{Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations of Popular Culture in Mexico} (Wilmington: SR Books, 1994)

\textsuperscript{257} Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}, Chapter 3.


\textsuperscript{259} See, for example, \textit{Trabajo y Ahorro}, Sociedad Cuauhtémoc y Famosa (December 1974).
Gauss and Michael Snodgrass have argued that economic liberalism and the North American business model were the driving ideological influences for regiomontano elites.\textsuperscript{260} As Snodgrass argues, “the conservative Catholicism with which Monterrey is often identified did not emerge publicly until the 1930s, when the local elite began promoting it as an ideological antidote to the government’s policies of ‘revolutionary nationalism.’”\textsuperscript{261} Despite the continued prevalence of Social Catholicism as a public rationale for industrial policy in 1970s Monterrey, this insight still applies.

Public officials in the 1970s gave Monterrey businessmen and those sympathetic to them ample cause to dissent based on religious conviction or political-economic ideals. In addition to transforming the language of Mexican development and throwing the weight of the state behind labor demands, Echeverría’s government legalized birth control and publicly supported the cause of women’s liberation. Where the former initiatives incited a public outcry, however, the latter elicited a subdued response from Monterrey’s leading industrialists. Further, when religious conservatives in much of Mexico mounted heated protests over the government’s inclusion of sexual education in public textbooks, opposition in Monterrey centered primarily on the books’ favorable treatment of socialist leaders.

As a U.S. consular official noted, business leaders and their supporters in Monterrey were far more concerned with radicalism. They opposed the secular treatment of sexuality only in a “pro forma” manner, an observation that Mexican sources confirm.\textsuperscript{262} Though industry leaders deployed the vocabulary of Social Catholicism in their pitch for managerial corporatism, labor radicalism and state antagonism provided the stimulus. Still, for adherents of Catholic Social

\textsuperscript{260} Gauss, \textit{Made in Mexico}, 8-9, 206-207; Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}, Chapter 3, esp. 57-58.

\textsuperscript{261} Snodgrass, \textit{Deference and Defiance}, 57.

\textsuperscript{262} “Textbook Controversy,” February 11, 1975. RG59-36B-P750036-0733, \textit{National Archives and Records Administration II (NARAII)}. The textbook controversy will be discussed in greater detail in the following Chapter.
Doctrine and lip-servers alike, the new administrative philosophy made an easier bedfellow than its Taylorist antecedent.

Eugenio Garza Lagüera, president of the Monterrey holding company, Visa, S.A., described new managerial practices as a vehicle for achieving fundamental human freedoms. The eldest son of deceased industrial magnate Eugenio Garza Sada, Garza Lagüera referred to the “binomial philosophy” of humanism and production as the “key to the progress of all businesses and, therefore, a requisite for the survival of a free society.” To this end, he posited, Visa had recently initiated an internal reorganization intended to harmonize the “administrative aspect” of the company with its business philosophy. The new managerial philosophy dealt not only with the “problem of compensation,” but with questions of “greater transcendence… liberty and human dignity.” “Fundamentally,” noted Garza Lagüera, Visa’s administrators sought to “promote the integral development of the human person” through a combination of material benefits and “psychological motivations.” Whether described in terms of “self-actualization” or “integral development,” the economic objective of managerial reforms was the same; the engineering of a disciplined, loyal, and highly productive workforce that derived more satisfaction from work than from compensation and leisure. But the conflation of terms was more than an economic strategy.

Visa’s director of human relations, Sergio Valdéz Flaquer, also mixed the terminology of social Catholicism and administrative theory freely. For Flaquer, the most important aspect of the company’s internal reforms was to “make all of our people aware that the business is fundamentally the human team that forms it.” In light of this understanding, he attested, “we struggle always for an integral development of the person at all levels, fomenting to the

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263 “Presencia del hombre,” Expansión, 14 May 1975, vol. 7, no. 165, 64.
264 Ibid., 64-66
maximum degree possible decentralization and participation in decision-making” so that the “work environment permits a complete self-actualization.”

Flaquer, however, explained the impetus for the company’s reforms differently. While acknowledging that they responded to the evolving needs of a society-in-transformation, he downplayed their novelty among Monterrey’s leading industries. “The program is not essentially new,” he contended, “we simply want to continue forward with the labor enriching policies that have always characterized the Group’s businesses.”

Flaquer’s insistence on the basic continuity of regional labor relations reflected the peculiar dilemma confronting the city’s leading industrialists.

Even as they promoted a new look for Mexican corporations, Monterrey’s business class was loath to divest itself of the social and political capital associated with the company welfare system. For most of the twentieth-century, regiomontano industrialists had assiduously advertised enlightened paternalism as the basis for lasting prosperity and social peace. The cross-class alliances that emerged from the forward-looking labor philosophy of company patrons, they had argued, was the bedrock of the city’s remarkable industrial modernization and a model for the Mexican nation. But company paternalism, enlightened or not, sat uneasily with business depictions of government paternalism as an impediment to economic and civic development. The turn toward managerial corporatism in Monterrey did not entail a rejection of paternalist labor relations. Rather than mending class divisions with progressive patriarchy, the new approach proposed to erase them through administrative feats of ontological engineering.

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265 Ibid., 66-67.
266 Ibid.
267 Gauss, Made in Mexico, 8-9, Chapter 6; Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite, 140-144
Managerial corporatism, in this sense, merely offered a new language and methodology for achieving the same goal.

Flaquer’s reference to ‘labor enrichment’ betrayed a more fundamental contradiction. Where humanism, class harmony, and productive prowess had long been selling points for the *regiomontano* elite, corporatism’s methods for achieving them diverged from those of its paternalist predecessors. The particular blend of Taylorism and company welfare for which Monterrey industries were known sought worker consent through the provision of above average compensation combined with socializing and acculturating programs away from the point of production. Cooperative societies such as the *Sociedad Cuauhtémoc y Famosa*, as well as company events and recreational activities, aimed to promote labor discipline and workers’ identification with the company and its values, but they were conceived as consolation for an onerous work regimen, not a remedy for it.\(^{268}\)

Conversely, the intellectual authors of job enrichment insisted that the integration of workers’ goals and values with those of the company must occur at the point of production.\(^{269}\) Nor, according to theorists, could the refried Fordism on which *regiomontano* industry had built its reputation in earlier eras engender the quasi-spiritual revelations of self-actualizing personal development. Though the company welfare system operative in Monterrey’s leading industries had undoubtedly raised the living standard of workers, Flaquer’s equating it to “labor enriching policies” was a calculated misrepresentation. As the progeny of the city’s industrial pioneers

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\(^{268}\) On the activities and aims of the *Sociedad Cuauhtémoc y Famosa* see Snodgrass, *Deference and Defiance*, Chapter 3. For a detailed discussion of the centrality of work-discipline to the ideology and policies of Monterrey’s leading industrialists see Gauss, *Made in Mexico*, Chapter 6.

devised new strategies for engaging workers and the public, corporatist ideas provided a more expedient framework for communicating their message.

Few were more conscious of this fact than were representatives of the Cydsa Corporation and their boosters at Expansión. Highlighting the company’s role in leading the defense of Mexican business, a writer for Expansión attributed Cydsa’s effectiveness in that capacity to its enlightened internal relations philosophy. Of the company’s renowned “communications efforts undertaken to project the image of free enterprise… defending the private sector’s reason for existence,” he contended, “it would have been able to do little or nothing toward the exterior if its internal organization did not obey the image that it has tried to project toward the general public.” Accordingly, Cydsa’s messaging aimed to position the company at the vanguard of managerial innovation while also proclaiming the superiority of those innovations over syndicalist or juridical alternatives.

Company president Andrés Marcelo Sada described Cydsa’s administrative philosophy as “completely distinct from that practiced in the past.” The “function of administration,” he elaborated, “is to create the motivating mechanisms” to encourage “greater responsibility, greater challenge… better opportunities for achievement and satisfaction within the organization.” Sada stressed that Cydsa offered its workers continuous “possibilities for personal development.” But he contrasted these opportunities to recent European legislation mandating union inclusion in key areas of corporate governance, which some saw as an inspiration for independent unionization in Mexico. The “imposed legal formalisms” of European industrial democracy,

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270 Cydsa initiated a comprehensive overhaul to the company’s administrative and operational structure that in 1969. However, the major impetus for restructuring Cydsa and other leading Monterrey firms into multi-division holding companies came with the murder of EGS and rising tensions with Ech. See Basañez, La lucha por la hegemonía en México; and Nuncio, El grupo Monterrey, Chapter 1


272 “No está el horno para bollos,” Expansión, vol. 6, no. 141, 26 June 1974, 7-13.
he contended, “prostituted the goodness of the concept.”

Cydsa’s labor philosophy, by contrast, vindicated the principle that “incentives should not be gifts, but rather opportunities.”

The director of Cydsa’s plastics division, Guillermo García Cano, underscored the synergy between the psychological needs of employees and the productive needs of the corporation. “Quickly the results [of the reforms] were apparent,” he noted. “[T]hat which permits people to cope better and make better use of their opportunities,” he insisted, “necessarily has to translate to more productivity and, consequently, to more service to society and the business.” As with Sada’s rejection of legislative solutions to the problem of industrial democracy, Cano saw individual moxie as the key to sustainable progress. Individuals who took pride in their work, he suggested, performed their jobs more effectively, and improved performance was “in itself an extraordinary motivator.” By according the requisite esteem and recognition to those who excelled, as opposed indiscriminately compensating the collective, he posed, Cydsa’s administrators created conditions that allowed performance and motivation to “mutually nourish one another.” Free from external interference, Cano insisted, this self-perpetuating cycle of achievement would ensure that “society progresses with its own resources.”

Company spokespeople stuck closely to this message.

Cydsa’s director of internal relations and the president of the Monterrey Productivity Center, Roberto Rodríguez Puente, affirmed the symbiosis between participatory decision-making and corporate economic goals. Rodríguez Puente commended the company’s implementation of “Quality Circles,” a technique of Japanese origin in which integrated teams of managers and production workers exchanged ideas on how to improve the quality of goods and services.

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273 The original statement reads “prostituido la bondad del concepto.” Significantly, the term “bondad” implies a moral goodness or kindness, not “goodness” in a utilitarian sense.


275 Ibid., 115.
reduce production costs. In addition to improving company products, he advertised, Quality Circles encouraged the “responsible participation of workers” and a “high degree of satisfaction for its personnel, not only in the economic [sense] but also as it pertains to self-realization.” In contrast to the Taylorist tradition of treating production workers as “an extension of the machine, a mechanical instrument,” businesses now recognized that the manual laborer “has intellect” and “practical knowledge” which made him a “valuable contributor of ideas.” Echoing the contention of theorists that integrated work teams helped workers ‘feel like owners’, Rodríguez Puente added that Cydsa’s Quality Circles made workers “feel like their work is an important part of the whole, of the general objective of the business.”

Central to this message, however, was the idea that including workers in corporate decision-making was no act of metaphysical altruism. When integrated within an enlightened productive philosophy, argued company representatives, man’s economic and existential needs were mutually reinforcing.

Cydsa executives insisted that fostering a sense of belonging and emotional wellbeing among workers not only redounded to the economic benefit of the company, but also revitalized the human initiative on which free enterprise depended. Hugo Monterrubio Medina, who headed the Investigation and Development of Work Models division, proposed that Quality Circles originated from the need to “rescue human creativity” from bureaucratic excess. In true Druckerian fashion, Rodríguez Puente characterized managerial acumen as a force of entrepreneurial innovation. He contended that by training company administrators to “develop the ‘managerial’ abilities of workers” through “training and motivation,” Cydsa’s participatory

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276 “Cydsa: círculos de calidad, resultados redondod,” Expansión, 9 November 1977, vol. 9, no. 228, 36. On theorists’ interpretation of quality circles and other types of work teams, see Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 155-175. Though Japanese quality circles originated independently, many theorists viewed the Japanese corporatist traditions as akin to—and, in the case of Drucker, as variations of—their own ideas.

schemes allowed all workers to “put into practice their creative potential.” Thus, he noted, could a “strong dose of humanism” harmonize the “economic aspect (cost)” of company operations with the “human aspect (actualization).” The extent to which such measures succeeded in diffusing shop-floor militancy is not entirely clear, but some workers joined company spokespeople in promoting the benefits of participation.

Leopoldo Espinosa, a veteran machine operator at Cydsa’s “Crysel” acrylics manufacturing plant, welcomed the opportunity that the circulos provided. Though his participation was voluntary—the circles met after the close of business hours and offered irregular compensation, ranging from nothing to an amount based on their estimated contribution to the bottom line—Espinosa underscored the importance of recognition and self-improvement. “My participation,” he noted, “showed me that I was not only good at cranking or stopping machines, but also at thinking and resolving problems.” In addition to the “notable recognition on the part of [his] bosses and compañeros,” Espinosa claimed that the experience of participation “has also helped me in my personal life.” “When I joined,” he noted, “I felt that I was taken into account. [A]fter they began to apply some of my ideas… I felt very satisfied.”

Though Espinosa was among a select coterie of workers chosen to participate in Quality Circles, Expansión characterized the measure as broadly inclusive. “At the worker level,” proclaimed the author of a publicity-piece, “the Circles have awakened a great enthusiasm, including at the syndicate level.” So successful was the practice, he added, that Cydsa had expanded it to “almost all of the group’s businesses,” including plants in Guadalajara, Mexico City, Monterrey, and Pajaritos. But where Monterrey’s captains of industry promoted the idea

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278 Ibid., 40.  
279 Ibid., 42, 44.
that corporatist managerial practices were germane to the enlightened philosophy of the city’s corporate patrons, others openly attributed new labor practices to union pressure.

After the CTM, in September 1974, demanded the second general increase to the minimum wage in twelve months in response to surging inflation, Expansión published a lengthy interview with representatives of Plásticos Romay, S.A. “In the midst of [labor] uncertainty,” the writer observed, some companies sought to avert future confrontations through a “policy of incentives not necessarily linked to the concept of salaries-benefits.” Where large companies had the organizational structure and resources to stay in front of administrative innovations, the writer suggested, for small- and medium-sized businesses the “most modern concept in business-worker relations is quite new” and often the “fruit of serious labor problems.” Unlike the corporate mammoths of the Monterrey Group, each of which employed many thousands of workers, the Mexico City-based Plásticos Romay employed eighty-eight manual laborers and forty-five professionals and other employees.280 The article exemplified the efforts of leading entrepreneurs and business journalists to demonstrate the utility of new administrative practices—and the correctness of the psychological principles underlying them—among middling sectors of Mexican businessmen.

The director general of Plásticos Romay, Rodolfo May, attributed the company’s turn toward corporatist administration to a labor strike the previous November. Noting that the stoppage was the company’s first since it was established in 1954, May acknowledged that “our focus changed in multiple senses due to the strike,” which was “complicated by problems of external agitation.” He grievously proffered that even as the company recovered from serious economic loses in the strike’s wake company executives were forced to turn their attention to

280 “Todos son la Empresa,” Expansión, 4 September 1974, vol. 6, no., 147, 34.
preventing future disruptions, beginning with a program of internal communications to foster “continuous dialogue” between workers and management. “[H]ad we put it into effect earlier,” he attested, “we never would have had the labor problems of the past year.” Communications, however, were only the first step.

The meat of the reforms, noted the article, lay in the incorporation of “what May calls job enrichment.” Without referring to the body of theory from which he plucked his ideas, May described how the struggle to resolve the labor crisis begot a deeper understanding of workers’ inner aspirations. “We have learned that the true cause of worker dissatisfaction is not so much wages as his lack of actualization as a worker and as a human being,” he declared. With this new understanding, May proposed, company executives could mitigate “illogical” union demands by administering the “medicine of work.” As the comment suggested, the medicine that company administrators prescribed had healing powers that extended beyond the patients who ingested it. According to Waring, “if managers wanted workers who were not constantly seeking more money, they should set up jobs that allowed opportunities for personal growth.” In exchange for this opportunity, managers expected workers to accept greater responsibility.

Company C.P. Emilio García Hernández elaborated on what administrators required in the trade. In addition to withholding demands for further wage increases, he noted, managers insisted that the worker “really identifies with his equipment or machine. That they are his responsibility.” García Hernández posited that workers “should care for the factors of production as a patrimony.” “We want the worker to understand,” he continued, “that each peso that goes to waste is a peso less to achieve his own development.” May suggested that this new business

281 Ibid.
282 Ibid., 36.
283 Waring, Taylorism Transformed, 136.
284 “Todos son la Empresa,” Expansión, 4 September 1974, vol. 6., no., 147, 36.
environment provided workers with a “second home” which, in addition to being an “area of personal realization,” was also “an escape valve for his socioeconomic problems.” Contrary to the syndicalist promise of instant gratification, however, he proposed that workers’ socioeconomic ascent could only occur over the “long term.” In the meantime, Plásticos Romay’s new labor philosophy created conditions in which workers could “begin to be somebody, to be recognized.”\(^{285}\) Workers who eschewed this psychological wage, he suggested, would have to live with the consequences.

May described the significance of job enrichment in relation to the hopelessness of workers’ living conditions. While acknowledging that workers too often lived in “deplorable” or even “subhuman” conditions, May argued that poverty among the working masses resulted not from unfair wages but from educational shortcomings. Even if companies paid “the best salaries in the world,” he postulated, “if we don’t resolve the problem of education, workers and their families will continue having the same problems.” May described job enrichment as a remedy for these educational inadequacies. Without a “true program of job enrichment in the factory,” he averred, “the worker will always confront a wall that he cannot jump.”\(^{286}\) To be sure, portrayals of job enrichment as a lifeline for hapless, socially dependent laborers say little about the meaning of corporatist labor reforms for workers. Rather, they shed new light on how such measures conditioned entrepreneurs’ estimation of their own social function.

May endorsed a view of reformed corporate hierarchies as a paragons of self-help. He admonished workers to “comprehend that business does not mean patron.” Traditionally, May suggested, company administrators tried to ensure that the worker “feels ‘protected’ by his wages and benefits, but [the worker] didn’t have a sense that he was taking an active part in the future

\(^{285}\) Ibid.

\(^{286}\) Ibid., 36-39
of the company.” Conversely, the “central point of non-paternalism… is the preoccupation with seeing that the worker can develop himself and progress within the company.” The worker, he added, needed to grasp that “the future could benefit him as an individual: that is, his self-actualization.” García Hernández reinforced this idea by pointing out that several workers had already been promoted to “technical posts” as a result of job enrichment. In contrast to union guarantees of employment or remuneration, however, May insisted that the new administrative structure put the onus squarely on workers. It was “vital,” he implored, “that the worker gains awareness that if he doesn’t manage to convert himself into a ‘professional’ in his area of activity, and for whatever reason loses his job at Plásticos Romay,” it would be prohibitively difficult to attain another job “that permits him to have what he had before and, much less, aspire to improve and progress.”

It is telling that representatives of Plásticos Romay were more explicit than spokespeople for larger companies in representing their actions as a rejection of paternalism. Where the Mexican Revolution and post-revolutionary reconstruction engendered public institutions and ideologies that assigned responsibility for alleviating endemic poverty and social strife to higher authorities, businessmen and their supporters depicted reformed corporate hierarchies as vehicles for providing organizational and peer support, while placing the onus for social advancement on workers themselves. Earlier dispensations of company paternalism had shifted the object of worker dependency from public to private institutions, but at the cost of reinforcing a patriarchal conception of social and political organization. Thus, even as they carried the torch in advertising new managerial practices as a remedy for the nation’s social ills, members of Mexico’s business aristocracy were careful to describe the reforms in a way that preserved the prestige of their

287 Ibid., 39.
corporate legacies. The example of Plásticos Romay suggests that executives of smaller companies, though they were less likely to delegate authority to professional managers, were also less constrained in voicing their rejection of paternalism as a system of social relations.

**Conclusion**

Beginning in the 1970s Mexican business leaders went to great lengths to reform the public image of private corporations and unify entrepreneurs behind a social philosophy that downplayed the role of economic incentives in business ideology. Eschewing formal, market-centered economic doctrines, they referred instead to managerial and organizational theories that offered new ways of understanding human psychology, motivation, and their relationship to corporate objectives and societal development. Crucially, these understandings dovetailed with core elements of Catholic social teachings.

Catholic Social Doctrine’s emphasis on the primacy of spiritual pursuits over material ones sat uneasily with both neoclassical economic tenets and the Taylorist forms of industrial organization. Portraying private businesses as vehicles for fostering intellectual and emotional enrichment, personal responsibility, and collective cooperation in pursuit of common goals, the leaders of Monterrey industry and their collaborators at USEM proffered a conception of human nature and society that rejected materialism as a basis for national development. More than a transformation of workplace or labor relations, their efforts established the framework for a comprehensive critique of Mexico’s political system and the entire project of state-led modernization.

Over the coming decade, this rejection of government paternalism would become a central feature of the narrative around which increasingly politicized masses of businessmen would mobilize. Joining them in their campaigns were large swaths of lay Catholics, whose
views on the nature of the human condition and the dangers of concentrating power in the hands of secular public authorities shared fundamental similarities to the emerging social philosophy of business. Since the 1930s Catholicism had been a marginal force in the formal political arena. Like their counterparts in the business community, however, Mexican Catholics revitalized their political activism in response to Echeverría’s public policies and the ideals on which they rested. The convergence of business and Catholic opposition to the state’s expanding role in public and economic life laid the groundwork for new forms of conservative protest, with long-lasting consequences for Mexican politics and society.
Chapter 3
“¡No Queremos Hijos Guerrilleros! [We Don’t Want Guerrilla Children!]”: Social Violence and Sexual Deviance in the Textbook Controversy

1973 was a pivotal year for Mexican Catholicism. Its significance derived not from any doctrinal revelation or transformation of the faith, but from a different sort of revival. The year witnessed the birth of a far-reaching campaign among key sectors of the Catholic laity to reassert the presence of religious associations in Mexican politics and public life. To be sure, Mexican president Luis Echeverría, in pledging to open the political system to dissenting voices, did not have religious conservatives in mind. Yet of the apertura’s myriad historical afterlives few have been as transformative, or as overlooked, as the resurgence of religious groups and values in Mexican politics.288 For Catholics, too, seized the opportunity that the opening presented, impelling a movement that challenged the logic of their exclusion and brought four decades of Catholic political quiescence to an end.

The reasons for this resurgence were varied, but the immediate catalyst was the 1973 Federal Education Law. Few issues in Mexican history have so united conservatives as conflicts over federal education policy, where demands for libertad de enseñanza, or freedom of education, evoked deeper fears over the expansion of central authority. Much to the dismay of its opponents, the 1973 law prohibited the use of all didactic materials except for a single, federally-mandated textbook for each grade. Compounding the perception of federal overreach, official

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curricula included sympathetic depictions of socialist leaders and, for the first time since the Cárdenas era (1934-1940), sexual education. Catholic activists organized street demonstrations, circulated propaganda, and took out paid announcements accusing public authorities of inciting radicalism and libertinism. Conservative parents, business leaders, and provincial journalists joined the cause, publicly exhorting government officials to respond to the protestors’ grievances and excoriating the absence of democratic procedures. In the context of Mexico’s deepening economic malaise, educational protests amplified the sense of crisis pervading the country.

At the core of the conservative insurrection were concerns that Echeverría was using public policy to subvert traditional family and social relations. The countercultural and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the recent surge in violence by largely middle-class, urban guerrilleros peaked conservative fears of social disintegration. Many Catholics and parents suspected that the administration was intentionally undercutting social cohesion to diminish resistance to the expansion of central power. For critics of the administration, escalating radicalism evinced a crisis of values that pervaded public life. The administration’s courting of the Mexican feminists and its embrace of secular reproductive policies—including the legalization of artificial contraceptives—exacerbated fears of familial decay and gender annihilation. As the following analysis illustrates, Catholic activists capitalized on these anxieties, fashioning a narrative portraying Mexico’s impasse as the result of a moral crisis that began with the political leadership and permeated the most intimate realms of society.

Administration officials viewed escalating opposition from the right as a significant threat. In response, they tasked government security agencies—which, prior to 1973, had been primarily concerned with radicalism and leftist dissent—with keeping tabs on middle-class conservatives and economic elites. Government spy reports suggest the scope of conservative
opposition. Dispatches from Mexican cities detailed a spate of rumors circulating among housewives, in cafes, via telephone campaigns, and in taxis where clients were wont to vent their frustrations.\(^{289}\) If the breadth of conservative discontent was already apparent, however, the emerging battle over educational and reproductive politics molded diffuse resentments into an organized movement.

Catholic activists, economic elites, and conservative parents converged in anti-government protests, but the nature of the interaction among these factions is less clear. Government spokespeople and the national press alleged that private sector elites under the direction of Monterrey’s industrial oligarchs underwrote the campaign against the reforms. While the evidence neither confirms nor refutes this charge, the political approximation of conservative Catholics and economic elites had lasting implications. Scholars have described the Mexican right as a “fluctuating network of alliances” joining, at varying moments, influential sectors of the business community and the middle classes.\(^{290}\) As the most organized sector of Mexico’s middle classes, the urban Catholic laity was a vital center of gravity in this nebulous constellation, and its pull brought religious conservatives and economic elites ever closer in the crises that beset Mexico after 1973.\(^{291}\) Adverse economic conditions, political vagary, and accelerated cultural change provided the backdrop for this approximation, but the educational controversy was its crucible.

\(^{289}\) See ibid., 45-72; See also Schmidt, Deterioration of the Mexican Presidency, Chapters 4 and 6.
\(^{290}\) Walker, Waking from the Dream, 46. See also Soledad Loaeza, Las clases medias mexicanas: La querella escolar 1959-1963 (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1988), 234-236
\(^{291}\) Despite a plethora of studies examining Catholic activism in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mexico, scholars of Mexican Catholicism have rarely acknowledged the middle-class status of their subjects or the influence of Catholic activists on middle class political values and identities. See Walker, Waking from the Dream, 17.
Though the lines of influence in these alliances remain murky, claims that Catholic
dissidents were mere pawns of the business aristocracy were clearly overdrawn. Accusations
that Mexican business leaders fueled discontent by spreading rumors and financing conservative
protests were likely well-founded. Nevertheless, in focusing on traditional modes of
resistance, such as rumors and capital flight, prevailing studies overlook fundamental changes in
the nature of conservative protest after 1973. An examination of the educational conflict reveals
that Catholic activists had their own vision and agenda; more, the religious laity possessed the
organizational infrastructure to channel conservative angst into meaningful political action.
There is little doubt that private-sector elites helped underwrite educational protests and stirred
dissent among their sympathizers. As this chapter argues, however, it was organized Catholics
who transformed right-wing opposition to Echeverría’s government into a formidable civic
presence.

The following discussion examines the role of the National Parents’ Union (Unión
Nacional de Padres de Familia, or UNPF) in spearheading this transformation. At the behest of
the Catholic Church, the UNPF formed in April 1917 to challenge the new Constitution’s
prohibition of religious education in primary schools, a law known as obligatory laicism. From
the time of its founding the Parents’ Union, whose strength resided primarily in urban centers,
was the foremost opponent of federal educational policies in Mexico. UNPF leaders cast
educational battles as contests for the preservation of traditional religious and family values
against the forces of secular modernity and communism, providing an effective counterbalance

Las crisis en el sistema político mexicano, 1928-1977 (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1977). Schmidt,
Deterioration of the Mexican Presidency, Chapter 4; Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 2.
293 “Fundación y Finalidad de la Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia,” 27 April 1917, DGIPS, c. 1548-C,
exp. 9, hs. 1-8, AGN.
to the government’s agenda in periods of conflict. Consequently, educational debates were proxies for a wide range of grievances concerning the state’s role in public life.

Doubtless, the UNPF was ‘for’ religion and traditional family relations, yet prior to the 1970s the union’s identity cohered around a pastiche of negatives. The UNPF’s stated mission of defending the rights of children and parents and improving the quality and moral substance of education was also a shibboleth for rabid anti-modernism, anti-secularism, anticommunism, and anti-statism—the ideological anima from which the union derived its influence. Beginning in the 1970s, however, UNPF protests adopted a posture uncharacteristic of past confrontations. Predictably, leaders of the association remained vehemently opposed to secularism, leftism, and statism, but the UNPF-led campaign against Echeverría was conspicuous for its ideologically-generative predilection. The new approach marked a turning-point in the history of conservative protest in Mexico.

In the 1970s the UNPF turned to an emerging Catholic paradigm known as ‘integral development’. Proponents of integral development called on citizens, and Catholics in particular, to actively engage with civic and political life to promote the moral and material development of Mexican society. In the mid-1960s, integral development emerged as a favored ideological referent for progressive and conservative Catholics alike. As the Mexican right mobilized against Echeverria’s government, however, religious conservatives claimed the paradigm as their own. The Parents’ Union was a driving force behind this appropriation, mobilizing wide swaths of the Catholic laity in opposition to the administration’s populist turn.

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294 On the earlier battles see Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*; and Loaeza, *Clases medias*. As I will discuss in detail below, the most intense battles over Mexican educational policy prior to the 1970s occurred during the 1920s-1930s and from the late 1950s through the early 1960s.

295 Loaeza, *Clases medias*.

296 See, for example, Martha María Pacheco Hinojosa, *La Iglesia Católica en la sociedad mexicana, 1958-1973* (Mexico City: IMDOSOC, 2005).
Demanding a voice in the making of public policy, these activists heralded the moral renewal of society through concerted, ongoing civic action. The following chapter illustrates that UNPF-led protests brought the oppositional strategies and ideals of middle-class Catholics and business leaders into closer alignment. The movement that grew out of their efforts transformed conservative strategies for engaging the public sphere, and with them the political arena itself.

*Educational Conflict in Mexico*

Intractable conflicts over public education were a recurring feature of Mexico’s post-revolutionary history. Pitting the Church and Catholic culture against what scholars have characterized as the ‘secular religion’ of Mexican revolutionary nationalism, these clashes occasioned serious challenges to the moral authority and prerogatives of Mexico’s one-party state. Unlike the more renowned struggles of laborers, *campesinos*, and university students, however, protests against federal policies in the realm of primary school education frequently aligned key sectors of the middle- and upper-classes. Animating these conflicts were deep-seated and often antithetical beliefs concerning the place of religious institutions and values in Mexican society, the limits of government authority, and the substance of Mexican modernity. As sites for contesting the moral foundations of national identity and public policy, educational controversies roiled the ideological fault lines anchoring the country’s collective allegiances. The debates that they engendered reshaped the public dialogue on the parameters of state power and

297 See, for example, Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*; Vaughan and Lewis, eds. *Eagle and the Virgin*; and Joseph, Rubenstein, and Zolov, eds. *Fragments of a Golden Age*.

298 Loaeza, *Clases medias*, 13-21; Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 33-38. Though it involved university students and was enormously destabilizing, the 1968 student movement should not be considered an educational conflict, as its principal inspirations and objectives were political and socioeconomic rather than educational. See Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices*, and; Herbert Braun, “Protests of Love and Engagement,” 511-549.
national belonging and the Revolution’s legacy for a country questing after modernity yet
ambivalent as to the place of religion in that quest.

At the core of Catholics’ historic opposition to federal education policy was the concept
of obligatory laicism. Article 3 of Mexico’s 1917 Constitution prohibited the clergy and religious
organizations from teaching or operating schools and banned religious instruction from school
curricula. Though for much of the twentieth-century enforcement of this provision was
inconsistent, early post-revolutionary leaders waged a systematic campaign to diminish the
influence Catholicism in Mexican society. Educational policy was a key battleground in this
campaign, and the struggles that it precipitated left deep imprints in Mexican politics and culture.

Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928) was the first to implement Article 3,
beginning in 1924. Calles’ attack on Catholic institutions and beliefs gave rise to the Cristero
War (1926-1929), in which Catholic militants in central and western Mexico waged a bloody
rebellion whose eventual suppression severely hobbled the Church’s influence. These early
battles between Catholics and the post-revolutionary government were fundamentally a contest
for institutional preeminence between the Church and a still weak state-in-formation. But this
contest played out largely as a struggle over the kinds of values that would guide the construction
of post-revolutionary society. In the aftermath of the Cristero War, a weakened Church
renounced violent confrontation with the state. After federal legislation banned religious

299 Calles’ dominance of Mexican politics continued even after his formal term as president concluded. From 1928-1934, as period known as the maximato, he remained the power behind the throne.
organizations from involvement in politics and labor organizing, education became the central arena through which Mexican Catholics contested the imposition of secular values and moral codes.  

Catholic activists in post-revolutionary Mexico viewed unbridled secularism as the greatest danger to society. Ecclesiastic and lay leaders promoted religious education as the key to preserving the nation’s tattered social fabric. A preoccupation with the perceived afflictions of secular modernity—including the pursuit of luxury and material gratification, indifference to spiritual pursuits, and the rejection of established customs and patriarchal authority—pervaded Catholic efforts to shape the post-revolutionary social order. The radical anti-religious stance of public authorities in the 1920s and 1930s further intensified these concerns. In July 1934, Calles proclaimed that the Revolution had entered a period of “psychological revolution,” a “spiritual conquest” to be accomplished by capturing the “consciences of children and young people.”

The grito de Guadalajara [shout from Guadalajara], as the address became known, marked a watershed in the state’s efforts to create a new secular morality. This project coincided with a hardening of the language and ideology of post-revolutionary rule. Political leaders’ tightening embrace of a populist nationalism stressing class struggle, rebellion, and the right to social justice peaked Catholic fears of social upheaval, stirring deep wells of anticommunist sentiment. When, in December 1934, Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies under incoming president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) passed a reformed version of Article 3 stating that public education “will be socialist and in addition to excluding any

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303 The exclusion of religious organizations from politics and the labor movement was formalized in the 1931 Labor Law. See William J. Suárez-Potts, The Making of Law: The Supreme Court and Labor Legislation in Mexico, 1875-1931 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), Chapter 8
304 Schell, “Of the Sublime Mission of Mothers and Families.”
305 Ibid., 103.
306 Loaeza, Clases medias, 104; Vaughan, Cultural Politics, 34.
religious doctrine, will combat fanaticism and prejudices,” a new wave of conflict ensued.\footnote{Quoted in Vaughan, \textit{Cultural Politics}, 34-35.} Given the official moniker “socialist education,” \textit{cardenista} educational policy encapsulated the worst fears of Mexican Catholics. It threw the weight of the state behind a project that not only prohibited the inclusion of religious doctrine and values in education. It proposed to actively combat Catholic beliefs while promoting class struggle as a pillar of Mexican nationalism.\footnote{Significantly, the new curriculum also included primary school sexual education, a feature that incited fierce opposition among parents and religious organizations. See \textit{Ibid.}, 34.}

Nevertheless, popular resistance to socialist education demonstrated the limits of the state’s ability to unilaterally determine educational policy. The UNPF, Mexico’s largest Catholic organization devoted to educational issues, organized massive protests in Mexican cities. Meanwhile, conservative state governors, local power brokers, and clergymen in rural areas stoked widespread opposition to the reforms, compelling the government to abandon the program by 1939.\footnote{Vaughan, \textit{Cultural Politics}, 34; Boylan, “Gendering the Faith,” 13, 192, 211. See also Roberto Blancarte, \textit{Iglesia y Estado en México; seis décadas de acomodo y de conciliación imposible} (Mexico City: Instituto Mexicano de Doctrina Social Cristiana, 1990), 16-19 and Marjorie Becker, \textit{Setting the Virgin on Fire}. Even before his government’s complete abandonment of socialist education, Cárdenas, as early as 1936, had begun to adopt a more tolerant stance toward the clergy and the Catholic faith.} Despite the failure of socialist education to achieve its stated goals, historian Mary Kay Vaughan argues that it “succeeded in nurturing an inclusive, multi-ethnic, populist nationalism based upon its stated commitment to social justice and development.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 7.} But the episode also revealed the continued power of religious values in Mexican society and the ability of Catholic activists to shape the national dialogue through debates originating in the field of education.

Education was one of the few areas where Catholics successfully challenged government policy and its underlying moral premises. To be sure, questions of ethnic inclusion, social justice,
and development were germane to educational debates and the larger dialogue that they generated. Equally central to this dialogue, however, were values associated with the family and religion, their place in Mexican politics and culture, and the boundaries separating the public and private spheres. Early conflicts between Catholics and the post-revolutionary government revealed the power of these issues to mobilize broad alliances that bridged, if only temporarily, class, regional, and sectoral divides. As Vaughan observed, the significance of these episodes lay less in their immediate outcomes than in the dialogue that they created between state and society.\footnote{Vaughan, \textit{Cultural Politics}, 7.} If post-revolutionary educational controversies inscribed populist nationalism into the bedrock of nationalist ideology and political rule, later conflicts would help to unravel it.

The decades following the state’s abandonment of socialist education witnessed a revitalization of Catholic organizational infrastructure in Mexico. Despite the successful campaign against socialist education, a decade of conflict with the state had left the Church weakened and with little taste for further confrontations with public authorities.\footnote{Even at the height of the conflict over socialist education, the Church remained divided over the appropriate response. The involvement of the Mexican hierarchy in the controversy was thus not as pronounced, or as vitriolic, as that of lay Catholics and some local clergy. See Blancarte, \textit{Iglesia y Estado}, 16-19.} Though temporarily threatened by the resumption of official anti-clericalism in the 1930s, after 1929 Church-state relations adhered to an accommodation known as the \textit{modus vivendi}, which, notwithstanding periodic hostilities between Catholics and the government, endured for more than fifty years.\footnote{Pacheco Hinojosa, \textit{La Iglesia Católica en la sociedad mexicana}, 97; Stephen J. Andes, “The Catholic Alternative to Revolution: The Survival of Social Catholicism in Post-Revolutionary Mexico,” \textit{The Americas}, 68:4 (April 2012), 550; Blancarte, \textit{Iglesia y Estado}; Manuel Ceballos Ramírez and J. Miguel Romero S., eds., \textit{Cien años de presencia y ausencia social Cristiana}, 1891-1991 (Mexico City: IMDOSOC, 1995).} In exchange for the hierarchy’s capitulation to the exclusion of religious organizations from politics and the labor movement, the political leadership ceased its campaign of religious persecution and, after 1940, loosened the ban on Catholic participation in

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312 Even at the height of the conflict over socialist education, the Church remained divided over the appropriate response. The involvement of the Mexican hierarchy in the controversy was thus not as pronounced, or as vitriolic, as that of lay Catholics and some local clergy. See Blancarte, \textit{Iglesia y Estado}, 16-19.
education. \(^{314}\) Church authorities in Rome and Mexico reoriented their strategy to promote peaceful coexistence with the government and tighten hierarchical control of the laity. \(^{315}\) The Church would confine its public role to religious and spiritual matters while strengthening lay organizations and encouraging their engagement in specific areas of social activity. \(^{316}\) This division of labor created a space for the episcopal and lay leadership to quietly reconstruct the political potential of Mexican Catholicism.

From the 1930s through the 1950s membership in Catholic lay organizations grew rapidly in Mexico. That the height of this expansion occurred during an era of broad consensus in national education policy tempered religious opposition to secular authorities. Successive administrations after 1940 progressively eased restrictions on Catholic and private sector participation in education. Equally important, in what Soledad Loaeza described as a conceptual shift from “socialism to nationalism,” the administrations of presidents Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), Miguel Alemán Valdér (1946-1952), and Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958) adhered to an educational policy that downplayed class struggle in favor of national reconciliation and economic development. \(^{317}\) This “liberal-nationalist” consensus reconciled the liberal emphasis on civic virtue with a “mystification” of the Revolution as the basis for a new revolutionary nationalism. The result was what Mario Tenorio-Trillo described as “a recycling of the old liberal civic religion, but more statist, paternalistic, [and] socially conscious.” \(^{318}\)


\(^{316}\) Loaeza, Clases medias, 151-163; Schell, 99-100; Blancarte, Iglesia y Estado en México, 14.

\(^{317}\) Loaeza, Clases medias, 113.

This shift did not resolve underlying tensions between Catholic demands for *libertad de enseñanza* and the state’s juridical monopoly on an avowedly secular educational system. But the monopoly remained in force in law only, as government officials granted Catholics and the private sector a growing stake in the educational system. Further, the crystallization of official anticommunism after World War II gave Catholics and public authorities a common ideological adversary. Notwithstanding doctrinal divides on issues of secularism and obligatory laicism, the relationship between Mexico’s political and religious leaders was implicitly cooperative. The religious hierarchy endorsed the state’s efforts to foster political conformity, while public officials quietly supported Catholic cultural traditions and social institutions. Meanwhile, Catholic institutions flourished. By the end of the Ruiz Cortines administration in 1958, the religious laity comprised, in Loaeza’s words, “an exceptional organizational network whose parallel could only be found in the official party.” The political potential of this network became clear when Catholics again mobilized to oppose the educational policies of Ruiz Cortines’ successor, Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964).

The most immediate antecedent of the campaign against Echeverría’s reforms, the controversy that erupted under López Mateos grew from a confluence of internal and external factors largely unrelated to the content of school curricula. Contrary to those of the Cárdenas era, López Mateos’ reforms featured little in the way of cultural modernization. On the surface,

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319 Despite Article 3’s continued prohibition of religious education, private, Cathically-administered schools continued to operate in Mexico throughout the postrevolutionary period. After 1940, however, government officials actively solicited the support of Catholics and the private sector to ease the budgetary burden of educating Mexico’s growing population. During this time the participation of confessional and private sector organizations increased significantly relative to public sector contributions. Loaeza, *Clases medias*, 151-168; 170-173.

320 Ibid., 112; 134-135; 155-159.

321 Ibid., 163.
opposition centered on the circulation of free, and obligatory, government-issue textbooks. Unlike the textbooks that would rally Echeverría’s opponents, however, those elaborated by López Mateos’ government did not substantially revise the educational curricula on which the consensus of previous decades rested. Nor, as Loaeza observed, did they portend a return to the populist nationalism of the Calles and Cárdenas eras. On the contrary, they exalted “the individual as the motor of history at the expense of structures and social processes.” More controversial were the mandate making the new textbooks obligatory and the related goal of homogenizing primary school curricula. None of these factors, however, explain the magnitude of the protests against López Mateos’ reforms.

Animating the conflict, rather, was what one scholar described as a “crisis of political conscience.” Under López Mateos, the pervasive political conformity of preceding decades began to fray, revealing deep fissures in the nation’s collective loyalties. The years 1958-1959 witnessed the largest labor insurgency since Cárdenas’ presidency and, partially in response to that insurgency, the first public revelations of an internal dispute between the cardenista and alemanista factions within the PRI. Together, these events called into question the trajectory

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322 López Mateos was the first Mexican president to extend the constitutional guarantee of universal free primary school education to include the provision and distribution of textbooks. Ibid., 169-173.
323 Ibid., 235. Loaeza observed that the texts conveyed a “linear and accumulative” vision of history in which the year 1940 stood as a monument to national reconciliation and a milestone in Mexico’s economic development.
324 In addition to making the official textbooks mandatory, the government placed restrictions on the use of supplementary materials. And although opponents would compare the goal of homogenizing primary school curricula to the educational designs of communist regimes, it was in reality part of a continuous effort to promote a cohesive civic identity and national integration by fostering collective loyalties rooted in a common past. See Ibid., 222-223; 227; 233-35.
325 Ibid., 205.
326 At the end of the Ruiz Cortines administration and peaking early in López Mateos’ presidency, workers in the powerful railroad, electrical, and teachers’ syndicates declared their independence from government-beholden union leaders. Ibid., 190-196; 205; 207-212; See also José Luis Reyna and Raúl Trejo Delarbre, La clase obrera en la historia de México: De Adolfo Ruiz Cortines a Adolfo López Mateos, 1952-1964 (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981); and Kevin Middlebrook, Paradox of Revolution.
of Mexican development and exposed the contradictions between nationalist ideals rooted in notions of popular struggle, on the one hand, and industrial modernization and capital accumulation, on the other. The triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959 amplified these differences, inciting renewed anticommunist hysteria among Catholics, industrialists, and broad cross-sections of the urban middle classes. In this context, many misread López Mateos’ ideological ambiguity as evidence of his intent to swing Mexico’s political pendulum back toward its populist past. The result was a cross-class revolt that threatened to destabilize the administration and compelled the government to modify its reforms.

The episode offers important insights for understanding opposition to Echeverría’s educational policy. According to one observer, the López Mateos presidency witnessed a resurgence of the “curiosity and interest of society in public affairs.” After nearly two decades of conformity dressed as consensus, groups across the political spectrum challenged established forms of political control. Although religious associations, industrialists, and an expanding middle class were the principal beneficiaries of the so-called consensus, the political exclusion of confessional organizations and the private sector made them vulnerable to vacillations in public

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327 López Mateos spoke out against rising US influence in wake of Guatemala. He rejected that communism was central threat to regional stability, claiming that it was underdevelopment. But he also suppressed labor dissidents, especially in cases where the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) was suspected to be involved, and he attributed labor radicalism to communist influence. Ultimately, he failed to appease the left while heightening conservative uncertainties as to the president’s intentions regarding the direction of national policy. Accusations that he was a leftist were a misreading of his statements and policies. See Loaeza, Clases medias, 195-204.

328 This was not a total victory for opponents of the texts, as the state retained its legal monopoly on education and continued distributing free textbooks, which remained obligatory in public schools and which continued under all succeeding administrations. Nevertheless, the protests compelled government officials to soften the mandate that the texts be used in private schools as well as the restrictions on the use of supplementary materials in both public and private schools. See Ibid., Conclusion

329 Ibid., 180. With the financial and organizational backing of the Monterrey Group, conservative civic, religious, and business groups formed what became known as the Regional Anticommunist Crusade (Crusada Regional Anticomunista), a cross-class, multi-sectoral alliance that rallied mass support in northern and central Mexico. See also Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 213.

330 Tanalis Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata.
policy. As demands for political inclusion among laborers and the left escalated, so too did conservative fears of a populist revival.

Of course, the challenges confronting Echeverría’s government were more acute than the relative instability of the López Mateos years. And the former’s populist turn, though more striking in rhetoric than in policy, had sharper teeth than the contrived populism attributed to López Mateos. In both cases, however, a mutual sense of marginalization underpinned the political alignment of lay Catholics, businesspeople, and middle-class conservatives. Although conditional, this alignment summoned insecurities endemic to Mexico’s political system.

Balancing the country’s liberal and statist political traditions was a perennial imperative of post-revolutionary statecraft. As the 1917 Constitution granted the executive broad latitude in navigating these poles, each presidential succession brought with it the possibility of a shift in the status quo. The conflict over López Mateos’ educational reforms initiated a process of political experimentation in which groups opposed to government intervention in social and economic life tried out new ways of influencing public policy. Educational policy, in the words of one scholar, was “an instrumental pretext” used to “advance positions in the structure of power in a context of relative instability.”

The movement to overturn López Mateos’ reforms was a point-of-inception for new forms of political participation among groups fighting to preserve their status but lacking a voice in the making of public policy. These strategies did not fully crystallize until the melee with Echeverría’s government, but neither were they dormant in the interim.

In 1961 the Catholic laity in Mexico formed a consortium known as the Conference of National Organizations (Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales, CON). Spurred by the

\[331\] Loaeza, *Clases medias*, 185.
textbook controversy, the CON’s architects saw the organization as a bulwark against the potential installation of communism in Mexico. Though it had ties to the episcopate and the Mexican Social Secretariat (Secretaría Social Mexicana, SSM)—a hierarchically-led organization charged with coordinating Catholic social action in Mexico—the CON was independent of the hierarchy. The CON’s founding objectives included educating members in Catholic Social Doctrine and disseminating Catholic social teachings; promoting joint actions among associated organizations; exposing the “true nature” of communism; broadening participation in religious lay associations; and revitalizing Catholics’ involvement in civic life.\(^{332}\)

A final objective, however, reveals the importance of educational conflict in the CON’s genesis: the organization was to “[s]trengthen by all means the National Parents’ Union,” which at the CON’s founding was leading the campaign against the textbooks.\(^{333}\) As religious historian María Martha Pacheco Hinojosa points out, the confrontation with López Mateos revived Catholic fears of a statist education project through which “love of God would be replaced by love of Country [and] respect for one’s parents would be [replaced by] respect for public functionaries.”\(^{334}\)

Though short-lived, the sense of common purpose that grew out of this fear inspired a renewed commitment among the Mexican laity to participate in social and political life. The CON was an upshot of this commitment.

Prior to its dissolution in 1971, the CON organized two national congresses that refocused the objectives of the Catholic laity toward a greater involvement in politics and national development. The first conference took place in October 1964 under the title *I Congress on the Integral Development of Mexico: Presence of the Christians* (*I Congreso sobre el*...)

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\(^{332}\) Pacheco Hinojosa, *La Iglesia Católica*, 87-88.


Desarrollo Integral de México: Presencia de los Cristianos, or ICDIM). ICDIM brought together lay associations, ecclesiastical leaders, and prominent private sector representatives with the goal of establishing a dialogue between papal encyclicals and the idiom of Mexican developmentalism. Taking Pope John XXIII’s final encyclical, Mater et Magistra (“Mother and Teacher,” May 1961), as their point of departure, congress organizers aimed to refashion understandings of development and the role of Catholics in achieving it.

Participants posited that the harmonious development of society must be grounded in the Christian conception of human nature as a balance of material and spiritual dimensions. Proceeding from the Pope’s suggestion that true development must be “integral,” panelists elaborated a holistic conception of development that included cultural, socioeconomic, political, moral, and spiritual facets working in synergy. ICDIM’s rejection of developmental materialism blended religious conviction with righteous anticommunism. As one speaker described it, the congress aimed to “capture the flag of development… so that other forces, like the communists, don’t take it as theirs.” Not only did participants universally confirm the sanctity of private property; conference organizers selected one of Mexico’s most prominent business administrative theorists, Isaac Guzmán Valdívia, to articulate the conference’s operative definition of “integral development.”

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335 Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales de Mexico, Memorias, I Congreso sobre el Desarrollo Integral de México: Presencia de los cristianos (ICDIM), 9-12 October 1964 (Mexico City: Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales, 1965).
336 Pacheco Hinojosa, Iglesia Católica, 133.
337 CON, Memorias, ICDIM. As discussed in the preceding chapter, conference organizers looked to private sector proponents of post-Taylorite organizational theory for understandings of how to foster the social, psychological, and moral development of laborers and corporate employees. The theories they invoked for this purpose, while they stressed the need to base managerial practices on humanist convictions derived from new understandings of human psychology, nevertheless insisted that corporate profits remain the priority of first order. Those discussions contributed to the formulation of a new moral rationale for corporate labor relations and public relations practices and established the basis for revising the social understanding of leading businessmen. Guzmán Valdívia’s selection to frame the ICDIM’s working definition of integral development attests to the ways that Mexican integralism was bound up with emerging psychological and organizational theories.
But the conference also marked a turning point in Catholic efforts to restore Christian values to the political mainstream.\textsuperscript{338} As late as 1956, the Mexican episcopate maintained that the vote was the only legitimate form of Catholic political participation.\textsuperscript{339} Even after the conflict with López Mateos, ecclesiastical leaders, careful to preserve the \textit{modus vivendi}, remained ambivalent concerning Catholic participation in political life. Conversely, lay participants in the congress energetically affirmed the need for religiously-inspired, civically-engaged institutional intermediaries to curb state incursions into social life.\textsuperscript{340} Congress organizers, observes Pacheco Hinojosa, saw ICDIM as the first step in correcting a “political-juridical context that not only rejected any confessional presence in public life, but in which any confessional expression [relating to] the social and political spheres was considered criminal.”\textsuperscript{341}

The subheading “Presence of the Christians” evoked the sense of political marginalization aroused in the textbook controversy and the goal of reasserting the presence of confessional associations in public life. But it was not until the second of the CON conferences that member organizations began to move past their sterile anticommunism toward a more constructive formulation of Christian civism.

