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NEW APPROACHES IN CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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Possible new approaches in twentieth-century Mexican history not only include utilizing new methods such as oral history, but developing interpretations of historical statistics. Since my thoughts on oral history have been presented in a recent book, *México visto en el siglo XX; Entrevistas de historia oral*.¹ I will confine myself here to the latter topic. This essay will present some *debatable* hypotheses in order to suggest examples of little examined political, economic, and social data which might fruitfully be investigated in historical research.

1

A major source of data which often has been overlooked in Mexico is election statistics. Perhaps because the honesty of some elections has been questioned, generally scholars have not examined, for example, patterns in presidential voting by state; apparently researchers assume that altered results will not help them to determine regional interests and influences upon policy or other questions concerning the nature of constituencies which have intrigued political analysts in other countries. In order to suggest a way of using presidential voting statistics, however, for the sake of argument let us hypothesize that, though time-series election data have been manipulated, they may reveal strength of regional opposition to the official party. In this regard, we may view the number of votes conceded to opposition presidential candidates as being related to the government's desire to make the election appear to be valid yet take into account varying amounts of dissent.²

Table 1 shows the percentage of vote won by the official candidate for the presidency in 10 presidential elections since 1917; low percen-

¹ James W. Wilkie y Edna Monzón de Wilkie, *México visto en el siglo XX; Entrevistas de historia oral: Ramón Beteta, Marte R. Gómez, Manuel Gómez Morín, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Emilio Portes Gil, Jesús Silva Herzog*. México, D. F., Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Económicas, 1969.

² The hypothesis that the results of Mexican presidential elections have been manipulated ignores possibilities that the Mexican populace generally has supported official candidates by massive majorities, especially with economic development in the last 30 years.

tages (boxed) portray the extent of major dissent. In Mexico, low percentages won by the official party include all figures below 80 per cent, a figure that would be considered a land-slide victory in the United States. Marte R. Gomez, Minister of Agriculture under President Manuel Avila Camacho, has noted that in 1940 Avila Camacho won the national vote but lost the Distrito Federal.³ Table 1 reveals, however, that official election results gave Avila Camacho 72 per cent of the votes! If a generalization might be drawn from this case, amounts less than about 70 per cent could be considered a loss to the government.

It is interesting to note that in 323 cases given in Table 1, only 57 or 17.6 per cent are presented in boxes (if the cut off point for boxes were reduced to amounts under 70 per cent, only 27 cases or 8.4 per cent would be included). Incredibly, the official tally of votes shows that only in 2 cases (Baja California and Sinaloa in 1924) was the official candidate not supported by a majority of voters. Among Mexico's 32 federal entities, Baja California and the Distrito Federal are exceeded only by Chihuahua for number of cases with percentage scores less than 80 per cent.

A glance at Table 1 raises a number of questions. Did national discontent with the "economic revolution" of the period 1940-1960 force the government to admit in 1946 and 1952 to the greatest amount of election dissent since 1924? (The year 1924 witnessed an outright rebellion against the government's candidate.) Given widespread social disorders after the election of 1958, did a renewed lack of voting opposition in that year represent a return to "authoritarianism"⁴ reminiscent of the very controversial election of 1940? What were the circumstances that would permit the government to announce in 1917 and 1934 that the lowest percentage won by the official party did not go below 80 per cent in any entity? Was the result in 1964 chosen at 89 per cent in order to take advantage of relative political peace yet fix an amount for advertising purposes? (Certainly the validity of 89 per cent might be more credible than 90 per cent.) Or did the introduction of opposition "diputados de partido" in the Chamber of Deputies obviate the need for concessions in presidential voting results?

In suggesting that Mexican presidential statistics might serve as a rough gauge of official party power, it is important to note that we could develop many alternative hypotheses, including one that would give presidents of the period of economic revolution credit for attempting to develop a more democratic count of the vote. Such hypotheses could be tested against aspects of official party strength in state and

³ Wilkie y Wilkie, *México visto en el siglo XX*, p. 120.

⁴ Philip B. Taylor, "The Mexican Elections of 1958: Affirmation of Authoritarianism?", *Western Political Science Quarterly* 13 (1960), pp. 722-744.

