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A Study of the Political Activity of Mexican University Students

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A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY
OF MEXICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Government

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Angela Rodríguez Fernández

March 1976

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A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY
OF MEXICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
Chapter	
I Student Politics in Comparative Analysis	1
II The Setting of Mexican Politics	9
III The Mexican Student Revolt of 1968.....	25
IV An Evaluation of Student Attitudes and Orientations in 1964 and Their Relation to The 1968 Revolt.....	47
Methods of Analysis.....	48
Findings of Analyses.....	53
V Conclusions.....	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I	Activity in 1968 by Students' Ideological Self-Designation in 1964	54
II	Discrepancy in 1964 by Students' Ideological Self-Designation in 1964	55
III	Activity in 1968, Discrepancy in 1964, Self-Designation in 1964 by Sex in 1964	57
IV	Activity in 1968, Discrepancy in 1964, Self-Designation in 1964 by Community Size in 1964..	59
V	Activity in 1968, Discrepancy in 1964, Self-Designation in 1964 by Father's Education in 1964.....	61
VI	Activity in 1968, Discrepancy in 1964, Self-Designation in 1964 by Age in 1964.....	64

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A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF MEXICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Angela Rodríguez Fernández

March 1976

78 pages

Directed by: John H. Petersen, Thomas Madron, and Faye Carroll

Department of Government

Western Kentucky University

An overview of the political activity of Mexican university students during the 1968 disturbances in Mexico was compared with data taken from a 1964 attitudinal survey conducted by the International Research Associates, Incorporated of university students from nine Mexican universities in an attempt to find possible trends and attitudes that could have predicted the 1968 and subsequent riots. The population for the analysis came from three of the nine universities based on the levels of activity shown during the 1968 riots ranging from most active to least active. Three main variables; activism as of 1968, ideological self-designation as of 1964 and degrees of discrepancy as of 1964 were cross-tabulated with sex, age, father's education and community size. Students who in 1964 saw themselves as falling to the extreme left of the ideological scale were found to be in the more active university in 1968. The majority of students in 1964 did not view the government and accompanying institutions as being that far from their own ideological views. The most active university had the largest percentage of students in the 31 or older category. Sex held no significance bearing on activism. Students coming from populations of less than 10,000 were found to be more highly concentrated in the most active university and those students whose father had completed college were also concentrated in the more active university.

CHAPTER I

STUDENT POLITICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

For more than a century, student movements have had an important place among the agents of social change. In some nations, students have succeeded in toppling governments or changing the fabric of politics. In others they have been instrumental in various kinds of cultural revivals, and in political and social development. In the third world nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, students have provided leadership to national liberation movements, political parties and on a more local level, labor organizations, and cultural groups.¹

The theory of student movements and political activity has moved countless researchers to search for meaningful explanations. In the course of such approaches numerous discoveries and rediscoveries have arisen. The study of student activism has been undertaken by social psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, historians, institutional economists and from time to time by a philosopher or two. Some of the usual preoccupations with student political activity, or lack of such are for example the degrees of conservatism and liberalism, the effects of socioeconomic level and

¹Philip A. Altback, "Student Politics," Student Politics, ed., Seymour M. Lipset (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), p. 94.

education, and the different areas of interest and careers, degrees of participation, and age.

Many reasons for student activism have been offered from a Communist conspiracy to a castration complex. It is erroneous to conclude that youth are "naturally" rebellious or idealistic. It is also not always true that youth is a period of restlessness, searching, unbound energy. Richard Flacks believes that youth revolt is a symptom of a fundamental sociocultural crises.² In general terms, the crises involves a substantial conflict between the emergent technological potentialities of a society and the established social order and cultural system. Technological changes have created new social roles, new classes, whose occupants experience discontent with old ways and established structures. Edward E. Sampson sees student protesters as generally outstanding students; the higher the student's grade average and the more outstanding his academic achievements the more likely he is to become involved in any particular political demonstration.³ Similarly, student activists come from families with liberal political values. They come from professional and intellectual families of upper middle-class status with higher parental incomes, parental education and less anxiety about social issues.⁴

²Richard Flacks, Youth and Social Change (Chicago: Markhan Publishing Co., 1971), p. 6.

³Edward E. Sampson and Harold A. Korn, Student Activism and Protest (San Francisco: Jasey-Bass, Inc., 1970), p. 169, 213.

⁴"Columbus and the New Left." The Public Interest, (Fall, 1968) p. 53.

Bell pictures young activists as manipulative and self-serving, but Lewis says his study contradicts this view, and finds activists as being warm, altruistic and socially concerned students who are committed to their political ideology.⁵

Rose K. Goldsen in her book, What College Students Think, gives evidence for increasing conservatism throughout the college years.⁶ By contrast, Philip E. Jacob, after an extensive review of available evidence has concluded that higher education has little or no effect on attitudes and values.⁷

Glauco A.D. Soares sees radical and conservative students as having different role images. A radical orientation according to Soares seems to be connected with an integrated role image, in the sense that the student role is not separated from the citizen role. Student life is seen as part of the national political life. Conservative students, on the contrary, tend to see themselves as full-time students preparing for a career. They are more likely to think of the student days as a long-term investment leading toward a well-paid occupation. They are more concerned with technical professional problems than with national or international issues. Nevertheless, with each ideological group it is the student from

⁵Stephen H. Lewis and Robert E. Draut, "Correlation of Student Political Activism and Ideology," Journal of Social Issues, vol. 28 no. 4 (1972): 131-49, p. 146.

⁶Rose K. Goldsen, What College Students Think (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1960), p. 123.

⁷Philip E. Jacob, Changing Values in College: An Explanatory Study of the Impact of College Teaching (New York: Harper Press, 1957), p. 198.

middle and upper class origins who is most likely to be concerned with national problems.⁸

Some experts believe that because students deal with perceptual and ideological problems they become more sensitive to the problems around them. This acute sensitivity on the part of the students moves them into activism. This is particularly true of those students who are engaged in the humanities, the social sciences, and law, and who have had opened up to them a wider knowledge about continuing societal problems. This creates a tendency to observe more carefully and thoughtfully the state of the world about them and what is being done and not being done about these problems by the adult population. This broadened and sharpened knowledge often leads to a deepened concern. Students in Latin America are always reform-minded. They take a militant stance against problems and issues they feel are both unfair and of grave importance.

Helen S. Astin suggests that activists subscribing to a particular political ideology are not distinguishable on personal dimensions from activists of a different ideology. Activists, whether of the left, middle, or right ideology are less needful of support and nurturance than are nonactivists. Moreover, they tend to place a higher value on leadership and are more socially ascendent and assertive.⁹

⁸Glaucio A.D. Soares, "The Active Few: Student Ideology and Participation in Developing Countries," Comparative Education Review, vol. 206 no. 10 (October 1966): 205-219. p. 206.

⁹Helen Astin, "Self-Perceptions of Student Activists," College Student Personnel, vol. 12 (July 1971): 123-70.

The characteristic national values and outlooks permeate the entire school curriculum from the kinds of problems posed in arithmetic to the formal instruction in civics. Whatever the content and whatever the approach, the school system functions as a powerful mold of politically relevant attitudes as a means of induction into citizenship.¹⁰ Almond and Verba in a five-nation study link increased civic duty with increased education, thus providing some support to V.O. Key's hypothesis that education plays an imperative role in the formation of citizenship.¹¹ The universities embody and disseminate the newest ideas and values. They inculcate such values as scientific, legal and civil rationality, and introduce students to concepts of equality, democracy, liberty and nationalism. Meanwhile the hope that higher education would have a modest, controlled gradual impact on backward societies especially, has proven false. Germany and Russia in the 19th century, and Eastern Europe, China and other Asian countries, and most of Latin America are examples of this.¹² Agriculture, being the primary mode of production, dominates the society. A feudal and aristocratic structure of power and privilege prevails in cultures that are religiously and traditionally oriented.

¹⁰V.O. Key, Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 26.

¹¹Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (New York: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 139.

¹²R. Hovighurst, "Latin America and North America in Higher Education," Comparative Education Review, vol. 4 (February 1961): 174-182. p. 180.

Students hungry for new cultural perspectives and stimulated by hopes for a better life for themselves and their future offspring gravitate to university life. They sense the obsolescence and ineffectuality of their parents and the values represented by the parent generation. At first, most students felt they could implement the modern ideas they were acquiring by appealing to the established elites on the one hand and using the elite positions they would inherit on the other. Classically, student movements began when such expectations were frustrated.

Student solidarity was promoted by student proximity. They were segregated into enclaves that permitted intimate association and mutual identification under conditions of both repression and relative freedom and they were privileged but lived in considerable poverty and economic insecurity.¹³

In this situation students became interested in movements expressing nationalistic and populist identification with the poor, deep hostility toward the parent generation as embodied in the government mentality, strong convictions of the moral righteousness and redemptive character of the fraternity of the young, and a longing for a new culture based on principles of brotherhood, community, freedom and equality. Freedom and equality after all are comparative. Freedom or the lack of it as felt by students is characterized when freedom is not just freedom to express oneself but to be able to change

¹³Ivan Barrientos, Seminar on Latin America, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky, June 25, 1973.

conditions. When it becomes clear that the freedom extended does not allow the exercise of changing conditions which are regarded as evil then it may be felt that the only real freedom must lie in rebellion. But to students freedom is ineffective because of the repressive atmosphere of the governing elites. The feeling hence emerges that protest simply echoes forlornly and unheeded down the vistaed corridors of power. It exists surrounded by a vacuum. Society is arranged in concentric circles, so that the inhabitants of each circle talk only to one another.¹⁴

In large measure, student political behavior is anticipatory adult political behavior, particularly in developing countries where even student demands for better university teachers and research facilities are part of the struggle for nation development. Consequently, student behavior will often reflect the state of adult politics, even if in a more extreme reformist fashion. The extent and concern with politics among students in different countries is in part a function of the degree of tension in the larger policy. Apparent greater student interest in national politics among Latin American students is probably a reflection of a more general political uncertainty and instability in Latin America, thus national politics becomes a matter of concern to everybody.¹⁵

In Latin American universities there exists the concept of co-government by which the students have the right to participation in

¹⁴Elizabeth H. Hastings, ed., International Youth Study Inventory (Williamstown: The Roger Public Opinion Research Center, Williams College, 1964)

¹⁵Arthur Liebman, "Student Activism in Mexico," The Annals of the American Academy of Politics and Social Sciences, vol. 395 (May 1971): 159-170.

the policy-making apparatus of the university. Student voting power may vary from one third to one half of the total voting power which may include faculty and administration. Students participate in the election of deans, departmental chairmen and construction of curricula. The concept of co-government reflects the traditional belief that the university exists to serve the student. Students in Latin America then, enjoy a prestigious status.¹⁶ A logical conclusion from the above observation would be that Latin American university systems have a built-in allowance for student political activity. In all activities, no matter what position they might take the students never question their right or competence to act. They consider themselves the educated elite that has the responsibility to act on behalf of, or with, the rest of the population to change the social, economic and political structure of the nation.