Convened in June 1968, the \textit{II Congress on the Integral Development of Mexico: The Laity in Development} (IICDIM) solidified the idea that an independent and engaged civil society was essential to national progress. Organizers and participants in the congress highlighted the doctrinal tenet of subsidiarity (\textit{subsidiariedad}) and the obligation of Christians to participate in the construction of society. Subsidiarity refers to the idea that responsibility for managing

\begin{itemize}
\item[339] Loaeza, \textit{Clases Medias}, 163.
\item[340] Notably, however, participants in the Congress stopped short of advocating formal opposition to the ruling party.
\item[341] Pacheco Hinojosa, \textit{Iglesia Católica}, 135.
\end{itemize}
societal interests should be delegated in such a way that power resides with the smallest or most localized competent entity, passing to higher or more centralized bodies only when the issue at hand exceeds the capacity or jurisdictional authority of subordinate institutions. Accordingly, the state should participate only in matters where civil institutions are inadequate.\textsuperscript{342} Further, as Catholic doctrine holds that the family is the most basic social institution, it should, according to this rationale, be the civil authority of first recourse.

For Mexican Catholics, conflicts over education—a family domain—accentuated the importance of subsidiary logic for understandings of national development. Though the rancor surrounding the conflict with López Mateos had faded by the time of the IICDIM, the episode reverberated in continuing efforts to reinvigorate the role of religious associations in social and political life. Indeed, as the most organized sector of Mexican civil society, and the sector most independent of the state, the Catholic laity had great potential to transform the civic arena.\textsuperscript{343} The events of the 1950s and 1960s inspired a renewed commitment to civic activism and Catholic Social Doctrine as the bases for renegotiating the boundaries of state power. Beyond this commitment, however, the organizations that comprised the CON had little in common, and internal dissention as to the meanings of Catholic social teachings plagued the coalition.\textsuperscript{344}

Due in part to intervening conditions, Catholic views on the form and function of civil society were more contentious. Significantly, the doctrinal referent for IICDIM was Pope Paul VI’s 1967 encyclical \textit{Populorum Progressio} (On the Development of Peoples). The encyclical,

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  \item \textsuperscript{342} Significantly, the principle of subsidiarity also applied to various levels of government, where municipal authorities, as the governing entities closest to the community, should function to the extent possible without the intervention of state and federal authorities. Thus, as a political philosophy, subsidiarity was also linked to federalism. See, for example, Yemile Mizrahi, \textit{From Martyrdom to Power}, 22-23.
  \item \textsuperscript{344} Pacheco Hinojosa, \textit{Iglesia Católica}, 228-232.
\end{itemize}
in which the Pope proposed a “structural change” in the global political economy and defined the right to private property as contingent on its service to the common good, accentuated latent divisions within both the CON and the episcopate.\textsuperscript{345} Though many Catholics were sympathetic to the message, religious conservatives saw it as “Marxism warmed over.”\textsuperscript{346} The subsequent maturation of liberation theology following the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín, Colombia (1968) and the publication of Gustavo Gutiérrez’s \textit{A Theology of Liberation} (1971) further aggravated these differences. For detractors of liberation theology, the liberationist emphasis on combatting institutionalized sin and structurally-embedded poverty called forth an insidious, Christianized Marxism.

Both the hierarchy and the laity were divided concerning Catholics’ responsibility for advocating socioeconomic and structural reforms. At the level of the episcopate, these divisions were evident in factional disputes between those linked to progressive Mexican bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo, who opponents derisively labelled the “Red Bishop of Cuernavaca,” and more conservative bishops, many of whom resided in northern Mexico and the \textit{Bajío}.\textsuperscript{347} Disunion within the laity mirrored these divisions. As Stephen Andes observes, organizations linked to the Mexican Social Secretariat (SSM), which had close ties to Méndez Arceo, were sympathetic to liberationist thinking, a position that alienated more conservative Catholics.\textsuperscript{348} These divisions fractured Mexican Catholicism and contributed to the dissolution of the CON in 1971.\textsuperscript{349}

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\item[345] The “structural change” outlined in \textit{Populorum Progressio} was fundamentally an appeal for the establishment of more equal commercial relations between rich and poor nations. It partially incorporated liberationists’ emphasis on socioeconomic structures, but it did not amount to an endorsement of liberationist thinking. \textit{Ibid.}, 149-163.
\item[346] \textit{Ibid.}, 151-152.
\item[348] Andes, “Catholic Alternative”; See also Pacheco Hinojosa, \textit{La Iglesia Católica}, 201-216.
\item[349] Pacheco Hinojosa, \textit{La Iglesia Católica}, 219-232.
\end{footnotes}
Nevertheless, the short-lived coalition propelled a conversation affirming a religious obligation to participate in the construction of Mexican civil society. The seeds of this commitment can be traced to insecurities arising from the structure of Mexican authoritarianism, but it was in clashes over national education policy that those insecurities achieved their fullest expression. The educational controversy of 1958-1962 rekindled debates over the meanings of political participation and the role of Christian values and institutions in the modernization process. Though little-studied, these debates helped rewrite the political future of Mexican Catholicism. Contravening the liberationist emphasis on social and economic uplift, conservative Catholics fashioned a rival vision stressing civic edification, moralization, and non-corporative political pluralism. Scholars have spilled far more ink on the former, to be sure. But it was the latter that had the more lasting, and transformative, impact on Mexican politics and society.

_A Dialectic of Materialism: Education, Sexuality, and the Reproduction of Violence_

The first public grumblings over the Echeverría administration’s education policy began in the summer of 1973, when the details of the pending Federal Education Law were revealed to the public. The law revised Article 3 of Mexico’s Constitution, granting the federal government sole authority over the provision of educational materials. As in earlier educational conflicts, opponents of Echeverría’s reforms accused government officials of creating a monopoly on education to indoctrinate the nation’s children with the dogmas of an interventionist state. Before the reforms were passed into law, UNPF president Francisco Quiroga Fernández described the proposed legislation to a Mexico City newspaper as the “most ferocious instrument

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351 See Vaughan, _Cultural Politics in Revolution_; Loaeza, _clases medias_.

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of educational statism.” 352 Under the direction of Quiroga Fernández, the UNPF, with roughly 500,000 registered members, mobilized conservative opponents of the administration behind calls for libertad de enseñanza.

As in preceding controversies, however, calls for freedom of education masked deeper divisions. Fueling the dispute, rather, were insecurities arising from the resurgence of official populism and Echeverría’s apertura democrática. The perception that the president was expanding the power of the state while welcoming leftist elements into its ranks incited Mexican Catholics and other disgruntled groups to use the apertura to advance their own visions of society and politics. Given their history of rallying widespread opposition to government social policies, educational debates provided religious conservatives with a propitious forum for advancing the cause of Christian civism. Intervening conditions gave further aid to this cause, amplifying the conflict and fortifying Catholics’ commitment to civic edification as a foundation of national development.

Escalating guerrilla violence in the months leading up to the announcement of the reforms provided a key referent for opponents. After the Chamber of Deputies passed the Federal Education Law in November 1973, the UNPF circulated a pamphlet that, according to government spies, reached all of Mexico and “all levels of society.” 353 The pamphlet cited the recent surge in bank robberies and kidnappings as evidence of a profound “moral and social crisis.” It accused public officials of abolishing established moral norms from school curricula in favor of “divisive theories” that promoted class struggle while pretending “absurdly that men

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352 “Califican el Tercero Constitucional de Monumento a la Tiranía,” 16 July 1973, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, AGN.
feel like brothers.” As a result, it impugned, immorality prevailed “from the highest realms of
government to the lowest stratum of society.”

In the absence of details on pending reforms to primary school curricula, which had yet to
be revealed, UNPF propaganda linked rising social violence to public immorality and the bad
example of government officials. Though it alluded to “rigged textbooks”—mandatory
government textbooks that had been a fixture of educational policy since Adolfo López Mateos’
presidency (1958-1964)—the pamphlet’s primary focus was discrediting public authorities.
Government malfeasance and godlessness, it insisted, turned traditional moral codes on their
head, making the “distortion of values” appear “natural.” These “dishonest adults who society
exalts” created a “confused mass of students” who, bombarded with propaganda that “devalued
the authentic values of the family,” fell victim to pornography, drug addiction, and violent
ideologies. Objections to state infringements on freedom of education remained central to
UNPF messaging, but they were increasingly bound up with warnings that immoral leadership
was driving Mexico toward social and political calamity. A month after the passage of the
educational reforms, Echeverría shepherded another piece of legislation through the Chamber
that heightened this perception.

In December 1973, the Mexican legislature passed the General Law of Population (Ley
General de Población), legalizing the advertising and sale of artificial contraceptives for the first
time in the country’s history. The law, which Matthew Gutmann dubbed the “1973 about-

354 “Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia, A.C.: Manifesto…,” 6 November 1973, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9,
AGN.
355 Ibid.
356 Ibid.; “Desconoce la Nueva Ley…,” 12 November 1973, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, AGN.
357 Significantly, the technology behind the birth control pill was developed in Mexico in the 1950s, and
oral contraceptives and IUD’s were available with a doctor’s prescription before 1973. Gabriela Soto-Laveaga,
Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill (Durham: Duke University
Press, 2009). However, in the absence of commercially available contraceptives and government promotional and
face,” marked a dramatic departure from the pronatalist policies of preceding administrations.\footnote{Matthew Gutmann, \textit{Fixing Men: Sex, Birth Control, and AIDS in Mexico} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 106-107.} Born of a transnational movement that joined, often tenuously, advocates of reproductive rights and those seeking to curb population growth in poorer, ‘darker’ nations, family planning in Mexico shared much with family planning in other parts of the world.\footnote{Historian Vijay Prashad used the term ‘darker nations’ to describe the countries of the Global South in his landmark study of the Third World movement, which sought to formulate an alternative to Cold War bipolarism better-suited to the geopolitical position and developmental needs of poor nations. See Prashad \textit{Darker Nations}; On the protean motives, interests, and concerns of transnational population control activists and how concerns over population growth in poor regions of the world shaped the movement see Matthew Connelly, \textit{Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population} (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008) and; Michelle Goldberg, \textit{The Means of Reproduction: Sex, Power, and the Future of the World} (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).} As one scholar observed, one of the most remarkable features of family planning in Mexico was “how quickly the country went from being a bastion of pronatal policies… to a country in which contraceptive methods were adopted in a matter of years by millions of women.”\footnote{Gutmann, \textit{Fixing Men}, 102-103.} Further, whereas private foundations, international organizations, and pharmaceutical companies were the principal promoters of contraceptives in other Catholic countries, in Mexico public policy aimed to shape reproductive behavior directly—a distinction that was not lost on Echeverría’s critics.\footnote{Thomas W. Merrick, \textit{Recent Fertility Declines in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico} (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1985); Joseph E. Potter, “The Persistence of Outmoded Contraceptive Regimes: The Cases of Brazil and Mexico,” \textit{Population and Development Review}, 25:4 (1999), 703-739.} The shift in policy responded to growing concerns over the capacity of Mexico’s economy to keep pace with population growth, which, at an annual rate of 3 percent, was among the highest in the world.\footnote{For figures and analysis relating to population growth in Mexico prior to the passage of the General Law on Population see Connelly, \textit{Fatal Misconception}, 382 and; Amembassy-Mexico to Department of State, “Embassy Analysis of Mexico’s New Population Law,” Airgram A-229, 12 May 1974, P740049-1103-P740049-1114,} But public officials’ turn away from pronatalism also served more immediate political objectives.

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\footnote{For educational efforts, contraceptive use in Mexico prior to 1973 remained low compared to other Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Colombia, with similar economic outlooks.}
Administration officials portrayed the law as a brake on population-driven resource scarcity that disproportionately affected peoples of the developing world. Speaking at a commemorative ceremony of the Union of Railroad Workers (Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrocarrileros) in February 1974, Mexican Secretary of Labor Porfirio Muñoz Ledo characterized the population law as an extension of the redistributive ideals of the Mexican Revolution and an exercise in thirdworldist leadership-by-example. He reiterated the claims of scientists that if unchecked natural resource exhaustion would lead to a “catastrophe of unpredictable proportions.” “In light of this thesis,” he proposed:

Mexico sustains the necessity of operating, at the global level, a just redistribution of humanity’s common patrimony… that the hording of natural resources, that the wasting of energy sources and of primary materials has not been the work of the weak and miserable peoples who consume barely a quarter of the world’s resources, but rather the result of a long colonial era, in which a limited group of men and countries have exploited the wealth of the planet for their exclusive benefit… It is important that the large industrial nations comprehend that, tomorrow, many popular movements could arise in the world which demand the interruption of the sale of primary materials; they must understand that, for the underdeveloped peoples to progress… it is necessary that they equitably share [their] knowledge, technology, and capital… This is the deeper meaning of the [Carta Echeverría]… We must understand the idea of the Carta as the proposal, congruent with the revolutionary tradition of the Mexican people, for achieving… a new structure in international economic relations.363

Thus, even as it affirmed the logic of scientists and population control advocates in wealthy countries concerning the potential for global resource exhaustion and disruptive protests spilling...
over from poor nations, Mexican demographic policy also inverted this logic. Paired with global political-economic restructuring along the lines proposed in the *Carta Echeverría*, argued administration officials, reduced population growth in the Global South not only kept wealthy societies from being overrun by the world’s impoverished majorities. It protected those majorities from exploitation and subjugation at the hands of advanced industrial powers.

Claims that the administration’s reproductive politics advanced the causes of “shared development” and Third World liberation undoubtedly appealed to many Mexicans. In addition, they insulated public authorities from charges that they were conspiring with rich nations to suppress the reproduction of the world’s poor. Crucially, however, such claims also brought the issue of birth control into the broader, and more tempestuous, struggle between competing visions of national development.

Further, the population law marked the opening phase of a government campaign to win over the domestic champions of women’s reproductive rights. Like its counterparts in other parts of the world, family planning in Mexico focused disproportionately on female sexuality and reproductive behavior. Where some observers have attributed this imbalance to stereotypes of male sexuality that glorified virility and promiscuity as signifiers of manliness, others highlight the political advantages of targeting women. Jocelyn Olcott’s shows that integrating

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364 For a closer analysis of the concerns driving the evolution of the global population control movement see Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, and; Goldberg, *Means of Reproduction*.


366 For an analysis of how the culture of machismo inflected Mexican demographic policy see Gutmann, *Fixing Men*, 112-115.
progressive women into Mexico’s political structure was a key policy objective, an observation that Echeverría’s legislative agenda confirms.\footnote{Jocelyn Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 26.}

Shortly after passing the population law, the Chamber of Deputies amended Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution, making men and women equal before the law. Significantly, that amendment also stated that “every person has the right to decide, in a free, responsible, and informed manner, the number and spacing of their children.”\footnote{María Eugenia Zavala de Cosío, Cambios de fecundidad en México y políticas de población (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992), 189-217. On the implications of the amendment for the progressive women’s movement in Mexico and its relationship to state policy see Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 26; See also Gutmann, Fixing Men, 107-108.} With fears of gender erasure at an historic high as a result of feminist and countercultural advances, Echeverría’s courting of those who would liberalize the nation’s sexual mores was for many an unwelcome omen.

Yet the historical legacy of legalized birth control for Mexican conservatism remains poorly understood. Given the ineffectiveness of opposition to the law and the precipitous decline in birth rates following its passage, scholars have pointed to the measure as a tipping-point in the secularization of Mexican society.\footnote{Gutmann. Fixing Men, 110-112; Ibid., 110.} Indeed, the rate of population growth in Mexico dropped from 3 to 2.5 percent between 1976 and 1982, then again to 1.9 percent in 1988, 1.3 percent in 1994, and 1 percent in 2000.\footnote{Ibid., 110.} Studies further suggest that popular demand for birth control in Mexico was climbing even before the change in official policy. A 1968 survey of 500 women in Mexico City concluded that “More than 8 out of every 10 women accept the use of contraception.”\footnote{Manuel Mateos Cándano, Rosabalda Bueno Lázaro, and Fernando Chávez Murueta, Actitud y anticoncepción: Estudio de la actitud de 500 mujeres de una área urbana de la ciudad de México (Mexico City: Departamento de Investigación Médica y Labor Asistencia, 1968), 148. See also Gutmann, Fixing Men, 105.} The quickness with which contraceptive use spread in Mexico suggests that
religious culture did not significantly impede the adoption of artificial birth control techniques. As Guttman observes:

[W]ith respect to sexuality and reproduction… [Catholicism] has never mattered very much… The conclusion most commentators have drawn regarding this surprising change in contraceptive practice, and the subsequent decline in fertility, is that women proved far less religiously bound and more concerned with providing their fewer children with more educational opportunities and material privilege… The slogan ‘Smaller families live better’, in short, [was] well and swiftly adopted by women in Mexico.

If Catholic morality was statistically unimportant to sexual behavior and reproductive choices, opposition to birth control and the sexual secularism was nevertheless central to the political identity of Catholic activists.

The growing acceptance of contraceptives did not diminish the power of reproductive issues to mobilize religious conservatives in opposition to government policy. Likewise, opponents’ success or failure in forestalling the expansion of reproductive rights is too narrow a criterion with which to gauge their political significance. As an official at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico reported, with the population law the topic of birth control “suddenly [became] a legitimate concern for a vigorous and voluminous public debate.” That this debate seemed to fizzle soon after the law’s passage evinced a strategic choice more than a lack of conviction among opponents of legalized contraception. Rather than dissipating, resistance was subsumed into a larger campaign that turned educational policy into the central arena for contesting Echeverría’s sexual politics and the political realignment of which it was a part.

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372 On the importance of reproductive issues in the governing philosophy and practice of Mexico’s National Action Party see Goldberg, Means of Reproduction, Introduction and Chapter 6. Also, as Gutmann points out, anti-abortion sentiment among Mexican Catholics remains a powerful impediment to the legalization of abortion. Gutmann, Fixing Men, 111.

Despite some initial protestations, the Catholic hierarchy, divided and wary of confrontation, quietly withdrew from the birth control debate, leaving the UNPF as the principal voice of opposition.\(^{374}\) The latter organization’s involvement escalated in April 1974, a month after the population law went into effect. Issuing statements in major Mexico City and provincial newspapers, UNPF president Quiroga Fernández, a father of fifteen, expressed the union’s opposition to the inclusion of population control in development planning.\(^{375}\) He rejected the contention that Mexico was overpopulated and the assumption that artificial contraception would curtail the “demographic explosion,” which he insisted was a more apt descriptor for rapid population growth.\(^{376}\) Far from a developmental barrier, he posited in one press release, Mexico’s expanding population had been an historic incentive for resolving “multiple social, political, and economic problems.” Instead of staying the course, he lamented, Echeverría’s government opted to “take us on a tangent and suppress… future generations.”\(^{377}\) Tellingly, the UNPF took special aim at the president’s claims that contraceptives would free impoverished women from the bonds of reproductive servitude.

For UNPF leaders, the problem had little to do with the availability of contraceptives or the socioeconomic conditions of those who would use them. Driving population increase, rather, was the “exorbitant growth of lust.” “If [overpopulation] existed in Mexico,” one advertisement posed, the prudent response was “controlling [one’s] passions and working arduously to achieve

\(^{374}\) On the ambiguous response of Mexican Church leaders to the population law, see Gutmann, *Fixing Men*, 110-112; See also Amembassy Mexico City to Dept. of State, “GOM National Population Council Inaugurated,” Airgram A-230, 12 May 1974, P740048-1500-P740048-1599, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 48C, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA II. Significantly, many religious lay organizations, including Acción Católica, generally followed the episcopate’s lead in avoiding open confrontations with public officials.

\(^{375}\) Quiroga Fernández fathered seventeen children, fifteen of whom were still living at the time of the controversy. “Estado de Nuevo León…,” 18 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 197-212, AGN.

\(^{376}\) “Hay Explosión Demográfica, no Sobrepoblación…,” 4 April 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 167, AGN.

\(^{377}\) “El Gobierno Evade el Reto…,” 5 April 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, AGN.
a better social status.” UNPF propaganda parroted the Vatican’s insistence that “responsible parenthood” was the only morally acceptable means for individuals, presumed to be in a conjugal relationship, to limit the size of their families. But spokesmen for the organization did not lay societal responsibility for accelerated population growth solely at the feet of irresponsible procreators. The real problem, they trumpeted, was the absence of “good government,” and the area in which good government could most effectively combat ill-breeding was education.\footnote{378}

Echeverría had opened the door for the merger of the birth control and educational debates the preceding March. In an address announcement the formation of the National Population Council (\textit{Consejo Nacional de Población}), which was to administer the General Law of Population, the president stressed the importance of revising primary school curricula in accordance with the aims of population control.\footnote{379} In response, Quiroga Fernández attacked public officials in the national press for indoctrinating children with an “unnatural and contraceptive mentality.” He argued that disassociating reproductive rights from the responsibilities of parenthood merely encouraged the pursuit of “pleasure for pleasure’s sake.” To allay the reproductive scourges of single motherhood, “bastard children,” and “second fronts,” he insisted, Mexico needed a government that would educate children in the “healthy principles of Christianity.”\footnote{380} The suggestion that the state should sponsor religious education was an obvious political nonstarter, but it underscored the contention that traditional religious and moral values offered solutions to problems of concrete developmental significance. In the

\footnote{378} “Hay Explosión Demográfica, no Sobrepoblación...,” 4 April 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 167, AGN. \footnote{379} Amembbassy Mexico City to Dept. of State, “GOM National Population Council Inaugurated,” Airgram A-230, 12 May 1974, P740048-1500-P740048-1599, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 48C, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA II. \footnote{380} “Hay Explosión Demográfica, no Sobrepoblación...,” 4 April 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 167, AGN.
months that followed, Echeverría’s opponents integrated debates over reproductive and educational policy in a powerful critique of Mexico’s political system.

UNPF leaders travelled extensively to plan their campaign against the educational reform. In 1973 and 1974, national representatives met with local UNPF leaders in such conservative bastions as Guanajuato, Querétaro, Jalisco, and Nuevo León to coordinate the activities of local branches and discuss fundraising and communications strategies. They worked with local leaders organizing public workshops and orientation seminars for parents and community members.381 Quiroga Fernández also met with representatives of the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, or PAN) to compare notes on legalized contraception. Although an internal crisis within the PAN would prevent it from capitalizing on conservative effervescence until the succeeding administration, party representatives expressed their support for the UNPF’s position that the state “cannot make licit that which according to natural law is illicit.”382 All the while the UNPF peppered national and local press outlets with announcements condemning the ideological meddling of administration officials and the state’s monopolistic designs on education. But it was not until the new primary school textbooks were unveiled in late 1974 that the conflict acquired the dimensions of a national controversy.

Opposition centered on the social science and natural science portions of fourth and sixth grade textbooks. Spokespeople for the UNPF railed that the social science materials evinced a deliberate Marxist bias, decrying “heroic” portrayals of figures such as Mao Tse-tung, Fidel

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381 “Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia (UNPF) de Guanajuato (Gto.),” 10 December 1973, DFS, exp. 44-11-73, legajo 3, h. 233, AGN; “UNPF de Gto.,” 29 April 1974, DFS, exp. 100-9-1-74, legajo 23, h. 87, AGN; UNPF de Jalisco, 22 November 1973, DFS, exp. 100-12-1-73, legajo 24, h. 97, AGN; “UNPF de Querétaro,” 29 April 1974, DFS, exp. 100-20-1-73, legajo 10, h. 59, AGN.

382 “Partido Acción Nacional,” 7 May 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 48-2-74, legajo 45, h. 266, AGN (doc 8057-8101, p33 of PDF). On the crisis within the PAN during this time see Mizrahi, From Martyrdom to Power, 25; Carlos Arriola, Ensayos sobre el PAN (Mexico City: Grupo Editorial Miguel Angel Porrua, 1994), Chapter 2; and Soledad Loaeza, El Partido Acción Nacional: La larga marcha (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999)
Castro, and Salvador Allende. National and local UNPF representatives took out a spate of paid announcements across the country denouncing the textbooks as a harbinger of socialist revolution, a charge that conservative columnists from Chihuahua to Guadalajara echoed and embellished. Of course, claims that public education in Mexico fed communist sympathies were not in themselves new, as similar accusations had been a defining feature of the revolt against López Mateos. Where the texts issued under that administration had retained a reverence for liberal ideals, however, Echeverría’s reforms placed renewed emphasis on class struggle while touting Third World liberation.

In the context of escalating radicalism, the focus on rebellion and structural transformation enraged many parents, who were fearful that official provocation—real or imagined—would incite social violence. No longer could they confine their anxieties to Mexico’s impoverished masses, either. Since 1968, those responsible for the most visible and disruptive acts of dissident violence had come increasingly from the ranks of urban, educated, middle-class youths. The upheavals that these parents so dreaded arose not only from Mexico’s factories, rail-yards, and countryside but from within schools, universities, and their own homes. These anxieties provided a powerful animus for the administration’s opponents, commanding the attention of press outlets spanning the political spectrum. Even in newspapers generally sympathetic to the reforms discussion abounded as to whether, as one Mexico City daily put it, Mexico was “raising guerrillas.”

383 “UNPF,” 7 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 309, AGN (doc 8057-8101, p 37 of PDF); “UNPF,” November 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 283, AGN.
384 “UNPF,” 7 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 309, AGN (8057-8101, p 34 of PDF); “Estado de Nuevo León,” 2 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 312, AGN (8057-8101, p 35 of PDF); “Carta Abierta,” 2 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 192, AGN.
385 Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 2; Carey, Plaza of Sacrifices; Zolov, Refried Elvis
386 “Nuestros Hijos Saben...,” 8 November 1974, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 10, hs. 91-92, AGN.
For critics of the textbooks, however, the social science materials were not the only cause of concern. For the first time since Cárdenas’ presidency, government policy required that official school curricula include sexual education. The introduction of sexual education infuriated many parents, who felt that the government had usurped their natural right to teach their children about reproduction. UNPF propaganda scathingly attacked public authorities for hijacking the power to decide the morality of sexual acts, arguing that the instruction imparted in the textbooks conveyed a materialistic and spiritually impoverished understanding of human reproductive behavior. Meanwhile, didactic guides instructing teachers to portray masturbation as a natural, and innocuous, aspect of adolescent sexuality set off the most widely publicized polemic on self-gratification in the country’s history. The resulting debate recast disputes over curricular reforms as a contest over the moral foundations of Mexican modernity and the parameters of political inclusion.

In the closing months of 1974 UNPF representatives drafted a formal petition to the Secretariat of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, or SEP), laying out arguments that would frame the coming debate. The document characterized the organization’s objections as juridical and philosophical more than religious in nature, reiterating demands for libertad de enseñanza and an end to the government’s domain over education. But these arguments acted as a foil for a more comprehensive critique of the Mexican political system. The petition decried the centralization of power and the exclusion of “legitimately organized” confessional and private-sector organizations from the making of public policy, imploring officials to delegate authority to responsible “intermediate organizations.” It enunciated well-worn arguments against the state’s endorsement of class conflict and, in the UNPF’s view, its reflexive advocacy of structural

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387 “UNPF,” November 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 283, AGN.
reforms. The document’s authors contended that demagogic pandering obscured that poverty was more often the product of “laziness or vice” than of exploitation. By invoking popular struggle, they suggested, public officials not only confused “economic inequalities with social injustice.” They sought to concentrate power in the hands of the state at the expense of intermediate or subsidiary bodies. More dangerous still, the document alleged, the textbooks had broadened this design to include the propagation of moral and familial ruin.

For representatives of the Parents’ Union, secular authorities aimed to enhance their power by expropriating the ‘natural’ laws of sexual conduct. “It does not belong to the state to determine moral norms,” the petition proclaimed. The document censored public officials for teaching sexuality collectively to male and female students, insisting that sexual education should be catered to individual needs and segregated by sex. In trying to “make the sexes equal,” it asserted, the administration discarded the divine mandates of marital love and procreation in favor of a “materialist and Freudian” philosophy that eradicated natural gender differences. Contrary to the male propensity for “aggression, acquisition [and] dominion,” it posited, female sexuality followed an in-born disposition toward the “solicitation of protection and the acceptance of subordination.” According to this thinking, mixed-group sexual education was only one of the ways that the textbooks annihilated sexual difference.

Even more incendiary for the petition’s authors was the subject of autoeroticism. The requisition rejected as unscientific a claim in the teachers’ guide that masturbation in adolescents did not cause psychological abnormalities, deriding the manual’s suggestion that “punishing a child for masturbating is as illogical as beating him for crying.” Most alarming, however, was the imposition of undifferentiated sexual standards for male and female students. The petition

388 “Memorandum que la UNPF Presenta...,” 3 January 1975, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 219-239, AGN.
389 Ibid.
targeted the manual’s assertion that masturbation was nearly as common among female as among male adolescents, a point that UNPF propaganda recalled to disgruntled parents ad nauseam. Such a “pro-masturbationist” perspective, it insisted, was a greater danger to would-be mothers than extra-marital sex, as it denied the very “reason for the existence of the sexes.”

Opponents would revise and redeploy these arguments in campaigns around the country.

The UNPF’s campaign against the textbooks was centrally coordinated, but it targeted key centers of regional opposition. National leaders oversaw the production and distribution of UNPF propaganda, engaged the Mexico City media, and lobbied federal authorities. Where the capital and the neighboring state of Puebla harbored significant opposition, however, the most fervent resistance emerged in northern Mexico and the Bajío region. From the waning months of 1974 through the spring of 1975, Quiroga Fernández and other national representatives travelled incessantly to locales in northern and central Mexico, while also holding regular meetings of local and regional leaders in Mexico City. From those meetings emerged detailed plans for protests and other gatherings, distributing propaganda, and coordinating the release of public announcements and other paid publicity.

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390 Ibid.

391 Among the most frequented states were Nuevo León, Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, Durango, Sonora, Sinaloa, Puebla, Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Querétaro. “UNPF,” 7 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 309, AGN (8057-8101, p 34 of PDF); “Estado de Nuevo León,” 2 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 312, AGN; “UNPF en la R.M.,” 13 December 1974, DFS, exp. 100-8-1-74, legajo 37, h. 314, AGN; “UNPF,” 3 January 1975, DFS, exp. 100-17-1-75, legajo 41, h. 244, AGN; “UNPF,” 13 January 1975, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, h. 25, AGN; “UNPF,” 16 January 1975, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, h. 28, AGN; “UNPF,” 8 February 1975, exp. 48-2-75, legajo 45, h. 276, AGN; “UNPF,” 7 February 1975, DFS, exp. 100-12-1-75, legajo 33, h. 273, AGN.

392 Tellingly, the reports of federal security agents regularly include substantive details from private meetings and conversations among UNPF representatives, suggesting that the residences and lodgings of UNPF officials were bugged. For a more detailed discussion of the surveillance methods of Mexican security agents see Sergio Aguayo Quezada, 1968: Los archivos de la violencia (Mexico City: Grijalbo/Reforma, 1998); Walker, Waking from the Dream, Introduction and Chapter 2, and: Tanalis Padilla and Louise Walker, “In the Archives: History and Politics,” Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, 19:1 (2013), 1-10.
UNPF leaders depended on local news outlets to publicize the organization’s objections to curricular reforms. Where major papers in the capital, aside from their more progressive editorial stances, had to tread lightly lest they incite government retaliation, those in provincial areas were less reluctant to publish UNPF propaganda. In a meeting with the president of the Parents’ Union in Nuevo León, Roberto Garza Treviño, Quiroga Fernández stressed the need to “continue collecting money” for advertisements in local papers, which he stated were the “only medium [we can] count on to disseminate” the organization’s concerns. In December 1974, a series of virtually identical paid announcements appeared in local periodicals in Chihuahua, Durango, Nuevo Léon, San Luis Potosí, Guadalajara, and Guanajuato. Signed by national and regional UNPF representatives, the advertisements rehashed key points from the UNPF’s petition to the SEP. Highlighting the contention that Mexico’s woes were moral and political rather than structural, the announcements concluded with the maxim: “Countries don’t save themselves if their children don’t want to save them.” Monterrey’s ultra-conservative daily, El Norte, littered its pages with columns condemning the textbooks and ridiculing public officials. Others, such as Guadalajara’s El Occidental and El Informador, were less vitriolic, yet openly critical nonetheless. Local television stations also got in on the act, filming press conferences

393 “Estado de Nuevo León,” 15 January 1975, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, h. 28, AGN (doc 8102-34, p24 of PDF).

394 “Estado de Nuevo León,” 2 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-17-1-74, legajo 41, h. 179, AGN (doc 8057-8101 p35 of PDF); “Estado de Durango,” 12 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-8-1-74, legajo 37, h. 11, AGN (doc 8057-8101 p40 of PDF); “Carta Abierta,” 2 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, h. 192, AGN; “UNPF,” 7 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-17-1-74, legajo 41, h. 179, AGN.

395 At the height of the educational controversy, it was not uncommon for El Norte to print anywhere from eight to a dozen articles on some aspect of the conflict. El Norte’s coverage of the controversy and the organizations involved spanned numerous journalistic genres, including editorials, opinion pieces, interviews, satire, and articles reprinted from newspapers in other locales. Further, El Norte frequently featured articles on the controversy in every section of the paper, with the general exception of the sports section.

396 Amtconsul Guadalajara to Department of State, "Controversy Continues over 'Ideological' Primary School textbook," Airgram A-12, 3 February, 1975, P750027-1807-P750027-2445, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 27D, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA I; Amtconsul Guadalajara to Department of State, "Controversy over 'Ideological' Primary School Textbook," Airgram A-14, 19
called by local UNPF spokespeople and televising round table discussions on issues raised in the debate.397

National UNPF representatives also charged their provincial counterparts with petitioning state and municipal governments and organizing letter-writing campaigns. As Quiroga Fernández explained in a conversation with Garza Treviño in Monterrey, the campaign would ensure that local authorities did not “play dumb” with the opposition while discouraging provincial officials’ compliance with federal mandates.398 Significantly, the grievances cited in these campaigns were not limited to education. “You tell us and you repeat that we live in a Democracy,” complained the author of a letter to Durango’s governor, Héctor Mayagoitia Domínguez. Yet instead of advancing the democratic process and “purify[ing] its procedures,” its writer lamented, public officials “foment class conflict and incite… constant fighting among citizens.”399 Similarly, Garza Treviño, on live television, demanded an interview with Nuevo León governor Pedro Zorrilla Martínez concerning both the textbooks and the government’s failure to consult subsidiary civic bodies in the execution of educational reforms.400

The emphasis on civic participation was also manifest at the level of community organizing, as local UNPF members and their supporters took to the streets. Students in Durango boycotted classes and capped off a public rally by burning their textbooks, and reports cite

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397 “Estado de Nuevo León...,” 17 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 195-196, AGN; “Estado de Nuevo León...,” 18 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp 9, hs. 197-212, AGN.
398 “Estado de Nuevo León,” 15 January 1975, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, h. 28, AGN (doc 8102-34, p24 of PDF).
399 “Estado de Durango,” 12 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-8-1-74, legajo 37, h. 11, AGN (doc 8057-8101 p40 of PDF)
400 “Estado de Nuevo León...,” 17 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 195-196, AGN.
similar episodes in various towns in Jalisco. Mothers in Monterrey organized marches to local SEP offices, where they discarded textbooks at the doorstep of government officials. In Sonora, parents organized community “fronts” to combat the “moral and social corruption” of children. Front organizers hoisted placards likening the textbooks’ secular take on reproductive biology to “giving a child a weapon without explaining to them [sic] its functioning.” Others raised banners warning that the textbooks “encourage masturbation [among] boys and girls alike.” Similar accusations were a salient feature of protests and other acts of civil disobedience in Chihuahua, Guanajuato, and numerous other states.

While opponents of the texts elaborated on a common set of complaints, the relative importance of specific grievances in galvanizing resistance varied by region and audience. Catholic culture was pervasive throughout Mexico, but its influence was especially pronounced in the Bajío region, including the central Mexican states of Guanajuato, Querétaro, Aguascalientes, and Jalisco. Inter-class cooperation based on shared religious beliefs was a defining feature of regional social relations. Consequently, disquiet concerning the secular portrayal of human sexuality was more uniform than in many northern locales. Of course, this did not diminish anticommunist ardor in the region, which was also deeply rooted in Catholic

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401 “UNPF,” 7 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 63-26-74, legajo 2, h. 312, AGN; “UNPF de Jalisco,” 9 December 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-17-1-74, legajo 32, h. 168, AGN; “UNPF de Jalisco,” 15 January 1974, UNPF, DFS, exp. 100-12-1-74, legajo 32, h. 168, AGN
402 “Madres deciden devolver textos,” El Norte, Monterrey, 15 February 1975, 1B.
403 “Estado de Sonora...,” 24 February 1975, DGIPS, c. 1579C, exp. 12, hs. 134-138, AGN.
404 “Estado de Chihuahua,” 3 March 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, hs. 163-67, AGN; “Carta Abierta,” 2 December 1974, DGIPS, 1548C, exp. 9, h. 192, AGN.
405 Conversation with Miguel Basañez, co-coordinator of the World Values Survey, Tufts University, Boston, July 2, 1913.
406 Gauss, Made in Mexico, Introduction, Chapter 2; See also Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance, 56-57.
407 As I will discuss below, ANCIFEM would later select another state in the Bajio, Querétaro, to host its second national congress in 1975.
culture and which acquired renewed force during the controversy.\textsuperscript{408} Nevertheless, oppositional motives in northern Mexico evinced a greater degree of class differentiation.

This variance was especially pronounced in Monterrey, the state capital of Nuevo León, which was home to the broadest and most ferocious campaign against the textbooks. The leadership of the Nuevo León Parents’ Union was predominantly upper-middle class, and frequently had familial or professional ties to the city’s powerful industrial clique. Rank-and-file members, by contrast, generally belonged to lower-middle and working classes. As a U.S. consular official in Monterrey observed, local UNPF directors and plebian members were mutually repulsed by the textbooks’ leftward political tilt. And, like members of the city’s business class, UNPF leaders in Monterrey were keen to shroud their defiance in the cloak of religious conviction. But where blue-collar UNPF constituents, in the words of one U.S. diplomat, viewed sexual education as a “demon issue,” UNPF leaders and local business representatives were primarily concerned with radicalism. Despite their public appeals to Catholic values, observed a U.S. consular official, resistance to sexual education among the UNPF brass in Monterrey was largely “pro-forma.”\textsuperscript{409}

This is not to say that the public campaign against it lacked zeal. UNPF advertisements in leading local papers scathingly attacked the mandate. One spokeswoman for a local chapter of \textit{Madres de Familia}—the women’s section of the Parents’ Union—Sara Jaime Zambrano, even

\textsuperscript{408} Amconsul Guadalajara to Department of State, "Controversy Continues over 'Ideological' Primary School textbook," Airgram A-12, 3 February, 1975, P750027-1807-P750027-2445, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 27D, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA II; Amconsul Guadalajara to Department of State, "Controversy over 'Ideological' Primary School Textbook," Airgram A-14, 19 February 1975, P750038-064-P750038-1297, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 38B, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA II.

\textsuperscript{409} Amconsul Monterrey to SECSTATE, WASHDC, "Textbook Controversy," Airgram A-8, 11 February 1975, P750036-0733, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-79/P-Reel Printouts, Box 36B, RG59, General Records of the Department of State, NARA II.
appeared alongside UNPF president Francisco Quiroga Fernández on the weekly television show *Nueve y Usted* [Nine and You] to discuss the issue of sexual education. There was little precedent in Mexico for airing topics relating to adolescent sexuality on a major network. As suggested by host Americo Leal Villareal’s opening reminder to viewers that the sexual education curriculum included the subject of masturbation, the episode was undoubtedly meant to fan controversy. The discussants treaded familiar ground, each expressing their disapproval of some aspect of the new curriculum or its mandate. Quiroga Fernández insisted on the need to distinguish “between sexual education and genital education,” where the textbooks, in his view, offered only the latter. Mrs. Zambrano, for her part, appealed to mothers concerning the impropriety of imparting lessons on human sexuality to mixed-gender groups. Yet events in Zambrano’s own upscale district suggest that sexual education was a secondary concern.

As a member of the *Madres* division in the wealthy Monterrey suburb of San Pedro Garza García, Zambrano led a procession of disaffected moms to the local SEP headquarters. Participants toted textbooks allotted to their children with them on the march, which was attended by the local press, and disposed of them outside the SEP office in a display of civil disobedience. The march took place just two months after Zambrano’s appearance on *Nueve y Usted*, yet marchers surrendered only the social science textbooks. As Mrs. Zambrano subsequently explained to a local reporter, the mothers of San Pedro Garza García could not permit the exposure of their children to ideologies “counterproductive to the development of Mexico.”

Additional examples suggest that parents in other affluent municipalities prioritized their objections in similar fashion. At a meeting with disgruntled parents and UNPF representatives,

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410 “Estado de Nuevo León...,” 18 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 197-212, AGN.
411 “Madres deciden devolver textos,” *El Norte*, 15 February 1975, 1B.
Monterrey’s Director of Public Education, Ricardo Torres Martínez, attempted to assuage his audience by suggesting, misleadingly, that the Mexican episcopate had approved the curricular reforms. As he proceeded with his reassurances, one irate mother interjected that neither the Church nor the state had the right to determine educational policy in the absence of parental consent. She conceded that rising sexual promiscuity was undesirable, but she clarified that it was not the most pressing topic under discussion. “We don’t want guerrilla children!,” she shouted on behalf of all in attendance.⁴¹² For others, however, the distinction between radicalism and libertinism was less clear.

Critics of the textbooks increasingly cast sexual permissiveness and radicalism as interlocking nodes of a common materialist malignancy. One father from Colonia Juárez in Nuevo León, Nemesio Uribe Juárez, complained in a letter to the editors of a major Monterrey paper that both the social and natural science portions of the texts violated Mexican customs and were “damaging to morals.” He fumed that teaching sexual education to unsegregated groups was akin to the collectivist education programs of socialist countries. “THE DAY IS NOT FAR OFF,” he deplored, “that we will see proliferate in our country a total degeneration, converting Mexico into an immense brothel, EASY PREY FOR THE MARXISTS.”⁴¹³ The UNPF issued full-page announcements in regional papers advancing similar arguments. “Let us be convinced,” urged one such announcement, “on the subjects of sexual education and… social sciences [the sixth-grade textbook] is SOCIALIZING.”⁴¹⁴ Other examples of UNPF propaganda articulated the rationale for this assertion more explicitly.

⁴¹² “Estado de Nuevo León…,” 5 December 1974, DGIPS, c. 1548C, exp. 9, hs. 193-194, AGN.
⁴¹³ Letter to editor, El Norte, 10 January 1975, 7B. Capitalization in original.
⁴¹⁴ “La educación de los hijos es derecho inalienable de los padres,” El Norte, 21 March 1975, 6B. Capitalization in original.
A UNPF pamphlet that security agents claimed had been widely distributed in Mexico characterized the curricular reforms as a two-pronged effort to lead the nation toward “socialism of the state.” Devoting more than three pages to the subject, it rejected the contention that women were as likely as men to indulge in masturbation. “Affirmations such as those,” it continued, “exonerate those who masturbate of moral responsibility [because] they relate it to the ‘natural’ desire to have relations with the opposite sex.” The texts’ sanctioning of non-procreative sexual acts and, most egregiously, the flyer insinuated, their conflation of male and female sexual impulses, presented a corrosive Freudian fallacy as fact. By reducing sex to a “biological necessity… fundamental to reaffirming one’s personality,” it argued, the textbooks betrayed the administration’s allegiance to “dialectical materialism.” In a strained explanation for this assertion, the flyer referred to Echeverría’s calls for structural change. “By changing the economic structure,” it asserted, government agents sought to reorder Mexican values so that “what was wicked before can be good.” Reiterating a central theme of the campaign, the pamphlet urged civic action to forestall the inversion of traditional morals.415 But the Parents’ Union was not alone in promoting civic-edification as the remedy for Mexico’s ills.

*Texts or Pre-Texts?: Economic Elites and the Production of Civism in Monterrey and the North*

Despite their prominence in the emerging campaign, UNPF leaders were publicly associated with private-sector opponents of the administration, whose calls for the inclusion of civic bodies, including business organizations, in the making of public policy reinforced the UNPF’s position as well as their own. Though cautious and informal, this association quickly became a focal point of the controversy, as public authorities tried to dismiss the protests as the result of a conspiracy orchestrated by an economic oligarchy bent on preserving its privilege.

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415 “Los Textos del SEP Enseñan Doctrinas Contrarias a Nuestra Nacionalidad y Tradiciones Mexicanas,” undated. DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, AGN.
The strategy succeeded, for a time, in reorienting the national debate around questions of social and economic inequality, obscuring what one scholar described as the “intimate” nature of conservative protests.\textsuperscript{416} In doing so, however, it deepened regional and sectorial divides while further uniting the opposition.

By early 1975 the public conversation centered increasingly on business elites’ role in fomenting dissent. Leading entrepreneurs, most notably members of the Monterrey industrial clique, had been at the forefront of the movement against López Mateos’ educational reforms.\textsuperscript{417} Although the nature and extent of private sector involvement in protests against Echeverría’s reforms is less clear, business leaders and those sympathetic to them were vocally critical of the textbooks. Nowhere were these criticisms louder than in Monterrey, whose business class was engaged in an ongoing ideological battle with Echeverría’s government.

Publicly, private sector spokespeople focused their objections on the textbooks’ neglect of businessmen’s contributions to Mexican society and their implicit characterization of entrepreneurs as greedy and “un-Mexican.” As the head of legal affairs for the Nuevo León Employers’ Confederation, Amado R. Díaz Guajardo, commented to a leading Monterrey newspaper, the new curriculum “consciously forgets the most elemental principles that support [businessmen’s] mexicanness,” omitting the “virtues and noble acts of those who have been [the] heroes of productive activities in our country.” Not only did Mexican businessmen foster economic prosperity and humane labor relations, he continued, but, more importantly, they comprised a critical line of defense against government infringements on the constitutional rights of individuals and institutions. Instead of recognizing these contributions, he lamented, public

\textsuperscript{416} Walker, \textit{Waking from the Dream}, 63.
authorities encouraged “idolatry [toward] individuals… opposed to the principles of private property, free enterprise, and the social function of businessmen.”

Similarly, a representative of Monterrey’s Chamber of Commerce, Pablo González, acknowledged to a reporter from El Norte that the chamber was working to raise awareness of the threat posed by the textbooks among its associates. González referred to a section of the mathematics curriculum titled “What is the price of a thing?” He complained that the lesson discounted business overhead, taxes, and other production costs to create the false impression that Mexican businesses earned exorbitant profits for owners while neglecting the needs of workers and the public. Such mischaracterizations, insisted González, impeded freedom of thought and threatened Mexicans’ “legitimate right to freely elect our regime of social and economic life.” These grievances found a sympathetic audience among local columnists and other opponents of the texts.

The perception that federal educators deliberately politicized the curriculum for even the most neutral and universal of sciences enlivened the satirical savvy of the regime’s detractors. Monterrey columnist Carlos Ortiz Gil likened the bureaucratic barriers to dialogue to the proceedings of a royal court. He depicted a scenario in which an entrepreneur complained to a fictive monarch that official mathematics curricula evinced a sectarian bias. When the king countered that, by their very nature, math lessons “cannot be tendentious,” the businessman admonished him to be more vigilant in overseeing the “royal instructor” – a reference to Secretary of Education Victor Bravo Ahuja – warning him that class conflict posed an even greater danger to the aristocracy than to private interests. Highlighting accusations of

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418 “Centro Patronal de NL,” El Norte, 9 January 1975, 1B.
419 “Textos amenazan libertad – CANACO,” El Norte, 17 January 1975, 1B.
bureaucratic indifference in the face of opponents’ requests for dialogue, the king insisted
apathetically that the complainant speak to the “royal instructor.”

In a subsequent piece, Ortiz Gil ridiculed the National Technical Educational Council
(Consejo Nacional Técnico de la Educación, or CNTE), the editorial council that compiled the
textbooks. “Shouldn’t we mention Carl Marx?,” asked one council member, adding “How about
in the Geometry section?” “No,” replied a colleague. “Let’s put Mao Tse-Tung in Geometry.”

Other observers were equally sardonic in pointing up the administration’s pedagogical
realpolitik.

El Norte’s scathingly satirical column, “M.A. Kiavelo,” steadily gained popularity among
middle- and upper-class readers during Echeverría’s presidency, becoming an important forum
for distilling the anxieties of the regime’s detractors. As accusations of pedagogic malfeasance
 gained prominence in the debate, M.A. Kiavelo’s creator, Abelardo A. Leal, introduced the
character Filipito (Little Phillip), a credulous primary school student whose persona parodied the
ostensibly doctrinaire aims of federal educators. From February 1975 until the close of the
school year in June, Filipito appeared in virtually every issue of the daily newspaper. In the
course of his fictitious education, Filipito’s instructors called on him to reply to assorted queries
pertaining to the new curriculum, reprimanding him for thoughtful, balanced responses and
commending him for dogmatic or erroneous ones. Questionable pedagogical practices
provided the administration’s critics with useful fodder and helped to broaden the campaign’s

420 “Más quejas en el reino,” El Norte, 18 January 1975, 2A.
421 “Ingeniosa geometría,” El Norte, Monterrey, 21 January 1975, 2A.
422 José Luis Esquivel Hernández, El Norte: Lider sin competencia, 60; 72-81.
423 On Abelardo A. Leal’s career with El Norte and the origins of M.A. Kiavelo see Ibid., 60.
424 See, for example, “M.A. Kiavelo,” El Norte, 20 February 1975, 2A; “M.A. Kiavelo,” El Norte, 22 February
appeal beyond religiously-rooted or sectarian objections.\textsuperscript{425} Regardless, the animating force for such criticisms derived from hostilities over the direction of development planning and ideology.

Though UNPF and private-sector representatives were careful to disavow any formal association, their mutual revulsion to populist rhetoric and political economics positioned them publicly as fellow travelers. UNPF leaders consistently rejected generalized attacks on Mexican businessmen. In response to federal educators’ not-so-subtle curricular engineering, however, the UNPF’s defense of private capital turned to lampoonery.

In late February, the Nuevo León branch of the Parents’ Union issued a full-page announcement in local papers reiterating the allegation that the textbooks “poison[ed] the minds” of Mexico’s youth by convincing them that “everyone that isn’t the Government… are [sic] exploiters.” If the business profits depicted in mathematics lessons were accurate, contended the ad, then the “problems of unemployment and underemployment in Mexico would be totally resolved,” as growing businesses would quickly absorb excess manpower while increasing remuneration in accordance with the resulting labor scarcity. But the announcement did not stop at projecting the faith of UNPF leaders in the equilibrating relationship between profits and labor markets. Tellingly, it concluded with a self-deprecating reminder of Mexican underdevelopment. “Imagine how we would be with thousands of businesses [like those] in the textbook!” it exclaimed. “[W]e would have to import gringo braceros. All the world’s inhabitants would be kissing the ground we walk on, the marvelous Mexicans!”\textsuperscript{426} The UNPF’s public defense of

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\textsuperscript{425} Loaeza observed a similar pattern in the controversy under López Mateos, when the commercial textbook industry and parents concerned with the quality of Mexican public education protested the standardized textbooks issued by the government on the basis that they omitted the diverse perspectives provided through more heterogeneous commercial offerings. Then as in the 1970s, claims that government textbooks were “anti-pedagogical,” while ancillary to the larger debate, helped broaden the opposition into other sectors. Loaeza, \textit{Clases medias}, 227-244.

