

Moctezuma's Revenge: The State of IR in Mexico

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In 1519, Hernan Cortés landed on the east coast of the Aztec Empire ruled by Moctezuma II. According to the Florentine Codex, written fifty years after the Spanish conquest, the Aztecs believed the Spaniards to be gods and Cortés to be the returned god Quetzalcoatl. Although the historical accuracy of the Codex is open to debate, there is little doubt that the Aztecs ontology included only Indians and gods, and therefore the Spaniards had to gods. This misunderstanding played an important role in the Spanish conquest and subsequent decline in the Aztec Empire. The point being that how we understand the world goes far in contributing to how that reality unfolds, and incorrect understandings can have dire consequences.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the “state of IR in Mexico”, and the experience of Moctezuma and the Aztecs is relevant. It is argued here that IR in Mexico has followed too closely the IR discipline in the United States, and as a result has misunderstood and misrepresented domestic and international realities that define Mexico’s place in the world. Such misunderstanding may be said to constitute Moctezuma’s revenge. The fault lies not merely within the Mexican IR discipline, but equally (if not more so) with how the discipline of IR has developed in the United States. Of course, such claims about the IR discipline in Mexico and the United States cannot be fully elaborated or supported in an essay of this length, and therefore this work should be seen as merely a preliminary attempt or propadeutic to reveal questions and concerns about the state of IR in Mexico in the hope that other scholars will begin to reflect seriously upon these issues.¹

The state of IR in Mexico, and more broadly Latin America, raises a number of interesting and perplexing issues.² However, one must first be precise in terms of what

¹ This essay is part of an ongoing project of critically examining the state of IR, particularly in terms of prevailing methodological, ontological, and epistemological assumptions within the discipline.

² I would like to thank Professor Arturo Sotomayor and my assistants Ivan Besserer and Andrea Valencia Montes de Oca for valuable research in the preparation of this paper. Also, thanks to Erika Ruiz, Natalia

IR (International Relations) refers to. Normally, IR refers to the discipline, which is the case here, although international relations (small case letters) normally corresponds to the phenomena of relations between nation states and other international actors. The discipline itself is far from unambiguous, and debates throughout the world continue to question the theoretical and practical boundaries of this particular academic domain. Furthermore, evaluating “the state of the discipline” is by no means a straightforward exercise. Often such evaluations identify the content of the discipline, such as trends in publications, the types of course and readings being given, and the nature of the prevailing methodology. Such indicators will be discussed in this analysis of the IR discipline in Mexico. But this hardly suffices in providing an adequate understanding of the state of the discipline in Mexico. For that reason, following the recent work of Ole Waever,³ the sociological standing of IR and its relationship to the Mexican state and society will also be briefly mentioned. While a study of this length can, at best, only be cursory and impressionistic, it is clear the IR discipline in Mexico remains in early stages of development and has much to overcome if it is going to be an important and vital intellectual field in this country.

Throughout the world, the discipline of IR is depicted as an “American social science” and American IR continues to be the most pervasive and dominant influence in defining national IR disciplines, its theories, and methodology. Such influences do not always serve the interests and needs of other countries, or even those of the Anglo-American community.⁴ As John Gaddis noted, overwhelmingly American IR theorists have long embraced a theoretical-methodological approach to the analysis of the

Saltamacchia, Jorge Domínguez, and participants at ISA (New York, February 2009) for helpful comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

³ Ole Waever, “The Sociology of a Not so International Discipline: American and European Developments in IR,” *International Organization*, 52, 4, (1998), pp.687-727.

⁴ It is important to note that there are significant differences between the American and Anglo IR traditions, as many scholars have emphasized. In addition to the works of Steve Smith (cited below), see also Gene M. Lyons, “The Study of International Relations: Further Connections,” *World Politics*, 38, 4, (July 1986), pp.626-645.

realities of international relations that mimics the standard models of natural science, even though this has been demonstrated to be wholly inappropriate for some time.⁵ Nonetheless, such dominant and outdated conceptions have contributed to the failure, or at least the limitations, of the discipline as a whole; that is a failure in terms of the discipline to analyze and understand evolving international realities. This failure is partly due to the discipline's blind allegiance to a "closed system of like units" appropriately labeled the "Westphalian straitjacket,"⁶ which has helped to create a narrow theoretical framework for the discipline, not only in terms of examining and explaining international issues, but also because of methodological commitments to narrow, positivist, empiricist analyses. IR theories are, of course, a subfield of the IR discipline, but theoretical debates within the discipline have defined what Steve Smith refers to as "the main intellectual fault-lines of the discipline as a whole,"⁷ which to date have legitimized the "Westphalian straightjacket". Such ahistorical and "scientific" conceptions have been accepted for their alleged strengths in providing generalizations and comparisons across time and space, but have failed to give history and specificity its proper due, which are essential in understanding the realities of international relations.⁸ Such closed-mindedness has led some to declare that "international relations has failed as an intellectual project."⁹ Yet history and science are not necessarily antithetical or mutually exclusive, as Gaddis has pointed out. But the nature of scientific methodology can be and should be consistent with historical analyses, leading

⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, "History, Theory, and Common Ground," *International Security*, 22, 1 (1997), p.78.

⁶ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, "Why International Relations has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to do About it," *Millennium*, 30, 1 (January, 2001), pp.19-39; and Hayo Krombach, "International Relations as an Academic Discipline," *Millennium*, 21, 2, (1992), pp.243-258.

⁷ Steve Smith, "The Discipline of International Relations: Still an American Social Science," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2, 3, (October 2000), p.379.

⁸ Paul W. Schroeder, "Historical Reality versus NeoRealist Theory," *International Security*, 19, 1, (1994), pp.108-148; and Paul W. Schroeder, "History and International Relations Theory," *International Security*, 22, 1, (1997), pp.64-74.

⁹ Barry Busan and Richard Little, "Why International Relations has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to do About it," *Millennium*, 30, 1, (January 2001), pp.19-39.

Gaddis to note that “process sciences” (biology, geology, astronomy) are the appropriate models for social sciences. Similarly, Buzan and Little have argued that the IR discipline should in fact be a “meta-discipline” incorporating all the social sciences and history into one broad (holistic) methodological/theoretical framework. Both the IR discipline and its theorists in the United States have largely failed to take these arguments to heart,¹⁰ reflecting the continuously dismal state of the discipline as a whole, which is not surprisingly reflected in its misguided development in Mexico.

