

THE BOOM IN REGIONAL STUDIES  
OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION:  
Where Is It Leading?

*Heather Fowler-Salamini*  
*Bradley University*

- REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN MEXICO: ESSAYS ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE, 1880-1940.* Edited by Jaime E. Rodríguez O. (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, University of California, 1990. Pp. 331. \$35.00.)
- ANENECUILCO: MEMORIA Y VIDA DE UN PUEBLO.* By Alicia Hernández Chávez. (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1991. Pp. 261.)
- LOS EMPRESARIOS DE AYER: EL GRUPO DOMINANTE EN LA INDUSTRIA TEXTIL DE PUEBLA, 1906-1929.* By Leticia Gamboa Ojeda. (Puebla: Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1985. Pp. 284.)
- THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION IN PUEBLA, 1908-1913: THE MADERISTA MOVEMENT AND THE FAILURE OF LIBERAL REFORM.* By David G. LaFrance. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1989. Pp. 259. \$35.00.)
- THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION OF 1910.* By Francisco I. Madero. Translated by Thomas B. Davis. (New York: Peter Lang, 1990. Pp. 307. \$51.50.)
- VERACRUZ, CAPITAL DE LA NACION, 1914-1915.* By Berta Ulloa. (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1986. Pp. 189.)
- SOLDADERAS IN THE MEXICAN MILITARY: MYTH AND HISTORY.* By Elizabeth Salas. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. Pp. 163. \$35.00 cloth, \$11.95 paper.)

Over the past two years, at least four noted Mexican scholars have referred to the enormous increase in regional studies of the Mexican Revolution as a new "boom." These scholars have suggested that Mexican regional studies have become a new methodological approach and a fresh perspective for challenging official histories and centrist politics of past Mexican regimes. Commenting on the pessimism arising from the crisis of theoretical paradigms in Latin America, Carlos Martínez Assad has argued that "the regional focus has restored confidence, at least in part, and has created a certain optimism in the methods used to acquire new knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

1. Carlos Martínez Assad, "Dos versiones de la Revolución Mexicana," *Nexos*, no. 167 (Nov. 1991):78-80; and "Presentación," *Eslabones: Revista Semestral de Estudios Regionales*, no. 1 (Jan.-June 1991):4.

Romana Falcón calls the emergence of regional history in the 1960s a solution to the methodological crisis of history as a discipline in creating a "true historiographical watershed that has contributed in a decisive manner to the reformulation of our interpretation of Mexico since 1910."<sup>2</sup> Thomas Benjamin echoes Falcón's belief that this boom in regional studies has brought a decentered perspective and a "wider acceptance by historians of Tannenbaum's view that there were multiple Mexican revolutions. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Gilbert Joseph hints that this boom might even affect current Mexican politics: "new regional history is flourishing, demystifying official interpretations, and often searching for historical roots and analogies that might inform the political activity of the present."<sup>4</sup>

In his 1980 *LARR* review of the literature, Barry Carr clearly predicted the coming of this explosion in regional studies. He urged that greater attention be paid to regional and local-level analyses in order to create a brave new synthesis of the Mexican Revolution that would integrate both regional and national research. What Carr called the first wave of professionally researched regional studies he attributed to the emergence of new historical and anthropological methodologies, greater access to state and local archives, and more financial support for regional centers.<sup>5</sup> These three trends have become even more pronounced in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Mexican government has promoted research and publication of regional studies in a variety of ways, only three of which will be mentioned here. First, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) established many regional centers and has partially funded the publication of numerous regional studies. Second, in collaboration with various states, the Instituto José María Luis Mora launched an entire series of publications dedicated to regional documents and texts. Third, under the auspices of the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes has published more than twenty-five original monographs, many of which are regional studies.

The majority of the state governments, particularly those of Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Yucatán, and Veracruz, have been actively funding

2. Romana Falcón, "Las regiones en la Revolución: un itinerario historiográfico," in *Balance y perspectivas de los estudios regionales en México*, edited by Carlos Martínez Assad (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Humanidades, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990), 69.

3. Thomas Benjamin, "Regionalizing the Revolution: The Many Mexicos in Revolutionary Historiography," in *Provinces of the Revolution: Essays on Regional Mexican History, 1910-29* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1990), 320. The reviewer was unable to include this work because she was a contributor to the volume.

4. Gilbert M. Joseph, "Introduction: The New Regional Historiography at Mexico's Periphery," in *Land, Labor, and Capital in Modern Yucatán: Essays in Regional History and Political Economy*, edited by Jeffrey T. Brannon and Gilbert M. Joseph (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 2.