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Mexican businessmen hitched the organization to a powerful ally, but in other ways its association with entrepreneurial interests was a liability.

Facing mounting public criticism, government officials portrayed dissenters as pawns of the economic oligarchy. Public authorities turned quickly to organized labor for support. Speaking at the Ninth Labor Congress in February, Secretary of Labor Porfirio Muñoz Ledo proclaimed that those resisting educational reforms were the same privileged elite who opposed a forty-hour work week and recently-passed consumer protection laws. The regime’s detractors, he insinuated, were the vanguard of a regionally-based counterrevolution under the shadowy direction of Monterrey industry:

The maneuvers [of] privileged groups… particularly in the north, in opposition to the educational labor of our regime, are part of a tenacious, but unfruitful, effort to prevent the full realization of the principles of the Mexican Revolution. Obscurantism, President Echeverría has called this behavior… One would be hard-pressed to find a more correct word to define it: obscurantism is, in effect, the systematic opposition to the education of the popular classes.

Concerned that population growth would suppress wages and diminish unions’ capacity to absorb unaffiliated laborers into the workforce, labor leaders had provided critical support for the administration’s family planning campaign, of which sexual education was a key feature. In light of that support, Echeverría’s courting of organized labor, and the historic antagonism between regiomontano elites and national labor leaders, it is unsurprising that the state would seek support from unions to legitimate its educational reforms. But government spokespeople

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427 On the debates surrounding the passage of consumer protections under Echeverría, see Walker, *Waking from the Dream*, Chapter 4.


invoked the specter of Monterrey’s much-maligned industrial courtesans in appeals to non-laboring sectors as well.

As opposition spread across northern Mexico, administration officials redoubled their public defense of the reforms. SEP representatives held community meetings and nationally-televised press conferences to redeem the pedagogical integrity of the textbooks. Spokespeople such as Dr. Rosa Luz Alegría insisted that the new curriculum provided students with an accurate, practical guide to understanding the social universe in which they lived.⁴³⁰ Central to this messaging, however, PRI functionaries also stepped-up efforts to link the opposition to regiomontano industrialists.

Speaking before a crowd of 2,000 supporters in the northeastern state of Coahuila, PRI president Jesús Reyes Heroles repeatedly referred to Catholic opponents of the textbooks as “industrialists of the conscience,” highlighting their alleged ties to Mexico’s business elite.⁴³¹ CNTE president Moisés Jiménez Alarcón was more explicit. Following one public meeting on the reforms, he released a statement claiming that resistance was confined to “small groups from Monterrey, with political interests.”⁴³² Even Nuevo León’s embattled governor, Pedro Zorilla Martínez (1973-1979), alleged in his 1975 Informe (annual address) that the campaign against the textbooks adhered to the “subterranean” designs of Monterrey businessmen.⁴³³ The open vitriol between the leaders of Monterrey industry and Echeverría’s government lent credence to this perception. Equally important, however, was the memory of their involvement in protests against López Mateos’ educational policies.

⁴³⁰ “Los textos se defienden solos, dice Dra. Alegría,” El Norte, 23 March 1975, 1B;
⁴³² “Afirma que existen intereses políticos,” El Norte, 23 March 1975, 1B
⁴³³ La Educación en Nuevo León, 1962-1985 (Monterrey: Colegio de Estudios Científicos y Tecnológicos del Estado de Nuevo León, 2008), 135; Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León (AGENL), Biblioteca “Ricardo Covarrubius.”
Regiomontano business leaders had played a defining role in the movement against López Mateos’ reforms. That campaign joined key figures from the Monterrey Group, including the group’s iconic leader, Eugenio Garza Sada, with local and regional branches of the Parents’ Union and clergy members. In addition to financing propaganda and other publicity, local businessmen formed civic associations such as the Regional Anticommunist Crusade and the Democratic Anticommunist Front to provide organizational support, circulate propaganda, and engage in outreach activities to expand the movement’s support base. As Soledad Loaeza observed, the entrance of Monterrey elites into the conflict brought the movement to a crescendo, culminating in a cross-class demonstration of over 200,000 protestors in downtown Monterrey that shook the government and compelled López Mateos to pare back the reforms. The resulting compromise permitted educators to use supplementary textbooks alongside the official textbooks, effectively ending the revolt, but the episode left lasting imprints in the public imagination.

For Echeverría’s defenders, swelling opposition to educational reforms was a predictable sequel to that earlier movement and evidence of continued collusion among the historic enemies of state-sponsored social uplift. In an article titled “Grand Pre-Texts: Again the Textbooks,” El Diario de México columnist Antonio Rodríguez recalled his experience as a resident of Monterrey during the 1962 protests. That “explosive manifestation,” he argued, resulted from a systematic campaign of misinformation through which local economic elites and religious leaders convinced masses of workers, company employees, and campesinos that the government aimed to separate children from their parents. He contended that the same “false and absurd”
reasoning and “sinister motives” fueled opposition to Echeverría’s reforms. “[W]e well-know who pays them,” he asserted in reference to the UNPF, “and from where their ideological inspiration comes.” Rodríguez implored readers to look past the crazed anti-Freudian rhetoric of religious conservatives, which he insisted was just a flimsy pretext for opposing Echeverría’s “progressive labor” in the service of “national independence.” The narrative coming out of the capital evoked deep-seated suspicions of norteño traditions and culture and the widely-held view of Monterrey as a counterrevolutionary haven. Meanwhile, protestors and opinion-makers in Monterrey offered a different perspective on the sources of regional divisions and the memory of the 1962 demonstration.

Local journalist and author Humberto Junco described efforts to discredit the opposition as an attack on Monterrey itself. In April, El Norte printed a column by Junco on the front page. In it Junco recalled the “magnificent and imposing” 1962 protest, in which the Nuevo León Parents’ Union “clearly and energetically” repudiated the imposition of mandatory textbooks. In response to that noble effort, he contended, “ultra-leftists” and “Jacobins” sympathetic to the government “unleashed a great offensive against Monterrey, its people and its institutions.” “History repeats itself,” Junco warned. He commended the “wise and gallant” resistance of local UNPF leaders to Echeverría’s reforms, lamenting that their “tenacious struggle” had again precipitated a “flood of the same adjectives.” The prevalence of terms such as “‘reactionaries’, ‘conservatives’, ‘obscurantists’, ‘retrograde’, [and] ‘enemies of the Revolution’, ” to describe opponents of the textbooks, Junco continued, was proof of a systematic assault on the city’s traditions and values. In answer to that assault, he announced, he was compiling a collection of his own writings from 1962 for republication under the title “Plot against Monterrey” (Conjura

436 “Grandes Pre-Textos: Otra Vez los Libros de Texto,” 10 February 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 11, h. 116, AGN.
The resulting volume, which catalogued the insults leveled at protesters in 1962, went to print eleven days later, on 29 April.

In the republished articles that comprised the book Junco defended the integrity of the city’s business leaders, but he rejected the contention that opposition reflected the interests of a privileged few. He presented the current controversy as an outgrowth of historical divisions between those beholden to the center and the defenders of regional traditions and autonomy. In his preface to the compendium, he used the figure of Nuevo León governor Pedro Zorrilla to draw distinctions between the two groups. He referred to Zorrilla, who Echeverría had appointed in 1973, as a “bird of passage” whose incessant travels to Mexico City and bookish style bred distrust among Nuevo León’s citizens. “He doesn’t confront nor resolve problems,” Junco stated of Zorrilla, “he confines himself to contemplating and sidestepping them,” looking unfailingly toward the capital in “search of orientation.” Where “the regiomontano” preferred “clear, frank, direct” speech, Zorrilla gave him “long-winded and confused discourses that he doesn’t understand.” The statement reflected the view of many in Monterrey that the unpopular Zorrilla was Echeverría’s creature—an apostle of centralized power disconnected from local ideals and traditions. As such, Junco suggested, the governor, who was among the foremost critics of the opposition, did not speak for Nuevo León’s citizens. “We can summarize Governor Zorrilla’s conduct in three words,” he concluded: “indecision, irresponsibility and ineptitude”—traits he deemed antithetical to regional values and identity.

For many in Monterrey, the protests reaffirmed a regional identity grounded in a history of resistance to central authority. In March 1975 a flyer distributed through the postal service appeared in mailboxes across the city. The pamphlet depicted the 1962 demonstration as a

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437 “Conjura Contra Monterrey,” *El Norte*, 18 April 1975, 1A.
438 Humberto Junco, *Conjura contra Monterrey* (Monterrey, Mexico: 1975)
defining moment in the “regional history of protest.” Without referring to the role of business elites in the present controversy, it lauded the accomplishments of local entrepreneurs and the UNPF in the civic collaboration that became the Regional Anticommunist Crusade. Included with the pamphlet was a reprint of a flyer from 1962, signed by leading businessmen and local UNPF representatives. Whether rooted in regional allegiances, religious beliefs, or political convictions, the convergence of middle class and elite narratives in the educational debate amplified the impact of opposition to the administration.

In a rare interview with fourteen leading Monterrey businessmen, journalist and Novedades columnist José Luis Mejías questioned interviewees concerning their involvement in the campaign. Participants in the interview, which took place in a grandiose conference room in one of the industrial group’s many Monterrey offices, included such outspoken critics of the administration as Andrés Marcelo Sada, Eugenio Garza Lagüera, Rogelio Sada Zambrano, Jorge Chapa, Alejandro Chapa, and José Luis Coindreau. Mejías, who did not identify individual respondents, asked participants to reply to accusations that they were using the textbook scandal to broaden opposition to the government. When the interviewees acknowledged their disapproval of the textbooks and defended their right to freely express their opinion, Mejías qualified that the upheavals surrounding the educational debate went beyond accepted modes of dissent. The criticism in question, he averred, “has been concerted, massive… and harsh: more similar to a rebellion than a simple criticism.” The respondents maintained that they had “never met to plan a campaign against the textbooks, as they say over there [in Mexico City],” but that participation among members of the group varied according to individual motives. Where some were wary of further confrontation with the state, others fought openly “because their wives and mothers are

More than the content of the textbooks, however, the interviewees insisted that the larger problem stemmed from the state’s use of educational policy to perpetuate the centralization of power.

Herein, the respondents argued, lay the reason for the recent outpouring of opposition to the administration. “The totalitarian state begins by subjecting history and the social sciences to its authority,” they posited, “and ends by exercising its coercive power over biology, philosophy, culture and art.” As for the recent surge in protests among non-elite sectors, the interviewees proposed a counterargument to accusations of elite puppeteering. Authoritarian leaders, they argued, “masquerade as revolutionaries” to conceal their quest for power. Yet in attempting to transform all aspects of society at once—“the economy, society, culture and even mental structures”—state agents inevitably “multiply many times over…the points of conflict” between public authorities, individuals, and private entities. Thus locked into proliferating conflicts with its citizens, contended the interviewees, the state must resort to coercion and intimidation. Hence, efforts to label opponents as elite subversives, “counterrevolutionaries, traitors, fascists, bad Mexicans” grew not from social realities but from the state’s congenital impulse toward self-preservation. Whether there was truth to accusations of an elite conspiracy or not, the convergence of elite and non-elite perspectives helped remake conservative strategies for confronting central authority.

Monterrey was a key site for this convergence. In a published compilation of his reporting on Monterrey during Echeverría’s presidency, Mejías recalled that following the publication of his interview with representatives of the city’s flagship industries he received a complaint from the owners of some smaller enterprises in Monterrey. Their grievances targeted

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440 “El Grupo Monterrey Habla de Sucesión, Libros de Texto…,” 17 March 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, 206-207, AGN.
the presumption that the whole of Monterrey’s business community answered to the heads of the city’s largest conglomerates. Nevertheless, Mejias reported, the complainants expressed their agreement with “almost everything that the businessmen interviewed said.”

Indeed, the general accord among regiomontano entrepreneurs with respect to political and economic philosophy is well-documented. In the educational controversies under López Mateos and Echeverría, however, calls for the decentralization of political authority arose from broad cross-sections of society in Monterrey and surrounding regions. What distinguished the protests of the 1970s from their antecedents was that they coincided with business leaders’ newfound devotion to challenging the state’s dominion over the nation’s social and political values. The views of middle-class and elite opponents of the administration coalesced around a shared commitment to sustained civic activism as a barrier to the expansion of state power.

An important outgrowth of this commitment was the Monterrey Association of Institutions (Asociación de Instituciones). Formed during the educational controversy, the association, later renamed the Council of Institutions (Consejo de Instituciones), counted more than 35,000 members at its founding. The council was a collaboration among local business, civic, and professional associations—including the UNPF, the Nuevo León chambers of industry and commerce, the Nuevo León Employers’ Center, and the newly-formed National Women’s Civic Association—along with numerous “clubs of social action” such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs. Spokespeople for the organization pledged to dispute the textbooks, but the council’s stated purpose was to inculcate “awareness among the population about diverse problems,”

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441 José Luis Mejias, Con Estos Bueyes, Hay que Arar: El Caso Monterrey (Mexico City: Unión de Expendedores y Voceadores de los Periódicos de México, 1977), 35.
442 Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance; Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite, Chapters 6-7; Gauss, Made in Mexico, Chapter 6.
promote “good government,” and spur civic engagement.\textsuperscript{443} Though the extent of the council’s involvement in the campaign against the textbooks is unclear, it played a key role in coordinating anti-government protests in subsequent years. Local Councils of Institutions were also active in Tamaulipas, Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, Chihuahua, Querétaro, and Jalisco from the mid-1970s through the 1980s.\textsuperscript{444}

Despite the city’s importance as a site of opposition, business involvement in the campaign against the textbooks was not confined to Monterrey. In Sinaloa, for example, leading businessmen organized meetings with representatives of religious groups such as the UNPF, the Christian Family Movement (\textit{Movimiento Familiar Cristiano}, or MFC), and the Knights of Columbus (\textit{Caballeros de Colón}) to plan protests against the educational reforms. The nerve center of opposition in Sinaloa was the headquarters of the local newspaper \textit{Noroeste}.

Established in 1974 at the secret initiative of agribusinessman Manuel Clouthier and other local entrepreneurs, \textit{Noroeste} was fiercely critical of the administration.\textsuperscript{445} Beginning in January 1975 the paper’s director, Silvino Silva Lozano, attended a series of meetings to determine how Sinaloa’s “fuerzas vivas” could mobilize resistance, “like the parents’ union[s] in other states have done.”\textsuperscript{446}

Over the coming months Lozano, along with \textit{Noroeste} editor and local MFC head Donato de la Garza Espinosa, who also had economic ties to Clouthier and the powerful Bailleres

\textsuperscript{443} “Nueva asociación discutirá los textos,” \textit{El Norte}, 18 February 1975, 1D.
\textsuperscript{444} I will discuss the role of local Consejos de Instituciones in the anti-government protests of later decades in subsequent chapters.
\textsuperscript{445} Clouthier founded Noroeste with his uncle, Jorge del Rincón Bernal and fellow businessman Enrique Murillo. Although he initially kept his role in the newspaper’s founding a secret, he later cited the September 1973 murder of Eugenio Garza Sada as a key factor in his decision. He also pointed to Garza Sada’s assassination as the catalyst for his becoming involved in opposition to Echeverría’s government through his leadership in Mexico’s leading business organizations. See \url{http://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Biografias/CMJ34.html}.
\textsuperscript{446} “Estado de Sinaloa,” 22 Jan 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 10, hs. 285-6, AGN. In this context “fuerzas vivas” loosely translates as “active forces,” but with the implication that said forces are comprised of influential and active groups, actors, or organizations within a community or society.
industrial group, met regularly with parents and disgruntled citizens.\footnote{On the economic links among Noroeste’s principal stockholders and with other influential families and business groups, see Gustavo Aguilar Aguilar, Banca y desarrollo regional en Sinaloa, 1910-1994 (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, S.A., 2001).} Other participants in these meetings included the president and secretary of the Sinaloa Parents’ Union, Rafael Canale Ojeda and Norma Harper de Aguirre, respectively, and national UNPF president Francisco Quiroga Fernández, who, as a colorful aside, claimed that state security agents stole his car while he met with local organizers.\footnote{“Estado de Sinaloa...,” 22 January 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 10, hs. 285-286, AGN; “Estado de Sinaloa...,” 20 February 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, h. 116, AGN.} In addition to hosting meetings, Lozano and de la Garza also printed propaganda using Noroeste’s equipment and regularly published the content of that propaganda in the daily newspaper. On one occasion, they even secured an airplane—most likely from among the agricultural hub’s legion of crop-dusting planes—to drop 75,000 flyers from the air, though the plan was apparently foiled when public authorities seized the propaganda in a raid.\footnote{“Estado de Sinaloa...,” 16 February 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, AGN; “Estado de Sinaloa...,” 20 February 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, AGN.} While the protests cannot be reduced to the work of elite plotters, collaboration among local businessmen, the UNPF, and other civic and professional organizations was a common feature of the opposition in Jalisco, Nuevo León, Sonora, Durango, and other locales.\footnote{Fix cit: NARA doc identifying Abelardo Garciaire Ramirez as pres of Centro Patronal as well as UNPF, Jalisco at time of controversy and AGN docs from states named – alos other NARA docs from Jalisco and BC doc on p69.} In coming years these tentative alliances would harden into a formidable coalition, bringing their brand of conservative anti-statism from the political fringes to the center of the public dialogue.

\textbf{Conclusion}

With the support of business leaders and the right-wing press, the UNPF mobilized growing numbers of middle-class Mexicans in opposition to Echeverría’s educational policies.
Between 1973 and 1975, UNPF leaders rallied religious and social conservatives across central and northern Mexico behind calls for *libertad de enseñanza*, portraying educational protests as a defense of traditional Catholic and family values against the impositions of a secular, left-leaning state. Animating these protests were fears that Echeverría’s government was undercutting Mexican families and communities with reproductive policies and political sympathies that, they argued, promoted sexual libertinism and radicalism among the nation’s youth. In the context Echeverría’s *apertura democrática*, many parents, business leaders, and religious and civic groups saw these developments as harbingers of social decay and evidence of a political realignment detrimental to their interests and ideals.

Echeverría’s educational and reproductive policies were a vital catalyst for this political awakening, which brought together leading entrepreneurs and middle-class conservatives in potent, if tentative, alliances. A defining feature of these nebulous coalitions was a deepening commitment to permanent civic engagement in defense of ‘integralist’ forms of social and political organization. After 1973, Catholic integralism emerged as a central ideological referent for conservative opponents of the PRI, reenergizing Catholic political activism in Mexico and mobilizing influential lay organizations in a systematic challenge to state-led development. Yet even at the height of the educational protests organizers were vulnerable to charges that right-wing protests were the upshot of an elite conspiracy that violated long-standing prohibitions on Catholic and private-sector political interventions. The strength of the protests revealed the potential of integralist ideals to galvanize right-wing opposition to the government, but in early 1975 aggrieved conservatives stood on precarious political ground. They were about to get much-needed reinforcements.
By the spring of 1975, another, lesser-known organization was emerging at the center of the controversy. Belying the public focus on male-led cadres of business elites and UNPF leaders, the National Women’s Civic Association (*Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina*, or ANCIFEM) was becoming a focal point in the protests. Even as UNPF leaders circulated a written pledge not to “cry like women for what we did not know how to defend as men,” women from within its own ranks were making the movement their own.451 If private sector and UNPF spokespeople hoped to move the public conversation away from questions of elite conspiracy and economic privilege, the credit for doing so belongs with the champions of women’s civism.

451 “Los textos del SEP enseñan doctrinas contrarias a nuestra nacionalidad y tradiciones mexicanas,” DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, h. 204, AGN.
Even before the education law cleared the legislature, conservative women’s groups had begun preparing the ground for a confrontation with Echeverría’s government. At the center of those preparations was the nascent National Women’s Civic Association (Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina, or ANCIFEM). ANCIFEM emerged from the struggles of the 1970s as a major player in Mexican politics. Comprised of mostly middle- and upper-class women, the association promoted women’s participation and leadership in the development of Mexican civil society, striving, per the group’s mission statement, “to achieve a new civic culture” based on citizen responsibility, permanent, effective civic engagement, and “respect for female dignity.” ANCIFEM was, and remains, formally independent of the government, political parties, and the Catholic Church. Since its inception, however, the group has energetically championed traditional Catholic gender and family values—an undertaking from which it derives both moral authority and political influence. Though scholars have pointed to ANCIFEM as a decisive force in the democratization campaigns fueling the electoral rise of the conservative National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, or PAN), few studies have examined the association’s activities in detail. Still more glaring, ANCIFEM’s origins—indeed, the first decade of its existence—remain virtually absent from the historical record.

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The years 1973-1975 were critical to ANCIFEM’s emergence as a mover of Mexican politics. ANCIFEM publicly dates its founding to 1975, when the association acquired legal status as an asociación civil (civil association), the Mexican equivalent of a non-profit organization. In reality, however, the group formed in late 1973, just as the conservative rebellion against Echeverría’s government was crystallizing. An examination of the conditions that gave rise to ANCIFEM and under which it flourished in these early years reveals vital insights into the contours and consequences of that rebellion and women’s role in defining, animating, and sustaining it. In a decade that witnessed the birth of myriad women’s movements demanding reproductive, social, and labor rights, few left a more enduring, or transformative, legacy than the one spearheaded by ANCIFEM’s privileged coterie of right-wing activists.

With the group’s coalescence, ANCIFEM organizers began mobilizing women against the perceived ideological and social menace of echeverrismo. But in this task they were not alone. ANCIFEM grew out of an ongoing campaign to galvanize Catholic women in opposition to Echeverría’s government—a campaign that leaders of the Madres de Familia, the women’s division of the National Parents’ Union (UNPF), initiated prior to ANCIFEM’s public debut. Inspired by the example of the Chilean women who helped topple Salvador Allende’s Popular Unity government, these Madres kindled a social movement with few precedents in Mexican history. Control of the movement soon passed to ANCIFEM, whose members mobilized

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455 For an overview of progressive women’s movements in 1970s Mexico see Jocelyn Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity”
456 For a detailed study of the role of right-wing women in the protests that led to Allende’s overthrow see Margaret Power, Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle Against Allende, 1964-1973 (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).
thousands of women behind calls for a women’s civic awakening in defense of Mexican mothers and families.

On the surface, leaders of the women’s civic movement adhered to Catholic paradigms limiting public activism among women to the defense of the feminine sphere, a charge that government forays into gender and sexual relations infused with renewed urgency. Crucially, however, movement organizers integrated this moralizing mission with a commitment to sustained civic engagement and the politicization of conservative women. Theirs was the first movement of its kind in Mexico, and it offers a new lens for understanding women’s role in Mexican social and political development.

In the early 1970s women hovered on the margins of national political life. Having won the vote in 1953, Mexican women had participated in three presidential elections, but women’s issues remained peripheral to public policy: the last Mexican president to make women’s status a federal priority had been Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Consequently, when Echeverría entered office women comprised a nebulous and largely untapped political constituency. The sudden emergence of gendered practices and representations as salient topics of national debate fueled widespread anxieties concerning such areas of daily life as family relations, household labor, and sexuality. Further accentuating these anxieties, however, were related debates over how women would be represented within the Mexican political system.

At the heart of those debates were concerns that the administration’s gender politics portended a political realignment that would give undue—or untoward—influence to secular and leftist women’s groups. By expanding the apertura to include proponents of women’s rights,

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457 Vaughan, Cultural Politics in Revolution; Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 26-30; Becker, Setting the Virgin on Fire
public authorities positioned the state as the principal agent of women’s emancipation. Accordingly, progressive and leftist women’s organizations advanced their goals primarily through patronage- or entitlement-based demands on the federal government.\textsuperscript{459} Women on the right, by contrast, rejected the secularization of gender and sexual norms and feared that the administration’s courting of Mexican feminists would empower both at their expense. Women’s civic activists capitalized on this disquiet, calling on conservative women to forge an independent civil society capable of defending traditional values and eroding the state’s preeminence in public life. As it merged with educational protests, the women’s civic movement amplified the conservative insurrection against Echeverría’s government.

The women’s civic movement in Mexico provides an important addendum to the burgeoning literature on women’s movements in late twentieth-century Latin America. Recent works looking at right-wing women during this critical period of the region’s history have done much to dispel entrenched assumptions of women’s predisposition toward progressive causes.\textsuperscript{460} Yet these accounts have focused overwhelmingly on more incendiary Cold War theaters in Central and South America, where conservative women’s groups were implicated in the overthrow of democratic regimes, the rise of brutal military dictatorships, and grisly counterinsurgency campaigns.\textsuperscript{461} Studies of analogous movements in cooler locales have been less forthcoming. Like their counterparts in places such as Nicaragua, Brazil, and Chile, right-

\textsuperscript{459} Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity”
\textsuperscript{461} This focus especially evident in the compilation of essays in González and Kampwirth, eds. \textit{Radical Women in Latin America}
wing women in Mexico came from predominantly middle- and upper-class backgrounds and mobilized around a revulsion of leftism and state-sponsored social reform, the defense of private property, and an allegiance to patriarchal notions of family and nation. But their campaign speaks to the political and strategic malleability of the conservative women’s movements that proliferated across the region after 1960. Where kindred movements turned to militarism and authoritarianism, the champions of women’s civism in Mexico fastened the identity of their movement to ideals that were ostensibly democratic.

The following chapter examines the genesis of ANCIFEM and the women’s civic movement in the context of ongoing political struggles and evolving Catholic protest strategies in Echeverría’s Mexico. It demonstrates that right-wing women in Mexico, fearful that the *apertura democrática* would bolster the political influence of Mexican feminists, selectively adopted Catholic social tenets to fashion an alternative, integralist model of political development. Championing civic-edification as a barrier against political centralism and paternalism, ANCIFEM and allied organizations built a movement that attributed social violence and familial decay to the imposition of secular reproductive and sexual politics and Echeverría’s courting of women’s liberation activists. Of greater long-term import, they bridged demands for political and economic opening through a critique of state power as corruptive not only of the economy but of the values and moral codes underpinning civic culture and family life.

Over the next decade, this narrative and the women’s groups that nurtured it transformed conservative politics in Mexico. These activists not only strengthened alliances among entrepreneurs and religious conservatives by subsuming unpopular market doctrines within a democratic vision that garnered widespread support among key sectors of Mexican society. They
mobilized right-wing women into an organized and engaged constituency with a formidable, unflagging presence in civic and political life.

**Mexican Catholicism and Women’s Activism in Historical Perspective**

Though independent of the Church, ANCIFEM and the women’s movement built upon a long tradition of Catholic women’s activism in Mexico. The continued vitality of lay religious associations following the suppression of the Cristero revolt in 1929 was due largely to the activities of women, who accounted for an expanding majority of members.⁴⁶² The Mexican Union of Catholic Women (*Unión Femenina Católica Mexicana*), the women’s division of Mexico’s premier lay association, Mexican Catholic Action (*Acción Católica Mexicana*, ACM), grew from 13,465 active members in 1932 to 149,514 in 1940.⁴⁶³ By 1953, ACM had grown to include 348,373 members, of which 286,273 were women.⁴⁶⁴ Not only did female membership in religious associations outpace that of their male counterparts. Women’s participation in Catholic groups also dwarfed activism in secular women’s organizations. As Kristina Boylan points out, at the high-point of the mid-century movement for women’s suffrage the Sole Front for Women’s Rights (*Frente Único Pro Derechos de la Mujer*), a consortium of government-affiliated and radical women’s groups, generously estimated its membership at 50,000.⁴⁶⁵ Even as legal restrictions and ecclesiastic intransigence undercut the Church’s social standing, women’s activism strengthened Catholicism in Mexico.⁴⁶⁶

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⁴⁶³ Boylan, “Gendering the Faith,” 210. As Boylan notes, the ACM’s female youth division, the Association of Young Women Catholics (*Joventud Católica Femenina Mexicana*, JCFM) experienced a similarly meteoric rise in membership, growing from 31,107 members in 1934 to 102,492 in 1942.
Women’s participation in religious organizations in these decades conformed to post-revolutionary political realities. Prior to 1929, Catholicism in Mexico had derived its political and social force from the ideals and strategies of Social Catholicism. While rejecting class conflict, revolution, and communism, adherents of Social Catholicism or its activist arm, Catholic Social Action, engaged in a broad array of activities to improve the living conditions of the Mexican masses. In addition to traditional forms of charity and social uplift, Catholic activists engaged in union organizing, formed cooperative societies, and mounted street demonstrations to demand better pay and working conditions for Mexican laborers.\(^{467}\) By 1930, however, official anti-clericalism had rendered Catholic Social Action politically untenable.\(^{468}\)

In-fighting among Vatican authorities, Mexican bishops, and lay activists over the identity of Catholic activism further diminished the social dynamism of Mexican Catholicism. With the *modus vivendi*, the Mexican hierarchy severed its links to the social movement and sought peaceful coexistence with the state.\(^{469}\) The laity followed suit, but post-revolutionary rulers continued to view Catholic men as politically threatening. To represent the faith in the public domain, Church leaders turned increasingly to women.\(^{470}\)

The heightened public presence of Catholic women was not without its contradictions. In the decades after 1930 women’s religious organizations engaged in community activities ranging from the provision of health and hygiene services to opening day-care centers, home- and night-...

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schools, and adult-education programs. But they also participated in protests and propaganda campaigns to demand that government authorities allow the public practice of religion and enforce stricter standards of public morality. Catholic women’s increasing penetration of the public sphere required the maintenance of a double-fiction. First, the participation of religious associations in demonstrations and other forms of civil disobedience rested on the illusory premise that their activities were not political. In addition, women’s predominance in these associations ran counter to Catholic teachings that portrayed women as the guardians of religious and moral values within the home. As Patience Schell observes, Catholic women “had to get involved in politics if for no other reason than to defend the feminine sphere, the home.” Thus, even as they promoted Catholic gender norms as the mainstay of social cohesion, the women of lay apostolates opened new spaces for women’s participation in public life.

Nevertheless, the women’s civic movement of the 1970s was in key respects an historical novelty. As they rallied opposition to Echeverría’s government, the champions of women’s civism affirmed women’s historic role as custodians of the family, the faith, and public morality. In doing so, however, they proposed to dramatically expand women’s involvement in national politics. Never before had conservative Catholic women formed a national movement demanding a collective political voice based on their identity as women and mothers. To defend the feminine sphere against an encroaching state, they implored, Mexican women must exert an active, and permanent, presence in civic and political life. Further, while movement organizers grounded their claims in Catholic social teachings, much as activists of earlier eras had done, their

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interpretation of those teachings was more selective. Eschewing Catholic Social Action’s emphasis on charity and social outreach, the movement’s architects focused instead on reforming the political arena from without.

The doctrinal rationale for this objective was the Catholic principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity refers to the idea that responsibility for managing societal interests should be delegated in such a way that power resides with the smallest or most localized competent entity, passing to higher or more centralized bodies only when the issue at hand exceeds the capacity or jurisdictional authority of subordinate institutions. Accordingly, the state should participate only in matters where civil institutions are inadequate. Further, as Catholic doctrine holds that the family is the most basic social institution, it should, according to this rationale, be the civil authority of first recourse. Using this logic, movement organizers argued that an expanding, hyper-secular state was trampling the values underpinning familial and social stability. To save the nation from moral and social calamity, they proclaimed, Mexican women must create and participate in “intermediate” civic organizations to shield families and communities from centralized power.

ANCIFEM also relied heavily on the women of lay apostolates for recruitment and leadership. Among ANCIFEM’s allies none were more important than the Madres de Familia. Not only did the women of Madres de Familia play a critical role in ANCIFEM’s founding. Madres members organized protests, conferences, and workshops, published and distributed propaganda, and canvassed local schools and communities to recruit adherents and

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473 Significantly, the principle of subsidiarity also applied to various levels of government, where municipal authorities, as the governing entities closest to the community, should function to the extent possible without the intervention of state and federal authorities. Thus, as a political philosophy, subsidiarity was also linked to federalism. See, for example, Mizrahi, From Martyrdom to Power, 22-23.
organizational affiliates for the women’s movement.⁴⁷⁴ ANCIFEM and the Madres recruited participants from assorted religious groups, most of which had numerically superior yet operationally subordinate women’s sections.⁴⁷⁵ Perhaps the largest feeder organization for the movement, ACM, was closely tied to the Mexican episcopate. A product of the modus vivendi, ACM avoided direct confrontation with the state as a matter of praxis.⁴⁷⁶ Conversely, ANCIFEM offered women a place on the front lines of national political struggles.

The Chilean Connection

International developments also played a decisive role in the formation of the women’s civic movement, as participants saw the movement as part of a larger battle to curtail the spread of leftist ideologies in Latin America. Right-wing women had been instrumental in the protests that led to the overthrow of Brazilian social reformist president João Goulart in 1964 and in the demonstrations preceding the September 1973 military coup that toppled the government of socialist president Salvador Allende in Chile. In both instances, middle- and upper-class women forged broad movements to oppose government threats to private property and defend patriarchal notions of authority, family, and nation. Mobilizing around their identities as women and mothers, participants in these movements linked leftist and socialist models of development to the demise of traditional family relations—a strategy that obscured their interest in preserving class hierarchies.⁴⁷⁷


⁴⁷⁶ Andes, “A Catholic Alternative.”

Further, as Margaret Power observes, they nurtured and refined their political strategies through transnational dialogue and exchanges. Right-wing women in Chile found inspiration and guidance in the example of their Brazilian counterparts, who, according to one inside observer, helped instruct “the Chileans [in] how to use their women against the Marxists.” Mexican women, too, were a party to this dialogue. If there was little precedent for an organized right-wing women’s movement in Mexico, kindred movements forged in Latin America’s Cold War provided a powerful animus for the emerging campaign.

Sources from Mexican archives indicate that Chilean women’s groups had a hand in the genesis of the women’s civic movement. In December 1973 government spies reported that groups of Madres de Familia in the urban centers of Monterrey, Guadalajara, León, Tampico, Puebla, and Mexico City had formed an organization called Movimiento Cívico Familiar (Family Civic Movement) and that its members were passing out flyers and other propaganda repudiating communism and socialism and ridiculing Echeverría’s government. The report claimed that Cívico Familiar was “intimately connected” to the Chilean group Solidaridad, Orden [y] Libertad (Solidarity, Order and Liberty, or SOL), which had featured prominently in anti-Allende protests and later campaigned to support the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The report’s authors asserted that SOL aimed to “extend in all of Latin America [an] ideology favorable to the United States” and to deepen U.S. “political, social, and economic

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478 Quoted in Ibid., 161. Power was citing an interview conducted by former Washington Post reporter Marlise Simons with a Dr. De Paiva, a founder and key member of the Brazilian Institute for Research and Social Studies, a right-wing think-tank involved in orchestrating the overthrow of the Goulart government.


dominion” in the region. SOL’s leaders, read the dispatch, saw Mexico as a country of vital strategic importance in this endeavor, and were working to gain followers among Echeverría’s enemies.481

The report imputed those same goals to the Mexican Cívico Familiar. It cited the group’s spreading of rumors and propaganda attacking Echeverría for his supposed “socialist tendency” and mismanagement of the economy, for damaging Mexico’s image abroad with his thirworldist rhetoric, and for encouraging violence and social unrest as evidence that Cívico Familiar aimed to increase Mexico’ dependence on the United States.482 In reality, neither Cívico Familiar nor the Chilean SOL, notwithstanding their rabid anticommunism, sought to subjugate their respective countries to U.S. domination, though their actions—especially in SOL’s case—were conducive to that purpose.483 Their likeness, rather, lay in their mutual aversion to communism and socialism, their defense of patriarchal family and gender relations, and the fact that their members and leadership consisted predominantly of middle- and upper-class women.484 It is unsurprising that government spies in Mexico, parroting the administration’s depiction of its opponents as agents of U.S. imperialism, would mischaracterize the objectives of SOL and Cívico Familiar.485 Nevertheless, they were not altogether wrong.

482 “Distrito Federal,” 17 December 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
483 It is also important to note that Chilean women’s groups seeking to overthrow Allende’s Popular Unity government received financial and logistical support from the U.S. government. Nevertheless, the claim that SOL was motivated by a desire to ensure U.S. domination of Chile is erroneous. See Power, Right-Wing Women and; and Baldez, “Nonpartisanship as Political Strategy.”
484 Margaret Power describes SOL as an “anti-Allende, family-based organization.” Though in the context of the Cold War and efforts to overturn the Popular Unity government its positions could be accurately described as pro-U.S. (and SOL likely received financial and logistical support from the U.S. government) its goals were oriented toward Chile. Power, Right-Wing Women, 163.
485 On the ways that political context conditioned the expectations and reporting of security agents see Sergio Aguayo, Archivos de la Violencia; See also Tanalis Padilla and Louise Walker, “In the Archives: History and Politics,” Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, 19:1 (2013), 1-10.
SOL leaders had indeed initiated contact with the Madres the preceding October. In a letter addressed to the “Women of the Committee of Madres de Familia of the National Parents’ Union,” dated 27 October 1973, leaders of the Chilean organization expressed their support for “Mexican wives and mothers” in their struggle against Echeverría’s government. The letter, claimed its authors, was SOL’s response to “the vibrant message that [the Madres de Familia] sent to… Señor Echeverría” concerning the deterioration of “moral values.” The statement alluded to an open letter that the Madres of Nuevo León penned to Echeverría following the assassination of industrialist Eugenio Garza Sada by leftist guerrillas the month before, demanding peace, security, and moral renewal. Significantly, that announcement, which appeared in newspapers around Mexico, conjured an affinity between Echeverría’s populism and Chilean socialism, deriding the Mexican president for paying homage to the fallen Allende and for welcoming Chilean exiles to Mexico—evidence, the Madres impugned, of his allegiance to “foreign ideologies.” Echoing the Madres’ concerns, SOL representatives expressed their dismay that “the man who did so much damage in such a short time [in Chile]” should receive “homage and respect” in Mexico. If, as Louise Walker observes, echeverrismo and allendismo became muddled in the political imaginations of Mexicans, many in Chile were similarly confounded.

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486 Letter from SOL to the Committee of Madres de Familia of the UNPF, 27 October 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
487 “Estado de Nuevo León,” 22 September 1973, DFS, exp. 11-219-73, legajo 4, hs. 18-20; See also Walker, Waking from the Dream, 57.
488 Letter from SOL to the Committee of Madres de Familia of the UNPF, 27 October 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
489 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 54-58.
Like the *Madres de Familia*, SOL’s envoys mistook Echeverría’s rhetoric and his public support of Allende for ideological kinship. The bulk of the Chilean group’s four-page letter to the *Madres* consisted of the group’s account of Allende’s rule and the events leading to his overthrow, a telling which rationalized SOL’s support for the military coup while drawing ominous parallels between the Allende and Echeverría governments. The letter’s authors recounted in vivid imagery the devolution of Allende’s presidency from, in their view, its falsely democratic beginnings to its violent end, highlighting the Popular Unity government’s ostensive disregard for private property and individual rights, the suffocation of private industry, food shortages, and the suppression and slandering of the opposition. To drive the analogy home, the letter’s author’s broached a subject of great concern to its recipients, who, as members of the UNPF, faced an impending battle over Mexican educational policy. “As you will imagine,” read the communique, in its “third year… the Marxist state” appropriated the educational system and “attack[ed]… the minds of our youth and our children.” Amid such chaos, the letter continued, Chilean women struggled tirelessly to bring about the “glorious dawn of September 11,” when Allende’s government collapsed under military siege.

By highlighting women’s pivotal role in Allende’s demise, SOL representatives hoped to embolden the *Madres*. “We triumphed,” goaded SOL’s emissaries, “because it was the job of the woman to awaken awareness of the Marxist threat… in all the land.” In a striking antilogy, the letter exalted the “democratic women’s movements” that rose up in Chile, “always unified” in  

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490 In reality, Echeverría’s populism and governing practices, while increasing the state’s role in social and economic relative to preceding decades, had little in common with Chilean socialism under the Popular Unity government. For an in-depth examination of Allende’s governing program with respect to workers and businesses see Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

491 Letter from SOL to the Committee of Madres de Familia of the UNPF, 27 October 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
support of a military coup. It was the women of these movements—the feminine “heroes of the democratic resistance”—the letter continued, who summoned the political will to dispose of Allende. “We appeal to you,” exhorted its authors, “as mothers who already know the anguish of an uncertain future,” to warn Mexicans of what befell Chile. The letter concluded with an offer of assistance and a rousing gesture of solidarity:

We are in these moments at your full disposal for any information, if you so desire, to make you part of our experiences and, above all, to encourage you in your marvelous mission to be the guardians of the spiritual and moral values of your homes, basic and fundamental pillars of your great Nation… Assume the work with faith placed in the Highest and in the destiny of your children. We are sure that you will triumph in your desires, as we have already seen that the united labor of women is of inestimable value when the cause is as noble and grand as your own country…. We will be grateful that you do not lose this valuable contact, which we initiate with this modest document… [and if you would convey] this communication… to all the Committees of Madres de Familia of the National Parents’ Union in the cities where they operate.492

Whether the communique led to lasting collaboration between SOL and the Madres de Familia remains unclear, but the document offers important insights into their relationship in late 1973.

The letter, dated 27 October, clearly states that it was SOL’s first overture to the Madres. Given that SOL enjoyed the favor of Chile’s military government, it is likely that the letter’s authors used diplomatic or other expedited channels in their foreign communications.

Regardless, written correspondence between Santiago, Chile and Mexico City, where the letter first arrived, would have been cumbersome and time-consuming. The claim of Mexican security agents that Cívico Familiar and SOL had become “intimately” linked by mid-December is dubious. On the other hand, the letter’s authenticity is verifiable. Not only was it printed on the group’s official letterhead, but two of the SOL representatives to sign the letter, SOL president

492 Ibid.
Silvia Ripamonte and public relations specialist Marta (“Maruja”) Navarro, also appear in the list of interview subjects for Margaret Power’s 2003 work on right-wing women’s groups in Allende’s Chile. It is clear, moreover, that the communication hit its mark, and that its recipients heeded SOL’s request to spread the word among provincial committees of Madres de Familia. The outcome of that exchange provides a telling example of how imagined affinities among right-wing women in Mexico and Chile impelled tangible political change.

Examined alongside the December spy report, SOL’s communique suggests that the women’s civic movement in Mexico grew, in part, from that initial contact. SOL’s letter described the Chilean organization as a “group of women, leaders of a Family Civic Movement.” That the architects of Cívico Familiar in Mexico named the group in the likeness of its Chilean counterpart indicates that SOL’s letter was indeed an inspiration for their actions. After all, it was the letter’s recipients, the Madres de Familia, who formed Cívico Familiar. However, after December 1973 Cívico Familiar disappeared from the records, showing up neither in press coverage nor in the ubiquitous spy reports detailing the activities of conservative opposition groups. This, in itself, follows political logic. Just as Mexican conservatives sought to undermine Echeverría by likening his rule to Allende’s, federal authorities, journalists, and public intellectuals cast rightward opponents of the administration in the mold of Chilean fascists. With government officials aware of Cívico Familiar’s ties to SOL, the name would have quickly become a political liability. What, then, became of Cívico Familiar and what was

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494 Letter from SOL to the Committee of Madres de Familia of the UNPF, 27 October 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN. Capitalization in original; italics added by this author.
495 See, for example: “Política de Cementario: Duelo y Dolo de un Abogado Patronal,” Excelsior 20 September 1973, 6-A. Following Allende’s downfall, a reporter for Excésior offered a particularly poignant rendition of a recurring theme, noting that “those [Mericans] who reproach [Echeverría]... are those who most resemble the ones [in Chile] who impeded Salvador Allende.”
its relationship to the women’s civic movement? Here again, the key insight lies in the December security report.

Of the women that Mexican security agents identified as architects of Cívico Familiar, numerous emerged as leaders of the women’s civic movement. Most of those named in the dispatch hailed from the Madres de Familia or ANCIFEM, which first appeared in press and government reports in late November 1973, raising the question of whether it was itself an outgrowth of SOL’s entreaty to the Madres. Among those Cívico Familiar members to assume leadership roles in the women’s movement were the president of the Guanajuato committee of the Madres de Familia, Imelda Vázquez de Torres, fellow guanajuatence and Madre Aurelia Gutierrez, Elsa González de Bracamontes, from the Madres de Familia chapter in Puebla, Guadalajaran Madre Laura G. de Morales, Maria Rosa Prado de Robles of the Mexico City Madres committee, and Rosa Maria Hernández Vargas, national secretary of the incipient ANCIFEM. The short-lived Cívico Familiar, it seems, was likely a forerunner of the women’s civic movement, which at the end of 1973 was still early-in-the-making.

The weeks following SOL’s transmission of the letter saw a frenzy of activity among national and local leaders of Madres de Familia. In mid-November, the president of the Madres de Familia national committee, Laura Aguilar de Cuadriello, began meeting with representatives of provincial committees. Over the coming week, Aguilar travelled extensively, meeting with Imelda Vázquez de Torres, in León, Guanajuato, from where both women, along with Rosa

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496 “Comité de Madres de Familia,” 26 November 1973, DFS, exp. 44-11-73, legajo 3, h. 227, AGN. Further supporting this timeline is the fact that following the assassination of Eugenio Garza Sada in late September 1973, the local Monterrey newspapers El Norte, Tribuna de Monterrey, Más Noticias, and El Porvenir published a public announcement condemning the murder and signed by more than a hundred local organizations. ANCIFEM was not included on the list. See “A Nuestros Associados y Publico en General,” 22 September 1973, DFS, exp. 11-219-73, legajo 4, AGN.

497 "Distrito Federal," 17 December 1973, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
Maria Hernández Vargas and other organizers, left for Guadalajara and Monterrey. The details of the discussions that took place during these meetings remain murky, but from them emerged plans for the I National Women’s Civic Congress (I Congreso Nacional Cívico Femenino), to take place in León from 8-9 December 1973. When the Madres concluded their meetings in the final week of November a national publicity campaign for the congress was in full-swing.

The circumstances of those meetings further corroborate the view that SOL’s communique was a catalyst for the women’s movement. As the president of the committee to which the Chilean group directed its entreaty, Aguilar was undoubtedly privy to the letter. The timing of her travels, and the fact that they instigated a national, if nascent, women’s movement, suggests that Aguilar conveyed SOL’s message to her colleagues in the course of her November junket, and to pivotal effect. The cities where those meetings took place—León, Monterrey, and Guadalajara—were the principal centers of activity for Cívico Familiar and ANCIFEM, both of which made their public debuts within weeks of the gatherings. And the women with whom Aguilar met and travelled during this interval, including Imelda Vázquez de Torres and Rosa Maria Hernández Vargas, were among the foremost authors of those organizations. But if the SOL connection helps explain the origins of the women’s civic movement, the movement’s arc speaks to the political dexterity of right-wing women’s movements in Latin America.

In fundamental respects the anti-Allende women’s movement and the women’s civic movement were analogous, yet their political trajectories diverged dramatically. Right-wing


women in Mexico and Chile mobilized around a common hatred of leftism and socialism, an allegiance to patriarchal social and familial relations, and a shared maternal identity—affinities that facilitated their interconnection. In each case, adverse economic conditions, social unrest, and political realignment underpinned ontological insecurities that defined and animated the movements. For the privileged coteries who organized and led the protests, deeply-felt understandings of what it meant to be a woman, wife, or mother ensconced an underlying resolve to preserve their class status. Yet where the women of the anti-Allende protest movement advocated—and for the next two decades staunchly supported—the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, the authors of the women’s civic campaign in Mexico rose to the forefront of a budding pro-democracy movement. How could two movements that shared so much in common, and which were indeed linked, engender such seemingly antithetical outcomes?

*Educational Conflict, Political Opening, and the Consolidation of the Feminine Right*

Part of the reason for this divergence stemmed from the entangled histories of Catholic activism and educational conflict in Mexico. As Aguilar’s role in the movement’s genesis illustrates, the women’s civic movement was heir to participatory strategies that originated in the educational controversy under Mexican president Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964). The wife of UNPF vice president Ramón Cuadriello, Aguilar was an experienced organizer. As a member of the Mexican Women’s Catholic Youth (*Juventud Católica Femenina Mexicana*), she had been active in the campaign against López Mateos’ educational reforms. Subsequently, in 1965, she helped establish the *Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica* (National Civic Action Union,

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500 See *Power, Right-Wing Women* for an in-depth analysis of the values driving the mobilization of conservative women in Allende’s Chile.

501 For a detailed examination of this controversy see Loaeza, *Clases medias*. 

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or UNAC), which consolidated the remnants of several oppositional organizations formed during that controversy. While the inauguration of the conservative Gustavo Díaz Ordaz administration (1964-1970) quelled UNAC’s adversarial fervor, the organization sponsored civic training courses and outreach programs to encourage electoral turnout. Though short-lived, it was an important antecedent of ANCIFEM.

UNAC signaled a philosophical and strategic departure for Catholic activism in Mexico. In the wake of the conflict with López Mateos, lay Catholics elaborated an alternative to secular, state-led development. “Integral development,” as its proponents dubbed it, denoted a holistic vision derived from Catholic Social Doctrine, which conceptualized development as the cultivation of moral, spiritual, and material wellbeing at the individual, familial, and societal levels. A key feature of this vision involved the decentralization of political and social life through the creation of independent, religiously-inspired civic entities—the pillars of a “subsidiary” society. After decades of Catholic political quiescence, educational conflict rekindled a determination among key sectors of the laity to participate in the civic and political development of Mexico. Lay activists admonished Christians to lead the construction of Mexican civil society by forming and participating in “intermediate” organizations to safeguard

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502 “Cuadriello, Laura A.,” 13 December 1966, DFS, exp. 100-22-4-66, legajo 1, h. 127, AGN; “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 15 March 1965, exp. 100-9-16-65, legajo 1, h. 312, AGN. UNAC merged the Regional Anticommunist Crusade, the Mexican Social-Civic Movement of the North and Northeast, and the National Civic Union—all of which had been key to the campaign against López Mateos. Formed following the I Congress on the Integral Development of Mexico (1964), UNAC was a bridge between that educational controversy and Catholic efforts to nurture an alternative vision of Mexican civil society.

503 “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 15 March 1965, exp. 100-9-16-65, legajo 1, h. 312, AGN; “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 16 July 1965, DFS, exp. 100-10-1-965, legajo 6, AGN; “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 26 October 1965, DFS, exp. 100-5-1-65, legajo 14, h. 349, AGN.

504 Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales (CON), Memorias: I Congreso sobre desarrollo integral de México [ICDIM]: Presencia de los cristianos (Mexico City: CON, 1965); CON, Memorias: II Congreso sobre desarrollo integral de México [ICDIM] (Mexico City: CON, 1968); Pacheco Hinojosa, La Iglesia Católica, 133-163.

505 Loaeza, Clases medias y política en México; Pacheco Hinojosa, La Iglesia Católica, 86-94.
local and sectorial values and interests against state impositions.\textsuperscript{506} The vision of Christian civism that they championed formed the philosophical basis for UNAC, and later ANCIFEM. Both organizations, however, had to circumvent entrenched legal and political obstacles.

