

they are survey chapters and rely on statistical data collected from a variety of sources, some of which are ethnographic work conducted by the authors themselves, such as Escobar Latapí and Hayes-Bautista. But, especially on some of the issues surrounding education, work expectations, and cultural activities, it would have helped to have heard more from Mexicans and Mexican-Americans themselves and from others' reactions to them. The people here appear too much as objects of academic analysis, something I am sure many of the contributors would not like to be the case.

And finally, the focus on California would have been more helpful if there had been more comparison between that state and others, in particular Texas: something here would have highlighted the peculiarities of the Californian nexus. I can hear the editors saying that all of this would have required a second volume; I do hope that appears and is as useful and stimulating as this.

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Cornelius, Wayne A., Craig, Ann L. and Fox, Jonathan (eds) (1994), **Transforming State-Society Relations in Mexico: the National Solidarity Strategy**, Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California (San Diego). xiii + 368 pp. Price not given.

These papers on Mexico's National Solidarity Programme (PRONASOL) by a mix of Mexican and foreign analysts reflect a diversity of positions, ranging from that of a senior PRONASOL official, Enrique González Tiburcio, to measured critiques. PRONASOL is considered by many to have been a key factor in the ruling PRI's recovery from its electoral discomfiture in 1988, and several chapters discuss its partisan manipulation, shedding light on the respective roles of direct buying back of voter loyalty versus castigating voters who opted for the Centre-Left PRD by denying them resources. The volume tries, however, to steer away from interpretations of PRONASOL as revamped clientalism towards more nuanced accounts of its political significance. The authors generally avoid total dependence on official statistics, and the book combines quantitative analysis of national and regional patterns with qualitative, case-study, approaches. The contributions were written at the Salinas administration's highpoint, before the economic downturn of 1993 and political shocks of 1994, but most of the questions they pose remain current.

Solidarity is an umbrella for a multitude of distinct programmes, which complicates analysis of its overall impact. Furthermore, the implementation of programmes has varied according to political circumstances at state and local level, as is brought out particularly well in chapters by Fox and Contreras and Bennett. The book can be roughly divided into analyses evaluating Solidarity as a poverty alleviation programme and those focusing primarily on its political impact, but political dimensions are kept in view throughout. Some consensus is apparent that Solidarity is less a means of reducing poverty than a way of making the neoliberal economic model politically sustainable, although Lustig and Hernández and Célis discuss ways in which programmes might be developed to foster human capital formation and create employment. The book gives useful preliminary indications that it is not necessarily the poorest who have benefited most to date, whilst the chapter by Gershberg on the *Escuela Digna* programme brings out an apparent failure to target indigenous communities effectively in Mexico State. The book begins with an historical essay from Knight which emphasises PRONASOL's underlying similarities with earlier

programmes from the standpoint of regime stabilisation, and Ward continues this contextualising effort by relating PRONASOL to the longer-term evolution of social policy in Mexico, expressing scepticism at the idea that it is fundamentally recasting state-society relations and describing it as a palliative that can only 'paper over the cracks' of the underlying structures of social inequality. But other contributors place more emphasis on PRONASOL's novelty and some argue that it has opened spaces for longer-term political change, whatever the motivations of its architects. Bailey argues that Solidarity serves a centralist remodelling of the political system which seeks to conserve a tutelary relationship between state and civil society whilst partially circumventing established corporatist structures and, like Dresser, suggests that strengthening of the power of the faction in government may clash with the entrenched interests embodied in the PRI, whose failure to reform itself was already apparent at the time of writing, before the sanguinary events of 1994. He also argues, however, that the programme may ultimately strengthen actors pushing for genuine decentralisation (rather than 'deconcentration') of administration and political liberalisation.

Several contributions focus on the extent to which the strategy of regime recomposition underlying Solidarity represents an attempt to create a new (primarily urban) popular base for the regime and on how far it has proved a mechanism for co-opting social movements. As Moguel points out, PRONASOL attracted a substantial section of the 'social left' which argued for the primacy of grassroots work. Haber discusses the important case of the Committee for Popular Defense in Durango, which distanced itself from the PRD after entering into a *convenio de concertación* with Salinas. The *convenio* gave the CDP control of substantial PRONASOL resources, it became a significant electoral force in its own right and was a founding organisation of the new Workers' Party (which some view as another 'parastatal' left party). Although Haber acknowledges the advantages the regime secured from the *concertación* strategy in terms of fragmenting the forces of opposition, he argues that the CDP has not been 'co-opted' in the classical sense, and that its 'organizational empowerment' not only serves the needs of Durango's poor better than the alternatives but can contribute in the longer term to a more pluralistic Mexico.

