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Where Are 'We' in Transnational US Latino/a Studies?

Benita Heiskanen[1]

The article considers various disciplinary, methodological, theoretical and ethical questions resulting from conducting transnational US Latino/a studies in practice. Drawing from research with a community of Latino prizefighters in Austin, Texas, it delineates academic discourses as spatially determined processes, demarcated by scholars' institutional settings and individual agency in multiple geographic environments. The discussion suggests that being an 'insider' or 'outsider' is not a rigid condition but necessarily malleable, contingent upon a range of factors that shape up broader knowledge formation processes in and out of academia. In lieu of a nation-based research paradigm, the article calls for contestations of shifting scholarly loci— spatial between-ness—for important strategic purposes. Such mobility may effectively allow adopting viewpoints that are not necessarily available for those who operate within fixed disciplinary, methodological and intra-group boundaries, while providing scholars with innovative new approaches to conduct Latino/a studies research from de facto *trans*national and *inter*disciplinary perspectives.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity, knowledge formation, space, place, transnationalism, US Latino/a studies

Introduction

It has been popular of late, across disciplinary spectra, to conduct research and designate one's scholarly locus within transnational research paradigms (Fishkin, 2005; Halttunen, 2007; Gutierrez and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008; Ngai, 2005; and Portes, 2003). While debates about the definition of the term per se—its origins and application—abound, such a stance usually invokes approaches that question rigid national geographic boundaries (Fitzgerald, 2004; Briggs, MacCormic and Way, 2008; and Kerber, 2005). Area studies scholars, in particular, have begun appropriating transnational 'lenses' in efforts to demonstrate the complexity of seemingly fixed place-based cultural, historical, socioeconomic and political phenomena (Pease and Wiegman, 2002; Rowe, 2002; Spivak, 2003). Yet, even if

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many of us today take seriously the spatial dimension of knowledge formation processes; others stubbornly insist on reifying essential notions of national identity, mono-disciplinary research agendas and singular methodological frameworks (see the dialogue between Berube, 2003; Kaplan, 2005; and Wolfe, 2004).

Cultural geographers generally differentiate the abstract concept of 'space' as distinct from 'place.' According to Yi-Fu Tuan, for example, '"[s]pace" is more abstract than "place." What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value…When space feels thoroughly familiar, it has become place' (1977: 6 & 73). Doreen Massey (1994; 2005) emphasizes the *ambiguity* of place, likening it to such signifiers as a 'meeting place,' an 'intersection,' or a 'process'. Hers is a definition that links place with degrees of bodily movement, socioeconomic mobility, social formations and other relations of power. Tim Cresswell (2002), in turn, emphasizes the dynamic nature of place as continually performed and practiced within various everyday contexts:

> Place is constituted through reiterative social practice—place is made and remade on a daily basis. Place provides a template for practice—an unstable stage for performance. Thinking of place as performed and practiced can help us think of place in radically open and non-essentialized ways where place is constantly struggled over and reimagined in practical ways.

But what broader ramifications might such spatial theorization have for transnational research in actual practice? Where do 'we'—as scholars—position ourselves within various spatial paradigms that extend beyond national borders? What, if any, corollaries do such approaches have for conducting research in various disciplinary environments?

My starting point for this inquiry is both scholarly and personal. The discussion springs from my background in the interdisciplinary field of American studies—with a particular focus on US Latino/as—but it hopes to engender interest beyond the hemispheric context of the Americas. Having worked within the field in the United States, Finland, Ireland and Denmark, I have been in a position to contemplate US Latino/a studies from the vantage point of multiple trans/national contexts and disciplinary home bases during the past decade.[2] In so doing, I have observed that transnational research has rarely only to do with geographic borders; more often, it jumbles up a complex web of other issues, such as identity politics, disciplinary politics and research ethics. This article attempts to untangle some of those interrelated issues.

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[2] Some of the ideas presented in this article have been explored in earlier formats at various academic gatherings. In particular, it draws from presentations given at the American Studies Association convention in Washington, D.C. in November 2006, the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis workshop in Amsterdam in March 2007, the British Association for American Studies conference in Leicester in April 2007, and the seminar 'Latino/a USA: Transnational Identities/*Identidades Transnacionales*' at the University of Southern Denmark in November 2008. I would like to express thanks to the participants of those sessions for dialogue concerning these issues. Thanks also to the anonymous comments and suggestions made on the manuscript during the peer review process.

Inside, Outside, or In-Between?

To begin, I want to invoke Günter H. Lenz's essay, 'Toward a Dialogics of International American Culture Studies: Transnationality, Border Discourses, and Public Culture(s)' in which he discusses the so-called 'international' (that is, non-US-based) American studies scholars' position within the global academic forum. Rather than lamenting being ignored by their US colleagues or being compartmentalized as specialists in particular 'minority studies' by default of one's cultural background, Lenz urges American studies practitioners to `investigate and articulate more rigorously than they have done in the past their own positionings in the interchanges between US American cultures and their (and other) cultures and to define clearly the political and cultural role and function of conceptualizing and institutionalizing interdisciplinary American studies programs in their own national or transnational contexts´. (2002: 477-478)

I propose to take up Lenz's challenge by exploring the spatial dimension of transnational US Latino/a studies, engendered by our everyday comings and goings—momentary entrances and exits—that turn into academic discourses in various research environments. Although drawing from my experiences both in the United States and Europe, the article will not be centred on either continent as such; rather, my attempt is to specifically underscore the mobility of our scholarly positionalities *between* various geographic and institutional settings.

Yet this spatialization of the discussion has a deliberate underlying agenda: it is an attempt to distance myself from place-based identity politics on either side of the Atlantic. For, as Sheila Hones and Julia Leyda argue, most of us are already 'familiar with the practice of living and working in relational space, a space in which national location is only one aspect of scholarly positionality' (2005: 1022). I want to suggest, in effect, that instead of insisting on some established spatial research paradigm (inside/outside), it may be a worthwhile exercise to occasionally distance ourselves from such positions. Indeed, embracing such 'relational spaces'—the spatial between-ness of our shifting positions—might offer scholars operating in any number of geographic contexts various strategic possibilities. My approach echoes Michel de Certeau's contention, according to which 'marginality' may provide channels to break free from the seemingly established spatial hierarchies: by taking advantage of the imposed margins, a person may carve out liberating possibilities for oneself; if not momentarily destabilize the very arrangements. In a similar vein, spatial between-ness amidst various scholarly loci not only allows disengaging from restricting nation-based assumptions but also adopting perspectives that might not be available for those operating within fixed disciplinary, intra-group or geographic boundaries. By such strategic appropriation of space, '[m]obility' per se, as Tim Cresswell so aptly writes, 'becomes human agency' (2006: 213).

From Identity Politics to Disciplinary Politics

In the United States, in particular, as the saying goes, everybody has to 'choose' an identity: one is either inside or outside of a group, and such affiliations carry momentous practical, theoretical and political implications. Identity formations become intricate interplays of individual, collective and societal assignments, intersecting with naming, citizenship status and language use, while tied to other relations of power, such as class, gender, age, religion and regionalism. The choice of a group label, too, easily turns into a political cauldron in which intercultural and interracial conflicts take on volatile meanings, with a marked difference in terms of who appropriates any particular labels at what specific instances.[3] Analogously, to engage in dialogue with certain groups of people becomes loaded with subtle underpinnings. Let me exemplify such labelling in the context of my own research.

When I first started working with Latino prizefighters in Texas, my initial idea was to use whatever self-identification labels my interviewees' might themselves use. That plan left me with close to a dozen ethnoracial markers: Mexican, Mexican American, Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, Spanish, Tex-Mex, *mexicano, tejano*, and *meskin*. The appropriation of any one term turned out to be contingent upon such variables as place of birth, place of residence and nationality—conflated with class, hue, and gender—and further nuanced by who one is interacting with, where one is physically located and what language one uses. Citizenship status, in particular, becomes a key factor in ethnoracial delineations, as evidenced in the statement made by former world champion boxer Jesus Chávez, a twice-deported Mexican national, who has lived most of his life in the United States, with only sporadic stints in Mexico, but without US citizenship: 'I could be considered Mexican or Chicano or Tejano, although I usually say I'm "Mexican".….Now, I guess, I would even say that I'm "Mexican American" because I have access to both countries…But it's important that some of us start realizing that, in the end, we are all Latinos and we still eat the same beans' (interview with Jesus Chávez, 21 November 2002; see also Heiskanen, 2006). Acknowledging the complexity of ethnoracial labelling in various everyday contexts, I ended up using the term 'Latino' when referring to the boxers collectively, although with a keen awareness of the problematic nature of grouping a heterogeneous cohort of people together under a singular marker.

Because these debates surrounding identity politics continue to be important, let me state my own position regarding the issue clearly: identity politics—and politics of location—have been *absolutely central* in articulating different groups' historical power struggles and hierarchical social organization in the United States. Within the parameters of academic research, however, the notion that some scholars would be more 'entitled' than others to engage in dialogue with particular groups of people has a number of problematic asides: it may lead into navel-gazing research projects, reluctance toward inter-group collaboration and a glass-ceiling in hiring

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[3] Nowhere was this more evident than in the 2008 presidential elections, where Barack Obama's mixed-race background became cause célèbre for scepticism about his claim for (African) Americanness on the grounds of race, religion and places of residence.

practices. Furthermore, what has been glaringly absent from the discussion of identity politics is the attention to the multiple *scales* at which identities—and power relations—are contested within individual, communal, regional, national and international contexts. While so-called 'ordinary' people may struggle daily to have their basic civil rights respected within various local and global contexts, academics the world over are generally privileged in comparison to most minority groups' class-based power contestations. For this reason, we would do well to pay increasing attention to the actual ramifications of everyday power dynamics on individuals operating within shifting spatial contexts.

Otherwise, the valorisation of a closed community for its own sake (which in reality, of course, is remarkably heterogeneous) may turn into a trump card in the so-called 'victim game' that some critics associate with identity politics. To quote Wendy Brown: '[an] identity rooted in injury…leads even those who do not appear overtly victimized to claim victim status…to see and cite victims outside oneself who can stand in for oneself' (2001: 54). A monolithic group identity may also impose identities on those who do not want to be part of it in the first place. Further still, there is the issue of 'non-identity': What if there is no identity to claim on the local/national front? (see Malkki, 1992) Will one insist on some—any—identity ('I am a Woman!') in an effort to belong? Or does such affiliation become an empty mantra that reveals little about one's actual scholarly locus? Finally, what sense, if any, do these considerations have in relation to various disciplinary locations?

I will make the case here that an interrogation into identity politics also has direct relevance to disciplinary politics: about having to 'choose' a scholarly position within certain preconceived disciplinary traditions, methodologies and theoretical paradigms. Professed interdisciplinarity, too, often seems to assume meaning as a conversation between two disciplines, instead of any number of disciplinary criss-crossings one might expect. American studies research, for example, often comes across, in both teaching and in research, as privileging certain mono-disciplines (such as History or English) as its disciplinary springboard; similarly, what is alternatively referred to as its inter-, cross-, multi-, or post-disciplinarity often amounts to those two disciplines. Indeed, John Carlos Rowe is well-founded in criticizing the field for its disciplinary insularity: So where are the theories and methods from some of the disciplines continually neglected in American studies, such as political science, economics, psychology, rhetoric, and even the cognitive sciences? Our range of interdisciplinary inquiry turns out to be embarrassingly narrow. (2000:14). My contribution to this discussion is that rather than continuing to impose rigid methodological suppositions for ourselves—whether students or faculty—should we not let the *topic* determine how to go about our work?

Instead, I would call more urgent attention to the ethical ramifications that any particular methodological choices carry with regards to knowledge formations and everyday power dynamics, issues that apply to all of us as researchers, regardless of our departmental home bases. What would be welcome in any Area studies, then, is more research that knowingly jumbles up various disciplinary scales to demonstrate the contingency of everyday and academic power relations.

Transnationalism in Theory and Practice

I have interrogated some of these ideas in practice with my work with a community of Latino prizefighters in Austin, Texas during 2000-2004. The research explores transnational identity formations as spatial processes within the United States: how the location of ethnoracial minorities within urban fringes shapes the understanding of socioeconomic prospects, individual and collective allegiances as well as the sense of belonging in society. The boxers' life stories are discussed within various everyday locations—such as the Latino *barrio* [neighbourhood], the boxing gym, and competition venue—where they lead their lives, where the sport is organized, and where its triumphs and tribulations are represented. The discussion is conceptualized within a theoretical framework that considers the boxing body as a site of knowledge and various locations within the sport's everyday culture as sites of being and becoming. In addition to the cultural geographers cited earlier, I draw on the work of philosopher Edward Casey, who calls critical attention to bodily *experience*, both pleasurable and traumatic, as a focus in understanding place-based identities. All human experience—living, thinking, remembering, geographic orientation—Casey (2000) contends, is mediated in and through the body. For boxers, too, bodily labour comes to constitute the essence of their physical prowess, identity formations and day-to-day survival—indeed, their knowledge about the outside world.

Although the majority of boxers never become world champions or household names, many of them are celebrated on a local level, and such recognition offers them avenues for upward mobility, social prestige and personal reinvention. What is more, the worker-athletes can—through sport—forge a niche of autonomy within their own everyday spaces and challenge one's geographic boundaries, that is, any ostensibly 'assigned' place vis-à-vis an 'aspired' place in society, for their shifting degrees of mobility are continuously negotiated at a variety of spatial scales in and out of the ring, each with their concurrent but distinct power struggles and socioeconomic stakes involved. In my work, then, I argue that the boxing body in space and place exhibits a tension between social control and individual agency, as various spatial structures in society shape the understanding of the sense of belonging in society. Thus, where and how bodies are situated reflect both grassroots politics of location and theoretical questions of spatially demarcated social organization. At stake is a very tangible conceptualization of everyday existence: where one can or cannot justifiably be—sit, walk, or drive—at any one time; what routes one chooses to travel to a destination; and what access one has to various recreational spaces. Consequently, a dynamic relationship between the body in space and place—turning space into place by appropriating space as one's own—becomes absolutely central to the interviewees' *raison d'être*.

Alongside the boxers, the researcher must continuously try to turn various abstract 'spaces' into tangible senses of 'place' by making sense of the sport's labyrinth of social organization and everyday power relations. For prizefighting carries deep-seated historical meanings as an ethnically and racially delineated, class-based and gendered practice; it is a close-knit community, and nobody just waltzes

into a boxing gym to start interviewing fight folks, no matter where they come from. Although I had stumbled upon my research topic by accident (as so many of us seem to do), I was quite familiar with the sport, as I grew up on fight circles in Finland, following my brother Tom Heiskanen's amateur and professional career in the 1970s and 1980s. Even though I had not been involved with boxing for some time, I soon gathered that the fact that my brother was a former fighter legitimated my project in the eyes of the interviewees. His career gave me (a parasitic?) insider status in the fistic world and no-one cared that it had all taken place on the other side of the Atlantic years ago. But I also had a personal background in martial arts, so I started working out at the gym and, in due course, many of the boxers would help me out with boxing technique and conditioning training; indeed, working with them turned into a central part of the intellectual inquiry. For the next four years, my life revolved entirely around boxing. I was either at the gym, at boxing shows or on road-trips, interviewing or transcribing interviews; or else I was the library scanning newspaper articles or doing online searches; and during weekends, fight insiders would often get together to watch Pay-Per-View boxing shows on TV.

During the course of this research, academics repeatedly confronted me with issues of identity politics. The following question, in particular, was often presented to me: 'How on earth does a *White Finnish Woman* end up studying Latino prizefighters in Texas?' Despite the frequency of the approaches, I never seemed quite ready to come up with a witty response, only a diffident: 'Why not?' But as much as the question sounds a cliché on first consideration, I became increasingly troubled by some of its underlying suppositions: that my *place of birth/nationality*— as opposed to my education, experience, or research ethics—would be considered to be the bedrock for my work. Also disconcerting was the notion of 'Finnish womanhood' that I was not only supposed to identify with but that I apparently was wedded to for the rest of my life. Embarking on such a train of thought, a series of other questions soon followed: should one, in effect, be a man to study male boxers? Should one be Latina to study Latino/as? Should one be a prizefighter to study prizefighters? And, finally, to stretch the logics further still, should one be a US national to do US Latino/a studies?

The provocation is not to say that one's national background has no bearing in conducting research overseas nor is it to argue that place-based power dynamics have no impact on the process. How could they not? One can hardly engage in any endeavour in life without bringing one's multiple subjectivities to it. Rather, it is to say that assuming 'insider' or 'outsider' positions cannot possibly be such rigid conditions; they are necessarily malleable, fleeting states of being at best, continuously contested within different everyday and scholarly power dynamics. This is especially the case with projects involving ethnographic fieldwork or some such inter-personal encounters. Within the idiosyncratic research milieu of professional boxing, I constantly had to be aware of my precarious roles between an insider and an outsider, an acquaintance and an observer, a participant and an observer, positions that were at times difficult to reconcile.

Early on, my presence in Texas boxing gyms stirred some queries amongst boxing insiders, because people were unsure how to label my identity as a foreigner.

One of the boxers asked me: 'Benita, where you come from, are you considered white?' (Heiskanen 2006) Another time, someone else asked me: 'I heard you speak Spanish to Gallito the other day, but I thought you were white. What are you?' (ibid). Yet another time, when one of the boxers put me in touch with an interviewee, he offered the following explanation: 'I don't know what you call a person from Finland, if she is "white" or "Finnish." But she is really smart and she speaks Spanish' (ibid). After I heard similar comments on various occasions, I understood how deeply, on an everyday level, ethnoracial identities along the Texas-Mexico borderlands were conflated with language: Spanish signified being non-white—irrespective of one's skin-colour—whereas English automatically labelled one a *gringo/a*, regardless of one's actual nationality. I was neither a native English nor Spanish speaker nor was I a US national, hence the puzzlement. Apropos, it was the very foreignness—spiced up with accented English and Spanish—that momentarily relieved me of an *a priori* 'white' identity, rendering my position ambiguously as 'not quite this' but 'not quite that' either within the ethnoracial dynamics of Texas. The fact that people had no preconceived notions about Finland ended up working to my advantage as a researcher, rather than the other way around, as some might expect. All the same, my alleged cultural, ethnic or racial 'identity' was just one factor in the larger scholarly process; of its own accord, it certainly was not enough to establish rapport with my sources.

In addition to grappling with identity politics, I was also confronted with questions concerning disciplinary politics: that is, whether my project would or would not constitute legitimate American studies research. At the early stages of my project, a colleague quite casually asked me in the midst of a conversation: 'By the way, how do you justify being in the American Studies Department; shouldn't you be in Anthropology?' Soon thereafter, I had an incident with an out-of-the-department faculty member, whom I had asked to serve on my qualifying oral exams committee. Adamant in refusing to work with me, the professor read into my project an agenda of disciplinary imperialism: 'So, essentially what you're doing is a Sociological study on professional boxing and now *that*, too, gets to be called American Studies!' The personal bemusement aside, such experiences have brought about a lingering intellectual uneasiness about the epistemological and methodological assumptions associated with Area studies, American studies, or Latino/a studies research. To move beyond the essentialism embedded in identity and disciplinary politics, then, I want to call attention to the *contingency of the research process* as a whole. This, in turn, takes us back to our point of departure: the spatiality of research.

Again, may the boxing research illuminate my point: When I left the academic ivory tower to interact with the so-called 'real' people in the 'real' world, I had little control over the external circumstances. Because the research was not conducted within a university setting, to even explain what the process *means* to the sources, posed various hurdles—conceptual, terminological and otherwise. Yet working out at gyms, attending boxing matches, conducting interviews and going on road-trips with fight insiders in Texas turned out to be strategically important to the research. For example, although I knew that boxing was notorious for its dubious business practices, it was only at the actual competition venues that I got to observe the motley

cohort of people—fighters, handlers, matchmakers, promoters, state athletic commissions, sanctioning bodies, fight officials, ringside physicians, the media and aficionados—who operate within its everyday culture, each with their miscellaneous agendas. As a result, *where* I interacted with my sources at any one time remarkably shaped up the encounters, the specific topics discussed—and, indeed, the overall ambience.

The entire intellectual inquiry turned into a negotiation between personal input versus academic objectives: how involved to get in the interviewees' careers and lives; how to represent one's sources—the sheep, the wolves, and the wolves dressed as sheep alike—accurately and fairly; and how to deal with the sport's overall occupational intrigues? Those ethical questions assumed a great deal more significance to the work than any ascribed or self-imposed identity labels I may or may not have embraced at its outset.

But what relevance does an unknown cohort of Texas prizefighters ultimately have for transnational US Latino/a studies? To answer that question, I had to engage in extensive interdisciplinary research on the history and sociology of prizefighting, complete with a range of economic, judicial, medical and ethical considerations endemic to the sport. This investigation led me to state boxing archives, congressional hearings, prizefight laws, medical records, newspapers, trade magazines, websites, boxing shows, cinematic representations, scrapbooks, photographs and video collections. These competing—and often contradictory—discourses helped me to understand the complexity of the sport, with its tangible social, economic, and ideological importance for individuals, communities, nations, and international collectives alike. Situating the work within its broader societal context also brought up a regionalization pattern underway: alongside the *Latinization* of 21st century US prizefighting, the entire sport was diverging from its Northeastern origins into a distinctly Southwestern phenomenon. Moreover, while the US Latino boxers continuously negotiated their lives and career opportunities within their various everyday locations, their collective status was simultaneously contested within the ethnoracial dynamics of the Americas; and they also belonged to an international collective of worker-athletes who conduct their occupation within global socioeconomic conditions, entrepreneurial principles and sporting networks. Prizefighting, then, the research demonstrated, is not only a professional sport; it is also a form of racialized bodily labour, a lucrative business, and an instrument of politics. Such were the insights gained from the interdisciplinary research, conducted not inside, not outside, but in between a range of disciplinary, scholarly and geographic locations.

Conclusion

As evidenced by my examples of identity politics and disciplinary politics, the binary dichotomy of insider-outsider positionality is problematic when attempting to conduct interdisciplinary US Latino/a studies research within a transnational context. If so, the reader might ask, then what in its place? My attempt in this article has been to conceptualize transnationalism as a paradigm that has to do with disciplinary

locations, methodological choices, subject positions, geographic scales and research ethics. Such an inclusive approach presents an alternative to the existing insider-outsider paradigm, a position which can, at best, only ever be one factor in the larger research process; at worst, it adds nothing to the actual intellectual agenda.

While each research project is ultimately a unique process, I would envision de facto transnationalism along the following lines: it would take into account a range of geographic scales to demonstrate the contingency of everyday power relations. It would entail research projects in which it is not scandalous to study *each other*—on any side, all sides—against the grain of intra-group monopolies and solipsistic identity fixations. How else can we possibly foster dialogue amongst each other? What's more, it would call for scholars to distance ourselves from self-imposed spatial preconditions. And, finally, I would underscore the ethical ramifications that any particular methodological choices carry with regards to everyday knowledge formations in and out of academia. Transnationalism, then, for me, is above all, an attitude. Latino/a studies the world over already provides us with spaces to engage in dialogue with each other from any number of disciplinary and geographic perspectives. But perhaps an important question for the global intellectual community to pose is our own agency within this academic forum: Where Are 'We' in Transnational Latino/a Studies?

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New People, New Historical Narratives
When the Mexican-Americans Came to Gonzales, Texas at the Turn of the 20th Century[1]

Anne Magnussen[2]

At the turn of the 20th century, the small central Texas town of Gonzales saw an impressive population increase consisting primarily of Anglo Americans from other parts of the United States and of Mexican Americans. The latter constituted a new ethnic community in a town of Anglo Americans and African Americans. The power relationship between these two communities followed the norms and practices of a southern racial hierarchy, and at least to some extent, the arrival of the Mexican Americans questioned the power logics of this relationship. The author argues that the activation in the first decades of the 20th century of a series of historical references to Texas' independence in public space was part of an Anglo American effort to maintain its economic, social and political power by integrating the newly arrived Anglo Americans and efficiently excluding the Mexican American community.

Keywords: Texas, ethnic communities, uses of history, national celebrations, 1900-1915

In 1825, a group of US immigrants founded Gonzales in central Texas on a land grant obtained from the Mexican government. At that time, central Texas was part of thinly populated northern Mexico and the immigrants (approx. 200 originally) apparently did not feel safe from the indigenous groups in the area (Rather, 1904: 130). Therefore, in 1831 the Mexican army lent the town a cannon for self-defence, but as the relationship between the Mexican government and the Texas population grew more and more tense over the first part of the 1830s, the Mexican army wanted its cannon back. In the fall of 1835, a Mexican garrison in nearby San Antonio asked the Gonzales mayor (*el alcalde)* to return the cannon. He refused to do so, and on October 2, 1835, Mexican troops confronted a group of Gonzales citizens just southwest of Gonzales, by the Guadalupe river. The citizens had brought the cannon, but also a white flag with which they defiantly urged the Mexican troops to "come and take it," with reference to the cannon. After a short fight, the Mexican troops returned to San Antonio without the cannon.

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Only a few months after the Gonzales incident, the famous confrontation at *the Alamo* in San Antonio took place (March 1836) as well as the battle at San Jacinto (April 1836), which is considered the decisive battle in the militias' fight for Texas' independence. It has therefore been commonplace in popular Texas histories to refer to the Gonzales event as the beginning of the Texas revolution, as the *First Shot of the Texas Revolution,* and to Gonzales as *the Lexington of Texas*.[3] This story seems to define Gonzales today (2008) in popular memory and history books, but also more specifically, through historical markers and practices that contribute to the shaping of public space and practices in Gonzales. When considering that it is a relatively small town of approximately 7000 inhabitants, Gonzales contains an impressive number of references to this historical event, including monuments, a memorial museum, flags in shop windows and an annual fair called *Come And Take It*. However, a quick historical study shows that the story about the *first shot* was hardly present at all in Gonzales before the turn of the twentieth century. The introduction of the story as *the* defining story of Gonzales, happened in between 1901 and 1912, with a first wave of new historical clubs and monuments.

Below I trace the story about Gonzales' role in Texas' independence as it became dominant in the town's public space within a very short period of time, and I discuss some of the reasons for its emergence and the consequences it had for life in Gonzales. My argument is that the redefining of Gonzales through the use of the narrative about the *first shot* and Texas independence was closely related to (changes in) the relationship between the town's ethnic communities, especially between the Anglo American and Mexican American populations.[4] Even though the activation of new historical narratives and references was closely connected to general socio-economic and demographic changes in the region, the Gonzales example involved local factors and relations that made it unique. I therefore study Gonzales and its ethnic communities as a place of local, regional, national and transnational intersections as described below.

Theoretical framework and concepts

'We recognize space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny' (Massey, 2005: 9). Gonzales as a place is in this sense the result of local interrelations and processes (local actors, history, institutions and events), the regional development of agriculture, the national focus on history at the turn of the century, the transnational

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[3] See e.g. Patton & Rosenfield, Jr., 1928:157; Lord 1961:39; Connor 1971:104. The town's official website states on its welcome page, "Gonzales, where the fight for Texas Liberty Began" (Gonzales, City of, 2008). *The Lexington of Texas* refers to the battle at Lexington, Massachusetts, April 19, 1775, which is considered the first armed confrontation in the American war of independence.

[4] With the term Mexican American I refer to all persons of Mexican descent in Gonzales at the time of the census taking, disregarding whether they were US or Mexican nationals, US born or Mexican born. The terminology is complex, but in this context I find this simple definition adequate. For a discussion of terminology, see for example Zamora et al, 2000: 2-3.

relations to Mexico, and so on. As these processes and factors changed over time, so did Gonzales and its ethnic communities. It also meant that the, say, Mexican American community of Gonzales at the beginning of the twentieth century shared many characteristics and interests with a Mexican American community in Houston or San Diego, while it also differed from these due to differences in local characteristics.

A sense of common history and of common origins are central to the definition of an ethnic community (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998: 19) and these senses are closely related to place, both to the place of origins and to the place(s) in which communities live. According to David Glassberg, 'a sense of history locates us in society, with knowledge that helps us gain a sense of *with whom we belong*, connecting our personal experiences and memories with those of a larger community, region, and nation' (Glassberg, 2001: 7). A sense of history is in this sense not only a question of with whom we belong, but also *where* we belong. This means that the historical narratives attached to a place through its historical monuments, places, names, celebrations etc., are decisive for a given ethnic community's sense of belonging and more specifically, for its political, economic, social and cultural power in that place.

Any changes in the historical narratives can be seen as the consequence of changes in the power relationships between ethnic communities living there, and vice versa. A place is therefore '[…] a space invested with meaning in the context of power' (Cresswell, 2004: 12), and the naming of the streets or the inauguration of an historical monument is hardly ever a conflict-free activity, but a way of manifesting power by making sure some people feel they belong and by excluding others. In this article I study Gonzales as a place invested with meaning through its ethnic communities' activation of (historical) narratives and the ways in which these processes relate to belonging and power.

The analysis of Gonzales as a place will include three interrelated dimensions, namely the town's *physical space*, *practices* within Gonzales, and the *narratives* about Gonzales. This is an analytical distinction as the three dimensions continuously interact. The inauguration of a new historical monument is necessarily the result of individual or group activities (practice), it changes physical space and it is most often a reference to a historical narrative that is already circulating in public space through the press, historical clubs, celebrations or the like. When the historical monument is there, it will further strengthen the narrative by its presence as well as shape future practice. The study of the ethnic communities and the relationship between them will in this way consist of an analysis of the communities' practices and the references in physical space to these communities and their narratives.

Agricultural development, southern history and the narrative of progress

From 1890 to 1900, the population of Gonzales more than doubled, from 1641 to 4297 inhabitants (Vollentine, 1986: 94; US Census 1900). This was due to a series of factors related in one way or another to the agricultural development in the southwest of the United States at the time (e.g. Campbell, 2003; Montejano, 1987; Zamora, 1993). The use of the land changed considerably with the advent of the railroad and of new techniques for example of irrigation. This development changed an order of big cattle ranches and self-sufficient family farms into a primarily capitalist production of cotton, vegetables and corn. New people were drawn to Gonzales County, both farmers who bought or rented land in the region, and agricultural labourers who worked in the cotton or corn fields. The development in the countryside had a considerable influence on the town of Gonzales as it was the administrative, political and legal centre of the county. Due to the town's branch railroad connecting it to the main Texas railroad lines between the big cities and the coast, the town also played a commercial and industrial role in the new agricultural order. This included a considerable shopping centre, an annual county fair, and among other industries, a brickyard, a sawmill and from 1902, a cotton mill (*The Gonzales Inquirer (GI)* 1880-1912; Hanson, 1898).

An important number of Gonzales' new citizens worked in commerce or industry and had moved to town from other US states, Europe and Mexico. In 1900 the population was truly new: Of the town's adult population (i.e. older than 18 years), 68 percent were born outside of Texas (US Census 1900). Furthermore, and central to the argument in this article, there was a considerable change in the town's ethnic composition as a Mexican American community emerged for the first time in the history of the town. Until approximately 1890, Anglo Americans and African Americans constituted the entire population, at least according to the census lists, but then Mexican Americans started settling in Gonzales, constituting almost fifteen percent of the population in 1900 (US Census 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900).[5]

With few exceptions the promoters of the commercial and industrial development in Gonzales were Anglo American (Hanson, 1898; *GI* 1880-1912; US Census 1880, 1900 and 1910). This community had been economically and politically dominant since the founding of the town in 1825, and the relationship between the Anglo Americans and African Americans reproduced the racial hierarchy of Southern US states history. Texas was a former slave holding state, and as the rest of Texas, Gonzales had been part of the Confederacy during the Civil War. An important part also of the later arrivals had moved in from southern US states reproducing the already established social, racial hierarchy (Morowski, 2008: 7; US

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[5] In 1880 61 percent of the population was Anglo American and 39 percent African American. In 1900, 57 percent were Anglo Americans and 29 percent were African Americans (US Census 1880, 1900). As the Gonzales Census lists from 1890 do not exist, the total number of citizens in 1890 (1641) is from the *Gonzales Inquirer* and historical accounts (here Vollentine, 1986: 94), and the ethnic composition is an estimate based on the other census lists as well as on historical accounts about the general ethnic makeup of central Texas at that time (e.g. Montejano, 1987).

Census 1860, 1870; Rather, 1904: 163-167). Since shortly after the abolition of slavery in 1865, the
relationship between the two communities had been defined by segregation and discrimination of the African American population similar to that of the US south and southwest in general (e.g. Campbell, 2003: 325).

The *physical space* of town – one of the three analytical dimensions – was organized according to this segregation as the African American population for the most part lived in a separate neighbourhood at the outskirts of town, close to the railroad station and depots, north of the town's original 49 blocks (figure 1). Here they had their own school, founded in 1878, and several churches – a Baptist and a United Methodist church from the 1870s, and a Methodist Episcopal church from 1901 (Morowski, 2008; Vollentine 1986: 126-133). The Anglo Americans lived in and around downtown Gonzales within the original city blocks, close to the county courthouse that housed both the county and city administration. The courthouse was placed in the exact centre, on block 25. Also the Anglo American churches, shops and schools were placed downtown. The county courthouse was surrounded by four public squares, and two of them – the ones on the east and south side (blocks 26 and 32 on figure 1) – had been leased to Anglo American churches since the 1850s (Vollentine, 1986: 124-134).[6] Until 1910, the other two squares constituted Market Square (block 24 on the northern side) and Park Square (block 18 on the western side) (ibid.: 100). The segregation of neighbourhoods and institutions meant that the Anglo American and African American communities did not interact in everyday life, apart from in the clearly hierarchical workplaces. The segregated physical space was in this sense closely related to the second analytical dimension, *practices*.

Apart from the ethnoracially segregated every day practices, the activities that dominated Gonzales' public space at the time were efforts to expand, modernize and renew it, changing physical space not least in downtown Gonzales. These efforts were of course closely related to the population growth and the needs that came with it in terms of new buildings and streets, but it also included a modernization of already existing public space, for example by installing public electric lights, expanding the sewer system and building sidewalks.[7] As part of this modernization process, the City Council tried to regulate the citizens' behaviour or practices, for example by issuing an appeal directed to 'the pride that each citizen entertains for his or her community' with specifications as to where to leave trash and how to keep the sidewalks clear and accessible (*GI*, June 29, 1899: 2). The City Council was also more direct, handing out fines to merchants that threw garbage in the street and by allowing the local businessmen to hire a night watchman to keep an eye on activities after dark (*Gonzales City Council Minutes*, Vol. 3: 315, Aug. 6, 1900 & Feb. 4, 1901, Vol. 3: 346). Also local initiatives such as the fundraising for a branch railroad (in the early 1880s) and for a cotton mill (around 1900), as well as the organization of a *Business Men's Club* from 1899, can be seen as practices and initiatives relating to

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[6] In 1904, there were eleven churches for the "white" population of Gonzales (*Daily Inquirer (DI)*, June 2, 1904: 3).
[7] There are many examples and the ones mentioned here can be seen for example in *City Council Minutes* Vol. 2, s. 362, February 20, 1893, Vol. 3, s. 163-164, February 14, 1898; Vol. 3, s. 329, September 9, 1900.

the modernization of Gonzales' public space (e.g. *GI*, June 8, 1899: 5; April 26, 1900: 5).

In terms of *narratives* related to Gonzales as a place, a narrative of progress and civilization was very explicit from the end of the nineteenth century, not least in the *City Council Minutes* and in *The Gonzales Inquirer*'s efforts to mirror and enforce the activities of expansion and modernization of the town described above. The narrative of progress was at least implicitly defined as an "Anglo" narrative in the sense that the town's political, industrial and commercial elite was Anglo American. Its ethnoracial character was occasionally (although not often) made explicit, as in this quotation from the *Inquirer*: 'But industrial art, like our race, is irrepressibly progressive' (*GI,* May 11, 1899: 1).

The Gonzales Inquirer was very active and direct in its promotion of this narrative of progress through local business portraits and continuous comparisons with other towns in the area regarding economic, commercial and technological advances. In the spring of 1899 the paper published detailed presentations of the town's major businesses from *Sunset Brick and Tile Company* to *A.J. Tadlock, Furniture Dealer & Undertaker* (e.g. *GI*, May 4, 1899: 1), and generally, the paper "educated" the population for example by explaining how a cotton gin worked (*GI*, August 20, 1887: 3). *The Inquirer* printed editorials in which the editors expressed opinions such as '*The Inquirer* would like to see the council inaugurate graded streets, especially in the business portion of the city. They look like an old Spanish town' (*GI*, April 13, 1899: 5), and used headlines such as "Industrial Gonzales it is. Fully equipped machine shops to be established, with practical men at the head' and 'Gonzales on the Boom' (*GI*, April 18, 1901: 1; August 15, 1901: 1). Hereby they strengthened the idea and narrative of Gonzales as a – civilized and modern – place of progress.

According to the narrative of progress, the past was negatively defined, as it was expressed clearly in quotes such as 'We live in the present and in anticipation of the future; the past is of little value, save as it prepares us for what is to come'. (*GI*, April 27, 1899: 3). The reference to 'an old Spanish town' mentioned above is another negatively defined reference to the past, more specifically to Texas' Spanish past. Gonzales' future depended on a rupture with the past, and this meant that explicit references such as historical monuments were entirely superfluous, if not counterproductive, when defining Gonzales' future progress and potential.

Summing up, until the end of the nineteenth century, the power relationship and interaction between the two major communities in Gonzales were expressed through the segregation of neighbourhoods and institutions as well as through work hierarchies and political power. The Anglo Americans were unquestioned as the community that truly belonged in Gonzales, while the African American community was marginalized both in physical space, through segregated practices and according to the dominating narrative of progress. Then a Mexican American community arrived, with no entirely clear position within the social and political order in Gonzales.

According to law, Mexican Americans were white, but in everyday practice Anglo Americans considered them a "mixed race" and discriminated against

them along the same lines as African Americans (e.g. Foley, 1997: 40). There was some leeway, however, which the ambiguity between law and practice pointed to. In the case of Mexican Americans in Texas, whiteness was not necessarily an either-or, but a question of degrees according to the actual colour of a person's skin, and due to his or her social and economic status.[8] As will be argued below, this uncertainty or flexibility was expressed through the presence of at least part of the Mexican American community in downtown Gonzales through commerce and celebrations in 1900.

The lack of a clear racial distinction was further enforced by factors within the Mexican American community itself. Regarding the question of colour and race, part of the Mexican American population – primarily among the economically and socially well off – sought to enforce a categorization of themselves as white also in everyday practice and politics and not only according to law. One strategy was to support a basic black-white dichotomy by defining themselves in opposition to the African American population (e.g. *El Regidor*, October 13, 1904: 8; Clemente N. Ídar, *La Crónica,* 3 December, 1910; Foley, 1997). At the same time – and partially at odds with the wish for racial integration – the majority of Mexican Americans considered Mexico as their – only – native country, also after a long life or even generations living in Texas.[9] The celebration of *16 de septiembre* was part of this national identification, and the reasons for it were complex and included the geographical closeness to Mexico, the continuous migration across the border, segregation of the majority in many areas and Anglo American discrimination.

All in all, the Mexican Americans constituted an ethnic community that differed from the African American community, both in their relationship to the Anglo American population and regarding the two communities' sense of national and ethnic belonging. The African Americans' choice of the abolition of slavery, with *Juneteenth*, as their most important historical celebration identified the community with United States as a central national reference, as opposed to the national Mexico reference of many Mexican Americans.[10] In this sense, Mexican-Americans seemed to constitute a category in between black and white, at least at the turn of the century in central Texas. This *inbetweenness* was present in Gonzales in 1900.

The Mexican Americans and a plurality of historical celebrations

As opposed to the Texas border region and San Antonio, there had been only few Mexican Americans living in central Texas, prior to 1880, and none were registered as living in the town of Gonzales before 1900 (US Census 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900). In 1900, the relatively new Mexican American population of 15 percent lived in and

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[8] For discussions for and against this interpretation, see e.g. Montejano, 1987:4; Young 1994:228; Foley 1997:4; Stewart, K.L. and A. de León, 1993; Zamora, 1993.

[9] This statement is based on Spanish language newspapers from the first twenty years of the century, and on interviews from the 1920s. See *El Regidor*; *La Prensa*; *Taylor*, 1919-1934 and Gamio, 1969.

[10] *Juneteenth* is the celebration of the abolition of slavery in Texas, announced June 19, 1865 (Turner, E. H., 2007).

around the town centre, although to some extent limited to the south-western part, close to the river and one of the town's two industrial nodes (approx. blocks 1-4, 11-14, 15-17 and 27-28 on figure 1). The neighbourhood included the sawmill, the waterworks, a cotton gin and the brickyard. The majority of the Mexican Americans were either migrant workers or resident labourers who lived and worked segregated in much the same way as the African American population. From 1899, there was a "Mexican school" in the Mexican American neighbourhood, as well as a Presbyterian church from 1902 and a Mexican Baptist church from 1906 (on blocks 3 and 4). In 1899 the city established a separate cemetery north of town for the Mexican Americans (*GI*, October 20, 1898; March 9, 1899; June 15, 1899:6; Vollentine, 1986:126-132).

There was, however, a small group of Mexican Americans that stood out. Some owned or rented shops in the city centre and advertised in the Anglo dominated *Gonzales Inquirer.* A few were officials in the county administration, and there were examples of Anglo American shop owners who hired Mexican Americans as sales clerks (e.g. US Census 1900; Hanson, 1898; e.g. *GI*, July 12, 1900: 1; January 8, 1903: 5). Almost symbolically, the watchmaker in charge of the county courthouse clock in the exact centre of town was E.A. Gomez of Mexican descent (*GI*, February 19, 1903: 5). At the turn of the century, this small group interacted at least to some degree with the Anglo American population in Gonzales' public space through everyday practices and on the margin of a clear-cut hierarchy based on ethnicity or race.

Another example of Mexican American presence in downtown Gonzales around the turn of the century was the celebration of Mexican Independence, *16 de septiembre*. In 1900 the celebration included a parade around the courthouse and the main squares (*GI*, September 20, 1900: 5). The celebration was clearly ethnically defined, which could be seen in the press coverage with statements such as: 'The Mexican residents of this city are preparing for a grand celebration of their independence day' (*GI*, September 6, 1900: 6). This ethnic division and consciousness regarding historical celebrations worked two ways. An example is the following notice regarding *Fourth of July*: 'The Mexican colony of Gonzales, Texas, highly welcome the American people of the United States, and especially the citizens of Gonzales County, on this, the celebration of the 124th anniversary of the birth of their nation' (*GI*, July 5, 1900: 5).

The two celebrations were similar to each other on several points. Most conspicuously they both included parades that moved along the same route around the downtown squares, and they both referred to historical events of independence from European colonial powers. An important difference, though, was the fact that the *16 de septiembre* parade was headed not only by the Mexican flag and one of the local Mexican American dignitaries, but also by the American flag and the Anglo American county sheriff (*GI*, September 20, 1900: 5). In comparison, the *Fourth of July* parade did not involve the Mexican flag – although it did include a Mexican band (*GI*, July 5, 1900: 1). This difference established a power relationship, stating that the "Mexican Colony" was in Gonzales and celebrating *16 de septiembre* under the auspices and control of the (Anglo) American people and laws.

Still, the parades were a way of stating that both communities belonged in Gonzales as they both physically gave meaning to the central squares through the parades (Tuan, Y.F., 2007: 169), and as political acts, the parades built and maintained local power relations (Davis, 1986:5). From this perspective, the Mexican American population belonged in Gonzales in a way that the marginalized African American population did not. The presence of Mexican American shops and merchants in downtown Gonzales, the proximity of the Mexican American neighbourhood to downtown Gonzales (it was situated within the original 49 blocks) and the *16 de septiembre* parade were all signs that at least to some degree questioned a clear-cut segregation of the Mexican American community. In comparison, the African Americans lived outside the 49 blocks and their celebration of *Juneteenth* did not include a similar parade downtown, as it was held in the African American section north of the city centre (*GI*, June 22, 1899: 3 and Caldwell County Oral History Project 1976: NN).

Apart from these three celebrations, there was a fourth historically related practice, namely *Decoration Day*, which was celebrated each year, at least from 1898, in memory of the local Confederate soldiers who had died in the American Civil War (*GI*, April 25, 1898: 3; April 27, 1899: 7; April 19, 1900: 5 etc.). *Decoration Day* consisted in a memorial service in one of the town's Anglo American churches, followed by a procession to the cemeteries and the decoration of the relevant graves with flowers. The celebration of *Juneteenth* and of *Decoration Day* both referred to Southern US history and activated the same historical event – the American Civil War – but with different evaluations of its ending. In this sense, the two celebrations further enforced the two groups as distinct ethnic communities, with different historical conceptions and different roles in Gonzales.

The four historical celebrations represented practices that reproduced important parts of the ethnic communities' historical identities, but none of them had by 1900 left any permanent historical markers in public space, nor did they lead to much historical interest in the newspaper, in City Council activities or in other types of organizations. What defined the historical narratives in Gonzales at the turn of the century was in this sense the plurality of narratives and the way in which they referred to all three major ethnic groups as separate communities.

However, the lack of permanent markers changed within approximately ten years. By 1912, two historical narratives were explicitly present in Gonzales' public space, not only through parades, but also in monuments, institutions, and other permanent markers. These were the narrative of the Confederate past and the narrative of Texas independence with the latter as the most conspicuous: It was new in Gonzales and it rapidly became the dominant narrative in town. Within the same period of time, the Mexican American community became completely segregated regarding neighbourhoods and institutions, and their position in the low end of the social and economic hierarchy was thoroughly cemented. As the analysis will show, the emergence of a new historical narrative, the changes in physical space and the activities and practices in town interacted in complex patterns, shaping each other

over time and leading to the identification of Gonzales with the story about the *first shot* and Texas independence.

The new historical narrative of Gonzales' role in Texas Independence

In the first years of the new century, an explicit interest in history emerged in Gonzales. In 1901 a group of women founded a local chapter of the historical club *The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC)*, and two years later, *the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT)* was formed (*GI*, November 7, 1901: 4; *Proceedings* 1903: 71). Immediately, both organizations started fundraising for historical monuments to be placed in Gonzales, and both monuments were unveiled in 1910 (e.g. *GI*, April 21, 1910: 3 and October 20, 1910: 6). The monuments were placed on Market Square and Park Square respectively, just north and west of the county courthouse (blocks 24 and 18 on figure 1) and over time the squares were renamed Confederate Square and Texas Heroes Square.

