

**A Land of Lakes and Fishers: The Cultural
and Historical Geography of the Lake
Pátzcuaro Landscape in Postrevolutionary
México**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2020

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the cultural and historical geography of the Lake Pátzcuaro region in Postrevolutionary Mexico. It covers a period of significant changes in México, following the end of the armed phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). My research also grapples with the domestic and global political changes in the context of WWII and how they shaped ongoing processes in the Lake Pátzcuaro region.

Throughout the thesis I examine the ideas, practices, and events that shaped this place and people's ways of relating to it, including ideas of national identity, indigeneity, environmental conservation programmes, scientific research, and continental integration. The purpose is to understand how these forms of relating to Lake Pátzcuaro emerged and how they came to define its character.

The thesis investigates the process of becoming indigenous in Lake Pátzcuaro and its role in the creation of a national culture and identity, within the processes of construction of the nation-state after the Mexican Revolution. I do so by looking at the development of the postrevolutionary cultural programme in the Lake Pátzcuaro region, which transformed the region into an icon of national authenticity. Even so, national integration efforts were only partially fulfilled, insofar as they resulted in the articulation of indigenous identities.

I then look at the production of Lake Pátzcuaro nature cultures and how it took part in the consolidation of power in the region, producing natural-political hybrids. This process involved the transformation of land property regimes, the production of scientific knowledge about the lake, the establishment of environmental protection schemes, as well as scientific forms of natural resource management. So that the creation of Mexico and the Mexican was not limited to the realm of culture but also involved nature.

The protection of Pátzcuaro's colonial architecture also contributed to the consolidation of the dominant discourses of Mexican identity, which established the colonial period as the founding moment of the modern Mexican nation. This involved regulating people's architectural conduct regarding modifications to the built landscape. The set of practices and discourses outlined above were both enabling and restrictive, producing particular ways of being in the landscape that expressed visions of revolutionary citizenship.

Finally, this work also explores the role of Lake Pátzcuaro in the development of international policies on indigenous peoples and its relationship with the development of Pan-Americanism. Indigenous peoples went from being the exclusive focus of national governments to being the centre of attention of international agencies, producing new geographies of indigeneity.

Acknowledgments

...Since each of us was several there was already quite a crowd. We are no longer ourselves... We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987), A Thousand Plateaus

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, who have funded my PhD. I would also like to thank the Gilchrist Educational Trust, for extra financial support. Many sincere thanks to the School of Geography and the University of Nottingham for the opportunity to use their facilities and their contribution to my intellectual development.

A special thanks to the staff of the different archives that I visited in Mexico for their help accessing archival documents. I would also like to thank Jimena Paz for the photographs of the CREFAL murals and to Ateri and Ricardo for letting me stay at their home in Pátzcuaro, while doing fieldwork.

I could not have done this without the invaluable support and guidance of my supervisors, David Matless and Sarah Metcalfe. I think this thesis would look very different if I had not had you as my supervisors. I also thank Prof. Charles Watkins for discussions during annual reviews and Prof. Stephen Legg for the many book and paper recommendations. To all of you, thanks for your genuine interest in my work.

Within the School of Geography, I would also like to thank to my friends and fellow PhD candidates, especially Phil, Neven, Yuzhi, Pooja, Emma, Vanessa, Emma, Hazel, Henry, and Sophie for making this experience such an enjoyable one. I would also like to thank all my Nottingham friends, so thank you, Gabi Sandoval, Lucia, Blanca, Gabi Duran, Jess, Edu, Karla, and Betsa for being my family in Nottingham.

Lastly, I thank all my family and friends in Mexico for their support and encouragement. And to David Garrido for all the love and support, thank you for being there, for me.

1 Introduction

An ideal place and a threatened lake. Lake Pátzcuaro in Michoacán is today shaped by regional development programmes, scientific research, cultural tourism, and environmental conservation projects. It is at the same time a national iconic landscape, an indigenous region, a focus of international attention, and a place where different narratives of identity unfold. Contested visions of the past and future, tensions between tradition and modernity, and a deep environmental concern articulates people's relationship with this place. This thesis examines some of these discourses and practices during the postrevolutionary period and its immediate aftermath, roughly between 1920 and 1950, encompassing ideas about indigeneity, national identity, environmental conservation, scientific research, cultural tourism, etc. Such practices and ideas have shaped the way people (including myself) relate to it, participating in the production and reproduction of the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape.

My initial interest on Lake Pátzcuaro comes from my own individual experiences. Lake Pátzcuaro is an area with which I became acquainted during my undergraduate studies on environmental sciences through several field trips. Its proximity to Morelia, the capital of the state of Michoacán, where a UNAM campus is located, made Lake Pátzcuaro one of the favourite fieldwork destinations in my degree programme. Lake Pátzcuaro was introduced to me as a 'biocultural diversity hotspot' whose protection and promotion was essential to build sustainable futures but whose continuity was in serious jeopardy. Weekend trips with family and friends also influenced my personal view of this area. These experiences not only shaped my relationship with this place, but also sparked my interest in the cultural dimension of human-environment relationships, which I continued to explore during my postgraduate studies.

I started to reflect on Lake Pátzcuaro's historical formation when I was working as a teacher on the Geohistory undergraduate programme. Students were taken on a field trip to Lake Pátzcuaro, as part of the activities of the introductory course to landscape studies. Based on field observations, visual representations of the landscape, and 19th century travel literature, students were asked to reflect on the historical formation of the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape. The activity and materials were originally designed and collected by the directors of the programme. Among

the graphic materials employed were a reproduction of the Beaumont map (1792) (Figure 1.1), a photograph of Lake Pátzcuaro by the American cultural geographer Robert West (1948) (Figure 1.2), and a reproduction of Juan O’Gorman’s mural *El crédito transforma a México* (1965) (Figure 1.4), each of them representing a particular spatial practice, going from colonial map-making to muralism and academic research.



Figure 1.1. Beaumont (1792) *Crónica de Michoacán*, Vol. III. The map shows the main towns around Lake Pátzcuaro and the transfer of the bishopric from Tzintzuntzan to Pátzcuaro.

Robert West’s photograph of Lake Pátzcuaro appears in *The Cultural Geography of the Modern Tarascan Area* (1948); his work representing an early cultural geography engagement with the region. There he defined Lake Pátzcuaro as one of the ‘geographical regions’ of the modern Tarascan area, as well as the cultural centre of the historical Tarascan area, associating its limits with the distribution of the Tarascan (P’urhépecha) language. This thesis revisits the area, engaging with

familiar, already examined topics (culture, landscape, and region) using different geographic lenses.



Figure 1.2. Lake Pátzcuaro seen from El Estribo Hill. Source: West (1948)

So that this thesis can also be understood as a way of travelling, of turning the familiar into the unknown to make it familiar again. Following a cultural geography approach, this thesis constitutes an attempt to understand how these forms of relating to Lake Pátzcuaro emerged and how they have come to define its character. I particularly focus on the decades that followed the end of the armed phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), known as the postrevolutionary period and its immediate aftermath, which is often characterised as an era of reconstruction, a period during which the state was refounded, a time of great social change in which cultures and identities were shaped, a national past forged, social relations transformed, and people's relationships with the land reorganised. Notably, during this period new ways of relating and conceiving the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape emerged, which were part of broader social, political, cultural, and economic changes, including avant-garde artistic practices, architectural conservation, lake monitoring, environmental conservation programmes, and social science research. In the next two sections I provide an outline of the region and explain the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Outlining the region

Lake Pátzcuaro is the name of an endorheic lake located in Central West México (Figure 1.3), in the state of Michoacán. Besides the lake, the largest town in the area

and the municipality to which it belongs is also called Pátzcuaro. Along with Pátzcuaro, the municipalities of Erongarícuaro, Tzintzuntzan and Quiroga are usually considered to make up the Lake Pátzcuaro region. The lake contains some small islands, whose number has varied historically with changes in the lake level. Nowadays, only four islands can be distinguished by sight, comprising Pacanda, Tecuena, Janitzio and Yunuen. The Lake Pátzcuaro region has also been defined in historical and cultural terms, as one of the lake basins where pre-Columbian civilizations flourished. Today it is one of the regions inhabited by the indigenous group of the P'urhépecha.

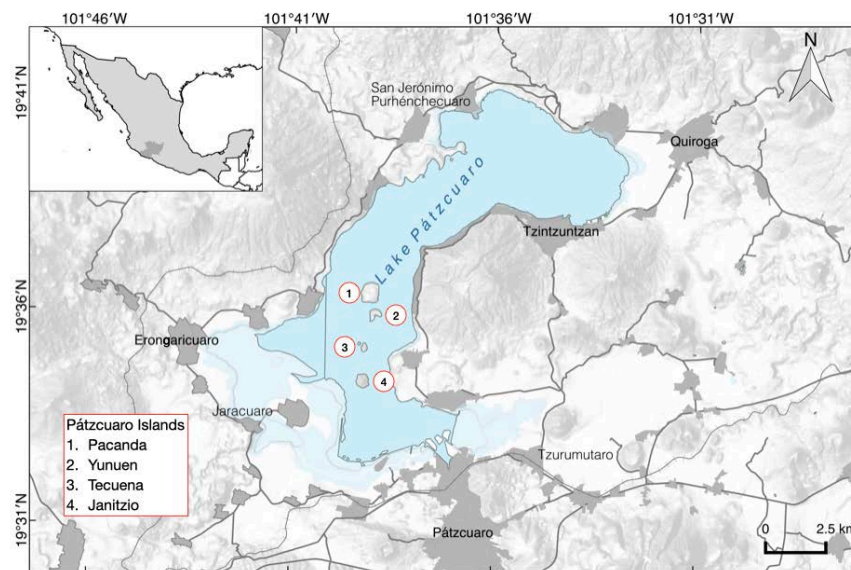


Figure 1.3. Geographical location of Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. Map by the author.

As an endorheic lake, the lake has no outlets. Surface intermittent streams fed the lake only during the rainy season. Rainfall constitutes the major water input, while evaporation and seepage constitute the main outflow pathways, so that climatic variations affect the lake-water balance, causing fluctuations in the lake level, which have often been the reason for environmental concern. Mountains of volcanic origin and sloped terrain surround the lake, limiting the area of arable land. Although rich in certain nutrients, the volcanic soils of the region are highly susceptible to erosion, also a source of environmental concern. Erosion control has played a central role in shaping the landscape of Lake Pátzcuaro both through physical interventions and by defining which activities are allowed or considered acceptable according to its environmental condition, regulating human activities within the basin. The study of the lake sediments has played a key role in producing cultural explanations about Lake Pátzcuaro environmental past, including the

causes of erosion (see below). The volcanic origin of the lake and the erosive processes of the basin have not only given place to scientific accounts, but have also been registered in art works, such as O'Gorman (1941, 1965) (Figure 1.4), who emphasises their role shaping the geography of Michoacán.



Figure 1.4. Scene from the mural 'El crédito transforma a México' O'Gorman (1965)

Since the 1930s, the watershed has been employed to define the boundaries of the region, reflecting the role of environmental regulations in the construction of the region, so that the Lake Pátzcuaro region is often referred to as the Lake Pátzcuaro basin. Animal life has also played a key role in regional definition, the whitefish being an important regional icon. Michoacán historian Gerardo Sánchez (2018) observes that the name Michoacán derives from the Nahuatl, *Mechuacan*, which means land of fishers, while in some historical sources the toponym of Michoacán is represented by a glyph of a hill crowned by a fish. The glyph of *Mechuacan* has been incorporated into the coat of arms of the state of Michoacán, appearing on the top (Figure 1.5).



Figure 1.5. Coat of arms of the state of Michoacán.

Bird life has also figured prominently in Lake Pátzcuaro depictions, associated with indigenous ways of life. The presence of numerous bird species has contributed to its status as an area of environmental importance. Since 1936, the Lake Pátzcuaro basin has a special protected status as a ‘hydrological forest reserve’. In 1998, the Lake Pátzcuaro basin was also declared a ‘priority hydrological region’ and an area for the conservation of birds. More recently, in 2005, the southwest part of the lake was included in the RAMSAR list of wetlands of international importance. Nonhuman life, including both animal and plant landscapes, has also been subject of aesthetic appreciation, depicted in the region’s murals, as well as in indigenous visual, literary, and musical cultures.

The Lake Pátzcuaro region has not only been defined in terms of its natural qualities, but also its cultural aspects, particularly indigenous culture, playing a vital role in regional definition. As an indigenous region, Lake Pátzcuaro is shaped by historical accounts about the region’s prehispanic past and the colonial legacy, notions of cultural authenticity, and images of tradition and distinctive ways of life. Along with colonial architecture, scenes of indigenous fishing and the Day of the Dead are among the region’s most prominent cultural icons. Cultural tourism is among the social practices through which these discourses are produced and reproduced.¹

¹ Lake Pátzcuaro natural and cultural richness was put forward in its designation as a “magical town” in 2002, a federal programme to promote tourism.

Historical characters also feature among the region's icons. An iconic historical figure in the region is the first bishop of Michoacán and colonial authority, Vasco de Quiroga, often depicted as 'benefactor of the Indians', whose importance in the region is only compared to that of Lázaro Cárdenas. Both figures played a central role in reestablishing the conditions of order and governance in the region during particular historical conjunctures. Such a narrative is reproduced in the tourist promotion of the region, attesting to the continuing role of tourism in the performance of cultural discourses about the region.

1.2 Thesis Structure

Although there is a certain chronological order in the way in which things are presented, the structure of the thesis follows a thematic order. Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature, followed by a discussion of the methods used in Chapter 3. Four empirical chapters (Chapter 4, 5, 6, and 7) follow, each dealing with a different topic. Put it in a schematic way, Chapter 4 examines the processes of identity formation, Chapter 5 looks at the mutual production of nature and culture, Chapter 6 deals with questions of aesthetics, and Chapter 7 looks at the effects of global processes in the region. Chapter 8 ends the thesis reflecting on some of the issues raised throughout the thesis. Having said this, most of the topics emerge more than once in the thesis, showing how the processes addressed exist in connection to one another.

Chapter 2 presents a critical evaluation of the different bodies of literature that have informed my research, covering different topics, such as, landscape and region, culture and identity, and science studies, as well as a more specific body of literature focused on postrevolutionary México and previous research on Lake Pátzcuaro. In Chapter 3, I discuss the methods used to undertake my research, as well as the archival sources employed. I also highlight some of the challenges experienced during the research process. Chapter 4 interrogates the process of indigenous becoming, examining the different practices and discourses that led to the recognition of Lake Pátzcuaro as an indigenous region, including the generation of historical knowledge, ethnographic and artistic practices of collection, as well as practices of exhibition, display and performance. I particularly pay attention to performative acts of indigeneity, as well those discursive practices that contributed to the production of an 'ethnicized' national identity. Chapter 5 focuses on the

mutual constitution of nature and culture, examining how discourses about culture and identity shaped nature and vice versa. The emphasis is on what I call scientific cultures of nature, referring to ideas and practices around nature that made use of scientific claims. I do this through examining the discourses surrounding the establishment of environmental protection schemes in Lake Pátzcuaro, comprising the creation of a forest reserve and fishing regulations, and the introduction of species as a measure to protect native fish and improve fisheries. Chapter 6 examines the process by which colonial aesthetics were established as typical of the Lake Pátzcuaro region, comprising the repurposing of religious buildings, art history research and architectural preservation projects. Chapter 7 examines the production of new geographies of indigeneity. I analyse how narratives about Lake Pátzcuaro transcended the nation to play part in international processes, as well as the effects of global processes and events in the region. The purpose is to understand how the arrival of new actors and interests shaped Lake Pátzcuaro but also how their work on Pátzcuaro enabled processes at other levels.

2 Literature Review

This chapter examines different bodies of literature, which have informed the development of this research. Throughout the text I also try show the conceptual lenses used, which have provided a relevant focus for my research. The content of the chapter is organised thematically in two main parts. The first part presents the main organizing concepts and theoretical approaches informing this research, covering different topics, such as, landscape and region, culture and identity, science studies and environmental history. I consider the way these topics relate to each other, integrating works from different disciplines. The second part presents a more specific body of literature, focusing on the history and historiography of the Mexican revolution and postrevolutionary México, as well as previous research on Lake Pátzcuaro and the research topics addressed. The purpose of the second part is, on the one hand, to provide a historical context of my study period, as well as to show how my research fits and adds to these body of knowledge on the Mexican Revolution.

2.1 Landscape, Region, and Culture or How Things are Tied Together

This thesis deals with questions concerning culture and nature, science, politics, and aesthetics. Within geography these questions are frequently examined through the study of landscape. The study of landscape has also attracted people outside geography, using the concept as a tool to examine nature-society relationships. Partly because the phenomena studied are recognized to be both natural and cultural, the usefulness of the term nature, or more precisely the nature/society dualism, has been called into question from within and outside geography. Such separation many thinkers have argued relies on an ontological schism, that has led us to divide the world into halves, on the one side we have put culture and society, and on the other, nature and science. The problem of this dualistic ontology is primarily a problem of how we understand the world we live in and the instruments we use to grasp it.

For Castree (2005, p.226) the society-nature dualism is so firmly established in our Western way of thinking that ‘we forget that it’s anything but natural’, he goes on to say that ‘not only do many non-Western societies not carve the world in two in this way, if we look back in history Westerners themselves only began to

employ the dichotomy from the eighteenth century'. The history of this division is nonetheless difficult to trace, in fact, there is not one history that can explain everything, for as to establish a root would reproduce a dualistic form of thinking. Having said this, one particular account of this divide, and one that has got prominence within and outside geography, is the one offered by Bruno Latour in his well-known work *We have never been modern* (1993).

For Latour (1993) this 'Great Divide' constitutes a modern form of classification. According to Latour (1991), to be modern involved the separation of nature and culture, and of science and politics, creating two different ontological domains. Consequently, the world began to populate with hybrids, which are simultaneously real, collective, and discursive, a bit more and a bit less than culture. Thus, while modernity is often defined in terms of humanism, it is also marked by the birth of 'nonhumanity' (Latour 1991, p.13). In Latour's view, the paradox of the critical project of modernity is that on the one hand, it allows the proliferation of hybrids while denying the possibility of their existence, making 'the work of mediation that assembles hybrids invisible, unthinkable, unrepresentable' (Latour 1991, p. 34). To be modern thus is to be able to consider these two practices separately, subscribing to the critical project of modernity. If, on the contrary, we are able to think simultaneously about these practices, then we cease to be totally modern, or perhaps, says Latour 'we have never been modern.'

For Donna Haraway (2004), if we have never been modern, we may, as well, have never been human. If this is the case and we can no longer hold this modern dualism, we can then start representing the hybrids, also called 'cyborgs,' providing an account of their existence. In other words, this means that other ways of making sense of the world are possible beyond the nature/society divide. This also leads to the recognition that humans are never autonomous beings, but they are shaped through their relationship with other entities. Nature is always more than nature, and so are humans. In the words of Haraway (2008, p. 25) 'all the actors become who they are in the dance of relating', 'all the dancers are redone through the patterns they enact'. There are no pure things, nor things exist in themselves.

Although they cannot represent the hybrid nature of the world, the terms 'nature' and 'culture' continue to hold importance in our everyday language. In this sense, geographer David Matless (2014, p. 5) considers the word 'nature' as a

‘working word impossible to erase’, offering a ‘powerful communicative coherence’. While for the anthropologist James Clifford (1988), culture is a deeply compromised idea, one that, however, we still cannot do without. In this sense, both terms can also be considered as ‘words in translation’, ‘bridges to something else’, which make conversation possible (Clifford 2013, p. 27).

Commenting on the work of Bruno Latour, Matless (2016 [1998], p. 30) observes that landscape might be considered as a Latourian quasi-object, ‘impossible to place on either side of a dualism of nature and culture, shuttling between fields of reference’. For John Wylie (2007), these fields of reference often come into tension in the study of landscape. So that for him, the term landscape can be better described as a series of tensions between proximity and distance, observation and inhabitation, eye and land, and nature and culture. These series of tensions far from being considered as problematic are seen as productive and creative. The source of this multiplicity of views on the concept of landscape has been partly attributed to the history of the term itself. Thus, for David Matless (2014, p.6) landscape’s ‘duplicity emerges in part from the historical geographies of the term, with landscape’s varying proprietarial, communal and imaginal associations’. For this reason, some scholars have called for drawing in its complexity and multiplicity, instead of trying to limit the concept to a single definition (Daniels 1989).

The conceptualization of landscape as something that is at once natural and cultural is not new. Early and mid-twentieth-century geographical engagements with the landscape paid attention to this natural-cultural complexity, though the focus was circumscribed to its material or observable features. Rooted in the soil and cemented with the passing of the years, landscape was seen as the result of the human inscription over the surface of the earth. Vidal de la Blache (1945-1918) and Carl Sauer (1889-1975) are regarded as representatives of this approach, which has retrospectively been called traditional cultural geography. Their works focused on analysing people’s role in creating distinctive landscapes, with a preference for rural areas and traditional cultures. Attentiveness to the material evidence of culture was central in the study of landscape, allowing the objective identification of areas of shared culture and history.

For Vidal de la Blache, culture, conceptualized as *genres de vie*, organised the landscape. *Genres de vie* denoted a situation of equilibrium between a group of people

and its *milieu*, producing regional distinctions. The landscape was seen as the reflection of regional ways of life. To understand the landscape was to study how people took benefit of their environments, creating distinctive modes of existence that resulted in regional differentiation. The superimposition of different regionalities gave a country a ‘physiognomy’ or ‘personality.’ In Vidal de la Blache’s proposal, examining regional spatial organisation involved considering long-term interactions between human and nature and its enduring heritage in the present landscape.

For Carl Sauer, landscape was also a material reality, including natural and cultural forms. Accordingly, culture was made up of material observable forms expressed in land use patterns. The cultural landscape was considered as the descriptive content of a region or areal culture. The study of cultural areas or regions comprised the study of distribution, origins, and the extension of a culture. This involved the recognition of spatial centres and frontiers, but also the reconstruction of past stages and the identification of the moments in which specific inventions took place. In this sense, attention to the origin of a culture also entailed studying its ‘evolution,’ its birth, growth, apogee, and in some cases, its fall. For Sauer, this defined the historical and cultural character of geography (Sauer, 1925; Sauer, 1941). Sauer was also interested in the study of the Colonial period and the European Contact in México, topics that subsequently engaged the attention of his students, who further discussed the relationship between population density and erosion, and the environmental effects of European arrival in the American continent (Denevan, 1992; Butzer, 1993).

Sauer’s interest in Mexico was partly motivated by its proximity to the United States, as well as by his preference for rural areas. According to West (1981) at Berkeley, Sauer found that most research problems within California had been claimed by other departments, but northwestern Mexico was relatively untouched. Moreover, he was repelled by the ‘industrial and mechanized’ scene of California and attracted by the ‘simple rural folkways’ south of the border. In this sense, the work of Sauer and his students holds particular importance for this thesis, shaping the landscape of the various places where they worked, where cultural and historical contours were outlined at different scales (Sauer, 1941; Kirchhoff, 1943; Stanislawski, 1944; West 1948). In *The Personality of México* (1941), Sauer proposed the creation of a cultural area for ‘prehispanic México’, establishing its southern and

northern limits. His work influenced Paul Kirchhoff's (1943) proposal of Mesoamerica as a cultural area where pre-Columbian civilizations flourished. Sauer also proposed western Mexico as the possible centre of fundamental cultural inventions, indicating that a greater knowledge of its ancient beginnings would reveal its true importance (Sauer 1941, p. 356). Influenced by his mentor, Robert West (1948) also developed a proposal on the Tarascan cultural area, which placed Lake Pátzcuaro as its historical centre.

These early geographical engagements with the landscape relied on an organicist view of landscape and culture, which considered culture as a discrete entity, singular, bounded, and autonomous. Referring specifically to the approach represented by Carl Sauer, James S. Duncan (1980) asserts that this mode of explanation, that he calls 'superorganic', reified the notion of culture assigning it an ontological status and causative power, determinative of individuals actions. Sauer's view of culture was based on the work of cultural anthropologists Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and Franz Boas, for whom the work of anthropology was to study distinctive cultures and their spatial distribution in terms of the origin of cultural traits and its diffusion from one society to another. Consequently, the main interest of cultural geographers was in the physical and visible evidence of culture in the landscape and not in its 'inner workings' or social dimension.

Today, most geographers find this dichotomous treatment of landscape problematic. Different approaches have been developed to overcome this divide between the physical and the symbolic. Cosgrove (1985) made an initial critique of this distinction by pointing out what he saw as a mistake on the part of humanist geographers to regard artistic representations of landscape as automatically belonging to the subjective realm, falling into a divide between science and arts. In a later work, Cosgrove (1990) also insisted on the equal status of physical landscapes and images or metaphors, stating '... metaphor and image are conceived not as surface representations of a deeper truth but as a creative intervention in the making of truth' (Cosgrove, 1990, p. 345). Yet the distinction between image and reality remained at the centre of the idea of landscape as an ideological artefact, obscuring a hidden reality. Such vision was also present in other approaches, such as that of the landscape as a text that structured landscape around binary oppositions (Duncan and Duncan 1988, Barnes and Duncan 1992).

For Tim Ingold (1993) the difficulty of these approaches that focused on the decoding of cultural meanings via text, sign or image was its inherent dualism, arguing instead for understanding landscape in terms of 'dwelling', moving away from the mind/matter duality. Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' was particularly influential in the development of what has come to be known as 'non-representational theory' in cultural geography, which arose out of what was perceived as an overemphasis on the study of representations. The term 'non-representational theory,' initially coined by Nigel Thrift (1996) and rephrased by Lorimer (2005) as 'more-than representational theory', has been inspired by a number of different philosophical traditions, but most notably phenomenology, focusing their attention on the study of people's lived experience and everyday practices.

Criticism of the nature/culture distinction also came from Marxist thinkers. David Harvey proposed considering capitalism as the overarching process that unites human and non-human entities in inextricable ways by participating in its reproduction (Harvey and Haraway 1995, Harvey 1996). In a similar vein, Noel Castree (1995, 2002) has proposed to examine the social and economic relations involved in the production of nature. Regarding landscape, Mitchell (1996) has argued in favour of examining the systems of capitalist production and reproduction involved in the material production of the landscape.

Other sets of works have addressed this question in a different way, influenced by poststructuralist thinkers. Drawing on Foucault, Matless (1992, p.45) criticised the 'hierarchies of truth' implied in the distinction between image and reality, instead, arguing for an understanding of representation, not as subordinate of an underlying or more basic reality, but as a 'creative remaking and recombination of the world' whose status is 'neither above, nor below that which has been drawn on'. Representations and images are regarded as 'highly concrete stuff' and constitutive of the world. This view is consistent with Foucault's discursive approach to representation, who sees cultural meaning as constructed within the discursive realm. Derrida's statement that 'there is nothing outside of the text' similarly suggests that all meaning is intertextual (Derrida, 1997 [1974], p.158). One implication of these statements is that we can examine the conditions under which landscapes are produced, including its historical circumstances and cultural discourses.

It is important to note that the notion of discourse exceeds its linguistic connotation, referring to the totality of actions, events and statements that constitute or define a particular field or subject, stepping aside from the traditional distinction between representation and practice. In this sense, discourse does not refer to what is said about a separate and pre-existing landscape, but it actually creates landscape (Matless 1992). This introduces a particular conceptualization of power, seen as disciplinary or productive. By creating the objects of our knowledge, discourse governs the way a topic can be reasoned about, disciplining people into certain ways of thinking or acting. These questions are brought together by Matless under the rubric ‘cultures of landscape’ which he defines as ‘the ways in which particular sets of practices are seen to generate particular ways of being in the landscape, which thereby becomes the occasion for an intellectual, spiritual and physical citizenship’ (Matless 2016 [1998], p.109). From this point of view, everyday landscape experiences are a product of regulatory practices and cultural discourses. However, power is not considered to come from a single source, that is, an individual or an institution, but from everywhere. What this means is that landscapes are shaped by multiple even contradictory discourses.

Questions of culture, power and citizenship are also central to the contemporary understanding of regions (Riding and Jones, 2017). Most recent discussions consider regions as relational spaces, emphasising its ever-changing character, looking at the relations established between various places, the *assemblages* created, and the spatiotemporal dynamics involved in the process of region-making. Within this ‘new regional geography’ regions are understood as ‘social constructs based on social practice and discourse’ instead of given realities ‘waiting to be discovered.’ Attention is thus given to the processes and practices of making and remaking regions (Paasi et al., 2018, p. 3).

A cultural geography treatment of the topic is offered by Cosgrove in *The Palladian Landscape* (1993). The term Palladian landscape refers to a small region in northern Italy, characterized by the architectural work of Andrea Palladio. For Cosgrove (1993, p. 5) the Palladian landscape expressed the view that certain social groups had about the world, which sought to ‘refine a vision of their human place in the order of nature and represent that vision through various forms of landscape making’. His work thus draws attention to the way in which this region was defined by the ideas and interests of a particular social group, as well as through texts,

images, maps, buildings, and engineering works that expressed those ideas, pointing out the relationship between regional definition and governance.

According to Matless (2014) the term 'region' carries associations of rule, indicating its root in definitional regulation. The construction of a region necessarily involves the construction of boundaries, whether territorial, physical, or symbolic, which differentiate the internal from the external. In his cultural geography of the Norfolk Broads, Matless (2014, p.14) indicates that 'Broadland is maintained through boundary work; barriers to keep water fresh by holding sea out, edges of jurisdiction between historic port authorities and contemporary planning bodies, symbols and markers...'. However, all borders are temporary, requiring one's active involvement in their reproduction or maintenance. According to Passi and colleagues (2018) the social practices through which regions are constructed and reproduced can be abandoned or destroyed as part of wider socio-spatial transformations. So that landscape practices also play a key role in the process of region-making.

The word region, Matless points out (2014, p. 14), carries an inherent tension, since it conveys a dual state of 'something carrying its own (contested) integrity, yet also being a region of something else.' Regional cultural landscape is thus inevitably linked with 'the articulation of scale and its political, economic, imaginative, emotional consequences, with the definition of a region an active and mutable component in its life.' Similarly, for the French geographer Paul Claval (2007, p.36) 'the construction of imagined communities involves moral categories: regions are ranked along scales of performance'. Regarding scale, Paasi (2018) also notes that although the term region is often associated with the subnational scale, the regional concept has, since its inception, been used to refer to all spatial scales, ranging from the very local to the international. The fact that the term region is linked with multiple scales also reflects the various levels on which power expresses.

2.2 Myths of Place and Identity

The performative aspect of discourses has also been examined in relation with the construction of identities. For the feminist scholar Judith Butler (1993, p.13) discursive practices do more than merely represent something; 'a performative is that discursive practice that enact or produces that which they name'. However, they can only do so by reference to an accepted norm or social convention. By

endlessly citing conventions and cultural discourses, we enact that reality. The enactment of cultural norms has real consequences, informing our senses of self and the way we perceive the world. Although they may appear natural, they remain social constructions that only take shape through repeated bodily discursive practices or performances.

The importance of Butler's theory of performativity is that it destabilizes essentialist ideas about gender, its naturalness, and by implication, wider processes of identity formation. Thus, for Butler (2002 [1990], 1993), gender identity is not something one is but rather something one does or performs. In other words, there is no gender identity prior to discourse, only 'gendering.' Echoing Foucault, Butler (2002 [1990], p. 33) sees identity as a 'culturally restricted principle of order and hierarchy, a regulatory fiction'. From this point of view, identities are constituted by a series of repeated performances. To say that identities are performative also implies that they are never finished products, instead they are seen in a perpetual state of becoming. Similarly, for the archaeologist Christopher Tilley (2006) notions of identity as forever grounded, stable, and immutable can only have a mythic status. Crucially, as ongoing discursive practices, identities are open to intervention and resignification. There is, in Derridean terms, an endless deferral of signification present in the performative citation of conventions.

Drawing on Butler's theory of performativity, geographer Tim Edensor (2002) also sees national identity as a performance. National identities, he argues, are reproduced, or performed through official or popular dramas, but also through everyday routines, habits, and duties. Regarding formal rituals or nationalist ceremonies, Edensor (2002) observes that they are played out to legitimate the power of the nation-state. Echoing Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), he points out that even though many of them are invented traditions, most of these rituals are conceived to appear time-honoured. Such events, he states, 'perform timelessness, grounding nation in history, symbolising community and legitimising authority' (Edensor 2002, p.73).

For Matless (1992, 2016[1998]) people's conduct in relation to the landscape is defined by 'myths of place'. Referring to a series of arguments about the social and architectural conduct of the people in the Broads, Matless observes that 'Statements which might at first appear to be taken-for-granted as to the architectural character of a place rest upon cultural judgements as to what and who

belongs there' (Matless 2016[1998], p.28). If we hold to the idea that identities are normative, this means that only certain behaviours (those that adjust to the rule) will be admitted or considered appropriate, while others will be seen as unusual or out of place. For Edensor (2002, p.70), such enactments of identity 'reinscribe who belongs to a place and crucially who does not. For particular performances -and particular actors- might seem out place, revealing the operations of exclusive identities.' Hence discourses about national identities not only produce a national subject, but also the Other. Accordingly, questions of belonging become a political matter, configuring self-other relations. In the case of Lake Pátzcuaro, the 'what and who' involves both the human and the non-human, or rather their interrelation, including environmental conservation, indigenous knowledges and practices, and questions of aesthetics.

Landscape aesthetics is also connected to the myths of place, participating in its production and reproduction. In this sense, some authors have considered landscape as an aestheticized vision obscuring a hidden reality. The role of aesthetically valuable landscapes in sustaining unequal economic relationships has also been pointed out (see Cosgrove 1985, 1998). Duncan and Duncan (2004) also point out how discriminatory (racist, classist) attitudes may underlie aesthetic concerns, while for Gillian Rose (1993) the landscape itself represents a masculine visual gaze. This position has been echoed and developed by Catherine Nash (1996, p. 149) who has called for the 'subversion, resistance and appropriation of visual tradition and visual pleasure'.

However, to subvert and resist such visual dominant narratives we need to examine how such orders are produced. From this point of view, landscape aesthetics are less about emphasising landscape aesthetic values than about examining the cultural and historical construction of such aesthetic values and its political resonance. This thesis engages with aesthetics through a number of overlapping subjects, including art, judgements of beauty, emotion, imagination, and perception. My interest is to understand the role of aesthetics in defining Mexico and the Mexican through the appropriation of indigenous culture, the politization of art and the aestheticization of history and everyday life.

To say that identities are regulatory fictions is not to regard them as false, only that is possible to examine the conditions of their production. Some of the authors discussed above have adopted a genealogical, historical approach to this

question. The genealogist's job is not however to authenticate or search for some origin or essence, rather it seeks to provide an account for the constitution of knowledges and discourses (Matless 1992, 1998). The anthropologist James Clifford (1988) also rejects the idea of cultures as separate entities or 'pure products' threatened by modernity, instead proposing a view of 'identity as conjunctural, not essential' (Clifford 1988, p.11). If authenticity is relational, he states, 'there can be no essence except as a political, cultural invention, a local tactic' (Clifford 1988, p. 12). Self-other relations are thus seen as 'matters of power and rhetoric rather than of essence' (Clifford 1988, p. 14). From this point of view, cultures and identities are not constituted prior to their relationships, but they are their relationships, moving the focus of attention from 'roots to routes' (Gilroy 1993, Hall 1996, Clifford 1997). Here too, culture and identity are conceptualised in terms of becoming. In the words of Stuart Hall (1999, p.2) 'instead of asking what are people's roots, we ought to think about what are their *routes*, the different points by which they have come to be now'.

Of particular interest for my research, is Clifford's notion of 'indigenous becoming' referring to the emergence of indigenous identities and their mobilization. Throughout the world, Clifford (1988) observes, indigenous people have had to face multiple challenges, including forces of progress and modernization and projects of national integration. It used to be assumed that these processes would lead the world towards irreversible cultural homogenization. Though cultural genocide did take place, something different and unexpected also happened: 'distinct ways of life once destined to merge into 'the modern world' reasserted their difference, in novel ways' (Clifford 1988, p.6). By the late twentieth century it was clear that indigenous people were going against the prediction, they were 'adapting and recombining the remnants of an interrupted way of life,' creating 'new pathways in a complex postmodernity' (Clifford 2013, p.7). Cultural endurance, Clifford (2013) notes, is a process of becoming.

Clifford identifies two historical moments in which indigenous peoples made their presence felt. After the second world war 'peoples long spoken for by western ethnographers, [...] began to speak and act more powerfully for themselves on a global stage' (1988, p. 6). This process is seen as an outcome of 'post-war decolonizing energies and the contestations of the global sixties' (Clifford, 2013, p.3). The 1980s and 1990s is also characterised by the emergence of indigenous

movements, as indigenous people 'became visible actors in local, national, and global arenas' (Clifford, 2013, p.13). These movements, Clifford observes, were shaped by two linked historical synergies, working in tension: decolonization and globalization. My research too examines a history of indigenous becoming though in a different historical moment, characterised by discourses of national integration and projects of applied anthropology but also by the articulation of indigenous identities.

In the case of México, although the mythical status of Mexican identity has already been examined, the role of nature in the articulation of such ideas has received much less consideration (see below). In the editorial introduction to the special issue *Nature and Nation* of the journal *Environment and History*, Wilko Graf von Hardenberg and Marco Armiero (2014, p.5) begin by asking if the nation is just a 'geographic frame' that could be useful for environmental history studies or if it also affects the way we look at nature? The point, they say, is not 'to compress nature into national borders but to explore how nation and nature have historically merged,' this being one of the objectives of the thesis.

One historian that follows such an approach is David Blackbourn (2006), who examines the transformation of the German landscape through a series of water reclamation projects, showing how nature and nation have always been intertwined in the history of Germany. The conquest of nature, Blackbourn argues, was part of a broader process of modernization linked to an increasingly powerful state. So that, for him, 'to write about the shaping of the modern German landscape is to write about how modern Germany itself was shaped' (Blackbourn 2006, p.8). Blackbourn also observes how the emergence of a conservationist movement in Germany was linked with the rise of Nazism, which Anna Bramwell (1989) has controversially referred to as its 'green component'. Blackbourn (2006, p.7) notes that the adjective 'green' is an 'unreliable indicator if it leads us to imagine a straightforward continuity of environmental beliefs'.

Similarly, in *A Rugged Nation* (2011), Armiero shows how mountains were relevant for the definition of a national identity in Italy. Armiero documents how during the twentieth century the Fascist regime constructed its own environmental narrative, appropriating mountains through both rhetorical recourses and concrete policies. According to Armiero, at the core of fascist attitudes towards the environment was a narrative of reclamation and improvement, visible in the

transformation of the Pontine Marshes, as well as in the improvement of pastures and forests. The relationship between mountains and Fascism was part of a broader narrative on ruralism, which praised the racial qualities of the rural people and argued for a return to the land. The regeneration of the country and its people and the regeneration of the land were blended in the Fascist discourse about reclamation. In the process of being politicised, Armiero (2011, p. 110) argues, mountains naturalised fascist narratives about the nation, ‘the politics, rhetoric, and economic policies, shaped the nature of the country’.

Blackbourn (2006) and Armiero (2011) demonstrate how nature participated in the legitimization of the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the link between nation and nature is not limited to national discourses within totalitarian regimes, rather as David Harvey (1993, p.25) has indicated ‘all ecological projects (and arguments) are simultaneously political-economic projects (and arguments) and vice versa’. Hence, the post-revolutionary programme in Mexico also involved the development of a conservation agenda and discourse, contributing to the consolidation of power (see below). The work of Blackbourn (2006) and Armiero (2011) also offer interesting historical parallels with my work. Mexican officials also considered such parallels between countries, which they interpreted as a global conjuncture (see Chapter 5).

2.3 The Itineraries of a Historical Geography of Science

This research is also interested in the way scientific discourse and practice have shaped the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape, as well as its relationship with other practices and discourses. A number of different approaches within and outside geography have developed to examine the way things are tied together, including the tracing of scientific networks by Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholars. This has also led to increasing self-reflexivity in different disciplines about their own practice (see below). John Law (2019, p.1) has recognised important similarities between some of these approaches, that he calls ‘material semiotics’, because they explore how ‘practices in the social world are woven out of threads to form weaves that are simultaneously semiotic and material’. The emphasis is on relations established between different entities or phenomena, which are not seen as external but internal or constitutive of them. This view also makes possible to treat all cultural and

human activities at the same level, regardless of their nature, making possible, for instance, the simultaneous examination of environmental policies and architecture.

If science is influenced by its context, then its spatiotemporal features deserve consideration. According to Heike Jöns and colleagues (2010) one of the most significant insights into the spatiality of knowledge production is the partiality of all knowledge claims. A historical geography of science can help us gain a broader understanding of how scientific knowledge is constructed, what forms of access to knowledge are accepted, and how scientific claims are justified and stabilized. Attention to the local and specific acquires relevance for challenging universalist, essentialist narratives (Livingstone, 1995). In this sense, the region -ranging from the provincial to the continental- becomes a relevant unit of analysis to examine the way science is carried out, how it takes shape and the products of scientific enterprise. From this standpoint, the features of specific regions are seen as profoundly impacting the doing of science and the knowledge claims practitioners have made (Livingstone, 2003).

If geography - and therefore history - matters, then we can speak of post-revolutionary science, in the same way that we speak of post-revolutionary politics or culture. Attention to the local also involves considering how the local is defined and the role that competing definitions of the local play asserting scientific legitimacy. In this sense, Matless (2003) remind us the role of geographical language shaping the geographies of truth, situating, and constituting scientific debate. Therefore, to understand the geographies of science one should also consider how the geographical is itself constructed. In words of Matless (2003, p.358): 'one should resist a priori definitions of local situation through which to understand the situatedness of science, but rather consider how senses of local, as of national, universal etc., are produced through and channel scientific debate'. Moreover, the characterisation of science as local or otherwise is seen as central to 'contests to truth.' Likewise, appeals to insider/outsider knowledge are considered to play a role in drawing the boundaries of science.

A key process that has profoundly affected the geographical imagination and the production of academic knowledge, is what Clifford (2013) has called the 'decentering of the West', marked by shifts of power and discursive location. According to Clifford (2013, p.5) since the 1950 an 'uneven and unfinished processes of decolonization have decentered the West and its epistemological

assumptions'. Two linked historical energies, decolonialization and globalization have worked to decentre the West or 'provincialize' Europe. So that there 'is no longer a place from which to tell the whole story (there never was).' No well-informed person, says Clifford (2013), now believes that Columbus 'discovered America.' In the case of anthropology, these processes have affected their authority to represent or speak for indigenous people.

In a self-reflexivity movement, anthropologists started to recognise the role of ethnography in the invention of cultural realities (Asad, 1986; Clifford, 1988). Anthropologists' authority to represent others is also seen as fashioned through ethnographic discourse. In the words of Clifford (1988, p.94) 'though it portrays other selves as culturally constituted, it also fashions an identity authorized to represent [...] the truths of discrepant worlds.' The subjectivities that emerge from these unequal exchanges include both that of the 'native' and that of the 'anthropologist,' both considered as 'constructed domains of truth,' 'serious fictions.' However, the invention of culture, its 'textualization,' goes beyond the control of any individual. The writing process is complicated by the action of multiple subjectivities and political constraints. Crucially, if ethnographies and subjectivities are historically contingent truths, specific to certain relations of textual production, then they are also contestable (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Clifford, 1988). The relevance of these propositions, I believe, is not confined to the field of anthropology, but it is also applicable to other academic disciplines and forms of knowledge.

Finally, a cultural geography approach can contribute to science studies by reasserting the value of geographical scale. In his elaboration of Actor Network Theory (ANT), Latour (1996) speaks of 'scale' as a tyranny of geographers and social theorists, one which ANT can help lift. While in consonance with ANT's non-hierarchical principle, such understanding of scale is also limited. As mentioned above, notions of local, the regional and the national are culturally constituted, playing a role in the production of difference. Latour (1999, p.19) considers that neither nature nor society, much less subjectivity 'define what the world is like, but what circulates locally and to which one 'subscribes' [...] including of course the subscription that allows us to say 'we' and 'one''. In this sense, Matless (2003, p. 357) contends that it is possible to extend the same considerations to the key terms of geography, including that of the 'local'. He goes on to suggest that 'if

the terms of 'subscription' to the 'we' and 'one' are themselves often configured geographically in the processes of identity formation, scale returns as a matter of concern as a constitutive cultural element within and product of such process.' Accordingly, rather than natural orders, hierarchies are the result of how geographical scales are mobilised or put to work within particular contexts.

2.4 Lake Pátzcuaro Environmental Histories

As mentioned above, this thesis is interested in how the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape has been shaped by various cultural discourses and practices, including scientific discourses about nature. Thus, this thesis also looks at the Lake Pátzcuaro environmental history, examining the construction of ideas about this. Disciplines such as limnology, archaeology, and historical geography have played a key role in this process. Lake Pátzcuaro environmental histories have focused on determining the environmental impact of past human activities, particularly the nature of prehispanic agricultural practices and the environmental consequences of the Spanish conquest. While these environmental histories deal with a different historical period, their relevance to this thesis relies on the fact that they are part of broader cultural historical debates about the area, which figured prominently during my study period, regarding the character of indigenous land management. Notably, although they deal with the same topic, the stories they tell about Lake Pátzcuaro's environmental past are very different. Two main approaches can be distinguished. One approach sees prehispanic agriculture as the cause of land degradation in the basin, the other describes prehispanic agriculture in more positive terms, as contributing to the creation and maintenance of the landscape.

Palaeoecological research began in 1941 with the development of a pollen record from a 6.2 meters core, as part of an attempt to apply the method of pollen analysis to chronological studies in Mexican archaeology, particularly those of the Valley of Mexico (Deevey, 1944). Because the extraction of sediments presented greater difficulties in Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico, the sedimentary core was obtained from Lake Pátzcuaro instead, under the assumption that climatic changes in the Valley would be reflected in the Pátzcuaro basin. The studies were carried out with the crucial help of the Pátzcuaro limnological station, the establishment of which is discussed in chapter five of this thesis. Though the pollen analysis from archaeological sites in the Valley of Mexico and Tzintzuntzan were

negative (no pollen being present), the work of Deevey (1944) resulted in the establishment of the first standard sequence for the Mexican highlands, which led to an increased interest on the area. He suggested that the presence of non-arboreal pollen in the cores indicated dry Holocene climatic oscillations. Hutchinson and colleagues (1956) studied the sediment chemistry and fossil algal flora of Deevey's cores. They also attempted to reevaluate Deevey's (1944) suggestion of a dry climatic phase, proposing that there were few climatic oscillations in the later Holocene and that the fluctuations of nonarboreal pollen reflected agricultural practice and demographic history.

In 1957, Deevey published *Limnological Studies in Middle America, with a Chapter on Aztec Limnology*, where he traced back the origin of freshwater biological observations in Mexico to the Aztecs, as depicted in the codices, introducing the idea of prehispanic limnology. Deevey (1957) also included a brief review on the importance of the lakes in Michoacán as seen in historical accounts, anticipating the incorporation of an archaeological perspective into the debates about the environmental past of the region. In 1963, the number of published studies on Lake Pátzcuaro was such that the American limnologist Gerald Cole considered Lake Pátzcuaro as 'one of the best-known lakes in Mexico, perhaps in all of Central America' (Cole, 1963, p. 413).

In 1973, John P. Bradbury and colleagues obtained a 14 m sediment core from the lake, 44,000 years old at the base. The core provided an insight into the environmental changes that occurred in the basin during the late Pleistocene and Holocene. William (Bill) Watts and J. Platt Bradbury (1982) described changing climatic conditions during the Holocene, warmer temperatures indicated by changes in the pollen of plant species. Lake Pátzcuaro's earliest occupation was indicated by maize pollen in the core (sometime between 1690 and 940 BC). Eutrophication by slope erosion was inferred by the presence of a rich aquatic flora, which was in turn interpreted as a consequence of agriculture activities. Watts and Bradbury concluded their account with the alteration of the lake's limnological character due to agriculture. Street Perrot and colleagues (1989) also found field evidence of erosion from the Late Postclassic and Early Colonial period.

Close examination of the last 3,500 years was made by Sarah O'Hara and colleagues (1993) who reconstructed environmental changes in the Pátzcuaro basin, based on palaeolimnological, geomorphological, and historical evidence.

Environmental changes during the Late Preclassic and Early Classic period (600 BC to AD 650) were associated with the establishment of settlements and crops on steep slopes in the northern part of the basin. The most significant episode of land degradation is nonetheless associated with the arrival of the P'urhépecha (AD 1200), linked to agricultural practice and forest clearance. The lacustrine record did not provide evidence of significant change in the influx of sediments to the lake immediately after the Spanish Conquest. Their account concludes with some remarks about the character of prehispanic agriculture, stating: "There is a move by many environmental agencies [...] for a return to traditional forms of agriculture [...]. As [...] traditional farming techniques cause significant erosion, it is unlikely that a return to prehispanic farming methods would solve the problem of environmental degradation' (O'Hara et al., 1993, p.50)

Georgina Endfield (1998) subsequently examined the environmental impact of the Spanish conquest and land use changes during the Colonial period using historical evidence. The main issue addressed were the environmental consequences of land use change during the Colonial period. Based on the interpretation of a range of historical sources, she proposed that in the immediate post-Conquest period there was a 'recovery' of the landscape derived from the depopulation and the decrease in land use intensity. She also signalled the introduction of conservative livestock-raising practices and regulations by the Spanish. Echoing O'Hara et al. (1993), Endfield (1998) signalled the lack of evidence indicating an immediate environmental impact of land use changes during the Early Colonial period. According to Endfield (1998) it was only from the 18th century that changes in land tenure, population size and drought led to land degradation.

In the field of archaeology, one of the first people to examine human-environment relationships was Pollard (1979, 1982) who proposed a model on the influence of environmental variables on the formation of the Tarascan state. At the end of the 1990s, a regression of Lake Pátzcuaro of about 10 m left uncovered features of intensive wetland agriculture, a practice usually associated with the emergence of centralised power (Fisher et al., 1999). They reached the conclusion that agricultural intensification was not related to demography in Lake Pátzcuaro Basin but with the emergence of elites. In addition, the successive series of canals make them suggest that landscape was modified repeatedly for mitigating the

effects of a highly variable environment. For them erosion during the early Colonial period was caused by large-scale landscape abandonment. In a subsequent study, Fisher and colleagues (2003) re-examined their previous findings, proposing that in the centuries prior to the conquest, a landscape highly dependent on human labour for its maintenance was created and that erosion during the Colonial period was a consequence of the abandonment of the landscape, instigated by demographic collapse. Fisher et al. (2003, 2005) also offers a closing scene of ecological collapse, although in this case it is caused by the interruption of a cultural trajectory. Like O'Hara, suggestions regarding indigenous agriculture were also made, but in this case, supporting its use for present conservation programmes.

These environmental histories were framed in the discussion about the 'pristine myth,' consistent in the view that the landscape of the Americas in the sixteenth century was primarily pristine and wild. This was linked to another myth about the 'ecological Indian' and the debate on whether indigenous practices were conservationist or destructive. Focusing on México, Denevan (1992) posed the idea that erosion was not just the result of the introduction of European systems of management but that it was the hallmark of the landscapes of Central México. Moreover, he proposed that demographic collapse led to the vanishing of 'Indian landscapes' so that by the eighteenth century, the landscape was 'more pristine' than it was before the arrival of the Spaniards. Lake Pátzcuaro constituted an appropriate place for testing Denevan's proposition because it was the centre of the 'Tarascan Empire', which is considered to have been highly populated.

According to Butzer (1993, p.17) the work of O'Hara had important implications for counteracting what he considered as an 'oversimplistic view' that 'indigenous agriculture was operated as a sustainable system' and that 'Spanish colonial forms of land-use were highly destructive'. However, their narrative was not that different from the one they were trying to counteract, only with reverse roles. The problem with both narratives was portraying indigenous agricultural practices as either destructive or conservationist, ascribing inherent qualities to them.

For the environmental historian William Cronon (1992) no matter how persuasive these stories of environmental change may be, their organisation has little to do with nature, as they have to do with human discourse. They are placed in particular historical contexts influencing the content of stories, fulfilling the

ideological needs of the moment. In the case of Lake Pátzcuaro, the historical context in which these environmental narratives emerged was the quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the American continent, which caused great debates about the effects of European colonialism, as well as the emergence of indigenous movements throughout the continent, influencing the reevaluation of their traditional ecological knowledge.

Cronon employs the example of the transformation of the Great Plains and the Dustbowl to show how a same event can be depicted both in positive and negative terms. Blackbourn (2006) also identifies these two types of narratives in the way in which the environmental story of Germany has been told, which he terms as the optimistic and pessimistic approaches. For him neither way of framing this history is really satisfactory, as far as it presumes the existence of an 'unblemished' nature. Similarly, for Armiero (2014, p.243) the idea that the environment can be either destroyed or preserved, leaves no room 'for the multiple interactions which mobilise cultures, politics, and ecologies.' Such propositions are relevant when examining indigenous agriculture and the effects of colonialism on Lake Pátzcuaro landscape. My research focuses less on determining the environmental impact of past human activities in the Lake Pátzcuaro basin than on the historical tracing of these ideas and their effects.

A different approach to the study of human-environment relationships during the colonial period is presented by Endfield's book *Climate and Society in Colonial Mexico* (2008), where she analyses the different factors influencing vulnerability to climatic variability and extreme meteorological events, including patterns of land ownership and social stratification. One of the most compelling arguments in the book, is the idea that climatic events influenced episodes of social unrest. Focusing on the late colonial period, Endfield posits that between the 1690s and the early 1800s repeated periods of anomalous climatic events and subsistence crises may have served to reveal and deepen the social inequalities of colonial Mexico, contributing to local and collective social unrest. My research also looks at the relation between land, the environment, and the colonial system, as it was discussed by elite foresters and postrevolutionary politicians. My main interest is in the different ways in which these relations were portrayed and how they were put to work.

2.5 Histories of the Mexican Revolution

This section of the literature review seeks to provide a historical context for my study period, comprising the postrevolutionary period and its immediate aftermath. The events that occurred during this period are linked with the Mexican Revolution and the ideas and practices that emerged from it. Depending on the criteria, the Mexican Revolution is variously described as having occurred between 1910 and 1920, 1910 and 1915, 1910 and 1917, or 1910 and 1940. Different historiographical approaches held different views about its duration, linked to the degree of popular participation. To be consistent with the current historiography, I will constrain the length of the revolution to the armed phase (1910-1920) and the 'post-revolutionary period' (1920-1940) to describe the reconstruction phase. The first section provides an overview of the Mexican Revolution and the post-revolutionary period. The next section offers an outline of the revolution in Michoacán. I then discuss the diverse ways in which the Mexican Revolution has been interpreted. The last section examines scholarship on the cultural dimension of the Mexican Revolution, as well as recent works on the Lake Pátzcuaro region. The outline aims to serve as a historical frame of reference for the reader to locate some of the events and historical figures mentioned throughout the thesis.

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) is often considered as one of the country's most important socio-political events. Alan Knight (1986) has also considered the Mexican Revolution as one of the greatest upheavals of the 20th century that deserves to be considered among the world's 'great' or 'social' revolutions. Like Knight, Hans Werner Tobler (1994) has compared the Mexican Revolution with other major revolutions (France, China, Russia). The magnitude of the armed struggle, the size of the popular mobilization and the impacts that the Revolution generated in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country, some of which can still be felt, account for this characterisation.

The start of the Mexican Revolution is conventionally set in 1910, its causes were varied, but one of them was the opposition to the government of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911), who had remained in power for more than thirty years, establishing a dictatorial regime. Yet, the popular insurgency had its roots in the difficult situation faced by the people in the countryside, indigenous communities, and urban workers. During the Porfiriato (1876-1910), the *hacendados* appropriated large tracts of land, which meant the inhabitants of the countryside had to hire

themselves to the local estates where they received meagre wages. The workers in the mines and factories also experienced harsh working conditions. This provoked the development of labour movements that were violently repressed. The 1907 financial crisis in the United States also impacted on the development of these problems. The cancellation and collection of credit to industrialists and landowners had an impact on the employment levels and working conditions of workers in the countryside and the city (Garcidiego Dantan, 2003).

The 1910 insurrection, which led to Díaz's fall a year later, began a decade of civil war. The first half of the decade was characterized by an increase in warfare, as guerrilla struggles and government counterinsurgency measures gave way to massive confrontations, first against a military counterrevolutionary regime (1913-14) and then between the different revolutionary factions (1914-15), which had different goals and visions for society. The two main opposing factions were, on the one hand, the forces of Venustiano Carranza, leader of the Constitutionalist faction, and on the other, the popular armies of Villa and Zapata. By 1915, the so-called Constitutionalist coalition had won, but they still had to face five more years of political instability, continued violence, and consequent economic dislocation. In addition to the different revolutionary factions, the United States also got involved in the armed conflict by supporting the factions that perceived more beneficial to their interests. The end of the armed revolution is marked by the last violent change of government in 1920 and the allocation of power to the winning faction, known as the 'Sonoran dynasty' (Knight, 1986).

The years that followed the armed struggle are usually referred to as the 'post-revolutionary period' (1920-1940), indicating both continuity and rupture with the revolutionary movement. The postrevolutionary period is often characterised as an era of reconstruction, a period during which the state was refounded. The first post-revolutionary governments consolidated the new revolutionary regime through building national power and enacting socio-political reforms. Mass publics were also incorporated into the new politics. Although the general violence had stopped, the new revolutionary regime still had to confront a number of internal and external challenges, including opposition from the Catholic Church and foreign oil companies regarding the enforcement of the 1917 Constitution, as well as U.S. suspicion about the character of post-revolutionary policies, accused of Bolshevism.

President Álvaro Obregon (1920-1924) began to implement the principles of the 1917 Constitution, including land distribution, rural education, and labour rights. One of the most remarkable aspects of its administration was the creation of the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP, for its initials in Spanish) in 1921. The philosopher and educator José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) became its first minister (1921-1924), from where he promoted his vision on education and culture. The Calles government (1924-1928) continued with the policies of its predecessor, developing the country's infrastructure through the construction of a road network, irrigation projects, and dams. The Calles government is also characterized by having an anti-clerical stance, instituting a series of laws that sought to eliminate the influence of the Catholic Church over the popular masses, which led to the outbreak of a religious conflict, known as the 'Cristero rebellion' (1926-1929).² In 1929, Calles created the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) which incorporated the major political forces, taking control of the presidential succession. Thus, although Calles' presidency officially ended in 1928, he continued to exercise influence over the political life of the country for the next six years.

During these years (1928-34), Calles and other revolutionaries adopted a more conservative stance, partly to protect their own economic and political interests, banning strikes and withdrawing support from workers' organisations. In addition to this, the effects of the Great Depression on the country's finances, caused the government to back down in the implementation of social reforms. The situation changed in 1934, when the PNR selected the revolutionary general Lázaro Cárdenas as a candidate. Upon reaching the presidency, Cárdenas moved the government to the left, opposing Calles' repressive policies. Through a series of strategic alliances, Cárdenas managed to get rid of Calles, who was reluctant to lose control of the presidency, sending him into exile. Cárdenas' government was characterised by the enactment of radical policies of land and labour reform, socialist education, and economic nationalism.

²The rebels were pro-Catholic militants, who became known as *cristeros* for their battle cry of "Viva Cristo Rey!". A possible translation of the name could be 'Fighters for Christ'.

2.5.1 The Revolution in Michoacán

Unlike other parts of the country, a popular movement did not emerge in Michoacán during the Revolution. According to Boyer (1998) although Michoacán had been the centre of the nineteenth century insurgency movements, the armed revolution of 1910 passed the region by. Most of the locals experienced the revolution as a period of insecurity and violence, which forced part of the population to flee the country. Although it may sound paradoxical, in Michoacán the *haciendas* increased in size during the Revolution, encroaching communal lands. This was in turn the result of an increase in the demand for crops due the destruction of large haciendas in other parts of the country. Although their properties were not considerably affected, the revolution did weaken the political power of the great landowners. After the publication of the Law of Restitution (1915), some communities in the region tried to regain their lands, favouring the emergence of grassroots militancy among landless campesinos, which demanded the application of the agrarian reform, leading to the emergence of an *agrarista* movement in Michoacán after the revolution (Boyer 2003).

Another effect of the 1910 Revolution was the disintegration of the old Porfirian political class in Michoacán. In the 1920s, new political groups appeared on the political scene, vying for local power. While some tried to make the least possible changes to the old order, others sought to transform the socioeconomic structures through the enactment of social reforms. The governors of Michoacán Francisco J. Múgica (1920-1922) and Lázaro Cárdenas (1928-1932) belonged to the latter group, who established links with the labour and agrarian movements (Guerra-Manzo, 2001).

In Michoacán, the *agrarista* movement gained strength in 1920, when the candidate of the Michoacán Socialist Party, General Francisco Múgica became governor, supported by Lázaro Cárdenas, who was then the state's military commander. The first *agrarista* union was founded in November 1921 by representatives of the communities of the Zacapu region, northwest of Lake Pátzcuaro, considered the heart of *agrarismo* in Michoacán. In December of the following year, they created the League of Agrarian Communities and Unions of the state of Michoacán (LCSAEM for its initials in Spanish) to unify the *campesino* movement (Guzmán Avila, 1986).

According to Boyer (1998) the *agrarista* movement did not emerge in indigenous communities with important landholdings but in more or less 'hispanicized' indigenous communities that had lost most of their communal lands in the 19th century. The loss of communal lands contributed to the breakdown of traditional forms of village government, which mixed political and religious authority. Among the communities in the Lake Pátzcuaro region that join the *agrarista* movement were Tzurumutaro, Erongaricuario, Puacuaro, Huecorio, Tzენტენзуаро, San Pedro Pareo, San Bartolo Pareo, Huiramangaro and Arocutin.

Often the *hacendados* employed gunfighters to prevent the communities taking possession of their lands, even though these had been officially granted (Boyer, 2003). For this reason, the Michoacán governor Francisco Múgica, decided to equip the rural defenses with arms so that they could defend their *ejidal* endowments. The application of Múgica's agrarian and labour programme was hampered by its political opponents, facing strong opposition from landowners, the Church, and the federal government. In February 1922, a group of conservative landowners and politicians planned a small rebellion against Múgica, who resigned within a week after hostilities broke out (Boyer, 1998). The following government were much less tolerant towards the *agraristas*. Landowners managed to continue fighting *agraristas* centres with the help of the state authorities and the support of the federal troops, detaining the leader of the *agrarista* movement in 1926 (Guerra-Manzo 2001).

In addition to disputes between agraristas and landowners, Michoacán was the scene of disputes between Catholic militants and *agraristas*, especially after the outbreak of the *cristero* rebellion. In September 1926, *cristero* rebels took up arms against federal troops, administrators, and schoolteachers. The government responded by mobilizing the army and equipping agraristas to fight the *cristeros*. By early 1927, about three thousand *agraristas* in Michoacán were helping the government fight the *cristeros*. However, the anticlericalism of the *agraristas* had nothing to do with their religious beliefs, but with the position of the Catholic Church against the agrarian reform and post-revolutionary policies. The *cristeros* militants, for their part, sought to defend their religious practice, which was connected to other spheres of community life (Boyer 1998, 2003). According to Purnell (1999, p. 18), for *cristero* communities, 'revolutionary agrarianism and

anticlericalism constituted a twofold and simultaneous assault on popular cultures and religious practices, property rights, and local political self-determination'. The conflict ended up connecting the *agrarista* movement with a tenacious defence of anticlericalism and revolution, with close ties to the revolutionary government (Boyer 1998).

2.5.2 Horizons of Interpretation

The events described above have been subject to different interpretations. The first accounts of the revolution were produced by participants and observers during the armed conflict (Barrón, 2004). These early accounts were crucial to legitimizing the emerging post-revolutionary state, within and outside the country. The accounts of foreign observers contributed to generating sympathy for the post-revolutionary project in the international arena. Joseph and Nugent (2003 [1994]) have classified the historiography of the Mexican Revolution into three groups: orthodox or populist, revisionist, and post-revisionist or neo-populist.

The early orthodox vision of the revolution is represented by the pioneer work of the 1920s and 1930s. Allegedly, these early accounts depicted the upheaval in a 'schematic and uncritical fashion', as a 'unified event', emphasising the popular character of the armed struggle. According to Mexican historian Luis Barrón (2004) for this generation of scholars, the revolution was agrarian, popular, nationalist, and anti-imperialist. The history of the Mexican Revolution was the history of the landless against the landowners, of the Mexican workers against foreign industrialists, of a small nation against the imperialist powers. For Joseph and Nugent (2003 [1994], p. 6), however sympathetic these accounts of the revolution may have been, they now have become 'a historiographic artefact'.

In the 1960s, a new wave of studies began to confront the 'old orthodoxy'. According to Barrón (2004) prior to a proper 'historiographical revisionism', there was a 'political revisionism', particularly among Mexican scholars, which was influenced by the tragic events of 1968 in México.³ For the first wave of revisionists, the objective was not to specify historical interpretations, but to understand how we had come to be in this situation, suggesting that the 'crooked lines of reality'

³ The 1968 student movement was a social movement led by university students that demanded greater political freedoms and an end to the authoritarianism of the PRI regime that had been in power for almost 40 years. Protests were violently repressed by the government, leading to the tragic events of October 2, 1968, known as the "Tlatelolco Massacre" when the army and security forces opened fire on the student crowd on Tlatelolco Square.

were nothing more than a consequence of the death of the revolution. In the case of historiographical revisionism, its emergence was enabled by the professionalization of regional history and the opening of new archives. Revisionist studies, mostly regional in scope, questioned the popular, agrarian, and democratic character of the revolution, suggesting that the 'people' were neither its protagonists nor its beneficiaries. In this rendition of the past, the revolution was caused by disagreements among different groups of the elite. When a popular movement did appear, it was co-opted by the middle class. Subsequent popular participation in the revolution was interpreted to be the outcome of political manoeuvring. From this point of view, rather than rupture, the revolution signified the continuity of the 'old regime' (see Knight 1986, Vaughan, 1997; Joseph and Nugent, 2003 [1994]; Boyer 2003, Barrón, 2004 for a discussion of the revisionist thesis).

According to Christopher Boyer (2003) the revisionist thesis was soon echoed in studies of the post-revolutionary era. Scholars began to recognize that few rural communities had spontaneously mobilized in support of the new regime. Subsequent studies indicated that the agrarian reform attracted more cadres of well-off politicians and rural chiefs than the average villager. Agraristas communities were portrayed as opportunist clients of the government, while the Cristero (1926-1929) movement, was seen as genuinely popular. Cárdenas far reaching land programme was likewise downplayed, and the post-revolutionary project to forge a modern citizenry was portrayed as an arbitrary act of social control. The protagonist role of the 'people' was given to the 'state,' which was depicted as an effective manipulator of the masses.

In the 1980s a new wave of studies emerged in response to the revisionist thesis. They questioned the alleged manipulability of the *campesinos*, the homogeneity of the countryside, as well as the characterisation of the post-revolutionary state as overpowering. In the 1980s, it became clear to some scholars that the revisionists had extrapolated their own realities from a strong central state of the 1960s and 1970s and imposed it on an earlier period in history (Knight, 1986). Postrevisionists reasserted the political agency of popular groups and the importance of popular mobilization in the Mexican Revolution. More recent works have focused on examining the relation between popular mobilization and post-

revolutionary state formation, indicating the durability and flexibility of revolutionary traditions.

2.5.3 The Cultural Dimension of Nation-State Formation

Scholars of the Mexican revolution have also emphasised the cultural dimension of nation-state formation. The work of late Marxist theorists, particularly that of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, has been influential in such formulations. Their work emphasized the importance of ideology in the reproduction of economic structures, shifting the focus from the study of structure to the superstructure, to use Marxist terms. Avoiding an instrumentalist vision of the state, Gramsci (1971) stressed the role of culture in his theorization of the state as ‘the ethical state’ or ‘cultural state’ that works propagating the culture of the ruling class, proposing the notion of hegemony as consensual rule. Consent to capitalist rule is achieved when the values of the ruling class become the accepted cultural norm. Writing during the fascist rule of Italy, Gramsci offered the insight that the durability of the regime was due to its ‘political power, to hegemony, consent with the threat of coercion’ (Krause and Bressan, 2017).

