

ownership for women in late nineteenth century Mexico (e.g. *patria potestad*) complicate the competing fixity and fugitiveness of state/local interactions?

Like the cartographic projects themselves, Craib's elegant prose, replete with poetic turns of phrase, is structured not in a unilinear progression but as a series of related essays that assert their argument cumulatively and challenge the reader to view them as parts of a complex whole. Contributing to Mexico's historiography of liberalism, the Porfiriato and post-Revolutionary state formation, the work stands at the intersection of the history of science and state formation, and intellectual and cultural history. *Cartographic Mexico* concludes with a succinct epilog that bridges its historical arguments with pressing spatial concerns in contemporary Mexico. In a post-NAFTA age where "neo-" liberal projects, global economies, autonomy-seeking Zapatistas, and fugitive transnational migrants increasingly challenge fixed state notions of space, Craib's book provides us with a prescient guide to the persistent challenges underscoring the continued forging of the Mexican nation.

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JOCELYN OLCOTT: *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

This fascinating study of women in postrevolutionary Mexico brings to life the multiple forms of struggle that women engaged in during the late 1920s and the 1930s. Based on extensive research, it both offers telling examples of women's local activism and shows the connections between it and the larger political context in which it occurred. Thus, this book illustrates the dynamic interplay that existed between women's efforts to improve their conditions on the local and national level and the political forces that supported or opposed them on the regional, national, and international levels. One other major contribution this book makes is it highlights the Communist Party of Mexico's active support of women's rights as well as its sustained engagement with women's mobilization.

Olcott argues that one of the major issues confronting Mexican women (and men) following the Revolution was to what degree and how were women integrated into or excluded from this new and evolving polity. Were women citizens of the new Mexico? What did citizenship mean in terms of rights and responsibilities for them? One of the key points of contention was the extent to which women's political participation challenged their gendered identities as mothers and homemakers and, concurrently, men's power. Although some women pushed

for their full and equal inclusion as citizens in the late 1910s and early 1920s, it was not until the 1930s that a national women's movement developed. The ascendancy of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) and his government's support for the more progressive Popular Front politics encouraged women's mobilization and their demands for a better standard of living and, at least initially, the vote.

To illustrate how these debates played out, Olcott offers three case studies of women's mobilization; one in the state of Yucatán, another in Michoacán, the state Cárdenas hailed from; and one in Comarca Lagunera, a region that straddles the states of Coahuila and Durango. Women's mobilizations, their demands, and the outcome of their struggles in the different regions reflected both local and national conditions. To take one example, in Comarca Lagunera the political upheavals engendered by the 1936 general strike of agricultural wage laborers, combined with the organizing efforts and politics of the Communist Party of Mexico and the support of the Cardenista government, created an auspicious environment for women's mobilization. Backed by and working closely with the Cardenista state, women formed the Women's League for Social Struggle, an organization that allowed them to be active participants in the political struggles while not challenging established gender norms. Rather than focusing on suffrage, many of these Leagues petitioned the government for the construction of corn mills, believing that this was a benefit they were entitled to and fully understanding that their construction would save them countless hours of backbreaking labor. In many cases, the government met their demands, and they got the corn mill. What it did not do was back women's efforts to get suffrage rights.

Women's attempts to obtain voting rights had a long, convoluted history. Although many women's groups concentrated on obtaining concrete, material benefits, such as corn mills, other women fought to achieve voting rights for women, and of course some women did both. By 1938 both houses of Congress had approved the Cardenista-sponsored amendment giving suffrage to women. Although Olcott offers an insightful discussion of the various positions held by different political tendencies and the debates that surrounded women's voting rights, she does not make it clear, at least to this reader, why Mexican women were denied suffrage until 1953.

Also, although Olcott framed much of her approach to Mexican women's struggle around the issue of citizenship, it is not evident to me that this is how Mexican women understood their own struggle. Only rarely did the Mexican women Olcott quoted use this term, or even appear to understand their demands in this context. They may well have done so, but it would have been helpful to have heard them articulate this interpretation of what their diverse struggles and demands meant.

This book successfully answers the question what did women think and do in postrevolutionary Mexico. Based on extensive research into previously unused sources, it eliminates the idea that women were passive or indifferent to their living conditions or status. Instead, it skillfully illuminates the multiple layers of women's political involvement in strikes, congresses, land takeovers, campaigns for corn mills, maternity clinics, the temperance movement, and the struggle for suffrage. By focusing on women's political mobilizations and demands, this book represents a major step forward in the efforts of historians to accurately portray the complexity of postrevolutionary Mexico by including the activities and ideas of the diverse political actors who shaped it.

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JENNIFER BICKHAM MENDEZ: *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor, and Globalization in Nicaragua*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

“Jobs, Yes... But with Dignity!”  
(Political slogan quoted in Mendez, p. 155)

Nicaragua's Working and Unemployed Women's Movement is a particularly apt organization to consider in the context of the neoliberal post-Sandinista period. Known as MEC, after union organizer María Elena Cuadra, the women who formed the group in 1994 have struggled to retain their commitment to the labor and populist social base of the CST, the Sandinista party's workers organization from which they emerged. Yet they have also sought to counter the party's male-dominated verticalism that was dismissive of their efforts to address gender issues. The founding members of MEC paid a heavy price as the Sandinista CST accused them of disloyalty and mismanagement, and withheld its support to working women. MEC has overcome many challenges within Nicaragua and beyond, gradually winning national recognition and transnational support for their efforts on behalf of working women.

Jennifer Bickham Mendez offers a well balanced and highly readable case study of MEC, which stands at the crossroads of several social constructions that are too often seen as binaries: labor movement and women's movement, new social movement and nongovernmental organization (NGO), and workplace organizing and household activism. MEC's principal activity has focused on bettering the conditions of women working in the *maquilas*, the foreign-owned factories located in Nicaragua's Free Trade Zone (FTZ). The organization has needed to walk a fine line between too harsh a critique of the multinationals, which they fear could result in loss of jobs for women, and too accommodating