TABLE 1

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VICTORY PERCENTAGES WON BY THE OFFICIAL PARTY OF THE REVOLUTION, 1917-1964^a

	1917	1920	1924	1929	1934	1940	1946	1952	1958	1964
Total	97.1	95.8	84.1	93.6	98.2	93.9	77.9	74.3	90.6	89.0
Agascalientes	98.9	98.0	77.7	94.0	96.0	93.9	70.4	67.9	93.2	91.2
Baja Calif.	95.3	96.4	44.7	91.6	97.2	93.9	63.6	61.7	60.7	78.6
Baja Calif. Terr.	b	b	b	b	100.0	b	91.7	82.3	93.4	96.8
Campeche	98.8	99.9	100.0	94.2	100.0	98.1	75.1	87.1	87.7	95.9
Coahuila	98.8	99.5	72.2	80.4	93.5	95.1	81.4	80.7	94.9	93.4
Colima	98.7	74.4	94.0	96.0	94.8	95.3	66.8	80.1	89.7	87.3
Chiapas	100.0	98.3	99.9	99.6	100.0	98.1	87.3	90.5	98.0	98.9
Chihuahua	98.2	99.7	68.9	78.9	99.8	92.6	75.7	63.9	64.6	78.7
Distrito Federal	96.6	96.0	94.9	97.0	97.3	72.0	57.0	51.4	79.9	74.9
Durango	88.5	97.8	69.8	84.1	99.7	96.8	65.4	65.0	84.8	90.0
Guanajuato	92.0	96.0	66.4	91.6	98.1	95.9	64.0	64.1	89.5	79.6
Guerrero	100.0	99.9	83.2	99.5	100.0	95.4	85.0	82.5	98.2	97.0
Hidalgo	98.4	99.7	87.1	96.0	100.0	99.5	90.4	88.7	98.1	98.4
Jalisco	99.7	73.2	87.4	93.9	99.1	98.7	78.8	64.7	89.0	87.0
Mexico	96.0	98.5	86.3	100.0	99.7	94.9	84.1	81.1	98.9	91.7
Michoacan	93.9	97.4	79.4	92.1	99.8	92.9	67.3	55.4	87.2	86.0
Morelos	b	91.7	93.6	87.1	99.8	98.1	57.3	68.5	95.8	94.2
Nayarit	98.3	87.4	59.0	100.0	100.0	97.0	85.3	76.0	98.7	91.6
Nuevo Leon	99.9	96.8	96.7	95.5	84.5	89.3	70.4	80.8	90.3	84.3
Oaxaca	99.5	96.9	98.8	99.7	100.0	99.4	90.2	79.8	95.6	96.9
Puebla	97.6	93.7	90.6	98.0	99.3	98.8	81.9	80.9	95.2	93.7
Queretaro	95.0	96.5	90.8	95.4	99.5	98.7	84.3	82.0	89.5	91.3
Quintana Roo	99.4	100.0	98.5	91.5	b	95.7	91.4	95.3	79.9	96.6
San Luis Potosi	98.5	99.3	93.0	99.7	100.0	98.2	80.2	88.9	94.3	91.6
Sinaloa	98.2	99.9	34.7	75.9	97.7	89.5	89.9	73.9	98.1	92.1
Sonora	97.9	96.2	84.5	68.9	100.0	92.4	81.5	81.1	97.3	98.4
Tabasco	99.7	100.0	100.0	93.1	100.0	99.8	95.6	79.3	98.9	99.3
Tamaulipas	95.5	100.0	90.3	94.9	97.1	88.1	72.4	69.5	94.8	96.5
Tlaxcala	98.4	99.6	81.4	97.9	99.6	95.7	81.1	81.2	98.4	98.4
Vera Cruz	98.8	98.3	88.1	89.3	94.9	94.8	90.5	91.5	97.6	96.8
Yucatan	99.7	100.0	99.8	100.0	99.4	88.1	75.9	81.5	77.4	85.8
Zacatecas	97.9	90.7	54.6	93.8	93.8	94.3	67.6	71.8	91.7	79.5

^a Excludes election of 1928 when Alvaro Obregón was unopposed.^b No data given in source.

