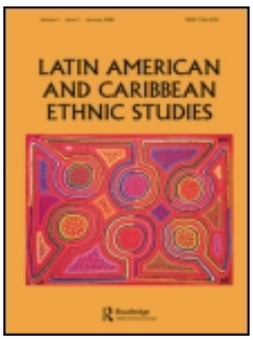

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Mexican Long-Living *Mestizophilia* versus a Democracy Open to Diversity

Olivia Gall

This analytical essay approaches the history of the Mexican state's ideologies and practices of ethnic and racial discrimination from three perspectives: a consideration of the different phases of mestizophilia *between Independence and contemporary times; thoughts on the negative consequences of* mestizophilia *on contemporary Mexican migration policies, which are often xenophobic and racist in character; and a critique of the traditional opponents to* indigenismo *that seeks to explain why the vast majority of opponents have not highlighted the antidemocratic and the racist aspects of this ideology and this policy.*

Keywords: Mexico; race; eugenics; nationalism; xenophobia; *indigenismo*; *mestizophilia*

Introduction

Mestizophilia first and, later, *mestizophilia/indigenismo* have been the two major cultural policies of the Mexican state since the country gained independence from the Spanish Crown. The state has used them to imagine, build and consolidate national identity and the nation's relationship to the rest of the world. *Mestizophilia* is not only a Mexican phenomenon, but a Latin American one (Miller 2004; Gruzinsky 2002). It is 'the great love or affection' for the *mestizo* and/or for *mestizaje*. Augustín Basave, the academic who coined the term, defined it as 'the idea that the phenomenon of mestizaje – the mixture of races and/or culture – has been desirable in the search for national identity' (Basave 2002, 13–14).

In Mexico, however, *mestizophilia* is older than *indigenismo*. In the early 19th century, among liberals whose attitudes expressed both continuity and change in regard to the colonial period, *mestizophilia* was already being visualized and implemented. *Indigenismo* was born with the 1910 revolution. From then on, these two policies – seemingly dissimilar and contradictory – have been perfectly compatible (Gall 2001, 2004). It is difficult to know where the first ends and the second begins. During several decades of post-revolutionary Mexico, they overlapped. From the 1970s until today, even though the state does not claim these policies as part of the core of its philosophy and political–cultural action, it has not in fact found anything

yet to replace them. As an ideological platform inherited from the past, the state has kept feeding the policies of sameness and otherness.

Among scholars who have focused their analysis on ethnic discrimination against indigenous Mexicans, many have referred to *indigenismo* as a discriminatory policy, but often forget its racial and chauvinistic dimensions. On the other hand, those who have included an ethnic dimension to the analysis of *mestizophilia* have focused on questions related to the racialization of social relations or to racial discrimination against Mexican native people, but not against different internal and external 'others'.

A Reflection on *Mestizophilia*

Nineteenth-century Mestizophilia

In Latin America, the idea of race mixing became a complicated issue from the 19th century onwards after the pseudoscientific works of Gobineau and other European thinkers put forward a deep concern with contamination, 'suggesting that race mixture proves unseemly […] because it violates the laws of biology' (Pérez Torres 2006, 5; Gruzinsky 2002). If racial mixture in the United States or Europe caused anxiety because it was seen to lead to the possible dissolution of a social and racial order, 'race mixture in Latin America – because it was so pervasive – led to a complex discussion about the nature of colonial, and later national, identity' (Pérez Torres 2006, 5).

In Mexico, the idea of *mestizophilia* was a product of Independence, and it was transformed into a series of ideas, feelings, practices and rules which, from that moment on, have constituted a culture and a set of cultural policies that underpin the formation, consolidation and reproduction of national identity and nationalism in this country. *Mestizophili*a emerged in an era in which, in Europe, an effort to develop taxonomies of human groups was being developed, and several European scientists of the time were classifying these groups in different races.

This is not to say that Darwinian evolutionary theories resulted in differentiated 'racial connotations of value' distinguishing different groups. Although Darwin's discoveries established 'heritage' as a biological notion, this did not necessarily mean that it was imbued with or based on essentialist ideas.[1] Those who introduced such notions to this theory were the founders of 'social Darwinism'. They claimed that social evolution can be explained by the laws of biological evolution; they placed the struggle between individuals, human groups and races in the foreground as a source of social and biological progress (Tilman 2001). Herbert Spencer, the chief representative and founder of this theory, was not recognized as a 'social Darwinist' because he was a forerunner of Darwin in terms of ideas about evolution. He was given this name because it was the reputation attained by Darwin that led him to exploit the latter's ideas to clearly pinpoint the separation and the social hierarchy of human groups, characterized by belonging to different races (Martínez n.d.).

During the second half of the 19th century, the first representatives of Darwinism and social Darwinism emerged in Mexico. Those who began to study the evolution of species in our territory came from the field of natural history. In 1877, the *Compañía*

Metodófila Gabino Barreda – none of whose members were biologists or natural historians – began studying these European scientific theories. Therefore, the incorporation of the theory of evolution began in Mexico in the cultural arena and not within biology. It is therefore not surprising that social Darwinism was the theory most penetrating the minds and convictions of those who formed the major philosophical and political circles of the country (Ruiz 1987). In Mexico, the word 'race' was born loaded with positivist notions, one of which was the glorification of miscegenation. Mexican social Darwinism left unmodified one of the basic paradigms of European social Darwinism: the alleged transfer of the laws of biological evolution to the construction of social evolution laws. However, interestingly, it introduced an idea that differed from European's exaltation of purity of blood as the basis for state-building and national identity. Rather, the idea of *mestizophilia* (mixed or impure blood) was the basis of state and national identity.

The first steps of this project were determined by the ways in which the Independence leaders – influenced by the colonial political and social relations of the New Spain (Martínez 2008; Bennet 2003, 2009; Lomnitz 1995; Stolcke 2008) – conceived and invented the nation. By the end of the 18th century, given the crisis of the Spanish monarchy, new ways of thinking and imagining different social hierarchical relationships were possible. The Mexican liberals, who were the heirs of Las Casas' ideas of the abolition of slavery and of the French Revolution, began to slowly invent what was to be the United Mexican States. They were instilled with a clear liberal spirit, but also with the extreme difficulty of resolving the multiple racial classifications of the caste system. Thus, the *Criollo* leaders launched one of the main ideas and projects of this invention: to abolish castes and transform them into masses, while transforming the Indians into citizens. Therefore, following a theoretical egalitarianism (Bonfil Batalla 1970, 44), they constitutionally erased the racial differences that survived in practice, by confusing nationality (a notion regarding citizenship), *mestizaje* (a racial and cultural category) and liberalism (an economic and political system) (Basave 2002, 21).