Building on Gramsci, Louis Althusser (1971) proposed that the state could not only be reduced to the ‘repressive state apparatus’, but also included institutions from the civil society or ‘ideological state apparatuses’ such as the school and the church, through which ideology is disseminated. Ultimately, Gramsci notes, consent is won through ‘wars of position’, that is, the struggle between two hegemonic principles for the ‘appropriation’ of ideological elements. Said struggle can lead to the ‘disarticulation’ of the previous ideology and the ‘rearticulation’ of its elements in a new form, which becomes the basis for consensus and hegemonic rule. However, if consent fails, the apparatus of state coercive power can enforce discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively.

Drawing on these insights, post-revisionist thinkers have argued that the process of state formation in post-revolutionary México required hegemonic consensus. Joseph and Nugent (2003[1994]) have pointed out the role of ‘popular culture’ within state formation, which they defined as ‘the symbols and meanings embedded in the day-to-day practices of subordinated groups,’ which are produced in relation to a dominant culture through a ‘dialectic of cultural struggle’ (Joseph and Nugent, 2003 [1994], p. 17). Drawing on Althusser’s notion of ‘ideological state

apparatuses,' Vaughan (1997) has examined the role of rural schools as arenas for cultural politics during the postrevolutionary period, indicating their importance in achieving hegemony. According to Vaughan (1997), postrevolutionaries had great hopes on the school's potential to transform rural people. However, she also observes that this occurred at a time in which the state was still weak while social groups were highly mobilized. Therefore, she argues that 'if the school functioned to inculcate state ideology for purposes of rule, it also served communities when they needed to contest state policies' (Vaughan, 1997, p.7).

Regarding the development of rural people's political consciousness, Vaughan argues that 'the revolution empowered the peasantry not only because the peasantry mobilised but because the peasantry gained space as a result of statelessness and the dynamic process of state creation' (1997, p. 10). Similarly, Boyer (2003, p. 6) considers that 'popular class groups [...] were all incorporated into the political sphere, both because they demanded to have their voices heard and because postrevolutionary leaders sought to build political clientele'. The real cultural revolution, Vaughan argues, lay 'not in the state project but in the dialogue between state and society that took place around that project' (Vaughan, 1997, p. 20). The orchestration of a hegemonic discourse was successful because 'it allowed for regional diversity and for multiple discourses in the local level.' (Vaughan, 1997, p. 22). Crucially, Vaughan (1997) observes, hegemony is a temporary pact between the rulers and the ruled that can be broken; the events of 1968 in Mexico are, in this sense, seen as a consequence of the breaking of said pact.

The notion of the Revolution as cultural transformation is also present in Rick A. López (2010). He studies the process by which the popular arts became a symbol of Mexican culture and identity, serving as an entry point to discuss the creation of an 'ethnicized *Mexicanidad*.' According to López (2010), prior to the revolution, popular arts were not seen as a proud symbol of national authenticity, but as an embarrassing evidence of backwardness. The dominant idea of a Mexican nation was that of 'the elite and middle classes whose solidarity derived from class interests and a shared vision of universal modernity' (López, 2010 p. 13-14). According to López (2010, p.19) the postrevolutionary critique of Porfirio Díaz was not that he had 'overmodernized México but that he had relied on methods and assumptions that failed to modernize it adequately'. So that while there were historical precedents, such as pre-revolutionary patriotism, it was only after the

revolution that an inclusive broad-based model of Mexican identity was formulated. It is in this sense that López (2010) states that the impacts of the Mexican Revolution were less economic and political than they were cultural. Culturally speaking, he states, the revolution was transformative.

The attempted cultural revolution that the Revolutionary state undertook was characterised by ‘nationalism, anticlericalism, agrarian reform, labour mobilization, educational programmes, artistic projects and party formation’ (Knight, 2003 [1994], p. 56). For Alan Knight (2013), the creation of a national culture involved a double process of ‘indianizing’ the Mexican population and ‘Mexicanizing’ the indigenous population (Knight, 2013). The *indianization* of the Mexican population, involved the selective valuation, dissemination, and adoption of elements of the indigenous cultures already labelled as Mexican, by the non-indigenous population. Whereas the *mexicanization* of the indigenous population involved the adoption of elements from the national hegemonic culture by the indigenous populations. This process has also been called by Mary K. Vaughan (1997) the ‘browning of the nation’ and by López (2010) as ‘ethnicization’. For López (2010), it was the promotion of an ‘ethnicized’ nationality that helped transform México’s population into a nation.

2.5.4 Postrevolutionary Indigenismo

This set of attitudes and practices directed towards indigenous peoples and their cultures were framed within the discursive practice of *indigenismo*, characterised by the positive affirmation of the expressive elements of contemporary indigenous cultures, seen as the source of originality and authenticity of Mexican culture. The term also refers to certain cultural and development policies aimed at indigenous populations that sought to integrate them into the project of a modern nation. The Mexican philosopher and historian of ideas Luis Villoro (2000, 1996) defined the *indigenismo* as an ideology, a vision of the indigenous by a non-indigenous. Whereas Henri Favre defines it as ‘a current of opinion favourable to the Indians’ and ‘an ideological movement of literary and artistic expression, but also political and social’ (Favre 1998, p. 7-8).

The *indigenismo* as a set of policies and ideas destined to govern the indigenous population has been traced back to Colonial times. For the Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla as a supra ethnic category, the category of ‘Indian’ or

‘indigenous’ lacks any descriptive value, instead what it does is to ‘denote a particular relationship between them and other sectors of the global social system of which they are part’ (1995, p. 342). In this sense, the category of indigenous designates first and foremost the condition of being colonised, denoting the existence of a colonial relation. Post-revolutionary *indigenismo* represented another non-indigenous formulation about the indigenous.

Post-revolutionary *indigenismo* was ideologically opposed to *hispanismo*, of a conservative character, which claimed Hispanic culture as the essence of Mexican nationality. According to Ricardo Pérez Monfort (2007, p.527), for the *hispanistas*, Catholicism and the Spanish language were determining factors in the definition of ‘the Mexican’, considering that ‘the conquest and the colony had been painful but necessary events to incorporate the Mexican nation into the ‘civilizing path’. However, the difference between *indigenistas* and *hispanistas* did not reside in the rejection or acceptance of the Spanish cultural legacy —just like the *hispanistas*, most revolutionaries believed that the Spanish conquest had pulled Mexico into civilization— but in the inclusiveness of the nation model proposed. Creole nationalism was replaced by an integrationist nationalist discourse.

In general, the post-revolutionary project did not seek to preserve the indigenous as a distinctive cultural universe, but rather to make indigenous cultures an element of Mexican culture and identity. For Vaughan (1997, p.5) ‘the multiethnic elements of popular culture [...] were celebrated and packaged as national culture to serve as a point of departure for modernization’. Indigenous culture needed to be preserved but within a modern national subject. The final aim of the state cultural programme was the creation of a *mestizo* nation, of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage, linked by a common language and culture. Thus, the adoption of cultural elements from various regions and cultures (cultural *mestizaje*) became the defining practice of Mexico and the Mexican.

2.5.5 Studies of Cultural Production

Partly because of the importance given to the arts in the construction of Mexican identity, aesthetics has gained importance as a topic within studies of post-revolutionary nation-state formation. In the introduction to their edited volume Vaughan and Lewis (2006) consider the role of popular imagery in the construction of postrevolutionary nationalist aesthetics. López (2010) study of popular arts

examines the process by which handicrafts won validation, involving complex relationships between artisans, intellectuals, and the state. Writing about muralism, Mary K. Coffey (2002, 2012) treats murals as technologies of truth. Muralism, she believes, helped constitute a national citizenry through the governmental apparatuses of heritage, particularly museums, establishing and communicating the facts of national history, identity, and culture. Photohistorian John Mraz (2009) has also emphasized the role of modern visual cultures in the construction of Mexican identity. The role of architecture in the construction of a national identity and memory has also been explored. For some the different architectural styles that emerged during this period revealed the existence of ‘many Méxicos’, while for others reflected the multifaceted character of the myth of the revolution (Olsen, 2006, 2008, Carranza, 2010). Although it has received less attention, cultural historians and musicologists have also examined the connection between music and the formation of the nation-state, focusing on the study of Mexican composers and the role of their work in the construction of representations about the Mexican (Vaughan and Velázquez, 2006; Madrid, 2008; Saavedra, 2019). Another set of works has focused on the role of folklorists in the ‘invention’ of indigenous music and its dissemination during the postrevolutionary period through the media and the school system (Alonso Bolaños, 2008; Reynoso, 2009).

Performance studies scholar Ruth Hellier Tinoco (2011) has also stressed the role of the SEP in the study and dissemination of indigenous dances and music. Her study focuses specifically on the Lake Pátzcuaro region, stressing its importance for postrevolutionary nation building. She examines how two bodily acts, the ‘Night of the Dead’ and the ‘Dance of the Old Men’ have become identity references of México and Mexicanness, interconnecting nationalist, indigenist and touristic agendas. To address this, she coins the term ‘performisms’ encompassing ‘matters of process, practice, doctrine, and theory’ (Hellier Tinoco 2011, p.38). According to the author, ‘processes of performism’ involved a series of interrelated practices, including appropriation, representation, framing, gaze, essentialization, authentication, commodification, and commoditization, which she sees as inserted in ‘hegemonic projects’ (Hellier Tinoco, 2011, p.47-48) Her work, however, overlooks how in various occasions indigenous people intentionally engaged in their own self-presentation, contributing to the construction of hegemony.

Jennifer Jolly's book *Creating Pátzcuaro. Creating México* (2018) also highlights Pátzcuaro importance for postrevolutionary nation building. She argues that during the 1930s Pátzcuaro became a 'microcosm' of cultural power, as a result of President Cárdenas' personal interest in the region, emphasizing its role in creating 'national institutions' and 'governance techniques' relevant to the nation in general, as well as the central place it acquired within the national imagination. These technologies of nation building included cultural tourism, art and visual culture, and the creation of historical preservation zones, examining their role in the creation of an image of Pátzcuaro. This image of the region was, according to Jolly, ideologically loaded, working as a mask that aimed to conceal Cárdenas' project of radical modernization. Therefore, for her, representing Pátzcuaro was a prelude to its transformation.

While Cárdenas was notably interested in Pátzcuaro, by giving him a protagonist role in the shaping of the region, she overlooks how his actions were themselves shaped by a broader context, as well as the role of popular actors in shaping and implementing the revolutionary agenda. On the other hand, while Jolly points out the importance of aesthetics for nation-state building, her work poses a difficult division between image and reality. In the case of Pátzcuaro, and as discussed above, such a division is problematic because it presupposes the existence of an underlying reality, an authentic culture, and a real history, which is substantially different from the one represented. The emphasis of this thesis is less about revealing the underlying truth hidden by visual aesthetics than on its constitutive role, examining how it contributed to shape Lake Pátzcuaro landscape.

2.5.6 Revolutionary Nature

As evidenced by the works discussed above, scholars from different disciplines continue to examine the cultural dimension of the revolution. However, and despite the great attention that the post-revolutionary cultural programme has attracted, few have considered its environmental dimension. Two authors that have advanced an environmental interpretation of the revolution are Emily Wakild and Christopher Boyer. In her study about national parks in revolutionary México, Wakild (2007) notes that the creation of national parks fit into revolutionaries' agenda for social change. According to Wakild (2007, p. 14-15) when citizens 'fashioned, visited, used, and discussed the parks they revealed the significant role

the environment played in their nation-building'. Both Wakild (2007) and Boyer (2007) highlight the role of scientific foresters in the development of environmental protection schemes. Urquiza (2014) also stresses the importance of scientific ideas in the development of theories about property and conservation. The type of preservation promoted by these scientists has been described by Boyer (2007, p. 97) as 'scientific paternalism', that is, 'the belief that the state, according to the prescriptions of scientific experts, had a moral obligation to transform peasant culture and practice to make them more modern, profitable and ecological'. However, as Wakild (2007, p. 17) convincingly argues, even though 'nationalistic plans appeared from upper levels of the federal government, campesinos' demands reordered nationalist agendas.' Referring specifically to Cárdenas policies, Boyer and Wakild (2012, p.74) argue that a fundamental element of his social and political agenda 'was to rationalize and expand the use of natural resources in tandem with social reform', through measures such as 'conservationist regulations, the creation of national parks, and a massive push to cooperativize work in the countryside', a process they have called 'social landscaping'. Similarly, Greta Marchesi (2017) argues that human–nature relations were constitutive of state visions of Revolutionary citizenship. This thesis engages with such questions by examining how conservation discourses and practices established a series of ideas about the non-human world and how people should relate to it, so that to be a good Mexican citizen also involved protecting the country's natural patrimony, becoming a moral obligation.

2.6 México in the International Arena

The purpose of this section is to present an overview of Mexico's international relations during the revolutionary period. In this sense, it is important to note that although the revolution was an internal conflict, its development was also influenced by the international context. Likewise, post-revolutionary policies were not only the result of the revolution but were also affected by processes unfolding beyond the national borders. Post-revolutionary cultural production and scientific research were also influenced by international trends. Overseas scientists and intellectuals also participated in the production of cultural discourses about Lake Pátzcuaro, which circulated both inside and outside the country. For López (2010) the construction of a national identity and culture was not solely a local process,

rather it was a transnational process forged through intimate interactions with other cultures and nations within structures of inequality. Vaughan and Lewis (2006, p.4) have also noted that the repertoire of images, icons, and sounds deployed by postrevolutionaries was, to a large degree, ‘the shared product in an ongoing transnational process of modern identity construction’. Working specifically on the topic of national parks in México, Wakild (2007) has likewise pointed out that their creation formed an international endeavour developed through exchanges among different nations. As many of these relations and cultural affinities were first established during the Porfiriato, this section begins by outlining México’s relations with other countries during this period. I then talk about the impacts of the Mexican Revolution in the cultural and political relations of México with other countries, as well as México’s foreign policy during the Cárdenas administration. Lastly, I discuss the impacts of global events on México.

2.6.1 Porfiriato

The economic policy of the Porfiriato (1876-1911), based on foreign investment, led to the establishment of economic relations with various countries, particularly with the United States. The relationship between the two countries was nonetheless restricted to the economic sphere. The mining and oil industries and the construction of infrastructure were developed with the predominant participation of U.S. capital. However, the territorial expansion of the United States in the Caribbean and the constant threats to Central American countries led México to diversify foreign investment. To counterbalance the growing influence of the United States in the country, México established political and economic relations with France (1880), Great Britain (1884),⁴ and Japan (1888) (Lajous Vargas, 2012; Palacios, 2012; Peddie, 2016).

Porfirio Díaz’s open-door immigration policy also favoured the establishment of Chinese and Japanese colonies in sparse populated areas of the country. Despite this policy, dominant racial ideas led to discrimination against the Chinese population (Knight, 2013). The racial theories of the ‘scientists,’ as the advisers of Porfirio Díaz were called, associated negative stereotypes to Chinese people. Unlike China, Japan was perceived as a modern country and an example to

⁴ Relations with France and Great Britain were interrupted by the wars of intervention, in which these countries participated (1838–1839 and 1861–1867).

follow (Cortés, 1980). The economic modernization of the country initiated during the Meiji period contributed to the formation of this positive image of Japan, whose material progress was seen as an evidence of their racial superiority. Therefore, Japanese immigrants were perceived to exert a beneficial influence on the country (Peddie, 2016).

The influence of Japanese culture was manifested in gardening and literature. The arrival of the famous Japanese landscaper, Tatsugoro Matsumoto, in México marked an important moment in this story. He was hired by Díaz to take charge of the gardens of the Chapultepec Castle in México City. He was also commissioned to create a nursery, introducing and popularizing different plant species and gardening techniques (Corona, 2018). Japanese culture also left its mark on literature, with the introduction and development of haikú by Mexican writers (Ota, 2014).

However, of all the countries mentioned above, France was the one that had the greatest impact in the cultural sphere. This was due in part to France's long presence in México. Although the French imperialist project in México failed, French culture was adopted by members of the elite, for whom it became a symbol of modernity and status (Tenenbaum 1994). French positivism also impacted Porfirio Díaz's way of governing through his group of advisers. The educational project of the Minister of Education, Justo Sierra, was also influenced by French educational ideas. The government of Porfirio Díaz also developed a scholarship system for the training of human resources in France, including sciences and arts. Artists who would later contribute to the post-revolutionary cultural project relied on the Porfiriato as a source of training. Porfirio Díaz also sought the insertion of Mexican intellectuals in European circles, supporting their participation in a number of international conferences (Meyer, 2011).

2.6.2 Revolutionary México

Although only the United States intervened directly in the conflict, during the Revolution, both the U.S. and European powers sought to protect their economic interests in México. After the triumph of the Constitutionalist rebellion (1914), Carranza forced the departure of most European diplomats who had recognized the Huerta government. The application of the Constitution of 1917 also constituted a point of friction between México and the United States and Great

Britain, whose economic interests in the oil industry were at risk. This led to the progressive deterioration of diplomatic and economic relations between México and the European powers.

In the case of the United States, bilateral relations were brought to a breaking point when the ambassador James Sheffield (1924-1927) convinced the U.S. State Department that the 'Bolshevik' Mexican President Calles (1924-1928) was trying to seize U.S. oil company lands. After an unsuccessful attempt to gain public support for a military invasion of México, the United States government appointed Dwight Morrow (1927-1930) as its new ambassador, who along with his wife Elizabeth C. Morrow played a key role in the popularization of Mexican culture in the United States, improving cultural and political relations between both countries (López, 2010).

The loss of diplomatic relations with Western Europe led México to establish relations with the Soviet Union in 1924, hoping to find a diplomatic interlocutor that would counteract the predominant role of the United States. However, over the next years, México and the Soviet Union did not find points of encounter. In 1930, México broke up diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in the context of the Sino-Soviet border conflict. In the following years, the only relationship between México and the Soviet Union was through groups of political sympathizers who promoted the resumption of relations between the two countries.

In the cultural sphere, things took a different course. The Mexican revolution and its political and cultural project attracted left-wing intellectuals and artists from the United States, Europe, and Latin America who acted as 'cultural ambassadors' for México in their countries. These cultural ambassadors helped popularize Mexican art and culture, improving the image of México abroad. Overseas intellectuals also contributed to the elevation of popular culture and its adoption among the Mexican middle and upper classes, who expressed an ambivalent sentiment towards the nationalist project of 'indigenizing' Mexican culture (Delpar, 1995; López, 2010).

Cultural and political relations between México and the United States improved during Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lázaro Cárdenas' (1934-1940) administrations, as a result of the 'good neighbor policy' and the similarities between their political agendas. As a foreign policy, the good neighbor policy was

aimed at improving its relationship with Latin American countries and gain their respect and trust (Spellacy, 2006). The ‘good neighbor’ policy also found coincidences in the post-revolutionary foreign policy based on the principle of non-intervention and respect for national sovereignty. This convergence between the Cárdenas and Roosevelt agendas was partly due to the effects of the Great Depression in both countries, who agreed on the importance of the role of the State and social and economic reform (Knight, 2016).

The relationship between México and the United States experienced a moment of tension in the context of the expropriation of the oil industry in 1938. Since the promulgation of the 1917 Constitution, the post-revolutionary governments had tried to renegotiate the oil concessions to foreign companies. The oil expropriation affected not only the United States, but also British companies, who owned more than half of the industry. As a result, Great Britain broke diplomatic relations with México, while the United States requested prompt compensation of the companies affected (Herrera and Santa Cruz, 2011).

Other events that marked México’s international relations included its entry into the League of Nations in 1931, reactivating political ties with Europe. Also, in 1931, México created its first embassy in Europe, with the establishment of the Spanish republic. These events allowed México to remerge on the international scene. Cárdenas’ international policy during these years was characterized by the rejection of fascist and totalitarian regimes and their policy of political asylum, which was linked to his conception of national sovereignty. Beyond the question of the state’s control of natural resources, for Cárdenas national sovereignty involved solidarity between nations, including the right of asylum (Gall, 2002).

Notably, in 1936 México provided political asylum to the political opponent of Stalin and longtime leader of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil war, México also provided humanitarian asylum to people from the civilian population that were fleeing the war. During the conflict, México maintained important activism within the League of Nations. After the military defeat of the republic in 1939, México gave political asylum to thousands of refugees and did not recognise the Francoist government, maintaining relations with the government of the republic in exile established in México (Pi-Suñer et al., 2011).

In relation to the European conflict, Cárdenas' position was articulated by the principles of respect for sovereignty, international collaboration, and neutrality, as well as that of not recognizing governments emanating from violence or armed conquests. According to Olivia Gall (2002), Cárdenas' antifascist policy gave to the Revolutionary discourse an internationalist dimension.

2.6.3 The Second World War

Towards the end of the 1930s, the imminent outbreak of World War II affected the character of relations between México and the United States. U.S. policies sought to ensure the cooperation of Latin American nations in the war effort, transforming the 'good neighbor' policy and the Pan Americanist discourse into a discourse of cooperation and defence between the nations of the continent. Following the outbreak of WWII, México established a neutral, pro-allied stance. However, around 1939, the neutral countries, including México, were the target of war propaganda that sought to gain public opinion. This led Cárdenas to issue a provision that obliged journalists to keep to the official position, expelling the head of German propaganda in the country in 1940.

In 1940, the United States created the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), coordinated by Nelson Rockefeller, which sought to extend U.S. influence and counteract Nazi and fascist propaganda, as well as the influence of communism and the Soviet Union in Latin America, considered anti-national and anti-American (in its continental sense) (Delpar, 1995; Loaeza, 2013). Thus, the cooperation agreements between México and the United States involved both political and ideological aspects, which extended to the post-war period.

Cárdenas' successor to the presidency, Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), strengthened México's role in hemispheric security and generated a political and commercial alliance between the United States and México. In 1941, México and the United States activated cooperation mechanisms before the imminent entry of the United States into the war. Likewise, México re-established diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom (1941), interrupted by the oil expropriation, and with the Soviet Union (1943). México officially joined the war in May 1942, after German submarines sank Mexican merchant ships. Among the measures taken by the Mexican government, was the canceling of Japanese fishing licenses on the Pacific Coast. German and Japanese residents on the Pacific Coast were also evacuated

from the area (Humphreys, 2016 [1982]). However, México's direct participation in World War II was limited, its main role consisting of economic and political cooperation with the United States and the allies. México's participation in the war also followed the convictions and changes of the new elite in power, contributing to the strengthening of Ávila Camacho's political alliances.

3 Methodology

I have primarily used archival research to document the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape during the postrevolutionary period. Since much of my work is concerned with the work of state institutions, most of the documents come from governmental agencies and public organizations. Other documentary sources employed were newspaper records and periodical publications that I accessed through university and public libraries. Newspaper records provided insight into popular views on the topics studied in this thesis, as well as the reception of government programmes in the region. I visited seventeen archives or libraries in total. Digital libraries and collections were also consulted to access key publications published at that time that are difficult to find or are missing in physical locations, as well as graphic materials such as films and photographs.

My archival research was conducted in two parts. The first research trip was carried out from July to September 2018, the purpose was to examine the content of potential archives in México City and Michoacán. I spent the first two months working with archives in México City, working in Michoacán during the last month. The archives visited in Michoacán were located in Morelia and Pátzcuaro. The second trip was undertaken from April to August 2019, during which I continued examining national and municipal archives and conducted fieldwork in the Lake Patzcuaro region. Research at national archives was conducted during the first month. I then spent the next six weeks working on the historical archives located in Morelia, after which I moved to Pátzcuaro. During the last two months I combined archival work and fieldwork in the Lake Pátzcuaro region. I spent seven months in total conducting research in México.

Visiting the archives was without a doubt an emotional and instructive experience. Feelings of excitement and restlessness were present during my stay in México City. There was the thrill of working in México City's archives and libraries. The tedium of commuting every day in México City. Then, when my stay in México City ended, there was the emotion of travelling back home, to Morelia, where the archives were a couple of blocks from my house. In every archive visited there was the pleasure of being in the reading room, always quiet, sometimes in the company of other researchers, whose presence and actions created a working atmosphere. Perhaps the most intense feeling came from the handling of historical documents,

which I had to handle with extreme care, affecting how I perceived their value and importance.

While my ‘research toolkit’ was very diverse, I had no previous experience doing archival research. Engaging in historical research thus felt very much like an adventure, making me feel both anxious and excited. Although I had taken the relevant training and accessed the archives’ online resources, many collections were uncatalogued making the location of materials difficult. This is particularly true for AGN uncatalogued collections, given their scale and strict consultation procedures that limited the number of items I could consult per day. For moments working with the AGN uncatalogued collections felt like trying to breach a fortress, which is what the building actually looks like, impenetrable without the key that opens its functioning and organization (Figure 3.1). In this context, locating useful materials felt like a great achievement. Moreover, sorting out the inherent challenges of archival research helped me gain confidence in my abilities to do historical research.



Figure 3.1. Side view of the AGN building in México City. Photograph by the author.

Decentralized archives from national institutions and university archives were generally easier to navigate, having the advantages of a small size archive and the infrastructure of a well-established institution. In the case of municipal archives, although none of them had catalogues, it was easier to search in their collections, partly because of their size and more flexible consultation procedures. As can be inferred from the previous exposition, the physical spaces of the archive range from entire buildings and numerous personnel to a single storage room with only one

person in charge, the reading room reduced to the archivist's desk. I went from working in a room with many other people under staff supervision to working completely in solitude (Figure 3.2). In some cases, the staff pointed me to relevant materials and other primary and secondary sources, working not only as a gatekeeper of the materials but also as an informant and a 'mediator' (Marquis, 2006). Of course, archivists' role as mediators goes beyond what I just described, for Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (2011) this role has to do with the way in which archival practices shape the documentary record.



Figure 3.2. Reading room of the Historical Water Archive. Photograph by the author.

A great source of disappointment when working on municipal archives was finding out that some of them had disappeared or been severely damaged. This was the case of the municipal archive of Erongaricuaró lost in a fire in 2009 due to the poor storage conditions, someone in the municipal presidency told me, and the municipal archive of Quiroga recovered from a landfill site, which has just been rehabilitated. The archivist, himself a historian, told me this story in an epic tone, making me feel fortunate. In this sense, it is important to recognise the role of archivists (past and present) shaping this research, not only through interpersonal interactions -occasionally limited to the handing over of documents- but also through their work in the production and maintenance of the archive, or as in this case, in the production of its heritage value, insofar as the idea of heritage always involves some type of risk, imminent or future. For Derrida 'there would indeed be

no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of a forgetfulness' (Derrida 1995[1996], p. 19).

In this sense it is important to note that, as with heritage and memory, the creation of an archive also involves a selection process. This process of inclusion and exclusion not only determines the content of the archive but is also present in the way archives operate, described by Foucault as a general 'system of discursivity', a system of exclusion that establishes the possibilities of what can be said (Foucault, 1972, p.129). Similarly and referring specifically to the documentary archive, scholars in archival studies Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook state: 'Archives—as records—wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity, over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002, p. 2).

By describing my first-hand experience in the archive, I have tried to make visible what is often hidden or taken for granted. The researcher's subjective experience, the materiality of the archive and its agency. In doing so I am trying to show how my strengths and limitations have influenced this research and to acknowledge the archive's existence not only as an object, but as an active agent, constructing, rather than just registering the past, inevitably influencing my own accounts. Control over the research process by the researcher is thus only partial, with the original plan subject to successive modifications.

3.1 Archival Sources

The archives visited can be classified into two main categories, comprising those from governmental agencies and those assembled by cultural and educational institutions. In the first case, the documents stored were produced by governmental offices from the three administrative levels (federal, state, and municipal) and are directly linked to their work. Archives from cultural and educational institutions are those kept by universities and museums (national and local), which record their institutional work and that of their members.

The AGN is México's most important historical archive. The archive stores historical documents from Colonial times to the present. I was specifically interested in 20th century public administration records. The archive is organised into fonds (collections), series, boxes, volumes, and folders. I accessed five collections (see Table 1), two of which (SARH, SEP) were uncatalogued. The SEP

historical archive had recently been incorporated into the AGN, which is why it had not been described. The problem of searching an uncatalogued collection was exacerbated by the volume of materials stored (the SARH collection alone has more than 4,000 boxes). In the case of the SARH, I consulted secondary sources on topics related to my research in order to guide my search. To solve the lack of search aids while in the archive, I did a kind of ‘random sampling’ of the boxes to get an idea of their organization. Inevitably, the amount of material consulted is but a tiny part of the historical records kept in the collection.

There is however a strong impulse to find the answers in the archive. Derrida’s notion of ‘archive fever’ or ‘*mal d’archive*’ also refers to this ‘compulsion’ that he associates with a desire to ‘return to the authentic and singular origin’ (Derrida, 1996 [1995], p. 85). While a part of me thinks that if I had kept looking, I would have found the answers to my questions, I am aware that completeness is just an illusion and archives are by their own nature fragmentary. So that it would no matter if I had been able to go through the 4,000 boxes, I would still have unresolved questions.

The collections consulted in the AGN provided information about the work carried out by various state institutions in the region during the mid-twentieth century, comprising government programmes during Lázaro Cárdenas’ period, educational and cultural programmes directed by the SEP, environmental protection schemes and scientific research in the Lake Pátzcuaro basin. I also gained access to Lázaro Cárdenas’ memoirs stored in the *Biblioteca del Museo Nacional de Historia* (National History Museum Library, BNHM), which were accessed digitally.

Another source of information on the Lake Pátzcuaro basin was the Historical Water Archive, which stores documents about the administration and control of water resources by the federal government. The archive also preserves documents related to the changes in the legal and administrative status of Lake Pátzcuaro.

The archives of universities and museums provided information about the work of these institutions and of specific individuals whose work played an important role in establishing ideas about Lake Pátzcuaro character. The documents collected provide information about their participation in public affairs,

as well as their connections with other intellectuals, public officers, and local people.

While historical records are the product of the functioning of an institution, such institutions are also produced through their own records. Lázaro Cárdenas' papers construct Cárdenas as a president by keeping records related to his exercise of authority. Moreover, the authorship of those papers is not limited to the person who originally wrote them, but they are the product of multiple authors. The same happens with university and museum archives. If one fails to recognise this, there is the risk of seeing Cárdenas or governmental institutions as the ultimate source of power or attributing too much power to their actions.

I have tried to counteract this by looking at local archives. While they are also institutional records linked with the exercise of municipal authority, they provide insight into the convergence or divergence of interests between local and federal actors, revealing the region's social and political heterogeneity. The materials collected show the articulation of interests and negotiation of power between the local elite, municipal authorities, local political groups, and the federal government. Likewise, since local people often submitted requests to municipal authorities on different matters of federal scope, the content of the requests and the answers to them shows the reaction of the local population to government programmes, as well as the position of local authorities.

In addition to written documents, the archives mentioned above also store graphic materials. In the case of the AGN, the photographs collected are related to the work of public officials in the region. In the case of state and municipal archives, the photographs collected are not part of institutional records, they consist of a series of postcards depicting landscapes, architecture, and monuments of the region. The photographic collections of some university archives have a similar character. In most cases, photographs had been collected by university professors and donated to their institutes. These photographs lack information about their authorship or creation date. A different type of photographic collections are those that store the artistic production of individual photographers. This is the case of the archive of the IIE-UNAM, whose collections are structured into author series, art historians, and archive series.

3.1.1 Newspaper Records and Periodical Publications

Newspaper records and periodical publications were mainly accessed at library facilities. Other publications were obtained from digital repositories (see Table 2). Periodical publications consist of magazines, bulletins, and academic journals, published by government departments, international organizations, civil society organizations, and research institutes.

The newspapers consulted were limited to state and local publications. The main newspaper consulted was the *Heraldo Michoacano*, whose records covered the final years of my work period. I also consulted the tourism magazine *MAPA* (1934), created by the journalist and writer Francisco Borja Bolardo (Figure 3.3). The magazine published articles about a variety of subjects, including descriptions of tourist destinations, local traditions, and arts, as well as opinion pieces on topics related to the promotion of tourism.

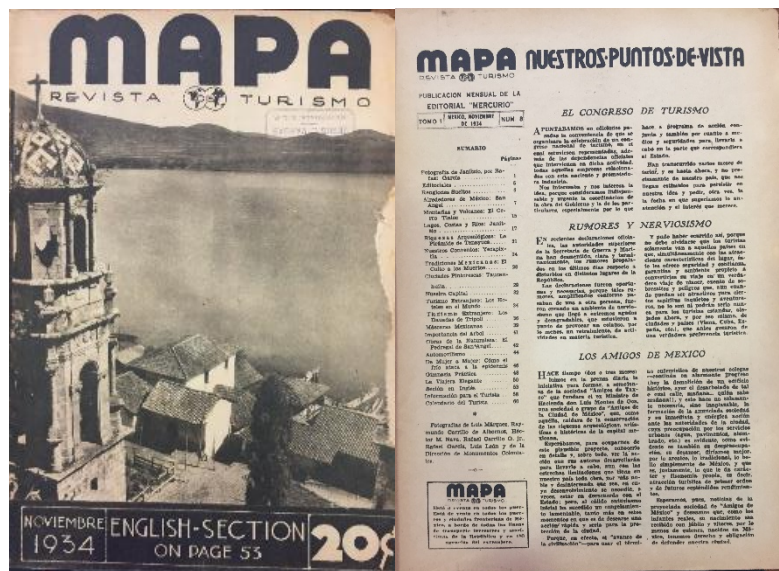


Figure 3.3. Cover and table of contents of the magazine *MAPA*, showing a photograph of Janitzio.

Government periodicals can be categorized into two groups, bulletins on the work of government offices and divulgation magazines. The later were conceived as a means of propagating the country's new values, having a role in the state cultural programme. The covers of the magazines displayed artworks. Given the literacy levels in rural areas at the time, one may think that they had a very limited impact. Nevertheless, an important component of a literacy project was the production of reading materials. Therefore, it may be argued that their publication and diffusion took part in the creation of a literate population.

I accessed the publications of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the Forest Hunting and Fishing Department (DFCP). It is important to mention that the DFCP was conceived not merely as a governmental office but also as a scientific organization. Since research on inland water bodies was focused on Lake Pátzcuaro, the bulletin of the DFCP constituted a central source to understand the evolution of scientific research in the field.

The bulletin of the DFCP focused on reporting the progress of the programmes undertaken by each of the department's sections, its contents consisted of law decrees, reports of activities, and occasionally, transcriptions of conferences. Reports were published monthly and annually. The bulletin also sought to be a platform for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. Accordingly, they published original research papers and republished influential scientific papers to broaden their circulation in México. With the same objective, they also printed informative texts about the status of national parks and conservation programmes in different parts of the world. These were intended to contextualize their work since they saw themselves as participating in a worldwide conservation movement. I also looked at the reports and papers of the Pátzcuaro Limnological Station, created by the DFCP, which carried out limnological research in the area.

The DFCP also published a magazine entitled *Proteccion a la Naturaleza* (Figure 3.4). The magazine had an informative character and was aimed at the rural population, its contents ranged from the presentation of new programmes and regulations issued by the department to articles about the importance of the forest, environmental problems, new forestry methods and agricultural techniques. Their objective was to propagate modern scientific knowledge and practices in order to shape people's relationship with nature. The magazine also published poems and literary essays to increase peoples' affection for nature. A permanent section was dedicated to disseminating guidelines for a good diet among the rural population. Another magazine consulted was *México Forestal* published by the Mexican Forestry Society, which played a key role in creating the first forest conservation laws. The magazine provides an insight into conservation discourses during postrevolutionary México.

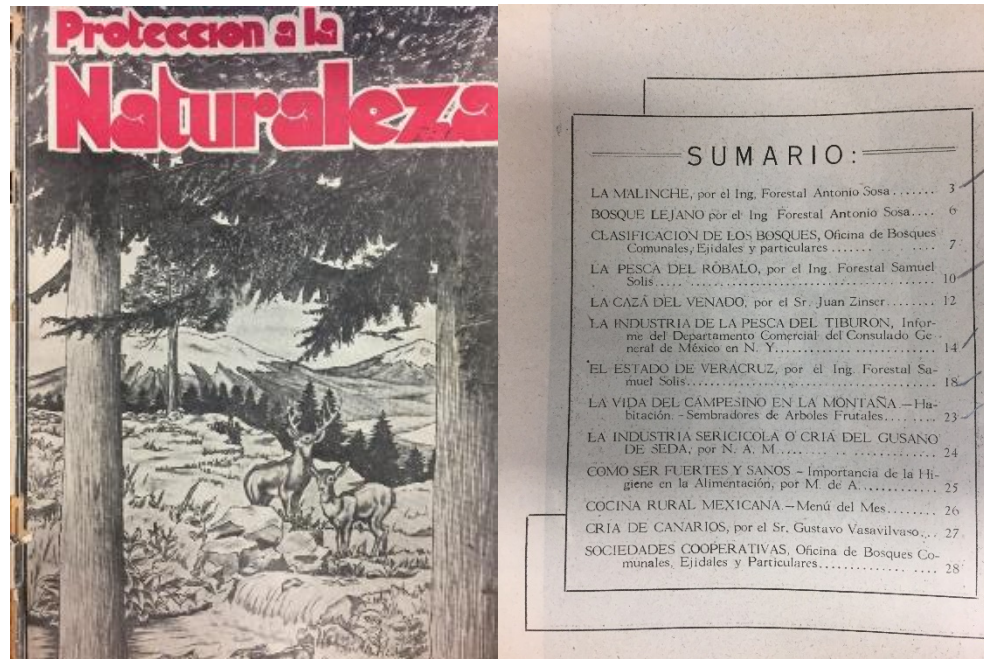


Figure 3.4. Cover and table of contents of the magazine *Protección a la Naturaleza*.

Regarding the SEP publications, I consulted the magazine *Maestro Rural*, aimed at rural teachers to help them in their work and contribute to their professional development (Figure 3.5). Besides official information and articles published by pedagogues and intellectuals, the magazine published contributions of rural teachers, being a medium through which they exchanged experiences and knowledge with other teachers in the country. The magazine also included sections on literature, dance, international pedagogical news, courses, agricultural techniques, the construction of school buildings, etc. The cover of the magazine often reproduced murals or artistic works, including popular art, suggesting the different media through which they circulated.

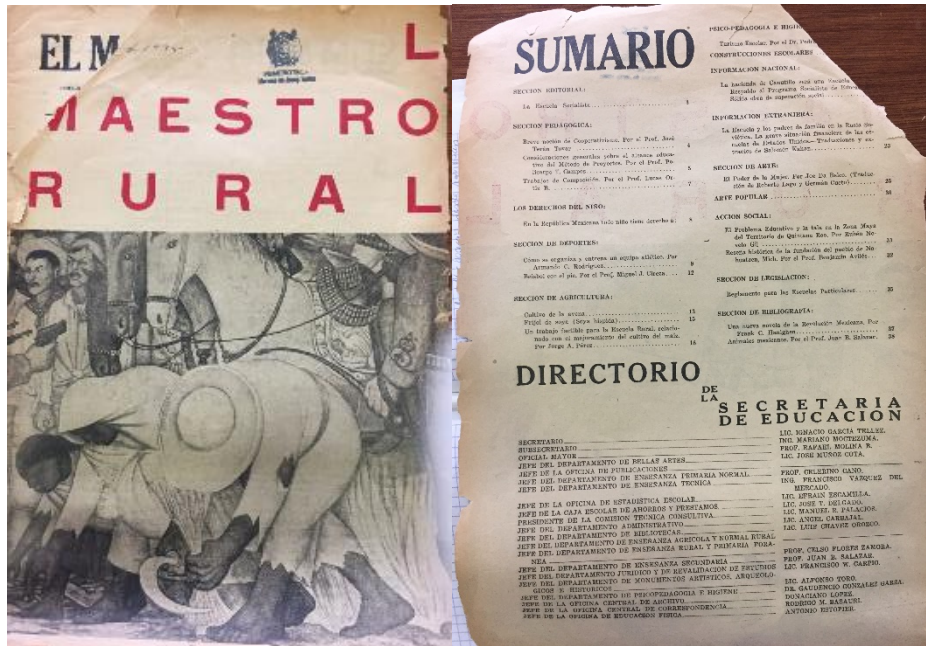


Figure 3.5. Cover and table of contents of the magazine *Maestro Rural*.

3.1.2 Other Sources

Other primary sources consulted were books and journal articles published during my study period, which were accessed at physical and digital locations. During my visit to the archives and libraries, I also collected a mixed variety of materials, with no other criteria than their relationship to Lake Pátzcuaro. Among them were brochures, maps, programmes of cultural events and tourist guides. Audiovisual materials (films, documentaries, music) were also accessed both at digital repositories and popular video reproduction platforms on the internet.

3.2 Fieldwork

Besides the archives, another source of historical information was the landscape itself. Traditionally, landscape has been compared with a palimpsest that carries the traces of past human actions. From this point of view, going to the field is part of doing historical research. A slightly different perspective is to think about historical research as a means to identify the discursive traces left by the past in the landscape, which are found both in the archive and the field. As Hayden Lorimer (2010, p. 257) correctly expresses ‘landscape is the arena where pasts seem to pass through the present, and where forms of fieldwork are entwined with archival inquiry’.

Moreover, doing fieldwork also enabled me to investigate the performative dimension of landscape. Apart from the islands, which I travelled to by boat, I decided to explore the region on foot. I employed walking as a research practice,

to gather a more intimate knowledge of the region through the first-hand landscape experience. However, I tried to adopt a ‘critical’ rather than a ‘natural’ attitude, reflecting upon past and present landscape experiences. I have been to Pátzcuaro several times, visiting friends, during holidays, on school field trips, and carrying out research. All these experiences have contributed in one way or another to my understanding of Lake Pátzcuaro. In terms of fieldwork, familiarity with the area was key for carrying out fieldwork successfully. Moreover, since this thesis examines practices I have engaged with, some of the reflections made in the thesis come from examining my own experience.

I carried out fieldwork in the towns of Pátzcuaro, Quiroga, Tzintzuntzan and Erongaricuaró, as well as the islands and lakeside communities. Among the sites visited were libraries, schools, museums, archaeological zones, religious buildings, and tourist attractions. I decided that I had to visit most of the communities in the region in response to what I saw as a limitation in other works whose stories focused almost exclusively on the town of Pátzcuaro. Moreover, as I was interested in the kind of knowledges that tourism enabled, I engaged with those practices that tourists and locals were encouraged to perform when visiting the region. My view of the places visited was informed by what I have read in the archive and my own experience.

I also carried out repeat photography as a means to understand the photographs collected in the archive. I went to the sites shown in the photographs to identify what exactly was being portrayed and from what point of view. While most of the photographs collected are part of Lake Pátzcuaro imagery, others are difficult to associate with Lake Pátzcuaro, prompting questions about the coherency and stability of what we may today regard as a dominant way of representing Pátzcuaro.

One of the things learnt during fieldwork was the existence of open-air theatres in most rural communities. The presence of open chapels and religious frescoes pointed out to the long history that these cultural forms have in the region. Learning about their existence prompted ideas about the relationship between the formation of cultural and social identities and landscape performativity. They also contributed to a broader understanding about the role of schools and rural teachers in the development of the state cultural programme.

I was also able to observe the way in which religious spaces were repurposed in these communities, a process that, unlike Pátzcuaro, was led by local political actors, as well as the nature of these changes. In some communities, religious buildings have returned to its original use. Likewise, historical monuments previously located in religious spaces, have been relocated to civic spaces.

I also visited the murals and monuments inside and outside Pátzcuaro. While most of the murals are still in public spaces, changes in the use of these spaces have affected their accessibility. This was the case of the murals of the Quinta Erendira, which is now the Center for Regional Cooperation for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CREFAL). While the centre is open to the public, the murals are located in a meeting room, whose access is restricted. This made me think that, if I wanted to understand how murals worked, I should not take for granted its status as public art or its function as a tool for public communication. In the end, photographs of the mural were obtained through a member of the staff.

Another mural whose access has been affected by changes in the use of the building is the one found inside the office of a service station in Pátzcuaro. Access to the office was granted by the manager, who also shared with me stories about the mural and the prior function of the space, whose original use according to him used to be a handicraft shop. The mural was affected by the remodelling of the space. Although it was later restored, the work was conducted by a nonprofessional. Arguably, the mural lost importance and function when it was removed from the sight of the public, remaining outside the radar of heritage institutions. Yet the attempt to restore it indicates that someone considered worth conserving the mural.

Conversational encounters like the one described above occurred while looking at murals or the decoration of buildings, with the context determining the content of our talk. My approach to this was not methodical as conversations grew out of the circumstances of fieldwork. Given their informal character, they are not referenced in the text. However, they did contribute to some of the ideas and reflections formulated in this thesis.

3.3 Putting the Pieces Together

As a result of my own practices of collection, I ended up assembling a set of documents about Lake Pátzcuaro. I began by simply putting the documents in

digital folders, following the archives' classification system. Later I took on the task of describing the documents collected. The description included literal transcription of selected parts, identifying recurrent ideas and narratives. To this end, I consulted my archival notes, which contained short descriptions of the documents collected. In the description, I also noted the relation of the document to other materials, including fieldnotes. Documents from disparate origins and without a previous link between them were thus brought to the same digital space by my research interests.

A next level consisted of organizing the materials according to their content, looking for connections between things in order to find and create meaningful patterns. During the process, I tried different ways of organising the material, modifying the position and importance of ideas. The way in which I decided to organise things is just one of many possibilities. This process continued throughout the writing process, going back and forth between examining everything again and putting together a coherent story.

The process of putting the pieces together did not result in a perfectly assembled puzzle. Whether the pieces have been always missing from the box or I have not taken them out, I often found myself unable to form a coherent picture. The fact that the archive only records what is written partially explains the missing pieces. Moreover, often the production of written records and their preservation is not widespread among all sectors of society, so that, information gaps may also reflect power disparities. In this sense, Caroline Brown (2013) observes that archives are sites of contested knowledge where certain stories are privileged, and others marginalised. This thesis is thus made of bits and fragments, absences, and presences. For me, the challenge has been to keep those absences in mind while writing the thesis.

Table 1. Principal archives consulted.

Archives	Location	Administrative division/Type of archive	Collections/Fonds	Description
<p>Archivo General de la Nación (AGN)</p>	<p>México City</p>	<p>National, Governmental archive</p>	<p>Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP)</p>	<p>The documents collected consists of activity reports and requests of various kinds to educational authorities.</p>
			<p>Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos (SARH)</p>	<p>The documents collected provide information about the creation of laws and natural protected areas.</p>
			<p>Lázaro Cárdenas, Archivo Presidencial (LC-AP)</p>	<p>The documents collected provide information about the development of government programmes in the region.</p>
			<p>Lázaro Cárdenas, Archivo Personal (microfilm)</p>	<p>The collection consists of personal correspondence, speeches, interviews and notes.</p>
			<p>Carlos Chávez, Archivo Personal</p>	<p>The archive of the nationalist composer Carlos Chávez stores documents related to his work with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Department of Fine Arts, where he served as director.</p>

Archivo Historico del Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Michoacán (AHPEEM)	Morelia	State, Governmental archive	Photographic Collection	Collection of postcards about Lake Pátzcuaro.
			Secretaria de Gobierno, Aguas y Bosques, Agricultura y Ganaderia, Municipios, Instrucción Pública, Comunicaciones y Transportes	The documents collected provide information about the actions of the Michoacan state government on issues such as forest management, the agrarian reform, education, academic institutions, etc.
Archivo Historico Municipal de Pátzcuaro (AHMP)	Pátzcuaro	Municipal, Governmental archive	Photographic Collection	Collection of postcards about the town of Pátzcuaro and the Lake Pátzcuaro region.
			Actas de Cabildo (1921-1945)	The book records the council meetings, providing information about different topics such as navigation permits, urban improvement works, the organisation of local celebrations, etc.
Archivo Histórico Municipal de Quiroga (AHMQ)	Quiroga	Municipal, Governmental archive	Presidencia (1928-1940)	The collection consists of a series of documents related to the functions of the municipal presidency, on topics such as <i>agraristas</i> claims, local celebrations, forest exploitation, and rural schools.

Archivo Histórico Municipal de Tzintzuntzan (AHMT)	Tzintzuntzan	Municipal, Governmental archive	Actas de Cabildo (1944-1949), Presidencia (1932-1937)	The documents collected comprised instructions from federal institutions, reports from rural schools, local celebrations, documents about the creation of local organisations, etc.
Archivo Histórico y Biblioteca Central del Agua (AHyBCA)	México City	National, Governmental archive specialised on water related issues	Aprovechamientos Superficiales, Aguas Nacionales, Estudios y Proyectos	The documents collected include declarations of national property, requests, permits, and lake surveys.
Archivo Gral. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia https://bnah.inah.gob.mx/bnah_lazaro_cardenas/publico/index.php	Digital Archive	Personal Archive		The documents consulted show Lázaro Cárdenas personal perception on different issues of national and international relevance. It also records his personal interest and involvement with the Lake Pátzcuaro region.
Archivo Histórico del Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia (AHMNAH)	México City	National, Museum Archive		The documents consulted provide information on the museum's research activities in the Lake Pátzcuaro region. Documents related to the Tarascan project were also collected.
Archivo Histórico del Museo Regional Michoacano (AHMRM)	Morelia	State, Museum Archive	Antonio Arriaga Ochoa	The documents consulted refer to the creation and functioning of the Michoacan

				Museum and the Pátzcuaro Museum, as well as about the research activities carried out by the INAH and the Tarascan Project.
Archivo Histórico y de Investigación Documental del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (IIE), UNAM	México City	National, University Archive	Manuel Toussaint, Justino Fernández	Consists of the papers of Manuel Toussaint, comprising publications, letters, proposals of national monuments, etc.
Archivo Fotográfico Manuel Toussaint, IIE-UNAM.	México City	National, University Archive	Luis Márquez Romay (Author series) (ca. 1930)	Most of the photographs collected were taken for the Janitzio film. Other photographs portray Pátzcuaro's cathedral and O'Gorman's mural.
			Manuel González Galvan (Art historians) (ca. 1920)	Pátzcuaro architecture, everyday life scenes, Lake Pátzcuaro views.
			Manuel Toussaint (Art historians)	Pátzcuaro architecture, townscape photography, Lake Pátzcuaro views.
Archivo Histórico del Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas (IIH), UMSNH	Morelia	State, University Archive	Jesús Corona Núñez	Papers, fieldnotes, newspaper cuts.
Archivo Fotográfico del IIH, UMSHN	Morelia	State, University Archive	Gerardo Sánchez Díaz, Ramón Sánchez, Alberto Rendón Guillen, Jesús García Tapia, Municipios Pátzcuaro	Collection of postcards about the Lake Pátzcuaro region.

Table 2. Libraries and digital repositories accessed during the research.

Libraries and Digital Repositories	Type of materials accessed
Hemeroteca Pública Universitaria Mariano de Jesús Torres	Newspaper records, Tourism publications (magazines), State Publications (magazines), miscellaneous materials
Biblioteca Central, UNAM	State Publications (magazines, bulletins)
Biblioteca Nacional de México	Books, Tourism publications (leaflets, guides)
Biblioteca Justino Fernández, IIE-UNAM	Books
Biblioteca del Instituto de Biología, UNAM	Scientific Publications
The Internet Archive	Bulletins, Late 19th century and Early 20th century Publications
Google Play Books	Bulletins, Conference Proceedings, Early 20 th century Publications

Table 3. Main periodical publications consulted.

Periodical Publications	Years consulted
Boletín de la Secretaría de Educación Pública	1922-1925
Boletín del Departamento Autónomo Forestal de Caza y Pesca	1935-1939
Revista Protección a la Naturaleza	1935-1936
Revista México Forestal	1923-1940
Revista Maestro Rural	1935-1939
Revista MAPA	1934-1937

4 Becoming Indigenous

During the post-revolutionary period, the turn to the indigenous was defined by the main concern of the time, which was the construction of national culture and identity. Lake Pátzcuaro contributed to give content to discourses of indigeneity. However, Lake Pátzcuaro had not always been characterised in these terms. Before the revolution, indigenous culture did not constitute a vital component of regional identity nor was it recognised as part of the living heritage of all the inhabitants of the region. Moreover, indigenous people did not necessarily define themselves in these terms.

The chapter interrogates the process of indigenous becoming, examining the different practices and discourses that led to the recognition of Lake Pátzcuaro as an indigenous region. I particularly pay attention to performative acts of indigeneity, as well those discursive practices that contributed to the production of an indigenized national identity. My focus is on the activities and practices of representation, exhibition, and performance within and outside the region that led to the formation of national and indigenous subjectivities. The intention is to understand how they took part in the construction of the idea of indigeneity and of Lake Pátzcuaro as an indigenous region. While the issue of identity and landscape is a central theme of the thesis, this chapter focuses on the work carried out by state institutions. Although there is not a strict chronological order, this chapter covers the first half of my study period, from the 1920s to the mid-1930s.

Throughout the chapter, I also use the concept of performance in both a restricted and an expanded sense to refer to a theatrical performance but more generally to performative actions. I thus pay attention to performative acts of indigeneity, in order to address the relationship between presentation and representation in a joined way, as well as to consider the corporeal dimension more explicitly. I believe this is important to understand the effects that different discourses had over peoples' actions and how their repetitive performance helped constitute an indigenous subject.

The chapter begins discussing the panorama in which individual scholars actively recovered Michoacán's prehispanic past in the late nineteenth century. I consider how pioneer historical research and literary representations of the past contributed to the elevation of Michoacán prehispanic legacy and of the P'urhépecha as one of the founding civilizations of the modern Mexican nation,

depicting Lake Pátzcuaro as the origin and centre of the P'urhépecha culture. The next section examines the role of folklore research in characterising the region in terms of its expressive culture. The chapter subsequently examines the revaluation and promotion of *artes populares* by state-run institutions and avant-garde artistic movements. I particularly explore the role of exhibition spaces as sites where ideas of indigeneity, Mexicanness and nationhood circulated. The focus is on understanding how these spaces worked, paying attention to its performative aspect. I then look at the role of applied anthropological research and schools as devices for cultural change. In this context, various theatrical proposals were developed, staging everyday life, indigenous traditions, and customs. There, I discuss how the transforming potential of open-air theatres lay in its performative aspect, being a platform to represent different social and cultural identities. Finally, the last section of the chapter reflects on the dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment involved in the *indigenista* discourse.

4.1 Researching Michoacán's Prehispanic Past

Interest in the study of Michoacán's prehispanic past arose towards the end of the 19th century, linked to the emergence of a national subjectivity. Rather than being the product of an organised or coordinated effort, the study of Michoacán prehispanic past was carried by individual initiatives. History was not an established discipline in México at that time, so previous historical research was scarce and the sources available limited. Accordingly, the pioneering historical studies generated during the nineteenth century were carried out by enthusiast individuals who had sufficient means to devote themselves to do research without being their main occupation.

The main interest was the 'study of antiquities', comprising archaeological explorations and the recovery of historical documents. Thus, for example, Nicolas Leon (1859-1929), a trained doctor, who founded the Museo Michoacano, acquired an interest in the study of the prehispanic past through two clergy from Zamora, Antonio Plancarte (1840-1898) and Francisco Plancarte (1856-1920), who by the end of the century had compiled a good amount of archaeological material.

Equally crucial for the development of historical studies on the prehispanic past of Michoacán was the publication of the *Relación de Michoacán*. Dating back to the sixteenth century, the manuscript is considered the most important

ethnohistorical source about the *Tarascan* state. The *Relación* was first published in 1869, another edition appeared in 1875, both by Spanish publishers. In 1904, the Michoacán government would issue a new version based on a copy of the manuscript, prepared in 1888 at the initiative of Nicolas Leon (Sánchez Díaz, *Los manuscritos y las ediciones de la Relación de Michoacán: su impacto historiográfico*, 2004).

Although the publication of the *Relación* opened a window to the prehispanic past of Michoacán, its content, the authorship of the document, and the circumstances surrounding its creation remained largely unexplained until the end of the last century. The *Relación* was written by the friar Jerónimo de Alcalá in 1541, at the request of the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. In the creation of the *Relación*, Jerónimo de Alcalá received the assistance of indigenous noble informants, as well as native artists. The manuscript contains 44 illustrations. The friar translated the oral contributions of the narrators into Spanish (Warren, 1971).

The original manuscript is in the Royal Library of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain, where it arrived in the 16th century. According to Angelica J. Afanador (2015), the existing manuscript is not complete, folios were removed and content was added when it was bound. Moreover, this was bound in disorder. The *Relación* remains a very complex document to analyse, both for the many literary styles it comprises, the presence of multiple voices and the many interests involved in its crafting.

The manuscript is made up of three parts. Only one folio accounts for the first part, consisting of a description of the P'urhépecha's gods and religious ceremonies. The second part is a historical account of the P'urhépecha, based on a speech given by the *Petamuti* or main priest during a ceremony, containing a piece of oral tradition. Finally, the last part describes the customs of the P'urhépecha and history of the events after the arrival of the Spaniards. Afanador Pujol (2015) believes that the last part also underwent the removal of content.

4.1.1 Literary-Historical Representations and the Construction of a Consistent Image of Michoacán Pre-Hispanic Past

Due to the challenge that the interpretation of the *Relación* represented and despite its historical importance, its publication did not satisfy the need to have a consistent picture of Michoacán's prehispanic past. In 1893, Eduardo Ruíz (1839-1902) a Michoacán lawyer and writer who had fought in the Second War of French

Intervention (1861-67)⁵ published a book about the history of the P'urhépecha, from its possible origin to its conquest. The book entitled *Michoacán: Paisajes, tradiciones y leyendas* (1893) was partially based on the 1875 edition of the *Relación*.

Ruiz's view of the *Relación* was that it was 'difficult to understand, 'misaligned', dark, incoherent and on many occasions absurd' (Ruiz, 1891, p. 6), so that neither the *Relación* nor the published research was enough to write a comprehensive history of prehispanic Michoacán. Concerning this Ruiz noted that his book was not meant to be a scientific account, stating 'it has never been my purpose to give the vague relationship of the events of Michoacán, before the conquest, the character of history' (Ruiz, 1891, p. 3). Accordingly, in addition to the *Relación*, he drew on a number of sources, including oral sources and land titles to fill the gaps of information. The outcome was a literary treatment of history, imbued with a nineteenth century romanticism. Ruiz's approach to the historical past made his work appealing and accessible to a wider public. In fact, many stories contained in Ruiz's book would be later represented in Pátzcuaro's murals. Ruiz's book begins by presenting a legend about the possible origin of the P'urhépecha, connecting them with the Incas. It then presents an overview of the social and political organization of the P'urhépecha, as well as their customs and religious life. The history of the P'urhépecha state is then developed in each of the chapters, its origins, the alliances made by the founding lineage of the Vacuxecha, the foundation of the P'urhépecha state by Tariácuri and its expansion. It also chronicles the rivalries and battles between the P'urhépecha and the Aztecs. It concludes with the story of the last P'urhépecha rulers and the arrival of the Spaniards. While the chronological order is relatively the same as the *Relación*, Ruiz incorporates his own interpretations of the events. Notable additions are the stories and names of the women who married the P'urhépecha rulers, whose names do not appear in the *Relación*. The second series of the book added some legends and traditions of the P'urhépecha, including that of the princess Erendira, a figure that would be strongly promoted during the post-revolutionary period.

Prior to the publication of Ruiz's book, the *costumbrista* writer Ignacio Manuel Altamirano published a book with a similar title "*Paisajes y leyendas: tradiciones y costumbres de México*" (1884). The *costumbrismo* was a literary and artistic movement

⁵ After winning its independence in 1821, Mexico went through wars of foreign intervention (in 1839 and 1861), the second of which led to the establishment of the so called 'Second Mexican Empire' (1864-1867).

developed in Spain and Latin America during the 19th century, derivative from realism. A *costumbrista* scene could equally refer to a literary text or a graphic representation. Most *costumbristas* works also display a romantic and nationalist orientation, portraying everyday life scenes, as well as the customs and manners of a specific group or region. According to Mey-Yen Moriuchi (2013, p. 114), in post-independence México the *costumbrista* ‘visual imagery and literary text functioned conjunctively in the formation of a new national subjectivity.’

The method par excellence for the production of *costumbristas* images was the lithography, so that very often the name of the technique replaced that of the visual genre (Pérez Salas, 2005). It is important to note, however, that as a literary genre, the *costumbrismo* itself had a marked visual character. *Costumbristas* writers often used a visual language in the title of their works, such as *cuadros de costumbres* (pictures of customs) or *bocetos* (sketches), so that they were portraying and sketching everyday life scenes with words.

Unlike Altamirano’s book whose *costumbristas* descriptions portray different places in the country, Ruiz’s book does not contain explicit descriptions of landscapes or places, so that one is drawn to believe that the mention in the book’s title to the landscape refers to the book’s illustrations. Most of the images in Ruiz’s book could be in fact classified as *costumbristas* images, comprising images of ‘popular types’ and ‘scenes.’ The book also contains drawings of archaeological objects and reproductions of historical documents from other sources.

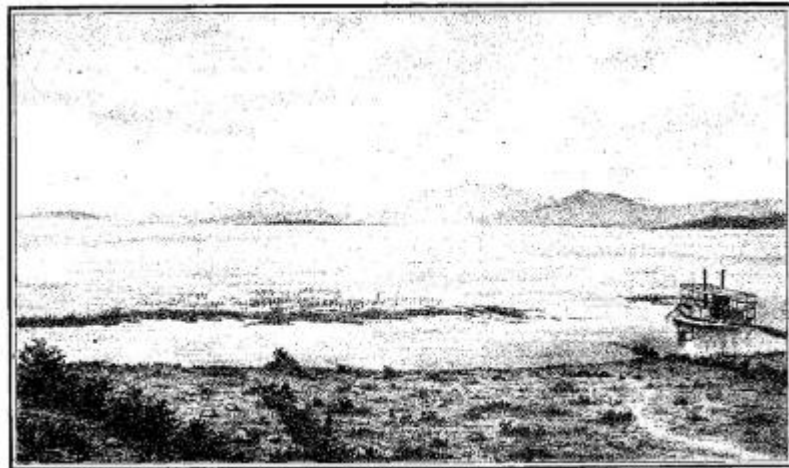
Except for one illustration that is set in the prehispanic past, the illustrations portray present-day indigenous women from Michoacán different regions. Women appear posing, wearing regional dresses. A landscape is depicted in the background, fixing indigenous women to a particular geographical setting (Figure 4.1). Some of the landscape illustrations correspond to what María E. Pérez Salas (2005) calls ‘scenes’, which were meant to capture a moment of everyday life (Figure 4.2). While Ruiz’s text provides a literary account of Michoacán prehispanic past, the illustrations combine present-day and past representations, connecting Michoacán prehispanic past with the present.



Indias de la sierra.
En la actualidad.



Figure 4.1. Representations of P'urbépecha women in Ruiz (1884).



Una vista del lago de Patzcuaro.-1891.

Figure 4.2. Lake Patzcuaro, a view from the north. The scene shows a steamboat not far from the shore.

Unlike the *Relación* whose access and circulation were limited, Ruiz's book became very popular, affecting peoples' view about Michoacán's prehispanic past. Soon after its publication, in 1900 the Mexican composer Ricardo Castro (1864-1907) created the opera *Atzimba*, based on the last section of Ruiz's book about the conquest of Michoacán. *Atzimba* is one of the first operas with local historical content premiered in México.⁶ Ruiz's story is a tragic romance between Atzimba, a woman of the Tarascan nobility and sister of the last Tarascan king, and Jorge de Villadiego a captain of the Cortes' army. The opera took up the general idea of Ruiz's story, adding new elements to increase the drama.

Recreating the prehispanic past in an opera also involved the musical production of a soundscape that was both exotic and familiar. First published in the magazine *El Eco Musical*, a review of the opera was reprinted in *El Orfeón Michoacano*, a cultural newspaper focused on music and literature, hinting at a good reaction from the cultural sector of Michoacán. The review described the music 'as beautiful as gestural and inspired'. According to the review, the work followed the modern trend without overture, 'it opens with a march, voices and instruments creating an atmosphere of war, conflict and masculinity.'⁷

The integration of shell trumpets and a *teponaztli* (a type of slit drum), were the musical gesture towards the prehispanic past. Another sign of authenticity was provided in the second act by the introduction of an ostensibly old song included in Ruiz's book: '... the Tarascan march is original and of completely local style, since the theme is an ancient P'urhépecha melody called 'The Four Stars, *Tan Hoscuá*, in Tarascan.'⁸

The opera was the first representation of Michoacán's indigenous past for a national public, albeit translated into a language recognisable to the cultural elites of México. According to Leonora Saavedra (2014) Castro's opera was an effort to signify the P'urhépecha-prehispanic as 'modern-heroic'. The cultural mediation effect of the opera allowed the people to identify with the P'urhépecha past and culture. According to Alejandro L. Madrid (2008), *Atzimba* would be produced again in 1928 and 1935; however, its reception would not have the same impact, by then being regarded as an inauthentic representation. Ruiz's book would continue

⁶ A couple of decades before, in 1871 the opera *Guatimotz'in* by Mexican composer Aniceto Ortega was released. However, according to Monsivais (1975) the first opera based on an episode of Mexican history was Antonio Vivaldi's opera *Motezuma* released in 1733.

⁷ *El Orfeón Michoacano*, p.4 y 5.

⁸ *Ibíd*

to have resonance throughout the twentieth century, as a source of historical information, albeit for a different audience and through different media (see Chapter 6).

4.1.2 El Museo Michoacano and the Institutionalization of Archaeology

The *Museo Michoacano* created in 1886 in Morelia was aimed at developing the study of Michoacán history. The museum would gather collections of archaeology, ethnology, and history, as well as organize and support research activities. The initiative to create a regional museum was welcomed by Michoacán governor Mariano Jimenez during his administration, who had created a similar museum in the state of Oaxaca while governing there. Nicolas Leon was the first director of the museum (1886-1892).

Before the creation of the Museo de Michoacán, individuals conducted the recovery of ‘antiquities’, so that most of them ended up in private collections. Although most people carrying out excavations were amateurs, some of them distrusted other people’s actions and intentions and asked for exclusive rights. The establishment of the museum presumed the institutionalization of this activity.

The *Museo Michoacano* started with a collection of stuffed animals. The specimens came from the remnants of the zoology collection of the *Colegio de San Nicolas*, assembled a couple of years earlier as part of the efforts to create a natural history museum in the city of Morelia. The specimens were exhibited in the 1884 World Fair celebrated in New Orleans as a sample of Michoacán natural richness. After the Fair, few specimens returned and the initiative to create a museum with them was soon abandoned.

Nicolas Leon described the museum’s collection, as ‘embalmed birds, reptiles in alcohol and other insignificant things, which had to be discarded, mainly because they were useless’ (León, 1888). To create the museum’s collections, Nicolás León appointed more than 300 officers throughout the state. The contributions did not only consist of archaeological objects. A natural history collection was formed from donations, which was the basis for the creation in 1892 of the Natural History Museum.

In 1888, the Museo Michoacano began to publish the journal *Anales del Museo Michoacano* through which the research conducted on the subject was disseminated. The objective of the publication was twofold, first, to increase the

interest of the Michoacán public in the subject and second, to disseminate the research conducted inside and outside the country.

The articles included in the first issue turn around the Tarascan culture, language, geography, and political organization. Other articles discussed the Tarascan calendar and numerical system. They also printed and reprinted original sources. Additionally, the issue included an original article by Ernesto T. Hamy, the director of the *Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro*, about the Tarascan locatives and toponyms within and outside Michoacán.