Source: México, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de los Debates*, April 26, 1917; Oct. 26, 1920; Sept. 27, 1924; Nov. 28, 1929; Sept. 12, 1934, 1940, 1946, 1952; Sept. 10, 1958; *Dictamen* published in *El Día*, Sept. 9, 1964.

municipal elections as well as related to the number of members in governmental affiliated labor unions or beneficiaries of land reform by state. In this manner we could revise and refine our concepts of the Mexican electoral process.

II

An example of economic data which has been involved in controversy for a number of years includes expenditure of Central Government income. Many observers have felt that Central Government capital investment has been overly concentrated in the Distrito Federal. One possible implicit corollary of this argument is that the population in the country is being taxed to support the growth of a great metropolis in the Distrito Federal which thus attracts ever greater concentration of capital and population. Because little "hard data" has been available to support such contentions,⁵ it is important to consider several factors.

By comparing data on actual origin of income taxes to projected capital expenditures and population by entity given in Table 2, we may hypothesize that the Distrito Federal has received less than an equitable share of capital in relation to its contribution of income taxes and population to national totals. If the 1960's, when data are available, are indicative of earlier years, the Distrito Federal has provided tax revenue to support development in the rest of Mexico by a margin which leaves relatively little funds to meet its own great needs generated by growth which is most productive.

Though projected outlay may have little to do with actual investment,⁶ Table 2 suggests that in 1961, 1964, and 1967 only Mexico's North Zone had anywhere near a balance of federal investment in relation to population and collection of revenue. In contrast, the South, which contributed the least in revenue was projected to receive investment exactly in proportion to its share of population in 1960, 11.9 per cent. If this pattern has historical validity (a supposition which needs investigation), heavy capital investment in the North during earlier years probably was in excess of collections; thus we might assume that if such a policy were applied to the South, in the long run that poor area might show increased economic development and tax collections. The present data, however, do not tell us how much investment might be required for the South (even assuming that the areas have the same requirements for development) because we have no idea about the level of investment to collections in the North prior to 1961.

None of this discussion answers the question as to where capital investment might better be spent in order to encourage economic production. If development of a national market for goods is dependent upon social affluence in the entire country, then the Government must

⁵ Cf. Ifigenia M. de Navarrete, *Política fiscal de México*. México, D. F., Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1964, p. 38.

⁶ See James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change Since 1910* (2nd ed., revised). Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970, Part 1.

TABLE 2

SHARE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INCOME TAX REVENUE BY
FEDERAL ENTITY COMPARED TO POPULATION AND PROJECTED
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT,
SELECTED YEARS, 1959-1967

(In Percentages)

Collections by Entity	Population (1960)	Investment (1959-1963)	Income Tax Revenue ^a		
			1961	1964	1967 ^b
Revenue (millions of pesos)			4,036	7,254	10,168
Total Per Cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
North	15.8	16.5	18.5	16.8	15.0
Baja California	1.5	2.3	2.4	2.2	1.6
Chihuahua	3.5	5.8	3.1	2.3	1.6
Coahuila	2.6	1.7	3.3	2.7	1.8
Nuevo León	3.1	1.8	6.4	6.4	6.9
Sonora	2.2	2.7	1.9	1.9	1.9
Tamaulipas	2.9	2.2	1.4	1.3	1.2
West	14.1	15.6	4.7	4.5	4.3
Aguascalientes	.7	.4	.1	.2	.3
Baja Calif. Terr.	.2	.5	.1	.1	.1
Colima	.5	1.0	.1	.1	.1
Durango	2.2	2.1	.3	.3	.3
Jalisco	7.0	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7
Nayarit	1.1	.7	.2	.1	.1
Sinaloa	2.4	8.1	1.1	1.0	.7
West Central	16.8	8.1	5.9	7.4	9.2
Guanajuato	5.0	1.6	.7	.9	.9
México	5.4	3.5	4.4	5.4	7.5
Michoacán	5.3	2.4	.4	.7	.4
Morelos	1.1	.6	.4	.4	.4
East Central	15.8	7.6	2.7	2.7	3.2
Hidalgo	2.8	1.2	.5	.3	.5
Puebla	5.7	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
Querétaro	1.0	.6	.3	.5	.7
San Luis Potosí	3.0	2.9	.6	.5	.6
Tlaxcala	1.0	.5	.1	.1	.1
Zacatecas	2.3	1.4	.1	.1	.1
South	11.9	11.9	.8	.9	.8
Chiapas	3.5	4.6	.3	.3	.2
Guerrero	3.4	2.6	.3	.4	.4
Oaxaca	5.0	4.7	.2	.2	.2
Gulf	11.6	9.3	2.3	3.1	2.4
Campeche	.5	1.2	.1	.1	.1