In an effort to understand this failure and the discipline’s relationship to Mexican academe and other Latin countries, the distinction between the IR discipline, its theories, and international realities is essential, each being driven by their own distinctive logics, concerns, and effects. It is precisely this disjunction that makes the question of the state of the discipline of IR in Mexico, and in Latin America, important.

While the discipline of IR has taken on slightly distinctive forms in different countries, many Latin countries, including Mexico, have defined the IR discipline as simply an appendage of Political Science, Economics, and Sociology. IR is often nothing more than “the study of international aspects of the essentially ‘domestic’ subject of the former [political science, economics, and sociology].”¹¹ This linkage is both substantive and methodological, resulting in the discipline and its theories rarely demonstrating theoretical innovation in Mexico or in other Latin countries. The failure of theoretical or disciplinary innovation may be due to the academic training of members of the discipline in Mexico follow the American model, which is not surprising given the birth of the discipline in the United States and England and the

¹⁰ Periodically the American IR discipline engages in debates with other disciplines but unfortunately these rarely produce any long term results. See for example, Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (eds.), *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

¹¹ Mark S.C. Simpson and Paulo Wrobel, “The Study of International Relations in Hispanic America,” *Millennium*, 16, 2 (June, 1987), p.309.

United States' influence over Mexico. For practical and pragmatic reasons (explained below), scholars seem unwilling, or unable, to critically engage the American model.

Yet, as Krippendorff adds, "The critique, the denunciation of American dominance in this particular field is, therefore, immanent: it states nothing but the obvious."¹² But in Mexico, and elsewhere, while research in IR and its theories diverges only occasionally from the American model, the reality of international relations is more distinct. This raises several important issues related to why such differences between the theories and the realities exist. For example, what is the relevance of the American IR discipline and IR theories for Mexico and other Latin countries? Why have Mexico and others countries adopted the American IR focus if it is of questionable relevance? Why has mainstream IR theories ignored the realities and needs of Latin America and other Third World countries? Why have there not been indigenous theories developed that correspond to the realities and needs of Mexico and of Latin America? While there are no obvious answers to these questions, it is worth considering these issues as well as the state of IR in Mexico, if only to understand these contradictions.

IR as an 'American Social Science'

As Stanley Hoffmann explained over three decades ago, the discipline of IR is an "American social science".¹³ American universities, journals, and publishing houses have enormous resources to educate and fund academic scholars being trained in the field. The wealth, power, and influence of these organizations in the United States

¹² Ekkehart Krippendorff, "The Dominance of American Approaches in International Relations," *Millennium*, 16, 2, (June, 1987), p.211.

¹³ Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Daedalus*, 106, 3, (Summer, 1977), pp.41-60. See also, Steve Smith, "Paradigm Dominance in International Relations: The Development of International Relations as a Social Science," *Millennium*, 16, 2, (June 1987), pp.189-206; Steve Smith, "The Discipline of International Relations: Still an American Social Science?" *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2, 3, (1990), pp.374-402; and Steve Smith, "The United States and the Discipline of International Relations: 'Hegemonic Country, Hegemonic Discipline'," *International Studies Review*, 4, 2, (Summer, 2002), pp.67-85.

overwhelm all other countries' efforts in terms of policy and research agenda as well as theoretical orientation.¹⁴ Other Latin countries, such as Mexico, do not have the resources or influence to compete on equal footing. American resources ensure that academic training will be of high quality and superior in comparison with Mexican doctoral programs, even if the nature of this training reflects American influence and interests. That translates into American influence and interests being far greater than that of any other country, which means international relations reflects American influence and power. The historical and continued American hegemonic influence over most of Latin American since the nineteenth century has compounded this dynamic.

However, one need only recognize that many of the most pressing problems in the world today (i.e. global warming, racism, migration, corruption, human rights, and social justice) embody compelling realities for Third World countries, which American IR regard as secondary (at best) to American concerns of war, terrorism, security, trade, and 'national interests'. Krippendorff elaborates, the "central problem and concern of most non-American scholars and observers is relegated to the realm of opinion, but is not part of the work of scholars in the field of IR theory."¹⁵ Similarly, to paraphrase Ken Booth, scholars analyzing "death by economics" rather than "death by politics" are dismissed as not really doing true international relations research. Perhaps the discipline and its theories in the United States should take these anomalies into account. Why it has not, is, of course, an important question, albeit for another day. More importantly, for this essay, the problems of the IR discipline and its theories in Mexico, and other Latin countries, are rarely, if ever, ones of arms, war, balance of power, and hegemonic influence, but rather political stability, economic and social development, ethnic conflict, investment, environment, human rights, migration, crime and

¹⁴ K.J. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985).

¹⁵ Krippendorff, *op cit.*, p.213.

corruption, among others. Furthermore, traditional (American) IR research tends to lack the methodological and theoretical tools to properly address these kinds of issues, much less ask the right kinds of questions. As critics have argued, the IR discipline should not only be open to the influences of other social science disciplines but should embrace them. Yet, “the Westphalian straitjacket not only blocks communication with other disciplines, but also limits the scope insight of what IR theory can achieve.”¹⁶

Beyond the basic realities of the (American) IR discipline, the methodological and theoretical focus of the discipline cast an enormous shadow over Latin America and Mexico; to the extent that American social science defines the standards of legitimate methodological (i.e. “scientific”) procedures which often preclude the investigation of important issues (such as ethnicity, culture, racism, corruption) in these countries.¹⁷ Methodological strictures define what constitutes legitimate and “serious” academic research (according to the U.S. academic community), which goes far to explain what is, and is not, researched and accepted for publication in the IR discipline in Mexico and elsewhere.¹⁸ The importance of U.S. methodological dominance in defining what constitutes valid “scientific,” and legitimate research, explains why many non-American scholars are dismissed in the mainstream IR field. The implications of this American methodological dominance are important and will be considered below.

The State of the IR Discipline in Mexico:

Not surprisingly, Mexican universities and academics reflect American influence, training, and interests. According to Reforma, Mexico’s most notable newspaper, the

¹⁶ Buzan and Little, *op cit.*, p.26.

¹⁷ The importance of Positivism in the discipline is examined in Milja Kurki and Colin Wight, “International Relations and Social Science,” in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (eds.), International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.13-33.

¹⁸ Evidence of this long standing trend is apparent in the central debates about methodology, theory and progress in the IR discipline. See for example, Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (eds.), Progress in International Relations Theory, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

most important IR programs in the country are: Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), Colegio de México (Colmex), Tec de Monterrey, Ibero Americana, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and Universidad de Guadalajara.