Nicolas León also discussed the topic of Tarascan place names, focusing on their origin and meaning. The entry on Pátzcuaro was the most extensive, discussing the previous interpretations and presenting a new proposal based on the *Relación*. The entry's footnote indicated that it came from the copy of the manuscript recently obtained by the museum and not from the published versions, which were plagued with inaccuracies. In addition to articles on the Tarascan language, culture, and history, the second volume of the *Anales del Museo Michoacano* (1889) contained contributions from the natural history department, including a list of animal names in Tarasco and Spanish.

The Michoacán museum lost government support, subsisting with minimal resources. Research activities and the publication of the *Anales del Museo Michoacano* stopped. When in 1924, the national museum asked the states about the existence of regional museums on history and archaeology, the then director of the regional museum, Manuel Martínez Solórzano replied, '...regarding archaeological, historical, anthropological and ethnographic research, no work was currently being carried out due to a lack of resources'.⁹ The museum was reactivated in 1939, during the administration of Gildardo Magaña as governor of Michoacán state.

4.2 Documenting and Promoting Lake Pátzcuaro Folklore

After the revolution, even though the prehispanic continued playing an important role in the construction of the idea of indigeneity, contemporary indigenous people and their cultural manifestations were positively valued. Under the patronage of the SEP, musicians, painters, folklorists, and anthropologists toured the country documenting indigenous artistic expressions. As the first Minister of Education,

⁹ Historical Archive of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia (HAMNAH). Vol. 47, Folder 45, f.212

José Vasconcelos saw in popular aesthetics the seeds for the creation of a national culture, encouraging the appropriation of popular aesthetics by nationalist artists. Although Vasconcelos did not consider indigenous expressive culture as art, the orientation of the various artists working for the SEP would influence their appreciation as art. In the case of musical folklore, its documentation would influence the musical production of nationalist pieces as well as the elevation of indigenous music. The musical traditions compiled by the SEP would also contribute to the creation of a repertoire of national music disseminated through schools.

Documentation of the musical folklore and indigenous traditions of Lake Pátzcuaro began in the early 1920s, when the SEP sent a commission of artists to the lake's islands. In 1924, Ruben M. Campos, a writer, musician, and folklorist, who was in charge of the folklore division of the Museo Nacional, was sent in a commission to Lake Pátzcuaro, along with the composer Francisco Dominguez and the painter Carlos Gonzalez with the purpose of documenting musical folklore. Campos and Dominguez were responsible for the collection of songs and music and their translation to musical notation. González was in charge of drawing the dancers, paying attention to the representation of the surroundings and the costumes. The results of the research trip informed the development of different SEP programmes, as well as their individual projects.

In the case of Campos, the fieldwork conducted in Michoacan aided his research on the musical culture of the ancient Mexicans. In his publication *Los instrumentos musicales de los antiguos mexicanos* (1925) published in the *Anales del Museo Nacional*, Campos argued about the extraordinary difficulty that the study of the music of the past represented compared to the other arts. For Campos, the only sound testimony were the musical instruments, describing Aztec and Tarascan instruments. Even though it was possible to estimate the acoustic properties of the instruments from playing them, the question about the music created with them remained unanswered. Concerning this, Campos proposed that present-day indigenous music could provide inklings into prehispanic music, using Michoacán as an example, where according to him, instruments similar to the prehispanic continued being played.

The article described above was reproduced as a chapter in Campos' seminal book *El folklore y la Música Mexicana* (1928) where other aspects of Mexican

musical folklore were discussed. In the chapter on indigenous dances, when trying to imagine the ancient splendour of the dancers' clothing, Campos thought that they should have looked like today Danza de los Moros' dancers in Michoacán.

En un tiempo más o menos lejano, los danzantes lucieron trajes esplendidos, como puede verse todavía en Michoacán en el traje de los moros, revestidos de dalmáticas deslumbrantes de seda, oro y plata y tocados con turbantes que tienen una extraña forma cónica [...]. El turbante de los moros michoacanos está en relación con la suntuosidad del vestido (Campos, 1928, p. 35).

In a more or less distant time, the dancers wore splendid costumes, as can still be seen in Michoacán in the Moors' costume, covered with dazzling robes of silk, gold and silver and turbans with a strange conical shape [...]. The turban of the Michoacán Moors is related to the sumptuousness of the dress.

The Dance of the Moors was nevertheless a dance of colonial origin, which together with music and theatre were part of the strategies employed for evangelization. A fragment of a mural by Carlos Gonzalez illustrates the Danza de los Moros' clothing (Figure 4.3). Created in the 1920s, it was part of the series of murals for the SEP building in México City, of which Diego Rivera's murals are the best known. Carlos Gonzalez and Carlos Merida painted their murals in the library. Since the mural was destroyed, it is difficult to know what other elements composed the set.



Figure 4.3. Carlos González's mural 'Danza de los moros en el lago de Pátzcuaro'. Source: Campos (1928), p.31

Performed on religious celebrations, in the mural the dance is separated from its context, resembling a staged performance. With Lake Pátzcuaro in the background, the mural shows a group of men performing the dance of the Moors. On the left side, a duo plays the music for the dance. On the opposite side, two persons contemplate the scene. Carlos González' mural is similar to the one Roberto Cueva

del Río would paint inside the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre in Pátzcuaro, a decade later (see Figure 4.20).

However, it is important to highlight that although a sense of historical continuity was attributed to P'urhépecha music, the European origin of the musical structure was also pointed out. In his *Album Musical de Michoacán*, Francisco Dominguez (1941) stated that the musical system of the indigenous music played in Michoacán conformed to the Western tradition, consisting of the use of the diatonic scale, as well as the compound and simple time signatures. The compilation presented in the book derived from field work carried out under the SEP commission decades before. For the musicians, the European characteristics that were present in indigenous music did not make it less authentic, evidencing that the notion of indigenous as a synonym of prehispanic was being redefined.

4.2.1 'A Little Poetic World'. Romanticism and the Elevation of Indigenous Music to True Art

The music of Michoacán was discussed in greater depth in the chapter *Los Cancioneros Populares* (popular song repertoire). There, Campos classified Michoacán music into three types: songs and *sones* from the uplands, *charaperas* songs and island *sones*. These categories were based on a geographical distinction rather than musical genres, the first category referring to the music of the Meseta Tarasca (highland) region, the second to the cities and the last was to the islands of Lake Pátzcuaro.

Campos' description of the *sones isleños* (island sones) came from the island of Jarácuaro that he had visited in the early 1920s. The *sones isleños* -stated Campos- came mainly from Jarácuaro island, where the musicians Don Hipolito Bartolo Juarez and his sons Alejandro, Esteban, and Nicolas, lived. The father played the double bass and his sons the violin, the clarinet and cello, respectively. Nicolas was also the composer, of whom Campos professed special admiration. Regarding the family of musicians, Campos wrote:

Contrapuntistas por naturaleza, por la maravillosa intuición que tienen los músicos michoacanos de los secretos de la polifonía, cada uno adivina el papel que le corresponde en el cuarteto, y borda sobriamente en el canevá de la linda melodía vernácula (Campos, 1928, p. 86).

Contrapuntists by nature, by the wonderful intuition that Michoacán musicians have of the secrets of polyphony, each one guesses the role that corresponds to them in the quartet and soberly embroiders the canvas of the vernacular melody.

Campos' description of his travel to Jaracuaro is included in the chapter alongside the description of the music, revealing a romantic sensitivity. Gonzalez and Campos had gone to the island to listen to Juarez' quartet. Ignoring the storm clouds that were gathering overhead, yearning to hear them, they stayed for a long time listening to the musicians play. Translated to musical notation, Campos hoped that it would transmit, albeit diminished, some of the beauty of the music that he could not express through words.

The admiration for the Juarez quartet was intensified by the fact that they were self-taught musicians, without academic knowledge about musical forms. Referring to the composer, Campos expressed:

La inspiración le sugiere temas como “El lago”, “La canoa más ligera”, “La Golondrina”, en su pequeño mundo poético que le tocó en suerte; pues el lago de Pátzcuaro es uno de los paisajes más bellos que el autor de estas líneas ha podido comparar con los lagos alpinos de Italia, después de haberlos visto. La rusticidad del lago de Pátzcuaro le da mayor encanto, y cuando se presencian en él escenas como una batida de patos, en que los cazadores van en ligeras canoas armados de venablos con púas ahorquilladas que lanzan cuando tienen a tiro de ballesta al pato, clavándolo por el pescuezo, y se ven los dientes blancos de los cazadores lacustres en sus rostros oscuros, al precipitarse sobre la presa en el haz de las aguas azulosas con reflejos de malaquita, se siente el encanto de las aguas sonoras donde se baña desnuda la poesía. Los músicos de Jarácuaro no saben por qué son poetas (Campos, 1928, p. 86-87).

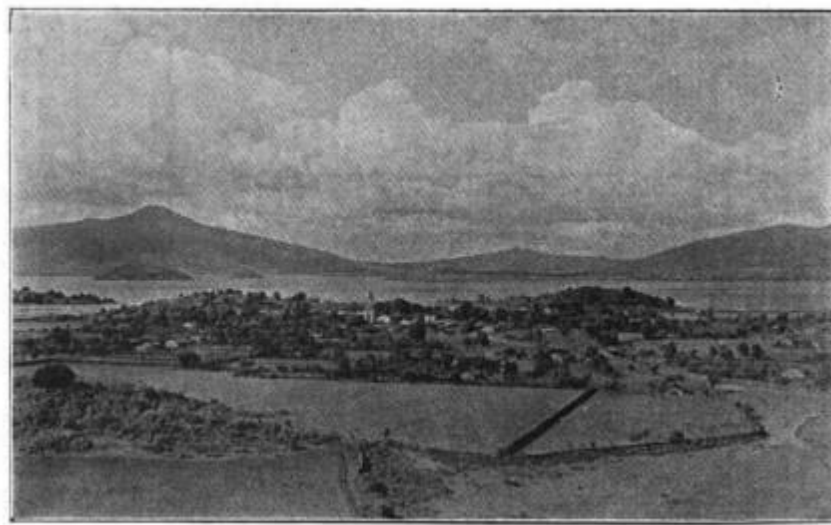
In his little poetic world in which he had the luck to live, the inspiration suggests to him themes such as “The lake”, “The lightest canoe”, “The Swallow”. I said this because Lake Pátzcuaro is one of the most beautiful landscapes that the author of these lines compares with the alpine lakes of Italy, after having seen them. The rusticity of Lake Pátzcuaro gives it greater charm, and when scenes like the duck hunting are seen, in which the hunters go in light canoes armed with spears [...] that they throw when they have a crossbow shot at the duck, striking it in the neck, and the white teeth of the lake hunters are seen in their dark faces, as they rush over to the prey in the beam of the blue waters with reflections of malachite, you feel the charm of the sonorous waters from where poetry emanates naturally. Jarácuaro musicians do not know why they are poets.

As the above quote illustrates, for Campos, music and poetry came out of Lake Pátzcuaro, and so did Nicolas' compositions. It was precisely this fact that made his music genuine. Conversely, the cities were depicted as a corrupted milieu, shaping the character of musical creations.

As a symbol of Mexican authenticity, Nicolas Juárez was invited on several occasions to teach dances and to play in México City. In 1924, he was invited to teach the Danza de los Moros and to sing in a new theatre company, the *Teatro del Murcielago* (Theatre of the Bat), travelling back to Jaracuaro just after his presentation. Concerning this, Campos expressed:

Feliz amor a la tierra madre, que libra a los artistas vernáculos de venir a presenciar el desorden del arte en un medio corruptor. Nicolás Juárez vino en 1924 a enseñar la danza de los Moros y a cantar en el Teatro Sintético, y volvióse prestamente a Jarácuaro con su timidez natural, asombrado de lo que en la capital hace el deleite de medio millón de auditores, y prefirió la quietud de su lago de aguas azules al estruendo ensordecedor de lo que la febril ciudad llama música (Campos, 1928, p. 88).

Blissful love of the motherland, which frees popular artists from coming to witness the disorder of art in a corrupting medium. Nicolás Juárez came in 1924 to teach the dance of the Moors and to sing in the Teatro Sintético, and he quickly returned to Jarácuaro with his natural shyness, amazed at what the delight of half a million spectators does in the capital, and preferred the stillness of its blue water lake to the deafening roar of what the agitated city calls music.



El lago de Pátzcuaro, región de músicos.

Figure 4.4. Lake Pátzcuaro seen from El Estribo. The photograph is entitled 'Lake Pátzcuaro, a region of musicians'. Source: Campos (1928), p.91

This romantic view held by Campos was a distinctive feature of research in folklore that also influenced musical nationalism (Figure 4.4). Even though this view elevated the music produced by indigenous groups to the category of 'true art', it also ended up assimilating indigenous music into the environment. In doing so, not only the career path of the musicians was ignored but also the historical and social processes in which the musical production was embedded. Accordingly, art, poetry and music came to be seen as inherent to Lake Pátzcuaro.

4.2.2 'The bat speaks Tarasco and Spanish'. The Staging of Indigenous Folklore in Avantgarde Theatre

Nicolas' participation in the *Teatro del Murciélago* had a particular significance, that deserves further discussion. According to Elissa Rashkin (2014), this theatre proposal was part of an avant-garde movement called *estridentismo*. Developed

during the 1920s, the *estridentismo* was a multidisciplinary movement, characterised by the simultaneous celebration of modernity and popular culture. As other avant-garde movements, they rejected academicism and went against intellectual and political complacency.

Inspired by the *Chauve-Souris* of Nikita Balieff, a theatrical approach that combined avant-garde aesthetics with elements of Russian folklore, Luis Quintanilla created the *Teatro del Murciélago*. During a stay in New York, Quintanilla attended one of *Chauve-Souris* presentations and driven by the idea that México was more colourful than Russia, he decided to create something similar. The painter Carlos González and the musician Francisco Domínguez (see above) collaborated with Quintanilla in the project.

The *Teatro del Murciélago* was inaugurated in September 1924. The cover of the programme shown an illustration of the Dance of the Moors (Figure 4.5). The cover did not necessarily reflect the variety of the programme, which included both presentations of regional folklore and humorous representations of modern urban life. The genres represented were also very diverse, including music, poetry, dance, and theatre.

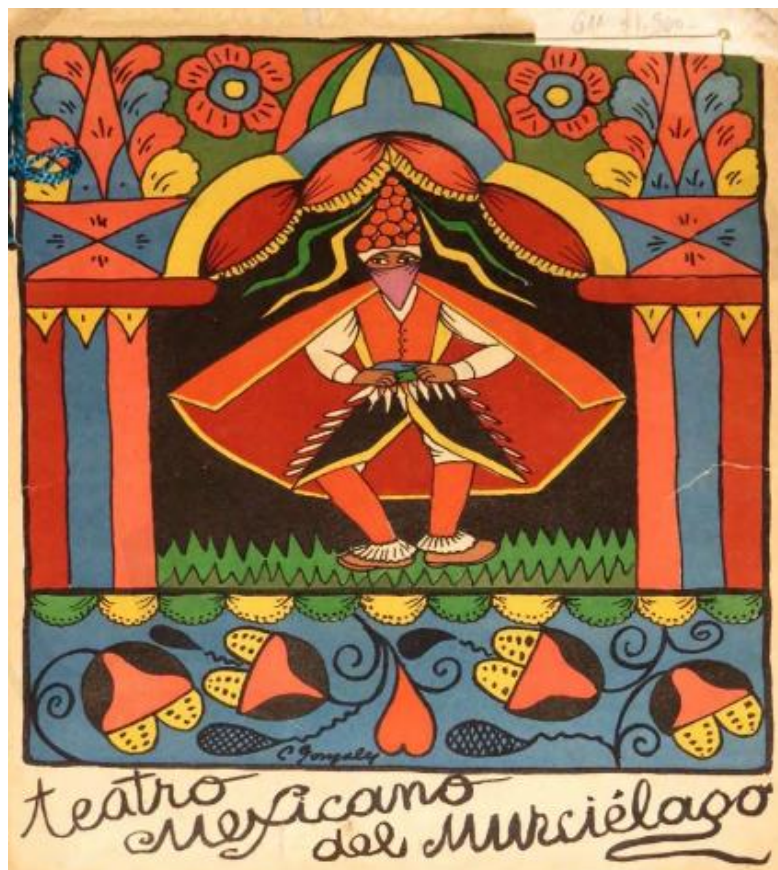


Figure 4.5. Programme cover of the *Teatro del Murciélago*, depicting the Dance of the Moors. Source: ICAA digital archive.

Folklore performances included the dance of the Old Men and the Moors, as well as a representation of the Day of the Dead of Janitzio. The first was announced as ‘performed by Juárez and others’, while the Day of the Dead was interpreted by the Italian photographer Tina Modotti, who visited the island in 1923 commissioned by the SEP (Figure 4.6). Francisco Domínguez, Carlos González, Rubén M. Campos, and photographer Luis Márquez also visited Janitzio the same year to witness the ritual (Hellier Tinoco, 2011). In addition to Modotti and Nicolas Juarez, the show featured performances by other national and international artists.



Figure 4.6. Illustration about the night of the dead in Janitzio within the programme of the Teatro del Murcielago. Source: ICAA digital archive.

The *Teatro del Murcielago* did not last long. At the end of 1924, Quintanilla wrote an obituary for the project. Using a humorous tone and addressing the bat, as if it were a real animal, he mourned the brevity of its stay, closing with the sentence: ‘tell Nikita that you have learned to speak Spanish and Tarasco’.

4.3 Exhibiting Artes Populares: Evaluating Indigenous Crafts as Art Objects

In addition to the documentation and promotion of indigenous musical traditions, artists and intellectuals worked on the revaluation of what would come to be known as *artes populares*. This involved a change in the way in which indigenous products were seen, from a sign of backwardness to a proud symbol of Mexican culture. The

Museo Nacional, which until then only housed collections of prehispanic art, also opened a new section of *Artes e Industrias Aborígenes* (Native Arts and Crafts). In 1917, the Museo Nacional moved a series of objects, among them Tarascan *bateas* (lacquer decorated wooden plates) from the 17th century from the Department of Ethnology to the Department of Minor Arts, suggesting that they were being valued not just as ethnographic objects but as works of art, even if in a lesser form.¹⁰

The anthropologist Miguel O. de Mendizábal (1890-1945) who was in charge of the Native Arts and Crafts section, had been actively involved in the revolution and was an advocate of the agrarian reform. As early as 1921, he went to Uruapan to promote the lacquer industry. The project involved artisans, local collectors, cultural institutions, scholars, and artists. In a meeting organised by the museum, artisans, local authorities and the staff from the *Museo Nacional* discussed the best means to make the lacquer industry return to its primeval splendour.¹¹ Meeting attendees agreed to form the cooperative society, *Sociedad de Pintores de Uruapan Vasco de Quiroga* (Uruapan Lacquer Painters Society). The aim of the society was to look after preservation of the craft and guide its development according to tradition, making lacquer attractive for the modern national market. To increase demand, new designs would be displayed in national and international events, preventing Uruapan lacquer from disappearing, a fate already suffered by the lacquerware of Pátzcuaro and Quiroga. During that occasion, the museum staff brought with them wooden objects of novel design to be painted by Uruapan artisans. The decorative motifs came from a collection of old lacquers of Dr Francisco de Paula Leon from Morelia.¹²

In addition to the work of the Museo Nacional, the reevaluation of popular arts was deeply connected with the work of avant-garde artists (González, 2016). Miguel Covarrubias, promoter of popular art and creator of the mural *Geografía del arte popular en México* (1951), attributed the discovery of the true aesthetic values of popular art to Jorge Enciso, Dr Atl, Best Maugard and Diego Rivera (Covarrubias, 1982). According to Miriam Osterreich (2018) this process was tied into the transnational artist networks which established the international reputation of

¹⁰ Correspondence between the Department of Ethnology of the museum and that of Minor Arts. November 1917. HAMNAH. Vol 423, Folder 8.

¹¹ Minute of the meeting on the creation of the Society of Painters of Uruapan. 23 May 1921. HAMNAH. Vol. 39, Folder 3.

¹² Letter from Miguel O. De Mendizabal to the director of the museum Luis Castillo de Ledón. 29 May 1921. HAMNAH. Vol 39, Exp3.

Mexican handicraft as an important element in the avant-garde's engagement with 'primitive' aesthetics. Their political commitment to the ideals of the Mexican Revolution also led them to advocate for a socially committed art. They not only rejected the division between minor arts and fine arts but also pushed for the democratization of artistic education, abandoning nineteenth century notions of 'art for art's sake'.

One of the first events in which Michoacán lacquerware was exhibited was the *Exposición de Arte Popular* (1921) held in México City, as part of the centennial celebrations of Mexican Independence. The idea of celebrating the centennial was proposed by the Secretary of Foreign Relations, Engineer Alberto J. Pani, as a way of getting diplomatic reconnaissance, particularly from the United States, as well as promoting a peaceful image of México. According to López (2010), the exhibition was organized at the last moment, after planners had to cancel the Industrial Fair, which was supposed to be the centrepiece of the celebrations. It was at that time that the painters Roberto Montenegro and Jorge Enciso (who was also the inspector of historical and artistic monuments of the National Museum) came up with the idea of an exhibition of popular art. The anthropologist Manuel Gamio similarly proposed to mount an exhibition of 'Native Crafts' in order to publicize the popular arts of the different regions of the country in the capital (López, 2010). Gamio may have seen this as contributing to the unification of aesthetic criteria among the Mexican population, which he judged fundamental for national integration (Gamio, 1916).

In the end, the proposal of Enciso and Montenegro was successful, being appointed together with their mentor Dr. Atl (Gerardo Murillo), as the Comisión de la Exposición de Arte Popular (Exhibition of Popular Art Commission). The *Exposición de Arte Popular* aimed to show popular arts as the aesthetic foundation of the country. Before the *Exposición de Arte Popular* no one had ever assembled a complete collection of popular arts. The exhibit included objects from the Museo Nacional and individual collections, including their own. The commission also turned to local governments to collect objects of popular art, specifying what they meant by popular art (López, 2010). Among the popular arts exhibited, were objects from Santa Clara del Cobre, Santa Fe de la Laguna and Quiroga (on Lake Pátzcuaro's northeastern shore), such as furniture, embossed copper pans and

jewellery, collected by the *Museo Nacional* under Mendizabal's direction.¹³ While the main aim was to present regional handicrafts as distinctively national, as the correspondence between Mendizábal and the director of the Museo Nacional shows, the display of lacquerwork in different events also meant to foment its consumption among the middle and upper classes. The presentation of the objects in the exhibition showed the public how to incorporate handicrafts as decorative elements. The exhibition took place at 85 Avenida Juárez, one of the most important in the city, decorating the central balcony was a monumental *batea* from Uruapan in Michoacan, painted by Roberto Montenegro.¹⁴ In November 1922, the collection of objects assembled for the *Exposición de Artes Populares* was exhibited in Los Angeles, being the first great exhibition of Mexican arts in the United States (see Chapter 7).

Lacquered trays from Uruapan were also present during the *Noche Mexicana*, another of the Centennial events. The organizing committee hired Mexican painter Adolfo Best Maugard to plan a garden party. Rather than a classic garden party, the event evoked a popular celebration (López 2010). Interestingly, even though the lacquer industry had disappeared from Pátzcuaro and would not be recovered until the next decade, the lacquer trays exhibited during the *Noche Mexicana*, another of the Centennial events, were associated with Pátzcuaro instead of Uruapan (Hellier Tinoco, 2011). Perhaps, this was due to the existing association between handicrafts and indigeneity. Unlike Pátzcuaro, Uruapan was not identified as an indigenous town, at least not in the national sphere, hence the connection between Pátzcuaro and lacquer. Moreover, since Lake Pátzcuaro was already seen as the historical centre of P'urhépecha culture, subsequent representations of lacquer and crafts from other regions of Michoacán would place them in Lake Pátzcuaro regardless of their origin.

The catalogue of the exhibition was commissioned from Dr Atl, who was one of the main promoters of popular art. The catalogue entitled *Las Artes Populares en México* (1921) was the first monograph on the subject. There he defined popular arts as 'all the creative manifestations of the Mexican people'. He considered that although not all the popular arts were 'strictly native', the popular feeling had

¹³ Letter from Miguel O. De Mendizabal to the director of the museum Luis Castillo de Ledón. 10 June 1921. HAMNAH. Vol. 39, Folder 3.

¹⁴ Letter from Miguel O. De Mendizabal to Roberto Montenegro. Historical Archive of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia. HAMNAH. 29 April 1921. Vol 423, Folder 60.

imprinted a distinctive Mexican stamp. Moreover, all popular arts had the imprint of indigenous culture. Enciso and Montenegro shared Dr Atl's view about popular arts, which they saw as the ultimate expression of Mexicanness.

4.3.1 The Corporeal Display of Bateas

Uruapan *bateas* were also present at the *Fiesta de la Canción y de la Danza*, a regional festival organised by the SEP in Paracho in 1924, located in the *Meseta Tarasca* (highlands region). They were part of the items employed in the dance of *Las Canacuas*. Ruben M. Campos, who was invited by the SEP to speak at the event, described *Las Canacuas* as a series of brief compositions, danced by the women of Paracho to welcome special guests. The *bateas* were used for carrying miniatures of local handicrafts (musical instruments and household items made of wood), which were given away to the visitors. For Campos, *Las Canacuas* was a dance of prehispanic origin, performed as part of an offering ceremony, constituting one of the 'purest artistic expressions of the P'urhépecha', where dance, music and color merged. Although altered, for Campos, the dance provided a general idea of what the ceremony may have been in prehispanic times:

Con esta ceremonia las vírgenes 'guaris' (mujeres), ofrendaban a los Reyes, grandes caciques y huéspedes gratos, frutas del tiempo, ricas telas bordadas y valiosos presentes [...]. Además de la danza entonan las 'guaris' delicadas canciones [...]. En la actualidad esta costumbre persiste, representándose la ceremonia en Uruapan, Paracho y en otros pueblos de la región [...], y aunque degenerada un tanto, nos da una completa idea de lo que esta ceremonia pudo haber sido en los remotos tiempos en que floreció la bella princesa Heréndira [sic] (Campos, 1928, p. 85).

With this ceremony, the virgins 'guaris' (women) offered seasonal fruits, embroidered textiles and precious gifts to the sovereigns, landowners, and special guests. In addition to the dance, the 'guaris' sing beautiful songs [...]. Nowadays, this ceremony persists in Uruapan, Paracho and other towns of the region [...]. Even though it has been altered, it gives us a general idea of what this ceremony could have been in the distant times in which the beautiful princess Erendira lived.

The programme's description highlighted P'urhépecha hospitality values represented in the dance, as well as the popular understanding of gender and the role of women in society. Like Atzimba, Erendira was a historical fiction character from Eduardo Ruiz' book, who was depicted as the leader of the P'urhépecha resistance; brave and rebellious (Figure 4.7). Even though this image of Erendira would be strongly promoted in the 1930s, the festival programme only stressed her beauty. Both in the description of Campos and in the programme, it is mentioned

that women ‘dress up’ like ‘*guaris*’, using dress as an indicator of ethnicity and indigeneity. Thus, the *Canacuas* dance aided the construction of gendered representations of craft making and indigenosity.



Figure 4.7. Fragment of a mural about Erendira painted by Fermin Revueltas in the *Quinta Erendira* in the 1930s. Sources: Photographic collection of the Historical Municipal Archive of Pátzcuaro.

The connection between the *Canacuas* dance and Ruíz’ book established in the SEP programme was made evident in the cover of the 1930s edition of the book (Figure 4.8). Even though the dance is stated to have been recently recovered, it was considered an embodiment of ancient values. The book cover features a woman dressed in P’urhépecha clothes and holding a *batea* as in the *Canacuas* dance, strengthening the link between contemporary indigenous people and the prehispanic past, represented in Ruíz’s book. This ethnicised image of a woman carrying a richly decorated *batea* would become part of the imagery around Michoacán.

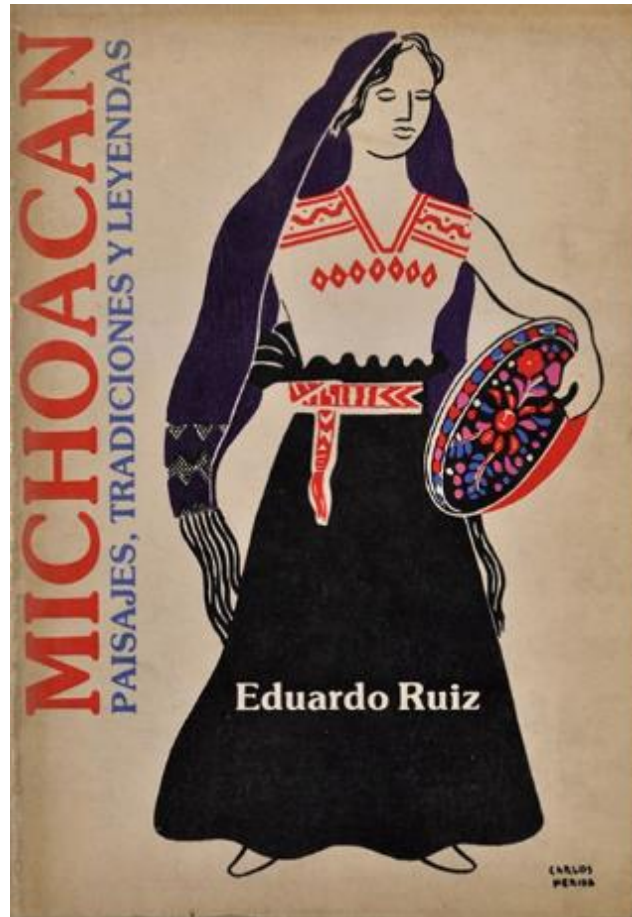


Figure 4.8. Cover of the 1930s edition of Ruiz's book portraying a woman dressed up as a 'guari', holding a colourful batea.

The use of indigenous clothing by non-indigenous people became popular in the framework of the celebration of civic festivals, particularly during national holidays, such as Independence Day and the Mexican Revolution. Figure 4.9 shows a group of children presenting a dance, the girls appear dressed as 'guarecitas', holding lacquered bateas as in the Canacuas dance during the celebration of the Mexican Revolution. Although the dress functioned as a sign of social difference that indicated belonging to an ethnic group, its use by non-indigenous people -whose bodies were not marked with difference- did not make them indigenous but truly Mexican.

Dos Aspectos de los Festejos del 20 de Noviembre en Pátzcuaro: grupo de niños participantes en un bailable y los contingentes organizándose para el desfile



Figure 4.9. Photographs on the celebration of the Revolution Day, showing a group of children dressed for a dance performance (above) and groups of people getting ready for a parade (below). Source: *El Heraldo Michoacano*, 25th November 1938

What I want to point out is that corporeal displays of *artes populares* had different effects than museum exhibitions. Museum exhibitions were directed to a national, non-indigenous public. They displayed *artes populares* as art objects, while promoting their consumption and incorporation into domestic life as an everyday object, whereas the corporeal display of *artes populares* by indigenous people contributed to the construction of body and gendered representations of indigeneity. Furthermore, ideas of indigeneity were communicated and apprehended through performance. The women that interpreted the Canacuas were not only performing a dance but were also performing indigeneity.

4.3.2 ‘Concurra, exponga, aprenda, compre, venda’: Regional Fairs and the Display of the Region.

Agricultural fairs were a different kind of exhibition focussed on showing the progress achieved in the areas of agriculture, livestock, and industry. National exhibitions of this kind began to be celebrated in the 1920s featuring specimens and objects from different parts of the country. In the 1930s, as part of the same policy, regional exhibitions began to be organised in order to promote the regional industry, under the name of *Exposición Regional Agrícola, Ganadera e Industrial* (Regional Agricultural, Livestock and Industrial Exhibition).

In Morelia, regional exhibitions, also called fairs, began to be organized in 1936. Under the motto ‘bring together, exhibit, learn, buy, sell’ the Secretariat of Agriculture and Development and the Ministry of Economy invited the population to participate in the fairs, either as exhibitors or spectators. According to an official statement, in 1938 all the municipalities of Michoacán state were participating in the event, displaying the ‘best exemplars’ of Michoacán products.¹⁵

As part of the event, talks and workshops were organized on aspects related to the improvement of agriculture and livestock.¹⁶ Competitions in the main areas of the exhibition were also celebrated to incentivise the improvement of regional products. People of ‘all social classes’ were invited to attend the event, either as exhibitors or visitors, assuring them that with their visit, they would get the best instruction in the different areas of the exhibition.

Interestingly, to persuade farmers to participate, the propaganda also invoked their patriotism. More associated with armies than with agriculture, patriotic fervour was summoned to bring people to the regional exhibition, ‘The Exhibition [...] expects the patriotic cooperation of all the elements whose activities promote the constant impulse and the systematic improvement of agriculture and livestock in our country’.¹⁷

Although the emphasis was on primary activities, the call was opened to all the productive sectors that were interested in showing Michoacán’s economic progress, bringing farmers, artisans, small industries and large companies together

¹⁵ ‘Tercera Exposición Agrícola, Ganadera e Industrial de la Ciudad de Morelia. Comunicado de agricultura y fomento.’ *El Heraldo Michoacano*. 1st September 1938. p.3.

¹⁶ ‘Michoacán debe darse a conocer en la proxima Exposición Agrícola, Ganadera, Industrial y Comercial’. *El Heraldo Michoacano*, 2nd September 1938. p.12.

¹⁷ *Ibíd.*

(Figure 4.10). Some governmental offices, such as the Forestry Department or the Irrigation Commission also had exhibition stands explaining their functions and activities to support the development of Michoacán.



Figure 4.10. Photographs from the 1938 Exhibition. The photo on the third row (left to right) and third column (top to bottom) shows a lacquerware stand. Source: *La III Exposición Agrícola, Industrial y Ganadera de Michoacán. El Heraldo Michoacano, 9th October 1938.*

The Secretary of Economy of Michoacán state and the Economy Museum also organized displays of ‘typical industries’. Concerning this, a newspaper note reported that, ‘... the secretary of the branch had a major interest in supporting local industries, particularly the so called typical industries that are so attractive and interesting that cause admiration among locals and foreigners’.¹⁸ What this suggests is that while its incorporation into the exhibition may have served to foment its consumption, it also sought to attract visitors, giving to the event a sense of regional particularity.

The exhibition also sought to get visitors from outside the region, publicising the event in tourism magazines. An advertisement in the tourism

¹⁸ ‘Un contingente del Museo de Economía a la Exposición. Organización del stand de industrias típicas de Uruapan, mayor atractivo’. *El Heraldo Michoacano*. 6th September 1938, p.3

magazine *Mapa* included pictures of Pátzcuaro, Uruapan and Morelia, announcing special discounts on the railways as well as organised excursions to these places, pointing out that regional products were not the only things on display, but the region itself (Figure 4.11). Moreover, it also indicated that tourism objectives were not so different from those of the exhibition.



Figure 4.11. Advertising of the 1936 exhibition. Source: *Gran Exposición Agrícola, Ganadera e Industrial. Mapa Revista de Turismo. Vol 3, n.25.*

However, it is important to note that the roles of ‘exhibitor’ and ‘spectator’ were not totally fixed in this context. The people exhibiting their products were also viewers and vice versa, as these events were conceived as spaces for social encounter and to learn from each other, so the educational aspect of the exhibition was more widespread than the activities explicitly established for it. As the event’s motto said it was through ‘bringing together, exhibiting, learning, buying and selling’, that an embodied knowledge of the region was grasped.

4.3.3 Pátzcuaro's Regional Exhibition

Prior to the installation of the regional exhibition in Morelia, a similar event had been taking place in Pátzcuaro. It is difficult to say when it began; the first mentions of the event in the council minutes refer to the early 1930s. The event encompassed an exhibition of regional products, as well as presentations of dances and music, which entered into a competition.

The organising committee was composed of members of Pátzcuaro's town council and distinguished individuals. They were also responsible for seeking sponsorship to reward contestants. The sponsors were usually distinguished individuals from Pátzcuaro, as well as government officials.¹⁹

In 1938, Pátzcuaro's regional exhibition merged with the *Exposición Agrícola, Ganadera e Industrial*, being held under this name for the first time. Quoting the inauguration speech, a newspaper account of the event stated that the exhibition was a 'sample of the progress made by the region'. As in Morelia, Pátzcuaro's Fair exhibited local crafts and agricultural products, so that 'progress' was framed in terms of tradition rather than industrialisation. The article also stressed the popular excitement around the event, motivated not only by the specimens exhibited but also by the traditional dances performed. The latter was the main attraction for visitors from outside the region. Concerning this, the newspaper noted, '... a great part of Morelia's population moved to the lake town to witness the native dances and other particular festivities of the day.'²⁰

Interestingly, the dates chosen to celebrate the regional exhibition coincided with the feast day of Pátzcuaro's patron saint, *Nuestra Señora de la Salud* (Our Lady of Health), traditionally December 8th. Patron saint feast celebrations were the population's main event since colonial times, attracting many visitors every year, including pilgrims. Music, dances, and processions were also part of the religious celebration. During *Nuestra Señora de la Salud* celebrations, commercial activities and fairground attractions remained throughout the month, the reason why the celebrations were also known as 'December Holidays'. The publicity surrounding Pátzcuaro's regional exhibition would also call it as 'Pátzcuaro's annual fair' or 'regional fair'.

¹⁹ Cabildo meeting proceedings 1935. Historical Municipal Archive of Pátzcuaro.

²⁰ 'Solemnemente se inauguró ayer la Feria de Pátzcuaro'. *El Heraldo Michoacano*. 10th December 1938, p.2

It is uncertain what the intention of the organizers was regarding the celebration of the two events on the same date. However, even if this was not intended, the coincidence of dates may have influenced the reception of the new civic festival among the locals. By 1939, a newspaper report indicated a complete success, since the organising committee had obtained full cooperation from the neighbouring towns for its realisation.²¹ This situation contrasted with that depicted in a council minute in 1933, according to which they had to convince the neighbouring municipalities to fix the roads, insisting on the mutual benefits.

During the 1930s, tourism increased its economic importance in the region. The people that benefited economically from this activity also shaped the government tourism agenda, articulating different interests. If tourism allowed the staging of Pátzcuaro as an indigenous place, it also contributed to create and protect a sense of authenticity. In 1938, the creation of a committee for the observation and protection of indigenous arts was proposed.²² Since indigenous arts were already a symbol of Mexican authenticity, these needed to be protected and regulated to guarantee a genuine experience and the future viability of tourism as an economic activity.

El turismo llega de todas partes avido de disfrutar de las bellezas de la region, de conocer habitos y costumbres y el folklore, el aspecto caracteristico, lo que le da personalidad a esa parte visitada. Y gustara de pagar bien a veces con esplendidez cuanto encuentra merecedor de llevarse como recuerdo, como documento historico, folklorico o como simple objeto de curiosidad. Pequeños comerciantes sin escrúpulos son bastantes motivos para ahuyentar al turista hasta de la mas bella region [...].

Tourism from all parts come to the region to enjoy its beauties, wanting to know about the traditions, customs and folklore, the characteristic aspect, which gives personality to the area visited. Tourists will pay well, sometimes extravagantly when finding something worth keeping as a souvenir, historical document, folklore, or curiosity. Small unscrupulous merchants are enough reasons to scare away tourists from even the most beautiful region [...].

It was proposed that the committees should be established in the places where crafts were made and, in each population, visited by tourists. They would be constituted by the municipal president, the tax collector, the director of the local school, a representative of the artisans and another of the merchants. Each committee member was named to represent the interests of the sector, except for the school

²¹ 'Se prepara ya la gran Feria de Pátzcuaro'. El Heraldo Michoacano. 26th November 1939.

²² 'En pro del turismo en lugares indígenas'. El Heraldo Michoacano. 15th October 1938.

director who was entrusted with the task of determining the artistic quality of the objects.

Consequently, the committees made artisans and merchants subject to regulation. However, since they were also members of the committees, they too participated in policing authenticity. While the tourism market benefited from the discourse of authenticity, it also contributed to its production through the establishment of regulatory bodies. The regulation of cultural products implied an organization of values about the region that were made accessible through processes of production, consumption, and sale. Similar organizations would be created in the following years, to regulate tourism and the image of the city.

4.3.4 Exhibiting Arte Popular for the Region: Pátzcuaro's Museum of Popular Arts and Crafts

In the 1930s, Pátzcuaro's crafts gained a permanent place of exhibition with the creation of the *Museo de Artes e Industrias Populares de Pátzcuaro* (MAIPP), which was also referred to as 'ethnographic museum' or 'regional museum'. The museum was conceived as a place fully dedicated to *arte popular*, reinforcing the link between craftsmanship and Lake Pátzcuaro region, organising the region in terms of its artistic production.

The creation of the MAIPP was initially proposed in 1926 as an ethnographic museum. However, it was not until 1932 that the works to adapt the building began. In 1936, the *Ex-Colegio de San Nicolas* was officially given to the SEP by the municipal government. Finally, in 1938 the MAIPP was created by presidential decree, under Lazaro Cárdenas' administration. The museum sought to contribute to the economic and aesthetic revaluation of handicrafts within the region.

Since his period as governor of Michoacán state, from 1928 to 1932, Cárdenas made the promotion of local industries one of the foundations of his programme to develop the region economically. The display of handicrafts in fairs and exhibitions was one of the techniques employed to promote them. A first attempt to promote Michoacán products was made in 1929 with the organization of an exhibition in the *Ex-Convento de los Josefinos*, in México City, a former religious

building made available by the federal government.²³ However, even though Michoacán crafts had already been exhibited in museums in the capital of the country, before the creation of the MAIPP they did not have an exhibition place within the region.

A notable figure in the first stage of the MAIPP was Salvador Solchaga (1892-1966), from Pátzcuaro, who as inspector of colonial monuments was asked to supervise the works to transform the building that would house the museum. Solchaga studied painting in the *Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes* in México City and then travelled to Spain to perfect his technique. While in Spain he visited the *Museo de America* in Madrid where he observed 18th century lacquerware from Pátzcuaro. This event had a profound impact on the development of his professional career. On his return to México, he began doing historical research to recover Pátzcuaro's traditional techniques. By the 1930s, Solchaga had successfully reintroduced the craft, after having almost disappeared (Martínez Aguilar, 2017).

Solchaga also established close links with a number of scholars, artists, intellectuals and institutions, whom he assisted as a key informant and gatekeeper when they visited Pátzcuaro. Through the cultivation of these ties, he also ensured for himself a position within regional and national cultural institutions. As a resident of Pátzcuaro, he participated in several local organizations dedicated to the protection of historical heritage, urban improvement, and the development of the city's tourism potential.

Interestingly, despite the fact that Solchaga was descendant of a Spanish family landowners, his friends in México City often identified him as an indigenous, pointing out how strong the link between *artes populares* and indigeneity was (Jolly, 2018). In this regard, Lopez (2010) mentions that the technical expertise of 'craft-revivalists' such as Salvador Solchaga, was often attributed to his alleged Indianness, overlooking his career. Concerning this, Jolly (2018) notes that Solchaga, as others artists, would manipulate his own image depending on the situation, influencing the way they were perceived.

²³ General Archive of Lázaro Cárdenas del Río. Biblioteca del Museo Nacional de Historia. Memorias como gobernador de Michoacán 1928-1932.

4.3.5 The Historical Echoes of the Museum's Building: Colonial Associations of Postrevolutionary Institutions.

The MAIPP was established in the *Ex-colegio de San Nicolas* in Pátzcuaro (Figure 4.12). The building had different uses before becoming a museum. It is said to have been the house of Vasco de Quiroga, the first bishop of Michoacán between 1536 and 1565. The building also housed the *Colegio de San Nicolas* (1540-1580) until the bishopric was transferred from Pátzcuaro to Morelia, after which it was bequeathed to the Jesuits becoming the *Colegio de Pátzcuaro* (1580-1767). The building also functioned as a guesthouse, *vecindad* (housing complex), prison, school for girls, and a centre of agrarian meetings. Part of the ruins of the P'urhépecha ceremonial centre was discovered during the remodelling work.



Figure 4.12. *Ex Colegio de San Nicolas*, ca. 1900. Source: Colección Manuel González Galvan, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

The connection between Vasco de Quiroga and the museum is significant as he is believed to have introduced the crafts in the region. Quiroga was a lawyer and a judge that was sent to Michoacán in 1533 to re-establish order and governance. In 1536, he was designated as the first Bishop of Michoacán, a position he held until 1565. His proposal for re-establishing order was the congregation of the indigenous population in well-defined settlements. The re-organization of space was linked with the establishment of a new social order, based on Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Early Christian Church principles.

The traditional image of Vasco de Quiroga depicts him as a saintly father figure, a compassionate man with a great love for the Indians. Today, he is remembered among the P'urhépecha as a benefactor, someone who took care of them, referring to him as 'tata', an affectionate way of saying father that also denotes a position of respect and authority.

People also acknowledge Quiroga for the current specialization in different crafts that exist in the villages around Lake Pátzcuaro. Nonetheless, some historians have contested this idea, pointing out that such specialization already existed during prehispanic times. Popular imageries have also been questioned as historical records contain complaints against him for meagre wages and forced labour. Concerning this, James Krippner Martínez (2000, p.1) argues that this image of Quiroga as a humanist icon should be understood as an 'after-the-fact reconstruction rooted more in colonial creole perceptions and the construction of modern Mexican nationalism than the sixteenth century past'.

It is important to note that during the post-revolutionary period, despite the anticlerical discourse, the figure of Vasco de Quiroga attracted some left-wing scholars and politicians. His establishment of the common ownership of the land and the collectivization of work were interpreted as proto-socialist. The people involved in the development of the state cultural programme also shared with Quiroga the eagerness to redeem and transform the indigenous population.

The educational programmes developed in Michoacán also benefited from Quiroga's legacy. Thus, when in the 1920s, the SEP chose Michoacán as one of the states to establish its educational project, one of the reasons stated was the settlement pattern of the indigenous population that unlike other regions was organised into small and well-defined towns facilitating the educational mission.

Michoacan es uno de los estados en los que la labor del departamento se facilitara mas en virtud de hallarse la raza tarasca –autoctona- concentrada en pequenos nucleos, especialmente en lo que fue el antiguo imperio purepecha, localizado en las islas y margenes del lago de Pátzcuaro.²⁴

Michoacán is one of the states in which the department's work will be facilitated by virtue of finding the Tarascan race concentrated in small centres, especially in what was the ancient Purépecha empire, located in the islands and margins of Lake Pátzcuaro

²⁴ Boletín de la Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1922, v1, n1, p.574

For the same reason, the SEP proposed establishing the first ‘indigenous college’ in Pátzcuaro in the building that once housed the *Colegio Jesuita*, next to the former *Colegio de San Nicolas* (Figure 4.13, Figure 4.14). The school was conceived as a place to teach the indigenous population basic literacy skills, modern agriculture techniques and to improve crafts. When the college was finally established, it was named after Vasco de Quiroga, creating a link between colonial and present-day institutions.



Figure 4.13. ‘Colegio Vasco de Quiroga y templo de la compañía’, postcard by the the company México Fotográfico (MF). Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.



Figure 4.14. *Colegio de San Nicolas* (to the left) and the school *Vasco de Quiroga* (to the right) postcard by the company MF. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.

4.4 Schools, Theatres and Cultural Transformation

A central component of the state cultural programme was rural education aimed at improving the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the people in the countryside. The purpose of the rural school was not only to educate the children but to transform the community as a whole. In this sense, schools and teachers were seen as agents of change. The SEP established action education as the education model for the rural areas. Productive habits were imparted through the cultivation of school gardens and plots. Collective work would be promoted through the organization of children and adult cooperatives. The formation of women's, children's, and men's committees also had the purpose of promoting other forms of participation and community organization. School festivals, team sports, and theatrical performances were also promoted to educate the population in national and civic values. These aspects would be further emphasized with Cárdenas's socialist education programme in the 1930s.

The *Festival de la Canción y de la Danza* held in Paracho in 1924 (see above) was part of the various theatre proposals developed within the framework of the so-called *indigenista* theatre. The SEP promoted the development of a New Mexican theatre as part of its cultural and educational programme, in which artists, anthropologists and educators participated. Vasconcelos had a decisive importance in this process. Vasconcelos' interest in the theatre was far from being exclusively focused on its educational application, but it was born of an aesthetic concern. Influenced by Nietzsche's ideas, Vasconcelos believed that the theatre should combine the Apollonian and Dionysian, so that musical tragedy, which largely incorporated dance, would be the theatrical form par excellence. Vasconcelos also thought that the play should be a collective product, challenging the conventional division between author, actor, and audience. This reflection led him to reject enclosed theatres and to promote the idea of open-air theatres (Fell, 1989).

However, the first open air-theatre experiences were linked to the work of the anthropologist Manuel Gamio (1883-1960), one of the main architects of *indigenismo*, who since the end of the 1910s was developing archaeological and ethnographic research in Teotihuacán, in the Basin of México. Gamio studied at Columbia University with Franz Boas. As a student of Franz Boas, he spread in México the idea of historical particularism and cultural relativism, which postulated that all cultures held the same importance and that they had to be understood in

their own context. Together, Gamio and Boas, established the International School of Archaeology and Ethnology in México City in 1910. The outbreak of the Mexican revolution caused its closure a few years later. Gamio's main achievement was the reconstruction of the archaeological site of Teotihuacan, through which, he turned it into the greatest public monument in México and situated Mesoamerican civilizations as the foundations of Mexican history (Brading, 1989). In 1917 he was appointed as the first director of the Department of Anthropology in México, a position that he held until 1924.

The discourse of cultural relativism favoured the positive valuation of indigenous cultures, specifically their expressive culture. Even so, Manuel Gamio also argued in favour of *mestizaje* and of applying anthropological research to processes of cultural change and acculturation. In his book *Forjando Patria* (1916) he argued that indigenous communities constituted a series of separate countries due to the many languages they spoke, which was seen as an obstacle for nation-state building. Gamio's ethnographic work in Teotihuacán sought to prove that it was possible to incorporate the indigenous population into the nation. He found that theatre could serve to this purpose, so that in addition to anthropologists and historians, Gamio included a group of artists into his research team, who were responsible for documenting everything related to indigenous folklore. The group of artists who worked in Teotihuacán was made up by the playwright-ethnologist Rafael M. Saavedra, the painter Carlos González, and the musician Francisco Domínguez, founding in 1921, the Teatro Regional de Teotihuacán. Based on their ethnographic research, they wrote the scripts, music, and scenography, representing everyday life on stage.

The plays consisted of the representation of stylized scenes of everyday life where elements of popular folklore were incorporated. Their brevity characterized this form of theatre, which is why it was also called *Teatro Sintético* (Synthetic theatre) or *Teatro Folclórico* (Folkloric theatre). Francisco Domínguez would also get involved in another avant-garde theatrical experiment called *El Teatro del Murciélago*, which has been regarded as a form of synthetic theatre (see above).

Driven by his aesthetic reflections, and as Secretary of Public Education, Vasconcelos supported the Teotihuacán project, proposing the construction of an open-air theatre in 1924 in the locality of San Juan Teotihuacán. He also promoted

the construction of a National Stadium whose design was inspired by the Greek amphitheatre (Ortíz Bullé-Goyri, 2003).

It is important to note that this theatrical proposal led by Rafael Saavedra, did not approach the indigenous population from a purely romantic vision, but rather tried to show the social conditions and difficulties faced by the rural population in their day to day. Moreover, unlike the *costumbrista* theatre, that stressed the picturesque aspects of the rural life, the *teatro sintético* developed by Saavedra tried to explore the sense of beauty of the indigenous population (Ortíz Bullé-Goyri, 2003). Although most of the scenic experiences of the time sought to revalue the expressions of popular culture, these characteristics would manifest differently in each of them.

The Teotihuacán group was responsible for developing a similar experience in Paracho, this time framed in the cultural missions' programme of the SEP. However, the *Teatro Regional de Paracho* was not an exact replica of Teotihuacan experience. A first difference lies in the thematic breadth. Unlike the *Teatro Regional de Teotihuacan* that featured musical folklore and ethnographic plays, the *Teatro Regional de Paracho* only focused on the performance of musical folklore. Yet both experiences tried to represent indigenous culture. On the other hand, while in Teotihuacán, the plays constituted the vision of the ethnographer-artist of people's daily life, in Paracho the plays incorporated people's vision of themselves. The villagers not only participated as actors, but they had an active role in the writing of the scripts.

Organisers asked the population to perform their dances and traditions on stage, with the 'typical' clothes and music. Some of the dances they represented were the Old Men, the Moors, the *Negros* and the previously mentioned *Canacuas*, as well as fragments of *pastorelas*.²⁵ The case of the *Canacuas* is particularly interesting. In addition to what has already been discussed (see above), its significance relies on the inclusion of a scene representing an everyday conversation between women. They discuss the presence of SEP officials in the village, interchanging opinions about the reasons for their visit while providing details about their activities in the region, showing that they too have been paying attention to the officials' actions and itineraries. In the conversation, the impressions are

²⁵ The *pastorela* is a religious dramatic genre set on the biblical episode of the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Nativity.

mixed. One of them believes the government is telling them to preserve their traditions. Another person thinks the presence of the SEP officials shows that the government will assure better work conditions so they can escape poverty and disease. In the final act, the women ask the officials to transmit their message to the government and invite the population of Paracho to act.

The dialogue of the play shows an understanding of the *indigenista* discourse about what it meant to be indigenous within the postrevolutionary regime. The conversation also reveals an awareness of its ‘fictionality’, accepting to act themselves in exchange for rights’ recognition. The former suggests intentionality and agency in the production of an indigenous subject. Concerning this, Elizabeth Araiza (2013) argues that the outcome of this staging was that the population of Paracho became somehow empowered and self-aware of their situation and rights. Moreover, while Campos’ (1928) descriptions of the *Canacuas* depicted women as passive, on the stage they presented themselves in a leadership role, showing the actual agency and influence they possessed in their communities.

4.4.1 Schools’ Open-Air Theatres: Performing Cultural and Social identities.

The different theatrical experiences developed in the 1920s were linked to the rural education enterprise developed by the SEP. On the one hand, in the projects developed in Teotihuacan and Paracho, the schools played a central role as interlocutors between the SEP officials and the communities. The theatrical forms that would be pursued in the school would emulate those of the synthetic and folkloric theatre. Schools would also promote the construction of open-air theatres as the ideal places for theatrical performance.

Other projects that were being carried out in society at large would also be tried to be reproduced at the community level through its incorporation into the rural education programme. In this sense, it is important to highlight that rural schools were not a space that was meant to be separated from the broader community; instead, they were conceived as agents of cultural change and social transformation.

Theatre presentations were usually part of the school’s organised festivals or *tertulias* (literary and musical gatherings). Most school festivals were held on national holidays. Besides substituting religious celebrations, civic festivals were

conceived as spaces of recreation and socialisation. Such spaces were seen as urgently needed in rural areas, where life was considered monotonous, not only because of the alleged lack of distractions but also because of the ostensible tedious and oppressive nature of agricultural work. The performance of plays, music and dances was aimed at raising the culture of the people living in rural areas and cultivating their aesthetic feelings. This understanding was largely shared among schoolteachers and intellectuals.

In the article entitled ‘What is the theatre in the rural communities?’ published in the magazine *El Maestro Rural*, the rural teacher José Encarnación Rodríguez from San Juan del Río, Queretaro expounded the significance of the theatre to his peers in terms of its recreational aspect and its cultural transformative potential. The illustration that accompanies the article shows a dance performance in what it looks to have been a 16th century *capilla abierta* (open chapel), used to evangelize, which was part of the architectural elements of the so called ‘open-air church’ that came to substitute the precolumbian plaza ritual space (Aguilar-Moreno, 2013) (Figure 4.15). The open chapel in the Franciscan convent of Tzintuntzan is one of the most remarkable examples of this type of architecture in the region. The open chapel and the convent are also decorated with religious frescoes (Figure 4.16). Notably, theatre performances played a key role in the evangelization of the indigenous population, which in turn drew in Mesoamerican public ritual. The former points out to the historical roots of theatre in México both as a space and a technique to inculcate certain values and establish power.



Figure 4.15. What is the importance of theatre in rural communities? Source: *Maestro Rural*. V7, n8, 1935.



Figure 4.16. Open Chapel in the Franciscan convent of Tzintzuntzan. Photograph by the author.

In the school environment, the theatre was also conceived as a means to educate and transmit values, as well as to generate social reflection. Different intellectuals, such as the anarchist and writer Rafael Perez Taylor contributed to applying the ideas of the synthetic theatre to the school programmes. The magazine *Maestro rural* also published contributions from writers and schoolteachers with short plays that could be reproduced in schools. Most of them were focused on transmitting civic

values and habits, such as industriousness, cooperation, solidarity, and hygiene, as well as creating class-consciousness and raising awareness of social problems.

Thus, in the opinion of another rural teacher, the importance of the theatre lay in its ability to ‘teach clearly through dialogues and comedies, the social problems which not only México was going through but the entire world’.²⁶ The article published in the section ‘school buildings’ sought to persuade rural teachers in other parts of the country about the need to build open-air theatres through presenting the way he had managed to do so, despite the limitations (Figure 4.17)



Figure 4.17. 'Construcciones escolares'. The photos illustrating the article show an open-air theatre. Source: *Maestro Rural* 7(8), p.25, 1935.

²⁶ Flores Muñoz, Daniel. (1932). Construcciones Escolares. *Maestro Rural* 7(8), p.25.



Figure 4.18. Open-air theatre on the cover of the magazine *Maestro rural*. Source: *Maestro rural*. V12, n11-12.

Even though cultural missions had a presence in the Lake Pátzcuaro region from the early 1920s, apart from in the main towns, the first rural schools run by the SEP were established at the end of the decade. The progress of rural schools was evaluated through visits by school inspectors, who produced concise reports on the state of the school and provided suggestions. The heads of the schools were also required to provide updated information on their operation every year. In addition to the school statistics, the reports provided information on the physical state of the school, its organisation and the progress made in each area of the curriculum.

Between 1927 and 1930, reports from schools located south of Lake Pátzcuaro described similar conditions. All of them had a modest building built by the community, as well as some agricultural annexes. They had managed to form cooperatives for the collective organization of work, as well as establish children and parents' societies. Most of the communities had also established sports courts.

Most school buildings were originally constructed with community cooperation. The construction was progressive and depended on the availability of resources. In some agrarian villages, former religious buildings were repurposed as schools. When authorised, the sports court and open-air theatre were built in the church's open-air atrio. With some exceptions, most of the school theatres, whether self-built or constructed by the government, tried to follow the model promoted

by the SEP since its inception, located outdoors and of semicircular shape (Figure 4.18, Figure 4.19).

According to the SEP reports, in 1930, the school of Arocutin reported having concluded the construction of its open-air theatre.²⁷ The opening festival of Tzurumutaro school, held in 1933, is stated to have taken place in the theatre of the school.²⁸ Even though they did not have a proper theatre, in 1931 the communities of San Pedro Pareo and Huirimangaro reported having banished alcoholism thanks to the rehearsal of plays and the practice of sports.²⁹

In 1935, with the support of the federal government, the island of Yunuen finished the construction of an open-air theatre.³⁰ The open-air theatre of the school of Jaracuaro and the school itself was also built in the same years by the federal government. In charge of the project was the architect Alberto Leduc, who also directed the construction of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre in Pátzcuaro, built on the site of a former convent.

Due to the limitations of space and economic resources, some schools adapted closed spaces as theatres. Thus, for instance, in 1936 at the request of the community of Puacuaro, the temple was repurposed as a school, and one of the rooms was used as a theatre. Likewise, the school of Huiramangaro adapted a corridor in the absence of adequate space. Concerning this, the director of the school mentioned:

Considerando que el teatro es un gran medio de difusión cultural y que en la escuela es un verdadero auxiliar para la labor social porque facilita la frecuente reunión de los vecinos, bajo el techo de la escuela procuré la instalación de uno pequeño en los corredores de la casa que ocupamos, y para que tuvieran mayor interés y lucimiento los programas que allí se desarrollaran pintamos una decoración [...]³¹.

Considering the potential of theatre as a means of cultural diffusion and social encounter, we installed a small theatre inside of the school, in one of the corridors of the house we occupied. In order to make it more inviting and make the representations more appealing, we painted a decoration.

²⁷ AGN. Archivo Histórico de la SEP, Serie Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 1

²⁸ AGN-SEP, Serie Escuela Rural Federal, Box 386922(3), Folder 11

²⁹ AGN-SEP, Serie Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 6; AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales en Michoacán, Box 38504(9), Folder 6,

³⁰ AGN-SEP, Serie Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 13

³¹ AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales en Michoacán, Box 38504(9), Folder 6.



Figure 4.19. Open-air theatre in Tsentsenguaro. Photograph by the author.

Generally, theatre performances were part of school festivals or literary-musical evenings organized for the community. The festival programmes usually included presentations of poetry, regional music, and dances. Despite the entertaining character of most plays performed, these were characterised by their social content and educational purpose.

Most of the plays presented could be classified as literary *realismo* or *costumbrismo* (see above). From this literary genre are the titles *La cuerda floja* (1915) by the Spanish writer José Estremera, and *La última campaña* (1894), a social comedy by the Mexican writer Federico Gamboa mentioned in the 1938 report of the school of Ajuno. The first was a '*juguete cómico*' a subgenre characterised by its brevity that could contain music and dances, presenting humorous situations of everyday life. Gamboa's play, for its part, explored nineteenth century nationalism in México, criticising the chauvinist attitudes of one of the characters through their comic depiction.

Other plays correspond to the literary trend called '*narrativa de la revolución*', considered derivative of social realism that merged history and literature. Some of them are also considered *costumbristas*. A very popular play in the region was *Tierra y Libertad* (1916) by the anarchist writer Ricardo Flores Magón, which portrays a phase of the revolution. The works of the stridentist German List Arzubide, a precursor of the *Teatro Guiñol* in México, are also mentioned in the reports of Tzurumutaro's school. It is important to note that the plays were not mere

propaganda. In fact, the work of Flores Magón criticizes the so-called ‘government made revolution’, stating that there was no such thing as a revolutionary government.

As mentioned above *costumbristas* authors aimed to portray everyday life, the manners, and customs of a specific social group. Precisely because they are part of the everyday, customs and traditions have a normative function, which is hardly questioned. *Costumbristas* plays worked establishing norms and conventions of the everyday. The performance of dances and traditions was also part of the production of the quotidian not because they were performed daily but because the discourses transmitted through them were expected to govern the everyday.

The 1939 report of the Jaracuaro School mentions other titles published in the magazine *Maestro Rural*. Besides theatrical performance, the schools of the region promoted the performance of regional music and dances as part of school festivals. In the case of the island of Yunuen, the 1943 report mentions that the plays were literary adaptations made by the director of the school. Children and adults constituted the theatre group of Yunuen. They performed both inside and outside the community, in the schools of neighbouring towns.

The transforming potential of the theatre lay not only in the content of the script but also in its performative aspect, being a platform to represent different social and cultural identities. However, the actors were not the only ones undergoing a transformative process but also the audience. One of the central ideas behind the construction of open-air theatres was to remove the boundaries between the author, the actors, and the public so that the theatrical performance would become a collective experience. Moreover, open-air theatre performances drew on the existent landscape, working as a stage of action, to perform a new one, mobilizing past and recent landscape experiences and memories. In the process, new meanings were inscribed on the landscape.

Concerning the school theatres created in enclosed spaces, it is interesting that the solution to their situation was to paint ‘decorations’ on the walls. Although the content of these paintings is uncertain, as a type of scenography its function was to recreate spaces or environments to aid the performance.

Inside the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre, for example, a mural of Lake Pátzcuaro covers the walls, giving the sensation of being surrounded by it (Figure 4.20). The mural painted by Roberto Cueva del Rio in 1937 presents Lake Pátzcuaro

most celebrated islands, Janitzio and Jaracuaro, along with two others, possibly Pacanda and Yunuen. In the distance, fishing boats navigate the lake. In the foreground, the cultural and educational programmes developed in the region are represented. A blue ribbon, with whitefish motifs inside, frames the mural.

The mural on the left wall is focused on regional folklore, represented by the dance of the Old Men and The Moors. While the island of Jaracuaro is clearly recognized, the identity of the other is imprecise, but it may be Pacanda. The school of Jaracuaro and its open-air theatre occupy almost the entire island in the mural. Sailboats and fishing boats with their distinctive butterfly-shaped nets navigate the lake. Plant and animal life are also represented in the mural. At the end of the scene, a flock of birds flies away.

The mural on the right wall shows a group of people with books in their hands gathered around a rural teacher, representing the SEP rural education programme in the region. Stylised scenes of everyday life and the making of handicrafts are also depicted. In one of the scenes, a group of luthiers is crafting string instruments. Next to them, another group of artisans creates lacquer works. Lutherie is, however, a craft restricted to the *Meseta P'urbépecha* region (highlands), from the town of Paracho, specifically, reinforcing the association between artisanship and Lake Pátzcuaro region. The island of Janitzio with the monument of Morelos on the top stands out from the rest. Other features such as the church and the cemetery, as well as fishing nets hung to dry are also depicted (Figure 4.21).



Figure 4.20. Fragment of Cueva del Río's mural (1937) on the left wall. Photographs by the author.



Figure 4.21. Fragment of Cueva del Rio's mural (1937) on the right wall. Photographs by the author.

Although more realistic in appearance, the anonymous mural inside of the school of Yunuen shares a similar style. The mural covers the three available walls of a classroom³². The content of the central wall refers to the school's transformative mission and its place within the broader modernisation programme, while the paintings on the sides emphasise the importance of sports and study. There too, Lake Pátzcuaro is ubiquitous, connecting the different scenes.

The first scene of the central wall mural shows a group of people, comprising children and adults, women and men throwing into the fire the symbols of the old regime, vestiges of the colonial past that had privileged its heirs (Figure 4.22). The next scene represents the rural education project, where a group of children of different age and adults engage in the study of scientific subjects. On the left side, a girl is studying chemistry, while an adult behind her points to something in the book she is holding. In the centre, a young boy looks through a microscope; a sheet of paper on the desk specifies that the subject is cell biology. On the left, a child, who is learning the alphabet, seems to be showing his homework to an adult. In the front of the scene, a boy studies a book whose subject is not revealed in the mural, while another boy stares at a globe that shows the American continent to the viewers, reflecting current Pan-Americanist trends (see Chapter 7).

³² Although there is no agreement regarding the authorship, according to José Manuel Martínez Aguilar (2019) this was painted by Roberto Cueva del Río, who also painted the mural inside the Emperor Caltzontzin theatre. According to the same author, Cueva del Río also painted the mural in the Estribo Chico viewpoint.



Figure 4.22. Mural inside the Yunnan school, fragment of the central wall, first part. Photograph by the author.

A door physically divides the wall into two parts. Helping to integrate the composition, laboratory instruments and a celestial globe are placed above the door. Yet this element also divides the set into two sections, a rural area and an urban, industrialised, setting. The second part of the mural depicts another part of the country's modernization programme. It displays a group of workers and engineers constructing a modern building. The person who directs the construction work appears represented on the right side, from his desk he gives directions to the men who are standing next to him. The building under construction is represented on the opposite side of the scene. In the centre is a public library, established in a former religious building. A reference to Pátzcuaro's public library but also to the broader process of architectural conservation and repurposing of religious buildings (see Chapter 6). The façade reads *Biblioteca pública 18 de marzo*. Metamorphosed into a factory, the library is named after the oil expropriation date '18 de Marzo'. Next to the library is represented what it looks like an oil refinery (Figure 4.23).

In the upper part, two ribbons with the symbols of socialism, peace and work frame the set. A dove holds the right end of the ribbon with its beak, while the other end is held by a woman, who is holding a shovel with the other hand. While the scenes in the mural are set in Lake Pátzcuaro, they represent the country's modernization programme, linking the region with nation building efforts.



Figure 4.23. Mural inside the Yunnan school, fragment of the central wall, second part. Photograph by the author.

The paintings on the side walls emphasise the importance of sports and study. The right wall shows a group of young people practicing Olympic sports, weight, and javelin throw, while others spend their time reading. History is the subject of one of the books. In the background, an amphitheatre appears depicted. Modern sports are represented in the left wall. There a group of young people is playing basketball and football. The houses of the town are represented in the back.