5. Carr, "Recent Regional Studies of the Mexican Revolution," *LARR* 15, no. 1 (1980): 3-14.

regional research in recent years. New research centers like El Colegio de Michoacán, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, and the colegios of the Bajío, Mexiquense, Sonora, and Jalisco have all contributed to this boom in regional studies. Moreover, regional journals including *La Palabra y el Hombre* of the Universidad Veracruzana and *Relaciones* of El Colegio de Michoacán have provided new forums for local scholars. Also, under the leadership of Carlos Martínez Assad, a national organization has been established, the Sociedad Mexicana de Estudios Regionales. In only a few years, the Sociedad has sponsored three conferences and begun publishing a new journal entitled *Eslabones: Revista Semestral de Estudios Regionales*.<sup>6</sup> How has this boom in regional studies affected new approaches to studying the Mexican Revolution?

To begin with, scholars have praised the methodological value of the regional perspective in understanding the complex, nuanced interrelationships among local, regional, and national processes. It provides for Mark Wasserman an alternative approach to unraveling the intricacies of the Mexican Revolution: "the only path to understanding the revolution is to look at it through the regions, not from the perspective [of] Mexico City and environs."<sup>7</sup> In a manner of speaking, regional studies are becoming what Paul Vanderwood calls the "building blocks" for understanding socio-economic, political, and cultural processes. Mario Cerutti has spelled out the practical advantages of the regional approach for studying economic development. If scholars accept the idea that no capitalist economy nor any national bourgeoisie existed during the Porfiriato, Cerutti argues, the development of the national economy can only be comprehended by analyzing regional markets, industries, and entrepreneurs. The regional perspective, methodologically founded on local primary sources and focusing on what he terms *el ámbito regional*, provides historians with new tools for understanding the development of the national market and the centralized state.<sup>8</sup>

The regional perspective has also allowed scholars to focus on the diversity and "multivalent" nature of the revolutionary process, as op-

6. See the works already cited by Barry Carr, Romana Falcón, and Thomas Benjamin. For a more extensive discussion of the historiography of regionalism, see Mario Cerutti, "Contribuciones recientes y relevancia de la investigación regional sobre la segunda parte del Siglo XIX," in Martínez Assad, *Balance y perspectivas*, 25–59. I am indebted to Carlos Martínez Assad for information concerning the Sociedad Mexicana de Estudios Regionales.

7. Mark Wasserman, "An Introduction," *Provinces of the Revolution*, 1.

8. Paul Vanderwood, "Building Blocks But Yet No Building: Regional History and the Mexican Revolution," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1987):421–32; and Cerutti, "Contribuciones recientes" in Martínez Assad, *Balance y perspectivas*, 25–59. See also Mario Cerutti, "The Formation and Consolidation of a Regional Bourgeoisie in Northeastern Mexico (Monterrey: From Reform to Revolution)," in *Region, State and Capitalism in Mexico: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Wil Pansters and Arij Ouwenel (Amsterdam: Center for Latin American Research and Documentation, 1989), 47–58.

posed to its unifying nature. Gil Joseph has argued unceasingly for “analysis of regional phenomena, some of which deserve perhaps to be called revolutions. Each was governed . . . by a discrete set of local, social, economic, political, geographical, and cultural factors.” This regional diversity of the revolutionary experience has likewise been highlighted in at least two recent *LARR* review essays.<sup>9</sup>

The field of regional studies has undoubtedly influenced particular interpretations of the revolution. Romana Falcón rightly points out that the rise of regional studies was linked to historically specific political events, centering on the political crisis of 1968 and the search for alternatives to the “official history” of the Mexican Revolution. In her view, the regional approach becomes almost synonymous with the new historiographical school of revisionism, a new critical interpretation of the revolution that downplays the popular, agrarian, and democratic trends of the revolution and stresses the emergence of the bourgeoisie, which embraced liberal ideologies and authoritarian policies similar to those of the Porfiriato.<sup>10</sup> Many early regional studies rejected scholarship written from the perspective of the center as well as the unified, singular, interpretation of the Mexican Revolution and affirmed a decentered perspective contrasting the varieties, richness, and disparities of the provinces. Such studies tended to reinforce revisionist arguments stressing the continuity of provincial socioeconomic and political structures and practices while demonstrating the heterogeneity of the prerevolutionary patriarchal family, hacienda, community, Catholic Church, and caciquismo at the subnational and micro level.<sup>11</sup>

Two important developments in the mid-1980s changed the focus of Mexican regional studies. First, four major studies on rural protest and revolt appeared that stressed the real changes wrought by peasant upris-

9. Gil Joseph uses the term *multivalent* in his introduction to *Land, Labor, and Capital in Modern Yucatán*. See also his *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), xi–xii. Also cited in Alma M. García, “Recent Studies in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Regional History,” *LARR* 22, no. 2 (1987):255–66; Mark T. Gilderhus, “Many Mexicos: Tradition and Innovation in the Recent Historiography,” *LARR* 22, no. 1 (1987):204–13; and Benjamin, “Regionalizing the Revolution,” 320.

