Redemocratization in Mexico: The Paradox of the Guadalajara Explosions of April 22, 1992

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Synopsis

It is the view of many scholars that Mexico is undergoing a process of redemocratization initiated by the student uprising of 1968. Many of these writers, who in this paper will be referred to as “optimists,” share the belief that as a result of cumulative and continued pressures from civil society, the contemporary Mexican political system exhibits signs of metamorphosis. Pluralism, it is further argued, will be the culmination of this process. This micro-study empirically demonstrates a case characterized by paradoxes and conflicting realities that generate the reconsideration of the optimist’s assertions. The data gathered in Guadalajara indicate an uneasy conexistence of subaltern resistance to, and acceptance of, the status quo. While not neglecting the fact that the Guadalajara explosions sparked a social movement among victims and sympathizers, the post-crisis response of the movement addressed the related problems within the regime’s institutional structures and their behavior indicated the presence of interaction codes typically representative of the prevailing corporatist political system. On this reading, the views of the optimists are not totally rejected, but rather revisited.

Perspectives of Redemocratization: A Review of the Optimistic Approach

Since the emergence of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in 1929, the Mexican political system has been characterized by its corporatist nature; the Party has remained in power through the implementation of mechanisms devised for the purpose of regime survival: cooptation, patronage, coercion, and most recently, the incorporation of regime liberalization.

For many Mexicanists, the awakening of civil society has been marked by regime responses to critical junctures affecting the political system and engendering popular expressions of dissatisfaction.¹ According to the views of the optimists, the student uprising of 1968, the reaction to the economic crisis of 1982, and society’s response to the earthquake of 1985 in Mexico City are examples of critical junctures. These episodes of socio-political instability, characterized by the activation of centrifugal forces generated historical legacies which contributed to the redemocratization of Mexico.

Jorge Castañedaoptimistically affirms that Mexico is undergoing changes “from the bottom up.” He sees the “outpouring[s] of solidarity, civic responsibility and participation by Mexican society that followed the September [1985] earthquakes [as] contribut[ions] to [the] initial democratisation of the Mexican political institutions.”²
With regard to changes in the political culture of civil society, Castañeda observes “embryonic signs of political consciousness” that could result in the actual political restructuring of the Mexican system.

Joe Foweraker states that 1968 initiated a new political epoch in which citizens began overtly expressing demands for change in the political system, thus mobilizing society.³

Although Foweraker takes into consideration the negative prospects of redemocratization in Mexico, including the absence of a strong counter-hegemonic alternative, a change in voting behavior indicates the loss of legitimacy of the dominant party.⁴ The aforementioned pattern demonstrates that civil society is indeed effecting demands on the system, forcing the State to attempt a reinstatement of legitimacy. The pressures and exigencies of the citizenry cause the government to actuate a process of liberalization, which includes the extension of rights and the expansion of the political space, through pluralism.⁵

In an analysis of the response to the 1982 Mexican economic crisis, Diane Davis emphasizes that protest and popular dissatisfaction generated a process of party delegitimization while the growth of civil society compelled the PRI to evaluate and consider political alternatives. Conservatism could lead to further deterioration of the current political system, while liberalization could accelerate its process of decay. David argues that opposition to the PRI for representatives to the National Congress in the July 1985 election in Mexico City created the propitious political climate for democratic reform.

The earthquakes of 1985, Davis writes, were particularly significant because civil society witnessed and responded to the inefficiency of the governmental response. Victims and volunteers acted independently of the party system, realizing that they no longer depended on the benevolence of the PRI. This challenging behavior marks yet another facet in the process of civilian independence from the dominant party, thus further eroding its legitimacy.⁶

John Bailey and Leopoldo Gómez contend that the results of the 1988 election, in which the PRI was threatened by “an electoral Rebellion” signal the ongoing change of national political consciousness. Should this be the case, the PRI would be obliged to liberalize the system. Otherwise, immobility, tradition, and inflexibility would lead to the demise of the party which had maintained rule for more than half a century.⁷

Finally, Daniel Levy’s analysis of the process of political liberalization in Mexico indicates that the decline of legitimacy of the PRI, as well as the increase in the organization of civil society, have precipitated a new political reality. Stronger political opposition and the steadfast demands of the citizenry have contributed to and/or accelerated the process of liberalization and possible democratization in Mexico.⁸

Although Levy recognizes the existence of corporatist elements that may prevent the redemocratization of Mexico, and that “transformation is less common than continuity,” he sees the increase of mass mobilization, which is critical of the regime, as a pressure mechanism which cannot be ignored. Furthermore, he states that the 1988 electoral results should not be overlooked.⁹
In summary, the aforementioned writers perceive a change in the political system as well as in the world views of Mexican civil society. Their evaluations vary regarding the extent of the prospects for redemocratization in contemporary Mexico. The underlying common factor, however, is one of optimism: civil society has awakened and does not intend to retreat again. According to these thinkers, mass mobilizations, subaltern resistance, and electoral behavior suggest a process which may culminate in the redemocratization of the Mexican political system.

The Guadalajara Explosions:
Descriptive Summary

April 22, 1992, Sergio Gómez Partida, a young Tapatio would celebrate his birthday.\textsuperscript{10} Fatality, however, overshadowed the festive spirit; tragedy prevailed. Parallely, calamity touched the lives of thousands of individuals. While not all of them would have celebrated something special on April 22, they abruptly shared the devastating effects of a disaster which implacably affected their lives. On that day the residents of Sector Reforma, in Guadalajara, became the victims of a series of explosions. While previously anonymous, Sergio Gómez Partida would rise to become one of the most notorious figures as post-crisis events unfolded.

During the course of the previous days, inhabitants of this area expressed concern as a suspicious, yet not uncommon gas odor invaded their streets and homes. After reporting this smell to the authorities, members of SIAPA (Sistema de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado), of the Unidad de Protección Civil, of Pemex, and of the regional fire department, arrived in Sector Reforma to conduct the necessary ground investigations. After surveying the area for several hours on April 21, the authorities identified the apparent cause of the problem. As per their initial version, the results pointed to La Central, an oil factory located in the proximity of Sector Reforma. Night arrived and the authorities determined that the residents could remain in their homes, and allowed vehicular traffic, previously closed off, to freely circulate through the area. Thus it was assumed that Sector Reforma was not in danger, and the residents stayed in their homes. The early morning proceeded rather typically, the lives of these Tapatios began to take their natural course. Although the odor had not disappeared, people continued with their everyday chores. At 10:09 a.m., however, Calle Gante (Gante Street) exploded. The concentration of gases in the water collector which runs underneath this street reached extremely high levels of explosiveness, leading to violent bursts which continued for more than two hours.