This project was strongly promoted, for example, by José María Luis Mora (1794–1850). Known as the father of Mexican liberalism, he was one of the first progressive *Criollos* to raise the need to 'dissolve' the 'red menace' in the social melting pot of *mestizaje*. He argued that to avoid racial division as a source of eternal discord, the country had to rush towards 'melting the Aztec race in the general masses', maintaining basic class division, but enabling members to enjoy what he called 'the benefits of Society' (Mora 1837, vol. 1).[2] This was the way in which the almost schizophrenic contradictions of this project came to light: they 'denied the real Indian, but elevated the mythical Indian of the pre-Columbian past as the real pillar of nationality, the authentic and deep Mexico to which the nation ought to be loyal' (Pérez Vejo 2010, 150). Thus, Mora refused to continue to recognize the indigenous world with its own logic, institutions and values, and to continue to nurture the ideas and the feelings around that mythical indigenous basis of the nation. This is why he proclaimed the need of the racial fusion of the large masses of the population. However, Mora was one of the first liberals not only to place real Indians on the lower level of the class scale, but to defend the fact that one of the central tools of the

mestizophile project should be the immigration of Europeans, whose purposes, according to liberals, were to 'whiten' the race and encourage industry (Arévalo Martínez 1919; González Ponciano 2007; Moreno Figueroa 2010).

Vicente Riva Palacio (1832–1896), an army officer belonging to the generation of triumphant liberalism, falls squarely within our understanding of a *mestizophile* thinker. He claimed that ethnic diversity was an impediment for the development of the independent nation: 'To achieve the harmony and strength of patriotic cohesion it is essential […] that Mexicans belong to the same race' (Riva Palacio 1994, 470). For him, *mestizos* were the only ones who could 'feel the country as their homeland, for only they could be distinguished from the inhabitants of Spain and of the Anáhuac, two nations that are far from the Mexican nation in space and time'. The *mestizo* was the new hero, and *mestizaje* was seen by Riva Palacio as a new unstoppable phenomenon with a life of its own. The *mestizo* was not a means, but an end; an end for whose sake '*Mexicanidad*' or Mexican identity would be consolidated. Nevertheless, in the same way as in Mora, Riva Palacio's interpretation also limped, because it ensured that the new race would not develop a new culture by itself. On the contrary, the European cultural protection would be encouraged, so cultural dependency would be maintained (Morales 2010).

In other words, the egalitarian liberal discourse constantly betrayed the idea of the merger, because it did not eliminate the Indian's inferiority or the fact that those Indians who refused to merge were considered outsiders to the nation; it did not eliminate the defense of the superiority of 'whiteness' (Wade 2009, 2010). That was how the *mestizo* was left to live in the (uncomfortable) center of the debate around the future of the Mexican citizen (Basave 2002, 23).

Considered as an economic and cultural policy, the *mestizophile* project was also indirectly promoted by the Lerdo Law,[3] which in 1856 led to the confiscation of the private and the Church's large estate, but also of the communal lands of indigenous peoples. This project sought to promote small-scale property as the basis of the new economic and social relations. It was of *mestizophile* nature more from an economic, political and social perspective than from an ethnic and racial one, in the sense that it was clearly animated by the defense of liberal, individual, civil and political rights, and not by the defense of the collective ownership of land and customary legal systems. In addition, the *Juaristas* managed to launch an educational positivist reform conducted by Gabino Barreda (1794–1850), a disciple of Comte and the Minister of Justice and Public Instruction of the Juárez (1806–1872) government. This reform would end up by amputating the Hispanic–*Criollo* aspects of the national project and laying the groundwork for the admittedly *mestizophile* Mexico (Zea 2005).

The *mestizophile* project was defended by its advocates, with great conviction of its progressive character. And it was indeed progressive, compared with that of European scientific racism theorists, who 'diffused the idea that miscegenation resulted in bastard populations, unable to make civilization go forward' (Castellanos 2000, 55). Justo Sierra (1848–1912), the leading intellectual figure of Porfirio Diaz' regime and of the secular National University (1910), translated that belief into words like the following, pronounced at the First International Congress of *Americanistas* in 1875:

> This pre-Columbian world whose monumental files you come to study here is ours, our past. We have incorporated it into our lives as a preamble that explains and cements our true national history, which dates from the union of the conquered and the conquerors, that is destined to create a *mestizo* people who (allow me this gesture of patriotic pride) is acquiring the right to be great.
>
> (Garner 2008, 7)

In 1909 this project was taken to a new level by Andrés Molina Enríquez (1868–1940), who introduced in it 'an inherent tension' because this important journalist and sociologist of Otomí origin, a pioneer of the revolution 'wanted to create a hybrid race that would be both homogeneous and pure' (Stern 2000, 59–60). For Molina, the *mestizo*, who was seeking to differentiate himself from Indians and Criollos, was destined to be in power, and the country's future depended on it. However, while achieving racial homogenization, the 'great national problem' derived from the policy of government's protection to C*riollo* private property. Molina clearly saw how the results of liberal policy had been different from the way they had been imagined by its first advocates: instead of reaching a nation of free and equal Mexicans, the country was almost entirely in the hands of the white hacienda owners and of domestic and foreign investors. Furthermore, 'Mexican citizenship was made of a mass of laborers, farmers and workers who most of the time lived hardly better than slaves' (Lomnitz 1995, 355).

The Post-revolutionary Mestizophilia/Indigenismo

The previously described failures of the 19th-century liberalism represented by both Juárez and Díaz detonated in 1910 a political and social revolution in Mexico. From the cultural institutions of the new state, and armed with the power emanating from the prestige and the moral and cultural authority of the triumphant revolution, the *mestizophile* project was refocused and redefined by José Vasconcelos (1882–1959). Vasconcelos was not only an important intellectual who had emerged from the critique of Porfirian positivism developed by the *Ateneo de la Juventud*. He was also the most important official of the national education system, both at the head of the National University of Mexico (1920–1921) and the Ministry of Public Education (1921–1924).

Under the National University slogan '*Por mi raza hablará el espíritu*' ('The spirit will speak through my race') the author of *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana* (*The Cosmic Race: Mission of the Ibero-American Race*; 1925) imagined the *mestizo* as the spiritual lighthouse of Hispanic civilization (Stern 2000, 61; Miller 2004, 2). Vasconcelos:

> thus attempted a renovation of the understanding of 'race' in the Latin American context, re-conceptualizing *mestizaje* as providential, progressive, and beneficial for Mexico and Spanish America. Vasconcelos' project was so provocative that Peruvian essayist José Carlos Mariátegui wrote that no one has imagined the future of America with so much ambition or with such vehement hope as José Vasconcelos.
>
> (Miller 2004, 28)

'It was a theme that was filled with hope and optimism and, thus, served as an inspiration for many people' (De Beer 1966, 290).