Mexican law prohibited confessional associations from openly engaging the political arena.\textsuperscript{507} However, UNAC and, in 1975, ANCIFEM sought and obtained legal recognition as asociaciones civiles (civil associations), the Mexican equivalent of non-profit organizations.\textsuperscript{508} Absent formal ties to the Catholic Church, they were not subject to the ban on political organizing.\textsuperscript{509} Yet the barriers to Catholic political engagement were not merely juridical. Mexican political elites and opinion-makers maligned Catholic opposition groups as counterrevolutionaries, anti-modern, and enemies of social progress—stigmas which undercut their political effectiveness. By embracing a civic identity and purpose activists such as Aguilar made it more difficult for taboo-raking public officials and journalists to discredit their politics. More importantly, that embrace and the larger vision of which it was a part destabilized a paradigm that had long-hounded religious activists.

By promoting civic edification and non-corporative political pluralism as missing links in the ‘integral’ development of Mexican society, lay activists staked a claim as agents, rather than enemies, of the modernization process. Of course, the new paradigm was steeped in paradox. At the heart of the integralist vision of a modern, pluralistic polity—indeed, its animating force—was a profound aversion to the secularization of social and cultural life. Nevertheless, from the

\textsuperscript{506} CON, Memorias: ICDIM; CON Memorias: IICDIM; Pacheco Hinojosa, La Iglesia Católica.
\textsuperscript{508} “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 15 March 1965, exp. 100-9-16-65, legajo 1, h. 312, AGN; “Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina,” 23 June 1975, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, hs. 210-213, AGN.
\textsuperscript{509} Andes, “A Catholic Alternative”; Manuel Ceballos Ramírez, Cien años de presencia y ausencia social Cristiana, 1891-1991 (Mexico City: IMDOSOC, 1992), 54-140.
conflict with López Mateos lay activists learned how to translate their beliefs into a compelling political vision while marshalling Catholic organizational networks into formidable opposition movements within legally prescribed boundaries. In doing so, they facilitated cross-sector coalition-building with opposition groups whose identities were not explicitly religious.510

Aguilar and other organizers brought these experiences to bear on the campaign against Echeverría, only with a new focus: rousing the latent political potential of right-wing women. Women of the Chilean SOL, it turned out, could hardly have chosen a more propitious moment to reach out to the Madres. As the women of Madres de Familia and ANCIFEM quickened their movement in the closing months of 1973, the debate over Echeverría’s educational policy was just taking shape. Crucially, however, that debate was converging with a battle over the administration’s sexual politics. The coincidence of the educational reforms—which included mandatory primary school sexual education—and the administration’s legalization of artificial contraceptives energized the women’s movement even as the male-wing of the UNPF remained, for the time being, the dominant opposition voice in those debates. If the impetus for reasserting Catholic values in politics and the public sphere can be traced to the López Mateos years, the reproductive politics of Echeverría’s government transformed an inchoate Christian civic movement into a gendered cause-célèbre.

The I National Women’s Civic Congress primed this transformation. Convened from 8-9 December 1973, the congress, whose official sponsors included ANCIFEM, the UNPF, the Movement for the Dignity of the Woman (Movimiento Pro Dignificación de la Mujer), and the

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510 UNAC, for example, was established by activists who acquired their organizational experience through participation in Catholic lay associations, and who adamantly defended Catholic religious, social, and cultural values. But, as discussed above, the organization merged the remnants of ostensibly secular groups. See “Unión Nacional de Acción Cívica,” 15 March 1965, exp. 100-9-16-65, legajo 1, h. 312, AGN. As I discuss in greater detail below, ANCIFEM followed a similar strategy.
Guanajuato Association of Executive Secretaries, broadcast participants’ opposition to pending educational reforms and the leftward drift of Echeverría’s government. Participants targeted the Federal Education Law as evidence of the socialist and authoritarian designs of government officials. Organizers held a moment of silence for the “latest dead Mexicans, victims of communism,” an unmistakable reference to the murdered Garza Sada, and several speakers attributed recent acts of guerrilla violence to populist demagoguery. ANCIFEM president Amparo Noriega de Martínez claimed that public authorities sowed radicalism among the nation’s youth by supporting “through action or through tolerance… violent subversive and delinquent groups.”

In his address to the crowd of 1,700, UNPF president Francisco Quiroga Fernández, the only male speaker at the conference, described the congress as an extension of Catholics’ historic opposition to obligatory laicism and government control over education.

With the educational controversy still in embryo, however, female participants conveyed a broader agenda.

Congress organizers blended calls for civic engagement with an impassioned defense of Catholic gender and sexual mores. Adopting the official slogan “The Family for the Country and the Country for the Family,” organizers heralded the “victory of women’s civism” and the “civic awakening of the woman.” Such an awakening, they contended, was the only salvation for a morally tormented and divided society. Yet underlying the mantra of civic engagement were deep-seated fears that progressive women’s groups were gaining influence in political decision-making.

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511 “Estado de Guanajuato,” 9 December 1973, DGIPS, c. 1179-B, exp. 4, hs. 558-559, AGN.
512 Ibid.
513 “Organizan en León el Primer Congreso Nacional Femenino,” 6 December 1973, DGIPS, c. 1548-C, exp. 9, h. 164, AGN; “Estado de Guanajuato,” 8 December 1973, DFS, exp. 44-11-73, legajo 3, hs. 229-233, AGN.
Political conditions resulting from the *apertura* further explain how a women’s movement forged in opposition to social and economic reformism pegged its identity to the mantle of democratization. As Jocelyn Olcott points out, by the early 1970s the progressive women’s movement in Mexico was emerging as an organized political force and “important target for populist incorporation.”

Echeverría’s public pledges to open the political process to dissenting voices undoubtedly encouraged greater public activism among conservative opposition groups. But the incentive driving right-wing women to capitalize on this opportunity derived less from democratic conviction than from angst over the political ascent of groups promoting values antithetical to their own. As ANCIFEM national secretary Rosa María Hernández Vargas described it, the women’s civic movement was a response to the “interference of… groups that try to distort Mexico’s social, moral and cultural values.”

In light of the legal prohibition on political organizing among religious groups, movement organizers feared that the democratic opening would hasten a political realignment detrimental to their values and social position.

Indeed, a promotional flyer for the I National Women’s Civic Congress characterized the gathering as the opening salvo of an anti-feminist countermovement. The leaflet chastised administration officials for a recent propaganda campaign promoting women’s liberation, the intent of which, it claimed, was to “disintegrate the family as a social institution,” fomenting “degeneration [and] homosexualism [sic].”

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516 “Evitará la mujer imitar el hombre,” *El Norte*, 3 July 1975, 1D.
517 “Estado de Querétaro: Información Periodística, 3 December 1973, DGIPS, c. 1220-A, exp. 2, 133-134, AGN.
Law in similar terms. Rather than a boon to development, insisted one presenter, legalized birth control was a brazen endorsement of “sexual liberation,” and, like “Marxist liberation,” “free youth” and other liberationist-styled movements, it aimed to “denigrate and debase” Mexicans with foreign ideas. To protect children and families, panelists urged, women must “actively participate in the problems that affect the nation… in the civic life of Mexico.” ANCIFEM spokeswomen subsequently described the congress as a cathartic moment for the women’s civic movement, confirming that women of the right comprised a vital reserve of opposition.

Nevertheless, over the coming year the public debate continued to focus on the UNPF’s male leadership and elite conspirators, shielding the burgeoning women’s movement from public recriminations and reprisals. Prior to 1975, the women’s civic movement was little more than a footnote in the battle over national education and reproductive policies. Though Madres members joined leaders of the Parents’ Union in protesting educational reforms, the UNPF’s male chieftains and private sector elites drew the ire of the administration and its defenders, creating a space for the incipient women’s movement to flourish. It was during this interval that ANCIFEM emerged as the clear standard-bearer of the campaign. Invoking widely-held understandings of Mexican women as the defenders of the home and the moral exemplars of the nation, ANCIFEM proved a difficult target for public authorities seeking to defame the organization.

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518 “Estado de Guanajuato,” 8 December 1973, DFS, exp. 44-11-73, legajo 3, hs. 229-233, AGN.
519 “Mujer Mexicana Forja Tu Patria,” El Norte, 14 April 1975, 6D.
520 On the ways that such moralizing understandings of women’s social role were constructed by proponents from across the political spectrum see Nichole Sanders, Gender and Welfare in Mexico: The Consolidation of a Postrevolutionary State (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Schell “Of the Divine Mission”; Andes, “A Catholic Alternative”; Boylan, “Gendering the Faith.”
In the months after the I National Women’s Civic Congress ANCIFEM grew rapidly. Spokeswomen for the group claimed that in the roughly year-and-a-half following its public debut ANCIFEM gained adherents in “hundreds of schools and dozens of women’s groups.”\textsuperscript{521} The group worked closely with religious lay groups as well as conservative women’s and student organizations such as the Association of University Students, Women’s Professional Action (Acción Profesional Femenina), and the Unit of Integral Formation (Unidad de Formación Integral) to disseminate propaganda and plan upcoming reunions. In proposing to “strengthen and organize women’s civism” at the local, regional, and national levels, ANCIFEM organizers sought nothing less than the transformation of politics and the public sphere.\textsuperscript{522} Representatives of the group, however, were careful to define their mission as a defense of traditional gender norms.

ANCIFEM’s raison d’être required a delicate balancing act. “In no way [do we] desire to usurp the place which naturally corresponds to the man,” assured Vargas upon being questioned by a reporter for Monterrey’s \textit{El Norte}. She contended that the group sought only to “tend to the energies of the woman herself.” “We don’t need protectors from tournaments of gentility,” she added of ANCIFEM members.\textsuperscript{523} For Vargas and other ANCIFEM leaders, preserving traditional domestic and maternal ideals required reordering women’s place in Mexican politics and society, but they insisted that women need not rival men as the principal agents of political decision-making. To succeed, they claimed, the movement had merely to overcome women’s historic apathy toward civic and political participation. Few platforms could have more

\textsuperscript{521} “Mujer Mexicana Forja Tu Patria,” \textit{El Norte}, 14 April 1975, 6D.
\textsuperscript{522} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{523} “Evitará la mujer imitar al hombre,” \textit{El Norte}, 3 July 1975, 1D.
effectively spurred that participation than ongoing debates over educational policy and reproductive and sexual rights.

The confluence of these debates reached its apex with the approach of the U.N.-sponsored International Year of the Woman (IYW) conference, held Mexico City from June 19-July 2, 1975. The conference was originally slated to take place in Bogotá, Colombia before political unrest there compelled UN planners to relocate it. To get the IYW commemoration to Mexico, Echeverría leveraged his thirdworldist credentials, the centerpiece of which was the Carta Echeverría, and Mexico’s reputation—albeit a misplaced one—as a champion of human rights.\(^\text{524}\) As Olcott shows, public officials viewed the conference as a “showcase for Echeverría’s brand of populism.”\(^\text{525}\) Thus, from the time that the last-minute change of venue was formalized in late 1974 the IYW conference was imbricated in sectarian debates over national development policy. The conversation that the IYW impelled recast those debates as a polemic on the sexual politics of modernization and national inclusion.

Government efforts to control the narrative on women’s rights were fraught with difficulty. Echeverría and members of his administration promoted the IYW conference as an expansion of the fight against social injustice. The president’s appointment of Attorney General Pedro Ojeda Paullada to coordinate the proceedings gave women activists a prominence rarely bestowed to them. But where official discourse framed women’s rights in terms of development, promoting population control as women’s salvation from reproductive servitude and highlighting the need to integrate women into the work force, women’s groups used the opening to demand sexual rights and government programs to alleviate the burdens of unpaid domestic labor.\(^\text{526}\)

\(^{524}\) Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 39-40
\(^{525}\) Ibid., 39.
\(^{526}\) Ibid.
“Echeverristas,” in the words of one prominent scholar, “struggled to modernize gender relations without antagonizing popular commitments to such ideals as motherhood and the male breadwinner.”527 For representatives of the administration, the sudden emergence of women’s sexuality as a topic of national debate was both unintended and unwelcome. Nevertheless, in the populist context of Echeverría’s political aperture many Mexicans viewed the IYW as a governmental annulment of traditional gender and sexual norms.

Scholarly analyses of the IYW and its afterlives have focused almost exclusively on the conference’s significance for progressive sectors. As Olcott illustrates, the populist aperture created a space for the articulation of demands not envisioned by administration officials. The legitimacy of Echeverría’s government hinged on its responsiveness to popular groups, even when their demands exceeded the designs of public authorities and mainstream social conventions.528 In this vein, feminist scholars have shown that the IYW opened the door for the first public discussion of women’s sexuality and sexual rights in Mexico’s history and the emergence of the previously closeted lesbian rights movement.529 But if the IYW was a watershed for Mexican feminism, scholars have largely neglected the backlash that it provoked.

Accentuating the fears of right-wing protestors were the composition and social position of the IYW’s central protagonists. The activists who dominated the IYW agenda consisted largely of second-wave feminists—educated middle class activists who cut their teeth in the New Left and student movements of the 1960s before the chauvinism endemic to those movements led them to form women-only organizations. Further, many second-wavers had ties to the

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527 Ibid., 43.
528 See Ibid.
Communist Party, a fact which both compounded and confused right-wing women’s abhorrence of Mexican feminists.\textsuperscript{530} Although significant divisions existed between proponents of women’s sexual rights and members of leftist women’s organizations, many of which were openly hostile to lesbianism, activists in the women’s civic movement consistently portrayed feminists of all stripes as, at once, hedonists, homosexuals, and communists.\textsuperscript{531} Underlying these attacks, however, right-wing women feared that feminist groups aligned with the state were perverting middle class gender ideology.

Indeed, the identity of the women’s civic movement developed around the defense of an idealized middle class family structure. As one ANCIFEM spokeswoman informed the press following a national meeting:

We are not single mothers; the children for whom we struggle have responsible parents who, besides sustenance, provide them with security and a well-constituted home… we are not defenseless orphans; we have fathers and brothers who love and value us.\textsuperscript{532} Even as they redrew the boundaries delineating acceptable forms of political engagement, ANCIFEM organizers reinforced a long-standing custom in which religious groups claimed moral legitimacy based on their defense of an urban, middle class family ideal.\textsuperscript{533} Implicit in their appeals to faith was a contest for dominion over the values that would guide Mexico’s middle classes.

ANCIFEM’s preoccupation with changing middle class values was evident in its commentary on the \textit{I National Meeting on the Middle Classes (I Encuentro Nacional sobre las Clases Medias)}. Convened in Mexico City in June 1975, the conference’s principal sponsor was

\textsuperscript{530} Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 26, 39.
\textsuperscript{531} \textit{Ibid.}, 41.
\textsuperscript{532} “Evitará la mujer imitar al hombre,” \textit{El Norte}, 3 July 1975, 1D.
\textsuperscript{533} Ma. Maria Pacheco Hinojosa, “Un modelo de familia católica: el Movimiento Familiar Cristiano en el México de los sesenta,” \textit{Cuestión Social} 18:3-4 (July-December 2010), 382-293.
the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares, or CNOP), which was responsible for representing the interests of the Mexican middle classes before the state. When a CNOP representative to the conference proposed reforming Article 27 of the Constitution to salvage the foundering ejido system, ANCIFEM published a retort in its recently established publicity organ, Legítima Defensa (Legitimate Defense). The article lamented that a “pro-leftist” organization such as the CNOP was permitted to dominate the discussion of Mexico’s middle classes. Bereft of “juridical argumentation,” the author of the piece alleged, the proposed reform was a thinly veiled ploy to “extend collectivism to the maximum.” The article accused the CNOP of appropriating the moral prestige of the middle classes to remove the “slightest trace of private property” from the Constitution. By undermining the legal rights of Mexican citizens, it contended, CNOP leaders betrayed the values of their constituents in an attempt to “give [the Constitution] an eminently socialist tenor.”

In reality, the CNOP represented a broad array of private interests, ranging from intellectuals to small farmers and middling merchants and industrialists. As Louise Walker observes, however, government employees beholden to the PRI dominated the confederation, whose power, by the 1970s, had eclipsed that of better-known corporatist bodies such as the CTM and the National Confederation of Peasants (Confederación Nacional de Campesinos). ANCIFEM’s rejection of the CNOP as the voice of Mexico’s middle classes was not only an attack on the social ideals that CNOP leaders endorsed; it was part of a larger assault on corporatist political controls and the system they upheld. Conservative opposition groups

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534 “Otro Ataque a la Propiedad Privada,” Legítima Defensa 1:11, June 7-15 1975, 2. DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
535 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 6-9.
increasingly portrayed official organs of political representation as ideological pollutants captive to statist dogma.

A quick glance at Legítima Defensa’s coverage supports this view. The weekly publication included articles on a wide range of perceived ills affecting the country. While debates over educational and reproductive policies were prominently featured, so were topics such as freedom of the press, youth delinquency, foreign relations, wage negotiations, and public sector indebtedness. Maintaining the anonymity of its contributors, the paper uniformly depicted the state as a corrupting influence on the nation’s values, institutions, and economy. Conversely, ANCIFEM, like the UNPF, was a vocal supporter of the Mexican private sector. When, following the first public revelations of the formation of the Businessmen’s Coordinating Council (Consejo Coordinador Empresarial) in 1975, Mexican congressman Luis Dantón Rodríguez accused business leaders of illicit meddling in national politics, Legítima Defensa published an article titled “Who Should Make Politics?” The piece insisted that “no Mexican is banned from political activity.” “How can [the state] deny a citizen [based on their] classification as a businessman… participation in the formation of society?” it asked. Public authorities, claimed the article’s author, condemned the politicization of Mexican entrepreneurs not for the benefit of society but to safeguard the state’s monopoly on power. “[A]ctive participation is the effective remedy for the political centralism that has invaded us in this sexenio,” the piece proclaimed. If ANCIFEM’s call-to-arms was a defense of traditional gender and sexual relations, the political project that it advanced aimed to discredit state paternalism while nurturing middle-class affinities toward private capital.

536 “Propaganda,” date N/A, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.

537 Ibid.
Regardless, ANCIFEM leaders’ faith in the power of gendered anxieties to mobilize the opposition was well-placed. Numerous studies have shown that the rise of the counterculture, rock-n-roll, and women’s liberation in 1960s and 1970s Mexico fueled widespread angst over the eradication of gender difference, libertinism and lesbianism, and the erosion of family values.\footnote{Zolov, Refried Elvis; Walker, Waking from the Dream; Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” Carey, Plaza of Sacrifices.} The publicity surrounding the IYW exacerbated these fears, inciting, in the words of one observer, “countless editorials… bemoaning the threats to the ‘national treasure’ of Mexican femininity.”\footnote{Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 42.} Absent organized opposition, such rebukes were of little long-term import. Amid swelling resistance from a newly-galvanized right, however, they provided a vital common ground between conservative protestors and mainstream culture. Where public authorities succeeded, for a time, in tempering opposition to educational reforms by attributing protests to the work of elite conspirators, opponents of women’s liberation could not be so easily dismissed.

Despite feminists’ heightened public profile, the demands of women’s liberation activists encountered widespread disapproval in 1970s Mexico. Even in the years following the IYW conference—years that witnessed the birth of Mexico’s first major feminist magazines, Revuelta and fem, as well as of the groups Lesbos and Oikabeth, the country’s first open lesbian organizations—women across the political spectrum publicly challenged the language and premises of women’s liberation.\footnote{For discussion of the emergence of feminist publications and the lesbian rights movement following the IYW, see Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 41.} Tellingly, female journalists and the leaders of mainstream women’s magazines, a burgeoning growth industry in the 1970s, were among the most vocal critics of Mexican feminists. In an interview with the business magazine Expansión representatives of the Mexican Association of Female Journalists (Asociación de Damas...
Publicistas de México, or ADPM) voiced their objections to women’s liberation. Ana Cecilia Treviño, the director of the Social Section for Mexico City’s *Excélsior*, the capital’s leading newspaper, lamented that women’s liberation evoked “little femininity and the constant thrashing of men.” For her part, Concepción (Concha) Solana, the president of the ADPM, described equal pay for women as “the only aspect of [women’s] liberation with which I agree.”

Other members of the association took still more conservative positions.

Maria Eugenia Moreno was among ADPM’s most vocal advocates of traditional gender roles. In addition to serving as the editor of the women’s magazine *Kena* and the president of Global Association of Women Writers and Journalists, Moreno headed the Social Benefits division of the Mexican Social Security Institute. Recently named the ADPM’s “Woman of the Year,” Moreno posited that women’s personal and professional aspirations should advance the “self-improvement [superación] of the woman, the health of children and young people, and the integration of the family”—a view shared by the champions of women’s civism. The statements of Moreno and other ADPM members, who earned their professional stripes appealing to a predominantly middle class readership, illustrate the depth of popular allegiances to traditional notions of femininity.

In the months surrounding the IYW conference ANCIFEM and its allies fanned dystopian fears of gender erasure in a campaign that propelled the women’s civic movement to the forefront of debates over educational policy and women’s rights. Women’s civic activists bracketed the IYW conference with a series of counter-conferences at the national, state, and local levels, while also organizing a spate of community workshops and coordinating a far-

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542 *Ibid.* For another example of Moreno’s outspoken stance on women’s liberation, as well as her penchant for airing that stance in private meetings and publications sponsored by private sector representatives, see “Women’s Liberation Roundtable,” *Mexican-American Review* 41 (January 1973), 30.
reaching propaganda campaign that kept the movement in the public spotlight. From April through August 1975 organizers campaigned incessantly, utilizing local newspapers and radio stations and street-level canvassing to promote participation in the movement and publicize its goals and accomplishments. Their efforts consolidated the educational and anti-feminist protest movements in a campaign that amplified the scope and intensity of the conservative rebellion against the PRI, prying the public image of that rebellion loose of its association with the economic oligarchy and fastening it more firmly to the precepts of civic democracy.

*The II National Women’s Civic Congress*

Beginning in early April 1975, Vargas, Aguilar, and other organizers hit the streets to promote the upcoming II National Women’s Civic Congress (*II Congreso Nacional Cívico Femenino*, or IICNCF). Targeting key cities in central and northern Mexico, they met with members of women’s and religious groups and parents of private-schoolers to encourage attendance at the congress and participation in the movement.\(^{543}\) Meanwhile, newspaper ads implored Mexican women to defend their roles as wives and mothers. “We fight for maternity and the natural values of the human being,” proclaimed Vargas in one such announcement. Vargas condemned women’s liberation activists and public officials who pandered to them for conspiring to “devalue feminine nature and dignity.” “The Mexican woman,” she declared, would not tolerate the “degradation of values at the expense of… [familial and civic] responsibilities.”\(^ {544}\)

Another advertisement illustrated the heightened inter-sectorial collaboration among conservative women’s groups. Signed by the presidents of ANCIFEM, *Madres de Familia*, the

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\(^{544}\) “La mujer Mexicana debe pugnar por su superación,” *El Norte*, 7 April 1975, 1D.
Association of University Students, Women’s Professional Action, and the Unit of Integral Formation, it invoked Catholic values as a critical line of defense against the imposition of state socialism. “We are living a crucial moment,” the announcement warned. It claimed that curricular reforms and feminist political interventions aimed to “annihilate the moral foundations of society [to facilitate] the communist plan to implant socialism in Mexico.” To advance this sinister project, the ad read, the state’s agents engineered a “totally materialistic” understanding of sexuality, “including the teacher’s guide that says masturbation is normal.”

Like the UNPF, women’s civic activists seized upon the topic of masturbation to stoke fears of moral degeneration. Touring private schools in the cities of Reynosa, Matamoros, Tampico, and Ciudad Victoria in the northeastern state of Tamaulipas, Vargas and other organizers admonished parents that the sexual education curriculum perpetuated a “crisis of moral values,” which gravely imperiled their children and families. “What does Catholic Doctrine say about the textbook which maintains ‘that masturbation is entirely normal and does not cause elemental physical and mental disorders?’” Vargas asked rhetorically at a parents’ meeting in Ciudad Victoria. To “save the children” from the carnal enticements of public authorities, she urged, Christians had an obligation to engage in permanent “civic action.” The IICNCF brought the vision and concerns of movement organizers into sharp relief.

Convened in the central Mexican state of Querétaro from 19-20 April 1975, the congress featured addresses on topics ranging from women’s liberation to educational conflict, the menace of socialism, and youth activism. As the IICNCF’s official mantra of “Mexican Woman: Forge Your Homeland” (Mujer Mexicana: Forja Tu Patria) indicated, however, the overarching goal of the conference was to mobilize conservative women in a movement capable of

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545 “Mujer Mexicana Forja Tu Patria,” El Norte, 14 April 1975, 6D.
546 “La mujer Mexicana debe pugnar por su superación,” El Norte, 7 April 1975, 1D.
challenging the state’s role as the arbiter of public life. If populism, as political scientist Francisco Panizza posits, “blurs the public private dividing line and brings into the political realm… desires that previously had no place in public life,” the tenuous marriage between \textit{echeverristas} and the feminist movement obliterated that divide.\footnote{“Mujer Mexicana Forja Tu Patria,” \textit{El Norte}, 14 April 1975, 6D.} The inclusion of women’s sexuality and sexual rights as a focus of public policy unleashed a torrent of competing claims on the public sphere. But where Mexican feminists ‘politicized the personal’ through patronage- or entitlement-based demands on the state, right-wing activists aimed to privatize aspects of political life itself.

Participants in the IICNCF proposed to wrest from the state the authority for mediating the interaction between private values and public policy. Addressing the crowd of 2,200, Margot P. de la Garza, a representative from ANCIFEM’s Nuevo León chapter, decried statist intrusions on rights “as fundamental as… the organization of the family and the sources of life themselves.” Reiterating a central theme of the congress, de la Garza demanded that public officials delegate responsibility for planning “educational, social, political, and cultural transformations” to civil authorities that would heed the “feminine voice.”\footnote{Quoted in Olcott, “Politics of Opportunity,” 30.} Vargas, for her part, stressed the need for women’s participation in the formation of an independent civil society capable of arresting the trend toward socialism. “Women’s civism,” she declared, “constitutes… a free force of opinion and action to demonstrate that the Mexican people don’t want communist socialism.”\footnote{“Repudian las mujeres el aborto y los textos,” \textit{El Norte}, 22 April 1975, 1D.}

Other presenters linked the imposition of secular reproductive politics to the specter of socialism more explicitly. Of the more than a dozen presentations, reports describe María Luisa Rodríguez de Ayala’s speech on “Feminism, Women’s Liberation, and Femininity” as the “most

\footnote{“Degrada y comuniza su Año Internacional de la Mujer..,” \textit{El Norte}, 1 June 1975, 1D.}
applauded.” Rodríguez insisted in a refrain increasingly common among opponents of Mexican feminism, aspired not to liberation but to “superación” [self-improvement], where “spiritual and eternal values supersede temporal and material ones.” Rodríguez described sexual education, birth control, and “free love” as part of an insidious plot to foster divisions between men and women “as if it were a racial struggle.” This strategy of “divide and conquer,” she claimed, was key to the designs of public authorities and women’s liberation activists to implant socialism in Mexico.552

The most detailed explication of the government’s purported use of libertinism as a Trojan horse for radical ideologies came from Elsa González de Bracamontes, a Madres de Familia representative from the state of Puebla. Like Vargas and numerous other organizers, González had been among the principal architects of Cívico Familiar. In a speech titled “Cultural Revolution in the Mexican School,” González conflated sexual education, the countercultural movement, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution in a scathing diatribe against the sexual politics of Echeverría’s government. She alleged that Mao Tse-Tung’s infamous program was the “dominant and governing” inspiration for Echeverría’s educational reforms, which, she warned, would incite “reining immorality” and “pansexual hedonism.” “[I]n the government lexicon,” González posed, the term for Cultural Revolution was “sexual education.” González identified “two phases” of this revolution. The first stage involved adapting and reorienting human intellect to the task of subversion, which the primary school textbooks misconstrued as “liberation from alienations and dependencies.” Next, she posited, the state sought “empowerment from the souls of men,” promoting “among other means… pansexualism, and in this way obtain[ing] the result of a revolutionary.” Alluding then to Cuban communism, González suggested that this “new

551 “Repudian las mujeres el aborto y los textos,” El Norte, 22 April 1975, 1D.
552 “Degrada y comuniza su Año Internacional de la Mujer...,” El Norte, 1 June 1975, 1D.
man” was in reality a “sub-man, vacated of soul, liberty, and dignity.” Far-fetched as they were, González’s views were not outliers.

Claims that the secularization of gender and sexual mores fed radicalism reflected understandings of state power endemic to the emerging protest movement. Following the IICNCF, Legítima Defensa published González’s speech in full, along with an accompanying article on the same topic. “The Cultural Revolution,” elaborated the author of that piece, required “a change in human nature; the convulsion of intellect,” which dispensed with the “sanctuary of conscience” to foster a materialistic understanding of human sexuality and social relations. Like UNPF representatives, women’s civic activists depicted radicalism and libertinism as the progeny of state-sponsored materialism.

According to this logic, government interventions in social and economic life fueled popular expectations for instant gratification, be it in the realm of bodily pleasures, social mobility, or economic reward. Such interventions, so the message went, encumbered civic responsibility, undermined familial stability, and impeded the formation of a diligent, productive workforce. For the Catholic right, however, they were part of a larger design. By positioning the state as the agent of material gratification while subverting non-material values, alleged right-wing organizers, public authorities engineered masses of utterly dependent subjects lacking the intellectual and spiritual wherewithal to challenge their abasement. Viewed from this optic, licentiousness, radicalism, and dependency were nested pathologies of a common political ancestor—state paternalism.

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553 “Legitima Defensa 1:11” 7-15 June 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
554 Ibid.
555 “Los Textos del SEP Enseñan Doctrinas Contrarias a Nuestra Nacionalidad y Tradiciones Mexicanas,” undated. DGIPS, c. 1575C, exp. 12, AGN.
Nowhere did this view find fuller expression than in the women’s civic movement. In a speech titled “The Trap of the so-called Women’s Liberation,” an unidentified presenter at the IICNCF accused “enemy forces” within the government and feminist movement of orchestrating an “ideological shift” that threatened to destroy “feminine nature.” The crux of this shift, she averred, was a systematic perversion of the meaning of liberty. The presenter claimed that women’s liberation activists demanded freedom only “to drug themselves, to prostitute themselves [and] to protest against social limitations.” “In the same way,” she added, feminists “speak of sexual liberty and want to do that which instinct commands,” disregarding moral and religious constraints in a blind pursuit of “that which they ‘crave’ and desire.” The speaker insisted, however, that proponents of women’s liberation did not set the trap to which the title of her address referred.

She argued that the administration’s calculated embrace of feminism and its legalization of artificial contraceptives deliberately fostered a “carnal and materialistic” view of Mexican women. Rather than liberating women, she asserted, populist incursions into gender relations made “the woman an object of pleasure,” robbing her of dignity and putting her “against the wall of erotic passions.” Thus “deprived of maternity,” she warned, Mexican women were losing their traditional place in society, with dire consequences. “Today there is no area of criminal violence in which the woman is not present,” she repined. “From the so-called weak sex are emerging the most audacious and aggressive criminals,” the most egregious of which were flooding the ranks of Marxist “guerrilla movements.” The speaker concluded by imploring women to wrench gender ideology from the clutches of secular authorities through concerted civic action aimed at

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556 “La verdad sobre la liberación femenina: ‘la rampa de la llamada liberación femenina’,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
restoring Christian conceptions of femininity to the public sphere. In the months following the conclusion of the IICNCF movement organizers disseminated these views in a campaign whose reach far-surpassed that of the conference itself.

The program of activities that movement leaders undertook in the wake of the IICNCF was far-reaching, highly coordinated, and expensive. Following the conclusion of the conference, organizers circulated a plan of action among IICNCF participants detailing activists’ post-congress responsibilities and stressing the importance of expanding the movement’s orbit. “Fellow Congress Participants,” the communique read, “our civic labor is necessary, because the effectiveness of the congress will be clearly demonstrated when all the women of Mexico know and make theirs… the conclusions at which we arrived during the Congress.” In addition to exhorting its recipients to disseminate the views conveyed at the IICNCF “in all the media,” the letter elaborated a comprehensive plan for mobilizing support in neighborhoods, cities, and communities. Congress participants moved quickly to put this program into action, mobilizing conservative women at the local and state levels in a campaign that transformed the public conversation and solidified the place of right-wing women as perennial force in national politics.

The plan consisted of a seven-point program that involved intensive local-level proselytization, public gatherings and demonstrations, and lobbying government officials. First, the letter directed local leaders to form “study circles to make known the [content of] the presentations” and main conclusions of the IICNCF among sympathizers and supporters who were unable to attend the congress. The letter proposed that study circles should be organized by a coordinator who attended the national congress or someone they had groomed, that the meetings should take place in homes or private institutions, and that they should include as many

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557 Ibid.
558 “Plan de Trabajo Cívico, Personal y en Grupo,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
participants as the venue and circumstances permitted.\textsuperscript{559} The purpose of the study circles was to cultivate coteries of organizers who could communicate the movement’s goals and accomplishments and direct grassroots organizing at the local level—criteria which undoubtedly limited the target audience to middle- and upper-class women with time and resources to spare.

Movement leaders also encouraged local organizers to arrange “awareness-raising” meetings. These meetings, the letter specified, were a forum for conveying activists’ views and concerns on topics including the textbooks, women’s liberation and the IYW, the “socialist option for Mexico,” and any other problem of “civic interest” addressed at the IICNCF. “To achieve more persuasion,” it suggested, reunion coordinators should use audiovisual materials and equipment stockpiled by movement leaders and available for purchase to prospective organizers.\textsuperscript{560} The letter provided an itemized list of the materials and their costs, further illustrating the class dynamics of the movement and providing a glimpse of its relative affluence.

Evidence indicating how organizers funded their activities or identifying their principal financiers is scarce, but the resources available to them were substantial. Audiovisual tools, stressed the communique, were a vital supplement to the media offensive which began in earnest after the IICNCF, and should be employed by local organizers in all applicable post-congress duties. Materials and equipment available to participants included slides and transparencies with full transcriptions of all IICNCF presentations and conclusions; transparency and slide projectors; and audio recordings propagandizing the movement’s positions on women’s liberation, abortion, and the textbooks. Not only was the $500 peso price tag for slide and transparency projectors—the equivalent of roughly $182 USD in 2016—well beyond the means

\textsuperscript{559} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{560} Ibid.
of poor and working-class families. Stockpiling such equipment and producing the accompanying materials in quantities sufficient to guarantee their availability to thousands of local organizers required access to capital and technological support on a scale prohibitive for most other contemporaneous social movements. Moreover, these expenses undoubtedly comprised but a small fraction of the movement’s total financial needs. The relative bounty at the disposal of movement leaders underwrote a campaign whose sweep, organization, and exposure had few parallels among Mexican social movements lacking government patronage.

In addition to study circles and awareness-raising gatherings, the letter instructed IICNCF participants to begin organizing “post-congresses” in cities around Mexico. These conferences, it stipulated, should be one-day affairs where organizers duplicated those IICNCF “presentations that… seemed most important to them” in relation to local sentiment and concerns. The authors of the plan implored their colleagues to draw the “greatest number of attendees possible,” and to secure venues with a capacity suitable to the task, such as “social clubs or auditoriums.” At the time of the letter’s circulation, movement organizers had already planned fifteen post-congresses, but in coming months that number grew to over thirty-five, the majority and largest of which took place in cities in the North and the Bajío region of central Mexico, including Monterrey, León, and Durango. Tellingly, movement organizers scheduled the first post-congresses to begin in early June, with subsequent conferences continuing through August.


562 “Plan de Trabajo Cívico, Personal y en Grupo,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN. Sources providing details from and indicating the locations of all post-congresses organized by leaders of the women’s civic movement have been elusive, but news coverage in later months cited the total number of post-congresses at 35 and counting. See “Mujeres contrarrestan influencia procomunista,” El Norte, 8 July 1975, 1D.
ensuring that the movement remained in the public spotlight for the duration of the IYW proceedings and the media hoopla surrounding them. Crucially, this strategy also impelled the educational debate through the summer months, when it would have otherwise waned with the close of the school year.\textsuperscript{563}

The next two post-IICNCF duties that the communique enumerated aimed to expand the movement into poor and working class neighborhoods and bolster its patriotic credentials. Activists were to hold “women’s civic assemblies” in local neighborhoods and communities, where they should “give addresses about the country’s difficulties” and “sow anxiety in the attendees.” Civic assemblies, the letter specified, should last sixty to ninety minutes, so as not to exceed the attention spans of their presumably less-educated audiences. Movement leaders further proposed that local organizers sponsor “Patriotic-Civic Acts” or ceremonies through which children and adolescents would learn “to value and appreciate the Patriotic symbols and true [national] heroes,” as opposed to foreign idols such as those appearing in the primary school textbooks. These acts, determined the letter’s authors, should “take place in communities, neighborhoods, schools [and] parks of each city”—an ambitious and costly proposal that further speaks to the high levels of organization and affluence which gave rise to the movement and propelled its early success.\textsuperscript{564}

Two remaining goals rounded out the post-IICNCF agenda. The first of these was an educational initiative for children and adolescents, the immediate objective of which was to counter what activists saw as the corrosive materialism of official primary school curricula. “Each congress participant,” the letter stipulated, “should help… initiate the foundation of

\textsuperscript{563} In past educational controversies the summer generally brought a reprieve from ongoing conflicts. See Loaeza, \textit{clases medias}.

\textsuperscript{564} “Plan de Trabajo Cívico, Personal y en Grupo,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN
Centers of Human, Patriotic, and Religious Formation [Centros de Formación Humana, Patriótica y Religiosa],” alternately referred to as Centers of Integral Formation [Centros de Formación Integral]. As their appellation suggests, the Centros adhered to notions of “integral development” endemic to Mexican Catholicism, an emphasis reflected in the training offered to the Centros’ staff and administrators. ANCIFEM organized and sponsored courses for activists and citizens interested in establishing a Centro in their respective communities. In addition to advising participants on how to open and administer the Centros, the courses imparted instruction on topics ranging from the psychology of puberty, “human formation” and its religious aspects, chastity, history, and “patriotic formation.” ANCIFEM spokeswomen subsequently specified that movement organizers planned to open five-hundred Centros around the country, for a start, each of which would enroll a minimum of twenty-five students.

The letter’s final directive instructed organizers to begin collecting signatures to be included in a formal petition to Secretary of Education Victor Bravo Ahuja demonstrating the depths of opposition to the primary school textbooks. Setting the ambitious goal of obtaining one-million signatures within a period of two months, movement leaders tasked each of the more than two-thousand IICNCF participants with collecting a minimum of five-hundred signatures and mailing them to ANCIFEM headquarters in Mexico City, where organizers would compile the signatures and send them, along with a formal letter of grievance, to the SEP. In addition to canvassing city streets and schools, stipulated the communiqué, local organizers should solicit signatures at other movement-sponsored gatherings, including post-congresses, as well as from

565 Ibid.
566 “Curso de Capacitación para las Coordinadoras y Auxiliares de los Centros de Formación...,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN.
567 Fix cit: Exp 100-8-1-75 (H. 264; L. 38), 17 July 1975
the parents of children attending the Centros.\textsuperscript{568} Over the coming months movement organizers embarked on a promotional \textit{tour-de-force}, broadcasting the movement’s goals and achievements and amassing support in locales across central and northern Mexico.

Integrating the women’s civic movement more fully with educational protests was a central focus of this campaign. Within a month after the conclusion of the IICNCF, ANCIFEM and the UNPF held a joint rally in León, Guanajuato in which over 50,000 people converged on the city center to demonstrate their opposition to the educational reforms. The protest’s principal organizers included ANCIFEM national secretary Rosa María Hernández Vargas, the president of UNPF, Guanajuato, Miguel Marmolejo Puente, and César Nava, president of the UNPF’s Michoacán chapter. The views articulated by speakers at the demonstration were by then exceedingly familiar, but the protest departed from the dynamic that characterized preceding rallies. Prior to the IICNCF, ANCIFEM leaders had taken a backseat to the UNPF in educational protests of such magnitude. Vargas’ inclusion among the rally’s organizers attests to the growing influence of ANCIFEM and the women’s civic movement. Further, demonstrators pledged to assist ANCIFEM in its efforts to collect a million signatures for the petition to the SEP.\textsuperscript{569} With the approach of the IYW conference, converging protests against educational reforms and women’s liberation put administration officials on the defensive.

The growing prominence of the women’s civic movement within the ambit of conservative protest caught the attention of local columnists and public officials alike. Following a “post-congress” convened in Monterrey on 1 June 1975, \textit{El Norte} featured a series of articles publicizing the movement. Sponsored by ANCIFEM, the \textit{Madres de Familia}, and “diverse

\textsuperscript{568} “Plan de Trabajo Cívico, Personal y en Grupo,” undated, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, AGN
\textsuperscript{569} “Más que 50,000 Padres de Familia Repudiaron los Libros de Texto,” 7 May 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575-C, exp. 12, h. 260, AGN.
groups” of university students, per one report, the post-council—or “mini-council,” as activists dubbed it—drew more than a thousand women to the exclusive Lions’ Club (Club de Leones), where speakers rehashed arguments and conclusions from the IICNCF. “The Mexican woman,” noted one columnist, summing up the central message of the gathering, “is heading toward degradation and Marxism [due to] the manner in which the program of the International Year of the Woman, which seeks women’s liberation, is developing.”\textsuperscript{570} The next day, \textit{El Norte} publicly endorsed the women’s civic movement in a front-page editorial. Praising the women of Nuevo León for their newfound commitment to engaging social and political issues, the piece described the meeting as an event of “singular transcendence.” “We all agree,” averred the editor, “that apathy is the bitter rival of democracy,” adding “the disinterest of the citizen in the conduct of her governors allows [politicians to disregard] community well-being.”\textsuperscript{571} Voices from outside of the women’s movement were beginning to make the cause their own.

Activists’ effectiveness in promoting the women’s civic movement on the eve of the IYW compelled public authorities to respond. But the administration’s efforts to tame opposition among conservative women were decidedly gentler than its handling of educational protestors in preceding months. Less than a week after the Nuevo León mini-council, the SEP sent the female director of its Planning Unit (Unidad de Programación), Dr. Rosa Luz Alegría, to Monterrey in an attempt to temper swelling opposition. Jettisoning the language of women’s liberation, the SEP christened the hastily-convened gathering as the I Symposium for the Improvement [Superación] of the Woman in a gesture of conciliation to the meeting’s audience. Alegría opened by acknowledging the value and importance of women’s increasing participation in political and civic affairs. When the conversation turned to educational policy, however, she

\textsuperscript{570} “Degrada y comuniza su Año Internacional de la Mujer...,” \textit{El Norte}, 1 June 1975, 1D.
\textsuperscript{571} “Mujeres,” \textit{El Norte}, 2 June 1975, 1A.
politely insinuated that supporters of women’s civism had been deceived as to the nature and intent of curricular reforms.

Speaking alongside “Conchita” Velasco de Zorrilla, the wife of widely despised Nuevo León governor Pedro Zorrilla Martínez, Alegría lamented that so many esteemed women acceded to the interpretive “deformations” of UNPF leaders concerning the educational reforms. As a result, she complained, “hundreds of thousands” of Mexicans based their opposition to federal education policy on false premises. Alegría’s comments illustrate the widening scope of conservative opposition and the anxiety that the emergence of the women’s civic movement provoked among administration officials. Equally important, however, they speak to the strategic advantages that the women’s movement yielded for the conservative crusade against Echeverría’s government. Where government spokespeople roundly condemned UNPF leaders as retrograde lackeys of economic oligarchs, they attributed opposition among right-wing women to credulity in the face of organized deception. Of course, the women of whom Alegría spoke were neither credulous nor servile; whatever their motives and beliefs, they exhibited a keen understanding of Mexican political and cultural realities. While the men of the UNPF endured public defamation, the champions of women’s civism took refuge in the ideological sanctuaries of motherhood and femininity.

Movement organizers leveraged this moral authority in protests coinciding with the IYW conference. Four days into the conference, on 22 June, ANCIFEM, the Madres de Familia, and the UNPF held a rally at the Insurgentes subway station, a bustling transit point between the Roma and Zona Rosa neighborhoods in Mexico City. Speakers at the rally, including ANCIFEM president Amparo Noriega de Martínez and María Concepción Ortega, who presided over ANCIFEM’s Guanajuato chapter, admonished those in attendance that if unchecked “materialist
and sectarian” federal policies would “destroy the intermediate structures of our country,” leading to “degradation and Marxism.” Protestors repeated familiar condemnations of legalized contraception and women’s liberation, but with the eyes of the international media and the United Nations now fixed on Mexico activists highlighted educational policy as the issue most central to their concerns. Ortega warned the women in attendance not to let their recently-granted juridical equality blind them to the reality that their primary responsibility was the education of their children, imploring them to join the “broad civic struggle” against government threats to mothers and families. Tellingly, a speaker provided an overview of these points in English for the benefit of international media members, whose presence at the rally organizers had arranged in advance.572

Activists in the women’s civic movement and the UNPF enlisted the foreign media to intensify pressure on the government. The 1948 U.N. Universal Declaration Human Rights, which former Mexican Secretary of Education Jaime Torres Bodet helped author, affirmed that “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”573 With the IYW conference underway, conservative protestors accused Echeverría’s government of violating its international commitment to the stated principles of the conference’s sponsoring organization. Prior to the 22 June rally, representatives of the women’s civic movement circulated a letter in English inviting the media to observe the demonstration. Above a caption reading “The International Woman’s Year, 1975,” the invitation expressed the determination of “free Mexican women to protest against the Mexican government policies on educational matters,” which, it alleged, violated “family rights” and the “universal

572 “Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina, A.C.,” 23 June 1975, DFS, exp. 63-26-75, legajo 3, h. 210, AGN.  
DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.” The SEP was forced to respond a few days later at an IYW conference panel dealing with educational issues, and again the task fell to Rosa Luz Alegría.

As the Mexican representative to the Global Forum (Tribuna Mundial) of the IYW, Alegría gave a presentation on Mexican educational policy in which she touted the reforms as a “liberating social movement.” “We are struggling,” she asserted with a verve that belied the conciliatory tone of her recent address in Monterrey, “[because we are] convinced that education in developing countries is the most powerful weapon that we possess to fight for political, social and economic liberation.” When foreign correspondents pressed her to comment on the “doubts and anxieties” surrounding the reforms and their implementation, Alegría dismissed the protests as haphazard and politically insignificant. “They won’t gain anything by screaming in front of the Secretary of Public Education,” she stated. “[I]f… they organize and express their disagreements [the SEP] will make those changes that the people ask for.”

In light of her recent appearance in Monterrey, Alegría’s rhetorical shrug at the mention of popular resistance to the reforms was clearly an attempt to downplay the depth of organized opposition before the IYW’s itinerant foreign correspondents. Administration officials were acutely concerned.

*Lay-Church Relations, Reconfigured*

In response to the heightened public presence of women’s civic activists, government spies and the national press intensified inquiries into the movement’s relationship with the Catholic hierarchy and its dependents. The Church’s position vis-à-vis the state and the Catholic laity was the source of much public confusion in the 1970s. The Mexican episcopate was itself

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575 “Si Es Necesario, se Harán Cambios al Libro de Texto: Rosa Luz Alegría,” 26 June 1975, DGISP, c. 1575-D, exp. 14, p.12, AGN.
divided over the meaning and propriety of liberation theology, and Echeverría’s revival of Mexico’s populist political tradition further accentuated these divisions. Church leaders sympathetic to liberationist thinking gravitated to progressive bishop of Cuernavaca Sergio Mendéz Arceo, who enjoyed the support of Echeverría’s government. Others, however, were wary of redirecting the energies of the faithful from apostolic to socioeconomic concerns and the implications of approximating religious teachings with secular reformist and leftist ideologies. Although numerous clergymen gave sermons condemning the new primary school curricula, religious leaders, fearful of antagonizing the administration, were circumspect in their published statements and publicly disavowed any association with anti-government protests. As a result, public authorities and conservative activists alternately claimed Church support for their positions. For the administration and its defenders, clarifying the relationship between the women’s civic movement and the hierarchy opened two possible avenues for undercutting the movement’s legitimacy. If Church leaders actively supported the campaign, public officials could condemn the campaign as an illicit ecclesiastic—and male—intervention in national politics. If they withheld their support, on the other hand, the administration could challenge the movement’s image as the defender of Christian maternal and family ideals.

To avoid becoming ensnared in the tangled artifice of Mexican religious politics, movement organizers took increasing care in how they represented their cause to the public. When ANCIFEM president Amparo Noriega de Martínez met with reporters to publicize an

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576 Mackin, “Becoming the Red Bishop of Cuernavaca,” 499-514; On Echeverría’s increased support for RCC in Cuernavaca see Camp, Crossing Swords.
upcoming ‘mini-congress’ in León, scheduled for July 4-5, journalists asked her to comment on a recent press release from the Mexican episcopate disclaiming association with the wave of protests sweeping central and northern Mexico. Noriega confirmed that the Church neither sponsored nor formally supported the movement, pointing out that the hierarchy’s only mandate was to tend to the spiritual needs of Mexican citizens. She insisted, however, that the episcopate’s denial of involvement was not a “repudiation,” as government spokespeople and the media construed it. Noriega characterized the movement’s relationship to the Church as a “division of action,” in which the hierarchy focused on apostolic duties while the laity represented the faith in the civic and social arenas.\textsuperscript{579} Indeed, the division of labor between the Church and the laity had been a defining feature of Mexican religious life since the advent of the \textit{modus vivendi} (circa 1929).\textsuperscript{580} Yet Noriega’s portrayal of the women’s civic movement as a continuation of this tradition required some creative interpretation.

In reality, the Catholic laity’s relationship to the hierarchy in the 1960s and 1970s was one of increasing independence, often to the dismay of Church leaders. The ‘division of action’ to which Noriega referred grew from religious leaders’ loss of appetite for conflict with the Mexican state in the wake of the government’s devastating suppression of the \textit{Cristero Rebellion} (1926-1929). Thereafter, Mexican Church and lay leaders abandoned political and labor organizing, from which the Federal Labor Law of 1931 legally banned them. The Church withdrew from social and political engagement while restructuring the laity and dividing responsibility for representing the faith in specific areas of social life—such as education, charity, and public morality—among various lay organizations.\textsuperscript{581} This arrangement did not, as

\textsuperscript{579} “Protesta de 800 Personas,” 23 June 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575-D, exp. 14, p.4, AGN.
\textsuperscript{581} Andes, “A Catholic Alternative”
Noriega suggested, empower lay groups to engage in oppositional politics or to advocate comprehensive reform to the Mexican political system. Nevertheless, following the uprising under López Mateos key sectors of the laity continued to insinuate themselves into national political debates, a trend which put the Church in a compromising position. Episcopal leaders ultimately tried to reassert control over lay organizations, but the cascading enmity of religious conservatives toward Echeverría’s government doomed their efforts. Thus, while the hierarchy could not publicly disparage movement organizers without losing face, many religious leaders were undoubtedly disquieted by calls for a Catholic political awakening.