The disaster area is located between the Central Camionera Vieja and the Mercado San Juan de Dios, and from 20 de noviembre to Calzada del Ejército.\textsuperscript{11} Some of the streets, particularly along Calle Gante, suddenly became deep ravines, reaching up to five meters in depth. People were confused about the incident; wondering what had occurred one resident commented, “what happened, we do not know. It exploded and the streets blew up.”\textsuperscript{12} Vehicles were trapped by the rubble, others were found on the terraces of semi-destroyed buildings. Facades across the disaster area simply disappeared. Houses exploded; in most cases only the back rooms remained standing. Calle Gante was the most severely affected, particularly from Calzada del Ejército to 20 de noviembre, an area totaling approximately ten blocks. A survivor testified, “I only heard stones falling, my daughter lives around the corner and her house it totally destroyed, I am waiting for her. There are some girls trapped, alive,…”.\textsuperscript{13}
Sectora Reforma was a highly populated area; Salvador Camarena writes, “In each corner there was a tiendita and on each block there were at least three or four stores, many of them mechanic shops.” Witnesses report that people and vehicles were everywhere on Calle Gante, and Sector Reforma in general, the day of the explosions. Children, on school recess, were likely to be at home, playing on their patios or in neighboring streets, while their mothers went about their routines, buying the daily necessities, cleaning, and conversing with store owners and neighbors.

A few hours after the explosions, the governor of Jalisco, Guillermo Cosio Vidaurri, publicly announced that the “situation was under control.” He further declared that official institutions and organisms, as well as civil society, had already become active in the rescue efforts. He stated that the coordination of these efforts was his responsibility.

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari arrived in Guadalajara on the evening of the explosions, visiting the disaster zone and staying overnight. The following day, the President went to hospitals and personally offered his support to the wounded and their relatives. He explained that he wanted to hear what kind of assistance the Tapatios needed from the federal authorities. In addition, he affirmed that Solidaridad would immediately release emergency funds to assist the victims. President Salinas de Gortari stated that the causes of the tragedy should be disclosed in 72 hours. He added that the responsible individuals would be punished and the victims immediately compensated. On the same day, Governor Cosio Vidaurri declared that he had been informed about the potential danger. However, according to the Governor, the responsibility fell on the Presidente Municipal (the mayor), Mr. Dau Flores, and not on himself as state governor. Cosio Vidaurri further claimed that the state representatives had assured the mayor that the explosive levels had fallen from 100 to 15 percent, thus suggesting the marked decrease of risk for the residents of Sector Reforma. Additionally, on April 24, Mr. Dau Flores requested a sixty day personal leave to facilitate the investigation procedures.

Even though Governor Cosio Vidaurri affirmed, on the day of the explosions, that all possible rescue and organizational efforts were being made, the victims expressed dissatisfaction. According to the latter, the services and rendering of information were inefficient. As events unfolded, what appeared to be a unified movement began to emerge. On April 25, the first consolidated voices were heard. Hundreds of victims requested the political trial of Jalisco’s governor. They also demanded the imprisonment of all guilty individuals. In addition, they claimed to be the pioneers of a social movement that would spread throughout the thirteen kilometers which covered the disaster area.

At a meeting on Calle Gante the victims decided to demand the professional assessment of damages, as well as a truthful and accurate count of the deceased. They also blamed Pemex. As of that date, the official figures regarding damages and victims were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals affected</td>
<td>4,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged homes</td>
<td>1,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocks affected</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the movement emerged, the victims, demanding fair compensations, announced that they would demonstrate and hold meetings in front of the Palacio de Gobierno as such measures became necessary.

On Sunday, April 26, a group of victims who participated in a press conference informed Siglo 21 that they were being closely observed by the police. They assumed that this was to prevent them from organizing. On the same day this group decided to form the Movimiento Civil de Damnificados 22 de Abril (hereby referred to as MCD 22 de Abril). Sergio Gómez Partida would become one of the most outspoken members of this group; his actions and perseverance parallel those of a leader. During a personal interview, however, he expressed to the author of this essay that he was just another member of the movement. In a second interview Mr. Gómez Partida explained that although MCD 22 de Abril made attempts to reach all the victims to embrace in the struggle as a block, the immediate presence of governmental officials, including Solidaridad representatives, prevented MCD 22 de Abril from interacting with the majority of the residents of Sector Reforma. Even if MCD 22 de Abril members communicated with these individuals, Mr. Gómez Partida stated that fruitful discourse was not likely since these people had already agreed to work within the system.

Miguel Angel Gómez Partida, Sergio’s brother and member of MCD 22 de abril, denounced the PRI in the presence of Governor Cosio Vidaurri, saying that party representatives had been seen distributing fliers in the disaster area. This, according to Miguel Angel, was done to promote the ideology of the PRI. Rejecting this type of operation, he stated, “the organization rose from the people and that is where it should stay.” The same day Siglo 21 reported that members of the PRD and the PAN visited the residents of Calle Gante and Nicolás Bravo, the area where the members of MCD 22 de Abril concentrated. MCD 22 de Abril accepted offers of support by perredistas (PRD members) and panistas (PAN members) only if party issues and ideologies were set aside. While MCD 22 de Abril was formulating demands, members of this movement showed a degree of political consciousness which was evidenced in their rejection of party ideologies.

Other victims, however, particularly concerned themselves with the immediate solution of their problems. Comments made by some of the residents of Sector Reforma indicate this differentiation even in the early phases of the post-crisis. For example, one of the victims told Governor Cosio Vidaurri, while he was visiting the disaster area: “…we ask for your help. That is all. We need it,… We ask for your understanding, your help, your solidarity…. We no longer ask for those responsible to be blamed, we simply ask for your help.”

The emergence of various political actors soon after the explosions is significant in this analysis. These actors are now introduced, identified and placed within the local and national context to facilitate the theoretical understanding of their actions.

**Political Actors**

The intervening political actors in the Guadalajara experience are divided in six groups in order to distinguish their affiliations, comprehend their actions, and evaluate their mutual relationships. They are:

1. Municipal government actors
2. State government actors
3. Federal government actors
4. Non-governmental actors
5. Opposition parties
6. Victims of the disaster
   a. Moderates
   b. Contestors

**Municipal Government Actors**

The *Presidente Municipal* of Guadalajara, Mr. Dau Flores, requested a temporary leave the day after the explosions. To justify this action, Mr. Dau Flores claimed that his decision was made to facilitate the process of investigations while denying responsibility for the disaster. Reporters asked Mr. Dau Flores if he could have prevented the explosions, to which he responded: “I had the authority to request the evacuation of those people [residents of the Sector Reforma] but I received information which confirmed the absence of risk, I had to respect the information and technical judgement of the experts.”