The cement of the new cultural nationalism was the 'impurity' of Mexican blood and culture, and Vasconcelos' discourse went beyond race. It was directed to those who had not yet encountered the Mexican hybrid culture. Its goal was for them to absorb it through national education, and to transform it into the core of their identity, as citizens of a nation that was being rebuilt. His project did not include the creation of a eugenically constructed racial homogeneity. However, in his book Vasconcelos silently:

> invoked the principles of Mendelian genetics, in order to argue that a perfect hybrid race combining the superior features of Indians, Asians, whites and blacks could be the product of a 'mysterious eugenic aesthetic taste', instead of that of 'scientific eugenics'. […] For [him], spiritual eugenics could encourage the formation of a new 'fifth race', capable of transcending the others in every way, and merging in a successful synthesis the elements of beauty, scattered in different peoples.
>
> (Stern 2000, 61–62)

The nation that Vasconcelos wanted to build represents perfectly well what Balibar has called 'fictive ethnicity', illustrating the national community instituted by the nation-state, in which diversity is ethnicized as a unit, and different social groups are represented as if they formed a natural community, with a shared identity of origins, culture and interests. In Balibar's own words:

> No nation naturally possesses an ethnic basis, but in the process of the nationalization of social formations, the populations that nations include, deal with and control are 'ethnicized'; in other words, they are represented in the past or in the future as if they would form a natural community, owning an original cultural identity made of common interests, transcending individuals and social conditions. […] By constituting the people as a fictively ethnic unity against the background of a universalistic representation and which thus divides up the whole of humanity between different ethnic groups corresponding potentially to so many nations, national ideology does much more than justify the strategies employed by the state to control populations. It inscribes their demands in advance in a sense of belonging, in the double sense of the term – both what it is that makes one belong to oneself and also what makes one belong to other fellow human beings. […] The naturalization of belonging and the sublimation of the ideal nation are two aspects of the same process.
>
> (Balibar and Wallerstein 2002, 96)

For Balibar, the myth of common ethnicity is produced and operates through two complementary pathways: language and race. Both express the idea that the national character is imminent to the people and converts the historicity of populations, of their diverse languages and 'races', into a predestined fact of nature. The old empires and the pre-national complex societies were conglomerates of linguistically differentiated populations.[4] However, where a superimposition of mutually incompatible languages for the dominant and the dominated – between which existed a whole translation system – occurs in modern nations, writers, journalists, politicians, teachers and other social agents speak 'the language of the "people"'. Social differences are thus expressed as different ways of speaking the national idiom and of relating to

its common code, its common norm. In this case, from his position as one of the heads of the state, Vasconcelos spoke 'the language' of Mexicans, not only in the sense of Spanish representing already the only official national language, but also in the sense of relating the national culture that was being consolidated to its *mestizo* common code.

But speaking the language of Mexicans was not enough to finally create national identity because, according to Balibar, the language community is not enough to produce ethnicity, as it is a community:

> in present terms giving the feeling that is has always existed, but not prescribing any destiny to future generations. It ideally 'assimilates' no matter who, but retains no one. Finally […] it can serve different nations (as do English, Spanish and even French).
>
> (Balibar and Wallerstein 2002, 97–98)

Thus, the Mexican state, in order to be attached to the frontiers of one particular people, also had to produce the national ethnicity. To do this, it needed, also in Balibar's terms, a particularity supplement or an enclosing, excluding principle. That principle was the community of race, in the sense of 'the symbolic nucleus allowing to ideally identify race and ethnicity, to represent the racial unity as the origin or the cause of the historical continuity' of the Mexican people, and to dissolve social inequalities in an ambivalent 'similarity': *mestizaje*. By doing so, the state managed to ethnicize the social difference, which is an expression of irreconcilable antagonism, by lending it the form of a division between the 'genuinely' and the 'falsely' Mexican (Balibar and Wallerstein 2002, 99–100). In Balibar's terms, what the Mexican post-revolutionary state did, represented mainly by Vasconcelos, was to institute an idea on the national race, whose nucleus was the belief that the filiations of individuals transmit from generation to generation a substance both biological and spiritual, which inscribes them in a certain community. National state ideology enunciated, through the *mestizophile* discourse, that the individuals who belonged to the Mexican people were interrelated, shared the same filiations or constituted a circle of extended kinship. This is how, from the end of the revolution in 1920, *mestizophilia* became the core of the ideology, the project and the public cultural and eugenic policies of the Mexican state.[5] In order to become, as well, the core of national identity, another element was missing: the voices that spoke on behalf of those diverse peoples who were then known as 'Indians', and who constituted a significant percentage of the national population. These voices came mainly from one of the representatives of anthropology, Manuel Gamio (1883–1960), known since then as the founders of *indigenismo*.

In 1916, a few years before the triumph of the Sonora team that allowed Vasconcelos to lead national education, in his book *Forjando Patria* (*Shaping Motherland*), the anthropologist Manuel Gamio called for an 'urgent *indigenista* effort', which would erase the existing disdain for the 'living Indian'. Gamio was a disciple of Franz Boas, from whom he adopted cultural relativism, the new approach that characterized this new school of American Anthropology of the early 20th century, and that revolutionized anthropology. This revolution consisted of opposing Louis Henry Morgan's and Edward Tylor's ideas, mainly based on social Darwinism.

Morgan and Tylor deterministically defined the differences between diverse peoples as the result of a progressive series of developmental levels that every culture had to go through in order to develop. Boas admitted that biological evolution was explainable in terms of purely natural processes, but he rejected certain concepts of the most deterministic social Darwinism. That is why Boasians fought the racist ideas of spencerism, which claimed that the predominance of the 'white Anglo-Saxon Protestant' race resulted of this brace being the winning elite in evolutionary terms. Boas disciples fought for a multiracial democracy that would support the maximum possible stage of individual freedom (Boas 1911). Boas established a new concept of culture and race, which led him to talk of 'cultural relativism', a premise based on the notion that all cultural systems are essentially equal in terms of their connotation of value (Boas 2001). Boas thought that the differences between diverse societies have risen as a result of each people's own historical, social and/or geographical conditions, and not as the result of each socio-cultural group going through a different phase in the development path. The latter measured in a linear evolutionary scale, in which some cultures are more advanced than others. While Boasian positions represented a significant advance over its predecessors, they also defended the idea that there was an internal cultural cohesion in societies that ensured culture and society fit one another and allowed one to believe that there was an 'inherent relationship between shared traditions and the structuring of social and political borders […], or a harmonious relationship between nations, institutions, forms of socialization and culture' (Lomnitz 1995, 15).