10. Falcón, “Las regiones en la Revolución,” in Martínez Assad, *Balance y perspectivas*, 74–75, 81, 83–86. This ideological stance has been taken by others like Paul Garner in “Constitutionalist Reconstruction in Oaxaca, 1915–1920,” in Pansters and Ouweneel, *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico*, 79–80.

11. See Simon Miller, “Revisionism in Recent Mexican Historiography,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 4, no. 1 (1988):77–88. See as examples Falcón, *Revolución y caciquismo: San Luis Potosí, 1910–1938* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1984); Heather Fowler-Salamini, *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920–1938* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978); Ian Jacobs, *Ranchero Revolt: The Mexican Revolution in Guerrero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1973); and Tomás Martínez Saldaña and Leticia Gándara Mendoza, *Política y sociedad en México: el caso de los Altos de Jalisco* (Mexico City: SEP-INAH, 1976).

ings, thereby challenging revisionism. Friedrich Katz argued that “rural revolutionaries at least in the short term tended to gain far more from their uprisings than has generally been assumed,” essentially echoing the pioneering contributions of John Tutino, John Hart, and Alan Knight.<sup>12</sup> Knight’s sweeping synthesis of the Mexican Revolution likewise critiqued the most strident forms of revisionism for placing undue emphasis on the economic causes of the revolution and labeling the revolutionary process as simply a bourgeois political rebellion. He advocated a return to a populist model, in which popular classes, particularly the peasantry, created a social revolution from below. Agrarian revolution provided the impetus from below for modifying institutions, social relations, and mentalities, all of which was so necessary for forging the new modern and bureaucratic state.<sup>13</sup> All four of these historians based their arguments on the outstanding regional studies by John Womack, Ian Jacobs, Raymond Buve, Dudley Ankersen, Romana Falcón, Carlos Martínez Assad, Gil Joseph, Mark Wasserman, William Meyers, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, and this reviewer. Thus regional studies also supplied the data and a perspective that fueled antirevisionism.

Second, regional scholars began in the 1980s to adopt methodological and ideological approaches developed by European social history as well as U.S. ethnographic techniques. The French *Annales* school finally began to alter significantly historians’ concepts of space and time as well as their methodological orientation. Micro-level social and economic data took on new meaning in studying elites and everyday individuals in what has come to be termed “new social history.” As a result, fresh new perspectives on the popular classes have emerged. History from the bottom up, mentalities, gender, and long-term processes have begun to take precedence over traditional political, diplomatic, and institutional approaches. In addition, the pathbreaking works of Eric Wolf, Arturo Warman, Franz Schryer, Paul Friedrich, and Friedrich Katz in the field of peasant studies have influenced regional studies. By the 1990s, anthropological forays into participation-observation ethnography and postmodernism are just now beginning to broaden regional studies into a truly interdisciplinary field.<sup>14</sup>

12. Friedrich Katz, “Introduction: Rural Revolts in Mexico,” in his *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 16; John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); and Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

13. See Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2:517–27.

14. Barry Carr hinted at this direction in 1980 in “Recent Regional Studies of the Mexican Revolution,” *LARR* 15, no. 1 (1980):11. See also Martínez Assad’s preface to *Balace y perspectivas*, 7–8; Falcón, “Las regiones en la Revolución,” in the same work, 71; and Gamboa Ojeda, *Los empresarios de ayer*, 13. Enrique Florescano has suggested three new trends: interaction between historical and anthropological methods, analysis examining peasant groups within

Before proceeding any further, one important caveat must be made with respect to regional studies. In at least one critical respect, scholars of the revolutionary period still lag far behind those of the colonial period, as Eric Van Young has pointed out. He correctly finds fault with modern Mexican regional specialists who often equate region with state boundaries, with the result being that “regions often appear to be artifacts of statistics, themselves in turn the residue of a political discourse.”<sup>15</sup> In fact, historians of modern Mexico are at times guilty of employing the concept of region as an administrative unit—such as a state, district, or *municipio*—rather than searching for socioeconomic parameters. This kind of thinking leads us, according to Van Young, to view regions more as problems themselves, as the “ossified remains unearthed by archaeologists of the state,” rather than as flexible spatial systems that can serve as building blocks of economic development. This methodological problem should have been taken into greater consideration in several of the books under review.

Despite these drawbacks, I see the glimmerings of at least four trends: the application of new social history and ethnographical approaches to probe the dynamics operating among local, regional, and national forces; greater acceptance of the *longue-durée* perspective in studying historical processes; attempts to synthesize revisionist, antirevisionist, and neoliberal approaches; and finally, more emphasis on the prerevolutionary period, particularly the Porfiriato.