While the best Mexican universities and IR programs are concentrated in the Federal District, there are also approximately 30 universities with IR programs throughout the country. Nonetheless, universities like Universidad de las Américas, Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, TEC Querétaro, TEC Chiapas, and Universidad de Quintana Roo have similar IR programs, using the same texts, offering the courses, and teaching the same theories and methodologies as in the Federal District.¹⁹

There also exists the Foreign Ministry's school of diplomacy, Instituto Matías Romero, which is specifically for the training of Mexico's diplomatic corps, where IR courses are offered. In addition, most of Mexico's IR scholars and institutes are linked together through the country's International Relations Association (Asociación Mexicana de Estudios Internacionales - AMEI), based at UNAM, established in 1967, with an annual conference, and periodic publications. According to AMEI's website, the geographic focus of IR research and publications is as follows: basic Mexican foreign policy = 33%; Mexican relations with the United States and Canada = 33%; Mexican relations with other Latin American countries = 15%; Mexican relations with the European Union = 10%; and Mexican relations with Asia = 10%. In terms of specific research and publication topics, the breakdown is as follows: foreign policy = 24%; economic = 10%; social = 12%; globalization and regionalism = 13%; cooperation (cultural, educational, and technical) = 9%; international security and

¹⁹ The theorists (and texts) use include: Aron, Keohane, Deutsch, Puchala, Waltz, Rengger, Kupchan, Jervis, Morgenthau, Gilpin, Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff are all standard, along with some translations and a few Mexican and Spanish authors such as Esther Barbé, Ileana Cid Capetillo, Celestino Del Arena, Ricardo Uvalle Berrones, and José A. Silva Michelena. See also note #22.

international organizations = 12%; international law and human rights = 5%; IR theories = 5%; international communication = 2%; and drug trafficking = 1.6%. The most striking aspect of these figures is the low percentage of academic work being done in the area of theoretical critique and innovation and problems related directly to Mexico.

These figures might be explained by the fact that overwhelmingly academics at Mexican universities and colleges have received graduate degrees from American universities, with some from Canada and Europe, and a small fraction receiving advanced degrees from Mexican and other Latin universities. American degrees are regarded as providing the best and most professional training, and increasingly Mexican universities want their faculty in IR trained abroad, presumably to lend stature and credibility to their programs. The large percentage of candidates getting their advanced degrees from the U.S. universities is not surprising, given the geographic proximity, family connections in the United States, the availability of fellowships and other funding for graduate students, and the long relationship between United States and Mexico. It should be added, however, that many universities in Mexico continue to have a large number of professors that are only ABD's ("all but dissertation"), and there has been remarkably little professional or institutional pressure for them to complete their degrees, although this is beginning to change.

This heavily American based training is reflected in the academic programs in Mexico as well, with emphasis given to theories, methodologies, political economy, comparative politics, security, U.S. foreign policy, Latin America, European studies, and, occasionally, but increasingly in the past few years, Asian, African, and Middle Eastern studies. The growth in European, Asian and African area studies reflects an increased awareness in Mexico of the importance of these areas for the country in its actual international relations, and perhaps a need to broaden (or "diversify" as the

Mexican literature states) its links and contacts with non-U.S. countries. While some aspects of law, economics, sociology, and anthropology are touched upon, they are generally covered in separate academic departments. Interestingly, and certainly more than is the case in the United States, the IR discipline is often treated separately (institutionally, not methodologically) in Mexico from political science, so there are completely separate academic departments with political science focusing more on domestic and comparative issues.²⁰ It should be noted that political science in Mexico is largely driven by rational choice theory and empirical methodology, also reflecting heavily American academic influence and training.

Basic texts and reading lists used in IR programs would be recognized by any American trained scholar, including basic works by Mingst, Art and Jervis, Goldstein, and Betts.²¹ Texts used for IR theories classes are equally familiar, including works by Morgenthau, Carr, Bull, Waltz, Gilpin, Keohane and Nye, and Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff.²² Roughly 80 percent of the books and articles used in IR theory courses come from mainstream theories: Realism, NeoRealism, Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Marxism, or what are commonly referred to as “rational” approaches. Dominance of traditional theoretical approaches in Mexican universities follows the pattern of American universities. The other 20 percent (or less) of theoretical approaches in

²⁰ The existence of separate IR departments does not contradict the statement that IR is an extension or appendage of economics, law, and political science, in that these long-standing fields have far greater standing in universities and the Mexican community. In terms of the curriculum in IR departments, both theoretically and methodologically, IR follows these more widely accepted fields.

²¹ Karen Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, (New York: Norton, 2003); Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis (eds.), *International Politics*, (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2006); Joshua Goldstein *International Relations*, (New York: Longman, 2008); and Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Conflict After the Cold War*, (New York: Longman, 2004);

²² Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993); E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis: 1918-1938*, (London: Macmillan, 1989); Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, (London: Palgrave, 2002); Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House, 1979); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989); James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, (New York: Longman, 2001);

Mexican universities include Post-Modernist, Social Constructivist, and Critical Theory perspectives, which are commonly known as “reflectivist”.²³ Cutting-edge theoretical work in IR theory is rare, and even then it hardly ever carries over to university curriculums. These distinctions are important in that the dominant “rational” approaches define research agendas as well as methodological guidelines, with “rational” frameworks constituting teaching and research in IR, and consequently defining international relations (for Mexico and other Latin countries) as driven by security interests, competition, interdependence, regimes, and trade, with these “rational” methodologies mandating empirical, positivist research techniques. While “rational” approaches can be useful, they are not necessarily the most appropriate for many of the issues concerning Mexico.

Academic journals in Mexico focusing on the IR discipline, and international realities, include Foreign Affairs: Latinoamérica (formerly Foreign Affairs en Español), Foro Internacional (Colmex), Relaciones Internacionales, Estudios de Asia y Africa, and Política Exterior (Instituto Matías Romero). The quality of these publications varies considerably. As a result, some Mexican scholars and foreign academics working in Mexican universities choose to publish in foreign academic (rather than policy) journals, such as: Third World Quarterly, Current History, Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, Millennium, and Latin American Research Review (LARR). Publication in foreign journals goes far to enhance the standing of an academic in the Mexican scholarly community.²⁴ The foci of the majority of

²³ One sees rough parallels with older U.S. curriculum, as noted by Alker and Biersteker in their 1984 survey, except for “dialectical” approaches corresponding to contemporary “reflectivist” theories. See Hayward Alker and Thomas Biersteker, “The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for a Future Archeologist of International Savoir Faire,” International Studies Quarterly, 28, 2, (June 1984), pp.121-142. On recent “reflectivist” approaches, see Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski (eds.), International Theory: Positivism and Beyond, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁴ This parallels “the state of IR” in many countries, where publication in foreign (non-U.S.) journals is encouraged and greatly contributes to the advancement of a scholar’s career. See, for example, Gerald Holden, “The State of the Art in German IR,” Review of International Studies, 30, (2004), pp.451-458.

publications (in both domestic and foreign journals) have been on economic development, trade, democracy, migration, environment, human rights, drugs, crime, and government and police corruption. An underlying theme in many articles is state sovereignty and nationalism.