True to these approaches from Boas, in his book *Forjar Patria*, Gamio embodied his proposal of what to do in this renewed Mexican nation concerning the Indians. Gamio intended to develop a policy that he called 'cultural', non-racial, which would stand against the evolutionary thesis of those who think that the Indian is the first cause of national backwardness. Gamio also thought that social deformities and social stagnation were likely to be solved by anthropology:

> It is axiomatic that, in its true broad concept, anthropology should be the basic knowledge on which good governance should stand, because through it we can get to know and understand the population that is the raw material with which governments work and for whom they work. Through anthropology we can characterize the abstract and the physical nature of mankind and of its different peoples, and we can deduce the appropriate means to provide them with a normal evolutionary development.
>
> (Gamio 1916)

Gamio built a project in which anthropologists would be able to lead, from the state's institutions, the ideology and the policies that should be followed – supposedly for the benefit of the Indians, but in fact reproducing the very foundations of nationalism: the belief that there is a national spirit that must be defended above all, a national communion against which diversity does not count. It is therefore not surprising that Gamio essentially coincided with Vasconcelos on which should be the basis of the construction of national identity, even if the Minister of Education's project was not thought to benefit the Indians but the nation as a whole. What Mexican Indians needed, Gamio claimed, was to mix their racial and cultural 'purity'

with the 'purity' of Spanish origins, so the result would be a single 'impurity' that would henceforth be considered as the official synonym of 'being Mexican'. For him, the assimilation of Indians into the nation – '*indigenismo*' – was the main project to defend towards building the cultural transformation of the Mexican population. Through it, the Mexico that had been designed by the post-revolutionary ideology tried to integrate its Indians into non-indigenous settings, thus erasing their collective identities, de-indianizing them.

As argued by Alejandra Stern (2000, 60), when you analyze Gamio's project carefully you can clearly see how much he actually ascribed to eugenics; not just to the Vasconcelos' esthetic idea linked to a hybrid cultural and spiritual rebirth of the nation, but also to a racial type of eugenics. This is not surprising, for eugenics, in addition to being in vogue in scientific circles, was closely linked to nationalism, and Mexican nationalism was not in this sense an exception. As Stern states:

> Gamio introduced, through the back door, the theory of recapitulation of the German zoologist Haeckel,[6] by suggesting that in order to be strong *Criollos* should 'indianize themselves', and ingrain the myth and the strong vitality of the Aztecs and the Mayas.
>
> (Stern 2000, 61)

Owing to this theoretical position, coupled with the crucial fact that Gamio became, side by side with Vasconcelos, the head of the political–cultural post-revolutionary Mexican state, the highly eugenic interaction between the founders of 20th-century anthropology, *indigenismo*, and the state was especially clear and notorious in this country.[7]

Mexican Anthropology (1936–1994) and *Mestizophile* Nationalism

From there on, the Mexican anthropological school flourished. To a large extent it adopted Gamio's thoughts and actions, as well as the increasingly *indigenista–mestizophile* face of the nation. This face was paradoxically also a shield that would guide not only the state's policies towards those that were part of the nation, but also towards those living in or coming from other nations, such as foreigners or immigrants. During the Cárdenas' regime (1934–1940), anthropologists started developing extremely valuable studies on the inter-ethnic and often conflicted relations in Mexico. At that time Aguirre Beltrán (1972, 1989), who was working in Chiapas, was one of the very few anthropologists to see a racist subtract in the ideas of Vasconcelos (1925) and Molina Enríquez' (1909) on *mestizaje*. Nevertheless, his engagement with indigenismo at the time did not allow him to identify the same subtract in Gamio's *indigenista* thought, something that he would only recognize in the 1960s. From the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards, several anthropologists, driven by a complex and lengthy process in which the indigenous movement was heading towards building its demands in ethnic and not only in class terms, disassociated themselves gradually from official *indigenismo*, claiming that it had lead to the 'acculturation of indigenous peoples, subsuming [and therefore erasing or denying] their different identities' (Hernández Castillo 2001; Castellanos Guerrero 1994,

109). Andrés Aubry (1927–2007), for example, who for many years directed the Archivo Diocesano of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, wrote:

> indigenismo is the system's response to a white peoples' question: why are multi-ethnic countries underdeveloped? But it also conceals a hypothesis: the Indian is an obstacle on the road to development. Instead of questioning the global society and its development model, it despises the indigenous culture.
>
> (Aubry 1989, 15)

Guillermo Bonfil's critique (1935–1991) was particularly strong, for he described *indigenismo* as a tool for the nation-state to destroy the identity of indigenous peoples and to integrate them into a homogeneous national culture, resulting in a form of ethnocide (Bonfil Batalla 1970, 43). Bonfil claimed that *indigenismo* had not managed to question, to put an end to or to reverse the mechanisms of ethnic and class discrimination suffered by indigenous peoples.

This critique was with no doubt absolutely correct in terms of its anti-discriminatory nature.[8] However, as Lomnitz has stated, in terms of a substantial criticism of the nationalist thought on which it was built, it was in some ways limited. First, it kept reasoning on the same mythical bases as did 10th-century liberal thought and the 20th-century *indigenista* project that it was supposed to question. Bonfil claimed that the only deep, real and authentic Mexico is the indigenous one, to which are added 'large sectors of Mexican society who do not recognize themselves as Indians, but who organize their collective life by deriving it from a cultural matrix of Mesoamerican origin' (Bonfil Batalla 1987, 244). Everything else in Mexico, Bonfil asserted, is merely fictional, artificial and imposed by a foreign modernity that is not compatible with the national 'us'. This argument stated again that everything which is neither Indian nor *mestizo* is not Mexican but alien, outsider, foreigner, imposed, modern, artificial, capitalist, and fictitious.

After criticizing what he rightly called 'an ethnocide of indigenous peoples at the hands of *indigenismo*', and the state's project for the national development that often lacked a social and cultural content, Bonfil's strongest suggestions were that, this time, Mexican nationalism should not fall into ethnic or class discrimination. He urged that Mexico had to rebuild its national identity once more, around a project that should mainly respect the country's indigenous soul, *el México Profundo*.

Bonfil's views had enormous influence in Mexican anthropology in the 1980s and the early 1990s. Genuinely concerned about ethnic and class discrimination, academics who were involved with the study of indigenous populations invested much of their energy to not reproduce it.[9] The number of anthropological papers and books on the study of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations in Mexico is in effect inexhaustible. But in 1994 it was the Zapatistas in Chiapas who added to this concern of the critics of *indigenismo* and to the ethnic demands of the peasant-indigenous movement three central themes: full recognition of the racial discrimination that the Indians' body, and not only their cultural self, suffer in this country; full recognition in practice, and not only on paper, of equality or full citizenship status – understood in liberal-democratic terms for every indigenous person; and incorporation of collective cultural rights for indigenous peoples.