Figure 4.24. Mural inside the Yunnan school, right and left walls. Photograph by the author.

Interestingly, schools' open-air theatres appear depicted in both murals. The mural inside the theatre *Emperador Caltzontzin* shows in the middle of the Jaracuaro island the school's open air theatre (Figure 4.20) whereas the mural of Yunuen shows an open-air theatre similar to a Greek amphitheatre (Figure 4.24), so that the scenes represented in the murals were also taking place in real life. They are performing the region and the nation. Murals thus helped bring to presence such corporeal knowledges, working in a way similar to scenography paintings, helping to enact certain behaviours in everyday life.

The attitudes and behaviours promoted through theatre and represented in murals were also encouraged off-stage. For example, collectivism would be promoted both through plays whose content referred to this topic and through the creation of child and adult cooperatives. The same could be said of topics such as sports, hygiene, or the care of nature. Thus, it was through the repetition of behaviours on and off stage that certain subjectivities were instilled.

4.5 Reclaiming indigeneity

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the category of indigenous was initially imposed from outside, so that the indigenous population did not identify themselves as such, however, indigenous identity would be strategically assumed among politically mobilised communities in their demand for rights and citizenship recognition. The language of indigeneity here was used to highlight their condition as an oppressed group while accepting the authority of the state and adhering to the nationalist-revolutionary programme.

One of the questions included in the SEP reports was about the 'prevalent race'. The most common responses were 'mestiza' and 'tarasca or p'urhépecha'. In a different version of the report, this question was part of a section called 'ethnography', to which a question about the physical appearance of the race was added, where they have to specify whether they looked 'stunted' or 'vigorous'. However, this was not the only section where racial considerations were made. The sections of hygiene and physical education also dealt with this subject.

The word race did not always refer to physical or biological attributes; sometimes, it was used to indicate social features. However, the fact that they used 'race' instead of 'culture' or 'ethnicity,' or that they used them interchangeably, does not necessarily involve a pure confusion; instead, it reveals a close association

between them. For instance, the P'urhépecha were often described as an 'artistic race'. A similar view was held regarding the artistic ability of the 'indigenous race'. In this case, the use of the term involved in some way or another the naturalisation of culture. Consequently, the discourses surrounding race also participated in establishing certain cultural practices as normative.

Frequently, the racial categorization of communities did not remain constant over time. This may reflect not only a process of cultural change when the description changes from '*tarasca*' to '*mestizo*' but also changes in diagnostic criteria over time and among those who completed the reports. For example, while in 1930, the community of Nocutzepo was described as mestizo in 1933, it appeared as p'urhépecha.³³ Conversely, in the case of the *agrarista* community of San Pedro Pareo, its status as a P'urhépecha community in a 1930 report changed the year after to mestizo.³⁴

Another case worth mentioning is that of the community of Tupataro, described in the inspection reports as mestizos. However, in 1931, the school director sent a figurine representing the 'Indians of that place' to the department of rural schools, so that, where the inspector saw a mestizo community, the director identified an indigenous one. The statue was going to be exhibited during the 'Día de la Raza' held on October 12, when the arrival of Christopher Columbus was commemorated as the birth of a new 'race'. This refers to Vasconcelos' 'cosmic race', being a celebration of *mestizaje*.³⁵

Other communities, however, maintained the same status over time in the SEP reports. The island of Yunuen often presented as an ideal community, continued being considered P'urhépecha over time. Similarly, the community of Tzurumutaro, which was also characterized by its participation in the *agrarista* movement remained as P'urhépecha in the school reports. Discourses of indigeneity that saw indigenous people as objects of oppression, were also appropriated by some P'urhépecha communities, particularly among *agraristas* communities which already had a *campesino* identity and were articulated around class and the struggle for land. However, the cause of indigenous oppression was seen as twofold, caused by their class condition and ethnicity.

³³ AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 9

³⁴ AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 6

³⁵ AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales en Michoacán, Box 38500(5), Folder 14.

This view was present in a letter sent by the communal authority of Huiramangaro to the Minister of Education in 1926, regarding the closing of the school by a local inspector. Since the situation was not consistent with the official policy, the letter asked for an explanation, hinting at the neglect of the government obligations towards the ‘Indians’ and requesting the reopening of the school, visibly adopting an *indigenista* discourse. The *indigenista* discourse thus provided a language for consent and dissent.

[...] como la forma en que se verifico la clausura nos hace dudar que fuera dictada por esa superioridad [...] toda vez que el gobierno de la nación tiene por principal anhelo hacer del indio un ciudadano libre, culto y soberano. Ahora bien, si dicha disposición ha sido dictada por dicha secretaria de su muy merecido cargo le encarecemos a usted se sirva restituirnos lo que sagradamente nos corresponde como indígenas de aborigen raza. ¿o acaso estamos puestos fuera del catálogo de los hijos predilectos de nuestro querido México? ¿o acaso de ser nosotros indígenas, pobres de saber y lejos del centro de la instrucción, no necesitamos de mayor esmero y caridad para que formemos parte de la acción social?³⁶

[...] the circumstances of the closure of the school make us doubt that it was done following your instructions since the government of the nation has as its main desire to make of the Indian a free, cultured and sovereign citizen. Now, if the secretary under your authority has dictated this disposition, we urge you to restore to us what is sacredly ours as indigenous people of aboriginal race. Or are we out of the list of the favourite children of our beloved Mexico? Wouldn't it rather be that we as indigenous, poor in knowledge and far from the centre of instruction need greater care and charity to take part in social reform?

In addition to requesting the reopening of the school, and using a similar argument, they asked for the government support for the construction of a school building. The letter sent to the Minister of Education pointed out the governmental abandonment that the community had experienced historically, stressing the education sphere. While on the one hand, they recognised SEP's work constructing schools' buildings elsewhere in the country, they reproached the government for the lack of a school building in their community, expressing their desire to become ‘true citizens’ and contribute to the construction of the nation.

[...] los apóstoles maestros predicán sus enseñanzas a la naciente juventud y a los adultos de aquellos benditos lugares, en tanto que nuestros amados hijitos y nosotros mismos, cual hijos desheredados, cual hijos a los que no ama su idolatrada madre, vivimos en el horrendo caos de la ignorancia, sin que por nuestro porvenir los magistrados de la nación nos brinden una ayuda que calme nuestras aspiraciones [...], quizá porque hasta la fecha nada hemos pedido sobre este particular. Pero ahora deseosos de formarnos verdaderos ciudadanos y dejar a nuestra patria hijos conscientes, capaces de poderla salvar en lo sucesivo, hemos

³⁶ AGN-SEP, Serie Departamento de Escuelas Rurales en Michoacán, Box 38504(9), Folder, 6.

resuelto edificar [...] un plantel que únicamente y en todo tiempo sirva para todos los que en el desearan recibir educación.³⁷

[...] the teacher-apostles teach their knowledge to the youths and adults of those blessed places, whereas our beloved children and ourselves live in the horrendous chaos of ignorance, as forgotten children, who are not loved by their idolized mother. Without glimpsing in the future, the assistance of the magistrates [...], perhaps because, we have not asked anything on this matter. Now eager to become true citizens and to make our children conscious of our country, capable of looking after their country in the future, we have decided to build [...] a campus that will only serve those who wish to educate themselves.

In both cases, the community of Huiramangaro expressed their problems and demands in terms of their indigenous ascription, showing an awareness of what it involved to be indigenous within the new regime. To gain rights, they acknowledged state authority accepting their subordinate position. In this sense, it is important to note that in addition to demanding the reopening of the school, the community requested the return of national symbols, comprising the flag and the portrait of the president. Therefore, by identifying themselves as indigenous, they also affirmed their belonging to the nation, their Mexican nationality.

The *indigenista* discourse thus involved a double dynamic of empowerment and disempowerment. Even though the *indigenismo* did not mean to preserve a separate indigenous culture, it provided a language for the indigenous people to articulate their demands. By making indigenous culture an indispensable element in the definition of Mexican nationality, it placed indigenous peoples in the position to make demands, morally obliging the state to comply with them. Indigenous people realised of their importance for the self-definition of the dominant cultural group and the legitimization of the postrevolutionary regimes, strategically adopting indigenous identity as a form of resistance.

4.6 Conclusion

Throughout the chapter, I have examined the different practices and discourses that transformed indigenous culture into a distinctive element of the region, as well as its role in creating an indigenized national culture. This process involved the generation and dissemination of historical knowledge about Lake Pátzcuaro's prehispanic past, ethnographic, and artistic practices of collection, as well as

³⁷ *Ibíd.*

practices of exhibition and performance, which transformed Lake Pátzcuaro into an icon of Mexican authenticity.

Ideas of indigeneity and nationality were apprehended through the performance of various acts associated with an *indigenista* notion of Mexican nationality, such as attending exhibitions of popular arts and indigenous dance performances, cultural tourism, etc. This process also involved instructing the indigenous population into the adoption of 'modern practices' and elements from the national hegemonic culture, as well as the performance of indigenous traditions for local and national audiences. These attitudes and behaviours were carried into practice in rural schools, through the formation of cooperatives, community organizations, the establishment of school farms, etc. National and civic values were also represented in school plays and murals, inscribing these values into the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape.

However, the creation of an indigenized national culture did not lead to the elimination of differences, instead differences were reasserted through the strategical adoption of indigenous identity as a means to negotiate their place within the new system. Indigenous people realised of the importance of indigenous culture within the new notion of Mexican nationality, intentionally participating in its performance in exchange for rights recognition, occupying the space opened by the revolutionary discourse.

The construction of ideas of indigeneity and nationality involved the active participation of artists, historians, anthropologists, folklorists, teachers, and state officials. The communities themselves played a key role in the signification or resignification of the concept to the extent that they appropriated, adapted, or rejected certain elements of it. The different discourses on indigeneity were also shaped in their interaction with other narratives and practices, ideas about culture and race, political demands, pedagogical currents, and artistic movements. In the process, other subjects emerged. The ethnologist-musician, the artist-historian, the scholar, and the government official were all in a process of becoming.

The actors involved in the formulation of *indigenismo* often had various roles and held public positions at different times. Even those who sought to separate their work from the state programme would end up getting involved in state cultural or academic institutions. With this, I do not suggest that they were co-opted by the state, as this involves an understanding of state and society as discrete

entities, but to point out their participation in the consolidation of a cultural project that served to enact state power relations. Like other actors, they also went through a redefinition of their place within the new order of things, and that place was not marginal.

5 Lake Pátzcuaro's Naturecultures

In the previous chapter, I discussed Lake Pátzcuaro's role in creating a national culture and identity, becoming a nationally significant landscape. This process was not limited to what is often thought of as the realm of 'culture', but it also involved 'nature'. Shaping people's relationship with nature and land was central to the creation of a national culture and identity. This chapter focuses on the cultural production of nature and how it took part in the consolidation of power, producing natural-political hybrids. The emphasis of this chapter is on what I call scientific cultures of nature, referring to ideas and practices around nature that made use of scientific claims.

The construction of a 'national nature' involved the inscription of national values into the landscape, the transformation of land property regimes, and the establishment of appropriate ways of relating to nature through the production of scientific knowledge about nature, formal and informal education, and the establishment of environmental protection schemes. The transformation of land property shaped people's relationship to nature as it involved regulating access to land and other natural resources. The state was established as the original owner of land and other resources. By gaining authority over natural resources, nature became national in its legal sense. Accordingly, the use of land and natural resources became subject to state regulation. This process also involved the reorganisation of labour, conditioning the access to forest and fishing resources to the formation of cooperatives.

Transforming people's views about nature also involved explicit educational work. In addition to schools, organizations from the civil society and governmental institutions assumed the role of educating people. By promoting a modern, scientific understanding of nature, educational institutions played a key role in the establishment of appropriate ways of relating to nature. Modern practices and values were imparted through the teaching of natural sciences, as well as through aesthetic, civic and agricultural education.

Nature was also shaped by scientific discourses and practices, as well as through the establishment of environmental protection schemes and scientific forms of natural resource management. Scientific organisations of the civil society played a major role in transforming people's experience of nature, particularly the

Mexican Forestry Society, directly involved in the design and creation of environmental policies.

To talk about the construction of a national nature, does not mean that this process was isolated from international trends. Throughout the chapter I also examine how ideas about nature were shaped in interaction with other countries, as well as international participation in the region.

The chapter first discusses the role of land ownership in shaping people's relationship with nature and land. Then I examine the conflicting views held by post-revolutionaries regarding indigenous land management. The chapter subsequently discusses the development of environmental discourses in México, paying special attention to the role that forestry played in shaping environmental policy and natural resource management. Finally, it examines the actions of the *Departamento Forestal de Caza y Pesca* (Forestry, Hunting and Fishing Department, DFPC based on its initials in Spanish) and the Pátzcuaro Limnological Research Station and how they discursively and materially shaped Lake Pátzcuaro.

5.1 Shaping People's Relationship with Nature Through Property

Land was a key theme in the revolutionary discourse and political practice. The Mexican Revolution's most pressing demand turned around the restoration of lands to indigenous people, who had been dispossessed from their agricultural lands and woodlands by *hacendados* and industrialists. For revolutionaries, the conservation of natural resources necessarily involved affecting the political and economic status quo, altering property rights and land tenure. Consequently, during the postrevolutionary period questions of land distribution and national ownership were at the centre of the political agenda.

In Michoacán, efforts to regulate the use of natural resources go back to the beginning of the revolutionary movement. In 1911, after Porfirio Díaz's government was overthrown and new elections organised, the governor of Michoacán, Doctor Miguel Silva (1911-1913) proposed an amendment to the 1882 Forestry Law, *Ley sobre Conservación de Bosques y Arbolados* (Law on Conservation of Forests and Trees). The law proposal mentioned that the government had received reports that some individuals and timber companies were carrying out immoderate logging violating their contracts and forest regulations, which established a minimum diameter for harvesting, indicating the need to take urgent action to stop

and prevent the destruction of the forest. The bill proposed the possibility of suspending forestry operations that violated the law, as well as other sanctions, such as fines and jail sentences, which were higher than those established in the 1882 law. The law was passed by the Congress of Michoacán one month later.

The 1882 law had, in turn, been a reaction to the widespread deforestation caused by the introduction of the railways, constituting an attempt to reverse its perceived environmental consequences. During the Porfiriato, the government provided the railways a series of facilities, such as the exemption of taxes, as well as the possibility of getting national lands for free or taking construction materials from those lands. Because of these provisions, several logging companies were established in Michoacán, most of them with foreign capital. Though the 1882 law established the obligation to reforest after logging as a measure to protect forests, the economic policy of the Porfiriato favoured the development of the timber industry granting the largest number of forest concessions. In 1894, a new federal law, the *Reglamento para la Explotacion de los Bosques y Terrenos Baldios y Nacionales* (Regulation for the Exploitation of Forests, Uncultivated Terrains and National Lands) enabled the exploitation of communal forests by private companies through lease agreements, giving rise to large-scale logging.

In addition to the overexploitation of forest resources, the development of the timber industry also led to the grabbing of communal forests due to fraudulent contracts between communities and companies. These issues were present during the 1917 Constituent Congress. As part of the discussions held about Article 27 of the Constitution, the Michoacán revolutionary Francisco Múgica exposed the *modus operandi* of logging companies in Michoacán; alienating woodlands from communities, generating large profits and overexploiting the forest in exchange for derisory sums. Múgica also noted the government's complicity with logging companies, by imposing community representatives that fit their interests or forcing them to sign lease agreements. The Constituent Assembly agreed to review all contracts and concessions made since 1876 that had led to the grabbing of land, water, forest, or other natural resources, giving to the executive power the faculty to declare them invalid. In March 1917, the Michoacán governor, General Luviano Renteria, issued a decree establishing a period of one month for the timber companies to present their contracts for revision.

The Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution was central in revolutionizing the country's nature, through the definition of property types and state powers regarding natural resources. The fact that Article 27 addressed jointly issues of land ownership and the protection of natural resources shows how both things were interconnected. The law asserted national control over all land, waters, and natural resources within the national territory, imposed limitations to land ownership by foreigners and the church, and laid the groundwork for a land reform. The state was given the right to enforce limitations on private property and to regulate the use of natural resources, to preserve them, and equitably distribute public wealth. By establishing the state as the original owner, only the state had the control of the territory, deciding over the use and access to land and other resources. An individual owner or a rural community could be in possession of land, but its use was subject to state regulations. This was meant to guarantee the equitable distribution of the benefits obtained from the use of natural resources.

In the Lake Pátzcuaro region, after the revolution, land ownership was heterogeneous between communities. While some villages had continued in communal possession of their land, surviving nineteenth-century liberal reforms, others had lost their lands at the hands of haciendas, this was the situation of many communities on the southern shore of the lake, including Erongaricuaró and Tzurumutaro (see Figure 1.3). During the revolution, the haciendas in the region increased in size expanding over communal lands. This in turn was the result of an increase in the demand for crops due the destruction of large haciendas by revolutionaries in other parts of the country (Boyer 1998). The communities that saw their lands affected were among the ones who joined the *agrarista* movement, asking for the restitution and granting of lands (see Chapter 2).

After the publication of the Law of Restitution of Land (1915), some communities in the region tried to regain their lands. In addition to requests for land restitution, in the late 1910s and early 1920s the decline in the lake level left land exposed, generating requests for land from lake side communities. The government could lease the new land to any individual or community that requested it. The lands were administered according to the jurisdiction of the lake (federal, state, or municipal). Depending on the political faction in power, the government favoured or not the petitions of *agraristas* communities. Notably, in 1921, the agrarista governor Francisco Múgica, requested that Lake Pátzcuaro and other lakes

of Michoacán be declared of Michoacán jurisdiction, with the purpose of regulating fishing, navigation, and agricultural activities in the lake area. He based his petition on Article 27, which he had himself helped to craft, stating that these lakes qualified to be declared as of the authority of Michoacán state³⁸. According to Article 27, lakes needed to be connected to permanent streams to be considered as of national property. Although Lake Pátzcuaro did not meet this condition, the response was that Lake Pátzcuaro had already been declared federal property in 1919. Accordingly, it fell to the federal government to decide over the newly exposed lands and regulate the exploitation of natural resources in the lake.

In 1919, the community of Tzintzuntzan, located in the northeast shore of the lake, requested the lands recently exposed by the lake, while the representatives of the indigenous community of the island of Jaracuaro, located in the south of the lake, requested that they be granted the lands near the island about to be exposed³⁹. In 1923 and 1924, the community of Erongaricuaro through the local agrarista committee, also made requests on the same subject.⁴⁰ All requests received a similar response from the Ministry of Agriculture, stating that they would not be able to fulfill their request until the area occupied by the lake could be determined. In the case of Tzintzuntzan, the response also specified that the lack of staff prevented the Ministry of Agriculture from surveying the lake area. While in the case of Erongaricuaro, the request resulted in the delimitation of the federal zone of the lake in the area near Erongaricuaro (Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2). The maps produced also showed the current occupants of the federal lands, to whom the government ended up leasing the lands. By January 1926, Erongaricuaro was the only area near the lake where the federal zone had been delineated.⁴¹

³⁸Correspondence on the status of the lakes of Pátzcuaro and Cuitzeo as federal lakes, 1921. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aprovechamientos Superficiales, Box 1755, Folder 26044

³⁹ Correspondence on the use of land near the island of Jaracuaro, 1919-1920. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aprovechamientos Superficiales, Box 4419, Folder 58243.

⁴⁰ Correspondence requesting an area of Lake Pátzcuaro between the federal and private property lands near the community of Tzintzuntzan, 1919. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aprovechamientos Superficiales, Box 4419, Folder 58244.

⁴¹ Documents referring to the request of the Erongaricuaro community on the lands recently exposed by the lake, 1924-1926. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aguas Nacionales, Box 1796, Folder 25316, file 1.

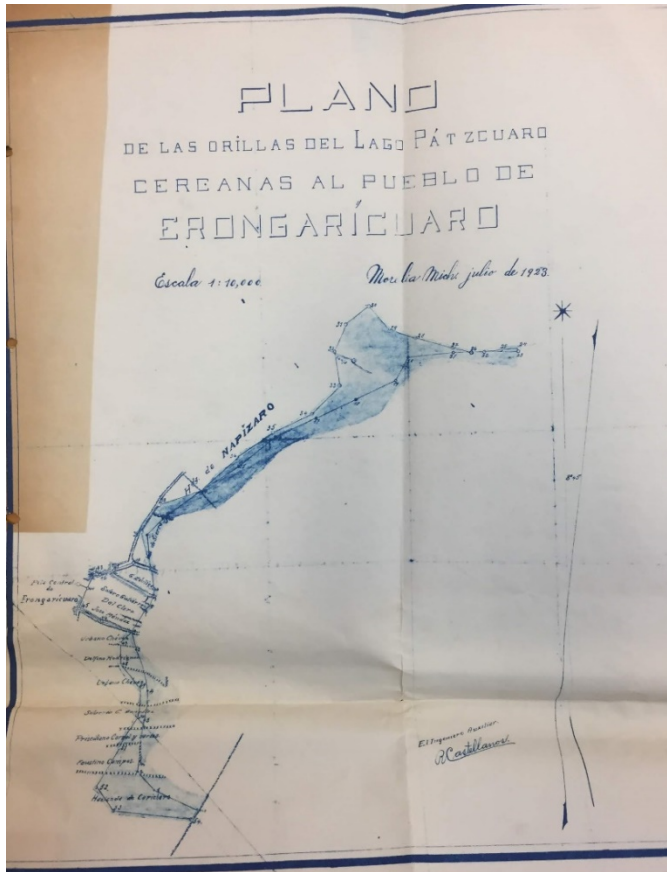


Figure 5.1. Map of the federal zone of Lake Pátzcuaro in the area near Erongaricuaro, 1923. Source: Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aguas Nacionales, Box 1796, Folder 25316, file 1.

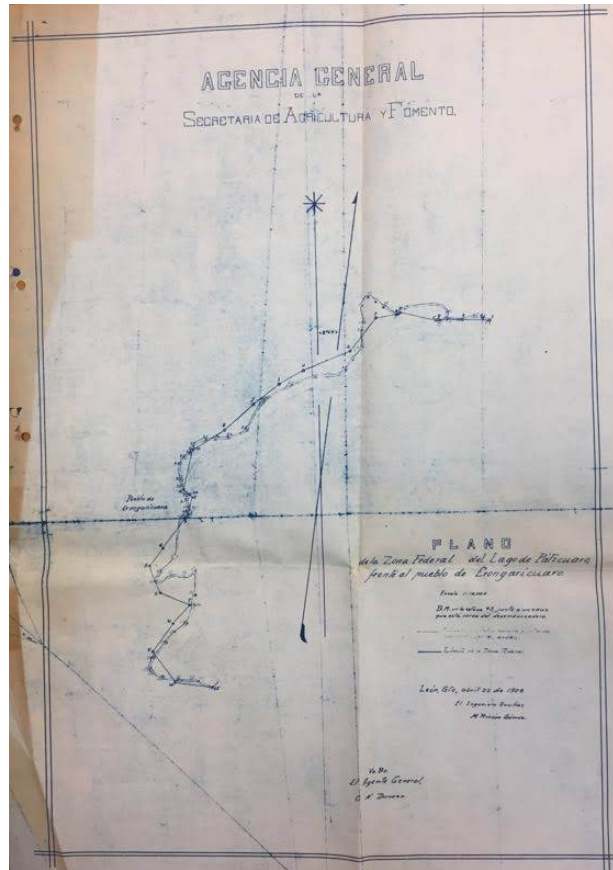


Figure 5.2. Map of the federal zone of Lake Pátzcuaro in the area near Erongaricuaru, 1924. Source: Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fond Aguas Nacionales, Box 1796, Folder 25316, file 1.

Among the *agraristas* communities, the main reason to request recent exposed lands seems to have been that private owners expanded their properties, denying the villagers their right to use the land.⁴² This concern was based on what had happened in the neighbouring region of the Ciénega de Zacapu, northwest Lake Pátzcuaro, drained during the Porfiriato. The new lands were occupied by haciendas to the detriment of the *Ciénega* communities, who used to live from fishing. In the case of Erongaricuaru, the Hacienda de Napizaro and the Hacienda de Carichero occupied most of the recently exposed area, occupying a total of 39 ha.⁴³ Communities from the Lake Pátzcuaro region also believed that the fall in the lake level was somehow related to the drainage of the Ciénega de Zacapu. Among the *non-agrarista* communities, such as Tzintzuntzan and Jaracuaro, their main concern was that

⁴² Letter from the Administrative Committee of the town of Erongaricuaru to the Secretary of Agriculture, 15 February 1923. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fondo Aguas Nacionales, Box 265, Folder 6380, file 1.

⁴³ Report from the head of the colonization section to the head of the department of lands and colonization, 21 July 1925. Archivo Histórico del Agua, Fondo Aguas Nacionales, Box 1796, Folder 25316, file 1.

other neighbouring communities would request the land before them, creating conflicts around its use.

Central to the definition of property and jurisdiction over Lake Pátzcuaro was the definition of the geographies of authority and of the kind of projects that would shape people's relationship with the lake. However, effective administration of the lands exposed by the lake, could not be carried out by the federal government. Changes in the lake level during those years posed a problem for the definition and mapping of the lake. Elucidating the environmental past of Lake Pátzcuaro would be key to establishing effective power over the lake area, defining the rights of use and temporary land tenure.

5.2 Miguel Ángel de Quevedo and The Mexican Forestry Society

Though failing to protect forest from overexploitation, forestry policy did not begin with the Revolution but during the Porfiriato. Porfirio Díaz's project of transforming México into a modern country also included nature. This project was aided by a group of advisors who called themselves the 'scientists'. In the countryside, nature was transformed through large infrastructure projects, such as the construction of dams and drainage. In the cities, it involved the creation of parks and gardens, as well as the establishment of reserves in surrounding forests. The importance of trees and forests was promoted through civic festivities, such as the Day of the Tree, during which trees were planted in parks and public avenues.

A key figure in this process was Miguel Angel de Quevedo (1862-1946), a civil engineer and conservationist, also known as the 'apostle of the tree'. Quevedo was born in 1862 in a well-off family in the city of Guadalajara, México, where he spent his childhood. He completed his education in France, obtaining a degree in Civil Engineering with a specialization in Hydrology from *L'École Polytechnique*. According to his autobiography, during his studies, Quevedo became aware of the role of forests in the hydrologic cycle and the strategic importance that forestry could have in México given its mountainous terrain and rainfall patterns. Quevedo also became familiar with the ideas of public health and hygiene, which dominated public discussion in France at the time, emphasizing the benefits of trees for public health.

On his return to México in 1887, Quevedo took part in several governmental projects, becoming part of the group of the 'scientists'. Quevedo

worked supervising the creation of infrastructure in the country. One of the most notable projects in which he participated was the final draining of the Basin of México, which one of the critical projects of the Porfiriato. During the 1890s, he also worked on different infrastructure developments in the port of Veracruz and carried out projects focused on draining swampy areas and improving the city's hygiene conditions. He also participated in the creation of hydroelectric power plants. While carrying out these projects, he saw large areas of the country without forest cover, which he believed was the ultimate cause of the problems he was trying to solve (Quevedo, 1943).

Quevedo also attended various international conferences on topics of hygiene and urban planning.⁴⁴ From his participation in these conferences, he became convinced of the importance of green areas in cities as a measure to ensure public health. In 1888, he began working in México City's council as the public works' alderman, promoting the creation of parks, gardens, and groves, as well as the conservation of forests surrounding the city (Quevedo, 1943).

In 1904, Quevedo created the first Forestry Society of México, from where he advanced his ideas about forest conservation. During the following years he presented in different forums the idea that the loss of land cover was altering the weather and causing erosion and floods. Together with a team of French engineers, Quevedo created a Forestry School in México City in 1909, inspired by the French Forestry Service. The Forestry Society also promoted the creation of urban green areas to ensure the liveability of the cities and the creation of national parks and forest reserves.

Like Quevedo, the members of the Forestry Society were members of the economic elite with a common interest in forestry. Accordingly, the society also worked advancing their economic interests in forest issues. The first Forestry Society of México and other initiatives did not last long because of the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, after which it reinvented itself adopting a nationalist - though less revolutionary- discourse. The Society was revived in 1921, under the name of *Sociedad Forestal Mexicana* (Mexican Forestry Society). They defined their mission in terms of the defence of the *territorio patrio* (homeland), through means other than arms. The Mexican Forestry Society was founded as a scientific society,

⁴⁴ Among the conferences attended were during this period were the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography and the Congress of Urbanism celebrated in Paris in 1888, and the Second International Congress of Hygiene, held in Berlin in 1907.

whose objectives were 1) to avoid the devastation of forests, 2) restore forest vegetation, 3) create groves and parks for the benefit of hygiene, and 4) ensure the rational and scientific exploitation of forestry resources.⁴⁵

The Mexican Forestry Society also meant to educate the population on the importance of forests, they did so through the publication of its magazine *México Forestal* and the organization of the Day of the Tree. Unlike the magazine directed to a specialised public, already interested in forestry issues, the Day of the Tree was meant at disseminating the importance of forests to the masses. The celebration was organised in conjunction with the SEP, the Ministry of Agriculture, and local governments. Like other civic festival, the Day of the Tree involved music, theatre, and dance performances. The Day of the Tree was celebrated both in rural and urban areas with the crucial help of schoolteachers. By 1924, the Day of the Tree was already considered a national holiday.⁴⁶ By the 1930s, a whole week was dedicated to celebrating the tree and in 1936, the SEP launched a 'Pro-tree campaign'. In the opinion of the educational inspector Epigmenio León, the school would not fulfil its purpose of national integration if this aspect of the curriculum were neglected.⁴⁷

The enactment of the 1917 Constitution coincided with foresters' interest in regulating natural resource exploitation, particularly forests. Because Article 27 empowered Congress to create laws on natural resource management, bills on this issue were soon proposed. In 1923, the Mexican Forestry Society suggested the creation of the first comprehensive forestry law. The bill was published in issues one and two of the magazine *México Forestal*, alongside an exposition of motives. There Quevedo noted how natural resource management had been absent from the country's general legislation. Quevedo also recalled previous discussions of scientific societies on the subject, who initially opposed the creation of laws restricting free enterprise. Their opinion eventually changed in favour of regulating the use of forests, however, the initiative could not be carried forward because the 1857 Constitution did not establish provisions on this matter.⁴⁸

The Forestry Law was passed by the Congress in 1926, constituting the first law of general character to be issued in the country. The 1926 Forestry Law

⁴⁵ 1923. *México Forestal*, México Forestal, v1, n1, p.1.

⁴⁶ 1925. *México Forestal*, México Forestal, v3, n2, p.29.

⁴⁷ De León, E. 1936. La campaña pro-arbol. *Maestro Rural*, v8, n8, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Quevedo, M.A. 1923. La necesidad de que se expida una ley forestal en México. *Revista México Forestal*, n1, n.p.

established a model of rational exploitation based on scientific principles. The exploitation of forests was subject to state regulation, regardless of the type of property. All aspects of logging were regulated, from the production of timber to its transportation. The law also established provisions for the training of forestry engineers. In the area of conservation, the law stipulated the creation of protected areas and the prohibition of logging in the upper part of the basins.

The passing of the 1926 law placed forestry –a young discipline in México– and its practitioners in a position of authority, while contributing to the consolidation of the postrevolutionary regime. It is important to note, however, that the mechanisms for enforcing the 1926 Forestry Law were limited at the time, since the office in charge of supervising forest exploitation, the Ministry of Agriculture, lacked structure and capacity to carry out this job. It was not until the Cárdenas administration that a comprehensive forestry plan was articulated with the creation of the DFCP.

5.3 The Forest, Hunting and Fishing Department

The Forest, Hunting and Fishing Department was created as an autonomous entity in 1934, during Cárdenas' presidency. The creation of the DFCP was among the actions taken by the Cárdenas government to establish greater control over the exploitation of natural resources. Other actions taken in this area were agrarian reform and the nationalization of oil industries, all of them established in Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution. The creation of the DFCP also sought to transform management practices, from traditional to modern and scientific, taking part in the post-revolutionary cultural project that sought to modernize rural and indigenous populations.

The idea of creating an autonomous department was presented by Quevedo to Cárdenas, who had asked him to create a plan for the development of forestry which would be incorporated into the 'Six-Year Plan', the planning apparatus developed by the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party). A commission of the Mexican Forestry Society participated in the writing of the forestry plan. According to Walkid (2007) Cárdenas overlooked Quevedo's involvement with Porfirio Diaz's regime, because of its practical experience and interest in forest conservation. The forestry plan and the DFCP represented the vision of elite foresters, for whom the protection of forests was a pressing issue.

The Six-Year Plan outlined the series of actions that the government would take to meet the social and economic demands derived from the Revolution, which were still pending compliance. A central point of the forestry plan was the need to create an autonomous department, independent from the Ministry of Agriculture, so that agricultural interests would not interfere with the protection of forests. For Quevedo, there was no doubt about the preponderance of forestry over agriculture. He considered that the country's mountainous character indicated that forestry and not agriculture was the most appropriate land use.⁴⁹ Moreover, unlike agriculture, forestry was seen as an activity that could provide permanent economic and environmental benefits.

The DFCP's Six-Year Plan was structured into three main areas: forest protection, the establishment of cooperatives, and the opening of forestry schools. Forestry schools would later include fishing in its study programme. In addition to the creation of protected areas (national parks and forest reserves) and reforestation, the conservation of forests involved regulating forest exploitation in national, communal, and private lands. Most of these measures were already considered in the 1926 Forestry Law, so that the law finally came into force with the creation of the DFCP as an autonomous department.

The DFCP acquired a conservationist character, responsible for the administration of natural resources, with the protection of forests as the cornerstone of its conservation programme. Following a basin management approach, the DFCP's conservation programme established a link between the protection of forests and water bodies with the protection of wildlife and the conservation of the soil. The functions of the DFCP thus included the conservation of forests, reforestation, hunting and fisheries management, the administration of national parks, scientific research, and environmental education.

Above any other objective, the DFCP sought to rationalize the exploitation of natural resources through the application of scientific knowledge. For the people involved in the DFCP, conservation did not necessarily imply leaving nature untouched, but to manage it in such a way as to ensure their future existence. This involved transforming management practices, from traditional to modern and scientific. Given its strong confidence in science, the DFCP also believed that

⁴⁹ DFCP. 1935. Propósitos de esta publicación. *BDFCP*, v1, n1, p.1-2.

science could improve nature, making it more productive while ensuring its conservation.

5.3.1 A World-Wide Conservation Movement

The protection of forests was by no means an exclusively national affair, limited to Mexican nationals or without influence from other countries. This was the view that Quevedo and the people working in the DFCP held. Though constantly framing the protection of forests in national terms, he also situated the DFCP's work as contributing to a 'worldwide conservation movement'. As mentioned above, Quevedo's ideas about forest conservation were shaped by his experiences abroad and by ideas exposed in international conferences. In addition to new knowledge and ideas, he brought tree seeds from different parts of the world, which he reproduced in his nursery in Coyoacán, México City. Furthermore, Quevedo's first initiatives to protect forests were carried out with international collaboration (see above).

Attendance at international conferences was also part of the DFCP's activities. Some of the congresses attended by the DFCP were the 2nd International Forestry Congress (Budapest, 1936), the Congress on Silviculture and Carbon Fuels (Brussels, 1936), the North American Wildlife Conference (Washington, 1936), and the 8th Congress of the International Society of Limnology (France, 1937). The DFCP also established relations with similar institutions in different parts of the world, through correspondence, interchange of publications, and study trips to Europe, U.S., and Japan. From these visits, the DFCP brought back ideas to improve its forest programme. The flow of ideas was not unidirectional; the DFCP also made proposals that were presented before international organisations.⁵⁰

The DFCP looked at examples from other countries to establish its national parks programme, including France, the U.S. and Japan. Periodical exchanges between México and the U.S. were also encouraged by the good-neighbour policy. Both countries sent each other new publications, maps, and updated lists of national parks. The DFCP also republished some articles from the U.S National Park Service in its bulletin.⁵¹ During the 1930s, México and the U.S. worked

⁵⁰ Quevedo, M.A. 1937. La creación de un organismo internacional que represente los intereses de la silvicultura separados de los de la agricultura en general. *BDFCP*, v3, n8, p.302

⁵¹ 1936. Reglamento del Servicio de Parques Nacionales en los Estados Unidos de América, *BDFCP*, v2, n6, p.316-331, Los parques nacionales de los Estados Unidos, v2, n4, p.331-342.

together to establish the Big Bend Park, as an international peace park. According to Emily Walkid (2007), U.S. officials appointed themselves as coordinators of the project claiming greater knowledge on the subject. In the end, the project for an international park never materialized.

In addition to the U.S., México would also establish collaborations with Japan on issues related to the improvement of fisheries. Diplomatic relations with Japan were an outcome of Porfirio Díaz's international policy (see Chapter 2). The change of regime in México did not alter its diplomatic relationship with Japan. Quevedo's vision of Japan was not altered either, inviting Japanese experts to collaborate with the fishing division of the DFCP, given its good reputation in this area.

Quevedo would also refer to the international context to validate their claims, showing the protection of forests as an activity typical of any 'modern' and 'civilized' country, building their authority in its international experience and knowledge. Quevedo often used examples from other countries which had gone through similar situations to demonstrate the importance of preserving forests. By using examples from different countries and times, Quevedo sought to show how environmental degradation was not something exclusive to a country or a certain time but a problem that many countries had faced and continue facing. Despite using examples from different countries, positive examples always came from powerful nations, reproducing colonial and Eurocentric visions.

Thus, for instance, to show the importance of planning Quevedo presented the case of the United States and European powers, who had made the conservation of forest resources part of their government priorities. By using examples from powerful nations, Quevedo established a relationship between the protection of forest resources and the consolidation of state power, based on a central planning apparatus.

Ante tal desastre de la ruina forestal, vemos hoy que la nación vecina, Estados Unidos de Norteamérica reacciona poderosamente, poniendo el presidente Roosevelt como primer capítulo de su programa de gobierno la reforestación y aplicando a esa gran obra cuantiosos elementos. Mussolini hace igual cosa en Italia, y las viejas naciones, las más juiciosas de Europa (Suecia, Suiza, Francia, Alemania, etc.) fincan su equilibrio fundamental económico y biológico en la protección forestal de su territorio. Rusia misma establece en su Programa Quinquenal de Gobierno Soviético la juiciosa explotación de sus riquezas forestales.

In the face of such disaster of forest ruin, we see today that the neighbouring nation of the United States of North America reacts powerfully. President

Roosevelt has put reforestation first in his government programme, investing large resources. Mussolini does the same in Italy, and the old nations, the most judicious in Europe (Sweden, Switzerland, France, Germany, etc.) find their fundamental and economic balance in the forest protection of their territory. Russia itself establishes in its five-year programme of the Soviet government the judicious exploitation of its forest resources.

Examples from countries with an allegedly long history of forest's regulation were also presented, highlighting their efficacy. The fact that ancient and powerful nations had been doing this for a long time proved its validity. France was one of such countries repeatedly praised for its good management of forest resources. These stories were brought up when trying to legitimate the adoption of similar strategies.

Attention was also brought to the mistakes that other countries had made in the past by transforming forests into agricultural fields, highlighting its economic and environmental consequences. According to Quevedo the policies of irrigation and the construction of hydraulic works in Spain and the French colonies of North Africa, failed because they did not consider the forest conservation of the basins. In some regions of Italy, such as Lombardy and Tuscany that had large irrigation systems, the lack of forests impoverished agricultural lands. Also, the rapid agricultural colonization in the United States, caused significant erosion and large dust bowls, having to invest a large amount of resources in its reforestation.⁵² México had to learn from the mistakes that other countries had made by neglecting their forest wealth for the sake of agriculture.

Examples were also taken from past cultures, comprising Classic European civilizations and Mesoamerican cultures, such as Greece and Rome, and the Aztec and Mayas, who were considered to be responsible for the degradation of their respective environments. In both cases, the moral conveyed was that the destruction of forests could lead a nation to its ruin, regardless of its cultural or political greatness. This narrative was usually used as a type of warning, of what could happen to México if the same situation continued.

Quevedo also established a history of forest use in México, reproducing colonial and Eurocentric discourses. For Quevedo, Mesoamerican cultures were careless of their environment, so that they did not constitute an example to follow.

⁵²Quevedo, M.A. 1937. Consideraciones sobre reservas forestales necesarias para resolver el problema forestal nacional. *BDFCP*, v2, n6, p.107; 1937. Coordinación entre las labores de los Departamentos Agrarios, Forestal y de Caza y Pesca. *BDFCP*, v2, n6, p. 99-100.

Likewise, as an independent country, México lacked consistent laws, resulting in the loss of forests. He believed that it was only during colonial times, that measures to protect forests were applied. European countries, in contrast, had had strict regulations since the Middle Ages and forest guards had been protecting European forests ever since.

A colonialist discourse was also present in his appreciation of Japan, which justified Japan's occupation of Korea based on its forestry policies. Quevedo reproduced racist and colonialist arguments that considered Koreans as backward, presenting Japanese colonialism as a civilizing force. Thus, unlike other Asiatic countries, Japan was portrayed as a modern, advanced nation that could serve as a model of development for México.

El juicioso y triunfante Japón conserva su territorio como un vergel, un paraíso de fecunda vegetación forestal en montañas y lomeríos, y de cultivos agrícolas en sus llanuras, siendo su labor primordial en los territorios que conquista, la de reforestarlos, como lo ha hecho con Corea.⁵³

The judicious and triumphant Japan preserves its territory as a garden, a paradise of fertile forest vegetation in mountains and hills, and crops in its plains, being a primary task in its conquered territories, that of reforesting them, as it has done with Korea.

For Quevedo, México would follow a similar fate if the country continued by the same path, ignoring the lessons from other countries, its negligence would encourage other countries to intervene and even conquer it to prevent the country from its 'forest ruin.'

De no ser así México llegara a ser pronto la China de América, nación imprevisora y decadente, destructora de los elementos indispensables para la vida humana y su bienestar; México será país que merecerá y provocará que naciones mas cultas y juiciosas intervengan y lo conquisten, inspiradas por principios de caridad y protección mas que de propio negocio, ante el atentado de lesa humanidad que significa la ruina forestal de todo un territorio. [...] Si México inspirándose en este movimiento mundial, también reacciona, teniendo su pueblo y su gobierno como lema como lema de conservación y prosperidad nacionales la necesaria protección forestal del territorio puede muy bien aspirar [...] a ser la Suiza de América.⁵⁴

If the forest destruction continues, México will soon become the China of America, a decadent nation, destroyer of the elements indispensable for human well-being; México will be a country that will deserve and provoke the intervention of more educated and judicious nations, and its conquest before the attack against humanity that means the forest ruin of an entire territory, inspired by the principles of charity and protection rather than for their own benefit. If, inspired by this

⁵³ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Proyecto de Plan Sexenal 1934-40 en lo relativo a la Protección Forestal del Territorio. *BDFCP*, v1, n1, p.7

⁵⁴ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Proyecto de Plan Sexenal 1934-40 en lo relativo a la Protección Forestal del Territorio. *BDFCP*, v1, n1, p.10-11.

global movement, México reacts, adopting as a motto of national conservation and prosperity the necessary forest protection of the territory, it may very well [...] aspire to be the Switzerland of America.

As it can be drawn from the examples presented above, righteousness of forestry conservation practices was affirmed based on its global presence. By framing the conservation of forests resources as a world-wide conservation movement, Quevedo presented the protection of forests as a metahistorical fact, always right regardless of the political circumstances, literally naturalizing the underlying political systems. The development of forestry policies was not only defined by internal revolutionary politics but also by the discourses influencing the world systems of power. For Quevedo, México's position within that system was to be proven by its forest policy.

5.3.2 National Parks

A vital component of the DFCP's forestry programme was the creation of forest protected areas, comprising national parks and forest reserves. National parks were considered natural monuments, notable for their beauty, geological origin, or ecological importance. Other sites were declared national parks due to their national symbolism and historical importance determined by the presence of archaeological ruins from prehispanic times, colonial architecture, the occurrence of remarkable events in national history or the oral tradition about them. The volcanic peaks of the Trans-Mexican volcanic belt were among the sites declared national parks due to their great natural and cultural importance. They were considered emblematic landscapes of great beauty and magnificence. The inland lakes of the Mexican plateau, considered as 'great spectacles of nature', were also meant to become national parks. By 1939, the number of national parks established in the country was around 37.

Because of their extraordinary features, national parks were also conceived of as living museums with an educational, scientific, and recreational purpose. In its educational facet, national parks were envisaged as spaces for learning, aiming at developing people's interest and aesthetic sensibility towards nature. National parks were also conceived of as spaces for scientific research, which would be carried out by the DFCP and other educational institutions. The testing of methods to increase productivity, the monitoring of lake and forest conditions and the creation of scientific collections would be among the activities developed.

While the idea of conserving pristine nature was not present in the notion of national parks, shaping nature and the way in which people related to these places were inherent in this endeavour. Converting these places into parks implied the modification of the activities and people's behaviours. Thus, although both locals and city people were equally welcomed, agriculture was not allowed in the parks and the use of forest resources was limited to fallen trees and branches. Moreover, foresters demanded that visitors behave in particular ways, encouraging the contemplation of nature over other forms of recreation.⁵⁵

The creation of national parks, as spaces for the harmonious relationship between people and nature, not only involved transforming people's conduct but also the shaping of nature through the introduction of species, extending the discourse of civilization and modernization to nature. Thus, harmless animal species, such as deer, were introduced into national parks, as well as 'good' species for recreational fishing. The population of animals considered 'dangerous', such as large cats, would also try to be controlled. Foresters envisaged a future in which, as in the national parks they have visited abroad, animals would not fear people but approach them. The introduction of species inscribed into national parks a series of ideas about nature and nation, working as instructive landscapes in more than one way.

The promotion of tourism was another of the objectives of national parks. For Quevedo, the contrasts in vegetation, the imposing mountains and clear lakes constituted a spectacle of international admiration. Moreover, the temperate climate present in most of the parks made México one of the most pleasant and healthy places to visit in the whole globe. The relationship between tourism and national parks was seen as reciprocal. Not only would the creation of national parks foster tourism, but it could also help to protect forests and bring economic benefits. The benefits of tourism were merely economic but also social, insofar as it contributed to the formation of a national subject.

In order to develop the tourism industry in the country, the Mexican government created a number of organisms dedicated to its promotion. The U.S. also promoted travelling to México as part of its good neighbour policy. This Pan-American tone was present in the tourist promotion of México with slogans such as 'See America first, Old Mexico next', which showed colonial monuments next

⁵⁵ 1936. Los Parques Nacionales. *Protección a la naturaleza*. v.1, n3, p.16-19.

to hunting and fishing images (Figure 5.3, Figure 5.4). The construction of the Pan-American Highway also contributed to the waves of tourists from the U.S. The DFCP also embellished the Laredo-México highway, connecting México with the United States, with national parks, promoting the highway and national park tourism (see Chapter 7).⁵⁶ Domestic tourism was also facilitated by the improvement of transport infrastructure, the expansion of the rail network and the road system.

In 1938, the National Tourism Commission (1934) issued a memorandum with recommendations for the promotion of international tourism addressed to the different offices related to tourism, including the DFCP.⁵⁷ Though only one point was related with the DFCP, concerning the promotion of sport fishing and hunting, Quevedo adapted the programme to national parks, reflecting his own interest on promoting tourism in these areas. In response to one of the points of the memorandum about maintaining a folkloric atmosphere, the DFCP proposed restricting musical performances in national parks to Mexican music. Half a year later, a provision was sent to the park administrators, specifying that the measure was intended to preserve the 'original aspect' of parks.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. La política forestal del Gobierno Mexicano para la protección del territorio y el fomento del gran turismo. BDFCP. V1, n2, p.151.

⁵⁷ Memorandum del Comité del Programa Mínimo y de Publicidad de la Comisión Nacional de Turismo. 30 January 1938. AGN, SARH, box. 1434.

⁵⁸ Letter from Daniel Galicia to the DFCP branch office in Cuernavaca, Morelos. 7 July 1938. AGN, SARH, box. 1434.



Figure 5.3. 'See America First Old México Next'.



Figure 5.4. Tourism Brochure. The photographs next to the monuments promote hunting and fishing.

5.3.3 Forest Reserves

The creation of forest reserves was also part of the DFCP's actions to protect forests. Forests were conceived as a public good that could contribute to national progress, the creation of reserves was a strategy to ensure its long-term existence. The forest reserves programme intended to improve forest management, maintain environmental functions, preserve, and restore the beauty of landscapes, promote tourism, as well as generate attachment to place among the rural populations.

The DFCP intended to convert all nationally owned forests into a national forest reserve, protecting them from future changes in land use. The DFCP would direct forest exploitation in these areas and restore degraded forests. Forest reserves would also be established in the upper parts of the basins to protect water bodies, human settlements, and agricultural lands. The objective was to establish forest reserves in 25 million hectares, covering the southeast, northwest, and central areas of the country. It is worth noting that, of all the selected areas, Quevedo considered the forests of central México as the most threatened, due to their higher population density and requests for land distribution. Therefore, the largest forest reserves should be established there to prevent forests from destruction.⁵⁹

For Quevedo, the most critical threat to forest conservation was the distribution of lands. Since the forests were part of the lands granted as land reform parcels, he was concerned about the opening of new lands for agriculture. The problem also was that some of the national parks and forest reserves overlapped with the newly granted ejidos and communal lands. The underlying idea was that agricultural and forest landscapes were not compatible. A vision that conflicted with traditional agroforestry systems in México, in which different management systems overlap. In April 1937, Quevedo submitted a proposal to exclude national parks and forest reserves from the land available for agrarian distribution. For Quevedo, the proposal was reasonable considering that national parks had been created in lands that were inappropriate for agriculture.

However, the conflict between land distribution and forest protection was not easy to solve. Because of the revolution, taking back land from the people or excluding them from its management was not an option. The idea of replacing woodlands with agricultural lands, conceived as plains, was not viable either, since these were scarce, particularly in the centre of México where most of the population was concentrated. While Cárdenas and Quevedo had a shared interest in protecting forests, their position regarding control, access and use of natural resources disagreed, so that, even though at the beginning Cárdenas expressed his agreement with Quevedo, in the end he asked Quevedo to restrict the proposal to national parks.

The final agreement established that given the environmental role of forests and the need to preserve nature for scientific and touristic purposes, national parks

⁵⁹ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Informes Marzo-Abril. *BDFCP*, v1, n1, p.75.

would not be subject to land distribution. Consequently, applications for land would not be accepted if they referred to forests with the status of national parks. The document also stipulated that although the very nature of the national parks required the establishment of a particular management programme, this was not meant to exclude rural populations. They would have the right to use pastures and fallen trees with prior permission of the department.⁶⁰

The last point of the agreement established that the Forestry Department should consult with the Agriculture Department to make any decision concerning declarations of national parks and the granting of exploitation permits. In May 1938, another provision was issued on this subject, reversing the allocation of forest lands to ejidos, if they were within national parks. If possible, forests would be substituted by agricultural lands. However, it seems that these measures were not applied immediately; instructions had to be given again in 1939 to comply with this provision.

5.4 Protecting the Forest, Protecting the Lake

The protection of lakes was framed within a vision of basins as management units. Indeed, the terms ‘forest basin’ and ‘basin and forest conservation’ appear in many of the documents produced by the department.⁶¹ In this sense, some forest protected areas were explicitly created because of their importance within a specific lake basin. The DFCP’s programme to protect inland waters was outlined in the *Plan de Aguas Interiores* (Inland Waters Plan), which involved the regulation of human activities occurring in the catchment and in lakes and rivers, particularly fishing.

When the department carried out the first explorations in central México to evaluate the state of the forests, they pointed out the risk faced by some lakes of filling up with sediments. They reported that the situation was particularly critical in the states of México, Morelos, and Michoacán. The consequences were perceived both in environmental and aesthetic terms since it was affecting the scenic beauty of the lakes and their condition as habitat. Measures to protect and restore these areas included their declaration as protected forests or national parks.

⁶⁰ 1935. Acuerdo que declara inafectables en materia de restituciones y dotaciones ejidales los Parques Nacionales. *BDFCP*, v2, n7, p.74.

⁶¹ The exact terms in Spanish are cuencas hidrológicas forestales and conservación hidrológica forestal.

The proposal for the Lake Pátzcuaro basin to be declared a protected area was first made in 1935, following an exploratory trip made by Quevedo in which several states of central México, including Michoacán, were visited. The report classified these forests as threatened and pointed out the need to protect the forest areas of the lakes of Pátzcuaro, Zirahuén and Tacambaro in Michoacán (Figure 5.5). It also indicated that it was necessary to change the nature of forest exploitation and reforest the degraded areas of the different states visited.



Figure 5.5. Lakes of Michoacán. The red box frames the lakes of Pátzcuaro, Zirahuén and La Alberca, in Tacambaro. Map by the author.

On January 7, 1936, the Lake Pátzcuaro basin was declared a forest reserve as a measure to protect the basin from future land use changes and to tackle erosion. The creation of the Lake Pátzcuaro forest reserve was also meant to maintain the lake's condition as habitat for fish species. This last argument was complemented with the idea of setting up an aquacultural station, whose creation would be pointless if the lake lost quality as a habitat. The decree also prohibited the opening

of new agricultural lands if this meant any damage to the forest area. The introduction of livestock in areas subject to reforestation or natural regrowth was also prohibited. Finally, compulsory reforestation was established for owners whose land was denuded or located on a slope. Unless their forests were under a closed season, residents of the forest reserve could continue to make use of forest resources if they had forests within their ejido and were constituted in a cooperative.

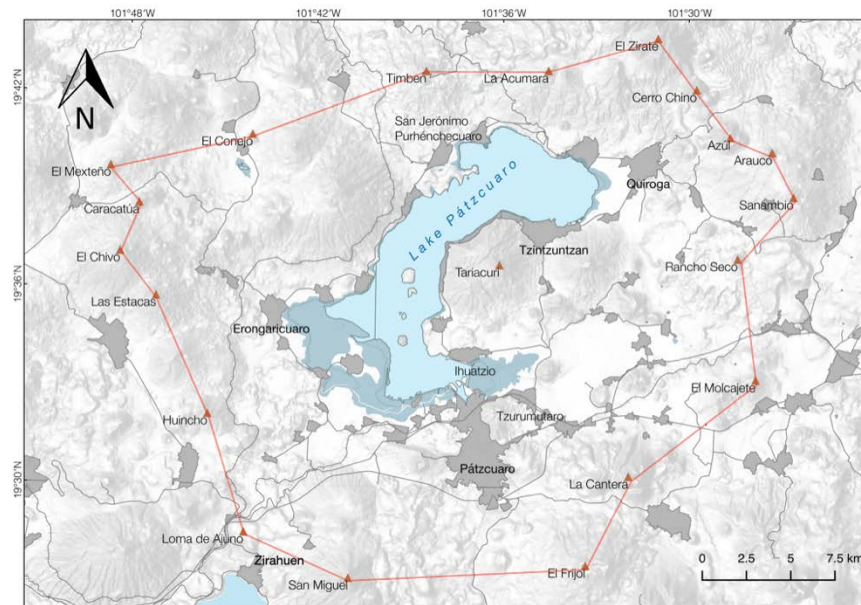


Figure 5.6. The map shows some of the features that demarcate the closed forest area. Map by the author.

After its declaration as a forest reserve, Quevedo undertook several other trips to the area to determine the status of the forest. In October 1936, Quevedo toured the area of Pátzcuaro and Tacambaro, accompanied by President Lázaro Cárdenas and Gildardo Magaña, governor of the state of Michoacán. In his account of the trip, Quevedo mentioned that although most of the mountains were covered by forest, the trees near the railway line had a small diameter, due to the logging for the construction of railways. Quevedo also observed that clearing for agriculture was not visible in this area.

Pero en todas las extensiones recorridas pude observar que el estado de los mismos bosques es el de joven fustal, constituidos por especies de *Pinus montezumae* y *leyophyla*, así como por encinos, no encontrándose ya sino rarísimos ejemplares de más de 40 cm de diámetro, y en algunos de dichos bosques el arbolado bastante ralo como resultado de las intensas explotaciones que se han llevado a cabo en los

últimos años favorecido por las vías férreas establecidas entre Pátzcuaro y Tacámbaro.⁶²

In all the traversed areas, I observed young trees made up the forest, the main species being, *Pinus montezumae* and [*Pinus*] *leyophyla*, as well as oaks. Specimens of more than 40 cm of diameter are very unusual. In some of these woods, trees are quite sparse because of the intense exploitations that has been carried out in recent years, favoured by the railways established between Pátzcuaro and Tacámbaro.

Far from the railway line, the status of the forests was not much different. Even though the diameter of the trees was bigger than those near the railway line they were still young. The areas visited were part of the forest reserves of Pátzcuaro and Tacámbaro. After the trip, Quevedo got convinced of the relevance of the forest reserves, congratulating himself for the measures adopted.

Reforestation works within the Lake Pátzcuaro forest reserve varied in size and magnitude, from planting trees in small areas to reforesting hills.⁶³ The creation of orchards and gardens were also seen as part of the reforestation efforts. Plants were provided by local and central nurseries. At first, the nurseries in México City supplied most of the plants for reforestation. Problems such a high rate of mortality of seedlings prompted the creation of nurseries in the rest of the country. Local governments, schools and forest cooperatives worked together with local offices on the the establishment of local nurseries. By the end of 1935, the DFCP reported the presence of thirty-six nurseries in the country, comprising eleven states, four of which were in Michoacán in the municipalities of Uruapan, Pátzcuaro, Zitácuaro and La Piedad. During the same year, the municipal government created another nursery in Pátzcuaro. The nursery was established in a plot attached to San Francisco's church. Its character as a nursery would only be temporary and would be given back to the municipality after one year.⁶⁴

The DFCP manual for the creation of nurseries included a list of twenty-three species recommended for reforestation. The trees listed were mostly native, though it also included other non-native and fast-growing species such as the casuarina, eucalyptus, and mulberry. The list also included ornamental and fruit trees.⁶⁵ These species fulfilled the DFCP's ideal of a productive nature. Because of

⁶² 1936. Observaciones llevadas a cabo sobre el estado de los bosques del estado de Michoacán. *BDFCP*, n5, p.137-142

⁶³ Quevedo, M.A. 1939. Informe sobre la explotación forestal llevada a cabo por el jefe del departamento en la región del camino México-Morelia-Guadalajara. *BDFCP*, v4, n15, p.29

⁶⁴ Cabildo meeting proceedings 1935. Historical Municipal Archive of Pátzcuaro.

⁶⁵ Roldan, A. 1935. Instrucciones para la formación de viveros. *BDFCP*, v1, n1, p.103-113.

its relative success, in Pátzcuaro most reforestations planted exotic, fast-growing species. In its 1937 report on reforestation and nurseries, the DFCP also listed the cultivation of olive trees in Tzintzuntzan as part of its activities, a species introduced by Vasco de Quiroga during colonial times. The idea was to plant cuttings from the original trees that Quiroga planted.⁶⁶ So that, the planting of trees also contributed to the creation of a historically inflected landscape.

Lake Pátzcuaro was also planned to be a national park. A 1935 annual report described the creation of several national parks, including the Popocatepetl and Ixtacihuatl volcanoes, Pico de Orizaba, the Cacahuamilpa caves, and Lake Pátzcuaro.⁶⁷ Reference to the creation of a national park in Lake Pátzcuaro was also made in a speech given by Quevedo on forest protection and tourist promotion.

Para realizar esa protección forestal se declaran por el gobierno con el carácter de parques nacionales las montañas cumbres culminantes. [...] Hacia occidente [...] en la región Michoacana las Serranías de Tancitaro y las del contorno de los bellos Lagos de Pátzcuaro, Zirahuen, Tacambaro y Laguna de Chapala que se declaran también reservas nacionales para la protección de sus cristalinas aguas y valioso pescado que se va a seleccionar en sus mejores especies eliminando los de mala clase y propagando otros mejores.⁶⁸

To carry out this forest protection, the greatest peaks would be declared by the government as national parks. [...] To the west, [...] in Michoacán region the mountains of Tancitaro and those surrounding the beautiful lakes of Pátzcuaro, Zirahuen, Tacambaro and Chapala are going to be declared national reserves, in order to protect their crystalline waters and valuable fish, whose best species will be selected, eliminating those of bad class and propagating better ones.

Except from Lake Pátzcuaro, the decrees for the creation of all these parks were published later. In 1937, a report on national parks mentioned Lake Pátzcuaro as a planned park (Figure 5.7). However, the list of national parks published two years later did not mention Lake Pátzcuaro as an established national park.⁶⁹ Despite this, most common park facilities were built within the Lake Pátzcuaro area, providing all the comforts for tourism and visitors to practice recreational activities. Both the federal and Michoacán state government established lookout points for viewing the lake in the hills of El Estribo, El Estribo Chico, and El Sandio, all of which could be reached by road. Extensive reforestation was carried out in these hills. Among

⁶⁶1937. Octubre 1937. Servicio de Conservación Forestal. BDFCP, v3, n9. p.53.

⁶⁷ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Resumen de los principales trabajos desarrollados por el Departamento Forestal y de Caza y Pesca durante el año de 1935. BDFCP, v1, n2, p.3.

⁶⁸ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. La política forestal del Gobierno Mexicano para la protección del territorio y el fomento del gran turismo. BDFCP, v1, n2, p.151.

⁶⁹ 1937. Parques Nacionales de la República Mexicana, AGN-SARH, box 1434.

the amenities that could be found in these sites were as pavilions, benches, picnic tables, cooking grills and car parks (see Chapter 6).



Figure 5.7. National Parks in México, 1937. Source: AGN-SARH, box 1434.

In Michoacán, the actions of the DFCP were met with enthusiasm by the general population, particularly regarding reforestation activities. Local characters such as José Carrillo from Pátzcuaro were also called ‘apostles of the tree’ for their work on forest conservation. In the local press, the establishment of new measures was often portrayed as a triumph for forest conservation, speaking in favour of the establishment of greater restrictions.⁷⁰ DFCP’s mission to educate the rural population was also taken up by broader sectors of the civil society. Thus, for example, the Michoacan newspaper *El Heraldo Michoacano* regularly included a section entitled *Página del Campesino*, with recommendations on how to improve agriculture, forestry, and fishing practices, articles on environmental issues, as well as short literary pieces.

Regarding the acceptance of the DFCP’s programme in the region, although most of the communities accepted the new provisions on forest management, they spoke out when the policies affected their right to access forest resources. Thus, during the 1930s most of the communities in the region established forest cooperatives since it was a requirement to access forest resources. However, in the Lake Pátzcuaro region, most communities extracted wood to

⁷⁰ See, for example, the *Heraldo Michoacano* newspaper article “Severos Castigos a fin de evitar la tala inmoderada”, 1st Septiembre 1938, p.3

satisfy family needs or for the manufacture of handicrafts, often struggling to pay taxes and permits. Debts in the payment of taxes carried the risk of having their exploitation permits suspended. Thus, for example, in 1935, the tax receiver of the Quiroga municipality requested the suspension of the permits of the forestry cooperatives of the indigenous communities of San Andres Tzirondaro and San Jeronimo, due to their tax debt.⁷¹ Similarly, in March 1936, a group of people from the indigenous community of Ihuatzio approached President Cárdenas requesting a reduction in the fee they had to pay to the DFCP due to their precarious situation.⁷² In relation to the restrictions derived from the creation of Lake Pátzcuaro forest reserve, in July 1936, the representative of the indigenous community of Tzintzuntzan asked President Cárdenas to allow them to extract firewood from their forest, as this was fundamental for the sustenance of their families.⁷³

Regarding the project to create a national park in the Lake Pátzcuaro basin, it is worth noting that delays in the creation of national parks were not uncommon. Among the most frequent causes were the lack of personnel or financial resources. However, in the case of Lake Pátzcuaro, this seems unlikely given the attention it received from the federal government at the time. Given that the declaration of national parks implied the exclusion of forests from land reform parcels, it is most likely that its creation would have been objected. As the examples mentioned above demonstrate, the peasants made their voices heard, which may have led to the reordering of some aspects of the conservation agenda in Pátzcuaro. Moreover, as these measures went against revolutionary principles, they ran the risk of affecting the legitimacy of the state and popular support in what was seen as a conflictive region.

5.4.1 The Nature of Indigenous Fishing Practices

The protection of lake basins also involved establishing greater control over fisheries. As in the case of forests, poor fishing practices represented a risk for fish conservation and the development of this industry. According to Quevedo, the way in which both hunting and fishing was being carried out in the country was

⁷¹ Municipal Archive of Quiroga. Box 1937-1940.

⁷² LC-AP, Box 1009, Folder 564.1/886

⁷³ LC-AP, Box 102, Folder 135.2/110

‘anarchical’ and had the appearance of a ‘massacre’.⁷⁴ The widespread destruction of wildlife suggested the need to develop new laws on inland fishing, regulated by the Hunting and Fishing Law.⁷⁵ To this end, the DFCP organized the First Sports Fishing and Hunting Convention held in May 1935, seeking the opinion and support of sports fishers and hunters in establishing new regulations. The call was applauded by the sportsmen, who considered the convention a turning point towards a more participatory way of making policies.

During the convention, the DFCP asked participants to collaborate with them in the mission of teaching rural people to appreciate nature, as well as good hunting and fishing practices, placing them in a position of authority.⁷⁶ Interestingly, among the agreements reached was requesting the DFCP to establish fish farms for the propagation of the white fish from Lake Pátzcuaro.⁷⁷ Although the new regulations incorporated public input on the issue, the convention left subsistence fishers out of the consultation. Through it, the DFCP also defined which segments of the society were worthy to be consulted. Behind this was foresters’ preconceived idea of the nature of sportsmen and indigenous management practices, one considered modern and rational, the other backward and in urgent need of modernization.⁷⁸ In a way, this created a sort of conservational hierarchy, in which campesinos and their livelihoods were placed at the bottom while recreational fishers were positioned at the top. Accordingly, one type of fishing was rational whereas the other was not.

The new requirements for fishing in inland waters were disseminated in several media, among them, the magazine *Protección a la Naturaleza*. Fishing was categorized into three types, comprising *pesca domestica* or subsistence fishing, recreational, and commercial. Subsistence fishing was the one whose sole objective was to supply food for family consumption. While commercial fishing, implied obtaining an economic benefit from the sale of fish products regardless the scale of fishing. Finally, sport fishing was defined according to the use of certain fishing gear. Except for subsistence fishing, fishermen had to obtain prior authorization from the DFCP, paying a small fee. Fishing in Lake Pátzcuaro was considered

⁷⁴ BDFCP v1, n1, p.148.

⁷⁵ 1935. Marzo-abril. Servicios de Caza y Pesca. BDFCP, v1, n1, p.80.

⁷⁶ 1935. Salutación a los miembros de la Convención de Caza y Pesca Deportivas. BDFCP, v1, n1, p.145.

⁷⁷ 1935. Memoria de la Primera Convención de Caza y Pesca Deportivas. BDFCP, v1, n1, p.158

⁷⁸ 1935. Marzo-abril. Servicios de Caza y Pesca. BDFCP, v1, n1, p.80.

commercial since it was undertaken for both subsistence and commercial reasons. The article on the new regulations included photographs of Lake Pátzcuaro, showing scenes of daily life and indigenous fishing, reminiscent of the film *Janitzio* (1935), which had just been premiered by the time the new regulations were published, revealing its status as an iconic lake (Figure 5.8). This reflected the existing conflicting views on indigenous management practices, considered inappropriate and destructive, while also being regarded as a symbol of authentic México. Like other *indigenistas* films, *Janitzio* also draws attention to the socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples, criticizing the exploitation of indigenous labour by an outside businessman (see Chapter 7).



Figure 5.8. 'Requirements for Inland Fishing'. Source: *Magazine Protección a la Naturaleza*, n1, 1935.