　　　The actual unveiling of the Confederate monument was on April 14, 1910, but the grand event was the laying of the cornerstone the previous year on July 21, 1909 (*GI*, July 22, 1909: 1; April 21, 1910: 3). It was combined with the *Firemen's Celebration* and attracted 4-5000 people from the county and beyond who wanted to see the parade, the baseball game and participate in the *Firemen's Ball* at the Opera House (*GI*, July 22, 1909: 1). When the Texas Heroes monument was unveiled October 20, 1910, there was an elaborate ceremony including several speeches and a representative from the Texas Congress as well as people from the churches, the Business Men's Club and from the local and neighbouring chapters of the DRT (*GI*, October 27, 1910: 1).

　　　With the monuments on the north and west side of the courthouse, the historical markers contributed to downtown by giving it an explicit and permanent historical meaning due to the historical narratives to which the monuments referred. With the Anglo American churches on the eastern and southern side of the courthouse, the county courthouse was now completely surrounded by Anglo American institutions and markers.

　　　The Gonzales Inquirer followed the historical organizations' meetings and activities, but the fight for Texas independence, the *first shot* event, to which *DRT* referred, was the strongest and most visible of the two narratives both in the press and through smaller permanent references to it already established before 1910 (*DI*, April 28, 1903; *GI*, February 28, 1901: 7). This difference between the narratives was further emphasized on state level, as the Texas Heroes monument received a contribution of $5000 from the Texas Senate, while the confederate monument was funded entirely by private means (Senate Bill No. 287, January 12, 1909 and e.g. *GI*, March 31, 1910: 7). The narrative of Gonzales and the *first shot* was reproduced through historical accounts in the paper, accounts that became more and more numerous, the closer to the 1910 unveiling of the Texas Heroes monument (e.g. *DI*, October 10: 1; October 20: 2; October 21: 3; October 27, 1910: 1). There was no

similar focus on Confederate history or the Civil War, neither in physical space nor in the newspaper.

Even though the narrative of Texas Independence was the most explicit of the two, the references to southern history continued to regulate the relationship between the Anglo Americans and African Americans, and with the UDC chapter and the confederate monument it had become visible in a way that it had not been when *Decoration Day* was the only explicit reference to the Confederacy. The sentiments and ideals behind the Confederacy were still very much alive in Gonzales, at least according to *The Gonzales Inquirer*'s coverage of the laying of the cornerstone: 'when our flag went down, never to wave again, not one stain marred its whiteness, nor dimmed its brightness'. (*DI*, July 22, 1909: 1). This increased focus on the Confederacy referred to the general regional interest in confederate history of the time (see Kammen, 1993:101-131), but also to the local increase in the African American population of Gonzales from 620 to 1230 in absolute numbers (although its proportional size diminished from 39 to 28 percent. US Census 1880 and 1900).

Part of the success of the narrative of Texas independence was probably due to the fact that it fused with the narrative of progress. This was apparent for example in 1912 when Gonzales won a price as 'the cleanest town in Texas of its size' (Editorial, 1912: 10). In the account of this event, *The Gonzales Inquirer* combined the narrative of progress' focus on modernization and civilization with the narrative of Texas independence when stating: 'Truly Gonzales, the Lexington of Texas, is coming into her own. Another victory has been won, and Gonzales, routing disorder, rubbish, […] as she routed Santa Anna's Mexican soldiers in years long gone, won the $300 prize and has taken her place as the cleanest town in Texas in her class' (*GI*, December 26, 1912: 1).

As a narrative of continuity, the historical narrative implied that events of the past explained and justified present and future values and activities in Gonzales. When combined with the narrative of progress, the economic, commercial, industrial and political importance of Gonzales was justified through references to the (Anglo) American citizens' actions in 1835. Furthermore, the narrative became an efficient tool in the regulation of the relationship between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans described below.

Why the need for a new and historical narrative?

According to many scholars of memory and uses of the past in the United States, the interest in history increased in the last decades of the nineteenth century (e.g. Glassberg, 2001; Kammen, 1993). The reasons for this interest were many, and most of them related in one way or another to the economic, technological and demographic development in the country. Industrialization and urbanization lead for example to the disappearance of traditional, rural life in some areas, which prompted an interest in historic preservation (Glassberg, 2001: 175). The emergence of many of

the historical clubs, including the DRT and UDC, played a central role in these preservation efforts, but in the case of Gonzales – as in Texas and other regions generally – the clubs' efforts were also closely related to the considerable influx of immigrants within the same period of time.

In Gonzales, the Anglo American population increased from 963 to 2432 persons from 1880 to 1900 with people coming primarily from other U.S. states (US Census 1880, 1900). The historical clubs helped create a "White Americans' regional and local history" integrating newly arrived white immigrants and efficiently excluding any non-white immigrant. According to David Glassberg, '"Anglo" Californians from a variety of Northern European backgrounds assumed the power to define particular environments as "historic" for the rest of society, and came to identify themselves with a "white" pioneer heritage' (Glassberg, 2001: 170. See also Kammen, 1993: 250). The story about Texas' independence worked at least as well as the Californian "pioneer heritage" as a means with which to construct a white or Anglo community and category.

The basic dilemma in California and Texas was the same: On the one hand, the new Anglo/white community considered itself as the only people who rightfully belonged and therefore should have the political, social and economic power. On the other hand, in both regions agriculture needed the immigrants as cheap labourers. According to David Montejano, the most efficient way of making sure that the commercial farmers in Texas had a manageable and cheap workforce was to *racialize* the class structure by defining Mexican Americans together with the African Americans as docile and traditionalist, the exact opposite of the reigning idea of the time of the entrepreneurial and progressive Anglo Americans (Montejano, 1987). There were many means with which to keep Mexican Americans from gaining (social, political) power, among them were a separate and subfunded school system for Mexican American children, the maintaining of a high degree of job insecurity, and the use of violence and discrimination in general (e.g. Foley, 1997; Montejano, 1987; Zamora, 1993).

As the Mexican Americans did not readily fit into the southern black-white dichotomy, the activation of the historical narrative of Texas' independence came to play an important part in the process of marginalization that took place at the turn of the 20th century in Gonzales. It became yet another way of excluding the Mexican American community from feeling that they truly belonged and more specifically, it removed and kept them from any real economic, social or political power.

The narrative of Texas independence and the *first shot* was very explicit when it came to the relationship between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans. According to this narrative, the Anglo Americans were the group that belonged in Gonzales, while it defined the Mexican (Americans) as the historical enemy who attacked Gonzales all those years ago and that the Anglos successfully confronted

and threw out.[11] The narrative of Texas independence was centred on a dichotomy of *Americans* against *Mexicans*, with the Americans defending their land and the Mexicans attacking it. It simplified and distorted historical events in the same way as did the overall narrative about the Texas independence at this time, including the story about *the Alamo*, and it was very effective in its construction of a power relationship between the two communities (see e.g. Brear, 1995; Flores, 2002).

The narrative defined the Mexican (Americans) as the foreigner and villain, but it also strengthened the Anglo American community across regions and national descent as Kammen and Glassberg argue. Race and ethnicity entered in this way into a peculiar relationship according to which the conception of an "(Anglo) American race" was opposed to the black African Americans and the racially mixed Mexican Americans. It meant that a white person who had arrived in Gonzales from New York or Ohio in 1898 became part of an ethnic community that built on a narrative about how the Texans defeated the Mexicans in 1835. As the narrative about Gonzales and the *first shot* became stronger and more visible in Gonzales' public space between 1901 and 1912, the relationship of power and the social hierarchy between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans became more and more similar to the black-white dichotomy between the Anglo Americans and the African Americans. The *inbetweenness* of the Mexican American community was disappearing fast.

The Mexican Americans of Gonzales, 1910-12

Until 1912 Gonzales County constituted one catholic parish and the town only had one catholic church, the St. Joseph's in the Anglo American section of town east of the county courthouse (*Messenger*, April 2, 1971). By 1911, the church had become too small for a congregation that had been growing enormously, consisting of approximately 250-300 families, of which two thirds were of Mexican descent.[12] In 1911 the Diocese of San Antonio to which Gonzales belonged, decided to build a new church and at the same time segregate the Mexican American catholics. The old church building was moved (on logs, the story goes) from block 46 on the east side of town to block 11 in the Mexican neighbourhood in the western part (*Today's Catholic*, December 20, 1985; *Correspondence*, August 1993). This highly symbolic event happened the same year, 1912, as the town celebrated its prize as the "cleanest town in Texas of its size".

From 1901 to 1912, the number of Mexican Americans within commerce and administration diminished and the community became more socio-economically homogeneous (e.g. US Census 1900 & 1910). This mirrored the general

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[11] See e.g. Stewart, K.L. and A. de León, 1993:94; Brear, 1995; Flores 2002 on this point about Texas in general and about San Antonio.

[12] *Annual Reports 1905 to 1906* and *1912*. The archdiocese of San Antonio Archives, San Antonio. The information is limited and the figures are an estimate based on 85 "white" and 219 "Mexican" families in 1905-06 and 173 "Mexican" families in 1912, after the parish had been divided.

proletarization and segregation of Mexican Americans in Texas within the same period of time (Zamora, 1993: 197). With the new Mexican catholic church and the disappearance of Mexican Americans in downtown commerce and administration, the division in ethnically defined neighbourhoods became even more explicit, with the Mexican Americans in the south-western corner of Gonzales.

As mentioned before, the county courthouse was from 1910 surrounded by Anglo American history and institutions. After 1910, to get from the Mexican American neighbourhood to the county courthouse and the administrative offices placed in the exact centre of town, one had to pass by the *Texas Heroes* Square (block 18) and the monument that celebrated the event in which the Gonzales Americans threw out the Mexicans. Symbolically, the militia soldier on top faced south towards Mexico, and locally towards the Mexican American neighbourhood. On the other central square (block 24), north of the county courthouse, the Confederate soldier similarly faced north towards the foe of the civil war, the northern states, as well as towards the local African American neighbourhood north of downtown Gonzales. The African American and the Mexican American communities were now thoroughly segregated in terms of neighbourhoods and historical narratives as these were expressed through the downtown monuments. The changes in *physical space* and in *narratives* shaped future *practice*, and here the difference for the Mexican American population seemed the biggest, as some of its members had actually experienced at least some flexibility within commerce and administration when they first arrived in Gonzales at the end of the nineteenth century.

The new Mexican American catholic church was a conspicuous symbol of segregation, but it was also a sign indicating that the Mexican American population was in Gonzales to stay. New practices and institutions emerged, as some of the community's members formed a chapter of the Woodmen of the World (*Leñadores del Mundo*), *The Campamento Brazil 2457* and other local organisations (*La Crónica*, May 17, 1910:4). At least some Gonzales Mexican Americans participated in the growing protest in Texas against the segregation of Mexican American children in poorly funded "Mexican schools" and against discrimination generally. The Laredo-based Spanish-language newspaper, *La Crónica*, was very active in this protest and it highlighted Gonzales as one of the school districts that had a segregated and malfunctioning "Mexican school" (*La Crónica*, December 17, 1910: 1; *La Crónica,* January 12, 1910: 1). The protest received its most organized expression with the *Primer Congreso Mexicanista*, organized by *La Crónica* and held in Laredo in September 1911, with delegates from all over south and central Texas, including one from Gonzales (*Primer Congreso Mexicanista,* 1911: 6). There were no local Spanish-language newspaper in Gonzales, but at least some of the Spanish-language newspapers from San Antonio and Laredo circulated in town, making it probable that members of the Gonzales community were informed about, and possibly agreed with, the general debates at the time (e.g. *La Crónica*, September 3, 1910: 10; December 17, 1910: 1).

The increased discrimination and segregation strengthened a nationalist, *Mexicanist* narrative, leading for example the newspaper *El Regidor* to recommend the Mexican Americans that they kept their Mexican citizenship and stayed close to other Mexican Americans instead of interacting with Anglo Americans (*El Regidor*, November 25, 1909: 1). Over time, this *Mexicanist* perspective evolved into a narrative focusing on Texas' Mexican past and on the Mexican (Americans) as its rightful inhabitants, turning the narrative of Texas Independence on its head (Limón, 1974; Camejo, 1970).

Concluding remarks

The analysis of the dynamics between physical space, the town's narratives and practices within public space has shown that the relationship between Gonzales' ethnic communities went through a process of strengthening the existing power hierarchy at the beginning of the twentieth century within a network of processes including a general national historical interest; the regional agricultural development; regional perspectives and ideas of race; the transnational relationship to Mexico and the particular organizations and histories relating to Gonzales as a town. All these factors and more were part of making the story about Gonzales as the place of the *first shot* of the Texas revolution such a successful one in the first part of the twentieth century. The examples of Mexican American challenges to this order on the other hand, showed that the maintenance of Anglo American dominance was a process that was hardly ever conflict free and that actively involved all ethnic communities in town.

In Gonzales today (2008) the neighbourhoods are not as ethnically segregated as they were in 1912, neither are there shops where the Mexican Americans or the African Americans are not allowed to enter. Due to federal law, the schools in Gonzales are no longer segregated, and since the 1980s, two of the four City Council members have almost continuously been African American and Mexican American.[13] Gonzales is of course a very different place compared to what it was in 1912. However, the socioeconomic differences between the three ethnic communities are significant and there are still two catholic churches, one for the Mexicans and one for the Anglos. There is only one historical marker with reference to the African American community, a plaque at the former "Negro school" in the original African-American neighborhood north of downtown, and there are no historical markers that include the town's Mexican Americans as other than the historical enemy. Mexican independence, *16 de septiembre*, is celebrated in the catholic church and the only public festival that involves a parade around the downtown squares is the *Come and Take It* celebrated in the first weekend of October, including a solemn ceremony at
the Texas Heroes Monument on the Sunday. According to these historical references, it seems that it is still only the Anglo Americans who truly belong.

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[13] *City Council Minutes*, Gonzales City Office, Gonzales. The proportion between the ethnic communities has changed considerably, with 13 percent African Americans, 33 percent Mexican Americans, 13 percent of other Latin American descent and 40 percent Anglo Americans.

Figure 1. By Inger Bjerg Poulsen
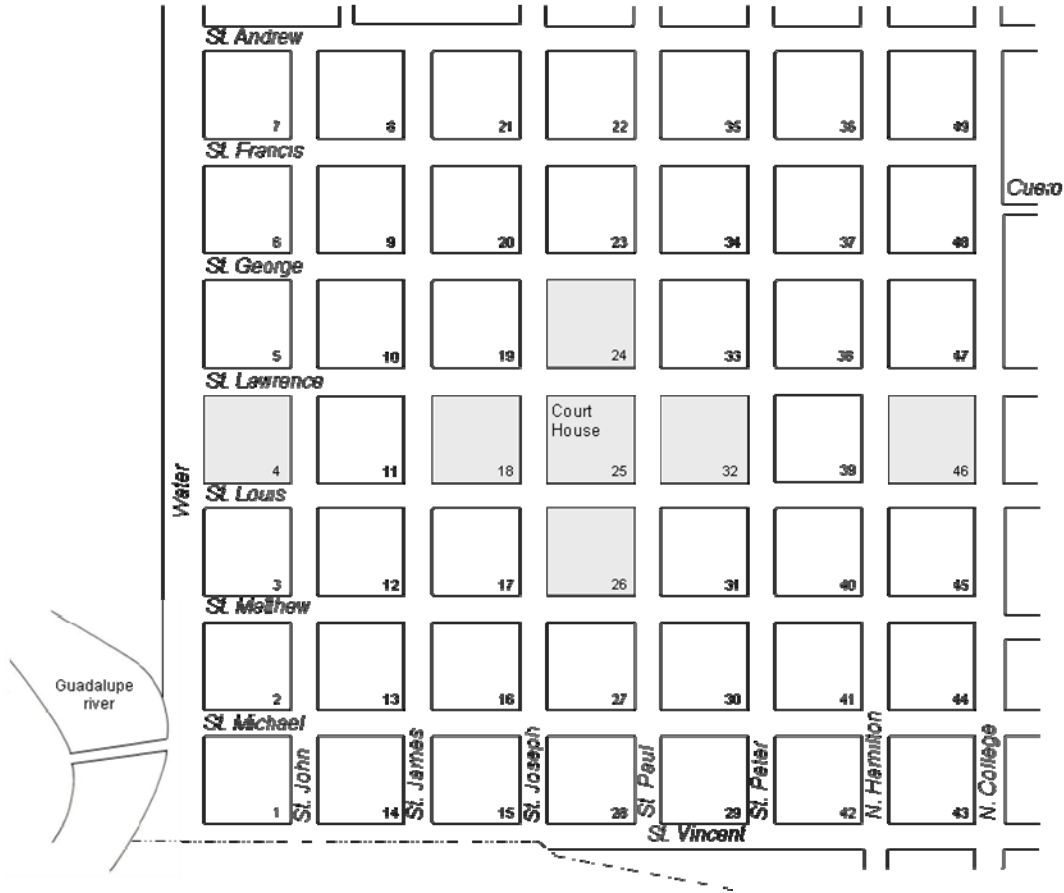
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Negotiating Latina/o Ethnicity in NYC: Social Interactions and Ethnic Self-Presentation

Rosalyn Negrón Goldbarg & Wilneida Negrón.[1]

Today, an increasing number of people regularly switch from ethnicity to ethnicity in normal discourse, in an attempt to maximize their economic and political interests. This paper focuses specifically on ethnic flexibility among Latina/os in New York City. Drawing on ethnographic, linguistic, and social network data we explore how Latina/os in NYC negotiate between *multiple* ethnic identities in everyday contexts. Through language and dialect switches, accents, and even calculated silence the Latinos in our research negotiated NYC's multi-level system of categorization. We hope to show that no one-to-one relationship exists between subjective feelings of ethnic belongingness and the use of ethnic markers. Ethnic markers, particularly language-related ones, are manipulated in a number of creative ways by members and non-members alike, pushing the limits of what constitutes ethnic group membership and challenging notions of ethnic authenticity.

Keywords: situational ethnicity, multiple ethnic identities, code-switching, Latina/os, New York City

Introduction

As America's ethnic diversity continues to grow, issues like resource distribution, ethnic conflict, or social and political movements cannot be understood in terms of neatly packaged identities in competition. Today, an increasing number of people regularly switch from ethnicity[2] to ethnicity in normal discourse, in an attempt to maximise their economic and political interests. The literature on ethnicity provides many examples of people contextually invoking (or hiding) their ethnicity to strengthen or weaken their ties to kin, community and the state and thereby to

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[2] Throughout this paper we use ethnicity as a construct that subsumes race, and do not make too fine a point about distinguishing between the two, except when referring to the US Census or research that uses the *race* construct. Following, Brubaker (2004) we treat race, ethnicity, and nationality as the same domain – subject to the same cognitive categorization processes of difference-making. We concur with Loveman (1999) that the distinctions between race and ethnicity are arbitrary and reflects differences 'based on a particular reading of US history, and not on any analytical foundation´. (p. 895) What is more, research has shown that Latinos tend to view their Latino/Hispanic identity as equivalent to race (Hirschman, Alba, and Farley 2000; OMB 2000), a trend that creates problems for interpreting racial and ethnic data used in the US Census - which distinguishes between the two constructs.

improve access to economic and political resources (Barth, 1969; Horowitz, 1975, 1985; Kelly & Nagel, 2002; Patterson, 1975). Yet, while ethnic identification has long been understood by anthropologists to be a contextual phenomenon, less is known about how the process of ethnic identification switching works in daily life. Little research has been done in recent years to further develop a theory of ethnic flexibility, a pattern of social interaction that emerges in highly ethnically diverse environments.

Through two case studies of ethnically flexible Latino men, we will demonstrate how situational ethnicity provides a fruitful theoretical departure for students of ethnicity. In kind, this paper focuses specifically on ethnic flexibility among Latinos in New York City. As America's fastest growing ethnic group, and certainly among the most internal diverse pan-ethnicities, Latinos are an ideal group for examining the salience and negotiation of multiple ethnic identifications. Drawing on ethnographic, linguistic and social network data we explore how Latinos in NYC negotiate between multiple ethnic identities in everyday contexts. These negotiations point to how Latinos cross back and forth between various Latino subgroup boundaries and reflect the prevailing patterns of everyday relationships and interactions among Latinos in New York.

Latina/os in New York City

In New York State, the majority of Latinos reside in the five boroughs that make up New York City (NYC). The Census shows that of the over three million Latinos state-wide, 2,281,173 reside in NYC alone; this is almost 1/3 of the total NYC population. The size of the Latino population in NYC has experienced a steady increase from 2000 to 2006. The Census data for these years show that the Latino population in NYC grew by 5.8 per cent. The most recent 2006 Census data shows that Puerto Ricans remain the largest Latino group in NYC (771, 984), making up 33.8 per cent of the total Latino population. They are followed by Dominicans (609,885), who are 25.7 per cent of total Latino population (See Table One). While Mexicans are the fastest growing Latino group (with an increase of 43.6 per cent from 2000-2006), they are the third largest Latino group making up 10.3 per cent of the total Latino population (263,811). The sharp rise in the Mexican population is attributed to the continued migration to NYC. Ecuadorians are the fourth largest Latino group with 186,469, followed by Colombians whose population decreased between 2005 and 2006 and totalled 107,712 in 2006. [3]

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[3] Data derived from, Latino Data Project: New York City's Latino Populatin in 2006. Laird W. Bergard, November 2007. Data was obtained from the US Census Bureau 2000 Census and American Community Surveys 2005-2006 data. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, found at http://usa.ipums.org/usa. American Community Surveys were obtained from samples; Census Bureau estimates a margin of error for Puerto Ricans was +/-6 per cent, for Domincans +/- 8 per cent and; +/- 15 per cent for Mexicans, Ecuadorians, and Columbians.

Table One

Top Five Largest Latino Groups in New York City, 2006

Nationality	2000	2005	2006	Per cent of Total Hispanic Population in 2005	Per cent of Total Hispanic Population in 2006	Per cent Change 2000-2006	Yearly Rate of Increase 2000-2006
Puerto Rican	799,558	790,609	771,984	35.0	33.8	-3.4	-0.6
Dominican	532,647	570,641	609,885	25.7	26.7	14.5	2.3
Mexican	183,792	227,842	263,811	10.3	11.6	43.5	6.2
Ecuadorian	146,200	172,791	186,469	7.8	8.2	27.5	4.1
Columbian	105,471	112,992	107,712	5.1	4.7	2.1	0.4
Total Latinos	2,156,930	2,222,641	2,281,173	100	100	5.8	.9

Latinos are bonded by a common language, similar geo-political histories, intertwined political destinies and shared neighbourhood where their lives overlap on a daily basis (Ricourt & Danta, 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). For example, antecedents to migration are strikingly similar across certain groups. Mexican, Puerto Rican and Dominican migrations were triggered by a shift from diversified, subsistence economies to capitalist agriculture and industrialisation. Yet the similarities between Latino groups arguably end there. Latinos run the gamut: from Mexicans who can trace ancestors here back a century or more, to Ecuadorians who just arrived; from the educated Cuban businesswoman, to the Puerto Rican factory worker; from black Dominicans to white Colombians. A number of scholars have reflected on these contrasts (see for example Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002; Portes & Truelove, 1987; Padilla, 1984; Stepick & Stepick, 2002; Torres-Saillant, 2002). Scholars argue that the differences are too significant for Latinos to be grouped together for analysis or policy treatment (Portes & Truelove, 1987). Indeed the contrasts are significant, and as Portes and Böröcz (1989) show, immigrants to the US experience divergent modes of incorporation. In fact, this makes Latinos an ideal group for examining the salience and negotiation of multiple ethnic identities. As we will argue, linguistic flexibility is central to this process.

Linguistic Flexibility & Social Interaction

Linguistic flexibility (multi-linguists, multi-dialects, multi-sociolectism) coupled with an ethnically ambiguous physical appearance, offers speakers exceptional control over ethnic self-presentation. Given these factors, Latinos are in an especially advantageous position to manipulate ethnic and linguistic categories, expectations and assumptions. The US Latino pan-ethnicity includes at least nineteen dialects (Lipski, 2004), socio-historical roots in nearly every continent, and distinct immigration histories within the US. Besides a medium for cultural reproduction and individual actualisation, language serves as a tool for categorisation of self and others (Fishman, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1981; Giles & Coupland, 1991). In multi-ethnic settings language may be the least ambiguous criteria used to categorise people into ethnic groups. Even among groups that speak the same language, lexical, grammatical and phonological variations are important ways to distinguish between various national or regional populations. Researchers assert that among all the criteria for membership in an ethnic group, language is potentially the strongest cue to a person's ethnic identity (Fishman, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1981). This is because a person's accent, speech style and language choice is acquired, in contrast to inherited characteristics such as physical appearance. Language markers are used by people as a cue to the strength of a person's ethnic identification.

Code-switching (CS), or the use of two or more linguistic varieties was a common way of invoking multiple ethnic identifications for participants in this study. A switch can occur between turns, within turns and intra-sententially (Bailey, 2000). Blom and Gumperz (1972) see switching as falling into at least one of three overlapping categories: situational, metaphorical, and contextualisation switching. In situational switching, context determines which code will be used. For example, people look for a number of group membership indicators, including gender, age and status and social setting to assess the appropriateness of a code choice or code-switching itself. Becker (1997) suggests that speakers don't CS unless they know the linguistic background and social identities of interlocutors. This (and other types of switching) suggests conscious action, but it should be noted that some switches occur below the level of awareness. With metaphorical switching, the social setting remains outwardly unchanged, but the code-choice may signal a change in topic or social role. Finally, unmarked, contextualisation switches centre the act of switching itself as a conversational resource (Gumperz, 2001; Bailey, 2000; Li, 1994; Auer, 1984). Thus, 'individual switches serve instead as contextualisation, or framing, cues to mark off quotations, changes in topic, etc. from surrounding speech (Bailey, 2000: 242)'.

In terms of the identification or identity functions of CS, bilinguals can change the directionality of CS (from English to Spanish or from Spanish to English; regional dialect to a majority language). It is also common for bilinguals or multi-linguists to scatter words or phrases in a second language throughout a mostly monolingual conversation. For example, Spanish-speaking bilinguals may briefly switch to words and phrases like *bueno* (good)*, lo que sea* (whatever)*, y todo* (and everything)*, pos* (well)*, ándale pues* (¿?) (Ok then or let´s go), to mark their Latino ethnicity (Jacobson, 1982; Toribio, 2002). A special case of CS is language or code-

crossing. This is characterised as the unexpected (and often viewed as 'illegitimate' or 'inauthentic') switch to an out-group code (Rampton, 2000, 1995).

The identity functions of CS are among the most widely explored areas in bilingual studies (Williams, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Greer, 2005; Gafaranga, 2001; Bailey, 2000; Cutler, 1999; Lo, 1999; Sebba & Wooton, 1998; Zentella, 1997; Rampton, 1995). The prevailing conceptual orientation is that identity is constructed or co-constructed discursively, rather than a pre-existing given of category or group membership (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Within this framework, code-choice is but one of several linguistic strategies that encode a relationship between a social identity and aspects of the social context. Our own approach is kindred to the constructivist conviction that a person can identify independently of category membership. However, we prefer to think of CS in the sense put forth by Gumperz (2001; see also Levinson, 2002): as cues that establish the context in which messages are interpreted and understood.

Dialect switching was one form of CS commonly found among the participants in this study. Who switched to which dialect and why, suggested patterns of dialect classification and use consistent with that found by Zentella (1990). Among Latinos in New York, class, race and education affects the extent to which Spanish speaking groups assimilate each other's dialects (ibid.). Zentella investigated dialectical contact at the lexical level in various New York City Spanish varieties. Her findings point to a number of social barriers to the adoption of lexical items from both Puerto Rican and Dominican Spanish. Zentella particularly found widespread rejection of the Dominican lexicon by Colombians, Cubans and Puerto Ricans. In contrast, the Dominicans were the only group that adopted from all other groups without exception. We would add that another dialect not adopted by the New Yorkers in this study is Mexican Spanish. With the exception of expression like *ándale pues* or *orale* to caricature or mock Mexicans, non-Mexican participants in this study did not switch or accommodate to this variety of Spanish.

The Study

We present here insights from a study in which the first author accompanied eleven NYC Latina/os, for one week each, in their daily routines and observed and recorded their verbal interactions. In addition to completing life history interviews and social network assessment questionnaires, these eleven participants were given digital recorders and they each independently collected another week's worth of their verbal interactions with family members, friends, co-workers, classmates, store clerks, and other community members. In all, at least 50 hours of naturally occurring conversations and interviews were collected by each participant.

From these continuous monitoring observations, two participants, Roberto and Abel emerged as the most ethnically flexible. Both Roberto and Abel regularly switched ethnic identifications in their daily interactions, and did so by switching languages, dialects, accents, or ethnic categories. We now turn to the cases of these two men who illustrate how sociolinguistic data as well as data about their social environment reveal subtleties in ethnic identification.

Roberto

Roberto is a bilingual, Venezuelan-born Queens, NY resident who had an excellent command of multiple-dialects. In addition to the ethnic category he was born into, Venezuelan, Roberto's life experiences led him to also identify with or as Puerto Rican and American, in addition to the Latino category. Table Two presents the ethnic identifications reported or invoked by Roberto during interviews and interactions. Next to each category we include a description, along with a verbatim example of how the category was invoked in Roberto's speech.

Table Two
 Roberto's Ethnic Identifications

Category	Description	Example
Venezuelan / South American	Automatic response used when must identify using an ethnic label. Otherwise, linguistically draws on other categories. This category becomes salient when discussing immigration issues or when communicating with other Venezuelans.	I'm from Venezuela. *Yo soy Venezolano.* ('I'm Venezuelan')
Spanish	Makes claim to family origins in Spain. Can be used to support claims to whiteness or being white, and conversely, can be downplayed to support claims to blackness or being black.	• Well, if they ask me where my origins are from because my origins are from Spain. • My father is from Spain. My father is that type of Spaniard that, he brought me up with values!

Puerto Rican/ Nuyorican	Developed attachments to elements of Puerto Rican culture like the food, music, dancing and language. This identification strongly tied to place, either the island or Puerto Rican communities in New York City.	• I know a lot about Puerto Rico. I know more about Puerto Rico than about my own country. You can drive me right now to Puerto Rico and I go boom! Give me the rental, I know where I'm going, I know what to do. Do that shit in Venezuela? *No joda, me encuentran en una montaña, allá al la'ito 'e Colombia. Perdi'o!* ('No kidding, they'll find me in a mountain, over there next to Colombia. Lost!') • I don't speak New York Spanish, like I said, I can roll into whatever. Usually we talk more Puerto Rican than anything.
Urban Latino	Often associated with African American culture, including music, language (AAVE), food, dress and kinesics. Urban Latinos are strongly linked in people's minds with socio-demographic trends among poor urban Latino and African American populations.	• You know what time it is with this nigger right here, son! • I like my rap, I like my Hip Hop.

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| White New Yorker | Emphasises upbringing in New York City as a source of attitudinal and behavioural uniqueness: grittiness, street-smarts, universality and directness. Embraces the city's long history as a melting pot, while capitalising on white privilege. Associates culturally and/or linguistically with white groups having a long history in New York (e.g. Italian, Irish). Speaks the New York dialect of English (Labov 1982). | • We grew up in Queens Village but I basically grew up in New York City because I would make my way all over New York.

• And the whites were just, they were more like me in the sense of, you know, the whole crew likes to play handball, you know, we all like to ride our bikes, everybody worked on their bikes.

• Like I could be a white boy. I['d] listen to classic rock and wear them jackets and the jeans, and you know 'hi dude, how are you doing dude' and you know. |

Roberto's Social Environment

Figure One suggests that Roberto's immediate social environment, as depicted by a social network graph, correlated with the diverse ethnic repertoire outlined above. Growing up in middle-class Queens Village, Roberto lived among a mix of people and languages. His close childhood friends were European-, Colombian- and Puerto Rican-American. Queens Village is close to Jamaica, an established middle-class West Indian neighbourhood and Roberto reports being one of the few white kids in a predominantly black school. Roberto affirms that he was more drawn to the 'Spanish crowd' and 'the whites'; the Spanish guys because they 'got all the pretty girls' and the white guys because he felt he had more in common with them.

In Figure One, refer to the legend for information about each network member's (ˋalterˊ) ethnic background. The size of the nodes represents his closeness to each of the alters: the bigger the nodes, the closer he felt to them. Roberto's network consists of four components. The largest component appears in the middle and includes work-related, family and friendship ties. Next, at the bottom right of the graph, two nodes are connected to each other and no one else. These are women who are related to each other, and have been supportive to Roberto in his life. Finally, each of the two isolates are separate components. These are distant acquaintances (Roberto was unsure about the last name of one of them), who have no relation to each other or anyone else in the network.

Figure One

Roberto's Social Network
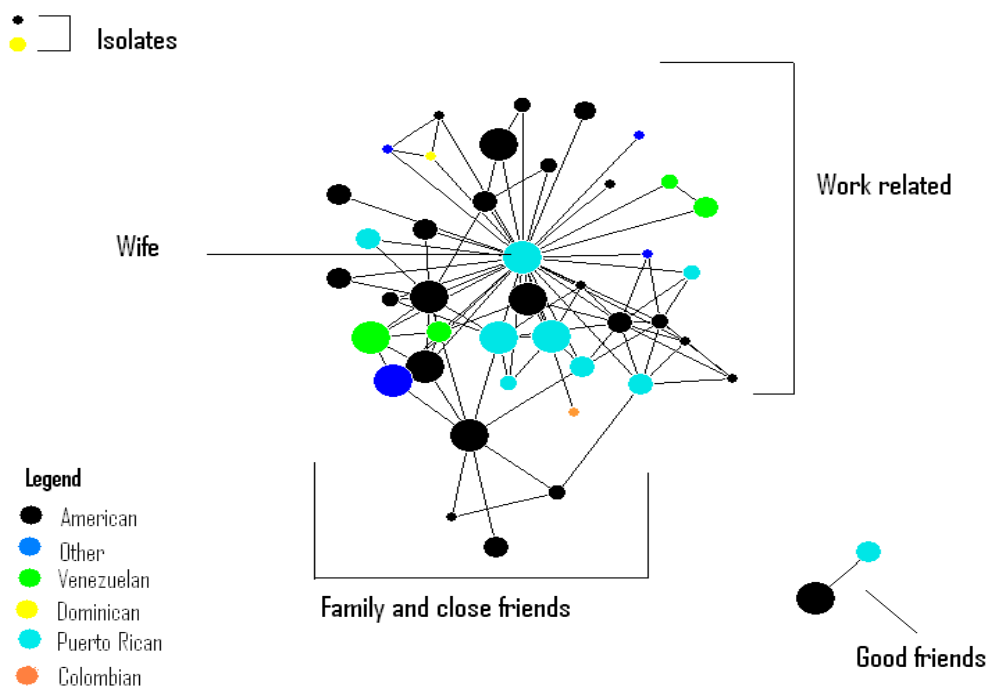
Roberto's personal network is moderately dense. Some areas are more interconnected than others. His family and close friends more so than his work-related contacts. The people he has known in his money-making ventures have not all been from one employer or organisation. We can see that most are spread out, several of which are only linked to Annie (Roberto's main business partner). The largest component, represents 41 of the 45 alters Roberto listed. His wife, Annie, can be seen in the middle, the most central person in his network. Except for the isolates and dyad on the bottom right, Annie has contacts with all areas of Roberto's network. The ethnic diversity of his upbringing and formative years is also portrayed in the graph. Roberto described half of his network as American (black nodes). Three of these he further described as Nuyorican or of Puerto Rican descent. His American alters are mostly white, but four were described as African American or *mixed-race*. Of the nodes that appear in blue ('other'), two were categorised as Russian, one as Jamaican, and another as Haitian (his step-mother who appears as the largest of the blue nodes). A number of his alters are Puerto Rican, more so than those who are Venezuelan. Finally, Roberto had weak ties to (based, in this case on closeness) to a Dominican man and a Colombian man. Thus, we can see that the two major network influences, both in terms of numbers and degree of closeness, were American and Puerto Rican. As we discuss next, these influences are evident in his code choice and discourse.

Roberto's Sociolinguistic Behaviour

Roberto's ethnic and linguistic repertoires are quite broad. However, during

interviews he confirmed that besides English, the code he used most frequently was Puerto Rican Spanish (PRS). The ability to align himself with Puerto Rican identification through the authentic use of PRS was advantageous in cases when he wished to distance himself from the 'whiteness' of his phenotype and Venezuelan heritage. Roberto is white and blue-eyed. Except for when he speaks in Spanish, he is indistinguishable from other white Americans. One day Roberto travelled to a black neighbourhood to purchase drugs. Apparently this neighbourhood was known to be frequented by undercover police officers. Here Roberto describes how he appropriated Puerto Rican (boricua) identity to avoid being mistaken for an undercover police officer:

> 'You know one thing when you are in a black neighborhood, right? You don't want these motherfucking *molletos*[4] to think you're white-white! Fuck that! *Me hago Boricua* ('I make myself Puerto Rican)…instantly! Like I remember, the last time I got high I was on my way to cop [buy] and I knew these niggas was not even gonna look at me. You know what I did? I turned the phone to vibrate so it won't ring and I had the thing *y me pongo hablar* ('and I start to talk'), '*Mira que si este, que si lo otro, cla, cla, cla…*' ('Look, this and that, blah, blah, blah'). *Hablando una conversacíon con el aire* ('Having a conversation with the air')! *Pero en español* ('But in Spanish'). *En boricua* ('In Puerto Rican'). *Y los tipos ahí* ('And the dudes there'): '*Bueno* ('Well'), you're not white!'

In New York City close associations are often made between blacks and Puerto Ricans. Part of this has to do with the historical neighbourhood coexistence of both groups, as well as the African heritage of many Puerto Rican. This link made it possible for Roberto to minimise the impact of his appearance and achieve some level of acceptance. As this example illustrates some Latino immigrants have used American racial categories and associations to their advantage, thus affecting patterns of ethnic identity invocation. Immigrants who can pass as white (or would otherwise be classified as white) find that emphasising a white racial identity allows them greater social and economic mobility (e.g. Cubans and Colombians). In contrast, given that the American racial binary stigmatises blacks, dark-skinned Latinos are at a disadvantage. Therefore, dark-skinned Dominicans and Puerto Ricans may choose to lessen the impact of black skin by emphasising their Latino background (Patterson, 1975).

Roberto's comfort with Puerto Rican dialect and culture also benefited his interactions with Puerto Ricans. In one conversation with a Puerto Rican store manager with access to promising business contacts, Roberto was initially uncertain

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4 A derogatory word for a dark-skinned person.

about the ethnicity of his interlocutor. Not wanting to preclude common identifications that would connect him to his peer, Roberto used his multi-dialects and knowledge of multiple frames of ethnic reference, but especially Puerto Rican ones, to keep interactional possibilities open. In other words, he invoked multiple ethnic categories in his conversation according to what he believed were the moment-by-moment interactional needs. However, in his conversations with Venezuelans he used an exaggerated form of Venezuelan Spanish (VS)[5], one that seemed to overcompensate for his tenuous connections to Venezuela and Venezuelan identification. Thus, Roberto is quite flexible in his use of ethnicity for achieving a number of interactive and material goals. He especially aligned himself to Puerto Rican categorisation. As seen in his network, Roberto had little contact with Venezuelans and Venezuelan culture. Puerto Rican influences were more present in his life. Major sources of Puerto Rican cultural knowledge came from his current wife and past wife who both identify as Puerto Rican. Additionally, influential neighbourhood relationships during his adolescence were with Puerto Ricans. Finally, Roberto confirmed that he was much more familiar with the island of Puerto Rico than with his birth country.

These experiences have played important roles in shaping Roberto's ethnic self-understandings. Roberto occupies a gray zone, vacillating between the fact of his kin and birth ties to Venezuela and his experiential and interactional ties to Puerto Rican identification. His discourse suggests this. If he has no choice but to identify himself by a label, he will choose Venezuelan. But if he has room to manage his ethnic self-presentation he draws readily upon his knowledge of Puerto Rican culture and behaviour and Puerto Rican linguistic norms.

Roberto's case further suggests that ethnic and national labels can be misleading. Labels in social scientific research draw boundaries around populations assumed to share attributes and outcomes. But Roberto's daily practice reveals just how arbitrary these boundaries can be. US Census conventions would categorise him as a white, Hispanic from South America. Yet his linguistic preferences, social environment and cultural knowledge align him well with New York Puerto Ricans. Scientists have called attention to the inadequacy of using *race* and *ethnicity* as explanatory variables, when what they actually capture is socio-economic variation (Rivara & Finberg 2001; Collins 2001; Schwartz 2001). Promising alternatives or supplements to ethnic categories can be found in social network measures (e.g. distribution of ethnicities among network members) and in questions about language use.

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5 By exaggerated we mean that his speech was heavily intonated and distinctly VS lexical items were frequently repeated throughout his speech.

Abel

The other focal participant is Abel, an Ecuadorian-born Queens resident. Like Roberto, Abel is bilingual but dominant in Spanish. Abel's case becomes especially instructive as we consider the relationship between subjective feelings of ethnic group membership and the everyday use of ethnic categories. Linguistically, Abel adopted elements of other Spanish dialects besides his native Ecuadorian, namely Colombian and Rioplatense Spanish, and to some extent, Caribbean Spanish. He used these dialects with Colombians, Uruguayans, Argentineans, and Puerto Ricans, as a way to lessen communicative or cultural distance. Often he used his linguistic flexibility to distance himself from Ecuadorian identification: this was impression management to lessen the impact of his Ecuadorian indio features and to command respect from others. To this effect, he occasionally altered his accent to feign ethnic identification, particularly to make others believe he was Colombian. Table Three shows the ethnic identifications most often adopted by Abel in his routine interactions.

Table Three

Abel's Ethnic and Regional Identifications

Category	Description	Examples
Ecuadorian	Makes claim to origins in Ecuador. Regionalism was an accepted theme among Ecuadorians NYC. Personal anecdotes revealed that Ecuador was divided right in half between los costeños ('the coast people') and los serranos ('the mountain people' or 'indios'). According to the prevalent categorisations in Ecuador, costeños are at once fun-loving, superficial, untrustworthy, open-minded, machistas. Serranos on the other hand are characterised as conservative, hard-working, ignorant, humble and (also) untrustworthy. The alleged differences are so deep that a costeño gets along better with other Latinos than with serranos.	• *Soy ecuatoriano* ('I'm Ecuadorian') • *Aquí somos todos ecuatorianos* ('Here we are all Ecuadorian')

Guayaquileño / Costeño	Makes claim to origin in the coastal city of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city. A preferred identification when de-emphasising Ecuadorian category. Pride in being Guayaquileño thrived on the sentiment that to be from Guayaquil was to be street-smart, confident, and ready. To be from Guayaquil was also a way to disassociate from the negative associations made of indios or serranos.	• *Yo soy de Guayaquil* ('I'm from Guayaquil') • *100 per cent guayaquileño*!
Indio	Identification with a group of people regionally linked to the Sierras of Ecuador or the countryside. Identification as indio is inextricably connected to specific phenotypic characteristics; chiefly, brown skin, short stature, and Asiatic facial features.	• *Mi mamá es indiecita como ella.* ('My mother is a little indian like her') • *Venimos de desendencia india.* ('We are descended from Indians') • *Yo soy cholo*[6]. ('I am Indian')
Latino/Hispano	Identification with the broader pan-ethnic collectivity of people having roots in the Spanish-speaking countries of North and South America and the Caribbean.	• *Siempre yo soy Latino.* ('I'm always Latino')

6 In Ecuador, this derogatory term for people having indigenous heritage connotes backwardness, low educational attainment, and poor social graces. Abel referred to himself in this way to an acquaintance, as a way of jokingly explaining his difficulty with opening a particularly tricky car door.

| Colombian, et al	Makes claim to origin in Colombia and other Latino categories which could not be claimed on the basis of birth origin. Colombian identification associated with favorable traits like whiteness, economic success, and well-mannaredness.	• O sea a mi me daba vergüenza. ('In other words, I was ashamed.') 'Where are you from?' 'Ah, from Colombia! From Venezuela! From Brazil!'

Abel's Social Environment

Abel's personal network suggests a Latino-dominant social environment, as reflected by the ethnic identifications he was most apt to use. His network comprises ten components, but nine of these are isolates. The main network depicted in the centre of the graph includes his work contacts, fellow church members (including pastors) and his family. Similar to Roberto, for Abel the most central person is his wife, Monica.

The main network component is moderately dense, although more dense than Roberto's. Notice for example, more clustering than shown in Figure One. Each of the sub-areas of his network is quite interconnected. Abel's network also spans international boundaries. Several of his family members live abroad; in either Ecuador or Spain. You may recall that Roberto's network was varied in the degree of closeness that he felt towards members of his network. Abel's standard for determining closeness was different, however. He used only two categories to describe his relationship with alters: 'very close' or 'close'. Thus, he reported not feeling 'extremely close' to anyone (one of the category options) but 'close' to many; his wife Monica being his closest relationship.

Abel spent most of his waking hours at work. But this work tended to be an independent endeavour. His close friend and colleague Marco was the only other person who regularly accompanied Abel during his day. They often worked together to sell satellite TV subscriptions, and had developed a system of sharing profits. Although his church was an important facet of his life, he spent very little time in church activities.

It is evident from the list of nationalities that Abel interacted with a diverse range of people. Although many of his alters were Ecuadorian, if we take out the family component it becomes clear that his actual interactions in the US were quite mixed. What is also clear is that he had few close contacts that were American. While diverse, Abel's personal network was entirely composed of Latinos. This fact was evident in the week of close monitoring observations of his daily routine. The non-Latinos he encountered on a daily basis were potential clients in his sales forays.