From this moment on, academic work that has focused on the issue of both race and ethnicity race has been extremely interesting. It has mainly concentrated on:

> the controversy on the existence of races and their relation with culture, initially developed during the Second World War against racist theories;[10] […] the study of *mestizaje* (which as a symbol of national identity has to be reaffirmed once and again) [Bokser, 1994; Basave, 2002]; and the ethnocide produced by the expansion of the capitalist development model [Báez 1996; Bonfil Batalla 1987]; the analysis of identities and of racism […], in a context in which we witness the resurgence of the ethnic conflicts and an indigenous movement, growingly rebellious and independent.
>
> (Castellanos Guerrero 2000, 54)[11]

Nevertheless, this work has been much less important than that which does not discuss race, but only ethnicity and culture.[12] I can mainly find two reasons why this has been so. The first reason is of an international order. For a long time it had an impact on the subjects that anthropologists chose to study. The reaction, mainly after World War II, against the fact that anthropology had been seen, at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, as a promoter of the idea of race as an irremovable biological reality; the case of the alliance between many German anthropologists and the Nazi regime being, without any doubt, the most dramatic example.[13] In effect, because anthropology's subject of interest was originally the colonized Other, because of its contributions to the theory of evolution, and because of its classifications and typologies of human groups (Spencer 1993; Carneiro and Perrin 2002; Tylor 1865, 1871), it was originally marked by stigmas that distinguished it as a discipline related to power, to racism and to the expansion of the West. It is true that these contributions served as important foundations of 19th-century racist thought, and to building theories about the inequality of races and cultures (Castellanos Guerrero 2000, 53). As a consequence of this, after World War II the idea that the study of racism can (*per se*) contribute to its creation and dissemination was diffused.[14] Many anthropologists began to question the existence of 'races', or human groups characterized by innate and unchangeable biological realities that made some inferior and some superior. That is why they started to work more around the concept of 'ethnicity', which had more to do with the way of conceiving cultural forms of sameness and otherness. Such was the need to show disbelief in the existence of superior and inferior biologically determined human groups, that many academics turned their back on the need to study racial ideologies and racial discrimination. Their argument was and has been that the idea of race is a cultural construct, and that otherness has to be examined only from what some groups think or feel about other groups' culture, and not from what some groups think or feel about what they call other groups' biological, 'natural' characteristics.

Despite this, all over the world many in this field have continued to work on race as their central theme or as one of their major subjects of interest. On the one hand, because they have been independent from power, and have not been in favor of promoting racial ideologies or of deepening the racialization of social relations. On the other hand, because they have considered that understanding the concept of race

as a 'cultural construct' does not invalidate in any way its specificity; a specificity so real that around it are created open, subtle or disguised racist ideologies and movements, which tend to be powerful and dangerous.

The second reason is of a national order, and it is related to the continuing strength of the powerful and long life of Mexican *mestizophilia* and to the *sui generis* Mexican racism that *mestizophilia* has created. Jesús Antonio Machuca explains the particularities of Mexican racism in a very clear way. As compared with the nationalist European ideology of the 19th century, the Mexican one of the beginning of the 20th century:

> did not modify the basis of the primitive paradigm of the relation 'blood-purity-race-nation', but did modify the meaning of its terms, transforming the negative into positive, the exclusive into inclusive. […] While *mestizaje* appears as the enemy of the racial discrimination that it pretends to attack with its opposite form, racial integration, it contradicts its own basis. It produces, in effect, a new socio cultural polarization: by declaring itself the only valid form of integration, it replaces the white-indigenous polarization that it pretended to destroy, by the *mestizo*-indigenous polarization, in which the *mestizo* replaces the white in the dominant place.
>
> (Machuca 1998, 40, 47)

In the same way that a '*historia patria*' – the official patriotic historiography reinforced by the Mexican Revolution – was developed in Mexico between the 1920s and the 1960s, an '*antropología patria*' was developed, attached to the post-revolutionary Mexican state's nationalism that created *indigenismo* and strongly reinforced *mestizophilia*. This is why for many years, except for the very rare cases mentioned above, race has not been a fundamental concern of Mexican anthropology. Most of this discipline's representatives did not see to what extent both policies, by acting together, strongly discriminated the indigenous populations of Mexico not only from the economic, political and ethnic points of view, but also from the racial one.

When, in the 1960s and 1970s, Bonfil criticized Gamios's patriotic anthropology, as was already explained above, he imprinted *indigenismo*/*mestizophilia* with a left-wing stamp, but because he essentialized indigenous Mexico and its *mestizo* body, he kept subscribing to the chauvinistic essence of *mestizophilia/indigenismo*. His critique could not see that this project had not only been built as a class and political–cultural pillar, but also as a eugenic and chauvinistic pillar (Stern 2000; Urías 2007; López Beltrán 2008). Its logic requires a particular type of analysis in which, in order to attend to its own specificities, neither the cultural nor the class specificities of discrimination need to be put aside. Marilyn Miller writes:

> Until the last decade of the twentieth century, […] in many early texts of postcolonial criticism, at least, *mestizaje* still provided an effective tool with which centuries of colonial domination based on racial and cultural difference could be halted or reversed. Throughout this period, *mestizaje* – especially in counterdistinction to the racial practices of the United States which allowed little room for such ideas – was generally considered antiracist, anti-imperial, and more inclusive of a greater portion of Latin America's diverse citizenry in political and cultural engagements than ever before.
>
> (Miller 2004, 36)

Also, the fact that this criticism has attributed the dominant aspects of the cultural nature of prejudice or discrimination over its biological nature has, as Machuca points out:

> hidden the knowledge of the social specificity of human biology (that places us in the field of anthropology), as well as the full acknowledgement of the biological specificity of the social sphere (that brings us close to the field of social etiology) and of the effective role of the biological sphere – which is by itself a cultural phenomenon – in the determinations of the social facts, within a framework of mutual determination between the biological and the social.
>
> (Machuca 1998, 52)

In other words, this critique did not realize to what extent, in a country that was no longer living in 1810 or 1920 but almost in the 21st century, it neither encompassed the whole spectrum of anti-discriminatory thinking nor did it really open up to a modern, democratic nation-building project, greeting internal and external diversities.

In 1996, forced by the great wave of sympathy aroused in the country and in the world by the Zapatista rebellion, regional and national authorities had to sign the San Andrés Treaties on Indigenous Rights and Culture with the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN).[15] Thus, the Mexican government agreed to amend the Constitution in order to guarantee the access of Indians to the state's jurisdiction, without denying their cultural and collective rights (López Bárcenas 2000a, 2000b, 2005; Hernández and Ortiz n.d., 4). However, between 1996 and 2001 this initiative was not sent to Congress: the legal officers of the Mexican regime basically refused to face the issue of recognizing difference and diversity 'as an aspect that enriches the country and not as a problem to remove' (Sierra Camacho 1995, 1).