Mexican scholars, diplomats, and journalist are also able to publish works through various publishing houses/university presses, such as UNAM, Plaza Janés, Ariel, ITAM, and Porrúa. These publications vary enormously in terms of academic quality (with little or no peer review), but focus on some Mexican themes, intellectually paralleling the foreign policy evolution of other Latin countries.²⁵ The themes are dominated by relations with the United States and Latin America, but with growing interests in Europe, Asia, and issues such as trade, human rights, sovereignty, security, borders, and environment. Mexican analyses are also concerned with the country's role in the hemisphere as well as the world, defined in part by its relationship with the United States and therefore Mexico does not suffer from an "irrelevance syndrome".²⁶ While some of this research is solid, there is virtually no innovative and distinctively Mexican or Latin approaches within the Mexican academic community dealing with Mexico's place in international relations in general.

Funding for study and research comes substantially from abroad: Hewlett, Ford, Tinker, MacArthur, Kellogg, and Fulbright regularly provide financial assistance for studies abroad for Mexican graduate students and/or advanced research by Mexican scholars. National funding for research and studies often comes from PIERAN (North American program) and CONACYT, which funds scholars but rarely for major projects.

²⁵ See, for example, Nelson Fonseca, Jr., "Studies on International Relations: Recent Times (1950-80), *Millennium*, 16, 2, (June 1987), pp.273-280.

²⁶ On the question of irrelevance in the Western world, see John Herz, "Relevancies and Irrelevancies in the Study of World Politics," in John H. Herz (ed.), *The Nation State and the Crisis of World Politics*, (New York: John McKay, Inc., 1976).

Obviously Mexico's Foreign Ministry is in the business of analyzing and making foreign policy, dealing with ongoing international problems. Major concerns include migration, human rights, trade, environmental concerns, international investment and MNCs, security, drug cartels, crime, democratization, border controls, all of which coincide with some research agendas in the IR discipline in the United States. As to be expected, there is considerable spillover from the academic sector to government in Mexico, with government officials frequently linked to universities and Mexican professors often simultaneously working in government. These dual roles result in much academic research overlapping with policy work, just as it does in the United States (but much less so in Europe). Yet, it has been noted there is an underlying contradiction in this dynamic, in that academics have a different role to play in assessing the realities of international relations utilizing a much more critical perspective than government officials who are driven by more policy-oriented issues, which requires prescriptive, rationalized, and legitimizing objectives of the state.²⁷

In civil society, there is a rapidly growing NGO sector, with some 6,000 NGOs, many of them with international linkages and dealing with problems related to international realities. The development of civil society and the "third sector" has been occurring since the mid-1980s, reflecting the changing relationship between a "paternalistic" government, its corporate structures, and an ever expanding and increasingly literate, sophisticated middle class. The "third sector" is increasingly regarded by the middle class as an effective way of dealing with problems that the Mexican government has traditionally ignored or shown to be incompetent, such as human rights, environment, and natural disaster responses. Some of the NGO organizations are strictly domestic, focusing specifically on Mexican problems, and

²⁷ Krippendorf, *op cit.*, p.210.

some are international, such as Amnesty International and Transparency International with working relations with local organizations. According to the Foundation Center Online, major U.S. foundations, such as Ford, Hewlett, MacArthur, Kellogg, and Packard, provide approximately 84% of the annual funding to the NGO sector (“third sector”), and thereby ensuring enormous U.S. influence, if not dominance over NGO agendas. Given the “hands-on” nature of these organizations, much of their activities are divorced from the IR discipline in Mexico and its theoretical underpinnings, with practitioners focusing on effective solutions to local problems. However, specialists from the IR discipline do sometimes lend their expertise in dealing with problems, for example, such as environment, development, and human rights, but more often than not it is the IR specialists that draw on the “third sector” for academic purposes of research and publication. Formal and informal linkages between the IR discipline and the “third sector” are still very much in the process of becoming more formal and prevalent, and suggesting much stronger connections in the coming years.

The Relevance of IR Theories for Mexican Foreign Policy:

Given the dominance of traditional (American) IR theories in the Mexican academic discipline, one must wonder if they are of relevance to Mexican foreign policy and its particular international realities. Within the American field, Realist theories still hold a predominant position, just as they have since World War II. Realist concerns with Great Power dynamics, and issues of security, have little immediate relevance in the contemporary world for Mexico and other Latin countries. Of course, security issues remain for all states, but Realist theories provide little utility in understanding or diagnosing these issues because of their essentially state-centric focus on Great Powers and the simplistic assumptions of a Hobbesian world of anarchy, where security issues

arise from the “external” or international environment.²⁸ Ontological assumptions underlying the Realist security framework preclude an examination of nonstate actors or domestic factors that define Mexican and Latin security problems. More likely than not, security issues for Mexico arise from “within” the state, meaning domestically, due to drug cartels and corrupt police, military, and government officials. Thus a more eclectic framework than the Realist approach, one focusing on domestic institutions, for example, would have far more relevance and explanatory utility. Daniel Deudney’s analysis of the “Philadelphia System,”²⁹ is the type of liberal-sociological-institutional perspective that would have considerably more value for the current Mexican situation, but remarkably seems to be unknown and is certainly not cited in reading lists and academic works.

Liberal theories in American IR have far more value in analyzing Mexico and its foreign policies.³⁰ This is precisely because of their theories of the state, domestic institutions, and “inter-mestic” perspectives, which periodically do appear in the Mexican academic literature. But most of the Liberal literature was originally developed with the United States in mind - and thus an advanced, industrialized, democratic state – which is hardly the case of Mexico or any other Latin American state. Moreover, Liberal assumptions regarding state actors as basing their decisions on instrumental rationality (or utility maximization) is a further reminder that such frameworks are of limited value outside of specific theoretical contexts. Clearly, Liberal theories represent Weberian “ideal types” for Mexico, in that Mexico might

²⁸ Robert L. Rothstein, “On the Costs of Realism,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 87, 3, (September 1972), pp.347-362.