The edited volume under review, *Revolutionary Process in Mexico: Essays on Political and Social Change, 1880–1940*, provides the most original contributions on these four departures. The inclusion of specialists on independence in this collection edited by Jaime Rodríguez O. demonstrates how emphasis on the continuity of the national experience has shifted historical analysis away from examining events to studying processes. In his introduction, Rodríguez takes the perspective that a revolution indeed occurred but that change took place in an evolutionary way related to centralization of the state, consolidation of the middle class, and changes in ideology and culture. In a sense, Rodríguez’s volume marks a shift away from Wil Pansters’s and Arij Ouweneel’s *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1989), which focused on the interrelationships among regionalism, political centralization, and capitalist development before and after the Revolution of 1910.<sup>16</sup> In their ex-

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a regional and national context, and attempts to submit the study of rebellion and its causes to more rigorous analytical and explicative approach. See Florescano, *El nuevo pasado mexicano* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1991), 97.

15. Eric Van Young, “Are Regions Good to Think? Space, Class, and State in Mexican History.” Paper presented at the Seminario Permanente de Historia Regional at the Facultad de Economía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Feb. 1991, 6–10.

16. See Pansters and Ouweneel, “Capitalist Development and Political Centralization be-

cellent introductory essay, Pansters and Ouweneel insisted that the revolution was not a revolution but simply a step in capitalist evolution to free Mexico from precapitalist constraints and the consolidation of the national state in the twentieth century.

Despite their decidedly revisionist perspective, Pansters and Ouweneel have introduced two important trends for regional studies. First, they took seriously François-Xavier Guerra's *longue-durée* approach and his neoliberal interpretation of the collapse of the regime of Porfirio Díaz. For Guerra, the causes of the revolution are to be found in the clash between the tradition-modernity dichotomy of elite ideologies and political culture. He argues that Díaz was no longer able to maintain the political pact between the regional elites and the centrist modernizing elites. Second, Pansters and Ouweneel introduced elements of new social history with regard to space and demography. Their attempt to construct a three-region diachronic model for Mexico—the north, the center made up of three subregions (Guadalajara, Michoacán, and central-Mexico with its central highlands and *faldas*), and the south—is laudatory. Unfortunately, however, it tends to overemphasize colonial patterns rather than nineteenth-century demographic trends.

In contrast, the essays in Rodríguez's *Revolutionary Process in Mexico* do not follow a regional perspective at all, taking a thematic approach that allows for greater flexibility in studying revolutionary processes. Yet regional issues surface time and time again. With regard to the orientation of this collection, contributors Gilbert Joseph and Allen Wells probably state it most succinctly in suggesting the need to work toward a synthesis of populism and revisionism within regional studies:

A regional-level approach has the potential to provide a multi-layered account of regional society. In fact, the study of regional society in crisis . . . provides us with a valuable opportunity to probe power relationships and divisions within *campesino* society and within the dominant class, as well as to examine certain tactical alliances forged between campesino groups and factions of the dominant class (and the new revolutionary state) through the agency of local brokers or caciques. (Pp. 164–65)<sup>17</sup>

Although all seven of the books being reviewed do not fall under the heading of regional studies, all but one of them make some kind of contribution to one or more of these four new trends. These works will be

fore and after the Revolution: An Introduction," in their edited collection *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico*, 2, 5, 24–25. Because this outstanding collection of essays has already been reviewed in *LARR*, I will refer only to its salient arguments in my discussion of regional studies.

17. Falcón suggests a synthetic approach at the end of her article on regionalism, "Las regiones en la Revolución," 89. Wasserman also believes that regionalism can help resolve the ideological civil war between revisionism and new anti-revisionism. See Wasserman's introduction to *Provinces of the Revolution*, 1.

discussed under three thematic headings: prerevolutionary society, popular resistance and revolution, and the postrevolutionary transition.

### *Prerevolutionary Society*

In this area, a trend can be perceived toward reevaluating and revising oversimplistic generalizations first made by John Kenneth Turner, Andrés Molina Enríquez, and Frank Tannenbaum and then repeated ad infinitum. In general, the authors addressing this topic are questioning whether the Porfirian era had an authoritarian regime, a cohesive ruling class, an oppressive hacienda system, and a passive, downtrodden peasantry. In particular, the diversity and complexity of the regional elites are being fleshed out by examining their economic bases, their ties to Porfirio Díaz's political system, and their mobilization of popular classes.