The *Procuraduría General de la República* (an organism which functions much like the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) of the United States, in matters concerning federal crimes) estimated that Mr. Dau Flores was allegedly responsible for the events of April 22. The Procuraduría reported that he seemed to have failed in the exercise of his duties as Presidente Municipal. His successor, Mr. Mora López, appointed by the Congress of Jalisco, became the temporary Presidente del Consejo Municipal. Mr. Mora López could not become the Presidente Municipal since this would have required formal elections.

**State Government Actors**

Mr. Cosio Vidaurri, his successor Mr. Rivera Aceves, the director of SIAPA, Mr. Limón Macías, and the president of the PRI in the state of Jalisco, Mr. Cobarruvias are some of the main political actors within the state government.

The tragedy induced a political *melange* which resulted in demands for resignation, requests for temporary leaves and the subsequent replacement of government officials *a la gatopardo*.

Mr. Limón Macías also requested a leave for the same reasons stated by Mr. Dau Flores.

In the meantime, demands for the governor’s resignation mounted, but Mr. Cosio Vidaurri refused to resign. After the Procuraduría read its report about the explosions on April 26, members of the PAN and the PRD reacted, declaring that this document omitted names and ignored the formulation of possible critical scenarios which could have led to other responsible individuals other than Mr. Dau Flores. PAN members emphasized that the responsibility of the explosions fell on various government officials, including state of Jalisco authorities. They announced that the culpability of Governor Cosio Vidaurri had yet to be determined. The dubious innocence of the governor led members of MCD 22 de Abril to declare, during a meeting on April 28, that they refused to identify him as
the governor of Jalisco. Sergio Gómez Partida declared: “To me Mr. Cosio Vidaurri is no longer the governor.”

Denying responsibility, the governor stated that he had been informed about the potential danger in Sector Reforma only minutes before the explosions began, and thus he was unable to act in a timely fashion. Nonetheless, victims and opposition parties continued to ask for his resignation. On April 30, approximately one hundred ninety victims signed a petition, published in Siglo 21, asking for the governor’s resignation. The State of Jalisco’s Congress decided to replace Mr. Cosio Vidaurri on May 2, 1992. Even though he firmly claimed his innocence, socio-political pressures threatening the regime forced him to request a leave. Mr. Rivera Aceves replaced him. The leave requested by the former governor is politically significant since his resignation would have led to elections.

While the congressional decision to replace the governor does not violate the Mexican Constitution, these replacements are intended to be approved and implemented during critical circumstances such as the physical impairment of a governor. In this case the congressional appointment of Mr. Rivera Aceves indicates that the PRI was able to exercise greater control than civil society, thus preventing elections, which, due to the unrest, could have led to the defeat of the Party in Jalisco and the further erosion of the regime at the national level.

Federal Government Actors

With regard to federal government actors, the visit of President Salinas de Gortari to Guadalajara, the presence of Solidaridad, the establishment of the Patronato para el Auxilio e Indemnización de los Afectados, Reconstrucción y Adecuación de la Zona Siniestrada del Sector Reforma by presidential mandate, and the intervention of the Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos after and not before the desalojo, an episode in which MCD 22 de Abril members were attacked by police while they were asleep in the Plaza de Armas, are significant. These indicate the presence of corporatist practices in the development of the negotiations and in the treatment of those victims whose views and actions contradicted those of the core.

The President’s visit suggests his determination to publicly demonstrate the concerns and “benevolence” of the nation’s government. Mr. Salinas’s emphasis on the importance of finding the responsible officials within the State of Jalisco indicates his efforts to promote the notion of a fair and democratic political system. In addition, the immediate release of emergency funds through Solidaridad is considered an attempt to give credence to this government’s social program, as well as an articulation to maintain patron-client relations in operation. Furthermore, in doing so, the federal government intends to capture the support of the majority of the victims, thus preventing them from organizing autonomously and/or associating with opposition parties.

The Patronato was created to manage compensation payments, recognize the victims’ rights, and provide bureaucratic channels that would allow the victims to voice their demands as well as to plan, organize, and execute all necessary actions to rebuild the disaster area. This organism was integrated by fifteen government officials, fifteen victims representing the rest of the damnificados, and the chairperson, former Presidente Municipal, Mr. Gabriel Covarrubias Ibarra.
The mediation and surprisingly liberal recommendations of the CNDH with regard to the desalojo, in which this organism’s determinations coincided with those of a local non-governmental agency on human rights, the Academia Jaliscience de Derechos Humanos, suggest the federal government’s attempts to legitimize the system through action. In this case the concept of flexibility applies. The system, confronted with a crisis situation, incorporates flexibility—practical ideology—in its operations to regenerate its hegemonic values and enhance the chances of regime survival. Later, in the detailed discussion of the desalojo, these manoeuvres will be further explained.

Non-Governmental Actors

One of the non-governmental actors that emerged soon after the explosions was La Coordinadora de Ciudadanos y Organizaciones Civiles 22 de Abril. This organism was created on April 24 by professionals and members of the private sector of Guadalajara. The main objectives of La Coordinadora included:

1. Assistance in reconstruction plans
2. Assessment of the victims’ needs
3. Provision of legal advice
4. Collection of testimonies to capitalize the experience

Members of La Coordinadora emphasized from the inception of this group, that theirs was not a competitive organism. The organization was willing to work with the government. Nevertheless, representatives of La Coordinadora expressed their determination to provide assistance to the victims.

Although this organization affirmed its non-competitive nature, its efforts were finally curtailed by the DIF (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia), a state organism directed by the wife of the current governor which is usually in charge of providing health assistance to the population. The nature of every state’s DIF differs, depending on its director’s considerations. The Coordinadora had centers to collect clothes and medicine which were later sent to the DIF distribution centers. Even though this non-governmental organization did not oppose the government, DIF representatives told members of La Coordinadora that their efforts were not necessary. The DIF, thus, became the exclusive collector and distributor of goods. This indicates that while civil society attempted to collaborate after the disaster, the dominant political system, aided by various organisms, succeeded in centralizing its power. Such actions suggest that corporatism prevailed; decisions such as those of the DIF are indicative of efforts made to reduce the number of autonomous groups, even in cases where they do not inherently threaten the system.