²⁹ Daniel Deudney, “The Philadelphia System,” *International Organization*, 49, 2, (Spring 1995), pp.191-228; and Daniel Deudney, “Binding Sovereigns: Authorities, Structures, and Geopolitics in Philadelphia Systems,” in Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996); pp.190-239.

³⁰ According to a recent survey, Liberal theories have superseded Realism as the “leading guide to inquiry.” See Thomas C. Walker and Jeffrey S. Morton, “Re-assessing the ‘Power of Power Politics’ Thesis: Is Realism Still Dominant?” *International Studies Review*, 7, 2, (June 2005), pp.341-356.

aspire to become a "Liberal state" but the theories have no direct parallel with contemporary Mexican reality and therefore have limited utility as frameworks of analyses. Liberal theories might offer the basis for future Latin theoretical paradigms due to their sensitivity to the importance of a greater range of actors, issues, and variables than Realist perspectives. But in that sense they are merely prescriptive rather than descriptive or explanatory in the Mexican context.

Some Mexican universities continue to place credence on Marxist theories, such as Imperialism, Dependency, World Capitalist System, and more recently Neo-Colonialism, although American academe has long regarded such approaches as obsolete. Certainly one can understand the attraction, if Mexican and Latin scholars are attempting to explain the perpetual economic underdevelopment of their countries it is tempting to place the blame elsewhere or to analyze the sociological/economic dynamics of their relationship with the advanced capitalist world. Indeed, it may be comforting to cast blame on the international capitalist system, on ruthless multinational corporations, and exploitative First World countries, for all or most of the economic problems of Mexico and Latin America. Yet, the economic logic behind these arguments is highly flawed,³¹ which consequently eliminates much if not all of the credibility of the Marxist perspectives. That is not to say that Dependency perspectives, for example, do not have something useful to say, for they do in terms of their socio-political analyses of the problems of underdevelopment.³² Much of the traditional (and static) Liberal economic theory of IR misses the importance of the historical development of Mexico, and other Latin countries, from colonialism to the present in explaining the development of classes, racism, elites, the nature of the state, religious

³¹ See for example the balance critiques of Benjamin Cohen, The Question of Imperialism, (New York: Basic Books, 1973); and Robert Gilpin, The Political Economy of International Relations, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³² See, for example, Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Falleto, Dependency and Development in Latin America, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

attitudes, all of which constitute “structures” or obstacles to growth, development, and democratization. Yet such important sociological contributions have been largely ignored in Mexican IR. One is much more likely to find interesting and innovative work in other fields in Mexico, such as in sociology, ethnography, and anthropology. More recently, theories of Post-Colonialism have appeared addressing some of the deficiencies of traditional Marxist approaches, but while these perspectives are focusing on concerns more relevant to Third World countries, they are still rudimentary and lack focus in terms of what these theories are actually trying to explain.³³

American theories have in the past two decades, or since the end of the Cold War, undergone a bit of a transformation, opening the discipline up to a far greater range of theories, in part drawn from other fields, and now including Critical Theory, Post-Modernism, and Social Constructivism. These “reflective” or interpretative approaches provide radically different methodological frameworks for analyzing social reality, including international relations. But, as yet, these theories have hardly made an imprint on the Mexican academic field. Why this is the case is not clear. One can only hope that they will infiltrate the Mexican academia, as the reflective approaches have the ability to raise questions and issues and focus research on areas that are far more pertinent to Mexican realities. The promise of reflective/interpretative approaches to transform analysis and raise relevant issues and questions rests on different methodological assumptions than traditional analysis, which merits further comment.

Implications of Methodology for Mexico IR:

The long-standing dominance of the American discipline of international relations and social science methodologies has had a tremendous influence on the discipline in

³³ For example: Phillip Darby, “Pursuing the Political: A Postcolonial Rethinking of Relations International,” *Millennium*, 33, 1, (January, 2004); and Christine Sylvester, “Development Studies and Postcolonial Studies: Disparate Tales of the ‘Third World’,” *Third World Quarterly*, 20, 4, (August 1999).

Mexico. As has been the case in the United States, the academic field of economics in Mexico is regarded as the most “scientific” of the social sciences. Economists are held in high regard in Mexico as well, and many of the country’s recent presidents have been professionally trained economists, receiving formal training in U.S. universities like Chicago, Harvard, and Yale. Mexico has a long history too, from the Porfiriato to Salinas and up to the present, in embracing the role of “technocrats” (i.e. economists) in government and policy making institutes. This wide spread acceptance and emphasis on “scientific training” makes economics the preeminent paradigm to be emulated methodologically by other social sciences in Mexico.

For International Relations (discipline and theories) in Mexico, research methodology follows the strictures of the traditional scientific method (of economics); that is positivist methodology with its accompanying postulates of objectivity, value-free analysis, causal explanation, naturalism, empiricist epistemology, and quantification. There is nothing wrong in adopting an empiricist epistemology and causal explanations, as the influential text by King, Keohane, and Verba has argues.³⁴ But this understanding of causal explanation, for example, ignores other forms of explanation (and other forms of causation and constitution),³⁵ such as those focusing on the intentionality and purpose behind human actions. Even within the standard causal framework there are problems. Following Aristotle’s distinction, causation is of four different types: material, efficient, formal, and final. Quite simply, the “material cause” is the raw material or parts or constituents of the whole to be explained. An “efficient cause” refers to prior events and conditions required for the occurrence of the event to be explained. A “formal cause” focuses on the dispositional properties needed to bring

³⁴ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

³⁵ See Milja Kurki, Causation in International Relations, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Wesley C. Salmon, Causation and Explanation, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

the event about. A “final cause” accounts for an event by attributing it to the will or purpose of the agent.³⁶

King, Keohane, and Verba focus their causal analyses on efficient causes, which severely limit their explanatory range. Their narrow understanding of causation is consistent with their positivist and empiricist assumptions. Empiricism defines knowledge as limited to what can be experienced, which precludes other forms of knowledge that are equally or even more valid as alternative forms of explanation, such as interpretative, cultural approaches, not to mention “formal” and “final” causation.³⁷ Traditional scientific methods close off the exploration of these important areas of investigation because of their questionable methodological and/or epistemological assumptions.³⁸ Causal explanations and empirical analyses ignore fundamental realities, problems, and concerns in social reality related to the “constitution” of reality or the “meaning” and intentions behind human actions, which need to be addressed in many social contexts. It is not that positivist perspectives are bad; they are simply narrow in their explanatory framework and can only be usefully applied to answer or explain certain types of questions and issues. Traditional scientific approaches may have practical utility in understanding some Mexican and Latin realities, but are of limited value in explaining many of the most important issues and concerns to Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Mexican political culture, for example, is a subject that goes far to explain contemporary problems of corruption in government, the power of “narcotraficantes”, high levels of crime, and the persistence of underdevelopment and income inequality. If

³⁶ For further discussion see Kurki and Salmon (note #33) and Michael Nicholson, *Causes and Consequences in International Relations*, (London: Pinter, 1996).