Collections by Entity	Population (1960)	Investment (1959-1963)	Income Tax Revenue ^a		
			1961	1964	1967 ^b
Quintana Roo	.1	.7	c	c	c
Tabasco	1.4	2.2	.2	.2	.2
Veracruz	7.8	3.7	1.5	1.9	1.8
Yucatán	1.8	1.5	.5	.9	.3
Distrito Federal ^a	14.0	31.0	65.1	64.6	65.1

^a Excludes payments made directly to the Federal Treasury; payments not determined by entity are not taken into account here.

^b Excludes collections of previous years.

^c Less than .05 per cent.

Source: Tax revenue is from México, Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, *Cuenta Pública*, (Dark-colored Edition), 1961, 1964, 1967. Regions, population and investment are presented according to methodology given in James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change Since 1910* (2nd ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), Table 10-1.

traverse a difficult path which will encourage balanced growth. What share of scarce resources can be devoted to a poverty-stricken South Zone (which because of its isolation and lack of transport infrastructure does not enjoy the North's border advantages of market and tourism)? Also, given scarce resources, one could argue that the Mexican policy of offering tax incentives to industry initiated outside of the Distrito Federal has been the wisest policy, except that some intellectuals now claim that funds must be massively diverted from Mexico City to the countryside. Thus, the real "dilemma of Mexico's economic development" may not stem from the fact that the Central Government has been eased into a "political strait jacket", as Raymond Vernon would have us believe, but that it must conduct a "balanced revolution" which will encourage social justice along with economic growth. Though Vernon views presidential actions of the early 1960's as evidence of weak and vacillating policy, I have portrayed the same actions as indicating a strong shift in policy from economic to balanced revolution which would attempt to meet some of the problems posed by uneven economic and social development. ⁷

Has recent Mexican governmental policy slowed the growth of the Distrito Federal? Has Mexico City's share in industry, commerce and

⁷ See Raymond Vernon, *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development: The Roles of the Private and Public Sectors*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963, Chapter 7, especially p. 188. Shift from economic to balanced Revolution is analyzed in Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution*, Part 1.

services, and motor transportation and gasoline consumption decreased? As I have shown elsewhere, these total shares did not increase between censuses in 1960 and 1965. Slight decreases in 1965 reversed a trend of increasing importance of the Distrito Federal in Mexico's economic life. Given the overwhelming economic importance of Mexico City, perhaps we might ask ourselves the following question: Why has the population of the capital grown so slowly? By 1965 the Distrito Federal only had an estimated 15 to 16 per cent of the population and persons economically employed compared to over one half of commercial and service activity, over one third of industrial activity, and over one quarter of all motor vehicles and gasoline consumption.⁸

In addition to the above figures which suggest that Mexico City's importance might soon reach a plateau, Table 2 shows that in 1961, 1964, and 1967 the capital's share of tax revenues remained about 65 per cent. Thus, if we are to understand the regional development process, we must suggest a number of factors for which study might be undertaken. We not only need to investigate the historical relation of regional tax collection and investment but to examine the relation of migration patterns to regional share in GNP and economically active population.

III

An example of socio-economic data which has been overlooked for historical analysis involves the interpretation of statistics on unemployment. Table 3 gives total figures on male unemployment for the 1930's and for 1940, 1950, and 1960 when data are available. Most observers think that these figures are too low to be meaningfully compared to time series for a more developed country like the U. S. The following oral history interview with Jesús Silva Herzog, however, reveals one possible approach to these statistics:

JW [James Wilkie]: ¿Hubo mucha desocupación en México [durante la crisis mundial de los años de 1930]? . . .