The Foro Ciudadano is another non-governmental actor. The nature and purposes of the Foro were discussed in a personal interview with Cristina Padilla, a member of this organism. She explained to me that the Foro is not an organization but a “space that appears and disappears.” Its main purpose, Ms. Padilla further stated, is to generate opinion. Lawyers, academics, PRD representatives, and members of the Academia Jaliscience de Derechos Humanos—AJDH—were some of the individuals and organizations that formed the Foro the day after the explosions. Immediately after its appearance, the Foro began to seek resources to generate prompt assistance to the victims. This “space” disseminated information through the media, and established communication with the Coordinadora. The Foro examined the relationship between the State and civil society.
the traditionalist world views of many Tapatios, her assessment, based on the participation of the victims and the citizenry in general, indicated optimism. Contrary to her beliefs, the analysis of civil society’s participation in the case of Guadalajara suggests the existence of contradictions in people’s behaviors. These contradictions prevented civil society from successfully expanding both its political space as well as its degree of participation and representation.

The Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos—AMDH—a non-governmental organization, was established in 1984 to operate as a forum that promotes fruitful discussion and engages in studies of human rights to defend these in Mexico. The members of the AMDH recognize the French Revolution as the prime promoter of human rights and the Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, signed in 1948, as another important phase in the development and expansion of human rights. 33

Mariclaire Acosta, a member of the CNDH, discusses the importance of human rights, asserting that these are recognized as inherent rights of the human condition; therefore, if society does not provide these rights it is then obliged to recognize and protect them. Human rights, Acosta further argues, transcend the Western world and the precepts of the Enlightenment, thus becoming universal in nature. Human rights are not natural rights, rather they are elaborated by human kind, and are the result of social exigencies. Human rights are not an abstract construction but a social concept based on reciprocal relations. Hence, the violation of these rights is the negation of society; it is denying every person’s right to life, freedom and security. Mariclaire Acosta posits two important postulates that enhance the respect of human rights:

1. Human rights must be known and recognized by all individuals.
2. Human action must be guided by the principles of human rights so that humanity may be constituted as states of rights. 34

Between 1976 and 1990, human rights gained relevance in matters of social struggles. Starting with President López Portillo and continuing until the present, civil society has consistently strived to recuperate political spaces in order to incorporate human rights within the context of the Mexican political system. 35

The AMDH has “branches” in every state. In relation to the explosions of Guadalajara, the role of the AJDH is fundamental. Víctor Ramos, Vice President of the AJDH told the author during an interview that the reform of Article 102 of the Mexican Constitution forced all states to have human rights commissions. As these commissions emerged, civil society also formed non-governmental human rights organizations. Mr. Ramos explained that the AJDH was among the first to appear. In addition, he stated that the Academia primarily concentrates on education, research and the dissemination of information. Because it is a human rights entity, he added, the members of the AJDH incorporated the legal commission to provide advice to civil society. Mr. Ramos stated that there are more than ten lawyers who participate in the Academia.

After the explosions occurred, the AJDH immediately intervened. On the first day, members of the Academia began to closely follow the events to write informational documents. The following day the AJDH publicly announced that the explosions had violated the rights to life, public security and the environment. Mr. Ramos also explained that as a result of these preliminary determinations it was important to provide legal
advise to the victims. The AJDH mediated between the victims and different governmental bodies, particularly in relation to legal matters regarding compensations as well as to defend the victims of the desalojo.

The Victims

The victims reacted to the explosions of April 22 with protests and demonstrations. Political heterogeneity among them began to emerge during the early phases of the post-crisis. The victims, namely MCD 22 de Abril members, made attempts to act as a group: different world views and ideologies, however, curtailed the central organization of the residents of Sector Reforma. Consequently, variations in the nature of disputes, demands, and negotiations with state and federal authorities prevailed.

rejecting traditional forms of bargaining, members of MCD 22 de Abril engaged in militant actions. Other victims, the moderates, also demonstrated; their world views and political ideologies, however, retain traditionalist overtones, leading the group to conduct negotiations in which the dominant group exercised control.

Even though some of the operations were dubious, the moderates still supported the organisms conducting these operations. A critical example of this is the relation between the Patronato and the victims. The Patronato used donated funds to pay compensations. Víctor Ramos stated that such actions were illegal. He added, “this is a case of fraud.”36 The clamorous exigencies of MCD 22 de Abril with regard to fair and lawful compensations did not stimulate the criticism of the moderates. On the contrary, the latter supported the Patronato.
The Political Parties

The PRD and the PAN were present and active during the post-crisis phases. Their major demands consisted of requests for the resignations of Mr. Dau Flores and Mr. Cosio Vidaurri, as well as the investigation of the SEDUE (Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología), an organism which, according to Tarsicio Rodríguez Martínez, the PAN president in Jalisco, was not mentioned in the report submitted by the Procuraduría General. Although the responsibility of the SEDUE is only briefly addressed in the report, PAN and PRD representatives emphasized that SEDUE should be investigated.

The parties shared the belief of the AJDH in that this was an ecological disaster.

Members of the PRD and Pan attempted to ally themselves with the victims, offering them support, publishing critical articles in newspapers, and blaming PRI individuals for the explosions. These parties tried to physically penetrate the disaster area and to ideologically capture the victims. The possibility of political alternatives remained within a political framework in which opposition parties offered traditional choices. They did not provide possibilities for the formation of a strong counter-hegemonic movement. The parties did not foster mobilization, since this represented a threat not only to the dominant party but also to themselves. As individuals mobilize, Percy Hintzen argues, the security of the instigators becomes fragile due to the stray and contentious nature of the mobilized group. The relationship of mutual understanding of these two groups, the mobilized and the instigators of the mobilization, may be momentary, culminating in antagonisms. Here, the mere possibility of this outcome precluded opposition parties from encouraging mobilization.

The preceding section introduced and briefly analyzed the political actors who were directly involved in the development of the Guadalajara explosions. Next, a theoretical interpretation of these actors and their actions explains why and how the mechanisms of corporatism prevailed. The theoretical concepts previously discussed in Part I are incorporated in the following section as the nature, structure and actions of the political actors as well as their relationships are evaluated. The following analysis reveals the prevalence of corporatism as a system that controls and centralizes demands, limits group autonomy, and generates regime survival.

The State and Civil Society in the Guadalajara Experience: A Theoretical Interpretation

The political actors involved in the case of the Guadalajara explosions were members of the municipal, state and federal government, as well as civil society. These actors began to position themselves immediately after the tragedy, and each one of their actions had significant connotations within the Mexican political context. In addition, their behaviors and relations provide empirical evidence that corroborates, and in some instances expands, the theoretical formulations presented in Part I of this essay.