³⁷ The dominant epistemology in the natural sciences, scientific realism, emphasizes the importance of “invisibles” below the surface of reality as being equally valid sources and forms of knowledge. See Heikki Patomaki, *After International Relations*, (London: Routledge, 2002); and Jerrold L. Aronson et al. (eds.), *Realism Rescued: How Scientific Progress is Possible*, (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).

³⁸ Ian Shapiro, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

“scientific” knowledge is limited to the empirical, and/or to causal analysis, or to what can be “objectively” quantified, then political culture will be never be adequately understood as a basis for explanation and understanding, much less reformed or improved upon. Using qualitative approaches like ethnomethodology, ethnography, or symbolic interactionism would go far in unraveling the meaning and significance of Mexican culture and help to explain, for example, inequality and corruption. These are the result of social interactions, rules and norms that become socially institutionalized, and, in turn, social structures that constitute the identities and meanings of human actions. To cite another example, the use of an interpretative/reflectivist approach like gender theory raises a whole set of questions about actors, issues, processes, structures, and relations that would never come under the purview of traditional scientific frameworks.³⁹ Violent crime against women throughout Mexico and human rights abuses in “maquiladoras” along the U.S—Mexican border are national problems that gender theory goes far to explain. Some of the most pressing issues in Mexico require historical, interpretative, ethnographic, or symbolic interactionist approaches,⁴⁰ or what the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz refers to as “thick description”; that is analyzing below the empirical surface of social reality and human interactions to discover deeper meanings and significance.⁴¹ But such qualitative approaches have often been ignored in Mexico, at least in political science and international relations departments. The rich and diverse history of Mexico has created a complex society and set of institutional practices that begs for further examination.⁴² Because political

³⁹ One of the best of this type of approach is Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

⁴⁰ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, (New York: Anchor, 1959).

⁴¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1973).

⁴² A fascinating example of such work is the collection of essays in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), which is an American publication and falls under the heading of anthropology and cultural studies rather than political science or international relations. Two other remarkable and innovative works of this type are

science and international relations are so methodologically bound to positivist and empirical methodologies, little in the way of innovative thinking is ever produced, so most published articles and books in Mexican IR discipline are merely recycling old topics and old ideas.

One is reminded of Albert Hirschman's famous essay "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding,"⁴³ in which he noted how many social scientists have been driven by methodological (and theoretical) guidelines which led them to impose their theories on the reality they were trying to analyze. As a result, they failed to grasp the significance and underlying complexities of the story they were trying to tell, and consequently did not allow the story or protagonists to speak for themselves. A "story" should be allowed to dictate the appropriate theoretical or methodological framework for investigation and interpretation, but Hirschman explained that often it did not, which has usually been the case in Mexican IR. Because Mexican universities are driven primarily by pedagogical concerns rather than pure research, there is little room for innovative and creative (theoretical or methodological) thinking, which is precisely what is needed in analyzing Mexico's, and Latin America's, rich and complex realities.

The commitment to traditional theories and methodologies in Mexico might be explained historically. Although Mexico and other Latin countries joined the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the Organization of American States (1948), entailing more involvement in the realities of international relations, the establishment of research centers and teaching institutions did not seriously take hold until the 1960s.⁴⁴ In part, this reflected the influence of ECLA (the Economic Commission for Latin America)

John Womack, *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, (New York: Vintage, 1970); and W.H.T. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico*, (New York: Bison, 2004).

⁴³ Albert O. Hirschman, "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding," in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan (eds.), *Interpretative Social Science: A Second Look*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁴⁴ According to Simpson and Wrobel, the first institute in Hispanic America dedicated specifically to International Relations was the Instituto de Estudios Internacionales at University of Chile in Santiago. Simpson and Wrobel, *op cit.*, p.310.

and INTAL (the Institute for the Integration of Latin America), and the establishment in 1973 of a body funded by the United Nations, RIAL (International Relations in Latin America), which aimed to bring together various institutes in the region. Academics working at these institutes brought the region's colonial experiences to their analyses in terms of economic underdevelopment and populism, and therefore introduced concepts that explicitly linked the problems of the Latin region to the systemic level. The focus of much work in Mexico during the 1970s, and elsewhere, was on bilateral relations with the United States, foreign policy analyses, geopolitics (role of the military), and normative evaluations of the international (economic) system. For better or worse, such research attempted to explain the external "behavior" of Mexico, and others, in the region without addressing the larger, traditional questions of the IR discipline and contemporary realities, although traditional theories, such as Realism, Interdependence, and Dependency/World Systems, were available. As bad as traditional theories were, the use of alternative frameworks were essentially about finding "facts" to support radical theories rather than analyzing the realities to develop theoretical explanations.

The irony of this is Mexico has historically wanted to be seen as an active and legitimate actor in its practices in international relations, participating in international organizations and forums, and signing on to international treaties, conventions, and regimes, and speaking out forcefully in favor of international law. However, Mexico simultaneously wanted to maintain its distance both from the hegemonic presence of the United States ("...so far from God and so close to the United States" as Porfirio Diaz allegedly declared in the late nineteenth century) by presenting itself as a "bridge" between the United States and the rest of Latin America, while also trying to shield itself off from the critical eyes of the international community. Consequently, Mexican presidents and government officials have often criticized efforts by the international

community (well into the late 1980s and early 1990s) to monitor or check human rights policies, the validity of so-called democratic elections, police and military behavior, enforcement of international laws (eg. - environment, multinational corporations practices, human rights and labor standards) all under the pretext that such actions by the international community constituted violations of Mexico's national sovereignty.