Figure Two
Abel's Personal Network
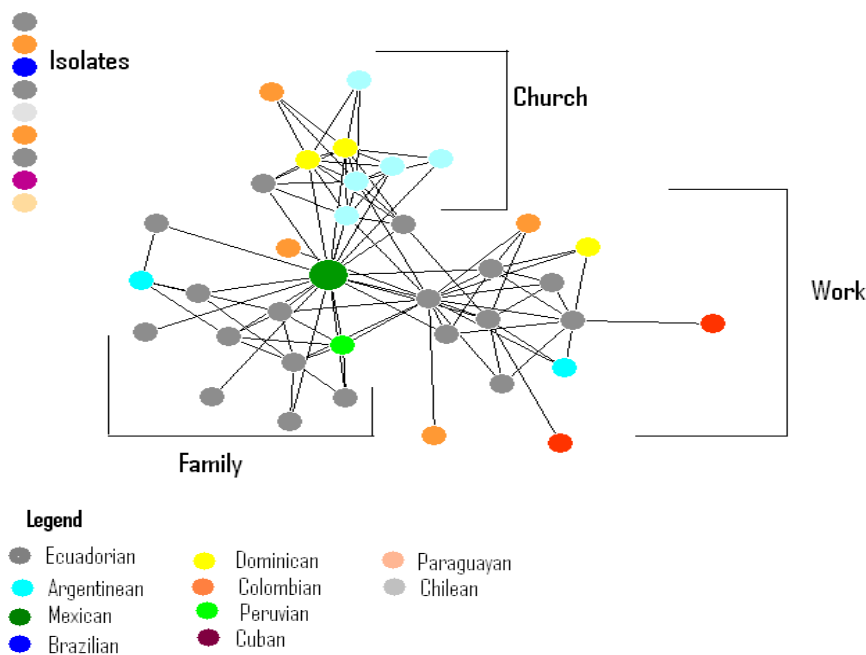
Abel's Sociolinguistic Behaviour

Abel adopted elements of other Spanish dialects, namely Colombian and Rioplatense Spanish, and to some extent, Caribbean Spanish. He used these dialects with Colombians, Uruguayans, Argentineans, and Puerto Ricans, as a way to lessen any communicative or cultural distance. Social Identity Theory asserts that group membership leads to self-categorisation in ways that favour the in-group at the expense of the out-group. Tajfel and Turner (1986) showed that just categorising themselves as group members led people to display in-group favouritism. Thus, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from others. However, in Abel's case, this was not always true. Often, Abel sought positive differentiation from his putative in-group. Basing his actions and interpretations on the negative stereotypes about *serranos* or *indios*, he preferred a regional category (*guayaquileño*). In some cases, he identified with the Colombian category. And he did so in a way that did not over-commit him to Colombian identification: by keeping silent, for example.

Abel differed from Roberto in that he did not have ambiguous physical features that might have allowed him greater control over his ethnic self-presentation. Abel valued this sort of control, at the very least, because it smoothened sales transactions. He quite explicitly admitted the instrumental / material interests he had in ethnic identification. To compensate for this he frequently accommodated or adequated (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), to non-Ecuadorians. Abel used whatever linguistic resources were available to him. But again, unlike Roberto, he lacked the

proficiency in English that might have afforded him more flexibility. Furthermore, his phenotypic features further eliminated certain ethnic options (see Waters, 1990). Because of the negative stereotypes shared in Ecuador (and throughout Latin American) about indios, his options to use this identification as an instrumental tool are considerably limited.

Abel's case highlights key points about ethnic identification. While Abel expressed some symbolic attachment (e.g. music, Ecuador's weather) to his Ecuadorian heritage, these were most salient in his interactions with other Ecuadorians. Although his identification as Ecuadorian likely helped him land the job as a DirectTV salesman, most prominent was a tendency to dissociate from the Ecuadorian category. But to say that he dissociated from the Ecuadorian category should not be taken to mean that he rejected his heritage or possessed some dysfunctional psychological complex. He was firm in his insistence to control how others treated him as best he could. But he also portrayed earnest moments of ethnic pride. Abel's example undergirds a central argument of this research: that ethnic identification (instrumental) often works independently of ethnic self-understanding (non-instrumental).

Discussion

This research documents what may become a prevailing trend in America: using multiple ethnic identifications. The 2000 US Census testifies that multiple race and ethnicity reporting is common among the youngest members of the American population. Increases in reporting multiple race/ ethnic categories reflect a general trend over the past 30 years towards ethnic and racial diversity in the US (Morning, 2003). This trend has been spurred by immigration, inter-ethnic relationships and global communication. Undoubtedly, government structuring of economic and political opportunities along ethnic and racial lines has also encouraged the adoption and use of multiple categories of identification. Responding to the unique problems of counting a diverse population, in 1993 the White House Office of Management and Budget changed federal regulation to allow multiple race / ethnicity reporting in the US Census. Our work substantiates that in people's daily interactions, as in socio-demographic questionnaires, multiple categories are necessary and used to navigate a complex and diverse ethnic landscape. Some, like Abel and Roberto, have quite broad ethnic identification repertoires.

From conversations with hundreds of Latinos in New York, and in-depth work with a select few, among New York Latinos multiple ethnic identifications are common and for the most part, uncontroversial. All of the original eleven participants interviewed or observed, including Roberto and Abel, reported using more than one label to identify themselves to others. Most common is the use of 'Latino' along with a specific national label. These two ethnic options comprise the standard toolkit for ethnic identification among New York Latinos. Both the national and pan-ethnic labels are expressed situationally, but Latino identification functions as a base or a canvas onto which further detail is added as need be. For example, in Roberto's

interaction with the Puerto Rican store manager, shared Latino ethnicity was assumed early on. Uncertain about each others' ethnicity, both adopted a strategy that opened up interactional possibilities. Abel, for his part, identified strongly with other Latinos, having roomed and worked with men from several Latin American countries. Furthermore, his wife, Monica, is Mexican. In general, both Roberto and Abel employed Latino identification when encountering other Latinos whose national origins were unknown. Compared to the nationality-based ethnic categories, inclusion in the Latino label is somewhat lax and characteristically inclusive. Often, ascription of Latino identification by person A onto person B is based on surface assessments of person B's appearance or stereotyped interpretations of behaviour. A person's selection of Latino identification for himself is encouraged by frequent interaction with Latinos from throughout Latin America, as was the case with Abel.

In contexts where Latino identification is in some way obvious or implicit, and specificity required, national labels like 'Venezuelan' and 'Ecuadorian' are used. The use of these labels represents a commitment to one or few categories. Therefore, those wishing ethnic flexibility will tend to avoid using a specific label. Roberto's case illustrates this. Banking on the ambiguity of his physical appearance, he rarely uses Venezuelan identification with non-Venezuelans unless asked directly. Venezuelan identification and cognate behaviours are employed in his interactions with other Venezuelans[7]. Similarly, Abel used *ecuatoriano* with other Ecuadorians, or when interacting with others on a long-term basis. In fleeting encounters, he admitted to using whichever identification was most advantageous, especially *colombiano*.

Further ethnic specificity, as with Abel's *guayaquileño*, serves at least two purposes. One is to package information about socio-economic background, cultural preferences, disposition, and/or status, for presentation to compatriots. This information could serve to positively differentiate oneself from others, or as a basis for further interactions and mutual support. Another function of a specific ethnic or regional label is to dissociate from a more inclusive, negatively evaluated category. It's the 'yes, but' move in ethnic self-presentation: 'Yes, I'm Ecuadorian, but from Guayaquil'. This was evinced by Abel. Wishing to distance himself from negative associations made of Ecuadorians and *indios*, he used *guayaquileño* as a way to draw attention from negative generalisations, taking more control over how others viewed and categorised him.

An important distinction in the matter of context and ethnic identification is whether the context entails a long-term or short-term encounter. Short-term encounters, ones in which actors are unlikely to come in contact again, allow more possibilities for ethnic self-presentation. Indeed, risky ventures like passing, as Abel did when claiming to be Colombian, are most effective in contexts where exposure or challenges are improbable.

Ethnic identification in long-term encounters or relationships tended to conform to the normative influences of relationship histories, habit and group

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[7] In at least one case not analyzed here, Roberto used a more Venezuelan presentation (dialectally) when talking to a South American (non-Venezuelan) man. This led to the only instance recorded in which someone correctly identified him as Venezuelan.

dynamics. Roberto was consistent in his language use and expressions of his ethnicity when with his wife. In fact, ethnicity was not an explicit factor driving their interactions. That being said, their initial relationship was enhanced by Roberto's knowledge of Puerto Rican culture and language, and his attraction to Puerto Rican women. Abel worked daily with a group of Ecuadorian salesmen and women. Thus, he was free to use Ecuadorian dialect and often engaged in banter steeped in references to Ecuadorian politics, people and places. In Abel's case, it was during time spent with other Ecuadorians that he expressed a positive evaluation of and connection to Ecuadorian identification.

Besides the linguistic feats described above, Roberto's and Abel's discursive work also lent support to their switching. As mentioned above, in some cases, Roberto and Abel straightforwardly used ethnic labels to identify themselves to others. Often, switching was achieved through references that signalled their (in-group) knowledge of categories like Puerto Rican, Colombian or African American (c.f. Plotnicov and Silverman, 1978) on ethnic signalling). Making references to in-group knowledge was a subtle means of negotiating multiple ethnicities. It was a way to imply affiliation without necessarily committing to an identification. In this way, ethnically flexible people like Abel and Roberto declare 'I am like_____' rather than 'I am_____'.

Conclusion

This research has shown that one cannot assume a one-to-one relationship between biographical ethnicity and the use of ethnic markers. Often, flexible identification spans multiple levels of inclusiveness (e.g. Latino, *Ecuadorian, serrano, Quechua*). Intriguingly, these repertoires also cross seemingly distinct boundaries (e.g. American, Ecuadorian, Colombian). Ethnic markers, particularly language-related ones, are manipulated in a number of creative ways by members and non-members alike, pushing the limits of what constitutes ethnic group membership and challenging notions of ethnic authenticity. People tended to switch ethnic identifications by changing to or emphasising a certain language or dialect (including accents), or simply by keeping quiet and letting others' assumptions take the lead. The reasons for switching ranged from the relatively minor (getting free drinks), to the quotidian (connecting with friends or landing better dates), to the vital (avoiding problems with immigration, making a sale, or in a job interview). When unpacked, these subtle and routine acts of flexibility reveal a number of compelling features about ethnicity. Ethnicity cannot be said to be who a person is, but rather a way of seeing (Brubaker, 2004) and doing.

By elaborating ethnographically how people choose among multiple ethnic identities in day-to-day contexts, the research informs how and why people decide what to say when they are confronted by questions about ethnicity in the US Census. Understanding what is captured by these categories is important given the reliance on these categories for prioritising needs and distributing resources. Using Roberto's and

Abel's cases, we have shown that specific nationality-based labels are misleading. Therefore, we argue that social scientist would be better served by relinquishing their reliance on self-reported accounts of ethnic identification. Abel's case illustrates how conflicting these self-reported internal states can be. Having developed negative associations of his indio heritage, he altered his behaviour during interactions to dissociate from this identity. To be sure, there are strong emotional and psycho-social attachments to identifying with a group. Yet in everyday lived experience, people like Abel and Roberto behave according to what is most advantageous for them. The sum of these actions translates to predictable patterns of behaviour that may not correlate with emotional or symbolic attachments.

Finally, this research dovetails with work on selective acculturation and segmented assimilation. Both of these critiques to the conventional, linear assimilation theory have pointed out that paths to assimilation are not the same for all immigrants and can depend on a number of immigrant incorporation factors (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Along these lines, our research has shown that the ability to oscillate between ethnic identifications according to situational requirements can lead people to have more than one fixed ethnic preference group (c.f. Nagata, 1974). The diversity of an immigrants' social environment, as reflected in their social networks, can include both mainstream American and home country influences. An immigrant need not choose between one or the other to secure their socio-economic advancement. New York City's bountiful ethnic landscape provides exceptional opportunities for Latino immigrants to develop alternative assimilation paths.

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Chicano Identity and Discourses of Supplementarity on Mexican Cinema: From 'The Man Without a Fatherland' (Contreras Torres, 1922) to 'Under the Same Moon' (Riggen, 2008)

By Armida de la Garza[1]

A radical change took place in Mexican narratives of belonging during the 1990s, when NAFTA was first negotiated. Narratives of migration drastically changed the status of Mexican migrants to the US, formerly derided as 'pochos', presenting them as model citizens instead. Following Derrida, I argue the role of the migrant became that of a supplement, which is, discursively, at the same time external to and part of a given unit, standing for and allowing deeper transformations to take place in the whole discourse of bilateral relations and national identity more generally. I use Derrida's concept of *the supplement* to discuss changing representations of Chicanos in Mexican cinema, and to assess the extent that they have succeeded in reframing the discourse on national identity, with a focus on gender.

Key words: Chicanos, representations, discourse, cinema, supplement

National identity is a discursive construction, and in this article I shall be using these terms in two different but interconnected ways. Firstly, I take my cue from Benedict Anderson's insights regarding the fundamental role of the novel in allowing print-capitalism to emerge, which resulted both in the formation of bourgeoisies that were for the first time national in scope and in providing, through literature, a shared space and time wherein at least the literate elites could imagine a community they belonged to, a community that Anthony Smith has further characterised as being one 'of history and destiny'. (Anderson 1991, 36, Smith, National Identity 1991, 97)

Later, it would be cinema that would take over this role, enlarging membership to the community by allowing illiterate masses to share into those narratives and bringing to the forefront, as Néstor García Canclini would put it, in addition to the epic stock of heroes, the chronicle of the everyday, the habits and tastes, the idiomatic expressions that differentiated one national community from another. (García-Canclini, 2001) Thus, whether on paper or image, narrative discourse is crucial to national identity in that it enables a particular conception of time as both linear and simultaneous within a linguistically bounded community, therefore culturally shared, and also in that the stories narrated are often stories about origins and belonging, of identity and difference, stories that reach a broad share of the population and become the backbone of a national, popular culture. But I shall be using the terms 'discursive construction' in relation to national identity in another way too. This time, on the

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basis of Michel Foucault's theories that the social world, if it is to make sense, must be understood as a discourse, or in other words, as power/knowledge, and further, on Jacques Derrida's assertions that discourses, both textual and social, work on the basis of binary oppositions. (Foucault 1984) (Derrida, Of Grammatology 1976).

In short, my argument is that national identity is a particular kind of social discourse, one that articulates a combination of ethnicity, religion and language as corresponding to a territorially-based unit, also narrated as an ancestral homeland, and seeks to deploy these in ways that foreground difference with the other, its binary opposite. From the twentieth century on, cinema has had a crucial role in the articulating, contesting and spreading of these narratives. Understood as discursive in these ways, there have been two crucial moments during the twentieth century in which the discourse of national identity in Mexico has been transformed. In the paragraphs that follow, I shall outline the key features of these transformations, pointing to the role that Chicanos and Chicanas, as well as Mexicans that cross the border and settle in 'the other side' have had in bringing these about, and the various ways they have been represented on Mexican film.

The first crucial moment when the discourse of national identity was redefined took place after the revolution, when the state sought to integrate indigenous peoples and the working classes into the national project.[2] This was largely attempted by ascribing a positive connotation to the purported hybridity of Mexicans, characterising them as the healthier, stronger product of a pool of genes instead of the 'half breed' that had been prevalent before, and by pursuing policies of assimilation that sought to turn the remaining indigenous minorities into cultural mestizos. (Minna Stern 2003) 'The Indians' would from then on be regarded as ancestors, having existed in a mythical Golden Age the national destiny would one day return the people to. A strong sense of loyalty to the group was cultivated partly through pride in the cultural values that were different from the United States', especially the centrality of the family unit and traditions. And in this discursive field, Chicanos, then referred to derogatorily as pochos, were what Derrida would call undecidable. (Derrida, Limited Inc 1988, 148) Simultaneously claiming the Mexican identity and the American identity that was, until the 1990s, its discursive opposite, Chicanos put into question the fit between the political and the territorial unit that nationalism struggles to create. In other words, the undecidability of the Chicano identity exposed the contingency of the hegemonic meaning of 'Mexicanidad'. It is therefore not surprising that research on representations of Chicanos on Mexican cinema during this period, and also of Mexicans who crossed the border, has found them to be relatively few and overwhelmingly negative, relying on highly didactic narratives. David Maciel has classified them into three types. First of all, there were those stories of people who crossed the Rio Bravo 'to the land of the dollars in search of an

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[2] Headed by José Vasconcelos, the Ministry of Culture engaged in a broad scale attempt to produce artistic representations of Indigenous populations and the working classes, famously including the commissioning of murals by Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and others. (Smith, 2004: 217) The murals later became central to Chicano identity. As will become evident in this piece, in Under the Same Moon, it is the murals too that enable community and identity.

illusive El Dorado', only to suffer unspeakable misfortune. (Maciel 1992, 110) Then there were those films that showed the pocho to be a sort of fake Mexican, a threat to the national culture who would, as it were, dilute or contaminate 'Mexicanidad' through the influence of the American culture of which he or she had become a bearer. And occasionally, a few films did celebrate not so much the immigrants, but those Mexicans who had fought in the 1847 war against the United States to preserve their land. In short, from Miguel Contreras Torres's <u>El Hombre sin Patria/The Man without a Fatherland</u> (1922), and through films with titles such as <u>Los Desarraigados/The Uprooted</u> (Gilberto Gazcón, 1958) and <u>Espaldas Mojadas/Wetbacks</u> (Alejandro Galindo, 1954), Mexican cinema consistently conveyed extremely negative views of Mexicans in the United States and their experience. Other researchers such as Norma Iglesias have identified similar topics, but have also highlighted issues of gender. The protagonists of these films were nearly always male, and the plight of their family left in Mexico was due to their absence. Any women of Mexican ancestry or Chicanas they encountered in the US were invariably prostitutes or thieves, who, in her words, 'may give an impression of happiness in a scene or two but whose life always ended in disgrace', not unlike the femmes fatales of film noir. (Iglesias Prieto, Retratos Cinematgáficos de la Frontera 2003, 336) (my translation) In addition, female characters faced much deeper identity crisis than their male counterparts since, as Iglesias argues and other research has demonstrated, Mexican women have a cultural reproduction role that men do not, so the male characters could simply transit from one culture to the other without having to compromise their identity in comparable ways.[3] (Iglesias Prieto, Retratos Cinematgáficos de la Frontera 2003, 341) According to Rafael Aviña, the preferred genres for topics related to Mexican migration to the US were thus the thriller and the drama, followed by very sensationalist melodrama, and comedy also featured, although more rarely. (Aviña 2004, 61-65) There was also of course what Iglesias terms 'cine fronterizo', border cinema: very low-budget films, featuring rather poor technical and narrative qualities, shown only at a few venues catering to immigrants at the border, but which were nonetheless extremely popular with their audiences. These films tended to focus on the thrills and dangers of crossing, and during the 1980s plots also included issues of drug dealing. (Iglesias Prieto, Retratos Cinematgáficos de la Frontera 2003, 234-235) Representations of Chicanos or of Mexicans crossing were not necessarily as negative as in the more mainstream Mexican cinema, but these films received no theatrical release beyond the border.

The discourse of national identity on which all these representations depended however was seriously challenged during the 1990s, since the onset of what David Harvey has termed the stage of 'flexible accumulation' of capital, and this I argue is the second crucial moment in which the discourse of national identity in Mexico was transformed. (Harvey 1991, 9-10) In Harvey's argument, technical, financial and

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[3] In the realm of fashion, for instance, there is evidence that men in colonised regions soon abandoned traditional clothes, which were regarded in the West as 'effeminate', and took to Western-style garments when seeking a 'modern' appearance, while insisting that women should continue to wear traditional clothes in order to uphold the national identity. (Jones and Leshkowich, 2003: 10-11)

institutional innovations have led from mass industrial production to globalised regimes of flexible accumulation. New sectors of production have emerged, including new ways of providing financial services, intensified rates of commercial, technological and organizational innovation, and above all, new markets that are no longer national in scope. Further, Arjun Appaudrai usefully put forward the notion of the translocality to account for a phenomenon whereby, due to increased migration and the availability of communication technology, the kind of media-based public sphere that Anderson theorised as having provided the cultural substratum for the nation-state was now giving birth to networked communities, composed by a collection of cities across national borders, linked by financial and trade operations as well as by tourism and family ties. (Appadurai 2003, 339)

In Mexico, this phase that Harvey terms of 'flexible accumulation' of capital has been experienced, above all, in the form of a regional economic integration with the United States and Canada, while it was precisely the US-Mexico border and other US and Mexican cities such as Chicago, New York, Puebla and Morelia that were among the examples quoted by Appadurai as fitting his definition of a translocality. Therefore, the revolutionary nationalism discourse outlined above, that constructed national identity on the basis of mestizaje, a syncretic version of Catholicism and a Mexican version of the Spanish language, insisting on its natural fit to the territory, a discourse that had more-or-less successfully answered the question 'who are we?' since the Revolution, began to lose ground. This discourse was replaced by one that sought to find a new meaning for the identity in a supra-national arrangement, the North American Free Trade Area, a discourse which I have termed, following Derrida, of supplementarity. To Derrida, the supplement had a crucial function in any discourse, for while external to the unit that it supplements at the outset, it gradually becomes a part of it, in such a way that the unit is later not complete unless it takes into account its former supplement. The supplement thus allows for change in discourse. (Derrida, Of Grammatology 1976) And it is my contention that the new discourse in question involved the re-framing of all key issues in the very complex bilateral relationship between Mexico and the US, including the external debt, drug trafficking and crucially migration, into narratives of partnership and supplementarity. (De La Garza 2009) Thus dependence for trade on the United States, formerly narrated as an obstacle to be overcome in order to achieve development, was instead presented as privileged access to the American market. More to the point, migration was also recast from a problem in which the United States was a passive victim, into the result of push-pull factors in the world economy that drew the labour force to where jobs were available, for the mutual benefit of both countries and ultimately the world, a situation that would otherwise correct itself as the Mexican economy improved. In 1995 a law allowing dual nationality for Mexican citizens was passed. At the national university, the Centre for Research on North America, formerly devoted to the US and Canada, broadened its remit to include Mexico. By 1999, Vicente Fox, then a presidential candidate, emphasised the proposed creation of institutions for the welfare of migrants, whom he cast as heroes, enthusiastically encouraging Mexicans to, like them, 'dream the American dream'.

Members of Congress to represent migrants were appointed in Zacatecas, one of the key sending states, and were proposed in other states as well. Even CNN weather forecasts shown in Mexico included Mexican cities when telling the forecast for the US. In short, if, as Foucault observed, 'the successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing [the] rules…[to] invert their meaning', the re-grafting of some of the key signifiers that had under the revolutionary nationalism discourse given meaning to Mexicanity into new discourses of supplementarity was indeed a success of the younger generation of the political and business elite of the period. (Foucault 1984, 86) They recast 'dependence' as 'opportunity', 'development' as 'integration', and allowed for national identity to be understood as Mexican even beyond the territorial borders of the nation.

And again, the discourse of supplementarity found expression on film, especially after the large-scale privatization that took place during the Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo administrations (1988-1994 and 1995-2000 respectively), in what is now called the 'Buena Onda Cinema'. (Wood 2006) It was of course Alfonso Arau's highly successful Like Water for Chocolate (1992) that inaugurated the trend. In this film, although it is not for the protagonist Tita to marry the American doctor, for as Barbara Tenenbaum has observed, it would have been easy for Mexican audiences to understand this as another instance of 'La Malinche', her aptly named niece Esperanza does marry the doctor's son, leaving integration to the new generations. (Tenenbaum 1997, 158) A plethora of gendered discourses in the media at the time also described Mexican and American integration in similar terms. Examples range from Sidney Weintraub's A Marriage of Convenience: Relations Between Mexico and the United States, published in 1990, to the description of the embrace between the majors of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, an American man and a Mexican woman respectively, who crossed the border to celebrate the 'arrival of the new millennium with an international hug and a kiss'. (Domínguez and Fernández de Castro 2001, 155) In a similar vein, Santitos, a farcical comedy by Alejandro Springall (1998), tells the story of a woman also called Esperanza, who goes to the United States believing her daughter has been kidnapped and is being held there. Her quest takes her all the way from Veracruz to Los Angeles, which on the film is shown to be as any other Mexican City would be. Esperanza cannot find her daughter there, but she finds and falls in love with no other than Angel, a wrestler famous for fighting and defeating 'La Migra'.[4] The film thus involves a process of negotiation of this woman's identity as Mexican beyond the territorial borders, and as a Spanish-speaking Catholic who nonetheless resorted to prostitution on her way to the US in her attempts to find her daughter. While she fails in this endeavour, she succeeds in beginning a new life in the U.S. But, as I have argued elsewhere, perhaps more forcefully than all these, the narrative that presented Chicanos and Mexican immigrants to the US as a supplement was put forward by Arau's son Sergio in 2004 with his *A Day without a Mexican*. (De La Garza 2009) In his words, 'the film sought

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[4] More complex portrayals of Chicanos and of Mexicans crossing the border were offered by Maria Novaro's *The Garden of Eden* (1994) and by Carlos Bolado's *Bajo California: En el Límite del Tiempo* (1998).

to make visible that which is invisible by removing it'. (Arau in Coll 2004) The idea, he explained, came from the 'Day without Art' organised in New York in 1994 when all museums and galleries closed for a day, to pay homage to those artists who had died as victims of AIDS. It is constructed around a simple but effective plot: the sudden and inexplicable disappearance of all Latino immigrants from the state of California. This disappearance brings the economic and social life of the region to a standstill and the consequences are explored in the mockumentary. Moreover, its theatrical release closely matched Appadurai's map of the Mexican-American translocality, bringing audiences for the opening night in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, among other cities in the US, to share the same culture-laden time with audiences in Mexico City and Guadalajara. The film ultimately had a mixed reception, since, unlike the short version filmed in 1998, it represented 'Mexicans' only as unqualified labour power, being the gardeners, maids and drivers that sustain the American dream, a picture that ignored the contributions of the many Chicanos and Mexican immigrants in the arts, higher education, investment and the liberal professions. The position that was critical to Arau could be summarized as arguing that there are Mexicans and Chicanos that are also part of the American dream, not just enabling it to happen but also living it, only that they dream it in Spanish, and this is their own right.

I would argue, however, that more important than the nature of the representations themselves is the fact that the stock of genres employed to depict the Mexican and the Mexican-American experience in the US was significantly broadened during this period. For, as John Corner reminds us, form is at least as important as content. (Corner 2002, 295) Form, after all, plays an important role in cuing modes of responding to the images, in promoting or hindering empathy with the characters, in eliciting realist or romantic modes of engagement with the stories told, and, in short, in turning narrated reality into either shocking or soothing bits-bytes. Therefore, it is significant not only that the experience of Chicanos and Mexican immigrants is now being narrated through genres other than the thriller and the very sensationalist melodrama, but specifically through the mock documentary, a postmodern genre based on parody and disbelief towards metanarratives including nationalism, even if it is also an inherently ambiguous, and also an inherently hybrid genre. More recently, in another instance of hybridisation to express narratives of national identity under migration, it was the task of Under the same Moon by Patricia Riggen (2008) to put forward new versions of Mexican immigrants and Chicanos. And it is to this film that I now turn to make my last point on the changing discourse of national identity and its representations of Chicanos and Mexican immigrants as supplements on Mexican cinema.

Under the Same Moon tells the story of Carlitos, a nine year old boy that illegally crosses the border to look for his (single) mother Rosario, herself an illegal immigrant working as a maid in the US, following the sudden death of his grandmother, who looked after him in Rosario's absence. The title alludes to a strategy for consolation as Rosario had told him that should he ever feel lonely, he should just look at the moon, because it would be the same moon she would be

watching too, and they would be connected, knowing they were, in fact, together, 'under the same moon'. During his quest, Carlitos meets Enrique, another illegal immigrant—and surrogate father—who is at first hostile to the child but who gradually develops a close friendship with him and helps him find his mother. The film thus draws upon the conventions of—and hybridises between—both the road movie and a less sensationalist form of melodrama to tell its story.

As a genre, the road movie has often been regarded as quintessentially American and mostly concerned with identity quests. Typically, travellers embark in a journey of learning and (often self) discovery and there is a transformation as a result of the trip. To Stephen Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, 'The road movie is […] a Hollywood genre that catches peculiarly American dreams, tensions and anxieties, even when imported by the motion picture industries of other nations'. (Cohan and Hark 1997, 2) Critics who hold this view argue this is because 'only America offers the geographic and symbolic conditions required to realise a road movie proper', these having to do with the mythology of the frontier and with the sense of freedom to reinvent onself afforded by the open space of the highway, both foundational to American identity. (Mazierska and Rascaroli 2006, 5) 'These expansive spaces obviously recall the western's articulation of the frontier […] However, the road movie re-invents the western's pre-industrial iconography of slow-paced horse treks as motorised motion and speed'. (Laderman 2002, 14) As Enrique and Carlitos are illegal immigrants, of course, their journey takes place mostly by bus or hitchhiking. But the public or borrowed nature of the transport they employ does not prevent them from gaining access to this travelling experience that the genre has turned into an inherently 'American' one. They too are shown on the road, amidst the kind of romanticised landscape that is read as 'a sign of the infinite opportunities awaiting travellers' including, in their case, finding jobs and protection almost wherever they go and even being given a lift by a famous music band.[5] (Mazierska and Rascaroli 2006, 14) By the end of the trip, Enrique has learned to rid himself of the anger and selfishness he displayed in the beginning, even risking to be deported to help the child, and in performing the role of a father he has learned to become one. For Carlitos, the journey is mostly about reconstructing the (Mexican) family beyond the borders of the nation, and it involves the negotiation of the role of the father, as at one point Enrique and Carlitos do find the latter's biological father, also an illegal immigrant in the US, but he disavows the child and the journey continues in the company of Enrique. If the metaphor famously employed by Octavio Paz when he attempted to trace Mexican identity back to the indigenous mother and the Western (Spaniard) father still holds, it would seem the proposal in this fundamentally oedipal narrative is to represent the possibility of a new Mexican identity, with a younger motherland that is perfectly capable to exist and sustain and nurture the identity beyond the borders—the older motherland, Rosario's mother, is dead—,and a father whose biological background is irrelevant, a father who becomes one just by performing as

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[5] *Los Tigres del Norte*, who also make a cameo there, provide the sound track, including the song on Superman's notorious alien status, given that he came, as their song reminds us, not just from another country but from another planet, Krypton: 'Superman's a Wetback'.

such, and whose sacrifice is ultimately essential for the realisation of this new version of the identity. (Paz 1967) Inasmuch as the main role of the father is to provide for the material conditions of existence and rule in a patriarchal family, this role is to be shared by Rosario and the American state.

This leads us to the other genre that is central to the story, namely melodrama, traditionally aknowledged as existing in many cultures and times but flourishing profusely in Mexico, especially as regards 'telenovelas', soapoperas. Melodrama was for a long time derided as crude, manipulative and sensationalist. However, the genre has now been re-conceptualised as an important part of poular culture concerned with the family and women, and also a potentially subversive one given its focus on excess, which challenges supposedly realist representations that are in fact thoroughly ideological. More importantly for our purposes here however is the fact that melodrama as a genre is not regarded as inherently Western, and indeed is often valorised for 'the ways [it] illuminates deeper structres of other cultures'. (Dissanayake 1993, 2) In a renewed 'mestizaje' of sorts then, Riggen's combination of precisely the American road movie and Mexican melodrama tells as much of her subject matter as does the story itself. At first sight it would seem that a road movie with melodramatic undertones is far better suited to represent Mexican immigrants and Chicanos than were the thrillers on drug dealing and prostitution of the period 1950s-1980s; the ambiguous, post-modern mockumentaries and satirical farces of the 1990s and early 2000s; or indeed the open didacticism of the silent cinema, when the likes of <u>The Man Without a Fatherland</u> represented 'pochos' as fundamentally flawed, trecherous characters and the only hope for being (Mexican) lied in Mexican soil, with no possibility of disembedding the culture. Moreover, apart from the generic strategies that <u>Under the Same Moon</u> employed to tell the story, there is more that seems innovative and even progressive in this film. In a time when a Conservative and avowedly Catholic Party, the National Action Party (PAN, in Spanish), heads the country, the family unit is nonetheless approvingly represented as constituted by a single parent, initially the grandmother, and then Carlitos's mother. The absent father is not for this woman the cause of suffering and misfortune, but rather separation from her child. Female characters are overall seemingly empowered ones, not only the main character, Rosario, who is the immigrant and the breadwinner, but also nearly all supporting female characters have active roles, that is, they are shown to make things happen—even if not always entirely morally sound. Doña Carmen, for instance, played by Carmen Salinas, heads a group of 'coyotes' that bring illegal immigrants across the border. Doña Reyna, played by Maria Rojo, hosts illegal immigrants in her home and rescues the child from abduction at a moment he is about to be sold into prostitution. And even in the Chicano couple, it is the woman who takes the initiative to go into the illegal business, to help her partner fund his studies. In the car that crosses Carlitos over the border, it is she who is, literally and metaphorically, in the driving seat. The film would also seem to be advancing a feminist agenda in that the director and producer, Patricia Riggen, and the scriptwriter, Ligiah Villalobos, are women, and this could presumably account for the feminine perspective.

Moreover, like the two Esperanzas in <u>Like Water for Chocolate</u> and <u>Santitos,</u> but with a more Catholic-sounding name, Rosario also eventually finds her home to be in the United States, but unlike them, she achieves this together with her family. For week after week, on Sundays, Rosario had been calling her son from a public booth and she had been describing the surroundings for him. Right opposite the booth, she would say, is a pizza shop, and right next to it a laundry, and to the left hand side a mural, well known in Mexican and Chicano iconography as an utmost artistic representation of national identity. And it is this description of hers that existed also in her son's mind that he remembers when he is in Los Angeles, and that ultimately allows him to find her at the usual call time on the Sunday, since he and Enrique thoroughly search for this particular combination of places anywhere near all murals in Los Angeles. Anderson's theory on imagined communities is thus here pushed to its limits. It is the community between Mexico and the United States existing in the minds of the thirty odd million Mexican Americans and Mexicans living in the US and their relatives that is also giving shape to a really-existing cultural community that can sustain a sense of belonging and identity pretty much along the lines that traditional national identity used to. Moreover, like Anderson's national realm, it is a community grounded on technology, this time in the form of the telephone as much as on the image, on the basis of Rosario's description imagined by her son, but also and more crucially on the basis of what we might call image-capitalism, with the pizza shop described and then depicted in the film being an instance of the many multinational corporations across the border of both countries, partly financing the film through tie-ins at the same time as they make the encounter between Rosario and her son possible.

In sum, migration would seem to have finally accomplished an ever more progressive journey of representation, from the immigrant or the Chicano being <u>The Man without a Fatherland</u> to Mexican women immigrants being shown <u>Under the Same Moon</u> as their families regardless of political borders, and capable of negotiating their identity, notably as regards religion, in the process, without having to, as it were, 'sell out'. In the meantime, the Chicano and the Mexican immigrant have been humanised and their dignity has been returned to them, as they have gone from mere 'braceros', or spare arms, to full-blown supplements, fully human valuable additions to both the American and Mexican identity.

I would argue however that although there may be a grain of truth in this picture, a closer reading of the film yields rather different, more pessimistic conclusions. While there may be a female protagonist and a female director and scriptwriter, the story itself and the treatment of it could hardly be more patriarchal. What makes Rosario commendable, after all, is motherhood, and with the absent father, she enacts yet again one of the only two traditional subject positions for women in patriarchal Latin America, namely that of the virgin mother, the other option being that of the prostitute. (Hershfield 2001) To remain pure and a worthy figure she must renounce even Paco, the security guard in the compound where she works and who is hopelessly in love with her, however Mexican he may be. Moreover, among the American characters, it is also the one who is a mother that is more human and

capable of transcending race, in that it is she who warns Rosario about the journey her son has embarked into to search for her. Rosario's other American female employer, childless, is arrogant and exploitative. And Rosario's Mexican younger friend, Martha, shown enjoying sexuality in a freer way, is not a mother. In addition, 'woman' is also objectified in the publicity stills for this film, which show a massive close-up of the woman's head that in one case occupies half the front cover of the DVD, while the two male figures of her son and Enrique are shown on the road below, full-bodied.[6] Moreover, the male-bonding story of the road movie is at least as important as the supposedly more feminine melodrama. Ultimately, the question also lingers whether the apparently progressive focus on a woman immigrant is not further contributing to the feminization of Mexico once again as in the gendered discourses that became common during NAFTA negotiations. For while male immigrants are in the US perceived as a potential threat and cause anxiety on miscegenation, women are perceived as vulnerable and have traditionally had a role as part of war spoils, thus it is the Mexican male, the absent father, that must be dispensed with in the film. And last but not least, Chicanos themselves are once again thoroughly derided, in that the only Chicano couple depicted in the film match the representations of Chicanos as culturally inferior individuals with a fake identity, who cannot even speak what is regarded as their language, Spanish, and who are trying to enter the human smuggling business by crossing babies through the border. More importantly, the narrative of the Mexican as having a place in the US, but this place being that of a second class citizen, is here not only suggested, as in Arau's film, but even naturalised, recruiting the moon itself to the effort. The potentially transformative role of the supplement is thus neutralised in this narrative. The relative box-office success of Under the same Moon, which was shown in 454 theatres in the US for 17 weeks and garnered slightly over USD $23,042,107 in the period, featuring number ten among the US top ten in April 2008, must then lie in its populist strand at a time when the Chicano production is also far less radical and moving towards the mainstream.[7] We might be Under the same Moon in a postnational translocality, but for Mexican immigrant women, Chicanos and Chicanas, it still looks like it is The Man without a Fatherland that has managed to retain the centre stage.

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[6] For a detailed theorisation of the close-up in film, see Doane, 2003.

[7] This still compares favourably to A Day without a Mexican, which only managed USD$10,057,021 and was shown in 107 theatres for 31 weeks, despite its (failed) efforts to recruit personalities such as Gabriel García Márquez to endorse the film.

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Mexican Hometown Associations in the U.S.:
Motives for Transnational Engagement

Lars Ove Trans[1]

Most of the literature on Mexican hometown associations (HTAs) has focused on their role as development agents and often emphasized the rapprochement carried out by the Mexican state in order to attract remittances. Although the Mexican state plays an important part in the proliferation of HTAs in the United States, the reasons for migrant involvement in HTAs are often left unexplored and typically explained as a result of 'emotional attachments'. This article, however, taking a Weberian approach, argues that it is important to consider a wider range of motives of the individual migrants for transnational engagement such as involvement in HTAs and hometown development. The article is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out among migrants from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, living in Los Angeles, California.

Keywords: Hometown associations; transnationalism; collective remittances; indigenous communities; actor-centred approach; motivations.

Introduction

The question dealt with in this article concerns the involvement of migrants in hometown associations and in particular why many migrants continue to be members of such associations even after they seem to have become firmly settled in the United States. In other words, the intention is to address a well-known and –researched phenomenon by addressing it from an angle that has so far received little attention, namely by focusing on the motives of the individual migrants for participating in these associations. The empirical material used for the exploration of these motives draws upon my fieldwork among migrants from the state of Oaxaca living in Los Angeles[2] as well as on examples from the existing literature on migration. Thus, some of the motives presented here have already been described to some extent by other migration researchers in order to explain types of transnational activities. Nevertheless, the aim here is to use these various insights in a more systematic way

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[2] The main part of the fieldwork was carried out over extended periods from 2002 to 2004 in Los Angeles and supplemented with short periods in the hometown in Oaxaca. In addition, a short follow-up fieldwork was carried out in the spring of 2009 in Los Angeles.

and to apply them to one particular form of transnational engagement, namely HTA membership.

The significance of HTA membership is not merely of academic interest. Throughout the United States there has since the 1990s been a rapid increase in the formation of HTAs from Mexico and Central America (Orozco, 2004) and it is now estimated that there are more than 3,000 Mexican HTAs in the U.S. (Fitzgerald, 2008: 146). Although the collective remittances sent by HTAs have been estimated to account for only one percent of the total amount of remittances (IFAD, 2004), collective remittances nevertheless hold a different type of development potential as they typically are destined for public works projects, which benefit the entire village of origin. Thus, Portes and Landolt (2000: 543) observed that '[t]owns with a hometown association have paved roads, electricity, and freshly painted public buildings'. Similarly, Orozco and Lapointe (2004: 48) point out that investments made by HTAs 'vastly outdo public works spending in small communities, and in many cases, basic infrastructural work carried out by HTAs forms the essential base for further economic development in these towns'. In this connection, the exploration of motives can, in addition to providing information about what drives migrants to engage in HTAs, also present some indications of the circumstances which are conducive to the persistence of collective remittances flowing to the villages of origin as well as the situations in which they are likely to decrease.

Finally, it should be noted that although the article argues for the usefulness of an actor-centred approach, which brings attention to individual motives, it does not imply that this approach should be privileged in relation to more structurally focused analyses. Indeed, as it will be argued, motives can only be understood in relation to the given social, political and economic structures, and in the case of migrants these structures often include the context of reception as well as the context of origin. In this sense, the article can be said to be methodologically oriented in two ways: first, the emphasis on the insights gained by systematic explorations of individual motives and, secondly, the call for multi-sited approaches that situate the object of investigation within a framework that includes the contexts in the place of origin as well as the place of destination.

Background and Research on Hometown Associations

Migration often takes place within existing networks where early migrants help newcomers from their communities of origin to find work and housing in the new context and thereby progressively reduce the costs and risks associated with migration (Massey *et al*., 1987). Generally, migrant associations evolve out of these informal networks of migrants who are already linked together by ties of kinship, friendship and residential propinquity. The associations typically involve a semblance of formal structure such as an organizational name, a charter, by-laws, a dues schedule and a leadership committee (Hirabayashi, 1993: 14). Although membership in most migrant associations is not ascriptive or obligatory, it is usually delimited in terms of eligibility: a migrant must come from a given locale in order to belong

(Hirabayashi, 1986: 9). That is, in contrast to voluntary associations in general, migrant associations are by definition based on ties having to do with 'common origin', although the precise meaning of this is often an issue of contention.

Some of the earliest associations of immigrants from the same hometowns are the *landsmanshaftn*, composed of Eastern European Jews who came to the U.S. between 1880 and 1923 (Rivera-Salgado, 1999: 1449). Mexican associations, commonly known as *clubes de oriundos*, also have a long history in the U.S. and the most prominent go back to the 1950s (Bada, 2003). In particular, the Mexican HTAs have proliferated since the early 1980s and this trend accelerated in the 1990s as a result of the outreach efforts made by the Mexican government through the establishment of the *Programa de Atención a Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero* (PACME), which aimed at strengthening the affective ties to the Mexicans abroad (Goldring, 1998). PACME gave a reinvigorated role to the Mexican consular offices, which since then have actively promoted the formation of HTAs (Zabin and Escala, 2002), and it also included the Three-for-One programmes that provide federal, state and municipal matching funds for donations sent by HTAs for development projects in the communities of origin.[3] In addition to funding public works projects in the hometowns, the HTAs also typically provide mutual assistance to their members in the new context and host social and recreational activities, and only to a lesser extent are they beginning to become politically involved in the U.S. (Zabin and Escala, 2002; Rivera-Salgado, 2006).

Much of the early research on migrant associations, influenced by functionalist and modernist paradigms, focused on their socio-psychological aspects by emphasizing their roles as 'buffers' that would 'cushion' the rural migrants against the culture shock of the big city or facilitate a positive transition to the urban context (e.g. Parkin, 1966; Little, 1973). Later research, informed by the historical-structuralist perspective, focused on HTAs as a result of the rural-urban ties that proliferate because of outmigration from the underdeveloped areas and as a response to dependency stemming from unequal patterns of national and local development (Roberts, 1974). Since the 1990s, a number of researchers, working within the transnational migration paradigm, have rejected the macro-approach adopted by historical structuralism and, instead of seeing migrants as passive reactors manipulated by the world capitalist system, emphasized their role as active agents (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1992, 1995). Generally, this approach has also informed most of the more recent research on migrant associations, which has tended to focus on their role as development agents – a tendency furthered by the celebratory approach of international development agencies towards migrant remittances – and their involvement in local and national politics in the country of origin.

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[3] The programme, initially known as '*Dos por Uno*' (Two for One), was first introduced in the state of Zacatecas in 1993. In 2001, the Mexican government implemented the programme nationwide and it has since then co-funded more than 7,000 projects with 723 HTAs in 34 U.S. states (Somerville *et al.*, 2008: 11). In the fiscal year 2005, Mexican HTAs raised about US$22 million for small- and mid-sized development projects, which was matched by US$66 million in Mexican federal, state, and local government contributions through the three-for-one programme (Rivera-Salgado, 2006: 6).

While the latter approach provides important insights into the types of activities carried out by the migrant associations, the motives of the migrants for engaging in these practices have rarely been examined. For the most part, the HTA activities tend to be conceptualized in terms of 'migrant philanthropy' (e.g. Orozco, 2007; Alarcón and Escala Rabadán, 2007), which seems to suggest that the migrants are mostly compelled by altruistic motives. However, even in the cases where researchers have sought to explain what drives migrants to engage in institutionalized transnational practices such as HTAs, there is often a tendency to view it as being primarily a result of 'emotional attachment' (e.g. Ferguson, 1992; Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo, 2002). For instance, Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo (2002: 769) argue that `immigrants who participate in transnational institutions are not necessarily driven by altruistic motives. They may be engaged in the pursuit of an enhanced social status or motivated by the desire to leave a personal mark in the place where they were born. Yet, sociocultural transnational participation is guided more by affective and symbolic motives than by instrumental rationality´.Although the motives of belonging and social status often are essential aspects of HTA membership, there may nevertheless also, as it will be argued in this article, exist more instrumental motives for this type of involvement.

Finally, it might be argued that Oaxacan migration provides a somewhat special case, because most of the migrants come from indigenous communities that maintain distinctive traditions of organizing and strong communal work obligations (Wolf, 1957), which sometimes are extended to include migrants in the new areas of destination (e.g. Kearney and Besserer, 2004; Trans, 2006). However, particularly in the research on indigenous migrants, there has often been a tendency to resort to a 'cultural' explanation where the indigenous identity and the cooperative traditions are seen as the basis for the formation of HTAs (Doughty, 1970; Zabin and Escala, 1998). Indeed, Orellana's (1973: 282) study of a group of Mixtec migrants from Oaxaca actually concludes that '[v]illage associations occur exclusively among rural Indian migrants coming from villages with a strong tradition of communal activity systems'. However, by focusing primarily on the importance of indigenous identity and traditions, such studies generally risk missing the causes and conditions which leads to the formations of HTAs, and although the cooperative traditions and identification *may* provide an important background for their creation, it is necessary to emphasize that HTAs are not mere extensions of such traditions. Rather, as Hirabayashi points out in his study of Zapotec migrants from Oaxaca in Mexico City, the 'preexisting regional sentiments typified by the phenomenon of pueblismo are shaped, re-created, and explicitly articulated in terms of the norm of paisanazgo by the Mountain Zapotec migrants *in the urban setting*' (1993: 14, original emphasis). That is, when Zapotec migrants emphasize the norm of *paisanazgo*, which prescribes solidarity and mutual aid on the basis of common origin and under specific circumstances can lead to the formation of HTAs, it is nevertheless still based on a choice that develops in response to the social, cultural and economic conditions they

face in the new urban context.[4] Thus, while indigenous migrants from Oaxaca compared to their *mestizo* compatriots often share stronger senses of communal orientation, due to the cooperative traditions in their villages of origin, the decision to be or not to be a member of an HTA is still the result of a choice, and as such it becomes interesting to examine the motives behind these choices.