Leticia Gamboa Ojeda's *Los empresarios de ayer: el grupo dominante en la industria textil de Puebla, 1906–1929* is the most exhaustive study of a regional elite among the books under review. It is innovative for the field of regional studies in two respects. First, Gamboa Ojeda has culled from notarial archives and the Registro Público de Propiedad fascinating socio-economic data on the textile empresarios and their family empires from the prerevolutionary era through the postrevolutionary period. Using this rich data, she has constructed an in-depth profile of the *poblano* regional bourgeoisie. Second, Gamboa Ojeda maintains that the textile elite displayed an incredible capacity to survive and to resist change. After immigrating from Spain, these families came into their wealth first through landownership and later through commercial activities. Much like the regional bourgeoisie of Monterrey,<sup>18</sup> they diversified into industrial production as well as into the banking, oil, mining, and service sectors during the Porfiriato. After examining the social composition of 127 small, medium, and large textile owners between 1906 and 1929, Gamboa concludes that little recomposition of the social group occurred even after the revolution because of the group's strong Spanish cultural traditions. Despite their socioeconomic heterogeneity, these textile owners displayed a similar class mentality in their hostile outlook on the revolution, the working class, and the Mexican state. Gamboa contends that outside economic factors, particularly the decline in demand for textile goods and a drop in prices on the international market in 1930, determined the eventual demise of these empresarios. Wed to the idea of the primacy of international capitalism, Gamboa seems to minimize unnecessarily the importance of militant labor unions and the inability or unwillingness of the textile elite

18. Cerutti, "Formation and Consolidation of the Regional Bourgeoisie," 47–58.

to modernize and integrate itself into regional politics, as the Monterrey bourgeoisie had done so well.

Moving to the north, one finds Romana Falcón and Gregorio Mora in the Rodríguez volume asking why Sonoran and Coahuilan elites deserted the Porfirian regime. Mora contends that Sonoran mining elites, unlike the Pueblan textile oligarchy, began to lose their economic and political predominance with the fall in prices of precious metals as early as 1900. Mora employs the controversial deprivation thesis to explain why sectors of the Sonoran elite and professional middle class joined Maderismo. In contrast, Falcón's study of the Madero clan is a pathbreaking analysis of the political dynamics between a northern patriarchal clan on the "outs," struggling to survive and retain its regional economic and political hegemony, and the Porfirian regime. Falcón first delineates how Evaristo Madero, the scion of the clan, built an economic empire on ranching, mining, industry, and banking in Coahuila. After Evaristo supported the ill-fated 1893 revolt, he artfully defended his holdings against the continual encroachments of Díaz's proconsul, military commander Bernardo Reyes. The Madero clan survived, Falcón argues, not by political confrontation but by accommodation and adaptation to Díaz's system of clientelism. Falcón attributes the demise of the Díaz regime to its inability to abandon paternalism and personalism and to adopt modern bureaucratic and institutional mechanisms. Although Falcón continues to work within Weberian and revisionist perspectives, she has entered new terrain by showing the long-term nuanced relationship between the central government and local elites.

For many years, Paul Vanderwood has attacked the characterization of the Porfirian state as a monolithic authoritarian regime. In his essay in Rodríguez's *Revolutionary Process in Mexico*, Vanderwood expands on his earlier arguments by shifting from dissecting the "rickety" structural components of the political system to analyzing its dynamics. Vanderwood argues that in order to understand why some villages rebelled and others did not, researchers must understand the ability of middle-level and lower-level officials to manipulate the masses. The failure of the Porfirian system, he maintains, is related to the fact that clientelism stopped working. In large part, Díaz's personal indecisiveness in taking firm control led to his own demise. In Vanderwood's view, "he weasels and waffles; he can be indecisive and switches tack when ill-winds blow." Much like Guerra, Vanderwood blames the collapse of the regime more on the inability of the dictator himself to hold his clientelist alliances with regional groups together than on its structural underpinnings.

If Díaz indeed wielded his power through clientelist relationships with local leaders, the institution of the *jefe político* takes on new meaning. Moreover, Alan Knight's characterization of the *jefe político* as the main culprit in the Porfirian regime needs to be scrutinized. As the descendent

of *corregidores* and the political prefects of the early independence era, *jefes políticos* served originally as the local representatives of the central government. Ricardo Avila's contribution to the Rodríguez volume paints too sympathetic a picture of Científico Governor José Vicente Villada in the state of Mexico and of Porfirian modernizing policies. Yet Avila develops nicely Guerra's argument that *jefes políticos* enjoyed considerable popularity in the early days of revolution in the face of general disorder. Avila, Falcón, and Vanderwood all concur that the *jefes* were not chosen in Mexico City but were more often appointed by the governors as part of a state patronage system. Vanderwood takes the middle ground between Falcón and Avila in suggesting that the *jefes* acted as intermediaries between the *populus* and the state. As a result, *jefes* were just as likely to be viewed as representatives of the state as representatives of the local population's "personal concerns and interests." This contradictory role explains why in some regions *jefes* became the targets of violent attacks at the outbreak of the revolution but led the revolution in others.