But political participation is not a monolithic concept as it embodies different forms, levels and degrees of intensity. Conceiving various forms of political participation as having different degrees of intensity is in itself a good justification for analyzing those forms separately. The study of student attitudes on the various factors that constitute their environment during their school years may lead to some understanding of their activism. Any conclusion drawn from an attitudinal study of student political participation is necessarily limited by the possibility that the factors correlated with being politically active in school may differ widely from those associated with local, regional, national or international politics.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 160.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF MEXICAN POLITICS

According to most of the criteria by which Western as opposed to non-Western political systems are characterized, Mexico has advanced toward the West. There is a relatively high degree of participation in, or at least awareness of, politics, and rather highly developed and specialized interest groups and associations exist and act in politics.

Mexico's de facto one-party system is embodied in the Partido Revolucionario Institucional political party and rests upon reconciling opposing interests. Under the leadership of the PRI the country has advanced not only politically but economically as well. The party has shaped an economy that has grown at the rate of seven percent annually during the last ten years making it one of the fastest growing economies in the world,¹ an accomplishment often referred to as the Mexican "miracle." Since the 1910 revolution the country has experienced a peaceful exchange of presidents under an apparent condition of stability in the Western sense of the word. In comparison with her Latin American neighbors, Mexico's growth for the last thirty five years

¹John S. Brecher, "Student, the University and the Government," Intellect, vol. 101 (January, 1973): 233-4.

registers a singular achievement, however measured.² Mexican economic policies have fueled the growth process; its political system has successfully absorbed the pressures resulting from the impact of rapid growth on welfare. This is the real Mexican miracle.

An inspiring feature of Mexican life is the multiplicity of schools all over the country, unconsolidated and unbussed, which seems to be turning out a generation of alert and very literate young people.³

Mexico's modern economic growth originated in a flood of foreign investment and the emergence of indigenous entrepreneurship during the years of the Díaz dictatorship. The revolution of 1910 slowed growth for almost thirty years, but reshaped the Mexican social structure and the opportunities for social mobility in a manner very favorable to the post 1940 economic boom. Finally, a set of government policies highly attractive to the Mexican private sector and conducive to the productivity of investment in general led to more than three decades of growth rates unparalleled in Latin American or elsewhere in the developing world.⁴

Mexico's distinctive foreign policy is evidenced by her consistent adherence to certain principles and in her anti-totalitarian and anti-expansionist attitudes. These include the propositions that all

²Arthur Liebman, "Student Activism in Mexico," The Annals of the American Academy of Politics and Social Sciences, vol. 395 (May 1971): 159-70, p. 161

³James L. Busley, ed., Latin American Political Guide (Colorado Springs: Juniper Editions, 1971), p. 5.

⁴William P. Tucker, The Mexican Government Today (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1957), p. 189.

countries have equality under international law, that outside intervention in a country's internal affairs is intolerable; that foreign residents can expect only equality of treatment with citizens under the law; and that diplomatic recognition does not depend on moral approval of the recognized regime by the recognizing country. In addition, the following principles are held to: no secret agreements; opposition to aggressors; opposition to a unilateral interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine; arbitration of disputes; and the right to asylum.⁵ Both the military and the Church have taken a benign position in the structure of Mexican politics.

Despite impressive data, Mexico by the mid-1960's had not yet arrived in the Promise Land. The nation still suffered from millions of illiterates, inadequate housing, and a mean real income which most Western Europeans would perceive to be near destitution.⁶ The concentration of the benefits from rapid growth in the hands of the upper thirty percent of Mexican society in the years between 1940 and early 1960's left Mexico with an income distribution more inequitable than that prior to 1940, and indeed more inequitable than that of most developing countries in Latin America and elsewhere.* For the top one-quarter, the great industrialists, the huge landowners, the small 'middle-class' of government functionaries, independent businessmen,

⁵Ibid., p. 210.

⁶John Womack Jr., "The Spoils of the Revolution," Foreign Affairs vol. 48 (July 1970): 677-87, p. 681.

*Between 1895 and 1940 Mexican middle class grew proportionally in excess of 100% while both upper and lower class portions decreased as effects of revolution and agrarian reform. John Womack, Jr. "The Spoils of the Revolution" Foreign Affairs 48:677-07, July, 1970.

managers, professionals and technicians, the gains have been substantial. Almost half of the national income goes into the hands of one-tenth of the nation's families. The improvement has also been tremendous for another highly important sector of the Mexican economy; the United States owners, largely corporate giants, of business enterprises in manufacturing, the service industries and agriculture. While this trend reflects in part the natural economic consequence of the process of industrialization, it also mirrors the impact of a set of government policies which were designed to concentrate rewards at the top of the income scale and do little to ease directly the poverty of those at the bottom who wind up paying increasingly more for less. Currently, according to official estimates, the poorest three-fourths of the population receives less than one-third of the national income, which is a much smaller proportion than prevailed twenty years ago when Mexico took off on its record-breaking statistical triumph.⁷

Sectoral shifts in both output and employment over the past thirty years illustrate the fundamental nature of the changes which the Mexican economy has experienced. The agricultural sector employed sixty-five percent of Mexico's work force and constituted over twenty-three percent of gross domestic product in 1940; four decades later it employs less than half of the work force and accounts for sixteen percent of aggregate domestic product. In contrast manufacturing activity has raised its share of the total domestic product from seventeen and eight-tenths percent to twenty-six percent and now employs more than

⁷Melville, J. Ulmer, "Who's Making It in Mexico?" New Republic vol. 165 (September 25, 1971): 21-3.

sixteen percent of the labor force. Except for mining, the industrial sectors annually register the highest rates of growth. From 1965 through 1968, for example, the manufacturing construction and electrical energy sectors all grew at an average annual rate of nine percent or better. Industrial production now represents approximately thirty-seven percent of aggregate domestic product. By 1970 Mexico was largely self-sufficient in the production of foodstuffs, basic petroleum products, steel and most consumer products. Between 1950 and 1966 production in steel and other metal products grew at an annual rate of eleven and five-tenths percent, machinery production by ten percent, vehicles and transportation equipment output by ten and seven-tenths percent, and chemicals production by twelve and five-tenths percent. Agricultural production has risen at an annual rate of four and four-tenths percent since 1935. In imports, the growth has been at twelve percent per year while exports of goods and services have increased at an average yearly rate of approximately seven percent.⁸

The men who rule Mexico today, their goals and values, their political apparatus, and the policies for which they are responsible, are best understood in terms of the 19th century mestizo political heritage. That heritage construed politics as an avenue to socio-economic mobility and personal power to fill the vacuum left by the outgoing rulers. Despite alterations in its outward forms, the substance of 20th century mestizo politics reveals little change.⁹

⁸Ibid., p. 23.

⁹Kenneth J. Johnson, Mexican Democracy: A Critical View (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), p. 171.

Corruption still enjoys moral sanction. Most observers believe that the official party, PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO INSTITUCIONAL is a contributing factor in the process of Mexico's recent economic development and political stability.¹⁰ What appears to have happened since 1940 is that one particular social group, a new industrial-agricultural elite has been consistently favored by government policy.

Pablo González Casanova, a well-known poet, writer-philosopher, retains the view that the political system embodied in the PRI emphasizes the nondemocratic, nonegalitarian and repressive aspects of Mexican politics. Somewhere between fifty to seventy percent of today's Mexicans are effectively barred from making any type of demand upon the political system. Any form of public protest is quickly suffocated. Supplication and silence win people little, but protest and organization are the traditional road to jail, exile and even death. González Casanova feels that the Mexican governing elite is inclined neither to democratize its political institutions nor to devote increased resources to raising the standard of living in 'marginal' Mexico.¹¹ For example, nationalization of the oil industry seems to be beneficial only to the politicians, the majority of whom own the gas stations and trucking lines that transport the gasoline.¹²

¹⁰Arthur Liebman, p. 166.

¹¹Ibid., p. 160.

¹²Roger D. Hansen, The Politics of New Development (London: John Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 1.

Another noted Mexican poet, Octavio Paz, writing in the wake of political and literary fervor of the student disturbances in 1968, affirms that Mexico is an essentially myth-oriented culture with the ritual being the essence and structure of national life. The world view of the Mexican has been dominated by the figure of the pyramid, the fundamental symbol of the Aztec ritual of 'creative destruction' and the image of its stratified society: the pyramid is an image of the world, in turn, that image of the world is a projection of human society. "The unconscious model of power is still the same as when the Aztecs destroyed the Toltecs, that is the pyramid and the sacrifice."¹³

What interests and value-orientations led this self-renewing political elite to adopt an approach built upon high profits, low wages, forced savings through inflation, regressive taxation and low tax rates, minimum expenditures on social programs and a maximum concentration of public sector expenditures on projects directly related to increased economic output? How has a political system which has greatly enriched its political and agricultural industrial elites while generally minimizing welfare gains for the great majority of Mexico's population maintained that degree of political stability vital for continued economic development? These questions can only be answered by an insightful understanding of Mexican power seekers and their rise to prominence. An understanding of the socio-cultural setting of Mexican politics and of the system developed by the power

¹³Edward J. Mullen, "Paz and Fuentes: How Close?" The Caribbean Review vol. 6 no. 2 (April, May, June 1974): 28.

seekers is equally imperative.

The policies and programs shaped by the Mexican government to promote economic development over the past thirty years are an accurate reflection of the interests and value-orientations of the political elite that controls Mexico today. Politicians expand their loyalties from social group to political institution and political community as they mount the ladder of authority in an institutionalized political system. In praetorian societies, the successful politician transfers his identity and loyalty from one social group to another. The individuals who mount the ladder to wealth and power simply transfer their allegiance from the masses to the oligarchy.¹⁴ The absence of political institutions capable of moderating and mediating group political action creates a more politicized praetorian society.¹⁵ Samuel Huntington in his book, Political Order in Changing Societies, has characterized the Mexican political system before the development of the PRI as praetorian.¹⁶ But he views the post 1940 Mexican political system as institutionalized. However, evidence suggests that both yesterday and today, any broadening of allegiances on the part of Mexico's mestizo politicians has been and continues to be severely limited by their own personal concerns for power and socioeconomic mobility.

¹⁴Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press 1968), p. 164.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 164.

A surprising aspect of Mexican political life over the past four decades has been the limited nature of demands made upon Mexico's political system. (Land distribution, political elite circulation and rapid economic growth have all helped to mediate the two challenges to political stability that were most prominent at least as late as the 1920's and 30's. These being the ownership of land concentrated in the hands of a few, and economic instability.) Demands have been limited in two senses: 1) in terms of the proportion of the total population involved in the creation of demands, and 2) in terms of the resources required by the government to satisfy them.¹⁷ As relates to the first, few demands have come from the disadvantaged bottom half of the society. The rural agrarian sectors have been more aggressive in terms of making demands on the system.