With regard to the federal authorities’ relations with municipal and state officials, the Secretario Adjunto del Presidente de México, Mr. Pedro Navarro Laflin stated, during our private conversation, that the President’s response to the tragedy was immediate. President Salinas de Gortari visited Guadalajara on the day of the tragedy. His presence indicates, first, the obvious: the President’s responsible action in a situation of crisis. Strategically, however, the visit suggests federal efforts to promote a sense of security among a group expected to become politically active as a result of what could have been
a preventable tragedy. While upheaval at the state and municipal level was predictable and imminent, federal authorities tried to balance this crisis by promoting traditional hegemonic values such as the benevolence of the government. These efforts were manifested by Salinas’ visits to hospitals and the disaster area. In doing so, the federal government attempted to confirm the regime’s concerns, as well as its capacity to effectively and promptly respond to the needs of the victims. Discussing hegemony, De la Pena asserts that the Executive commonly advances hegemonic values by emphasizing its role of mediator between the State and civil society to generate consensus. In addition, he mentions the government’s use of rhetoric to elevate its benevolent image among civil society.  

The replacement of Mr. Dau Flores and Mr. Cosio Vidaurri suggests the activation of political manoeuvres intended to prevent their resignation requested by civil society and opposition parties, such actions would have led to general elections. If these had occurred, the prevailing popular dissatisfaction could have resulted in the defeat of the PRI in Jalisco; said defeat was impeded by appointing provisional substitutes of these officials. Such manipulation clearly reflects the employment of “regime survival kit” tools.

As previously stated, this thesis argues that the Guadalajara case does not fit within the macrohistorical framework of the optimists. Indeed, the explosions served as triggering forces that provoked a critical juncture within the Mexican political milieu. Nevertheless, the outcomes of this crisis did not follow the patterns of the historical legacy initiated by the student uprising of 1968. While the optimists consider these episodes as an accumulation of civil society’s demands for redemocratization, the actions of the Guadalajara victims indicate the prevalence of a moderate mentality which impeded the growth of a movement that could have otherwise transcended immediate issues such as compensations and the re-establishment of the pre-crisis conditions. A struggle for redemocratization was not a salient issue among the victims of the Guadalajara explosions.

Following the disaster, residents of Sector Reforma protested: “Why were we not informed about the danger?” The victims, experiencing anger, frustration, and confusion, began to organize, engaging in demonstrations and holding meetings in the vicinity of the disaster area. Differences of world views began to emerge. MCD 22 de Abril not only refused to work within the system but also demanded the withdrawal of Solidaridad units since these displayed PRI logotypes. Furthermore, members of this group emphasized that they “did not need the government’s tutelage.”

The major differences of world views among the victims are related to the Patronato. The support offered to this organization by approximately half of the victims suggests the manipulation of the political circumstances by the government, as well as the hegemonic, non-contesting values of the supporters.

Since the Patronato was created to compensate the victims and channel their demands, the structure of this organization, with the participation of fifteen victims, initially insinuates the creation of a democratic organism that would promote fruitful discourse. An analysis of the Patronato’s proposed compensations, as well as its channeling of demands, however, indicate the presence of elements typically representative of a corporatist regime. With regard to compensations, the Patronato submitted the Convenio Finiquito, a document regulating the indemnifications. The
Convenio was based on article 1836 of the Civil Code of Jalisco, which states that “the reparation of damages will consist of the reestablishment of the pre-crisis situation if and when possible, or of the payment of damages.” This document established that upon its signature the victims could not formulate further claims. The Convenio states:

“expresamente acept(o)(amos) no revervar (me)(nos) acción, queja, denuncia, querella o demanda alguna en el presente o en lo futuro, con motivo del siniestro antes indicado, obligando(me)(nos) a coadyudar, según corresponda, con el referido Patronato y/o con el gobierno federal y/o el gobierno estatal y/o el gobierno municipal, si así lo requiriese(n), en los procedimientos que resuelva(n) instaurar.

The partiality of the document provoked the resistance of the contestors, who rejected its stipulations. A MCD 22 de Abril pamphlet about this Convenio ends as follows: “No firmes ningún documento que te haga perder derechos…no firmes el convenio finiquito.

The moderates, however, emphatically supported the Patronato, and during a meeting held on June 28, a victim’s representative recognized this organism as “el único órgano…que nos rige a los damnificados y pormedio del cual vamos a lograr todas y cada una de nuestras necesidades y demandas.” On that day more than two thousand people marched to Guadalajara’s Government Palace to express their support to the Patronato. The victims applauded Mr. Covarrubias as he appeared before them. The demonstrators exclaimed “aquí estamos, los verdaderos damnificados.” Mr. Rivera Aceves, also present during this rally, greeted at least one hundred people, assuring them that the tramites would be expedited. The presence of Governor Rivera Aceves and Mr. Covarrubias symbolizes their mutual support, parallely, civil society’s approval of the actions of the latter actor denotes the endorsement of both.

The Patronato, acting as a governmental organism, controlled the demands of the victims, thus centralizing and limiting their actions. Coinstantaneously, the Patronato represented the benevolence of the government by serving as a body that addressed the needs of the victims. Moreover, the hegemonic values of the PRI were upheld through the Patronato’s rhetoric and actions. In “channeling” demands, this organization executed dual functions. First, it prevented the growth and development of non-aligned groups. Second, it reinforced the legitimacy of the dominant party through the distribution of compensations. Patron-client relations existed in this exchange; while the victims received monetary remunerations, the government obtained the support of a great number of victims. In this case, as in any case of patronage, the exchange was unequal since the dominant group succeeded in retaining its power and control and the subaltern classes only obtained indemnizations that would eventually allow them to regain their pre-crisis state. The political order remained the same; the supporters did not contest such order.

The moderates’ belief that the Patronato responded to their needs suggests two important explanations concerning their behavior. The first indicates the presence and effectiveness of the core’s hegemonic values among this group of victims. Thus, the political culture of these Tapatios must be considered. Discussing political culture, de la Peña states that in order to discern its possible alterations, the researcher must concentrate not only on concepts of hegemony which emphasize “obedience and acceptance factors,” but must also consider the elements of conflict and resistance in the behaviors of the people studied. He adds that hegemony is confronted with subaltern resistance. At this
in juncture it is fundamental to evaluate the existence and extent of subaltern resistance to
determine if the changes in political culture may potentially have repercussions on the
political system. De la Peña differentiates between the political culture which represents
the values of the core—the regime—and that which emerges from, and is representative
of, civil society.\textsuperscript{51} The former has homogeneic and monopolistic connotations, while the
latter indicates the presence of heterogeneity and cleavages that highlight the capacity of
civil society to act and decide independently of the hegemonic values of the dominant
group. With regard to Guadalajara, de la Peña posits a dilemma by discussing the
ambiguities found in civil society, since the values among residents of this city do not
entirely reflect those of the core, yet elements of patronage are present.\textsuperscript{52} The
Guadalajara explosions indicate the prevalence of hegemonic values among a large
number of victims. This region of the country has been identified as conservative; during
the last years, however, this area has witnessed the growth of civil society.\textsuperscript{53} The
citizenry has not remained static. However, the outcomes of the explosions suggest that
the transformations or changes of the political culture of Guadalajara are merely pulsating
and/or latent; moreover, these may still be restricted through corporatist manoeuvres.