It is difficult to know to what extent the new requirements for inland fishing were applied, as well as the practical consequences that Quevedo's vision had on indigenous fishing. However, it is possible to state that they did not go uncontested. It seems that low fishing revenues prevented fishermen from covering the cost of fishing permits. This was the case of the indigenous community of Janitzio, which

in 1939 asked Cárdenas to exempt them from payment by reason of poverty.⁷⁹ Moreover, in 1940 Cárdenas issued a decree by which the fishers on the islands and shores of Lake Pátzcuaro were given exclusive control of commercial fishing, transportation, and sale of fishery products,⁸⁰ going against DFCP's policies on indigenous fishing in Lake Pátzcuaro (see below).

5.4.2 Improving Nature: The propagation of exotic and Indigenous fish species.

In addition to regulating fishing, the DFCP also sought to protect inland fisheries through restocking and fish farming to ensure long-term fishing yields and to increase fishing productivity. This was seen as a positive action for the development of fishing and to prevent fish stocks from depletion. Due to its biological and cultural importance, the DFCP also attempted to protect and propagate white fish (*Chirostoma estor estor*) through its introduction into other lakes.

Equally crucial was the establishment of a research programme for the study of inland fishing. The idea was that, in addition to their normal activities, the officers would carry out research activities. Their work consisted of providing information on the approximate location of water bodies, biology, morphology, and physical characteristics. Regarding the study of fish fauna, they had to collect information on their common names, length, breeding season, feeding and population size. An outline of the present and past situation of the fish populations should also be provided. Finally, fish specimens had to be sent to the department's central offices for further examination.⁸¹

In May 1935, the DFCP reported working on the selection of fish species for cultivation and the developing of appropriate methods for their reproduction. By July, the first native species to try to be propagated was the white fish of Pátzcuaro. The fishing division placed white fish roe into lake La Alberca in Michoacán and the Lake Atochac in Hidalgo state. They were also deciding whether a reservoir of white fish could be established in an artificial reservoir in Chapultepec.⁸² The DFCP also reported conducting research on the characteristics of different lakes and reservoirs in the country to determine their aquaculture

⁷⁹ AGN, LC-AP, Box 733, Folder 534.6/393

⁸⁰ AGN, LC-AP, Box 560, Folder 501.2/426

⁸¹ BDFCP, v1, n2, p.81-82.

⁸² Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Julio. BDFCP, v1, n1, p.96.

potential. They studied the conditions in the lakes of Zirahuén and Tequesquitengo, located in the states of Michoacán and Morelos respectively, to determine their suitability for the propagation of white fish.⁸³

The DFCP made several attempts to plant white fish without much success. In 1935, while trying to propagate the white fish to other places, the DFCP noticed a decline in the populations of white fish in Lake Pátzcuaro. The black bass was first identified as the possible cause, because of its predatory behaviour. In August 1935, the department reported the suspension of the introduction of fertilized white fish eggs into Lake Tacambaro after learning of the existence of black bass in that lake, which at that moment was seen as having a negative effect over the populations of white fish in Lake Pátzcuaro.⁸⁴ Because of that the DFCP suspended the fishing of white fish in Lake Pátzcuaro and Zirahuén. They also prohibited the introduction of any other plant or animal species without the department's previous authorization. The ban applied equally to indigenous and exotic species in any stage of development.

The introduction of black bass into Lake Pátzcuaro first occurred at some point during the late 1920s. The practice of introducing exotic species into inland waters was part of the popularisation of extensive aquaculture in México, initiated at the end of the nineteenth century with the introduction of the common carp. Most of the species introduced were already used in aquaculture in other parts of the world and had proved to be effective in increasing fish stocks.

Measures to protect the white fish were also motivated by its cultural importance. White fish was promoted elsewhere as a symbol of Lake Pátzcuaro, associated with indigenous people's ways of life and Michoacán prehispanic past, becoming an emblematic species. Notably, Lake Pátzcuaro's most famous postcard consists of a fishing scene. White fish are also present in Lake Pátzcuaro's murals representing indigenous cultural expressions and economic activities. Historical research also popularised Michoacán prehispanic iconography, which characterised this region as a land of lakes and fishers (see Chapter 6),⁸⁵ so that the protection and dissemination of white fish had a wider social and cultural importance. As the introduction of species come to be seen as natural, there was popular enthusiasm

⁸³ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Resumen de los principales trabajos desarrollados por el Departamento Forestal y de Caza y Pesca durante el año de 1935. BDFCP, v1, n2, p.1-24

⁸⁴ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Agosto de 1935. BDFCP, v1, n2, p.32-33

⁸⁵ *Mechuacan* means 'land of fishermen', represented as a fish on top of a mountain.

surrounding the propagation of white fish into other lakes as illustrated by a newspaper note about its introduction to the lake of La Magdalena, which was a national reserve, and the lake of La Alberca, in Tacambaro, Michoacán, emphasising the cooperation between the local authorities and the DFCP (Figure 5.9). So, shaping people's relationship with nature not only implied the imposition of new conservation measures (e.g. closures, bans, regulations), but was also built around consensus.

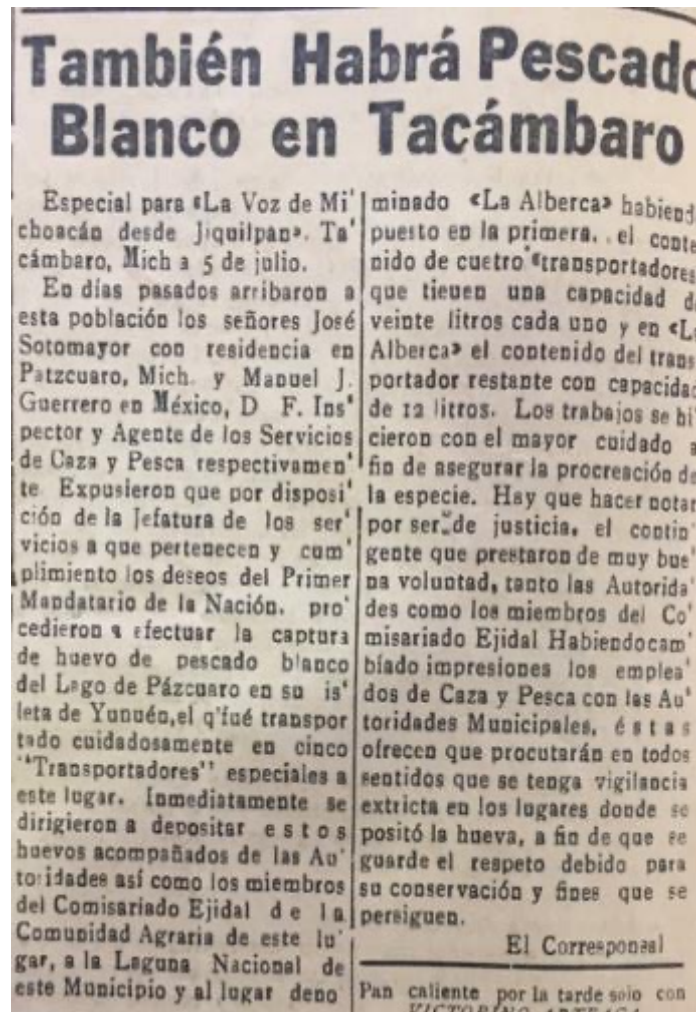


Figure 5.9. 'There will also be white fish in Tacambaro'. Source: Newspaper El Heraldo Michoacano, 1938.

The DFCP also planned the creation of a limnological research station as the way forward to determine the causes of the declining white fish populations. The limnological station would monitor lake conditions and develop techniques for the reproduction of whitefish and other economically valuable species. In August 1935, the DFCP presented a proposal for the construction of a floating laboratory to carry out limnological investigations in the lake. Soon afterwards, a prototype was tested and approved for construction. They also proposed the creation of an

aquaculture station near Lake Pátzcuaro on the land of the former Hacienda Ibarra.⁸⁶ The original proposal was successively modified and adapted with the involvement of new actors. The floating laboratory was not part of the final project. Although the DFCP began working on the establishment of the limnological station immediately after its approval, construction work lasted until 1939.

5.5 International Collaborations

Through international collaboration, overseas scientists also played a role in shaping the nature of Lake Pátzcuaro. In 1936, the DFCP appointed two Japanese experts, Yoshiichi Matsui and Toshie Yamashita, who were government officials working at the “Piscicultural Branch of Imperial Fisheries Experimental Station”, to improve fishery productivity. Their first task was to study the situation of white fish in Lake Pátzcuaro. During their stay they undertook several research trips to the area. They also travel to other regions of the country to study coastal fishing. Their stay lasted until 1938, on the onset of the WWII (see Chapter 2).

Their first research trip was carried out during the last days of March and at the beginning of April, in 1936. They travelled to Michoacán to visit the lakes of Pátzcuaro, Zirahuen and the streams of the Uruapan National Park, accompanied by Quevedo, the head of the fishing division, Felipe Berriozabal, and the forester, José García Martínez, with the objective of establishing their productive potential.⁸⁷ In Pátzcuaro, they took limnological measurements in different parts of the lake and samples of plankton to estimate its composition and abundance. They also visited Pátzcuaro’s tianguis to examine fish sizes and fishing nets (Figure 5.10).⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Quevedo, M.A. 1935. Agosto de 1935. BDFCP, v1, n2, p.32

⁸⁷ Quevedo, M.A. 1936. Informe del C. Jefe del Departamento sobre la explotación de los Lagos de Pátzcuaro y Zirahuen. BDFCP, v1, n3, p.161-165.

⁸⁸ Berriozábal, F. B. 1936. Informe del comisionado Felipe B. Berriozábal sobre observaciones hechas en los lagos de Pátzcuaro y Zirahuen y en el río Cupatitzio. BDFCP, v1, n3, p.173-189

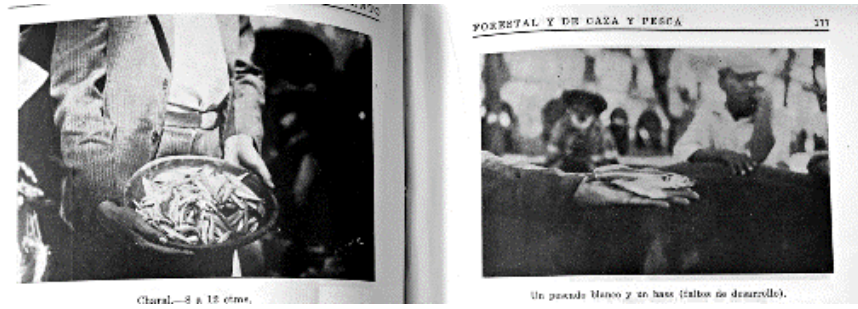


Figure 5.10. Photographs included in the report of the expedition showing the size of the fish for sale at the Pátzcuaro tianguis. Source: BDFCP, n3, p. 177.

Based solely on the size of the fish, the researchers concluded that most of the fish for sale had not reached maturity. Both the *charales* and white fish were considered to be underdeveloped.⁸⁹ They also saw some specimens of black bass whose length did not reach 10 cm. Regarding the fishing nets, the mesh size of the examined nets was only 2 cm wide. The expected consequence was a high rate of capture of juveniles, reducing the individual's chance to reach maturity, leading to an eventual depletion of the spawning stock.

The group of experts also carried out research on Lake Pátzcuaro conditions. They described Lake Pátzcuaro as a typical temperate lake, greenish and shallow. In the southern area of the lake, the depth varied from 2 m near Pátzcuaro's main jetty to 7 m at Cape Santiago, three kilometres away. Other measurements were taken near the islands. There the depth of the lake varied from 5 m near the island of Janitzio, to 14 m, half a kilometre from the island of Pacanda (see Figure 1.3). The average temperature at the bottom of the lake in both areas was about 18 °C. Regarding plankton, the samples collected showed great abundance in the lake, with Copepods as the dominant group. For the Japanese experts, these features made Lake Pátzcuaro an ideal site for the propagation of fish, especially young fish from temperate waters.⁹⁰

Given that Lake Pátzcuaro presented optimal conditions for the propagation of fish and considering the observations made during the visit to the tianguis, they concluded that indigenous fishing procedures and not black bass were the main cause of the white fish situation. For the Japanese experts, it was better to invest in the propagation of white fish than in the eradication of black bass, which had the disadvantage of being difficult and expensive due to its large population. A

⁸⁹ Small-sized fish from the *Chirostoma* genus, which is the same genus as white fish.

⁹⁰ Matsui, I. and J. Yamashita. 1936. Informe de los doctores Matsui y Yamashita acerca del mismo asunto. BDFCP, v1, n3, p.166-172

more feasible solution to reduce the black bass population was to increase its fishing through the introduction of fishing techniques specific to the behaviour of the species. They were also concerned that the eradication of black bass could affect the development of tourism and sport fishing. They believed that Lake Pátzcuaro could provide enough for the development of white fish, black bass, and many other species if overfishing was regulated. Among the species suggested for introduction were *Cyprinus carpio* var. *koi*, *Tinca vulgaris*, *Perca flavescens*, *Alosa sapidissima* and *Anguilla rostrata*. In fact, in August 1936, plants and fish sent by the Japanese government arrived at the port of Mazatlán, which were taken to the nurseries of México City for propagation.⁹¹

After the research trip, the DFCP announced a series of measures to protect white fish. To prevent the capture of juveniles the mesh size of the fishing nets had to be increased from 2 to 4 cm. The banning of charal fishing also sought to contribute to the same end. The creation of a closed area within the lake was also suggested. The area proposed was the northern part of the lake, near Chupicuaro where there were fewer fishers. The measure was not supposed to affect the fishers since they could go and fish in the non-closed area. With this measure they not only wanted to create a natural refuge for fish but also a place for experimentation. The idea was to establish an experimental plot for the artificial propagation of white fish, comprising traps and ponds. Likewise, since the conditions of the lake were optimal for the propagation of other fish species, they insisted about the importance of setting up a limnological research station to conduct scientific research relevant to aquaculture development.

Actions were soon taken to enforce the recommendations emerging from the expedition to Pátzcuaro. Thus, in June 1936, the DFCP presented a decree proposal regulating fishing in the lake. The decree mentioned that, despite the efforts made by the DFCP, fishers continue capturing small size fish, and given the results of the exploration, it was essential to act to reverse this situation. The decree prohibited the fishing of white fish and black bass whose length was less than 25 cm. It also established a minimum size mesh for the various type of fishing nets. A period of 60 days to replace the nets was established. As in other occasions, the document specified that the measures would not leave local populations without

⁹¹AGN, LC-AP, box 733, Folder 534.6/393

livelihoods, as they could find work in the construction of roads or on the railways that were in operation.

The results of a second research trip to the area by Matsui in July 1936 caused him to change his advice on the announced measures.⁹² Matsui interviewed the fishermen to elicit information about the white fish spawning seasons, noting an overlap of spawning seasons for charal and white fish. Fish that had just been caught by the fishermen were also examined, finding that, even though they were small in size they were all adults. The fish identified as charales also showed the characteristics of adult fish. Seen under the microscope the roe of white fish and charales turned out to be identical. Based on these comparisons, Matsui considered that even though current works on the *Chirostoma* genus reported the existence of eighteen different species, five of which were supposed to be found in Pátzcuaro, his research showed that they were difficult to differentiate.

He also provided more information on indigenous fishing practices. Based on the examination of the fish caught, new minimum sizes were established for mature *charales* and black bass in Lake Pátzcuaro. Regarding gear fishing, Matsui reported the existence of different type of nets, comprising the *chinchorro*, *charamecuas* (trammel net) and *cucharas*. There were two types of *charamecuas* that varied in mesh size, one used to catch charales and the other for white fish. Only fish over 6 cm were caught with these nets. The *cuchara*, also called butterfly net, was reported to be used for the fishing of *acumara* (*Alganssea Lacustris*) when found in the shoal.

Therefore, according to Matsui, none of the causes established so far for the decline in white fish populations had a solid scientific basis. Due to the lack of statistics about the population of whitefish, it was not possible to assess the magnitude of the problem. Moreover, assuming that there was a decline in the populations of white fish, this could be attributed to other causes, such as climatic variability. For these reasons, the proposed restrictions on fishing seemed excessive to him. Furthermore, while the ban did not guarantee a solution to the perceived problem, negative consequences on people's livelihoods could be expected, and this might not be justified.

The replacement of the fishing nets also seemed very difficult to implement, since it would involve a burdensome expense for the fishers. Also, since

⁹²Matsui, Y. Informe del Dr. Matsui sobre el problema de la pesca en Pátzcuaro. BDFCP, v1, n4, p.177

his research indicated that small fish might already be adult, Matsui suggested that only the mesh size of the back of the trawl nets should be regulated. On this occasion, he concluded by advising that before establishing any restrictive measure, a greater knowledge of the species in question was necessary. Moreover, decisions involving people's livelihoods should take into consideration both biological and social perspectives. The way forward was to finish the construction of the limnological research station to develop the required research.

Matsui also provided advice about the characteristics that the limnological station should have, suggesting the creation of biological and chemical laboratories, a meteorological section, an aquarium, and an experimental farm, as well as a natural history museum. The farm consisted of three groups of experimental ponds divided by size. Small ponds would be destined for the study of fish reproduction, the reproduction of fish on a larger scale would be developed in larger ponds, while earth ponds would serve for fish farming experiments. They also suggested acquiring a research boat with the necessary equipment to conduct limnological research.⁹³

Matsui also presented a proposal on the research activities that the limnological station should focus on. He suggested structuring the activities of the research station in two main sections: one dedicated to the study of the lake and the other to the reproduction of fish. The research activities of the first section would be 1) to determine the nature of the lake, its morphology and morphometry, as well as its physical, chemical, and biological conditions, 2) the creation of a meteorological record and the study of the influence of meteorological variables on the lake, and 3) the compilation of data regarding the function of fisheries. The second section would focus on the study of natural and artificial reproduction methods, focusing on the propagation of white fish, the interaction of seabass with other species, methods to increase the population of other valuable species of fish from Lake Pátzcuaro, the introduction of other beneficial species, the improvement of fishing methods, and the commercialization of fish products.⁹⁴

In 1936, the Hacienda Ibarra was handed over by the government for the construction of the limnological station, whose construction began in late 1936. In

⁹³ Matsui, Y. 1936. Informe del Dr. Matsui sobre el establecimiento del Laboratorio Limnológico de Pátzcuaro. BDFCP, v1, n4, p.172-176

⁹⁴ Proyecto de los trabajos que se desarrollaran en la estación limnológica de Pátzcuaro, Mich. BDFCP, v2, n6, p.145-148

May 1937, the department reported the ongoing construction of the Lake Pátzcuaro limnological station and the operation elsewhere of several fish farms, some of which also had simple laboratory facilities. The first aquaculture station of this type was established in 1936, in Almoloya, in the state of México. Apparently, the delay in the construction of the Pátzcuaro limnological station was related to its calibre, involving a greater financial expense. Although the Lake Pátzcuaro limnological station began operations in 1938, construction works continued. In 1938, adjustments to the experimental ponds were reported. In 1939, the DFCP programme for the six following years included the completion of Lake Pátzcuaro limnological station as one of their objectives.⁹⁵ Moreover, although the limnological station carried out some research activities during its first years, its functioning was erratic. In February 1938, the head of aquaculture was reported to have been sent to Pátzcuaro to 'activate' the project.

During these years, the fishing division of the DFCP continued the repopulation of inland waters. Most of the species used were exotic, obtained from fish farms or water bodies where they abounded. The rainbow trout, for instance, came from the stations of Almoloya and Salazar, and the black bass from Lake Pátzcuaro. The only native species they ever tried to introduce was the white fish. During the restocking operations, black bass and whitefish were often introduced into the same body of water.⁹⁶ However, it was expected that the actions of repopulation in Lake Pátzcuaro and other water bodies, would achieve the recovery of the whitefish.⁹⁷

The Japanese experts remained in México for just over two years, working on the area until the end of their stay. In their last research trip to Pátzcuaro they studied the hydrochemistry of the lake with novel equipment brought from Japan (Figure 5.11). The purpose was to evaluate its potential for the development of fisheries. The results showed high levels of silicates and phosphates, which were interpreted as beneficial for the development of phytoplankton and diatoms.⁹⁸ The report included for the first time a map of the lake, showing the location of sampling stations within the lake (Figure 5.12). Further studies needed to consider

⁹⁵Quevedo, M.A. 1939. Anteproyecto del plan sexenal para el periodo 1941-1946 en las ramas forestal y de caza y pesca. BDFCP, n14, p.16

⁹⁶ Repoblaciones de peces en Michoacán, BDFCP, v4, n14, p.111-126

⁹⁷ Informe de los principales trabajos que ha desarrollado el departamento forestal de caza y pesca, y que proseguirá en el transcurso del siguiente año de 1939, BDFCP, v4, n13, p.5.

⁹⁸ Informe rendido por el Ing. T. Yamashita sobre investigaciones realizadas en el Lago de Pátzcuaro, BDFCP, v4, n14, p.91-100

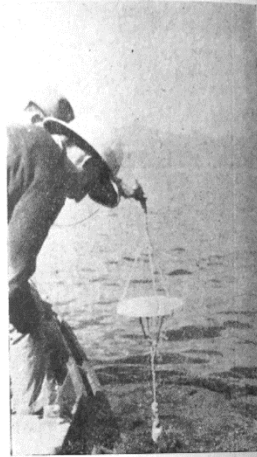
seasonal variations and continue taking the samples from the proposed sites indicated in the map.



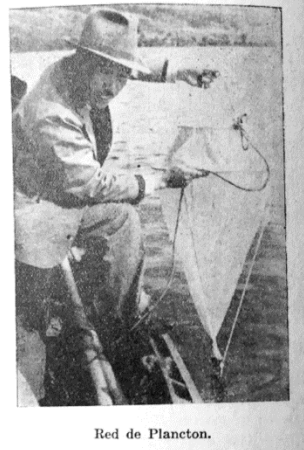
Momento de iniciar el sondeo.



Botella para captar muestras de agua.



Tomando el grado de transparencia de las aguas.



Red de Plancton.

Figure 5.11. Sampling Lake Pátzcuaro waters. Source: BDFCP, v4, n14, p.94-97.

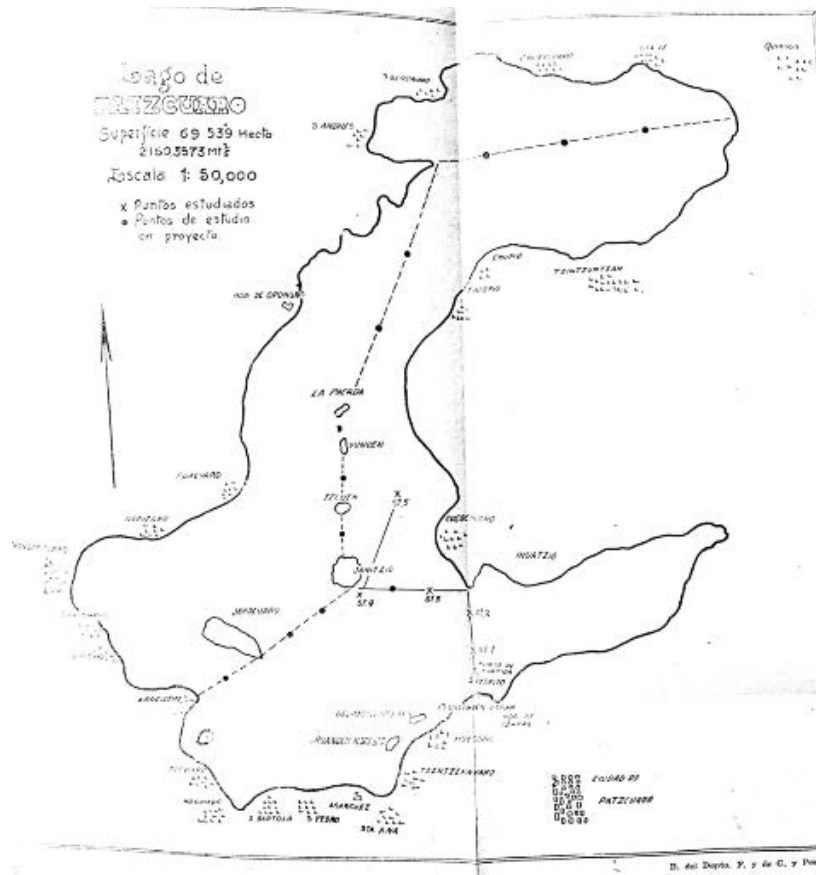


Figure 5.12. Studied sites and sites under project. Source: BDFCP, n14, p. 91-100.

Matsui and Yamashita left México at the end of 1938, making a series of suggestions for the development of fishing in México, fisheries education and limnological research.⁹⁹ In an interview with the journal *Universidad*, Matsui reaffirmed Quevedo’s core belief about the importance of forests and their relationship with the stability of climate and water bodies’ conservation. Matsui also reiterated his view about Lake Pátzcuaro’s environmental situation, shared among the DFCP officials that held fishers responsible for decline in whitefish populations. To the question of who were the main enemies of the fish wealth in México, Matsui stated:

Los pescadores son el peor enemigo de esa riqueza. Por ejemplo, en Pátzcuaro hay pescado blanco, que poco a poco se va agotando. Durante mucho tiempo se ha pensado aquí que ello se debía a la presencia de las truchas, considerando a éstas como su enemigo más hostil; pero después de cuidadosas investigaciones he podido encontrar que ese pez blanco empezó a disminuir antes de que se hubieran echado truchas a dichas aguas. Insisto en decirle que los pescadores son los que más perjuicios han causado. Sin embargo, la educación podrá hacer mucho para modificar esta situación (Valle, 1938, p. 14).

The fishers are the greatest enemy. In Pátzcuaro, for instance, whitefish are gradually depleting. For a long time, it has been thought that this was due to the

⁹⁹ Consideraciones personales sobre el futuro pesquero, BDFCP, n12, p.79-96; La educación de jóvenes mexicanos en la rama pesquera en los planteles de Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, BDFCP, n10, p. 89-90.

presence of trout (sic), considered as its most hostile enemy. However, after careful research I have found out that whitefish populations started to decrease long before the introduction of the trout. I insist that fishers are the ones who have caused most damage. However, education could do much to change the situation.

In 1939, the DFCP was lowered in category, becoming again a division of the Secretary of Agriculture. Despite its short existence, the DFCP profoundly shaped Lake Pátzcuaro, both materially and discursively. Scientific research on the causes of the whitefish situation established a series of interrelated ideas about Lake Pátzcuaro's situation: 1) the whitefish population was decreasing, 2) the black bass was not to blame for its disappearance and 3) fishing practices were the most probable cause, although no research had directly explored the relationship between the whitefish and the black bass or evaluated the effect of indigenous fishing practices. It can be argued then that the reason for which the introduction of black bass was discarded as a cause was the prevalent ideas on the nature of indigenous fishing practices, which along with the social relations and hierarchies instituted, enabled those statements to act as valid explanations.

The DFCP also established the restocking and the introduction of species as a common practice, which would continue to be implemented by the research station in Pátzcuaro. From a current point of view, this was incompatible with the protection of native species, which they also pursued. As the regulations issued on the subject show, they did not ignore the possible adverse effects of the introduction of species. How was it then that two conflicting practices coexisted in the DFCP's programme? I propose that, this is connected to the idea expressed earlier in the text that science could improve nature. The authority and legitimacy of the DFCP also enabled these practices to coexist, since they were the ones who determined if a species could be introduced or not.

Moreover, this is related with the very construction of the categories of the national and foreign. As foreign knowledge and practices, exotic species were not considered bad or good in themselves but were judged by their usefulness and how they could contribute to the improvement of the country. This conceptualisation also enabled white fish to be introduced into other lakes outside its natural distribution area. Just in the same way in which cultural practices specific to a place became Mexican through their diffusion all over the country, the introduction of whitefish into other lakes took part in the creation of a national nature. In a way, if the idea of improving nature was possible in the first place was because it was part

of broader efforts to create México and the Mexican. The country's nature and the region's nature were both shaped by the same process.

5.6 The First Years of the Pátzcuaro Limnological Station

The Pátzcuaro Limnological Station inaugurated a new stage in the development of scientific research in the area. The research carried out under the direction of the Forestry Department, could be considered the first stage in that development. Research evolved from the data collection carried out occasionally by the department's officials to the research project that involved the Japanese experts and culminated with the start-up of the Pátzcuaro research station. The initial interest of the Forestry Department on the relations between the upper catchment and the lake would be explored from now on through limnology.

While the limnological station began operating in 1938, it was not until 1940, when staffing was completed, that it began operating on a regular basis. In 1940, the limnological station was incorporated into the 'Department of Fisheries and Marine Industries'. Manuel Zozaya, who was already working at the DFCP, was appointed director, while Fernando de Buen, a Spanish ichthyologist arrived during the Spanish Civil War as a refugee, was given the position of scientific advisor. The limnological station was aimed to contribute to the development of fishing, through the study of the lake and fish species. In its first report of activities, they described their work in these terms: 'In the same day, at the same moment the biologist will gather the data given by the limnological research. Fish farming will benefit from biological research, not only in its industrial aspect but in the development of lake richness'.¹⁰⁰

The research took on a systematic and periodic nature, adopting methods recognised by the scientific community. Detailed accounts of the procedures followed, and the research outcomes were made available. Research activities were serialized, allowing its traceability across publications. The research developed was communicated through three different publications: *Informes* (reports), *Avances de trabajos* (research progress) and *Trabajos* (research papers). A monthly report of the research activities, along with the data generated was published in *Informes*, preliminary results of the research were published in *Avances de trabajos*, and original

¹⁰⁰ Zozaya, M and F. De Buen. 1940. Informes de la estación limnológica de Pátzcuaro, *Informes*, n1, p. 3.

research papers were published in *Trabajos*. The results of Lake Pátzcuaro's research were also communicated through other scientific journals.

The activities of the limnological station consisted of the constant taking of meteorological data and physical-chemical parameters, the measurement of the level of the lake, the study of the species of plankton and fish, the examination of fish species in aquariums, and experimentation on fish farming. Together this constituted the 'Lake Pátzcuaro study problem'. Although its research focus remained on Lake Pátzcuaro, the limnological station also conducted research in other water bodies within and outside the region.

Although the limnological station was a direct consequence of the work of the DFCP, it constantly sought to differentiate its work. They did so by pointing out the limitations of previous research and making clear that their research conformed to scientific principles, providing an objective and reliable understanding of the Lake Pátzcuaro situation.

In 1939, the limnological station established a sampling station to make observations valid and comparable (Figure 5.13). It was reported that the site had been established following international conventions. Visits to the sampling station began to take place periodically from April 1940. They collected data about atmospheric conditions, depth measurements, and the physical and chemical conditions of the water. The sampling station also served as a reference point for the fishing of plankton.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ De Buen, F. 1940. Métodos de investigación planctónica seguidos en la Estación Limnológica de Pátzcuaro y primeros trabajos, *Informe*, n4, p.5

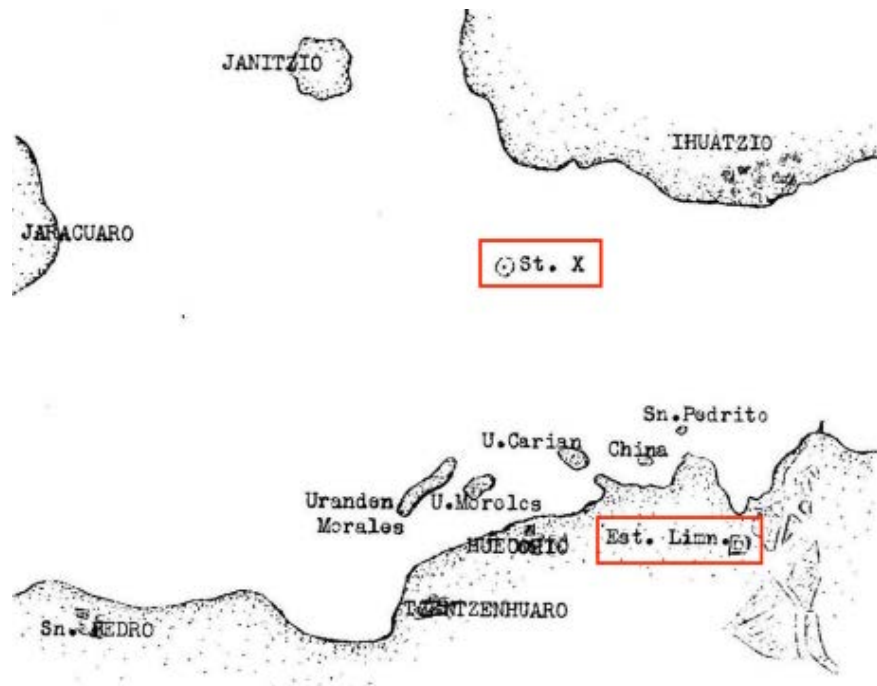


Figure 5.13. Location of the sampling station (station x). Source: *Investigaciones*, n7, 1941

The limnological station also proposed the creation of a new map of the lake. The existing map was considered inaccurate, posing important limitations on the study of the lake. The creation of a new map would allow them to conduct bathymetric studies, delimit the areas of aquatic vegetation and the spawning sites, as well as to establish exact locations by means of coordinates. The new map was created in collaboration with the Higher School of Mechanical and Electric Engineering of the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). In May 1940, the DFCP carried out the first bathymetric study of the lake surveying the area between Uranden and Janitzio islands.

The station also undertook the study of the level of the lake. Lake level measurements were made fortnightly, beginning in April 1939. Two benchmarks were established to measure the level of the lake, located in the jetty number two and the research station's boathouse.¹⁰² The increase or decrease in lake level was reported monthly. As more records accumulated, seasonal and annual comparisons were made. In November 1940, the limnological station reported a decline in Lake Pátzcuaro levels compared to the previous years.¹⁰³

In March 1941, the limnological station published all the available meteorological data, from 1924 to 1940. The document established the average

¹⁰² Nivel del lago. Informes. n1, p.6

¹⁰³ Zozaya, M and F. De Buen. 1940. Informes. n10, p.3

annual temperature and precipitation in the basin, as well as their typical annual and monthly values. The joint study of meteorological data and the lake level was aimed at understanding the influence of the climate on the latter.

The limnological station also continued the study of fish species, making observations in their habitat and in captivity. Periodic fishing was carried out to obtain information on its biology and the interactions between species. The samples were grouped according to their genre, registering their size, stomach content, sex, and sexual state. The lake was characterised as relatively rich in ichthyological fauna, inhabited by six species of the *Chirostoma* genus, as well as the species *Alganssea lacustris*, *Goodea luitpoldi*, *Neophorus diazi*, *Skiffia lermae*, from the Goodeidae family, endemic to México, and the exotic species of *Micropterus salmoides*. Observations about the distribution and abundance of the different fish species within the lake were also made.¹⁰⁴

Once again, the *Chirostoma* study faced the problem of its taxonomic identification. According to Fernando de Buen, although the existing literature reported the presence of six species, one of them could not be found (*C. humboldtianum*), likewise the description of two species of charales (*C. attenuatum* and *C. patzcuaro*) did not coincide with any of the collected specimens, proposing that they were variations of a species (*C. bartoni*) already described. Furthermore, a new species of *Chirostoma* (*C. michoacanae*) and two subspecies of whitefish were identified (*C. estor* var. *pacanda*, and *C. estor* var. *tecuenta*).

En verdad pudieran mantenerse las dos especies de Meek siempre que sus características fueran absolutamente constantes, pero precisamente acontece todo lo contrario [...]. No hay absoluta coincidencia entre los caracteres que da Meek y los observados por nosotros, pero nos contentaremos [...] con considerar al *Chirostoma patzcuaro* sinónimo del *Chirostoma attenuatum*, como casos excepcionales, límites de variación de una especie (De Buen, 1940, p.6).

In truth, the two species described by Meek could be maintained if their characteristics were constant, but it is precisely the opposite that happens [...]. There is no absolute coincidence between the characters that Meek gives and those observed by us, but we will content ourselves [...] with considering *Chirostoma patzcuaro* synonymous with *Chirostoma attenuatum*, exceptional cases of the limits of variation of a species.

The identification of species in their different stages of development also became important on the study of the reproduction of *Chirostoma*. As a fry, the identification could be done through supposedly invariable characteristics present throughout the

¹⁰⁴ De Buen, F. 1940. Pescado blanco, chacuami y charari del Lago de Pátzcuaro, Trabajos, n1.

life cycle. In the case of eggs and alevins, their classification could be done through artificial fertilization or using data from the laying season. Although observations were limited to the laying areas, they considered that the knowledge generated so far on the different species of *Chirostoma* could guide the establishment of closures by size to ensure their reproduction.

The establishment of the limnological station increased scientific interest on the lake, attracting other institutions and researchers. The arrival of new scientific actors started a debate on the research problems examined by the limnological station that had previously kept uncontested. Thus in 1940, the Institute of Biology, UNAM undertook a research trip to Pátzcuaro to carry out a comprehensive study of the basin, which was conducted with the collaboration of the limnological station. One of the subjects studied was precisely that of the fish fauna.¹⁰⁵

Referring to De Buen's new proposal of classification, they indicated that the great variation observed within the *Chirostoma* genus was due to the isolation of the Lake Pátzcuaro basin and that the new varieties described could be hybrids. Therefore, the taxonomic value of De Buen's observations could only be asserted after examining enough specimens. They also noted that the species described by De Buen was within the limits of variation of another species. Inter and intra-specific variation posed an important problem for taxonomic classification, complicating the issuing of fishing restrictions.

In relation to the study of the interaction between white fish and black bass, the results showed that chirostomas were the second source of food for black bass, with crustaceans' number one. Despite this, De Buen concluded that the black bass was not responsible for the decline of whitefish population and that this hypothesis should be discarded.¹⁰⁶ The approach to introducing species did not change much from that of the DFCP. Since most of the fish were carnivorous, they proposed the introduction of the herbivorous carp. A different understanding of the situation was presented by the Institute of Biology, proposing that the competition for food and black bass predatory practices were having a negative effect over the population of whitefish. They also observed that the populations of several species of the

¹⁰⁵ Ancona, et al. 1940. Prospecto Biológico del Lago de Pátzcuaro. Instituto de Biología, UNAM.

¹⁰⁶ De Buen, F. 1940. Primeros trabajos realizados en la Estación Limnológica de Pátzcuaro sobre alimentos de los peces, Informes, n9.

Goodeidae family were very scarce and that this could be an effect of the introduction of black bass.¹⁰⁷

5.7 Lake Pátzcuaro's Origin and Future

The studies carried out on the ichthyological fauna and the geographical features of the Michoacán lakes allowed De Buen to make a series of propositions regarding the lake's origin. De Buen noted that the distribution area of the *Chirostoma* corresponded to the Lerma River Basin, and to the lakes of Zirahuén, Pátzcuaro and Cuitzeo. The species found in Zirahuén and Pátzcuaro shared more characteristics between them than with those of Cuitzeo, which resembled the Lerma species (Figure 5.14). Similar conclusions were drawn from the distribution of the Goodeidae family. Moreover, as the lakes were also placed in an altitudinal gradient, De Buen proposed that these lakes were once tributaries of the Lerma (De Buen, 1943). Successive volcanic episodes during the Tertiary and Quaternary caused the isolation of the lake basins. The order in which this happened was deduced from the similarities and differences between species, Zirahuén and Pátzcuaro separated first, and a more recent event separated Cuitzeo from Lerma.



Figure 5.14. Distribution area of *Chirostoma* according to De Buen. Map by the author.

¹⁰⁷ 1940. Los vertebrados de Pátzcuaro. In *Prospecto Biológico del Lago de Pátzcuaro*. Instituto de Biología, UNAM. p.481-492

Picking up on general theories about lake ecology and evolution, De Buen proposed a theory on the evolution of Michoacán lakes.¹⁰⁸ According to which, the lakes of Michoacán were evolving towards a final demise, becoming valleys that were once flooded basins. After their formation, the lakes would go through two stages, called transgressive and regressive. During the first stage the filling of the lake with sediments would cause the loss of depth, leading to the transgression of the shoreline. This in turn will cause increased loss of water through evaporation, leading to the regression of the shoreline. During the second stage, the lake would have lost both surface and depth.

The lakes of Michoacán were seen as having different degrees of evolution, representing successive phases of ageing; Zirahuen was the youngest, Pátzcuaro followed it, already aged, Cuitzeo was in senescence and Lagunillas was a valley of lacustrine origin. Referring to Lake Pátzcuaro De Buen stated:

Habiendo disminuido la profundidad del lago, ha suavizado las irregularidades del fondo, sus aguas por la polución de arcillas se colorean de verde o amarillo, dejan su antigua transparencia o el color azul. Pátzcuaro que retiró sus aguas, especialmente en Chapultepec y Quiroga dejando terreno a la agricultura se encuentra en regresión y por tanto en franco envejecimiento (De Buen 1943. p.217).

Having decreased the depth of the lake, it has softened the irregularities of the bottom. Because of silting its waters are coloured green or yellow, losing its former transparency or blue colour. Pátzcuaro, which has fallen in level, especially in Chapultepec and Quiroga, exposing new land for agriculture, is in regression and therefore in full ageing.

Some of these ideas were first outlined in other works by De Buen. For instance, in a description of the lake included in a paper on the *Chirostoma*, he stated that because of the transport of soil to the lake, the bottom was now covered by a thick layer of sediments. The current depth of the lake did not correspond to the type of basin or the existence of islands such as Janitzio, which arise out from the surface abruptly.¹⁰⁹ The same idea is repeated in a different work stating that the existence of these features showed that the lake used to be deeper. The same water volume used to cover less surface. However, because of the loss of depth the lake waters were flooding the surrounding area. These was said to be caused by the filling up

¹⁰⁸ According to Fernando Bernal-Brooks (1998, 2017), it is possible that De Buen's theory on the evolution of the lakes of Michoacán (De Buen 1943), originated from an exchange of ideas with Deevey in 1941, who was close to Lindeman and would further develop his ideas.

¹⁰⁹ De Buen, F. 1940. *Pescado blanco, chacuami y charari del lago de Pátzcuaro*. *Trabajos*, v1, n4, p.4.

of the lake due to localised soil erosion in Ihuatzio, to the southeast. De Buen also referred to the possible existence of large, logged trees in the bottom of the lake.¹¹⁰

Despite being the youngest, Zirahuen was forecast a similar future to that of Pátzcuaro and Cuitzeo. According to De Buen, Zirahuen will undergo rapid ageing, 'leaving behind its blue, transparent and deep waters'. Moreover, deforestation by fire and logging would shorten its geological evolution cycle.¹¹¹ The past and future of Lake Pátzcuaro merged in De Buen's evolution theory. As the theory became broadly accepted, it triggered interest on the reconstruction of its environmental past. Although there have been alternative proposals to De Buen's 'one-way theory of the evolution of lakes', it continues to have a great influence on opinions about the past and future of Lake Pátzcuaro (Bernal-Brooks, 1998). The irredeemable disappearance of the lake established in De Buen's theory has also become a source of great environmental anxiety, around which lake's concern articulates up to date.

In 1941, the taking of a sediment core sediment started a new phase in the study of Lake Pátzcuaro's environmental past through the analysis of its palaeolimnological reconstruction. The development of a pollen record from a 6.2 meters core was part of an attempt to apply the method of pollen analysis to chronological studies in Mexican archaeology, particularly those of the Valley of México (see Chapter 2). The studies, conducted by American paleolimnologist Edward S. Deevey, received crucial assistance from the Pátzcuaro limnological station, while the INAH granted him access to archaeological sites. The presence of non-arboreal pollen in the core was first attributed to dry Holocene climatic oscillations (Deevey, 1944). Further work on Deevey's core was performed out by Hutchinson and colleagues (1956) suggesting that the occurrence of small numbers of *Zea mays* pollen grains confirmed that agriculture has been practiced in the basin for a long time, anticipating future debates on the environmental impacts of prehispanic agriculture (see Chapter 2).

¹¹⁰ De Buen, F. 1941. El Lago de Pátzcuaro: recientes estudios limnológicos. *Revista Geográfica*, v1, n1, p.35.

¹¹¹ De Buen, F. 1943. Los lagos Michoacanos. I. Caracteres generales. El lago de Zirahuén. *Revista de la Sociedad Mexicana de Historia Natural*, v4, n3-4, p.216.

5.8 Conclusions

Throughout the chapter, I have tried to show how the project of creating México and the Mexican also involved regulating people's relationship with nature, comprising changes in land ownership regimes, the transformation of natural resource management, the establishment of environmental protection schemes, and scientific research. This process also involved the collectivization of labour in rural areas, conditioning the access to natural resources to the formation of cooperatives.

The transformation of land ownership regimes changed people's relationship with nature as it involved giving the state final control over land and natural resources. Accordingly, the use and access to land and natural resources became subject to state regulation. In the case of Lake Pátzcuaro, the use and access to the lake's resources was also subject to the definition of the lake's jurisdiction, which established federal authority over the lake.

Peoples' relationship with nature was also shaped through the establishment of environmental protection schemes and scientific research. The basin management approach adopted in the DFCP's conservation programme made forest conservation a central element in the protection of waterbodies. The creation of the Lake Pátzcuaro forest reserve responded to this vision. Likewise, the definition of Lake Pátzcuaro as a hydrological basin also played a crucial role in the definition of the region by establishing its physical boundaries. Thus, the basin management approach constituted as a key technology for regulating human activities within the catchment area.

The DFCP also shaped the Lake Pátzcuaro region through the establishment of a series of ideas on the nature of traditional management practices, generally depicted as destructive and in need of modernization. The DFCP programme to modernize the use of natural resources, not only involved transforming people's conduct in relation to nature through laws and regulations but also the shaping of nature through the introduction of species, extending the discourse of modernization to nature. The DFCP also sought to extend the distribution area of the white fish, endemic to Lake Pátzcuaro through its introduction into other lakes. The introduction of species transformed the region's nature both ecologically and culturally, participating in the construction of categories about the national and the foreign. Ultimately, I argue, that if the idea of

improving nature was possible was because it was part of broader efforts to create México and the Mexican.

The DFCEP scientific research agenda regarding the farming of fish and the study of the lake was carried forward by the Limnological Station, who also pointed to indigenous management practices as responsible for the degradation of the lake. The limnological research carried out by the Pátzcuaro limnological station also established a series of ideas about the environmental past and future of Lake Pátzcuaro, presenting its disappearance as an irremissible fact. Lastly, while environmental policies were created by central government institutions, the civil society also played key role in their implementation and development. Moreover, state directives were also contested at the local level, altering national policies on natural resource management.

6 The Production of Pátzcuaro's Colonial Aesthetics

During the 1930s, Federal and local governments enacted a series of laws on the protection of the urban landscape. These regulations mobilised notions of 'lo típico' (the typical) and the 'pintoresco' (picturesque). These terms were also employed to describe the Lake Pátzcuaro region, the natural landscape, and scenes of indigenous life. The laws on the protection of monuments linked these notions to colonial architecture. The conflation of colonial architecture and the notion of 'lo típico', constituted an attempt to establish colonial architecture as the norm. Thus, efforts to protect colonial aesthetics participated in regulating people's conduct not only in terms of compliance with the law, but also through the establishment of dominant discourses on Mexican identity. This chapter examines the process by which colonial aesthetics were established as typical of the Lake Pátzcuaro region, comprising the development of art history research, the repurposing of religious buildings, tourism, and the development of neocolonial architecture, which contributed to the reorganization of the values associated with colonial aesthetics.

The chapter begins presenting an historical account of the development of laws about the protection of historical monuments and how they moved from the protection of single buildings to the protection of entire towns. I also examine the role of Pátzcuaro in the enactment of state-wide laws about the protection of monuments. The chapter then addresses the participation of art historians in the valuation of colonial architecture and its status as typical. I particularly discuss the relationship between the *plano pintoresco* (picturesque map) of Pátzcuaro created by the art historian Justino Fernández and the protection of the town's image. I subsequently examine the works carried out in Pátzcuaro to improve the image of the town and to 'protect' and 'restore' its character. I also consider how the protection of religious architecture involved replacing religious aesthetics by a secular-historical aesthetics. The next section of the chapter focuses on the creation of a historical landscape through public art, the construction of monuments and architectural conservation projects. Then I examine the role of tourism in maintaining Pátzcuaro's colonial aesthetic. This is followed by a discussion about the neocolonial architecture style employed in the new constructions, which were meant to preserve the town's character. The last section discusses the competing views about the character of the region by looking at the contrasting opinions about the monument to Morelos on the island of Janitzio. Finally, I examine the conflicts

between the government and the *agraristas* communities concerning the modification and repurposing of religious buildings. The purpose is to show how the protection of colonial architecture was a contested process and the often-conflicting narratives that shaped the Lake Pátzcuaro region.

6.1 Historical context

The first efforts to protect colonial architecture can be traced back to the Liberal Reform in México during the 19th century. According to Pedro Paz-Arellano (2011), they first had a religious motivation, emerging as a response from the civil society to the Laws of Reform (1857) to avoid the division and sale of religious buildings, using the artistic value of these spaces as an argument for their protection. The *Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, SHCP based on its initials in Spanish) was made responsible for the administration of confiscated church property. The technical section of the SHCP was responsible for authorising modifications to religious buildings. A group of specialists was consulted for more important cases. It is important to note that during this period the first regulations on the protection of monuments were established, however, these were focused on the conservation of archaeological monuments (1862).

During the government of Porfirio Díaz, new institutions (1885, 1905) and laws (1897, 1902) about the protection of monuments were passed, expanding the conservation policies to historical and artistic monuments. However, these policies had a limited effect on the conservation of colonial architecture given Porfirio Díaz's inclination towards French culture. At this time, the societies of architects became the main promoters of the protection of religious buildings, which were considered as the epitome of architectural art in México.

Mexican architects attended international conferences of architects in Europe, where the conservation of historical monuments was a central topic.¹¹² They promoted the conservation of colonial monuments as a way of showing México's contribution to universal culture. They also argued that preserving colonial monuments would confirm the status of México as a civilised country since this was a common practice in European countries.

¹¹² I refer to the 6th International Congress of Architects (1904, Madrid) which established the first regulations on the protection of historical monuments and the 7th International Congress of Architects (1906, London).

Amid the armed phase of the Revolution new laws on the topic were enacted. On 6th April 1914, the 'Law on the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Monuments and Natural Beauties' was issued. Its creation involved the establishment of an 'Inspectorate of Artistic and Historic Monuments'. The 1914 Law was followed by the 'Law on the Conservation of Monuments, Buildings, Temples and Historical or Artistic Objects' (1916). Under these laws, not only religious buildings were subject to protection but also objects and buildings of civil character. The conservation of natural spaces for their scenic qualities was also considered by both laws, revealing the importance of nature in the process of nation-building (see Chapter 5).

The Inspectorate was also entrusted with the creation of a catalogue of national monuments, setting up a network of inspectors and regional sub-inspectors who were given the task of reporting 'new findings.' These conservation measures were based on the idea that certain spaces, objects, or buildings expressed, better than others, the country's character. More than just discovering heritage sites and objects, the Inspectorate department actively participated in the making of cultural heritage as it involved a selective process and a hierarchical organisation of values.

On the other hand, even though the artistic value of religious architecture had already been noted during the 19th century, during the post-revolutionary period, the appreciation of colonial architecture was at odds with certain aspects of the revolutionary discourse. State efforts to preserve colonial architecture involved the reorganisation of values associated with it and its articulation with the nationalist rhetoric.

During the post-revolutionary period, the laws about the conservation of monuments (1930, 1934) changed their focus from the protection of isolated buildings to the conservation of the urban landscape. The 1930 'Law on the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Natural Beauties' created the Department of Artistic, Archaeological and Historic Monuments (DMAAH based on its initials in Spanish). The Office of Colonial and Republican Monuments (OMCR based on its initials in Spanish) attached to the DMAAH was in charge of the protection and conservation of the monuments created during the period between the colonial era and the end of the Restored Republic (1867-1876), eliminating the Porfiriato era from consideration. The 'Law on the Protection and

Conservation of Archaeological and Historical Monuments, Typical Towns and Places of Natural Beauty' (1934), incorporated a section on the conservation of the 'typical and picturesque' aspects of cities and villages.

It is important to mention that by the time the 1934 federal law was enacted, the state of Michoacán already had laws and regulations that considered the protection of 'picturesque towns' (1930, 1931). These laws were established following the example of the colonial mining town of Taxco, in the southern state of Guerrero, where the first law of this type was established in 1928 to prevent the increase in tourism from altering its 'typical' appearance. In 1929, the buildings of historical or artistic value were declared as of public utility. The same year, another decree on the construction of urban infrastructure was issued, to improve the image of towns with tourism potential. The 1930 Michoacán law also established the creation of a conservation zone in Pátzcuaro within which no modifications could be made. The 1930 law also created the Department of Control of Historic and Artistic Buildings, responsible for the maintenance of regional architecture (García Sánchez, 2013).

During his tenure as governor of Michoacán, Cárdenas realized the tourist potential of the state, promoting the development of a regional tourist economy. The federal laws of 1930 and 1934 also responded to a similar interest. In this way, while these laws sought to prevent tourism from altering the typical image of tourist populations, they also favored the development of a tourist economy. Governmental initiatives to promote tourism in the country also included the creation of the National Committee for Tourism (1928) and the setting up of the Department of Tourism (1936), which expanded the state's role on this subject. In 1943, the Michoacán congress passed the *Ley Reglamentaria para la conservación del aspecto típico y colonial de la ciudad de Pátzcuaro* that linked the existing laws on the subject and established the necessary means for its application.

6.2 The Study of Colonial Architecture

During the postrevolutionary period, the protection of colonial architecture went hand in hand with the development of art history as an academic discipline and its institutionalization. As in the case of folklore studies whose origin is associated with the SEP cultural programme (see Chapter 4), the work of art historians coincided

with the work of the SHCP, which sought to promote them as sites of tourist interest.

The first study of colonial architecture was published by the SHCP in 1924. The multi-volume work titled *Iglesias de México* (Churches of México) was written by Manuel Toussaint along with Dr Atl and José Benítez. There Toussaint defined 'Hispanic-colonial art' as all the artistic, religious, and civil production of the viceregal period. For Toussaint, colonial art was not just European but a mix of Spanish and Indigenous traditions which had created novel styles and forms, resembling Dr Atl (1921) for whom the hundreds of churches and houses built during the colonial period had a distinctive indigenous imprint (Atl, 1922 [1921])

As an art historian Manuel Toussaint and his student, Justino Fernández, would make important contributions to the study of colonial art in México. Toussaint's work is linked with the origin of colonial art studies, encompassing a wide range of topics. For his part, Fernández specialised in the study of aesthetics, folk dances, and urban planning. It was also Toussaint, who in 1934 proposed the creation of a centre dedicated to the study of art history at UNAM. The proposal materialised in the establishment of an Art Laboratory, which in 1936 was elevated in category to become the Institute of Aesthetic Research.

Both Toussaint and Fernández also sought to contribute to the appreciation of colonial architecture among the population and thereby influence its protection. They did so through publications in non-specialized magazines, such as the tourism magazine *MAPA* and *Mexican Art and Life*, the latter published by the DAPP, to stimulate people's interest in colonial monuments. Toussaint and Fernández also contributed to the protection of colonial architecture through their collaboration with the SHCP, being commissioned on various occasions to study colonial monuments. In 1930, Toussaint organised the *Seminario de Investigaciones del Arte en México*, aimed at the technical staff of the SHCP, contributing to their training.

Toussaint also wrote a series of monographs on the architecture of specific towns, commissioned by the SHCP. The objective of these monographs was to contribute to the tourist promotion of the places described. The first of these books was about Taxco, Toussaint went beyond the SHCP original request to study the town's main churches, as he believed that the urban setting should be considered to fully understand religious buildings. The book entitled *Taxco. Su*

historia, monumentos, características actuales y posibilidades turísticas (1931) also included a series of recommendations on the conservation of the typical aspect of Taxco. Justino Fernández would also publish a brief guide on Taxco in 1934, in which he included a *vista* (bird's-eye view) and a map of the town. Toussaint was then commissioned to work in Michoacán, whose main outcome would be the publication of the monograph *Pátzcuaro* (1942).

Toussaint began his research on Michoacán by studying existing historical sources about the area, particularly the *Crónica de Michoacán* and the *Relación de Michoacán*. In the early 1930s, he began collecting information on Pátzcuaro's colonial architecture with the help of the local artist and craft-revivalist Salvador Solchaga,¹¹³ who was also an inspector of monuments and a member of the Pátzcuaro History Society, which in 1931 published a book about Pátzcuaro's colonial architecture, entitled *Los Rincones Históricos de Pátzcuaro* (see Chapter 4).¹¹⁴

The same year that the Pátzcuaro monograph was published, Toussaint issued a series of dictums on the artistic and historic value of Pátzcuaro main colonial buildings, advising that they be declared national monuments.¹¹⁵ All the proposed monuments were examples of Pátzcuaro's religious architecture. Among the aspects that were taken into consideration were their artistic and historical value, its state of conservation, including current threats, and in particular their reuse as schools.

Justino Fernandez was also commissioned by the SHCP to create a series of *planos pintorescos* (picturesque maps) of the cities of Pátzcuaro (1936), Morelia (1936) and Uruapan (1936), which were promoted as a tourist route elsewhere (see Chapter 7). The maps created by Fernández were partially based on those created by the Michoacán Secretary for Development (1895). The *planos* were characterized by the inclusion of pictorial elements and historical references, drawing inspiration from colonial maps. They were accompanied by a brief monograph, which included geographical data, historical information, and the characteristics of the current urban settlement, including its architectural features. For Toussaint, who wrote the foreword to the guides, the written information was only supplementary to the *planos*, to which an artistic and historical value was associated.

¹¹³ Letter from Solchaga to Toussaint. 25 November 1932. Colección Manuel Toussaint. Box 30, Folder 1315, F.17847.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Solchaga to the Director of the National Museum. MNAH, Vol. 228, Folder 48.

¹¹⁵ The dictums are directed to Manuel Enciso, director of colonial monuments. Colección Manuel Toussaint. Box 30, Folder 1315, F.17847.

In addition to the *planos* (Figure 6.1), the Pátzcuaro guide also included a view of the region (Figure 6.2), and a reproduction of the Beaumont map (1792) on which he reportedly based his view (Figure 1.1). Both maps employed a white and red colour palette, establishing this element as characteristic of Pátzcuaro's colonial aesthetics. The maps in the Pátzcuaro guide also emphasized the geographical setting, particularly its mountainous relief. Information about its historical past was succinctly written within the frame of the picturesque maps referring both to its prehispanic and colonial origin. The style and pictorial elements employed also helped constitute a particular historical narrative about these places.

Among the most characteristic elements of Pátzcuaro mentioned in the monograph were its public squares, fountains, street names, and civil and religious architecture. These elements are also represented in the *plano pintoresco* of Pátzcuaro, which records the names of important squares, streets, and buildings. The map also included a portrait of Vasco de Quiroga, a compass with the prehispanic glyph of Michoacán in the centre, and Pátzcuaro's coat of arms. These elements are linked in the sentence inside of the frame of the map about its prehispanic origin and Vasco de Quiroga's repopulation work after the conquest.

The pictorial elements included in Fernández's view of the Lake Pátzcuaro region corresponded to those of Beaumont's, even though they were updated (Figure 1.1). The transfer of the bishopric from Tzintzuntzan to Pátzcuaro (1540) was replaced in Fernandez's by a group of people walking down the road towards Pátzcuaro. Fernández also took from the *Crónica de Michoacán* the coat of arms of Tzintzuntzan and Pátzcuaro, which show their status as cities granted by royal decree in 1534 and 1553, respectively. As a pictorial element the Yacatas are also present on Fernandez map, although only the Yacatas of Ihuatzio are shown. An important difference is the point of view from where the lake is seen. In Fernández map, Lake Pátzcuaro is seen from the south, showing a high angle oblique view. Although the point of view is modified, like Beaumont, Fernández shows a comprehensive view of Lake Pátzcuaro, providing a sense of unity. The train tracks surrounding the lake also helped convey this impression, while pointing out the role of transport infrastructure in the integration of the region.



Figure 6.1. Picturesque map of Patzcuaro. Source: Justino Fernández, Patzcuaro (1936)



Figure 6.2. Lago de Patzcuaro. Source: Justino Fernández, Patzcuaro (1936)

Mónica Ramírez-Bernal (2020) relates the style employed by Fernández with the study that Toussaint, Fernández and another historian, Federico Gómez de Orozco were conducting about 16th and 17th-century maps of México City, which they called *planos pintorescos*, emphasising their pictorial qualities. The study was not, however focused on the maps *per se*, but on the planning of the city during the Colonial period. For the art historians, the history of the city represented through its maps revealed its character, which also defined its present needs. Modern urban planners should consider the city's 'spiritual needs' before beginning any urban improvement project. Ramírez-Bernal (2020) also points out the fact that the study only included maps from the Colonial period, showing the rejection by the authors of later urban policies. The study was published in conjunction with the International Congress on Planning and Housing (1938) held in México, organised by Carlos Contreras, founder and president of the National Planning Association of Mexico (1926), who coordinated México City's development plan in the 1930s, focused on the protection of the historic centre (Consentino, 2018).

This idea that historical maps revealed the character of a place was also present in his understanding about recent urban development works in Pátzcuaro. For Fernández, the new constructions and architectural renovation works were not considered significant insofar as they had not altered the image or structure of the city. Comparing the 1895 map (see above) with the map created by him, Fernández noted: 'some modifications can be observed [on the map] since an effort has been made to update it, without being many or very notable since fortunately the city has not undergone significant changes since that date' (Fernández, 1936, p. 51-52). The above quote illustrates Fernández's ideas about the study of maps considered by him as an 'unequivocal record of the morphology of a place over the years' (Ramírez-Bernal, 2020, p. 198), and the function of picturesque maps as a regulatory instrument.

It can be argued then that the creation of *planos pintorescos* of modern towns helped establish colonial aesthetics as a defining feature of those places, which had to be considered in the urban planning process, participating in the production of the typical image of the city, including its historical past. The fact that they were intended to contribute to the development of tourism in these places also indicates the regulatory function of this activity, its role in the establishment of landscape regulations.

6.3 Urban Development Works and Architectural Conservation in Pátzcuaro

During the same period, the local and Federal government developed urban improvement works in Pátzcuaro, comprising the creation of new urban facilities and the renewal of public spaces. Among the new urban facilities created within the city were a library and a theatre, located across the *Plaza Chica*, and a new museum dedicated to popular arts in the eastern section of the city close to the Basilica. While these works were related to the construction of a modern-postrevolutionary Pátzcuaro they were characterised by their focus on ‘preserving’ the typical and picturesque aspect of the town. These actions were celebrated by tourism promoters and historians alike for respecting Pátzcuaro’s character.

Urban infrastructure works were focused on improving public services and hygiene conditions, established by the 1929 decree (see above), which were meant to make it more attractive to tourism. Among the urban infrastructure actions carried out in Pátzcuaro were the construction of the municipal public market (1935), the construction of a hydroelectric power plant (1938), and the improvement of pavements and road paving. Many of these works were carried out on local initiative, by individuals or municipal authorities, with the support of the federal government.

In the case of the municipal market, work began in 1935 after the municipal government secured a loan from the *Banco Nacional Hipotecario y de Obras Públicas* (BNHUOP) through the direct intervention of President Lázaro Cárdenas. The BNHUOP was created in 1933 to finance the establishment of public services, which at that time were lacking in many towns and cities. The new market was built in the place of a block of houses near the *Plaza Chica*, considered by Fernández (1936) as Pátzcuaro second most important square. The OMCR supervised that its construction respected the character of Pátzcuaro. The market would be inaugurated on 20 March 1937.

The Pátzcuaro History Society also played an active role in the conservation of colonial architecture. One of the members of the society was the local businessman, politician and *hacendado* Luis Ortíz Lazcano, who served intermittently as municipal president (1914, 1923, 1924) and would become a member of the City of Pátzcuaro’s Conservation Board created in 1944. He would also collaborate with the government in establishing public services and

infrastructure, being responsible for the construction of a new hydroelectric plant in Pátzcuaro. Newspapers described the construction of the power plant as part of Pátzcuaro's march to progress.¹¹⁶

Pátzcuaro una vez más emprende la marcha hacia el progreso por la iniciativa y el patriotismo de sus hijos, hombres que como el señor Ortiz Lazcano, propietario de la planta de luz de Pátzcuaro, cooperan al desarrollo y al mejoramiento de su Patria Chica [...].

Pátzcuaro once again sets out on the march towards progress under the initiative and patriotism of his sons, men who, like Mr Ortiz Lazcano, owner of the Pátzcuaro power plant, cooperate in the development and improvement of his Homeland [...].

Regarding the supply of drinking water, the article emphasised its positive impact on the health of a population. The works to supply potable water to the population extended to other parts of the region, taking part of the effort to transform the indigenous population into modern subjects and to integrate them into the national whole (see Chapter 4). Paradoxically, fountains were considered a characteristic element of Pátzcuaro's architecture, part of its typical and picturesque aspect (Figure 6.3, Figure 6.4) (Fernández 1936; Toussaint 1942). Likewise, the scenes of women carrying water in clay pots were part of the imagery about indigenous Pátzcuaro promoted elsewhere as a symbol of authentic México (Figure 6.5, Figure 6.6).

The case of Pátzcuaro's municipal market is not that different. Jolly (2018), who has also studied the production of 'Pátzcuaro típico', points out that the construction of a public market was an attempt to regulate commerce in Pátzcuaro public spaces. However, as she also points out, images of Pátzcuaro's *tianguis* (open-air market) had become emblematic of the region and an icon of indigenous culture. Both Fernández and Toussaint also mentioned the *tianguis* as a distinctive element of Pátzcuaro urban landscape in their monographs.

As in the case of water supply, the construction of the municipal public market was related to the establishment of modern practices of hygiene and urban planning conventions. Despite their modernizing character and associated architectural modifications, these developments were not considered to alter the typical aspect of Pátzcuaro. While the establishment of public services and facilities

¹¹⁶ Obra de Romanos la Nueva Planta de Luz de Pátzcuaro. Heraldo Michoacano. 6th October 1938.

was considered necessary to meet its growing needs as a tourist destination, the protection of things ‘typical’ was also consistent with its new status, as México’s symbol of tradition.



Figure 6.3. Del Toro fountain in the Plaza Gertrudis Bocanegra, ca. 1930. Source: Photographic Archive of the IIH-UMSNH.



Figure 6.4. Los Guajes fountain on the walk to El Calvario, ca. 1930. Source: Photographic Archive of the IHH-UMSNH.