Thus we observe the "ambivalent Mexican", one who supports the revolution and political institutions that have emerged since 1930, and on the other hand, is quite cynical about Mexican politics and political leaders, thus becoming a passive observer.¹⁸ With feelings of alienation and distrust, Mexicans on the whole are poorly informed regarding government policy and machinery. Thus, the upper class becomes the only group to make significant demands, but even then the resources required to meet the demands are minimal.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁸Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (New York: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 46.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 206.

In conjunction with the per capita problem facing Mexico there exists other major economic problems. One is that while Mexico's death rate has been considerably reduced, her birth rate has been increased by substantial proportions. The Church, while remaining politically impotent has still remained sufficiently strong thus far to prevent an official program for population control. The overall rate of population growth is now three and five-tenths percent per year. Life expectancy is sixty-two years, rising birth rate is 46.0 per thousand (1960) and falling death rate is 11.5 per thousand (1960). Somewhere between forty-five and fifty percent of the population is under fifteen years of age. This distribution places a tremendous burden upon the educational system and severely limits the savings capacity of a great majority of Mexican families. In addition, rural-urban migration patterns have caused urban population to grow at an annual rate of five percent ever since 1940, eventually necessitating the rapid expansion of urban social and economic infrastructure expenditures.²⁰ Mexico entered the 1970's with a population of approximately fifty-one million. Current calculations project a demographic growth rate of three and five-tenths percent for the next ten years and by the end of the century a population of one hundred million by some estimations.²¹

The unemployment rate threatening Mexico is another problem the country has to contend with. During the 1960's over three million

²⁰Roger Hansen, p. 209.

²¹Ibid., p. 210.

landless farm laborers in rural Mexico experienced increasing difficulties in finding work. Indications are such that the 1970 census will reveal a continued deterioration in their rate of employment and standard of living.²²

Directly related to the rapid population increase and the government's limited expenditures on education the literacy rate while continuing to increase is rising more slowly than in most other Latin American countries.²³

There exists in Mexico a necessity to augment revenues. Tax efforts need to be overhauled. Additionally, there is a need to sustain and possibly increase the present rate of savings. While the capacity to generate domestic sources of investment represent a marked achievement, Mexico's burgeoning population necessitates an even greater allocation of the gross national product for investment purposes if economic growth is to continue to raise per capita income at a rapid rate.

For over thirty years the present political regime has retained the capacity to govern Mexico in a manner consonant with rapid economic development. Its major contributions to economic growth have been two. First, it has provided more than three decades of political stability, a setting that has encouraged the emergence of a dynamic private sector response to the entrepreneurial opportunities in the Mexican market. It has made that market even more attractive through legislation of a comprehensive set of governmental policies designed specifically to

²²Ibid., p. 210.

²³Ibid., p. 210.

raise the rates of domestic saving and investment. One dramatic result has been the rise in Mexican private-sector investment from less than five percent of the national product in the 1940-46 period to an average of more than fourteen percent ever since the mid-1950's.²⁴

The present regime has developed the capacity to concentrate public sector resources on the promotion of rapid economic growth. It has been able to concentrate public-sector revenues in crucial infrastructure and industrial investment programs precisely because it has not had to respond to the demands of all the groups within the PRI. By making only insignificant expenditures on programs of agricultural extension, ejidal credit, rural and urban education, housing and other welfare programs, the government has been able to channel a larger proportion of its limited resources into major development projects than all other industrializing nations of Latin America.

Four major factors account for much of the PRI regime's success. First, the program of agrarian reform eventually produced a state of political acquiescence in rural Mexico. Second, the increasing opportunities for socio-economic mobility offered by the turnover of political offices within the party and by the rapid pace of industrialization eased the traditional Mexican politician problem of managing discontent among the educated mestizo segment of society. Third, the development within the official party of the capacity to smother elite competition for political office perceptibly slowed the mobilization of large segments of Mexican society into active participation in political life. And fourth, the traditional cultural and psychological

²⁴Ibid., p. 221.

barriers to political participation continued to limit both the extent and the nature of political demands coming from Mexico's parochial and subject groups, which together comprise close to ninety percent of Mexico's total population.²⁵

Mexico can continue to face a continuing series of challenges to rapid economic growth if it can stabilize the process of social change inherent in periods of rapid industrialization, limit those political demands which would shrink the Mexican government's capacity to generate internal savings and induce continued private sector initiatives in the growth process.

The events connected with the Battle of Tlatelolco in 1968 make it clear that the PRI leadership would not hesitate to incur the criticism of middle class Mexico in dealing with challenges to the present status quo. (Rather than accede to some quite reasonable student demands that year, most of them concerning police methods and political prisoners, the government ruthlessly crushed the massive demonstration at a probable cost of over two hundred lives.) The present leadership entered the 1970's with an apparently undiminished capacity to accommodate or suppress urban dissent as it sees fit without risking any rapid erosion of its control over Mexican politics.

The dilemma facing Mexico today is that many Mexicans have awakened to these shortcomings and are transferring their loyalty to groups that demand reform of the country's overall governing system. According to Kenneth F. Johnson, the PRI has ceased to be a popularly

²⁵Ibid., p. 222.

based movement.²⁶ Instead, it has come to depend heavily upon the wealthy industrial and properties classes for support. It has not co-opted the left but has repressed and alienated it. It has failed in equal terms with the extreme right and with labor and students. Johnson believes that political outrage can erupt violently at any time in Mexico and the provocations can vary, but socioeconomic wretchedness is in the background of most such expressions.²⁷

Students, as stated earlier, constitute an important element in the national politics of Latin America and Mexico is no exception. While student participation in politics has not been as violent or universal in scope as in other Latin American countries it has nevertheless consistently held an important consideration within the government. Prior to 1968, there appeared to be distinct patterns in the political participation of Mexican students especially at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) the largest and most important university. In the eyes of several prominent social scientists, there seemed to be an overall reduction in student political activity prior to 1968, which was directly related to the strength and vibrancy of the society, the economy, and the polity.²⁸ When activated, these students' concerns tended to focus on university-related issues, such as increases in bus fares, changes in admission policies, unpopular academic regulations or

²⁶Kenneth J. Johnson, p. 171.

²⁷Arthur Liebman, p. 159.

²⁸Ibid., p. 159.

unpopular administrators. Seldom, in recent years, had protests or other political manifestations by any sizeable group of UNAM students involved off campus or national political issues.

National and international issues and events were not very salient to student leftists at UNAM. Leftist students would loudly condemn official corruption, various government leaders and the United States as well, but it was as if they were stating these condemnations for some historical record or as a way of presenting their political credentials. It was radical rhetoric because there was little connection between their words and actual or intended deeds. Few, if any, had serious intentions of acting at present or in the future in any way that would jeopardize their careers. Most looked forward to some type of government position within which they claimed they would reform the system over the years.

Political activity among students at the UNAM was, for the most part, centered in the schools of Law, Economics, Social and Political Sciences and Philosophy. Politically quiet schools were Architecture, Business and Engineering. The campus was politically fragmented. There existed a variety of political organizations. On the left were the Communists, Maoists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, Fidelistas and Christian Socialists. On the right were the Falangists, and the Movimiento Universitario de Renovadora Orientación (MURO).²⁹ Mexico, some think, was immunized against the new nationalism that is sweeping most of Latin America, by its own populist, xenophobic Revolution of 1910.

²⁹Ibid., p. 166.

However, the immunity is obviously wearing off, as witness such recent signs as student upheavals, guerilla activities, and a resurgence of anti-Americanism and the government's subsequent defensive swing back to the left.

Most Mexican students are predominantly the offspring of struggling and poor families, who are in college because it means the chance to a better life. But their interests are not self-limited. They are concerned for world peace, they advocate non-intervention and while being highly nationalistic have a great respect for the rights and sovereignty of their country.

Thus it was that from late July to early October, 1968 and even later a mounting crescendo of student unrest in Mexico City drew widespread attention to a nation long considered Latin America's most stable and in many ways most progressive country. The unrest began over a seemingly small incident involving the National Polytechnical Institute and another preparatory school. The Mexico City riot police brutally broke up the crowd and thus began one of the country's bloodiest strikes. The relatively unimportant event quickly took on political overtones as student criticism of the treatment handed to them by the riot police spread to criticism of the government and eventually to criticism of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. The climax to the series of demonstrations by students, and later ordinary citizens came on the evening of October 2, 1968 when at the Plaza de las tres Culturas in the heart of the city some 400 students and private citizens were killed* as army troops descended upon a peaceful rally of about 300,000.

*Official government estimation was 35.

CHAPTER III

THE MEXICAN STUDENT REVOLT OF 1968

The Mexican university protest seems to be rooted in the concrete experience of Mexican life. The year 1968 signified a radical break in the political process of Mexico. Not perhaps because the unravelling of events was unforeseeable but because they erupted with an unusual force that revealed the deep truths about Mexican development, quite different from official rhetoric and window dressing. In 1968 is seen the end of a student movement begun almost ten years prior, during which feeling, attitudes and preparations were being put into effect to culminate in a forceful, radical and democratic mass movement independent of government control. During this new phase the student struggle goes beyond expressing demands for its own benefit, but draws attention to the general need of a democratic existence regardless of unmerciful government suppression.¹

The characteristics of the present movement went beyond the usual definition, where heretofore students in the social sciences, law, economics and philosophy were the core of the activism. It literally engulfed the whole student body at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Politécnico Nacional and other institutions

¹Juvenio Wing Shum, Los Estudiantes, La Educación y la Política (México, D.F.: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, S.A., 1971), p. 160.

of higher learning throughout the country. But it also engulfed many high school students and professors.

Some observers of Mexican politics contend that the economic and political makeup of Mexico are one and that while this attitude has indeed had some profound beneficial outcomes for the country as a whole it has also become infected with the ailments of many industrialized countries as relates to students, their careers and lifestyles. Because the basis of production under a capitalistic system is the accumulation of capital for gain, scientific discoveries are beneficial only as they relate to production.²

Consequently, it is false to conclude that under a neocapitalism, productive science has become an immediate productive power. Instead, its application at the present time has become subordinated more than ever before to the immediate authority of profit. Intellectual labor including engineering, chemistry, physics, economics, sociology, medicine, and administration is expressed in the same level as profit. In Mexico, as in Asia and Africa there exists a surplus of certain professionals. This surplus is directly dependent upon economic markets controlled by more industrialized and advanced nations. The apparent scarcity of professional positions (the transformation of intellectual labor into a commodity) is not only expressed in the classic insecurity of the proletariat but presently also affects the intellectual. Additionally, it has produced important consequences upon the ideology

²Victor Flores Olea, La Rebelión Estudiantil y la Sociedad Contemporanea, (México, D.F.: UNAM, 1973), p. 8.

of the intellectual.³

Thus witness the hybrid social nature of many a Mexican university student. He is becoming increasingly aware that the object of his studying is dependent not upon dedication, individual aspirations or talent in any particular area, but upon the trend of a particular market, as dictated by neocapitalism. He becomes an intellectual apprentice, increasingly alienated from the mainstream of an accepted lifestyle, a resultant marginal person. The son of a peasant who studies at a university to become a salaried professional seems to belong to the small bourgeoisie due to his origins and to the proletariat according to his future. He is no longer a peasant but neither is he a working person.