Vanderwood's essay also tries to confront another hotly debated issue, the cohesiveness of the rural community before 1910. The concept of the closed corporate community has now been essentially discarded, but a debate still rages over how many communities as a whole joined in popular resistance against the Porfirian regime. Vanderwood contends that in the Valley of Papigochic, Chihuahua, one finds that open communities did not rebel as entities. The majority of those villages, soon to join the rebellion led by Pancho Villa, had mestizo inhabitants who lived in nuclear families, owned their own land, and worked as wage earners or farmers. Rivalries among villagers, Vanderwood argues, were drawn more along ethnic and psychological lines where conflicting mental sets took priority over class distinctions.

Alicia Hernández Chávez comes to quite different conclusions in her excellent microhistory of Emiliano Zapata's village, *Anenecuilco: memoria y vida de un pueblo*. She gained access to invaluable village records held by the Sotelo Inclán family to write her historical narrative, which follows the tradition of Luis González y González's classic *El pueblo en vilo*. Hernández Chávez paints the modernizing sugar *hacendados* in populist tones as having few redeeming qualities as they systematically usurped the villagers' land in their quest to monopolize land and water resources from colonial times onward. Most poignant is the saga of the villagers' popular struggle from the sixteenth century onward to retain their lands and their village autonomy. Hernández Chávez recounts this story citing rich documentary materials, which are reproduced in the appendices. Two themes emerge from her pictorially handsome village study. First, the villagers persistently followed legal procedures to protect their lands, elect their leaders, and pay their taxes. Here Hernández Chávez is expanding on some of the themes first introduced by John Womack in his classic popu-

list study of Zapatismo, but in tracing this long-term protest movement, she reaches back to Indian records of the colonial period, which are magnificently reproduced. The second theme is Hernández Chávez's interpretation of these everyday forms of resistance as manifestations of republican ideals, embodying the collective memory of a village. In many respects, Hernández Chávez envisions the peasantry as the successful defender of popular culture and ideology, much as Florencia Mallon has done for the liberal era, where the villagers' "secular search for collective rights" was based on the principles of federalism, liberalism, nationalism, and anarchism (pp. 118–19).<sup>19</sup>

### *Popular Resistance and Revolution*

Peter Lang's translation of Francisco Madero's *The Presidential Succession of 1910* provides scholars and students with the chance to return to a work that its translator characterizes as long-winded, awkward in style, repetitive, and sometimes inaccurate but of transcendental importance in the eruption of the Mexican Revolution. The James Creelman interview with Díaz and the Plan of San Luis Potosí have also been translated for this volume. Madero's sweeping political indictment of Porfirio Díaz accused the president of abusing absolute power to keep himself in office. Yet Madero could not bring himself to attack the president personally or to make more than a timid and unrealistic proposal to have Díaz's vice-presidential running mate elected democratically. Notwithstanding its pathetically weak call for political reform, Madero's book inspired grassroots political and social movements in 1909 that demanded sweeping reforms.

In this regard, David LaFrance's monograph *The Mexican Revolution in Puebla, 1908–1913: The Maderista Movement and the Failure of Liberal Reform* is central. LaFrance has researched state and national archives extensively to weave together a fine political analysis of the emergence of a regional reform movement with two distinct branches: the radical urban lower-class wing with disgruntled middle-class elements, led by cobbler

19. See Florencia E. Mallon, "Peasants and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Morelos, 1848–1858," in *Political Power and Social Theory* 7, no. 3 (1988):1–54. For a fine alternative perspective stressing the importance of leadership skills and ideology to the success of the Liberals in mobilizing the Indian communities of the Sierra Norte, see Guy Thomson's "Montaña and Llanura in the Politics of Central Mexico: The Case of Puebla, 1820–1920," in Pansters and Ouweneel, *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico*, 59–77. Hernández Chávez has designed five outstanding maps showing land-tenure patterns in Morelos for 1910 and 1921–1929 based on maps and archival materials from the Secretaría de Reforma Agraria. These maps reveal a lopsided land-tenure system in 1910 in which haciendas had squeezed out village lands as well as small properties. Equally important is Hernández Chávez's reconstruction of the massive land expropriation between 1921 and 1929, which effectively eliminated the hacienda system in Morelos.

Aguiles Serdán; and the moderate wing dominated by urban middle- and upper-class residents of the city of Puebla. LaFrance conceptualizes the Madero period as a transitional era encompassing the years from 1908 to 1913.

To put the matter in other words, regionalists are now viewing Maderismo not simply as a political movement but also as a popular rebellion in which both the lower classes and the elites responded to what has been termed *la apertura maderista*. LaFrance assesses the triumphant moderate wing of Maderismo from a revisionist perspective, arguing that it endorsed outmoded nineteenth-century liberal views, distrusted radical mass movements, and supported President Madero's authoritarian practices in order to bring the Serdán faction into subservience. LaFrance's analysis of the urban protests launched by the poblano textile workers is clearly the most important contribution of this monograph. Striking workers caused dozens of factories to close, disrupted production, and created an atmosphere of defiance for months. Unfortunately, LaFrance does not explore the rural protest occurring simultaneously in the countryside, which he intimates was much more successful in forcing revolutionary changes.