In 2001 President Vicente Fox sent the San Andrés bill to congress, although it had been previously revised by some of the senators:

> The new legal framework […] that aroused then was a major breakthrough against the monocultural and homogenizing discourses of the past, but still did not generate the conditions for a political pact between the State and the indigenous peoples, that could eventually create real structural changes to better support access to justice for them.
>
> (Hernández and Ortiz n.d., 4–5)

This limited Mexican constitutional reform took place almost six years before the United Nations acknowledged, for the first time, in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, what was raised by EZLN in San Andrés: 'that in order to respect indigenous peoples there are two levels of rights to be respected. The civil, social and political rights of individuals – indigenous or not – and the inherent rights of peoples as communities, in terms of their cultures, their territories, their forms of organization and their resources' (López Bárcenas 2000a).

Today, academics who study the legal aspects of indigenous anthropology argue that legal pluralism has *de facto* been – whether recognized or not – a reality present in Mexico since Independence, and that 'we cannot continue talking about indigenous law and national law as two isolated spheres. These spheres interact continuously through the legal strategies of the social actors who use both fields of justice' (Sierra Camacho 1992, 101). It would be better to speak of a single legal map, in which the

regulatory systems overlap, and in some contexts oppose each other, in a productive dialogue that must necessarily affect the very contents of the different legal spaces (Sierra Camacho 1995). However, talking in this way means to have already proceeded to a change in the old mentalities, which have fed both ethnic and racial discrimination and *mestizophile* chauvinistic nationalism. It means to start to think in terms of launching a real state reform destined to incorporate diversity, not only in legal terms but also in practice.

Next, I will discuss the negative consequences of *mestizophilia* on the often xenophobic and racist character of the contemporary Mexican migration policies. In this part of the essay, I move away from subject of the history of ideas and ideologies related to the cult of *mestizaje* as the basis of national identity from 19th-century and 20th-century Mexico to briefly touch another subject.

The Impact of *Mestizophilia* on Migration Policies

As we have seen, the *mestizophile* nation-building model established after independence was full of contradictions:

Among them, a significant one was that, in the nineteenth century,

> it was carried out, almost absolutely, by Criollo elites who were above all white, racist, [and convinced] that the future of Mexico had to go through an immigration progress, capable at the same time of exploiting the immense natural resources of the country and, in contradiction with its bet in favor of a mythical indigenous ethnic group as the basis of nationality, of whitening the 'inferior' indigenous race.
>
> (Pérez Vejo 2010, 151–152)

At the beginning of the 20th century, other countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Cuba condemned miscegenation, considering that it was dangerous to encourage, through immigration policies, the mixture of whites with Indians, blacks and other races. Mexico, which elevated its own basic biological and cultural mixture, was born to the century with an immigration discourse that did not seem excluding. In effect, it was developed in a country that praised *mestizaje,* and also in which the state's ideology was progressive and therefore did not necessarily consider left-wing foreigners as dangerous immigrants (Yankelevich 2010). However, Mexico never matched the numbers of immigrants in Argentina and Brazil. Between 1928 and 1932, for example, their number did not exceed 0.1 percent of the total population of the nation (Yankelevich 2010). In post-revolutionary Mexico it was not until 1926 that an immigration bill was passed, and it was full of mentions to races that were 'unassimilable' to Mexico, incompatible to dissolve in the melting pot of Mexican *mestizaje.* It was argued that the reason for such incompatibility was that 'it had been scientifically proven that those races cause degeneration in their descendants' (Yankelevich 2010, 196).

Among these 'races', blacks and Jews were especially considered (Saade 2010; Gleizer 2010). Blacks were especially considered because they were thought to be 'racially inferior, "occupationally incompetent", "unable to become true citizens" and "dangerous to the national indigenous population"' (Saade 2010, 237–238). In short,

the core of the argument contained in multiple confidential official documents against black immigration to Mexico was that in the nation-building model which Mexico had adopted 'the mestizo is not colored' (*'el mestizo no es de color'*); (Saade 2010, 245–246). Jews, on the other hand, were especially considered because they were thought to be part of those groups 'whose mixture of blood, cultural habits and traditions, are exotic to our psychology', inadaptable, again, to our Indo-Spanish fusion (Gleizer 2010, 254).

That is why the number of Jews who entered the country was larger during the *sonorense* governments (1920–1934)[16] than later on. This became dramatically evident at the outbreak of World War II, and especially when the world began to know clearly that 'the final solution', the methodical extermination of the Jews, had been decided and was being implemented by the Nazis. Even in those years, Mexico accepted only a few of those persecuted Jews who sought refuge in its territory.[17] In the same way as Argentina and Brazil – who put forward classical racist arguments against Jewish immigration – Mexico's motives to support this refusal lacked a humanitarian approach, except in the case of 100 Jewish children who were admitted (Gleizer 2010). This is even more surprising when seen in comparison with the generosity shown, only a few years earlier, by the Lázaro Cárdenas government, which, unlike the right-wing governments of Argentina and Brazil, largely opened the doors of Mexico to the Spanish Republicans and to the communist leader Leon Trotsky.

This praiseworthy generosity regarding the right of asylum for politically persecuted people was later seen again, between the 1960s and the 1970s, when Mexico greeted an important number of Guatemalans, Brazilians, Chileans, Argentineans and Uruguayans. But it is this generosity that has stayed in the Mexican social imaginary, as the emblem of their asylum and migration policies. From the standpoint of political asylum this picture is pretty accurate, except for the aforementioned case of the Jews, who were also fleeing from a fascist regime. From the point of view of immigration, however, Mexico, between the 1930s and the 1970s, entered in a 'closed door to immigration' phase (Yankelevich 2010). The legislation in this matter largely gave priority to domestic population policies and to the repatriation of emigrants over foreign immigration.