According to different analysis people appear to participate in politics for a variety of reasons, each of which might be subsumed under the concept of reward. When a person's activity does not receive the reward he expects, or receives punishment, he will be confused, angry and disappointed, and may perceive the results of aggressive behavior as rewarding. In related terms there seems to exist within each person a desire to have some control over his life, including the people he interacts with in particular or general terms, over events and processes that impact upon and shape his life. There are many political consequences that flow from this desire. The basic need to gain control over one's physical and psychological life-space, here generally referring to those aspects of the environment that are

³Ibid., p. 26.

perceived by the individual to be important in the ongoing pursuit of his goals, values or needs, may very often not include politics nor the political system. Political system refers to the people, institutions, and processes that are perceived to have the power and, or authority to make decisions which are binding on both the individual and the other components of the social system. When politics is perceived to be a control-relevant aspect of the individual's psychological life-space, the link is forged between psychological needs and a political life.⁴ Individuals with low feeling of personal control are much more likely to be highly politically alienated, while individuals with high personal control are much more likely to have low alienation.⁵ Persons with low personal control are significantly more likely to attribute the state of the system to the nature of the system itself, rather than to individual feelings of the skills and capabilities of individuals.⁶ Government that is perceived to allow and make possible personal control will be positively valued and be evaluated as more effective and beneficial, than one which is perceived to be structured so as to decrease the opportunities for personal control.⁷ Thus persons with low personal control are more likely to have participated in

⁴Stanley Allen Renshaw, Psychological Needs and Political Behavior: A Theory of Personality and Political Efficacy. (New York: The Free Press, 1971), p. 19.

⁵Ibid., p. 161.

⁶Patricia Gurin, et. al., "Internal-External Control in the Motivational Dynamics of Negro Youth," Journal of Social Issues vol. 25 (Summer 1969): 29-53. p. 45.

⁷Renshaw, p. 163.

demonstrations, written public officials and worked for a particular candidate.⁸

There was nothing potentially different about the misunderstanding between the students of the National Polytechnical Institute and another preparatory school in July of 1968 from other squabbles among students. However, when the Mexico City riot police brutally dispersed the crowd the relatively unimportant event quickly took on political overtones as student criticism of the treatment handed to them by the riot police spread to criticism of the government, and eventually to criticism of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.

The students became angry after the first initial encounter with the riot police. They felt that the interference by the riot police was unwarranted and they resented the fact that the police had used a bazooka to shoot down an 18th century door at the prep school. Students from other schools joined in the expression of resentment and demonstrations were begun. At this point the demonstrators were prep school students between fourteen and eighteen years of age. Subsequent encounters with the riot police, the 'granaderos' and army troops* sent to supplement the police resulted in the death of at least one student and the injuring of some 400 within a week of the first

⁸Ibid., p. 194.

*According to the Constitution, only the Congress of the Union can authorize the President to bring in the army during times of peace, and only when the security of the nation is threatened. Thus the troops sent out to control the student demonstrations was in direct violation of the constitution. Fernando Carmona, El Milagro Mexicano (México, D.F.: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, S.A., 1970), p. 179.

encounter. Some seven thousand students marched from the old university section near the national palace, commandeered four buses near the Zócalo, the city's main square, forced out the passengers, smashed windows and then ran the vehicles into the sides of buildings. With 1116 arrests made, it was clearly the worst student riot in twenty years.⁹ The government had remained silent but Interior Minister Luis Echeverría made a statement in which he placed the blame on the youth arm of the Communist Party.¹⁰ This action of placing the blame on the Communist Party without acknowledging the police brutality complaint made by the students was the preview of the stand the government would take.

By August first the insurrection had spread to the states of Tabasco and Veracruz where at least twelve students were killed and scores injured. In Tabasco the students seized the state university and demanded the resignation of Governor Manuel Mora after he denied student demands for the economic betterment of the university.¹¹ In Veracruz students commandeered twenty buses and demanded compensation from the government for the families of six students killed earlier in the year in a bus accident.¹² In both Veracruz and Tabasco the demonstrations were under control within days. In Sinaloa, the National University students delivered a manifesto uniting themselves with the

⁹The New York Times, 31 July 1968, p. 1-3.

¹⁰The New York Times, 1 August 1968, p. 5-8.

¹¹Shun, p. 51.

¹²The New York Times, 1 August 1968, p. 5-8.

students in Mexico City and denounced the violence initiated by the riot police. In the states of Jalisco, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Durango, Nayarit and Yucatan where student demands dealing with university administration or economic needs had never been met, the students also aligned themselves with the students in Mexico City.¹³

Meanwhile in Mexico City police continued to make arrests. Federal officials claimed that many of the arrested students were foreigners. Five Frenchmen were identified as "experienced riot coaches." Others arrested were Chilean, Puerto Rican, Algerian, Spanish and American. Some government officials now claimed that the riots were stimulated by Communist agitators who were plotting the insurrection from outside of Mexico,¹⁴ while others added that the CIA was now involved. No clear ideological or political direction by the student movement could be noted, but strike committees had been formed and had begun a series of peaceful marches. The students strongly protested and denied the government's implication that the disturbances were Communist led, and the Communist leaders strongly denied having had anything to do with the student demonstrations. The Mexican Communist Party subsequently published a manifesto denying responsibility for the student disorders and sought to blame the government.¹⁵ No proof can be found to substantiate the government's

¹³Shun, p. 55.

¹⁴The New York Times, 1 August 1968, p. 5-8.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 4.

accusation of Communist involvement. Communist were also known not to have taken leadership roles during the strikes of 1966 involving railroad workers and teachers. Some Pro-Castro placards were noted during the 1968 disturbances and this led some observers to speculate that Castro enjoys a considerable following among students in Mexico and in the rest of Latin America. According to Raymond Vernon, Castro's popularity has shown a clear decline attributable to the increasingly effective anti-Castro propaganda of the Church and to the interventionist sentiments voiced at the Castro-sponsored Tricontinental Conference held in Havana in 1966. Also contributing to his decline in popularity is his well known hard handed treatment of Cuban students. Furthermore, the Cuban revolution has hurt the student movement in Latin America which adheres to university autonomy, a relaxed curriculum and student participation in university policy-making. The real goals of the Cordoba Reform Movement of 1918 which include: student "co-government" of the university, a role for alumni in university decisions, free attendance, free instruction, periodic review of faculty competence, publication of university rules and decisions, university extension for popular education, and university autonomy, among others¹⁶ have not yet been accomplished and the students are still fighting for a unified student movement which Mexico has never had. The strongest organization, the Confederación

¹⁶John H. Petersen, "Recent Research on Latin American University Students," Latin American Research Review, vol. 5 no. 1 (Spring 1970): 37-58, p. 38.

de Estudiantes (1928) is a clerical oriented group and draws its support from the provincial universities. Trotskyism, says Vernon, remains most appealing to students and intellectuals because of its rigor, its ideological purity, its condemnation of dialecticism and its refusal to compromise with facts.

The university leaders were now backed by the National University 87,200 student body and the National Polytechnical Institute student body of 62,700 plus some fifty additional schools of the area. Likewise schools throughout the country were joining the protest. It is interesting to note that the location of a university in or near a capital encourages political activity because national political organizations and personalities are more on the minds of students and are also more available as the foci of thought agitation and demonstration. The staff of these universities also tends to be more political. With few exceptions the only student organizations that historically have had important roles in political life in Mexico are those of the major national university established in Mexico City.

On August 6, 1968 the students set five demands before the Mexican government. They made it clear that they had no intention of disrupting the Olympic Games as some observers had charged. The demands were the following: freedom of political prisoners; abrogation of Article 145 of the Penal Code which punishes acts of subversion, treason and other forms of public disorder; elimination of the granaderos; dismissal of the police chief and two of his deputies; and payment of

indemnities to victims of police aggression.¹⁷ They threatened mass demonstrations if the government failed to accede to the petition for the disbanding of the riot police and the dismissal of the chief of police, Luis Cueto and his two deputies. At this point the demands were immediate to the students. They did not contain provisions for other sectors of society. The government continued its silence.

Two subsequent demonstrations were held, one on August 13 involving some 150,000 students and one on the 27th of the same month which included 300,000 students, businessmen, housewives and other private citizens. The State of the Union Address was delivered by President Díaz Ordaz on September 1. Being both conciliatory and tough in it the president admitted some justification for student complaints. He offered to consider their demands, to uphold university autonomy and to extend it to the National Polytechnical Institute. He denied the existence of political prisoners and promised to personally investigate the matter. The president asked for an immediate end to the demonstrations and threatened to use force if he had to in order to insure the undisturbed success of the Olympic Games. He appealed to the country in nationalistic terms and ended the address by promising to ask the Congress to begin immediate hearings on Articles 145 and 145a of the Penal Code.

Governor of the Federal District, Alfonso Corona del Rosal offered student participation in a joint commission to investigate

¹⁷The New York Times, 7 August 1968, p. 2-3.

self-perpetuating.¹⁸ Many fear that the party is moving toward totalitarianism, and that Mexico may go the way of Brazil. Some young professionals and students believe that the formation of a new political party is in order. Others are convinced that the CIA is heavily involved in the country's affairs and that the United States' financial stake which continues to soar has persuaded PRI leadership that permitted dissent would invite instability and economic problems with the United States. Thus it became apparent that there existed a deep-seated alienation between the political leadership which prides itself on its popular basis as the heir to the 1910 Revolution and the nation's youthful intelligentsia as represented in its schools and universities. According to Raymond Vernon in The Dilemma of Mexico's Development, the PRI no longer serves as the sole channel of communication between the government and the people. A stalemate of divergent positions has been reached and it has been shown to be extremely difficult to reunite the extremes.