The establishment of the\textit{ Patronato} also denotes the government’s implementation
of\textbf{ practical ideology}, one of the “regime survival kit” tools. By including fifteen
victims in its organizational structure, the\textit{ Patronato} appeared a democratic entity. The
corporatist regime, therefore, responded to a situation of crisis by adapting itself to the
prevailing political circumstances and by adopting a flexible response. This response
was articulated so as to allow and promote the participation of the victims; this, however,
was constrained. The government effectively utilized its resources to reestablish order.

The second explanation indicates that the response of the moderates may also be
attributed to the lack of a strong counter-hegemonic alternative. The victims, realizing
the absence of an effective opposing alternate, opted for a practical path that would result
in more rapid and efficient solutions. This attitude, however, cannot be considered
attributable to the Olsonian model of rational choice since in their massive support of the
\textit{Patronato} people not only identified with this organism, but also saw themselves as a
monolithic group, “\textit{los verdaderos damnificados}.” Rather, this situation reflects the
coexistence of hegemonic and practical values. Susan Stokes argues, in her discussion of
Gramsci’s notion of “contradictory consciousness,” that people’s practical knowledge of
their political surrounding may, indeed, free them from the conceptions and hegemonic
values of the dominant group; nevertheless, she explains, this may coexist with
“uncritically absorbed” ideas which emanate from, and are disseminated by, the ruling
elite.\textsuperscript{54} The victims’ support of the\textit{ Patronato}, and their rejection of alternative groups
such as MCD 22 de Abril indicate that even if they favored the\textit{ Patronato} as a result of
\textbf{practical knowledge}, hegemonic values which have been permeating from the top down
generate and delineate their beliefs and behaviors. Otherwise, the moderates would have
engaged in contestatory activities, at least temporarily.

The Guadalajara case also provides evidence of a bifurcation in the political culture
of the moderates \textit{vis-à-vis} the contestors. The actions of MCD 22 de Abril, since its
emergence on April 26, were critical in nature. Sergio Gómez Partida and other members
expressed that they would not negotiate according to the stipulations of state and federal
authorities. Sergio mentioned to the author that a few days before the\textit{ desalojo}, Governor
Rivera Aceves visited the disaster area, specifically where MCD 22 de Abril gathered,
staying overnight. According to Mr. Gómez Partida, the state officials were trying to
placate MCD 22 de Abril by affecting concern and understanding. Gómez Partida,
refusing to accept this “paternalism,” continued to protest, and on May 31 they participated in a demonstration called *La Marcha Nacional de Dolor y de Protesta*, held at the *Plaza Mayor*, located in front of the *Palacio de Gobierno*. Sergio states that prior to the demonstration, government officials, including representatives of the *Patronato*, offered to pay indemnizations; as these payments were somewhat augmented upon the victims’ requests, the *damnificados* decided not to participate in the *Marcha*. Most victims opposed the operations of MCD 22 de Abril; one individual declared that this group should accept working with the *Patronato* instead of refusing to negotiate. Others mentioned that the Governor advised them not to participate in the demonstration. Furthermore, both the moderates and the Governor rejected the actions and attitudes of MCD 22 de Abril, commenting that members of this group were *ciudadanos minoritarios* who were against the reconstruction plans. Later, responding to these accusations, Sergio declared that these were mechanisms employed by government officials to damage the image of his group and to create antagonisms among the victims of *Sector Reforma*.

The day of the demonstration members of MCD 22 de Abril decided to stay at the Plaza overnight. Their demands included provisional housing and direct participation in the reconstruction plans. At 3:15 a.m. of June 1st, the demonstrators, totaling about thirty, were asleep. Suddenly, approximately forty individuals arrived at the Plaza and began to attack the victims of the explosions, some of whom, including Sergio, were beaten, suffering injuries. Others were able to escape.

The next day the moderates repudiated the *Marcha*, while the AJDH immediately expressed its support to the victims of the *desalojo*. This human rights organization was able to confirm the events of June 1st, since one of their members, a female lawyer, was a witness. The AJDH, which had provided legal advice to the MCD 22 de Abril since the explosions occurred, became directly involved in matters concerning the *desalojo*. Víctor Ramos, discussing this episode, stated that while the authorities declared that government officials were not responsible for the incident, according to the witness the attackers were members of the police force. Moreover, Mr. Ramos explained, even if the Governor had not been directly involved in the *desalojo*, public security regulations stipulate that the Governor is responsible for such acts of violence, apart from whether he ordered it or not.

Mr. Ramos added that soon after this event the media began to refrain from making remarks that would somewhat support those being made by the AJDH about the *desalojo*. He also stated that between the 1st and the 5th of June members of his organization felt isolated since the media and civil society refused to hear and evaluate their informed opinions. Mr. Ramos said, “with the exception of *Siglo 21*, we were left alone.”

The AJDH requested the participation of the CNDH to investigate the events of June 1st. Mr. Ramos explained that while this commission’s response is not always prompt, in this case the answer was immediate, and within five days members of the CNDH were meeting with the AJDH in Guadalajara. On June 5th the latter was reporting its version of the *desalojo* and although during the first five days their version had been considered dubious, the presence and agreement of the CNDH with regard to this event led the press to suddenly recognize the statements made by the non-governmental organization. The CNDH concluded, in accordance with the findings of the AJDH, that the individuals who conducted the *desalojo* were members of the *Departamento de Seguridad Pública*. Furthermore, the CNDH concluded that the event of June 1st violated constitutional guarantees such as freedom of expression and association. The *Comisión*
formulated petitions presented to the Jalisco government requesting the undertaking of all necessary investigations in order to legally punish all responsible individuals.

Following the desalojo, MCD 22 de Abril expressed its demands to the Patronato< these included some of those previously stated, such as provisional housing, the withdrawal of Pronasol from the disaster area, fair indemnizations without major bureaucratic impediments, and investigations about the June 1st incident. As a result of their negotiations with the Patronato, some of the agreements were: evaluations of a project to build provisional houses, weekly meetings between MCD 22 de Abril and Mr. Covarrubias, and investigations concerning the desalojo, as well as the release of information regarding the Patronato’s activities. After these agreements, MCD 22 de Abril announced that it would cease its demonstrations since the Patronato agreed to negotiate.