During the last two or three decades, this phenomenon has extended to the highly discriminative treatment given by the Mexican migration authorities and the officials of the southern Mexican states – mainly Chiapas, Oaxaca, Tabasco y Veracruz – to the Central American citizens who cross the Mexican southern border to escape extremely difficult political or economical conditions in their countries, find work in Mexico, or make their way to the United States. Despite the fact that they are mostly *mestizos*, they are marginalized from Mexican society, they become most of the time invisible and their voices are almost never heard. According to Amnesty International, the experience of exclusion and violence they suffer in Mexico has taught them not to trust anybody, especially the authorities. Migrants who suffer or witness abuses have very little options. They can choose not to file a complaint and to bear the terrible hardships that continuing their voyage means, with the hope that they will find a better future. Or they can risk denouncing those abuses to the

Mexican authorities, who may well reject their denunciation or even worsen the abuses they suffer. This invisibility of Central American migrants in Mexico and this difficulty they find in having access to the justice system turns them, especially women and children, into easy targets for criminal gangs and for corrupt government officials.[18] All this suggests that, despite the fact that Vasconcelos' project was apparently open to racial and cultural mixture, 'in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mexico a foreigner cannot be part of the nation, because he or she represents its denial' (Pérez Vejo 2010, 181). What better way to show this feeling of weakness than some episodes of our history and our present, in which there have been frequent accusations against others who are simply different – considering them to be 'traitors', 'cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic', 'Jews', 'promoters of Judaism',[19] or 'effeminate and thus foreignizing' (Monsiváis 2001; Sheridan 1985; Lomnitz 2010).

Curiously enough, even if this rejection of foreigners is clearly xenophobic, Mexico does not consider that it deserves this epithet, because it can only apply to those nations in which the nationals reject the aliens mainly because they are convinced of their own superiority. And yes, indeed, Mexico does not deserve this epithet for those reasons, which are traditionally the most common and recurrent. It nevertheless does deserve it, but for the opposite reasons: because it has to defend a 'race' that, before it actually becomes the 'cosmic race', is still weak; more so when facing foreigners – strangers who can take advantage of its weakness (Pérez Vejo 2010, 181). 'What better proof of that', argues Pérez-Vejo, 'than the three centuries of conquest by the powerful Spanish?' (2010, 181). What better proof of that, would I add, than the terrible humiliation and loss suffered by our country in the mid-19th century, when half its territory was confiscated by the powerful North American white neighbors? [20]

We can therefore see that there are lines of continuity with the 19th-century policies that we previously called schizoid. On one hand, during the 1940s and into the 1960s, the revolutionary cultural nationalism proudly defended the indigenous side of the nation, at the same time as the state was practicing a 'medical–sanitary depuration inspired in eugenics, and [that] the criminological thought […] raised the need to impose measures of social prophylaxis, taking as its benchmark the racial heritage factor' (Urías 2007, 88).[21] On the other hand, in the course of the 20th century, Mexico was showing the rest of the world that humane part of its face which was receptive of people and groups who, as it was explained before, were politically persecuted elsewhere. However, it did not openly show the other part of it, the shield, that drew a whole list of undesirable peoples who wanted to come to Mexico, and who were defined as belonging to 'non-assimilable races' or to 'races that were harmful' to the national race (Yankelevich 2010).

Conclusions

The *mestizophile* project was built since 1810 on the basis of the same paradigm that has underpinned all modern nations: blood, race, identity, and nationhood. By changing the 'pure and white' blood as the first element of this paradigm to a 'mixed, hybrid and impure blood', this project was intended to give the whole country an original but compelling national identity that would strengthen it (Machuca 1998).

In contrast with *indigenismo, mestizophilia* has proved far more successful in historical terms. Not only is it still alive but it is still healthy. It has by no means disappeared.[22] Furthermore the criticism developed against it by academia and social movements is considerably younger and less profound than the one – still unfinished – against *indigenismo*.

Despite how respectable and progressive they may sound in the words of their campaigners, *mestizophilia* and the type of nationalism it carries with it have consistently proven to be monolithic and to systematically exclude difference. Even after the 2001 constitutional reforms that officially declared Mexico to be a multicultural country, this reality is still much discursive than real. Since its very beginnings, the nationalist *mestizophile* project has never considered different peoples or individuals to be 'absorbable' in this 'mestizo national us', which, in its mythical journey towards the cosmic ideal, remains extremely weak (Perez Vejo 2010): embroiled in its own labyrinthine umbilicus (Lomnitz 1995, 13), from which it finds no way out.

Loaded with an ideology centered on national identity, 'which favors the enclosed instead of the open' (Paz 1983, 28), Mexico has developed a negative type of nationalism that focus on its 'fear of losing [what it calls] the national authenticity' (Handler 1988, 196). Our umbilicus cannot account for the existing national heterogeneity. It is unable to give life to a modern project that should defend national sovereignty while at the same time being inclusive, diverse and democratic; which should have its windows open to respect interior and exterior differences, a multicultural state of law, and settling a past that must be put in clear perspective in order to move forward.

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Notes

[1] Darwin was not the first evolutionist. Before him, Bonnet, Lamarck, Pander and Spencer wrote about evolution. Lamarck formulated the first theory of biological evolution. Darwin's most important discovery was 'natural selection', which is defined as the differential reproduction of genotypes (the set of genes of an organism) within a biological population. Natural selection is based on two premises: that among the descendants of an organism is a blind variation, non-random but yet non-deterministic, which is partly inherited; and that this variability can lead to differences in survival and reproductive success, making some emerging features able to spread in the population. It is the accumulation of these changes during several generations that leads to all of the evolutionary phenomena (Margulis and Olendzenski 1966; Mayr 2004; Orgel 2007).

[2] In Mora's *mestizófilo* discourse (and in the liberal discourse of *mestizaje*) there is no mention of the role of the black population in the composition of the Mexican *mestizo* people. It is necessary to say that during the colonial period the pyramidal scale of skin colors was headed by the small minority of the white Spanish inhabitants, both peninsular and *Criollos*. In second place were the Indians, who here were 'pure blooded'. In third place were the *castas*, which were the product of all kinds of different mixtures, including the blacks, brought as slaves from 1580 on. Finally, we could find the non-mixed blacks, who also represented a

pure pole blood. All along the colonial period *mestizaje* showed a growing dynamism, but no one could attain the pure poles through any kind of miscegenation, and that indigenous blood could redeem itself completely or, as Castoriadis would say, the Indians were eventually allowed to abjure of what they were, while the blacks were in no way allowed to do that because, in theory, their blood could never completely whiten. While a mixed Indian could never become a pure Indian again, he or she could get near the Spanish blood. On the contrary, a black mixed person could never become a pure black, nor could he in any way approach the Spanish blood. The nearest he could get to this blood was to be placed in that category called '*tente en el aire*', a sort of racial and cultural limbo (Lomnitz 1995, 351–352).

[3] The 1856 Lerdo Law allowed the government to force the sale of Church and of big land owners real estate and all communally-held land. Not all church land was confiscated; however, land not used for specific religious purposes was sold to private individuals. This changed the nature of land ownership, allowing more individuals to own land, rather than institutions.

[4] In Mexico, there are still more than 60 indigenous languages alive today.

[5] It is interesting to contrast these policies in Mexico with the eugenic policies in other parts of Latin America (see Leys Stepan 1991).

