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From The *Invention* Of Homeland To The Modern Nation: The Social Representation Of Modernity In 19th Century Mexico

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Strictly speaking, this text is not a history of Mexican nineteenth century. Probably it is not a work on social representations, if this last one supposes a series of theoretical and methodological interstices that sometimes appear like inevitable. In spite of both questions, the text is not totally disconnected from the conceptual and methodological frameworks that govern the disciplinary development of history and social psychology. Rather, the aim of this work is to use some part of the theoretical framework of social representations to offer a partial response to a problem that has been developing for some time in the field of Mexican social, cultural and intellectual history. In recent decades, nineteenth-century historians in Mexico, particularly those dedicated to the analysis of nineteenth-century politics, have circumscribed much of their discussions to the obvious interest of the political class in the creation of citizens. In the context of this discussion, our aim is to use the theory of Social Representation as a possibility to explain this process, arguing that the notion of modernity is inserted in the political class of the Mexican nineteenth-century mediating its anchorage with the concept of the nation, and that the impatience for the creation of citizens could be explained by assuming that in them lies the figurative nucleus.

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I. The public spirit in the mexican nineteen century

As Durkheim well said, "[…] a society cannot create itself without creating next to it an *ideal* [about itself]". This creation does not represent for itself a sort of surrogated act upon which, once formed, it complements itself; *it represents the setting on which it makes and renovates periodically.* A society is not just built upon the mass of individuals that comprise it, by the land they occupy, or the acts they develop, but above all *by the idea it has about itself* (Beriain, 1988), emphasis added. This work is precisely about such processes.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the educated Novohispanic class felt a recent and passionate pride for itself and its homeland. In its last breath, the New Spain was a place of self-contemplation and bragging: praise of the land and a pre-Hispanic past granted to the same nobility, attributed to classic History; exaltations of miraculous images; a vehement but barren demand to canonize its fellow citizens; almoner charity and acts of piety never seen before; authentic court society; the transition from rural life towards urban settings, in which an unprecedented Mexico City is being conceived, proud of itself like never before; creative and artistic productions of known magnitude. And all of this is crowned, so the Criollos said, by the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe since only in her presence "and the divine act upon the humble indigenous cloak" (Manrique, 1987), was reason enough for its exaggerated pride: ¡This only is enough –so would Juan de Viera have said around the 1760's decade- to upheld Latin America as the main part of the world, and only you Mexico City, as the main orb, since nowhere is to be read of other nations where the Holiest Mary has made such a wonderful manifestation.

Not even five decades had past when the political elite was not so sure of the Mexican grandeur its forerunners had praised. In the time when Maneiro said: "I would give in for Tacuba, filthy town, Rome, the famous capital of the world" (Manrique, 1987), there were only few traces left, together with filth, as indicated in the quote. It was the time when some, like Ignacio

Ramírez, joked about self-exile.[1] Others, maybe because they saw themselves as being portrayed in the Pepe Rojo of Rabasa,[2] did not share the same humor:

> Indeed I met –López Uranga wrote after meeting with Comomfort- there was not government, ministry, or political plan, or hope for this poor country; after I turned my eyes towards the elements of reaction and they were prostituted, so miserable and coward, that I must confess, I set to leave the country and take my family; as I didn't think of anything but it (quoted by Escalante, 1992).

But what concerns us is the fact that the political class lived in such degree of deception towards the state of the homeland: "Everything, everything we have lost but honor, -once said José Fernando Ramírez- because this departed from us long ago" (Ramírez as cited in Escalante, 1992). Nonetheless, it is known that he was not the first one, and he certainly was not the only one to say so.

Probably, this state of affairs did not afford anything else since the conditions upon which it was attempted to straighten a Nation, truly modern, were not adequate ones. This was because of several reasons. The *law to consolidate the royal bonds*, enacted in 1804, had seriously harmed the Novohispanic economy after setting loose a considerable spill of assets towards the capital, as well as the loss of the main part of the recent investments (Florescano, 1985). ¿Afterwards? Afterwards came the contributions –mandatory of willfully- to uphold the war against Napoleon, and a few years later the Independence war and the internal debt accepted by the new government (a bit more than 76 million pesos). This last was raised by following and unavoidable loans that wrong could be faced since the collecting system was not what can be called efficient (although somehow corrupt) and the tax payers were not really willing to fulfill, partially or fully, their tax duties (Rhi Sausi, 2000). If the above mentioned was not enough, the war itself caused in the agricultural output to decrease by half, and the mining industry to a third, and this seriously harmed trade as well as industry.