JSH [Jesús Silva Herzog]: Aquí en México, como en otros países subdesarrollados, hay siempre desocupación oculta. Pero aquí sucede algo que no sucede en los países altamente desarrollados; lo que sucedió entonces y que se puede repetir en distintos momentos es que el hermano que tiene trabajo acoge al otro hermano; que hay una familia, el padre, la madre, tres hijos. Si un hermano no tiene trabajo, le dicen: "Vente acá; aquí repartiremos los frijolitos." Y llega el hermano, muchas veces

⁸ James W. Wilkie, "La Ciudad de México como Imán de la Población Económicamente Activa, 1930-1965", *Historia y Sociedad en el Mundo de Habla Española; Homenaje a José Miranda*. México, D. F., El Colegio de México, 1970.

con la esposa y dos hijos. Y se avienen a vivir en un pequeño cuarto o en dos pequeñas habitaciones. De suerte que no hubo manifestaciones de desocupados ni el gobierno de México tuvo que acudir durante la crisis en auxilio de los desocupados. Eso es muy interesante apuntar.

...

JW: Bueno. Hablando de la estadística de desocupación: se comenzaron a reunir las estadísticas de desocupación al venir la Depresión en México y subió el número —el porcentaje de la población de trabajadores— del dos por ciento, más o menos, al cinco o al seis por ciento de la población. Pero no dicen las estadísticas qué son los desocupados, quiénes son los que tenían trabajo, y ya no lo tienen. ¿Perdieron su trabajo por culpa de la Depresión? No se dice nada de estas estadísticas ocultas de que usted habla. Y las estadísticas de hoy tampoco... ¿El gobierno no puede tratar de averiguar cuánto es el porcentaje?

JSH: Es sumamente difícil. Son casos verdaderamente interesantes éstos de la desocupación oculta. Miren ustedes, a medida que el nivel económico en este país es más bajo, hay una mayor solidaridad entre los componentes de las personas de ese bajo nivel económico y se ayudan unos a otros. Por ejemplo, nosotros tenemos aquí una criada que tiene bastantes años con nosotros. Tiene una casita y seguido sabemos que tiene recogido a un señor o a una mujer en su casa, que “porque están más pobres que ella”... Sería necesario hacer una encuesta de muestreo en varias regiones del país para poder tener una idea de este fenómeno.⁹

A second possible approach to statistics in Table 3 might involve a hypothesis that in a less developed country high unemployment rates occur only with increasing affluence or serious depression. Alternatively, low rates occur because unemployment benefits are not available, and persons must find a way to make a living even if it involves selling lottery tickets in the streets or becoming a professional beggar. Thus a rate of 1 to 2 per cent male unemployment in 1930, 1950, and 1960 would offer a rough gauge of low Mexican social affluence. Increase of this rate to between 3.1 and 6.5 per cent in the Mexico of the period 1931-1940 would indicate a lingering aftermath of depression in the early 1930's rather than affluence. The nomination of Lázaro Cárdenas to the presidency in 1933 and the nature of his government between 1934 and 1940 can be related to this social and economic problem.

Variation of the above hypothesis might be developed to relate unemployment in Mexico to the U. S., a ratio showing the difference in the level of social affluence in the two countries. Examination of the 13 years under consideration in Table 3 reveals that except for 2 years (when the depression was at its worst in Mexico during 1931-

⁹ Wilkie y Wilkie, *México visto en el siglo XX*, pp. 677-678.