Publicly, Acción Católica Mexicana (ACM), Mexico’s bellwether lay association, also handled the women’s civic movement like a political hot potato. Prior to a ‘post-congress’ scheduled for 20 July in Durango, ACM published an announcement in El Sol de Durango addressing “rumors and confusions” that ACM was organizing the conference. The ad stated unequivocally that the conference was “organized, coordinated and led by [ANCIFEM],” and that the group “does not have any connection to Acción Católica.” The announcement’s authors took pains to distinguish ACM from ANCIFEM, describing the latter as an “eminently civic [association] created to promote moral, intellectual, civic and material development”—a function, it stressed, that was “completely unconnected to any organization of apostolic character such as Acción Católica.” But ACM’s disavowal of ANCIFEM and the women’s civic movement did not stop there. The ad proposed an unlikely cause for rumors of ACM involvement in the gathering. “Possibly the initials A.C.,” it suggested in reference to ANCIFEM’s recently acquired status as an Asociación Civil (Civil Association, or A.C.), “are confused with the initials by which Acción Católica is known (A.C.).” In truth, there were far

582 Pacheco Hinojosa, La Iglesia en la sociedad, 230-231.
583 “Estado de Dgo…..,” 19 July 1975, DGIPS, c. 1173, exp. 2, pp.285-287, AGN.
more plausible explanations for the ‘rumors and confusions’ to which the announcement referred.

That *Acción Católica* would go to such lengths to disassociate itself from ANCIFEM is unsurprising: on the contrary, avoiding confrontation with public authorities was a pillar of its mandate. When ecclesiastical leaders restructured the Catholic laity at the onset of the *modus vivendi*, they replaced Catholic Social Action (*Acción Social Católica*), whose commitment to social and political activism threatened the fragile post-*Cristiada* peace, with the more docile ACM. From the time of its inception in 1929, ACM toed the episcopal line, limiting its activities to religious and spiritual matters to avert potential conflicts with the government. ACM spokesmen stuck firmly to this position as ANCIFEM- and UNPF-led protests spread under Echeverría’s government. The same was not true of all ACM members, who, numbering over 300,000—more than two-thirds of whom were women—provided a fertile recruiting ground for the women’s civic movement.

*Acción Católica* was well-represented within ANCIFEM and the women’s movement. Even as ACM leaders and the clergy distanced themselves from the movement, the local organizers who flocked to ANCIFEM frequently held concurrent memberships in ACM or other lay associations. In Durango, for example, ANCIFEM’s general coordinator, Maria Dolores Monreal García, was an active member of ACM, as was Marcela Vega, one of the principal organizers for the Durango ‘post-congress’. Indeed, ANCIFEM filled its ranks with women who were simultaneously active in Catholic organizations such as ACM and the Family

584 Andes, “A Catholic Alternative”
585 Ceballos, *Cien Años*; Andes, “A Catholic Alternative.”
587 See “Estado de Dgo...,” 17 July 1975, DGIPS, c. 1173, exp. 2, pp.263-265, AGN; and “Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina,” 17 July 1975, DFS, exp. 100-8-1-75, legajo 38, h. 264, AGN.
Christian Movement, or in women’s sections of male-led lay organizations, including the Madres de Familia, the Mexican Catholic Women’s Union (Unión Femenina Católica Mexicana), and Mexican Women’s Catholic Youth (Juventud Católica Femenina Mexicana). With few exceptions, women far outnumbered men in these organizations, yet female members occupied a subordinate position within the organizational hierarchies of those groups. Many of these women welcomed the opportunity that the women’s civic movement provided.

Movement organizers relied heavily on the women of local lay organizations as they expanded the campaign into new locales. Government spies frequently reported that women from local religious groups were helping movement organizers proselytize, distribute announcements and other propaganda, and promote the movement in cities, neighborhoods, and municipalities. ANCIFEM routinely circulated letters to local religious groups inviting their members to attend conferences and demonstrations and urging them to join the cause. Spokespeople for the movement also hit the airwaves to recruit women of the faith, regularly buying spots on local radio stations to promote participation in the movement. As Victoria González and Lisa Baldez have shown in the cases of Nicaragua and Chile, respectively, increasing women’s voice in political decision-making was an important and often overlooked incentive for participants in contemporaneous right-wing women’s movements in Latin America.

America. In the case of the women’s civic movement, this incentive was two-fold. The movement not only offered participants a voice in Mexican politics, but also a chance to lead the faith in a national campaign for moral renewal.

As the movement expanded, however, ANCIFEM spokeswomen publicly insisted that theirs was an apolitical cause. Prior to a demonstration in Durango ANCIFEM issued an announcement in *El Sol de Durango* assuring the public that the group was “purely civic” and “without [religious] or political dependency,” its mission being only to “preserve the dignity of the woman and the integrity of the family in the face of the grave problems which confront our country.” A similar announcement also appeared in *La Voz de Durango*. Disavowing any political agenda, the ad referred to the IICNCF slogan “¡Mujer Mexicana: Forja tu Patria!,” explaining “[t]o forge the country it is necessary to act civically [and] for that we need to know in depth the national predicament and its causes, which we believe [derive from the] disruption of moral values.” Government security agents reported that the ANCIFEM representatives who signed for the ad had assured the paper’s general director, Salvador Nava Rodríguez, that theirs was not a political organization. Likewise, the director of an auditorium that movement representatives booked for an upcoming reunion reported to government agents that “four unknown young ladies” had vouched for the “totally apolitical” nature of the gathering. Government spies’ growing interest in the movement’s activities helps to explain the care that organizers took in defining the nature and objectives of the campaign.

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593 “Estado de Durango: La Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina, A.C.,” 18 July 1975, DGIPS, c. 1173, exp. 2, pp.241-245, AGN.

594 “Estado de Durango...,” 15 July 1975, DGIPS, c. 1173, exp. 2, pp.279-282

Claims that the movement was ‘purely civic’ and ‘apolitical’ responded to the efforts of public officials and journalists to link the movement to the conservative PAN.\textsuperscript{596} The implication was not entirely baseless. While ANCIFEM was not formally tied to any political party, the views that its leaders championed closely coincided with the PAN’s religiously-rooted political philosophy. Not only did both organizations promote Catholic family values and gender norms as the foundations of social stability and public morality. The subsidiary logic that guided the civic vision of movement organizers was a cornerstone of the PAN’s founding ideals.\textsuperscript{597} Though \textit{panistas} in the 1970s were primarily concerned with enhancing the authority of local and state political institutions vis-à-vis the federal government—they were, in essence, federalists—rather than with the construction of civil society, the distinction was a practical one. The philosophical bases of \textit{panismo} and the women’s civic movement were kindred and mutually-reinforcing.

Predictably, party representatives were also outspoken critics of both the educational reforms and women’s liberation. \textit{Panista} officials frequently attended meetings and demonstrations convened by the UNPF and women’s civic activists, though they neither organized nor openly participated in them.\textsuperscript{598} In Baja California, where the PAN later won its first governorship (1989), party officials furtively campaigned to help ANCIFEM and the UNPF obtain signatures for their petition to the SEP—an endeavor that local party operatives used to gain a foothold in a state they described, in 1975, as a “virgin field for all the activities of [the]
party.” Moreover, numerous organizers of women’s civic and educational demonstrations—including Laura Aguilar de Cuadriello, UNPF president Francisco Quiroga Fernández, and Sinaloan Madre Norma Harper de Aguirre, to name but a few—were active in the party prior to their involvement in anti-government protests under Echeverría. Over the long-term, the PAN was the clear partisan beneficiary of those protests.

Nevertheless, the women’s civic movement did not obey the PAN’s political strategy; to the contrary, it inverted it. Like right-wing women protestors, *panista* officials saw Mexico’s hosting of the IYW as a threat to national gender norms. Instead of mobilizing its female constituents to challenge the language and ideals of women’s liberation, however, in 1975 the PAN closed its women’s sections in districts across Mexico. *Panista* federal deputy Margarita Prida Yarza subsequently explained this move as a reaction to the feminist movement. “[T]he initial theory,” she elaborated, was “not to segregate the woman with the false myth of feminism.” “[W]hen the woman is mature [and] prepared,” she added, “she works much better in collaboration with the man.”

But the strategy backfired, distancing women from the PAN and neutralizing its ability to recruit women into the party. The miscalculation further increased the PAN’s ineffectiveness in

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599 “Estado de Baja California...,” 26 July 1975, DGIPS, c. 1548-C, exp. 10, pp.138-9, AGN. See also “Estado de Baja California...,” 30 June 1975, DGIPS, c. 1575-D, exp. 14, pp.65-66, AGN.


601 On the role of conservative organizations such as the UNPF, ANCIFEM, and Desarrollo Humano Integral in the subsequent rise of neopanismo see Carlos Arriola, *Ensayos sobre el PAN* (Mexico City: Grupo Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1994), Chapter 3; and Alejandra Salas-Porras, “Corrientes de pensamiento empresarial en México (segunda parte),” *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 44:183 (May-December 2001), 227-257.

602 At the IYW conference, the PAN organized a panel in which presenters, while acknowledging women’s right to participate in political and social life, affirmed the belief that such participation should be based on their authority as mothers and guardians of the family. Partido Acción Nacional, *Las Mujeres en Acción Nacional: 60 Años de Trabajo y Consolidación Política* (Mexico City: PAN, 2008), p.168-169. Accessed in the Archive of the Partido Acción Nacional, Mexico City.

the face of an internal crisis which prevented it from running a presidential candidate in the 1976 election. “It was a coincidence,” a party historian later explained, “that in the years of the panista crisis there was no women’s organization and very few women participated in the party.”

Women’s civic activists succeeded in mobilizing conservative women at the very moment that the PAN was alienating its own female constituency. Even as the women’s civic movement fortified the PAN’s long-term viability, it did so from without, and in spite of the party itself.

**Conclusion**

In the short-term, the women’s civic movement expanded and reinvigorated educational protests, ultimately compelling the administration to backtrack on the reforms. Not only did the movement undercut public perceptions of educational protests as the product of collusion among UNPF leaders and economic elites engaged in a masculine quest for power. It rekindled protests across central and northern Mexico as the summer holidays dampened oppositional fervor. By early-July, women’s civic organizers had held nine state-level ‘post-congresses’ and scheduled thirty-five more, opened *Centros de Formación* in cities from Puebla and Mexico City to Guadalajara, León, Querétaro, Monterrey, and Durango, and, according to ANCIFEM spokeswomen, collected over 900,000 signatures from Mexicans opposed to the reforms. Prior to the start of the new school year in early September, the *Madres de Familia* and ANCIFEM launched a campaign demanding that Secretary of Education Victor Bravo Ahuja publicly clarify his personal views on foreign guerrilla movements and the normalcy of adolescent

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Bravo Ahuja did not, of course, so defame himself. But the following week the SEP announced substantial revisions to official primary school curricula—changes that press reports roundly attributed to the effectiveness of the opposition.

Though the government retained its authority as the sole provider of educational content, the revised textbooks abandoned the thirdworldist emphasis of their predecessors in favor of more intensive instruction in “[Mexican] traditions and customs [and] important national men.” In addition, SEP officials assured parents that the new curricula employed an “adequate vocabulary” to allay fears that the administration aimed to indoctrinate children. Although sexual education remained a core feature of the new curricula, public authorities pledged to allow greater input from parents, teachers, and interested organizations. The revisions succeeded, for the time being, in lowering the temperature of anti-government protests. Of course, the UNPF and ANCIFEM continued to clamor for curricular modifications congruent with their values and constitutional reforms limiting the state’s control over the educational system. As UNPF and Madres representatives put it in a public announcement responding to the administration’s apparent capitulation:

We hope that your opening to listen to the opinions of parents shows continued results, modifying those which today are still insulting for millions of Mexicans. WE HOPE THAT IT IS TRUE [and that] THE EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES BEHAVE SERIOUSLY, WITHOUT SECTARIAN PASSION, WITH AUTHENTIC DESIRE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.\(^{611}\)

It was the announcement’s concluding remarks, however, which spoke loudest to the larger significance of recent UNPF- and ANCIFEM-led protests. The statement’s authors admonished public officials to bear in mind that they would not diminish their authority by heeding the “reasonable petitions” of civic groups, but strengthen it.\(^{612}\) More than the issues around which they mobilized, it was protesters’ newfound commitment to sustained civic activism that left the most lasting imprint on conservative strategies and ideals.

Campaigns against the educational and sexual politics of Echeverría’s government engrained civic protest into the bedrock of conservative politics. After 1975, collaboration among Catholic activists, right-wing women, and entrepreneurs became an enduring feature of anti-government protests, and appeals to civic edification became their calling card. Characterizations of public authorities as morally bankrupt remained central to conservative critiques of state power under Echeverría’s successor, José López Portillo, and those critiques acquired renewed force after the 1982 economic crisis revealed the state to be fiscally bankrupt.

Unsurprisingly, then, the revival of right-wing opposition under López Portillo crystallized another pattern characteristic of 1970s protest movements: the approximation of religious and economic rationales for curtailing the state’s role in public life. As moralizing arguments against the dangers of secular statism became increasingly entangled with liberal economic ideology, anti-government protestors employed the language and ideals of democracy

\(^{611}\) “Estado de Durango…,” 7 September 1975, DGIPS, c. 1173, exp. 2, pp.530-534, AGN. Caps in original.
\(^{612}\) Ibid.
to legitimate their opposition to state-sponsored social uplift. If Mexico’s political system was not yet ripe for electoral challenges to the PRI’s reign, the protests of the 1970s erected the strategic and ideological foundations from which those challenges could arise.
Chapter 5
Manufacturing a ‘Business Mystique’ under the Alliance for Production

Writing for the monthly magazine *Nexos* in February 1979, Mexican scholar Carlos Arriola recalled the precarious situation that Echeverría’s successor, José López Portillo (1976-1982), had inherited two years earlier. Echeverría’s revitalization of the state’s role as “arbiter and regulator of social life,” Arriola averred, provoked a backlash that gravely imperiled government legitimacy. He referred to business leaders’ “intense campaign of [ideological] diffusion and active participation… in political life”—a campaign, he argued, that inspired intersecting protests among “broad and varied social groups and institutions.” The heterogeneous protest movement that emerged united influential business associations and “diverse civic organizations,” which, he suggested, received financial and organizational support from *norteño* business leaders. Consequently, Arriola claimed, the most urgent task facing López Portillo upon his inauguration in December 1976 had been reestablishing the “moral authority of the state and its rectorship of the development process.”613

Indeed, for most observers at the start of 1979 López Portillo’s government had done just that. The years 1978-1980 witnessed the apex of two related developments that were transforming Mexico’s economic and political outlook. The first was a dramatic economic recovery fueled in large part by the discovery of vast new oil reserves in the Gulf of Mexico. As Mexican petroleum production increased, the OPEC-induced spike in international oil prices that had so shaken Mexico’s economy under Echeverría became an economic boon, fueling annual

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613 Carlos Arriola, “¿Los empresarios tras el Estado?,” *Nexos*, 2:14 (February 1979), 3.
rates of growth exceeding eight percent. The second development was the rapprochement of the public and private sectors in a compact known as the Alliance for Production (Alianza para la Producción). As economic historians Carlos Bazdresch and Santiago Levy described it, the Alliance for Production was an accord “under which all social groups would participate in the process of economic recovery and political healing.” More concretely, the Alliance tempered hostilities between government and business representatives, softened labor demands, and fostered public-private sector cooperation in production and price-setting. López Portillo further mollified aggrieved conservatives by curbing official references to such controversial topics as federal educational policy, women’s liberation, and the redistribution of national resources. The resulting “honey moon,” as businessman Lorenzo Servitje characterized the respite, underpinned a period of optimism and prosperity that elided the tumult of Echeverría’s presidency.

Yet beneath the rosy patina of Mexico’s oil-fueled euphoria ideological dissention gnawed the newfound rapport between business leaders and government officials. Political and economic conditions at the end of Echeverría’s presidency hardened private-sector opposition to the state’s expanding role in Mexican development. When Echeverría left office at the end of November 1976 runaway inflation and price instability, soaring government debt, and massive capital flight had devastated the value of the peso, leading to Mexico’s most severe economic

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614 Haber, et. al., Mexico Since 1980, 45.
616 Arriola, “¿Los empresarios tras el Estado?,” 3.
617 “Testimonial de Don Lorenzo Servitje,” COPARMEX: Setenta años al servicio de México: Historia última parte (Mexico City: Coparmex, 1999), 6-7, IMDOCSOC. On the climate of optimism that characterized this period see Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 3.
crisis in more than two decades. The outgoing president’s ill-advised expropriation of private landholdings in northwestern Mexico less than two weeks before leaving office further alienated his opponents and stiffened the resolve of private-sector leaders to refine, and diffuse, an ideologically compelling alternative to state-led development. Despite the public fanfare surrounding the accord, the Alliance for Production did not dampen this resolve.

The following chapter explores business leaders’ continued efforts to undermine the state’s preeminence in public life during the Alliance for Production. Under López Portillo, Mexican business leaders quietly but assiduously nurtured a vision of Mexican politics and society that subsumed unpopular economic doctrines within a religiously-rooted conception of civic democracy consistent with the ideals championed by conservative protestors during the preceding administration. Though the renewed public amenity between business leaders and government officials during this period has largely obscured the contours of this work, the project that took shape fundamentally challenged traditional relationships among business, state, and society.

Central to this endeavor was a concerted effort on the part of business leaders affiliated with COPARMEX, the CCE, and USEM to fashion and disseminate a ‘business mystique’ that encouraged greater entrepreneurial participation in politics and society. As Roderic Camp has argued, pervasive anti-business sentiment in Mexico engendered a “negative self-image” among

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619 Maxfield, *Governing Capital*, 33. The public amenity between government and private sector leaders under the Alliance for Production, combined with a dearth of studies on the activities of Mexican business organizations during this period, has led researchers to view the private sector-led conservative protests that erupted in response to the 1982 bank nationalization as a sudden break. See, for example, Haber, et al., *Mexico Since 1980*. As I will discuss below, the strategies and narratives guiding those protests built upon the work of business and conservative civic groups over the preceding decade.
Mexican entrepreneurs that limited their willingness and ability to openly engage with civic and political life.\textsuperscript{620} To combat this image, the authors of this mystique recast the experiences of businessmen as uniquely suited to the problems confronting Mexican society, imploring their constituents to apply their values and leadership to the task of national political development.

The primary targets of this project were local, largely middle-class entrepreneurs in northern Mexico and the Bajío. Successive COPARMEX and CCE leaders worked to establish new local branches, expand membership in existing ones, and strengthen ties among varied business associations at the local, regional, and national levels. These self-appointed entrepreneurial luminaries used their organizations as both laboratories and conduits in a sweeping effort to reform businessmen’s understandings of their role in society and politics and galvanize the entrepreneurial rank-and-file behind a sociopolitical vision that integrated liberal economic, Catholic, and democratic ideals in a broad challenge to political centralism and paternalism. This network of business elites, I argue, cultivated an infrastructure of dissent that bridged their interests and ideals with those of middle-class entrepreneurs and religious conservatives, laying the groundwork for a broad political insurgency against the ruling PRI.

\textit{The End of Echeverrismo: Crisis, Expertise, and the State}

When Echeverría left office on 30 November 1976 Mexico’s economy was reeling. Despite continued high levels of economic growth during Echeverría’s tenure, rampant inflation eroded economic stability. Fueled by increased energy and import costs resulting from the OPEC oil embargo and elevated government spending, the average annual rate of inflation under Echeverría reached 16.8 percent, compared to just 2.7 percent during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{621} Declining production further exacerbated the situation, as growing demand for scarce consumer goods

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Camp, \textit{Entrepreneurs and Politics}.
\item Haber et. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 64-65.
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exerted sharp upward pressures on prices, which nearly doubled in 1973 and again in 1974.\textsuperscript{622} With the rising cost of goods squeezing real income, government officials implemented policies—including price freezing and emergency wage increases—that, while shoring up consumer purchasing power, also spurred inflation, reduced production incentives, and alienated private-sector leaders.\textsuperscript{623} Inflation and price instability undercut confidence in the government’s management of the economy, inciting fierce criticism from Echeverría’s detractors.

Equally important, the economic balance between the public and private sectors tilted markedly toward the state. Contrary to business leaders’ characterization of Echeverría’s economic program as a distillation of the Club of Rome’s “no growth” formula, Mexico’s economy grew by an average rate of 6 percent from 1970-1976.\textsuperscript{624} But the public sector’s share of that growth ballooned. Not only did public spending increase from 6.5 percent of GDP in the 1960s to over 11 percent by 1976.\textsuperscript{625} To combat rising unemployment Echeverría’s government expanded the number of state-owned industries nearly nine-fold, from a total of 85 in 1970 to 740 in 1976.\textsuperscript{626} When Echeverría left office the state accounted for roughly 30 percent of Mexico’s total economic output, a three-fold increase from 1970.\textsuperscript{627} Echeverría’s economic policy did, however, place greater emphasis on the ‘redistribution’ of income and resources than on production, and public spending on health, housing, and education, in particular, increased


\textsuperscript{624}\textit{Recent developments in Mexico}, 10; “Sánchez Navarro no cree...,” \textit{1 January 1974, Excélsior}

\textsuperscript{625}Data compiled by the World Bank. See http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Mexico/Government_size/

\textsuperscript{626}Haber, et. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 64-65; 53.

\textsuperscript{627}Bazdresch and Levy, “Populism and Economic Policy in Mexico”; \textit{Recent Developments in Mexico}, 24-25.
dramatically.\textsuperscript{628} For critics, as one analyst put it, “there was too much money going to consumer rather than capital needs.”\textsuperscript{629} As the state’s economic role expanded, government social experiments amplified anxieties over the future composition of Mexico’s mixed economy.

Soaring government expenditures also carried economic consequences beyond inflation. Following Echeverría’s failed tax reform, the state resorted increasingly to foreign borrowing to finance the federal budget.\textsuperscript{630} Further compounding the situation, a chronically overvalued peso reduced the competitiveness of Mexican exports—a critical source of government revenue and foreign exchange—deepening the administration’s dependence on external loans and creating unsustainable trade imbalances.\textsuperscript{631} To service its debt the government began spending its foreign reserves, a vital anchor for Mexico’s fixed exchange rate.

The main culprit in Mexico’s emerging foreign exchange crisis, however, was capital flight. By 1976, capitalists reacting to the deteriorating investment climate and seeking revenge on Echeverría for his anti-business rhetoric were spiriting billions of dollars in foreign reserves out of the country.\textsuperscript{632} In response, in September the government let the peso float against the dollar for the first time since 1954, resulting in a devaluation upwards of 40 percent. Another devaluation in November of that year brought that figure to 58 percent.\textsuperscript{633} The political fallout, in the words of one observer, “produced a picture of a nation divided and floundering.”\textsuperscript{634}

\textsuperscript{628} Babb, \textit{Managing Mexico}, 111-112; Haber, et. al, \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 35-36. As Babb points out, however, redistribution might not be the best term, as the stymied tax reform meant that public spending on consumer needs came largely from foreign loans rather than from existing national wealth. Shared development, therefore, entailed little sharing but much spending.
\textsuperscript{629} \textit{Recent Developments in Mexico}, 68.
\textsuperscript{630} The federal deficit increased from 6.7 billion USD in 1971 to 29.5 billion in 1976. Babb, \textit{Managing Mexico}, 112.
\textsuperscript{631} Haber et. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{632} Bazdresch and Levy, “Populism and Economic Policy,” 240-245.
\textsuperscript{633} Agustín, \textit{Tragicomedia Mexicana}, Vol 2, 114-115. From 1954-1976, the Mexican government adhered to a fixed exchange rate of 12.5 pesos to the dollar.
\textsuperscript{634} \textit{Recent developments in Mexico}, 10,
The deteriorating climate at the end of Echeverría’s presidency crystallized a contest between proponents of competing economic paradigms. Even in the wake of the 1976 crisis few political leaders or economists in Mexico publicly endorsed such central neoliberal tenets as unfettered global trade or the dismantling of the welfare state. Nevertheless, price instability and the specter of fiscal insolvency impelled heated battles over Mexican fiscal and monetary policy.

Scholarship on the resulting struggle has focused largely on internal rivalries among government economists and the university economics departments with which they affiliated.\(^{635}\) State interventionism in the 1970s tied the government’s legitimacy more firmly to its ability to directly foster economic development, increasing the demand for professional economists in Mexican policymaking circles.\(^{636}\) As Sarah Babb illustrates, economists in the Secretary of the Presidency and the Ministry of Natural Resources, which oversaw Mexico’s proliferating state-owned industries, held sway for most of the 1970s. On the far left of the developmentalist consensus, these economists included Echeverría’s Secretary of Budget and Planning, Carlos Tello, and José Oteyza, Mexico’s Secretary of Natural Resources from 1976-1982, both of whom completed graduate economics degrees at Cambridge University—the world’s bellwether institution for Keynesian and ‘post-Keynesian’ economic thought.\(^{637}\) Mexican policymakers who identified with the Cambridge school saw foreign borrowing and deficit spending as a viable way to accelerate economic growth, anticipating that the gains would eventually stabilize the budget.

For Echeverría and, ultimately, López Portillo, this economic ideology was a congenial one. As officials resorted to public spending to alleviate varied social, political, and economic pressures, government demand for Cambridge school economists grew, and state resources

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\(^{635}\) Centeno, *Democracy within Reason*; Babb, *Managing Mexico*

\(^{636}\) Centeno, *Democracy within Reason*, 182.

flowed more freely into the Center for Economics Education and Research (*Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas*, or CIDE), which emerged as the preferred training ground for Cambridge school economists in Mexico. In light of revenue shortfalls, the free-spending approach of these economists far-exceeded orthodox Keynesian practice; more than economic doctrine, their policies responded to political trends, new oil discoveries, and the loose lending practices of international bankers. Regardless, as neoclassical ideas gained acceptance in much of the Global North, critics portrayed economic conditions in Mexico as a referendum on the validity of Keynesianism and the mixed economic model. Beginning in the 1970s, Mexican economists concerned with profligate public spending turned increasingly to neoclassical ideas, fueling the polarization of economic expertise in Mexico.

On this side of Mexico’s technocratic divide were conservative developmentalists and monetarists housed in the Ministry of Finance and the Banco de México, who found theoretical inspiration in approaches gaining credibility in U.S. economics departments. Acutely concerned with inflation and price stability, they frequently clashed with Echeverría and López Portillo, whose penchant for replacing ministry heads who disagreed with them undermined the traditional autonomy of the central bank and Finance Ministry to determine their own leaders and personnel. In response, Banco and Finance officials channeled government funds to private Mexican universities such as the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education

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638 *Ibid.*, 118-119

639 As I will discuss in greater detail below, international financiers holding a glut of petro-dollars in the wake of the OPEC embargo and seeking investment outlets eagerly lent to developing nations in the 1970s. Due to the initial discovery of new oil reserves during Echeverría’s *sexenio*, Mexico was a favorite lending destination for international bankers, who lent to Mexico on terms that were initially favorable, but adjustable. See *Ibid.*, 114. As Babb points out, spiraling public debt in Mexico and other developing nations in the 1970s and 1980s resulted from profligate lending as well as profligate spending.

640 See, for example, *Recent Developments in Mexico*, 17-18.


(Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores, or ITESM) and, more importantly, the Mexican Autonomous Institute of Technology (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, or ITAM), which became bastions of Americanized economic expertise. These universities, and ITAM in particular, emerged as the premier recruiting grounds for the central bank and the Finance Ministry.  

The result was a striking paradox. Not only did interconnections among the central bank, the Finance Ministry, and their university affiliates give rise to an influential coterie of public officials whose Americanized economic vision directly contradicted the economic populism of Echeverría and López Portillo. It was the Echeverría and López Portillo governments that made the education and training of those officials possible by dedicating unprecedented levels of government funding to the professionalization of Mexican economics. During the economic crisis of the 1980s this new generation of economists rose to the forefront of the PRI’s governing elite, impelling a radical transformation of the party’s economic program. This intellectual sea-change has dominated scholarly interpretations of Mexico’s so-called neoliberal turn.

In her ground-breaking work on the PRI’s shift from nationalist to neoliberal economics, however, Sarah Babb questions the power of ideas to bring about such a fundamental change in Mexico’s ruling party. Far from an organic reaction to a new and compelling school-of-thought, she argues, the PRI’s technocratic changing-of-the-guard responded to the imperative of renegotiating Mexico’s external debt while avoiding a potentially devastating default. Simply put, the government needed brokers who could negotiate with foreign leaders and international financiers using a common language and economic framework. More than doctrinal

643 Babb, Managing Mexico, 118-120; 128-136.
644 Ibid., Introduction.
645 Centeno, Democracy within Reason; Babb, Managing Mexico.
646 Babb, Managing Mexico, Chapter 7.
consensus, Babb demonstrates, government money and practical necessity fueled the PRI’s
cconversion to neoliberalism; viewed from the top-down, ideas exercised little independent
influence in Mexico’s economic transformation.

Yet changes within the ruling party cannot in themselves explain such a dramatic reversal
in national economic policy, and ideas seldom adhere to the boundaries that specialists construct
for them.\(^{647}\) In the hands of entrepreneurial activists and their allies, the sterile precepts of
Mexico’s “money doctors” acquired the reproductive force of a humanist ideology.\(^{648}\) Not only
did this process disguise business leaders’ allegiance to neoliberal economics. It created new
social meanings and political expectations, with enduring consequences for Mexican society.

*Ideas and Ideals in the Interregnum: A Business Perspective*

Scholars have largely neglected the cultural and ideological work of business elites under
López Portillo and its long-term impact on Mexican political and economic life.\(^{649}\) Various
studies have pointed out that the conservative protests that erupted following the 1982 bank
nationalization relied heavily on the resources and organizational capacity of national business
organizations.\(^{650}\) But this observation, while important, presents a narrow view of entrepreneurial
involvement in those protests and the campaign that arose from them. More than material
support, it was business leaders’ provision of a counter-narrative explaining the causes of
Mexico’s impasse and offering an ideologically compelling remedy that channeled conservative
resentments into an enduring political movement. Against a backdrop of socioeconomic

\(^{647}\) On some of the ways that neoliberal economic ideas have acquired unenvisioned meanings within
varying cultural contexts see Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*; Blyth, *Great Transformations*; Ferguson, *Global
Shadows*.

\(^{648}\) Sarah Babb coined the term money doctors to describe this new generation of neoliberal technocrats.
See, for example Sarah Babb, “Neoliberalism and the Rise of the Money Doctors,” in Gerald Epstein, ed.,
*Financialization and the World Economy* (Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2005)

\(^{649}\) Cite Basanez (mostly Ech) and Salas-Porr as as exceptions

\(^{650}\) Mizrahi, “La nueva relación entre los empresarios y el gobierno”; Loaeza, “El fin del consenso.”
calamity, ideas became prime political currency, and the government’s shattered credibility gave leading entrepreneurs a substantial share of the market.

Exploring the actions and initiatives of Mexican business leaders under the Alliance for Production illuminates key aspects of Mexico’s long transition to neoliberalism. The economic crisis of 1976, though short-lived, strengthened the commitment of leading entrepreneurs to challenging the moral and intellectual foundations of state-led development. Despite the generally amiable tone of public-private sector relations in the early López Portillo years, leading businessmen restructured Mexican business organizations to expand the private sector’s role as a producer of economic knowledge and its capacity to propagate market-friendly views among middling entrepreneurs, business professionals, and the public at large. Like economists with the central bank, Finance Ministry, and private sector think-tanks, these businessmen saw inflation, price instability, and government indebtedness as grave threats to Mexico’s economy. In their script, however, the country’s economic maladies were symptoms of a deeper infirmity.

Leading entrepreneurs viewed populist economic policies as an organic outgrowth of the Mexican political system. Inflationary and deficit spending, in their view, were cogs in a patronage-machine that kept organized labor, rural campesinos, and federal employees dependent upon, and loyal to, the ruling party. To be sure, entrepreneurial activists understood that exalting impersonal market forces as infallible arbiters of human society was, in Mexico, politically toxic. But popular resistance to such a project was for them the byproduct of a governing elite that routinely and cynically appropriated the ideals of Mexico’s social revolution

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to perpetuate its own power. In crafting their own crisis narratives, Mexican business leaders defined the nation’s ailments as primarily political and moral, and only secondarily economic.

By revitalizing the rhetoric and regulatory protocols of the Mexican Revolution, Echeverría had awakened private sector insecurities that were largely dormant in preceding decades. In the words of an AmCham economist and critic of Echeverría, the more radical articles of Mexico’s 1917 Constitution “remained dead-letter for over a half century, until [Echeverría made them] the basis of a large number of new laws or decrees.” For Mexican business elites, Echeverría’s political vagary and expansion of central authority gave the 1917 Constitution an ominous hue. Consequently, Mexico’s Carta Magna loomed threateningly over private sector leaders.

On 20 November 1976, Echeverría invoked a slumbering constitutional provision in a decree that established the trajectory of business activism under the succeeding administration. Just ten days before the end of his term and on the official anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, the outgoing president announced the expropriation and pending redistribution of 137,135 hectares of highly productive, privately owned agricultural and grazing lands in the Yaqui Valley of southern Sonora. Although López Portillo’s government returned the lands to their original owners soon after taking office, the expropriation hardened a determination among an influential cadre of businessmen to remain actively, and permanently, engaged in national politics. Wary of the potential backlash from an organized incursion into party politics, however, they opted for a less conspicuous approach. As former president of the Mexican Employers’

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652 Recent Developments in Mexico, 21. The quoted statement was made by Redvers Opie in a written testimony submitted to the U.S. Subcommittee on Inter-American Economic Relationships of the Joint Economic Committee of the 95th Congress of the United States.
653 Agustín, Tragicomedia Mexicana vol. 2, 119.
Confederation (COPARMEX), José María Basagoiti (1982-1984), put it, business leaders immersed themselves, “not in a party, but in politics, for the design of the country.”

It was another consequence of the agricultural expropriation, however, that consolidated this political project. In the years leading up to the 1976 decree, declining agricultural productivity and Mexico’s growing reliance on food imports had brought agricultural issues to the forefront of national debates for the first time since the 1940s. An ideologically-charged contest over the future of the ejido system—a system of collective land tenure and agricultural production consolidated in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution—led, in 1975 and 1976, to a series of land invasions in the northern states of Sinaloa and Sonora. With the 1976 expropriation, Echeverría effectively converted Sonora’s peasant-occupied lands into ejidos even as private owners struggled to reclaim them. The reemergence of agricultural issues as a point of contention in public-private sector relations led COPARMEX, in 1978, to elect Sinaloan agribusinessman Manuel Clouthier, or Maquito, as he was popularly known, as its next president. Clouthier was the first agribusinessman to become president of the confederation in its fifty-year history, and he presided over a political awakening whose origins and import remain poorly understood.

**Clouthier, COPARMEX, and the CCE**

Born into a wealthy family in Culiacán, Sinaloa in 1934, Clouthier attended Brown Military Academy in the United States before enrolling at ITESM in Monterrey, where he completed his agricultural engineering degree in 1957. At ITESM Clouthier became active in university politics, serving as president of the university’s student association—an experience

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654 “Setenta Años al Servicio de México: Testimonios de nuestros expresidentes; Historia parte III,” Entorno (Mexico: COPARMEX, 1999), 16. IMDOSOC.
655 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 96; Agustín, Tragicomedia Mexicana, vol 2
that he credited with honing his political identity and leadership skills. While in Monterrey
Clouthier formed a lifelong friendship with Rogelio Sada Zambrano, nephew of Monterrey
industrial magnate Eugenio Garza Sada and the younger brother of Andrés Marcelo Sada, whom
Clouthier succeeded as president of COPARMEX in 1978.657 The Sada brothers’ relationship
with Clouthier and their affinity for his brand of activism undoubtedly favored Clouthier’s
ascension to COPARMEX’s highest post.658 Significantly, Clouthier’s presidency also
corresponded with an ongoing effort on the part of that organization to ‘decentralize’ its
leadership, which prior to the mid-1970s hailed disproportionately from Mexico City.659 But
neither Maquío’s links to COPARMEX’s founding family nor COPARMEX’s efforts to expand
its representation and influence in the provinces in themselves explain Clouthier’s rise in the
industrialist-dominated organization.660 The move, as Expansión’s editors confirmed after
Clouthier’s inauguration, responded to business leaders’ growing concern with agricultural
issues in the wake of the 1976 land expropriation.661

Prior to 1978, Clouthier had been a regional powerbroker with little direct influence over
national business associations. Upon returning to Culiacán following his graduation from
ITESM, Clouthier began farming rice and tomatoes on a seventy hectare plot that he inherited

657 Nanti, Maquío, 54-55.
658 Though COPARMEX elected its officers—almost all of whom, with the notable exception of Andrés
Marcelo Sada (1976-1978), were small or medium entrepreneurs—through a formal vote, it is clear that business
elites, and especially members of Monterrey’s leading industrial families, exercised considerable behind-the-scenes
influence on the selection of candidates. See Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 148-150, 165-166; Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”
659 On the pattern of decentralization see Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 165-166. Significantly, the
cited work was published in 1980, and notes only the appearance of the pattern. It could not, therefore, confirm
the pattern over the long-term or assess its significance for business activism and ideology in Mexico.
660 As I will discuss in greater detail below, the shift toward greater provincial representation among
COPARMEX’s leadership targeted the northern provinces specifically, where COPARMEX and the CCE underwent
rapid expansion beginning in the 1970s and from where a disproportionate number of its non-Mexico City-based
officers came after the mid-1970s. For a detailed account of the Garza Sada family’s establishment of COPARMEX
see Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite.
from his father, turning the operation into a profitable business and earning a reputation for enlightened labor practices.\(^662\) In the 1960s and 1970s he headed various local and regionally-based organizations, including the Culiacán River Farmers’ Association (\textit{Asociación de Agricultores del Río de Culiacán}, or AARC), the Sinaloan Confederation of Agricultural Associations (\textit{Confederación de Asociaciones Agrícolas del Estado de Sinaloa}), and the National Union of Vegetable Producers (\textit{Unión Nacional de Productores de Hortalizas}, or UNPH).\(^663\) In addition, Clouthier and his wife, Leticia Carrillo Cázarez, co-founded the Christian Family Movement in Mexico and actively participated in local branches of the Knights of Columbus (\textit{Caballeros de Colón}) and the National Parents’ Union (\textit{Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia}, or UNPF)—all while rearing eleven children.\(^664\) Clouthier’s preoccupation with family values and his charismatic portrayal of the private sector as a vehicle for Christianizing public life became hallmarks of his persona.

Maquío put his growing stature to use leading the regional opposition to Echeverría. Not only had he built a reputation as an effective business leader through his stewardship of varied agricultural associations. Clouthier personally owned or was the principal stockholder of more than two dozen agricultural, industrial, and retail businesses, belying his self-styled image as a ‘small businessman.’\(^665\) In the 1960s and 1970s Clouthier parlayed his farming business into Sinaloa’s largest and most diversified industrial group, the so-called Culiacán Group (\textit{Grupo

\(^{662}\) Nanti, \textit{Maquío}, 65-68.

\(^{663}\) “Clouthier del Rincón Manuel de Jesús: COPARMEX” undated, DGIPS, c. 11, legajo 1, hs. 32-35, AGN.

\(^{664}\) Nanti, \textit{Maquío}; Gómez Peralta, “The Role of the Catholic Church in Mexico’s Political Development”; “Antecedentes de Manuel Clouthier del Rincón” 14 September 1976, DFS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón versiones públicas, legajo 1, h. 59, AGN.

\(^{665}\) Clouthier frequently used the terms \textit{pequeño propietario} (small landholder) or \textit{pequeño empresario} (small entrepreneur) to describe himself. As Angus Wright points out, large landholders in Mexico frequently leased large tracts of land in the names of relatives to get around laws limiting the size of individual landholdings. See Wright, \textit{Death of Ramón González}. In addition, under Echeverría Mexican business leaders used the term ‘small entrepreneur’ to cast themselves as defenders of the middle classes. “Unión Agrícola Nacional,” 6 August 1976, DFS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón versiones públicas, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 15, AGN.
Culiacán), which he controlled along with a number of lesser stakeholders, including his uncle, Jorge del Rincón Bernal and Emilio Goicochea Luna, both of whom collaborated closely with Clouthier in coordinating conservative opposition in Sinaloa. The Culiacán Group exerted a dominant influence over local chapters of CANACO, CANACINTRA, and COPARMEX, as well as the UNPH and AARC—all of which were publicly hostile to echeverrismo. In addition, in 1973 Clouthier, del Rincón, and the president of CANACO-Culiacán, Enrique Murillo Padilla, anonymously founded the newspaper Noroeste, whose fiercely anti-government stance positioned the paper as an influential voice of opposition in the region.

Under director Silvino Silva Lozano (1973-1992), a close confidant of Clouthier, Noroeste’s Culiacán office doubled as a staging ground for conservative protests against Echeverría’s education and reproductive policies. Silva Lozano hosted frequent meetings of conservative civic and Catholic groups, offering up the paper’s resources and equipment to print flyers and other propaganda for protests and proselytizing activities. On one occasion, he oversaw the production of 75,000 leaflets to be dropped from a crop-dusting plane, though government agents seized them in a raid ahead of the scheduled flight, foiling the plan. Silva Lozano, however, offset the damage by publishing the contents of the confiscated leaflets in Noroeste the same week. As with anti-Echeverría protests in other locales across northern Mexico and the Bajío, Clouthier and his collaborators deepened ties among local entrepreneurs,

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666 Francisco Reveles Vázques, “Sinaloa 1986: Bloque en el poder, partidos políticos y participación ciudadana en las elecciones estatales” [Tomo I] (Master’s Thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1988), 76-79. It is worth noting that at the national level CANACINTRA was a vocal supporter of Echeverría’s government, due to the fact that the organization was controlled by Mexico City manufacturers whose industries relied heavily on government subsidies. Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 161-163. Of CANACINTRA’s local subsidiaries, Monterrey and Guadalajara were the two most important outside of Mexico City. Notably, both actively opposed Echeverría.

667 Nanti, Maquío, 101-104.

business organizations, and religious and civic groups. Equally important, his allegorical melding of business and Christian virtue reinforced the efforts of national business leaders to rehabilitate the public image of Mexican businessmen.

Clouthier’s tenures as president of COPARMEX (1978-1980) and, subsequently, of the CCE (1981-1983) consolidated trends that had begun under Echeverría. In the years following the CCE’s establishment COPARMEX and CCE leaders collaborated closely, further elevating COPARMEX’s profile within the larger panorama of private sector interest groups. As Basagoiti later complained, the CCE was itself organized as a “completely corporatist” body, which he later came to view as inconsistent with COPARMEX’s independent mission and identity. From its inception, however, the CCE’s leadership envisioned the peak organization as an instrument for promoting ideological unity and internal solidarity within the private sector.

Beyond its common cause with a nascent CCE, however, COPARMEX’s heightened prestige and ideological appeal among Mexican business leaders grew from a more complicated set of interrelationships. The succession of presidents leading the confederation during these years—Andrés Marcelo Sada (1976-1978), Manuel Clouthier (1978-1980), José Luis Coindreau (1980-1982), and José María Basagoiti (1982-1984)—were all actively involved in USEM prior to their transition to the more militant COPARMEX. By integrating USEM’s religiously-rooted vision of society within the action-oriented COPARMEX, this new generation of business leaders aligned their views more closely with conservative Catholic groups traditionally reluctant to publicly associate themselves with the country’s economic elite.

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669 Setenta años al servicio de México: Historia Parte III: Se impone la Defensa,” (COPARMEX, 1999), 17, IMDOSOC.
670 Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy.
671 Setenta años al servicio de México: Historia Parte III, 13-14
672 Loaeza, clases medias, 185-186; Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 2.
The cultural and ideological project that Clouthier and his collaborators fashioned blended elements of the market-centric, pro-business campaigns taking shape in the United States with a humanist ideal rooted in Catholic Social Doctrine. COPARMEX championed an ethos that attributed societal progress to the enterprising spirit of rugged, fiercely independent individuals—the heirs to a frontier tradition antithetical to government meddling in social and economic life. But entrepreneurial activists in Mexico distanced themselves from claims that impersonal market forces could alone channel human initiative to the maximum benefit of society. Their goal, of course, was much the same as that of their U.S. contemporaries: to broaden the appeal of market-friendly social and political values in the public sphere. The means through which Mexican business leaders aimed to achieve this goal, however, responded to conditions endemic to Mexico. For those such as Clouthier, Sada, and Basagoiti, the priority of first order was creating a common language and ideological framework for challenging entrepreneurs’ exclusion from political life.

In addition, Clouthier significantly expanded the reach of COPARMEX and the CCE, establishing new branches in the provinces and swelling membership in existing chapters. Between 1978 and 1979, membership in COPARMEX increased by more than thirty percent, from a total of 975 formally affiliated corporate members to 1,308. During the same span, COPARMEX established state branches, or Centros Patronales, in Querétaro, Durango, Baja California Norte, Colima, Veracruz, and Campeche. More, by the end of Clouthier’s term in 1980, COPARMEX counted more than 220 Centros at the municipal level. Maquío also promoted the creation of local CCE chapters, founding the Sinaloan Coordinating Council in

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673 Saragoza, The Monterrey Elite; Snodgrass, Deference and Defiance.
675 “XXXIX Asamblea Nacional Ordinaria de Centros Patronales...,” 18 April 1980, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 103-106, AGN.

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1977 and presiding over it until 1978, when he assumed leadership of COPARMEX, leaving CCE-Sinaloa under the direction of his uncle, Jorge del Rincón Bernal.\textsuperscript{676} Even as they promoted economic cooperation with the government, COPARMEX and CCE leaders worked to undermine the ideological foundations of state-led development.\textsuperscript{677}

A close examination of their efforts sheds new light on the protests and political activism that erupted among \textit{norteño} businessmen following the 1982 bank nationalization. What prevailing studies characterize as a sudden, reflexive response to the executive seizure of the nation’s financial system was in reality the upshot of a cautious but systematic project to reform Mexican entrepreneurs’ understanding of their role in society and politics.\textsuperscript{678} Absent a compelling sociopolitical alternative, their protests would have had little lasting impact. Instead, entrepreneurial and Catholic activists converged around an anti-statist vision in which a responsible, morally-upright, and productive citizenry, liberated from its dependency, would democratize political and economic life to the benefit of all.

\textit{Provincializing the ‘Business Mystique’}

In May 1978, two months after becoming president of COPARMEX, Clouthier discussed his vision for the confederation in an interview with the business magazine \textit{Expansión}. The interview came amid growing optimism concerning Mexico’s economic future, encapsulated in López Portillo’s now famous assertion that the country’s greatest remaining economic challenge

\textsuperscript{676} Not coincidentally, Del Rincón Bernal became vice president of COPARMEX under his nephew’s successor, \textit{regiomontano} businessman José Luis Coindreau. “Antecedentes del Ing. Agr. Manuel Jesús Clouthier del Rincón...,” 28 January 1983, DFS, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 231-236, AGN; “Estado de Sinaloa: Información de Culiacán,” 22 March 1980, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 119, AGN.

\textsuperscript{677} Setenta Años al Servicio de México: Historia Parte III, 17 Significantly, this project subsequently generated sharp divisions within CCE, where many elite members saw greater advantages in playing nice with the PRI-led government, Clouthier and his collaborators eschewed this pragmatic view in favor of a more ideological and activist approach.

\textsuperscript{678} See, for example, Haber, et. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}; Loaeza, “El fin del consenso.”
was the “administration of abundance.” Indeed, the amiable tone of the interview marked a sharp contrast from business leaders’ hostile depictions of the preceding administration. Clouthier affirmed that rising prosperity and renewed cooperation between the public and private sectors boded well for the country. “If I had to define it in a single word,” he noted regarding the significance of the Alliance for Production, “the word is confidence. We are living a totally different situation.” Clouthier’s praise for López Portillo’s capital-friendly policies notwithstanding, his comments highlighted key philosophical differences underlying business leaders’ public rapport with the new administration.

Among the more striking and consequential of these differences concerned the private sector’s political posture. When asked if his presidency signaled that COPARMEX would become more politically active, breaking “old dogmas and the whole of a Mexican tradition,” Clouthier responded affirmatively. “[B]ut,” he added, “I believe that it’s time we started thinking another way.” Clouthier defined politics broadly, as the act of promoting the “common good of the community,” suggesting that greater political involvement among Mexican businessmen would “strengthen democracy” by providing a counterbalance to the power of the state. “Life is evolution and change,” he averred. In Clouthier’s view, the tradition of private-sector political abstention was a relic from a dying era.

Despite his vocal support of the Alliance for Production, Clouthier was careful to distance his position, and COPARMEX’s, from the claims of administration officials that oil exports were an adequate basis for national development. Responding to the interviewer’s query as to how COPARMEX’s activities would support the “administration of abundance,” Clouthier

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679 Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 3.
681 Ibid., 33.
682 Ibid., 36.
conceded that Mexico’s petroleum reserves were an undeniable windfall. He pointed out, however, that “[t]here are countries that have great oil wealth and nevertheless live in the most terrible backwardness.” Clouthier likened new oil discoveries to winning the lottery. “I believe… that for the few people who have won the lottery [winning] hasn’t done them well if they don’t develop themselves in a harmonious way,” he posited. “So,” continued Clouthier, “we’re going to win the lottery, but this is the moment to lay the foundations for a harmonious development.”683 The new face of COPARMEX was not just questioning the ability of petroleum exports to prop up Mexico’s economy.

Invoking a paradigm increasingly familiar to Mexicans, Clouthier questioned the very substance of Mexican modernity. “I always think of development in an integral way,” he stressed to the interviewer; “[t]o grow in only one activity would be like a table that had one leg longer than the other three. The table would be lame.” Like many private-sector analysts, Clouthier was concerned that Mexico’s obsession with oil would encourage the neglect of other economic sectors. But that was not the point of the analogy. Rather, he posed, true development must be “integral, including the cultural, political, familial [and] economic planes.”684 Depictions of paternalism and state-sponsored materialism as the point-of-origin for wanton immorality, socioeconomic dependency, and civic negligence provided the ideological scaffolding for lasting alliances among entrepreneurs and conservative Catholics—alliances that, historically, had been conditional and fleeting.685 Even as they curried the favor of the new administration, Mexican business leaders nurtured their ties to religious conservatives. For the champions of ‘integral’

683 Ibid., 34.
685 Loaeza, clases medias, 185-186; Walker, Waking from the Dream, 46; Arriola, empresarios y el estado.
development, the root causes of Mexico’s societal ailments were political; consequently, so was the remedy.

Andrés Marcelo Sada articulated this view more forcefully in a write-up for *Expansión*. Sada echoed the claims of religious conservatives that social, economic, and moral discord in Mexico were related upshots of a centralized power structure in the hands of a secular political elite. Modern societies, Sada impugned, confronted a choice between “collectivist materialism… or the man without society, guardian of an irresponsible liberty”—in other words, hedonistic individualism. He characterized both “economic and non-economic problems” as the results of a political system that rejected subsidiary logic. Describing subsidiarity as a “principle of social efficiency” that “responds to a natural order,” he warned that paternalism, even in prosperous times, was “not subsidiarity, but rather inefficiency and denigration.” For the time being, however, private-sector leaders were careful not to antagonize the new administration.