It has been hypothesized that Mexican student behavior may partly be explained by inconsistencies between the image of the student role in politics on the one hand, and actual experience in attempting to realize that image. Students are aware that they are a force to be reckoned with both in the determination of the character of the university and in the shaping of the social and political life of the

¹⁸Wright E. Bakke, "Students on the March: The Cases of Mexico and Columbia," Sociology of Education, vol. 37 no. 3 (Spring 1964): 200-228, p. 225.

the disturbances. One student organization accepted but other dissident groups who sensed the feeling of tokenism in such a commission rejected the offer. Every political student organization was now involved. Castro, Mao, Moscow and Trotsky Communists, and a Roman Catholic organization of highly right-wing ideology called Muro were all involved in the discussions. The Moscow and Castro lines were in the minority. There was much talk of bringing the workers and peasants into the demonstrations and strikes, but this was never carried out. The moderate elements usually outvoted the representatives of the more radical faculties such as philosophy and letters, economics and political science.

At this point the students claimed that they were trying to protect constitutional liberties and were not revolutionary. They continued to express their antipathy towards corrupt government officials and judicial system, and for the one party rule. The President's State of the Union Address had triggered feelings of concern for other segments of the Society. Their demands ceased to be immediate. This is the closest that the movement came to any ideological commitment. Mexican nationalism with its non-aggressive approach has promoted internal unity among Mexicans, but they have not been misled. The lack of political democracy has been continually criticized, especially by intellectuals. There exists an evident cynicism among students and ordinary citizens about the one party system and the all-powerful influence of the elite within the various elements of the party. The leadership of the PRI is believed to be

community and nation. But when a student finds himself in a plural interest structure, a complex class system, and confronted with the workings of law and order as viewed by the government, his relative power becomes more limited. Thus the momentum even at its highest peak failed to activate all segments of society to bring about any constructive changes either in administrative orientation or actual implementations. That the students were calling attention to some of the country's basic needs was clearly evident but that the government is strongly in control is equally evident. The breakdown of communication between generations which has contributed to the militancy of the students, is the result of a particular kind of situation. This situation is liable to occur when a government, ruling class, and/or the political establishment acts in a way which seems to the youth a violation or betrayal of ideals. Ideals meaning those usually derived from ideas of behavior absorbed from the atmosphere, so as to speak, during childhood and perhaps youth.¹⁹ That a government seemingly can do or will do little to correct the wrong through conventional discourse tends to produce in the most idealistic and energetic students a sense of frustration. The young who hold revolutionary views visualize a struggle between everything that is human in the governmental system and everything which they recognize as human in themselves.²⁰

¹⁹Stephen Spender, The Year of the Young Rebels (Brattleboro: The Book Press, 1969), p. 129.

²⁰Ibid., p. 136.

Wright E. Bakke seems to feel that Latin characteristics play a large role in student violence. He sees volatile, aggressive, mobile, physically and vocally activist, enthusiastic and poetic tendencies come to the surface.²¹ This observation seems to hold true in many circumstances including the confrontations in 1968,²² but it would seem incorrect to limit the observations to this phenomenon. The highest type of student leadership seemed to emerge under the government's conditions of repression. The students appeared willing to die for their idealism, to sacrifice their educational and professional futures in order to participate in the political movement, and organized expertly and efficiently to the point that there were no reported acts of violence except those activated by the police themselves. Their idealism was a genuine commitment.²³ They felt a conviction that as young intellectuals they had a special historical mission to achieve that which the older generation had failed to achieve. They hoped to be able to correct the imperfections in the environment, and achieve a more democratic justice and equality. The long standing disappointment of the government became increasingly more evident as more and more citizens joined the marches and fully identified with the student movement. The demands and issues raised

²¹Bakke, p. 221.

²²Elena Poniatowska, La Noche de Tlatelolco, Testimonio de Historia Oral, (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, S.A., 1971).

²³Philip G. Altbach, "Students and Politics," Comparative Education Review, vol. 10 (June 1966): 175-187, p. 176.

by the students assumed a national dimension and were beginning to be viewed as inseparable from the basic need of important changes in Mexican society and politics.

On September 20, 1968 the government violated the Cordoba agreement of autonomy and army troops invaded the National University, the National Polytechnical Institute and other schools for the third time. The PRI began a strong campaign against the university rector, Javier Barros Sierra who had supported the students throughout the strike.²⁴ He denounced the action. Arrests were rampant and included, besides students, many teachers. Sentences were harsh even for those accused of relatively minor crimes. Working in consort with an army general and the governor of the Federal District, and in charge of the student disturbances, the Minister of Interior, Luis Escheverría issued a statement saying that the army had moved in to protect the autonomy of the university against groups using the campus for purposes foreign to university affairs and that the buildings would be returned to university administrators as soon as possible but not before the end of the Olympic Games late in October of that same year.²⁵ Thus the government hoped to dismantle the movement by leaving the students without physical headquarters.

Anne Fremantle argues that university autonomy, as defined in the constitution, says nothing about police interference to correct violations of law and order.²⁶ No meetings held on university

²⁴The New York Times, 21 September 1968, p. 1-3.

²⁵Ibid., p. 2.

²⁶Commonweal, vol. 89 (October 11, 1968): 47-8.

property are subject to police control and the students felt that the invasion by federal troops upon the university was clearly in violation of their civil rights. Some observers contend that autonomy serves as a safe haven where non-student political leaders can hide, and that students will do things inside the campus that they would not do off campus. One observation about the Mexican student strike is noted. The students used the campus only to meet and organize their marches. All demonstrations were conducted off campus. They only remained on the campus when they were surrounded by troops. There is the possibility of some deep problems in the area of academic freedom and higher education.²⁷

Octavio Paz, eminent statesman, poet, lecturer and ambassador to India resigned in view of the government's actions. The rector of the National University likewise resigned, adding fuel to the disturbing atmosphere.²⁸

The solidarity of students had spread throughout the country. The more violent and publicized disturbances occurred in Monterrey, Nuevo León where students had long been disappointed with ultra-conservative Eduardo Elizondo, governor of that state. Nuevo León has a long history of intense political activity including terrorism, in addition to having the reputation of being very difficult to govern.²⁹

²⁷Orlando Alborno, "Academic Freedom and Higher Education in Latin America," Comparative Education Review, vol. 10 (June 1966): 250-256, p. 253.

²⁸The New York Times, 23 September 1968, p. 1.

²⁹Latin American Digest, vol. 7 no. 2 (January 1973), p. 1.

The rebel gang, the National Liberation Movement is well known. The student grievances, in this instance, were a continuation of what they claimed were "El Plan Elizondo" which had led among other things to a very bad financial situation for the university. In the past, violence had always followed student demands in this area. In Guadalajara, Jalisco the University Guadalajara Official breaks from its conservative past and joins the student movement along with the Autónoma de Guadalajara. Students organize themselves into the Federación de Estudiantes Revolucionarios (FER) and decide to confront what they perceive as government corruption. The student movement likewise spreads to the provinces and includes many secondary schools.

In Mexico City the last peaceful demonstration prior to the now famous Tlatelolco massacre of October 2 was held the day before in which thousands of mothers and sisters of prisoners and dead students marched. No students participated. The demonstration was a silent one and was reported as being dignified and unmolested.

The culmination of the disturbances in 1968 occurred when the army opened fire upon demonstrators gathered at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. The crowds were surrounded by soldiers, tanks and jeeps and escorted by helicopters from above. The firing lasted at least one hour. Some of the injured were taken to hospitals where they later complained of being refused treatment. One of these was European reporter Oriana Fallaci who, writing for Look magazine, gives a vivid account of the events of that evening. She speaks of her injuries and the subsequent treatment both by private detectives

whom she said all wore white gloves or handkerchiefs around their left hands to identify one another, and by army personnel. She speaks of doctors being under strict instructions not to treat patients coming into the hospitals from the zocalo area and not to administer blood transfusions to those same patients.³⁰ Other accounts of the seriousness of the situation are recorded in Elena Poniatowska's La Noche de Tlatelolco, Testimonios de Historia Oral, and from private citizens living in the apartment houses within the area who testified that the snipers were army personnel and private detectives wearing white gloves on their left hands who had entered the building before the rally and had stationed themselves at the windows. Official government reports claimed that the army opened fire only after first being fired upon by snipers hidden in various buildings surrounding the area. Students claim that because they were well aware of the army's strength they would not have taken it upon themselves to engage in a shootout with the troops, thus jeopardizing not only their lives but those of hundreds of civilians as well. They also claimed that there was no available reason for them to decide to use weapons at this particular rally when nothing of the sort had been utilized throughout the strike. Government reports indicated some thirty-five dead but hospital records showed fatalities to be somewhat higher, at least by 200.³¹ The press

³⁰Oriana Fallaci, "Students: The Conscience of Mexico," Look vol. 32 (November 12, 1968), p. 20.

³¹Commentary, vol. 47 (March 1969), p. 503.

carried small articles on the event, including some 'confessions' while radio and television stations remained silent. The only journal of opposition, *¿Por Que?* a radical weekly run by one, Mario Menéndez Rodríguez carried articles pointing to the vindictive character of the president as the reason for the massacre. It also cited the government's fear of an impending military coup should the disturbances continue, and added that the 'confession's' were forced.

Mexican writer and statesman, Octavio Paz finds no justification for the killings. He claims that the dead numbered at least five hundred and that the government in order to prevent an accurate account hurriedly carried mass cremations. The few families who were able to claim their loved ones' bodies were compelled to sign a document declaring the death was accidental.³²

Writing in an editorial for the New York Times, Ambassador Jorge Castañeda, Chief Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that he had witnessed the events from the window of his office in one of the government buildings facing the plaza. He claimed that the army did not fire at a given signal from the helicopters as had been claimed, but that the shooting started from the fourth floor of the Chihuahua Building. He had no suggestions as to who occupied the fourth floor of said building.³³

³²Ibid., p. 503.

³³The New York Times, 21 October 1968, p. 1-4.

The student strike of 1968 was for all practical purposes dead. There have been sporadic cries of defiance from the students in Mexico City since that day in October but they have been quickly hushed by the government. A case in point cites the attempt by students and civilians to attend a mass in honor of the slain students whereupon they were quickly arrested by plain-clothed policemen and a sign was posted on the door of the church indicating that the church was closed for services on that day.

Some observers see Díaz Ordaz as quite close to being termed a dictator. As secretary of the Interior under President López Mateos, Díaz Ordaz was considered a hard-liner. It was he who quickly liquidated the railroad strikes of 1958 which were precipitated by the teachers' strike during the presidency of Ruiz Cortinas. Díaz Ordaz is a devout Catholic, far to the right of the political spectrum. He was opposed by the leftist intellectual and other sectors of the National University.

Luis Escheverría served as Minister of the Interior to Díaz Ordaz before becoming president. He was in charge of the student disturbances and particularly in charge of the events at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas on October 2.