Most of the governments not only had to deal with an economic deficit *in crescendo*. After the independence war the "high rank" politics was split in two groups that now and then would share the chair: liberals and conservatives. In each, if remotely, there were twenty names

1 "¿What do you like the most about Mexico?", asked Tornel to Ignacio on the same day he shattered the Letrán Academy. "Veracruz, he answered; because through Veracruz you get out of it" (quoted by Guillermo Prieto, 1958, and also by Escalante, 1992).

2 "[...] I need to migrate to a more civilized country, used to say Pepe, somewhere where freedom has been better understood and practiced [...]" (Rabasa, as cited in Escalante, 1992).

to be heard, and only an even scarcer number had the popularity that allowed them (like Santa Ana, Hidalgo or Morelos) to gather crowds in order to set for its cause the battle ahead. To the narrow popularity of the political group and the aftermath of 57 years of almost continuous war, it must be added that from its conception, Mexico did not have international recognition. Some, indeed, came soon. But those that interested the Mexican government the most (Spain and the Vatican) were not as prompt as was needed. Obviously, the internationally related problematic, in a land on the edge of bankruptcy, and the denial of the legal frame to establish commercial relationships with the main powers, forced it further to spend the few money left in weapons, army and ships, in response to the lingering threat of innovation an inland mutinies.

In the end, it neither turns out to be casual, nor hard to understand, that for a long time the political class yearned the Novohispanic bounty and calm. Alamán, for example, accepted that the independence was "[…] a tendency so natural among nations as among people […]". However, he lamented that it was not implemented "by the middle and high class of society", and that "the most flourishing provinces were nothing else but ruins: trade, mining, industry, everything had been destroyed". On such grounds, he concluded that "if independence could not be sought through other means, it should never be sought at all, because besides [without] those employed it would have never happened, being just a matter of convenience, it was not to be expected an improvement with respect to the state of prosperity where the country was, but the beginning of its destruction" (De Gortari, in Noriega (ed.), 1992).

Like Alamán, Mora tried to prove also that "a revolution undertaken by the masses, should necessarily be disastrous as it was […]", and he acknowledged that just as his political counterpart, the independence, "[…] if indeed it separated the New Spain from its metropolis, a pernicious and destructive facet is still vivid, since […] everything has contributed to the destruction of a country that through so many years, so many as have passed, has not been able to recover yet from the immense loss that it suffered." A country that finally, "[…] had reached at that moment the highest level of prosperity it ever had" (De Gortari, in Noriega (ed.), 1992.).

Probably, both were right. And perhaps Zarco was also concerned with this when, around 1850, he asked to rebuild everything, in all and each of its circumstances:

> […] make radical arrangements through out the social machinery; encourage and undertake with public funding the opening or improvement of the roads and any other communication routes, without which there can no true agriculture and trade; promote by all means foreign immigration; resolute something with respect of the wastelands and dispose of them with equality; encourage

> and protect the agricultural and mining companies, main source of our wealth; *mend as is due the public, primary and secondary instruction, removing all the locks and vices of the colonial system that sadly pervade in some points* […] *correct all the defects of the justice administration, because without it, as much as is said about order, freedom and individual guarantees, and even political rights, it is not more than a chimera;* begin the organization of a navy that even reduced can protect our coasts and keep them from looting […] *correct the excess and abuses of some social classes who have been constant remora towards the establishment and improvement of many useful and convenient improvements; in conclusion, make effective the responsibility of the officials and employees of al kind, so that it can be said that moral is the grounding of our politics* (quoted by García Cantú, emphasis added).

What concerns us here, of course, is not the evaluation of the state of the country during the first half of the XIX century, but the insistence, already visible in Zarco, of the problems of moral and public order. This is very close in tone and spirit to the views expressed by Chevalier in 1863:

> Mexico is today among the civilized nations one of those considered not productive […] The reason for such a complete nullity is no other than circumstance, because in the nature of things it lies the fact that Mexico represents a great role in the world scene, *for which it would be enough for its citizens to be willing to put the means and be organized conveniently in order to make the gifts that providence has granted them* (Luis González, 1986).