1932), the U. S. had 4 to 5 times as much unemployment as Mexico. (If circumstances have not changed, and if the ratio has any meaning for the first nine months in 1969 when data are not available for Mexico, the official rate of unemployment in Mexico might currently be less than 1 per cent).¹⁰

TABLE 3
UNEMPLOYMENT, AVAILABLE YEARS, 1930-1960^a

Year	Mexico			U.S.	
	Men ^b Unemployed ^c (1)	Economically Active Pop. ^b (2)	Per Cent Unemployed ^d	Total ^e Per Cent Unemployed ^f (3)	Ratio U.S./Mexico
1930 ^g	89,690	5,165,803	1.7	8.7	5.1
1931 ^h	287,462	5,188,245	5.5	15.9	2.9
1932 ^h	339,378	5,238,124	6.5	23.6	3.6
1933 ^h	275,774	5,307,090	5.2	24.9	4.8
1934 ^h	234,538	5,386,192	4.4	21.7	4.9
1935 ^h	191,371	5,428,121	3.5	20.1	5.7
1936 ^h	186,904	5,482,307	3.4	16.9	5.0
1937 ^h	180,128	5,573,809	3.2	14.3	4.5
1938 ^h	209,332	5,649,142	3.7	19.0	5.1
1939 ^h	198,593	5,787,109	3.4	17.2	5.1
1940 ^h	184,247	5,858,116	3.1	14.6	4.7
1950 ^g	91,095	8,345,240	1.1	5.0	4.5
1960 ^g	160,147	11,253,297	1.4	5.6	4.0

^a No data available for 1941-1949 and 1951-1959.

^b Over age 12.

^c Including men unemployed for more than 1 month in 1930 and 1940 and for 12 weeks or less as well as over 13 weeks in 1950 and 1960.

^d Women unemployed (not included) in 1960 constituted .2 per cent of the economically active population.

^e Men and women over age 14.

^f Including persons not at work during the survey week.

^g Census.

^h Monthly average.

Source: Columns 1 and 2: México, Dirección General de Estadística, *Anuario Estadístico*, 1938, p. 158 and 1940, p. 431; *Resumen del Censo*, 1940, p. 17; 1950, p. 58; and 1960, pp. 1, 3, 363. Column 3: *Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, Conn.: Fairfield Publishers, [1965]), pp. 73, 100A.

¹⁰ The average unemployment rate in the U. S. for the first 9 months of 1969 was 3.5 per cent; see *Newsweek*, October 20, 1969, p. 89.

Assuming that unemployment is related to affluence, theoretically in 1930, 1940, 1950, and 1960 when data are available,¹¹ the Distrito Federal should have had greater unemployment than the national average. In fact, most cases did exceed the national average; figures for the D. F. were 3.6 in 1930; 1.5 in 1940 (incomplete); 1.7 in 1950; and 2.0 per cent in 1960.¹²

Unemployment also is related to a political factor. Until a political decision is made in Mexico to provide unemployment benefits, it may be argued that some persons can not afford to be unemployed regardless of the level of affluence in the society. Furthermore, given the view presented by Jesús Silva Herzog, we may suspect that the decision to expand unemployment benefits will intrude upon Mexico's tradition of extended family solidarity, a tradition that in the U. S. did not withstand the impact of urbanization and industrialization.

IV

There are a great number of historical time series which have not been investigated for purposes of historical research. Almost every central government agency and decentralized institution have generated statistics. Several guides to this material have been prepared by the Dirección General de Estadística, one of the most useful being the *Inventario de Estadísticas Nacionales*, 1966.¹³ This work gives information on the nature and coverage of data, frequency of tabulation, initiation of series, and where published or unpublished figures may be obtained.

Though the Mexican population census is one of the best in Latin America, with regard to coverage and consistency of time series it could be greatly expanded to provide data on political attitudes as well as social modernization. In order to suggest possible improvements in national population censuses (and local surveys) in Latin America, a Social Census Conference recently met at the University of California in Los Angeles to consider a questionnaire developed from the point of view of historians who generally have not made their views known concerning data needed for analysis.¹⁴

¹¹Data on economically unemployed population for the D. F., are not available for the period 1931-1939.

¹²Calculated from sources in Table 3 and *Anuario Estadístico*, 1938, p. 52. Data on unemployment for 1940 are contradictory; the monthly average during the year was higher than figures given on the date of the census, except for the D. F. where the monthly average was incomplete or not measured during the period 1931-1940. I have used the monthly average as more representative of the entire year for national totals of unemployed but have used census data for the D. F.

¹³See also *Catálogo General de las Estadísticas Nacionales* and its separate *Índice* (1960).