Focusing their energies internally, entrepreneurial elites worked to unify their associates behind the ideals of integral development, civic edification, and political engagement. Former COPARMEX president Héctor Larios Santillán (1991-1993) subsequently stated that Clouthier’s tenure witnessed the consolidation of the confederation’s role as a “custodian and promoter of indispensable values and ideas.” Consequently, he posited, “through voluntary affiliation… increasing numbers of entrepreneurs, above all small and medium” joined COPARMEX from the late 1970s. Santillán noted that the bulk of this growth occurred in the provinces, where new and expanding *Centros Patronales*, as the confederation’s state and local chapters were known, promoted “important changes in… the zones where COPARMEX [had] an active presence,

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through the [political] participation of businessmen at the state and municipal levels.” In the words of another former COPARMEX president, Alfredo Sandoval González (1984-1986), members of the confederation championed the “thesis that the entrepreneur, as a citizen…had every right and moral duty to participate in politics.” The effectiveness of this project hinged on the ability of the confederation’s leaders to enlist middle-class entrepreneurs.

Expanding middle-class membership in provincial Centros from the late 1970s was a strategic innovation of considerable consequence. According to historian Roderic Ai Camp, from its inception in 1929 COPARMEX remained largely under the control of Monterrey’s industrial aristocracy. But with the exception of Andrés Sada’s presidency (1976-1978), which was an emergency response to Echeverría’s attacks, regiomontano elites shielded the confederation from charges of oligarchic dominance by populating formal leadership positions with non-elites. Regardless, so-called ‘small’ and ‘medium’ businessmen in Mexico often resented the influence, and arrogance, of their elite counterparts. As Camp has suggested, however, they tended to interpret official attacks on business leaders as an assault on the private sector as a whole. In this context, COPARMEX’s expansion provided an institutional conduit for business elites to propagate their vision of society among the entrepreneurial rank-and-file.

Animating this project was a widely-shared conviction that Mexico’s “ideological, spiritual, and economic discord,” as one prominent businessman described it, resulted from civic

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689 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics; Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”
691 Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics, 137-39.
692 Ibid., 137-149.
negligence. Expansión editor Arturo Villanueva signaled the business community’s commitment to promoting civic and political participation less than a year into López Portillo’s presidency. Warning that corruption in Mexico had evolved from what he begrudgingly characterized as a utilitarian political instrument into “an integral part of the system,” Villanueva admonished readers not to confine their understandings of corruption to the actions of those who directly engage in it. The blame, he insisted, lay with “all citizens, who condone it by not demanding [change].” To stress the point, Villanueva proffered a slant on López Portillo’s unifying mantra, “We are all the solution” (La solución somos todos). If that were indeed the case, he mused, then Mexicans must also acknowledge that “we are all corruption” (la corrupción somos todos). Mexican entrepreneurs, Villanueva implored, needed to cast off the psychological legacy of their political exclusion and embrace a new civic mentality.

Clouthier, for his part, saw entrepreneurial political engagement as a developmental imperative. Speaking at the fifty-year anniversary commemoration of COPARMEX in November 1979, to an audience that included President López Portillo and numerous other government functionaries, Clouthier insisted that “COPARMEX is not, nor does it intend to be a political organization,” in that it did not seek “to obtain [political] power.” He admonished, however, that:

[O]ne of the gravest problems in achieving political development [in Mexico] consists [of the fact] that within our sector, as in some others… politics continues to be viewed as something dirty or sinful, from which we should abstain in order to preserve prestige and to be able to negotiate [using] our passivity.

694 “¿Dónde quedó la bolita,” 17 August 1977, Expansión 9:222, 1.
695 “La Política: ¿algo sucio o pecaminoso?,” 16 November 1979, DFS versions públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 2, h. 73, AGN.
Clouthier’s disparaging reference to the traditional business practice of abstaining from politics in exchange for economic favors signaled a fundamental departure in public-private sector relations.696 “If we want to modernize ourselves and decentralize the Federation,” he exhorted, “we must demand honesty in our governors.”697 In this task Clouthier envisioned a special role for provincial entrepreneurs; but to fulfill this role, he insisted, local businesspeople required the tutelage of their blue-blooded compatriots.

A key component of this tutelage involved the provision of information and guidance to local entrepreneurs struggling to make sense of distant political developments. As paraphrased by one writer, Clouthier frequently lamented that “provincial entrepreneurs feel that they are in the dark about many of the things that happen in the country; they consider that they receive little information.” Consequently, he continued, paraphrasing Clouthier’s views, “rumors thrive, gossip flows, and joining together in a… common national task is made difficult, if not impossible.” For Clouthier, “good communication [was] necessary to integrate us as a nation,” and private sector elites had a responsibility to fill the gaps where official information was deficient.698 Implicit in Clouthier’s allusions to an information-gap, however, was a keen understanding that the federal government also faced an intractable credibility-gap. Not only did Mexicans too often find government communications on important issues lacking; distrust of official information was rampant. It is hardly surprising, then, that COPARMEX’s growth and activities during these years targeted precisely those regions where the credibility-gap was widest.

696 See, for example, Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics
697 “La Política: ¿algo sucio o pecaminoso?,” 16 November 1979, DFS versions públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 2, h. 73, AGN.
698 Ibid.
COPARMEX leaders sought to capitalize on widespread distrust in the government across much of central and northern Mexico, but the vacuum into which the confederation inserted itself grew not only from inadequate government communications. Equally important, it fed off a deeper questioning of existing models of economic development and political representation. As early as July 1979—at the pinnacle of the Alliance for Production—middle- and upper-class respondents to a public opinion survey in Monterrey and Guadalajara suggested, in the words of one reporter, that the “traditional mixed economy of Mexico appears to have lost the favor of the [social] classes consulted.” Of course, in Monterrey and Guadalajara—the country’s largest industrial centers outside of Mexico City—the “classes consulted” consisted largely of entrepreneurs and business professionals. Notably, eighty-nine percent of survey respondents, and ninety-two percent of those from Monterrey, believed that all major companies should be in the hands of private owners. 699

Upon taking the reins at COPARMEX Clouthier launched a campaign targeting locales across northern Mexico. The public rationale for the campaign was to mobilize local and regional businessmen behind the Alliance. Clouthier reassured business owners and members of local business associations that Mexico’s recovery from the 1976 crisis was complete and that López Portillo’s government provided a stable, prosperous economic climate. He and other leaders of the confederation implored their constituents to invest, create jobs, and comply with official price-setting measures. 700 But to facilitate these goals, they proposed, the confederation needed to renovate its provincial infrastructure.

699 “Opinión Pública: Sólo una cara de la moneda,” 25 July 1979, Expansión 11:270, 64-65. Notably, the survey did not even collect responses from poor or working class citizens due to their perceived inability to answer in an informed manner. The high rates of dissatisfaction were a reflection of elite and middle class views.

700 “Concretizar en el Campo, Compromiso de Clouthier...,” 11 March 1978, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 2, h. 122, AGN; “Estado de Tamaulipas...,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J.
In 1978 COPARMEX created the Entrepreneurial Promotion Center (Centro de Promoción Empresarial), which provided local businessmen with information and services to assist them in identifying and navigating growth and investment opportunities. The Center’s first order of business, per its 34-year-old coordinator, Jorge Enrique Orozco, was a “campaign of dissemination, promotion, and motivation… through the celebration of seminars in different cities of the provinces.”\(^7\) Those seminars, which took place in September in the northern cities of Culiacán, Saltillo, and Coahuila, followed an agenda established the preceding June at meeting of the Employers’ Centers of the Northeast (Centros Patronales del Noreste), comprised of Centros Patronales from the states of Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and Coahuila.\(^7\) Encouraging business formation and expansion in support of the Alliance was indeed a central theme of that agenda. Other initiatives, though, were of greater long-term consequence.

Clouthier intensified efforts begun under Andrés Sada to expand interconnections among regional Centros Patronales and unify local businessmen behind the vision and ideals of the national leadership. In addition to promoting local investment and job creation, COPARMEX’s Promotion Center integrated the operations and communications of local and state Centros throughout northern Mexico.\(^7\) Enhancing intercommunication among COPARMEX’s local affiliates and unifying the confederation’s messaging were key features of Clouthier’s plan of action. At the marathon ten-hour meeting of the Centros Patronales of the Northeast Clouthier stressed the importance of strengthening and expanding ties among local Centros as well as forging closer relationships with other local-level business organizations, including the CCE and

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\(^7\) “Estado de Tamaulipas...,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J. Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 85, AGN;
“Estado de Tamaulipas...,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J. Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 86, AGN.

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CANACO. For Clouthier, a central goal of such linkages was to “affix the politics of the centros patronales” behind a common approach. Even so, he continued to shield the confederation from charges of political interference.

Clouthier’s vision for COPARMEX was, on the surface, a contradictory one. Clouthier implored associates at the meeting in Nuevo Laredo not to undertake “political activities under the name of this organization, neither open nor surreptitiously.” Throughout his tenure at COPARMEX, he was careful to preserve the private sector’s accord with López Portillo—an accord that, not coincidentally, was strongest during the boom years from 1978-1980, when corporate profits grew apace with the economy and the government remained firmly on the side of capital in labor debates. As long as the government upheld corporate interests and economic conditions remained favorable, COPARMEX’s leadership was content to keep its philosophical quibbles to a murmur, deterring members from engaging in organized opposition in the name of COPARMEX or the private sector as a whole. All the while, however, they prodded their constituents, as citizens, to play an open, active, and permanent role in civic and political life.

As Noroeste’s José J. Castellanos reported, Clouthier’s primary objective as president of the confederation was to create a “new mystique of solidarity and subsidiarity” among Mexican businessmen. By positioning COPARMEX as a trusted source of information and establishing institutional instruments for unifying private sector views, the architects of this mystique created channels for nurturing a new entrepreneurial self-image in those regions where conditions were

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704 “Estado de Tamaulipas.,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J. Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 85, AGN; “Estado de Tamaulipas.,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J. Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 86, AGN. Notably, Eduardo Longoria, the director of the Centro Patronal of Nuevo Laredo, where the meeting was held, was in attendance.
705 “Estado de Tamaulipas.,” 15 June 1978, DGIPS, Manuel J. Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 85, AGN.
706 “Concretizar en el Campo, Compromiso de Clouthier.,” 11 March 1978, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 2, h. 122, AGN.
most favorable. In effect, they constructed an infrastructure of dissent by reconfiguring the institutional, informational, and philosophical linkages among local entrepreneurs, national business leaders, and conservative civic groups. Clouthier argued that such linkages would “facilitate learning in [the realm of] decision-making and extend the education” of local businessmen and their employees. By making the guidance and expertise of Mexican business leaders available to local entrepreneurs, Clouthier proposed, he and his peers promoted the key to integral national development—the “human factor.”

National business leaders blended Catholic, ‘integralist’ understandings of the human condition with those proffered by a new generation of managerial theorists. Unlike stake-holders in large corporations, the middling entrepreneurs that populated local business organizations often had little exposure to new approaches in business administration, and the generally modest size of their companies limited the practical utility of new managerial theories, which addressed the needs of large, diversified corporations. As sociologist Mauro Guillén has shown, managerial theories associated with Peter Drucker and Douglas McGregor, whose pioneering works had a transformative impact on corporate human relations practices, were most readily adopted by business leaders in Catholic countries.

707 “La Política: ¿algo sucio o pecaminoso?,” 16 November 1979, DFS versions públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 2, h. 73, AGN.
708 For a detailed discussion of the ways that new managerial theories focused primarily on the needs of large corporations see Waring, Taylorism Transformed; Guillén, Models of Management; and Stephen P. Waring, “Peter Drucker, MBO, and the Corporatist Critique of Scientific Management,” in Daniel Nelson, ed. A Mental Revolution: Scientific Management since Taylor (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1992).
709 Guillén, Models of Management, 129.
Indeed, the understandings of human nature to which those approaches adhered—understandings derived largely from the work of psychologist Abraham Maslow—shared remarkable similarities to Catholic prescriptions for the integral development of individuals and communities.\footnote{On Maslow’s influence see Waring, \textit{Taylorism Transformed}, 52-64, 78.} According to these understandings, people could achieve ‘self-actualization’, in managerial parlance, or ‘integral development’, after the Catholic fashion, only through creative problem-solving and responsible participation in collective decision-making toward a common objective. Consequently, paternalistic or authoritarian controls—within corporations or society at large—were antithetical to self-realization, stripping individuals of the right, and the will, to actively contribute to the common good. Understandably, scholarship on administrative approaches incorporating Maslow’s insights has focused almost entirely on their impact within corporations themselves.\footnote{See, for example, Waring, \textit{Taylorism Transformed}; Guillén, \textit{Models of Management}; and W. Jackson Duncan, \textit{Great Ideas in Management} (San Francisco and London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989), Chapter 9.} For Mexican business leaders, however, the same concepts were applicable to social and political life.

Entrepreneurs such as Clouthier, Sada, Servitje, and Basagoiti uniformly touted private businesses as vehicles for nurturing the intellectual and moral qualities essential to the healthy development of individuals and society. Private companies, they proclaimed, not only drove economic progress; they were extensions of the family and community. As such, they engendered the virtues of responsibility, cooperation, and leadership on which family and civic life, as well as social and political cohesion, depended. As Basagoiti described it, a business was in essence a “community of persons. A micro society.” “[L]ike the broader society,” he opined, this micro society “integrated” its disparate members into single, cooperative unit, teaching them to value the common good above individual aspirations and accolades.\footnote{“José María Basagoiti: No es la hora de lamentaciones,” 9 June 1982, \textit{Expansión} 14:342, 58-60.}
Per this rationale, the antidote for the paternalist scourge was, paradoxically, enlightened patrons. Belying their repeated demands that the previous administration take a ‘hard line’ toward leftist dissidents, this new breed of entrepreneurial activists proclaimed that true authority rested not on the power to coerce or co-opt, but on the ability to inspire and motivate. And contrary to government functionaries, they contended, entrepreneurs understood the importance of the psychological, or spiritual, wage. Finding individual fulfillment in disciplined action and personal sacrifice toward a collective goal, they insisted, required the guidance of wise, compassionate authorities, and entrepreneurs had the requisite values and experience to provide this guidance. As Servitje explained it, Mexico’s political leadership sought to “make everyone happy through deficit-spending” and material gratification, resulting in chronic “mediocrity,” the “discrediting of excellence,” and a loss of “moral authority.” “True leadership,” he counterposed in an oblique tribute to Ayn Rand, lay in the capacity to “mobilize the creative minorities” behind the common good. Servitje argued that because people were “essentially equal but existentially unequal,” hierarchy was an inevitable consequence of the natural order. But where all human groups required a “boss,” authority should rest not on physical coercion or patronage but on the “moral force to make them obey.” This notion was a central pillar of the ‘business mystique’ and a recurring theme in efforts to rehabilitate the image of Mexican entrepreneurs as legitimate political actors.

In his parting address as president of COPARMEX in April 1980, Clouthier elaborated at-length on the composition and requirements of this new entrepreneurial ethos. Exhibiting his flair for religious metaphor, he warned his audience that without determined action on the part of

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713 For an early example of business leaders’ public demands that the government take a hard line (linea dura) toward radical leftist groups see “Urge Poner Hasta Aquí,” El Norte, 19 September 1973, 1-A.
714 “Hacen falta de líderes,” 19 September 1979, Expansión 11:274.
the private sector “oil will be converted to revenues that will be wasted on subsidies to give… a fish to the hungry, instead of teaching him how to fish.” He stressed, however, that treating this “dependency complex” required that Mexican entrepreneurs apply their talents and, more importantly, their values to all aspects of public life. Contrasting the supposedly econo-centric “negociante” (businessman) with the true “empresario” (entrepreneur), Clouthier posited that the primary distinguishing characteristic of the latter was not rationality or efficiency—though empresarios surely possessed these qualities in abundance—but “human warmth.”

He implored members of Mexico’s private sector to continue propagating the “business mystique,” which, he effused, was “born from our loftiest human and patriotic, cultural, familial, entrepreneurial, and political values.” It was these values, he insisted, that would consecrate society’s commitment to “unity and work, enthusiasm, and active and responsible participation.” For Clouthier, these qualities were uniquely suited to larger societal concerns.

Clouthier championed USEM’s narrative that private businesses were analogues of society and, as such, provided models on which to base new and improved forms of social organization. “Great historical feats,” he acclamed in his address, “demonstrate that motivation and productivity accelerate notably when a mystique of unity and achievement lives and [that] they are retarded when there is indifference.” Clouthier insisted, however, that the “greater responsibility” for creating the requisite conditions for ‘unity and achievement’ lay with “leaders.” After all, he adduced, the “determining factor” in the success of a business was not

715 The distinction, as implied by Clouthier, between negociante (as businessman) and empresario (as entrepreneur) does not correspond precisely to the meaning of either term, in English or in Spanish. Empresario more often denotes a business owner, where negociante applies to a broader range of business-related vocations. Clouthier’s used the term empresario to convey a more comprehensive social vision and commitment to resolving societal problems beyond those that directly affected one’s company or business enterprise. Significantly, in so doing he aimed to apply the term more broadly, to anyone associated with the private sector, in any capacity.

capital; it was “administration.” “[T]o be a leader,” Clouthier continued, “vocation and aptitudes are not enough; it also requires an untarnished patriotism and spirit of sacrifice, inspired enthusiasm, and [obtaining] the good will of one’s subordinates.” In case the implicit comparison was not yet apparent, he rounded it out with the congratulatory assertion that entrepreneurs “do not seek parallel solutions for our workers, but rather a business mystique that includes them as [both] beneficiaries and active subjects” of the company. “Only the worker of a true empresario is fully considered a human being,” Clouthier avowed.717 Likewise, the analogy implied, citizens who looked to the state for solutions forfeited their human potential in a misguided quest for gratification free of sacrifice.

Subsequent declarations further highlighted the peculiar ideological mélange from which the new mystique derived. Like other business leaders who made the transition from USEM to COPARMEX and the CCE, Clouthier tacked seamlessly between references to administrative psychology and Catholic social teachings—a kind of philosophical fusionism that he viewed as intrinsic to the private sector.718 “Free enterprise,” he posed in his exit speech, was “by nature, the conjunction of many values.” He acknowledged the material functions of private companies in the areas of job-creation, the provision of goods and services, and combating poverty, but, he insisted, these were an inadequate basis for understanding the social function of business. Clouthier argued that while entrepreneurial leaders “suffer over [social] misery,” their experience and innate qualities served a greater cause.

To fulfill their obligation to society, Clouthier believed, Mexican businessmen must apply the business mystique to the task of civic edification. He contended that having captained

717 Ibid., 16.
718 Historian Kim Phillips-Fein used the term fusionism to describe similar processes of ideological mixing in the United States, as businessmen and conservative intellectuals grafted new meanings onto neoclassical economic ideas. See Philips-Fein, Invisible Hands, 77.
their respective businesses—“communit[ies] of men integrated through effort”—Mexican entrepreneurs “appreciate the importance of the subsidiary and solidary integration of all intermediate societies, which will… lead to the common good of the nation as a whole.” For this reason, he declared, the cornerstone of the mystique was “civism, a new type of heroism” and the only means of fostering the “integral development [of Mexico] and all its people.” Oddly enough, Clouthier concluded his reproof of paternalism with a parenting analogy:

Before being businessmen, we form part of a family, and in this we teach ourselves to love those who are not our equals; we understand [inequality] and we do everything possible to preserve the solidity of the Mexican [national] family. We educate our children in liberty and responsibility… We give them as much freedom as possible and exercise only as much authority as necessary… If we educate by the enlightened principle of subsidiarity, they will… construct a tomorrow where there is as much society as possible and only as much state as necessary.\footnote{\textit{“Testimonio del Ing. Manuel Clouthier del Rincón,” \textit{Setenta Años al Servicio de México: Historia Parte II,”} (Mexico: COPARMEX, 1999), 16-18, IMDOSOC.}

Clouthier recycled and redeployed this analogy repeatedly as a parable for his social philosophy, its final refrain becoming a rallying cry for increased private-sector participation in Mexican politics.

Significantly, Clouthier concluded his term at a time when Mexican business leaders were growing increasingly concerned about the future of the Alliance for Production and the implications of the state’s expanding economic role. Despite continued high rates of economic growth and a generally prosperous business climate, other political and economic trends were exposing rifts in the public-private sector compact. Even as government officials trumpeted the arrival of Mexican ‘abundance’, business leaders suggested that the country was in a state of perpetual crisis. “Mexico’s situation has put and will continue putting before us a crisis with
diverse aspects,” Clouthier declared to his constituents, admonishing them to “foresee danger and take advantage of the opportunity” it presented. Clouthier’s comments, seemingly hyperbolic in the economic context of 1980, were also prescient. Mexico was indeed hurtling toward renewed economic crisis, although neither private- nor public-sector leaders foresaw the depth of that crisis or the speed at which it was approaching.

The Politics of a Strained Alliance

When Clouthier’s term as president of COPARMEX ended in May 1980, continued high levels of economic growth obscured more troubling indicators. For one, Mexico’s balance of trade was rapidly deteriorating. Historians Stephen Haber, Kevin Middlebrook, and Noel Maurer describe Mexico’s oil boom as a “pyrrhic victory,” where revenues from expanding petroleum exports were quickly consumed by costs incurred through the importation of specialized drilling, pumping, and refining equipment needed to bring the oil to market. Consequently, they point out, even as oil production peaked the “balance of trade remained in deficit.”

Even more problematic were government policies for financing oil production in the face of this imbalance. Where oil exports were insufficient to offset Mexico’s dependence on imported capital equipment, international banks were eager to fill the void. After 1973, the OPEC embargo impelled a largescale transfer of global wealth from oil-importing to oil-exporting nations. The beneficiaries of this transfer, whose generally anemic domestic economies offered limited investment opportunities, sought more profitable ways to invest oil revenues, entrusting enormous sums to international banks based in the United States and Europe. These banks, in turn, saw the governments of industrializing nations, and especially

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Haber, et. al., *Mexico since 1980*, 45.
those with large oil deposits of their own, as sound investments that would yield hefty returns from projected oil revenues.721

This ‘petro-dollar cycle’ channeled enormous quantities of liquid capital into the Global South via loans whose terms were initially favorable to borrowing countries.722 Thanks to financial ‘innovations’ pioneered by Citibank chief executive Walter Wriston, however, the loans were subject to variable interest rates intended to protect lenders against the possibility that inflation would outpace the interest accrued on the loans, resulting in losses for the banks.723 While interest rates on these loans—of which Mexico and Brazil were Latin America’s largest recipients—remained low prior to 1981, the prospect of rate increases on outstanding balances was a ticking economic time-bomb. Meanwhile, borrowing countries were acutely vulnerable to fluctuations in international oil prices and in the volume of available petroleum reserves. Egregious though it was, López Portillo’s profligate spending was an outgrowth equally wanton international lending practices.724 The conditions of Mexico’s loans, however, provided safeguards for creditors alone.

Despite its high-performing economy, Mexico was dangerously exposed. The country’s public-sector debt tripled from 1974 to 1980, increasing from $US10 billion to $30 billion, and would double again over the next two years, reaching $60 billion by 1982. Approximately forty-five percent of the government’s total foreign borrowing went to the state-controlled oil giant,

721 Ibid., 60-61; Walker, Waking from the Dream, 144-145; Babb, Managing Mexico, 114-118.
724 Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 5; Babb, Managing Mexico, 114-116, 181-185.
PEMEX, which used the funds to finance the construction and operation of offshore drilling platforms and onshore processing facilities, expand oil refineries, conduct further exploration, and purchase capital goods and foreign expertise. The government used the remaining fifty-five percent to paper over widening budgetary shortfalls, heavily subsidizing uncompetitive private domestic industries, and, more importantly, a rapidly expanding parastatal sector. Under López Portillo, the total number of state-controlled industries in Mexico increased from 740 in 1976—up from just 85 as late as 1970—to 1,155. A vital source of employment, these companies nevertheless demanded a growing share of state revenues. Unlike in the preceding administration, where social spending was paramount, the lion’s share of government expenditures under López Portillo went toward production. Consequently, business opposition to increased public spending under the Alliance for Production remained relatively subdued even as an expanding money supply eroded price stability.

Beyond deficit-spending, López Portillo’s government resorted to the dangerously inflationary practice of printing money to bankroll its sprawling obligations. External loans and domestically-manufactured currency flooded Mexico’s market after 1978, resulting in an overall increase in the rate of inflation from 16.8% in 1976—already an alarmingly high figure in relation to the single-digit norms of the 1960s—to a staggering 27.9% in 1981. Collaborative efforts to mitigate the effects of inflation on consumers were a centerpiece of the Alliance for Production, and public- and private-sector representatives reached repeated agreements to keep the cost of goods down through a combination of wage suppression, production increases, and

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726 Haber, *Mexico since 1980*, 53.
While such ad-hoc measures gave the private sector what one observer described as “public relations” victories, they did little to address the underlying causes of inflation, and the failure to stabilize prices set the stage for renewed debates over the causes, and culprits, of the inflationary spiral.

Tensions over rising inflation simmered just below the surface of the Alliance. Even as cabinet-level debates between so-called monetarists and expansionists intensified, business leaders were reluctant to openly criticize government economic policy. Despite having sufficient numbers of “very capable economic analysts” at their disposal, complained one business reporter, Mexico’s leading entrepreneurs “follow the directions of political declarations and apologies” concerning the state’s responsibility for inflation. With the notable exception of CCE president Prudencio López (1979-1981), who publicly defended the “monetarist thesis” that the “germ of the inflationary infection” was a combination of printed money and a “super extensive parastatal network,” private-sector leaders declined to openly associate themselves with a particular economic paradigm. Contrary to the characterizations of more hawkish proponents of monetary contraction, however, this reluctance did not equate to kowtowing. When a reporter asked if the government’s expansionist policies were a source of tension within the private sector, Clouthier dismissed the notion that the economic philosophies of the business community and the state were incompatible. “More than an expansionist policy, I believe the

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729 Ibid, 112-115; Walking, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 3.
731 Babb, Managing Mexico, 116-120; Centeno, Democracy within Reason. As Babb argues, the terms “monetarist” and “expansionist,” which applied to international schools of thought associated with neoclassical and Keynesian economic approaches, respectively, were not necessarily the most apt descriptors for rival camps in Mexican context. Babb contends that Mexican developmentalism under the ISI model that prevailed from the mid-1940s until roughly 1970 offers a better baseline for assessing the views of Mexican economists in this period.
current government has followed a policy of conciliation,” he averred. True to message, for Clouthier the cardinal sin of Mexico’s rulers was not their allegiance to any economic doctrine, but to maintaining power through the allocation of patronage.

This is not to say, of course, that Clouthier or his elite cabal of ideological engineers were nonpartisans in the battle of economic ideas. On the contrary, they aggressively disseminated the findings of private-sector think-tanks, among the most important of which was the Center for Economic Studies of the Private Sector (Centro de Estudios Económicos del Sector Privado, or CEESP). A subsidiary of the CCE and an unwavering proponent of monetarism and free trade whose founder and president, Gastón Azcárraga Tamayo, was another of USEM’s esteemed progeny, the CEESP regularly published its findings in specialized outlets such as Síntesis Económico, Expansión and Análisis Económico, an offshoot of the Christman-led Expansión Editorial Group (Grupo Editorial Expansión) tasked with publishing more rigorous economic analyses. Business leaders used these studies to inform their decisions on company- or sector-specific issues as well as to guide their negotiations with public authorities on broader macroeconomic matters.

But the CEESP reached its widest audience through private-sector organizations. National business leaders circulated pamphlets and other literature summarizing CEESP studies among their provincial associates, organized seminars promoting the Center’s views and conclusions, and frequently reiterated those points at meetings of local business associations. As

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736 “Organización Actual del Sector Privado,” 22 October 1981, DFS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón versiones públicas, legajo 1, hs. 127-134, AGN
Clouthier explained at a meeting of the Centro Patronal in Tampico, Tamaulipas in March 1980, the government “invests more than it gets back and falls into dangerous practices to soften the effects of inflation, such as… foreign loans and, much more dangerous still,” printing currency.\textsuperscript{737} If they were cautious in their statements to the press, leading entrepreneurs diffused monetarist and free-market ideas widely among their local associates, whose distrust in government information on the economy created a receptive audience. Yet even in these efforts they subsumed economic prognostications within a broader critique of the Mexican political system.

These criticisms intensified under Clouthier’s successor at COPARMEX, regiomontano businessman José Luis Coindreau (1980-1982). Known for his confrontational style, Coindreau’s election prompted one business reporter to ask: “Is the storm approaching?”\textsuperscript{738} Though he too abstained from directly attacking López Portillío or individual public officials, Coindreau did not conceal his contempt for the PRI’s ideological expedience. “Still they try to justify the populist theses,” he lamented in a statement to the press. Coindreau supported the Alliance for Production, but his strident criticisms of the political system brought the contradictions underlying the accord bubbling to the surface. After Coindreau publicly excoriated national reporters that “only the scavengers of discontent and delirious utopias can deny our [political] reality,” numerous public functionaries warned business leaders, in the words of one writer, to “dedicate yourselves to that which is yours, which is to produce, and leave politics to those who know how to do it.”\textsuperscript{739} Despite Coindreau’s more bellicose instincts, there was little appetite within the private sector for renewed hostilities with the state; the new head of COPARMEX did

\textsuperscript{737} “Estado de Tamaulipas…,” 11 March 1980, DGIPS version públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hojas 117-118, AGN.
\textsuperscript{738} “¿Se avecina la tormenta?,” 14 May 1980, Expansión 12:290.
not precipitate the unraveling of the Alliance. Rather, he immersed himself in the work that Andrés Sada and Clouthier began.

Coindreau energetically promoted the business mystique among COPARMEX’s local associates, crisscrossing central and northern Mexico urging private-sector unity behind the new ethos. His most striking—and strained—paean to entrepreneurs’ ostensive ethical metamorphosis came in March 1981, at the annual meeting of Centros Patronales. Coindreau acclaimed that his constituents’ fealty to the business mystique had created an entirely new category of social actors. Like his predecessors, the USEM alum attributed this purported existential leap in large part to enlightened administrative practices. Mexican entrepreneurs, Coindreau asserted, had “moved away from the once rigid worker-patron relations, transforming them into Human Relations.” Consequently, he admonished:

[T]he term capitalism diminishes [entrepreneurs] and does not define the richness of the Entrepreneurial philosophy; distorted above all in the public opinion, it is a term that no longer corresponds to the entrepreneurial way of thinking; the true capital is the human being; the economic resource, investment, is but a condition of [the] possibilities of business.

For Coindreau, this new entrepreneur was no factor of production, defined through his creation of wealth or his provision of goods and services. He was, rather, a social pioneer, devoted above all to developing responsible citizens “through freedom and productive work,” transforming the “sociological environment” so that “intermediate societies” could flourish. “We no longer passively await messianic solutions,” Coindreau pontified; “far from it, through the rationale of solidarity and effective subsidiarity we have learned that we will all continue being the solution”

740 “XL Asamblea de los Centros Patronales de la R.M.,” 20 March 1981, DFS, José María Basgoiti Noriega versiones públicas, legajo 1, hs 33-36, AGN.
741 “XL Asamblea de los Centros Patronales de la R.M.,” 20 March 1981, DFS, José María Basgoiti Noriega versiones públicas, legajo 1, hs 33-36, AGN.
(la solución seguiremos siendo todos).\textsuperscript{742} Clouthier’s election to the presidency of the CCE (1981-1983) a few months later, in June 1981, further reinforced this new entrepreneurial identity.

Clouthier was the first president of the young CCE to make the transition from COPARMEX, with all preceding presidents having come from the national chambers of commerce (CONCANACO) or industry (CONCAMIN), whose obligatory membership and formal consultations with the state made them increasingly suspect among advocates of greater private-sector independence.\textsuperscript{743} As one prominent businessman put it, too many members of Mexico’s official chambers were “bit by [the bug] of statism.”\textsuperscript{744} Although the CCE was far from unified concerning the wisdom of entrepreneurial political activism, Clouthier’s selection to head the elite organization was a testament to his success in promoting ideological unity within the private sector and aligning the rank-and-file with the strategies and ideals of national leaders.\textsuperscript{745} Crucially, Clouthier’s ascent to the CCE’s highest post consolidated USEM’s imprint on two of Mexico’s most influential business organizations. Throughout his tenure, current and former USEM members held a near monopoly on the top positions in both COPARMEX and the CCE.

During Clouthier’s term, the vice-presidency of the CCE was occupied by long-time USEM associates Andrés Sada and Lorenzo Servitje, respectively, the latter of whom concurrently served as the president of USEM.\textsuperscript{746} For his part, Clouthier, during his first year at

\textsuperscript{742} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{745} “Plaza Pública,” 6 June 1981, DGIPS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 132, AGN. See also “Entrevista con José María Basagoiti,” Setenta Años al Servicio de México, Historia Parte III, 17, IMDOSOC.
the helm of the CCE, also occupied the presidency of USEM concurrently. Other influential figures in the CCE who sharpened their entrepreneurial identities in USEM included Rogelio Sada Zambrano, Jorge Chapa Salazar, Alejandro Chapa, Gastón Azcárraga Tamayo, and Federico Müggenburg. Through the CCE, this coterie helped nurse the nascent synthesis of Catholic Social Doctrine and economic liberalism to political maturity. That they achieved such a synthesis despite Catholic social teachings’ explicit rejection of liberalism speaks to the growing influence of USEM’s camarilla of alumni and affiliates. It also illuminates a more generalized and ultimately more important phenomenon; when social actors tailor religious and economic belief systems for use as political capital, ostensibly distinct, immutable articles of faith become malleable and interdependent.

Close collaboration among the CCE, COPARMEX, and key corporate allies during the critical years spanning Clouthier’s tenure was essential to this project. Coindreau’s vice-president at COPARMEX was none other than José Basagoiti, formerly president of USEM-Mexico City and vice-president of the International Union of Christian Business Executives (Unión Internacional de Ejecutivos Cristianos), USEM’s parent organization. Coindreau and Basagoiti, who succeeded Coindreau in 1982, coordinated closely with Clouthier and other allies in the CCE, decrying government paternalism and preaching the virtues of the business mystique to local entrepreneurs across central and northern Mexico.

Meanwhile, Monterrey’s leading corporations, and especially Cydsa and its subsidiaries—the crown-jewels of Andrés Sada’s empire—threw their formidable economic weight and public notoriety behind the project. Cysda sponsored well-publicized seminars in

747 See http://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Biografias/CMJ34.html.
748 For a brilliant exposé on the intermingling of Christian values and neoliberal ideology in the United States see Moreton, To Serve God and WalMart.
749 “Entrevista con José María Basagoiti,” Setenta Años al Servicio de México, Historia Parte III, IMDOSOC.
partnership with local and regional business associations, diffusing the message to increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and business professionals. Sada often participated directly in these conferences, enlisting additional participants and support from Monterrey’s notoriously incestuous corporate behemoths and their smaller regional affiliates.  

Cydsa was so unrelenting in publicly fastening its image to beneficent human relations practices that one observer described the company’s executives as the “bishops of current [human relations] knowledge, theories, and practices.” Clearly, the increasing uniformity of the business community’s public script owed in large part to the growing influence of a new generation of like-minded leaders with interpersonal and institutional ties spanning varied interest-group, civic, corporate, and editorial entities. But these networks cannot in themselves explain the striking consonance or uncharacteristic finesse of private-sector messaging.  

A bevy of newly formed think-tanks within the CCE acted as vital ideological and strategic refineries for this project. These think-tanks offered critical support for the CCE’s “primordial goal” of promoting the “dignity of the image of the entrepreneur and his social function” by unifying businessmen “around common ideals” and “influencing public opinion” in their defense.” In addition to the more technocratic CEESP, which predated the CCE but whose influence greatly expanded after its incorporation within the peak organization, the CCE

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752 Roeric Ai Camp, Mexico’s Mandarins: Carfting a Power Elite for the Twenty-First Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Camp argues that mentoring, through family, social, and professional networks, fueled formation of a so-called “Power Elite” in Mexico.

753 “Organización Actual del Sector Privado Mexicano...,” 22 October 1981, DFS versions públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 127-134, AGN.
established separate dependencies to re-attire neoclassical ideas in the new social semantics.\textsuperscript{754} As Servitje subsequently revealed in a rare moment of indiscretion, the Center for Social Studies (Centro de Estudios Sociales, or CES) was among the most important of these. The brainchild of Andrés Sada and the birthplace of the little-known but, in Servitje’s recollection, highly influential “Project 2000” (Proyecto 2000) initiative, the CES was both a laboratory and a clearinghouse for the ascendant private-sector narrative.\textsuperscript{755} Created in the early years of López Portillo’s administration, the CES’ internal operations were highly secretive, but existing evidence offers a glimpse into the scope and nature of its work.

In a pamphlet dated May 1982, Clouthier outlined the CES’ efforts to forge a compelling entrepreneurial ideology from disparate sources of inspiration. He described the “integration of commissions” within the CES to study and compile “codes of ethics… of both a specialized and general nature.” The goal, he insisted, was to establish “a minimum of common principles of a philosophical, ethical, social, civic, political, and economic character that give solidity, congruence, and direction to the activities [of] entrepreneurs and their organizations.” Clouthier again leaned on the crutch of filial allegory, insisting that to instill the “correlative” values of liberty and responsibility in one’s children, “we [must] not solve all of their problems”—a concept, he argued, that was vital “for business and business organizations”:

If we desire less state and bureaucratic interventionism, which impedes the integral development of Mexicans, [then], as entrepreneurs, united in our organizations, we must assume our responsibility… to achieve the harmonious development of the country.\textsuperscript{756}

\textsuperscript{754} On the restructuring and increasing influence of the CEESP under the CCE see: “Francisco R. Calderón: la actividad de los organismos empresariales,” 20 July 1977, Expansión 9:220, 56; and Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?,” 98.
\textsuperscript{756} Responsabilidad Social del Empresario (Mexico: Consejo Coordinador Empresarial; Centro de Estudios Sociales, May 1982), IMDOSOC.
Attaining this goal, however, required getting the message out to broader and broader audiences. In addition to sponsoring proliferating publications “of a doctrinal character” and the “constant celebration of meetings of study” and consultation, Clouthier saw the CES as a vehicle for reaching beyond the business owners, capitalists, and stockholders most often associated with entrepreneurship. The CES, he insisted, should target “[a]ll those who have a role in affecting the trajectory” of businesses or private-sector associations.\(^757\)

Architects of the CES sought to nurture an entrepreneurial identification in more populous sectors whose members did not necessarily self-identify as businessmen. This included managers, technicians, business professionals, and, of course, workers. But Clouthier stressed that the CES must appeal even to those with “barely a small corner-store that they attend personally” or a “shopping cart that they push in the street.” Indeed, the pamphlet itself was part of this effort, an exemplar of a larger initiative unassumingly titled “Document.” As Clouthier explained, literature produced through this initiative distilled the ideas and principles underlying the business mystique into “rapid lessons” that could be easily reproduced and disseminated.\(^758\) The CES, however, was not the CCE’s only mechanism for advancing this work.

In contrast to the surreptitious CES, Mexican Entrepreneurial Thought (Pensamiento Empresarial Mexicano, A.C., or PEMAC), another subdivision of the CCE, was more publicly engaged. Established in the first month of López Portillo’s presidency, PEMAC was, reported one government spy, “a regiomontana idea to bring together” CCE members behind a common set of ideals.\(^759\) That PEMAC’s first president was Eugenio Sada Zambrano, brother to Andrés and Rogelio, attests to the leading role of Monterrey businessmen in PEMAC’s establishment.

\(^{757}\) Ibid.
\(^{758}\) Ibid.
\(^{759}\) “Pensamiento Empresarial Mexicano, A.C.,” 4 February 1977, DFS, exp. 100-17-1-77, legajo 55, h. 188, AGN.
and to the pervasive influence of the Sada Zambrano family in the formation and design of the CCE. In a press conference announcing the think-tank’s formation, communications director Sergio Mihailide described PEMAC’s mission as “making known to the Mexican people a true image of what the entrepreneur is and… that the real wealth of a business is man.”760 As with other private-sector initiatives under the Alliance for Production, though, PEMAC’s primary focus, at least initially, was internal.

A writer for Expansión described PEMAC’s work as a two-stage undertaking. The first stage consisted of “defining and unifying” the business community’s social and economic philosophy, which required an intensive campaign “within entrepreneurial channels themselves.” Only then, the article asserted, could PEMAC “direct itself to the non-business media,” where it would have to contend with “supposedly progressive ideas… that consider the partial or total suppression of freedom indispensable as a condition of social and economic progress.”761 By 1981, this second stage was well-underway, and government spies reported that PEMAC was:

[A]ctively working in the preparation of conferences, the provision of audiovisual materials, the elaboration of messages through radio and television spots, the editing of brochures, the circulation of information and memos that can be utilized by the press in favor of the Private Sector, [the] execution of seminars and round-tables with groups that have influence [over] public opinion, worker education programs, etc.762

It is clear, however, that the latter phase of PEMAC’s agenda neither supplanted nor superseded the former. PEMAC’s core mission was, and remained, “to unify the thinking of the business sector around common ideals, search for cohesion and harmony among workers, technicians, and managers [within] business[es], and improve the image of the entrepreneur before the public

760 Ibid.
762 “Organización Actual del Sector Privado Mexicano...,” 22 October 1981, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 127-134, AGN.
opinion.” PEMAC was a direct upshot of business efforts to synchronize Catholic Social Doctrine and economic liberalism, and a central assembly-point for the business mystique.

Tellingly, PEMAC was the namesake and institutional outgrowth of a book published in Monterrey in 1974 titled *Pensamiento Empresarial Mexicano*. Contributors to the volume included such champions of the ascendant entrepreneurial ethos as José Basagoiti, Alejandro Chapa, Lorenzo Servitje, Juan Sánchez Navarro, Rogelio Sada Zambrano, and Alejandro Garza Lagüera. The book, opened its anonymous editors, grew from a determined effort among business leaders to combat the “myopic attitude” that businesses were purely economic entities and that the Mexican entrepreneur “has an exclusive obsession with profit, that he uses his workers as things… that he is disinterested in income inequality, and that he favors the creation of an economic elite” over the “aspirations of the popular majority.” The collection of essays expounded on topics such as “The Business Leader in the Transformation of Society,” “Business Organizations: Pressure Groups or Partners in Society?,” and “Entrepreneurial Participation in Civic Life”—a compendium of ideas at the heart of the business mystique. Contributors uniformly invoked Catholic conceptions of the human condition as a struggle for equilibrium between material, spiritual, individual, and collective needs. Taken together, noted the editors, the essays laid out a “humanist vision” for development “in all aspects of… cultural, political, religious, social, economic, and family life.” In addition to pumping the ideals of subsidiarity and solidarity, contributors cast private businesses as “nuclei of liberty” where enlightened administrators established the conditions for integral development. By allowing workers to “express themselves with confidence, develop their initiative, participate in decisions, and…

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763 ibid.
fully actualize themselves,” they claimed, business leaders nurtured values and aptitudes that inevitably translated to social and political life.\textsuperscript{765}

The volume was nevertheless attentive to economic concerns, and depicted markets as natural forces to which entrepreneurs were ethically bound. Its authors cast magnanimous human relations practices as the point-of-reconciliation between Catholic social teachings and the “rigorous laws of the economy,” repeatedly evoking Peter Drucker and worker “self-actualization” to justify their claims.\textsuperscript{766} Notably, the editors attributed the book’s completion to the “constant help” of \textit{regiomontano} businessman and Cydsa executive Adán Elizondo and Lorenzo Servitje. “[A]s members of USEM,” concluded the prologue, Elizondo and Servitje “made available to us their documents, internal publications, etc. [from which] we gradually compiled” the collection.\textsuperscript{767} \textit{Pensamiento Empresarial Mexicano} offers an early example of business efforts to align the interests and philosophical leanings of the politically docile USEM with more militant and autonomous entrepreneurial actors and associations in Monterrey—a convergence that laid the foundations for PEMAC and the larger project of which it was a part. Within the framework of this project, the CCE centralized the production of an ideology that rested, above all, on the premise of decentralization.

\textit{Conclusion}

Scholars have most often depicted the Alliance for Production as a reprieve from the rancor that characterized business-government relations under Echeverría, and in crucial respects it was. But the period spanning the accord also witnessed the consolidation of a social philosophy of business that rejected, and ultimately undermined, Mexican entrepreneurs’

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{765} \textit{Ibid.}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{766} \textit{Ibid.}, 9; 19-29, 52-56; 124-129.
\item \textsuperscript{767} \textit{Ibid}, 14.
\end{itemize}
exclusion from national political life. By expanding the reach of COPARMEX and the CCE in regions where popular distrust of central authorities ran deepest and concentrating proselytization efforts in those regions, the authors of this ‘business mystique’—a select cadre of ideologues closely linked to the Catholic USEM—enlisted increasing numbers of ‘small’ and ‘medium’ entrepreneurs in a project that aimed to unify the private sector behind a common set of values. Despite their continued public support for the Alliance, this coterie of entrepreneurial elites sowed opposition to the government’s expanding economic role while championing a sociopolitical model antithetical to state-led development.

Equally important, this so-called business mystique further aligned economic elites with the strategies and ideals of the conservative, largely Catholic groups that had so destabilized the preceding administration. Joining calls for permanent civic action in defense of traditional values, they affirmed the private-sector’s commitment to ‘integral development’, reinforcing anti-paternalist and anti-corporatist political ideologies. Crucially, this narrative enveloped elite allegiances to neoclassical economics in Catholic teachings that explicitly rejected liberalism—a synthesis that, despite its ideological incongruity, prepared the ground for a broad-based, organized challenge to the PRI’s political hegemony. Events in the final years of López Portillo’s presidency laid waste to Mexico’s economy and, with it, the Alliance for Production, bringing this challenge to fruition and inaugurating a political movement that would slowly undermine the PRI’s reign.
Only weeks after Clouthier assumed the presidency of the CCE in June 1981, a ten-percent drop in international oil prices sent Mexico’s economy into a downward spiral. Even after the drop, petroleum prices remained well above pre-1973 levels, but the decline shook the confidence of international lenders in Mexico’s ability to indefinitely service dollar-denominated debts with revenues from oil exports. Around the same time, explorations for new petroleum deposits began coming up empty. Consequently, lenders were unwilling to risk new loans, and Mexico’s international credit quickly dried up.\(^{768}\) The timing could hardly have been worse. In 1981, Paul Volcker, Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve during the Raegan administration, raised interest rates to curb inflation, invoking what became known as the ‘Volcker Rule’.\(^{769}\) The rate hike activated the variable interest rates to which Mexico’s international loans were subject, dramatically increasing the country’s total foreign debt.\(^{770}\) From mid-1981, declining export revenues and ballooning interest rates sent Mexico’s economy into a tailspin.

Further expediting this economic collapse was heightened uncertainty concerning the future of the Mexican peso. Following the devastating devaluations of 1976, the López Portillo administration returned the peso to a fixed rate-of-exchange vis-à-vis the dollar, a policy that effectively subsidized the importation of capital equipment and foreign expertise to boost petroleum production. But maintaining an overvalued peso also resulted in sharp declines in traditional sources of foreign revenue, namely non-oil exports and foreign tourism, the high cost

\(^{768}\) Haber, et. al., *Mexico since 1980*, 63-65.
\(^{769}\) Walker, *Waking from the Dream*, 144-145.
\(^{770}\) Haber, et. al., *Mexico since 1980*, 63-65.
of which reduced their competitiveness.\textsuperscript{771} By deepening the country’s dependence on oil exports, an inflated peso was a central feature of what scholars have termed the ‘petrolization’ of Mexico’s economy.\textsuperscript{772} Prior to 1981, an expansionist monetary policy had muted the negative impacts of petrolization by stimulating domestic markets and, with them, internal consumption of Mexican goods.\textsuperscript{773} The government’s inability to continue this stimulus in the face of free-falling revenues and evaporating international credit accentuated questions over the wisdom of propping up the nation’s currency, leading to widespread speculation that a devaluation was eminent.

Even as anticipation of a devaluation led middle- and upper-class Mexicans to exchange their pesos for dollars in droves, López Portillo’s government stubbornly maintained its allegiance to the fixed exchange rate. On 5 February 1982, the president famously declared that he would “defend the peso like a dog.”\textsuperscript{774} But the mere mention of a devaluation produced the opposite of the intended effect, putting a spotlight on the government’s yawning credibility-gap. In the days following the 5 February pronouncement, peso-to-dollar conversions markedly accelerated, further depleting the reserves on which the government depended to service its debts and stabilize the currency. Less than two weeks later, on 17 February, Mexico’s foreign reserves reached a record low.\textsuperscript{775} In response, the Mexican central bank let the peso float and, as in 1976, the result was a devastating devaluation. Over a two-day span, the value of the peso fell from 22-1 to 70-1, instantly reducing Mexico’s total GDP by forty-two percent and bringing price

\textsuperscript{771} Ibid., 57-64.
\textsuperscript{772} See, for example, Francisco E. González, Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Institutionalized Regimes in Chile and Mexico, 1970-2000 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).
\textsuperscript{773} Waker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 3-4; Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980, 57-62.
\textsuperscript{774} Walker, Waking from the Dream, 144-145.
\textsuperscript{775} “Salieron del País en Tres Meses 3,000 Millones de Reservas...,” 26 May 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, h. 30, AGN.
instability to a breaking-point. To make matters worse, any boost to non-oil exports that an enfeebled peso might have generated was dwarfed by the resulting increase in Mexico’s foreign debt burden, which effectively tripled with the devaluation.\textsuperscript{776} A corresponding economic crisis in the private sector further compounded the situation.

In crucial respects, private-sector economic trends under the Alliance for Production ran parallel to those of the public sector. Mexican corporations also borrowed heavily from international banks to finance expansion plans that were frequently haphazard and ill-advised. Further, swelling corporate debt responded largely to a combination of irresponsible borrowing and predatory lending, where the better judgement of both corporate leaders and international financiers succumbed to their overly optimistic, and over-eager, pursuit of easy money. And as with the public sector, rising interest on outstanding balances and the sudden, severe devaluation of the nation’s currency crippled the ability of Mexican corporations to repay dollar-denominated debts.\textsuperscript{777} The consequent freezing of credit lines generated a crisis of liquidity that paralyzed private-sector production. Simultaneous and intersecting crises in the public and private sectors dealt a double-blow to the nations productive capacity, resulting in widespread business closures and unemployment, rising costs, and a shortage of basic goods, which, in turn, encouraged

\textsuperscript{776} Haber, et al, \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 63..

\textsuperscript{777} The most highly publicized and controversial example of this trend was the Bernardo Garza Sada-led Alfa, the largest of the Monterrey Group holding companies and the largest private corporation in all of Mexico. The López Portillo government’s bailout of the company, the dissolution of which would have resulted in hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and disruptions in the production of a wide range of industrial and consumer products, created a public controversy and damaged the company’s public image as well as its position vis-à-vis the government. See “Siguen rumores y falta de información: ¿Quién le pone el cascabel a Alfa?,” 9 June 1982, \textit{Expansión} 14:342, 16-19. On Alfa’s ill-advised expansion, which involved skyrocketing administrative salaries in what business historian María de los Ángeles Pozas has described as an “arms race” for talented corporate managers and administrators as well as the acquisition of wide-ranging companies whose products and services were largely unrelated to those of Alfa’s core industries. See María de los Ángeles Pozas, \textit{Industrial Restructuring in Mexico: Corporate Adaptation, Technological Innovation, and Changing Patterns of Industrial Relations in Monterrey} (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1993) and María de los Ángeles Pozas, \textit{Estrategia internacional de la gran empresa mexicana en la década de los noventa} (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 2002).
hoarding and price-gouging—trends that priced poor and middle-class families out of essential products and services. As economic conditions deteriorated, the public conversation on the causes of the crisis devolved into an exercise in finger-pointing.