Mexico is not the first (and certainly will not be the last) country to use international law and agreements (and theories) for its own ends. In this case, the long standing use of national sovereignty as legal right to prevent international monitoring of Mexican state behavior distorts the essence of what sovereignty is about. That is, sovereignty is a form "legitimate authority", in this case the authority of the nation-state, which itself rests on two standards of legitimacy: international law and domestic law and a constitution. Mexico, like many countries, has long argued that sovereignty is about self-determination (true) and based solely on legitimizing principles of domestic law (false).⁴⁵ In reality, sovereignty is also based on international standards, and any state potentially violating those standards by ignoring them or failing to implement them correctly, as in human rights practices, is subject to international monitoring of its domestic practices and behavior, and in extreme cases even intervention.

A similar argument could be made regarding the Mexican government's cosmetic practices of democratic elections, which until the last decade were nothing more than a sham that by the 1980s had become so bad that opposition parties refused to participate in elections. The point being (and this argument could be applied to other concepts and theories of the IR discipline) that Mexico (the government explicitly and academics implicitly) have used sovereignty (and democracy) for political ends that contradicts the

⁴⁵ Thus, until very recently, the Mexican government made it standard practice to defend Cuban sovereignty against foreign (U.S.) interventions regardless of the practices of the Cuban government, including the building and placing of Soviet missiles on Cuban territory and within striking distance of major U.S. cities.

purposes of the academic discipline.⁴⁶ Why this has occurred the way it has in Mexico can best be understood by drawing upon Ole Waever's impressive sociological analysis of the IR discipline in Europe.

Sociology of the IR Discipline in Mexico:

Ole Waever has pioneered a new form of analysis of the IR discipline in his work on the European, and by comparison American, IR community.⁴⁷ Waever provides an interesting argument that national variations of IR do exist, despite American IR dominance. Waever introduces three levels (and sub-levels) of analysis: (1) societal-political features of the country (i - cultural, intellectual style; ii - ideologies or traditions of political thought; iii - form of state, state-society relations; iv - foreign policy); (2) the standing and structure of social science in general in the particular country (i - general conditions and definitions of social science; ii - disciplinary patterning, disciplines and sub-disciplines); and (3) the internal intellectual and social structures of the IR discipline, including its theories and forms of debate (theoretical traditions).⁴⁸ Waever's sociological approach goes well beyond the standard content analysis of national IR disciplines in order to not only assess their strengths and weaknesses but also identify interesting characteristics and connections. Following Waever's model, one would expect the IR discipline in individual countries to develop differently methodologically, sociologically, and institutionally, and indeed they have in his examination of three European states (Germany, France, and Britain) and the United States. If one applies Waever's levels to Mexico (particularly level 1 - societal-political

⁴⁶ This is not to condone the problems of IR as, for example, elaborated in Barry Buzan and Richard Little, "Why International Relations has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to do About It," *Millennium*, 30, 1, (January 2001), pp.19-39.

⁴⁷ Waever, *op cit.*, pp.687-727.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.689, 695.

features), which can only be undertaken in a cursory fashion here, the development of IR and its consequences on the state and society show distinctive features as well.

Specifically, from the colonization of Mexico to the present, the state has historically been a tool of the elites, the state being characterized as “paternalistic” or patrimonial, with the elites handing out largesse to the lower classes while using the state for its own political and economic ends. The “lower classes” in Mexico can be identified as the approximately 40 percent of the population that continue to live at the poverty level or below, and therefore desperately depend on state assistance (the “patrimonial state”) in order to survive. Similarly, Mexico is also among the most notable countries in terms of the size of the gap in income distribution between rich and poor. In part the rich have gotten richer because they controlled the state and because of a pervasive and deeply entrenched culture of corruption and a lack of transparency. The large percentage of those living in poverty struggle to survive and are usually illiterate. Mexico as a whole is not a country of readers, and books, journals, and other publications circulate only within a very small percentage of the population.

Well up until the late 1980s, political/economic elites controlled the state through the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and its corporatist structures. National sovereignty was embraced by elites as legitimizing “self-determination”, even though elite and academic understanding failed to recognize or understand the standards of international legitimacy on which state sovereignty actually rests.⁴⁹ If sovereignty was strictly and unconditionally about domestic self-determination, as Mexican elites and academics maintained, then elites would be free to engage in whatever activities they

⁴⁹ See, for example, Hideaki Shinoda, *Re-Examining Sovereignty*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

saw fit, and they usually did do what they thought fit.⁵⁰ Clearly this is tied to the elitist culture where there is little or no transparency and accountability, at least until recently. Some politicians and academics continue to argue sovereignty is an unconditional right to self-determination, and surprisingly, the Mexican IR profession has done nothing to disabuse them of this idea. Furthermore, this understanding of sovereignty as essentially self-determination was also partly the justification of Mexico's long standing criticism of U.S. interference in Cuban affairs.

Mexican elites in the PRI have also long professed to be supporters of democracy, recognizing the utility of elections to ensure their representatives' legitimacy in the eyes of the international community and to a lesser degree the domestic. Democracy has been used, like sovereignty, to perpetuate elite standing and control over the state through manipulation of results, at least until the 1990s. This was common knowledge in Mexico and some opposition parties even refused to put forth candidates in the 1980s because they knew it was impossible to win the election. This narrow understanding of sovereignty was also evident in cases where the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) took up the question of the legality of democratic elections in Mexico in the late 1980s. According to the Mexican representative to the IACHR, if a sovereign state allowed an international body to rule on the legitimacy of national elections that "state would cease to be sovereign." Moreover, if the IACHR passed judgment on the election it was intervening into the sovereign affairs of Mexico.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Similarly, the Mexican military has embraced a Realist "national security doctrine" (DN-1, DN-2, DN-3) which attempts to define what it considers its appropriate tasks and responsibilities. This was in part a reaction to the aftermath of the 1968 student massacre which resulted in severe criticism of the military's role in society. More recently, the military has complained about its role in the drug war in part because of fear of contamination or being co-opted by cartels. For further discussion, see Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Seguridad y relaciones cívico-militares en México y América Central," and Erubiel Tirado, "La relación cívico-militar en México: hacia la reformulación de un Nuevo pacto," both in Athanasios Hristoulas (ed.), *Las Relaciones Cívico-Militares en el Nuevo Orden Internacional*, (México: Porrúa, 2002).

⁵¹ OAS, *Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1989-1990*, (Washington, D.C.: OAS General Secretariat, 1990), pp.103-105.