Joseph and Wells's essay on the Yucatán oligarchical crisis in the Rodríguez collection is on the cutting edge of this new wave of regional studies "to put everyday Mexicans back into the Mexican Revolution." It draws on personal testimonies of criminal court cases and oral interviews to reconstruct the peasant mentality at the outbreak of revolution. Joseph and Wells argue that in its effort to survive, the landed elite mobilized the peasantry from above under the guise of Maderismo and inadvertently contributed to transforming the peasant mentality. The fortunes of the landed elite, dominated by the Molina-Montes clan, had been closely tied to the U.S. henequen market. With the fall in henequen prices in the waning years of the Porfiriato, internal tensions emerged within the elite, surfacing as hostility toward the Molina-Montes cartel. The opposing faction found in Maderismo an economic alternative to the Díaz model, or what Joseph and Wells call a "more equitable reapportionment of the spoils of the henequen economy."

For Joseph and Wells, the violent peasant revolts erupting on the fringes of henequen monoculture mobilized largely by vying elite groups began to take on their own agendas, exhibiting all the characteristics of everyday forms of resistance by 1911–12. Although the rebelling peasants could not overthrow the reigning oligarchy, Joseph and Wells detect from their reading of criminal records a change in peasant mentality in their unwillingness to allow the elite to go unchallenged. This essay masterfully applies new perspectives and methodological approaches to micro-level research in a manner that other regional scholars should emulate.

Historian Simon Miller wrote in 1985, "one of the areas most ur-

gently in need of detailed attention is the period of the Revolution itself . . . , not so much in terms of what the Revolution signified, but rather in terms of what actually occurred on a routine basis during the turbulent decade."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, regional studies have yet to produce enough micro-level studies to determine what it was like to live in the midst of revolutionary strife. Berta Ulloa's microhistory, *Veracruz, capital de la nación, 1914–1915*, offers a valuable glimpse of living conditions in the port of Veracruz at the height of the revolution, where food scarcities, disease, and housing problems were all pervasive. She also describes the countryside in the midst of warfare and Carrancista efforts to redistribute land and force landowners to treat their workers more equitably. I must nevertheless question her contention that the radical worker organizations enthusiastically cooperated with the Carrancistas in the creation of the Red Battalions in the Córdoba-Orizaba region.

The revolution did in fact transform certain social groups in different ways by altering their makeup, challenging the Porfirian ideology, and forcing new social roles on them. Two previously ignored groups—students and women—are now being studied for the first time. Javier Garciadiego Dantan's excellent contribution to the Rodríguez collection elucidates how the body of elite students attending universities and preparatory schools in Mexico City was transformed in social composition and ideological perspective as a consequence of the revolutionary process. The upper- and upper-middle-class group, which had supported the Científicos during the Porfiriato, became a socially more heterogeneous group with the admixture of numerous provincials and embraced revolution after 1915.

Elizabeth Salas's *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* attacks the stereotype of the *soldaderas* in myth, history, and literature that characterizes them simply as wives, paid servants, or whores. Salas includes far too many individual examples, which makes her monograph tedious reading. But her basic argument—that soldiering has been a traditional and commonplace life experience for women that empowers them in times of crisis—needs to be explored much further. Salas has also documented how military modernization indirectly reinforced patriarchal values. Women were eliminated from the ranks of the División del Norte when Pancho Villa transformed his guerrilla army into mobile cavalry units. Historians have far to go in reconstructing the everyday life of combatants and civilians in the midst of revolution, but these studies take a step toward realizing this goal.

20. Simon Miller, "Revisionism," quoted by Garner in "Constitutionalist Reconstruction," in Pansters and Ouweneel, *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico*, 80.

*The Postrevolutionary Transition*

The years 1920 to 1940 have been categorized in the past as the period of social revolution or postrevolution, but now they are being increasingly referred to as the “period of transition”—from regional autonomy to centralized state, from traditional caciquismo to new or modern caciquismo, from personalismo to corporatism, from regional economies to national economy, and from folk culture to modern culture. Fewer and fewer regionalists share Pansters and Ouweneel’s view of this period as a return to “a political, social, economic situation that looks not much different from the one during the last years of the Porfiriato.”<sup>21</sup> More frequently, scholars view the period in terms of process: the evolving internal dynamics between regional caciques and the central state, the importance of interconnecting economies, and transformation of culture. Let us begin with the familiar.