One year and a half later it was reported that at least one hundred sixty students and teachers were still being held without trial.* The Mexican constitution guarantees a trial no later than

*As of 1971 only 19 of the 897 political prisoners held on 1968 riot charges when President Escheverría took office in December 1970 were still in prison. The 878 released in small groups were part of presidential amnesties designed to restore dialogue between the government and leftist youth movements. Latin American Digest, vol. 6 no. 1 (October 1971): p. 2.

one year after the arrest. Sometime in January of 1970 the prisoners staged a hunger strike. They were allegedly beaten. Arthur Liebman in a paper delivered in Mexico in April 1970 during the International Forum on Youth, called for the freedom of political prisoners. He was applauded by the audience but the press was highly critical of him.³⁴

On June 10, 1970 riots between anti-government students and right-wing students referred to as 'hawks' resulted in twelve deaths, dozens of injuries and the resignations of some federal officials. After students criticized the government for being 'post-Revolutionary men who are no longer flexible, 'the hawks' arrived at the scene of confrontation in buses. The fact that the police did not immediately challenge 'the hawks' caused charges by the anti-government students that the Federal District police tacitly supported the hawks. Investigation by the pro-government leading Mexican daily newspaper, *Excelsior*, confirmed the non-partisan foreign correspondent dispatches from the Associated Press, United Press International, and Britain's Reuters that 'the hawks' did have an unmarked office in a building operated by the Ministry of Gobernacion. On July 28, federal Attorney General Julio Sánchez Vargas officially closed his investigation of the June 10 riots. He had 87 attorney and police investigators assigned full-time to the case working 42 working days. Yet the Attorney General announced that those responsible for the killings and injuries 'cannot be

³⁴New Republic, vol. 162 (April 25, 1970): 12-13.

identified' but confirmed that 'some students used firearms.'³⁵ On August 19 Sánchez Vargas resigned after being widely criticized for avoiding indictments of right-wing hawks and their left-wing counterparts.

President Echeverría asserted that the Mexican government would not tolerate paramilitary extremists. Eduardo Elizondo, governor of Nuevo León resigned in 1969 after admitting that he could no longer control the disquieting demands of the students in that state.³⁶ In January of 1973 National University rector, Pablo González Casanova resigns upon his inability to resolve a strike that paralyzed that institution in October and November of 1972 when he would not allow government troops to enter the campus.³⁷ Meanwhile in Guerrero, a guerrilla band, Frente Urbano Zapatista kidnaps the rector of the University of Guerrero and demands a ransom of 2.5 million pesos and the release of nine radical leftist prisoners.³⁸ In Sinaloa peasants and students engage in riots with government troops.

Upon this background of succeeding disturbances the independent character and perservation of the student movement becomes the sine qua non of its existence.

³⁵New Republic, p. 12.

³⁶Shum, p. 100.

³⁷Latin American Digest, vol. 7 no. 2 (January 1973): 11.

³⁸Latin American Digest, vol. 6 no. 1 (October 1971): 2.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVALUATION OF STUDENT ATTITUDES AND ORIENTATIONS IN 1964 AND THEIR RELATION TO THE 1968 REVOLT

Against the background of recent student activism and the fact that Mexico has not attained economic, political and cultural independence but depends a great deal on United States markets, this chapter will focus on the political attitudes of Mexican university students as regards their personal political ideology and their relations with the Mexican government in an attempt to investigate possible underlying causes or potentials for future revolutionary action by students.

Using data taken from a survey conducted by the International Research Associates, Incorporated, during the months of April, May and June, 1964 of university students from nine Mexican universities¹, this chapter will investigate student attitudes then relating to personal ideological feelings about themselves and the Mexican government in the hopes of finding trends that could have possibly led to the student/government riots of 1968.

Of specific interest will be to look at variables such as sex, age, father's education, and community size in relation to later

¹Elizabeth H. Hastings, ed. International Youth Study Inventory (Williamstown: The Roger Public Opinion Research Center, Williams College, 1964).

activity, and to see if data taken four years prior shows consistency in attitudes as it relates to later activity.

Methods of Analysis

The survey information contained in the International Data Library and Reference Service Survey Research Center which was conducted in 1964 by International Research Associates, Incorporated focuses on nine Mexican universities: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto Politécnico Nacional and Normal de Maestros in Mexico City, Universidad de Chapingo in the state of Mexico, Universidad de Michoacan at Morelia, Ciudad Guzman in Jalisco for which no substantiating information as to its existence could be found* and has therefore been filtered out from this research, Autónoma de Guadalajara and Gradalajara Official in the state of Jalisco, and Universidad de Monterrey at Nuevo León. The total number of respondents is 2359.

Among the subject matters dealt with are Mexico's most important problem Mexico's development; method of bringing changes to Mexico; student's contributions to progress; power groups; attitudes toward Socialism, Communism and Capitalism; best political system for Mexico; U.S. business in Mexico; Mexico's foreign policy and the liberalism/conservatism of various groups. Some of the descriptive characteristics are sex, school of study, grade completed, university, father's

*Telephone calls and letters to the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C., University of California at Berkley, International Research Associates in New York and Mexico City all failed to bring the necessary information to verify the existence of a university at Ciudad Guzman, possibly Instituto Tecnológico Regional.

education and occupation, part-time employment of respondent, hours of work, foreign languages spoken, original residence, community size, socio-economic level, respondent's occupation, and age.

According to the political activity recorded for the 1968 and subsequent student disturbances,² the eight universities were categorized in the following manner as relates to their activism. Designated as very active are the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto Politécnico Nacional and Normal de Maestros. Falling in the somewhat active category are the Universidad de Chapingo, Autónoma de Guadalajara and Universidad de Monterrey at Nuevo León. Categorized as not active or having very little activity are the Universidad de Michoacan at Morelia and Guadalajara Official.

The original orientation was to use the designated activity of the eight universities in 1968 as the dependable variable against various facets contained in the 1964 data. However, the activity of the various universities as recorded for 1968 was oftentimes conflicting. While the bulk of the activity took place in and around Mexico City, there were other sites of strong activity throughout the country which were not as well covered by the media. In the states of Nuevo León³ and Michoacan violent disturbances took place. Not being able to arrive at a workable nonconflicting arrangement of activity for these eight universities the focus moved from eight universities to three for which degrees of activity could be comfortably reached. The

²The New York Times, July-October, 1968.

³Latin American Digest, vol. 7 no. 2 (January, 1973), p. 1.

final three are the Universidad Autónoma de México rating as highly active, and Guadalajara Oficial and Autónoma de Guadalajara as having the lowest level of activity. Thus, the population for the analysis comes from these three universities.

Confusion still exists concerning the meaning of "activism" because of the tendency to use the term interchangeably with "leftism", "radialism", and even "extremism". David J. Finley concludes that in Third World Countries there is a lack of Left-Right clarity and that such divisions are to be interpreted only with the context of a particular nation or culture.⁴ He believes that the self-perception of a Left orientation is a somewhat better predictor of participation than the conservative score and that the combination of Left and conservatism is a better predictor than the Right-conservatism score.⁵ Other literature suggests that "Leftist" students generally are more politically aware, interested and active than their counterparts on the Right,⁶ and that "radical" students (whether Left or Right) are more active than those who are moderates.⁷ Usage here is based on the degree of political activity of the total number of students from the Nacional

⁴David J. Finley, Douglas W. Seaman, and L.A. Wilson II, "The Concept of Left-Right in Cross-National Research," Comparative Political Studies vol. 7 no. 2 (July 1974): 209-221, p. 213.

⁵Ibid., p. 213.

⁶Philip Althack, and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Student Politics and Higher Education in the United States," Comparative Education Review (February 1966): 320-349, p. 325.

⁷Glaucio A.D. Soares, "The Active Few: Student Ideology and Participation in Developing Countries," Comparative Education Review vol. 10 (June 1966): 205-219, p. 210.

Autónoma de Mexico, Guadalajara Oficial and Autónoma de Guadalajara in 1968. Thus the activity index used to determine whether the attitudes prevalent in 1964 of the students in these three universities might be consistent with the actual activism of the three universities in 1968 reads as follows: UNAM as more active, GO and GA as less active.

As the individual begins to interpret national values in terms of more specific interests or according to generalizations about information and experience of particular relevance to his needs, the value is articulated in operating rules, and its terms of reference are more concretely perceived.

Self-designation (a student's self-description of his political beliefs) as a measurement of ideology is used here as an economical device which allows the avenue by which to assess the respondent's views of himself in any number of dimensions which reflect cognitive, emotive and affective facets of self which are part of political culture.

The ideological self-designation index was arrived at by consulting literature and scoring first the three universities according to high left orientation, medium left orientation and low left orientation. Originally, the idea was to use a composite reliability index for a broader basis using a total of eight questions and their answers as designated by the students. That is, how many times students gave 1 = leftist answers as opposed to 0 = non-leftist answers to these eight questions, such as, "Here is a card which shows the political range from extreme right to the extreme left. Please indicate the number that you believe is the most representative of

your personal political position. At what point on the scale do you think most Mexican students fall. The majority of the people in Mexico." The left orientation index was used because of the function of the questions. This composite would then be compared with the first ideological scale based on the literature. The composite reliability approach was abandoned when the reliability coefficient Cronback's Alpha was too low. The arrived at index is based on the students' answer to the first question, "Here is a card which shows the political range from extreme right to the extreme left. Please indicate the number that you believe is the most representative of your personal political position."

Ideologies help men see the relationship between themselves and more remote frameworks; their country, their world, and their universe. Ideologies are a way of dealing with the complexity of the political and social environment.

The critical difference is how much diversity of individuals and institutions is possible. Ideologies that advance theories of institutional infallibility reduce variance among norms. Likewise, ideologies exploiting individual insecurity and fear restrict the kinds of behavior that citizens may attach to political ideas. It is the tolerance of conflict, experimentation, and deviance among individuals and institutions that distinguishes ideologies.⁸ To maintain

⁸Douglas E. Ashford, Ideology and Participation - Vol. 3 (London: Sage Publication, 1972), p. 58.

a political system under these conditions is a more difficult task than under rigidly uniform criteria of relevant behavior.

How closely a student views governmental institutions in accordance with his own ideological views is significant as relates to activism. Degrees of difference or discrepancy helps to speculate a student's potential for activism. Discrepancy here is used to measure how close or how far (degrees of difference) students view government institutions (in this case, the present government, the military, the church, the present U.S. government, and various political parties ranging from PRI to Communist, to Socialist, to National Liberation Movement) from their own ideological self-designation as per ideological index used. That is, whether they view governmental institutions as to the left of their own self-designation or to the right of their own self-designation in degrees of difference.

Findings of Analyses

In order to see how students fell according to their political orientation as per ideological index in relation to the degrees of activity of the three universities UNAM, GO and AG, these variables were tested using the chi square significance index and the results showed that students seeing themselves in 1964 as having a high Leftist orientation were found in the university showing the most activism in 1968 (UNAM), and students seeing themselves as having a low Leftist orientation in 1964 were found in those universities having the least amount of activity in 1968 (GO and AG).