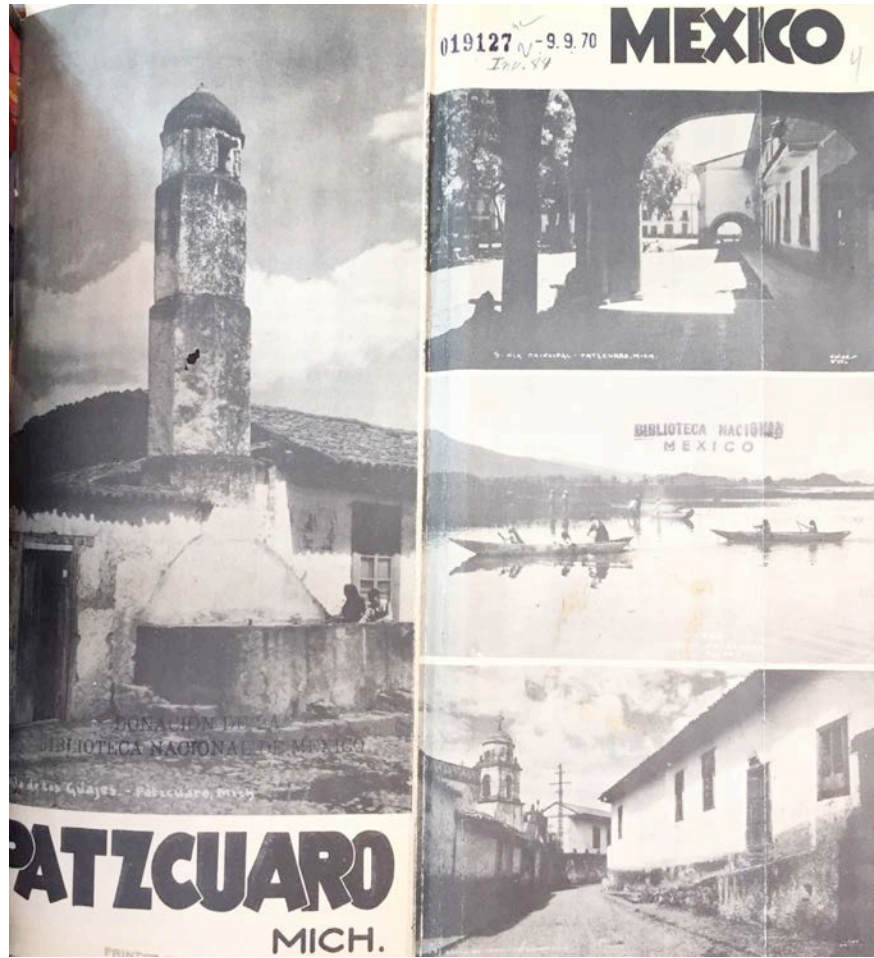


Figure 6.5. Tourist guide of Pátzcuaro, published by the Department of Tourism.



Figure 6.6. Photograph from the film of *Janitzio*. The photograph shows a woman carrying water in clay pots. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

6.4 Architectural Restoration and the Repurposing of Religious Buildings

The OMCR also carried out the restoration of religious and civil buildings across the country, including Pátzcuaro. The purpose was to return monuments to their ‘original state’, re-establishing their aesthetic and architectural character (Rámirez-Méndez and Salinas-Córdova, 2018). In the 1930s, the OMCR sent the architect Alberto Leduc to lead Pátzcuaro’s restoration works. Among the works supervised by Leduc were the restoration of the main plaza and the construction of the *Emperador Caltzontz’in* theatre and the *Gertrudis Bocanegra* library. Outside of Pátzcuaro, Leduc led the construction of two school buildings on the island of Yunuen and Janitzio.

The OMCR also worked on the restoration of the *Ex-Colegio de San Nicolas* that was repurposed as the *Museo de Artes e Industrias Populares de Pátzcuaro* (MAIPP) (1938) (Rámirez-Méndez and Salinas-Córdova, 2018). Both the *Colegio de San Nicolas* and the neighbouring *Colegio Jesuita*, stopped being administered by the Jesuits since 1767 when they were expelled from the country. In 1930, the *Ex-Colegio Jesuita* was repurposed as a public school, named after Vasco de Quiroga (see Chapter 4).

The idea of restoring Pátzcuaro’s character was of course problematic. What was Pátzcuaro’s original aesthetic and architectural character? To what point in the past should these buildings return? Not only were there many architectural forms in Pátzcuaro but most religious and civil buildings from the colonial period exhibited the superposition of different styles. Therefore, Pátzcuaro’s architectural restoration was as much a work of recuperation as it was of (re)invention.

Restoration works in Pátzcuaro began with the elimination of Porfirio Díaz era architectural elements. In 1931, Lázaro Cárdenas, who was then governor of Michoacán, ordered the dismantling of the *Apolo* theatre (1912-1932) owned by Luis Ortíz Lazcano (see above). The theatre originally built in 1912, was modified in the 1920s (Figure 6.7, Figure 6.8). The theatre, located in Plaza Chica, was dismantled as part of the works to dedicate the plaza to Gertrudis Bocanegra (Martínez Aguilar, 2012). The *Apolo* theatre, which was the only theatre in the city, would be replaced by the *Emperador Caltzontz’in* theatre in 1936 (see below).



Figure 6.7. Original salón Apolo, ca. 1912. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.



Figure 6.8. Teatro Salón Apolo, ca. 1930s. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.

Another architectural element from the Porfirio Díaz era was the main plaza bandstand (1905), which was removed in 1935 (Figure 6.9, Figure 6.10). The Porfirian era bandstand was replaced by a fountain, known as the *pila de los pescadores* (the fishermen's fountain), decorated with fish. The *pila de los pescadores* was a recreation of a fountain that existed in the plaza before Porfirio Díaz era kiosk, the fountain was rebuilt by architect Alberto Leduc and the sculptor Guillermo Ruíz

(Figure 6.11). The sculptor Guillermo Ruíz would also supervise the creation of other stone works and sculptures, the most famous being the monument to Morelos on the island of Janitzio (see below).

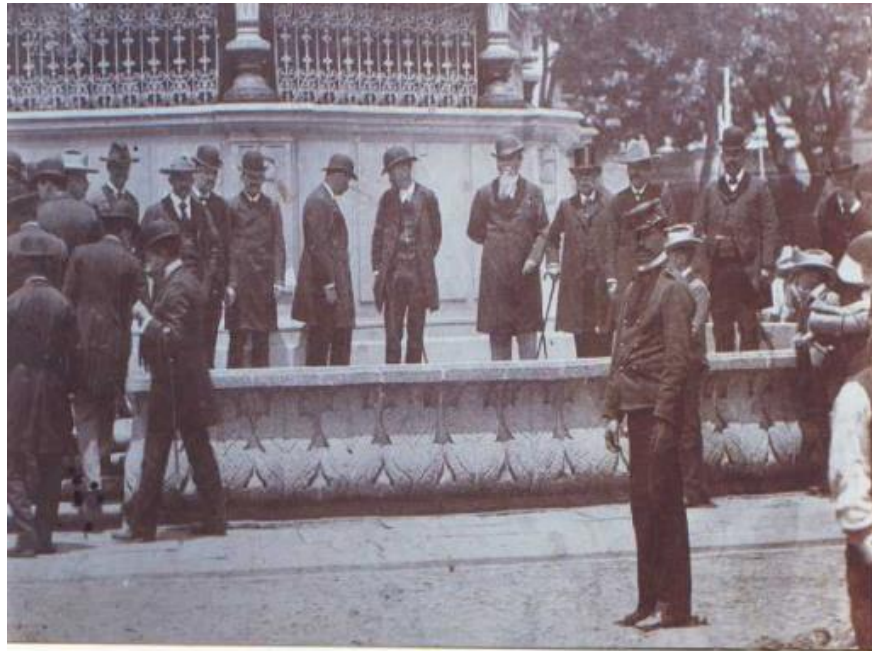


Figure 6.9. Inauguration of the main plaza kiosk, ca. 1905. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.



Figure 6.10. Tianguis in the main square, ca. 1905. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.

Rather than just expressing aesthetic preferences, architectural restoration involved a systematic process of inclusion and exclusion, where certain values were rescued, and others consigned to oblivion. Aesthetic preferences also expressed preferences in values. In the case of Porfirian architecture, what counted was its association with a certain political and social order, against which the new regime defined itself.

Thus, for Jolly (2018, p.101) the removal of the bandstand can be understood as a ‘rejection of Porfirian cosmopolitanism and a return to early nineteenth-century neoclassical and independence era values.’ Moreover, this was linked to a particular idea about the ‘national’ within architecture, linked to prehispanic and colonial-era buildings. In this sense, many architects and historians often accused Porfirian era constructions of being *extranjerismos* (foreign constructions) without connection to the nation’s past.



Figure 6.11. *Pila de los pescadores*, postcard by México Fotográfico, ca. 1935. Source: Municipal Historical Archive of Pátzcuaro.

6.4.1 A New Theatre for Pátzcuaro

In 1936, the federal government-sponsored the creation of a new theatre in Pátzcuaro. According to Martínez Aguilar (2016), the people of Pátzcuaro had a strong affection for the theatre that he traces back to 16th century evangelisation efforts so that ever since the Apolo was dismantled, they were expectant about the construction of a new theatre.

The new theatre, which was given the name of *Emperador Caltzontzin*, was built in the same area of the city as the Apolo, the Plaza Chica, occupying the site of the old Augustinian convent, originally founded in 1570-71 and reconstructed in 1782. During the 17th and 18th century the church walls were covered by numerous *retablos* (reredos), which were destroyed in 1892. As in other parts of México, in Pátzcuaro, the application of the Laws of Reform led to the confiscation of religious buildings. In 1882 the state of Michoacán handed over the convent to the municipality to establish the municipal house and prison, experiencing important transformations. Since then, the building was used for many different

purposes, from being used as a *vecindad* (housing units) to Michoacán state government offices (Figure 6.12). The building exhibited a precarious state of conservation when it was demolished to build the theatre (Figure 6.13). With the construction of the theatre, the federal government took over its control as it was classified as a national good.

Although the external aspect of the new theatre emulated the architectural style of the former building, the only element that was preserved from the original building were the arches of the corridor of the lower cloister of the convent, reused as the new building's entrance (Figure 6.14). Similar arches were built for the windows of the second floor. The convent also had a well-preserved baptismal font, which was destroyed (Martínez Aguilar, 2016). The building also incorporated other elements of local architecture, such as red tile and wooden window frames.



Figure 6.12. *San Agustín Convent Complex, ca. 1908 by Winfield Scott. The photograph illustrates the ruinous aspect of the building. Source: Fototeca Nacional, Mediateca INAH.*



Figure 6.13. *San Agustín Complex Convent, ca.1920s. The convent is the low building next to the church. Source: Colección Manuel González Galvan, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.*



Figure 6.14. *Construction of the Emperador Caltzontz'in theatre, ca. 1936. Source: IIE-UMSNH Photograph Archive.*

The new theatre was inaugurated on 1st January 1938. The theatre was managed by a local board, which in 1939 leased it to a private company. Profits were used to fund the maintenance of the local public hospital. In addition to presenting cinema and theatre functions, the *Emperador Caltzontz'in* theatre also served as a meeting space, hosting the most important event of the *indigenismo*, the First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life held in April 1940 (see Chapter 7).

The design of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre differed from the *Apolo*, not only in its external appearance but also in its internal design. The changes in the organisation and decoration of the space reflected the new social and political order. The public was not restricted to the city’s inhabitants, but it was conceived as a place that would serve the people from the whole region, as shown in the inscription on the entrance that reads: ‘This theatre was built in 1936 to contribute to the social and cultural improvement of the people from the Pátzcuaro region [...]’ (Figure 6.15).



Figure 6.15. Box office. The inscription on the relief mural provides details on its construction, above is a plaque about the celebration of the First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life in this place. Photo by the author.

The audience space eliminated boxes opting instead for an open seating plan. As for the decoration, unlike the *Apolo* that exhibited French style decorative elements, the auditorium of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre was decorated with motifs from Lake Pátzcuaro’s indigenous culture. The ceiling was decorated with one of the most famous handicrafts of the region, a large painted *batea*, while the walls were

covered with a mural of Cueva del Río (1937) whose content celebrated Lake Pátzcuaro's indigenous culture and the SEP rural education programme.

The first floor of the building was also decorated with murals. In the central part of the upper foyer, Cueva del Río painted a historically themed mural representing the encounter between Tanganxoan II and the conquistador Cristobal de Olid (Figure 6.16). Two related murals by Ricardo Barcenas on Cárdenas' Six-Year Plan (Figure 6.17) and Michoacán's regional industries (Figure 6.18) were also painted on the sidewalls of the hall.

The mural of Cueva del Río represents the encounter of the P'urhépecha ruler and the Spanish conquistador that had been used to represent the conquest of the area. Although the *Relación de Michoacán* does not record the encounter between these two characters,¹¹⁷ the mural places the event in Pátzcuaro, in a site called *El Humilladero*. The idea probably comes from Eduardo Ruíz (1891) whose description of the conquest of Michoacán, turned into local folklore, differs from that of the *Relación* (see Chapter 4). Ruíz indicates that when Tanganxoan II met Cristóbal de Olid he humiliated himself in an act of submission, hence the name of the place.¹¹⁸ Cueva del Río transformed Ruíz's scene of humiliation into a diplomatic encounter, similar to the one that appears in the *Crónica de Michoacán* (1792).¹¹⁹ This same scene is represented on the base of the monument to Tanganxoan (1938) built at Pátzcuaro's entrance (see below).

The mural of Barcenas on Cárdenas' Six-Year Plan represents the country's economic and cultural programme. Among the elements represented were public education, transport infrastructure, the modernization of the countryside, industrial development, and the oil industry. Interestingly, Pátzcuaro's new public theatre appears represented in the middle of the composition, establishing a relationship between nation-building efforts and Pátzcuaro's architectural restoration. The mural on the industries of Michoacán, located at the opposite end of the room,

¹¹⁷ The *Relación de Michoacán* (1540), which constitutes the main historical source for the study of the P'urhépecha, mentions that Cristobal de Olid asked Tanganxoan II to meet him in a place called Quangáçeo, near Charo. However, there is no further mention to the encounter between both characters in the text.

¹¹⁸ Toussaint (1942) indicates that the name comes from the fact that there is a cross in that place, corresponding to what in Spain is known as a *Humilladero*, which is defined in the Dictionary of Authorities (1734) as a place of worship that is found at the entrances and exits of the towns and on the roads with the image of Christ, the virgin, a saint or the Holy Cross. The *Capilla de Cristo del Humilladero* is in fact a place of worship located on the Camino Real (Pátzcuaro-Morelia).

¹¹⁹ The meeting between Cristóbal de Olid and Tanganxoan does appear registered in the *Crónica de Michoacán* (1792), which locates the event somewhere near Guayangareo, today Morelia.

shows the making of various regional handicrafts, placing the scene in Lake Pátzcuaro. By pairing both murals, the promotion of regional handicrafts appeared as part of the country's modernisation programme. In this way, Barcenas' paired murals also exemplified the relationship between tradition and modernity that was integral to the postrevolutionary cultural and economic programme, in which the modern was not simply the opposite of the traditional, but modern México was often defined through the traditional. The conservation of colonial architecture was also about 'preserving' the traditional only under a new logic.



Figure 6.16. 'Encuentro del Rey Tangahxuan II con el Conquistador Cristóbal de Olid en las cercanías de Pátzcuaro en el año de 1522' by Roberto Cueva del Río (1937).



Figure 6.17. Cárdenas' Six-Year plan by Ricardo Barcenas (1937).

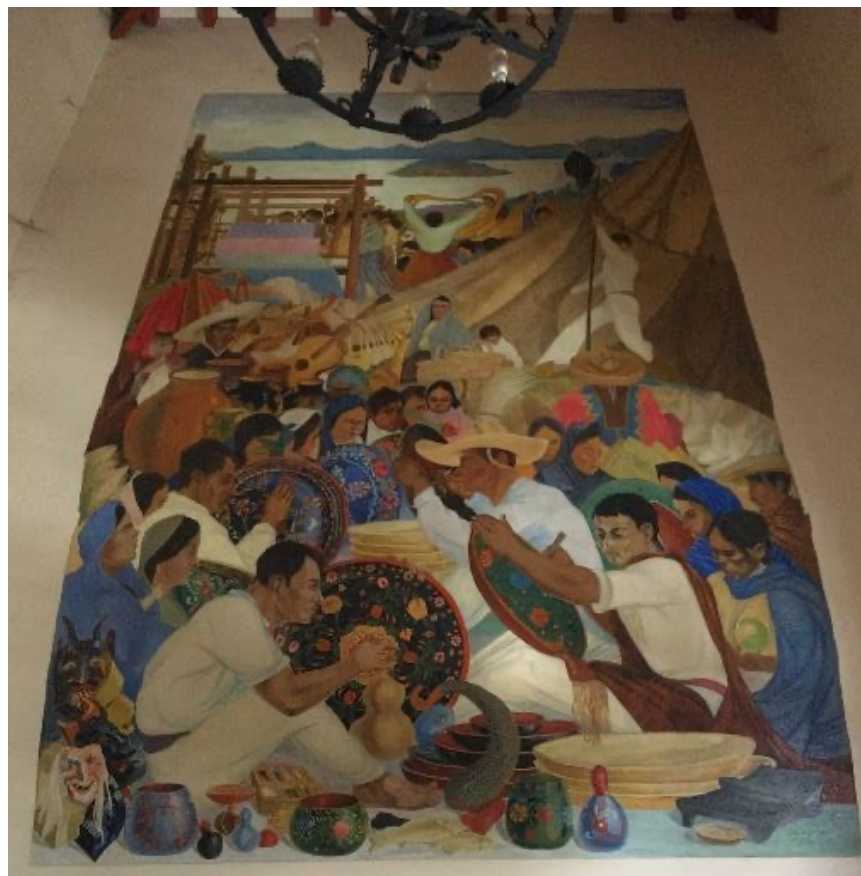


Figure 6.18. Ricardo Barcenas' mural (1937) on Michoacán regional industries.

As in the case of open-air theatres built in the lakeshore communities, the construction of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre contributed to the formation of a post-revolutionary citizen. The theatre provided an alternative assembly space for Pátzcuaro society different from the church. Although the theatre was already part of the secular leisure culture of Pátzcuaro, going to the new theatre and sitting in a space without class divisions instructed Pátzcuaro's society about post-revolutionary values. A local newspaper reported the daily attendance of a thousand people to film screenings, indicating its wide popularity.¹²⁰ Moreover, the parallelism between the theatre and Lake Pátzcuaro, established by the mural in the auditorium suggested that the space for the performance of this new citizenship went beyond the theatre, to the city and Lake Pátzcuaro region. The integration of handicrafts as a decorative element in a neocolonial style building, also contributed to reinforce the narrative of cultural *mestizaje*, represented in Cueva del Rio's mural. Nevertheless, the integration of colonial and indigenous arts was not only a defining feature of the new theatre, but of Pátzcuaro's regional aesthetics.

6.5 Lake Pátzcuaro Historical Reinvention and the Aestheticization of History

As mentioned above, the church next to the new theatre was also repurposed as a library. Unlike the theatre whose construction involved the destruction of the original building and its reconstruction in a similar architectural style, the church building did not undergo major physical transformations, preserving the façade. In the interior, all the religious elements were removed, including the altarpiece and other artworks. Regarding the building's decoration, it is interesting that while the decorative painting of the walls was covered, the plasterwork in the porch with the symbols of the Augustinian order was kept.¹²¹ The wall chandeliers were also preserved as part of the decorative elements. The bookshelves were placed next to the altar area and the reading desks distributed throughout the nave. The decoration of the library would be completed a few years later with the creation of the O'Gorman mural *La Historia de Michoacán* (1941-1942)

The library opened its doors in 1938 with the name of Gertrudis Bocanegra. The works to dedicate the Plaza Chica to the local heroine Gertrudis Bocanegra

¹²⁰ 'Teatro Emperador Caltzontzin'. Periódico Quincenal VIDA. 1st July 1938.

¹²¹ The original painting of the walls was uncovered in the recent restoration (2018) of the building carried out by CREFAL.

concluded in 1938 with the erection of a statue in her honour (Figure 6.19). In the same year, the Michoacán historian Jesus Romero Flores, who was the director of the History Department of the *Museo Nacional* published a biographical essay about her life (Figure 6.20). The book cover shows her execution, a scene that is also reproduced on the pedestal of the statue.

Gertrudis Bocanegra de Lazo de la Vega was born in Pátzcuaro around 1770 to a Spanish family. Romero Flores (1938) portrays her as a rebellious woman in a context in which what was expected from a woman was submission and passivity. Various episodes of her life are cited to demonstrate her revolutionary character and strong patriotism. Her patriotism and sacrifice, however, are associated with her status as a woman and more specifically as a mother, who did not mind giving her life for the greater good. The statue created by Guillermo Ruiz also emphasized these attributes, in which she is shown with a resolute and rebellious attitude, with her hair loose, moving forward decisively as she offers her breast, a metaphor of the life she generously gave for the new nation. So, while the way Gertrudis Bocanegra was portrayed by both Romero Flores and Ruiz challenged conservative representations of women, they remained traditional in other aspects.



Figure 6.19. Monument to Gertrudis Bocanegra, postcard by the company MF, ca. 1938. Source: IIH, UMSNH Photograph Archive.

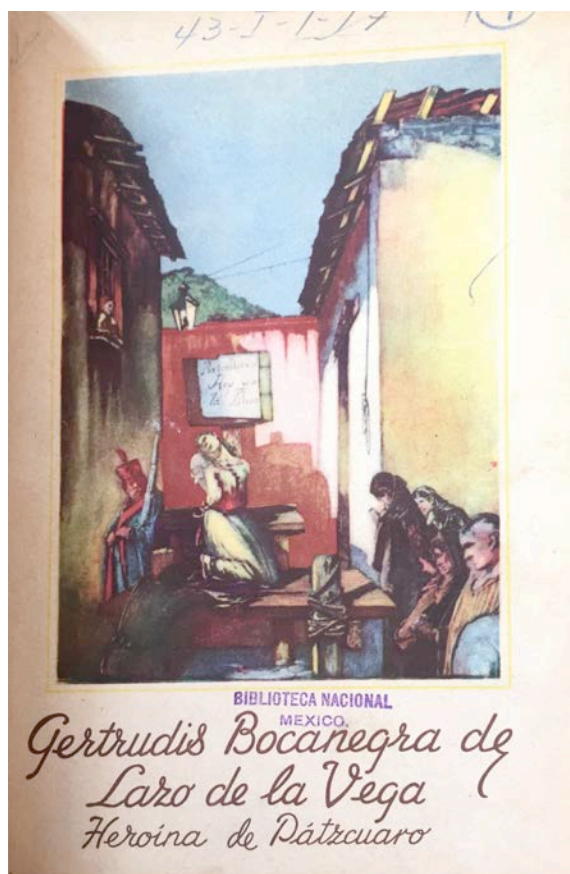


Figure 6.20. Book cover of Gertrudis Bocanegra's biography (1938).

The memorialisation of the figure of Gertrudis can be seen as part of a broader process of recovering women's participation in history, which in turn was meant to provide a role model for contemporary women. Not unlike Erendira, the figure of Gertrudis Bocanegra was promoted as the ideal of Mexican womanhood, in the service of the revolutionary cause (see Chapter 4). Their example was intended to encourage women to get involved in new community spaces and institutions. Following the example of women in history, contemporary women would participate in political activities, form cooperatives, care for the school community, and join anti-alcohol and anti-clerical clubs.

Gertrudis Bocanegra was not the only independence era woman memorialised in the region, in the agrarista town of Erongaricuaró another statue to a local independence heroine, María Luisa Martínez, was erected (Figure 6.21). The statue was placed in the open-air *atrio* or great patio of the Franciscan convent church,¹²² occupied since the 1920s by the normal rural school. Throughout the

¹²² The *atrio* is an architectural element of Colonial religious architecture in Mexico, reminiscent of prehispanic *teocallis* or temples. Manuel Aguilar-Moreno (2013) defines the atrio as a 'space of great

region, many religious spaces were reused for civic purposes. In the case of *atrios*, they were transformed into public squares or sports courts (see above). Monuments to national heroes were often built there to prevent them from returning to their previous function. For instance, in the community of Tsensenguaro, the busts of Zapata and Madero were placed in the former *atrio*, which was transformed into a garden, a sports field and an open-air theatre. The construction of the statue of María Luisa Martínez in the *atrio* of the church of Erongaricuaró may also have had this purpose. However, today, the statue is no longer in the church *atrio*, but in the town's central plaza where civic activities take place.



Figure 6.21. Bust of María Luisa Martínez in Erongaricuaró. Current (left) and previous location (right). Photograph by the author.

The construction of monuments to local figures also aimed to highlight local participation in national struggles, encouraging people to participate in nation-building efforts. Likewise, Pátzcuaro's prehispanic past was relabelled as Mexican. The monument to Tanganxoan II (1938) paid homage to two P'urhépecha rulers, Tariacuri, considered the founder of the Tarascan state, and Tanganxoan II or Tzintzincha, the last P'urhépecha ruler (Figure 6.22). Like other monuments and murals on Michoacán's prehispanic past, the Tanganxoan II monument was based on Eduardo Ruíz (1891), whose nationalist interpretation of P'urhépecha history coincided with the need to articulate a national history.

dimensions, usually square in shape and bounded by strong walls topped with merlons or other battlements.'



Figure 6.22. Monument to Tanganxoan at the entrance of Pátzcuaro. Photograph by the author.

The base of Tanganxoan monument incorporated reliefs about the lives of both rulers. The relief on the central face of the base shows the lineage of the ruling dynasty while the other three deal with Tariacuari and Tanganxoan II. The relief about Tariacuari shows the moment in which he appointed his nephews and son as lords of Tzintzuntzan, Ihuatzio (Coyuca) and Pátzcuaro (Figure 6.23). The colours that Eduardo Ruíz ascribed to each part of the kingdom corresponded to the colours of the Mexican flag, assimilating national symbols into local history.



Figure 6.23. Metal relief on the base of the statue to Tanganxoan II. Photograph by the author.

The reliefs of Tanganxoan II show the encounter between Tanganxoan II and Cristobal de Olid in the outskirts of Pátzcuaro in 1522 (see above) and the murder of Tanganxoan II by the conqueror and president of the First Audience, Nuño de Guzman in 1530 (Figure 6.24). Despite being based on Eduardo Ruíz (1891) the scenes differ from this in their tone. In this rendition of the events, the actions of Tanganxoan II lack the shameful character that Eduardo Ruíz attributes to them. He is depicted as a martyr, undergoing constant suffering for defending his people, likening his figure to Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec ruler. The blurring of events and figures helped frame regional history as national. Along with Erendira and Gertrudis Bocanegra, Tanganxoan became part of the regional pantheon of national heroes, who represented the defence of the homeland. Transformed into a national hero, the glory of the region's indigenous past was restored, becoming a treasured past.



Figure 6.24. Reliefs about Tanganxoan. Photograph by the author.

The figure of Gertrudis Bocanegra was also present in the inauguration of Tanganxoan statue. According to a newspaper note, the inauguration programme included the singing of a hymn to Gertrudis Bocanegra and the *Corrido de la Colecta*, a song about people's cooperation in the recent oil expropriation.¹²³ For the author of the note, the schoolteacher Hilario Reyes, the programme did not make sense since none of the acts had any connection with P'urhépecha history. Reyes also found it astonishing that the statue would be dedicated to Tanganxoan II, to whom local tradition did not reserve an honourable place. So that, not only was his interpretation of the events of the conquest different, but he did not see the similarities between the characters' actions or the connection between the prehispanic past and the region's modern history. This new meaning and direction given to the region's past were made clear in O'Gorman's mural *La Historia de Michoacán*, discussed below.

6.5.1 La Historia de Michoacán

As the title indicates the mural tells the history of Michoacán, from its mythical origin to the Mexican Revolution.¹²⁴ The mural is 14 m high and 12.70 m wide, occupying the back wall of the nave. The content is organised into four main

¹²³ El monumento a Tanganxhuan. Periódico Quincenal VIDA. 1st July 1938.

¹²⁴ For a detailed view of the mural see: <https://Pátzcuaro.pagesperso-orange.fr/mx/03/mx/03cubg04.htm>. The interpretation of the content is based on the guide to the mural written by the director of the library in 1945, which continues to be the authoritative guide to the mural. See also: [youtube.com/watch?v=4j79zVo5f_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j79zVo5f_o)

sections, comprising 1) the mythical origin of the physical landscape and the P'urhépecha people, 2) Michoacán prehispanic past, 3) the Spanish conquest and, 4) the 1810 Independence and the 1910 Revolution. It reads from right to left and top to bottom (Figure 6.25, Figure 6.26). One of the distinctive features of the O'Gorman mural is the multiple signs included that expand the information of the events portrayed, often using a satiric tone (Figure 6.27). The organisation of the content reveals something of a Marxist understanding of history. From the beginning, the content of the mural is structured in opposite pairs, whose contradictions make a history of Michoacán's progress towards the emancipation of the oppressed class.



Figure 6.25. O'Gorman's mural in the Gertrudis Bocanegra Library, Pátzcuaro, ca. 1940s. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.



Figure 6.26. View of O’Gorman mural from the library’s reception. Photograph by the author.

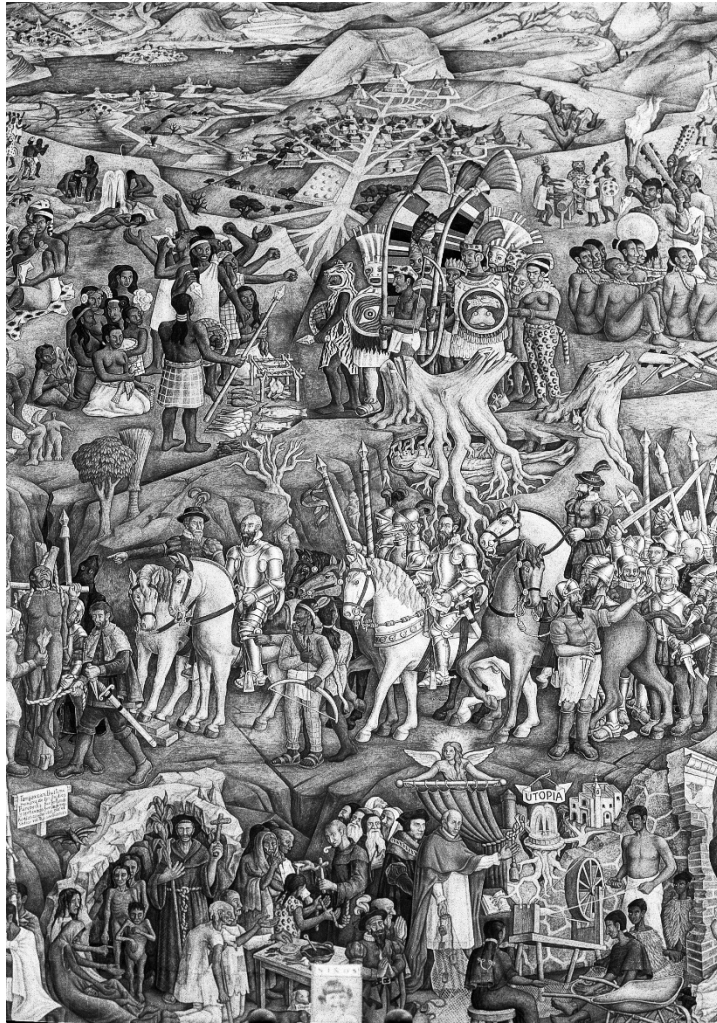


Figure 6.27. Close up photograph of the central part of O’Gorman mural, ca. 1940s. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

The upper part of the mural tells the myth of the formation of Michoacán’s lakes, according to which the lakes of Pátzcuaro and Zirahuen emerged from a waterspout after a volcanic eruption.

The mural continues telling the history of the P’urhépecha, from the arrival of the *chichimeca* tribe to the establishment of the P’urhépecha state (see section 4.1.1). The next section of the mural is structured in two parts, the right side shows the military campaigns of the P’urhépecha against the Aztecs, while the left side shows the rites and customs of the P’urhépecha.

The second part deals with the history of the region after the Spanish conquest. A tree with broken branches divides the mural into two parts, presenting the event as a moment of historical rupture. The events represented consist of the arrival of Nuño de Guzman and his army, the burning of indigenous documents and codices after the fall of México-Tenochtitlan, the indigenous resistance represented by Erendira, and the brutal death of the last P’urhépecha ruler.

The following scenes illustrate the missionary work of the Franciscan friars in Michoacan, as well as the *encomienda* system, contrasting the actions of one and the other. The scene on the right shows the arrival of Vasco de Quiroga and his work in the region (Figure 6.28). The sign that accompanies Quiroga says: ‘yes, sometimes the lion is as they paint it’, which probably means that for O’Gorman, Quiroga’s reputation coincided with his true character. O’Gorman’s mural also reveals that if most *indigenistas* identified with Quiroga, was because of their teleological vision of history, which determined the meaning of Quiroga’s actions (see Chapter 7).

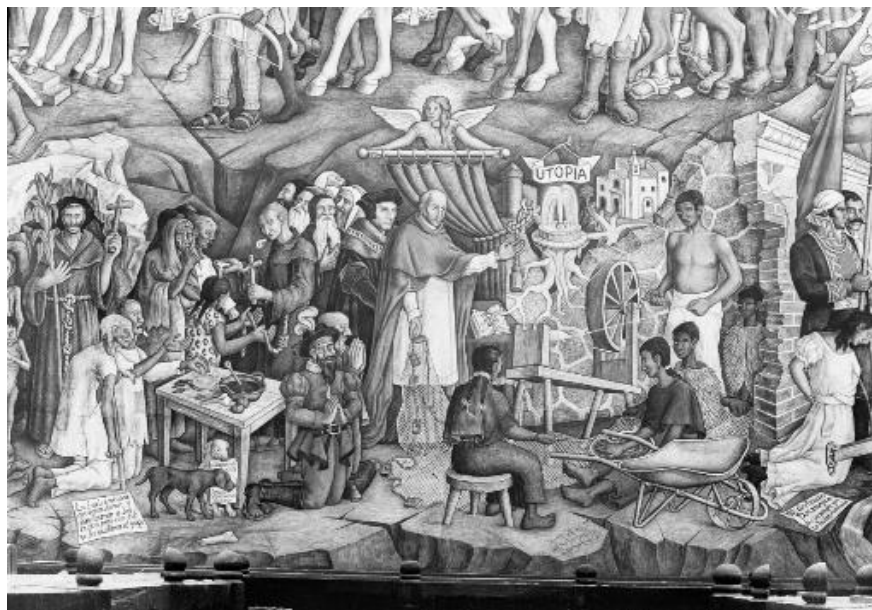


Figure 6.28. Scenes from O’Gorman mural on the work of the Franciscan Friars and Vasco de Quiroga, ca. 1940s. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

The mural concludes with the depiction of Mexican Independence (1810) and the Mexican Revolution (1910), represented by the figures of Emiliano Zapata, Gertrudis Bocanegra and Morelos, holding signs allusive to their role in the revolutionary movements. In the mural, their actions acquire greater importance since they appear as the consequence of a long-term historical process, whose final purpose is the emancipation of the oppressed.

O’Gorman also represented himself in the mural. He appears next to his wife, near the left corner, holding a sign, whose content makes explicit the reason of the mural, as a tribute to the indigenous population. There, O’Gorman also presents indigenous arts and culture as a form of resistance. The sign states:

Han pasado los años, los siglos y los indios no están vencidos a pesar de la conquista que acabo con lo mejor de su población. No los ha abatido la

explotación, la miseria y las enfermedades. No han muerto de hambre. Han resistido el trabajo en las minas, carreteras y ferrocarriles. Han labrado la tierra con sus manos para darnos de comer. Les robaron sus tesoros vieron caer sus templos. Cargaron piedras sobre sus espaldas adoloridos para construir iglesias. Pero su resistencia es una fuerza latente, que algún día, ya libre de las cadenas de la opresión, producirá un arte y una cultura extraordinarias, como un gigantesco volcán en erupción.

Years, centuries have passed, and the Indians are not defeated, despite the conquest that ended with the best of their population. Exploitation, misery, and disease have not brought them down. They have not starved. They have resisted working in the mines, highways, and railways. They have tilled the ground with their hands to feed us. Their treasures were stolen, they saw their temples fall. They carried stones on their aching backs to build churches. But their resistance is a latent force, which someday, already free from the chains of oppression, will produce extraordinary art and culture, like a gigantic erupting volcano.

The creation of the O’Gorman mural can also be understood as a reflection of the development of historical research on Michoacan during the second half of the 1930s, when several federal research institutions focused their work on Michoacán. The publication in 1941 of the *Historia de Michoacan* by Jesús Romero Flores reflected this accumulated knowledge. O’Gorman’s mural contributed to the work of disseminating the historical knowledge generated. Unlike other murals and public monuments which referred to specific events or characters, O’Gorman’s presented a total view of Michoacán past, thus providing an interpretive framework to the town’s historical monuments.

Notably, in 1945, the director of the library, Juan E. Noguez Becerril, wrote the first guide to the mural to help the public interpret the work, being the only mural in Pátzcuaro for which a guide was developed, perhaps due to the complexity of its content. This raises a question about the readability of murals, whose content was supposed to be accessible to the public. In general, most of the murals and public monuments represented elements of the local history and culture with which people were familiar. So, it may be argued that it was not that they could not identify the events or characters represented, but that the people were not familiar with the new order and meaning that was given to the region’s past (see above). Moreover, it signals that while O’Gorman’s mural represented a particular rendering of the region’s past, the content was not unequivocal. So that in a way, the guide was also an attempt to establish control over its meaning.

Patriotic festivals also played an important role in shaping peoples view about their past, as events where national revolutionary values and history were performed. In Michoacán, the Revolution Day (20 November) and Morelos Day

(30 September) joined the Independence Day as the most important civic celebrations. On these occasions, people from different sectors of society would dress in traditional clothes. Schoolchildren would also dress as national heroes, performing historical plays and parades (see Chapter 4). The public squares and streets of Lake Pátzcuaro's towns thus became the extended theatre for the performance of national identities.

6.5.2 Secular-historical Aesthetics

Unlike other murals created around the region, O'Gorman's was not commissioned by the state. The sponsorship of the project came from the American Jewish philanthropist and businessman Edgar J. Kauffman in compensation for the cancelling of a mural that O'Gorman was going to paint for the building of the Young Men and Women's Hebrew Association in Pittsburgh, where he was president. Both the place and content of the mural were entirely left to O'Gorman. O'Gorman's selection of the *Gertrudis Bocanegra* library may have been influenced by the significance of this place as the meeting place of the indigenous delegates of the First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life, celebrated a year earlier, framing present-day indigenous political participation and *indigenistas'* actions in a historical perspective (see Chapter 7).

The mural was approved by the Minister of Education, Dr Enrique Arreguin, and had the support of Lázaro Cárdenas.¹²⁵ In his autobiography, O'Gorman (2007) narrates that the creation of the mural was seen as a way of preventing the building from returning to its previous use (O'Gorman, 2007). Unlike the San Agustín convent that had been in disuse since the middle of the last century, the church was still active in the 1930s. In 1941, the director of the library sent a communication to the inhabitants of Pátzcuaro and surrounding towns about the library opening times and services inviting the residents to visit it.¹²⁶ While the lack of visitors may have had many causes, it may also have expressed people's rejection of the closing of the church and perhaps the hope that it would return to

¹²⁵ Due to his moral authority, after his presidency Cárdenas would continue to be consulted on the region's affairs, particularly in those involving the projects initiated by him.

¹²⁶ Notice about the library opening times and the services offered. January 1941. Presidencia, Municipal Historical Archive of Quiroga.

religious service again. In fact, it was not uncommon for religious buildings turned into civic spaces to return to their original use.¹²⁷

The creation of O’Gorman’s mural was thus seen as the final move towards the irreversible change of the building into a secular space. What this reveals is that the act of painting a mural was a (trans) formative act, capable of affecting the ‘atmosphere’ of a place and peoples’ relationship with it. In this context, it is worth noting that the mural was placed on the back wall of the nave, where the *retablo* (reredos), the most important decorative element of the church, used to be. The baroque decoration of the *retablo* was replaced by an equally elaborated ‘decoration’. Interestingly, O’Gorman would incorporate the word *retablo* to the title of two of his historical themed murals, the *Retablo de la Independencia* (1960-61) and *Retablo de la Revolución (sufragio efectivo, no reelección)* (1967-68) located in the Museo Nacional de Historia. Like the mural in the *Gertrudis Bocanegra* library, both murals are characterized by their complexity and richness of detail, which seem to produce an excess of meaning, mediating affectively people’s reception of their message. What this points out is that the affective qualities of the mural were as important as its content in shaping people’s view about their past.

I also want to argue that O’Gorman’s mural helped transform the character of the space in which it was located, from a religious to a secular space. According to Davor Džalto (2019) the aesthetic environment of religious buildings mediates people’s experience of the sacred, inspiring religious devotion. Following Džalto (2019) one may well argue that the mural influenced how people felt and experienced this place. O’Gorman’s mural not only occupied the place of the *retablo* but also substituted an aesthetic-religious experience by a secular-aesthetic-experience. Not unlike the church, the library also demanded from the visitor a particular behaviour, creating an atmosphere of silence conducive to study, reflection, and aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetics thus played a significant role in shaping the character of the building from a religious place to a ‘temple’ of knowledge. Standing in front of the mural, the library visitors would also be induced to meditate only the object now would not be religion but history. Overall, practices of architectural conservation, the construction of monuments and murals helped

¹²⁷ See, for example, the case of the temple of the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús in Jiquilpan, Michoacán, which returned to religious service in 1945. Currently the altarpiece covers a mural painted by Roberto Cueva del Río.

constitute a historically inflected landscape that reinforced nationalist narratives. In this sense, people's everyday encounters with the landscape shaped their understanding of the past.

6.6 Maintaining Pátzcuaro's Colonial Aesthetics: Architecture and Tourism.

Works of urban improvement were also carried out in the area near the railway station, to the north of the town. People coming by train or car entered Pátzcuaro from this side. People from the islands or lakeside towns who used boats as a means of transportation also entered Pátzcuaro from this part of the city. Among the urban infrastructure actions carried out were the remodelling of the jetties, the construction of a promenade, the installation of public lighting, the paving of the road leading to the train station and the planting of trees along the road.¹²⁸ These works were intended to improve the image of the city to promote tourism.

Works in this area were carried out in 1936 by the company *Ferrocarriles Nacionales Mexicanos*, which was also commissioned works in Morelia and Uruapan. Works in Pátzcuaro were characterised by incorporating historical-style decorative elements, such as colonial streetlamps elevated over quarry columns of regional manufacturing and cobblestone paving. They were expected to be completed before the celebration of the Morelia's Regional Exhibition, which was going to be held in May of the same year. The president of the railway company trusted that in the context of the fair, the works of urban improvement and beautification would attract tourism to Pátzcuaro.¹²⁹ The recognition made by the municipal president of Pátzcuaro to the company *Ferrocarriles Nacionales* also emphasized the benefits that such works would bring to tourism.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ List of works carried out in Pátzcuaro by the company *Ferrocarriles Nacionales Mexicanos*. April 6, 1936. AGN, LC-AP, Box 625, Folder 514.6/19.

¹²⁹ Letter from Engineer Antonio Madrazo, president of the railway company, to the Private Secretary of President Lázaro Cárdenas. 6 April 1936. AGN, LC-AP, Box 625, Folder 514.6/19.

¹³⁰ Telegram from the municipal president, Pedro S. Talavera, to President Lázaro Cárdenas. 4 September 1939. AGN, LC-AP, Box 625, Folder 514.6/19.



Figure 6.29. Photographs of the works carried out in the proximities of the lake by Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México. Source: Letter from Engineer Antonio Madrazo to the Private Secretary of President Lázaro Cárdenas, January 1936. AGN-AP, Box 625, Folder 514. 63/19

Jetties were also built in the lakeside towns both for the benefit of the local populations and tourism (Figure 6.29). Likewise, viewpoints were built and remodelled in Pátzcuaro and other lakeside towns. A tourist resort for government workers was created in Chupicuaro, north of the lake, near the town of Quiroga (see Figure 1.3). The creation of recreational facilities for workers sought to promote domestic tourism in the country. This was made possible by new labour laws that guaranteed the availability of leisure time and disposable income. Unions also played an important role in the development of domestic tourism by encouraging workers to travel, improving their benefits, and creating special facilities for them. The resort in Chupicuaro was originally built in 1932, when Cárdenas was governor of the state.¹³¹ The photographs of Chupicuaro taken by the construction manager of the *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México* (1935-1938), Ignacio Avilés, show its facilities and the tourist infrastructure of Pátzcuaro available at that time (Figure 6.30, Figure 6.31).

¹³¹ BMNAH. Archivo del Gral. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río. Memorias del General Lázaro Cárdenas: Informes como gobernador constitucional del estado de Michoacán, 1928-1932.

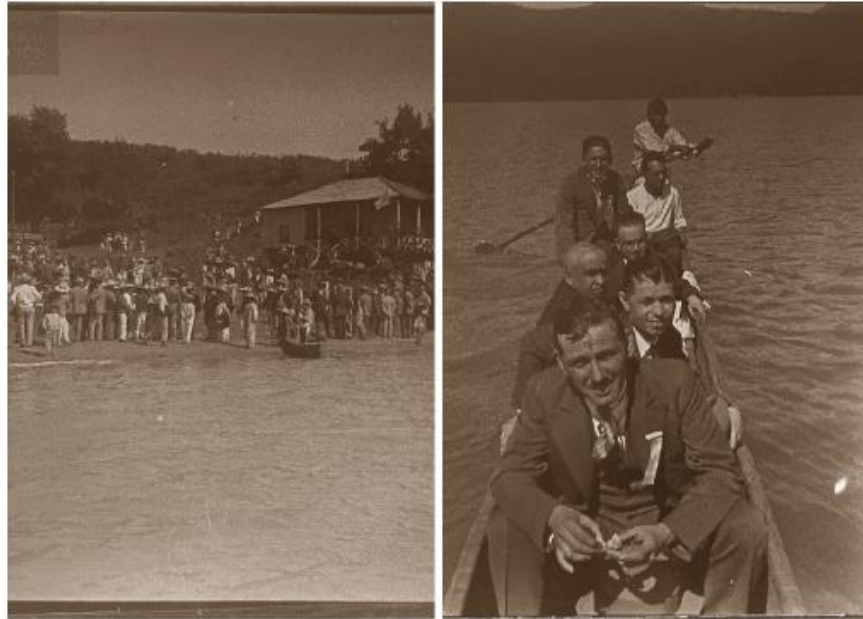


Figure 6.30. The photograph on the right shows Ignacio Áviles and others being transported to Chupicuaro. The photograph on the left shows a group of government officials being welcomed by the local population. Source: Ignacio Áviles, AGN Photograph Archive.



Figure 6.31. The photographs show the recently renewed jetty in Pátzcuaro. Source: Ignacio Áviles, AGN Photograph Archive.

Domestic tourism was also facilitated by the improvement of transport infrastructure, the expansion of the rail network and the road system. In this sense, the construction of the México-Laredo highway, which was part of the Pan-American highway, increased national and foreign tourism to the region (see Chapter 7). The government sought local collaboration in the development of tourism in the towns where the road passed, instructing the creation of local Pro-tourism committees. Pátzcuaro Pro-tourism Committee was established in November 1938, after the visit of the head of the Tourism Department, Abraham Mejía. The committee was made up of hotel owners, bus company owners, and lake transport service providers, allowing the articulation of local interests with those of the federal government. Among its functions was supervising the behaviour of tourism service providers, as well as contributing to the beautification of the city and the construction of tourist facilities.¹³²

Despite the status of Pátzcuaro as a tourist retreat since the 19th century, in towns other than Pátzcuaro, visitors often faced local hostility (Martínez Aguilar, 2017). In 1934, on the eve of holidays for government employees, the federal government sent a series of recommendations on how to treat tourists to the municipalities with tourist potential. The municipal authorities of the Lake Pátzcuaro region were advised to follow these guidelines.¹³³ Rural teachers were also asked to cooperate in promoting tourism in their localities by changing people's attitudes toward visitors. The magazine *Maestro Rural* (1935) dedicated various articles to the topic, giving suggestions on how to transform their towns into tourist destinations by stimulating in the population feelings of pride for their natural and cultural heritage.¹³⁴ Students also became familiar with the concept of travelling for pleasure by practising travelling, as they were taken on trips to neighbouring towns.¹³⁵ Likewise, teachers were asked to inform the population about the tourist attractions of their locality and train the students to act as tourist guides, showing 'the most picturesque places without altering their primitive style'¹³⁶, involving the

¹³² Quedó constituido el Comité Pro-turismo en la ciudad de Pátzcuaro. *El Heraldó Michoacano*. 10th November 1938.

¹³³ Municipal Historical Archive of Tzintzuntzan. 8 September 1934. Recomendaciones que hace el Departamento de Turismo de la Secretaría de Economía Nacional a las autoridades municipales del estado de Michoacán y comités pro-turismo, así como agentes honorarios del mismo estado.

¹³⁴ *El Maestro Rural*. 7 (1).

¹³⁵ General report of activities of the school for girls Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez. 26th October 1934. Municipal Historical Archive of Quiroga.

¹³⁶ Pérez Taylor, R. 1935. Cómo deben aprovechar el turismo los maestros rurales. *El Maestro Rural*, 7 (1), p.4-7.

local population in maintaining the character of their towns. In this way the development of tourism also involved shaping the locals' view of their towns as they learned to see them through the lenses of tourism.

Tourism magazines, promotional advertising and guidebooks also shaped tourists' perception of the places visited. Pátzcuaro was marketed as one of the most picturesque and interesting towns. One guidebook compared Pátzcuaro with an artist studio, 'Pátzcuaro, like Tasco [Taxco], seems to be a large studio for painters and poets, where each portal, each plaza, each corner and each street-scene invites the brushes of the artist or the retina of the photographic camera'.¹³⁷ The modern tourist would travel to Pátzcuaro and visit religious buildings looking for an aesthetic experience instead of a religious one. This was particularly significant for Pátzcuaro, given its status as a pilgrimage destination and the central role of religion in popular identity (see Chapter 4). People would now travel long distances on a secular pilgrimage to see Pátzcuaro's cultural heritage and architecture.

Although tourism was seen as an activity of economic importance that could contribute to creating better citizens and improve México's image internationally, its development also raised concerns about the loss of authenticity in towns that had become tourist destinations. Paradoxically, these concerns came from people involved in the tourism sector. The magazine *MAPA* was very active in promoting the conservation of architectural heritage, campaigning for the creation of stricter laws for its protection (see section 3.1.1, Figure 3.3). They saw with concern the appearance of alien style constructions in colonial towns, as well as the construction of modern urban facilities without consideration of the local architecture.

The tourism magazine *MAPA* employed the terms *Turistificación* and *Tijuanización* to denominate this process.¹³⁸ The first term referred to the alterations in the typical appearance of a city because of trying to meet tourists' demands. The second referred to the propagation of U.S. architectural styles or Hollywood-like versions of Mexican architecture in the construction of vacation houses, due to cinema and television, as well as to the propagation of advertisements in English and modern urban infrastructure, common in border cities such as Tijuana. Such constructions were seen as an attack on nationality and tradition, attributed to a

¹³⁷ Pátzcuaro. Departamento de Turismo.

¹³⁸ La tijuanización de Cuernavaca. *MAPA*. Vol.3, n.31, October 1936.

lack of culture from their perpetrators. One of the cities affected by this process was the city of Cuernavaca, a favourite escape for the people of the capital. The magazine considered that neither the Porfiriato's French-style buildings nor the 'Zapatista revolution' had altered the aesthetic truth of the city as much as the new constructions were doing.

Street advertising was also seen as an attack on the aesthetics of a place, not only because they damaged heritage buildings and 'uglified' the landscape, but also because they were importations. In other words, judgments of beauty depended upon the fact that they were imported elements. A Michoacán newspaper criticised the lack of regulations on-street advertising that was damaging the landscape, affecting urban and rural areas alike.¹³⁹ The writer attributed this situation to the spread of a consumerist mentality under the influence of the United States. One of the many articles that the magazine *MAPA* published about Pátzcuaro regretted that the walls were covered with political propaganda. The name of a fabric store, *El Puerto de Beyrouth* (The Port of Beirut), located nearby was also seen as very unfortunate, as it had nothing to do with the 'Mexican character' of Pátzcuaro.¹⁴⁰

Tourism promoters believed that, contrary to what was happening, tourist destinations needed to preserve their typical aspect and local traditions to ensure the future viability of tourism as an economic activity. To fulfil this objective, historical centres needed to be protected and new constructions regulated. They also called 'cultured' people to create local societies to look after the protection of architectural heritage. The protection of architectural heritage thus involved regulating people's conduct concerning architecture and the built landscape. Conceived as a type of truth, the protection of colonial architecture was as much about ethics as it was about aesthetics.

6.7 Architectures of Tradition and Modernity: Pátzcuaro's Neocolonial Architecture

The area near the Pátzcuaro railway station also had a concentration of the new neocolonial constructions, most of them were second homes of government officials. The most known was the *Quinta Erendira*, owned by Cárdenas (Figure 6.32). Equally prominent was the *Quinta Tzipeca*, in the neighbouring town of

¹³⁹ Cuando la propaganda ensucia hasta el paisaje. *El Heraldo Michoacano*. 29 October 1939.

¹⁴⁰ Pátzcuaro. *MAPA*. Vol.1, n.1, April 1934.

Huecorio, owned by former revolutionary and member of Cárdenas cabinet, General Francisco Mujica (Figure 6.33). Both properties were widely circulated in photographs and postcards of the region during the 1930s.



Figure 6.32. *La Quinta Eréndira (original building)*, ca. 1928. Source: IIFH-UMSNH Photograph Archive.

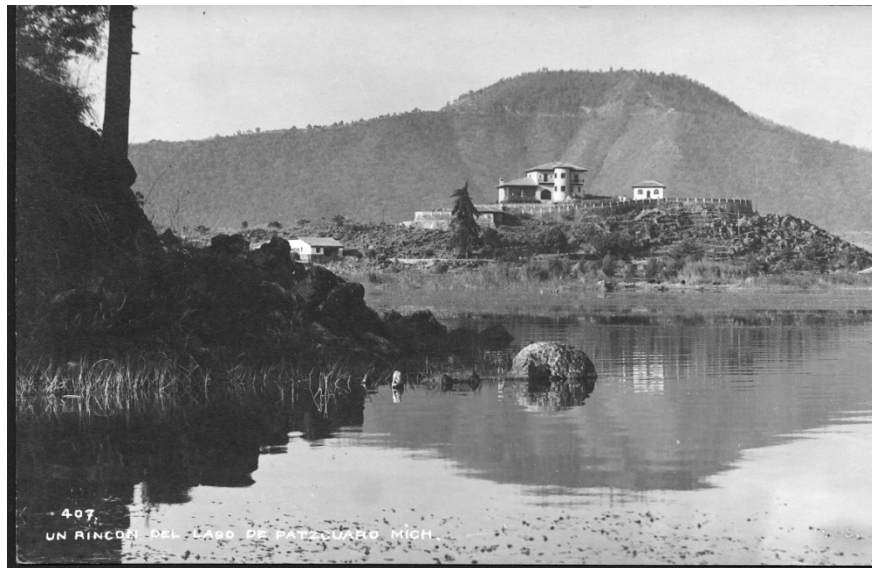


Figure 6.33. *La Quinta Tzipeca*, the Estribo hill is shown in the background, ca. 1930. Source: IIFH-UMSNH Photograph Archive.

Martinez Aguilar (2016) reports other less known *Quintas*, including the *Quinta San Ángel*, *El Fresno* and *Calimaya*. Another of the *Quintas* mentioned was the one owned by Coronel Carlos Moya González, commander of the 22nd regiment, which, along with the *Zapateros* battalion were deployed in civil works in Pátzcuaro, comprising the construction of the monument to Morelos in Janitzio and reforestation works. Lastly, the *Quinta Los Tres Reyes* was owned by Efraín Buenrostro de Ochoa, who was also a member of Cárdenas cabinet.

The Quinta Erendira was originally constructed in 1928-29 as Cárdenas' house when he was governor of Michoacán. In 1930, the building was adapted to house a public library, comprising the creation of a series of historical-themed murals by Fermin Revueltas representing the origins of the P'urhepecha state, the encounter between Tanganxoan II and Cristobal de Olid and the story of Erendira. During Cárdenas' presidency, the *Quinta Erendira* returned to its residential function and eventually became the headquarter of Latin America's first training centre for rural educators, the CREFAL, created in 1950 by UNESCO in cooperation with the Mexican government. Similarly, today the *Quinta Tzipecua* houses the *Universidad Intercultural Indígena de Michoacán* (Intercultural Indigenous University of Michoacán).

Unlike the other *Quintas*, the *Quinta Erendira* was not originally constructed in a neocolonial style, but it was later remodelled by architect Leduc in the late 1930s being part of Pátzcuaro 'larger stylistic and historical reinvention' (Jolly, 2018) (Figure 6.34). The remodelling of the house also involved the removal of Fermin Revueltas' murals and the creation of new murals by Cueva del Río with a similar content, which occupied the dining room (Figure 6.35). In addition to the murals about P'urhepecha history, Cueva del Río included two murals about Morelos and Quiroga, depicted as leaders (Figure 6.36). On another wall, he represented the Lienzo de Jucutacato, reflecting current themes in historical research (Figure 6.37). Cueva del Río also gave the rest of the murals the appearance of old historical documents.



Figure 6.34. Counterfacade of the Quinta Erendira, the photo shows the addition of colonial-style decorative elements. Photograph by the author.



Figure 6.35. Cueva del Río's mural on the execution of Tangaxuan II in the Quinta Erendira. Photograph by Jimena Paz.



Figure 6.36. Cueva del Río's murals about the figures of Vasco de Quiroga and Morelos in the Quinta Erendira. Photographs by Jimena Paz.



Figure 6.37. Fragment of the mural Lienzo de Jucutacato by Cueva del Río. Photograph by Jimena Paz.

Unlike other murals, which were open to the public, the new murals had and continue to have a limited audience related to the building uses. What this highlights is that not all the murals were public art or functioned as a tool of public communication. The murals of the Quinta Erendira reveal the role that representations of the past played in the way Cárdenas and other *indigenistas* perceived themselves and their work. On the other hand, since official events and government activities were often conducted from the Quinta Erendira, to the point that it was known as the presidency branch office,¹⁴¹ murals may have contributed to shape the image of the government.

For Jolly, colonial façades were used as an ideological masquerade that aimed to conceal Cárdenas' project of radical modernization. Yet very often neocolonial architecture was presented as modern (see below). In this sense, the transformation of the Quinta Erendira from a 'modern' construction to a neocolonial building can be understood as part of broader discussions about modernity, the colonial, and its role in the definition of modern Mexican identity. Moreover, it also shows how, despite the decisive role of the government, Pátzcuaro was not simply a creation of Cárdenas, insofar as Cárdenas' vision of Pátzcuaro was influenced by these discussions. Efforts to protect colonial aesthetics participated in the regulation of people's conduct not only in terms of compliance with the law, but also through the establishment of dominant discourses on Mexican identity.

The neocolonial style was also employed in the construction of PEMEX service stations, the state-owned petroleum company created in 1938 after the oil expropriation. While the use of the neocolonial style in the service stations may have served to reinforce the nationalist discourses associated with the creation of PEMEX, it also points out the increasing importance of such places in the tourist's itinerary.

With the rise of motorism, service stations became a ubiquitous element in the landscape. Often, the design of the service stations was criticised for disrupting the local architecture. An article published by the magazine *MAPA* in 1934 on Taxco, accused foreign oil companies of distorting the character of the city and interfering with efforts to protect its architecture, suggesting that the design of

¹⁴¹ La Quinta Eréndira es una sucursal de la presidencia. *El Heraldo Michoacano*. 8 November 1938.

service stations be adapted based on Taxco architecture.¹⁴² By 1938, three service stations of the companies La Huasteca Petroleum Company, Pierce Oil and El Águila had remodelled their service stations adapting them to the regional architecture. In the context of the tensions between the Mexican government and oil companies, these actions may have also been intended to improve their public image.

According to Catherine R. Ettinger (2018), it was from 1940 that a formal aesthetic proposal for service stations was articulated by PEMEX, changing the appearance of service stations across the country. Ettinger also suggests that this aesthetic proposal was linked to Cárdenas' vision of a national architecture linked to his native Michoacán. In 1940, the service stations of Pátzcuaro and Uruapan were inaugurated. Even though the model was applied throughout the country, the stations were advertised as constructed in a 'regional style', consisting of thick white walls, semi-circular arches, and hip roofs with clay tiles.

The fact that neocolonial constructions were also called regional or local indicates how the process of creating the neocolonial architectural style may have worked. Mexican neocolonial architecture was an abstract idealisation defined through the regional, based on the observation and classification of individual examples. The elements selected as typical of regional architecture were both distinctive and generic, allowing its differentiation, but also its identification as national so that regional architectures were seen as variations of the Mexican type.¹⁴³ The design of the 'regional style' subordinated the regional to the national. Correspondingly, the dissemination of the 'regional style' across the country may have been an attempt to create a common element or sense of unity in the architecture of the Mexican countryside.

The case of Cuernavaca and Taxco discussed above also illustrates how Mexican neocolonial architecture was defined vis-à-vis the foreign. Nevertheless, neocolonial architecture was not a style exclusive to México. According to Verónica Cremaschi (2014) the neocolonial style developed simultaneously in Latin America and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, where it was known as 'Spanish revival'. The development of neocolonial architecture in the continent was linked, on the one hand, with individual processes of nation-state

¹⁴² Anverso y Reverso. MAPA. Vol.1, n.2, May 1934.

¹⁴³ In the article 'La tijuanaización de Cuernavaca' the magazine MAPA defined the architecture of Cuernavaca as an environmental variation of the Mexican type.

formation, and on the other, with the formation of a continental, Pan-American identity. Indigenous aesthetics also played a key role in shaping hemispheric bonds (see Chapter 7). In the field of architecture, one of the clearest examples of the appropriation of indigenous aesthetics was the neo-prehispanic, particularly the Mayan revival style or neo-Mayan architecture, developed separately in México and the United States. However, it is important to remember that in México, colonial architecture was itself considered the result of indigenous artfulness.

In the case of Pátzcuaro, most public buildings integrated Hispanic and indigenous aesthetics. In the case of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre and the Quinta Erendira, in addition to the indigenous-themed murals, the names of the buildings also referred to the P'urhépecha past. Tourism infrastructure and buildings were also characterized by the integration of Hispanic and indigenous aesthetics and constant references to the region's prehispanic past, promoting the idea of colonial architecture as *mestiza*.

Pátzcuaro's service station, for instance, was decorated with a historically themed mural about the P'urhépecha ruling of the region and the Spanish Conquest. The mural covers the four walls of a room that today functions as an office, but which could well have been a restaurant or a handicrafts shop, as it was the case with other service stations in the country (Ettinger and García, 2014). Thus, the past of the region was introduced to the visitor from the first moment it entered Pátzcuaro. One of the walls shows a colonial-style map of the region, similar to that of Beaumont (1792) and Fernández (1936), providing a comprehensive view of the Lake Pátzcuaro region (1792) (Figure 6.38).

The plaque placed on the outside of the building reproduces a phrase from the *Reglas y Ordenanzas para el Gobierno de Los Hospitales de Santa Fe de México y Michoacán* (1538) which portrays Lake Pátzcuaro as an ideal site and a space ready for colonial intervention, replacing the violence of the conquest with persuasion (Figure 6.39). The plaque reads:

...Pues por la providencia divina hay tanto y tan buen metal de gente en esta tierra, y es tan blanda la cera y tan rasa la tabla, y tan nueva la vasija en que nada hasta ahora se ha impreso, dibujado, ni infundido que me parece que esta la materia tan dispuesta y bien condicionada que la tarea ha de ser provechosa, aun cuando no fácil, si se logra por convencimiento, por orden y por trabajo...

...By divine providence there is so much and such good metal of people in this land, and the wax is so soft, and the table is so smooth, and the vessel so new that nothing up to now has been printed, drawn, or infused that seems to me that the

subject is so ready and well prepared that the mission will be fruitful, even if not easy, if it is achieved by persuasion, order, and work ...



Figure 6.38. Mural inside the office of Pátzcuaro Service station. Photograph by the author.



Figure 6.39. The sidewall of Pátzcuaro Service Station. Photograph by the author.

6.7.1 The Tariacuri Viewpoint

In addition to the service stations, other constructions that were part of tourism infrastructure were the viewpoints. During the 1930s, several viewpoints were built around Lake Pátzcuaro. In addition to the El Estribo and El Estribo Chico viewpoints, two other viewpoints were built outside Pátzcuaro. One of them is located on the island of Janitzio, inside the raised fist of the Morelos statue. The other is located on the El Sandio hill, in the community of San Jerónimo Purenchécuaro, north of the lake. The viewpoints look to the south providing a different view to that of El Estribo.

Unlike the other viewpoints, El Estribo hill had functioned as a lookout point since the 19th century. During the 1930s, Cárdenas ordered the viewpoint to be remodelled. Works in the Estribo area were carried out from 1932 to 1936, consisting of the repairing of the road that led to the viewpoint and the reconditioning of the site (Figure 6.40). As part of the reconditioning works, 417 steps to the summit of the hill were also built. Extensive reforestation of the site was also carried out. The viewpoint was renamed after Tariacuri, the first P'urhépecha ruler of Pátzcuaro (Figure 6.41). As in the case of the *Emperador Caltzontzin* theatre or the Quinta Erendira, the name of the viewpoint pays homage to Pátzcuaro prehispanic history.



Figure 6.40. View of the Tariacuri viewpoint. The photograph shows the previous pavilion. Source: IIH-UMSNH Photograph Archive.



Figure 6.41. Cárdenas and others in the Tariacuri viewpoint. Source: Historical Municipal Archive of Pátzcuaro.

The Estribo Chico viewpoint was built by the state government in 1938. Pavilion structures were built in both viewpoints. Notably, although both viewpoints were placed in a natural setting, they were built in different architectural styles. The pavilion of the Tariacuri viewpoint had a rustic look, which was seen as the most appropriate architectural style for this type of spaces (Figure 6.42, Figure 6.43). A similar gazebo can be found in Morelia's park, Bosque *Cuauhtemoc*, called after the last Aztec ruler (Figure 6.44). However, the pavilion in the Estribo Chico viewpoint adopted a neo colonial style (Figure 6.45). As in the case of the service station, the Estribo Chico viewpoint integrated Hispanic and indigenous aesthetics through its murals, these about local traditions (Figure 6.46). The fact that both styles (rustic and neocolonial) were used in the construction of structures in natural environments, shows how neocolonial architecture was seen as conforming to Pátzcuaro's character.



Figure 6.42. Gazebo in the Tariacuri Viewpoint. Source: IIF-UMSNH Photograph Archive.



Figure 6.43. Modern view of the gazebo in the Tariacuri Viewpoint simulating a rustic style construction. Photograph by the author.



Figure 6.44. Gazebo in Morelia's park 'Bosque Cuauhtemoc'. Photograph by the author.



Figure 6.45. Gazebo in the Estribo Chico Viewpoint built in a neocolonial style. Photograph by the author.



Figure 6.46. Murals by Cueva del Río (1938) in the Estribo Chico viewpoint. Photograph by the author.

Remarkably, most pictorial representations created during the post-revolutionary period show Lake Pátzcuaro from the Estribo hill. Thus, for instance, Justino Fernández's map of Lake Pátzcuaro indicates that the view corresponds to the view from the Tariacuri balcony (see Figure 6.2). Tourist guidebooks also showed Lake Pátzcuaro from El Estribo. One guidebook described the view as of 'surpassing beauty'.¹⁴⁴ After describing the view of the lake, information about the islands and lakeside towns is provided, even if they are not all visible from El Estribo. The role of transport infrastructure in the integration of the region is also noted. So that, in both visual and written representations, the panoramic views from El Estribo offered the opportunity to imagine Lake Pátzcuaro as a regional whole (see section 4.1.1).

Mural representations of Lake Pátzcuaro also show Lake Pátzcuaro from this viewpoint. Remarkably, the mural painted on the outside of the school of Yunuen represents the story of Tariacuari (see Chapter 4). The mural tells the story

¹⁴⁴ Mexico's Western Highways. PEMEX Travel Club.

of the selection of Pátzcuaro as a place to settle and the life of Tariacuri. The scene shows the moment when Tariacuri's father and uncle spot a ring of standing stones, which was the sign of the gods that Pátzcuaro was the chosen site to build their temples (Figure 6.47). Pátzcuaro was one of the main P'urhépecha settlements during Tariacuri times, where he ruled until his death.