Exploring Motives in the Social Sciences

The exploration of motives in the social sciences was first suggested by the German sociologist Max Weber. Following the ideas of Wilhelm Dilthey, Weber pointed out that, within the overall phenomenon of human conduct, we may distinguish between the purely outward behaviour (*Verhalten*) and its internal aspect in the form of subjective meaning (*Sinn*). Because there is no single rational motive that underlies human social action, any given type of behaviour can in theory be caused by an infinite variety of internal, mental states – or subjective meanings – that include rational as well as irrational elements. In order to interpret a particular act correctly it is therefore necessary also to come to an understanding of the subjective meaning of the actor.

Thus, according to Weber, there are two types of understanding involved in explaining a given action. The first, which Weber terms 'direct observational understanding' (*aktuelles Verstehen*), seeks to establish the meaning of the particular act or expression without reference to any broader context. The second type of understanding, termed explanatory understanding (*erklärendes Verstehen*), consists in placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning and by attaching a motive to it based on the situation in which it occurs. Explanatory understanding thereby adds something that cannot be derived from immediate observation alone by also seeking to establish the underlying motive, which Weber (1968: 8) defines as 'a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the conduct in question'.

In order to approach an understanding of the motive behind a particular act, the researcher has to undertake a 'sympathetic participation' or 'empathic re-experiencing' in which he or she seeks to become acquainted with the actor's own intellectual and emotional categories of interpretation (Burger, 1977: 130). There are, however, a number of obstacles to this procedure. For instance, as Weber (1968: 21) points out, in most cases the actor is governed by impulse or habit where 'actual action goes on in a state of inarticulate half-consciousness or actual unconsciousness of its subjective meaning'. Furthermore, even when a group of actors is aware about their subjective meanings of a given action, the actors themselves may not always agree on the categories and rules of interpretation (ibid. 27-28). Thus, as Weber himself cautions, in comparison with explanation in the natural sciences, the

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[4] Moreover, as Hirabayashi (1993) points out, there are limits to the mutual aid, and paisanazgo ties can be terminated in certain contexts (ibid. 129), and, indeed, some of the village migrants chose not to affiliate with their *paisanos* (ibid. 96). Paisanazgo is not a term that was used among the Oaxacan migrants in Los Angeles, but the same obligations of mutual aid entailed in the concept also exist in Los Angeles.

additional achievement of explanation by interpretive understanding is 'attained only at a price – the more hypothetical and fragmentary character of results' (ibid. 15).

Nevertheless, through methods such as long-term fieldwork and participatory observation, it is possible for the researcher to gradually become acquainted with shared emotional and intellectual ways of reacting to specific types of circumstances within a particular culture. Such techniques also permit the observation of practices, for instance surrounding HTA membership, which are often not being articulated directly. In the process, it becomes possible to identify what is considered 'rational', 'normal' or 'usual' under the prevailing conditions and, by the same token, to separate subsidiary patterns which are not shared to the same degree (Burger, 1977: 130). Through these insights, the researcher can systematize his observations into what Weber terms 'ideal types' based on 'the classification of possible types of subjective meaning' (Weber 1968: 22). These ideal types function by arranging what initially seemed to be indistinct traits into a consistent construct by an elucidation of their essential elements (Morrison, 2006: 346). That is, through an exposition or one-sided accentuation of certain essential characteristics that appear to be common tomost cases of a given phenomena, it becomes possible to synthesize them into an ideal type.

The Village of Zoogocho and Its Migrant Associations

San Bartolomé Zoogocho is a small Zapotec village located in the Sierra Madre mountain range in the state of Oaxaca. Before the twentieth century, Zoogocho was relatively isolated and only a small number of people spoke Spanish. The first experiences with migration among the Zoogochenses began in the early twentieth century when women went to do domestic work for rich families in Oaxaca City and some of the men would follow to become street vendors. In the 1930s, a number of villagers migrated to Mexico City and this trend intensified in the early 1940s as the population of Zoogocho peaked at 1,125 persons and put pressure on the available land and raised the level of poverty (Ramos Pioquinto, 1991: 334). Mexico City had in turn become the primary site of industrial development and abounded with occupational and educational opportunities (Hirabayashi, 1997: 50). The first U.S. migration began in 1944 when the US-Mexico agricultural contract labour programme (1942-1964), known as the *Bracero Programme*, opened its office in Oaxaca and 84 men from Zoogocho decided to enlist. When the Bracero Programme was ended, some of the younger Zoogochenses using the experiences acquired during the programme began to migrate illegally to the U.S. In the 1980s, the prolonged economic crisis in Mexico accelerated the trend of U.S. migration to above all Los Angeles. Since then, as one informant described it, every Thursday when the weekly bus connection to Oaxaca arrived, a few paisanos would leave the village. Today,

there are less than 100 people living in the village[5] and most of them are elderly and retired, who live on remittances sent by migrant relatives or, in some cases, on the pensions they receive from having worked in the U.S. Thus, Zoogocho has witnessed a steady and dramatic decline in the number of inhabitants, to a point where it has virtually become a 'ghost town'.

Today, the far largest group of Zoogochenses lives in Los Angeles, numbering approximately 5-600 migrants (Trans, 2006), while much smaller numbers remain in the two other main destinations, namely Oaxaca City and Mexico City. In each of the destinations, the Zoogocho migrants have set up hometown associations and every adult who was born in the village is automatically considered a member of the union. The HTAs all have close ties with the village of origin but have each fulfilled different functions depending on its location, leadership and number of members. The first of the HTAs, the *Unión Fraternal Zoogochense* (UFZ), which was formed in Mexico City in 1951, has fulfilled an important economic and political function, sending its yearly monetary contribution to the village and dealing with the federal department offices to acquire public services to the village (Ramos Pioquinto, 1991: 337-8). The latter purpose of establishing links between villagers and government officials in their petitioning for access to governmental resources was an important aspect of the Oaxacan HTAs that was set up in Mexico City during this period (Hirabayashi, 1997). Second, in 1969, the Zoogocho migrants in Los Angeles created the *Unión Social Zoogochense* (USZ), which although being politically insignificant has had an incomparable economic importance for the development of the hometown by sending by far the largest amount of money. Finally, in 1974, the Zoogochenses residing in Oaxaca City founded the *Frente Unificador Zoogochense "José Jacinto de Santiago"*, which has mainly had a political function through their close ties with the municipal authority in Zoogocho (Ramos Pioquinto, 1991: 337-8).

In the case of the USZ, the association was initially founded when the president of Zoogocho wrote to the small group of Zoogochenses residing in Los Angeles at the time and asked them to help pay the debt incurred while repairing the church in the village. Since then, the USZ has carried the main burden of financing a wide range of public works projects in the village, as for example when the roughly 25 migrants residing in Los Angeles later in 1969 each contributed 80 USD to have electricity installed in Zoogocho – making it the first village in the surrounding area to have it. In a similar way, a number of other projects from the construction of a community centre and a basketball court to pavement of the roads have been accomplished in the village over the years, with the USZ providing the bulk of the finances while the male heads of the households in the village have carried out the work through *tequio* [mandatory community labour requirements for the maintenance and construction of village infrastructure]. As the word of the USZ got out and the number of members increased, membership gradually came to be expected of all

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[5] According to the official statistical count of INEGI in 2005, there were 361 people over the age of five living in the village. However, this number contains the more than 200 children who live at a nearby boarding school, which the villagers include in the official census to boost their numbers.

migrants who were born in Zoogocho and, in the process, the yearly quotas paid by the migrants have come to resemble a fixed tax rather than a philanthropic arrangement to support work projects and festivals in the village. While initially, the migrants each would give in the range of 100 USD annually, the membership fee has gradually been lowered over the years, reflecting not only the successful completion of the many projects sponsored by the migrants, but also that there are increasingly more opportunities to access government funds to carry out such projects. Still, in 2001, the USZ sent 40,000 USD to the village for the construction of the *panteón* (cemetery). In addition, the USZ each year sends a significant amount for the celebration of the patron saint, a week-long festival taking place in the village in August. Most recently, in 2008, the incumbent president of Zoogocho travelled to Los Angeles to ask the USZ to help finance a modernization of the *cancha*, the basketball court in the centre of the village, a project that would cost an estimated 300,000 USD. All of the members supported the idea and the USZ agreed to come up with 200,000 USD for the project while the remainder will be provided by the associations in Oaxaca City and Mexico City. However, with no young or middle-aged people living in the village any longer, one may speculate about the practical need for such a project. Furthermore, with most of the Zoogocho migrants working in the lower segments of the Los Angeles economy, one may wonder why they would all agree to finance such a large project.

The Effects of Collective Governance Traditions on HTA Participation

One reason for the continued support of the HTA and participation in the migrant community in Los Angeles might be related to the intended patterns of migration and settlement of the migrants. If a migrant plans to return to live in the community of origin at one point, the continued participation in the HTA and the willingness to give donations in support of public works projects in the village, for instance to provide it with potable water and amenities such as electricity and telephone lines, can be seen as an investment in order to improve the possible, future lifestyle of the return migrant. Indeed, in the case of the Zoogochenses, most of them do hold on to the dream that one day they will be able to return to live in the village. However, because their children are growing up in the United States, it often becomes difficult for the parents to realize this wish. This point is illustrated by Pedro, a 40-year-old man who came to Los Angeles as a young child to live with his mother who had migrated to the city a few years before him. Thus, Pedro explained:`We are here because my kids were born here, but if I could have it my way we would probably be in Zoogocho. My kids were born here, my wife wants to stay here … so in that sense I am stuck here for a while, but I never lose hope that one day I will go back and live in Zoogocho´. In addition to the intended migration and settlement patterns, there is in the case of many of the indigenous communities from Oaxaca often a much more immediate reason for the migrants to retain their HTA membership and pay their contributions to the village of origin. Thus, one study comparing four Zapotec communities in Oaxaca found that they to varying degrees were able to use the organizational capacity of the traditional governance systems to access collective

remittances (VanWey et al., 2005). In the most organized communities (in terms of the requirements for labour and monetary contributions and enforcement of the rules), the community governments were able to access remittances through fees assessed on migrants for missed tequios (ibid. 97). Similarly in the case of Zoogocho, the yearly membership fee that the Zoogocho migrants pay to their HTAs has come to substitute the tequio requirements demanded of the people living in the village, as one migrant pointed out, 'instead of tequio, we send money'. Moreover, the villagers in Zoogocho have also frequently been known to nominate migrants for cargo duties [community service in government and religious affairs], which mean that the migrant has to return to the village for a full year to complete his service obligations or, if he is unable to do so, pay a substitute to fulfil his requirements and thereby maintain his good standing with the community.

While most of the Zoogocho migrants would argue that it is their duty as Zoogochenses to help their village of origin and pay their quotas, there nevertheless also exist a range of social mechanisms on both sides at the border, which seek to enforce these obligations. In Zoogocho, a migrant who plans to return to the village of origin even for a short visit will risk being ostracized if he has not fulfilled his remittance and cargo obligations. As pointed out by Pedro, 'if they don't serve with the community, if they don't give their quotas, then if they go back home, they are looked upon as outcasts, as people that don't belong there'. In the more extreme cases, a person who refuses to perform his cargo could lose his village citizenship and have his property foreclosed. On the U.S. side, the enforcement mostly takes a more subtle form, as for instance through the distribution of a '*lista negra*' (black list), as the Zoogochenses refer to it, containing all the names of people who for some reason were unable or did not want to pay. This list is printed on the back of the official membership list, detailing all the members who paid their quotas as well as any voluntary contributions for the patron saint's celebration, and distributed annually by the incumbent board.[6] By distributing the membership list, detailing donations as well as defaults, to the community, it functions as a mechanism of social control to induce migrants to meet their obligations (Philpott, 1968: 472). Nevertheless, these mechanisms do not always achieve their aim. As Rogelio, a 75-year-old man who worked in Los Angeles from 1978 until 1988 when he decided to return to live in Oaxaca City, explained, 'I have always felt like a Zoogochense even though I don't live there. We were born there and we have certain responsibilities, but there are always negative people who do not want to participate'. In the end, if the mechanisms of social control, such as becoming an object of gossip, fail to compel the migrant to remain in good standing with the community, he faces an additional sanction.

According to Robles Camacho (2004: 470), a native of Zoogocho, '[a] migrant who has never supported his community and has never participated in his hometown association is a migrant who has lost his community rights. He even loses the rights to have the church bells rung for him when he dies'. That is, he is both legally and symbolically excluded from the community. Both statements made by Robles Camacho and Rogelio seek to shape the meaning of absence from the village

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[6] In 2003, the 'black list' contained 28 names (7.7 percent of the total list).

and define what is expected of a Zoogocho migrant. As such, they are discursive and practical tactics intended to frame the communal understanding of migration and village membership and in the process influencing symbolic as well as practical forms of social action, but they also indicate that these practices are contested.[7]

Although the obligations placed on the migrants have been objects of renegotiation over the years, in particular the cargo duties, there has generally been a remarkable support for sponsoring various projects in the village. Today, however, with the availability of more government funds for public works projects, a very limited number of people still living in the village and most of the present migrants being unable to carry out the idea of returning permanently, one may well ask what the point is to continue this type of support for the village of origin. In order to come to an understanding of some of the mechanisms involved in the continued support, I suggest that it is necessary to outline some of the motives of the migrants for this type of engagement. Such an exploration will also provide a better understanding of migrant involvement in HTAs in general, regardless of the collective governance traditions found in the indigenous communities in Mexico.

The Motive of Belonging

The most commonly cited motive (among migrants as well as researchers) for migrant engagement in transnational activities is unquestionably the motive of belonging and the emotional attachment of the migrant to the place of origin. This motive is typically framed within the migrant's personal (childhood) memories of the place of origin, often in combination with a wish some day to return, and, indeed, this is also how many of the Zoogocho migrants tend to express it. However, belonging also seems to involve a number of other dimensions. For instance, as Pedro, who at the time served as the secretary of the USZ, explained about the migrants from his native village: `There are so many people that have never gone home, who have been here like twenty or thirty years… They have no desire to go back home, but they still cooperate. Every year they give their quotas because it is part of their culture. It gives them a sense of being, a sense of community and a sense of unity. So, they give their quotas anyway, even though they don't ever want to go back home… Very few people isolate themselves from us´. As Pedro points out, continued membership of the village HTA is an important aspect of individual identity, as it confirms your connection with the village of origin, and it is also a way to recreate a sense of community in the new context by making the migrants feel that they are part of something. However, even though giving quotas in Pedro's statement is couched in terms of being 'part of their culture', one should be mindful that such loyalties do not necessarily exist *a priori*. To put it differently, it is not an ontological part of their

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[7] During the fieldwork I was unable to locate any of the Zoogochenses who for some reason did not pay their quotas or had deliberately chosen not to be a part of the community. In one case, as I was told by one of my informants, a woman from Zoogocho had married an African American man and had renounced her indigenous background by beginning to 'dress and eat American'. In other cases, some Zoogocho migrants had chosen not to associate with the community of Zoogochenses in Los Angeles because of various conflicts, but nevertheless still paid their yearly quotas to avoid becoming the objects of gossip.

being to be *a Zoogochense* and *to belong* to the Zoogocho community in Los Angeles (see Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). Rather, the creation of this type of *pueblismo* – village-based identity – is the result of, on the one hand, the larger structural contexts and dynamics, such as the Mexican government programmes of centralization, rural development and assimilation of indigenous peoples (Hirabayashi, 1993: 129) and, on the other hand, the internal village discourses seeking to frame the meaning of belonging and the obligations it entails.

The moral obligations of belonging can be attributed to a number of causes such as the nature of the social networks that the migrants form in response to the challenges that confront them in the city – which sometimes are given formal expressions in the creation of HTAs – as well as what Stuart Philpott terms the 'migrant ideology', a cognitive model that the migrant holds as to the nature and goals of his migration, which is reinforced by, and in turn reinforces, the social networks (Philpott, 1968: 474). Furthermore, in the case of Zoogocho, the moral obligations are also formed by the nature and demands of the cargo system as it has been enforced by the village authorities, and since many Zoogocho migrants have held on to the idea that they may one day return to the village, their actions in the place of reception can have very real consequences upon the feasibility of this wish. Thus, a number of factors work to shape the meaning of belonging among the Zoogocho migrants, in addition to their personal memories, and they have found their expression, among other things, in the creation of a 'contract' among the villagers and the migrants that the latter should contribute to the advancement of the village of origin as well as in the obligations to aid fellow migrant villagers.

Moreover, this relationship is also reinforced by the particular ethnic and social structures that the migrants encounter in the U.S., and especially in Los Angeles. For instance, in the case of migrants from Oaxaca, they frequently suffer discrimination both as Mexicans in relation to the larger society and as indigenous in relation to their fellow Mexican compatriots (Nagengast and Kearney, 1990). According to one view, the creation of Oaxacan migrant associations can be seen as a response to this kind of discrimination, while also providing the migrants with a space for their cultural reproduction (Ramos Pioquinto, 2003: 17). Thus, structures of discrimination in the new context are likely to reinforce the sense of belonging, which can be articulated through membership of an HTA. In this sense, the HTA addresses some of the socio-psychological needs identified in the early research on migrant associations by providing a comfortable and relatively secure linguistic, cultural and social environment for new migrants in the city. However, while the motive of belonging undoubtedly is a fundamental requirement for HTA participation, it does not preclude the existence of other motives.

The Status Motive

Another explanation for the continuation of ties between migrants and the village of origin focuses on the importance of status. In many ways the motive of status is closely related to belonging, because status claims are often made within the context

of the community of origin, and they thereby also serve to confirm the migrant's belonging and continued membership of this community. However, it differs from the motive of belonging by drawing on a different kind of rationality – understood in the Weberian sense as a type of orientation to reality based on strategies for ordering the world in order to obtain specific goals – which is less predicated on emotional sentiments.

The significance of the place of origin in relation to the status motive is due to the fact that people often interpret status claims in a historical and community context, where certain practices, rituals, goods and artefacts have mutually intelligible meanings and valorisations. Therefore, as Goldring argues, having one's status valorised among peers who share claims to community membership provides an important context for expressing statuses and identities, which are not readily available in the United States (Goldring, 1998b: 173-4). According to this view, Mexican migrants tend to continue to orient their lives in part around their places of origin, maintaining transnational spaces and multiple identities, because these localities `provide a special context in which people can improve their social position and perhaps their power, make claims about their changing status and have it appropriately valorized, and also participate in changing their place of origin so that it becomes more consistent with their changing expectations of statuses. (ibid. 167)´. One of the most important contexts in which to display spending power, claim status and have it valorised are village events like patron saint celebrations since they are usually attended by a large concentration of fellow villagers. Consequently, as Mountz and Wright (1996: 416) observed in a village in Oaxaca, migrants and their families who engage in fiesta sponsorship 'sometimes spend more than their total annual income on a particular celebration. The size of investment exemplifies the extreme material competition for successful migrant status at work in the village'. In the case of Zoogocho, the patron saint celebration, the most important event in the village, is financed entirely by voluntary donations made by the migrants and collected by the HTAs. In addition, the returning migrants often donate *castillos* (expensive firework castles) or hire *bandas* (brass bands) to play the traditional Zapotec music during the celebrations, which in some cases can cost as much as 3,000 USD. These donations are often made to fulfil promises made to the patron saint for instance in return for a safe journey across the border, but they also serve to mark a status claim in front of one's peers and not least to reaffirm the migrant's community membership. Ironically, however, while claiming status may serve to reinforce community membership, it is also something that contributes to the continuing fragmentation of the community by spurring renewed migration. For instance, as José, a 38-year-old man who grew up in Zoogocho and came to Los Angeles with his parents as a young child in 1978, explained, 'When people go back [to the village] the people there see them with video cameras and nice clothes, so they also want to go to the U.S., but if you tell them about the reality [about life in the U.S.], they think that you just want to keep it to yourself. That you are jealous'.

Status can, however, also be claimed at the community level, for instance in relation to other nearby villages. Thus, many of the Zoogochenses spoke proudly of the village as being a role model for the surrounding villages because of the many

public works projects they had been able to carry out with the help of the HTAs over the years. Indeed, the sense of collective achievement and the recognition it bestows, can be highly motivating factors for participating in such projects. This point was illustrated by Maria, a 33-year-old woman who like José also came to Los Angeles as a young child with her parents, who had suggested that the HTA membership fee should be raised to 300 USD in order to finance the rebuilding of the basketball court. As she explained, 'It is a thing to show your kids when you go back, something to be proud of'. In this sense, as Goldring (1998b: 183) argues, participation in changing the material landscape and services available through community-level service and infrastructure projects 'also increases people's feeling of having a stake in the community, which again reaffirms community membership'.

In addition to the status claims at the collective level, there are also a number of more individually oriented status motives for participating in HTAs. In particular, because migration is often associated with a loss of social status, involvement in HTAs and development projects in the home community can be ways of compensating for the loss of self-esteem and respect in the new context (Goldring, 2001; Kleist, 2007). Indeed, the motives of migrant organizers can sometimes be based more on a desire for social status, prestige and personal power within the migrant community, than with facilitating migrant compatriots or helping out in the home village (Jongkind, 1974). More generally, however, it should be noted that HTAs are often dominated by a small migrant elite – consisting of long-time immigrants who have reached a significant level of economic security (Zabin and Escala, 1998: 10) – who have more time and resources to participate.

While claims for status and improvement of social position in relation to the community of origin undoubtedly play an important part in the lives of many migrants, one should expect that the importance of this context depends on the kind of integration that the migrants experience in the United States. In particular, as the migrants become increasingly involved in the receiving society and shift their orientation towards this context, their obligations towards the home community are likely to become a burden and status-driven remittances are therefore also likely to be transitory. However, there may also be instances where increasing involvement in the receiving society is not necessarily at odds with continued support of the home community.

The Option Motive – The Importance of the Village Network in Los Angeles

When most of the Zoogocho migrants arrive in Los Angeles for the first time, they are often able to find employment with relative ease by using their network of paisanos in the place of reception. In this way, by obtaining referrals from fellow migrants, many Zoogochenses have found work in restaurants. For example, Rogelio recounted that he through his close friendship with his employer in the U.S. was able to have dozens of Zoogochenses employed in the restaurant where he worked for about a decade. In fact, as Pedro explained, 'the new migrants from Zoogocho only worry about crossing the border, not about whether they will be able to make it in Los Angeles, because they know that they will be able to find a place to live and a job

through the network up here'. Thus, another motive for continued participation and affirmation of membership of the community of origin might be to gain access to the employment options provided by the network in the place of destination.[8] This is particularly the case when migrants work in imperfect labour markets, such as the ethnically segmented economy of Los Angeles, where personal contacts are the main avenue for economic mobility (Waldinger, 1996: 27). Above all, undocumented, less-educated migrants, who have few alternative information or mobility channels, benefit from engaging in these networks. Under these circumstances, the community of origin takes on a particularly important role because, as Roberts and Morris (2003: 1260) argue, it 'is not only the conceptual locus of the network but also the place where much of the interchange of information concerning opportunities actually occurs'. In this sense, one can argue that community events, like the village fiesta, in addition to being important symbolic and religious events also serve an instrumental function. Not only do they reaffirm the existence of the network and confirm individual memberships, they also provide an occasion for exchange of employment information among migrants, which in turn increases the value of participation in the network. In addition to the occasional, physical return of the migrant to the village and participation in events in Los Angeles, other important ways of confirming membership are by paying your quotas to the HTA, as exemplified in the quotes by Rogelio and Robles Camacho, as well as sending remittances to family members in the place of origin.

From this perspective, HTA quotas, family remittances and the maintenance of rural ties more generally, are comparable to a financial option, a contract which entitles, but does not oblige, its owner to a particular course of action (ibid. 1253). That is, the option, in the form of membership in a network, not only reduces the risk of unemployment, but also allows the migrant to take advantage of the potential gains resulting from economic mobility (by having access to more occupational alternatives). The price the migrant pays for the option is, according to this theory, 'the support given to family and community that is paid to maintain membership in the network, which can be measured by a portion of remittances'
(ibid. 1267). In this conception, the option is a form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1985), which requires the 'investment of some material resources and the possession of some cultural knowledge, enabling the individual to establish relations with valued others' (Portes and Landolt, 2000: 531). Following the option model, it is not obvious, in contrast to the argument made by Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo (2002: 769), that 'sociocultural transnational participation is guided more by affective and symbolic motives than by instrumental rationality'. On the contrary, although most of the Zoogocho migrants will support the notion that their affective ties and sense of belonging guide their participation, there is also a more instrumental side (motive) to this argument.

Following the option model, the higher the migrant's earnings in his or her current job, the lower the value of the option, and when the potential benefits

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[8] In addition to providing job references, membership of the Zoogocho migrant community also provides important mutual aid insurance in the case of family accidents or deaths. For instance, if a migrant dies the HTA will initiate a collection to help the family and to cover for the funeral expenses.

provided by the network in obtaining future employment no longer is enough to offset the cost of network membership, the result will be permanent migration (Roberts and Morris, 2003: 1268). However, migrants do not only engage in these networks for instrumental reasons but also for social and emotional purposes, as described in the sections on the motives of status and belonging. Moreover, because jobs held by migrants, especially the undocumented, are often unstable and cannot be relied upon to provide permanent employment, the migrant runs a great risk by not retaining membership of the network.

If, as the option motive asserts, remittances and hometown association engagement are 'fees', which migrants pay in order to maintain their membership of the network, then transnational participation may coexist with successful incorporation into U.S. society (see Guarnizo *et al.*, 2003; Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo, 2002). In fact, these conditions can lead to a strengthening of the migration networks and the continued participation and affirmation of loyalties to the place of origin. From this perspective, it seems likely, as Kenneth Little (1973: 421) suggests, 'the regional associations' appearance may be governed by the presence or absence of certain structural factors'. In particular, this seems to be the case when migrants are left with few channels of social mobility (ibid.). Consequently, migrant associations can function as a symbol of community membership in the new context, which may provide the migrant with access to resources accruing from the network and provide a measure of security against the vagaries of the particular job market.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have argued for the need to explore in a more systematic way the motives of migrants for engaging in transnational activities, such as HTA membership. Through a greater attention to the subjective dimensions entailed in these acts, it is argued, it will be possible to achieve a better understanding of what compel migrants to continue to participate in transnational fields. In particular, such an approach may reveal that what is commonly conceptualized in terms of 'migrant philanthropy' and thought to be primarily the outcome of emotional attachment can also be based on more instrumental and self-interested motives.

Moreover, when HTAs are referred to as 'philanthropic associations' (e.g. Orozco, 2007; Alarcón and Escala Rabadán, 2007) there is a risk of not only ignoring other important dimensions of these associations, but also of regarding their donations as acts of altruism and thereby ignore some of the complex sets of relations and exchanges that take place between the villagers (the non-migrants) and the migrants.[9] Rather, as pointed out by Fitzgerald (2008: 159), local politicians in the community of origin may sometimes be uneasy about soliciting migrant HTAs for support of local projects, because they 'worry about migrants transforming their collectively donated economic capital into political capital and the generation of demands on government services, or even worse, for political change'.[10] Thus, HTA donations often imply much more complex relations of exchange than what is suggested by an act of altruism – that is, an act without any expectations of reciprocity – and, indeed, the same may also be the case behind some of the motives of the individual migrants for maintaining their HTA membership.

More generally, while individually based motives can coexist and complement collectively oriented goals, such as public works projects, the individual motives cannot be deducted from the goals by themselves. Thus, only by examining the individual motives can we gain a better insight into the efficacy and persistence of HTAs as well as the situations that sustain transnational involvement more broadly. In this connection, it should be noted that the reasons for HTA involvement is often the result of a combination of different motives, which are likely to reinforce each other. Moreover, the motives for participating in different fields of transnational life are likely to vary over time, as is the extent of participation in such practices.

Although the article has called attention to the need to systematically consider the motives of migrants for participating in HTAs, it is necessary to emphasize that such an analysis cannot stand alone. The three motives outlined above arise to various degrees from some of the challenges and disadvantages, which the migrants face in their attempts to adapt to the new urban context. As such, the motives are importantly framed by historical and structural conditions in the place of origin as well as the place of destination. In order to explain the formation of HTAs,

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[9] Levitt (2002) has similarly used the term 'migrant philanthropy' but has also emphasized some of the complex negotiations between migrants and non-migrants surrounding the projects.

[10] Two interesting cases where the HTAs came to dominate their villages of origin are provided by Orellana (1973) and Hirabayashi (1986).

it is therefore also necessary to consider other factors than individual motives. Often some type of politicization is a key aspect for the formation of HTAs, as for instance the development and integration programmes created by the Mexican government in the 1960s and 1970s where HTAs in Mexico City became crucial intermediaries between the state institutions and the rural villages. More recently, the Mexican government has since the 1990s played a key role in the formation of Mexican HTAs in the U.S. by setting up PACME and matching funds programmes. In addition to these programmes, there are, as in the case of Zoogocho, often specific social, political and economic dynamics in the places of origin as well as reception that shape the form and outcome of the HTAs.

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Aspectos da música na liturgia católica na América Latina do Vaticano II aos dias atuais
Do "canto do povo de Deus" ao "som da massa"

Vinicius Mariano de Carvalho[1]

This paper provides a brief overview of the origins of ethno-liturgical compositions and the scope of this aesthetic of music in the church, especially stressing their link to the concept of acculturation of the Theology of Liberation. The paper then extends the discussion, pointing out what the musical-aesthetic ideas of this movement are, and why it is linked to the Theology of Liberation. The main point noted in this paper is concerned with the possible theological, pastoral and aesthetics reasons for its development and subsequent decline. Finally, the paper reflects on the Pop phenomenon and its influence on ecclesiology and liturgical music, leading to some conclusive points on the character of an acculturated liturgical music in a church increasingly marked by a Pop culture. The question posed by the paper is: What are the pastoral and musical consequences of this influence?

Key Words: Theology of Liberation – Ethnomusicology – Neopentecostalism – Modernism in Music – Pop Culture.

1 – Introdução

Em outubro de 2005 tive ocasião de dirigir a famosa e polêmica Misa Campesina Nicaragüense durante o Simpósio "Com-passion - theologische Perspektiven im Globalisierungsprozess (Com-paixão – perspectivas teológicas no processo de globalização), promovido pela Cátedra de Teologia Fundamental da Profa. Dra. Martha Zechmeister, na Universidade de Passau, Alemanha. A Missa foi executada por estudantes da universidade, sob minha direção, durante a liturgia do simpósio, que celebrava o 25º aniversário do martírio de D. Oscar Romero, rememorado nesta ocasião.

Escolhi a Misa Campesina, a despeito de não ser salvadorenha, porque é um dos exemplos mais lapidares e marcantes da música produzida para a liturgia nos anos fortes de vivência das Comunidades Eclesiais de Base, as

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CEBs, na América Latina. Qual não foi a surpresa ao ver, durante a liturgia, a assembléia, em sua maioria formada por alemães, cantando, com o coro e os instrumentistas, partes da Misa Campesina, especialmente seu canto de entrada: Vos sos el Dios de los pobres, el Dios humano y sencillo, el Dios que suda em las calles, el Dios de rostro curtido.2

Ao fim da liturgia não foram poucos os que vieram comentar sobre a música, e o que mais chamou a atenção foi que a maioria dos comentários lamentava o quanto a música atualmente praticada nas liturgias católicas se distanciava deste modelo inculturado de música como o da Misa Campesina, modelo este incentivado e louvado pelas reformas empreendidas pelo Concílio Vaticano II. As pessoas com alguma vivência de igreja na América Latina lembravam a avassaladora inundação de músicas pop na vida eclesial neste continente, especialmente vinculada por movimentos ou grupos que ignoram a produção musical específica e étnica latino-americana.

A experiência de dirigir esta Misa Campesina, bem como as reflexões nascidas sobre a prática da música litúrgica na igreja latino-americana atualmente motivaram a pretende, além de mostrar um quadro histórico do surgimento da Misa Campesina Nicaragüense, bem como o de outras missas de aspecto étnico em seu conteúdo musical, também procura analisar o porquê deste modelo inculturado de música litúrgica vir perdendo cada vez mais espaço nas comunidades eclesiais. Pretendo neste artigo refletir o porquê da prática das músicas etno-litúrgicas ter praticamente desaparecido sendo que estas composições respondiam aos critérios conciliares para a música da liturgia e retratavam a expressão musical dos povos.

O artigo inicia com um breve panorama sobre o nascimento deste tipo de música a que denominei em outro artigo (Carvalho, 2000) composições etno-litúrgicas e a abrangência desta estética, especialmente acentuando sua vinculação à Teologia da Libertação (TdL)3. Em seguida ampliarei a discussão, percebendo em qual conceito estético se embasa este movimento musical e o porquê da sua vinculação à TdL. Por fim, refletirei sobre o fenômeno Pop e sua influência na eclesiologia e na música litúrgica. Isto nos conduzirá a certos pontos conclusivos sobre o caráter de uma música litúrgica inculturada.

Inicio comentando algumas Missas compostas na América de língua espanhola e no Brasil que se enquadram nesta categoria de étnicas. Não se trata de um estudo exaustivo das mesmas, mas apenas um apresentar de algumas delas, talvez as mais conhecidas. Tampouco é uma descrição sumária, senão um

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[2] A Missa Campesina pode ser encontrada no site: http://www.radiolaprimerisima.com/canciones.

[3] A Teologia da Libertação é uma proposta de reflexão teológica surgida nos anos 70, com forte desenvolvimento na América Latina. Teve como base hermenêutica uma dialética marxista e por essa razão foi sempre vista com certa desconfiança pela Cúria Romana. A TdL reflete a situação da pobreza e da exclusão socail à luz da fé cristã. Esta situação é interpretada como produto de estruturas econômicas e sociais injustas.A situação de pobreza é denunciada como pecado social e a TdL propõe o engajamento político dos cristãos na construção de uma sociedade mais justa e solidária. Uma característica da TdL é considerar o pobre, não um objeto de caridade, mas sujeito de sua própria libertação. A *praxis* da libertação encontra lugar na Comunidade Eclesial de Base (CEBs), núcleo da vida cristã libertadora.

breve levantamento que ajudará a fundamentar a argumentação do artigo. Tomo como base também que todas estas Missas que aqui comento se prestam a uma execução litúrgica e não são apenas peças de concerto.

Em suma, o artigo pretende, a partir da observação da evolução da linguagem musical nas liturgias católicas latinoamericanas, estabelecer um diálogo entre musicologia, teologia e contexto sócio-político na América Latina. O objetivo é notar que esta evolução da linguagem musical litúrgica não é um fato isolado e descontextualizado, mas é expressão de um conjunto de fatores culturais.

2 - As Missa Étnicas

Em outubro de 1964 aparecia pela Philips a primeira gravação da *Misa Criolla*, do argentino Ariel Ramírez. O disco foi editado em mais de quarenta países, ultrapassando a cifra de 3 milhões de cópias vendidas e sua partitura foi logo editada nos Estados Unidos pela Lawson-Gould Music Publishers Inc., no Canadá pelo Ministério da Cultura, na França pela Warner Chappell Music France e na Argentina pela Pigal-Lagos. Além da inovação trazida por conta do texto do ordinário traduzido em castelhano[4], a composição de Ramírez teve ainda o mérito de se inspirar completamente em temas musicais populares e folclóricos da América Espanhola.

Buscando expressar adequadamente com a música cada momento da missa, a composição de Ramírez apresenta um notável conjunto de inspiradas melodias originais. Escrita para um solista (ou duo vocal), coro[5] e uma inusitada orquestra composta de piano ou cravo, violão, contrabaixo, charango, flauta quena, flauta pan boliviana e diversos instrumentos de percussão, inclusive o bombo legüero, tradicional na Argentina, a *Misa* procura, em tudo, ser fiel às formas e ritmos tradicionais que lhe serviram de inspiração.

O *Kyrie*, combinando dois ritmos andinos (vidala e baguala), procura evocar a dramaticidade, solidão e aridez dos Altiplanos para expressar o pedido de perdão através do solo de tenor. O *Gloria*, em compasso binário e modo menor, utiliza um dos mais populares ritmos latinoamericanos, o Carnavalito, para proclamar o louvor a Deus. A parte tecnicamente mais difícil da missa é, sem dúvida, o *Credo*, uma Chacarera trunca, dança típica de Santiago del Estero. Seu ritmo emocionante e quase obsessivo sublinha a dramaticidade da linha melódica, dramaticidade esta reforçada pela constante alternância entre coro e solista, nesta profissão de fé. No *Sanctus* é retomado o Carnavalito, desta vez na forma boliviana, em compasso ternário e modo maior. Em Estilo

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[4]O texto oficial da liturgia em Castelhano, traduzido por Osvaldo Catena, Alejandro Mayol e Jesus Gabriel Segado, foi aprovado em 1963 pela Comissão Litúrgica para a América Latina. É este o texto sobre o qual Ramírez compõe sua *Misa Criolla*. Ordinário é a parte comum da liturgia, com texto oficial próprio, é composta do *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus* e *Agnus Dei*. Em música é o que costuma chamar-se de Missa.

[5] O arranjo coral é da pena do Pe. Jesus Gabriel Segade, que, além de assistir ao compositor durante a criação da *Misa*, era também o diretor do coral da *Basílica del Socorro* na primeira gravação da obra.

Pampeano o *Agnus Dei* encerra a missa de maneira solene com um canto extremamente lírico executado pelo solista seguido de uma intervenção do coro manifestando o anseio pela paz. Outra gravação da Misa Criolla foi realizada pela própria Philips, na Espanha, em 1987, tendo como solista José Carreras e dirigida por Damián Sanchez, estando Ariel Ramírez ao piano e cravo.

Ainda na América Espanhola, três outras missas são dignas de nota, a *Misa Popular Nicaragüense*, a *Misa Popular Salvadoreña* e a *Misa Campesina Nicaragüense*, esta última que nos serviu de motivação para este artigo. Compostas com uma perspectiva diferente da *Misa Criolla*, essas três missas centro americanas são importantes por procurarem traduzir a TdL de maneira musical. Todas as três missas são em língua espanhola, não utilizando porém as traduções litúrgicas oficiais e contém não só o ordinário, mas também o próprio da missa. Na primeira edição das *Misas Centro Americanas*, publicada pelo Centro Ecumênico Antonio Valdiviesco de Managua e pelas Comunidades Eclesiais de Base de El Salvador, em 1988, encontramos já na apresentação notas sobre a importância das missas:

> (...) el estudio de las "misas centroamericanas" es (...) sencillamente indispensable para quien desee conocer el alma del nuestro pueblo y la conmoción espiritual y teológica que se ha producido en su seno en los veinte ultimos años. Es imprescindible también para comprender la profundidad de las transformaciones espirituales que se hallan en curso y que se reflejan en el conflicto centroamericano, donde nuestro pueblo ha dicho "basta" a la explotación y dominación externa que secularmente se le ha impuesto. (Vigil et Torrellas, 1988:sp)6

Nessa introdução é possível depreender que a preocupação das Missas Centroamericanas é ser um elemento pastoral eficaz, nas quais, além do aspecto litúrgico, o caráter catequético dos textos seja ressaltado através da música. A partitura é muito mais um registro da tradição oral das missas que uma orquestração fixa e determinante.

A *Misa Popular Salvadoreña* foi composta entre os anos de 1978 a 1980 por Guillermo Cuéllar, participante das comunidades de base de San Salvador. Tendo como subtítulo *Madura Lectura Historica de la Fe Cristiana*, esta, como as outras duas missas, pretende, através de seu discurso, mostrar a caminhada teológica da igreja latino americana, já inculturada e reflexo da encarnação do Cristo no pobre homem do povo. Nela também são usados ritmos e temas melódicos populares, os quais entretanto acabam eclipsados pela preocupação com o discurso teológico do texto. Em outras palavras, ainda que musicalmente calcada na expressão popular latino-americana, e mais especificamente

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[6] Sobre a notação trazida nesta edição é que nos baseamos para os comentários e análises deste artigo.

salvadorenha, o acento pretendido pela missa está muito mais em seu texto que no conteúdo musical da mesma, o que não a torna menor no conjunto das três missas Centro-americanas. No comentário a essa missa, feito por José Maria Vigil, na edição CAV-CEBES, podemos notar esta predileção pelo texto:

> La misa fue y sigue siendo un instrumento pedagógico y concientizador. Y sigue siendo hoy una pieza maestra de la espiritualidad liberadora del pueblo salvadoreño. Es por ello un texto privilegiado para estudiar, para analizar, para acercarse a esta espiritualidad liberadora.(Id: 17)

Importante e inegável o papel desempenhado por essa missa no que diz respeito ao texto da mesma, entretanto é lamentável que nem uma linha sequer é reservada nessa edição a uma apreciação musical da obra, que consegue, ainda se mantendo popular, trazer arranjos corais que valorizam sobremodo os temas populares de cada trecho da missa.

A *Misa Popular Nicaragüense* composta em fevereiro de 1968 por Manuelito Dávila, ajudado por Angel Cerpas e Juan Mendoza é toda feita sobre ritmos populares nicaragüenses e a letra foi elaborada pela comunidade da Paróquia de São Paulo Apóstolo de Manágua. Rapidamente se espalhou por várias igrejas da Nicarágua, sendo logo em seguida proibida pelo Vaticano por trazer no Credo a expressão "Jesús nació de nuestra gente". Essa missa tem o mérito de anteceder teologicamente muitos desdobramentos do Concílio Vaticano II na América Latina, propostos pela Conferência de Medellin em 1968.

Composta em 1975 por Carlos Mejía Godoy, a *Misa Campesina Nicaragüense*, mote para este artigo, também emprega elementos da música popular em sua estruturação. Nesta tarefa, colaboraram com o compositor, antigos membros do Grupo Gradas, que se dedicava à música popular latinoamericana, especialmente nicaragüense, até ser dispersado durante a ditadura de Somoza em 1974. Além dos elementos musicais populares, chama a atenção nessa missa o texto do *Gloria*, que, numa referência direta ao Salmo 150, proclama que o louvor a Deus é feito com os instrumentos e danças próprias daquele povo. Citamos aqui a estrofe inteira, jóia de poesia popular e documento etnomusicológico:

> Hoy te glorificamos Señor, con las marimbas,
> con los violines de ñámbar, sonajas y atabaques,
> con chirimillas, quijongos y sambumbias,
> con las danzas nativas de Subtiava y Monimbó.

A estrofe nos dá a natureza do *instrumentarium* da missa, todo este da tradição nicaragüense, além de também ressaltar que na dança nativa é que se encontra o louvor a Deus.[7]

No Brasil, várias são as composições que visam integrar o caráter autóctone da cultura à espiritualidade da Igreja brasileira, as quais trataremos aqui sem aprofundamentos analíticos, apenas como fundamentação de nossa argumentação seguida.

Inicio pela Missa Nordestina, do baiano Lindembergue Cardoso, composta em 1966. Utilizando o texto do ordinário traduzido para o português, com algumas adaptações no Glória e no Credo, Lindembergue compõe uma verdadeira *missa solemnis*, para coro a quatro vozes e percussão, inegavelmente de acordo com as formas musicais nordestinas. A presença constante do modalismo típico da música nordestina é outra marca dessa missa, além, é claro, do ritmo, que muitas vezes é um xote ou um baião explícitos. A composição de Cardoso, utiliza ainda um tecido harmônico extremamente complexo, rico em dissonâncias típicas do discurso musical de sua época.

Outra composição litúrgica com características étnicas, ainda do Nordeste, é a Missa em Aboio, de Pedro Marinho, gravada em 1969 pelo Coral Ars Nova sob a regência do maestro Carlos Alberto Pinto Fonseca. Nessa missa encontramos mais uma vez o modalismo próprio do Nordeste, neste caso com influência inegável da cantoria dos cegos; as sétimas, extremamente bem trabalhadas, marcam a harmonia da peça, que também é enriquecida na trama contrapontística com uma série de imitações. No ritmo a presença de síncopes demonstra outra característica brasileira da obra. O título da missa esconde um pouco de sua riqueza, sua música vai muito além do aboio[8], é uma verdadeira representação do espírito musical popular nordestino fecundando as formas litúrgicas. Outro mérito de Marinho é sua intenção real de fazer música sacra e não simplesmente música formatada aos textos da missa. Apesar da grande sensibilidade ao caráter popular da música, Marinho ainda compõe para o texto latino, num momento em que o vernáculo mostrava-se uma necessidade para a liturgia.

Ainda do Nordeste temos a Grande Missa Nordestina, do pernambucano Clóvis Perreira, gravada pela orquestra e coro da Universidade Federal da Paraíba, no dia 1º de outubro de 1978, dirigida pelo próprio compositor. Essa peça, de uma envergadura maior que a anterior, mostra uma grande riqueza composicional, utilizando vários elementos da música nordestina. Ela se

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[7] Estudo aprofundado e meticuloso das missas étnicas na Nicarágua, encontramos no artigo de T.M Scruggs, premiado pela Sociedade Internacional de Etnomusicologia. Este autor se dedica há tempos ao estudo da música na Igreja nicaragüense e neste artigo argumenta se esta inculturação, a que ele dá o nome de indianização, não seria na verdade uma reindianização, levando-se em conta o caráter sincrético do catolicismo. Cf: (Re)Indigenization?: Post-Vatican II Catholic Ritual and "Folk Masses" in Nicaragua. In: World of Music. 47(1): 91-124.