[6] Ernst Haeckel, German biologist and philosopher, popularized the work of Darwin, but ignored the important role that Darwin attributed to chance. He thus argued that evolution was directed toward a progressive complexity that had targeted mankind as its main goal. He formulated in 1866 the 'recapitulation theory', now discredited in its literal version. According to this theory, the development of an embryo of each species repeats the evolutionary development of this species altogether, so that ontogeny (the evolutionary process of an individual within a species) would reproduce the phylogeny (the evolutionary process of the species). Haeckel also advocated that the 'primitive' races were still living their infancy and needed supervision and protection of more mature societies. He extrapolated from there a new philosophy, which he called 'monism'. His work served as a reference and a scientific justification for nationalism and racism, and was used as one of the bases of Nazism's racist theories.

[7] Not all anthropologists who worked in Mexico on the indigenous issue, between 1920 and 1980, were tainted by this *indigenista* anthropology that we might call an ally of power through an interventionist project that followed a eugenic logic, apparently unconscious, and always called 'culturalist'. Moreover, many who did believe in it developed an extremely valuable job, mainly within the framework of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista or of academy.

[8] It also allowed academia to contribute in an important way to the anti-*indigenista* project of this new indigenous movement.

[9] The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) is an indigenous armed organization from the state of Chiapas that rebelled against the government on January 1994, demanding the recognition of citizenship and collective rights for indigenous peoples in Mexico.

[10] See Juan Comas (1941a, 1941b, 1942, 1944, 1946, 1948a, 1948b, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1972) and Santiago Genovés (1967, 1992).

[11] Lately, some of this academic work has also concentrated on the study of the eugenic policies of the Mexican State in the first half of the 20th century (Urías 2007; Stern 2000).

[12] Before the Zapatista uprising, the work concentrating on race in Mexico was mainly that of: physical anthropologists such as Juan Comas, Aguirre Beltrán and Santiago Genovés, among which the latter participated in building the first UNESCO declaration on race and racism; historians such as Favre (1976), who think that miscegenation is the strongest proof against the existence of racial relations in Mexico; very few social anthropologists, such as Van der Berghe (1971), De la Fuente (1965) or Stavenhagen (1969), who recognize imbrications between class and race relations and between *mestizos* and Indians. After 1994, see the work of: historians such as Knauth (2000), Urías (2007) and Rozat (2000, 2002); social anthropologists such as Castellanos Guerrero (1994, 1998, 2000; Castellanos Guerrero and

Sandoval 1998), Krotz (1994), Barabas (1979), Paris Pombo (1997) and Lomnitz (1995, 2010); and philosophers such as Gómez Izquierdo (1991, 2000, 2008) or López Beltrán, and other academics such as Stern (2000), who is a specialist on the history of medicine, and Gabayet (2000), who is a specialist on politics and culture.

[13] The proximity between Nazism and anthropology is illustrated especially in the case of Joseph Mengele, who in 1935 wrote, in Munich, his PhD thesis on the racial differences in the structure of the inferior jaw. He then travelled to Frankfurt, where he worked as an assistant to Otmar von Verschuer at the Institute of Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene, at the Frankfurt University. Having also studied medicine, Mengele became, during the War, the chief medical officer of the main 'nursing concentration camp' of Birkenau. He there became internationally famous as the 'Angel of Death', because he conducted extremely cruel experiments on his Jewish, Gipsy, homosexual and twin prisoners.

[14] These ideas, although understandable at one moment that is now very far behind in time, were and still are as absurd as those who would dare to state that because sociology studies social relations it promotes class exploitation.

[15] The San Andrés Treaties on Indigenous Rights and Culture were signed by the Mexican federal government and the EZLN, on the basis of a set of legal propositions that the EZLN presented to the Mexican Federal Government in 1996, demanding that they be discussed in Congress and elevated to constitutional law. The government did not fulfill its engagement until 2001.

[16] Between 1920 and 1934, the main heads of Mexican government were Adolfo de la Huerta, Álvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elías Calles. They were all born in the northern state of Sonora, and they represented the triumphant side of the revolution, which was part of the constitutional military and political movement during a large part of the revolution (1913–1917) and which, in 1920, defeated and assassinated President Carranza, head of this constitutional current, taking over power and keeping it until President Cárdenas took office in December 1934.

[17] The Mexican Jewish community is composed today of around 50,000 people. The first Jews arrived in the New Spain with Cortés and then during the colonial period, but many of them converted to Catholicism and/or practiced their religion in secrecy. After the Independence of Mexico, some German Jews came to Mexico thanks to the invitation made to them by Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg (1864–1867). In 1900, the census accounts for 134 Jewish residents in the country. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1922), another group of Jews arrived. In 1930 the Jewish population in Mexico amounted to 21,000 residents. The several communities inside this population are the Ashkenazi from East Europe, the Syrians and the Sephardic group, coming mainly from Turkey (http://forojudio.com/bin/forojudio.cgi?ID=2407&q=28).

[18] See http://www.periodismotransversal.com/index.php/los-hijos-ausentes/los-hijos-ausentes-mexico/140-el-cruce-de-migrantes-centroamericanos-por-mexico-uno-de-los-mas-peligrosos-del-mundo-amnistia-internacional-.

[19] Lomnitz (2010), Gleizer Saltzman (2007, 2011), Gojman de Backal (2000): controversy over Jalife-Rahme's antisemitism, *La Jornada*, 19 December 2008 and January 2009.

[20] In 1835, while Mexico was governed for the eighth time by General Antonio López de Santa Anna and while a liberal State reform failed, the *Siete Leyes* were promulgated, a centralist constitution that led to the fact that Texas declared its independence. Since then, this territory was forever lost by the Mexican nation, and was appended to the United States in 1841. In 1846, the United States invaded Mexico and occupied it until 1848. Mexico declared war on the invaders. The war ended with the signature of the Guadalupe–Hidalgo Treaty, where Mexico accepted that the Texan frontier would start north of the Río Bravo, and 'gave away' the until-then Mexican territories of California and Nuevo México (almost 2,000,000 km^2 that constitute today the North American states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, the largest part of Colorado, the south west of Wyoming and Kansas and the west of Oklahoma).

[21] At the beginning of the 1940s Gamio became an important official in the Demographics Department belonging to the Ministry of Interior or State Department.

[22] Marilyn Miller writes: 'This revelation of the problematic and even pernicious fallout of the cult of *mestizaje,* though now fairly widespread in Latin American academic studies, nonetheless seems at times to have had little practical effect. When convenient, *mestizaje* is still often seized upon in both political and artistic engagements that strive to define nations or the region. It appears that in the twenty-first century, the concept is again being retooled, this time alongside a call for the dissolution of frontiers and differences where they might provide obstacles to a full assumption of transnational neoliberal ideologies' (2004, 5).

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