The story about the P'urhépecha founding of Pátzcuaro, which linked the act of seeing with ruling was introduced both to locals and tourists through different media. A version of this story was included in an article about Janitzio published in the magazine *MAPA*.¹⁴⁵ The article described the P'urhépecha ruler as a 'seeker of panoramas who lived with the obsession of finding a magnificent landscape to make it the capital of his kingdom.'¹⁴⁶

In this context, Jolly (2018, p. 74) notes that Pátzcuaro's viewpoints 'were visually and rhetorically associated with an indigenous point of view'. In this sense, I argue that although presented as indigenous, this was not only an indigenous point of view. The Tariacuri viewpoint, not only linked the view from El Estribo with the region's indigenous past, but also with authority, pointing out to the relationship between *indigenista* discourse and the consolidation of authority over the region. After all, the *indigenismo* was a project originally articulated by non-indigenous people for the indigenous population (see Chapter 2).



Figure 6.47. Mural on the outside walls of the school of Yunuen. Photograph by the author.

Remarkably, descriptions of Lake Pátzcuaro from El Estribo viewpoint also appeared in non-tourist publications. In 1941, the Pátzcuaro limnological station (see Chapter 5) published a synthesis of Lake Pátzcuaro's limnological research in the first number of the journal *Revista Geográfica*. Unlike other publications of Pátzcuaro's research station, the paper was not limited to a limnological

¹⁴⁵ The version reproduced corresponds to the one included in *Los rincones Históricos de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro* (1930) by Jorge Bay Pisa

¹⁴⁶ Janitzio. *MAPA*. Vol.1, n.8, Noviembre 1934.

characterisation, but almost half of its content focused on describing the region. The author suggests the reader ascend El Estribo volcano to have a comprehensive view of the region. Towards the end of his description, and before proceeding to the presentation of Pátzcuaro's limnological research, the author places the reader to the research station. So that, in a way, the research station also constituted a vantage point from which the condition of Lake Pátzcuaro could be elucidated.

The view from El Estribo involved a particular *way of seeing* linked to new ways of engaging with the region, such as travelling and tourism but also scientific research. The mural inside of the school of Yunuen illustrates the visual technologies and modes of representation that enabled this new way of seeing (see Chapter 4). In the central scene that shows a group of children and adults engaging in the study of scientific subjects, different scientific instruments are represented, including a microscope, a terrestrial globe, a celestial globe, as well as laboratory equipment. The next scene depicts a group of men working on the construction of a modern building. The architect is placed in an elevated position, from which he oversees the work, on his desk is a set square representing technical drawing instruments used in architecture.¹⁴⁷ Notably, the scene also shows a religious building that has been transformed into a library. Although each mode of representation had its specificities, they all contributed to reordering social relations and the nature-society relations.

6.8 Modernist Aesthetics

Neocolonial architecture was not the only architectural proposal associated with nationalist rhetoric and the quest for a Mexican architecture. In fact, during the postrevolutionary period, different aesthetic proposals were formulated. In addition to the so-called historicist styles discussed above, various proposals related to architectural modernism were developed in México. However, it is important to note that in Latin America architectural modernism was linked to the construction of national identities, employing the language of modernism to create a discourse about the 'national'.

In addition to architecture and mural painting, sculpture also played a central role in shaping the built landscape through the construction of public

¹⁴⁷ A similar element appears in the mural of Barcenas about Cárdenas' Six Year Plan (see Figure 6.18), which shows a surveyor in an elevated position looking through his theodolite.

monuments, some of which had monumental dimensions. The sculpture cultivated by the so-called Mexican School of Sculpture was characterized by its monumentality and the use of modernist aesthetics.¹⁴⁸ As in the case of muralism, they turned to prehispanic sculpture in search of its roots. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of prehispanic sculpture was its monumentality and public character, likewise, most of the prehispanic sculptures were carved in stone. The 1937 excavations in the archaeological sites of Tzintzuntzan and Ihuatzio exposed different examples of stone sculpture (Figure 6.48).



Figure 6.48. Workers unearth a sculpture of Chac Mool. Source: Mediateca INAH.

Modernist aesthetics burst into the region with the construction of the monument to Morelos (1933-1935) on the island of Janitzio. However, and as will be discussed later, its construction caused criticism as it went against the maintenance of a single visual discourse. The Morelos statue was built on the island of Janitzio in commemoration of Morelos' passage through the island during the War of Independence, registered in local folklore. Today, an infantry cannon is on display inside the monument as evidence of this event.

The statue of Morelos conformed to his most popular image, in priest clothes and with his head covered by a bandana. He is shown in his insurgent role, holding a sword and with his left fist raised.¹⁴⁹ Following modernist conventions,

¹⁴⁸ The Monument to the Revolution (1934) in Mexico City is one of the most known examples of this monumental sculpture.

¹⁴⁹ There are only two contemporary portraits of Morelos, the first is an anonymous portrait (1812) in which he appears in a military uniform, the second is a miniature wax portrait of Jose Francisco

the Morelos monument used a stylized vocabulary based on geometrical forms, emphasizing form and volume over a realistic representation.

Along with Hidalgo, Morelos is credited as one of the organisers of the independence movement. Morelos was born in 1765 in Valladolid (renamed Morelia in 1928 after Morelos). He served as priest before getting involved in the armed movement. In 1811, he assumed the leadership of the movement after the execution of Hidalgo. In 1813, he called the Congress of Chilpancingo to form a government and draft a constitution, promulgated in 1814, in Apatzingan, which declared México's independence from Spain. However, he was soon captured by royalists forces and executed after being excommunicated.

Although the figure of Morelos already occupied an important place in Michoacan history, after the revolution his importance increased. In 1934, the Michoacán government declared 30th September, the day of the national flag and of Morelos, which persists to this day as Michoacan's most important celebration.¹⁵⁰ The construction of the Morelos monument emphasized the importance of Michoacán in the nation's liberation struggles, establishing Michoacán's historical character as essentially revolutionary.

Guillermo Ruíz directed the construction of the monument, under Cárdenas instruction. Ruíz was the founder and director of the *Escuela Libre de Escultura y Talla Directa* (1927) in México City. The school was one of the open-air schools created during the first decades of the twentieth century as a rejection to academic formalism and an attempt to democratize the teaching of the arts. Among the open-air schools created outside the capital were those of Taxco, Michoacán, and Cholula (Barbosa, 2001) (Figure 6.49).

Rodriguez (ca. 1813) where he appears in religious clothing. Morelos is represented in both ways in Patzcuaro murals, O'Gorman (1941) shows Morelos in military uniform while Cueva del Rio (1938) represents him in priest clothes.

¹⁵⁰ APEEM, Leyes y Decretos, Folder 256.



Figure 6.49. Students from the *Escuela Libre de Escultura* during a class in Tzintzuntzan, ca. 1927. Source: Mediateca INAH, Fototeca Nacional.

According to Laura González Matute (1987) along with muralism, open-air art schools represented the reforming ideals of the post-revolutionary cultural programme. Unfortunately, by the 1930s, many of these schools had disappeared, in part due to disagreements among the members of the intellectual circle about their artistic value. The *Escuela Libre de Escultura*, however, continued to exist, partly because of its work producing most of the official sculptures during the 1930s. Notably, in Pátzcuaro most sculptures and decorative stone works were created by Guillermo Ruíz.

In the case of the Morelos monument, its construction was the product of both the artistic talent of Ruíz and his local assistant Juan Tirado Valle, as well as the technical expertise of Captain Antonio Rojas García, responsible for the construction. The labour of the 22nd regiment, and the *Zapateros* battalion was also deployed in the construction of the 47 meters tall monument. Ruíz used reinforced concrete to create the structure of the sculpture, covered with carved quarry.

In front of the Morelos statue, a fragment of the document *Sentimientos de la Nación* (1813), written by Morelos was engraved on metal, where he established that America was free and independent from Spain and from all other European nations, as well as the principle of national sovereignty, underscoring the continental character of the struggle for independence. The banning of slavery and caste distinctions were also included in the reproduction. Notably, the document's most conservative point on Catholicism as the only religion was excluded.



Figure 6.50. Monument to Morelos under construction. Photograph by Luis Márquez. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

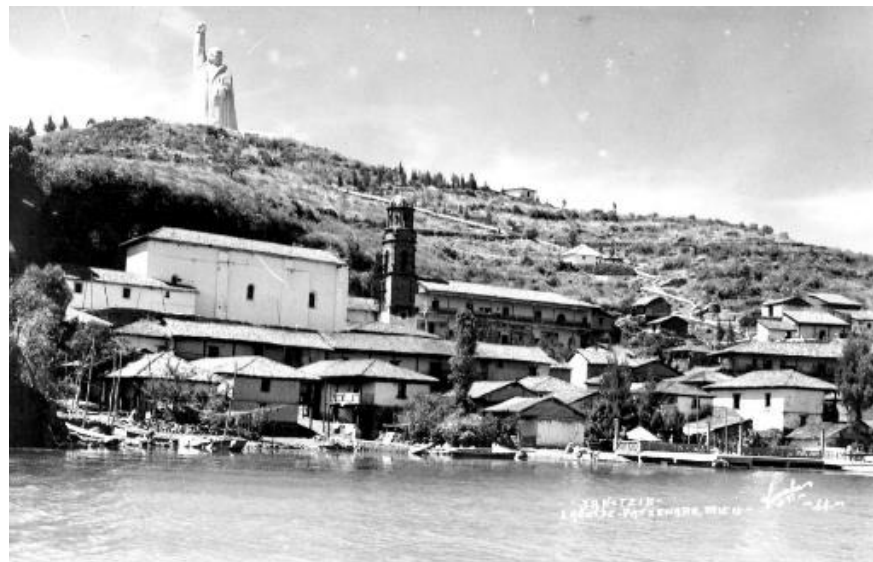


Figure 6.51. View of the monument to Morelos and the island of Janitzgo from the lake. Source: Photographic Archive of the IIE-UMSNH.

The creation of the mural to Morelos clearly illustrates how the recovery of Morelos by postrevolutionaries was a selective process. The mural was created by Ramón Alva de la Canal (1938-1940), comprising 56 panels on the life of Morelos (Figure 6.52, Figure 6.53). The proposal was first sent to Cárdenas for his approval, who removed those passages of Morelos' life that refer to its identity as a Catholic priest,

one that he never abandoned during the Independence movement.¹⁵¹ Although his ordination as a priest appears in the scenes of his life before the independence movement, in the final representation, references to his priestly condition were excluded from the following scenes, aligning his figure with modern nationalist revolutionary values. The incarceration and trial of Morelos by the inquisition was nonetheless included. In the context of the church's opposition to the post-revolutionary programme, the promotion of the figure of Morelos may have tried to influence public opinion on the subject.



Figure 6.52. View of the Alva de la Canal mural in the interior of the monument to Morelos. Photograph by the author.

¹⁵¹ Preliminary proposal of the mural outlining its content. AGN, LC-AP, Box 978, Folder 562.2/14,



Figure 6.53. Fragment of *Alva de la Canal* mural. Lake Pátzcuaro is represented in the panels on the right side. Photograph by the author.

Another aspect of Morelos highlighted by the sculpture was its mixed ethnic background. The sculpture exhibited phenotypic traits usually employed to represent indigenous people, thus, establishing a relationship between the national history and the local indigenous population. Interestingly, some of the photographs of the Morelos monument establish a comparison between the local people and the monument (see Figure 6.54, Figure 6.55). These photographs are taken from a low angle, emphasising the size of the monument. By comparing the statue to local people, the photographs seem to attribute the monumentality of the statue to the people.

Reference to the indigenous is also present in the incorporation of certain elements of prehispanic sculpture, particularly in the materials employed (volcanic stone) and monumental dimensions. The sculpture combined techniques of European modernism that gave it its modernist character with references to prehispanic art, while simultaneously representing a national figure, articulating a discourse about *mestizaje* that emphasised the country indigenous-prehispanic roots.



Figure 6.54. Photograph of the monument to Morelos by Luis Márquez, ca. 1935. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.



Figure 6.55. Monument to Morelos in the Island of Janitzio, 1938-1940. Photograph by *Compañía México Fotográfico*.

The statue to Morelos appeared portrayed in murals, photographs, and postcards of the region, becoming part of the imagery about Janitzio and Lake Pátzcuaro, and an important tourist attraction. Despite this, the statue was severely criticised by those who defended Pátzcuaro's colonial aesthetics, among which were art historians and tourism promoters. The criticisms were not directed to the historical figure represented, but at the style and dimensions of the monument, described as intrusive and foreign, despite its allusion to prehispanic aesthetics. One article of the magazine MAPA lamented its construction, stating: 'it is a shame that a monument of Yankee proportions has eclipsed the Tarascan poetry of the island, despite the fact that the monument is dedicated to an enormous hero, whose name covers the history of our freedom: Morelos.'¹⁵²

The former illustrates how the definition of Mexican aesthetics was a contested ground. In the case of Pátzcuaro, the construction of the monument to Morelos and buildings in a different architectural style caused criticism among art historians and the tourism sector as they went against the maintenance of a

¹⁵² Pátzcuaro, MAPA, v.3, n.25, p.38-40, April 1936.

picturesque aesthetics as a homogeneous or single visual discourse. Pictorial representations of Janitzio often emphasized its typical and picturesque aspects. Scenes of the day of the death, fishing with butterfly nets and fishing nets hang out to dry.

Moreover, guidebooks often portrayed Lake Pátzcuaro, and particularly Janitzio as frozen in time. Drawing on romantic narratives, they created an ahistorical image of Janitzio, reproducing colonial narratives. The film *Janitzio* (1934) filmed during the construction of the statue to Morelos, also portrays the island as an idyllic world, one that is nonetheless condemned to disappear with the advance of modernity (see Chapter 7). Arguably, the monument to Morelos came to challenge this image of Pátzcuaro. Although the Morelos monument was inserted within the same nationalist agenda, it imposed a challenge to the idea of neocolonial aesthetics as typical, and to its status as ‘truth’. Moreover, as architecture contributed to imagine Lake Pátzcuaro as regional unit, modernist aesthetics also imposed a challenge to established ideas of regional and national identity.

6.8.1 Janitzio and the Musical Avant-garde

Another challenge to the picturesque aesthetics of Pátzcuaro was raised by the musical piece *Janitzio* (1933), written by the Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940).¹⁵³ *Janitzio* was a bold avant-garde experiment, which was mistakenly applauded by the critic for its nationalistic character. Leonora Saavedra (2009, p.213) has described Revueltas’ style as indexing multiple and often disparate elements of the cultural soundscape of México through polysemic musical resources which often propelled these elements into collision.

Janitzio was first performed in 1933 by the *Orquesta del Conservatorio* (Conservatory Orchestra). Salomon Kahan, one of Revueltas’ most fervent admirers and critics, described Revueltas as the ‘hero of the day’, not for his work *Ocho x radio*, an unmistakable avant-garde piece that was also part of the programme, about which he preferred to ‘refrain his opinions’, but because of *Janitzio* (Saavedra, 2009). Indeed, after its premier by the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional* (National Symphonic Orchestra), *Janitzio* was selected by the audience as the most popular work of the 1933 season.

¹⁵³ A version of *Janitzio* can be listened here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDqxX-IelgE>

Along with *Colorines* (1932) and *Cuaubnahuac* (1931), *Janitzio* was considered one of Revueltas' best works. For Otto Mayer-Sierra (1941), *Janitzio* and *Cuaubnahuac* (the Nahuatl name for Cuernavaca) were the only works by Revueltas that explicitly referred to the landscape. Interestingly, both places were tourist destinations. What these pieces had in common was the incorporation of popular themes in a twisted or disfigured way. These works were also characterised by the disruption of rhythm and the inclusion of atonal elements, features that were criticised in previous works without an explicit Mexican reference. Like *Janitzio*, contemporary interpretations of *Cuaubnahuac* have also described the piece as a satire of *indigenismo* (Saavedra, 2009).

Popular motifs were also present in the title of the pieces, reason for which the audience expected nationalist compositions. Trying to avoid reductionist interpretations of his works, Revueltas made clear the lack of programmatic content of its work. Thus, in his comment to *Ventanas*, he expressed:

Ventanas is a music that had not programme [...]. The name does not mean anything; it might be called "Skylights" or anything else. (It all depends on the good or bad will of the listener.) Nevertheless, a window does offer a fertile literary theme, and it might satisfy the taste of some persons who can neither understand nor listen to music without a programme [...] (cited in Mayer-Sierra 1941, p.129)

What the above quote points out is that while the titles may refer to 'Mexican motifs', they did not define the character of the piece. In other words, the meaning of the pieces was not subordinated to the title but the other way around. So that titles were employed satirically or as a double entendre. Despite the cautionary note, the audience and critics continued interpreting the titles as indicative of a nationalist programme, often facing disappointment.

In the case of *Janitzio*, its saturation with nationalist motifs have led some scholars to think about the piece as a nationalist concession to the audience given the negative reception of previous pieces (Saavedra 2009). Robert Kolb Neuhaus (2012) agrees on interpreting *Janitzio* as a response to previous criticism. However, he differs from Saavedra (2009) on the intention of the piece, arguing that with *Janitzio*, Revueltas was not trying to reconcile with the audience but to provoke it. The ironic intentions of the piece were also expressed through a brief note to the programme, stating:

Janitzio es una isla pequeña en el lago de Pátzcuaro. El lago de Pátzcuaro es mugroso. Los viajeros románticos lo han vestido con versos al estilo de las postales

y música. Para que no me lo ganen, he añadido mi grano de sal. Seguramente la posteridad me premiará por esta contribución a la industria turística (cited in Kolb Neuhaus 2012).

Janitzio is a small island in Lake Pátzcuaro. Lake Pátzcuaro is filthy. Romantic travellers have embellished it with postcard style verses and music. Not to be outdone, I too add my grain of sand. Posterity will undoubtedly reward my contributions to the tourism industry.

Revueltas did not literally think that Lake Pátzcuaro was filthy, instead the note shows his disdain towards the picturesque, or as he called it, ‘postcard style’ aesthetics. While many had interpreted Revueltas’ note as characteristic of his sardonic humour, omitting its relationship to the piece, for Kolb Neuhaus (2012) the note aimed to warn the audience about its ironic tone, revealed in the parodic musical structure. Among the compositional devices identified by Kolb Neuhaus (2012) that indicate its parodic intentions are 1) abrupt transition between themes, 2) the interruption of popular melodies by others that bear no connection with the theme, taking away its seriousness 3) the distortion of popular melodies through changes in the tonality and harmonic texture, 4) the quotation of colloquial expressions used to insult or mock someone, and 5) the introduction of dissonant notes in climax moments, breaking with the expectations. The ironic tone is also revealed in the introduction of a rupturist discourse in the pastore introduced in the second part of the piece.

In *Janitzio*, Revueltas used the musical formulas of nationalism to disarticulate them, challenging the aesthetic coherence of the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape. *Janitzio* is thus regarded as a sort of ‘anti-landscape’, an avant-garde satirical parody that aimed to disrupt the romantic narratives around Lake Pátzcuaro employed by the tourism industry (Kolb Neuhaus, 2012).

In 1936 Revueltas released a revised version of *Janitzio*. He also included the ironic note, reaffirming its intentions. Once again, the intention was ignored or misinterpreted, becoming part of the repertoire of musical nationalism. The radio programme *La Hora Nacional* (1937) used it as a soundtrack of its weekly transmissions. The subtext remained hidden not because it was difficult to interpret, but because the predisposition of the audience to see the work of Revueltas in a way that fitted their interests. Moreover, the meaning of *Janitzio* was influenced by the cultural context, as well as the spaces in which it was performed and played. Hence, it is not strange, that the same people that criticised the rupturist

aesthetics of the Morelos monument were the ones who celebrated the work of Revueltas.

6.9 Neocolonial Modernity

As discussed in the previous sections, aesthetic representations of modernity and nationality took different forms. Both neocolonial and modernist aesthetics participated in this discussion. Neocolonial architecture was often defined through the traditional, inextricable linked to the nation's past and therefore Mexican. As such, it stood in opposition to architectural modernism, usually conceived as cosmopolitan and universal. However, in México, architectural modernism also turned to the past in search of its aesthetic foundations, participating in the search for a national architecture. Although in apparent conflict, both trends had similar concerns, only that they were expressed differently.

In this context, Cremaschi (2014) proposes to consider the neocolonial style as a type of Latin American modernism. Contrary to the dominant idea that conceives neocolonial architecture as a preamble to the international modern movement, protomodern or even antimodern, she advocates an understanding of neocolonial architecture as modern even if the aesthetic language does not match with that of European modernism. Cremaschi notes how in different Latin American countries, the neocolonial style was often referred to as modern architecture. The proposal is suggestive if we think about Mexican avant-garde artistic movements that promoted the re-evaluation of indigenous and prehispanic arts, in the context of the nation-building process. Then, it may be argued that in Latin America the aesthetic definition of modernity was a contested process.

We can also think about Mexican modernism as 'neocolonial' in the sense attributed by Mary Louise Pratt (1992 [2006]) to the concept. Pratt examines how 20th century Latin American writers engaged in the 'neocolonial predicament', which generally refers to the difficulty of previously colonized countries to 'exit the system and chart a separate course' both culturally and politically. In its cultural dimension, the neocolonial predicament is expressed in the following terms: the norms generated elsewhere cannot be implemented where one is but cannot be refused either. One of the writers discussed by Pratt is Mário de Andrade, who grappled with the neocolonial predicament in a comic mode. To create something 'authentically' Brazilian, he employed inherited European discourses in conscious

inauthentic ways. Thus, she argues, for the modernist of the neocolony, the path to decolonization and subjectification runs not around but through the codes of modernity. A bit like De Andrade, Revueltas' avant-garde experimental pieces used humour to dislocate discourses of authenticity.

Mexican avant-garde artists appropriated European aesthetic codes, challenging colonial discourses about Lake Pátzcuaro character while simultaneously participating in the construction of national cultural capital. Meanwhile, neocolonial architecture, appropriated colonial aesthetic discourses to create a national architecture. Both projects used aesthetic discourses from the 'metropolis' in their definition of Mexican aesthetics, simultaneously speaking back about the 'metropolis'. It can be argued then that in different ways both styles were 'modern' and 'neocolonial'.

6.10 Contested Landscapes

Outside of the town of Pátzcuaro, the protection of colonial architecture followed a different path. The communities around Lake Pátzcuaro assumed different attitudes towards the protection of monuments. Colonial religious buildings were signified and valued differently throughout the region. Political and religious identities influenced people's attitude towards the protection of colonial architecture. While some communities opposed the repurposing of religious buildings carried out by government institutions, *agraristas* communities actively engaged in their transformation.

Given its anticlerical stance, during the *agrarista* movement, religious buildings became contested spaces (see Chapter 2). During the 1920s, many religious buildings were transformed into educational, cultural, and assembly spaces. Open-air *atrios* were likewise transformed into public squares or sports courts. In Arocutin, the church lost many of its goods, given the anticlerical stance of its members. Likewise, in 1932, the atrial cross of San Bartolo Pareo was dismantled and removed from its place (Ramírez Romero, 1986). During this period, requests from *agraristas* communities to the SHCP to use the churches as secular spaces are abundant.

However, as heritage policies consolidated in the region, conflicts over the use and modification of religious buildings arose between the *agraristas* communities and the SHCP. For example, in 1933, the sports field of the community of San

Pedro Pareo established in the church atrio, was suspended by the SHCP. The inspector of federal education advised the community to request the space directly from the president; the request was rejected again by SHCP. The inspector considered the SHCP's attitude as 'reactionary' and opposed to sports promotion efforts. The only value he saw on preserving 'old walls' was as a historical reminder of the *raison d'être* of the libertarian struggles. He asked the federal director of education to intervene on their behalf, promising to build an open-air theatre if the land was granted.¹⁵⁴ By invoking a revolutionary discourse to argue against the SHCP's decision, the school inspector was questioning the legitimacy of a government that called itself revolutionary. Furthermore, the case of San Pedro Pareo also illustrates that while rural teachers and *agraristas* communities often cooperated with the government, their political interests were not always aligned.

Arguably, local contestations to architectural conservation policies may have influenced the way in which the SHCP conducted its work. In April 1939, the community of San Andres Tzirondaro made a similar request to the SHCP's local office.¹⁵⁵ The way the SHCP handled the situation was clearly different from the one outlined above. To assure its legitimacy, the SHCP first sought to reach political consensus among major political actors, seeking the opinion of the inspector of federal education, the municipal authority and the church board before turning the petition to the central office.

Moreover, *agraristas* political power was sometimes seen by the government as a challenge to its authority. The political practice of *agraristas* also conflicted with the government's efforts to create social and political stability in the region. As discussed above, one of the purposes of protecting Lake Pátzcuaro colonial aesthetics was to create a sense of regional and national unity, central to the consolidation of power. The former illustrates how the protection of colonial architecture was a contested process and the often-conflicting narratives shaping the Lake Pátzcuaro region.

¹⁵⁴ Correspondence between the inspector of federal education and the federal director of education, 1933, AGN-SEP, Serie Escuelas Rurales, Box 386921(2), Folder 6

¹⁵⁵ Correspondence between the SHCP local office and the inspector of federal education. Presidencia, Municipal Historical Archive of Quiroga.

6.11 Conclusions

Throughout the chapter I have examined the role that the protection of colonial architecture played in defining the region's aesthetics, contributing to the establishment and consolidation of a dominant discourse about the Mexican based on the notion of cultural *mestizaje*. The protection of colonial architecture was possible thanks to the accommodation of several interests. Different sectors of the society supported different aspects of the government programme to protect colonial architecture. Art history scholars played a key role in the reordering of the values associated with colonial-religious architecture, transforming what some revolutionaries saw as symbol of colonial domination and into a symbol of Mexican identity. The measures to protect colonial-religious architecture also involved the repurposing of religious buildings into cultural venues, replacing their aesthetic-religious values with a historical-secular aesthetic. In this way, architectural conservation policies, also took part in the postrevolutionary project to secularize society. Outside of the town of Pátzcuaro, this agenda was carried out by agraristas communities and schoolteachers.

The actions to protect the town's colonial image, also coincided with the interest of local authorities to promote Pátzcuaro as a tourist destination. Pátzcuaro residents and authorities also supported the repurposing of former religious buildings into cultural venues that came to meet local needs. In most cases, there were already local plans for its creation that had not been carried out due to lack of resources, so the intervention of the federal government was welcome. As a symbol of authentic México, colonial architecture also served a developing tourism agenda. For this reason, the tourism sector also participated in the protection of colonial architecture.

The protection of colonial architecture along with the creation of murals and monuments also contributed to the creation of a historical inflected landscape, articulating a discourse about the region's past that reinforced nationalist narratives. The protection of colonial architecture also involved regulating people's architectural conduct regarding the repurposing of colonial religious buildings and the construction of new buildings, which meant they should not affect Lake Pátzcuaro colonial aesthetics. However, architectural conservation policies did not go uncontested. Modernist aesthetics imposed a challenge to colonial aesthetics and its status as truth, as they went against the maintenance of a homogeneous

discourse. The protection of colonial architecture also came into conflict with the agraristas agenda, who questioned the revolutionary character and legitimacy of these policies. So that the production of Lake Pátzcuaro colonial aesthetics was a contested process, shaped by multiple discourses, practices, and interests.

7 New Geographies of Indigeneity

In the first chapter of the thesis, I discussed the process of indigenous becoming, paying attention to the practices that led to the recognition of indigenous culture as a vital component of regional and national identity and Lake Pátzcuaro as an indigenous region. This process occurred in the context of the construction of national identity and the establishment of the post-revolutionary state. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the processes shaping discourses about indigeneity changed, as well as ideas of indigeneity itself. I refer to the processes of continental integration, the relations between the United States and México, the outbreak of World War II and the geopolitical reordering of the world. While these political phenomena developed at a far larger scale, they also met in Pátzcuaro, both literally and metaphorically. Although there was some continuity in the discourses and practices of representation about the region, they served different purposes. In this chapter, I analyse how narratives about Lake Pátzcuaro transcended the nation to play part in international processes, as well as the effects of international participation in the region. The purpose is to understand how the arrival of new actors and interests shaped Lake Pátzcuaro but also how their work in Pátzcuaro enabled processes at other scales.

The first part of the chapter focuses on the Inter-American Conference of Indian Life. I analyse the role of Lake Pátzcuaro in the adoption of *indigenismo* as a continental policy, where indigenous culture was recognised as a common heritage of the countries of the American continent, allowing the articulation of ideas of Pan American unity and identity. In the text, I argue that Pátzcuaro was chosen to host the conference by the Mexican government because it embodied *indigenistas'* version of indigenous culture. Lake Pátzcuaro's depiction at the Conference as the historical site in which projects aimed at the indigenous population had been developed, placed present *indigenistas* policies in the same line of events. I also consider how representations of Lake Pátzcuaro at international events contributed to the dissemination of an *indigenista* image of the country. The last section focuses on the Tarascan Project, an applied anthropological research project, analysing the effects of transnational cooperation in the region.

7.1 The First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life: Indigenismo and Pan-Americanism

The First Inter-American Indigenous Congress or First Inter-American Conference on Indigenous Life was a key event both at the local, national and international levels, which supposed the emergence of new policies aimed at the indigenous populations of the Americas while also bringing new actors and interests to the Lake Pátzcuaro region. The conference was part of the recommendations made by the 8th International Conference of American States held in Lima, Peru, and was meant to establish a common policy or a standard of conduct concerning indigenous people. The Conference took place in the city of Pátzcuaro, from 14th to 24th April 1940, which is why it is better known as the Pátzcuaro Conference or the Pátzcuaro Congress. The day of its inauguration coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Pan American Union, held in Washington (8-15 April).

The event was held at the *Emperor Caltzontz'in* theater and the Gertrudis Bocanegra Library (see section 6.4). A plaque outside of the *Emperador Caltzontz'in* theatre reminds present-day visitors of its historical significance as the main venue for the event. The Gertrudis Bocanegra library (next to the theatre) also housed the meetings of the official delegates and the representatives of indigenous people. Three years later Juan O'Gorman would paint the mural 'Historia de Michoacán' there, honouring the resistance and endurance of indigenous people (see Chapter 6).

The conference, which was originally going to be celebrated in Bolivia, was moved to México upon the petition of the Mexican government¹⁵⁶, designating Pátzcuaro as the venue for the conference. President Cárdenas' inauguration speech opened the event, followed by the contribution of John Collier, Chief of the U.S. Indian Office and Dr Enrique Finot, ambassador of Bolivia in México (Figure 7.1).

¹⁵⁶ The Conference reports and final resolution were published in different documents. A general report was published in the first issue of the *Boletín Bibliográfico de Antropología Americana* published by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History in 1940. A partial report of the event was published in the Bulletin of the Pan American Union the same year. The Office of Indigenous Affairs published the Final Act of the conference in 1941. The Inter-American Indian Institute published the Spanish version of the Final Act in 1948, prior to the celebration of the second conference.



Figure 7.1. Inauguration of the First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life. President Lázaro Cárdenas appears in the center of the photo giving the inauguration speech, to his right is John Collier in charge of the United States Office for Indians.

In his inauguration speech, Cárdenas expressed his views on the indigenous question, for whom the purpose of *indigenismo* was not to ‘de-Indianized the Indians’, that is to make them abandon their language, traditions or attachment to the land, nor to maintain them ‘Indians’, separated from the rest of society, but to ‘Mexicanize’ them. The idea that it was possible to integrate indigenous people into the national project while respecting their distinctive cultural traits, was the distinctive mark of Mexican *indigenismo* in the 1930s (see Chapter 1). The photographs of the inauguration show President Cárdenas surrounded by government officials and local residents, most of them men (Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2. The photograph shows the attendants at the inauguration in the Emperador Calixtonzín theatre. Cárdenas appears in the centre of the photograph, looking out, and greeting the delegates. Source: Tercero (1940)

The organising committee was made up by well-known Mexican *indigenistas*. Luis Chavez Orozco, who was the head of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DAI), was appointed as the president. Moisés Sáenz, ambassador of México in Peru and

former director of the DAI, Alfonso Caso, director of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), and Manuel Gamio, head of the Department of Demography, were designated as vice-presidents. The General Secretary of the Conference was Miguel Othon de Mendizabal, who had worked on the revival of Michoacán lacquer and was the head of the Anthropogeography laboratory of the Polytechnic National Institute (IPN based on its initials in Spanish) (see Chapter 4).

Representatives of nineteen American republics, the International Labour Organization and the Panamerican Union were present at the conference. Among the participants were diplomatic representatives and scholars, as well as delegates of the indigenous people of México, the United States, Chile, and Panama. The Mexican delegation was made up of official delegates, advisors, indigenous delegates, and congress representatives. Interestingly, among the advisors of the Mexican delegation were U.S. linguists, such as Mauricio Swadesh and Norman A. MacQuown, members of the *Consejo de Lenguas Indigenas* (Indigenous Languages Council, CLI), who had been researching the P'urhépecha region where governmental support was focused. Dr Fernando de Buen, in charge of the Pátzcuaro's Limnological Station and Antonio Arriaga, director of the *Museo Michoacano*, also participated as congress representatives.

The Pátzcuaro Conference was divided into sections on biology, education, law, and socio-economic issues, with a subsection on Indian arts and crafts. The presentations intended to cover all aspects of indigenous life, comprising the areas of economy, agrarian reform, labour rights, popular arts, social and political problems, diet, housing, indigenous women, childhood, birth rate, family and mortality, immigration and redistribution of the indigenous population, education, health, law, and academic research. Other papers concerned national and inter-American affairs. The findings of the various sections were discussed and voted by the participants. As a result, a total of seventy-two resolutions, agreements, and recommendations regarding the indigenous people in the continent were adopted.

A permanent commission for the organisation of future conferences was established. Luis Chavez Orozco, head of the DAI, was appointed as its director. Among the achievements of the Pátzcuaro Conference was the creation of the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano* (Inter-American Indian Institute, III) in 1942, as the institution responsible for guiding indigenous policies in the continent. The

Pátzcuaro Conference also recommended the creation of national institutes in each country to serve as a link between the III and national governments.

Several resolutions turned around the question of indigenous lands and territories, recommending the implementation of agrarian reforms, protection for indigenous property, irrigation and infrastructure projects, the extension of roads and rural credit, as well as the application of scientific research and technology to the improvement of agriculture, livestock and fisheries production. A specific suggestion to carry out scientific studies on the soil and programmes to prevent erosion was also made.

Another group of resolutions concerned indigenous education. The recommendations were predominantly based on U.S. and Mexican education programmes, suggesting to other countries the adoption of those aspects that they found most useful to their situation. Regarding indigenous languages, the Conference agreed on their use in education, as well as the creation of alphabets for indigenous languages. The celebration of the First Inter-American Conference on Applied Indigenous Linguistics also emerged from the Pátzcuaro Conference. Bilingual education was based on the idea that more effective learning could be achieved using indigenous languages. To do so, applied linguistic research needed to be conducted. For this purpose, it was agreed to hold the First Inter-American Conference on Applied Indigenous Linguistics. These resolutions were informed by an experimental project of bilingual education that was underway in the P'urhépecha region, also known as the Linguistic Tarascan Project. Other agreements were made on the use of applied anthropology in the planning of projects for the indigenous population, adopting the resolution of conducting holistic research programmes in indigenous areas. The Tarascan project presented by Ralph Beals and Daniel F. Rubin de la Borbolla was suggested as an example (Beals and de la Borbolla, 1940) (see below).

Another resolution concerned the protection of indigenous culture by providing opportunities for indigenous people to 'develop their capacities'. This would not only benefit the culture of indigenous people but also the culture of each country and that of the entire world. Accordingly, the Pátzcuaro Conference adopted a series of resolutions on the protection of folk arts, seen as the fundamental expression of indigenous cultures.

Among the papers that discussed the protection of popular arts were ‘Some considerations on the cultural levels of indigenous and mestizo groups’ by Manuel Gamio, and ‘Protection of popular arts’ by Alfonso Caso. In his paper, Gamio considered that unlike other expressions of their material culture, indigenous art was superior to European art, as it was the result of the long permanence and adaptation of indigenous groups to its environment. Therefore, while other elements of material indigenous culture could be replaced by those of western modern culture, indigenous art needed to be protected and promoted (see Chapter 4).

Both Gamio and Caso considered popular art as the authentic Mexican art. Being a product of the mixture of indigenous and European art, contemporary indigenous art was not only seen an expression of indigenous culture but of Mexican nationality. Caso was concerned about the possible loss of authenticity that an increase in the demand for popular arts by a foreign public could produce. Caso attributed the situation to the bad taste of European buyers, who preferred products that by not following the original motives, Caso called ‘counterfeits’. Among the proposals made by Caso were developing research in popular arts to inform policymaking, as well as the creation of a catalogue of popular arts, detailing the production process. Caso, who was then the director of the INAH, also proposed the creation of the Consejo de Arte Popular, which in 1951 promoted the creation of the Museo de Artes e Industrias Populares (Museum of Popular Art and Industries, MAIP). Among the resolutions adopted in this area were the protection and promotion of all visual, musical, and dramatic folk arts by national bodies of the participant countries. Accordingly, all national bodies would look after the development of folk art, develop research, and contribute to its appreciation and appropriation by the rest of the population. More importantly, they would ‘protect’ their authenticity so that they will not lose their ‘intrinsic value’.

The set of measures and ideas that emerged from the Pátzcuaro Conference came to be referred as the ‘Pátzcuaro doctrine’, characterised for the adoption of an *integrationist* approach to the indigenous question (see Chapter 4). Integration measures were explicitly mentioned in resolution 53, which called for the ‘complete integration of indigenous people’. Each country delegation assumed the responsibility for convincing their respective governments to adopt the Pátzcuaro Conference’s resolutions. In October 1940, Moisés Sáenz, who was ambassador in

Peru and director of the III, informed Chávez Orozco, president of the permanent committee of the Conference, about the presentation that the Peruvian delegate to the Conference made before the Chamber of Deputies of his country on the Resolutions adopted in Pátzcuaro. As a result of which the Chamber of Deputies recommended to the ministries of education, health, and social welfare to adapt the resolutions of the Conference to the Peruvian reality, especially regarding education and the agrarian question. Referring to the opinions generated from the presentation, Sáenz mentioned that the general opinion leaned towards the ‘doctrine supported by the Pátzcuaro Conference’ pointing out the extent to which the *indigenista* discourse had come to define Lake Pátzcuaro, as well as its role in the adoption of the *indigenismo* as a continental policy.¹⁵⁷

7.2 The Making of an International Region: Forging a Pan-American Identity

The promotion of folk art across the continent was meant to reinforce the cultural ties between countries. To this end, it was resolved to establish a permanent exhibition of folk art of the Americas, the Inter-American Exposition of Folk Arts, as well as exhibitions in each country. The Panama Canal Zone was chosen as the site for the Inter-American Exposition since it would attract viewers from all around the world. Moreover, commercial agreements between the American countries should be established to promote their production and consumption.

With the same purpose, the Pátzcuaro Conference recommended to the governments the promotion of indigenous music, dance, and theatre through the organisation of ‘typical’ ensembles. The national governments and the III should also sponsor them to play in other American countries. The Conference resolved to organize an Inter-American Folklore Festival during the Second Inter-American Travel Congress, which was planned for 1941 in México City.

The significance of the Pátzcuaro Conference also lay in considering indigenous culture as an element that could help forge a Pan-American identity. Concerning this, during the inauguration ceremony, Dr Pedro de Alba, the president of the Pan American Union expressed “The Indian is the basis of

¹⁵⁷ 1940. Correspondence between Sáenz and Chavez Orozco. HA-MNAH, Vol. 119, Folder 4, f.21-24

American life; except for geography, there exists in all America no other common denominator as fundamental as that provided by the Indian' (Tercero, 1940, p. 705).

In the Foreword of the Final Act, Oscar L. Chapman, chairperson of the United States, stated that the importance of setting a cooperation programme in benefit of the indigenous people lay in its potential to create solidarity between the American countries (Chapman, 1940, p. 8).

[...] this cooperation programme between the American republics on behalf of the Indians is important now not only for humanitarian reasons but also because it will contribute significantly to the attainment of solidarity among the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Cultural affinities will be strengthened, and democratic principles will be reinforced throughout the Americas if the objectives of this programme are realized.

Similarly, in his inauguration speech, President Lázaro Cárdenas signalled that the project of equality and justice in the Americas would never be fulfilled if indigenous people continue living under oppression, deprived of their lands and rights. Conversely, the project of continental integration based on the coordinated action in favour of the indigenous would contribute to achieving human fraternity.¹⁵⁸

La integración de las culturas del nuevo continente debe contribuir a la fraternidad humana, en momentos en que el eclipse de la civilización occidental se revela por el empleo de la fuerza. La ciencia y el progreso no se miden por la mayor capacidad destructiva sino por el aprovechamiento y coordinación de las energías vitales en lucha contra la hostilidad de la naturaleza, y contra los impulsos negativos que incuban las guerras y la opresión.

In moments in which western civilization is eclipsed by the use of violence, the integration of the cultures of the new continent should contribute to human fraternity. Science and progress should not be measured by their destructive capacity but through the use and coordination of the vital energies against the hostility of nature, and against the negative impulses that produce war and oppression.

These lines should be read in the context of the outbreak of World War II, which allowed American countries to call into question European cultural values and its supposed superiority. The war exhibited a crisis in the European civilization model, establishing the conditions for the revaluation of indigenous cultures in the American countries, creating the possibility of continental integration. From there, the American continent could emerge as a distinct cultural and civilizing project. In the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Pan American Union, declarations highlighted how current Pan Americanism was close to the realisation of the ideal

¹⁵⁸ Cárdenas. 1940. Discurso del presidente de la República en el Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano, Patzcuaro, Michoacán. Available online: <https://www.memoriapoliticadeMéxico.org/Textos/6Revolucion/1940PCM.html>

of 'cooperative peace' envisaged in the first attempts to create continental unity.¹⁵⁹ For the representative of the Pan American Union, the celebration of the Pátzcuaro Conference on the same date as the Anniversary was symbolic of the achievements made, marking a 'milestone for all the nations of America' (Tercero, 1940, p. 705).

On the other hand, the celebration of the conference in México also served to project a positive image before the other countries, particularly the United States. According to Wilbert T. Ahlstedt (2015), the holding of the conference in Pátzcuaro represented a success for Mexican diplomacy and President Lázaro Cárdenas in particular. This was relevant in the context of the tensions between México and the United States caused by the nationalization of the oil industry in 1938 by Cárdenas (see Chapter 2). Crucial in this 'success' was the support from U.S. representatives for Mexican policies concerning indigenous people, which were recognised as part of the achievements of the Mexican Revolution. This represented a significant change in the attitude of the United States towards México from condemnation to admiration, regarding 'Indian policy', influencing the creation of the Indian New Deal during the Roosevelt administration (Ahlstedt, 2015).

However, and despite the Conference being envisaged as a product of hemispheric cooperation among equals, U.S. participation in the inauguration made explicit its predominant role in hemispheric politics. Even though the leading figures of the U.S. delegation had a real interest in the subject, there were additional motivations, represented by the presence of U.S. government officials without any relation to the indigenous question. Oscar L. Chapman (see above) for instance was representing the Secretary of the Interior. According to Laura Giraudo and Victoria Furio (2012) other members of the U.S. delegation were 'covert' actors of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), created that year, which was in charge of cultural and economic relations with Latin America during the war and of counteracting Nazi propaganda in Latin America.

It is important to note that even though the Pátzcuaro Conference established indigenusness as a fundamental feature of continental identity, this identity was not automatically assumed among the participant countries. Thus, for Chapman, the indigenous question was more important in Latin America than the

¹⁵⁹ Message from President Roosevelt during the anniversary of the Pan-American Union. In the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Pan American Union, 424-427.

U.S., where the indigenous population was said to be a minority. Yet, they were interested in cooperating with Latin America through all the available means. Paradoxically, for Chapman (1940) more than a common feature, indigenism was an element that differentiated the United States from Latin America. This view, of course, did not constitute a general agreement, yet it illustrates why the indigenous question was relevant for people beyond the *indigenista* movement and the variety of reasons for the involvement of the United States in the Pátzcuaro Conference. War collaboration also played an important role in the U.S. financial support of III projects in subsequent years. As will be discussed later in the chapter, this would result in the consolidation of U.S. hegemonic power in the region.

In the years that followed the celebration of the Pátzcuaro Conference the course of the *indigenista* programme was transformed. Within the III, the approach towards the indigenous question changed, from a socially and politically militant *indigenismo* represented by Sáenz to a scientific and apolitical *indigenismo* represented by Gamio. Sáenz, the first director of the III, believed that the institute needed to have a social and political commitment, contributing to improving the conditions of indigenous peoples through advancing structural changes. In opposition, Gamio, who would become the second director of the III, believed that the institute should only give advice, based on scientific research. The III should focus on promoting cultural change rather than articulating political demands. Only a minority in the III shared Sáenz position, which led some of its members to propose a change in the direction of the institute. The marginality of Sáenz's position within the III was also manifested in the negative response of the executive committee of the journal *América Indígena*, official organ of the institute, to publish one of his essays, where he expressed his ideas on the indigenous question and his vision for the III.

The lack of economic resources also affected the operation of the III, as it depended on the contributions of its members. During the first year, México almost completely funded the work of III. The support of the Mexican government ended in 1941 after the change of government, when the indigenous question lost importance. México was one of the last countries of the III to create a national institute on indigenous affairs. Its creation was part of the Pátzcuaro Conference's agreements and would only be fulfilled in 1948. Mexican leadership in advancing a continental *indigenista* agenda did not last long. Nonetheless, some of the projects derived from the Pátzcuaro Conference were conducted in different countries.

In the following years, U.S. public and private institutions became the main funders of the institute's work, which focused on the generation of scientific research. War-related interests motivated the financing of III projects. According to Giraud (2017), the effects of the war on the continental coordination of *indigenismo* were paradoxical. On the one hand, its outbreak created a suitable context for the adoption of *indigenismo*. However, WWII profoundly transformed the world and the political international and continental arena. Although the work of the III was not interrupted, its orientation changed. Moreover, the idea of continental integration based on a shared indigeness was never realized, instead, differences between the United States and Latin America were enhanced.

7.3 The First Meeting of Indigenous People of the Americas

The Pátzcuaro Conference also constituted the first-time that indigenous groups from the Americas came together. About twenty different indigenous groups from México, the United States, Chile, and Panama were represented at the conference. The largest delegations were those of México and the United States. The indigenous groups of the Mexican delegation consisted of Tzotziles, Zapotecos, Mixtecos, Huastecos, Tarahumaras, Nahuas, Otomís, Mazahuas, Tarascos, Totonacos and Coras. The indigenous groups from the U.S. delegation were the Hopi, Pueblos, Pápago, Apache, and Sioux. The Cuna from Panama and the Mapuche-Araucana from Chile were also present.

The considerable number of indigenous delegates who attended the Pátzcuaro Conference took some of the delegates by surprise. They doubted that indigenous people could contribute to the discussions, questioning the value of their participation. In this regard, Marc Becker (1995) cites a private conversation between President Cárdenas and his Secretary of Foreign Affairs, where the latter expressed his concern on the issue. He believed that indigenous delegates would not be able to imagine means to help indigenous peoples of the continent. Cárdenas justified the decision to invite them, saying that although he was probably right, it would be worth inviting one or two indigenous representatives. However, indigenous people were not expected to turn up or have active participation in the Conference.

What happened went against expectations, indigenous delegates did turn up and the conference had to establish a parallel session for indigenous

representatives to meet, which was held at the Vasco de Quiroga hotel. According to Pedro de Alba, the attendance of various indigenous groups was one of the most notable aspects of the Pátzcuaro Conference, stating that ‘in the beginning, there had been no little scepticism over the idea of inviting Indians to be present, but the merit and astuteness of the proposal became evident during the Congress’. Moreover, because of the meeting, the indigenous delegates ‘established among themselves a great bond of companionship and sympathy’ (Tercero, 1940, p. 707).

Despite these comments, it is difficult to assess the impact of indigenous participation in the Conference since this was not registered systematically. However, according to the ‘Final Act’, some of the resolutions considered the contributions of indigenous people that had met in the parallel session; in particular those concerning folk arts and the future meeting of indigenous representatives. In the first case, the Final act mentions that the resolution was the result of ‘having heard the propositions on the subject presented by indigenous delegates’. Equally, the celebration of a folklore festival during the Inter-American Travel Congress is said to have been approved by the indigenous delegates.

Indigenous delegates also proposed the creation of permanent meeting spaces. This was incorporated into resolution 58 entitled National Assembly of Indian Groups which stated that ‘facilities should be provided for representatives of said groups to gather and take action concerning their part in the programme of advancement adopted by the conference’ this would allow them to know each other and work together on its fulfilment. The establishment of an Indian Day of continental character is said to have been proposed by the indigenous delegation from Panama. The date was established as 19th April to commemorate the first time in which the indigenous people from the Americas met, providing an occasion for indigenous people to reflect on the ‘spirit of their race’. For their part, schools and universities would dedicate the day to study present-day indigenous problems. Taken together, the indigenous delegates' proposals indicate that they saw the adoption of a shared group identity as a means of gaining power and recognition, enhancing their political participation.

However, although many countries joined the celebration of the Indian Day, it lost its original intention of commemorating the political participation of indigenous peoples. According to Giraudo (2017), although Indian Day was commemorated in several countries, the celebration did not acquire an inter-

American character. As for the indigenous assembly there is no evidence of its creation. Like the other Conference resolutions, the lack of budget and the global political context of the following years may have affected its compliance. Likewise, the changes in the approach to the indigenous question, from a position that emphasized the political dimension to one that defined itself as ‘apolitical and scientific’ may also have diminished its importance. However, the consequences of the meeting of the indigenous groups and their participation in the Conference should be further considered. The question that arises is whether the Pátzcuaro Conference contributed to generating a continental indigenous conscience.

7.4 Pátzcuaro’s Role in the Conference

The Conference view on the indigenous question was also influenced by the place where the event took place: Pátzcuaro. For Pedro de Alba, the president of the Pan American Union, Pátzcuaro was the ‘ideal scene and the most appropriate historical spot’ for the celebration of the Conference (Tercero, 1940, p. 705). He compared Lake Pátzcuaro with pictorial landscape forms, such as ‘the rich paintings of the Venetian Renaissance school’ and ‘the single line drawings of Foujita’.¹⁶⁰ An article on Pátzcuaro, published in *The Pan-American Bulletin* on the occasion of the Conference, described it as an otherworldly retreat: ‘a picturesque city situated on the slopes of a low range of mountains overlooking beautiful Lake Pátzcuaro’. For Fred E. Wankan (1940), author of the article, this explained the selection of Pátzcuaro as the centre for the ‘new culture’ of Vasco de Quiroga, thus relating its ‘picturesque’ character to the exercise of colonial authority.

Lake Pátzcuaro’s beauty and geographical situation were also linked with the character of the P’urhépecha, described as a beautiful race, noble, simple and skilled, who seem to live in a different world and time, preserving the traditions of their ancestors. They were also described as a ‘stubborn’ race, who had never really adopted the new language and religion and continued struggling with modernity. For this reason, the author asserted, the Mexican government should take care of them and ensure their development (Wankan, 1940).

While condemning the brutality of the conquest, most *indigenistas* celebrated the work of Vasco de Quiroga (see section 4.3.5), who was sent to Michoacan in

¹⁶⁰ The Japanese-French modernist artist Leonard Tsuguharu Foujita.

1533 to re-establish order and governance. Concerning this, Pedro de Alba's inauguration speech mentioned:

Through here there passed that scourge of God named Nuño de Guzmán, but after him there came the saintly Bishop Vasco de Quiroga to bind up wounds, to support hospitals, to establish granaries as a reserve against lean years, to teach the popular arts throughout this region, to plant the grape and the olive which opened new horizons to the Indian (Tercero, 1940, p. 706).

Collier equally celebrated the work of Quiroga in the region, placing the Conference in the same course of events. For him, Quiroga's work was being resumed in the Conference. As the U.S. Indian Commissioner in charge of the U.S. Indian Office, Collier envisaged himself establishing a legacy like the one established by Quiroga in Lake Pátzcuaro. Following Quiroga's steps, he created The Indian Arts and Crafts Board to develop Native American craftsmanship. Collier's admiration for Quiroga extended to Cárdenas, whom he saw as the new embodiment of the old spirit, the conclusion of Quiroga's work in Michoacán (Collier, 1948).

The admiration for Quiroga was widespread among the attendees. So that the Conference resolved to pay him homage along with other 'illustrious benefactors of the native races of America', comprising colonial officers, friars, and missionaries (Tercero, 1940, p.712). Therefore, although they recognized the devastating effects of the conquest, they also saw some colonial representatives as advocates of the indigenous peoples.

Cárdenas's inaugural speech is representative of this ambiguity towards the colonial. He observed how the colonial paternalistic attitude made possible to disguise the injustices of the colonial system, warning the Conference to not to fall into the same approach since he considered that 'the formula for incorporating the Indian into civilization still retain[ed] vestiges of old regimes that sought to conceal the actual inequalities'. However, he also believed that there had always been 'generous spirits' that had regarded the Indian with sympathy.

If Cárdenas and other *indigenistas* failed to notice the unequal relations of power between the indigenous people and their colonial 'benefactors', it was because they were pursuing a similar objective; they were playing a similar role and were persuaded of following their steps. Like their colonial predecessors, the Conference was organised by non-indigenous people, from the dominant cultural group and motivated by a double interest in improving the social conditions of indigenous people and consolidating state power.

Lake Pátzcuaro was also linked with the national libertarian struggles. The recently built Morelos statue on Janitzio Island (see Chapter 6) reinforced this interpretation. In Pedro de Alba's exposition of why Pátzcuaro constituted the ideal setting for the Conference, he expressed:

Over this land upon which we now stand there passed the cavalcade of heroes of Mexican Independence. Facing us, we behold the great statue of Morelos, raised at the scene of his heroic deeds, and surrounded by the ancient dominions of the Tarascan kings (Tercero, 1940, p. 706).

Similarly, for Cárdenas, indigenous peoples were part of the contingent of people that had contributed to 'struggle for the liberty and progress of the nation'.¹⁶¹ In a similar line of reasoning, the article in the Pan American Bulletin established an association between the national struggles and indigenous emancipation, so that, not only indigenous people had contributed to national causes but national events were linked to the process of indigenous liberation.

Upon the summit of Janitzio stands a massive statue of Morelos, the idol of Mexican people and disciple of Hidalgo, the father of the 1810 revolution. Morelos was the first man to see something of the one coming struggle for the reconquest of México by its original inhabitants (Wankan, 1940, pág. 379).

In conclusion, the Pátzcuaro Conference contributed to establish *indigenismo* as a continental policy. The Conference allowed the American nations to recognize indigenousness as a common feature that could help construct a Pan American identity. The prospect of a new world war made this project even more relevant. The selection of Pátzcuaro as the seat of the Conference had an important influence shaping the continental view of the indigenous question, being deployed as the material support for the *indigenista* discourse. Indigenous histories and national narratives were presented as inextricably linked to Pátzcuaro. Moreover, Pátzcuaro was depicted as the historical site in which projects aimed at the indigenous population had been developed, thus constituting the ideal setting for the performance of *indigenismo*. In doing so, they also established Lake Pátzcuaro as a centre for testing out international policies concerning indigenous people. This idea will be further discussed in the examination of the Tarascan project.

¹⁶¹ Cárdenas. 1940. Discurso del presidente de la República en el Primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán

7.5 Pátzcuaro in the World of Tomorrow

The celebration of the conference in Pátzcuaro drew international attention to the region. During the conference, Lake Pátzcuaro represented México before other American countries. There Pátzcuaro was presented not only as a world of yesterday but as a plausible future, a different path for México towards ‘modernity’ that embraced its indigenous heritage. This vision of Pátzcuaro was also present at the New York World Fair (1939-1940). This section examines the role that narratives about the indigenous played within national and continental visions of the future. We begin in the New York World Fair with a general description of the event and the participation of México in the Fair. I then draw on particular elements of the exhibition, such as the map of the Pan-American Highway and the photographs from Janitzio's film, as a starting point to examine various associated discourses and practices, and the way in which indigenous peoples appear within them.

The Fair was inaugurated on 30th April 1939, in memory of the 150th anniversary of George Washington as the first president of the United States. The theme of the exhibition was the construction of the ‘world of tomorrow’. It presented the main advances in telecommunications, aerodynamics, and road transport. WWII broke out six months later causing the fair to close for a few months, affecting the exhibits of some European countries. On 12th May 1940, the fair was reopened after a reorganisation under the new theme ‘for peace and freedom’.

Around thirty-three countries participated in New York World Fair, however, the Fair saved the central place for corporations. The centrality of corporations at the Fair was consistent with the vision of progress and social harmony that the United States was promoting. According to Patterson (2010), the fair provided an opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of cooperation between big business and government. Both the U.S. government and companies sought to restore confidence in capitalist democracy and individual enterprise. In the context of world events, such a vision was promoted as opposing totalitarian ideologies.

According to Marco Duranti (2006, p.1), the world of tomorrow theme represented an ‘attempt to reconstitute national narratives of progress shattered by a past traumatic experience, an unstable present and uncertain expectations for the

future'. They did so by projecting an alternative reality to that of the war, framed by utopic narratives of a near-future where modern technologies would give rise to a harmonious and planned society. The outbreak of the war shifted from a utopic narrative of progress to a nostalgic vision of an innocent past lost. This too was an escape from the unsettling reality of war.

During the New York's World Fair, most exhibits including the Mexican were located in the Hall of Nations (Figure 7.3). As with the Fair, the Mexican exhibit had two parts. México's first exhibit can be described as a historical depiction of México towards modernity, from the glories of prehispanic civilizations, the Colonial period to modern post-revolutionary México. However, the exhibition organizers decided not to include infrastructure and recent technological advances, as this would not help México stand out from other countries. According to the art historian Justino Fernández (1940), who was in charge of the installation of the pavilion in 1940, the exhibit had primarily an 'artistic nature'. It resembled previous exhibits in the way it represented the country, stressing its cultural richness based on deep historical roots. Yet it also contributed to the Pan-American tone of the fair, which linked Mexican art with the development of a continental art (see below).



Figure 7.3. *The Mexican Pavilion at the New York's World Fair 1939-1940. Source: Bulletin of the Pan American Union (1940), 74 (11).*

In charge of the exhibition was a committee of experts, each of them responsible for a particular section. Archaeological pieces and reproductions of monuments represented prehispanic México. Alfonso Caso, director of INAH, was in charge of this section. The Colonial Section consisted of a display of colonial art objects. In charge of its assemblage was Manuel Toussaint, director of the recently created Institute of Aesthetic Research, UNAM. There was also a Travel Section under the direction of Miguel O. de Mendizabal, comprising a series of maps and posters showing the different parts of México, along with a selection of folk art. The statistics section showed the country's most recent advances in the different areas of the economy, education, and public works.

For the 1940 season, the Mexican pavilion was altered. In part, because an exhibition on Mexican art had been installed at the New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). The exhibition, entitled 'Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art', was originally planned to take place in France but because of WWII, it was moved to the United States. It was announced as the 'largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Mexican art ever assembled'.¹⁶² The exhibition featured about five thousand objects comprising sections on prehispanic, colonial, folk art, and modern artists. In charge of putting together the exhibition were Alfonso Caso, Manuel Toussaint, Roberto Montenegro and Miguel Covarrubias, respectively. According to Itala Schmelz (2012), the MOMA exhibition became the epicentre of New York's wave of enthusiasm for Mexican culture.

The MOMA exhibition was not the first of its kind in the United States. Exhibitions of Mexican art had been organised in the United States since the early 1920s. At least three exhibitions of the same magnitude had been held before in the United States in 1922, 1928 and 1930 (see Delpar, 1995). Unlike the first exhibition financed by the Mexican government to improve the image of the country in the United States, the other two were organized by U.S. public and private organizations, reflecting a growing interest in Mexican arts. Most of the Mexican art exhibitions followed the same formula, they coded prehispanic and indigenous art as Mexican, while presenting Mexican contemporary art as drawing on historical tradition. The 1940 MOMA exhibition was no exception, culminating

¹⁶² Press release. 'Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art Opens at MOMA. May 15, 1940. MOMA Online archive.

with the live creation of the mural 'Dive Bomber and Tank' by José Clemente Orozco.

During the fair, the United States organised several exhibitions of Latin American art. One of these, the 'Latin American Exhibition of Fine and Applied Art', was directly organised by the New York World's Fair Commission, featuring nine countries of Latin America. The exhibition was held in the Riverside Museum, from 2 June to 17 September 1939.¹⁶³ Other small exhibitions of Latin American Art were organized during the fair. Although promoted as Latin American Art some of them were exhibitions of specific countries.¹⁶⁴ The review of the Argentine Art exhibition published by the Pan-American bulletin noted that the development of art in Argentina and the United States had followed a similar path; none of them was indigenous, their roots were European but more recent trends indicated that they were 'growing up [...] turning away from Europe and discovering their birthright'.¹⁶⁵

Muralism was also present at the New York's Fair. More than one hundred murals were painted for the buildings of the fair. One of the muralists, Anton Refregier, who created murals for the Works Project Administration building, expressed 'We are the mural painters. We hope we are catching up with our great fellow artists of México. We will show what mural painting can be!' (Patterson, 2010). In tune with the Panamericanism trend, some artists and intellectuals considered prehispanic and indigenous art as part of the artistic heritage of the Western Continent (Delpar, 1995). In promoting the development of muralism, the United States saw itself as contributing to the development of an authentic art in the continent; the production of a common culture based on a shared heritage.

The art exhibitions organised in the context of the Fair were also part of the 'Good neighbor policy' promoted by the Roosevelt administration (see section 2.6), which advocated cooperation and mutual understanding among American countries. They were based on the idea that the arts could contribute to the construction of cultural relations between the Americas.¹⁶⁶ However, it is important to note that, although these exhibitions were announced by the Pan American

¹⁶³ Latin American Exhibition of Fine and Applied Art. Bulletin of the Pan American Union. 74 (1), p.19-31

¹⁶⁴ Recent exhibits of Latin American Art in the United States. Bulletin of the Pan American Union, 74 (3), p.136-146.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p.144

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p.136.

Union as cultural and intellectual cooperation activities, there were no exhibitions of U.S. arts, but all were about Latin American or Mexican art, placing the U.S. in a different position. Thus, Pan-Americanism fluctuated between a policy of cooperation and a policy of the United States towards Latin America.

7.5.1 Consuming Difference

The new exhibit in the New York's Fair emphasized México touristic attractions and Lázaro Cárdenas Six-Year Programme. The installation of the 1940 exhibition was overseen by the art historian Justino Fernández (see Chapter 6). The content of the exhibit, guided spectators on how they should see México, the places they should visit and the activities they should engage with to experience México's cultural authenticity. Travel maps and posters were located alongside a selection of folk art. A handicraft shop was installed in the same space and travel literature was offered to the pavilion's visitors. The archaeological salon consisted of the reproduction of emblematic objects and sites. The section on national statistics displayed the most relevant aspects of Cárdenas administration. Models of infrastructure works were also displayed. Although this aspect had a secondary importance, according to Justino Fernández, the section attracted great attention due to its arrangement; models of infrastructure developments standing next to folkloric representations of the country.

The exhibit also displayed a map of the Pan-American Highway, whose section comprising México and Central America was also known as the Inter-American Highway. The exhibit emphasized México's cooperation in its construction, whose section from México City to the border city of Laredo had just been completed. The map showed the main towns along the route, highlighting the tourist attractions. In a way, the change of theme of the Mexican exhibit mirrored that of the fair, from showing México's route towards 'modernity' to promoting México as a place for holidays.

The idea of connecting the continent through a highway was first suggested during the fifth International Conference of the American Republics held in Chile in 1923. Among the objectives pursued with the construction of the Pan-American highway were the improvement of transportation, tourism, trade and hemispheric defence (Coblentz, 1942). Though it was considered that the construction of road infrastructure of continental scope would contribute to closer relations between countries, there were important tensions around the construction of the highway

regarding United States intentions (Ficek, 2016). Notably, the U.S. section of the highway was absent from most maps of the Pan-American Highway. This is the case of the map illustrating the cover of the booklet *The Pan American Highway* published by the Pan-American Union (Figure 7.4).



Figure 7.4. Cover of the booklet *The Pan American Highway* published by the Pan American Union. Source: Coblenz (1942).

The Pan-American Highway project coincided with the Mexican government's plans to build a federal highway network, which was seen as contributing to national integration efforts. The highway also assured important benefits for tourism as road travel became more and more popular. The Laredo - México section of the Pan American Highway was officially opened with a motorcade of fifty-six vehicles from the United States to México. A brochure entitled *Down to Mexico in your own car* produced by the Department of Advertising and Propaganda (DAPP for its initials in Spanish) reproduced some comments of the people that participated in the caravan. The comments highlighted the technical aspect of the road, while also stressing its geographical setting. This aspect was also emphasised in the cover

(Figure 7.5). One of the comments reproduced in the brochure, was from Josephus Daniels, ambassador of the United States in México, who stated:

The highway [...] was one of the best constructed roads in America [...]. The magnificent scenery is unsurpassed. The bridges are strong and safe. The road is well graded and the trip was made on time because of its perfection. The thousands of tourists and businessmen from the United States who will pass over it will find the trip one of pleasure.

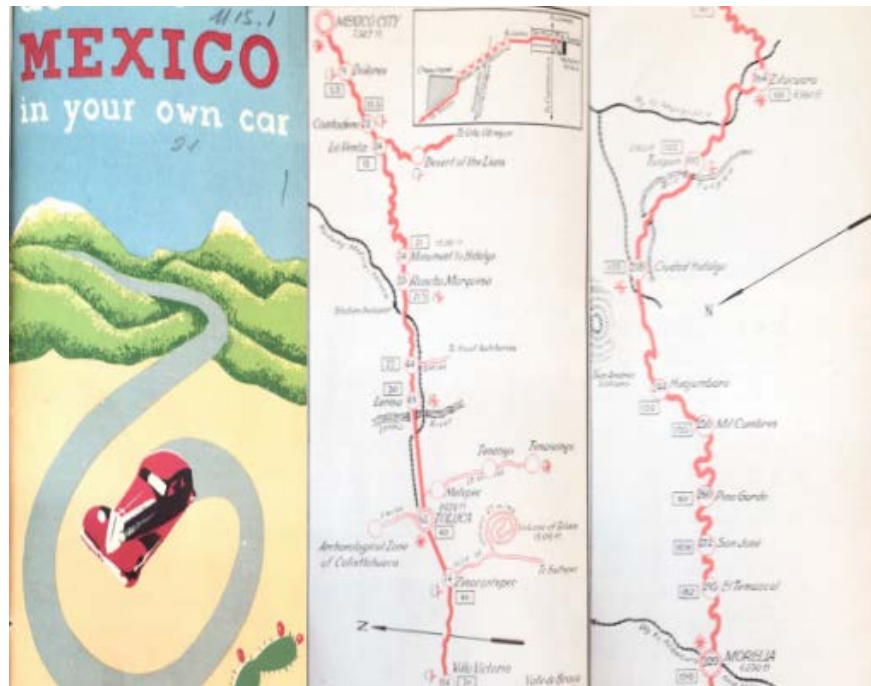


Figure 7.5. Highway México-Toluca-Morelia-Pátzcuaro. Source: *Down to Mexico in your own car* (1937), by the Departamento Autónomo de Prensa y Publicidad.

As the Pan-American highway joined Mexican federal and U.S. roads, México was also attracted by the economic potential of U.S. motorists in México. U.S. tourism in México, developed during the last decade, was furthered by the creation of the Tourism Department, during Cárdenas' administration. Travelling to México was promoted as an affordable trip for the typical American family, as exemplified in the following statement from a tourist brochure: 'The day has come to drive your car southward to México's paradise land [...] with the completion of the Pan-American Highway as far as the Aztec capital, México has thrown open its doors to the streams of everyday American vacationists.'

The description of the route highlighted the diversity of climates and landscapes that the Pan-American Highway crossed in México. Archaeological sites, colonial architecture, 'luxuriant nature', and 'genuine native life' were among the things the tourist could see along the road. Among the points of interest

indicated on the map were national parks, historical sites, and monuments, as well as a fish farm. The last section of the road ended in the town of Quiroga, northeast of Lake Pátzcuaro, noting possible sites of interest. The list of possible places to visit ends with Tzintzuntzan, the ‘old capital of the Tarascan’, and finally Pátzcuaro, ‘the charming town of the lake that no tourist should fail to visit’. A picture of Lake Pátzcuaro seen from the road closes the description of the route.