[8] Aboio é o nome que se dá a cantos e interjeições com que se conduz o gado, muito comum no Nordeste Brasileiro.

distancia um pouco do aspecto da inculturação quando prefere uma instrumentação orquestral tradicional, não se valendo de instrumentos nordestinos, e também perde em popularidade dada a dificuldade de sua execução, porém reserva o caráter brasileiro de maneira distinta.

A estrutura melódica do *Kyrie* é toda centrada nas escalas nordestinas e seu ritmo é apoiado na "Dança dos Caboclinhos". No *Gloria* a influência Ibérica, herança Colonial, é incontestável - em certos momentos o tratamento dado aos violinos lembra o modo de se tocar a rabeca. No *Credo* podemos logo nos primeiros compassos ver as Cantigas de Cegos retratadas com clareza; em alguns momentos do *Credo* ainda é possível remetermos às bandas de pífanos. No *Sanctus* a estrutura do *Kyrie* é retomada com algumas alterações em virtude da especificidade deste momento na liturgia. No *Agnus Dei* o aboio é o motivo central empregado pelo compositor. Por todas estas características a Grande Missa Nordestina é indubitavelmente uma composição genuinamente inculturada à realidade brasileira, apesar de também utilizar o texto latino.

Merece destaque a Missa do Morro[9], de Pierre Sanchis, celebrada pela primeira vez em dezembro de 1965 em Salvador, Bahia, na basílica de São Bento, por ocasião de uma formatura. Trata-se de uma Missa com ritmos e temas melódicos inspirados no Candomblé e que utiliza, como instrumentação, coro em uníssono (com algumas poucas divisões de vozes, em cadências, principalmente), solista, atabaques, agogôs, berimbaus e violão. Possui melodia simples e fluente e uma harmonia despretensiosa - a música é quase monotônica, em Ré maior - a riqueza rítmica, entretanto, destaca-se em toda a obra. Utilizando o texto litúrgico em português a Missa é composta do "Senhor Tende Piedade", do "Glória", do "Santo" e do "Cordeiro de Deus". No "Senhor Tende Piedade" o solista invoca as Pessoas da Trindade num pequeno melisma e é respondido pela assembléia e coro com uma melodia que se repetirá todas as vezes que a expressão Tende piedade de nós aparecer na Missa. No "Glória" também se alternam solista e coro/assembléia com eventuais interlúdios de percussão. No "Santo", o solista entoa Santo, Santo, Santo lentamente e com um acompanhamento bastante sóbrio da percussão e é imediatamente seguido pelo coro/assembléia com a mesma invocação; a seguir o coro canta vivamente Santo é o Senhor, Deus do universo. Céus e terra estão cheios de sua glória. Há então uma divisão de vozes nas palavras Hosana nas alturas e volta o solista cantando o Bendito aquele que vem em nome do Senhor, desta vez numa marcha-rancho, ritmo este revestido de certa solenidade dentre os ritmos brasileiros. O "Cordeiro de Deus" retoma os temas do "Senhor Tende Piedade".

A afirmação de que merece destaque a Missa do Morro é porque se trata de uma composição revestida de aspectos musicais genuinamente brasileiros e por essa razão tem condições de expressar vivamente a espiritualidade do povo. Sem dúvida trata-se de uma composição de inspiração e originalidade ímpar.

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[9] A Missa do Morro foi executada mais recentemente, três vezes, entre 1998 e 99, pelo Coral Cura d'Ars do Seminário Arquidiocesano Santo Antônio de Juiz de Fora, Brasil, sob minha regência.

Além de bem feita e familiar é também acessível pois lança mão de instrumentos bem próximos das comunidades e tem uma estrutura não tão complexa que permite sua execução por coros amadores.

Com o adjetivo de "popular" e "brasileira" surgiram também neste período algumas composições do Padre carioca José Alves, então sinônimo de canto popular na liturgia. Sua Missa Nossa Senhora do Brasil é um bom exemplo de seu trabalho. Publicada pela Comissão Arquidiocesana de Música Sacra do Rio de Janeiro, a partitura "para 3 vozes iguais e Assembléia" denota a preocupação do compositor em fazer uma música que seja acessível à comunidade e que ao mesmo tempo apresente uma elaboração técnica, tudo isso ainda afeito à preocupação com a inculturação. Nota-se uma linha melódica de fluência tipicamente carioca.

Uma outra composição digna de nota é a Missa dos Quilombos, composta entre 1980 e 1981 por Milton Nascimento, com os textos de D. Pedro Casaldáliga (bispo da Prelazia de S. Félix do Araguaia) e Pedro Tierra. Como o próprio nome, diz a Missa dos Quilombos pretende celebrar a luta dos negros por liberdade e igualdade, no passado e no presente, para isto retoma temas musicais afro-brasileiros, com vozes, violões, percussão, saxofone, piano, bateria e baixo elétrico. O texto do ordinário não é o oficial da Igreja, mas um conjunto de verdadeiras composições poéticas que, assim como o próprio, ressaltam o caratér específico desta missa. A primeira apresentação da Missa dos Quilombos foi no Recife em 1981, quando além de D. Pedro Casaldáliga, celebraram também D. Helder Câmara e D. José Maria Pires. Em 1982 foi celebrada novamente na Igreja N. S. Mãe dos Homens, no Caraça,
Brasil, acontecendo aí também sua gravação pela Ariola, e em 1992 foi celebrada no Santuário de Santiago de Compostela na Espanha e em Belo Horizonte, comemorando os 500 anos da chegada de Colombo na América. Em 1995 a gravação da Ariola foi remasterizada para CD e foi lançada neste formato como edição especial contra o trabalho escravo.

Do paulista Oswaldo Lacerda, há a Missa a Duas Vozes. A melhor referência a ela está na Revista Liturgia e Vida de julho/agosto de 1966.

> A missa de Osvaldo Lacerda (...) parte de uma utilização consciente das características melódicas do canto popular, como elemento básico para a formação de um estilo litúrgico brasileiro. (...) Resulta de excelente efeito o tratamento polifônico da melodia viva e sincopada do Hossana (sic), no Sanctus, com sua afinidade rítmico-melódica com o motivo gaúcho do balaio, enquanto no Agnus-Dei as duas vozes espreguiçam nas inflecções (sic) bonitas da modinha, com um leve movimento rítmico de marcha-rancho. A partitura registra ainda outra experiência interessante (...): um ousado duo caipira, completamente destituído, porém, de qualquer sentido anedótico ou pitoresco, conduzindo o texto seríssimo do Credo.(Enout, 1966:47)

Pelo teor do comentário deve trata-se de uma composição que expressa muito bem a brasilidade em sua música, respondendo aos apelos de uma nova música inculturada para a Igreja.

Outros exemplos de missas étnicas surgiram em África e Europa, no entanto me limitarei a esses exemplos latino-americanos, pois neste sub-continente pretendo centrar a reflexão do artigo. A relação e descrição foi um pouco exaustiva, porém ela se justifica para que fique demonstrado que este modelo de composição etno-litúrgica não foi apenas um fenômeno sujeito à moda, mas uma verdadeira escola de composição, com princípios e fundamentação musical e teológica, que passamos a apontar no tópico seguinte.

3 – A teologia que conduziu às Missas Étnicas.

Já desde meados dos anos 1940 uma grande reflexão no seio da Igreja Católica no que diz respeito à prática litúrgica tem início. Nas palavras de Martimort:

Antes de 1940 a preocupação era colocar a liturgia existente ao alcance do povo e promover o canto gregoriano; posteriormente compreendeu-se claramente que era necessária uma reforma dos ritos feita em profundidade e a introdução parcial da língua vernácula na celebração. (Martimort, 1988a:84)

O chamado Movimento Litúrgico deu os primeiros passos no que diz respeito a uma reforma litúrgica que culminaria no Concílio Vaticano II, que abriu suas reuniões exatamente tratando da Liturgia e promulgando a Constituição *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a sua primeira, no dia 4 de dezembro de 1963.

Muitas novidades trouxe para a música litúrgica o Concílio; a ela é dedicado um grande capítulo na Constituição *Sacrosanctum Concilium* e logo após também é promulgada a Instrução *Musicam Sacram* pela Sagrada Congregação dos Ritos que estabelece as normas principais acerca da prática da música sacra. As principais novidades são: a permissão do vernáculo na liturgia e, portanto, na música, e a possibilidade de se incluir outros instrumentos e outras formas musicais na Igreja, espaço este antes reservado ao órgão, ao canto gregoriano e a polifonia no estilo palestriniano. Esta abertura motivou muitos compositores a fazerem uma nova música sacra que, principalmente, fosse mais próxima da realidade dos fiéis. Surgem assim o que chamei em outros textos de composições étno-litúrgicas, quer dizer, músicas destinadas ao culto católico com características dos povos onde se encontra inserida a Igreja, música

litúrgica inculturada. Estas novas composições se fundamentam no que diz a supracitada Constituição Conciliar sobre a Liturgia em seu artigo 119:

> Quando se encontram em algumas regiões, principalmente nas missões, povos que tem uma tradição musical própria, a qual desempenha importante função em sua vida religiosa e social, deve-se tomar em devida conta essa estimação da música e dar-lhe um lugar conveniente, tanto para lhes formar o senso religioso, quanto para adaptar o culto à sua mentalidade, de acôrdo com os artigos 39 e 40(SC).[10]

O gênero de música sacra que mais se valeu desta concessão foi a Missa. Em várias partes do mundo surgiram Missas Étnicas muito ricas, seja no que diz respeito a sua espiritualidade, seja na qualidade musical das mesmas.

Sem dúvida, foi a perspectiva de *aggiornamento* proposta pelo Papa João XXIII, resultando no Concílio Vaticano II, que tornou possível o surgimento da expressão estético-religiosa das Missas Étnicas. Este processo de revisão e reinterpretação do que significa a música na liturgia, iniciado antes do Concílio com o Movimento Litúrgico, teve como resultado uma verdadeira revolução para a Igreja com a Constituição *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Para a América Latina, devem-se incluir como continuadoras da reflexão pastoral do Concílio as Conferências do Episcopado Latino-americano, especialmente aquelas de Medellín (1968) e Puebla (1979). Estas conferências foram catalisadoras de um amadurecimento da reflexão teológica latino-americana, elaborada neste próprio continente. Este é um período de fecunda produção teológica e prática pastoral, mostrando uma Igreja com rosto latino, pobre, oprimido, enfim, uma Igreja Encarnada, inculturada e libertadora.[11] O nome deste pensamento teológico: Teologia da Libertação (TdL).

Uma nova hermenêutica, de chave dialético-marxista, procura na TdL interpretar a encarnação como sinônimo de opção pelos pobres, portanto também destes emana a salvação, já que Cristo se faz pobre com os pobres. O Êxodo é lido como a caminhada do povo sofrido em busca da libertação da opressão. A expressão popular da experiência cristã é o que tonifica a comunidade, não mais vista apenas como um ponto de encontro, mas como um verdadeiro sinal do Reino de Deus. Um cântico muito popular das Comunidades Eclesiais de Base (CEBs) diz:

> Eu sou feliz é na comunidade

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[10] Concílio Vaticano II. Constituição Apostólica *Sacrosanctum Concilium* sobre a S. Liturgia. Art.119. Documentos Pontifícios 144. 2.ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1989. Os artigos 39 e 40 desse documento tratam da adaptação da liturgia às tradições e índole de cada povo.

[11] Não é nosso objetivo aqui aprofundar no tema Teologia da Libertação. Apenas como referência, nos valemos da obra de LIBANIO, João Batista. *Teologia da Libertação*. Roteiro didático para um estudo. São Paulo: Loyola, 1987.

Na comunidade eu sou feliz
A nossa comunidade se reúne todo dia
E a nossa comunidade se transforma em alegria.
Nós cantamos um bendito, depois um pelo sinal
Um lê o Evangelho e todos vamos comentar.
Os pobres fizeram um plano: isto eles querem ganhar!
Lutar pelos seus direitos para a vida melhorar.

Este cântico é um bom resumo da hermenêutica libertadora e do entendimento do que é comunidade. Ao mesmo tempo nos fornece, como em algumas estrofes de missas étnicas que citamos acima, este entendimento de que o canto pastoral é aquele que emana da comunidade, do "Povo de Deus". O cântico fala de cantar benditos, expressão da religiosidade popular brasileira, manifesta em música, com instrumentos populares.[12]

Um outro aspecto muito marcante desta teologia é o reconhecimento do "outro" como face viva do Cristo, especialmente do "outro" sofrido. Na América Latina este rosto se fez ver no negro e no índio, marcados pela opressão histórica da escravidão e do extermínio. Assim, uma valorização evangélica da Encarnação nestes povos trouxe também uma nova expressão para a Igreja. Nas palavras de Gustavo Gutiérrez:

Na América Latina, os velhos povos indígenas fizeram ouvir sua voz de protesto pelos maus-tratos recebidos ao longo de séculos. Mas também elevaram a voz para enriquecer outros com a abundância de suas culturas, o amor pela terra fonte de vida, a experiência do seu respeito pelo mundo natural e seu sentido comunitário, a profundidade de sues valores religiosos e o valor de sua reflexão teológica. Com os matizes próprios de cada caso, algo semelhante ocorre com a população negra de nosso continente, assim como com a nova presença da mulher, especialmente da que pertence aos setores marginalizados e oprimidos. Isso levou a um fecundo diálogo entre diferentes pontos de vista teológicos. (Gutiérrez, 2003:52)

É neste ambiente teológico-pastoral que nascem as missas étnicas que acima comentamos. Nada mais natural que tivessem como preocupação a expressão musical também encarnada, aquela do povo pobre latino-americano. As perguntas que nascem aqui são as seguintes: qual é esta "música do povo"? Onde encontrar esta "música popular", verdadeira expressão do povo? Quais as bases etnomusicológicas dos compositores das missas étnicas? Inculturar sim, mas em qual música?

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[12] Outro canto conhecido dizia: "de repente nossa vista clareou, e descobrimos que o pobre tem valor".

4 – Raízes Estéticas das Missas Étnicas

Para se entender as raízes estéticas das missas étnicas é preciso recuar um pouco na história da música na América Latina e remontarmos a um movimento que, apesar de disforme temporal e geograficamente, tem suas origens e marca a produção musical do sub-continente desde fins do século XIX: o Nacionalismo Musical.

Gerard Béhague, em sua obra *Music in Latin America: an introduction*, comenta:

> In the first half of the twentieth century, the most significant single phenomenon in Latin America was the rapid growth of nationalism in the social and political development of the continent. Music, as one aspect of culture, did not escape this salient feature of contemporary life. (…)
> However, Latin American musical nationalism has never been defined to the satisfaction of all (…). (Béhague, 1979:124)

O surgimento deste movimento estético, conforme aponta Béhague, ocorre de forma muito irregular nos países da América Latina, tendo em comum o fato de estarem profundamente associados à chegada do modernismo artístico e, por que não falar assim também, à ascensão destes países à modernidade, refletida em mudanças sociais fortes. Assim, por exemplo, o México conhece o início de seu nacionalismo musical após a Revolução Mexicana, que começa em 1910, e tem como nome mais significativo deste período Manuel Ponce, precursor de elementos nacionais na música mexicana, seguido por Carlos Chávez, no período pós-revolucionário.

Já no Brasil, costuma-se chamar de Nacionalismo Musical ao movimento surgido após a Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922, que atingiu todas as artes no Brasil. Neste movimento, artistas, pesquisadores, compositores, escritores, empenharam-se em encontrar uma arte genuinamente brasileira, uma música que representasse a "alma brasileira" e seus caracteres mais notáveis.

Ainda que tenha sido Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) o nome que está diretamente associado ao surgimento do nacionalismo na música brasileira, nos últimos anos do século XIX compositores que estavam na Europa escreveram músicas com o que poderíamos chamar de elementos de brasilidade. Ainda não se tratava de algo como um movimento, mas era mesmo ainda uma cópia de uma diretiva européia, que neste período começa a valorizar e a formular um certo nacionalismo na produção musical. Renato Almeida, em sua História da Música Brasileira, afirma que "(...) desde Carlos Gomes, e mais precisamente depois de Alexandre Levy e de Nepomuceno, a preocupação por uma música brasileira começou a manifestar-se."(Almeida, 1942:394)

As transformações históricas da sociedade brasileira aliada à multiplicidade estilística e de recursos técnicos da linguagem musical provocaram o surgimento de uma série de escritos, ensaios, críticas jornalística e histórias da música, por vários autores (Renato Almeida, Oswald de Andrade, Graça Aranha, Mario de Andrade, Villa-Lobos, Luciano Gallet, Lorenzo Fernandez) proclamando a autonomia da obra musical brasileira. Estes textos funcionaram como um programa modernista de construção de uma música brasileira moderna, como um projeto com vistas a criar uma teia de significantes representativos da música brasileira nacionalista, com as especificidades rítmicas, melódicas e tímbricas.

Essa discussão conduziu a fortes debates sobre o conceito de identidade nacional; sobre o papel do folclore como símbolo da fala do povo, e que portanto deveria ser investigado e pesquisado com rigor, para ser posteriormente aproveitado temática e tecnicamente pelo artista erudito; e sobre o critério metodológico do nacionalismo brasileiro frente às modernidades européias.

Assim, de um lado as pesquisas do folclore (danças brasileiras, festas populares, cantos étnicos) e a sua assimilação, consciente ou não, pelos nacionalistas, e de outro, os contatos de Villa-Lobos, por exemplo, com a mentalidade das camadas sociais suburbanas, na década de 1910, participando vivamente das serenatas, roda de choro e danças populares, e ainda de um terceiro lado, a convivência cada vez maior com estruturas polifônicas e polirrítmicas e o emprego de novas combinações sonoras; conduziram a definição de traços do mosaico delineador do rosto musical brasileiro.

No Brasil, a opção pelo folclore determinou toda uma revisão do conceito de modernidade e promoveu uma releitura do que é erudito na música. Uma série de trabalhos de coleta de material folclórico (Luciano Gallet, Roquete Pinto, Mario de Andrade) e ensaios de análise deste material serviram de base para compositores que introduziram este aspecto em suas composições.

Mario de Andrade, em seus textos, apontava, ainda que implicitamente, para o surgimento de um "messias da música" brasileira, como uma metáfora do autor que fundamentar-se-ia completamente no som brasileiro. Na realidade, Mario de Andrade, Renato Almeida e o próprio Villa-Lobos se autodefiniram como profetas da missão de valorizar a cultura popular e resgatar as tradições para fazer com elas a modernidade brasileira.

> (...) impulsionados por um espírito salvacionista, passaram por cima de divergências secundárias, empenhados no resgate das tradições populares, que a seus olhos corriam o risco iminente de desaparecimento, frente à crescente modernização da sociedade, ao êxodo rural, ao avanço da industrialização, às rápidas mudanças nas relações sociais e nos modos de vida.(Souza, 1991:3)

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Criou-se um mito de um "espírito nacional" e de uma população irmanada por um mesmo sentimento e uma mesma expressão musical, em outras palavras, criou-se uma imagem de cultura brasileira. O movimento Nacionalista construiu uma imagem de nação e a fez com que os próprios brasileiros a assimilassem e admitissem como autênticas.

Assim, no movimento Nacionalista, a música deveria refletir temática e tecnicamente as mais diversas falas populares para que se encontrasse o verdadeiro som brasileiro, conservando contudo uma universalidade e ocidentalidade.

Fica evidente portanto que o critério nacionalista da música brasileira estava portanto em sua filiação ao folclore, ao popular. Citando Mario de Andrade, em seu *Ensaio sobre a Música Brasileira*, podemos compreender o que a geração de 22 definiu como nacional:

> O critério de música brasileria prá atualidade deve de existir em relação á atualidade. A atualidade brasileira se aplica aferradamente a nacionalisar a nossa manifestação (...) O critério historico atual da Música Brasileira é o da manifestação musical que sendo feita por brasileiro ou individuo nacionalisado, reflete as caracteristicas musicais da raça. Onde que estas estão? Na música popular. (Andrade, 1972:20)[13]

Mario de Andrade empreende então uma verdadeira pesquisa etnomusicológica, apontando quais são estas características da música popular que devem nortear o compositor da construção desta Música Brasileira, com maiúsculas. Diz taxativamente o pesquisador: "O compositor brasileiro tem de se basear quer como documentação quer como inspiração no folclore." (Andrade, 1972:29) Para que se soubesse o que é este folclore, Mario de Andrade empreende viagens pelo Brasil, registrando o folclore musical nacional e, após analisar o material colhido, observou quais as constâncias rítmicas, melódicas, polifônicas e instrumentais típicas desta música, definindo-as como parâmetros para uma verdadeira música brasileira. Curiosamente conclui Mario de Andrade: "o critério atual da Música Brasileira deve ser não filosófico, mas social", diz isso porque compreende que estas características que depreende estão profundamente relacionadas a um primitivismo, que a seu ver não é de caráter estético, porém social. Curiosamente a fundamentação estética para a prática da música litúrgica no Brasil no pós Vaticano II e especialmente vinculada à TdL, assimilou de maneira forte estes princípios modernistas de categorização do que é música do povo.

Os principais renovadores da música litúrgica brasileira, que abriram as portas da Igreja Católica no Brasil para o elemento étnico o fizeram se baseando completamente nas diretrizes marioandradianas. Duas obras são testemunho

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[13] na citação manteve-se a grafia original.

desta filiação, a primeira delas do Pe. José Geraldo de Souza, publicada na coleção Musica Sacra da Editora Vozes, que tem como título *Folcmúsica e Liturgia* (subsídios par ao estudo do problema) (Souza, 1966). Nesta obra, o salesiano faz um levantamento de como os documentos pontifícios, desde o *Motu Proprio* de Pio X até aquela data (1966), haviam tratado a questão da música folclórica na Igreja. É notável como estes documentos acompanham as reflexões advindas do Movimento Litúrgico, que por sua vez, caminha *pari passu* às movimentações modernistas de um nacionalismo musical. A segunda, *Música brasileira na Liturgia*, data de 1969, e traz uma coletânea de estudos realizados nos encontros nacionais de música sacra, promovidos pela Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB), de 1965 a 1968 (VV.AA, 1969) 14. Seus autores foram os expoentes da inculturação da música brasileira, Cônego Amaro Albuquerque, Pe. Nicola Vale, Pe. Geraldo de Souza, o compositor, herdeiro do nacionalismo modernista, Oswaldo Lacerda (este mesmo autor de uma missa que comentamos acima), e o Cônego José Alves de Souza, outro compositor de música litúrgica inculturada. O que se nota nesta obra é a elaboração de um verdadeiro projeto ideológico totalmente calcado naquela mentalidade advinda do modernismo de definição do que é o verdadeiramente brasileiro. E aqui o que é, a nosso ver, o mais interessante. Um projeto profundamente Moderno, este do nacionalismo musical - no sentido de que realizado com base em pesquisas e análises, calcado em uma realidade social, altamente crítico em relação ao estranho ao povo, resultante de um processo racional de definição de parâmetros - associado a uma teologia também Moderna, como a TdL, mas que aponta para a pré-modernidade (que Mario de Andrade chama de "primitivismo") como critério. Em pleno processo de urbanização acelerado, modernização tecnológica e econômica, volta-se os olhos para um Brasil pré-moderno e rural no que diz respeito à cultura.

5 – As crises de um modelo

Como já apontamos acima, os anos de 1960 viram um novo influxo no que diz respeito à maneira com que as religiões institucionalizadas se situavam no mundo, especialmente no ambiente cultural da América Latina. A expressão da teologia política conhecida como Teologia da Libertação levanta-se em seu discurso social protestando contra o poder centralizador da Cúria Romana e conclamando uma igreja mais afeita a modelos democráticos e comunitários, confundindo, de certa maneira, sua pregação com o discurso do socialismo utópico marxista. Um dos maiores nomes desta Teologia Política, o Professor da Universidade de Münster, na Alemanha, Johann Baptist Metz, formula de

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[14] Esta mesma obra foi republicada pela Editora Paulus no ano de 2005, na coleção Música e Liturgia, também como Vol II. Esta coleção é resultante dos Encontros do Grupo de Reflexão de Música Litúrgica da CNBB. A sua republicação seguiu-se caloroso debate neste Grupo de Reflexão sobre as propostas do livro, 36 anos após sua publicação.

maneira categórica este novo caminho que deve trilhar a Igreja em sua obra "Para além da religião burguesa". Neste livro aponta a necessidade de a Igreja católica afastar-se de modelos burgueses de organização, pois estes modelos são na verdade o oposto do Reino de Deus (Metz, 1981).

Neste período, diversos países da América Latina viviam regimes políticos militares de exceção, de inspiração direitista (com exceção da Cuba recém investida no universo do socialismo histórico), e movimentos de libertação nacional de cunho socialista e comunista, apoiados pela antiga URSS, provocavam desde manifestações pacíficas por democracia até luta armada guerrilheira para desestabilização das ditaduras. Estes grupos, curiosamente, viram uma religião, até então considerada "ópio do povo", tornar-se cada vez mais engajada nas causas de esquerda, com um discurso quase comunista e propondo práticas de vida comunitária socialista utópica.

Este socialismo utópico, no entanto já era visto por seus próprios defensores como passível de reformulação. Em 1962 a Declaração de Port Huron, documento fundador da Nova Esquerda, já se mostrava bastante duro com o socialismo de Estado e não deixou de criticá-lo como alternativa ao modelo capitalista de direita. Assim, em fins da década de 1960 até o início de 1980, o que tínhamos era, ao mesmo tempo uma crítica nascente ao socialismo como até então realizado, principalmente nos países do leste Europeu; uma visão utópica e messiânica de um socialismo religioso cristão, confundido com o conceito de Reino de Deus, advindo da Teologia da Libertação; uma reconfiguração dos regimes ditatoriais latino-americanos, resultado não apenas da luta da esquerda, mas também de crises e mudanças de paradigmas internos destes regimes.

Enfim, um panorama propício para a realização do que a Igreja Católica na América Latina vinha vislumbrando como modelo eclesial, a saber, menor dependência de Roma e conseqüente flexibilização hierárquica, desmonte da Instituição Igreja Católica como centro de poder e reflexo da sociedade burguesa, constituição de comunidades menores, onde o alcance social da igreja seria redimensionado, não mais querendo-se apoteótico, supracultural e universalista, porém atento às diferentes culturas e grupos, por menores que fossem. Este processo denominado inculturação abriu espaços para experiências litúrgicas diferenciadas, como as missas étnicas, não presas ao Cânon romano, e também a interpretações doutrinárias dentro de uma perspectiva mais cerca da cultura do crente que do a priori teologal, ditado pela hierarquia.

Esta crise institucional não foi exclusividade da Igreja. Como dito acima, os regimes, os críticos dos regimes, os modelos de mercado como um todo também viveram neste período profundas convulsões internas indicando para a necessidade de um repensar de paradigmas, visto a fragmentação das hegemonias até então dadas como seguras. É neste contexto que surge um novo movimento de articulação mundial que recebe o nome de Globalização, filho direto da crise de hegemonias e do colapso do socialismo de Estado no leste

europeu, terminando assim com o bipolarismo típico dos anos de Guerra-Fria. Esse movimento é como uma vitória daqueles todos que de alguma forma protestavam na década de 1960. É como se a história tivesse dado razão a todas as críticas.

No entanto a fragmentação resultante deste desmonte de macroculturas, de instituições e regimes atingiu também (ou também havia iniciado) em outras instâncias, principalmente no mercado, no trabalho e na religião privada.

A mudança nas relações e condições de trabalho atingiram primeiramente a vida das famílias, que se viram obrigadas a uma reestruturação radical de valores, resultante da instabilidade profissional, do ingresso cada vez mais crescente da mulher no mercado de trabalho, do questionamento dos valores de educação, familiar e escolar, que vinham sendo praticados até então.

A menina dos olhos da Globalização, um mundo sem fronteiras, uma era global, ainda que belo idealmente, provocou outro fenômeno em proporções e fundamentações que o mundo não havia visto até então, uma onda migratória sem limites temporais ou espaciais, constituindo uma malha cultural cada vez mais ampla, porém tênue, porque desvinculada de comunidade. Esta última instituição, louvada pela Teologia da Libertação como instância básica da igreja (denominada Comunidade Eclesial de Base na Teologia da Libertação) se vê desmantelada, visto que o valor do "seguir em frente", do não se acomodar, do buscar sempre mais, sem se estabelecer, do correr em busca do sucesso, é a palavra de ordem do "novo homem".

Esta nova concepção de igreja nascida da Teologia da Libertação se vê, desta forma, defrontada com uma séria questão que é conseqüência inesperada de sua própria ação crítica. Imaginava-se que a destruição ou crítica da suprainstituição, representada pela Cúria romana, geraria automaticamente a comunidade de base. O problema surge quando se percebe que o processo de "desmantelamento institucional" atingiu a vida do homem como um todo, em especial naqueles fatores apontados acima: o trabalho e a religião privada.

A pergunta que se surge para a Igreja é: qual homem consegue prosperar em condições sociais instáveis e fragmentárias? Ou qual comunidade consegue sobreviver em instabilidade e fragmentação constante?

6 – O advento da cultura Pop, ou de uma nova ordem "desordenada"

A proposta eclesial e teológica nascida desta crise é defrontada com alguns desafios inerentes a esta nova condição social, ou seja a Igreja se vê desafiada a cuidar das relações de curto prazo, proporcionar uma compreensão do homem para si mesmo nesta nova dinâmica de rupturas constantes da história, nesta obrigação de migrar-se constantemente, seja de tarefa, de trabalho ou de lugar.

Comunidades organizam a narrativa da própria vida. Se a comunidade se fragmenta, a narrativa perde seu enredo. Como construir comunidade deixando o passado sempre para trás em busca de um sucesso, que neste novo modelo

sócio-econômico não é garantia de perenidade? A instabilidade de todas instituições (leia-se aqui, empresas, igrejas, famílias, etc.) provoca uma desconstrução da narrativa ao invés de ser o fio condutor das narrativas individuais.

Alia-se a isso o reforço ao conceito de consumidor neste novo mercado, ou neste novo modelo de sociedade que passamos a chamar a partir daqui de omnicapitalista (Sennett, 2006).[15] O Consumidor ganha um status *sui generis* nesta nova cultura, pois é ao mesmo tempo sujeito e objeto. É o motor do seu próprio sucesso e desenvolvimento, ávido por novidades, mais individual ou individualista que o sujeito moderno kantiano, que para atingir seu objetivo está disposto a abrir mão de seu passado como abre mão de seus bens antigos, mesmo os que ainda estão funcionando e são úteis, apenas em busca da novidade. Simultaneamente este sujeito é também o objeto desta nova cultura, que descobriu no ser-humano um bem vendável e portanto também necessitado de constante "aperfeiçoamento", ou melhor dizendo, de constante mudança de roupagem mercadológica, necessitado de um "marketing pessoal", de uma imagem, que não é a sua, mas a que quer vender, de acordo com as necessidades e aspirações do mercado.

Como as igrejas combinam isso, uma realidade omnicapitalista, com uma narrativa contínua que dá sentido à existência? Como combinar o perene da proposta de Salvação e de Reino de Deus, ansiado e esperado, com este novo modelo de indivíduo e de comunidade sem história?

Um outro nome para este momento de escolhas individuais, oposto àquele de construção de identidades amplas (nacionalismo) do modernismo, é pós-moderno. O marco deste pensamento é justamente a fragmentação, a indiferença ou mesmo desconfiança a todo discurso universal ou totalizante, além de uma ruptura com o sentido de continuidade e memória histórica. Assim, a filiação a uma tradição baseando-se em um porquê é inválida nesta lógica pós-moderna, avessa às interpretações teóricas de larga escala e pretensamente de explicação universal. Em outras palavras, o pós-moderno é quase uma reação à austeridade conceitual do moderno. O que importa é o episódico, o efêmero, o jogo, o fragmentário, o espetáculo.

As conseqüências estéticas e teológicas disso são portanto facilmente deduzíveis. Em virtude da facilidade de combinação de símbolos de códigos díspares ou mesmo de múltiplas significações, mesmo à custa de disjunções ou ecletismos, obedecendo apenas o "gosto do consumidor" conduziu, no que diz respeito à religião, ao que Paul Heelas chamou de "Disneylândia espiritual" (Heelas, 1998). Uma desregulamentação da religião, ou uma transformação da religião (aqui entendida como sinônimo de macronarrativa) em religioso. O Êxodo se dá de forma inversa ao proposto pela TdL, vai-se do público para o privado, e o religioso passa a ser apenas mais um produto de consumo. Estes

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[15] Desta obra valemo-nos não apenas do conceito de omnicapitalismo como também nos baseamo para elaborar estas reflexões sobre como as mudanças econômicas estão moldando novos valores sociais e pessoais

produtos devem ser oferecidos de acordo com a capacidade que têm de provocar experiências.

O racional dá lugar ao sensorial, emocional. A verdade passa a ser "o que funciona para mim". Isso leva a uma total desconexão entre crença religiosa e experiência espiritual.

A definição do que é ou do que não é religião não depende mais de uma instituição ou de uma tradição, já que a religião está desregulamentada. Surgem não apenas novas formas de religião, mas novas formas de viver a religião, nascidas da autonomia do indivíduo para operar combinações, que são eternas enquanto durar a experiência. A religião talvez se caracterize mais como um hibridismo efêmero que como uma tradição cultural.

Do ponto de vista estético a diferença não é grande. Uma reação à tradição cultural, a total aceitação do efêmero, do fragmentário, do descontínuo e mesmo do caótico pautam a estética do pós-moderno. Esta estética do choque, da despreocupação com a profundidade metafísica moderna, da colagem, do kitsch, coloca a arte não como um valor perene, mas apenas como mais um objeto de consumo. O nome mais comum para esta arte: Pop. Seu principal meio de expressão: os *Happenings*.

Estes dois termos, mais que definições, são como uma rede de conceitos, uma rede que se tece e desconstrói constantemente, modificando sua configuração, sem uma continuidade histórica ou mesmo obedecendo padrões delimitáveis. Seguimos Pierre Restany na tentativa de explicação do que é a Pop art. Em *Os novos realistas*, Restany nos diz que Pop é abreviatura de Popular, e que "recobre atualmente todo o setor do realismo contemporâneo nascido de um novo senso da natureza moderna, industrial e urbana." (Restany, 1979:131) O mesmo autor nos esclarece que o termo foi empregado pela primeira vez já em 1955 pelo crítico inglês Lawrence Alloway, tendo sido retomado em 1963 para caracterizar as novidades da arte norte-americana daquele período. Restany esclarece mais sobre o termo quando diz: "Entre o pop-corn e as pop-songs a América do Norte tinha necessidade premente de consumir a pop'art regada com todos os molhos e sem distinção de anterioridade." (Restany, 1979:139)

Talvez o jogo com o verbo *to pop*, do inglês, nos ajude a compreender melhor o que significa este novo conceito em arte. O episódico, emergente e consumível, se tornam critérios para a arte. As palavras usadas por Restany corroboram a associação desta arte com o que falávamos acima sobre o omnicapitalismo: "necessidade premente de consumir". Também o hibridismo e a ruptura com uma tradição são evidenciados por Restany quando diz que esta arte é "regada com todos os molhos e sem distinção de anterioridade".

A expressão desta arte Pop ganhou o nome genérico de *happening*, e outra vez é em Restany que buscamos sua explicação:

À primeira vista poderia tratar-se de espetáculos de síntese, do desenrolar de uma ação complexa, gestual, sonora, luminosa,

mecânica, humana, animal dentro de um quadrou e de um cenário e segundo um roteiro mais ou menos vago. (...) são (...) acontecimentos, mas no sentido mais genérico da palavra, isto é, das coisas que acontecem tanto por sorte como por acidente. (Restany, 1979:251)

Nota-se como tudo isso está muito distante de um modelo pretensamente organizado, com uma estética definida e formalizada, como pretendida pelos modernistas, especialmente no que diz respeito à busca pelas raízes étnicas nacionalistas.

Os *happenings* não permitem mais a separação entre ator e expectador. O *performer*, termo utilizado para definir o protagonista do *happening*, não faz a arte para um expectador, simplesmente o ignora, por isso está distante do conceito tradicional de intérprete na arte. Não há uma disciplina a ser respeitada, a performance é para ser consumida e consumir. O *happening* é como:

Uma técnica da participação coletiva cuja justificativa prática constitui o fim em si: suscitar entre os assistentes uma simpatia ativa, fazê-los passar da receptividade à ação, criar neles e à volta deles as condições de uma participação possível. (Restany, 1979:252)

Os *happenings* operam como a grande celebração da individualização, como sinal do declínio da determinação institucional. Como efêmero por natureza não se esforça em sustentar ou continuar valores, crenças, ou mesmo descrenças. Isso suspende definitivamente os padrões de autoridade para um juízo estético (e também teológico. Enfim para qualquer tipo de juízo). Só se pode julgar o espetáculo em termos de quão espetacular ele é. Aqui só há a experiência, e ela não é mais mediada por nenhuma narrativa, instituição ou tradição.

Como então representar o eterno e perene da revelação e da encarnação em meio ao caos? Como construir a comunidade onde só há o indivíduo? Como ouvir e cantar o "canto do povo da terra", do "povo de Deus", quando cada um é consumidor e quer o produto que lhe agrade mais?

7 – Seria o Pop um "Sinal dos Tempos"?

Em 1990, o grupo de rock brasileiro Engenheiros do Hawaii, lançava disco intitulado O Papa é Pop, trazendo neste a canção homônima de Humberto Gessinger, cantor do grupo. Reproduzo aqui alguns versos desta canção:

> Todo mundo tá revendo
> O que nunca foi visto
> Todo mundo tá comprando
> Os mais vendidos..
> (...)
> E ninguém tá salvo...
>
> Todo mundo tá relendo
> O que nunca foi lido
> Tá na Caras...
> Tá na capa da revista...
>
>
> O Papa é Pop!
> O Papa é Pop!
> O Pop não poupa ninguém
> O Papa levou um tiro
> À queima roupa
> O Pop não poupa ninguém...
>
> Uma palavra
> Na tua camiseta
> O planeta na tua cama
> Uma palavra
> Escrita a lápis
> Eternidades da semana..
> (...)
> Toda catedral é populista
> É pop
> É macumba prá turista
> (...)

O grupo tinha razão. De fins da década de 1950, período das primeiras manifestações de uma arte com características pós-modernas, até hoje o pop não poupou ninguém na nossa cultura ocidental. E o mais incrível é que os paradoxos da canção são de fato constatáveis. Revê-se o que nunca foi visto e

relê-se o que nunca foi lido. Mas o mais importante dessa lógica: compra-se tudo, de preferência os mais vendidos. Tudo dura uma eternidade de uma semana.

As igrejas parecem também já ter assimilado esta lógica pós-moderna. Sim, o Papa é Pop, como também o são os pastores evangélicos e a Macumba. A revista Veja, de 12 de julho de 2006 trouxe matéria de 11 páginas, intitulada "Novos Pastores", mostrando como a formação dos pastores de muitas igrejas evangélicas afasta-se cada vez mais da teologia e centra-se no aprendizado de técnicas de marketing e convencimento de público. A linguagem da igreja se confunde com a do mercado. A libertação (do pobre, da opressão, do sofrimento) dá lugar à Prosperidade (econômica e social), nome desta nova teologia.

Na Igreja católica a diferença não é muito grande. O espetáculo dá lugar á liturgia. O Pe. Marcelo Rossi foi pop e campeão de venda de CDs e aparições em programas de TV. Em seu esteio, outros se lançam no mercado como cantores de música gospel, pobre imitação do gênero norte-americano.

A reação a isso tudo parece muito mais acadêmica que pastoral, afinal, o modelo vêem dando resultados, transformando muitos padres em *pop stars*. Estes, mesmo sendo representantes da instituição, da tradição, da narrativa, criam sua própria religião, formam grupos privados, oferecendo o seu produto, como algo pessoal. Não são mais os organizadores das comunidades, mas vendem uma experiência, resultado de sua performance no altar, que não é mais um altar, mas palco. A liturgia, longe de ser o serviço divino da memória do sacrifício eucarístico, torna-se um show. A missa é vista como um produto: quanto mais "animada" e "emocionante", melhor.

Mais do que nunca, esteticizou-se a prática religiosa, mas o fez com o *kitsch*. O ritual está mais para um *happening* que para uma liturgia. Todos são *performers* deste serviço religioso. O templo se transforma de espaço sagrado para pista de dança. Não há mais lugar para a música do povo, aquela pré-moderna, definida pelo modernismo. O que importa é provocar a experiência pessoal com Deus, sinal da migração da religião do público para o privado.

O jornal Folha de S. Paulo, de 9 de abril de 2006, em seu caderno Ilustrada traz um bom exemplo desta estética desta nova expressão teológica. Com o título, "Cristoteca louva a Deus em plena balada", o artigo apresenta o grupo electrocristo, que dedica-se a cultivar a música eletrônica e promover as festas e *raves* católicas nesta Cristoteca, onde estilos como a *dance music*, *electro* e *trance*, comandadas por Djs, animam jovens. O mais interessante é que tudo isso precedido por uma missa. O conteúdo teológico dos textos destas músicas, distantes do valor da comunidade, do caráter libertador e atento à realidade social, característicos das músicas da TdL, em especial das Missa Étnicas, falam em sua maioria de um Deus particular e de uma experiência individual. O povo de Deus dá lugar à massa, que quer sentir os efeitos dessa

experiência no aqui e agora e não na história. E com isso, toda catedral vira populista e até o Papa é apenas mais um produto a ser vendido.

8 – Conclusão

Neste contexto de Igreja que se vive neste momento no Brasil, e que de maneira particular se reproduz em toda a América Latina, com nuances mercadológicas especificas em cada país, pode-se entender facilmente o porquê de não haver mais espaço para as missas étnicas. Estas composições não se enquadram nesta lógica pós-moderna, mercadológica, omnicapitalista. Elas não são um canto para o consumo da Igreja massa, mas canto da Igreja povo.

Não se pode contudo esquecer que se o advento desta cultura pop está vinculado a uma lógica específica, que tem conseqüências não apenas musicais e estéticas, mas de caráter antropológico e ético. Teologicamente há que se perguntar qual é a postura cristã a ser tomada neste ambiente. Neste sentido, voltamos à Gutiérrez para terminar este texto, quando este afirma que :

> Reconhecem-se os valores da liberdade, da iniciativa pessoal, das possibilidades abertas à humanidade pelos progressos técnicos, incluindo a função que o mercado pode desempenhar dentro de certos parâmetros. Contudo, denuncia-se determinadamente a lógica do mercado que subjuga pessoas, povos e culturas, tanto por meio do seu afã homogeneizador como através das novas fraturas sócias que provoca. (Gutiérrez, 2003:27)

Mais que respostas, restam-nos muitas perguntas ao fim deste artigo. Talvez tenha sido possível notar como um movimento estético musical permitiu a contemplação do que seja étnico na América Latina. Talvez tenha sido possível entender a razão do surgimento das missas étnicas em um contexto mais amplo de teologia e eclesiologia e também como esta mudança de contexto conduziu ao silêncio desta música. Talvez tenha sido possível se questionar se a música litúrgica, devendo ser inculturada, não segue fazendo exatamente isso que foi preconizado e iniciado após o Concilio Vaticano II, quando hoje cede ao pop. Afinal, não é essa a cultura em que vivemos? O que entendemos por cultura hoje para nos inculturarmos? Qual é a expressão musical hoje do povo de Deus? Como, por ter todas as faces acaba por não ter nenhuma, esta cultura pop não seria uma maneira de não reconhecer a encarnação, de não dar um rosto para o Cristo? Este inclusivismo homogeneizante da cultura pop não seria, ao contrário, profundamente excludente por não reconhecer as diferenças culturais? Vale se perguntar ainda: como as comunidades cristãs se reconhecerão como tal, abrindo mão de uma macronarrativa, de um sentido de perenidade, do valor da memória e do memorial, em nome de um "falar a linguagem deste tempo"?

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Church, State, and Society during the Nicaraguan Revolution

John-Paul Wilson[16]

The course of the Church's history in Nicaragua had changed from an institution led by a martyred Bishop protecting Indian rights before Rome and the Spanish King to one largely concerned with protecting its own interests following Nicaragua's independence to one that had come to terms with its mission to save souls and to serve its people. However, many of those who took the initiative to bring the Church toward a more humanitarian orientation in modern times had allowed themselves to become the tool of a revolutionary political movement whose aim was to perpetuate its own power. Ironically, those who truly wished to serve God and His people found themselves oppressed by those who claimed that they were doing the same. After a long struggle, a free election in 1990 brought to power a series of democratic governments allowing freedom of the Church to fulfil its mission.

Keywords: Governors, Popes, Dictators, Christians, Marxist, ecclesia

Throughout the centuries, the Catholic Church was created to propagate the basic Christian message (evangelisation) and to provide for God's people according to their spiritual and material needs. The primary role of the Church's clergy has been to prepare souls for the coming of the kingdom of God and to aid the less fortunate, both Christian and non-Christian. In principle, there need be no conflict between secular authority and the Church. Jesus gave clear instruction to his followers to 'render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that belong to God' (Mark 12:17). Even so, the Church still recognizes that spiritual matters transcend the secular. State demands for societal coherence and Church moral teachings are the usual domains of Church/State conflict.

Historically, the extent to which the Church has been involved in the lives of the people has often been dictated by its relationship to the state. Attitudes

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toward the Church's influence over society have ranged from benevolent patronage, allowing the Church to evangelise and expand its activity,[17] to the most severe attacks of anti-clericalism for which a defensive posture starting with apologetic approaches to underground operations in the extreme.[18] Throughout the course of church/state relations in Latin America, the Church has had to redefine its commitment to people in ways that are sometimes compatible with current political systems and at other times requires an offensive posture including aggressive evangelisation and non-violent confrontation on moral issues. At times, the Church has made intermittent defensive alliances with various political forces to prevent its loss of influence over society. Consequently, as an imperfect institution, the Church has, at times, found itself inadvertently serving the interests of party politics, the state, or even itself. Yet, at various points, the Church has fully realized its position and redirected itself back toward its original mission in a process of renewal through various Episcopal Conferences, Ecumenical Councils and papal proclamations.