Fox's study of Oaxaca suggests that the existing strength of local organisations has an important impact on the prospects for (relative) participation and pluralism within Solidarity programmes, but he highlights the factors which pre-empted such possibilities in other contexts. Popular organisations may also receive conjunctural backing from the centre against entrenched regional élites in the interests of a broader modernisation strategy, a circumstance for which there are certainly historical precedents, but cases like Chiapas and Guerrero indicate that *Salinismo* was also willing to compromise with less 'modern' faces of regional power. It seems important not to lose sight of the way even apparently 'positive' developments under Solidarity contributed to securing a balance of power in which neoliberal policies could be pushed through by fundamentally anti-democratic means. The specific nature of the neoliberal economic project in Mexico may also set strict limits on what can be achieved through limited 'empowerment' of popular organisations and activists in terms of the long-term reduction of social inequality. Hernández and Célis stress the importance of relating Solidarity programmes to wider sectoral policies, as does Graham in a concluding chapter which compares PRONASOL with poverty alleviation programmes in other countries. But this book offers no clear perspective on how neoliberal 'reform' fits in with global capitalist restructuring, nor much analysis of popular responses to Solidarity 'from below', in terms of popular political culture and the working out of power relations in everyday life, although Contreras and Bennett offer some empirical insights into the limitations of 'participation'. As Dresser concludes, the shining path of neoliberal reform is littered with victims, the com-

pensatory mechanisms embodied in Solidarity depend on achievement of real economic growth, and PRONASOL has maintained a balance between the potentially contradictory demands of economic strategy and political stability which remains precarious.

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De la Peña, Sergio and Wilkie, James (1994), **La estadística económica en México. Los orígenes**, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (México). xvii + 196 pp. Price not given.

This book is the outcome of De la Peña and Wilkie's experience in the field of the Mexican national historical statistics. This piece of work is part of a research project entitled Series of Cycles and Tendencies in Mexico of the XX Century, organised by the Mexican Programme at the UCLA.

The book is divided into two parts. The first provides an historical analysis of the genesis of the Mexican economic, social, and demographic national statistics. The second part of the book examines, through official data sources, the impact of land reforms over land distribution between 1853 and 1909.

In the first part of the book, De la Peña makes a valuable analytical contribution of how the economic, social and political environment affected the design and development of the Mexican statistical data. The analysis begins with the Colonial period, in which the scarce information reflects the Spanish Crown's interest in controlling specific economic resources in its colony. Thus, export and import trade; taxes; public finance; and gold, and silver production are well documented during this period. After the Mexican War of Independence in 1817, the new government recognised the necessity to produce demographic, social and economic information to control national resources. As the writer explains, the political instability of the country in that time was reflected in attempts to carry out a population census for seven decades. Nonetheless, between the Independence and Revolutionary wars, statistics about external commerce, public finance and public debt were systematically published.

The writer explains how in 1887 the country reached the 'political stability', through the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz who came to power for more than 30 years. Díaz aimed to impose national policies, and the generation of data was seen as an essential factor to promote economic development. Important statistics were published, not only about population and economic sector activities, but also about the banking system, transport, prices, monetary circulation, credit, growth of new business, public administration, manufacturing, export and import trade, and so on. In 1895, under this regime, the first Population Census was finally carried out. De la Peña highlights that the origins of contemporary Mexican national statistics are found in this period.

In the second part of the book, Wilkie provides an estimation of the changes of land distribution owing to the land reforms in Mexico between 1853 and 1909. The analysis is based on data about property transfers of land between public or ecclesiastic to private ownership. The writer challenges previous approximations of land distribution made by other scholars through a detailed analysis of land registers during this period.

The writer points out that after the War of Independence, Santa Anna in 1853 carried out the first land reform in Mexico. Through this reform the government