Another guide entitled *Mexico's Western Highways* edited by Pemex Travel Club included the new section of the highway, finished in 1939 (Figure 7.6). The new section of the highway connected the cities of Morelia and Guadalajara, crossing the Lake Pátzcuaro region. The cover of the brochure includes Lake Pátzcuaro's fishing scenes among its elements. The rest of the elements included in the cover do not make direct reference to the other places described in the guide but to iconic images of México.

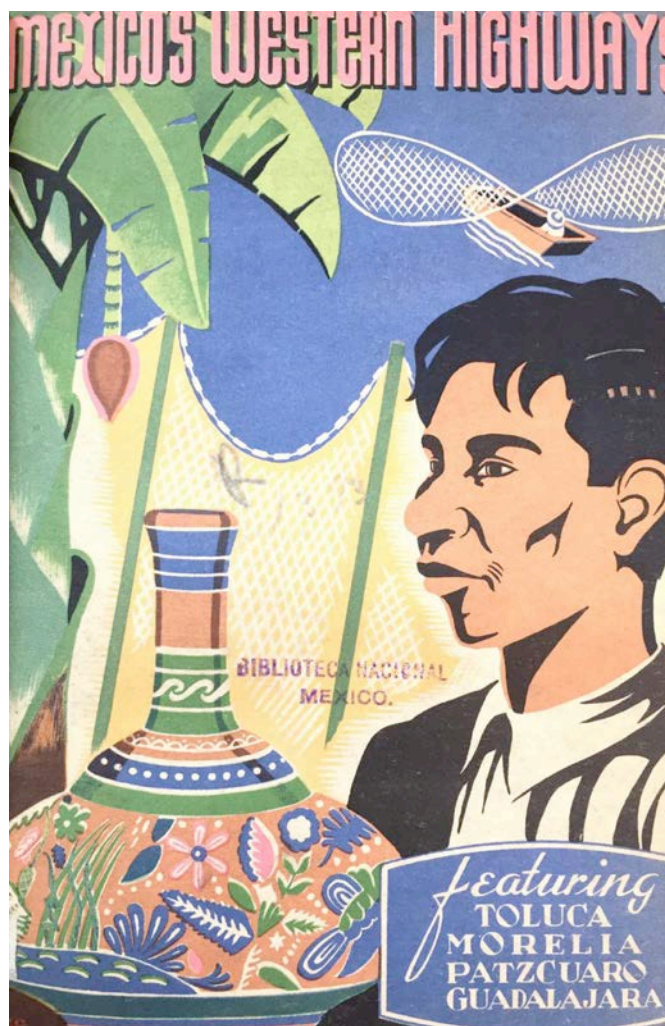


Figure 7.6. *Mexico's Western Highways*

The guide suggested tourists buy lacquer works in Quiroga on their visit to the Lake Pátzcuaro region, recommending paying attention to detail, looking for authentic works. Consequently, the guide promoted the adoption of certain roles associated with art collectors and ethnographers, as authenticators. The guide also recommended not to miss the dance of the Old Men. Otherwise, they could arrange a ‘command’ performance for a fee, highlighting the new role of tourism in the performance of cultural traditions, complicating notions of cultural authenticity. While the performance of dances and traditions outside their original context of production was not new, performing culture for tourist audiences involved its commodification and consumption. Interestingly, the guide associated present-day visitors with the Spanish conquerors, stating ‘four centuries ago its beautiful and appealing situation must have been attractive to the conquering Spaniards as it is to the visitor today’ hinting at the neo-colonial aspect involved in cultural tourism in the region. Today people from Janitzio perform fishing with butterfly nets for tourists and every year thousands of tourists visit the island to witness the Day of the Dead. The dance of the Old Men is also performed in the squares of all tourist towns in Michoacán, such as Morelia (Figure 7.7).



Figure 7.7. Photograph of the dance of the Old Men. Source: *Mexico's western highways* (1939).

In this regard, Roger (2006) mentions that the sale of elements of subordinate/colonized cultures with their active participation often occurs under conditions where there are few other options to earn a living. However, he adds, economic and ideological constraints do not necessarily eliminate agency. Instead, these conditions also enable or constitute limited forms of agency. In the case of

Lake Pátzcuaro, the performance of cultural traditions was shaped by the development of a regional economy based on tourism and the great popularity of indigenous cultural products in México and abroad. In this context, cultural tourism also implied the opportunity for indigenous people to gain recognition and improve their economic situation, in a context of changing power relations both within the country and globally. In words of James Clifford (2013, p.46) ‘This is hegemony at work: interactive and negotiated but ultimately in terms dictated by the more powerful’.

7.5.2 Pátzcuaro’s Indigenistas Images

In addition to the displays of folk art, archaeological objects and travel maps, the new exhibit in the New York World’s Fair included photographs and regional dresses installed by the Mexican photographer Luis Márquez, along with dance and folklore shows. Among the folklore performances was a traditional celebration from the island of Janitzio. Both the exhibition of photographs and dresses and the folklore performances were organised by Márquez himself, combining ‘internationally popular picturesque themes with refined modern aesthetics’ (Jolly, 2018, p.41). During his stay in New York, he also created a series of photographs about the New York’s World Fair, some of which overlapped Mexican folklore with the modernist setting of the Fair (Schmelz, 2012).

Luis Márquez’s relationship with the Lake Pátzcuaro region came from his first experiences as a photographer at SEP where he began his career in the early 1920s. As a SEP officer, Márquez travelled around México creating a visual record of indigenous groups. There he also got involved in the staging of dances and indigenous traditions, which included the display of indigenous clothing and ethnographic photographs. In 1923, he travelled to Janitzio for the celebration of the Day of the Dead, along with the Italian photographer Tina Modotti, and the folklorists Francisco Dominguez, Carlos González, and Ruben M. Campos (see Chapter 4). His visit to Janitzio is said to have made a deep and lasting impression on him, influencing the theme of his work (Tibol, 1989).

In 1931, Márquez was appointed as one of the cultural assessors of the Soviet filmmaker Sergei M. Eisenstein who was working in a film project in México.¹⁶⁷ The film entitled ¡Qué viva México! was conceived as a study of Mexican

¹⁶⁷ The work of a cultural assessor was to supervise an accurate representation of México.

culture. Although the project was never completed, different short films were produced using Eisenstein's footage (Salazkina, 2009). One of these films was 'Time in the Sun', whose premiere coincided with the presence of Márquez at the fair (Schmelz, 2012). In 1934, Márquez was hired to produce the photograph for the *indigenista* film 'Janitzio' directed by Carlos Navarro. The screenplay was also written by Márquez. According to Jolly (2018, p.58-59) the film complicated picturesque aesthetics and its ideological assumptions by 'deploying the social realism of documentarians and Sergei Eisenstein's dramatic formalist experimentation', fluctuating between 'picturesque and antipicturesque imagery'.

The photographic exhibition that Márquez set up for the New York Fair presented an *indigenista* picture of México. Photographs from the film 'Janitzio' stood out in Márquez's exhibition. In particular, the photograph of Los patriarcas (The Patriarchs) that was part of the publicity of the film (Figure 7.8, Figure 7.9). The photograph is centred around three elderly P'urhépecha fishermen, elevating their figure to heroic proportions. According to Jolly (2018) the photograph projected the end of a proud generation, generating a sense of nostalgia, considered as typical of world fairs and tourism. Márquez's work was well received at the Fair, having won first prize at the International Photography Exhibition of the New York Fair.

In 1943, the photograph of Los patriarcas would win the first prize in a photographic exhibition organized by the Pan American Union (Schmelz, 2012). This speaks to the growing importance of Lake Pátzcuaro as a national icon and its ability to represent México before national and international audiences.



Figure 7.8. *Los Patriarcas*. Source: Colección Luis Márquez, IIE-UNAM Photographic Archive.

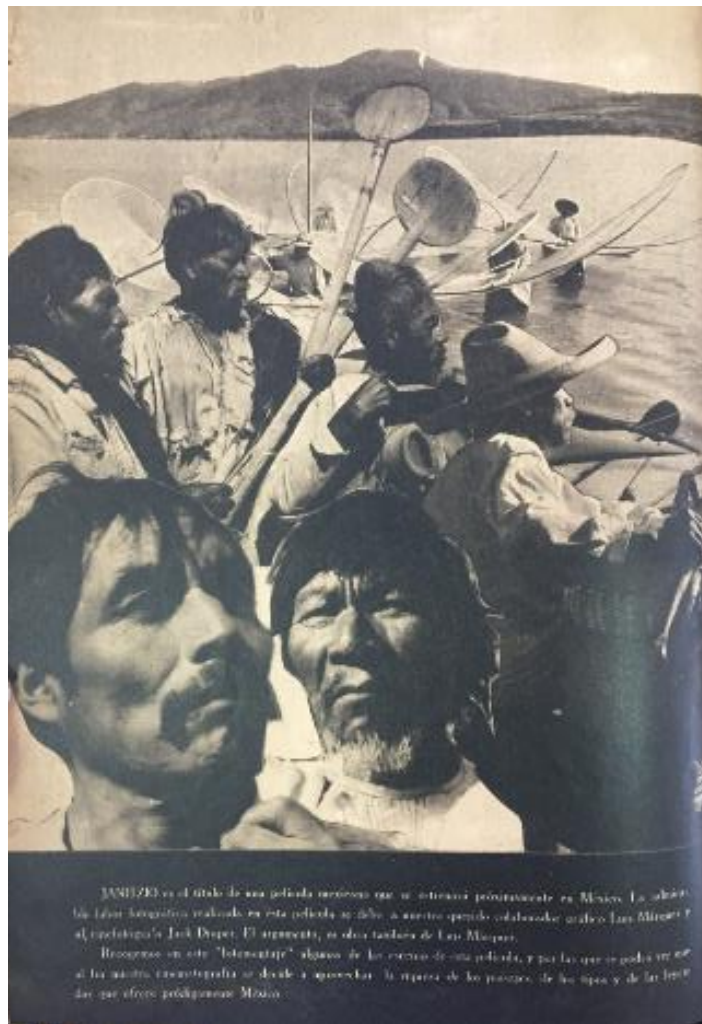


Figure 7.9. *Janitzio* film advertisement. Source: Mapa. Revista de Turismo, 1935, Vol. 2, n.12.

The film portrayed scenes of everyday life and indigenous traditions, some of which were already part of the regional iconography used at the Fair to promote this

region as a tourist destination (see above). For instance, scenes of people fishing with butterfly shape-nets, the weaving of nets, women carrying clay pots and Janitzio's Day of the Dead. Some of these images were also included in photomontage used by the tourism magazine MAPA to promote the film, whose aesthetics differed greatly from that of the tourist guides (Figure 7.9). The disruptive aesthetics of the photomontage anticipated the tone of the film. However, the modernist photomontage contrasted with its description in the magazine, according to which, the scenes included in the photomontage evidenced how the film industry had finally 'made use of the richness of landscapes, types, and legends that Mexico lavishly offers'.

The film, set in Janitzio, was a romantic drama of social orientation, in which the idyllic world of the island is upset by the arrival of a capitalist from the city. In contrast to the island, the city is represented as a corrupt place, yet it also symbolises modernity, posing a conflict between both worlds. The story turns around a couple of locals, Erendira and Zirahuen, who are engaged. The capitalist not only appropriates the work of fishermen, to whom he refuses to pay a fair price for their catch but also wishes to seize Erendira. Using deception, he manages to put Zirahuen in jail. The capitalist offers Erendira to free Zirahuen in exchange for spending a few days with him. In addition to the capitalist's obsession with Erendira, in the film the restrictive social norms and values of the community lead the couple to a tragic end, presenting indigenous values as obsolete. The idyllic world of the island is thus presented in the film as condemned to disappear by the advance of modernity.

The story of *Janitzio* is a common trope in the literature of revolution and *indigenista* literature, in which a powerful man tries to seize the 'woman of another man', who does not have anything but her love. Although many of these stories tried to cause outrage about the alienation of work and property in rural areas, in using women as an extreme example of that situation they ended up depicting women as property, reflecting and reinforcing the values of a patriarchal society. The play *Tierra y Libertad* (1916) by the anarchist writer Ricardo Flores Magón followed a similar theme, there, however, such a situation incited an armed uprising on a hacienda. Similarly, in the film *Redes* (1936) the murder of a fisher unites fishers against the injustices committed by a middleman. Conversely, in *Janitzio* film characters are depicted as passive, unable to exercise any agency over their situation.

The participation of Janitzio's inhabitants in the recording of the film points towards a different direction from the one portrayed in the film. Moreover, *Janitzio* was filmed during the construction of the Morelos statue in which they also participated, attesting to their ability to navigate the new social and economic circumstances, marked by the rise of Janitzio as a tourist destination (see Chapter 6). In fact, according to local folklore, the construction of Morelos statue in Janitzio and the subsequent recording of the film resulted from the actions of one of the island's inhabitants, who as a reward for saving President Cárdenas from a shipwreck in the lake, asked him to do something that could bring permanent economic benefits to his community. President Cárdenas then offered to change the location of the statue from San Jeronimo, north of Lake Pátzcuaro, to Janitzio, becoming a tourist destination (Cortés Hernández, 2020).

Another version of Janitzio's story appeared in 1941 in the play 'Los Pescadores' written by the normalista student Raúl Arreola Cortés. The Japanese-born theatre director Seki Sano¹⁶⁸ encouraged the student to write the play while he was attending one of his courses. The play tells the story of the abuse of an intermediary who refuses to pay fair prices to the fishers for the fish they sell. Advised by Janitzio's teacher, a group of fishers decides to create a fishing cooperative, but soon they face the wrongdoings of the middleman, the municipal president, and the priest (Sánchez Díaz, 2018). Arreola Cortés version of the Janitzio story illustrates the extent to which *indigenistas* narratives were subject to intervention and local reappropriation.

7.5.3 'A Mexican Land of Lakes and Lacquers'

Márquez's photographs also circulated in the *National Geographic Magazine*. They appear in the article 'A Mexican Land of Lakes and Lacquers' (1937), a sort of visual essay with photos by Márquez, Helen Fischer, Summer W. Matheson, and Luis Perez Parra. According to Ricardo Pérez Monfort (2012), one of the photographs shows Emilio 'El Indio' Fernández in his role as Zirahuen, standing on a canoe with his chest uncovered (Figure 7.10). The caption reads 'An Adonis of the Lake Proud and Virile', adding, 'Many fishermen of the Pátzcuaro region are magnificent

¹⁶⁸ Seki Sano (1905-1966) was an actor and theatre director of Japanese origin, founder of the so-called 'theatre of the left' in Japan. Due to his political militancy, he was forced to leave Japan. In 1939, after the intervention of President Lázaro Cárdenas, he arrived in Mexico as a political refugee and stayed there until his death.

physical specimens. Chroniclers say that when the early Spaniards arrived, were the finest looking of all Mexican aborigines' (cited in Monfort, 2012, p.23). The article omitted to mention that Fernández was an actor. In this regard, Pérez Monfort (2012) observes that Fernández was anything but a 'Tarascan Indian'. While this is true, it is worth noting that Márquez's photograph was not very different from other representations of the P'urhépechas.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, although Fernández was not 'indigenous',¹⁷⁰ it is interesting to note that part of Fernández's reasons for playing indigenous characters was to promote a positive image of them. In fact, part of the *indigenistas* policies to transform the negative representations of indigenous people, involved promoting an indigenous model of beauty, which would be incorporated into a more inclusive model of Mexican beauty (see López, 2010). Therefore, it is possible to argue that if the magazine selected this photograph was because it conformed to the indigenized model of Mexican beauty promoted by the *indigenistas* elsewhere. Márquez's photographs of Lake Pátzcuaro contributed to the consolidation and dissemination of this image of the indigenous.



Figure 7.10. Emilio Fernández in its role as Zirabuen in the film *Janitzio* by Luis Márquez. Source: Archivo División filmica, Colección y Archivo de Fundación Telenisa.

¹⁶⁹ See for example the murals presented in Chapter 6 of the thesis, particularly the portrayal of Tanganxoan.

¹⁷⁰ Fernández was from the northern state of Coahuila, his nickname as 'Emilio el Indio Fernández', referred both to his indigenous heritage from his mother lineage and to the many indigenista films where he participated.

At the beginning of the section I said that the vision presented at the Pátzcuaro Conference was also present at the Fair. This is true to the extent that México presented an *indigenista* image of the country, which celebrated indigenous artistic creativity. However, as I have also discussed, the images of Lake Pátzcuaro presented at the fair also depicted indigenous folkways as a ‘world of yesterday’, condemned to disappear. In what way then was indigenous culture part of the world of tomorrow? The narrative of the exhibit suggested that it was through its incorporation into the national mestizo culture and its appropriation by other sectors of society that indigenous culture could be preserved. During the fair, Lake Pátzcuaro epitomised these narratives.

To sum up, during the fair the content of the exhibit, guided spectators on how they should see México, the places they should visit and the activities they should engage with to experience México’s cultural authenticity. The emphasis on tourism in the second part of the México exhibit at the New York’s Fair pointed out to the connection between arts and tourism. As arts had come to represent the country’s essential values, their display offered the public a look into the country. Notions of cultural authenticity attracted international tourism and created a market for Mexican arts. Márquez’s photographs of Pátzcuaro contributed to the creation of an *indigenista* image of the country. Here, as in the case of architecture discussed in the previous chapter, modernist aesthetics were employed to create a discourse about the national (see Chapter 6).

On the other hand, while the promotion of tourism and arts was framed within a Pan Americanist discourse of continental unity, the Fair fluctuated between two versions of Pan Americanism. One emphasised the shared cultural heritage among the countries of the continent, while the second relied upon notions of difference between Latin America and the United States. The images of the region that México put in the fair to promote tourism involved the creation of a romantic, exoticized ‘Other’, allowing the U.S. to distinguish itself as the opposite, a modern and developed country. Both at the New York’s Fair and the Pátzcuaro Conference, the promotion of popular arts was framed by narratives of national and continental unity, based on the consumption of indigenous culture. The same *indigenista* discourse that promoted the appreciation of popular art at the same time justified the need to intervene to integrate the indigenous population into modernity.

7.6 Cultural Geographies of a Changing Region

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, various applied linguistic and anthropological research projects were carried out in the region. The characterization of the region as a changing place, ‘a world on the way to disappearing’ supported the idea of using applied research in processes of cultural change. Unlike previous projects, their development was not exclusively a national affair, involving cooperation across national boundaries. The Tarascan Projects discussed in this section were part of the resolutions of the Pátzcuaro Conference on the use of social science research in cultural change programmes.

There were two Tarascan Projects discussed at the Pátzcuaro Conference: 1) the Linguistic Tarascan Project (LTP) and 2) the Anthropological Tarascan Project (ATP). The first was a project of applied linguistics that was part of an experimental programme of bilingual education developed by the DAI. The results of the first phase of the project were presented at the conference, leading to the adoption of a series of resolutions on the use of indigenous languages in education. The second was an anthropological project that involved cooperation between Mexican and U.S. institutions. The project received official approval during the Pátzcuaro Conference, which also suggested the implementation of similar projects to the participating countries (see above).

Both projects were designed to be developed throughout the Tarascan area, however only the anthropological project succeeded in doing so, working in the Lake Pátzcuaro Region and the Meseta P’urhépecha, whereas the LTP only worked in Paracho and few other neighbour towns in the Meseta P’urhépecha. The cancellation of the LTP by the incoming government in late 1940, prevented it from expanding to other places. Although President Manuel Ávila Camacho (Cárdenas’ successor) also withdrew financial support for the ATP, it allowed the project to continue to operate, leading to the establishment of a new collaboration agreement between the Smithsonian Institution’s Institute of Social Anthropology (ISA)¹⁷¹ and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH based on its initials in Spanish). The programme of cooperation between the ISA and the

¹⁷¹ The ISA was created in 1942 by Julian Steward, as an instrument of scientific cooperation between the United States and Latin America. The ISA would finance other projects in Mexico and Latin American along with other public and private organisations such as the OCIAA, the Social Science Research Council, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Guggenheim, Ford and the Viking Fund.

INAH was conceived as an extension of the previous one, established between the DAI, the Department of Anthropology of the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and the University of California (UC).

7.6.1 The Linguistic Tarascan Project. Applied Linguistics and Literacy Missions in the Tarascan Area

The LTP was the first project of literacy in a native language, developed in conjunction by the CLI with the sponsorship of the DAI. For the ideologists of *indigenismo*, the incorporationist educational policies based on the teaching of Spanish had not yet achieved the objective of culturally and socially integrating indigenous peoples into Mexican society. They believed a most effective way to promote indigenous peoples' cultural development was through teaching in indigenous languages. It was thought that literacy in indigenous languages would facilitate the subsequent teaching of Spanish. The LTP was based on these ideas. Linguistic research focused on the development of literacy methods in indigenous languages. The organisers hoped that if the project succeeded, it would become a model for indigenous education throughout the country (Swadesh 1939).

The director of the project was Mauricio Swadesh from the University of Wisconsin, who studied with Edward Sapir at Yale University. Sapir was a student of Boas, from whom he adopted the idea of cultural and linguistic relativism. In 1939, Swadesh was responsible for the linguistic area of the DAI. Other participants of the LTP, were the linguists and anthropologists Alfredo Barrera Vazquez, founder of the *Academia de la Lengua Maya* (Mayan Language Academy), Norman McQuown, student of Sapir at Yale University, and Maxwell and Elizabeth Lathrop, from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). The Lathrop family had been working in the town of Puacuaro southwest of Lake Pátzcuaro since 1936, on the development of a P'urhépecha 'practical alphabet'.

The SIL was an organization established in 1936 by the presbyterian minister William Cameron Townsend, its purpose was to expand the existent knowledge on indigenous languages, promote literacy, and translate the Bible into indigenous languages. The presence of evangelical missionaries in the project was related to their technical skills in descriptive linguistics. The confrontation between the Catholic Church and the post-revolutionary state may also have favoured the

work of the SIL in México since the establishment of other religious cults was seen as contributing to fracturing the ideological hegemony of the Catholic Church.

The LTP began in July 1939 with the students at the indigenous boarding school of Paracho,¹⁷² attended by students from the neighbouring communities. The first part of the LTP focused on the training of P'urhépecha teachers in the use of the P'urhépecha alphabet. During this period, they taught the students at the indigenous boarding school, as well as the people of the community, receiving a positive response. After their training, the students became 'missionary teachers', who travelled to neighbouring communities to teach basic literacy skills, replicating the experience they went through. The P'urhépecha alphabet developed by the LTP had a phonetic character and sought to be as simple as possible to popularize its use and teaching. They adapted the Spanish alphabet, eliminating orthographic rules that could be confusing, this would also facilitate the learning of Spanish in a subsequent stage.

During the same year (1939), the project started up *La Prensa Tarasca* (The Tarascan Press), a printing house that published literacy learning materials, consisting of alphabets, and reading booklets. The latter contained stories, oral traditions, and *pirekuas* (p'urhépecha songs) written by the students themselves. Other publications had an educational character and were aimed at improving the social and cultural status of the communities. Among the themes were health and hygiene, agriculture techniques and fundamental laws affecting indigenous people (Barlow, 1948).

The idea for the second part of the project was to continue with the literacy missions and the training of native teachers, expanding throughout the Tarascan region. The research part of the project would include linguistic studies, as well as research on the social and economic aspects of the P'urhépecha communities. The final aim was to incorporate the local dialects into a standard version of the P'urhépecha. The goal of a standard language was to solve communication problems between communities, contributing to their mutual understanding (Swadesh 1939). However, due to the cancellation of the LTP, the second part could not be carried out.

¹⁷² The idea was for the graduates of indigenous boarding schools to serve as agents of social change in their communities by introducing literacy, Spanish, hygiene concepts, new agricultural techniques, and other elements of 'modernity'.

For the government of Ávila Camacho, the LTP compromised its policy of national unity due of its social objectives of reinforcing inter-communitarian organization. Popular political organisation, promoted by Cárdenas, was now in conflict with his policy of national consensus. So that although linguistic research continued as part of the Tarascan Project, the ‘first Mexican native language literacy project’ was abandoned.

As for SIL, the change of government did not affect its work in the country, as evidenced by its continued presence. However, the involvement of the SIL in the LTP speaks to a broader relationship between missionary work and linguistic projects, which since colonial times had helped to consolidate power. In the opinion of Professor Rafael Ramirez (1939), the effectiveness of teaching in indigenous languages was based on the successful experience of the missionary friars who ‘brought their culture in the indigenous language to the Indians’.¹⁷³ The first studies of P’urhépecha date back to the early colonial period, to the works of the Franciscan friar Maturino Gilberti. There, linguistic work was key in establishing Colonial power linked to the evangelization process. Similarly, for some *indigenistas*, literacy in native languages would allow for better acculturation. In the case of SIL, its work in México and Latin America was funded by the United States government, acting on behalf of its interests. According to Todd Hartch (2006), the ‘missionaries of the state’, as he calls them, contributed to consolidating United States presence on the continent.

After the cancellation of the project, in February 1941, Alvin J. Gordon, of the Contemporary Films Company, came to México commissioned by the UC to record a film about the literacy works of the LTP.¹⁷⁴ The film was entitled *México Builds a Democracy* and had the approval of the new Mexican government; it was aimed at an American audience and was intended at improving the knowledge of México in the United States. As the LTP had finished, they asked some of their participants to recreate the process. The film follows the work of the philologist Ignacio Castillo, from the INAH, and the P’urhépecha schoolteacher Pablo Velázquez, from their arrival at the boarding school to their assignment to the community of Arantepecua, where they stayed for six months on a literacy mission.

¹⁷³ Ramírez, R. 1939. La política educativa de nuevo trato hacia los indios. *El Maestro Rural*, 12(9), p.22.23

¹⁷⁴ Available online at the American Indian Film Gallery <https://aifg.arizona.edu/film/México-builds-democracy>

The film was first exhibited at an Education Conference in California, where it had great success. The OCIAA later acquired the rights to the film.

In 1943, Ignacio del Castillo would take steps to obtain a copy of the film. He wrote to the director of the National Museum asking him to request a copy of the film from OCIAA Director Nelson Rockefeller on behalf of the museum. He based his request on the fact that he had participated as an actor and that the film used sound material from INAH. For del Castillo, it was paradoxical that although the film was about México, it had never been exhibited in the country, so people in México were not aware of its importance. Moreover, the cancelling of the project revealed that the government was also ignorant of its significance, thence the importance of the diffusion of the film in México. The final request was made by INAH, stating the aforementioned reasons.¹⁷⁵

The approval of the LTP film by Ávila Camacho may seem paradoxical since his administration cancelled the project. However, the film reproduced an image that had granted the country some prestige and that had been present in the relationship between México and the United States during the last decade. The approval of the film could also be due to the fact that it added to the objectives of the Good Neighbor policy. A similar reasoning may have underpinned the continuation of the Tarascan anthropological project since it promoted cooperation between the two countries.

7.6.2 The Anthropological Tarascan Project

The Anthropological Tarascan Project was presented for the first time at the Pátzcuaro Conference by Daniel Rubin de la Borbolla, director of the Department of Anthropology of the IPN, and Ralph Beals, from UC Los Angeles, who would be appointed as the executive directors of the project. Paul Kirchoff (IPN) and Alfred Kroeber (UC Berkeley) were also involved in the development of the proposal. As mentioned above, there were two programmes of collaboration associated with the research project. The original agreement was between the DAI, the IPN and UC. The second collaboration project was established in 1943, between the ISA and the INAH. The ISA took over the role as the main sponsor of the project to overcome the financial uncertainties of the project. The new collaboration agreement also integrated the recently created Regional Institute of

¹⁷⁵ Archivo Histórico del MNAH, vol. 130, Folder 12.

Anthropology and History (IRAH), responsible for the administration of historical archives, local museums, historical buildings, as well as for directing ethnographic and anthropological research in Michoacán.

During the presentation of the project at the Pátzcuaro Conference, Rubin de la Borbolla and Beals described the area as poorly studied despite its anthropological, linguistic, archaeological, and historical importance. Moreover, the processes of change that were underway in the region made it a site of great interest for anthropological research. The paper predicted rapid transformations in the heart of the Tarascan area due to the construction of the branch highway México City – Guadalajara, seen as a trigger for cultural change in the region, making a case for the use of applied anthropology (see above). The study promised practical utility by helping to lessen the impacts of cultural change and channel it positively (Beals and de la Borbolla, 1940). The narrative of a vanishing world allowed cultural anthropologists to position themselves as the professional in charge of directing the processes of cultural change.

The idea that anthropology could be used in processes of cultural change was an accepted vision among American cultural anthropologists at that time. Applied anthropology in the United States was informed by Boas's ideas about culture, particularly by the concepts of diffusionism and acculturation. Within the project of applied anthropology, the so-called 'salvage ethnology' played a central role. Anthropologists had to document 'primitive cultures' thoroughly before the assault of modernity made them disappear, involving the collection of cultural data and artifacts. Thorough documentation of these cultures would allow for future study and provide a basis for successful interventions. This vision matched with the interest of the Mexican government to incorporate indigenous populations into the nation. Likewise, the application of anthropology in processes of cultural change was not new in México. Rubin de la Borbolla and Beals were aware of this trajectory and recognised Gamio's work in Teotihuacan (see Chapter 4) and Miguel Othon de Mendizabal in the Mezquital Valley as predecessors of the project.

The proposal for an applied anthropology project in the Tarascan region also reflected the new panorama of the social sciences in México, marked by the professionalization of anthropology¹⁷⁶ and the creation of a series of research institutes and schools, including the Department of Anthropology of the IPN

¹⁷⁶ In 1940 Cárdenas issued a decree recognising the professional character of anthropology.

(1937) and the INAH (1939). The professional character of anthropology was recognised in 1940 by Cárdenas, before leaving the presidency. In 1942 the teaching of anthropology moved from the IPN to the INAH, with the creation of the National School of Anthropology (ENA based on its initials in Spanish), which would become the National School of Anthropology and History in 1946 (ENAH based on its initials in Spanish). In this context, the project of collaboration between academic institutions in México and the United States can also be understood as an attempt to consolidate professional anthropology as a scientific discipline in México.

The project was conceived as the most complete and thorough regional study ever conducted. Visibly informed by ideas of historical particularism and cultural diffusionism,¹⁷⁷ its purpose was to determine ‘who the Tarascan were and how they have changed, what their culture was, what their culture is today, and the major steps of the transition from past to present’ (Beals and de la Borbolla, 1940, p. 710). They also expected to understand ‘the relations of the Tarascan culture to its environmental setting and its reciprocal relations with surrounding cultures both anciently and modernly’. This involved examining the relationship between the Tarascan and other prehispanic cultures, as well as the relationship between the Tarascan and Hispanic cultures, to establish the origin of Tarascan cultural traits. The research programme was structured in the areas of ‘fundamental studies’, ‘archaeology’, ‘historical development’, ‘physical anthropology’, ‘linguistic studies’ and ‘anthropology and social ethnology’, equating Boas’ four-field approach to anthropology. Research would be carried out first within the Tarascan area and then in neighbouring areas.

The objectives of the ATP were difficult to meet both because of its magnitude and financial uncertainties (see above). Although substantial progress was made in archaeological research, the only outcome of the anthropology and ethnology section was Beals’ (1946) study about Cherán, in the Meseta P’urhépecha region. The second project of collaboration between the ISA and the INAH focused on the training of anthropologists at the ENA and fieldwork-based research in the Tarascan Area. The agreement also involved the creation of modern

¹⁷⁷ Historical particularism postulated that all cultures were the product of single history. The particularity of a culture was also determined by the relationship between human beings and their environment over time. The study of culture involved the description of cultural traits and elements, as well as its origin, through diffusion or invention. Diffusion of cultural elements explained the presence of similar cultural elements in different cultures.

ethnographic collections of the Lake Pátzcuaro Region. The role of the IRAH in the ATP was that of facilitating the work of researchers in the region by informing the local authorities about the arrival of researchers and students beforehand.¹⁷⁸ In this second stage, the works of the Tarascan Anthropological Project were developed in both the Lake Pátzcuaro region and the Meseta P'urhépecha. The main research sites were Tzintzuntzan, Quiroga, and Cherán.

An important difference between the original project (INAH, DAI and UC) and the second phase of the project, financed by the ISA, was that the geographical aspect acquired greater relevance. This was reflected in the incorporation of cultural geographers into the project, as well as the incorporation of cultural geography into the courses that were being taught as part of the agreement between ISA and ENA. In 1943, once the collaboration project between the ISA and the INAH began, the anthropologist George Foster and the geographer Donald Brand joined the project. Linguist Stanley Newman officially became involved with the project in 1945, taking up the work started by the LTP. Geographer Robert West joined the team towards the end of the project in 1946. All had completed their PhDs at UC Berkeley, where Alfred Kroeber and Carl Sauer worked. Donald Brand completed his doctorate in Geography under their direction (1928-1933). Robert C. West was also a student of Sauer, completing his doctorate in 1946, while George Foster completed his doctorate in anthropology under the supervision of Kroeber and Robert H. Lowie (1935-1941).

As Sauer students, both Brand and West were already familiar with the area. Sauer and his students had been working since the late 1920s in western México, from Baja California and Sonora to Michoacán (see Chapter 2). Brand had also been working in the region, conducting archaeological research before joining the project. Dan Stanislawski, another student of Sauer, also contributed to the project through his doctoral work. His thesis entitled *The Historical Geography of Michoacán* is considered to be a straightforward application of Sauer's *Morphology of Landscape* (Pederson 1998).

ISA's interest in increasing geographical knowledge about western México coincided with the interests of regional and national institutions. The reports of the IRAH often highlighted the role of the ATP in the construction of 'a geography of Michoacan'. In an activity report, Arriaga defined the project of collaboration with

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum. Historical Archive of the Michoacan Museum. Box 12, fol.17, f2-4

the ISA as ‘an agreement to intensify anthropogeographic investigations’.¹⁷⁹ Also referring to the TP, in another activity report, Arriaga stated: ‘I want to make only one consideration, the work being done will be the first scientific basis for a geography of the state of Michoacán to exist’.¹⁸⁰ In 1941, in the context of the transformation of the Department of Anthropology into the ENA, plans were made to incorporate History and Geography into the academic offer, reflecting the importance that both disciplines had acquired.¹⁸¹

The activities of the new researchers began in 1944. Foster and Brand first went to the ENA to train graduate students. Before starting fieldwork, Foster, Brand and a P’urhépecha student Pablo Velázquez visited the region to select the communities where they would work. Velázquez already had a long history assisting research projects in the Tarascan region, including the LTP (see above). In June 1944, Brand, Foster, and Rubin de la Borbolla visited Michoacán to carry out an aerial survey of Lake Pátzcuaro and the Meseta P’urhépecha regions.¹⁸² In December 1944, a research team consisting of Foster, Brand and six students from the ENA moved to Lake Pátzcuaro to begin fieldwork. In 1946, Foster returned to the region with a new group of ENAH students to continue research in the Lake Pátzcuaro region. In the field of archaeological research, from 1942 to 1946 three seasons of archaeological work were carried out in Tzintzuntzan. Another site in which archaeological research was carried out within the Lake Pátzcuaro region was Ihuatzio. Archaeological research work was also carried out in other areas of Michoacán and western México. The research results were published by the ISA in a series of monographs, comprising *Houses and House Use of the Sierra Tarascans* (1944) by Beals, *Cherán: A Sierra Tarascan Village* (1946) by Beals, *Cultural geography of the modern Tarascan area* by West, *Empire’s Children: The People of Tzintzuntzan* (1948) by Foster, and *Quiroga. A Mexican Municipio* (1951) by Donald Brand.

One of the outcomes of the Tarascan anthropological project was the definition of a modern and historical Tarascan area. According to Brand (1944),

¹⁷⁹ Report of activities 1945-46. Historical Archive of the Michoacan Museum. Box 19, fol. 17, f35

¹⁸⁰ Report of activities and expenditures in 1945. Box 19, fol.16, f218

¹⁸¹ Letter from Rubin de la Borbolla to Ralph Beals. 23 September 1941. HAMNAH. Vol 122, Folder 1. The Department of Anthropology offered the degrees of social anthropology, physical anthropology, linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology. The degree of history began to be taught in 1946. Cultural geography studies continued being taught at the ENAH but did not formalised as a separate degree.

¹⁸² Letter from Rubin de la Borbolla to Antonio Arriaga. Historical Archive of the Michoacan Museum. Box12, fol.17, f.44

depending on the criteria used, one could speak of at least five Tarascan regions, which included archaeological, socioeconomic, racial, political and linguistic, presenting the available information and a series of considerations for its definition, which were summarized on a map. The map showed the possible limits of the Tarascan state and its linguistic boundaries during prehispanic times (Figure 7.11).

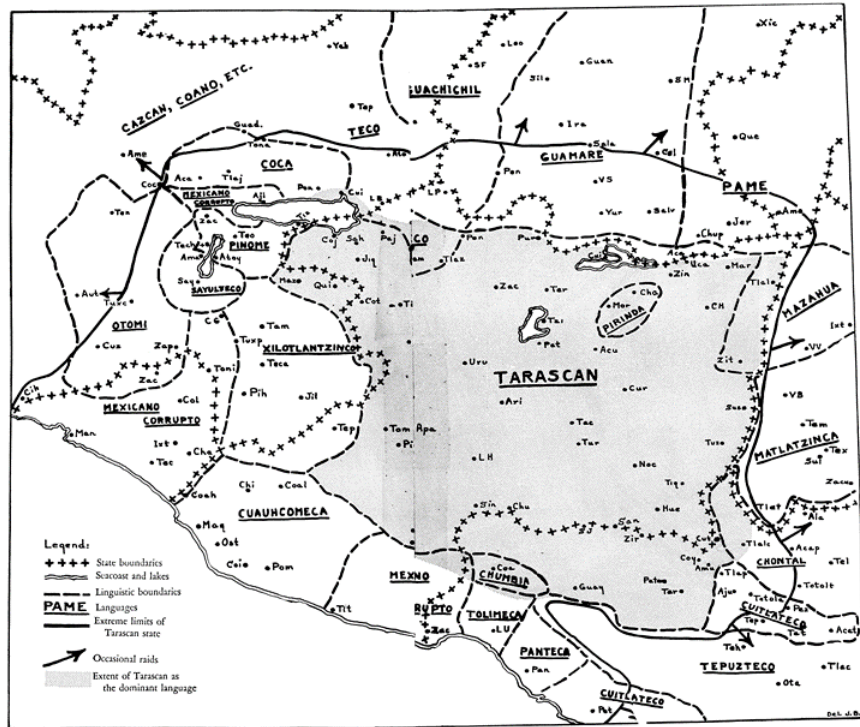


Figure 7.11. The Tarascan Region. Source: Brand (1944).

West (1948) defined the modern Tarascan area using the linguistic criterion as the 'present territory of Tarascan speech' constituted by four distinct geographical regions, consisting of the Sierra, also known as Meseta P'urhépecha, Lake Pátzcuaro, La Cañada, and the Cienega de Zacapu, with the first two considered as the Tarascan cultural core. The characterization of the Tarascan area involved the description of its physical setting, population, settlements, and economy, mapping its distribution in space, delineating the Tarascan region as a physical entity both natural and cultural. In addition to the maps, the natural and cultural aspects of the region were represented through photographs. The order in which they were presented reproduced Sauer's approach to the cultural landscape, showing the physical landscape as the medium on which culture acts. Descriptions of its physical environment emphasized the volcanic character of most of the physiographic areas. Regarding the lake area, Zirahuén was described as a relatively deep lake with stable levels. On the other hand, Pátzcuaro was considered as a shallow lake whose levels

had varied frequently in historical times. Citing De Buen (1944) as the source, West (1948) mentioned that since 1939 the levels of Lake Pátzcuaro had decreased about four feet, among the factors contributing to this process were climate variation, forest clearing, and obstruction of internal springs (See Chapter 5).

The descriptions about the population focused on the areal recession of the P'urhépecha. Changes in the area of Tarascan speech since the Spanish Conquest were represented in a series of maps by West (1948), showing its contraction from an area equivalent to the modern state of Michoacán to the central part of Michoacán (Figure 7.12). The areal recession of 'native speech' was described as an ongoing process, predicting its eventual 'extinction'. Ongoing cultural changes, such as improved transportation, frequent contact with modern life, the opening of educational facilities, and government literacy programmes, were all aiding to its disappearance.

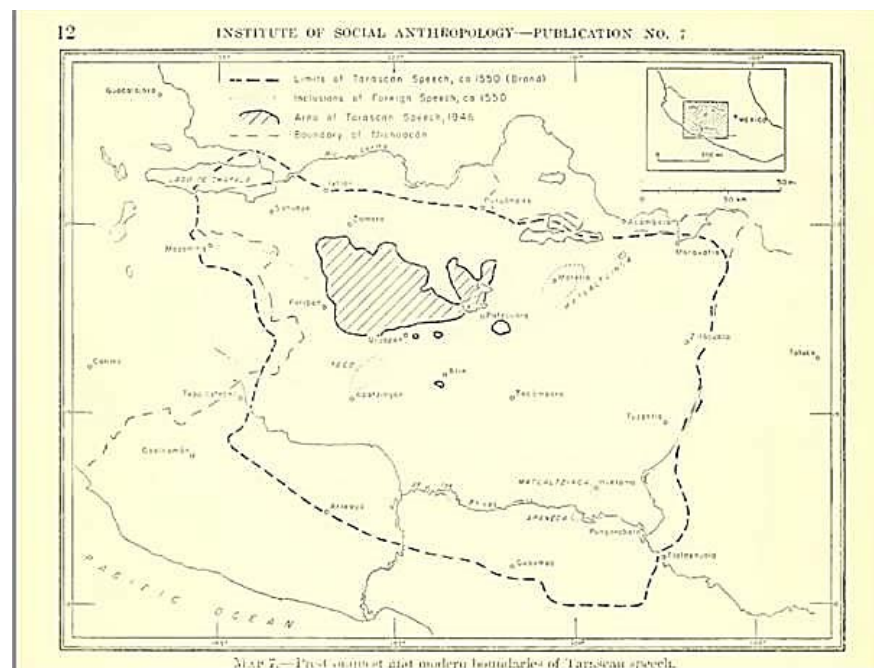


Figure 7.12. Pre-Conquest and modern boundaries of Tarascan speech. Source: West (1948).

Using the linguistic criterion, most of the towns on the southern shore of Lake Pátzcuaro were considered 'mestizos', including the towns of Pátzcuaro, Tzurumutaro, and Erongaricuaro, as well as Tzintzuntzan and Quiroga on the north shore (Figure 7.13). In the case of the town of Tzintzuntzan, although it was the former capital of the P'urhépecha state, it was considered almost completely mestizo by West (1948), whereas for Foster (1948) the town was definitely mestizo. In addition to the linguistic criterion, Foster (1948) considered other features to

classify Tzintzuntzan's population. The people from Tzintzuntzan were identified as mestizos since their physical type conformed to the bulk of México non-Indian population and did not present the 'typical' features of indigenous people. Tzintzuntzan's largely bilingual population also added to his identification as a mestizo town. The incorporation of words from the P'urhépecha into speech was not as large as the words from Nahuatl, therefore rather than Tarascan, the Spanish of Tzintzuntzan had to be considered Mexican. Brand (1951) also described the municipal centre of Quiroga as a mestizo town; what once was a 'pagan Tarascan town', it was now a 'Spanish-speaking Christian mestizo town' (Brand, 1951, p.5).

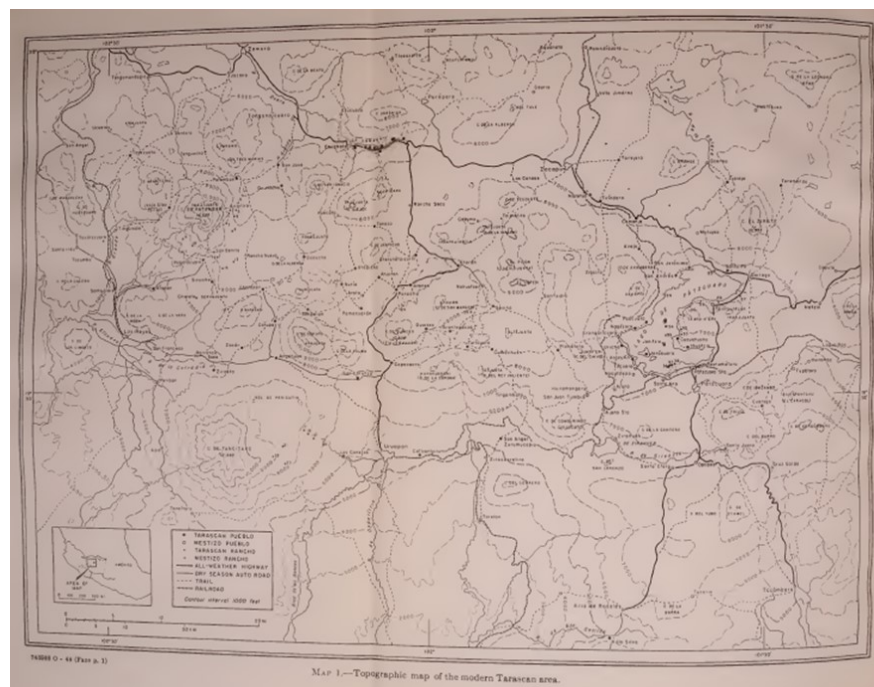


Figure 7.13. Topographic map of the modern Tarascan area. The map categorises settlements into Tarascan and Mestizos. Source: West (1948).

Descriptions of the material culture of the Tarascan area also pointed out to a similar direction. Aspects with the settlement pattern and house types were described as of European origin. Descriptions of economic activities emphasized European influence on the techniques and materials of native industries. In the case of agriculture, the most notable influence was on the introduction of the plough and new crops. Although native basic food crops (maize, beans, and squash) continue to have a central place in the diet, wheat cultivation now played an essential position in the region's economy and diet. Regarding livestock raising, the raising of all European animal domesticates and their incorporation into the diet was also mentioned. Major changes in the landscape during the colonial period were associated with introduction of the Euro-agrosuite. In the case of gathering and

hunting, although gathering was still part of the food quest, the only place where hunting was economically important were the islands of Lake Pátzcuaro, where duck hunting continued to take place.

Material culture was also represented in maps, showing the distribution of the different economic activities, settlement patterns, and house types throughout the Tarascan region (Figure 7.14). These elements were also shown in photos, presenting culture as a physical, observable reality.

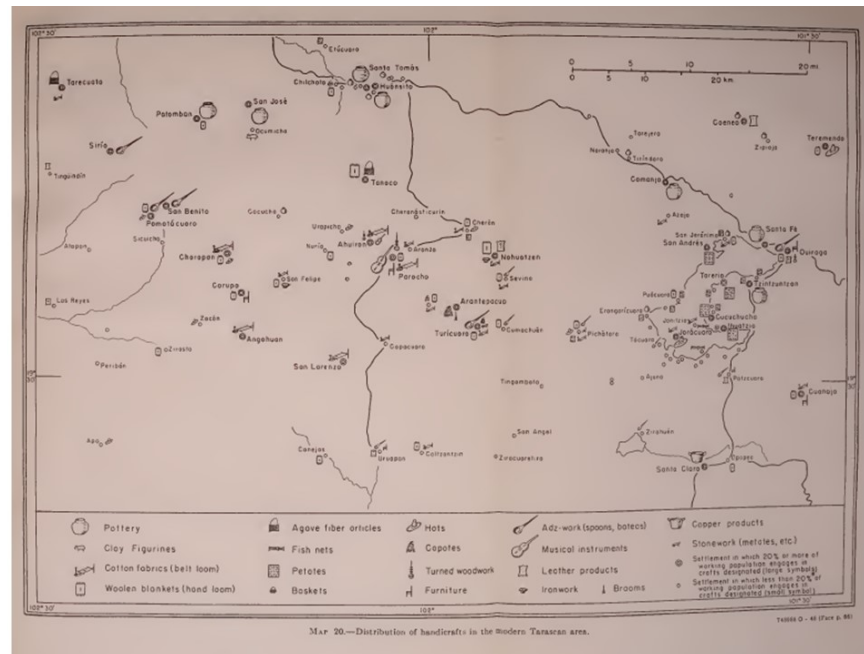


Figure 7.14. Distribution of handicrafts in the Modern Tarascan Area. Source: West (1948).

Unlike the economic activities described above, whose main changes were associated with the European contact, changes in fishing and forestry were associated with recent environmental changes. Thus, although fishing was the most important economic activity in the lake area during prehispanic times, the desiccation and drainage of lakes and marshes during the last 150 years in the northern part of the Tarascan region have decreased their importance. In the case of Lake Pátzcuaro, the recent introduction of black bass was also seen as having a negative impact on fisheries. Deforestation and erosion were also described as problems affecting the Lake Pátzcuaro basin (Foster, 1948; West, 1948; Brand 1951). In fact, for Foster (1948, p.24) erosion was 'Mexico's number one problem'. Erosion in the Lake Pátzcuaro basin was also shown through aerial images, which highlighted the severity of the problem (Figure 7.15). According to Brand (1951) there were several factors contributing to the problem in the Lake Pátzcuaro basin, including the predominance of steep slopes, rainfall patterns, and the removal of

natural vegetation. However, the cause of present-day erosion was associated to traditional agriculture practices. Some native industries were also seen as adding pressure to surrounding forests. The importance of lumbering was also seen as decreasing due to the deterioration of forests. Despite forest regulations, West (1948) considered most forest exploitation as destructive, echoing the arguments of scientific conservationists (See Chapter 6). Clearing of new ploughland to sustain an increasing population and commercial timber extraction in the Meseta P'urhépecha region were signalled as the main causes of forest depletion. The construction of the national highway (1939) had also intensified deforestation by increasing the market for charcoal (Brand, 1951).



PLATE 3.—Tzintzuntzan from the air. This view, looking south, shows the eroded slope of Yahuro (left center) and Tariaqueri (right center) hills, between which the village nestles on the lake shore. Most of the lake is out of sight to the right; its southern extremity (appears middle upper right), beyond which lies Pátzcuaro town. The highway from Quiroga appears (lower left), skirts the lake shore, widens slightly at Ojo de Agua, and turns sharp south to pass through the village, at the southern edge of which appear the *casetas* on a rectangular earth base. (Courtesy U. S. Army Air Force and Mexican Army Air Force.)

Figure 7.15. *Tzintzuntzan from the air*. Source: Foster 1948.

The ATP also resulted in the assemblage of ethnographic collections that were put on display in the region's museums (see above). In addition to collecting cultural data, the researchers of the ATP also collected cultural artifacts from both the Lake Pátzcuaro and the Meseta P'urhépecha regions. The idea was that the Pátzcuaro's museum would become an ethnographic museum that would show the life and material culture of these regions, leading to the reorganization of the collections of the Morelia and Pátzcuaro regional museums, which until then exhibited both

ethnographic and archaeological material. The archaeological pieces found in the Pátzcuaro's museum were thus transferred to the Regional Museum of Morelia, and the ethnographic objects found in the latter were moved to Pátzcuaro.¹⁸³ Other ethnographic collections, assembled by INAH, were exhibited at the site museum of the archaeological zone of Tzintzuntzan, created in 1944, on the 'life of the Tarascan Indians'.¹⁸⁴ The creation of these ethnographic collections contributed to ATP's purpose of providing a picture of the region before a rapid transformation of the area (see above).

From comparing the cultural data collected with the historical records and archaeological data of the prehispanic Tarascans, the cultural anthropologists of the ATP concluded that besides language, there was nothing else that could identify the inhabitants of the region as indigenous. Foster's (1948) study about Tzintzuntzan, in the Lake Pátzcuaro region, indicated that although its material culture had experienced important transformations, the non-material aspects were the ones that had been most altered by Spanish culture. The title of Foster's monograph *Empire's Children. The People of Tzintzuntzan* similarly indicated that the inhabitants of Tzintzuntzan were heirs to a past of which only 'memories of greatness' remained (Foster, 1948, p.19).¹⁸⁵ Political, social, and religious systems had little or no trace of 'native ideas'. Foster also believed that the people of Tzintzuntzan showed a predominantly individualistic attitude that contrasted with the corporative identities attributed to indigenous people. From comparing ethnohistorical sources and ethnographic research in other indigenous areas of México with the contemporary culture of people from Tzintzuntzan, Foster concluded that of 'all major Indian groups of Mexico', the people of Tzintzuntzan were the 'least Indian' and that they were rural Mexicans rather than Tarascans. The results of the research, Foster believed, were applicable to many other similar communities. Beals (1946) study of Cherán, in the Meseta P'urhépecha region, similarly concluded that although people of Cherán thought of themselves as

¹⁸³ Letter from Rubin de la Borbolla to the director of the INAH, presenting a proposal of reorganisation of Michoacán's museums. 2 July 1946. Box 19, fol.17, f.46-f48.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Antonio Arriaga to José Tafolla Caballero, Chief of Operations of the State. 3 September 1945. Historical Archive of the Michoacan Museum. Box 19, fol.16, f.129; Letter from Rubin de la Borbolla to Ignacio Marquina. 19 July 1946. Box 19, fol.16, f.151.

¹⁸⁵ The opening of the archaeological zone of Tzintzuntzan may have probably influenced the title's choice. From 1942 to 1946 three seasons of archaeological work were conducted in Tzintzuntzan. The archaeological zone of Tzintzuntzan was opened to the public at the end of the first season, when the structures were restored and consolidated.

'Indian', apart from their physical type and language, their culture was almost exclusively European in origin. In their view people living in Lake Pátzcuaro and other towns in the Tarascan region could no longer be considered indigenous.

The anthropologists of the ATP thus created an image of the indigenous culture as a set of traits originated in a specific moment, creating a fixed and static notion of the Tarascan culture tied to the prehispanic. This view about the indigenous relied on an organic model of culture that sees culture as a discrete entity, singular, bounded, and autonomous (see Chapter 2). Such an organicist view sees culture as an organism that cannot resist radical change, loss, replacement of elements, or radical hybridization, or else they would die. This image contrasted with the one that *indigenistas* had created of indigenous cultures as a hybrid. In fact, for the *indigenistas*, it was precisely the hybrid character of indigenous culture that could make it the basis of national identity. For the cultural anthropologists of the ATP, the changes that occurred during the Colonial period radically transformed the culture of the region to the point that it could no longer be considered indigenous. Hence, the ATP anthropologists believed that the changes that the region was experiencing would eventually lead to their complete disappearance. If the disappearance of the Tarascan culture was imminent, directed acculturation was perfectly justifiable. The scenario of environmental deterioration outlined by the ATP also presented indigenous management practices as in need of modernization. Such problematization would become the basis for the formulation of future regional development projects.

For the anthropologists of the ATP, the central question was why they were still considered indigenous, if almost all the cultural elements of the communities studied were Spanish in origin. For Julian Steward, director of the ISA, a persistent characteristic in many indigenous communities in México and other parts of the Americas was their strong attachment to the locality, their local group, and traditional culture. So that for Steward rather than a demonstrable aboriginal content in their culture the essential characteristic of an 'Indian' was its 'failure to integrate emotionally and actively with national life' (Beals, 1946).

In the case of Tzintzuntzan, although they were considered the 'least Indian', in part because of their supposed individualistic attitude and strong acquisitive sense, their 'cultural goals' were quite simple. The interest of the people of Tzintzuntzan in material goods was limited to having enough for personal

security and to satisfy the obligations of the church. However, it was the non-material objectives that concentrated their energies, the respect and esteem of one's fellows and ensuring one's spiritual future. The scarce relationship between the fulfilment of both goals surprised Foster; the people from Tzintzuntzan exhibited an individual and group lethargy that made them content with little. Beals' (1944) study on Tarascan housing also saw the attitude of the inhabitants as the main obstacle to overcome to improve housing, so that more than an economic problem, it was a problem of altering basic patterns of culture.

Like Steward, Foster identified among the Mexican population a strong attachment to the locality, something he deemed 'incomprehensible' in the United States. So that despite the supposed cultural homogeneity of the country and the strong patriotism its members could express, economic and social interests were limited to the 'local region'. This localism was seen as an impediment to national capitalist development. Thus, for Foster, it was their status as pre-modern subjects which defined the otherness of these towns, whether they still retained 'indigenous' cultural traits or had been incorporated into the bulk of Mexican rural population. The observations of Foster and Steward about the persistence of the local also point to the way in which the postrevolutionary cultural programme was negotiated at the local level.

Despite this, the Tarascan region was seen as having the potentialities for rapid acculturation, given the high degree of 'Hispanicization' of its culture. Foster considered that the assimilation process that the region had undergone should be extended to the most remote indigenous groups to achieve a more integrated economic and social system. Only then, Foster believed, the true greatness of the Mexican nation will be realized (Foster, 1948, p.290). For Steward, a greater assimilation of the region to the nation could occur through informal means of 'external contacts' and the more formal means of 'government programmes'. The purpose of such a programme would no longer be focused on achieving ethnic homogeneity, but on the modernization of the indigenous economy, through its integration into national and international markets.

Drawing on Lawrence Cohen's (2012) analysis of postwar anthropology, Anthony Wright (2018) suggests that the work of Beals and Foster could be understood in terms of Weber's notion of 'protestantization', referring to the relation between Calvinist work ethic and the development of capitalism.

Protestantism in this reading involved an ‘anxious and ascetic orientation to the world that would lead one to spend less, accumulate capital, and generate the conditions for urban culture with its achievement orientation allowing capitalist take off’ (Cohen, 2012, p.82). Such ideas can be identified in Foster’s final comments on the culture of Tzintzuntzan, in which people’s attitude towards ‘material goals’ is considered as an obstacle for capitalist development which requires a pursuit of profit. Thus, it could be argued that the project of applied anthropology in the region went hand in hand with the construction of a premodern and underdeveloped subject and the work of developing agencies.

7.7 Conclusions

Throughout this chapter I have examined the ways in which complex historical transformations produced new geographies of indigeneity, characterised by the emergence of new technologies for the administration of the indigenous populations of the Americas. These new geographies were enabled by a Pan American discourse of continental unity, developed in the context of WWII. The prospect of WWII also established the conditions for the revaluation of indigenous cultures, considered as an element that could help forged a Pan American identity. The celebration of the First Interamerican Conference of Indian Life (1939) celebrated in Pátzcuaro resulted from the articulation of these processes and discourses.

During the Conference, Lake Pátzcuaro was depicted as the historical site in which projects aimed at the indigenous population had been developed, presenting the region as the ideal place for the performance of *indigenismo*. In doing so, they also established Lake Pátzcuaro as a centre for testing out international policies concerning indigenous people. The set of measures and ideas that emerged from the Pátzcuaro Conference came to be referred as the ‘Pátzcuaro doctrine’, characterised by the adoption of an ‘integrationist’ approach. The name given to this set of guidelines also points out the role of *indigenismo* in the definition of the region, as well as the role of Pátzcuaro in the development of *indigenismo* as a continental policy. The Pátzcuaro conference supposed the emergence of new administrative bodies responsible for guiding indigenous policies in the continent.

The processes and discourses mentioned above were also present at the New York’s Fair (1939-1940), which had a distinctive Pan American tone,

expressed in the numerous art exhibitions of Latin American art organised by the Fair's committee. On the other hand, the exhibition that México brought to the Fair presented an *indigenista* picture of the country, presenting indigenous culture as an important part of Mexican identity, which needed to be preserved. The images of Pátzcuaro presented at the fair helped articulate such a discourse. The narrative present in the Mexican exhibit suggested that it was through the incorporation of the indigenous into the national and its appropriation by other sectors of society that indigenous culture could be part of the "world of tomorrow".

Finally, the hemispheric cooperation policies activated during the Pátzcuaro Conference led to the development of the Anthropological Tarascan Project. The Anthropological Tarascan Project portrayed a world on the way to disappearing announced by the areal recession of 'native speech'. Moreover, the culture of the Tarascan region was described as essentially Spanish in origin. So that for the anthropologists of the ATP the inhabitants of the region could not be considered indigenous. However, and in their view, if there was something that could identify the inhabitants of the region as indigenous, it was their inability to integrate into the modern world. The characterization of the region in these terms pointed to the need for acculturation directed according to the needs of global capitalism, a task that would no longer be carried out solely by national governments. Indigenous peoples thus went from being the exclusive focus of national governments to being the centre of attention of international institutions. As a result, international actors and interests came to play a key role in the shaping of the Lake Pátzcuaro region.

8 Conclusions

Throughout the previous four chapters I have attempted to trace the history of the various discourses and cultural practices that have come to define the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape, including discourses of modernity and tradition, indigeneity, Mexicanness, and nationality. Understood in terms of practice, this thesis has looked at the mutual constitution of the landscape and one's sense of self. By focusing on the landscape, my work has also looked at the relation between the human and non-human, pointing out the role of nature in the definition of the nation, an aspect largely overlooked by scholars of the Mexican Revolution. In doing so, my work also contributes to ongoing debates about the nature of the everyday state, as well as studies of nation-state building in postrevolutionary México.

Questions of regional and national identity are specifically addressed in the first chapter of the thesis, which focuses on the creation of an indigenized national identity and the emergence of indigenous identities. The recognition of Lake Pátzcuaro as an indigenous region involved the generation of historical knowledge, ethnographic and artistic practices of collection, as well as practices of exhibition and performance. Aesthetics also played a key role in the creation of a national identity, by transforming indigenous expressive culture into a symbol of Mexican identity, but also through the politicization of art and the aestheticization of history.

Although Lake Pátzcuaro was generally seen as an indigenous region, within the region different places represented different aspects of Mexican culture. While some places were more strongly connected with indigenous culture, such as the islands of the lake -especially Janitzio- and Tzintzuntzan (associated with the former splendour of the Tarascan state), other places were linked to the colonial period, such as the town of Pátzcuaro itself or colonial Tzintzuntzan, both of which were seats of the colonial power at different times.

Historical narratives about the Mexican established the colonial period as a foundational moment in the formation of a mestizo national identity. Thus, narratives about the colonial occupied a central place in the revaluation of indigenous culture through the idea of *mestizaje*. From this point of view, indigenous contemporary culture was considered to carry the traces of Spanish culture and

viceversa, Spanish cultural heritage was seen carrying the traces of indigenous culture, enabling its classification as Mexican. The promotion of the idea of a mestizo nation was seen as contributing to the elimination of a colonial system of privilege based on racial distinction. However, the idea of *mestizaje* also involved a narrative of racial improvement and historical progress that justified colonialism, producing a double attitude (positive and negative) towards both the indigenous and the colonial.

Throughout the thesis I have tried to show how both identities and landscapes are open to intervention and resignification. While the postrevolutionary cultural project succeeded in creating an indigenized national culture, it did not that result in the elimination of difference. So, the postrevolutionary cultural project to create a modern mestizo nation was never fully completed. Instead, the discursive practice of *indigenismo* provided a language for indigenous peoples to negotiate their place within postrevolutionary México. By making indigenous culture an indispensable element in the definition of Mexican nationality, the *indigenista* discourse placed indigenous people in a position to make demands, morally forcing the State to comply with them.

This research has also shown that the creation of México and the Mexican was not limited to the realm of culture but also involved nature. The construction of a 'national nature' involved the establishment of appropriate ways of relating to nature, including the transformation of land property regimes and the establishment of environmental regulations. The transformation of land ownership regimes not only involved the redistribution of land, but also granting the state the final control over the use and access to the land and natural resources. The postrevolutionary cultural project to transform indigenous and rural populations also implied transforming their management practices, from traditional to modern and scientific. At the core of postrevolutionary attitudes towards the environment was the idea that science could improve nature, making it more productive while ensuring its conservation. In the case of the Lake Pátzcuaro basin this involved the introduction of exotic species as part of the practice of restocking and reforestation, as well as the protection of native fish species. In the thesis I argue that these practices participated in the construction of ideas about the indigenous, the national and the foreign, contributing to their 'naturalization'. In a way, if the idea of improving nature was possible in the first place was because it was part of broader

efforts to create México and the Mexican. So that the construction of the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape and the project to create a modern national subject was one and the same process.

In the thesis I have also looked at the role of architectural preservation policies in shaping the character of the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape. During the postrevolutionary period, state efforts to preserve colonial architecture involved the reorganisation of values associated with religious architecture and its articulation with nationalist rhetoric. The processes by which colonial aesthetics were established as typical of Lake Pátzcuaro comprised the repurposing of religious buildings, art history research, and architectural preservation projects. I argue that the protection of colonial aesthetics was related to the establishment of dominant discourses about Mexican identity. This involved regulating people's architectural conduct regarding the repurposing of colonial religious buildings and the construction of new buildings, which meant that changes in the use of religious buildings should not affect their architectural qualities and that new buildings have to respect Lake Pátzcuaro colonial architectural character. In the chapter I also argue that the protection of colonial architecture was shaped by conflicting narratives about the colonial legacy. Rather than being simply the result of an imposition, the protection of colonial architecture was a process that resulted from the articulation of multiple discourses and interests.

Finally, my research has also examined the ways in which the geopolitical reordering of the world and internal political changes produced new geographies of indigeneity. These new geographies were enabled by discourses of continental integration developed in the context of World War II. The prospect of the WWII produced a change in United States foreign policy, including the promotion of Pan-Americanism and the 'Good Neighbor' policy. The need to articulate a Pan American identity led to the appropriation of the *indigenista* discourse, whereby indigenous culture was recognised as a common heritage of the countries of the American continent. The First Inter-American Conference of Indian Life celebrated in Pátzcuaro resulted from the articulation of these processes, as well as from the internationalization of the ideology of the Mexican revolution. While advancing the presence of indigenous peoples in international arenas, the adoption of *indigenismo* as a continental policy, also produced new attempts at cultural assimilation. In this sense, the Tarascan project was part of the global technologies

of governance developed during WWII, which were aimed at reshaping the so-called 'traditional societies' for the advance of world capitalism. The actors and processes involved in the making of the Lake Pátzcuaro region surpassed the nation to include international agencies and interests. By adopting a cultural geography approach, my research reasserts the importance of space in the study of governance, showing how practices of region making always involve the administration of populations and vice versa. So that neither the nation nor the region is simply a container for power relations, but they are themselves produced by those relations. Moreover, my research also shows that practices of region making articulate different geographical scales, going from the local to the international.

The practices and discourses examined in this thesis continue to play a key role in regional definition. Lake Pátzcuaro is often presented as a place with exceptional qualities (both natural and cultural) and an embodiment of regional, national, and international values, which is evidenced by its inclusion on heritage lists and the efforts of different groups at different levels to protect and manage its natural and cultural heritage, now seen as inextricably linked. Likewise, the images of Lake Pátzcuaro continue to be important icons of México both nationally and internationally. As indigenous people have become visible political actors, movements in defence of indigenous rights are now led by indigenous people themselves. The region's political geography is also shaped by indigenous claims for self-determination and autonomy, contesting existing power structures.

Lake Pátzcuaro's regional cultural landscape, thus emerges as a variegated collection of stories, guiding people's way of being in the landscape. The content of such stories itself shaped by people's everyday landscape practices. As these stories are written and rewritten, the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape is also made and remade. Instead of separate plots, such stories intersect at different points, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes contradicting each other, enabling the articulation of multiple interests and actors. One thing is entangled with another, and with another: the local and the global, nature and culture, science and politics, artistic practices, and academic research, etc. However, and as the thesis shows, instead of coexisting harmoniously, the historical energies shaping the Lake Pátzcuaro landscape have been fraught with conflict and contradiction. The orders that such forces produced have been both enabling and restrictive, involving a

double dynamic of empowerment and disempowerment. The relations that constitute such orders are unstable, changing with every historical shift. The Lake Pátzcuaro landscape appears as a mutable set of relations, which make and remake the region's physical and symbolic boundaries.

9 Bibliography

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