Government officials and organized labor, for their part, blamed Mexico’s deepening foreign exchange crisis on currency speculators and capitalists, while attributing rising costs and inflation to a greedy merchant class. Mexico’s extensive, porous border with the United States made currency speculation and capital flight both attractive and difficult to regulate in times of economic instability, and Mexican capitalists customarily protected their assets—and punished hostile administrations—by moving or reinvesting them across the border. Yet Mexican law permitted all citizens to hold their money in either pesos or dollars, and to convert it free of penalty or conditions. In this respect, currency ‘speculation’ and capital flight, though economically destructive, were perfectly legal, and not limited to business elites.

From late 1981 through the spring of 1982, Mexicans from broad cross-sections of society, including federal workers and the political class, hastened the exodus of dollar reserves to the United States by way of currency exchanges, the transfer of assets to U.S. banks, and a wide array of other investments. Government officials, union leaders, and sympathetic opinion-makers chastised merchants as venal opportunists eager to profit from instability in price

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779 Recent Developments in Mexico; Hamilton, Limits of State Autonomy; Story, Industry, the State, and Public Policy; Walker, Waking from the Dream, 46; Maxfield, Governing Capital.

780 Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980, 57-60.

781 “Salieron del País en Tres Meses 3,000 Millones de Reservas...,” 26 May 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, h. 30, AGN.
structures and supply chains, rekindling a time-honored tradition in Mexico.\textsuperscript{782} This is not to say that these depictions were unfounded, of course. But such blanket portrayals tended to alienate and unite merchants of widely varying levels of wealth and operational scales while aligning them more closely with industrialists and other private sector groups—a trend that became increasingly visible as the crisis deepened.

Business spokespeople countered official attacks by invoking monetarist interpretations of the crisis, but with a twist. Subordinating technical arguments as to the primary causes of Mexico’s economic woes, leading entrepreneurs and their allies exploited the government’s credibility-gap, depicting the crisis as the result of the state’s fundamental dishonesty concerning the nation’s economy. As Louise Walker shows, a common thread of Echeverría’s and Lopez Portillo’s otherwise distinct economic restructuring programs was the formation of what she terms the “debt-economy.” Crucially, this trend was not confined to the government and private corporations; it involved bolstering the purchasing power of middle-class households through consumer protections, government-subsidized credit, and individual access to international credit. “Whether it was through foreign loans, an American Express card, or government-issued credit,” Walker argues, “the debt-economy signaled profound policy and cultural changes, as… families across the republic grappled with new ways of understanding money, time and value, and the changing economy.”\textsuperscript{783} With middle-class identity bound increasingly to consumerism and purchasing power, the combination of extinguished credit lines, inflation, and currency devaluation created an existential crisis punctuated by widespread incomprehension at the sudden collapse of livelihoods and economic aspirations.\textsuperscript{784} The precipitous demise of popular

\textsuperscript{782} Walker, \textit{Waking from the Dream}, 120.
\textsuperscript{783} Walker, \textit{Waking from the Dream}, 73-74.
\textsuperscript{784} On the growing importance of consumerism to middle-class identity in Mexico in the 1970s and early 1980s see \textit{Ibid.}, 67, 105-139.
hopes for the much-touted and long-anticipated arrival of Mexican ‘abundance’ demanded explanation, creating a political opening for the PRI’s detractors.

This chapter explores the debates surrounding the economic crisis, the administration’s consequent nationalization of the Mexican banking system, and the conservative protests that they impelled. It illustrates that right-wing political upheavals following the September 1982 bank expropriation were an outgrowth of the civic protests of the 1970s and business leaders’ cultivation of a social philosophy and political vision that reinforced the ideals of aggrieved conservatives while promoting the politicization of the entrepreneurial middle classes. Crucially, those upheavals united rank-and-file businessmen and influential right-wing organizations in a broad-based regional movement whose organizers portrayed Mexico’s economic woes as the consequence of an authoritarian and paternalist political system. Unlike conservative protests in preceding eras, however, the movement that arose in 1982 crystallized open and enduring alliances among key business elites, middling entrepreneurs, and conservative civic groups. These alliances, I contend, consolidated the political and ideological foundations of neopanismo [‘new’ PANism] independently of the PAN itself. In the end, the PAN captured rather than conceived the movement responsible for the party’s subsequent successes.

The discussion that follows traces the ascent of neopanismo to a little-studied, elite-led movement known as México en la Libertad [Mexico in Freedom]. Organized by Manuel Clouthier and José Basagoiti in the wake of the bank nationalization, México en la Libertad channeled disparate and localized opposition campaigns in northern Mexico and the Bajío into a unified movement that generated widespread public support. In addition to validating the ‘integralist’ ideals and strategies championed by business leaders and religious conservatives, the
movement signaled a permanent shift in the role of Mexican entrepreneurs in national political life, transforming a long-excluded sector of society into a powerful political force.

Yet México en la Libertad’s democratic stylings obscured another objective that its organizers had long-coveted: legitimating liberal economic ideology. Not only did the movement help to discredit the government’s preeminence in all aspects of Mexican society, including economic life. Organizers traced the origins of government economic errors to the ‘Keynesian’ policies of the Echeverría and López Portillo administrations, contrasting those policies to the ostensibly ‘un-Keynesian’ policies underpinning Mexico’s so-called economic miracle. This misleading characterization offered a subtle vehicle for tying conservative democratization to the global assault on Keynesianism and, by default, to neoliberalism.  

Tellingly, México en la Libertad’s organizers did not explicitly identify the movement with liberalism, ‘new’ or old. Only after the PRI assumed formal ownership of Mexico’s neoliberal turn did they openly claim the paradigm for themselves. Yet by integrating liberal ideology within an incipient neopanista movement this cabal of elite ideologues consolidated the PRI’s broadest base of support for policies that, in crucial respects, undermined the political foundations of the very party they opposed.

Economic Truths: Regionalism and the Politics of Crisis

As Mexicans struggled to make sense of the crisis, government and business leaders constructed competing narratives as to the causes and culprits of the nation’s crumbling economic fortunes. Where public officials fell back on tried-and-true depictions of greedy entrepreneurs putting their own interests above those of the nation, Mexican business leaders turned to the ascendant economic expertise of neoclassical, monetarist economists. Rather than

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785 As I will discuss in further detail below, the Echeverría and López Portillo administrations were far less faithful to orthodox Keynesian practice than their predecessors had been.
parroting the abstruse language of economic specialists, however, they rebranded monetarist precepts using the language of economic realism. Through public statements, published articles, and meetings of local business associations, entrepreneurial elites and their fellow-travelers cast the escalating battle of economic ideas as a contest between proponents of a “fictitious economy” (economía de ficción) and “economic realism” (realismo económico). Unlike the cabinet-level conflicts on which scholars of the period have largely focused, business efforts to garner public sympathies relied on emotional appeals, eschewing mechanical squabbles in favor of a morality-tale on the virtues of simple truthfulness.

The expansionist policies of administration officials, they contended, defrauded Mexican citizens by treating oil reserves and deficit-spending as “magic wand[s]” that would painlessly conjure first-world modernity and ‘abundance’. As Basagoiti put it shortly after assuming the presidency of COPARMEX in May 1982, “the Mexican” was “unwilling to sacrifice,” believing instead that “if I want something, the state has the obligation to give it to me. The government should resolve my problems for me today.” López Portillo’s administration, he argued, cynically exploited this selfishness for the sake of political expedience, incurring “useless expenses,” generating “unproductive bureaucracy,” and fostering rampant “immaturity” and dependency.

When his interviewer asked if COPARMEX was staking out a combative position, Basagoiti

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787 Babb, Managing Mexico; Centeno, Democracy within Reason.

788 “Después de la devaluación, las medidas económicas, las elecciones...,” 7 July 1982, Expansión 14:344, 22; “Reacción Ante el Alza del Dolar,” 13 August 1982, DFS versiones públicas, José María Basagoiti Noriega, legajo 1, hs. 47-50, AGN.
replied: “What we propose to be is a truthful institution, in search of realistic positions, not illusory ones… If clarifying the truth is to be the ‘hard line’, then that we are.”

Of course, the economic ‘truth’ to which Basagoiti referred derived, indelibly, from the laws of the market. The new head of COPARMEX argued that the administration had bypassed a vital phase of its own economic plan, which should have proceeded from recovery to consolidation, and only then to accelerated growth. Instead, he decried, public officials engaged in “economic, political, and social voluntarism,” bending policy to the fickle will of a collective euphoria they themselves had authored. Deploying a vehicular analogy, Basagoiti asserted that policymakers had bypassed economic consolidation, accelerating prematurely in defiance of “market signals”—signals, he insisted, that demanded not only to be “read and understood, but also obeyed.” For Mexican business leaders, however, the signals to which Basagoiti referred did not emanate from an abstraction; they were the natural expression of a market personified. “One should not demonize the market,” implored Basagoiti, “as it delineates the nature of things and of people.” If the crisis compelled Mexico’s business elite to express their economic views more explicitly, they did so not as champions of obscure doctrines but as economic naturalists.

Political reforms under López Portillo amplified the consequences of the economic crisis for the PRI. In 1977, López Portillo’s government passed the Federal Law on Political Organizations and Electoral Processes (Ley Federal de Organizaciones Políticos y Procesos Electorales, or LOPPE), which eased party registration requirements, expanded opposition parties’ access to the national media, and guaranteed opposition parties a minimum of twenty-five percent of the seats in the federal Chamber of Deputies. The legislation also extended

790 Ibid.
791 Haber, et. al., Mexico since 1980, 128-129.
proportional representation to municipal councils in cities with over 300,000 inhabitants, a feature that was expanded to include all municipalities in 1983. The reforms built on Echeverría’s *apertura democrática* in a continuing effort to stem alarmingly high rates of electoral abstention by drawing various unregistered groups into the political process. In the federal legislative elections of 1979, two leftist parties, the Mexican Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Mexicano*, or PCM) and the Socialist Workers Party (Partido Socialista de Trabajadores, or PST), and the right-wing Mexican Democratic Party (Partido Democrático Mexicano, or PDM) successfully obtained legal recognition and competed in the elections. Many initially saw LOPPE’s broadening of political and ideological representation within formal political channels as a resounding success.

Nevertheless, the PRI maintained a firm grip on the legislature and on the electoral process. For the authors of one influential work on the period, LOPPE “preserved Mexico’s democratic façade at a time of considerable political ferment by simultaneously reinforcing the party and electoral systems and confirming the PRI’s dominant position.” While this was undoubtedly the intent of the law, the deepening economic crisis heightened political opposition to López Portillo’s government.

As with the *apertura democrática*, the prospect that LOPPE would benefit leftist groups intensified the disquiet of Mexican conservatives as debates over the unfolding catastrophe raised the political stakes of the reform. With the next elections scheduled to take place on 4 July 1982, the PAN looked to redeem itself following its failure to field a candidate in the 1976

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793 Haber et al., *Mexico since 1980*, 129.
795 Haber, et. al., *Mexico since 1980*, 128-129.
presidential elections. PAN president José Angel Conchello insisted that the party was prepared to compete “on a war footing” in the upcoming 1982 elections. Conchello shared the fears of Mexican conservatives that LOPPE, and the *apertura democrática* before it, had opened the door for a leftist revival. In an article conveying this sentiment, a writer for *Expansión* charted the supposed rise of the left’s political fortunes under the preceding and current administrations. The political left, he reported, had been “clandestine” in the 1940s and 1950s before again flexing its muscles in the 1968 student protests; was further emboldened by Echeverría’s rhetoric and corresponding *apertura*; and, finally, “legalized by the Political Reform” of López Portillo’s administration. Despite the ubiquitous conservative protests of the 1970s, many continued to see the long-arm-of-the-left as the driving force in the nation’s political development.

In the context of these fears, the continuing accord between the public and private sectors, though strained, was a source of considerable frustration for leaders of the PAN. In 1981, Conchello publicly scolded business leaders for failing to “notice that the government moves in the direction of dictatorship.” The PAN, he insisted, needed to convince businessmen to fight for “something more than personal benefits and profits.” Indeed, the economic incentives that accompanied the oil boom and Alliance for Production had forestalled business leaders’ embrace of oppositional politics in the formal sense—incentives that compelled even Monterrey’s hard-liners, in Conchello’s estimation, to hand the governorship of Nuevo León to the PRI in 1979. Crucially, however, Conchello failed to grasp the importance of the cultural

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and ideological work undertaken by Mexico’s entrepreneurial elite during the interim between 1976 and the onset of the crisis, a blind-spot replicated in scholarship on the period.

Soledad Loaeza credits Conchello for opening the PAN to a broader constituency in the wake of the 1976 debacle. Loaeza and other leading scholars have correctly attributed the party’s breakdown at the end of Echeverría’s term to a split between the PAN’s traditional constituents, beholden to Catholic Social Doctrine—including, by 1976, some of the more progressive precepts of liberation theology—and those who wanted to welcome disaffected business leaders and other anti-statist groups into the party. Loaeza argues that Conchello’s embrace of the latter group allowed the PAN to make “circumstantial alliances” with proponents of neoliberalism, which the PAN had historically condemned as anathema to Catholic teachings. Thus, for Loaeza it was the party and its leadership that reconciled Mexico’s two prevailing anti-government narratives: “State v. Society” and “State v. Market”—a reconciliation, she argues, that gave birth to a “definitively secularized right.”

To be sure, the melding of those two narratives gave neopanismo, as the political movement led by the revamped PAN became known, its ideological pulse. But this merger was neither party-driven nor, in its rhetorical intonation, at least, secular. Crediting the PAN for integrating society- and market-centric critiques of state power overlooks the fact that leading entrepreneurs and their allies had been working for years to synchronize market, Catholic, and civil society ideals. As Basagoiti stated when asked if he was still committed to Mexico’s mixed economic model despite the crisis: “No Señor, I don’t believe in a mixed economy without

802 Ibid., 589.
803 Ibid., 567-568.
qualifications [a secas]. I believe in a subsidiary mixed economy. And, if you like, you can get rid of the ‘mixed’. I believe in a subsidiary economy.”

Market and society, in this script, were not distinct entities; they were interlocking, interdependent manifestations of human reason, values, and initiative. Business leaders had themselves established the philosophical preconditions for the integration of market-oriented entrepreneurs into the PAN, all the while preparing their constituents for a greater role in politics and public life and aligning their ideals with those of conservative civic groups that, prior to the 1980s, remained largely outside the fray of party politics. In the post-1970 transformation of Mexican conservatism, the PAN was the proverbial cart, entrepreneurs and a reenergized civil society the horse.

The elections of July 1982 were in key respects a referendum on the nature of Mexico’s deepening economic crisis. López Portillo lamented in his memoir that the crisis pushed the “middle class bourgeoisie” rightward, to the benefit of the PAN. The PAN’s success in the July elections attests to what Loaeza describes as the “maturation of anti-statism” across broad swaths of the population, as citizens felt that the government had knowingly defrauded them regarding the state of the country’s economy. Conservative commentators alleged that the government’s proliferation of “economic disinformation” created a crisis of confidence that was the root cause of capital flight and currency speculation. Clouthier, Basagoiti, and other top figures in the CCE and COPARMEX stressed the importance of disseminating the findings of private sector think-tanks such as the CEESP in the provinces, where, they contended, government misinformation created a statistical void that made reliable information on the

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807 “Editorial” (get title), 1 September 1982, Expansión 14:348, 1.
economy a “luxury item.” Nevertheless, they were careful not to frame their arguments as an endorsement of a specific economic paradigm.

Conversely, on the eve of the elections conservative economist Edgar Mason explicitly linked official ‘dishonesty’ on economic matters to the global battle between competing economic models. A frequent contributor to conservative newspapers in northern Mexico and the Bajío, Mason echoed claims that the government had created a “fictitious economy,” arguing, misleadingly, that this grand economic lie grew not from the state’s highly unorthodox economic program but from its allegiance to “Keynesian policies” to which, he contended, monetary and fiscal deception were intrinsic. By eschewing neoclassical truths in favor of Keynesian expansionism, he decried, the state had “diminished the people’s capacity to trust.” “That,” he insisted, “is the worst capital flight… we did not learn the lesson of 1976.” Mason’s willingness to openly identify with neoliberalism offers a notable contrast to entrepreneurial strategies, but the distinction was primarily semantic. The economic objectives of neoclassical economists and business leaders were firmly aligned.

Even as the crisis escalated, private-sector spokespeople cloaked their neoliberal disposition in the trope of anti-paternalism. “To cleanse the fictitious economy,” argued Basagoiti, the state must enact policies “free of paternalisms,” cutting subsidies for parastatal and uncompetitive private industries and discontinuing the manufacture of currency for economic stimulus, as these policies, he assured, were the primary drivers of inflation and debt. For Basagoiti, economic honesty demanded that “the market develop in accordance with supply and

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Similarly, entrepreneurs and conservative economists welcomed the peso’s return to valutative ‘reality’. However, they excoriated the administration for delaying this inevitable reckoning, arguing that devaluation should have begun in June of the previous year, when oil prices began their descent, and then proceeded gradually. Instead, noted one economic analyst, the administration opted for a “devaluation a golpe,” the severity and rapidity of which was economically devastating. But where economists such as the Banco de México’s Pablo Aveleyra attributed officials’ overvaluation of the currency to “strongly expansionist” policies, business spokespeople portrayed the maintenance of a “fictitious parity” as a cynical exercise in political patronage.

On the other side of the electoral debates, leftist parties, including the PCM and PST, parroted official claims that bankers, capitalists, and merchants were responsible for the exodus of dollars and the resulting devaluation. Parties on the far left were alone in advocating the nationalization of private banks and the imposition of exchange controls. That these parties were handily defeated in the July elections while the PAN notched notable gains seemingly indicated the unpopularity of such proposals, a point that conservatives and business leaders trumpeted loudly in coming months. Clearly, distrust of the government was widespread, a reality that aided the PAN. But the party’s success did not derive from this distrust alone; nor did it prove that the idea of expropriating private banks was nationally unpopular. More precisely,
the ‘maturation of anti-statism’ to which Loaeza referred was tied to the rise of a corresponding
culture of participation.”816 Over the course of 1980s, the pattern of increasing political
participation expanded to include a broad array of ideological and partisan constituencies.817 In
1982, however, a decade of broad conservative mobilizations and civic proselytization gave the
PAN a distinct advantage, one not entirely of its own making.

Entrepreneurs in northern Mexico and the Bajío pressed this advantage in the run up to the elections. From Guanajuato and Guadalajara to Nuevo Laredo, Sonora, and Chihuahua local members of COPARMEX and CONCANACO decried the government’s economic follies and its propensity to deflect blame to the private sector.818 “Once again as it did six years ago,” read one public announcement from CANACO, Chihuahua, the state “intends to blame all our troubles on the private sector,” demanding that entrepreneurs “remedy the errors of the government through [their] sacrifice.”819 Leaders of local business associations offered public tutorials on the causes of inflation and devaluation, mounted campaigns to promote electoral turnout in their districts, and mobilized their members to monitor polling stations.820 Elections in

816 Loaeza, “El fin del consenso,” 570-571.
819 “Chihuahua, Chihuahua: En el Periodico Novedades...,” 25 March 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 11-13, AGN.
820 “Harán campaña en contra del abstencionismo miembros de la CONCANACO,” 19 May 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, h. 29, AGN; “Intercederá la FECANACO ante el Gobierno Constitucional del Estado,” 31 May 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 36-37, AGN; “X Asamblea Annual de la FECANACO de Sonora,” 8 June 1982, DGIPS, c.
these regions, where the PAN made significant gains, provided a measuring stick for shifting political sentiments and the effectiveness of oppositional strategies, a centerpiece of which was increasing private-sector participation in the political process. They were an important primer for what was to come.

The PRI’s fortunes in northern Mexico declined further in the wake of the elections. An intensifying “fever for the dollar,” as one reporter described it, prompted López Portillo’s government, on 5 August, to again float the peso on international markets. The result was another extensive devaluation, as the peso plummeted from an already paltry 70-1 ratio vis-à-vis the dollar to upwards of 100-1. Yet even the seismic increase in the cost of the dollar did not slow demand, and within weeks of the devaluation Mexico’s dollar reserves again reached record lows. In response, López Portillo ordered a freeze on dollar-denominated bank accounts, converting all dollars held in Mexican banks to pesos at below-market exchange rates.

While many Mexicans, including CTM leader Fidel Velázquez, saw the measure as necessary to prevent further decapitalization, it was widely unpopular in the North. The combined effects of the devaluation and exchange controls wreaked economic havoc in frontier regions, where both entrepreneurs and citizens were largely dependent on U.S. goods—the cost of which were, historically, significantly less than those ‘imported’ from more distant manufacturers in Mexico City and surrounding regions—and where local economies relied

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17-15-D, exp. 21, hs. 38-40, AGN. See also Yamil Mizrahi, “La nueva relación entre los empresarios y el gobierno: el surgimiento de los empresarios panistas,” Estudios Sociológicos, 14:41 (May-August 1996), 493-515
821 “Crónica de una devaluación crónica,” 1 September 1982, Expansión 14:348, 42; Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980, 89.
823 “Reacción Ante el Alza del Dólar, 13 August 1982, DFS versiones públicas, José María Basagoiti Noriega, legajo 1, hs. 47-50, AGN; “Control de cambios y crisis: México frente a la realidad del oráculo,” 1 September 1982, Expansión 14:348, 48
heavily on cross-border transactions in U.S. dollars. That the exchange controls were necessary in the macroeconomic sense was of little comfort to norteños confronting widespread scarcity, skyrocketing prices, and evaporating liquidity.

Opposition to López Portillo’s administration among northern entrepreneurs reached new heights following the announcement, and intensified even further when the government raised the cost of gas and electricity in a desperate move to increase revenues. Merchants in Baja California, Tamaulipas, Sonora, and Chihuahua publicly threatened to close their businesses in protest, though they backed off when the Federal Electricity Commission implemented special protections for ‘small’ and ‘medium’ businesses. In Chihuahua, the president of the PAN’s municipal committee in Ciudad Juárez, Miguel Agustín Corral Olivas, met with local businessmen to express the party’s “total support” for Clouthier’s recent call for the government to sell off its parastatal industries. Not only were subsidies to inefficient state-run businesses responsible for Mexico’s growing debt and the corresponding economic crisis, Corral Olivas decried, but they had also “become the greatest sources of corruption for those close to the power” of the presidency. Government remedies deemed prejudicial to frontier economies brought regional distrust in the administration to a boiling-point. Equally important, the debates surrounding the crisis aggravated the deep historical and cultural discord between northern Mexicans and their compatriots in and around the capital.

In an article for Nexos frontier scholar Jorge Bustamante illuminated this cultural and political divide in a plea to curtail regional animosities. Observing that “prejudice in the center of

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824 Jorge A. Bustamante, “Las tentaciones de la frontera,” Nexos, No. 59 (November 1982), 41-43.
825 “Coordina la Camara de Comercio y la Comisión Federal de Electricidad,” 18 August 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 65-66, AGN.
826 “Estado de Chihuahua,” 18 August, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1., h. 164, AGN.
the country against residents of the frontier [fronterizos]… has acquired greater force in recent weeks,” Bustamante outlined the unique burdens that the devaluations and exchange controls placed on residents and businesses in the North. The piece, however, was not a defense of militant opposition by the region’s hardline entrepreneurial elites, with which, its author suggested, critics too often conflated ‘northernness’.

On the contrary, it was a warning against precisely this conflation. “There is nothing that irritates frontier residents more than when their nationalism is doubted,” Bustamante asserted, beseeching readers to understand that the “majority of the frontier population is prepared to show solidarity” in resolving the crisis. He acknowledged that regional suspicions cut both ways, pointing out that “impatience, stereotypes, and [ethnocentric] generalizations” were proliferating “on the part of fronterizos as well as those who refer to them from the center.” But he admonished that “geographical distance from the United State [does not] guarantee nationalist purity” any more than “geographical proximity [is] a temptation to betray the country.” Nevertheless, Bustamante acknowledged that the meanings and forms of political participation in Mexico had become regionally compartmentalized.

The inconformity that characterizes the fronterizo should not be confused with pressure to obtain an exceptional deal with respect to the rest of the country. The fronterizo wishes to participate in the decisions having to do with his region. Here [in the North, residents] have learned to differentiate between the [kind of] consultation that populism implies… and that which implies participation in decisions. One will not find an adequate mechanism for the northern frontier in the exchange controls or in other aspects of national policy if [policies] do not account for the experience of the fronterizo.

It was in this context that norteño political ‘inconformity’ entered its defining crucible under López Portillo’s presidency.
If the devaluations and exchange controls were necessary to shore up the country’s foreign reserves, they had come too late. Shortly after the controls went into effect, on 20 August, Secretary of the Treasury Jesús Silva Herzog announced that Mexico could no longer service the interest on its foreign debt. The announcement set off a global financial controversy, as international financiers worried that other indebted nations throughout the region, including Brazil, Argentina, and Peru, would default on their loans if Mexico refused to pay. This debtors-rebellion never materialized, and the outcome of the crisis for Mexico is well-known: López Portillo ultimately signed an agreement with the IMF in which Mexico received relief in the form of a ‘rescue package’ that rescheduled the country’s loan payments in exchange for the imposition of draconian austerity and economic restructuring measures that dramatically reduced public expenditures and, beginning under López Portillo’s successor, Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), dismantled Mexico’s welfare state.

The measures inaugurated what became known as Mexico’s “lost decade,” in which economic growth, incomes, and employment remained stagnant while economic restructuring eviscerated the government’s ability to provide relief. The crisis that began in 1982 marked a dramatic turning point in Mexican history, the beginning of a neoliberal era that was politically inconceivable only a few years before. But the collapse of 1982 was not the immediate catalyst

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827 On Friday 20 August 1982, Mexico’s total reserves hit another record low of $US180 million, while Mexico’s next interest payment on its international obligations, due the following Monday, was roughly $US300 million. See Silva Herzog interview in Mexico: From Boom to Bust, 1940-1982 (WGBH, Boston and the Blackwell Corporation; Peabody Broadcast Corporation, 1988).

828 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 147-151. Walker suggests that other indebted nations in the region were awaiting Mexico’s response to determine their own, and that joining them in a debtors rebellion was an option for incoming president Miguel de la Madrid, although he chose not to take it.

829 Ibid., Waking from the Dream, 144-145.

the conservative uprising that engulfed northern Mexico in its wake—an uprising that, ironically, supplied a broad base of support for the PRI-led transition to neoliberalism. This support helped turn a set of emergency economic policies into a sustainable and enduring transformation of the nation’s political-economy.

**Breaking the Banks**

On 1 September 1982, López Portillo, in his final *Informe*, announced the nationalization of the private banking system and the further tightening of exchange controls. The nationalization, which critics argued was a misnomer, given that the measure expropriated Mexican rather than foreign assets, caught observers from across the political spectrum by surprise. Author and cultural critic Roger Bartra observed that despite disagreements as to the reasoning and wisdom of the measure “we all agree that the nationalization of the private bank was a surprising and totally unforeseen act.”

Expansión’s editors stated emphatically that “nobody dreamed… neither tranquilly nor in nightmares” that López Portillo would expropriate the banking system. José A. Luis Pérez, a right-leaning contributor to Mexico City’s *Excelsiór* whose columns were regularly reprinted in conservative periodicals such as Monterrey’s *El Norte*, Sinaloa’s *Noroeste*, and Guadalajara’s *El Informador*, described the measure as a “pro-state blitzkrieg.” Lorenzo Servitje, for his part, later recalled with regard to the business community that the expropriation “completely floored us.” In retrospect, this universal lack of anticipation is rather un-mysterious. The nationalization was a unilateral—or, in Loaeza’s words,

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“strictly personal”—decision on the part of the president, who bypassed even internal vetting channels, including the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, in reaching his conclusion.\textsuperscript{835}

Another perplexing aspect of the measure was the conspicuous absence of a compelling economic rationale.\textsuperscript{836} The freshman director of the central bank, Carlos Tello Macías, who López Portillo appointed to oversee the transfer, provided three core justifications for the move. First, he claimed that the expropriation would fortify the financial foundations of Mexican production by guaranteeing credit to a broader base of private actors.\textsuperscript{837} Indeed, Mexico’s private banks were laboratories of financial inbreeding, with individual banks often linked to a specific corporation or industrial group for whom the bank served as an internal and largely exclusive liquidity stream. Historically, only finite percentages of private lending went to small- and medium-businesses and, excepting only the largest agricultural enterprises, rural areas were perpetually credit-starved.\textsuperscript{838} Further complicating these arrangements was the fact that ownership and control of the largest private banks and the corporations to which they were married were frequently delineated so vaguely as to be indecipherable, with bank and corporate stocks inextricably entangled. Consequently, the expropriation put the ownership of some of Mexico’s largest corporations, for whom private banks were major, and often majority, shareholders, in jeopardy. Government control of the banking system effectively put these companies up for political ransom, leaving many high-profile business leaders prostrate pending resolution to the question of corporate ownership.\textsuperscript{839}

\textsuperscript{835} Loaeza, “El fin del consenso,” 585.
\textsuperscript{836} \textit{Ibid.}; Haber at. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}.
\textsuperscript{838} Haber et. al., \textit{Mexico since 1980}, 52; See also Maxfield, \textit{Governing Capital}.
\textsuperscript{839} “Confederación de Trabajadores de México,” 13 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 196, AGN.
Yet the proposition that public control of the banking sector would ensure a more equitable distribution of national credit, while emotionally appealing, was empty. In the first place, the state already had rights to a sizable majority of banking reserves. By 1982, the government had raised the legal *encaje* limit, the reserve requirement to which private banks were subject, to an unprecedented 70 percent, meaning that 70 cents of every dollar held in Mexican banks was allocated to the *Banco de México*, a practice that scholars have equated to “preying on the banking sector.” Nevertheless, central bank reserves evaporated faster than the *encaje* could replenish them, as the government paid out enormous sums to international creditors and subsidies to parastatal and private domestic manufacturers. Not only was the administration complicit in the credit scarcity it claimed to address with the nationalization; there was no liquid capital remaining with which to expand access to credit.

Other explanations that the administration provided were equally unconvincing. The second reason that Tello Macías offered to justify government control of the banks—containing inflation—signaled an ineffective attempt to deflect blame for the inflationary spiral away from the public sector. Though bankers and businessmen were undoubtedly culpable, along with government officials and masses of individual account holders, for the capital flight that drained the country of vital resources and drove down the value of the peso, the presumption that consolidating the nation’s financial resources within the public sector would contain inflation was, in 1982, grimly comical. Lastly, the newly-anointed director of the central bank announced that the expropriation would provide greater security to small borrowers and account holders by lowering interest rates on loans and raising them on savings, measures that the government, in its

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decrepit fiscal condition, did not have the resources to see through. Absent a default on the country’s debts, the bank nationalization was immaterial to the larger economic crisis.

This is not to say that it was unpopular. On the contrary, wide swaths of the population greeted the expropriation enthusiastically, including organized labor, left-leaning intellectuals and political parties, and a majority ordinary citizens.\(^842\) As Bartra observed shortly after the decree, the left universally supported the measure. After all, he noted, “only the blindness of extreme sectarianism could reject a step so significant and profound for the life of the country.”\(^843\) The bank nationalization accentuated sectarian tensions, to be sure. But resistance was hardly limited to the sectarian fringes and, as Bartra acknowledged, trust in the government was at an historic low. It was precisely the significance and profundity of the measure that opponents feared.

There is broad agreement that López Portillo’s motives were fundamentally political. Mexican intellectuals such as Octavio Paz, Gabriel Zaid, Luis González y González, Daniel Cosío Villegas and Enrique Krause, most of whom tacitly supported the nationalization, nevertheless agreed that López Portillo was engaging in political theater, a conclusion that scholars have roundly corroborated.\(^844\) Predictably, business leaders condemned the expropriation as an exercise in populist realpolitik. Rogelio Sada Zambrano, president of Vitro, S.A., one of the Monterrey Group’s flagship holding companies and a major stakeholder in the Banpáis banking chain, bemoaned that the president “unilaterally broke the Alliance for Production.”\(^845\) Clouthier issued a statement on behalf of the CCE insisting that bankers and

\(^{842}\) Loaeza, “El fin del consenso”; Conversation with Miguel Basañez at Tufts University, 2 July 2013.

\(^{843}\) Bartra, “El reto de la izquierda,” 15-16.

\(^{844}\) Loaeza, “El fin del consenso”; Haber et al.; Arriola; Agustín, Tragicomedia Mexicana, vol 2; Babb (?); Walker (?).

\(^{845}\) Quoted in Bartra, “El reto de la izquierda,” 16.
business elites were “simply scape goats” in López Portillo’s attempt to “hide behind his curtain of smoke the innumerable monetary, financial, and fiscal errors” of his government.  

This version of events, which business leaders uniformly adopted, was not entirely baseless. As Bartra incisively observed, however, the nationalization was not the work of a hostile administration bent on whipping the private sector into submission. Labeling the CCE’s statement a “display of hypocrisy,” he reminded readers that “what Clouthier did not say is that all of those ‘errors’ formed part of the ‘Alliance for Production’, which sadly ended up fomenting speculation and rent-seekling by bankers and businessmen, who took advantage of the critical juncture to make extraordinary profits.” If official rationales did not hold water, Bartra correctly surmised, neither could the decree be reduced to a simple act of scapegoating. “The expropriation,” he averred, was an appeal to nationalism, born of the “synchrony between the devaluation of the president and the devaluation of the peso.”

In this respect the decree offers a cautionary tale on the unintended consequences of executive overreach. Referring to entrepreneurial claims that López Portillo had brought socialism to Mexico with the “stroke of a pen,” Bartra, who welcomed the expropriation, nevertheless insisted that it had “nothing to do with the democratic socialism for which the most important organizations of the left struggle.” He warned that the “unipersonal and authoritarian manner in which the nationalization was decreed” allowed the right “to diffuse the idea that socialism [was] dictatorial, totalitarian, and anti-democratic.” “They confuse socialism

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846 “Reacción sobre la Nacionalización de la Banca Privada,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN.
848 Ibid., 16
849 Bartra, “El reto de la izquierda,” 17; “Reacción sobre la Nacionalización de la Banca Privada,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN.; “Reunión de Miembros del Centro Patronal Valle del Yaqui,” 6 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 224-226, AGN.
with statism,” Bartra adduced, to “create panic in the middle strata, and especially in the… four million Mexicans who voted for candidates of the right in the [July] elections.” Though he labelled cries of socialism “absurd,” Bartra keenly perceived the underlying dilemma.850

That López Portillo granted the left one of its primordial wishes and, in so doing, invoked the unilateral power of a discredited presidency as justification, imperiled the left’s claims on democracy. By the early 1980s, many of Mexico’s most renowned intellectuals and, with them, their predominantly middle-class audiences, had begun to openly question the authoritarian strictures of Mexican presidentialism and the Jacobin tenor of Mexican revolutionary nationalism.851 Likewise, Bartra cautioned that the decree had “occasioned an avalanche of patriotism that obscures the crux of the problem”—that “official revolutionary nationalism finds its limits… in its lack of democratic sentiment.” Consequently, he repined, the platform of democratic socialists was “splitting in two: the government is taking up the reformist dimensions of its demands and the parties of the right are snatching up the democratic dimension.”852 Herein lay the paradox, and lesson, of the nationalization. By conceding one of the left’s most sacred demands in a unilateral move to salvage his own foundering credibility, López Portillo expropriated not only the banks. He seized the ideological credibility and political potential of independent, progressive democracy. ‘Avalanche of patriotism’ notwithstanding, the beleaguered president did the left no favors.

Of course, Mexican conservatives had been asserting, and refining, their democratic credentials since the apertura democrática, and the expropriation—widely hailed as a blow to the power of the right—only reinforced those claims. Scholars and contemporary observers have

highlighted anti-communist fervor in the wake of López Portillo’s decree, and for good reason.\textsuperscript{853} The initial responses of business leaders and other conservative groups were rife with customary howling over the arrival of socialism, including a widely circulated public announcement titled “Socialism or Liberty?” [¿Socialismo o Libertad?], authored by business and civic groups in Monterrey. Appearing in local and national papers from Mexico City to Puebla, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, Durango, Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Baja California, the announcement likened the expropriation to events in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Poland. It also invoked another ancestral mode of private-sector resistance, calling on entrepreneurs to “unite with the people” in a national commercial strike.\textsuperscript{854} But entrepreneurial leaders’ reversion to such aging strategies, while indicative of their priorities, was largely a knee-jerk reaction. Business leaders quickly abandoned the proposed strike and, habitual references to socialism notwithstanding, subsumed tired appeals to anticommunism within a more compelling script.\textsuperscript{855} As Loaeza observes, the narrative that emerged from the nationalization was not “capitalism v. socialism,” but “authoritarianism v. democracy.”\textsuperscript{856}

Yet contrary to prevailing interpretations the bank nationalization did not create the conditions for the PAN’s emergence as a legitimate challenger to the PRI.\textsuperscript{857} As national business leaders debated how to respond, civic organizations formed in the crucibles of echeverrismo and apertura joined provincial entrepreneurs at the forefront of the opposition. The

\textsuperscript{853} Ibid.; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics; Agustín, Tragicomedia mexicana vol 2; Walker, Waking from the Dream; Babb, Managing Mexico; Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980.

\textsuperscript{854} “Reacción sobre la nacionalización...,” 6 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1., hs. 183-186, AGN; “En los diarios de la localidad...,” 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, h. 233, AGN; Reacción sobre la nacionalización..., 7 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 187-195, AGN.

\textsuperscript{855} “Supuesto Paro del Comercio...,” 8 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, José María Basagoiti Noriega, c. 55, legajo 1, hs. 63-64, AGN.

\textsuperscript{856} Loaeza, “El fin del consenso,” 585.

\textsuperscript{857} Haber et. al, Mexico since 1980; Mizrahi, “La nueva relación”; Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics; Mizrahi (working paper as well as From Martyrdom to Power); Arriola, etc
Monterrey Council of Institutions [Consejo de Instituciones], whose members included a panorama of local business organizations and conservative groups, including the UNPF, ANCIFEM, and the Alliance of Women’s Associations [Alianza de Agrupaciones Femeninas]—an outgrowth of ANCIFEM—immediately began organizing resistance, calling meetings and issuing public condemnations in local newspaper, radio, and television outlets. 858

An upshot of the educational conflict under Echeverría, the Council cast the bank expropriation as the culmination of the “parastatal advance of the last 12 years.” “Never… prior to Luis Echeverria,” proclaimed one announcement, “had the country suffered the convulsions that that sexenio and this one, in its continuation, have provoked.” 859 The Council mobilized imposing street protests in which demonstrators excoriated executive excesses and government corruption, waving placards reading “Mexico Lives with Liberty.” 860 “With what moral authority,” council members demanded, citing the results of the 4 July elections, did the “Chief Executive, and nobody else, make the decision” to seize control of the nation’s financial centers? Red-baiting aside, the larger message followed the narrative established under the preceding administration, calling for “citizen responsibility… in defense of their rights and freedoms.” 861

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858 “Reacción sobre la nacionalización de la banca...,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN; “En los Diarios de la localidad...,” 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, h. 233, AGN;
859 “Reacción sobre la nacionalización de la banca...,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN; “Socialismo o Libertad,” El Norte, 6 September 1982, 7A.
860 “Reacción sobre la nacionalización de la banca...,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN.
Similar trends characterized responses in other provincial locales. In Puebla, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Coahuila, Durango, Sinaloa, San Luis Potosí, and Chihuahua, local business and civic groups organized the conservative middle classes in opposition to the government. Sinaloa’s own Council of Institutions, in conjunction with representatives of the Pan-American University’s Institute of Upper Business Management [Instituto de Alta Dirección de Empresa, or IPADE], convened meetings in Mazatlán and Culiacán to mobilize resistance. In these meetings and others in Torreón, Saltillo, León, and Chihuahua, local papers reported, ANCIFEM and allied women’s groups, along with the UNPF, played a leading role. The resulting outpouring of dissent spurred key national business leaders to action.

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862 “Iniciativa Privada...,” 3 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 179-180, AGN.
Despite issuing a deluge of public announcements and other propaganda condemning the decree, Mexico’s most powerful businessmen were divided over how to proceed. Many in the elite CCE urged caution and continued support of business leaders’ ‘alliance of convenience’ with the PRI. Equally important, many of the private sector’s most outspoken advocates of a more independent and politicized stance toward the government—including Andrés Sada and fellow scions of the Garza Sada family, Alejandro and Eugenio Garza Lagüera—were constrained either by public-sector bailouts or by the government’s recent inheritance of corporate stockholdings bound up in private banks. As a reporter for the Wall Street Journal observed, of Monterrey’s four largest holding companies—Alfa, Visa, Cydsa, and Vitro—only Rogelio Sada’s Vitro was sufficiently insulated from the nationalization to retain its capacity for autonomous resistance. Consequently, scholars have pointed out, the defining feature of the business response was an explosion of political activism among ‘small’ and ‘medium’ entrepreneurs in northern Mexico and, to a lesser extent, the Bajío. Nevertheless, the

864 “Actividades que desarrollan medios de información y iniciativa privada,” 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 17-15-D, exp. 21, AGN; “Situación que prevalece...,” 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 258-259, AGN; “Se Informe sobre consigna de los comentarios de la radio y la televisión,” 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 262-264, AGN.
865 “En revista con José María Basagoiti,” Setenta años al servicio de México: Historia parte III.
866 “Siguen rumores y falta de información: ¿Quién le pone el cascabel a Alfa?,” 9 June 1982, Expansión 14:342, 16; "Informe de Alfa: Se acabó el misterio," 23 June 1982, Expansión 14:343, 17; María de los Angeles Pozas, Industrial Restructuring in Mexico: Corporate Adaptation, Technological Innovation, and Changing Patterns of Industrial Relations in Monterrey (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1993); María de los Angeles Pozas, Estrategia internacional de la gran empresa mexicana en la década de los noventa (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 2002).
involvement of national business leaders, both before and after the expropriation, was more
decisive than these authors have acknowledged.

At the forefront of elite efforts to capture this predominantly middle-class uprising,
unsurprisingly, were Clouthier and Basagoiti. Both men were adamant that the impetus for the
protests did not originate with the national leadership. As Clouthier put it, “these movements in
Sinaloa, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Nuevo León… and other states and cities [are]… bottom-up and
not promoted from the top-down. It is the bases that pressure us to action.” In place of the
planned commercial strike, which he dismissed as counterproductive, Clouthier proposed that the
leaders of national business organizations “study the possible response to movements from
below. We will try to seize the mood and channel it.” With Andrés Sada and other powerful
*regiomontano* industrialists sidelined, however, Clouthier struggled to galvanize the CCE’s
leaders. Basagoiti later recalled that many of the CCE’s wealthiest businessmen “never
supported [Clouthier]” or “gave him the energy he deserved for his struggles; they always
considered him an arrogant man, without caution or prudence.” Clouthier undoubtedly had
powerful allies in the CCE, including Rogelio Sada and the more discreet Lorenzo Servitje, but
the organization’s leadership remained sharply divided.

Internal organizational relationships, however, were less important in determining
entrepreneurs’ response than ties across organizations. “I again joined forces with Manuel
Clouthier,” Basagoiti recollected. Commending Clouthier as a “true entrepreneur,” Basagoiti
recounted that he, Clouthier, and CONCANACO president Emilio Goicochea Luna “were the
only… presidents of organizations that… got ourselves up and went.” Unlike the CCE,

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869 “Apoyaremos a banqueros, estamos unidos: Clouthier…,” *Noroeste*, 6 September 1982, 1-B.
870 *Setenta años al servicio de México*, parte III, 15.
871 *Ibid*.
COPARMEX’s national leadership was unified in advocating a more militant response to the bank nationalization. Basagoiti, too, stressed the independence and initiative of his local constituents, but the earlier efforts of national leaders to expand and proselytize in the provinces were clearly showing results.873

Local CCE branches in places such as Sinaloa, Baja California, Tamaulipas, and Chihuahua openly joined with protestors despite the reluctance of national CCE leaders, and Centros Patronales across northern Mexico and the Bajío mobilized in masse.874 “It is no longer something shameful to participate in politics or be a businessman,” proclaimed one local entrepreneur in the northern state of Nayarit. “A new entrepreneurial consciousness is brewing.”875 Local reporting offered further evidence that the ‘business mystique’ was bearing fruit. Mexican entrepreneurs, effused a reporter for Noroeste, had finally realized that the “true spirit” of the businessman was to “cultivate people,” a trait, he insisted, that was essential to political leadership.876 Though scholars have correctly argued that the responses of middle-class entrepreneurs to the expropriation helped rehabilitate Mexican businessmen as legitimate

873 “Reacción sobre la Nacionalización de la Banca Privada,” 7 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 187-195, AGN.
874 Ben Ross Schneider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?,” 100. Schneider contends that the bank nationalization “radicalized the CCE,” but that characterization oversimplifies the CCE’s response and the role of the bank nationalization in crystallizing the ideas and strategies at the core of the radicalization to which he alludes. Not only was that radicalization largely confined to a relatively small but influential subset of CCE leaders – including Clouthier, Rogelio Sada, and Federico Muggenburg. It was most pronounced among local branches in the North and the Bajío, all of which were established after 1976 as part of an ongoing effort to expand the influence and “mass representation” of COPARMEX and the CCE in the provinces of those regions and promote civic and political engagement among local constituents. "Reunión de Miembros del Centro Patronal Valle del Yaqui,” 6 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 224-226, AGN; "Reacción sobre la Nacionalización de la Banca Privada,” 7 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 187-195, AGN; "Diferencias de Opinión Entre Las Cámaras Locales," 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 231-232, AGN; "Respuesta a la Consigna Dada a Conocer...," 7 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 234-236, AGN; "México en la Libertad," 8 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 299-308, AGN. The bank nationalization was an important catalyst for the political mobilization of CCE and COPARMEX members, but the groundwork had already been laid.
875 “Situación que prevalece en la Entidad...,” 2 September 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 80-85, AGN.
876 “Concertar acciones: Empresarios y Trabajadores...,” Noroeste, 12 September 1982, 4-A.
political actors, these accounts neglect that business elites had long-nurtured that rehabilitation.\textsuperscript{877} Elite actions following the nationalization were no less important.

Even as CCE leaders deliberated, Clouthier moved quickly to control the narrative. With many on both sides of the debate focused on the economic crisis and the economic merits of the expropriation, Clouthier insisted that Mexico’s predicament was, at its core, a political one. “Mexico is an infantile country because of state paternalism,” he exclaimed shortly after the decree. Exhorting Mexicans to fight for a “mature society,” he denounced the absence of democratic consultation leading up to the nationalization, clarifying that in referring to democracy he was “not thinking of corporatism.”\textsuperscript{878} The CCE president rehearsed these arguments unrelentingly in the wake of the decree. “If there is infantilism in Mexico,” Clouthier proclaimed in one public statement, “it is because the State always responds with tutelage and the statization [sic] of problems.”\textsuperscript{879} In another, he colorfully impugned that government paternalism “castrated” Mexican citizens.\textsuperscript{880} Of course, lack of the inferred endowments hindered neither the militancy nor the effectiveness of the thousands of conservative women helping to lead the ‘bottom-up’ protests Clouthier hoped to steer. Rather, the analogy targeted “infantilism of the left,” a trope that his sympathizers quickly adopted to explain the outpouring of support for the expropriation in Mexico City and the South.\textsuperscript{881}

The deployment of infantilizing language introduced a new and emotionally charged terminology to the anti-paternalist critique—an acerbic addendum to Mexico’s own ‘nanny-state’

\textsuperscript{877} Loaeza, “El fin del consenso”; Scheider, “Why is Mexican Business So Organized?”; Mizrahi, \textit{From Martyrdom to Power}, 166-174; Mizrahi, “La nueva relación entre los empresarios y el gobierno.”
\textsuperscript{878} “Debería someterse a plebiscito…,” \textit{Noroeste}, 2 September 1982, 1-A.
\textsuperscript{879} “Reacción sobre la nacionalización de la banca…,” 1 September 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 164-175, AGN.
\textsuperscript{880} “El CCE llama a la cordura y a evitar enfrentamientos,” \textit{Noroeste}, 7 September 1982, 1-A and 7-A.
\textsuperscript{881} “Infantilismo de la izquierda,” \textit{Noroeste}, 1 November 1982, 4-B.
debate. “The reason for the left’s applause of the measure is obvious,” stated a local reporter in Sinaloa: “the State is its terrestrial god,” the worship of which led to the “abandonment of civic and political duties” and the “moral values that bind the people together.”

Another reporter for the same paper claimed that the state “enslaved workers to manipulate them,” adding that supporters of the expropriation “all depend on the government.” Goicochea Luna, a fellow sinaloense and close ally of Clouthier, was more to-the-point. “[F]or the government that Mexicans want,” he admonished, “we have to fight with democracy, in the parties.” Only then could Mexicans leave the yolk of paternalism behind and “responsibly exercise their civic and political duties,” he insisted.

Clearly, PAN representatives hoped to capitalize on conservative outrage. In a statement uncharacteristic for a leading panista official, José Angel Conchello proffered an implicit endorsement of economic liberalism. “Behind all this,” Conchello conceded, “I see that the Keynesian… economic model that we have lived has exhausted itself,” leading the government to resort to “escapist” solutions. Conchello’s statement, while indicative of the party’s shifting position on economic policy, betrayed the indecision of its leaders concerning how to most effectively cash in on swelling opposition. Not only did the PAN remain doctrinally opposed, at least publicly, to economic liberalism. Keynesianism was not incompatible with economic ‘subsidiarity’, the party’s official economic platform. It is unclear why Conchello would point to an economic paradigm, much less one that so imprecisely described the administration’s unorthodox economic policies, as the underlying cause of the PRI’s political missteps. It is

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883 “El Desquite,” Noroeste, 9 September 1982, 4-A.
884 “Debería someterse a plebiscito...,” Noroeste, 2 September 1982, 1-A.
885 “Escapismo y compra de tiempo,” Noroeste, 23 September 1982, 4-A.
886 Mizrahi, From Martyrdom to Power, 22-23.
possible that Conchello, a *regiomontano* with close ties the city’s business community, was signaling to leading entrepreneurs that his party was finally ready to endorse a turn to neoliberalism. It is equally possible, however, that he simply misread the narrative that was emerging in the aftermath of the expropriation. Though a neoclassical assault on Keynesian economic ideas was implicit to that narrative, the movement that it impelled defined itself using the language of democracy.

Other *panista* spokesmen offered reasoning more in line with that of Clouthier and other conservative groups. Abel Vicencio Tovar, president of the party’s national committee, characterized the expropriation as a major step toward the state’s goal of “taking control of every manifestation of cultural, political, economic, and social life.”

Regardless, none of the nascent protest movements that responded to the decree publicly associated themselves with the PAN or other opposition parties. The bank nationalization breached the long-quavering floodgates of dissent, unleashing a torrent of activism that expedited the PAN’s political rise, but the civic and ideological foundations of that rise were already in place. The PAN, in other words, did not need to ‘snatch’ the reins of democracy from a suddenly compromised political left, as Bartra suggested. It needed to channel the energies of rightist civic and entrepreneurial groups, for whom the nationalization was but another in a long line of government abuses, albeit, for them, a monumental one. Nevertheless, it was not a foregone conclusion that the expropriation would impel the party’s ascent.