The terms revisionists began to employ twenty years ago to characterize the Mexican state after 1920—*authoritarian, corporatist, exploitative, and oppressive*—are becoming more nuanced in the new regional political studies. One of the best discussions of the shifting interrelationship between state strongmen and the central government in the 1920s is Raymond Buve’s and Romana Falcón’s contribution on Tlaxcala and San Luis Potosí in Pansters and Ouweneel’s revisionist reader on Mexican regional studies.<sup>22</sup> On the Cárdenas era, Mark Wasserman in the Rodríguez volume traces the “transition” away from personalistic politics to corporatist official-party politics in Chihuahua. In this frontier state, rival factions battled ruthlessly to establish dominance in the early 1930s because there the national government lacked the clout it could wield in central Mexico. Not until the second half of the 1930s were competing state factions and their grass-roots supporters co-opted into the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) to continue their personalist struggles within the ranks of the official party.

The importance of the international market and foreign investment for the survival of revolutionary regimes is just beginning to be assessed for this transitional period. Access to foreign markets along with foreign loans were almost as critical for the survival of Alvaro Obregón’s government in the 1920s as they are for Carlos Salinas de Gortari’s government today. Linda Hall’s painstaking analysis in the Rodríguez volume of the 1922 negotiations between Adolfo De la Huerta and Thomas Lamont deftly lays out how the Mexican’s compromises with U.S. oil and banking interests led to his political demise and jeopardized the nationalist principles

21. Pansters and Ouweneel, *Region, State, and Capitalism in Mexico*, 16.

22. “Tlaxcala and San Luis Potosí under the Sonorenses (1920–1934): Regional Revolutionary Power Groups and the National State,” in *ibid.*, 110–33.

of the revolution. A nice parallel can be drawn here with the ongoing negotiations over the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Finally, controversy has always surrounded the efficacy of Cardenismo as a revolutionary ideology. Populists are now arguing that revolutionary ideology was the real battleground for the heart and soul of the Mexican people and the place where the state failed to transform popular culture. Alan Knight's provocative contribution to the Rodríguez collection contends that the revolutionary leadership failed to inculcate the nationalist liberal and Jacobin tradition of the nineteenth century among the masses. Although the revolutionary leaders succeeded in constructing a powerful and durable centralized state and half-succeeded in building a dynamic capitalism, it failed to convince a recalcitrant people to embrace the revolutionary *étatisme* and to abandon their own popular culture, a "folk liberalism" that gradually transformed itself into a folk radicalism in self-defense. The real watershed for Knight came only after 1940 with the "tide of cultural Americanization" and the penetration of the market economy. Returning to Robert Redfield's structuralist rural-urban model does not appear to be very helpful heuristically, but his basic argument seems to be supported by a number of micro-level studies. Mary Kay Vaughan's work on literacy in the Sierra Norte of Puebla finds passive opposition to Cárdenas's socialist literacy campaigns to have been entrenched. For Marjorie Becker, Cardenista socialist and anticlerical policies imposed from above actually inspired popular everyday forms of resistance in Michoacán. Although neither of these regional studies directly addresses the dynamics between gender and culture, women became some of the main actors, resisters, and supporters of cultural values in the Cardenista revolutionary discourse.<sup>23</sup> These kinds of regional studies once again have permitted a synthesis of revisionist and antirevisionist perspectives, demonstrating the multilayered dynamics of regional variables.

In conclusion, the boom in regional studies has made tremendous strides over the past five years in unraveling the complexities of the Mexican Revolution. Mexican scholars have at their disposal a plethora of information, methodologies, and perspectives never imagined two decades ago. Moreover, many of these new techniques and approaches are only beginning to be applied in the field of Mexican regional studies. Thus the

23. Mary Kay Vaughan, "Rural Women's Literacy in the Mexican Revolution: The Case of Tecamachalco, Puebla," paper delivered at the Reunión de Historiadores Mexicanos y Norteamericanos in San Diego, 18–20 Oct. 1990; Marjorie Becker, "Torching La Purisma, Dancing at the Altar: The Construction of Revolutionary Hegemony in Michoacán, 1934–1940," paper presented at the conference "Popular Culture, State Formation, and the Revolution," 27 Feb.–2 Mar. 1991, San Diego. The role of rural women in the revolutionary process was explored in greater detail at the recent conference "Crossing Boundaries, Creating Spaces: Mexican and Chicana Women, 1848–1992," held at the University of Illinois, Chicago, 9–11 Apr. 1992. The papers on Mexico are presently being edited for publication by Mary Kay Vaughan and Heather Fowler-Salamini.

manner in which we use this newly found wealth will be critically important in the years to come. We must never lose sight of the totality in our micro-level approaches. Regional studies, it seems, should always be regarded as just one of the building blocks in the constantly evolving comparative analysis of the revolutionary process.