The Catholic Church of Nicaragua has been unique from the standpoint that in its redefining of its commitment to God's people following the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), forces were unleashed that altered the course of Nicaragua's political and social history. In response to Vatican II, a dispute emerged among members of the clergy. There was a unanimous agreement on the definition of the Church's mission, yet parties differed in the means by which that mission could be fulfilled. One group of revolutionary Christians believed that the needs of the people could best be served through an ideology of human liberation based on a Marxist critique requiring an armed insurrection. Another found it necessary to work within the confines of the establishment. A third group of new bishops appointed in the early 1970s by Pope Paul VI avoided the trappings of politics.

A series of pastoral letters, written to clarify the Nicaraguan Church's position as an offensive thrust against a repressive Liberal government, incited retribution against the progressive wing of the Church. This group, after suffering under the prior establishment, would later be deemed reactionary; and a new revolutionary government would thus renew the earlier suppression of Church activities. Nevertheless, a reactionary political uprising, resulting in a free election monitored by an international team lead by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, would eventually bring to power a new democratic government more closely aligned with the Nicaraguan bishops by 1990.

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[17] Christianity was used for coherence within the Roman Empire under the Edict of Milan (313).

[18] As within the first two centuries of the Roman Empire and many twentieth century Marxist states.

The Development of Church/State Relations

As a result of the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*, the Church had granted the Spanish monarchy full power and authority over the western portion of newly-discovered lands in the Americas (Alexander VI, 1493); and in deference to this papal gift, the King's authority in these lands would be used to preserve indigenous identity, culture, and practices as they pertained to the strictures of medieval serfdom. The crown would assure the Church's social prominence through the running of its own courts, schools, hospitals, and charitable services; and it would guarantee that the Church would have ample resources through its extensive land grants and other privileges (Williams, 1989: 13; Dobson, 1993: 122-123). This relationship would, in fact, facilitate the creation of *Patronato Real* where the Spanish crown put newly discovered lands under the complete social administration of the Church; and a symbiotic relationship thus developed in which Spanish colonial endeavours were integrated within the proliferation of Catholic culture. The role of the Church tended to 'undermine the Indian potential for resistance and rebellion' and this would later help to integrate the Indian population into the framework of colonial economics (Mechum, 1966: 11; Dobson, 1993: 123).

This system of regal paternalism, however, could be easily corrupted, leading to abuses. There were clergy who actively sought to protect the Indians from exploitation by colonial landowners. For example, Rodrigo de Contreras, governor of León, was deposed by the local Bishop, Antonio de Valdivieso, over Indian issues as reported by Bartolomé de las Casas (1951: 453). Valdivieso was assassinated for his defence of the Indians by Pedro and Hernando de Contreras, the sons of the deposed governor (Foroohar, 1989: 2-3). Following las Casas' reporting on Indian suffering to the Spanish Court and Rome, an offensive manoeuvre with Paul III's Papal Bull *Sublimis Deus (1537)* defended Indian rights after which Emperor Charles V promulgated the Anti-Slavery Laws of 1542 (Donovan, 1974: 6-7).

By the end of the 16th Century, the Roman Catholic Church had accumulated vast amounts of wealth through property ownership and had emerged as one of the most powerful institutions in colonial society. However, with the decline of the Hapsburgs, the Spanish government quickly lost control of its colonies. The establishment of the Bourbon dynasty, as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, sought to restrict the banking and bureaucratic practices of the clergy, which began a steady decline in the Church's economic clout into the 19th Century. By the time of Central American independence, native-born elites soon took the place of colonial officials. As a result, the Church's relationship to the state changed: It now had to rely on a 'legal bases of privilege … to insure influence in society' (Vallier, 1970: 7; Gismondi, 1986: 20-21; Dobson, 1993: 124-125, 165).

In 1823, the Central American provinces of the short-lived Mexican Empire broke up into several new Latin American governments. Many of these governments were dominated by the Liberal Party that represented those who had not benefited from the crown's centralized control of exports and production. Its leaders proved to be anti-clerical in the sense that the Liberal Party sought to check the Church's authority independent of the state. Consequently, the Church was pushed into the arms of the Conservative Party that had hoped to retain the rights of the clergy. A violent struggle ensued between Liberals and Conservatives in the decades following Independence that impeded the development of Nicaragua's agro-export economy (Gismondi, 1986: 20-22; Williams, 1989: 13-15).

The domination of the Liberal Party in Nicaragua was cut short by its alliance to the American 'filibuster' William Walker, who seized power for a short time until the Conservatives drove him out in 1855. During the next 35 years, policy favoured the expansion of Church authority (Williams, 1989: 16). For instance, in 1862, the *Concordato* was signed between the Conservative government and the papacy that defended papal rights to nominate ecclesiastical authorities and obligated the state to support the Church financially. However, when the Liberal Party regained the leadership of the country in 1893, President Jose Santos Zelaya introduced the *Estado Liberal*, a new constitution that effectively nullified the *Concordato*. Moreover, new anti-clerical laws were introduced in 1899 that called for the ban of clerical dress and the nationalization of Church property (Williams, 1985: 343-345; Gismondi, 1986: 23).

Zelaya's triumph over the Conservative oligarchy proved to be short-lived. In an attempt to revive the economy, the Liberal president initiated several contract loans from U.S. banks and British sources. However, the economy did not improve and the government went increasingly into debt. The United States thereafter intervened into Nicaraguan financial affairs in order to protect the country from European retribution and forced Zelaya from office (Williams, 1989: 16-17). Between 1912 and 1932, U.S. marines invaded this Central American state on numerous occasions in the name of North American interests. In each case, the hierarchy of bishops never openly supported the U.S. in their actions. However, when the marines were called in to help suppress a nationalist and anti-imperialist rebellion begun by Augusto César Sandino in 1928, the Church hierarchy broke their silence and spoke out against the rebels. To the bishops, Sandino was seen as 'an atheist and a bolshevist' and a danger to Nicaragua (Williams, 1985: 343; Williams, 1989: 16-18).

Upon the suppression of Sandino's rebellion, President José María Moncado sought to maintain cordial relations with the Church in appreciation of its support against Sandino. Moncado took the first step by repealing many of the anti-clerical laws of the *Estado Liberal*. Opposition to Sandino was the crucial factor that also began to bridge the gap between Liberals and

Conservatives. In fact, with Anastasio Somoza Garcia's rise to power in 1936, any distinction between the two had faded almost completely (Williams, 1985: 343-344).

Somoza established a regime through direct control over the Presidency, the Liberal Party, and an internal police force (*Guardia Nacional)*. But more importantly, Somoza broke with Liberal tradition by cultivating a good relationship with the Church (Gismondi, 1986: 24-25; Shepherd, 1993: 280-282). The Church was given tax exemptions as well as a continued central role in education. In return, the Church provided a source of legitimization to a regime that 'relied primarily on force and intimidation of the countryside' (Shepherd, 1993: 283).   As the nature of the state became increasingly determined by the actions of the *Guardia Nacional*, the Church took an increasingly offensive stance against the Somoza dynasty that would intensify as a result of six new Bishops appointed by Paul VI in the wake of Vatican II.

Revitalization and Institutional Change

The rise of modern industrialisation resulted in urbanisation and new fissures in society, giving credence to new social theories affecting global society. Industrialists with new-found wealth replaced the ancient aristocracy but the workers supporting industry suffered from low wages and harsh living conditions. Karl Marx's economic and social theories advocated that the wealth of the industrialist was gained from the excess labour of the workers and proposed a new system abolishing private ownership of the means of production under the banner: 'From each according to their ability and to each according to their need' (Marx, 1875). The convergence of Marxist and Christian thought is usually in comparison with the early Christian community in Jerusalem where 'everything they owned was held in common…and distributed to all according to their need' (Acts 4:44-45). The transition from a capitalist to a Marxist society requires, according to Marx, a political transition period of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in which Vladimir Lenin requires an authoritarian 'vanguard' to spearhead the revolution (Lenin, 1903). The Marxist society is necessarily brought about by coercion whereas the Jerusalem Christian community had been a free choice.

A Christian approach for dealing with the modern industrialised world began with Pope Leo XIII's papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Leo XIII, 1891). The underlying framework on the rights of ownership and of individual workers to form associations, and duties of citizens and rulers had been taken from St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* (Leo XIII, 1891: 7, 11, 13). *Rerum Novarum* rejects the extreme unfettered capitalism subject only to market forces and the socialist tendencies that deny the right to personal property. The role of the State is to ensure the dignity of the workers and their right to free association while encouraging adequate production for the common good. At

the beginning of the pontificate of Pius XII, a collaboration of priest and laity in 'Catholic Action' was called to work for human dignity (Pius XII, 1939: 8-11, 14). In *Anni Sacri,* Pius XII (1950) laments those who deceive and provoke hatred, rivalry and rebellion leading to a continuing series of riots and revolts causing 'ruin of economies and irreparable harm to the common good'. He again calls for Catholic Action associations to combat these evils through prayer, teaching, and bringing justice to the poor (Pius XII, 1950: 1-2). The Nicaraguan Church responded with *Acción Católica* associations formed to emphasize lay participation in the defence of the Church against Communism and to advocate social change (Williams, 1985: 347; Williams, 1989: 22).

During the course of its close relationship with the Somoza regime, the Catholic Church in Nicaragua had become dispirited, lacking any clear orientation beyond its assigned role. Nevertheless, with the creation of Vatican II, a process of renewal had begun which would galvanise the Universal Church. This event had the effect of further reorienting the Nicaraguan bishops' defensive position toward an offence facilitating change. Pope John XXIII set the theme of socio-economic structural change through a series of encyclicals that included *Mater et Magistra*, again emphasizing the rights of ownership and free association as means of social and economic change (John XXIII, 1961: 4). In *Pacem im Terris*, John XXIII (1963: 2-5) gives clear definition of rights and duties of individuals, society, national states, and international relations; stressing the need for decent standards of living, education, and political participation. This theme was fully realized over the course of Vatican II, where the emphasis was placed on lay participation in the acquisition of equity and freedom.

The social teachings of Vatican II were synthesized and further discussed by Pope Paul VI in the post-conciliar document, *Populorum Progressio,* including endemic poverty and injustice as well as the vast disparities of wealth and power supported by social, national, and international structures maintaining the status quo (Vatican II, 1965a: 2-4; Paul VI, 1967: 1-4). Vatican II's *Apostolicam Actuositatem* hoped to resolve these 'immense inequalities' and advocate a 'commitment to the poor' with a renewed call to Catholic Action (Vatican II, 1965b: 5-7). Both Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* and Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* emphasized that the world and its goods are given to all mankind and that great disparities are not justified (Vatican II, 1965a: 37-39). *Gaudium et Spes* reaffirms the ancient teaching that 'When a person is in extreme necessity he has the right to supply himself out of the riches of others' (Vatican II, 1965a: 39-40). Consequently, these very issues soon became the centrepiece for an Episcopal Conference that would have an even greater impact on Nicaragua and the rest of Latin America.

In 1968, the *Consejo Episcopal Latinamericano* (CELAM, 1969) held their Second General Conference in Medellín, Colombia. This historic gathering of clergy had been assembled to address the issues brought up during Vatican II in

a way that was relevant to the needs of Latin America. Dom Helder Camara, CELAM Secretary General, was a moving force sighting the need for transforming the current capitalist socio-economic structures while avoiding Marxist options with its associated class warfare as 'both systems militate against the dignity of the human person' (CELAM, 1969: 4). Camara pleaded for the development of grass-root communities to form networks for a non-violent confrontation with the prevailing unjust socio-economic systems (Camara, 1971: 81-82). At Medellín, the Church's relationship to political authority was redefined to take on a proactive role in the remodelling of societal structures and to demonstrate 'a special commitment to the poor'. This new social doctrine encouraged the establishment of *Comunidad Eclesial de Base* (CEB or Christian Based Community) aimed at defending the rights of the impoverished masses and creating awareness of social injustices, but more importantly, it encouraged a theology of human liberation based on analysis of class conflict that attempts to employ the gospel as a means of resolving concrete problems (Camara, 1971: 37-9; Dobson, 1993: 128-9).

Vatican II had ushered in a greater concern for humanity, particularly the material conditions of the poor, the marginal, and the excluded. Liberation theology was created as a result of existing doctrines and institutions failing to serve the real needs of the people. According to their chief author, Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973: 137), the key to analyzing the problem and creating a solution lay in the recognition of class struggle that is part of current Latin America society and inherited from colonialism. Camara and Gutiérrez both struggled for an appropriate Christian response to this problem. Gutiérrez (1973: 48, 53-58) believed that only through social revolution could Latin America change its present condition. For Marxist Christians, unjust social structures such as capitalism and Western imperialism became associated with sin. Perhaps the most elegant examples are found in the writings of the Trappest priest Fr. Ernesto Cardenal (1993: 351-78) who lead the Marxist Christian community in Nicaragua, for example, his poems such as *Like the Waves* (*Cantiga* 35) and *The Grave of the Guerrilla* (*Cantiga* 36). Historically, Christ could be interpreted by Cardenal as the ultimate political figure and revolutionary. Cardenal made use of traditional Christian imagery with the 'New Jerusalem' replaced by the 'New Havana' described in *Cantiga* 19 (Cardenal, 1993: 191). In this case, there could be no neutrality; one had to take up the 'option of the poor' and be committed to Marxist revolution in order to be a Christian (Gutiérrez, 1973: 108-109, 137-140; Belli, 1988: 209-211). While there is some convergence of Marxist and traditional Christian ideals, they differ on the roles of private property, democracy, human solidarity, and especially revolutionary violence.

To establish Marxism as a tool against oppression within the Christian community, the traditional theology of the Church is presented as a bourgeois/imperialist theology that perpetuates unjust conditions (Gutiérrez,

1973: 108-109). Only a new theology developed from within the underclass relevant to their experience can serve the poor for which the current Church hierarchy with its bourgeois perspective does not comprehend (Girardi, 1989: 74-75, 92-99). According to Gutiérrez (1973: 307), 'we will have an *authentic* theology of liberation only when the oppressed themselves … are the protagonists of their own liberation [emphasis added]'. Furthermore, Gutiérrez (1973: 111-112, 274-278) stressed that a classless society where private ownership of production is prohibited is the only acceptable Christian response.

The Nicaraguan bishops could not ignore that something extraordinary was happening within the Latin American Church, yet they had little enthusiasm for changing the traditional role of Christianity. Nevertheless, a small group of clergy had been inspired by the issues addressed at Medellín and Vatican II. This avant-garde movement of religious was eager to play a more active role in promoting social change through pastoral experiments aimed at creating awareness of unjust social conditions in Nicaragua as the first step to overcoming them (Williams, 1985: 22-24; Bahktiari, 1986: 18-19). In 1965, Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, established the first CEB on a small island in the middle of Lake Nicaragua called *Nuestra Señora de Solentiname*. With the assistance of Spanish priest, José de la Jara, Cardenal hoped to create an 'intermediary structure' wherein the laity was encouraged to participate in Bible discussion and reflection preparing a basis for a new theological understanding. Cardenal hoped to put into practice Marxist analysis to help solve the social problems facing Nicaragua. He was particularly inspired by the accomplishments of Fidel Castro and his 'love for one's fellow man' (Cardenal, 1974: 321-322). In 1966, José de la Jara followed Cardenal's example by establishing the first of many CEB's throughout the *barrios* of Managua.

In January 1969, one hundred members of the Nicaraguan clergy attended the *Primer Encuentro Pastoral* in which various religious groups reported on the progress of how the proposals of Medellín were being used to promote change in society. One discourse by Fr. Noel García, a Jesuit priest, praised the work done at the *Solentiname* community while criticizing the majority of the clergy for their preference toward landowners and businessmen who provided economic support for the work of the Church. García explained that at the root of the bishops lack of commitment to social change was the fact that bishops 'were *not in touch* with the lower clergy and the laity on a grass-roots level [emphasis added]' (Williams, 1985: 349-351; Bahktiari, 1986: 18).

Polarization and Division

Growth associated with the economy during the 1950's was the outcome of a cotton boom that helped to lessen the country's sole dependence upon coffee production. This development resulted in Nicaragua's entry into the Central American Common Market. Nevertheless, the country's newfound economic

prosperity did little to alleviate the sufferings of the poor as the majority of the profits ended up in the coffers of Anastasio Somoza Garcia and his supporters. Rising to power in 1967, Anastasio Somoza Debayle followed in the footsteps of his father displaying insatiable greed. He tried to take direct control of the economy, ultimately alienating the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the new dictator had eliminated all channels of participation, thus exacerbating public discontent (Gismondi, 1986: 24-25; Williams, 1989: 24). With the absence of a vent for the growing social frustration, the CEB's were transformed into channels for political activism, in turn, compelling the laity to adopt a more radical stance (Bahktiari, 1986: 19).

In the early 1970's, Fr. Uriel Molina, a faculty member at *Universidad Centroamerica* (UCA), founded a 'university community' in which students could gather and discuss the Bible; but in reaction to the increasing repression of the Somoza regime, those students became involved in popular protest. Many of the students who were committed to social change were products of the Catholic middle and upper classes that were once loyal to the *Somocistas* but had found themselves alienated from the regime as a result of its growing corruption. In 1971, the students, led by Fr. Molina, held a massive protest over the lack of popular political participation in Nicaragua and the government's ill treatment of political prisoners (Williams, 1989: 45-47). Grassroots political protests such as this became prevalent throughout the 1970's; yet this particular instance was the first in which Catholic priests were directly involved.[19]

The most important factor in the politicization of the lower clergy was the emergence (1960-1967) of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN). Fr. Cardenal was inspired by this popular movement that he believed was destined to become the successor to the Castro Revolution. In turn, the *Sandinistas* saw the potential within the politicized clergy and laity to become the powerbase in which to replace a corrupt and archaic political system through revolution. Moreover, the revolutionary cadre saw an opportunity to expand its power base and sanitize the movement through its collaboration with Christians.[20] Hence, the FSLN adopted a policy of religious tolerance and even allowed revolutionary Christians into their ranks. Within this collaboration, it was believed that 'true' Christians were the ones who joined into this struggle (Gutiérrez, 1973: 275; Belli, 1988: 212-215).

The revolutionary Christian interpretation of Vatican II and Medellín was not the only view taken by those who responded to its call for social reform. In March 1970, Monsignor Miguel Obando y Bravo was appointed by Paul VI as the new Archbishop of Managua. The Obando

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[19] One of Fr. Molina's students, having accepted armed struggle, was among the first revolutionary Christians to experience revolutionary killing by running down a hospital security guard with his car while delivering weapons to the east *barrios* of Managua (Girardi, 1989: 97).

[20] Tomás Borge met with Ernesto Cardenal in 1969 and Uriel Molina in 1971 (Belli, 1985: 250).

appointment would be followed by five additional new bishops over the next few years. Obando had distanced himself from the Marxist/Christian union and their interpretation of liberation theology in his criticism of 'unreasoned insurrectional or armed protest' of revolutionary groups (Williams, 1985: 352; Shepard 1993: 285). Nonetheless, he stressed a true commitment to the poor and to the protection of human rights. This new voice of moderate opposition became the catalyst for the Church hierarchy's formal break with Somoza. Soon after his appointment, he was given a Mercedes Benz as the usual gift from Somoza. The Archbishop sold it and offered the money to the poor. He went even further by stating that he would abstain from the up-coming elections due to his belief that they were being used to perpetuate the *Somocistas* (Williams, 1985: 352-353).

Obando's actions encouraged some of the other bishops to take his lead. On 29 June 1971, a pastoral letter from the *Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua* (CEN) was published describing the Church's duty in the political realm (Williams, 1985: 353). It stressed the need to allow the citizens to decide the system of government that best suited their needs. A 19 March 1972 pastoral letter criticized the 'inadequacies of the current social structure' and stated that the Church supported changes (CEN, 1972).

In December 1972, Managua experienced a devastating earthquake that wrought damage all across the capital. Soon after, Somoza began a reconstruction campaign to rebuild the city. *Somocista* industries, however, controlled the vast majority of the loan contracts over labour and materials enabling the dictator to use the disaster to enrich his own coffers from foreign charity. A year after the ordeal, a mass was celebrated by Obando in Managua to commemorate those who had lost their lives during the earthquake. The Archbishop in his homily stressed the 'need to construct not only new buildings, but a new morality, and that this could only be accomplished through peace, not a peace imposed by repression'. At this point, Somoza, who was in the congregation, walked out, and members of the *Guardia Nacional* were ordered to forcibly disconnect the speakers (Williams, 1985: 354).

A series of droughts combined with lingering effects of the earthquake proved too much for many to bear. In response to the continued graft and corruption on the part of the regime, CEN (1974) published a pastoral letter citing abuses and offered to negotiate change. Furthermore, the *Sandinistas* seized the opportunity to return to the offensive amidst the chaos (Williams, 1985: 355-356). However, following a series of successful guerrilla operations, the dictator retaliated by declaring a state of emergency to root out the source of dissidence and unrest. Between 1975 and 1976, Nicaragua experienced an unprecedented level of repression bringing an investigation by the Organization of American States (OAS, 1978). With the press heavily censored, the *Guardia Nacional* was sent out into the countryside to summarily torture and execute any insurrectionist on the slightest pretence. The

Solentiname community was raided and its founder, Fr. Cardenal, was arrested. In January 1977, the bishops condemned the state of terror; yet they were careful not to condone the violence committed on the part of the armed opposition (CEN, 1977; Williams, 1985: 356-357).

As a result of the national scene being dictated by 'institutionalized violence', a clear break had occurred within the Church between those firmly implanted within the opposition against Somoza and the small minority that still supported the regime. The opposition camp, however, was divided in its approach on how to affect change. The majority favoured the moderate non-violent opposition typified by Archbishop Obando who agreed that Somoza had to go, but would not go so far as to support the *Sandinistas*. Outside of this majority remained a smaller, but highly organized, group of lower clergy and laity who had been radicalized by Somoza's brutal policies. Operating out of the CEB's, this group actively worked toward a *Sandinista* victory through armed revolution. Those following this latter tendency realized that without the organized support of the moderate opposition, the overthrow of Somoza was out of the realm of possibility (Bahktiari, 1986: 20). As a result of the government's armed assault, the FSLN had disarticulated into three distinct factions following the death of its leader, Carlos Fonseca, in 1976. Both the *Tendencia Proletaria* (TP) and the *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (GPP), staying strict to the founding principles of Marxism-Leninism, refused to collaborate with the forces of the 'petty bourgeois' but the third tendency, the dominant *Terceristas*, was able to temper the extreme tendencies of the FSLN to make the movement appear more attractive to the prospective moderate opposition (Black, 1981: 92-97).[21]

Following the FSLN's October Offensive at the end of 1977, the leaders of the radicalized Christian opposition, Maryknoll priest, Miguel D'Escoto, and Jesuit priest, Fernando Cardenal (younger brother of Ernesto), published *Los Doce*, a document calling all Nicaraguans to 'find a national solution to the country's problems'. Obando, with the support of the Democratic Union of Liberation (UDEL), attempted to mediate a dialogue between the FSLN and the *Somocistas*. But even though the *Tercerista* faction, led by Daniel Ortega, accepted the proposal for a dialogue, Somoza would only participate if the FSLN first put down their arms. For a time, it seemed as if a compromise might be reached. However, the assassination of Pedro Jaoquin Chamorro (the conservative publisher of *La Prensa*) and the events that followed diminished any possibility of a peaceful settlement (Gismondi, 1986: 26; Williams, 1989: 33-34).

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[21] At this juncture, Fidel Castro communicated two requirements on the FSLN for future arms shipments: first, that the three factions needed to reunite; second, that the factions needed to convey 'a democratic profile' as he had done in the Cuban insurgency to allow collaboration with moderates prior to entering Havana. After power was consolidated, the rosary beads around his neck during the insurgency came off and a Marxist-Leninist state was declared (Belli, 1985: 41-42).

In response to the murder of Chamorro (which was widely believed to involve Somoza), Obando all but justified the use of force against the regime that has brutally repressed every other form of protest. On 2 August 1978, a pastoral letter reiterated Obando's feelings, stating that 'silence in the face of injustice would be tantamount to complicity' (CEN, 1978). The bishops went so far as to declare themselves in solidarity with the 'popular clamour arising from the depths of poverty' (Williams, 1985: 359-360). Even so, Somoza began a campaign to silence the church with intimidation and violence against the clergy (OAS, 1978: Chpt VI, 17).

Notwithstanding the hesitancy of the bishops toward violence, a turning point had been reached in the opposition to Somoza. Soon after the Chamorro assassination, the FSLN introduced their platform of government aimed at addressing the political agendas of both the broad based coalition of mostly moderate opposition, the *Frente Amplio Opositor* (FAO), and the hierarchy of bishops. The document proposed 'a government without leftist rhetoric, the creation of an anti-Somoza front with non-Marxists, the creation of mass support for the FSLN, the radicalization of the moderate opposition, and a unification of all factions of the FSLN'. For the non-Marxist participants, the platform's most attractive features were the guarantes of 'political pluralisms, the "mixed" economy of state and private enterprise, and international non-alignment' (Christian, 1985: 37). Ultimately, a united front was forged between the disaffected members of the bourgeois and the *Tercerista* faction of the FSLN. Obando, however, never felt comfortable with either the radical ideology of the Sandinistas or their collaboration with members of the lower clergy. According to the Archbishop, Christian arguments were being used by Marxists to persuade others to take up the revolutionary struggle (Bahktiari, 1986: 25).

As a result of close collaboration between the FSLN and the CEB's, the revolutionary Christian laity had prepared the peasant masses in the countryside and the *barrios* for an armed insurrection. The FSLN and their Christian allies alike were convinced that organized, collective, political action was the answer to improving peasant conditions. Hence, the Association of Rural Workers was created in 1976 to facilitate the training of peasant leaders in political organization. Not surprisingly, these radicalized peasant communities often became sanctuaries for *Sandinista* guerrillas to receive first aid and comfort. Later, under the guidance of Fr. Gaspar García, these peasants began to assemble bombs and store arms to sustain *Sandinista* forces through the revolution (Bahktiari, 1986: 21-22).

By the spring of 1979, the political and military status of the Somoza regime was deteriorating rapidly in the face of virtually unanimous opposition to the regime. The Jimmy Carter administration had cut-off sales of munitions to Somoza weakening the government's military posture (Kagan, 1996: 83). All attempts to reach a peaceful settlement had failed due to the dictator's unwillingness to resign. In May, the FAO began to work more closely

with the FSLN through the coordination of a nation-wide general strike. Nonetheless, the bishops were determined to make one last desperate attempt to negotiate with Somoza.

By this time, it had become obvious that Somoza's obstinacy would never be overcome, in which case the hierarchy of bishops gave their blessing to the armed struggle taking place against the regime in the final months of the campaign (CEN, 1979a). The bishops had failed in their moderate reformist approach by allowing the FSLN to take the initiative. As a result, the *Sandinistas* had become the vanguard of the revolution (Williams, 1989: 36-38).

The Catholic Church and the *Sandinistas*

At the conclusion of the final offensive, Somoza fled the country, allowing the *Sandinistas* to enter Managua on 20 July 1979. The members of the newly formed *Junta de Gobierno de Reconstrucción Nacional* (JGRN, an FSLN/FAO collaboration) now faced the difficult task of rebuilding Nicaraguan society (Williams, 1989: 65). The FSLN enjoyed widespread praise for what they had accomplished from every section of the country. In fact, the bishops published a pastoral letter on 17 November 1979 recognizing the role of the *Sandinistas* in delivering the Nicaraguan people from the dictatorship and opening the possibility of a new more just society (CEN, 1979b). The letter, however, was not a blanket endorsement of the FSLN, speaking clearly on future hopes but remaining sceptical of the guarantee of rights of free association and political participation. In the months following victory, there was concern over the dominant role that the *Sandinistas* were creating for themselves within the new government. Even though the FSLN platform had stressed the tenets of 'non-alignment, political pluralism, and mixed economy' and a respect for religion, many were beginning to realize that these guarantees had been made to facilitate the *Sandinistas* seizure of power so as to create an appearance of legitimacy. Indeed, when the 'marriage of convenience' had run its course, the FSLN soon revealed its true colours (Belli, 1984: 9-13; Christian, 1985: 124-126).[22] Yet, for the time being, the new government would tolerate political and economic pluralism, as the *Sandinistas* were determined to exploit their connections to various Christian tendencies and factions to further a program of socio-economic transformation.

Throughout the course of the revolution, the CEB's were unwavering in their support of the *Sandinistas*. In turn, these radicalized groups of clergy and laity were asked to participate in the new regime. Five priests were appointed to high-ranking government offices and ministries. These

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[22] 'After the victory, [Humberto] Ortega recalls, "we [the National Directorate] radicalized our model to look more like Cuba. Whether *Terceristas* or not, we wanted to copy in a mechanical way the model that we knew—which was Cuba—and we identified ourselves with it… We didn't want to follow the other models." (Kagan, 1996: 122).'

priests believed their positions to be 'manifestations of their obedience to God' (Williams, 1989: 69). They surmised that their positions better served the interests of the poor and considered their actions as that of 'conscientious objection', in conflict with Church canon law yet insisting on their continued loyalty to the Church (Williams, 1989: 68-70).

Other members of the radicalized lower clergy and laity were given the task of going into the countryside to begin a series of humanitarian projects that would help provide for Nicaragua's poor, both materially and spiritually. In practice, however, these projects focused largely on the raising of political consciousness rather than matters of the soul. The CEB's were attempting to formulate a new value system based on revolutionary ideals and a secularized Christianity (Belli, 1985: 138). In this, the *Sandinistas* were promoted as ideal Christians. Theoretically speaking, the atheist Marxist revolutionary was closer to Christianity than a non-Marxist Christian (Gutiérrez, 1973: 175-178; Cardenal, 1993: 351-358). Nevertheless, in a country as thoroughly religious as Nicaragua, overt anti-religious policies would be unwise. Instead, the *Sandinistas* preferred to work with the radicalized Christians toward bringing the country's churches under the submission of the state (Belli, 1985: 169-170).

The first step toward undercutting Nicaragua's religiosity was to directly suppress the minority sects whom the *Sandinistas* thought that they could not convert. Nicaragua's only synagogue was confiscated and Jewish personal property was seized (Belli, 1985: 192). Protestant missionaries were singled out as being 'Uncle Sam's puppets' sent to destabilize the government. These attacks culminated in the persecution of Moravian missions on the Atlantic coast. The *Sandinistas* torched 49 *Miskito* villages including their churches (in one church 13 *Miskito* trapped inside by *Sandinista* soldiers died) and either imprisoned or executed the missionaries (Belli, 1985: 110, 194-195). However, the most elaborate plan of attack was for the Catholic Church hierarchy of bishops who had begun to criticize government policies and abuses of power (CEN, 1983; Belli, 1984: 40-43). The *Sandinistas* appointed Fr. Arias Caldera as the 'Archbishop of the Poor' to lead the radical Christians who were now referring to themselves as the 'Popular Church'. This was an attempt by the FSLN to undermine the authority of the Church. Christians were then urged to support the 'Church of the Poor' rather than the 'Church of the Rich' led by Archbishop Obando. There is little wonder that the first visit of John Paul II would mainly address questions of Church unity (John Paul II, 1983). Still and all, Obando enjoyed the overwhelming support of the poor, attracting large crowds almost everywhere he went, whereas Caldera struggled to find an audience. In response, the *Sandinistas* attempted to tip the scales against the Church by denying it access to the media. In July 1981, the annual televised mass celebrated by Obando in Managua was suspended. This action was followed by heavy censorship (and later banning) of *Radio Católica* and *La Prensa*. By contrast, the 'Popular Church' was given free reign to launch a

series of media attacks to which the bishops were unable to respond. These actions were then coupled by *Sandinista* policy that withheld foreign grants to all 'reactionary' organizations, supplying the 'Popular Church' with even more contributions (Belli, 1984: 40-45).

The popularity of Obando and the church hierarchy with the masses was no mystery. The Archbishop had hailed from the peasantry and had spent his entire life living among the people he was committed to serve. On the other hand, the leaders behind the 'Popular Church' were products of the upper class. Fr. Miguel D'Escoto lived in a luxurious home and drove a Mercedes Benz, whereas Sr. Geraldine Macias (a nun who was exiled in 1982) referred to Fr. Ernesto Cardenal as an 'upper-class hippie' who donned peasant clothing (Belli, 1985: 174-180). Such people from affluent backgrounds did not win the popular support of the masses. Furthermore, the peasants had realized that the radical groups were not so much willing to tend to their needs as they were to politically indoctrinate them (Belli, 1985: 178-180).

In the face of religious persecution, the bishops continued their offensive by speaking out on violations of human rights or 'policies that denied basic Christian principles about man and society' (CEN, 1983: Belli 1985: 173). Yet, the Sandinistas perceived such protests as a betrayal to the revolution and an endorsement of bourgeois ideals. Some of the more vocal clergy were exiled from the country on the slightest pretence. But the FSLN vanguard was later prompted to use the mass organizations as a weapon against the Church. At first, activities ranged from demonstrations outside churches to interrupting catechism classes to hand out propaganda leaflets. However, these relatively benign activities soon progressed to random acts of violence. In March 1981, Bishop Pablo A. Vega was harassed by an organized mob during a demonstration and then stoned as he tried to escape. That same year, Catholic billboards (some proclaiming, 'love your enemy') were vandalized and Archbishop Obando's jeep was destroyed. In 1983 alone, 26 Catholic churches across Nicaragua had their windows and doors smashed while 'divine mobs' beat up parishioners (Belli, 1984: 47-49). But perhaps the most disgraceful incident involved the public display of a naked Fr. Bismarck Carballo, head of *Radio Católica*. Students immediately took to the streets in protest to this gross violation of human dignity. As a result, one hundred people were arrested and the university was seized. By December 1982, the bishops had released a flurry of letters critical of the policies and abuses of the FSLN. Yet the protests were to no avail (CEN, 1982; Belli 1984: 50-52; Gilbert, 1988: 141-142).

In March 1983, Pope John Paul II arrived at Sandino Airport for a papal visit. Ever since his attendance at the CELAM III Conference at Pueblo (Mexico) in 1979, John Paul II had condemned the 'transcendence of religion beyond politics that surrenders the primacy of spirituality' (CELAM, 1979) as he had grown dismayed for the refusal of the priests in the *Sandinista* government to step down. During his visit, he celebrated a mass in Managua. It

was there that the Pope made a call for unity among the members of the Church (John Paul II, 1983). In defiance, the FSLN vanguard led the crowd to chant 'Power to the People!'. It was discovered later that the congregation at the papal mass had been hand picked by the *Sandinistas* to taunt the Pope, while many of the faithful were turned away. John Paul II later wrote a letter denouncing the Popular Church and reaffirming the authority of the bishops (Daw 1983: 632).

With the escalation of the contra war and the presumed possibility of U.S. intervention to overthrow the regime, relations between the Nicaraguan bishops and the Sandinista government reached its nadir between 1983 and 1987. The bishops criticized the government-established National Reconciliation Commission which required 'only surrender and disarmament' as the single option for a 'negotiated' settlement. A new Commission was proposed, consisting of representatives from the Church, the regional Red Cross, opposition leaders, in addition to members of the revolutionary government to promote a ceasefire, democratization, and free elections (CEN, 1987).

Archbishop Obando and Bishop Vega began to tour around the country on an anti-*Sandinista* campaign that found much support. Fr. Miguel D'Escoto attempted to counter these activities by organizing month-long fasts and demonstrations to protest suspected Church complicity in the U.S. aggression against the government. However, by the late 1980's, it was obvious that participation in the CEB's was dwindling. The Church hierarchy was producing a new generation of traditional priests that were undermining the radical clergy (Gilbert, 1988: 140-150). By the end of the decade, the FSLN found it necessary to compromise their position by easing censorship, giving back portions of confiscated properties, and agreeing to free elections with international oversight if the revolution was going to survive.

The *Sandinistas'* effort to re-strengthen their eroding support base was not enough to spare them from political defeat by conservative candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in what the OAS refers to as the first free nationwide democratic election held in 1990 (OAS, 2005). During the Day for World Peace celebrations that year, prior to elections, two nuns were killed and an Auxiliary Bishop and priest were seriously injured in an ambush in northern Zelaya (CEN, 1990). In the wake of serious economic distress and continued hardship, the people of Nicaragua wanted a change and an international team lead by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter certified the election results (monitoring over half of the voting precincts). John Paul II made a return visit to Nicaragua at the invitation of the new President that he fulfilled in 1996 to deliver a message of unity and to dedicate the new Cathedral in Managua (John Paul II, 1996a).

Peace was the desire of John Paul II's 1983 visit and at the homily in the new cathedral he notes, 'Thanks to Divine Providence, peace has returned to your country' (John Paul II, 1996b).

Epilogue

The course of the Church's history in Nicaragua had changed from an institution led by a martyred Bishop protecting Indian rights before Rome and the Spanish King to one largely concerned with protecting its own interests following Nicaragua's independence to one that had finally come to terms with its mission to save souls and to serve its people. Many of those, however, who took the initiative to bring the Church toward a more humanitarian orientation in modern times had allowed themselves to become the tool of a revolutionary political movement whose aim was to perpetuate its own power. Ironically, those who truly wished to serve God and His people found themselves oppressed by those who claimed that they were doing the same.

After a long struggle, a free election in 1990 brought to power a series of democratic governments allowing the Church the freedom to fulfil its mission. The fifth General Conference of CELAM (2007: 16) held in Aparecida (Brazil) was guided by the new Pope Benedict XVI resulting in 'an abundance of timely pastoral guidelines, explained in a wealth of reflections in the light of faith and of the contemporary social context…The focus is the impact of globalization on culture, faith, and socio-economic factors'. The Pope has often pointed out that globalization 'brings with it the risk of vast transnational monopolies and of treating profit as the supreme value'. (CELAM, 2007: 16) Obviously, bringing justice within such a complex system is daunting and requires technical understanding. A possible hindrance to a just resolution is public and private corruption, even within democratic institutions. Nevertheless, the advancement of social justice must be a focus of the Church (CELAM, 2007: 19-20); and this can only be done through international cooperation and formal agreements guided by moral teachings.

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El referéndum contra el *status quo*
Análisis de Ecuador, Venezuela, Perú y Bolivia
Yanina Welp[1]

In Latin America, the referendum has become a subject of controversy from experiences such as those promoted by Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador. The discussion of its results has polarized a debate between those who argue that direct consultation to citizenry promotes a deepening of democracy and those who warn against populism and / or the accumulation of power. Seeking to contribute to this debate, the article explores the conditions under which a referendum has been called in those cases and their consequences. The findings of the study emphasizes that the referendum has served to channel an existing conflict, which manifests itself as soon as a leader outside the hegemonic groups gets the power. However, direct democracy is not in itself but the tension between ideological polarization and the willingness of actors to accept the 'rules of the game' which determines the outcome of these practices in the long term.

Key words: Democracy, citizen participation, recall, popular initiative, referendum, political conflict

Introducción

Los mecanismos de democracia directa (MDD) no son algo nuevo en América Latina, aunque han ganado un peso considerable en la última década, en la que se ha producido el 40% de las consultas realizadas en medio siglo (Welp 2009)[2]. Sin embargo, las explicaciones para este fenómeno permanecen poco exploradas. La orientación ideológica del gobierno que los promueve no aparece como una variable determinante, ya que tanto impulsores de políticas neoliberales como de políticas redistributivas los han convocado o han

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[2] Cabe destacar también que las consultas de la última década se realizaron en democracia mientras durante el período previo el referéndum o plebiscito fue un recurso también de las dictaduras, destacándose los casos de Chile y Uruguay, adonde dieron origen a la transición.

impulsado reformas constitucionales que los permiten (por ejemplo, Alberto Fujimori en Perú o Hugo Chávez en Venezuela). Tampoco la demanda ciudadana ha sido indispensable, al menos no lo fue en Ecuador, adonde la tradición en el ejercicio de la consulta directa a la ciudadanía fue ampliada por iniciativa de Rafael Correa, aunque sí fue central en Bolivia, donde hasta 2004 los MDD no eran contemplados por la constitución y fueron incorporados por presión popular. Así, pese a que el mapa es diverso y el caso destacado en el ejercicio de los MDD en América Latina es Uruguay (Altman 2008), fueron las experiencias realizadas primero en Perú y más tarde en Venezuela, Ecuador y Bolivia los que ubicaron a la democracia directa en el centro del debate. En estos casos centraremos nuestro análisis.

El rechazo o la defensa de los MDD -definidos como aquellos mecanismos mediante los que la ciudadanía toma una decisión directamente, a través de las urnas- polariza un debate entre quienes describen la emergencia de una *democracia delegativa* (O'Donnell 1994) o formas neopopulistas de gobierno[3] y quienes demandan más participación de la ciudadanía en la toma de decisiones. Fujimori, Chávez, Morales y Correa tienen en común el haber accedido al poder por fuera del esquema de partidos políticos tradicionales, caído en el descrédito por su incapacidad para producir reformas, cuando no directamente por la escasa transparencia de su ejercicio del poder. Llegaron a la Presidencia de sus respectivos países criticando a los partidos y prometiendo solucionar los grandes problemas nacionales mediante el desarrollo de una democracia participativa, en relación directa con la ciudadanía. En la base de estas experiencias se encuentra la crisis del sistema de representación y la existencia de amplios sectores sociales que se sienten excluidos y no encuentran una vía para que sus necesidades sean atendidas. Pero existen profundas diferencias tanto entre estos líderes como entre los contextos que presenta cada país. Para comprender el rol jugado por estos mecanismos analizaremos: en primer lugar, cuándo y por qué se incorporan los MDD en estos países: ¿Responden a la demanda ciudadana, a objetivos personales de los líderes o simplemente forman parte de un paquete de reformas? Consideraremos también el tipo de mecanismos introducidos y, en tercer lugar, analizaremos cuándo se han utilizado y con qué consecuencias: ¿Fueron impulsados por la ciudadanía para promover o enfrentar políticas; fueron iniciados por los gobiernos o grupos políticos para consultar a los electores o fueron utilizados para la confrontación

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[3] O'Donnell, diferencia la democracia delegativa del populismo argumentando que este último "implicó una ampliación de la participación y de la organización política popular (aún cuando se la controle verticalmente) y coexistió con períodos de expansión dinámica de la economía doméstica. En cambio, la democracia delegativa tiende típicamente a despolitizar la población -excepto durante los breves momentos en los cuales demanda su apoyo plebiscitario- y actualmente coexiste con períodos de severa crisis económica" (1993: 63). Para otros autores el *discurso populista* o *neopopulismo,* caracterizado por la división de la sociedad en dos grupos opuestos, puede desarrollarse en el contexto de la democracia delegativa (Paramio 2006). Para una interesante discusión sobre el populismo en América Latina véase *Nueva Sociedad* n° 205 (2006)

entre poderes del estado? Este recorrido es el que sigue el artículo, y que finalmente nos permitirá plantear la discusión y extraer conclusiones.

1- La democracia (representativa) en transición

A fines de los años setenta se inició la tercera ola democratizadora, que cambió profundamente el mapa de América Latina. En menos de una década, la mayoría de los países de la región pasaron de estar gobernados por dictaduras a regirse por sistemas democráticos. Sin embargo, sólo unos pocos incorporaron MDD durante la transición. Podemos remontarnos a la fundación de las naciones latinoamericanas para encontrar las causas de esta ausencia. En algunas convenciones o asambleas constituyentes se había discutido la introducción del referéndum, pero fue descartada alegándose o bien que el pueblo no estaba preparado para ejercer este derecho o bien que estos instrumentos comportaban el riesgo de impulsar gobiernos demagógicos. La vuelta a la democracia volvió a generar este debate, aunque muy tibiamente. Más tarde, y especialmente desde los años noventa, la mayoría de las reformas constitucionales realizadas incorporaron o ampliaron mecanismos de democracia directa[4] (Barczak, 2001; Altman, 2005; Zovatto, 2006; Welp y Serdült, 2009; Breuer, 2008). Veamos las experiencias de los casos seleccionados para este estudio.

Ecuador había sido uno de los primeros y pocos países en incluir el plebiscito en su Constitución de 1869, conocida como la 'Carta Negra'. Esta Constitución condicionaba el derecho de ciudadanía a la profesión del catolicismo y convertía –en palabras de Morales Viteri (2009: 199)- 'al Presidente designado en un dictador con tintes de legalidad...' Más de un siglo después, en 1978, tras un largo período de inestabilidad, la misma reintroducción de mecanismos de democracia directa formó parte del proceso de transición a la democracia. El régimen de *facto* que gobernó el país durante 1976-1978, denominado *Consejo Supremo de Gobierno,* organizó la transición a la democracia mediante la creación de tres comisiones encargadas de la elaboración de un proyecto nuevo de Constitución Política de la República; la elaboración de un proyecto de reformas de la Constitución Política de 1945; y la elaboración de las leyes de Elecciones, de Partidos Políticos, y de referéndum. De este modo, la consulta directa a la ciudadanía formó parte del proceso de construcción del nuevo régimen político. Las leyes de partidos y de referéndum buscaban reducir la fragmentación partidaria, el bajo índice de nacionalización de los partidos y la volatilidad de las preferencias, volatiad que se evidencia, entre otros, en que ningún representante ha logrado repetir en su cargo desde la recuperación de la democracia (Conaghan 1995: 246).

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[4] Cabe destacar la excepcionalidad de Uruguay que, inspirándose en la experiencia suiza, fue desarrollando el marco legal para incluir estos mecanismos a lo largo del siglo XX (Ver Altman, 2008).

Venezuela, a diferencias de los otros países analizados aquí, ha funcionado como una democracia relativamente estable durante buena parte del siglo XX. Tras una década de gobierno militar, finalizada en 1958, el pacto "de Punto Fijo" estableció un sistema de reparto de poder entre los partidos políticos hegemónicos que se mantuvo hasta fines de los noventa. Este pacto buscaba evitar la repetición del golpe de estado creando incentivos para la cooperación entre un grupo de actores, ya que los firmantes se comprometían a respetar los resultados de las elecciones, establecer consultas interpartidarias y repartir los cargos de responsabilidad política. Con el tiempo, este acuerdo, que excluía a los grupos de izquierda, fue borrando las diferencias ideológicas e incrementando la corrupción administrativa. Para la década del ochenta, las decisiones parlamentarias se tomaban primero en el seno de los dos partidos hegemónicos. El deterioro de la democracia y el crecimiento de la pobreza generaron protestas sociales y saqueos, y también el descenso de la participación electoral y la creciente personalización política. Este descontento formó las bases de sustento al liderazgo de Chávez (Paramio, 2006). Luego, ya con Chávez en la Presidencia, los mecanismos de democracia directa tuvieron un lugar protagónico en la reforma constitucional de 1999[5], cuyo objetivo explícito fue promover una mayor participación ciudadana en los asuntos públicos, pero también formó parte de una estrategia del gobierno, que buscaba superar los 'obstáculos' impuestos por los contrapesos de poderes amparándose en el respaldo popular (Lissidini, 2009).