Table 1

ACTIVITY IN 1968 BY STUDENTS' IDEOLOGICAL
SELF-DESIGNATION IN 1964

Activity	Self-designation		
	Low	Medium	High
More Active '68	62.9% (22)	69.3% (594)	79.5% (410)
Less Active '68	37.1% (13)	30.7% (263)	20.5% (106)
Totals	100% (35)	100% (857)	100% (516)

Chi square = significance 0.0001

As the individual begins to interpret national values in terms of more specific interests or according to generalizations about information and experience of particular relevance to his needs, the value is articulated in operating rules, and its terms of reference are more concretely perceived.

Discrepancy as we have defined it here refers to how close or how far a student views government institutions from his own ideological self-designation. That is, whether he views government institutions to the left of his own ideological self-designation or to the right of his own self-designation. The importance of this measure is the distance between these two points.

Table 2 shows some interesting observations. For example, those students with a low-Left orientation had a high degree of discrepancy while students with a high-Left orientation fell into the medium discrepancy cell.

Table 2

DISCREPANCY IN 1964 BY STUDENTS' IDEOLOGICAL
SELF-DESIGNATION IN 1964

Discrepancy	Self-designation		
	Low	Medium	High
Low	8.8% (5)	54.0% (761)	17.2% (154)
Medium	42.1% (24)	44.5% (627)	49.7% (444)
High	49.1% (28)	1.4% (20)	33.1% (296)
Totals	100% (57)	100% (1408)	100% (894)
Chi square - significance 0.0000			

Mexican women voted nationally for the first time in 1955 and in 1958 in a presidential election.⁹ According to Almond and Verba, the political behavior of Mexican women has been frequently apathetic,

⁹William J. Blaugh, "Political Attitudes of Mexican Women," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* vol. 14 (May 1972): 201-224, p. 210.

parochial, conservative and sensitive to the emotional and esthetic aspects of political life in electoral campaigns.¹⁰ James W.

Clarke and Joseph Egan in their study of student activism found no significant relation between sex classes, although there was a slight tendency for male students to participate more than females in all forms of political activity.¹¹

Table three shows the distribution in cross-tabulations between sex, activity in 1968, discrepancy in 1964 and self-designation in 1964. More males tended to be found in the university (UNAM) showing the greatest amount of activity in 1968, while the females tended to be found in those universities showing the least amount of activity (GO and AG).

Females showed the least amount of discrepancy while males showed a greater amount of discrepancy between their self-designation and governmental institutions.

Females showed up as falling in the medium measure of the left-ideological scale while males also seemed to fall in the medium measurement of the same scale, although more to the left than did the females.

¹⁰Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (New York: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 390-95.

¹¹James W. Clarke and Joseph Egan, "Social and Political Dimensions of Campus Political Activity." The Journal of Politics vol. 34 (1972): 500-523.

Table 3

ACTIVITY IN 1968, DISCREPANCY IN 1964, SELF-DESIGNATION
IN 1964 BY SEX IN 1964

Activity	Sex	
	Males	Females
More Active '68	73.2% (887)	70.9% (139)
Less Active '68	26.8% (325)	29.1% (57)
Totals	100% (1212)	100% (196)
Chi square - 0.5649		
Discrepancy	Sex	
	Males	Females
Low	38.8% (751)	40.1% (169)
Medium	46.2% (895)	47.5% (200)
High	15.1% (292)	12.4% (52)
Totals	100% (1938)	100% (421)
Chi square - significance 0.3586		
Self-designation	Sex	
	Males	Females
Low	2.1% (41)	3.8% (16)
Medium	58.4% (1131)	65.8% (277)
High	39.5% (766)	30.4% (128)
Totals	100% (1938)	100% (421)
Chi square - significance 0.0006		

In studying demographic variables relating to the political activity of university students, Steven H. Lewis' study found no demographic variables which distinguish groups of students differing on ideology or activism.¹² Riley Dunlap found that activists are likely to come from urban settings as opposed to rural environments. However, as protest spreads activists are more likely drawn from broader segments of the population and demographic characteristics distinguishing early participants may no longer do so.¹³

In testing for community size and activism no outstanding significance was noted. Students coming from communities with populations under 10,000 tended to be found in the more active university (UNAM) while the less active universities (GO and AG) tended to have representatives from communities of more than 10,000.

Students from communities of less than 10,000 tended to fall in the medium levels of discrepancy with students from the larger communities also falling in this category.

As relates to the relationship between community size and self-designation it was found that there was no significance between a student's self-designation and the size of his home community. The bulk of the students fell into the medium range of the self-designation scale.

¹²Steven H. Lewis and Robert Kraut, "Correlates of Student Political Activism and Ideology," Journal of Social Issues, vol. 28 no. 4 (1972): 131-149, p. 139.

¹³Riley Dunlap, "Radical and Conservative Student Activists: A Comparison of Family Backgrounds," Pacific Sociological Review vol. 13 no. 3 (Summer 1970): 171-181, p. 171.

Table 4

ACTIVITY IN 1968, DISCREPANCY IN 1964, SELF-DESIGNATION
IN 1964 BY COMMUNITY SIZE IN 1964

Activity	Community Size	
	Less 10,000	More 10,000
More Active '68	74.7% (130)	73.2% (880)
Less Active '68	25.3% (44)	26.8% (322)
Totals	100% (174)	100% (1202)
Chi square - significance - 0.7436		
Discrepancy	Community Size	
	Less 10,000	More 10,000
Low	30.3% (103)	40.5% (803)
Medium	50.3% (171)	45.7% (906)
High	19.4% (66)	13.8% (274)
Totals	100% (340)	100% (1983)
Chi square - significance - 0.0005		
Self-designation	Community Size	
	Less 10,000	More 10,000
Low	2.9% (10)	2.3% (45)
Medium	55.3% (188)	60.3% (1195)
High	41.8% (142)	37.5% (743)
Totals	100% (340)	100% (1983)
Chi square - significance 0.2057		

One of the areas that has traditionally interested researchers of student political activity concerns the parents' educational level and home environment. M. Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi found that the higher the father's educational level the less politically active was the son or daughter. They suggest that friends and acquaintances with like attitudes play a much more important role in the political socialization of the offspring, as do the media, religion and general environment in the country at the time.¹⁴

In testing for the significance of a father's education on the activity of his son or daughter it was found that students whose father had completed college were found in the university showing the most activity in 1968 (UNAM), while students whose fathers had virtually no education were found in the universities showing the least amount of activity (AG and GO).

Students whose father had completed college fell into the medium cell of discrepancy, but students whose father had no education also fell into this category.

Students whose father had completed college tended to view themselves as falling in the medium point in the left ideological spectrum, while students whose father had no education also viewed themselves as falling in that point on the scale.

¹⁴M. Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi, "The Transmission of Political Values for Parent to Child." American Political Science Review vol.62 (March 1968): 172-176, p. 173.

Table 5

ACTIVITY IN 1968, DISCREPANCY IN 1964, SELF-DESIGNATION
IN 1964 BY FATHER'S EDUCATION IN 1964

Activity	Father's Education				
	Complete University	Complete Preparatory	Complete Secondary	Complete Primary	Nothing
More Active '68	84.4%(271)	76.8%(159)	69.3%(140)	68.1%(276)	67.5%(139)
Less Active '68	15.6%(50)	23.2%(48)	30.7%(62)	31.9%(129)	32.5%(67)
Totals	100%(321)	100%(207)	100%(202)	100%(405)	100%(206)
Chi square - significance 0.0000					
Discrepancy	Father's Education				
	Complete University	Complete Preparatory	Complete Secondary	Complete Primary	Nothing
Low	35.7%(163)	40.2%(117)	45.0%(145)	41.2%(287)	34.8%(162)
Medium	50.7%(231)	45.7%(133)	42.2%(136)	44.8%(312)	47.1%(219)
High	13.6%(62)	14.1%(41)	12.7%(41)	13.9%(97)	18.1%(84)
Totals	100%(456)	100%(291)	100%(322)	100%(696)	100%(465)
Chi square - significance - 0.0444					
Self-designation	Father's Education				
	Complete University	Complete Preparatory	Complete Secondary	Complete Primary	Nothing
Low	2.9%(13)	3.1%(9)	2.8%(9)	2.4%(17)	0.9%(4)
Medium	62.3%(284)	58.4%(170)	60.2%(194)	60.5%(421)	55.7%(259)
High	34.9%(159)	38.5%(112)	37.0%(119)	37.1%(258)	43.4%(202)
Totals	100%(456)	100%(291)	100%(322)	100%(696)	100%(465)
Chi square - significance 0.1165					

Observers of Latin American politics as well as government representatives have generally indicated that core positions in student uprisings have been held by older, many times so called "professional" students who are not entirely interested in finishing their education or going on to careers, but who are more prone to agitation and radicalism within a campus life. Additionally it is felt that most students involved in disturbances are the older part-time political experts who hang around a campus taking one course at a time waiting for the slightest provocation to close down a university or incite a riot. Their political views are felt to be in the extreme left camp.

Assuming that some 1964 students were still in school in 1968, table six shows that in the more active university (UNAM) the largest percentage of students were found to be in the 31 or older group, with the second largest percentage falling in the no answer group. In the less active universities (CO and AG) the largest percentage fell in the 26 to 30 age range with the second largest percentage falling in the 19 or less age group.

As relates to discrepancy, all age groups fell into the medium range, with those giving a no answer to age constituting the largest percentage. The largest percentage in the low discrepancy cell belongs to the 19 or less age group. The highest discrepancy cell was found to correspond to the 31 or older and the no answer group.

The self-designation table shows the bulk of all groups falling in the medium category, with the 20-25 age group having the highest percentage followed closely by the 19 or less age group. In the low cell the 19 or less age group had the highest percentage, with the 31 or older group having the lowest. In the high range, we find the

31 or older and no answer groups as having the largest percentages with the 19 or less group having the smallest percentages.