Similarly, media and information was controlled and manipulated by the PRI and its elites, which meant democracy never really functioned properly. Media control began to loosen in the 1990s but being a journalist in Mexico remains a dangerous profession. Mexico is to this day among the leading countries in the world for the kidnapping and assassination of journalists. Nonetheless, by far the most interesting research being done in Mexico on contemporary domestic and international problems is being produced by journalists (which is why they fear for their lives) and by the long tradition of independent intellectuals, such as Enrique Krause, Lorenzo Meyer, Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, Pablo Gonzalez Mendez, Daniel Cosío Villegas, Jorge Volpi, and Jorge Fernandez Mendez. In such an environment, academic freedom has been moderately constrained, but as long as Mexican IR scholars remained tied to their “Westphalian straitjackets” and followed traditional orthodoxy, they had little reason to be concerned about assassination or kidnapping. Rarely do Mexican IR publications cause a ripple in the public mind. It has been the work of independent thinkers and writers that affects the Mexican intellectual climate.

The ongoing flow between government and academe, which continues today, has imposed further constraints on the role of the Mexican academic community. The Mexican state has historically co-opted intellectuals (known as “organic intellectuals” in Mexico) who provided intellectual and ideology ballast for state policy, including the use, or misuse, of concepts like sovereignty and democracy.⁵² But there is another aspect of the government-academic connection which is even more troublesome; that is the culture of corruption throughout the country and including the government. There is a Mexican saying that a poor politician is an incompetent politician. As President Calderon has recently stated, corruption encompasses all classes, rich and poor, male

⁵² After the 1968 student massacre, intellectuals became reluctant to be directly associated with the state and the term “organic intellectual” fell out of use.

and female, and all levels of education.⁵³ Corruption poisons much of the government's operations and many Mexican citizens believe that the government is heavily corrupt.⁵⁴ But the culture of corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, are also evident in academe, more specifically in terms of plagiarism. This problem is not only one of students not knowing how to document their research, but willfully taking information from sources that is not acknowledged. Unfortunately, this problem extends to the professorial level where plagiarism is all too common, in part because when plagiarism does occur it has little effect on the academic standing or career prospects for a Mexican professor. The relaxed standard towards plagiarism reflects the much broader culture of corruption that is so deeply rooted throughout Mexican society.

Until the IR academic community separates itself fully from the state and its foreign policy institutions and radically reforms the prevailing culture of corruption, it will be virtually impossible for the Mexican IR profession to develop original and significant analysis of international problems and issues. Perhaps the IR discipline should remain the handmaiden of the state and provide "organic intellectuals", but in that case it will never produce truly original and serious academic research. Of course, recognizing that this separation and reform is not likely to occur in the near future (if ever), what can the Mexican IR profession do?

Conclusion

As an academic discipline, International Relations has evolved theoretically and methodologically since its inception after World War I, albeit not as quickly or

⁵³ As reported in Marc Lacey, "In Mexico Drug War, Sorting Good Guys from Bad," New York Times, (November 2, 2008).

⁵⁴ "Cree 43% de mexicanos que gobierno fomenta la corrupción," El Universal, (December 7, 2006). See also, Luis Astorga, El Siglo de las Drogas: El Narcotráfico, del Porfiriato al Nuevo Milenio, (México: Plaza y Janés, 2005); and Stephen Morris, Corrupción y Política en el México Contemporáneo, (México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1992). Transparency International continues to rank Mexico as significantly corrupt. See its Perception Corruption Index, at <http://www.transparency.org>

impressively as other social sciences have. For precisely that reason, the Mexican IR discipline (as well as the American) still has much to learn a lot from other disciplines, even such conservative disciplines as history, which has shown both sophistication and flexibility in changing and adapting to new methodological innovations and practices drawn from other fields. For example, in 1929 the Annales School in France broke out of the narrow and prevailing forms of historical explanation of the late nineteenth century positivism by focusing on broader concepts of human reality, aiming to understand more aspects of human life. In order to achieve this end, the Annales School expanded their investigative techniques, drawing heavily upon sociology. They focused on “*mentalité*”, or collective consciousness, or the mental and psychological characteristics of people at specific times. They also introduced the concept of the “*longue durée*,” or long duration, reflecting structural continuities that underlay historical change, such as the land, the sea, the climate, and vegetation.⁵⁵ The point is not that particular Annales’ concepts should be adopted into the IR discipline or embraced as IR theoretical frameworks, but rather that creative conceptualizations are possible and extremely valuable in opening up new realms of investigation and understanding. Recent IR research and theoretical developments in continental Europe also demonstrates that it is possible to not only break out of the Westphalian and American theoretical/methodological straitjackets but also to produce highly original and significant research within the IR discipline.⁵⁶

Over the past few years, it has become common practice to critique the IR discipline for its numerous failings, and such criticisms are merited. The state of the IR

⁵⁵ The best known work by an Annaliste historian is Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). It is worth adding that the French have always had an imaginative and independent intellectual tradition, even in its national IR discipline. See the discussion of Gene M. Lyons, “Expanding the Study of International Relations: The French Connection,” *World Politics*, 35, 1, (October 1982), pp.135-149.

⁵⁶ Knud Erik Jorgensen, “Continental IR Theory: The Best Kept Secret,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 6, 1, (2000), pp.9-42.

discipline in Mexico is worse than in most countries, partly due to limited financial resources as well as because of the preponderant influence of the American IR discipline. In addition, the Mexican discipline has been handicapped by its close ties to the Mexican state and to its seemingly indifferent attitude towards the long standing culture of corruption, which spills over into all walks of life, including academe. Certainly there are exceptions to these generalizations, and Mexico has produced some outstanding intellectuals and writers, but these have been figures who were creative, imaginative, independent thinkers who were not constrained by traditional social science standards, theoretical straitjackets, or entrenched institutional practices. As the American IR discipline continues to evolve and become more eclectic, both theoretically and methodologically, one can only hope this will have some impact on the state of the discipline of IR in Mexico. Ultimately, however, the fate of the IR discipline in Mexico will depend on Mexican scholars themselves. As one IR scholar has noted, there are significant advantages to seeing the world from outside the American framework and drawing upon distinctively different historical experiences.⁵⁷ Furthermore, creative, imaginative analysis, even within the IR discipline, is not without precedent.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.148. See also Stephanie Neuman (ed.), International Relations Theory and the Third World, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

⁵⁸ Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, "The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the *Poiesis* of Worldism," International Studies Review, 6, 4, (Winter 2004), pp.21-49.