A series of theoretical considerations emerge as a result of the preceding description of the desalojo, the most salient being: coercion, pure and practical ideology, social conflict, hegemony, and inclusionary and exclusionary practices. With regard to coercoin, the desalojo exemplifies a case in which government officials resort to violence in an effort to dismantle threatening groups, curtail the further growth of opposition movements, and retain its power and control. Interestingly, while greater mobilization and social upheaval could have been the outcome of this episode, the data demonstrates that MCD 22 de Abril began negotiations following this event; it is as if the centrifugal forces that originally generated the actions of this group progressively transformed themselves, becoming centripetal. Political cleavages narrowed. Although members of this group claimed that the Patronato agreed to negotiate with them, their previous statements and actions indicate that they were not entirely willing to negotiate with this organism. The decision to negotiate after June 1st indicates a change of tactics among the members of MCD 22 de Abril and the chronological order of this change in relation to the desalojo suggest a plausible connection.

As discussed in Part I of this essay, the use of repressive measures against demonstrators may provoke greater agitation; if violence is followed by appropriate political articulations, however, agitation does not necessarily ensue. In the case of the desalojo the immediate response of the CNDH, a governmental organization, and, most important, its surprising liberal conclusions, suggest said articulations. Although the CNDH is considered an autonomous entity, and its president acts independently, this is, nonetheless, a Comisión founded by the current President of Mexico. Political ideologies are therefore similar.

The CNDH’s immediate response is hence interpreted as a maneouvre which indicates the implementation of practical ideology. This was defined previously as actions taken by the government through state institutions to preserve its power by means of assuring civil society that its interests will be protected. Practical ideology was further considered as a mechanism that enhances the chances of regime survival. Since the legitimacy of state and federal authorities was again threatened after the desalojo, the presence and conclusions of the CNDH were crucial if legitimacy and consensus were to be regained. Federal authorities could remedy the ruptures suffered at the state level and strengthen legitimacy at the national level.

In the theoretical discussion of social conflict the notions of solidarity, participation and ideology were presented and discussed. These are now incorporated in
the analysis of the desalojo. Ideological values among members of MCD 22 de Abril differed from those of the moderates and the dominant group. Though not counter-hegemonic, since they did not mobilize to alter the social order, the ideologies of these individuals conflicted with those of the core. By participating in demonstrations and identifying as members of MCD 22 de Abril, the contestors expressed solidarity and commitment to their cause. Their actions, as members of an identifiable movement, indicate the presence of a common ideology and political culture among these individuals. This is not to say that theirs was a homogeneous group, rather, it suggests the heterogeneity of civil society in Guadalajara. While the majority of the damnificados are categorized as moderates, a minority of them engaged in subaltern resistance. The hegemonic monopoly of the PRI has been broken. Nonetheless, the corporatist nature of the regime subdued the vociferous members of MCD 22 de Abril. Although they did not acquiesce, they began negotiations with the authorities. It can only be inferred that through such dialogue the victims will obtain some benefits. As in the case of the Mexico City earthquakes of 1985, however, these individuals had to agree to “work with and not against the system.” Simultaneously, the presence and verdict of the CNDH is indicative of the Mexican liberalization process. Such a process allows the regime to prevent its erosion, which would be more likely if the system remained, as Wiarda terms it, dinosauric.

A final inference emerges from the case of the desalojo. The statements made by Governor Rivera Aceves with regard to MCD 22 de Abril prior to June 1st suggest exclusionary practices. The emergence and resonance of this movement led government officials to undermine its reputation and exclude it by not directly addressing its demands. The increase of mobilization and ideological differentiation first caused the authorities to exclude the contestors only to later absorb them within the state apparatus. As Stepan argues, in his discussion of exclusionary and inclusionary policies, the inclusion of a threatening group (in this case MCD 22 de Abril) reduces the degree of risks for the regime and it allows it to augment its control.

**Toward Democratization in Mexico: Reflections**

The preceding discussion of behaviors and attitudes of the moderates and contestors in relation to the Patronato and the desalojo reveal that participation had different meanings for each group. Although neither of them expressed a desire to alter the social order, the moderates were less critical of the regime than the contestors. For the former, participation implied demonstrations of support in which they demanded efficiency but concurrently approved the operations of the Patronato, and repudiated the Marcha. The latter questioned the efficiency of the system, resisted patron-client relations, rejected the hegemonic values of the dominant group, did not participate in the moderates’ demonstration of support for the Patronato, and demanded fair representation within the structure of this organism. In formulating their demands they stressed citizen’s rights and reprobated the rhetoric of the regime as it tried to advance a “benevolent” image. As they were “reabsorbed” by the system, after the desalojo, their ideologies were not altered, since they continued struggling and formulating demands to the Patronato. Nonetheless, the future militancy of this group, once their needs are met, remains to be seen. The absence of a counter-hegemonic mentality among members of this group indicates its possible future dissolution. Thus, the legacy to which the optimists refer did not prevail in Guadalajara, and probably will not flourish as a result of the contestors’ response to the explosions.
This legacy is found, however, among other citizens who participated in the political developments which followed the events of April 22. Namely, members of El Foro, La Coordinadora, and the Academia Jaliscience de Derechos Humanos. The informed opinions of the individuals who integrate one or more of these non-governmental groups and organizations relate to a world view which is critical of the regime, ideologically counter-hegemonic, and militant. These attributes may lead to popular reformulations of political culture. Such changes would be the result of the dissemination of information among the citizenry. Since members of these groups are committed to their causes and actively pursue modifications within civil society, as well as within the regime, the possibilities of popular mentality transformation exist. Such changes, however, also depend on the ability of the regime to impose, in a corporatist fashion, its hegemonic values. The regime succeeded in the Guadalajara case by employing various techniques, among them rhetorical subterfuges, and articulated liberal actions which secured consensus and served as testimonies of democratic beliefs, thus, subsequent regime accomplishments are predictable.

While Silvia Gómez Tagle affirms that “it is evident that since 1968 the citizenry wants to change the system, or at least the legal and institutional terms of representation within it, thus it organized and mobilized,” the Guadalajara experience manifests that these generalizations may prove misleading. Regional micro-political studies concerning the nature of state-civil society relations such as this present evidence which posits dilemmas about Mexican socio-political realities when confronted with the assumptions made through macro-historical analyses, thus generate further discussions about the redemocratization process in Mexico.