Table 6

ACTIVITY IN 1968, DISCREPANCY IN 1964, SELF-DESIGNATION
IN 1964 BY AGE IN 1964

Activity	Age				
	19 or less	20-25	26-30	31 or older	No answer
More Active '68	72.4%(304)	73.2%(442)	70.5%(189)	80.2%(77)	76.9%(10)
Less Active '68	27.6%(116)	26.8%(162)	29.5%(79)	19.8%(19)	23.1%(3)
Totals	100%(420)	100%(604)	100%(268)	100%(96)	100%(13)
Chi square - significance - 0.4700					
Discrepancy	Age				
	19 or less	20-25	26-30	31 or older	No answer
Low	42.0%(337)	39.1%(368)	35.4%(149)	35.1%(53)	26.5%(9)
Medium	44.6%(358)	48.8%(460)	45.8%(193)	41.1%(62)	50.0%(17)
High	13.3%(107)	12.1%(114)	18.8%(79)	23.8%(36)	23.5%(8)
Totals	100%(802)	100%(942)	100%(421)	100%(151)	100%(34)
Chi square - significance 0.0004					
Self-designation	Age				
	19 or less	20-25	26-30	31 or older	No answer
Low	3.2%(26)	2.0%(19)	2.1%(9)	1.3%(2)	2.9%(1)
Medium	61.3%(492)	61.5%(579)	55.3%(233)	52.3%(79)	52.9%(18)
High	35.4%(284)	36.5%(344)	42.5%(179)	46.4%(70)	44.1%(15)
Totals	100%(802)	100%(942)	100%(421)	100%(151)	100%(34)
Chi square - significance 0.0599					

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Mexico emerged out of the 1910 Revolution with a new set of goals for the society, in part enshrined in the constitution, which were to serve as standards for subsequent governments and, more importantly, which became the concrete aims by which Mexicans could attach their interests to the national political system. Out of the diverse interests associated with the revolution, a nationalistic party emerged with a functionally based organization. Seldom has a political organization so directly reflected the motives of political groups. From 1945, the PRI was built on sections for workers, peasants, and popular groups. Within each of these organizations, a number of organizations exist, and there has from time to time been jockeying for power among these groups, but the PRI has managed to amalgamate the interests of these three well-defined sectors of the society into a continuing party structure. The party institutionalized the motives linking various interests to the political system, and by doing so, transformed the revolutionary ideology.

Every nation has at some point in the political system a set of symbols, goals and values that represent its aspiration and justifies its existence. The important distinction is the way these values relate to individual perception of political life and to the structuring of collective endeavor. And, because concern with justice, equality and

virtue is found among the people of every nation, and every political system makes its moral overture to citizens, the legitimacy of nations rests on achieving some acceptable overlap between the leader's purposes and the citizens' perceptions of those purposes. The support essential to the nation depends on the loyalty of the people.

Many developing countries have used ideology to promote new institutions, such as the land reform in Mexico in 1910. A working ideology, of course, means more than the particular doctrine of the regime, and it is instructive to note how cultural values and institutional norms interact with the politically justified doctrine.¹ Ideology must not be conceived as only an expression of positive or negative feelings about authority, government, or the state, lest very few conclusions be drawn.

Our habitual responses to politics are fundamental to the working of a political system and closely linked to ideology. A working ideology might be measured in terms of the range of choice or variety of rewards related to the political system, the kinds of behaviors it sanctions in order to affect these choices, and its usefulness in helping citizens order politics in more specific terms. The cognitive dimension of an ideology is how it helps citizens, groups and institutions differentiate their environment and attach shared values to numerous specific alternatives.

¹Douglas E. Ashford, Ideology and Participation vol. 3, (London: Sage Publications, 1972), p. 107.

Various terms describe how ideas and behavior interact in politics. Doctrines and creeds refer to more dogmatic, rigid forms of ideology and generally imply some kind of inflexible standard for judging behavior. More recently, political science has adopted the notion of belief systems, suggesting that individual attitudes and perception could be conceived as having latent structural qualities which might not be explicitly recognized in the values governing political life. Thus, the relatively high levels of confidence expressed in the political system in Western democracies might be considered an element of our belief system, although democratic values themselves do not explicitly postulate political efficacy as a value to be achieved. A third, even looser usage is to think of ideology as the disconnected, almost accidental, outcome of diverse opinions and reactions coalescing in some way to affect events and problems. The pluralist approach to politics tends to take this randomized view of ideology.² Some scholars believe ideology is a pattern of beliefs and concepts (both factual and normative) which purport to explain complex social phenomena with a view to directing and simplifying sociopolitical choices facing individuals and groups.³ Others call ideology a schematic image of social order, the tendency at a given time to make facts amenable to ideas, and ideas to facts, in order to create a world image convincing enough to support the collective and individual sense of identity.⁴ Perhaps a more complete definition

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 26.

⁴Sills, D. ed., International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), p. 82.

of ideologies is a form of comprehensive patterns of cognition and moral beliefs about man, society and the universe in relation to man and society.⁵ Nevertheless, the oppressed and the privileged share a common pattern of thinking, the poor because they wish to make a claim on society and the rich because they wish to preserve their claim on society. In this line of reasoning, ideas tend to become a residual element. An ideology is devised to relieve both the feelings of threat among the elite and the feelings of deprivation among the outcasts.

The student unrest in Mexico and resulting violence proved, at least, that the government's electoral majorities were not necessarily a reflection of similar support during periods of stress. Juan Manuel Cañibe, a member of UNAM's political science faculty, concludes that the movement at the time didn't reach one of its explicit objectives: the people politization. It had reciprocal action only among students themselves or among people very near to them: teachers, employers and their families. There was no solidarity from workers or peasants. This only occurs when demands are in function of concrete interest, particular to the partakers and when these demands have the possibility of being fulfilled.⁶ Rosalío Wences Reza explains the student movement in class conscious terms. It is anti-imperialistic, anti-monopolistic, and is conscious of the exploitation of classes and the internal colonialism in Mexico. Which means that within the movement

⁵Ibid., p. 67.

⁶Juan Manuel Cañibe, "El Movimiento Estudiantil y la Opinión Pública," América Latina Año 14 Nos 1/2 (Janiero-Junio 1971): 21-39, p. 39.

there exists the conditions favorable though difficult to change the structures of society. However, he does not think this will come about shortly but until workers and peasants reach the necessary awareness and are able to withstand and exist within a changed structure.⁷ Also to be taken into account is the fact that the majority of the population lives in near poverty and for all practical purposes in political oppression. Additionally, the number of college graduates continues to grow and is not keeping up with the evergrowing number of births and illiterates. Possible positions for these graduates are not becoming available soon enough to accommodate them.

President Luis Echeverría seems to have changed some of his earlier perspectives and is trying to modernize Mexico, but the structure remains the same. An observation which moved poets Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes to organize a new political organization, Revolutionary Action Movement, to work within the confines of the PRI with such extreme aims as to 'overthrow the government of landowners and pro-imperialist capitalists.'⁸ Nevertheless, President Echeverría stipulates that his dual aims to make Mexican politics more democratic and to introduce a social content to the country's economic development will serve to alleviate many of the country's problems.⁹ As

⁷Rosalío Wences Reza, El Movimiento Estudiantil y los Problemas Nacionales (México, D.F.: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, S.A., 1971) p. 88.

⁸Stanley Ross, "The Institutional Revolution," Texas Quarterly vol. 16 no. 2 (Summer 1973): 22-36, p. 27.

⁹"Behind the Image," Economist vol. 246 (March 31, 1973): 28-29, p. 28.

presidential candidate he began speaking of reform and traveling around the country as no other previous candidate had ever done; spoke of improving the grim lot of peasants; almost half of Mexico's some fifty-two million inhabitants. He is no revolutionary but recognized that with the rise of emerging tensions, new political forces were emerging that could threaten the stability of the system. Once president, he used the language of the left to criticize conditions in the country. He released most political prisoners and encouraged the press to break away from its traditional subservience to the government. Some observers feel that most of the reforms were verbal. The well entrenched party conservatives have also sought to sabotage the president's gentle efforts to make the ruling party a little more democratic. The president has done a lot in foreign policy. He has awakened the country to the existence of countries other than the United States and considers Mexico not as an American satellite but as an independently strong country.

In attempting to understand the interrelationship of ideology and student activism in 1968, a series of cross-tabulations were used. Even four years to the described activity we can see some consistency in attitudes. Those students who in 1964 saw themselves as falling in the extreme left of the ideological scale were found to be in the more active university four years later (UNAM). Yet in 1964 at least the majority of Mexican students did not view the government and accompanying institutions as being that far from their own ideological views, although males showed a slightly greater amount of discrepancy than did females and also fell slightly to the further left of the ideological scale than did the females and more

were found in the more activist university (UNAM), thus supporting established attitudes about female political thought and participation.

The theory that discrepancy has a strong bearing on a person's potential for activism failed to materialize. The 1964 students as a whole did not show significantly high degrees of discrepancy yet the 1968 disturbances engulfed the student bodies of all three universities although not in the same degree.

Community size seemed to have a small bearing on political activity although students from populations under 10,000 seemed to be found in the more active university (UNAM). Several reasons for this can be postulated, for example, UNAM is the best known and largest university in Mexico and is located in Mexico City which would probably draw students from all over the country but perhaps more from provincial settings. Also, students from smaller more conservative towns may have been shielded from radical thought, less exposed to different values and ideas and once finding themselves in a stimulating, more populous urban setting become radicalized and politically active.

Conversely, students coming from urban settings, if the offspring of conservative parents may tend to prefer universities conducive to their own political orientations, or if not, may tend to become less politically oriented once they find themselves in more conservative settings.

Community size also had no significant bearing on a student's discrepancy scale or self-designation, with the majority of students falling in the medium ranges.

A father's education seemed to have some bearing on a student's political activity with those students whose father had completed college being found in the more active university (UNAM). A father's education, however, seemed to have no bearing on a student's self-designation or discrepancy measure.

It has been postulated that older so called "professional" students have been responsible for student unrest in Latin America. According to tabulation results, the largest percentage of students were found in the active university (UNAM) and these students were 31 years of age or older, thus substantiating in part the thinking of some observers. It may be suggested, however, that older students may have had to work to support their academic careers therefore taking longer to complete their education. Perhaps they may begin to view the world with more mature eyes feeling mainly that a career is no guarantee for a better life because of the professional surplus in the working market. They may become disappointed with the state of conditions and disenchanted with government institutions.

Age seemed to have no particular significance either to discrepancy or self-designation with the majority of students falling in the medium range.

Radicals have often been explained away in sociopsychological terms which have succeeded in dissipating the worth of the protest largely by refusing to recognize, or even consider, that the ideological content of their revolt and its criticism of society have any place in an understanding as to why the revolt occurred.

From the data analyzed it would seem that few underlying currents were visible or strong enough in 1964 by which the activity of 1968

could have been predicted. The political activity during those turbulent months signified a radical break in Mexico's political process. It was unforeseen and eruptive in nature, engulfing the very essence of life in that country yet seemed to culminate student feelings and attitudes long unrepresented. Mexico's PRI is believed to represent all segments of society, yet one significant segment seems to not have representation or at least not able to forcefully express its real feelings and needs within the confines of the party structure as it now exists.

Nevertheless it seems unlikely that due to the activity and control by which Mexican politics is represented in the PRI, any significant changes will be evidenced in that country anytime soon. Those segments of society controlling the economic and political spectrum are too strong and powerful to allow any radical changes which might jeopardize their stake.

Consequently an analysis such as this, limited in its scope, fails to offer any significant conclusions. In the final analysis people participate in political activity for any number of reasons, the more evident being perhaps the desire for control over one's life and the need to redress grievances real or imagined.

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