*Mexico en la Libertad: Democratizing the ‘New’ Liberalism*

Here again, the involvement national business leaders, and especially those with ties to USEM, was vital. As Basagoiti later recalled, he, Clouthier, and Goicochea Luna hatched a plan

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887 “El Comité Regional del PAN,” 15 September 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 25, legajo 1, hs. 149-152, AGN.
to channel disparate opposition campaigns into a unified movement that they dubbed *México en la Libertad* [Mexico in Freedom]. ⁸⁸⁸ Clouthier described this movement more candidly at a rally in his home town of Culiacán. “*México en la Libertad,*” he exclaimed, was a “regional movement” to bring the values of the “patria chica” [home town, or birthplace]—an expression that in Mexico commonly denoted a broader norteño identity—to bear on national politics. Clouthier proposed to galvanize “constructive civic movements” rooted in a “mystique of solidarity.” Such movements, he elaborated, were an essential counterbalance to the “immature ones… the demagogues and opportunists; the paternalists and infantilists that have bled our economy and massified our people.” But *México en la Libertad* was not just a protest movement, he insisted. It was a means to an end. Its “higher purpose,” Clouthier proclaimed, was “integrally developing Mexico… not only in the economic, but also in the familial, cultural, political and including the religious” realms—to achieve, finally, “liberty that is not libertinism.” ⁸⁸⁹ As in the protests of the 1970s, ‘integral development’ became a central mantra of *México en la Libertad* and, ultimately, an ideological pillar of the political movement it helped launch: *neopanismo.*

From early October through the end of November 1982, movement organizers held six demonstrations, regularly drawing between fifteen hundred and two thousand participants. ⁸⁹⁰ Virtually all of the gatherings took place in cities of the North and the *Bajío*—including Monterrey, Torreón, León, Culiacán, and Mexicali—with the sole outlier being Mérida, Yucatán, which would become one of the PAN’s only strongholds in southern Mexico. ⁸⁹¹ Bracketing these rallies were contemporaneous meetings in more numerous locales in which organizers conveyed

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⁸⁸⁸ *Setenta años al servicio de México*; parte III, 15.
⁸⁸⁹ “Estado de Sinaloa,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 156, AGN.
⁸⁹⁰ “Portafolios,” *Noroeste,* 9 October 1982, 4-B.
México en la Libertad’s message to local stakeholders and devised strategies appropriate to local conditions. Whereas the movement received only scant, mostly negative media coverage in Mexico City and government-friendly news outlets elsewhere, it dominated headlines in many provincial papers and was the frequent subject of local television and radio broadcasts. Further bolstering México en la Libertad’s impact, of course, was the credibility vacuum created by citizens’ deepening distrust of public authorities.

Organizers rationalized that the need for the gatherings was especially dire in these regions due to the widening credibility gap and lack of reliable information. Clouthier cited a need to “inform” residents of the provinces concerning the causes of Mexico’s problems and the path forward as a core justification for México en la Libertad. “We search for the truth,” asserted Monterrey businessman Eugenio Clariond Reyes in similar fashion, to cut through “ideological confusion” and “know the real causes” of the country’s dilemma. Only by

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894 “Estado de Sinaloa,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 156, AGN.
“[i]dentifying the truth and cross-checking it with our principles” could Mexicans overcome the “irrational nationalism” that bound PRIísta patrons to their hapless dependents, he contended.\(^895\) As Basagoiti described it, the goal was to traverse “distant capitals of the provinces, stirring up the people because [the government] was taking away our liberties.”\(^896\) Tellingly, the liberties that México en la Libertad’s organizers and orators demanded spanned the pantheon of grievances that had galvanized conservative resistance over the preceding twelve years.

With slight variations, the rallies followed a common set of talking points and featured representatives from a broad array of business, civic, and other ‘intermediate’ groups. Organizing themes included the constitutionality of the bank nationalization, the composition and future of Mexico’s mixed economy, the role of intermediate organizations in Mexican politics and public life, citizen participation, women’s civism, corruption, and authoritarianism.\(^897\) In addition to the CCE, COPARMEX, and CONCANACO, local business and professional associations such as the Nuevo León Chamber of Manufacturing Industries [Cámara de Industrias de Transformación de Nuevo León, or CAINTRA, NL], chambers of tourism and real estate, sales and marketing executives, lawyers’ associations, engineering and architectural societies, and centers for industrial relations were heavily involved in the demonstrations.\(^898\) Joining these organizations was a who’s-who of conservative civic groups.

\(^{895}\) “México en la Libertad,” 8 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 299-308, AGN.
\(^{896}\) Setenta años al servicio de México; parte III, 15.
\(^{897}\) “Basta de intervencionismo,” El Norte, 7 October 1982, 1-B; “Estado de Coahuila,” 15 October, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 197, AGN.
\(^{898}\) CAINTRA, NL was a powerful and militantly non-conformist division of the National Chamber of Manufacturers [Cámara Nacional de Industrias de Transformación, or CANACINTRA], whose largely Mexico City-based corporate constituents were heavily dependent on government subsidies. As a result, CANACINTRA, at the national level, was generally friendly to government industrial policies, and often at odds with other business chambers and organizations. See Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics. CAINTRA, NL was the most powerful branch of the organization outside of Mexico City, and its militant opposition to government intervention in business and the economy consistently put it at odds with CANACINTRA’s national leadership. See Gauss, Made in Mexico. In 1982, CAINTRA, NL had over 7,000 members. See “Industriales reiteran: apoyamos a Clariond,” El Norte, 12 October 1982, 1-B
Equally central to the proceedings were ANCIFEM and other women’s groups, Councils of Institutions in Monterrey, Sinaloa, and León—the former of which was the official organizer of the first México en la Libertad meeting, in Monterrey—local student associations, and the UNPF. Represented alongside this vanguard of gender-inclusive political modernizers was a potpourri of creaky men’s-only associations, including local Rotary Clubs, Lions’ Clubs, and the Sembradores de Amistad [Sowers of Friendship], which despite their unfailing presence exercised only marginal influence over the movement. Conversely, México en la Libertad catapulted one newly-established organization to political prominence: Integral Human Development Citizen Action [Desarrollo Humano Integral Acción Cívica, or DHIAC].

Founded by a group of poblano businessmen earlier in López Portillo’s tenure, DHIAC was committed to containing the residuum of echeverrismo in social, familial, and economic life. The group’s co-founder and president, Jaime Aviña Zepeda, served concurrently as the president of Pro-Life National Committee [Comité Nacional Provida, A.C.], an anti-abortion organization formed in 1978 in response to fears that the secularization of official reproductive policies under Echeverría—policies that remained in place after the presidential transition—would lead to the legalization of abortion. Both DHIAC and Provida established close ties to ANCIFEM and the UNPF, but prior to México en la Libertad DHIAC’s public profile was relatively obscure. The intensification of DHIAC’s activities from late 1982 was a

900 “Desarrollo Humano Integral, A.C.,” 14 June 1979, DFS, exp. 100-9-1-79. DHIAC was founded by a group of Catholic businessmen in Puebla in 1976, though evidence of DHIAC’s public engagement is sparse prior to 1982 and only becomes more voluminous in the 1983-1985 period. See also Arriola, Ensayos sobre el PAN, Chapter 3. The bank nationalization and, more immediately, México en la Libertad, which rallied conservative opposition through the end of 1982, were important launching pads for DHIAC’s growing influence.
development of considerable long-term import. As Loaeza, Arriola, and others have pointed out, collaborative campaigning by DHIAC, Provida, ANCIFEM, the UNPF, and local entrepreneurial organizations was vital to the PAN’s subsequent electoral successes. Situating these alliances within the broader optic of business and conservative protests from the 1970s is essential to understanding the origins of neopanismo and the constellation of values from which it derived its ideological appeal. In this regard, México en la Libertad was both a launching pad and a melting pot.

From the themes that movement participants expounded three interrelated objectives were discernable, the confluence of which underpinned the rise of neopanismo. First, organizers championed permanent, organized, and expansive engagement with civic and political life at all levels of society and government. In his opening address at México en la Libertad’s first meeting on 8 October, president of the Monterrey Council of Institutions Gustavo González García implored his audience to “exercise their freedoms” and “assume their civic responsibilities,” urging individual “sacrifice for the Mexican community.” Rubén Alanis Alburne, president of CANACO, Monterrey, put it differently. He lamented that after a hundred and sixty years of national independence the “legacy of centralism” continued to stunt “political maturity,” impede civic duties, and encourage apathy in electoral processes. Local reporters and opinion-makers amplified this message.

Following México en la Libertad’s inaugural demonstration, El Norte’s widely popular political satirist M.A. Kiavelo earnestly described Mexicans’ aversion to civic and political participation as the “capital sin of the citizenry.” Similarly, after a 15 October gathering in

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902 Loaeza, “El fin del consenso”; Arriola, Ensayos sobre el PAN, Chapter 3.
903 “México en la Libertad,” 8 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 299-308, AGN.
904 “M.A. Kiavelo,” El Norte, 9 October 1982, 4-A.
Torreón, the conservative *Siglo de Torreón* published a piece titled “¿México en la Libertad? ¿o el hombre en la Libertad?” [Mexico in Freedom? or Man in Freedom?]. The writer congratulated movement organizers for taking up, finally, what he described as the divinely-mandated duty to constructively engage the problems affecting one’s country and community. Underscoring the import of Catholic Social Doctrine to this cause, he cited its earliest formulation, the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, to drive the point home.905

Participants and sympathetic observers stressed the preservation of traditional family, religious, and social values as the central impetus for appeals to civic virtue. In successive rallies in Torreón and León, ANCIFEM, UNPF, and DHIAC representatives trumpeted now familiar calls for intermediate associations to organize permanent opposition to government infringements on educational freedoms and traditional family, gender, and sexual relations, claiming that such trespasses begot ostensive moral afflictions ranging from homosexuality to hedonism, communism, and criminal violence.906 Meanwhile, priests across the region engaged the movement from afar, giving sermons with such titles as “Corruption for Lack of Civic Values”—excerpts of which local papers dutifully published—reinforcing the premise that citizens had a moral and religious obligation to defend their families and communities from the excesses of secular demagogues.907 Predictably, demands for educational freedoms were central to such appeals, but the most salient aspect of *México en la Libertad*’s defense of families was its mobilization of conservative women.

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905 “¿México en la Libertad? ¿o el hombre en la Libertad?,” El Siglo de Torreón, 15 October 1982, 12-C.
The prominence of women’s civism as a rallying point for the movement was a powerful testament to the impact of Echeverría’s sexual politics on Mexican conservativism and the continued effectiveness of ANCIFEM leaders in expanding the group’s influence. Speaking in León, ANCIFEM representative Susana de Venegas called on women to "set aside their passivity" and ensure that the state "respect the family as the fundamental nucleus of society." Mexican women, de Venegas insisted, had a moral "responsibility to create a better Mexico," where the "right to life, expression, thought, religion, association, and property are respected." Organizers deemed women’s civism so essential to the cause that they augmented rallies with special meetings on the topic, which Clouthier and other business representatives personally attended.

True to character, Clouthier conveyed his views on the subject through metaphors of virtue and virility. Politically-engaged and devoted mothers, he proclaimed in a speech in Culiacán, were the best vehicle for preventing “Papa Gobierno” from “prostituting our youth and manipulating it to [his] whims.” Basagoiti and other COPARMEX leaders, for their part, dispatched the organization’s modest scattering of female representatives to speak alongside ANCIFEM spokeswomen at demonstrations and to liaise with members of ANCIFEM and other women’s groups in locales from Baja California and Sinaloa to Veracruz and Mérida. Yet

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909 “Invitan a la Ciudadanía...,” 5 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 156, AGN; “Estado de Sinaloa,” 9 November 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, lgajo 1, hs. 224, AGN.
910 Add cits: Culiacán rally; Mexicali rally; and JMBN file on COPARMEX meeting with ANCIFEM reps in Veracruz; “Invitan a la Ciudadanía...,” 5 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 156, AGN; “Estado de Sinaloa,” 8 November 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 209-223, AGN; “Sexta Reunión Empresarial...,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 157-164, AGN; “Estado de Veracruz,” 6 December 1982, DFS versiones públicas, José María Basagoiti Noriega, c. 55, legajo 1, h. 68, AGN; “Estado de Baja California,” 22 November 1982, DFS versiones públicas, José María Basagoiti Noriega, c. 55, legajo 1, hs. 55-57, AGN.
women’s civism was not the most contentious aspect of the political awakening that México en la Libertad impelled.

A second and overlapping goal of the movement was to rehabilitate Mexican entrepreneurs as legitimate political actors and end, at long last, their exclusion from formal politics. It is telling that none of the widely publicized announcements inviting citizens to attend México en la Libertad rallies explicitly referenced private-sector political participation, an omission that contrasted with open appeals to other civic-political topics such as ‘women’s civism’, ‘citizen participation’, and the role of ‘intermediate organizations’. Movement organizers undoubtedly viewed businessmen and business organizations as key constituencies within the latter two categories. As Basagoiti contended, citizenship was a “political condition” and by excluding Mexican businessmen from politics the government also deprived them of their “capacity as citizens.”

But promoting entrepreneurial political engagement was far more central to México en la Libertad’s objectives than appeals to inclusive citizenship implied. Not only was the question of businessmen’s role in political life a key topic of discussion at every demonstration. Of all the topics that México en la Libertad organizers addressed, it was the most controversial and, accordingly, the most hotly debated in public forums outside of the movement.

Indeed, movement organizers broached the subject only gingerly at the first México en la Libertad demonstration. CAINTRA, NL president Eugenio Clariond Reyes, who had also served as president of the Monterrey Council of Institutions from 1979-1980, admonished the businessmen in attendance that they, too, had a social responsibility to actively participate in civic and political life. USEM disciple and CES representative Federico Muggenburg agreed. As a member of the CCE think-tank, Muggenburg’s commentary contained echoes of the

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911 Setenta años al servicio de México, parte III, 17.
912 “México en la Libertad,” 8 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 299-308, AGN.
‘business mystique’. He proclaimed, to energetic applause, that entrepreneurial leadership in public life was essential “to defend and conserve [Mexico’s] spiritual and material patrimony” from the “intellectual frivolity [and] dishonesty” threatening the “disintegration of the natural order.” Nevertheless, participants in México en la Libertad’s inaugural meeting left the question open. At the gathering’s conclusion organizers circulated a survey with a series of questions, one of which asked what actions entrepreneurs should take to defend “free enterprise” and combat ‘ideological confusion’ and misinformation in their communities.

Reporting in the days that followed shed light on both the responses to that questionnaire and the controversy that such a proposition would inevitably stir. El Norte columnist Luis E. Mercado introduced the topic by stating “after the revolution, [Mexican entrepreneurs] renounced being factors of positive influence in society and took refuge in their businesses.” Highlighting the profound shift in businessmen’s understanding of their social function and responsibilities since the 1970s, Mercado reported that survey respondents largely agreed that Mexican entrepreneurs should assume an open and active role in political life. Specifically, he relayed, businessmen acknowledged that their social responsibilities could no longer “center only on profits… but rather on the benefit that the entrepreneur bestows on the community through exemplary, resolute, and appropriate civic conduct.” That same day, CAINTRA, NL issued a public statement expressing “total and absolute solidarity” with Clariond Reyes on behalf of the organization’s 7,000 members. As Mercado pointed out, however, a minority of those who replied felt that such an incursion was tantamount to “digging their own graves.”

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913 “Ya estamos en el socialism,” El Norte, 9 October 1982, 8-B.
914 “México en la Libertad,” 8 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 299-308, AGN.
These skeptics were right, of course, to expect hostilities from many public officials and opinion-makers. Critics of the movement immediately compared México en la Libertad to the clandestine ‘Chipinque’ meeting of 1974, in which Mexico’s most powerful businessmen had gathered outside of Monterrey to discuss strategies for subverting Echeverría’s government. Yet as defenders of the movement quickly pointed out, such comparisons failed to account for the dramatic strategic shift that had occurred since the conflict with Echeverría began.

Regiomontano journalist Carlos Ortiz Gil described the comparison to Chipinque as a “judgement that says it all.” Ortiz Gil and others countered that not only was México en la Libertad completely out in the open, but that the demonstration was crawling with government spies, whose surreptitious presence more closely mirrored the conspiratorial air of Chipinque than did the gathering they infiltrated. Despite continued criticism, calls for greater political participation among Mexican businessmen intensified in succeeding protests.

Predictably, Clouthier was foremost among advocates of entrepreneurial politicization. Speaking in Torreón, he heralded a “not far off future” when masses of Mexican entrepreneurs will “do as the campesinos do” and mount “public demonstrations… and hunger strikes” to press their demands. At a subsequent rally in León he took his appeals a step further, publicly invoking leadership credentials rooted in the ‘business mystique’. The “true struggle,” he proclaimed, was not among social classes, but overcoming differences and “fix[ing] ourselves on common goals.” In contrast to the divisive politics of populist governors and labor unions, which, he claimed, sought the “annihilation of opposites,” Clouthier touted entrepreneurs’

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918 Mejías, Con estos buyes, hay que arar; 72-73; Agustín Tagicomedia Mexicana, vol 2; “Nada de conspiraciones,” El Norte, 9 October 1982, 7-B.
919 “Un juicio que lo dice todo,” El Norte, 11 October 1982, 4-A; “Nada de conspiraciones,” El Norte, 9 October 1982, 7-B.
920 “Los empresarios de ésta ciudad...,” 15 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D., exp 21, hs. 392-395, AGN.
aptitude for the “integration of dynamic equilibrium” of disparate interests and ideals. True leaders, he effused, “try to convince instead of defeat” those opposed to them.  

Clouthier’s uncle and the president of CCE, Sinaloa, Jorge del Rincón Bernal, was even more emphatic. “Never again will we accept seeing our human condition reduced to the sole role of producing wealth,” he stated unequivocally at a rally in Culiacán. Such comments were indicative of México en la Libertad participants’ hardening public stance on the subject.

The exploratory appeals to an entrepreneurial political insurgency that began in Monterrey quickly snowballed into one of the movement’s core mantras. From León to Culiacán to Mexicali, entrepreneurs and their conservative allies exclaimed that Mexicans must “nationalize politics,” not banks. Headlines such as “Businessman-Politician,” “Entrepreneurs demand the nationalization of politics,” and “Businessmen will participate in politics” proliferated in local periodicals, and entrepreneurial associations spanning distant locales published statements of support for rally organizers. The explosion of publicity surrounding the topic spurred debates and galvanized support across the North and Bajío. México en la Libertad’s detractors cast calls for greater private-sector political engagement as a blatant power grab along sectarian lines. Movement organizers, on the other hand, countered that they had no interest in forming a political block or party to represent the exclusive interests of the business

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922 “Sexta Reunión Empresarial...,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 157-164, AGN.
class, but rather in fomenting a movement in which entrepreneurs and their organizations joined like-minded civic groups in a broad political awakening.\textsuperscript{926}

\textit{México en la Libertad} organizers insisted that businessmen should participate within existing political parties, though they denied affiliation with any particular one. “What we need, my friends” Clouthier declared, was an entrepreneurial colonization of all political parties:

[T]o confront the country’s problems with a constructive spirit. A mystique that will impel a less corrupt order, so that we can all develop our initiatives and abilities in peace and justice; in a word [so that we become] ‘more brothers, more citizens, more men’.

Even at this critical juncture, the future panista presidential candidate (1988) declined to pledge himself to the PAN, despite the obvious ideological affinity. Clouthier lambasted the PRI for using patronage to secure the support of “drug addicts,” feminists, and sexual dissidents, avowing that true entrepreneurs would never align with “those who intend to destroy God [and] supplant man in his place.”\textsuperscript{927} But when a national reporter pressed him on his partisan leanings, Clouthier famously announced: “I don’t have the stomach to be of the PRI or the liver to be of the PAN. I am of the PUP,” or the \textit{Partido Único de los Pendejos} [Sole Party of the Assholes].\textsuperscript{928}

In other words, he would not betray his values, but he also wanted to ‘win’, and he was not yet convinced that the PAN was ready to compete. Meanwhile, the movement he impelled was not only transforming the PAN’s political fortunes, but also the platform on which they rested.

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\textsuperscript{927} “Estado de Sinaloa…,” 8 November 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 209-223, AGN.
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Though its organizers defined it as a movement for political and moral renewal, México en la Libertad signaled a critical turning point in business efforts to bind their political vision to economic liberalism—the third, and most understated, of its core objectives. Publicity for the movement described this goal in terms of clarifying more precisely the structure of Mexico’s mixed economic model, and speakers incessantly denounced the “fictitious economy,” highlighting the need to “assure that the economy is managed in accordance with the truth.”

As Alanis Albuerne conceded during his speech at the Monterrey rally, however, economic realism—or truth, or honesty—as organizers conceived it, involved little ‘mixing’. “The planned economy,” he asserted, “should give way to a free market economy.” Similarly, El Norte’s Luis Mercado, reporting on México en la Libertad’s inaugural demonstration, speculated that Mexico’s policymakers “seem to have read Friedrich Hayek and [determined] to do precisely that which he recommended to avoid.” As in protests of the preceding decade, demonstrators mostly eschewed explicit references to liberalism, preferring the language of ‘integral development’. But calls for a grassroots defense of ‘free enterprise’, which Clouthier and others took great pains to distinguish from ‘capitalism’, were hardly undoctrinaire.

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930 “Observan a México rumbo al socialism,” El Norte, 9 October 1982, 8-B

931 “Empresarios revelaron plataforma política,” El Norte 13 October 1982, 9-A

932 “Estado de Sinaloa,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, h. 156, AGN; “Sexta Reunión Empresarial con la Tema México en la Libertad...,” 8 November 1982, DGIPS, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 157-164, AGN.

Among the most striking testaments to organizers’ efforts to validate neoliberalism was the inclusion of economist Luis Pazos as a regular speaker at México en la Libertad rallies. Pazos was a protégé and confidant of Agustín Navarro Vázquez, a Guadalajaran businessman and member of the Mont Pelerín Society—of which Pazos was also a member—who was arguably Mexico’s foremost champion of economic liberalism in the post-revolutionary era. A relatively obscure figure prior to the bank nationalization, Pazos emerged as a prolific publisher of books condemning government economic policies and a frequent contributor to conservative periodicals, including El Norte, Noroeste, El Informador, El Siglo de Torreón, and El Sol de León. Though he, too, refrained from using neoliberal terminology during his speeches and other public commentary, his interpretations of the economic crisis—like those of fellow economist Edgar Mason, whose columns frequently appeared alongside Pazos’—rejected wholesale the government’s role as an arbiter of social and economic life. Rather than openly endorsing neoclassical theory, Pazos led a growing chorus of contemporary observers who used the crisis as an opportunity to publicly attack the validity of Keynesianism.

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934 “Los Empresarios de Esta ciudad...,” 15 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs 392-395, AGN; Estado de Durango,” 22 October 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, hs. 198-199, AGN.

935 “Grupo México,” 9 November 1982, DFS versiones privadas, exp. 009-045-003, AGN; See also Cristina Puga, México: Empresarios y poder, 106. Navarro Vázquez was a frequent columnist for the conservative Mexico City newspaper El Heraldo de México and the founder of Mexico’s earliest liberal economic think-tank—the Institute of Economic and Social Investigations [Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales]—and numerous right-wing publications, including the magazines Impacto, Réplica, Espejo, and Temas Contemporaneas. While Navarro Vázquez’s unabashed promotion of economic liberalism (and anticommunism) from the early post-WWII era marginalized him from the mainstream public conversation, he exercised considerable influence in right-wing circles of businessmen, Catholics, and economists. Notably, Navarro Vázquez was also a mentor to Manuel Francisco Ayau Cordón, a close friend of Pazos and the founder of Guatemala’s prestigious Universidad Francisco Marroquín (UFM), which has graduated a wide network of neoliberal economists and public officials from countries around Latin America. On links between Ayau, UFM and US corporate-led initiatives to promote the training of Latin American leaders of neoliberal orientation see Moreton, To Serve God and Wal-Mart (find pp#); See also Manuel Francisco Ayau Cordón, Mis Memorias y Mis Comentarios sobre la Fundación de la Universidad Francisco Marroquín y sus Antecedentes (Guatemala City: Editorial UFM-IDEA, 1988).

936 For an example of Mason’s views see “Se requiere cada vez más empresarios, no mayor concentración gubernamental: Mason,” El Informador, 9 Oct, 1-C.
Pazos and Mason acted as critical moderators of economic debates in conservative-leaning public forums, and government reports following the crisis deplored the “popularization” of their views and works.\textsuperscript{937} Both professional economists, Pazos and Mason gave credence to the claims of less-credentialed contemporaries that, as Luis Mercado flatly stated, “Keynesianism is dead.”\textsuperscript{938} But their reasoning contained a peculiar, and almost certainly deliberate, glitch. Pazos repeatedly chastised public officials for their allegiance to “Keynesian expansionism,” suggesting that the administration’s heedless, debt-driven monetary approach was an inescapable byproduct of the Keynesian economic model.\textsuperscript{939} Similarly, Mason excoriated officials in López Portillo’s government for not perceiving the failure of Keynesianism in the wake of the 1976 crisis.\textsuperscript{940} Yet both figures invariably dated the beginning of this ostensive Keynesian fallacy to the Echeverría administration, pining for the lost age of Mexico’s economic ‘miracle’—an age in which, they failed to acknowledge, economic policies based on ISI adhered far more faithfully to orthodox Keynesian theory.\textsuperscript{941} Of course, they also omitted that in addition to high rates of GDP growth, rapid industrial modernization, and rising incomes for the urban middle classes, Mexico’s so-called miracle produced unsustainable gaps in income and wealth, rural misery, and massive demographic dislocations. As Federico Muggenburg put it at one

\textsuperscript{937} “Grupo México,” 9 November 1982, DFS versiones privadas, exp. 009-045-003, AGN; “Consejo Coordinador Empresarial,” 12 November 1981, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 140, AGN.


\textsuperscript{939} “¿Qué se dijo?,” 29 September 1982, \textit{Expansión} 14:350, 112; “Los Empresarios de Esta Ciudad...,” 15 October 1982, DGIPS, c. 1715-D, exp. 21, hs. 392-395, AGN; “Estado de Coahuila,” 15 October 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, legajo 1, h. 197, AGN.

\textsuperscript{940} “Se requiere cada vez más empresarios, no mayor concentración gubernamental: Mason,” \textit{El Informador}, 9 October, 1-C

\textsuperscript{941} Babb, \textit{Managing Mexico}; Gauss, \textit{Made in Mexico}; Haber, et. al. \textit{Mexico since 1980}.
México en la Libertad rally, Echeverría unleashed a “fierce struggle between two totally distinct political and economic models, one wise… and the second deluded.”942

By establishing Keynesianism as the straw-man for failed economic policies, these conservative intellectuals helped shoe-horn economic liberalism into the sociopolitical vision of movement organizers. If the economic program that led to the collapse of the early 1980s represented unadulterated Keynesianism, they insinuated, then the logical—or ‘honest’—solution lay with its global antithesis. For movement organizers, México en la Libertad provided an unprecedented platform for promoting their vision of a democratic polity led by a free and responsible citizenry that would uphold Mexicans’ most sacred spiritual and moral values. Within this vision, however, they interwove a rationale for a very different paradigm shift, spurring neoliberalism-by-default. From here it was only a short step to a full-throated endorsement, and with the state taking the lead in the nascent economic restructuring program the political risks of such an endorsement were fast diminishing.

Though scholars looking at Mexico’s economic crisis, the bank nationalization, or their aftermath have largely neglected the movement, México en la Libertad was a watershed for Mexican conservatism and a vital catalyst for neopanismo. Public officials downplayed the conservative uprising by arguing that Mexico’s crisis was purely economic, and that the nation’s political model remained sound.943 But the publicity surrounding the demonstrations and broadening support for the cause captured the full attention of both the PRI and the PAN. The PAN’s official publication, La Nación, praised the “awakening” of Mexican civil society and

942 “Estado de Guanajuato,” 25 October 1982, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 10, legajo 1, hs. 200-208, AGN.
943 “México Atraviesa por Crisis Económica, Pero no Política,” El Sol de León, 21 October 1982, 6-A.
entrepreneurs’ newfound commitment to civic and political engagement. Meanwhile, for the PRI *México en la Libertad* had become an embarrassment and a threat.

As the transition to the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1986) neared, Basagoiti later recalled, the president-elect demanded behind-the-scenes that organizers cease the demonstrations. After they refused to cancel a December rally in Mexicali, the first after the presidential transition and the movement’s final demonstration, Basagoiti replaced Clouthier in the proceedings to mitigate the offense that their defiance might cause the new head-of-state. De la Madrid was nevertheless incensed, according to Basagoiti, that someone of comparable influence filled in for the magnetic Clouthier—a point that the COPARMEX president’s successors subsequently confirmed. De la Madrid never attended a single COPARMEX meeting in his six years in office, becoming the first Mexican president since the confederation’s establishment in 1929 to boycott its assemblies for the entirety of his sexenio.

This despite his implementation of an economic program long-coveted by COPARMEX leaders. The president—a willing enforcer of economic restructuring and despoiler of the welfare state—could not abide the integration of that program with a political movement that challenged the power of the ruling party or its mandate, however impaired, to arbitrate Mexican social and economic life. Indeed, *México en la Libertad* inaugurated a broad and enduring challenge to the PRI’s dominance, signaling the birth of *neopanismo* as a formidable political movement. Yet de la Madrid’s outrage was pregnant with irony, as it was precisely that challenge that gave the PRI

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945 Setenta años al servicio de México, 14-16;
its broadest and most politically important base of support for the neoliberal restructuring of Mexican society.\(^{947}\)

In the years that followed Clouthier emerged as the standard-bearer of *neopanismo*, culminating with a failed run at the presidency in 1988, but he began campaigning for neoliberalism in the afterglow of *México en la Libertad*. In March 1983, only three months after the movement’s conclusion, Clouthier unveiled his vision of the ‘new’ liberalism at an auto-distributors convention in Acapulco. “In the political as well as the economic” realms, he effused, “liberalism trusts in the individual.” Clouthier took pains to distinguish the ‘new’ liberalism from its disreputable ancestors. Unlike its antecedents, he insisted, “modern liberalism... is not the least bit anti-religious.” “[O]n the contrary,” he posited, “the liberal” preserved freedom of religion and “believed in freedom of education.” “Nor does liberalism claim today to give full freedom to private persons to abuse” workers and vulnerable citizens, he qualified. Predictably, Clouthier contrasted this ostensive universal empowerment with the paternalist pretensions of authoritarian rulers, who “inevitably decide that the people are not prepared to know what they need and, consequently, [that] it is necessary to restrict their rights to express themselves freely.”\(^{948}\) For the first time since the start of his meteoric ascent, however, the charismatic businessman inverted his philosophical referents. Rather than enveloping liberal values in a cocoon of Catholic precepts that rejected liberal individualism, he submerged those precepts within the globally-vetted lexicon of the ‘new’ liberalism.

Clouthier proffered what appeared, on the surface, to be a disavowal of the ideological project that he himself had helped bring to fruition. “Contemporary liberalism… is not

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\(^{947}\) Add cits on PAN’s support of neolib: Loaeza, Arriola, Mizrahi, as well as Benson docs on US-Mexico Business Committee that mention the support of the PAN for GATT, NAFTA, etc.

\(^{948}\) “Palabras pronunciadas por Ing. Manuel J. Clouthier...,” 17 March 1983, DFS versiones públicas, Manuel Clouthier del Rincón, c. 11, legajo 2, hs. 317-329, AGN.
doctrinaire, nor philosophical,” he dissembled, but “simply a practical method and a principle of collective discipline”—a vehicle, in other words, for citizens to express their values through the election and deposition of their political representatives and to pursue material well-being “according to the laws of the market.”

Of course, the notion that neoliberalism was an apolitical technology, or technique, rather than an ideology was a foundational claim of neoliberal crusaders around the world—themselves an amorphous breed of ideologues wearing the assorted hats of technocrats, development workers, entrepreneurs, or downhome politicians seeking common sense solutions for simple folk. But Clouthier was not ready to fully surrender the entrepreneurial mysticism on which he had built his reputation to the pretense of an impersonal and unprincipled market.

Instead, he rechristened the entire neoliberal economic order as the “social economy of the market.” Clouthier did not portray this social economy of the market as the Catholic iteration of a universal standard, but as the standard itself. “Where it has triumphed,” he proclaimed, “modern liberalism… takes the name social economy of the market, because it respects the fundamental right of the individual to… accumulate that which he has accomplished by his ingenuity, his effort, his frugality and his honesty.” Leaving aside the fictive claim that neoliberalism facilitated ‘accumulation’ by regular citizens, much less the whole of the ‘social’ body, Clouthier identified poverty-stricken 1980s New York and Río de Janeiro, Brazil—the economic center of a country then under military dictatorship—as utopian exemplars of the new liberal modernity. “When a country abides by the social economy of the market… misery, ignorance, and unhealthiness begin disappearing. And progress is rapid,” he assured his

949 Ibid.
950 See, for example, Ferguson, Anti-Politics Machine; Jackson, Globalizers; Moreton, To Serve God and Wal-Mart.

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audience. Though time has proven them wrong, Clouthier’s statements attested to the profound shift in public understandings regarding politics, society, and the economy—neoliberalism and democracy—that he and his allies engendered.

**Conclusion**

The conservative protests that erupted following the bank nationalization fundamentally realigned Mexico’s political fabric, forging a movement that dramatically broadened organized opposition to the PRI and brought once marginalized groups into the political mainstream. Amid an unprecedented economic crisis, ‘integralist’ developmental ideology offered a vehicle for interpreting a wide range of social and economic ailments as the natural outgrowths of a morally infirm, secularist political system that encouraged government corruption and rent-seeking, radicalism, and civic and political underdevelopment. The champions of this sociopolitical vision, including an influential cabal of economic elites, religious conservatives, right-wing women, and newly politicized middle-class entrepreneurs, formed the backbone of an embryonic neopanista movement that challenged the PRI’s reign and reoriented democratization along conservative lines. In the process, they also reinterpreted the ‘integralist’ tenets from which they constructed this vision in a manner that, contrary to Catholic doctrine, reconciled them with the neoliberal designs of global elites and their intellectual surrogates.

By wrapping their movement in the mantle of democracy, the architects of this movement obscured their allegiance to a radical liberal ideology that had been anathema to Mexican economic life since the Porfirian era. Their efforts did not bring about Mexico’s neoliberal turn. But they imbued that turn with a measure of political stability that the PRI, whose power rested on the twin-pillars of a mythologized revolutionary nationalism and an expansive system of patronage—both of which the neoliberal transition greatly undermined—would have struggled
mightily to obtain. As the ruling party abandoned its traditional bases of support to the mercy of economic restructuring, these conservative insurgents helped legitimate a profound shift in the economic policy and ideology of the ruling party they so fervently opposed. One is left to wonder: absent conservative support, might that party’s reign have ended sooner?
Epilogue

New forms of conservative protest and ideological contestation in the period after 1970 carried far-reaching consequences for Mexican society. PRIísta officials’ imposition of neoliberal restructuring was politically treacherous, undermining a revolutionary ideology and patronage system that had sustained one-party rule in Mexico since the 1920s. Representatives of the De laMadrid administration justified the shift as a necessary response to an unprecedented crisis—emergency measures whose rationale derived from the unique demands of a specific historical moment.951 Similarly, Sarah Babb concludes that the rise of neoliberal technocrats within the PRI’s ranks and the resulting shift in the party’s ruling ideology responded not to a new internal consensus but to the practical requirements of negotiating with international creditors in the wake of the debt crisis.952 In other words, the PRI was following a template that dated to the postrevolutionary period: flexible accommodation to changing conditions buffeted by a constitution and political mythology that granted the state broad latitude to arbitrate social and economic life. There was no guarantee that the political-economic pendulum would not swing the other way when the crisis subsided.

Subsequent events further eroded the PRI’s credibility and deepened its dependence on panista support for unpopular socioeconomic policies. The years following López Portillo’s presidency bore witness to two seemingly incongruous trends: the consolidation of Mexico’s neoliberal turn and the continued decline of the party that initiated it. In September 1985, a

952 Babb, Managing Mexico, Chapter 7.
devastating earthquake struck Mexico City, reducing to rubble countless buildings, many of them residential, that were supposedly built to withstand such an event and exposing pervasive collusion between government officials and private contractors responsible for ensuring that construction practices met safety codes. De la Madrid’s botched response to the resulting disaster compounded the crisis, forcing citizens to bear the burdens of rescue and recovery in a moment that scholars have described, somewhat hyperbolically, as the birth of Mexican civil society.\footnote{For a detailed account of the role of investigative journalists and intellectuals in framing public debates following the earthquake see Vanessa Freije, “Journalists, Scandal, and the Unraveling of One-Party Rule in Mexico, 1960-1988,” PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2015. Freije traces the oft-repeated claim that the earthquake marked the birth of Mexican civil society to Carlos Monsiváis, who made the assertion in the days following the disaster and retreated from it in the months that followed. See also Carlos Monsiváis, “La solidaridad de la población en realidad fue un tomo de poder,” Proceso, September 23, 1985, 10 and Carlos Monsiváis, “Finalmente, el gobierno no se dejó rebasar; Víctima de su vulnerabilidad, la sociedad civil va callando,” Proceso, December 30, 1985. For a journalistic account of the diminishing support for the PRI in the wake of the quake see Luis Javier Garrido, “El Carpetazo,” La Jornada, September 19, 1986. That the earthquake was a catalyst for greater civic participation is indisputable, but it was only the most recent example of an overall pattern toward greater civic engagement—a pattern that began with the apertura democrática of the 1970s. Louise Walker provides a nuanced account of earthquake’s importance in mobilizing civic groups in Mexico City behind efforts to preserve social safety nets, foster more direct forms of democracy, and address corruption. Walker, Waking from the Dream, Chapter 6. With regard to the administration’s failed response to the quake, De la Madrid initially refused offers of international aid to assist in rescue, recovery, and reconstruction, despite the government’s lack of preparedness and inability to respond quickly and effectively to the disaster. See Mexico: End of an Era, “From Boom to Bust.}
The appearance of government haplessness in the face of immense human suffering in the capital and revelations of government complicity in the cataclysm heightened the PRI’s disrepute as citizens struggled to cope with the effects of restructuring and economic stagnation.

Seething discontent within the party and among its traditional supporters soon reached a breaking point. In 1988, a dissident faction of PRIístas under the leadership of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo—a faction known as the Democratic Current (Corriente Democrático)—formed the National Democratic Front (Frente Democrático Nacional, or FDN). Forerunner to the current Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática), the FDN joined the Democratic Current and a block of smaller political parties
and civic groups in a left-wing coalition that, barring widely suspected election tampering, many
projected to unseat the PRI in the 1988 presidential elections and bring Cárdenas, the party’s
presidential candidate, to power. Tellingly, the immediate catalyst for the FDN’s
establishment was De la Madrid’s selection of Budget Secretary and neoliberal economist Carlos
Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) as the PRI’s nominee, making him the presumed heir to the
presidency. That Salinas’ nomination provoked a split capable of threatening the PRI’s power
underscored the political perils of the party’s neoliberal embrace.

Meanwhile, the 1988 race marked the second time in as many years that the PRI endured
a public scandal over accusations of election fraud. In 1986, the PRI claimed victory over the
PAN in a hotly contested gubernatorial race in Chihuahua. Though spokespeople for the
official party vehemently denied wrongdoing, the results, which gave PRI candidate Fernando
Baeza Meléndez a 61 to 35 percent margin of victory over PAN candidate Francisco Barrio
Terrazas, incited widespread accusations of election tampering. Panistas, Mexican intellectuals,
local parties of the left, and Church leaders—who, prior to 1986, had avoided overt political
interventions—vociferously denounced the results as fraudulent after PAN supports revealed
boxes of falsified ballots and voter registration cards in favor of the PRI. The fallout from the
Chihuahua affair put a national spotlight on the PAN’s continued ascent in the North and made

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955 Camp Politics in Mexico, 192-194; Krause, Biography of Power, 770.
956 In 1983 elections, which had proceeded cleanly, the PAN won an unprecedented 44% of gubernatorial vote and the 5 most popular districts in the state, effectively giving the party control of 70% of the state’s population at the municipal level. The results raised expectations of panistas leading up to 1986 elections, while showing PRI how precarious its hold on power was in the North and thereby encouraging official interference in subsequent elections; Mexico: End of an Era, “From Boom to Bust.”
the problem of clean elections a national issue. As Loaeza argues, the convergence of the left and right on this issue strengthened the PAN’s claims to represent the vanguard of Mexican democracy.\textsuperscript{958} Over the long-term, the PAN’s credentials as a democratizing force ensured its continued viability, culminating, in 2000, in its becoming the first opposition party to win the presidency since the formation of the official party in 1929.\textsuperscript{959}

The short-term picture was more complicated. Even as voices from the left and right joined together in demanding greater political democracy, the PAN’s economic platform reinforced the PRI’s hold on power. As Chihuahua’s Baeza, who PRI officials had nominated largely due to his distinctly norteño pedigree and outlook, stated after his ostensible victory in the 1986 gubernatorial race: “We have a broader concept of liberty [in the North]… Northerners are more individualistic. They have more faith in the free enterprise system.”\textsuperscript{960} In this respect, the PRI’s shift to neoliberalism blurred distinctions between the two parties, while the PAN’s embrace of that shift broadened support for the PRI’s most politically fraught policy agenda.

As the PAN’s selection of Clouthier as its candidate in the 1988 presidential election illustrates, conservative protests in the 1970s and 1980s played a critical role in this alignment. Clouthier was the highest profile entrepreneur to run for the presidency in modern Mexican history, and he won the party’s nomination by a wide margin.\textsuperscript{961} The former president of COPARMEX and the CCE ran on a platform that focused on democratization, clean elections, and anti-corruption. Clouthier advertised his experience leading businesses and prominent

\textsuperscript{958} Loaeza, "El fin del consenso."
\textsuperscript{959} ibid.; In the 2000 presidential elections PAN candidate Vicente Fox became first Mexican president to come from ranks of an opposition party. Mizrahi, \textit{From Martyrdom to Power}.
\textsuperscript{960} Mexico: End of an Era, “From Boom to Bust.”
\textsuperscript{961} Manuel Clouthier, \textit{Diálogos con el pueblo: 1988, Año de Cambio}, vol 1, 18. Clouthier received 870 of 1105 total votes cast by PAN delegates.
‘intermediate’ associations as uniquely suited to the task of promoting human dignity, solidarity in pursuit of common national goals, and ‘subsidiary’ democracy.\(^962\)

Nevertheless, he struggled to differentiate his nebulous “social economy of the market” from the policies that De la Madrid enacted or those that Salinas proposed. Whereas Cárdenas and the FDN strongly condemned the PRI’s imposition of economic restructuring as an abandonment of the Mexican people to foreign interests and ideologies, Clouthier fell back on critiques of excessive bureaucracy, public spending, and inflation—criticisms that more accurately applied to the Echeverría and López Portillo administrations.\(^963\) And while the official results, which gave the PAN 17 percent of national vote, likely underrepresented Clouthier’s total support, the lack of concrete distinctions between his economic vision and Salinas’ clearly hindered the PAN’s competitiveness. *Neopanistas*’ ‘integralist’ conceptualization of free enterprise did not boost their electoral prospects in 1988, but it did help to legitimate austerity and economic restructuring.

For all its religious and democratic underpinnings, the guiding economic ideology of *neopanismo* was fundamentally a neoliberal one. That the restructured PAN marketed its political-economic platform in humanist rather than technocratic terms did not alter this reality. On the contrary, by redefining the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s as outgrowths of an entrenched political structure and ideology—as opposed to the aberrant, and reversible, economic policies of individual administrations—the mosaic of conservative groups that impelled the *neopanista* movement achieved something novel in Mexico. They imbued market

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\(^963\) On Clouthier’s campaign platform where economic policy is concerned see Héctor Gómez Peralta, “The Role of the Catholic Church in Mexico’s Political Development,” *Political Development: Faith-Based Schooling and Learning*, 6:1, 17-35 (2012); Clouthier, *Diálogos con el pueblo*, vols 1-3.
ideology, whose shallow historical roots in Mexico provided a precarious foundation for long-term survival, with a durability derived from its association with political democracy.

To be sure, the PRI’s embrace of neoliberal restructuring complicated the PAN’s path to power, leading party leaders to focus their opposition on issues of democratization, social policy, and public administration. Nevertheless, the importance of panista support to the PRI’s continued viability was evident in the broader trajectory of Salinas’ reforms. To assuage PAN supporters, Salinas—the archetype of the PRI’s neoliberal technocracy—revised Article 3 of Mexico’s constitution, ending the government’s monopoly on educational content, normalized Church-state relations, and removed long-standing legal restrictions on Catholic political participation. These concessions responded to the political realignment initiated with Echeverría’s apertura democrática, when the mechanisms for legitimating government policies began shifting, however haltingly, from formally incorporated sectors toward democratic procedures. The PAN’s emergence as a viable opposition party gave officials in the beleaguered PRI an unlikely, democratically-vetted base of support for official policy.

In this sense, the 1970s marked the beginning of Mexico’s long transition to neoliberalism. Conservative protests under Echeverría and López Portillo established the foundations of the neopansita movement, propelling the PAN’s emergence as an electoral competitor of the PRI. The rise of a market-oriented, democratic alternative to one-party rule

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provided a vital source of legitimation for the neoliberal reforms implemented by PRIísta technocrats in the wake of the 1982 economic crisis. As the PRI abandoned large blocks of supporters to the mercy of neoliberal restructuring, it turned to traditionally antagonistic conservative groups to lend credibility to those reforms.

Entrepreneurial elites played a vital role in the rise of neopanismo. Beginning under Echeverría, businessmen following the lead of Monterrey industrialists borrowed from the public relations strategies and techniques of U.S. corporations and business associations, devising new ways of influencing public opinion and promoting common values and internal consensus within the private sector. But the language and ideological referents that they deployed in this project diverged sharply from those of their U.S. counterparts. Through COPARMEX, the CCE, and USEM, this new generation of entrepreneurial leaders worked to synchronize the values and ideals of business elites with those of conservative Catholics and middle-class entrepreneurs. In so doing, they created the necessary conditions for lasting, broad-based alliances in support of economic and political ‘liberalization’.

The upshot was a conservative civic awakening that enveloped entrepreneurial elites’ opposition to state intervention in economic life within a comprehensive sociopolitical vision that had broad cultural purchase. Right-wing protests mobilized growing numbers of Mexicans behind ‘integralist’ notions of societal development that cast civic edification and political decentralization as prerequisites for a morally-sound, prosperous Mexico. Meanwhile, business leaders expanded the reach of private-sector associations across northern Mexico and the Bajío, nurturing a commitment to civic and political engagement among rank-and-file entrepreneurs. These ends came together following the bank nationalization in 1982, as conservative civic and business organizations spearheaded the regionally-grounded insurrection known as México en la
Libertad. México en la Libertad brought an end to entrepreneurs’ long-standing exclusion from political life, crystallizing fluctuating alliances among right-wing civic and women’s organizations and influential private-sector groups in an enduring, regionally-based political block that formed the core of the neopanista movement.

That neopanismo rested on a civic ideal which integrated market- and society-centered critiques of state power complicates prevailing interpretations of neoliberal transitions in the Global South. As in other poor nations, crises, real and manufactured, established the conditions from which neoliberalism in Mexico arose; and as David Harvey and other influential scholars have observed, the weakening of key sectors of ‘civil society’—including labor unions and federal employees as well as non-incorporated, or unofficial, groups—with the economic collapse diminished political impediments to economic restructuring. But this interpretation provides an incomplete picture of Mexico’s neoliberal turn. An examination of Mexican conservatism in the decades leading up to this shift reveals that the political viability of Mexico’s neoliberal transition hinged not only on the prostration of civil society, but on its construction.

Right-wing protests in the 1970s and 1980s propelled influential sectors of Mexican society from the margins of national civic and political life to its center. The business and civic groups driving this transformation asserted their legitimacy and shielded themselves from official reprisals with a civic ideal that cast opposition to government intervention in economic life as one aspect of a larger campaign to protect families and communities from the destructive

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967 Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism; Klein, Shock Doctrine; Martin Durham and Margaret Power, eds. New Perspectives on the Transnational Right (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); For an examination of the dilemma facing organized labor and, by extension, other groups whose strength historically derived from their relationship to PRI see Michael Snodgrass, “‘New Rules for the Unions’: Mexico’s Steelworkers Confront Privatization and the Neoliberal Challenge,” Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas, 4:3 (2007); For a detailed account of the ways that crises shaped middle-class views in favor of neoliberalism see Walker, Waking from the Dream.
influence of a centralized, authoritarian, and secular state. When the PRI-led government upended its historic commitment to socioeconomic mediation in response to the crisis of the early 1980s, it was the newfound political prominence and democratic credentials of Mexican conservatives that allowed the ruling party to solidify the turn to neoliberalism. From this vantage-point, civil society was an indispensable motor of Mexico’s neoliberal transition.

This is not to assert that there was a mechanical relationship between the strength of ‘civil society’, in an aggregated sense, and the rise of neoliberalism.968 Nor does it support the claims of that paradigm’s proponents that economic and political liberalization share an intrinsic causal relationship.969 On the contrary, a careful accounting of Mexican conservatives’ role in political and economic transformations in the latter decades of the twentieth-century dispels such notions.

Democratic ideals acted as a foil for neoliberal ones, and the prominence of the political right in Mexico’s lumbering transition to democracy imbued neoliberal restructuring with a legitimacy derived from that transition.970 Political and economic opening in Mexico responded

968 Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism; Klein, Shock Doctrine. It is important to note that these scholars have generally bestowed the concept of ‘civil society’ with progressive attributes that do not necessarily apply.


970 Where numerous economists and political scientists have claimed that economic opening was a precondition of political democracy in traditionally authoritarian ‘developing’ nations, conservative opponents of the PRI inverted this relationship. Neoliberal economists affiliated with the Mont Pèlerin Society, including Friedman, Hayek, and von Mises, had asserted this claim since the 1940s, and economists and political scientists friendly to neoliberalism have since recycled it in various forms. See Durham and Power, New Perspectives on the Transnational Right; Weintraub, “The Interplay between Economic and Political Opening”; Baer, “North American Free Trade,” It should be noted that in the case of political scientists this view has been the subject of considerable debate, and those such as Peter Smith and Denise Dresser have argued persuasively against such claims. Smith, for example has highlighted the contradictory nature of this argument in cases such as Chile, where it required the military overthrow of a traditionally democratic government to impose neoliberalism, and Brazil, where, like Chile, the military ruled for over half a generation before democratic political reforms were implemented. See Peter Smith, “The Political Impact of Free Trade on Mexico”; Denise Dresser, Denise Dresser, Neopopulist Solutions to Neoliberal Problems: Mexico’s National Solidarity Program (La Jolla, CA: University of California-San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1991). Nevertheless, such claims have persisted.
to historically specific, highly contingent constellations of circumstances, which grew from regional, national, and transnational factors that defy formulaic interpretations. Conservative protests provided a vital point-of-convergence for these processes—a political nexus without which neoliberalism and democratization shared little in common. Notably, the market democracy that those protests helped forge remains more faithful to the former designation than to the latter.
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