Political cleavages are present and active in polarized countries; these are reduced in nations characterized by a more moderate and centripetal political ideology, and virtually absent in corporatist nation-states. Regardless of the prevailing political philosophies of any nation, elections, commonly considered the ultimate democratic manifestation, are one more demonstration of the limits and restrictions imposed on humans since the rise of the state. Elections are significant events in which people experience the satisfaction of having participated in the political process of their nation. Different countries offer variations in the electoral process; the degree of representation varies accordingly. Whether candidates are elected via the winner-take-all system or by means of proportional representation, electors choose only from candidates and ideologies that are offered to them. In making a choice, individuals feel gratification and hope to see the materialization of their needs and demands. Corporatist regimes, however, exercise much greater control than democratic political systems by reducing the autonomy of potentially contestatory groups and individuals, constricting their participation and representation, as well as by engaging in fraudulent electoral practices. The partial opening of the Mexican regime through its redemocratization, and the concurrent awakening of a segment of the population symbolize a change in the socio-political patterns of Mexican society. But the analysis of the Guadalajara explosions cautions against optimistic assumptions since the Party successfully utilized “regime survival kit” tools that promoted and secured its endurance.

One of the dilemmas relates to ideology and political culture; their further analysis would expand the understanding of human behavior. In this thesis, the author provided evidence which suggested that hegemonic values advanced by the dominant group still influence the behavior of many Tapatios. Time constraints did not permit the compilation of biographical data, but through the informants’ comments, and personal
observations of Sector Reforma, the residents of this area are considered members of the lower-middle-class. The contrasts between these individuals and the members of the non-governmental organizations mentioned above suggest that educational patterns, at least in Guadalajara, contribute to the formation of political ideologies which, in turn, lead to moderate or contestatory behaviors. In the case of MCD 22 de Abril, Sergio Gómez Partida, one of the contestors, is an educated individual who currently attends engineering school in Guadalajara, but not all MCD 22 de Abril members are students. Many of the moderates are or were owners of small shops in their neighborhood. Formal education, hence, is possibly one of the factors which produces changes in world views. In addition, the socialization process, originated within the nuclear and/or extended family and affected by the predominant hegemonic values of the core, certainly influenced the individuals’ responses after the explosions. These factors, then, are directly related to the possibilities of changes in the world views of the citizenry, and may subsequently lead to greater and more persistent demands for the expansion of the political space within the Mexican political milieu. Thus, it is inferred that should there be a consistent, solid and ubiquitous growth of civil society, the power of the State could probably be constrained, and the structure of the regime significantly modified. Regional contemporary socio-political realities do not indicate the imminence of this prosperous state of affairs.

1Collier and Collier define critical junctures as periods of change which produce distinct legacies. Critical junctures are triggered by forces (external or internal) at certain historical moments and within different contexts. However, the periods are analytically equivalent, that is, they represent different values on the same variable. Cleavages or crises lead to critical junctures. These are referred to as “generative” cleavages. The importance of critical junctures is their historical legacy. This means that goals and purposes do not cease to exist at the end of a critical juncture, rather they accumulate. For a complete discussion of critical junctures see: Collier and Collier in Shaping the Political Arena (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 27-39.

2J. Castañeda, “Mexico at the Brink,” Foreign Affairs Journal, Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. 64/2 (1985): 293. Also, Rafael del Aguila Tejerina discusses the political culture of Spain in premodern, modern and postmodern times. He finds that the political culture of Franco’s regime reflected characteristics of passivity, while modernity gave rise to stronger political opposition. Postmodernism, on the contrary, causes the cessation of emancipating and liberating goals. Rather, postmodernism leads to fragmentation, it even reaches the individual level, as opposed to the generalized interests which prevailed in modern times. The modernity to which the author alludes seems to coincide with that which is currently taking place in Mexico. For further details see: R. del Aguila Tejerina, “Rasgos básicos en la transformación de la cultura política española,” in Cultura Política y Democratización (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales [CLACSO], 1987).

Foweraker discusses the implications of 1968. He sees a process of redemocratization in Mexico which is signaled by the loss of legitimacy of the PRI and the active participation of civil society through mobilizations. These, according to Foweraker, symbolize a struggle for autonomy and greater representation. For details on this perspective see: Joe Foweraker, “Los movimientos populares y la transformación del sistema político mexicano” (particularly pages 93-96), Revista Mexicana de Sociología LI/4 (octubre-diciembre 1989), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico.

4Ibid., p. 102. Also read Wiarda who states that the 1988 presidential election was critical in Mexican politics. Although the PRI won, opposition was higher than in past elections. Manuel Clothier, president of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) was a challenge for Salinas de Gortari, candidate for the PRI, while Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, president of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) drew his support from Mexico’s leftist groups. In H. Wiarda, “Mexico: The Unravelling of a Corporatist Regime,” Journal of International Studies and World Affairs (Florida) 30/4 (Winter 1988-1989): 7-8.


10A Tapatío is a native of Guadalajara.


12Ibid., p. 13.

13Ibid.

14Ibid., p. 5.

15Ibid., p. 6.

16Ibid.

17Ibid., pp. 8-9.

18Siglo 21 is a local Guadalajara newspaper. Starting on April 21, reporters from this newspaper began to follow the potential danger in Sector Reforma. On April 22, Siglo 21 published an article in which Alejandra Xanic, a reporter, described the events of the previous day and reported the latent risk in the area.

19Siglo 21, April 26, 1992, p. 3.

20Ibid., p. 8.

21Ibid.

22La Jornada, April 24, 1992, p. 9.

23El Informador, Guadalajara, Mexico, April 27, 1992, p. 3-A. See also Siglo 21, April 27, 1992, p. 1.


25Ibid., p. 10

26El Nacional, Mexico, April 30, 1992, pp. 1 and 9.

27La Jornada, April 30, 1992, p. 12.


29Ibid., April 26, 1992.

30From a discussion with professor Guillermo de la Peña.

31Siglo 21, April 26, 1992.

32This information was obtained in an interview with Ms. Padilla during my stay in Guadalajara.


36Mr. Ramos expressed this during the interview previously mentioned.

37Siglo 21, April 27, 1992, pp. 3-4 and 8.

38Víctor Ramos mentioned this. See also Siglo 21, May 1, 1992, p. 8. Raquel Gutiérrez, member and coordinator of the ecology department of the AJDH stated that officials involved in the tragedy violated the laws of ecological safety.

39Percy Hintzen, Democracy and Middle Class Domination in the West Indies (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1990), p. 6.
I met with Mr. Navarro Laflin in Mexico City to discuss the explosions of Guadalajara.


Ibid., April 28, p. 10.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Siglo 21, June 28, 1992, p. 5.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 261.


For a discussion of practical knowledge see S. Stokes, Making Social Movements: The State and the Urban Poor in Peru (manuscript), pp. 20-22.

These arguments were formulated by Sergio Gómez Partida during the course of our second meeting in Guadalajara.


Ibid., June 1, 1992, p. 5.


Ibid., June 1, 1992, p. 5.

Ibid., June 2, 1992, p. 3.

Ibid., p. 6.


Phrase extracted from the recording of our discussion about the desalojo.