La incorporación de MDD en Perú ya se había discutido durante la transición, en la asamblea constituyente de 1979, pero se rechazó alegando que el pueblo peruano no estaba 'lo suficientemente preparado para el ejercicio de la democracia directa'. Y, aunque finalmente se estableció la consulta popular para las modificaciones de demarcación territorial y la iniciativa popular para la reforma constitucional y la acción de inconstitucionalidad, los requisitos eran tan elevados que, como señala Maraví Sumar (1997:127) 'no nos debe extrañar que parte de la participación política ocurriera al margen de la ley o por vías no pensadas para este fin'. Años más tarde, en 1992, el presidente Alberto Fujimori (1990-1995, 1995-2000, julio a noviembre de 2000) llevó adelante un *autogolpe* y clausuró el congreso, tras lo que convocó el llamado *Congreso Constituyente Democrático* con el que buscó dar legitimidad a sus actuaciones y promover una reforma institucional. La mencionada autora señala que ante la adversa reacción internacional, Fujimori 'optó por constituirse astutamente en un abanderado de los mecanismos de participación ciudadana, con el fin de dar un barniz democrático a su gobierno' (Maraví Sumar 1997: 128). Buena parte de sus promesas no se cumplieron, sin embargo, como veremos en este estudio, la incorporación de mecanismos de democracia directa al marco normativo

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[5] Antes de esta reforma existía el referéndum constitucional y la iniciativa legislativa sin capacidad de decisión sobre la propuesta (que quedaba en manos del congreso). Para más detalles ver Maraví Sumar, 1997: 162.

peruano tendría, en los años posteriores, consecuencias no previstas ni buscadas por el gobierno.

Bolivia ha sido uno de los últimos países de la región en incorporar mecanismos de democracia directa a su carta constitucional. Aunque finalmente perdieron las elecciones de 2002, Evo Morales y Felipe Quispe se habían presentado como candidatos por el Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) y el Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (MIP) defendiendo la creación de una democracia participativa inspirada en las estructuras comunitarias indígenas (Mayorga, 2005). El nuevo presidente fue Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (MNR), quien poco tiempo después enfrentó un grave conflicto al plantear la exportación de hidrocarburos a Estados Unidos a través de Chile (debido al arraigado sentimiento antichileno originado en la Guerra del Pacífico, 1879-1884). La decisión desató la indignación popular y llevó el debate a las condiciones de explotación de los recursos naturales. En octubre de 2003, en lo que se dio en llamar la 'guerra del gas', se produjo una movilización de sindicatos, organizaciones campesinas y juntas vecinales que pedían la dimisión de Sánchez de Lozada. La magnitud de los enfrentamientos (con 59 muertos) produjo la renuncia de Sánchez de Lozada, quien fue sustituido por el vicepresidente Carlos Mesa. Mesa se comprometió a llamar a un referendo vinculante sobre el gas. Para convocarlo, era necesario crear el marco legal correspondiente. El 20 de febrero de 2004 se promulgó la reforma de la Constitución y en julio el Congreso aprobó la Ley 2769 del referéndum, con una disposición transitoria autorizando la consulta extraordinaria sobre hidrocarburos. A partir de este momento el referéndum pasa a ocupar un lugar central en la política boliviana como ámbito de enfrentamiento entre el gobierno y la oposición.

Tenemos así un país que incorporó los MDD en su proceso de transición a la democracia, Ecuador, sumando la consulta ciudadana al funcionamiento institucional pese a que la llegada de Correa a la presidencia ha modificado cualitativamente el uso de la democracia directa como se explicará más adelante. Otro, Venezuela, en que los MDD fueron ampliados bajo el impulso de un líder, Chávez, y en el contexto de crisis y enfrentamiento entre los partidos políticos. En un tercer país, Perú, el presidente Alberto Fujimori recurrió al referéndum para legitimar actuaciones anticonstitucionales. En el último caso, Bolivia, fue el resultado de la presión social y la demanda ciudadana, vinculándose también con la recuperación de las prácticas de las comunidades aborígenes. La insatisfacción ciudadana, las graves crisis económicas derivadas de las políticas neoliberales implementadas en los noventa, y la incapacidad de los partidos políticos tradicionales forman un telón de fondo común. Sin embargo, al analizar los mecanismos de democracia directa introducidos y utilizados, podemos observar que las tendencias no son unívocas sino que hay profundas diferencias entre los casos.

2- Las reglas del juego

En cuanto a los MDD que se incorporan, los cuatros países estudiados presentan un amplio espectro (Ver tabla 1 en anexo). Para comparar entre países, se clasifican los mecanismos según su origen: consulta obligatoria o establecida por la constitución, iniciada por el Poder Ejecutivo, el Legislativo ('desde arriba'), o por la ciudadanía ('desde abajo'); y según sus efectos –vinculantes o no. Por último, consideramos también la existencia o no de requisitos para aprobar las decisiones: en términos de porcentaje de participación, número de firmas exigidas, porcentaje de votos a favor, etc.

La constitución venezolana es la que más opciones ofrece a la ciudadanía, que puede revocar el mandato incluso del Presidente[6], y admite tanto la iniciativa legislativa (presentar propuestas al Parlamento) como la consulta popular promovida y votada directamente por la ciudadanía para sanción o veto de leyes y para la reforma constitucional (Lissidini 2009). Con las nuevas constituciones de 2008 y 2009 tanto en Ecuador como en Bolivia los mecanismos de democracia directa han sido ampliados considerablemente. Los requisitos para activar el referendo ciudadano varían desde el 6% de firmas registradas en el padrón en Bolivia, el 8% en Ecuador, el 10% en Perú y el 20% en Venezuela. En Perú la ciudadanía puede convocar referendos legislativos. En algunos casos, también existen requisitos para aprobar la consulta: en Perú debe contar con más del 50% de votos mientras en Bolivia gana una mayoría simple siempre que la participación supere el 50% del padrón. En Venezuela no se exige un quórum pero sí se excluyen algunos temas del referéndum abrogativo, como presupuestos, impuestos, créditos públicos y amnistía. En Bolivia no pueden ser sometidos a referéndum los asuntos fiscales, la seguridad interna y externa y la división política del país[7]. En Bolivia una restricción adicional consiste en que cada una de las tres instancias con facultad de iniciativa sólo podrá realizar un referéndum por período constitucional, y no podrá llevarse a cabo ninguna de estas consultas durante los 120 días anteriores y posteriores a la celebración de elecciones ni en período de estado de sitio.

En Bolivia, Ecuador y Venezuela los parlamentos pueden convocar referendos vinculantes. En Ecuador, los mecanismos son dos, la reforma propiamente dicha, que se aprueba siempre a través del poder Legislativo, y la enmieda, que puede ser propuesta por el Poder Ejecutivo o por la ciudadanía. Ni la consulta obligatoria ni la revocatoria de mandato estaban contempladas en Bolivia hasta la sanción de la nueva constitución, aprobada por referéndum el 25 de enero de 2009. Además de los mencionados mecanismos, la nueva

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[6] La nueva constitución boliviana también incluye el referéndum revocatorio aunque en la modalidad en que se utilizó en 2008 no respondió a la iniciativa ciudadana sino a una convocatoria por decreto del mismo presidente.

[7] En todos los casos analizados hay otras restricciones y aspectos a tener en cuenta que escapan al objetivo de este texto. Para una revisión de los mismos me remito a Salazar Elena, 2009; Rupiere, 2008; Lissidini, 2009; Morales Viteri, 2009; Krause y Molteni, 1997; Altman 2005; Zovatto 2006, Lissidini, Welp y Zovatto, 2009 y a las constituciones de los cuatro países analizados.

constitución establece que la reforma constitucional puede iniciarse por referéndum convocado por la ciudanía (al menos 20% de firmas) y su ratificación por consulta popular es obligatoria. La reforma o elaboración de una nueva constitución también debe ser ratificada por la ciudadanía en Venezuela y Perú, aunque en el segundo caso puede no convocarse si dos legislaturas sucesivas aprueban la reforma. En Perú, ni el Parlamento ni el Presidente pueden convocar referendos, lo que podría indicar que la reforma impulsada por Fujimori vio en los MDD un instrumento para dar salida a la crisis puntual en que se encontraba inmerso (mediante el referendo constitucional), pero no pretendía potenciarlo como método de gobierno. El Presidente sí puede llamar a referendos con resultados vinculantes en Bolivia, Ecuador y Venezuela y también puede hacer consultas no vinculantes en los dos últimos países. En Venezuela, el Presidente tiene también la posibilidad de convocar un referendo abrogatorio para que la ciudadanía exprese en las urnas su apoyo o rechazo a una ley sancionada por el Parlamento. En Ecuador el plebiscito consultivo puede realizarse sin la conformidad del Congreso Nacional, mientras para reformas constitucionales la ley obliga a solicitar la conformidad del Congreso.

3- Hacia dónde va la democracia (directa) en América Latina

En los siguientes párrafos se sintetizan las consultas convocadas en los países analizados desde la recuperación de la democracia. Una síntesis de las convocatorias se puede ver en la tabla 2 en anexo.

Ecuador: de la consulta 'encuesta' al referendo por la nueva constitución

Ecuador es el país en que más consultas se han realizado en el período. Desde 1979, se han registrado ocho convocatorias en el nivel nacional. En la mayoría de los casos fueron convocadas 'desde arriba', por el presidente (1986, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2006, 2007) mientras la última fue convocada por el Tribunal Supremo Electoral para ratificar la constitución de 2008 (de acuerdo al procedimiento establecido en el reglamento de funcionamiento de la asamblea constituyente).

La consulta de 1986 fue convocada por el presidente León Febres Cordero (1984-1988), constaba de una pregunta sobre la participación de los independientes en elecciones populares de tendenciosa formulación y que buscaba modificar la ley de partidos, que exige la afiliación de los candidatos. Aunque las encuestas previas mostraban que la opinión de la ciudadanía era favorable a la reforma, el rechazo al gobierno condujo al rechazo a la propuesta mostrando el condicionamiento de las preferencias de voto a la aceptación o rechazo de la figura del Presidente o del gobierno más que al tema en cuestión. Cabe mencionar que esto no es una particularidad del país, numerosos autores han discutido sobre 'el orden de preferencias' puesto en marcha en estas

consultas, señalando la existencia de unas preferencias de segundo orden (la opinión sobre el gobierno) que podrían imponerse sobre las de primer orden (la ley o reforma propuesta)[8]. En 1994 y 1995 se realizaron dos consultas convocadas por el presidente Sixto Durán (1992-1996). Ambas incluían un gran número de preguntas y propuestas de reforma, pero mientras la primera fue aprobada, la segunda fue rechazada, en el contexto de un gran descrédito y denuncias de corrupción. Algunos especialistas han señalado la dificultad de abrir un debate ante consultas complejas, con gran cantidad de preguntas que luego se reducen en el debate público al apoyo o rechazo al gobierno (Morales Viteri 2009).

La consulta también ha sido utilizada como un instrumento legitimador en casos de grave crisis institucional. En 1997, el poder legislativo declaró cesante al presidente Abdalá Bucaram (agosto de 1996-febrero de 1997) amparándose en el artículo 100 de la Constitución, que establecía la facultad del Parlamento de actuar de esta forma en caso de que el primer mandatario presentara ′incapacidad mental para el ejercicio del cargo'. En medio de la crisis, el presidente interino, Fabián Alarcón, realizó una consulta sobre 14 cuestiones, buscando legitimar la destitución y reemplazo del presidente Bucaram. La consulta obtuvo el apoyo de la ciudadanía dando un barniz de legitimidad al gobierno interino. En 2006, el presidente Alfredo Palacio (abril de 2005-enero de 2007) consultó sobre políticas de educación, salud, presupuesto de sanidad y el destino de los recursos provenientes de excedentes petroleros. La convocatoria generó debate, por plantearse junto a las elecciones presidenciales, pero finalmente se llevó a cabo y las tesis del gobierno obtuvieron un voto afirmativo. Una vez más, el contexto y la imagen del Presidente promotor de la consulta son las variables que explican los resultados, más que la discusión y toma de posición sobre los temas consultados.

Las elecciones de 2006 marcan un hito en la reconfiguración del sistema de partidos ecuatoriano. Pese al multipartidismo y la volatilidad de las preferencias, existieron ciertas pautas que señalaban el proceso de institucionalización de los partidos, considerando su arraigo regional (Freidenberg y Sáez 2001). Desde las últimas elecciones, sin embargo, fuerzas políticas creadas en los años recientes como el Partido Renovación Institucional Acción Nacional (PRIAN), el Partido Sociedad Patriótica (PSP) o la misma Alianza País han desplazado a los partidos tradicionales que fueron importantes actores en el espectro político durante las décadas anteriores. También creció el voto nulo (21,61%), en parte estimulado por la campaña de Correa contra la 'partidocracia' y prometiendo convocar a una asamblea constituyente, por lo que su partido no presentó candidatos a las elecciones legislativas. Tras una campaña electoral muy polarizada, en la que atacó a los partidos políticos, Correa se convirtió en Presidente. Cumpliendo con sus propuestas electorales,

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[8] Este debate se ha activado en torno a los referendos de ratificación de la Constitución Europea (Svensson 2002, Le Duc 2002).

llamó a un referéndum para que la ciudadanía apruebe o rechace la convocatoria a una asamblea constituyente con plenos poderes para cambiar el marco institucional del Estado y elaborar una nueva Constitución. Pese al rechazo de la mayoría de los partidos representados en el parlamento, el SI obtuvo un 81,72% de votos aunque con una abstención del 49%. Tras este triunfo comenzó a funcionar la asamblea constituyente, en paralelo al congreso y en el marco de una polarización y enfrentamiento crecientes. Finalmente, en setiembre de 2008, la constitución aprobada por la asamblea fue ratificada con el 64% de los votos a favor en una consulta en la que participaron el 51% de los ciudadanos[9].

Perú: las erráticas consecuencias de los mecanismos de democracia directa

Tras la clausura del congreso durante el 'autogolpe' de 1992, Fujimori convocó a una asamblea legislativa para redactar una nueva constitución. El proceso culminó con la sanción de la Constitución de 1993, para cuya ratificación se establecía la convocatoria a referéndum. La aprobación popular daría legitimidad a las actuaciones realizadas por fuera de la legalidad por lo que no resulta sorprendente que el voto se haya polarizado en torno a la figura del Presidente más que sobre los contenidos de la nueva constitución. García Belaunde (1996) señala que Fujimori personalizó la campaña al sugerir que lo que se votaba era la aprobación de su gestión presidencial, lo cual convirtió la votación en un plebiscito para medir el apoyo a su gobierno. Para Rupiere (2008: 2) el gobierno de Fujimori utilizó la promoción de la democracia directa *'*como herramienta de deslegitimación de los partidos políticos tradicionales y de organizaciones como los gremios de trabajadores, etc. presentándolos como instrumentos que entorpecen la democracia y la gestión de la voluntad popular...'. Cabe destacar, sin embargo, que la reforma no habilitaba el recurso al referéndum para el Presidente, por lo que su valor como herramienta del gobierno fujimorista se limitaba al caso concreto de la aprobación de la reforma constitucional. En cambio, al haber intentado revestir de coherencia su discurso incluyendo mecanismos de democracia directa para la ciudadanía, abrió un espacio de actuaciones que efectivamente fue ganando peso en los años siguientes, especialmente en los gobiernos locales (Welp 2008)·

Desde la reforma de 1993 se han presentado una propuesta ciudadana de referendo y varias iniciativas legislativas. La primera solicitaba la nulidad de la 'ley de interpretación auténtica' que permitía a Fujimori presentarse a la presidencia por tercera vez consecutiva. Se presentaron más de 1.200.000 firmas, pero el congreso la desestimó considerando una exigencia establecida *ad hoc:* que la iniciativa fuera aprobada por la mayoría del Congreso. Así, pese a responder al procedimiento establecido constitucionalmente, la convocatoria no llegó a producirse. Posteriormente,

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[9] Todos los resultados mencionados en el apartado fueron consultados en las bases de datos del Tribunal Supremo Electoral.

otras iniciativas orientadas a la reforma constitucional tampoco tuvieron éxito: la primera, en 2002, impulsada por el Foro Democrático para el restablecimiento de la constitución de 1979, fue rechazada por el Congreso. Al año siguiente se propuso anular la Constitución de 2003, que aún se encuentra en una comisión del Congreso, sin tratamiento. Ese mismo año, la Asociación civil *Dignidad Humana* propuso la modificación de algunos artículos de la constitución referidos a la protección de derechos personales. Otras iniciativas sí fueron aprobadas por el congreso, aunque en este caso debemos destacar que el poder de la ciudadanía ha sido de agenda ya que el mecanismo no permite una decisión directa. Esto ocurrió en 2004, cuando *Veeduría ciudadana* propuso y logró la Ley 28278 de Radio y Televisión; o con una iniciativa que propuso que el dinero del Fondo Nacional de Vivienda sea devuelto a los trabajadores, y concluyó en la Ley 27677. Otra experiencia exitosa es la Ley que excluye a la Empresa PetroPerú de la lista de empresas a privatizar, esta iniciativa fue impulsada por el Sindicato Unificado de Trabajadores del Petróleo, Energía y Derivados Afines de la Región Grau al norte del Perú. Fue rechazada la iniciativa promovida por FENTAP, la Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de Agua Potable, para impedir la privatización de las empresas de agua y alcantarillado (Rupiere 2008). Observamos en estos procesos, la importancia de las asociaciones para difundir y agregar voluntades impulsando proyectos de Ley, y la falta de mecanismos que garanticen al ciudadano el funcionamiento de estos procesos. El que algunas de las iniciativas mencionadas no hayan recibido ningún tratamiento podría explicar la opción ciudadana por la acción directa, fuera de los canales institucionales, en vez de asumir el esfuerzo de activar procedimientos institucionalizados. El esfuerzo de actuar dentro del marco de la Ley sin obtener resultados podría reforzar el círculo vicioso entre la creciente desconfianza ciudadana y el descrédito en que caen las instituciones y los representantes.

Venezuela: polarización ideológica y debilidad institucional

Desde 1999, con la llegada de Hugo Chávez a la presidencia, se han convocado seis referendos, tres de ellos iniciados por el Poder Ejecutivo, uno por los grupos opositores y dos de ratificación constitucional (obligatorios). El primer referéndum (1999) buscaba aprobar la convocatoria a una asamblea constituyente. La consulta incluía dos preguntas orientadas a conocer el acuerdo de la población con la convocatoria a una asamblea constituyente para 'transformar el Estado y crear un Nuevo Ordenamiento Jurídico que permita el funcionamiento efectivo de una Democracia Social y Participativa'. Ambas obtuvieron un resultado muy favorable para el gobierno con una aceptación superior al 80% pero también con un alto nivel de abstención[10]. Quienes se

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[10] Los resultados citados en este apartado fueron obtenidos de Kornblith 2005, Lissidini 2009 y a partir de los procesos de consulta de 2004, del Consejo Nacional Electoral de Venezuela.

oponían a la asamblea constituyente se centraron en la crítica a la concentración de poderes en el presidente, sin embargo la campaña fue débil y poco organizada y osciló entre pedir la abstención o el voto negativo. Pocos meses después fue llamado un segundo referéndum, de ratificación de la nueva constitución que nuevamente fue muy favorable para el gobierno (lo apoyó el 71% del electorado) pero también con una alta abstención (62%).

La tercera consulta del período se produjo en el año 2002. En el contexto del enfrentamiento del gobierno con los sindicatos, Chávez propuso suspender a los líderes vigentes para elegir una nueva conducción. El proceso fue muy cuestionado pero volvió a obtener un resultado favorable para Chávez (62,50% votos a favor y 27,34 % en contra) con una abstención aún superior a las registradas en las consultas previas (76,5%). Pese a estos resultados, no se incrementó la intervención gubernamental sobre los sindicatos y la consulta tuvo escasas consecuencias prácticas (Kornblith, 2005).

En 2004 se inició un nuevo proceso, indirectamente propiciado por Chávez que había promovido la introducción de la revocatoria de mandato en la constitución. La oposición se organizó en torno a "Coordinadora Democrática" (CD), integrada por el sector empresarial (Fedecámaras) y los partidos políticos (AD o Primero Justicia), que contaron con un fuerte apoyo de los medios de comunicación privados y al que más tarde también se sumaron los sindicatos y otras organizaciones sociales. Las organizaciones de apoyo al gobierno fueron variando las formas de alianza y cooperación, en general debido a que los partidos que lo integraban -el Movimiento Quinta República (la organización política de Chávez), Patria Para Todos o el Partido Comunista de Venezuela- estaban escasamente institucionalizados. La alianza estuvo integrada también por organizaciones sociales como los círculos bolivarianos, los comités de tierras urbanas, y organizaciones cooperativas, sindicales, etc. (Lissidini 2009). El proceso fue tenso, largo y controvertido desde la recolección de firmas hasta la definición del día de consulta y la misma pregunta: '¿Está usted de acuerdo con dejar sin efecto el mandato popular otorgado mediante elecciones democráticas legítimas al ciudadano Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías como presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela para el actual periodo presidencial?'. Hubo numerosos recursos judiciales y enfrentamientos en cada etapa, lo que contribuyó a polarizar aún más a la de por sí dividida sociedad venezolana, en la que los sectores más carenciados apoyan de forma creciente a Chávez mientras lo rechazan los principales grupos económicos del país. El 25 de agosto se produce la elección y Chávez es confirmado por el 58,9% de los votos frente a un 40,6%, con una participación cercana al 70%. Aunque hubo acusaciones de fraude, el proceso fue avalado por los observadores internacionales.

En 2007 Chávez impulso una nueva reforma constitucional, que fue discutida en la Asamblea Nacional. Aunque la mayoría de la Asamblea era afin al gobierno, dado que la constitución obliga a la ratificación ciudadana se llamó a un nuevo referéndum. La consulta se dividió en dos opciones que implicaban

el rechazo o la aceptación (en dos bloques de artículos) de la reforma impulsada. Nuevamente hubo un alto nivel de polarización y personalización de la campaña, que principalmente se centró en torno a avalar o rechazar la reelección indefinida. En un muy ajustado resultado (el bloque A obtuvo el 49.34% de votos a favor y el 50,65% en contra mientras el B obtuvo un 48,99% a favor y un 51,01% en contra); con un 44% de abstención, perdió la opción del presidente. Poco más de un año más tarde Chávez volvió a impulsar una enmieda constitucional con el fin de permitir la reelección indefinida de cualquier cargo de elección popular. Hubo un nuevo referéndum (obligatorio ya que se trataba de una reforma constitucional) y esta vez las urnas le dieron la victoria al gobierno (54% de votos a favor con una abstención del 30%).

Bolivia: de la guerra del gas al conflicto étnico

La mencionada 'guerra del gas' (2003) condujo a la reforma constitucional que permitió llamar a referéndum (véase apartado 1). El mismo se realizó el 18 de julio del 2004 y derivó en un triunfo contundente del SI, aunque con diferencias entre las cinco preguntas planteadas ya que las tres primeras preguntas (orientadas a rechazar las políticas conducidas por Sanchez Losada y nacionalizar los hidrocarguros) recibieron en promedio el 68.5% de los votos emitidos, mientras que las dos últimas (orientadas a legitimar las políticas del Presidente Mesa) tuvieron en promedio el 41.9%[11], lo que se interpretó como un triunfo relativo de Evo Morales (que había pedido el voto a las tres primeras mientras rechazaba las dos últimas). Un problema inesperado de esta consulta provino de la misma amplitud y ambigüedad en la formulación de las preguntas, que a pesar de los resultados permitió un amplio espectro de interpretaciones en la efectiva toma de decisiones. 'Como resultado, el Congreso emitió una ley distinta de la iniciativa presidencial, que estipulaba que el gas en boca de pozo era de propiedad estatal, estableciendo una regalía de 18% y un impuesto de 32%. Mesa no refrendó la ley, pero tampoco ejerció su facultad de veto' (Salazar Elena, 2009).

Al asumir Morales, aprobó un decreto que ordenó a las empresas extranjeras ceder a Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB) la producción, transporte, refinación, almacenamiento, distribución y actividades comerciales e industriales de producción de hidrocarburos; estableció que el Estado debía controlar al menos el 51% del capital accionario de las empresas privatizadas durante los 90 y de las dos refinerías de Petrobrás, y fijó un impuesto de 82% para las explotaciones gasíferas más grandes.

Para ese momento, la oposición ya había comenzado a gestar el referéndum autonómico. Pese a ser una vieja demanda y tema pendiente en la política boliviana, con el triunfo de Morales adquirió nuevos tintes, no exentos

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[11] Datos de la Corte Nacional Electoral.

de racismo (Salazar Elena, 2009). Este referendo se convocó en 2006, consiguiendo el apoyo mayoritario de los cuatro departamentos más ricos (los de la medialuna) (con 62.2% de los votos válidos en promedio), mientras que en el resto la respuesta negativa obtuvo el mayor número de votos (con 63.3% de los votos válidos en promedio). Por el peso poblacional de este segundo grupo de regiones, en el agregado nacional el SÍ obtuvo el 39.4% de los votos emitidos, frente a un 53.5% para el NO. De ahí en más el espiral de conflicto continuó creciendo.

El año 2008 fue especialmente conflictivo en Bolivia y el referéndum se instaló en el centro de la puja. Los prefectos (gobernadores) de la oposición convocaron referendos ratificatorios de sus nuevos estatutos de autonomía mientras Morales intentaba hacer lo mismo con la nueva constitución. La corte desestimó ambas consultas alegando que se daban las condiciones mínimas para proceder a un acto eleccionario. Sin embargo los prefectos continuaron adelante con las iniciativas, por lo que tras el referéndum en Santa Cruz, Morales emitió un decreto para someter a ratificación popular su mandato, el del vicepresidente y el de ocho de los nueve prefectos de las regiones. El gobierno del MAS fue ratificado por una amplia mayoría, como también seis prefectos (los de Chuquisaca, Oruro, Potosí, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Pando y Beni). Dos prefectos opositores fueron removidos de sus cargos (La Paz y Cochabamba). Pocos meses más tarde el gobierno volvía a plantear un referéndum, en enero de 2009, para ratificar la Constitución, que obtuvo el respaldo del 61% de la población, aunque con una distribución muy desigual según los territorios y nuevamente en el marco de un polarizado debate, marcado por la agresión verbal y no exento de violencia. Uggla señala que el referéndum en Bolivia muestra las limitaciones del referéndum como mecanismo de decisión política dado que 'en ausencia de un trasfondo político estable ninguna de las victorias (o derrotas) que han sido fruto del uso de este mecanismo han generado una situación duradera (...) no ha logrado terminar con el "empate catastrófico" que sigue marcando la política en Bolivia' (Uggla, 2008: 19).[12]

4- Discusión y conclusiones

El análisis ha mostrado que, a menudo, el recurso al referéndum es una estrategia para superar el conflicto entre el gobierno y la oposición apelando a la ciudadanía. En Ecuador, el actual presidente Rafael Correa había anunciado durante su campaña la realización de una consulta popular para convocar a una asamblea constituyente. Una vez en el poder, la consulta se llevó a cabo, y la propuesta fue aceptada por una amplia mayoría ciudadana pese al abierto

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[12] La reelección de Evo Morales por una mayoría abrumadora, en diciembre de 2009, en elecciones pacíficas
que contaron con el aval de observadores internacionales, sugiere que el sistema político boliviano podría tender
a la estabilidad y la reducción del conflicto.

conflicto con el parlamento, que se opuso a la medida. Como ha señalado Morales Viteri, puede decirse que Correa había creado o incentivado las condiciones para que esto se produjera, ya que su Alianza no había presentado candidatos al Parlamento. El mecanismo del referéndum fue utilizado como recurso para superar el esquema institucional y ampliar el poder del Presidente.

De acuerdo con Paramio (2006: 68), el liderazgo de Hugo Chávez puede ser entendido como una consecuencia de la crisis del sistema de partidos, pero la aparición de liderazgos populistas no exige necesariamente un colapso previo del sistema de partidos. La condición fundamental es la existencia de una crisis de representación: que una parte importante de la sociedad sienta que ninguno de los partidos existentes representa sus intereses. El discurso populista puede ir acompañado de reformas concretas, redistributivas, que en alguna medida beneficien a sectores de la población tradicionalmente excluidos, como parece ser el caso de Venezuela. Esto marca una línea divisoria entre la Venezuela de Chávez y el Perú de Fujimori.

En Perú la sanción y la convocatoria a referéndum respondió al objetivo de Fujimori de legitimar su 'autogolpe' ante la presión internacional. Sin embargo, en paralelo a este proceso se generaron otros, como la participación ciudadana canalizada en iniciativas legislativas que en algunas ocasiones obtuvieron los resultados deseados por los convocantes (como el impedir la privatización de la empresa de petróleo del estado). Sin embargo, a diferencia de los otros tres casos analizados en este artículo, la promoción de la participación ciudadana durante el gobierno de Fujimori no fue más que una fachada en tanto se pusieron numerosos obstáculos legales, manipulando las instituciones, para evitar que la ciudadanía pudiera tomar decisiones directamente.

En Bolivia no fue Evo Morales sino el presidente interino Mesa, presionado por la intensa movilización ciudadana, el impulsor de la reforma constitucional que introdujo los MDD. Luego, en los usos registrados desde la reforma constitucional del 2004 las preferencias del presidente no estuvieron en clara consonancia con la opción ciudadana. Morales ha sido un actor clave en todos, en el primero desde la oposición y en los siguientes desde el sillón presidencial, aunque han sido promovidos por su gobierno y también por la oposición. Aunque el referéndum en Bolivia 'ha atado decisiones relevantes con los deseos de la mayoría' (Salazar Elena 2009), también se ha convertido en un arma en la lucha entre sectores, que mientras traslada la batalla a un 'flexible' marco institucional promueve una gran inestabilidad política.

Los MDD han abierto la puerta a un escenario en que la participación ciudadana juega un rol complejo y a menudo con doble filo. Por un lado, se han observado usos escasamente democráticos (Fujimori, en 1993). Sin embargo, como muestra la evolución de convocatorias en Ecuador y recientemente en Venezuela, y también el segundo referéndum en Bolivia, los gobiernos no tienen garantizado el acuerdo ciudadano (Auer 2008). Por otro

lado, los líderes que en general intentan acumular poder en su persona tampoco tienen garantizado los resultados. La ciudadanía cuenta ahora con instrumentos que permiten canalizar las demandas y reaccionar por dentro de los esquemas institucionales. El errático funcionamiento de estos mecanismos puede echar luz sobre la opción ciudadana de 'tomar las calles' y la creciente desconfianza en las instituciones. Sin embargo, también puede abrir la puerta a nuevas formas de participación , ya que en los cuatro casos analizados la institucionalización de MDD ha abierto puertas para que la ciudadanía organizada active estos instrumentos y tome decisiones.

En definitiva, los MDD no parecen haber potenciado la democracia delegativa sino que han proporcionado un marco para la expresión del conflicto, que a su vez parece haber incrementado tanto la polarización ideológica como la movilización de la ciudadanía y los grupos organizados de la sociedad civil, sea a favor o en contra del gobierno. Pero la polarización en Bolivia se produce por la llegada de Morales al poder (y lo que representa: a sectores tradicionalmente excluidos del poder), y no por el referéndum, que se convierte en un catalizador de esa tensión. Las élites bolivianas, como hacia 2002 también ocurrió en Venezuela, muestran que no aceptan tan fácilmente las reglas del juego democrático cuando no les favorecen. Sin embargo el referéndum revocatorio de 2004, en Venezuela, quizá permita ser optimistas y observar que poco a poco el terreno de lucha se traslada a la arena institucional. La oposición se movilizó para pedir el referéndum revocatorio, no logró triunfar en las urnas y aceptó el resultado. En 2007 fue Chávez quien perdió el referéndum de ratificación de la Constitución y aceptó los resultados, aunque posteriormente volvió a convocar un referéndum (enmienda constitucional) que esta vez si le fue favorable y le permitió establecer la reelección indefinida.

En lo inmediato, parece haber una creciente o, al menos, sostenida inestabilidad que hace difícil sentar unas bases comunes. En estos casos, también se observa una tensión entre los MDD y la democracia representativa, ya que funcionan no de forma complementaria sino abiertamente en competencia. En este marco, y con las garantías mínimas de respeto a las reglas del juego electoral, la disputa se desplaza al terreno discursivo y tanto unos como otros recurren a discursos de 'demonización'. Dicho esto, y puesta en duda la capacidad de fomentar consensos de estos mecanismos que producen un juego de suma cero (en el que quien gana, gana todo, y el que pierde, pierde todo), quisiera destacar que en América Latina la democracia directa ha servido para canalizar un enfrentamiento preexistente, que se instala en cuanto un líder de fuera del grupo hegemónico obtiene el poder e intenta un cambio del sistema, abriéndolo a actores previamente excluidos pero también concentrando poder en su persona o en la figura del Presidente. En este complejo escenario, los MDD muestran, paradójicamente, que aunque a veces de forma endeble e inestable, en América Latina la democracia está consolidada y la ciudadanía tiene, en última instancia, la palabra y la decisión pero, a la vez, la democracia directa puede

contribuir a reforzar el espiral de la inestabilidad y la polarización de posiciones. El pluralismo, la libertad de expresión y la garantía de elecciones libres y limpias son claves para garantizar el futuro y la profundización de la democracia.

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ANEXO

Tabla 1: MDD presentes en las constituciones de Bolivia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela
(nivel nacional)

Consulta Obligada 2009	P. Ejecutivo	Poder Legislativo	Ciudadanía
BOLIVIA			
SI (con la nueva constitución de 200)	Consulta popular vinculante	Consulta popular vinculante, cuando lo soliciten 2/3 de los miembros del congreso	Iniciativa legislativa (no reglamentada), referendo nacional vinculante, debe ser solicitado por al menos el 6% del padrón electoral.
ECUADOR			
SI (con la nueva constitución de 2008)	Consulta popular vinculante	Consulta popular vinculante iniciada con el voto asambleístas	La iniciativa legislativa requiere el 0.25% de respaldo del padrón electoral para poder ser presentada. La reforma constitucional requiere del 1% de respaldo para ser presentada al legislativo. El referéndum se puede convocar directamente con el 8%.
PERU			
Ratificación de reformas constitucionales (no aplica si el congreso la ratifica en dos legislaturas seguidas)	NO	NO	Iniciativa legislativa para la reforma de la constitución; se activa con las firmas del 0.3% del padrón. referendo, activado por el 10% del electorado nacional, para reformas constitucionales, aprobar o derogar leyes.
VENEZUELA			
Ratificación de reformas constitucionales	Consulta popular vinculante y no v. Referendo abrogatorio (la participación no debe ser inferior al 40%)	Referendo consultivo y referendo vinculante	Iniciativa legislativa (0.1% de inscriptos en el registro). Consulta no vinculante (10%). Iniciativa constitucional vinculante iniciada por el 15% de los inscriptos en el padrón; referendo abrogativo (10%) y de revocatoria de mandato iniciada por un 20% de los inscriptos.

Fuente: elaboración propia en base a las constituciones de los países

Tabla 2: Consultas populares convocadas en Bolivia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela desde 1979*

Consulta	Año	Resultados	%Part
BOLIVIA			
5 preguntas sobre Política energética	2004	Aprobado en forma parcial.	60
Referendo sobre Autonomías departamentales	2006	Aprobado en Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni y Pando. Resultado vinculante para la Asamblea Constituyente.	84,5
Referendo ratificación estatutos autonómicos	2008	El referéndum es declarado ilegal pero se lleva adelante.	s/c**
Referendo revocatorio de mandato	2008	El presidente y el vice son ratificados y también seis de los ocho prefectos.	s/c**
Ratificación de la constitución	2009	Aprobada. Ratificada.	90,2
ECUADOR			
Plebiscito: Nueva Constitución	1978	Aprobada. Ratificada.	86,7
"Consulta-Encuesta" Candidaturas independientes de los partidos	1986	Aprobada. No vinculante	73,5
"Consulta-Encuesta" de 7 preguntas.	1994	Aprobada. No vinculante	64
"Consulta-Encuesta" sobre la competencia del Poder Ejecutivo para disolver el Parlamento.	1995	Rechazada. No vinculante	58,6
"Consulta-Encuesta": 11 preguntas entre las que figuraba la revocatoria presidencial.	1997	Aprobada, No vinculante	59,2
Consulta-Encuesta	2006	Aprobada. Se inician reformas	75,5
Referéndum para la Convocatoria a una asamblea constituyente	2007	Aprobada. Se convoca la asamblea.	51,4
Ratificación de la Constitución	2008	Aprobada. Ratificada	51,3
PERU			
Referendo: Ratificación de la Constitución	1993	Aprobado. Ratificada	70,4
VENEZUELA			
Referendo Asamblea constituyente	1999	Aprobado. Se convoca la asamblea.	37,5
Ratificación de la Constitución	1999	Aprobado. Ratificada	44
Referendo por la renovación del mandato sindical	2002	Aprobado	23,5
Revocatoria de Mandato (Chávez)	2004	Rechazado	69,9
Reforma Constitucional	2007	Rechazada la nueva constitución.	44,1
Enmienda Constitucional	2009	Aprobado. Se enmieda la C.	70

Fuente: elaboración propia basada en la información de juntas electorales y organismos pertinentes de los países estudiados. Base de datos del C2D: www.c2d.ch
*Se incluyen las consultas formales (acordes a la ley) convocadas desde la transición a la democracia. No se incluyen las iniciativas legislativas que no conducen a referendo (no votados por la ciudadanía sino convertidos en proyectos a tratar por el Congreso).
** Los resultados difieren según la pregunta, la región y/o el cargo sometido a revocatoria. Por detalles véase Salazar Elena 2009, Uggla 2009 y Corte Nacional Electoral.

Fortalecimiento de tendencias delegativas en la democracia venezolana durante la Revolución Bolivariana

José Guillermo García Chourio
Luis J. González Oquendo[1]

The 1998 election of Hugo Chávez as President of Venezuela marked the beginning of a new phenomenon regarding political personalization in the old Venezuelan democracy. Besides being an outsider, Chávez has governed with a certain authoritarian shade, always using a concept of discourse radically opposed to the market economy. However, beyond revisiting the above mentioned elements to the level of functioning of the government, the purpose of this article was to describe, from the optics of the functioning of the democratic regime, some of the principal indicators that show the delegative tendency, which has acquired the Venezuelan democracy as a structural character from the governments of Chávez. In this respect, it has been observed that the use of delegative strategies of government has, more and more, spoiled the weak checks and balances of State, from an institutional point of view. Nevertheless, it not has managed, up to this moment, to spoil the basic procedural nucleus of the polyarchical game existing in Venezuela.

Keywords: Delegative democracy, political personalization, authoritarianism, accountability, checks and balances government, Bolivarian Revolution.

Introducción

El excesivo predominio –sin parangón en la historia democrática de Venezuela- que ha alcanzado la figura presidencial durante los gobiernos de Hugo Chávez, no sólo responde al enorme estado de personalización política que registra el

sistema político tras el desmoronamiento de los partidos tradicionales ocurrido en la última década del siglo XX. Otros factores de tipo institucional, relativos al manejo en la distribución y equilibrio de poderes del Estado, han incidido notablemente en el aumento del peso gubernamental del Ejecutivo, encarnado casi de forma exclusiva en el propio Chávez.

En un contexto de elevada desafección social hacia las instituciones políticas y gubernamentales, Chávez, valiéndose de su gran legitimidad de origen, renovada tras cada triunfo electoral, ha logrado sustraer (o controlar) con éxito las potestades de un conjunto significativo de instituciones del Estado más que cualquier otro presidente de la democracia venezolana. Dicho incremento del poder presidencial, que en esta ocasión no parece presentar un perfil transitorio, se ha hecho efectivo mediante una progresiva delegación y transferencia de autoridad al Ejecutivo por parte de otros poderes y organismos autónomos estatales.

A la luz de ese incremento desmesurado de los poderes del presidente, este trabajo tiene como objetivo exponer algunas de las principales variables que permiten identificar el carácter delegativo que ha venido asumiendo la democracia venezolana a partir de los gobiernos de Hugo Chávez. La tesis fundamental del presente trabajo gira en torno la naturaleza del tipo de régimen con el que se puede identificar al actual Gobierno venezolano. Mas allá del diseño presidencialista que como modo de gobernar ha caracterizado desde su fundación a la democracia venezolana, el comportamiento que ha asumido éste en el manejo político y administrativo del Estado podría ser un indicador suficiente que permita considerarlo como un régimen con elevados déficits democráticos.

El argumento central sería que la posibilidad de rendición de cuentas -tanto horizontal como vertical- se ve imposibilitada dado el control que el propio Poder Ejecutivo tiene sobre el entramado institucional que debe garantizar el funcionamiento de los mecanismos de control y sanción, así como elección y renovación de las autoridades. Si bien cierto que la literatura sobre hiperpresidencialismos ha sobreestimado muchas veces el valor explicativo de la alta concentración de autoridad en el Ejecutivo, las muestras de poder delegado y/o sustraído de los otros poderes e instituciones del Estado por parte del propio Chávez, permiten catalogar este fenómeno como un rasgo que está adquiriendo carácter estructural en la democracia venezolana.

Lejos de pretender realizar una evaluación negativa sobre la democracia presidencial como diseño institucional que facilita el desarrollo de estilos autoritarios de gobierno, este trabajo busca mostrar más bien que éstos pueden ser el producto de condiciones políticas específicas –como las que se han venido delineando en Venezuela-, las cuales propician formas de gobernar que prescinden del control y equilibro entre los poderes del Estado en favor de un mayor predominio del Ejecutivo.

1. La democracia en Venezuela: signos de transformación

El establecimiento de la democracia venezolana tiene al año 1958 como fecha referencial, año en el que finalizó el último gobierno autoritario no electo de la historia del país. A partir de entonces, se han constituido once gobiernos a través de voto universal, directo y secreto. Desde una perspectiva contemporánea, puede parecer un logro poco estimable. Sin embargo, en una región como América Latina, donde los regímenes dictatoriales fueron la norma y no la excepción durante mucho tiempo, la experiencia de Venezuela en cuanto a la organización de un régimen democrático estable fue un gran activo político de ese país por espacio de cuatro décadas.

Pero paradójicamente a esa estabilidad democrática, Venezuela mostró tempranos signos de estancamiento del proyecto de modernización social fundado con la democracia, siendo sus indicadores más evidentes la crisis social y política que se hizo manifiesta a finales de la década de 1980[2]. Después de una intensa movilidad social ascendente durante los decenios de 1960 y 1970, a partir de la década de 1980, comenzó un deterioro sostenido de la calidad de vida de la población y de la pobreza. A esto se hace necesario agregar la incapacidad institucional del Estado venezolano para responder a las crecientes demandas de la población una vez que se hizo patente el agotamiento de la renta petrolera como mecanismo de provisión de recursos redistributivos[3].

Asimismo, y paralelo a dicho deterioro de las condiciones sociales de la población, se dio una sostenida pérdida de legitimidad de los partidos políticos tradicionales, fenómeno que tuvo su origen en el rol jugado por estas organizaciones dentro del sistema político. Con el establecimiento en Venezuela de un régimen político de democracia representativa a partir de 1958, éste se sustentó en mecanismos de conciliación de élites fundamentado en la distribución de renta petrolera a través de los partidos. Así, mediante relaciones de clientelismo político, se estableció una perversa relación entre el Estado y Sociedad donde, el primero terminó corporativizándose por determinados grupos y la segunda quedó desmovilizada a partir de un manejo populista por parte de los gobernantes.

En 1958 se estableció en Venezuela un sistema de partidos con pluralismo moderado en proceso de institucionalización, que dio paso en 1973 a un sistema bipartidista no polarizado compuesto por Acción Democrática y COPEI, partidos que además de convertirse en los únicos con opción de gobierno durante veinte años, tejieron además una extensa red de lealtades

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[2] Ya desde finales de la década de 1960 (Bonilla, 1972) se había señalado la ausencia de un proyecto modernizador debido a la prevalencia de valores no-modernos en las clases dirigentes venezolanas, situación reafirmada por estudios más recientes (España, 2005; Hurtado Salazar, 2000).

[3] Mientras que para 1981 la renta por habitante correspondía a US$ 864,87, para 2002 llegó a US$ 478,66 con un incremento poblacional de 6 millones de habitante y un deterioro del coeficiente de Gini de distribución del ingreso disponible entre familias de 0,520 a 0,567 (Baptista, 2005).

partidistas con la que llegaron a dominar la vida social. Esta situación, definida por Juan Carlos Rey como «partidocracia» y por Michael Coppedge como «partiarquía» (Molina, 2004), estaba caracterizada por tres rasgos básicos: (a) la sociedad civil no sólo media la representación popular sino que la mediatiza, es decir, le impone la representación; (b) la sociedad civil sólo se hace socialmente visible en las organizaciones sociales –sindicatos, gremios, asociaciones- a través de los partidos; (c) los partidos políticos promovieron relaciones políticas de clientelismo y padrinazgo (Combellas, 1991: 172-173).

No obstante, desde otra línea, hay quienes, como Oropeza (1998), han preferido definir a esta experiencia política como «pluralismo tutelado». Este autor, sin dejar de reconocer la existencia de prácticas corporativas, ha planteado que esta situación no significaba necesariamente que existiese una democracia de partidos, ya que estos necesitaban de grupos corporativos [empresarios, grupos sindicales, gremios profesionales, etc.] para una eficaz intermediación social. En todo caso, tanto esta visión como la anterior, pese a sus diferencias, coinciden en cuanto a la presencia de fuertes partidos políticos que dinamizaron una corporativización del Estado y el establecimiento de mecanismos de conciliación corporativa excluyentes, constituyéndose a sí mismos como el canal de participación política por excelencia, aspecto que ha sido analizado en un primer momento por Combellas (1975) y posteriormente por Crisp (1997).