¹⁴See James W. Wilkie, John C. Super, Edna M. Wilkie (eds.), "A Social Census Questionnaire for Latin America", draft, January 1970.

In spite of limitations, existing census data could serve as a guide to researchers in several disciplines who are interested in such fields as local and regional investigation. Some years ago, for example, Howard F. Cline showed that if statistics on location of communities which have been studied (and on size of their populations) were taken into account, scholars might advantageously investigate a greater variety of villages in Mexico.¹⁵ We might add here that social and economic characteristics from the population and agricultural censuses could be used for developing parameters by which individual communities could be selected and introduced in a national setting. Yet one of the most innovative community studies published in recent years, economist Michael Belshaw's valuable work on Huecorio, Michoacan, excludes the use of census data which would allow us to understand the *municipio* context of village life in a country which in 1960 had 2,377 *municipios*. Indeed, Belshaw not only implicitly assumes that Huecorio is representative of Mexican village life, but explicitly suggests that it has an "uncanny resemblance to an underdeveloped country in miniature". This latter assertion is made without supporting data and despite his findings that one third of the adult males of the community had been to the U. S. to work as braceros!¹⁶

Examination of consistency and meaning in census materials themselves provide opportunity for scholars. An example of the kind of work which should be encouraged is found in Robert G. Greer's M. A. thesis at the University of Texas. Writing on "The Demographic Impact of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1921", Greer concluded in 1966 that the period of violence of the teens held Mexico's population at a virtual standstill for 10 years in which the country could have been expected to increase by about 2 million persons. His calculations and review of the literature lead him to the interesting view that only about 75,000 to 100,000 persons were killed in military action in contrast to previous estimates reaching as high as 1,200,000 deaths.¹⁷

In the political and administrative appointments of the "permanent revolution" since 1910 we have an example of information from which data can be generated to test hypotheses about outcomes of the Revolution. Has the Revolution opened opportunity for advancement through a dynamic bureaucracy?

During the past several years I have encouraged several individual scholars to examine the role of bureaucracy in Mexico in order to trace patterns in the way the government fills its positions. Though some observers maintain that the Mexican political system is "open" com-

¹⁵ Howard F. Cline, "Mexican Community Studies..." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 32 (1952), pp. 212-242.

¹⁶ Michael Belshaw, *A Village Economy: Land and People of Huecorio*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1967, pp. xi-xiv, 123.

¹⁷ Pp. 9 and 21.

pared to the closed Porfirian system, others feel that this year's middle-aged senator will be next year's director of a decentralized agency, and a future cabinet minister before he returns to the Senate. Such generalizations might be tested by establishing a pool of important positions for which appointees could be listed in a year-by-year scheme cross-related to individual career biographies. In this manner we could develop statistics in order to pinpoint periods of bureaucratic expansion as well as investigate the "openness" of an expanding system. Such an analysis might begin by considering a bureaucratic pool of 1048 offices given in the *Directorio del Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1961* (including ministerial and departmental offices, embassies, consulates, etc.), and 316 organizations given in the *Directorio General de Organismos Descentralizados, Empresas de Participación Estatal, Establecimientos Públicos, Comisiones, Juntas e Institutos Dependientes del Gobierno Federal* (1964).¹⁸ A work contributing to the feasibility of this analysis is the extremely useful *Manual de Organización del Gobierno Federal, 1969-1970* which deals with the public sector in general.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Historical statistics provide threads by which many aspects of contemporary Mexican history can be reexamined. One advantage which we enjoy in working with data in our own age is that frequently we are able to question persons who have compiled materials in order to clarify meaning and formulation of time series. Nevertheless, few aspects of Mexican history have been investigated in light of patterns in time series; whole fields of political, social, and economic history are open to this type of research. In offering some debatable hypotheses about time-series data which many have found particularly questionable, I have tried to suggest that statistics might be useful for interpreting history in new ways. Examples are given here to indicate approaches which need research, and several series are presented here for the first time in order to make figures available to scholars.

¹⁸ Both directories are published by the Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional.

¹⁹ Prepared by the Secretaría de la Presidencia, Comisión de Administración Pública.