De este auge de los partidos como figuras máximas intermediación, la desalineación partidista -producto de la crisis de representación de esas organizaciones tradicionales- dio paso desde inicios de la década de 1990 a una conducta del elector basada sobre factores de tipo coyuntural, tales como las características personales de los candidatos, los temas debatidos en las campañas electorales, la evaluación de la gestión del gobierno saliente y del comportamiento demostrado por los otros partidos frente dicha gestión como actores de oposición (Molina, 2000). Las elecciones de 1993 marcaron el fin del bipartidismo, dando paso a un sistema de partidos inestable y caracterizado por un pluralismo polarizado y desinstitucionalizado. No sólo hay un incremento de la volatilidad electoral –la cual se ubicó en 32% en las elecciones entre 1993 y 2000, mientras que con anterioridad al período nunca superó el 13%- sino que se dio un derrumbe de su compenetración social y un debilitamiento de su legitimidad institucional (Molina, 2004). Esta situación impulsó una creciente volatilidad electoral que quedó ratificada en 1998 con el triunfo como presidente de Hugo Chávez, quien se hizo con el apoyo de un 56% de los electores (Consejo Nacional Electoral, 1998).

Después de una década en la presidencia, ha llegado el momento de realizar una evaluación política de la presencia de Hugo Chávez y su contribución a la consolidación de la experiencia democrática en Venezuela. Por un lado, sus partidarios han señalado que la Revolución Bolivariana –nombre con el que se conoce al proceso político venezolano reciente- está construyendo

una nueva experiencia socialista, expresión de una democracia participativa y protagónica. Por el otro, sus detractores señalan constantemente como la democracia en Venezuela se encuentra en una situación de inminente debacle.

Así, el presente trabajo se plantea la necesidad de verificar cuál es el locus central del debilitamiento de la calidad de la democracia en Venezuela: si ésta se ubica fundamentalmente en el plano de lo simbólico y subjetivo o en la dimensión de los procedimientos y resultados institucionales. Asumiendo que los rasgos que caracterizan a la poliarquía no han dejado de ser los que caracterizan al actual régimen político en Venezuela, se verificará cómo cada una de estas dimensiones contribuye a una mejor comprensión de la situación actual así como a una profundización de su estabilidad.

2. El personalismo político y el elemento simbólico

Se ha señalado que -más que una resurrección del autoritarismo a partir de la figura de Chávez y de una inclinación de las preferencias electorales de los ciudadanos hacia personajes carismáticos de tendencia antipolítica- las elecciones de 1998 reflejaron "un realineamiento en la dimensión ideológica que tiende a oponer los extremos de izquierda y derecha" (Carrasquero y Welsch, 2000: 189). Como se ha de recordar, fue en este momento cuando la alianza partidaria que apoyaba al candidato Hugo Chávez planteó la Asamblea Constituyente como vía estratégica para el cambio radical que llevase a la fundación de una «Nueva República» a partir de la redacción de una nueva Constitución (Blanco Muñoz, 1998). Esto le sirvió a Chávez para proyectar un discurso electoral fuerte sustentado en la autoridad como vía para poner fin al clientelismo y la corrupción predominante en los anteriores gobiernos de los partidos tradicionales, señalándolos como responsables de la situación de deterioro económico y social en que ha caído el país.

Con Hugo Chávez, la posibilidad de llegar al poder de outsiders estableció desde comienzos del siglo XXI una nueva tendencia sobre este fenómeno en Latinoamérica[4], donde la personalización política de estas figuras se ha acentuado sobre la base de combinar en algunos casos la imagen de candidatos antipartidos con un discurso de radical oposición a lo que han sido las reformas de mercado[5]. Hasta entonces, en el caso venezolano, éste no parece haber sido el argumento de emergencia. Pereira Almao (1996) señala que el resurgimiento del liderazgo personalista de Rafael Caldera durante su segundo

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[4] La personalización de la política ya era un fenómeno descrito por la Ciencia Política durante la década de 1990, dando cuenta de figuras como Carlos S. Menem en Argentina, Fernando Collor de Mello en Brasil y Alberto Fujimori en Perú, las cuales –aunque marcadas de un fuerte personalismo- representaban la opción antipartido que promovía reformas de mercado.

[5] Así, teniendo a Hugo Chávez como su iniciador, se observa su continuidad en los triunfos electorales de Evo Morales en Bolivia, Daniel Ortega en Nicaragua y, más recientemente, Fernando Lugo en Paraguay.

gobierno estuvo asociado a la crisis de los partidos tradicionales sin romper con la experiencia histórica de las últimas cuatro décadas.

El descontento social por el mal funcionamiento de la administración estatal, la baja valoración de los dirigentes políticos y el desdibujamiento de partidos tradicionales que no lograban ya articular las demandas sociales desgastó progresivamente la afectividad del ciudadano por la política y por lo político. Ante tal circunstancia, Salamanca (1996: 209) afirma que

"Es posible que el venezolano promedio, se encuentre más bien en una suerte de limbo ideológico, en el cual se refleja por una parte, su apoyo a la simbología democrática, pero al mismo tiempo, estaría ganado para apoyar cualquier intento de transformación súbita o radical".

Así, los ciudadanos venezolanos -en la búsqueda de solución a esta contradicción- apostó electoralmente por Chávez como una supuesta figura ajena a la política que planteó una oferta alternativa a partir de esbozar un discurso de izquierda, que fue apoyado por un grupo partidos de este signo, históricamente relegados del bloque en el poder por una lógica bipartidista excluyente desde los inicios de la democracia. Vale resaltar que el mismo Hugo Chávez señaló poco antes de su elección en 1998 que ésta era una "… guerra política entre el poder y el contrapoder" (Blanco Muñoz, 1998: 535).

Desde la izquierda política diversas han sido las explicaciones realizadas para explicar esta situación. Duterme (2005) señala que se ha dado la emergencia de un marco social en el que se habla de responsabilización del poder, reconocimiento de las diversidades y revalorización de la democracia –entiéndase una acepción que no corresponde a la idea de poliarquía-. Para Borón (2005: 42), se ha dado la llegada al poder de líderes articulados con partidos de izquierda con el propósito explícito de «gobernar bien», entendido esto como la honra del mandato popular (Borón, 2005: 42). Stolowicz (2005: 69) es enfática al señalar que, independientemente de las deficiencias, es siempre positivo que gobierne la izquierda sobre todo. Todos tienen en común la crítica al concepto de gobernabilidad en tanto que lo único que garantiza es el mantenimiento del status quo. Este discurso –que ha encontrado eco en la población- ha permitido a una nueva camada de partidos de izquierda capitalizar el rechazo hacia el modelo neoliberal para aprovechar la oportunidad política al lado de estos nuevos líderes para alcanzar el poder del Estado.

El Gobierno bolivariano no es sólo un proyecto político de izquierda. Chávez y su coalición de gobierno ha señalado en múltiples ocasiones que su objetivo fundamental es la «socialización de la propiedad» para sustituir el modelo de mercado –enfatizado en la concurrencia- por un paradigma alternativo de desarrollo basado en la participación popular. Sin embargo, hasta ahora los esfuerzos le han permitido sólo adelantar una nacionalización de

activos estratégicos que se concretiza en una estatización progresiva de la economía o en una fuerte presencia de regulaciones. En simultaneidad con ello, el cambio de perspectiva en torno a la izquierda -ahora como agente principal de gobierno- ha supuesto en el plano político la aplicación de elementos de participación popular ampliada: consejos comunales, contraloría social, democracia participativa y protagónica, corresponsabilidad ciudadana, Poder popular, entre otros. Un elemento ideológico fundamental de la Revolución bolivariana es el carácter movimientista de la Revolución Bolivariana (González, 2007). Esto implica que la construcción del orden político está fundamentada en la existencia de un «Poder popular», visto éste como la concretización del pueblo en acción.

Sin embargo, a pesar del énfasis dado al supuesto carácter constituyente del movimiento popular en acción, sin embargo, es posible dar evidencia del énfasis dado al papel del liderazgo del Presidente Chávez en el seno del movimiento revolucionario y del proceso de transformación social. Adán Chávez –hermano del Presidente Chávez, Ministro de Educación durante la actual gestión- ha señalado:

"... él siempre ha tenido carisma de líder. Siempre ha sido un organizador, y le llega mucho a las personas, porque toma siempre en cuenta la solidaridad, la amistad y los afectos." (Bujanda, 2000).

Guillermo García Ponce, líder histórico de la izquierda venezolana e ideólogo de las organizaciones partidistas de Hugo Chávez y sus comilitantes[6], señaló:

"No hay chavismo sin Chávez. Eso es un absurdo. Eso es no tener noción real del papel que juega una personalidad tan carismática como Chávez en un proceso revolucionario. Las ideas y las revoluciones, en determinado período, se personifican en los hombres. Ahí está el leninismo, el marxismo..." (Bujanda, 2002).

Asimismo, William Lara, dirigente del MVR y PSUV y exministro, afirmó:

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[6] El golpe de Estado del 4 de noviembre de 1992 fue promovida por el Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario-200 [MBR-200], la logia militar liderizada por Hugo Chávez Frías. Desde 1992 hasta 1997, Chávez Frías y su entorno rechazó la participación electoral como vía para la conquista del poder. Pero la expulsión de miembros de las Fuerzas Armadas –que constituían su base de crecimiento y representación dentro del sector castrense- y el progresivo incremento de la popularidad de Hugo Chávez generó las condiciones para que se optara por la vía electoral. Para ello, se constituyó el Movimiento Quinta República [MVR], organización que agrupó al liderazgo y bases de apoyo del MBR-200 con el liderazgo y bases de apoyo proveniente del sector civil, esencialmente sectores nacionalistas y de izquierda. El MVR, entre 1997 y 2007, sirvió como estructura electoral que –junto a otros partidos aliados- permitían administrar la participación electoral. Luego de la derrota en el referendo de reforma constitucional del 2 de diciembre de 2007, el Presidente Chávez exigió la conformación de un partido único de la revolución. Así, se le exigió la disolución a todos los partidos y movimientos aliados de la Revolución Bolivariana para constituir una nueva organización: el Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela [PSUV]. Salvo el Partido Comunista de Venezuela, el Partido Patria para Todos, todas las demás organizaciones se disolvieron.

"Consideramos que la personalidad política de Hugo Chávez es imprescindible en este proceso. Eso puede traer como consecuencia que nos acusen de culto a la personalidad y es un riesgo que corremos, pero planteamos la influencia de la personalidad en la historia" (Perdomo, 2005).

El Equipo Político de la Liga Socialista de la Alcaldía Metropolitana (2006) de Caracas hizo pública la declaración que

"... para avanzar en el debate esclarecedor siempre tomaremos de guía el texto constitucional, la unidad del pueblo y los revolucionarios encabezados por Hugo Chávez Frías y el reclamo mayoritario de nuestro pueblo de profundizar el proceso de construcción de la patria nueva: La Patria Socialista."

Finalmente, José Vicente Rodríguez (2007), Presidente del Instituto Autónomo Ferrocarriles del Estado, en un discurso público declaró:

"Si el presidente Chávez le pide a algún gobernador o alcalde comprometido con este proceso que renuncie a su cargo, no debería ese funcionario tener mayor problema que entregar el cargo. Debemos dar ejemplo de obediencia y de entrega revolucionaria. El único hombre indispensable en este proceso revolucionario es el presidente Chávez, el resto, somos hombres y mujeres que tenemos que desapegarnos de lo material y servirle a la patria donde sea que nos llamen".

Se podría señalar que tales epígrafes constituyen la versión de terceros sin que ello signifique una autovaloración del Presidente Chávez. Sin embargo, él mismo ha hecho afirmaciones al respecto. En una de las primeras entrevistas concedidas después de su liberación, señaló que

"... Las escuelas militares son escuelas de liderazgo. Allí aprendemos a ejercerlo, a comandar hombres."

En la misma, líneas después ratifica ante la interpelación hecha por la periodista en relación a la adulancia generada entre sus seguidores:

"No creo que eso sea adulancia ni que sea justo calificar de adulante a un pueblo que lo que aspira es salir del atolladero y no consigue liderazgo. Creo que eres injusta al calificarlo de adulancia. Y creo que todo venezolano merece respeto. En todo caso, si Petra Pérez, que vive en la orilla del Arauca, pone el retrato de Hugo Chávez al lado del de Bolívar o Guaicaipuro, pues ese es el enfoque que una venezolana humilde, cansada y desesperada tiene del fenómeno político nacional. pero no podemos decirle adulante por eso. ¿Tú crees que eso es adulancia? ... Hay una diversidad de enfoques, de formas de responder a un fenómeno social. Yo no me creo ni mito ni metáfora: soy un luchador social. pero si insistes con lo del mito, te diría que siempre me aferro a lo que decía Aristóteles: "Todo mito tiene un núcleo de verdad". Y yo soy eso: un núcleo de verdad." (Fuentes, 1994).

En este sentido, existe una fuerte carga simbólica en la construcción del liderazgo político del Presidente Chávez. Esta no se sustenta sólo en la legitimidad normativa sino que se articula en torno a una carga emocional significativa. Tal tesis, que ya ha sido desarrollada por Uzcátegui (1999), aunque útil para comprender la fuerza y la intensidad de la personificación del liderazgo, sin embargo, ayuda a comprender poco la inserción del mismo en el sistema político venezolano.

Todo parece indicar que la personificación de la política recientemente promovida por el liderazgo de Hugo Chávez pudo alojarse en el sistema político venezolano en tanto que éste ya había generado condiciones propicias para ello. Para Molina (2004: 39), desde comienzos de la década de 1990, un indicador clave de las dificultades de los partidos políticos en Venezuela es la creciente personalización de la política en torno a liderazgos nacionales y regionales[7]. Así, en las elecciones de 1993, así como el triunfo electoral de Rafael Caldera se dio a través de Convergencia Nacional, partido de claro tinte personalista. De hecho, Molina Vega y Pérez Baralt (1996) señalan que las elecciones regionales de 1995 consolidaron el proceso de personalización de la política nacional. Más tarde, en las elecciones de 1998, Proyecto Venezuela se constituyó como esfuerzo nacional alrededor de la candidatura de Henrique Salas Römer a partir del Proyecto Carabobo, movimiento que le permitió llegar a ser gobernador del estado Carabobo y le sirvió de plataforma electoral para que su hijo Henrique Salas Feo le sucediera en el cargo. Esta situación se repitió en los proyectos políticos asociados a las candidaturas regionales en diferentes entidades federales venezolanas. En cuanto a las fuerzas políticas que irrumpieron en 1998-2000, no puede ser más contundente: el Movimiento

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[7] Vale resaltar que en el desarrollo de este fenómeno a nivel regional contribuyó en mucho la reforma institucional que hizo posible la elección directa de gobernadores y alcaldes a partir de 1989.

Quinta República-MVR no ha sido más que el partido de Chávez, a pesar de las pretensiones de convertirse en una organización nacional de masas con orientación izquierdista.

Así, tanto la desinstitucionalización de los partidos en Venezuela como su progresiva personalización han sido elementos fundamentales en la constitución del orden político en Venezuela desde el inicio de la década de 1990. En este sentido, existieron factores tanto simbólicos como estructurales que generaron las condiciones para la instauración y avance del «chavismo», no sólo como estilo de liderazgo, sino como una alternativa práctica de gobierno.

La necesidad del ejercicio autoritario para la consolidación de la estabilidad política no es una tesis novedosa en el pensamiento político venezolano. Así, se puede recordar la tesis del «cesarismo democrático» esbozado por Laureano Vallenilla Lanz a principios del siglo XX. Sin embargo, todo referente simbólico, por muy arraigado que pueda estar en el imaginario colectivo, necesita ser reforzado mediante hechos o situaciones que le den sentido a su mantenimiento: es necesario institucionalizar el ejercicio de la autoridad. Por ello, los mecanismos de control –más que la sola presencia de una disonancia cognitiva- podrían poner en duda la posibilidad de concretizar decisiones que pueden llegar a ser consideradas no válidas por otras instancias de la estructura de poder.

3. La debilidad institucional para la rendición de cuentas

La dimensión subjetiva puede llegar a tener poca significación a la hora que el sistema político se vea totalmente incapacitado de responder a las demandas debido a la debilidad institucional tanto del Estado como de los partidos políticos. La valoración subjetiva del régimen democrático –en tanto que muro de contención- sería un dique débil cuando se enfrenta a la dimensión utilitaria sobre la que ha descansado el juego democrático desde su instauración en 1958 (Rey, 1991; Kornblith, 1994). Cualquier democracia -con instituciones incapaces de filtrar las demandas de la sociedad y darles respuesta- comienza a perder con el tiempo la base de su justificación, muy por encima de todo sentimiento o valoración que la reconozca como el mejor sistema de gobierno.

La expresión «buen gobierno» no se limita en la literatura politológica reciente sólo a rendir resultados eficientes en la relación insumo/producto: también hace referencia a la génesis de un espacio de construcción de acuerdos colectivos, donde se establezcan mecanismos de control y evaluación de los representantes políticos y funcionarios fundamentados en la rendición de cuentas de la gestión de los asuntos públicos. En la medida que los ciudadanos tienen mayor acceso a mecanismos de regulación sobre las actividades que los afectan directamente y que son realizadas por gobernantes y funcionarios que

ellos mismos eligieron libremente o que depende de la contribución tributaria que realizan, se estará dando pasos hacia el fortalecimiento y profundización de una democracia realmente sustantiva (Villoria y García, 2006).

El imperio de la ley, ha sido una de las condiciones fundamentales que ha resaltado Dahl (1999) para verdaderamente hablar de la presencia de una democracia poliárquica. Sobre la base de ello, O´Donnell (1997b) considera que toda democracia que se precie de considerarse como tal deben existir fuertes y eficientes mecanismos de rendición de cuentas. La necesidad de constituir gobiernos transparentes, donde se amplíe el control ciudadano es un imperativo de las democracias actuales, las cuales desde la caída del socialismo real tienen ahora que justificarse más por méritos propios que por defectos ajenos (Lechner, 1996).

El diseño institucional de un régimen democrático es -entre otros factores- uno de los elementos que determina los tipos de potestades y el nivel de discrecionalidad que tienen cada uno de los poderes que conforman el Estado. Como parte del equilibrio entre estos poderes, un signo distintivo del buen funcionamiento de la democracia está en la capacidad de ciertas instituciones estatales para controlar el ejercicio de dichas potestades y sancionar la trasgresión ilegal que las autoridades al frente de cualquier poder puedan hacer sobre las competencias de algún otro en determinado momento o de forma constante. Este tipo específico de interacción intraestatal es lo que O´Donnell (1997b) define como *accountability* horizontal [AH], siendo su labor esencial para dotar de confianza al régimen como tal. Dentro de este mecanismo de control intraestatal, el autor distingue dos subtipos. Por un lado, el AH de balance, referido al tradicional control mutuo de los poderes del Estado para garantizar el equilibrio en cuanto a los límites de competencia de cada uno. Por el otro, el AH asignado, proceso en el que un conjunto de agencias estatales son las encargadas de supervisión, prevención y/o sanción en caso de trasgresión o corrupción en el ejercicio de las potestades que tienen atribuidas los poderes del Estado en cualquiera de sus niveles de gobierno. Para O´Donnell, el desarrollo de este segundo tipo AH, ha sido producto de las limitaciones que en el devenir histórico ha tenido el sistema de pesos y contrapesos de los poderes ante, en un primer momento, la supremacía de la legislatura y, posteriormente, el poder ganado por el ejecutivo y la burocracia debido al crecimiento del sector público.

La complejidad en las relaciones de poder que impone ese escenario hace que el sistema de control mediante balance de los poderes presente serias limitaciones para evitar las trasgresiones. Con respecto a esto, una las observaciones que O´Donnell hace sobre el AH de balance es su limitado alcance para la solución de conflictos ya que tiende a actuar de forma reactiva y, por ende, intermitente, a producir acciones dramáticas de elevado costo para las instituciones así como que los conflictos en que incurren los actores sean motivados por razones partidarias. Ante estas limitaciones del AH de balance, el autor le otorga un matiz técnico y neutral a las instituciones de AH asignada

para confrontar los riesgos de trasgresión y/o corrupción dentro del aparato estatal. Esta aseveración, sin embargo, pese a que resalta las debilidades de este tipo de agencia en el subcontinente, no toma en cuenta el posible nivel de partidización de las mismas en América Latina.

Como complemento de estos tipos de control intraestatal, O´Donnell pone sobre el tapete la importancia de la *accountability* vertical [AV], en esta oportunidad, definida más allá de su tradicional concepción centrada en el voto. Señala que dentro de esa AV -control de las autoridades y la sanción mediante elecciones- es importante algún *accountability* de tipo societal de manera de hacer más transparente la gestión del Estado. Esta implica mecanismos de rendición de cuentas ante la ciudadanía, condiciones que, a su juicio, se han hecho extremadamente importantes hoy en día para el mantenimiento de la democracia.

El problema de la construcción institucional del control del poder es un aspecto fundamental de la interpretación de la democracia desarrollada por el cientista político argentino. Esto se debe, fundamentalmente, al hecho de la crítica a la forma como efectivamente se establecieron los gobiernos democráticos de la transición democrática de la década de 1980 en América Latina. A este respecto, O'Donnell señalaba que –más que democracias representativas en sentido estricto- lo que se establecieron fueron «democracias delegativas». En su concepción original, con esta expresión se da cuenta de aquella situación en la que los electores efectúan una delegación del poder a los gobernantes electos y, una vez realizadas las elecciones, no existe forma de control permanente de las instancias de poder. Las democracias delegativas se basan en la premisa de que la persona que gana la elección presidencial está autorizada a gobernar cómo crea conveniente, acción sólo limitada por la realidad de las relaciones de poder existente y por las especificaciones constitucionales relativas al término de su mandato (O'Donnell, 1997a). Los electores eligen a estos líderes para que en situaciones de crisis releven al electorado de sus responsabilidades, estableciéndose una ciudadanía de baja intensidad en la que se respetan los derechos participativos y democráticos de la poliarquía pero se viola el componente liberal de la poliarquía (Pérez Murena, 2007: 273).

O'Donnell (1997b: 146) plantea que la poliarquía contemporánea es el resultado histórico de la conjunción de los componentes de tres tradiciones políticas. El componente democrático señala que todos pueden participar en los asuntos colectivos y decidir sobre cualquier asunto que considere apropiado. El componente republicano, por otro lado, señala que el cumplimiento de los deberes públicos es una actividad que demanda el cumplimiento y consagración al interés público, aún a costa de los intereses privados de los funcionarios. Finalmente, el componente liberal da cuenta de la existencia de algunos derechos que ningún poder puede usurpar, mucho menos el Estado. Así, se podría deducir que, en la democracia delegativa, aunque haya una

reivindicación de la participación y de los deberes cívicos, quedan en minusvalía la defensa de los derechos particulares y la vida privada.

Como ya se ha señalado, el término «democracia delegativa» fue diseñado por O'Donnell para interpretar la redemocratización de los países latinoamericanos. La enorme importancia del Ejecutivo en los Estados latinoamericanos no es un fenómeno que responde exclusivamente al carácter presidencialista sino también en el modo de gobernar que ha prevalecido tradicionalmente en nuestra cultura política. También está asociada con la supremacía que durante el siglo XX adquirió el gobierno a raíz del crecimiento de una administración pública orientada a desarrollar un Estado fuerte y con múltiples responsabilidades en el marco de unos proyectos social-modernizadores. Esta situación dio forma de organización de la sociedad a partir de una matriz Estado-céntrica (Cavarozzi, 1993), donde el Poder Ejecutivo fue asumiendo de manera preponderante un gran número de atribuciones que han venido siendo recogidas por las sucesivas reformas constitucionales que han demarcado sus límites en una suerte de desigual desarrollo en comparación con los otros poderes[8].

Ahora bien, entre el transito y la consolidación democrática en América Latina se han suscitado una serie de circunstancias adversas de carácter específico en cada país, que no sólo llevaron a echar por tierra esa visión teleológica que se mantenía del proceso como algo enteramente positivo, sino también a reconocer los propios limites de la reforma política, donde el rendimiento de las instituciones estaría sujeto a serie condiciones políticas, las cuales podrían descartar o verificar el cumplimiento de la propuesta de O´Donnell a partir de observar, entre otras variables, el comportamiento sistémico de los mecanismos institucionales de control. Una aproximación a cómo ha funcionado la lógica del control institucional en la democracia venezolana viene a ser un esfuerzo en esa dirección.

4. La incremental delegatividad en la democracia venezolana

La democracia venezolana es –en los términos esbozados por Shugart y Mainwaring (2002a)- una democracia presidencialista: el Jefe del Ejecutivo es popularmente electo y los mandatos tanto del presidente como del poder legislativo son fijos. De hecho, ésta ha sido la tradición política venezolana desde 1830, fecha de establecimiento de la República y que se reafirmó con la Constitución Nacional de 1961, base normativa que imperó durante todo el período democrático hasta 1999.

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[8] No hay que olvidar que dentro del ya clásico debate entre parlamentarismo vs. presidencialismo, autores como Juan Linz y Alfred Stepan señalaron que los sistemas presidencialistas son poco favorables para la construcción de democracias estables –entre otras cosas- por la tendencia al creciente reforzamiento del poder presidencial. Mientras que otros autores, como Mathew Shugart y Scott Mainwaring (2002), quitando peso a la anterior explicación, consideraron que no es sólo un problema de régimen sino que todo depende de las variaciones observables en los poderes presidenciales de cada país.

Un primer elemento fundamental para comprender el incremento de la delegatividad de la democracia venezolana pasa por la comprensión de cómo el proceso constituyente de 1998-1999 alteró los mecanismos de AH que se habían establecido durante la experiencia democrática entre 1958-1998. En este trabajo se ha dado cuenta de cómo han estado presentes los rasgos corporativos que afectaron el funcionamiento de los mecanismos de control del poder en la democracia venezolana. Sin embargo, aún a pesar de ello, se establecieron acuerdos de distribución de las diferentes instancias del poder entre los partidos políticos. Así, aunque es verdad que la figura presidencial en Venezuela tenía grandes potestades otorgadas por la Constitución de 1961, sin embargo, el Senado en el marco del Congreso bicameral ejercía formas de control, sobre todo a partir del manejo de materias [p.e., la política militar]. Estos mecanismos de conciliación fueron alterados a partir del proceso constituyente de 1998-1999, dinámica que transformó la estructura de la institucionalidad del AH.

Durante la campaña presidencial de 1998, el candidato Chávez señaló como una de sus propuestas políticas la convocatoria de una Asamblea Constituyente que se encargase de elaborar una nueva constitución. Esta propuesta había sido rechazada por el Congreso Nacional ya que no estaba considerada por la Constitución de 1961 y, al estar dominado por los partidos tradicionales, no existía voluntad política para reformarla. La Corte Suprema de Justicia, por otro lado, rechazó la propuesta al señalar que con ésta se rompe el hilo constitucional. Sin embargo, la primera medida tomada por el Presidente Chávez al momento de hacerse con la presidencia fue decretar la convocatoria a un referendo para consultar al pueblo la conformación o no de una Asamblea Constituyente. Aunque la oposición política en el Congreso estaba en contra, la Corte Suprema de Justicia decidió a favor del decreto presidencial señalando además que ésta tendría carácter originario, es decir, no tendría que sujetarse a leyes anteriores ni a la Constitución vigente. Esto le otorgó a la asamblea a ser elegida la posibilidad no sólo de redactar una nueva constitución sino la posibilidad de disolver y crear nuevas instituciones.

El referendo de consulta acerca de la realización de la Constituyente se realizó el 25 de abril de 1999, resultando aprobada la propuesta con un abrumador 71,78% de los votos, aunque con una abstención de 55,63%. La elección de los constituyentistas se realizó el 25 de julio de 1999, quedando más del 90% de sus miembros constituidos por partidarios del Presidente Chávez, quedando de la oposición sólo cuatro postulados. La Asamblea Constituyente se estableció el 3 de agosto de ese mismo año procediendo a disolver al Congreso Nacional y decretando la emergencia judicial y carcelaria. Con su aprobación, el Presidente Chávez declara la emergencia constitucional y procede a sustituir jueces en todas las instancias. La Constitución redactada fue aprobada mediante nuevo referendo el 16 de diciembre de 1999 y, una vez terminadas sus funciones de redacción constitucional, se nombra una comisión legislativa –a la que se llamó «Congresillo»- conformada por Constituyentes elegidos por el

Presidente y que procedió a sustituir a las diferentes instancias de control: el Contralor General de la República, el Fiscal General, las autoridades del Consejo Nacional Electoral, el Procurador General, el Superintendente de Bancos, el Presidente del Banco Central así como al Presidente del Fondo de Garantía de Depósitos. Aunque constitucionalmente algunos de estos cargos eran por concurso público, sin embargo, fueron nombrados de manera discrecional. Se disuelve la Corte Suprema de Justicia y se crea un Tribunal Supremo de Justicia con nuevos magistrados. Esta instancia, a su vez, señala que las decisiones del Congresillo tienen carácter supraconstitucional, por encima incluso de la Constitución de 1999. También se convocaron elecciones generales para la Presidencia, gobernadores y alcaldes para una total renovación de las autoridades.

La Constitución Bolivariana de 1999 introdujo algunas novedades en lo relativo al marco institucional de control del poder. A los clásicos poderes públicos ejecutivo, legislativo y judicial, agregó dos adicionales: el Poder Electoral –representado por el Consejo Nacional Electoral- y el Poder Moral Republicano –constituido de manera conjunta por la Fiscalía General de la República, la Contraloría General de la Nación y el nuevo Defensor del Pueblo-. Asimismo, en la declaración de principios, se estableció que la democracia venezolana era participativa, lo que plantea –según el Artículo 70- la constitución de «medios de participación y protagonismo del pueblo en ejercicio de su soberanía» tanto en el marco de lo político, lo social y lo económico. Sin embargo, esta constitución también fortaleció la autoridad presidencial al otorgarle algunas potestades que anteriormente poseía el Senado y al establecer una Vicepresidencia cuyo titular es seleccionado y removido por decisión ejecutiva. Sin embargo, uno de los elementos fundamentales para el reforzamiento de la presencia del Presidente de la República fue la aprobación de la reelección presidencial –posibilidad negada en la Constitución Nacional de 1961- así como el aumento de cinco a seis años del período de mandato[9].

Ya en su segundo mandato, el Presidente Chávez presentó, el 15 de agosto de 2007, a la Asamblea Nacional un proyecto de reforma de 33 artículos de la Constitución de 1999. El 2 de noviembre, en un ambiente polémico, la Asamblea Nacional aprobó la reforma de 69 artículos así como la anexión de 15 disposiciones transitorias, las cuales abarcaban múltiples materias y fueron sometidas a la decisión popular a través de referéndum en dos bloques el 2 de diciembre de 2007. Ambos bloques fueron rechazados por los electores con el

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[9] Con miras a que reformas de este tipo redunden en mayores beneficios para la democracia, algunos autores (Payne et al, 2003) han considerado más bien la idoneidad de reducir el número de años de mandato en el caso de introducir la reelección inmediata, así de esta manera, además de seguir garantizando la posibilidad de la alternancia en el cargo dentro de un período razonable de tiempo, se daría respuesta con la reelección a esa necesidad de una mayor margen temporal que muchas veces es imprescindible para que un gobernante pueda acometer su programa electoral, ello sin restar que la posibilidad de un segundo mandato establecería un incentivo para un mejor desempeño en el ejercicio de gobierno, por lo menos durante los primeros años, ya que estaría en juego la continuidad en el cargo.

50,8% y 51,01% de los sufragios respectivamente. Uno de los puntos más polémicos del proyecto fue lo relativo a la aprobación de la reelección indefinida del Presidente de la República así como el proyecto de reordenamiento territorial que le permitía al Ejecutivo Nacional crear nuevas unidades político-territoriales y encargar de las mismas a funcionarios por encima de los gobernadores de estado y alcaldes. Tales medidas fueron señaladas como ataques directos a la descentralización política.

En este caso particular de la descentralización, los riesgos que ella enfrenta son enormes bajo el presidencialismo omnímodo de Chávez ya que, si bien hay nuevos actores con poder en la esfera local, estos actúan bajo el poder concentrador del Jefe del Estado, quien recurriendo a la figura del decreto impulsa acciones nuevamente centralizadoras que minan los márgenes de autonomía ya consagrados de los gobiernos locales. En estas circunstancias, las dificultades que se imponen en la transferencia de recursos hacia los estados y municipios, cristalizan aún más el cuadro de baja capacidad de muchos de estos gobiernos para enfrentar las demandas que hacen explosión en base a las competencias que ahora manejan, con lo cual los espacios de ingobernabilidad se multiplican en el sistema político.

Aparte de las atribuciones concedidas constitucionalmente, otro mecanismo que ha permitido reforzar tendencias delegativas en la democracia venezolana es la atribución legislativa concedida al Poder Ejecutivo. Para Mainwaring y Shugart (2002b: 260), uno de los principales problemas que generan los sistemas presidenciales es que permiten a los presidentes gobernar por decreto sin autorización previa del parlamento, instancia representativa y legislativa por excelencia. Esta situación incrementa la posibilidad de emergencia de procesos delegativos en las democracias. En el caso venezolano, existe un mecanismo de acción legislativa por parte del Poder Ejecutivo que – aunque recibe autorización por parte del Poder Legislativo- implica que este cede por completo y no tiene control sobre las áreas de competencia autorizadas. Es el mecanismo denominado «Ley Habilitante» la cual permite emitir «Decretos con rango y fuerza de Ley».

Entre 1999 y 2008, el Poder Ejecutivo venezolano ha recibido en tres ocasiones autorización del Poder Legislativo para decretar paquetes de leyes. El 22 de abril de 1999, el Congreso Nacional autorizó al Presidente Chávez para que legislara por seis meses en materia económica, financiera y tributaria, emitiendo 54 Decretos-Ley en este lapso. El 13 de noviembre de 2000, la Asamblea Nacional autorizó al Presidente a dictar –durante el lapso de un año- decretos con fuerza de ley en ámbitos económico, financiero, infraestructura, ciencia y tecnología, seguridad ciudadana y jurídica, social, transporte y servicios, y organización y funcionamiento del Estado. Esta Ley Habilitante tuvo como resultado 49 leyes, resultando las más polémicas las leyes de Tierras, Hidrocarburos y Bancos. El 30 de enero de 2007, la Asamblea Nacional aprueba por tercera ocasión una Ley Habilitante que autorizaba al Ejecutivo a

legislar durante año y medio en un mayor número de materias, elaborándose al final 46 normas decretadas. Una de las leyes más polémicas de la Ley habilitante 2007-2008 fue la Ley del Sistema Nacional de Inteligencia. Por un lado, se le objetó que desconocía principios, derechos y garantías establecidos por la Constitución Bolivariana y el Código Orgánico Procesal Penal, especialmente en lo relativo al derecho a la defensa, la inviolabilidad del hogar y las comunicaciones, así como lo referente a la garantía de acceso a la información pública y privada. Por otro lado, la segunda objeción, provino del hecho que quedaba bajo el total control del Poder Ejecutivo sin que se estipulase ningún control por parte de otras instancias del poder público, sea el parlamento o el poder judicial. El escándalo alcanzó tal proporción que el Presidente Chávez la derogó a los pocos días señalándola como un «desastre».

El uso continuo del decreto como estrategia para gobernar, caracterizada por la delegación en el Ejecutivo de amplias potestades de gobierno que están muchas veces en el borde de los principios constitucionales, ha llevado a que Chávez no en pocas ocasiones adopte la figura de un presidente con un perfil cesarista y plebiscitario. En este escenario de múltiples prerrogativas y elevada discrecionalidad del Ejecutivo el equilibrio de poderes se ha visto desvirtuado, propiciando una constaste evasiva de las autoridades a seguir los canales formales del sistema sin mayor grado de sanción. Esta débil *accountability* horizontal entre los órganos del Estado es un factor importante que contribuye a perpetuar la baja transparencia de los procesos de representación y elaboración de políticas públicas.

Es importante resaltar que buena parte de los decretos con rango y fuerza de ley desarrollados a partir de la tercera Ley Habilitante se realizó en el marco del fracaso del proceso de reforma constitucional de diciembre de 2007. Ante la imposibilidad de reformar la Constitución Bolivariana y agregarle algunas instituciones y procedimientos, el Poder Ejecutivo lo convirtió en materia tratada a través de leyes. Frente a esta situación, la oposición política señaló que ésta era una forma de evadir la voluntad popular. El Presidente Chávez, por otro lado, señaló que no existía ninguna limitación legal para hacerlo. Por parte de otras ramas del poder público no hubo ningún pronunciamiento.

La desinstitucionalización del sistema de partidos así como la debacle de los partidos tradicionales ha ayudado a debilitar la presencia política de control del Poder Legislativo. En términos electorales, la oposición política no ha logrado encauzar su caudal electoral y ha tenido baja presencia numérica. A esto también ha contribuido decisiones políticas tomadas: en las elecciones legislativas de diciembre de 2005, la alianza política partidaria de la agenda política de Hugo Chávez consolidó una mayoría absoluta debido a una táctica abstencionista de los partidos de oposición que buscaban –en términos estratégicos- deslegitimizar el proceso electoral. Con esta decisión, se desaprovechó la oportunidad para mostrar ante los ciudadanos alguna posible opción de cambio y se renunció a la competición electoral debilitando la

posibilidad de constituirse en segundas fuerzas dentro del sistema político. Así, se le permitió al Ejecutivo continuar su gestión sin mayor interferencia de la oposición como contrapeso a nivel del Parlamento. Tal control legislativo por parte de la alianza gobernante le permitió al Gobierno obtener aprobación de la Asamblea Nacional para asumir durante dieciocho meses la capacidad de legislar a través de una «Ley habilitante».

El uso de mecanismos constituyentes e institucionales ha ayudado a posicionar a funcionarios comprometidos con el proceso político revolucionario en los puestos clave que deberían de servir de mecanismos de AH. La intervención del Congresillo –ya señalada líneas atrás- es un ejemplo de ello. Entre 1999 y 2007, la oposición política ha utilizado diferentes expresiones para dar cuenta de la situación en la que el Presidente Chávez ha tenido plena libertad para actuar a discreción y se ha señalado que tiene el control político de las instancias institucionales que han de controlar su actuación. Aunque no corresponde aquí hacer una valoración acerca de la honorabilidad y los compromisos personales y políticos por parte de los funcionarios que se han encargado de las instancias de AH, sin embargo, hay evidencia que permite señalar algunos ejemplos referenciales. Isaías Rodríguez y Jorge Rodríguez después de haber cumplido funciones como encargados de poderes públicos – Fiscal General de la República y Presidente del Consejo Nacional Electoral, respectivamente- fueron designados por el Presidente Chávez como Vicepresidentes Ejecutivo de la República, cargo de confianza del Poder Ejecutivo. Incluso, es necesario señalar que Jorge Rodríguez era el Presidente de la Junta Nacional Electoral que se encargó del Referéndum revocatorio presidencial de 2004. Asimismo, Omar Mora Díaz, Presidente del Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, en una entrevista publicada por el diario El Universal el 5 de febrero de 2005 [p. A-1], se autodefinió como un revolucionario que estaba identificado absolutamente con el proceso de cambios que estimula la Constitución, en tanto "*que se corresponde con sus sueños de juventud*" por el que estaba trabajando para hacerla letra viva. Al preguntársele sobre cómo evaluaba la gestión del presidente Chávez señaló

"El liderazgo del presidente Chávez ha sido factor fundamental en este proceso de transformación. Ha sido el motor fundamental de un proceso que lo van a hacer todos los venezolanos, respetando las disidencias".

Sin embargo, desde sus inicios, el formato delegativo que ha promovido el presidencialismo de Chávez ha actuado de manera paradójica. Al mismo tiempo que se han institucionalizado prácticas participativas –que podrían actuar como mecanismos de AV de balance- también se les ha limitado mediante el incentivo de prácticas autoritarias tradicionales. Desde 2005 se ha defendido la necesidad del «Poder popular» como forma de hacer efectiva la

democracia participativa y protagónica señalada en la Constitución Bolivariana. En este sentido, se hace referencia a una serie de mecanismos de participación y decisión ciudadana: Consejos comunales, contraloría social, consultas públicas, referendos, cabildo abierto, asamblea de ciudadanos, iniciativa popular, iniciativa legislativa, presupuesto participativo, entre otros. Sin embargo, sólo por citar un caso, los Consejos comunales –instancia fundamental de organización popular por excelencia- han sido vinculados directamente con la Presidencia de la República a través de la Comisión Presidencial del Poder Popular, instancia adscrita al Ministerio de Participación y Desarrollo Social la cual tiene atribuciones de orientar, coordinar y evaluar el desarrollo de este mecanismo. Esta situación lleva a recrear el ejercicio del poder en un contexto donde los rituales formales del modelo democrático se mezclan con formas particulares de gestionar la política, desdibujando la distinción entre las esferas pública y privada.

Mediante un discurso centrado en la propuesta de una «democracia participativa y protagónica», el Presidente Chávez ha revitalizado la experiencia de liderazgo populista en Venezuela. El nuevo esquema de distribución de los recursos fiscales se rige sobre la base de una recomposición neocorporativa de las relaciones entre el Estado y ciertos sectores de la sociedad civil organizados y cooptados por el propio Gobierno Bolivariano. Vale resaltar que la experiencia democrática en la Venezuela anterior a 1998 –sustentada en los mecanismos de conciliación de élites- asumió formas corporativas, con la diferencia que la instancia de mediación era el partido político. Actualmente, esta instancia no existe sino que está directamente en las manos del Gobierno el cual –a su vez- está personificado en un liderazgo carismático. Asimismo, también han emergido nuevos mecanismos de presión: tal como lo ha señalado Gómez (1997: 29), se ha avanzado a la constitución de un «clientelismo negativo»: caracterizado no por el logro de una ventaja sino como amenaza de pérdida de un derecho. Así, al escasear los bienes que distribuye el Estado, la intermediación política adquiere más valor. Un ejemplo reciente de ello lo constituye la conocida «Lista Tascón»[10].

Un rasgo a resaltar es que el caso venezolano se mantienen procedimientos de control vertical, como fueron los casos de los comicios del 2000 y el referéndum revocatorio de 2004. Sin embargo, también se han generado condiciones que incrementan el peso discrecional de la figura del líder frente a la institución: se ha dado la consolidación de un sistema de elecciones libres pero no competitivas; el establecimiento de instancias de Poder popular las cuales –aunque deberían ejercer la función de contraloría social- se

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[10] Una vez tramitada ante el Consejo Nacional Electoral la convocatoria del referendo revocatorio presidencial de 2004, la lista de solicitantes fue hecha pública por Luis Tascón, diputado oficialista en la Asamblea Nacional. Esta lista de electores fue utilizada por funcionarios partidarios del Gobierno Bolivariano como base de datos para sancionar ciudadanos por su posición opositora. Ésta base de datos ha sido conocida en Venezuela como la «Lista Tascón».

relacionan directamente con el Presidente Chávez; control de las instancias de control horizontal por parte de partidarios del líder de la Revolución Bolivariana. Esto ha generado que el carácter del régimen haya tendido con el tiempo hacia una forma de democracia delegativa.

Conclusiones

El gobierno por delegación en Venezuela se ha reforzado a través de diversos mecanismos. Por un lado, se ha utilizado el recurso de valorización simbólica del Presidente Chávez. Así, se demuestra lo que ya había señalado O'Donnell (1997a: 293) en torno al carácter del Presidente en las democracias delegativas: se convierte en encarnación de la Nación y principal definidor y guardián de sus intereses- se ha visto reforzada en el caso venezolano. Por otro lado, también se han utilizado mecanismos institucionales que han permitido una legitimación de la acción delegativa a través de procedimientos de construcción constitucional, técnica legislativa, la típica guerra de posiciones en los mecanismos de AH y AV así como en procedimientos de cooptación y clientelismo negativo.

¿Peligra la democracia en Venezuela? A pesar de todo lo señalado, a pesar de la incapacidad institucional del Estado y el desprestigio de los partidos políticos, la democracia –por lo menos en los términos estipulados por los criterios de poliarquía- no ha dejado de ser el régimen político en Venezuela. Se ha señalado que, a pesar de los fallos evidentes a nivel de rendimiento, la única legitimidad con la que podría contar la democracia venezolana es lo que se ha denominado «legitimidad simbólica» ligada al mundo de la cultura política que tienen los ciudadanos, en donde está presente la idea que la democracia es el mejor sistema de gobierno, independientemente de las imperfecciones que presenta (Salamanca, 1996). El arraigo de este referente en un gran sector de la sociedad venezolana es el que ha servido hasta ahora para que el ciudadano medio haya podido diferenciar entre los deficientes rendimientos que han tenido los gobiernos de turno en cuanto a la tarea de satisfacer las demandas de la población y las ventajas de convivir en un sistema democrático (Carrasquero y Welsch, 2000).

Es posible que los bajos rendimientos de los gobiernos tiendan a que la democracia comience a dejar de ser vista por los actores políticos y sociales como el «único juego posible» (Linz y Stepan, 1996), dando así sentido a formas de gobierno autoritarias que pueden llegar a tener aceptación en ciertos sectores de la población, dado el profundo sentimiento de frustración que experimentan por la insatisfacción social. El término "crisis sistémica" (Salamanca, 1996), es expresión de una crisis general y orgánica del sistema político venezolano que fácilmente puede conllevar hacia una crisis de la democracia, si el chavismo como alternativa de gobierno no es capaz de lograr efectivamente la realización de las preferencias ciudadanas.

Juan Carlos Rey, reconocido politólogo venezolano, en una entrevista pública señaló que el Gobierno Bolivariano se ha hecho peligroso en tanto que es inestable por naturaleza. Según su opinión, carece de bases sólidas en tanto que –a pesar no tiene oposición- está basado en el elemento personalista, incluso en la definición de sus ideas y en la conformación de un partido. Así, la debilidad es esencialmente institucional (Conde, 2008).

En este sentido, las posibilidades reales de la democracia en Venezuela van a depender en los próximos años, de la capacidad que pueda tener el sistema político para edificar y reconstruir instituciones que apunten hacia el desarrollo sustantivo del régimen. Esta tarea se hace bastante compleja en momentos en que resulta difícil la constitución de acuerdos entre los actores donde se distribuyan pérdidas y se pospongan ganancias, debido fundamentalmente al enorme clima de polarización política que ha promovido el propio gobierno de Chávez.

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