The interpretation of Chevalier is not new or strange. On the contrary, the image of a lavish homeland was common well into the XIX century, and probably still is up to this day. What calls attention is the last part, the idea that it is the Mexicans who either commit to waste it, or even worse, destroy it: "What afflicts the most –used to say Carlos María Bustamante- is to remember that the biggest enemies of this nations have been his own children, his *demoralized* children" (quoted by Escalante, 1992).

At times, it seems it takes a minimum amount of common sense to reach conclusions like this. If you have an excellent geographic situation, a great variety of climates, and therefore natural resources, vast coasts, mineral riches – namely, the qualities of a cornucopia – then the cause of misery must be found somewhere else.

Very much in the style of Mora, most people thought that a good deal of the problems lied on the rupture with the political machinery that the independence represented. Certainly, the wars of independence did not produce that centralization of power that Jouvenel and Tocqueville imagined. In fact, the first "[…] had brought with it a destruction without precedent of the authority and obedience bonds; not with Hidalgo and Morelos, but with the countless squad of insurgent's bandits and bandits insurgent, like Vicente Gómez, Albino García, Bernardo

'Huacal', los Villagrán, los Osorno, and some heard of afterwards, like Giordano Guzmán", to whom it was never possible to reign in forces. The second, the one of Iturbide, was an answer of the privileged groups against the modernization of the peninsular state and, besides, "[…] it was undertaken between negotiations and attacks by a group of officials loyal to the crown: the product of a disloyal army that in fact overtook the public authority" (Escalante, 1992).

Afterwards came several attempts of cleavage.[3] Although this was formally solved through a federalism that after all was well received by the liberal and conservative groups, it was also a "deeply opportunistic" solution, because it depended on the regional caudillos, to whom bad could be submitted to a rigid institutional order (Escalante, 1992). In this manner, given the weakness of the governments, their economic ruin, the unquestionable difficulties that come with the control of a geography like ours and, above all, the lack of popularity of the political projects, it is possible to explain that a good deal of public life depended, from that moment onward, on the regional powers.

The caciques, caudillos, landlords, military commanders, and local personalities "[…] developed very solid family networks, that braided commerce with mining and, with the military power, with the property of the land […] In fact, families substituted almost every other social institutions that had been dismantled" (Escalante, 1992). And of course, it was with them that the State had to compromise, since due to its undeniable power nobody was willing to submit to the central authority. "In this direction manifests the answer of Albino García about a reconvention of the Zitácuaro Council: 'The highest council?... there is no one more sovereign than God, nor higher heights that those of the mountains, nor closer that those of the river's meeting" (quoted by *Escalante, 1992*.). "[…] it is not possible to rule under these conditions, nobody obeys, I can force no one to obey […]" (quoted by Brading, in Noriega, 1992). In this occasion, it is Benito Juárez who complains in 1861. And it can be understood that he does so. It is understood that even to rule he had to turn into the dictator filled with the 'extraordinary faculties' that Rabasa had diagnosed. But also well understood is the sound concern of the political class to summon towards national unity: "In the face of the desolation and ruin announcements – Nigromante said

3 During 1823, Guadalajara declared itself as the Free State of Jalisco. Around the same time, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Oaxaca, Puebla and Yucatán also proclaimed themselves against the centralized republic.

– we have at hand the dessert, the arms of despair, and *nationalism*" (*Escalante 1992*). The problem is that, in addition to other things, nationalism was lacking:

> Watching the complete extinction of the *public spirit* –Alamán wrote- that has vanished any idea of *national sense*: not able to find Mexicans in Mexico and contemplating a nation that has reached from infancy to decrepitude, without having enjoyed but a glimpse of youthful age or giving any other signs of life than violent convulsions, it seems there is reason to recognize with the great Bolívar, that the independence has been bought with all the assets that the Spanish America enjoyed… (quoted by Escalante, 1992)

"¿What good is it of to state opinions out of good will, -Zarco asked himself- point out what is good for the country, when *the public spirit is death* and the people and the wealthy classes abandon their luck and that of the country to what if, to chance…?" (quoted by García Cantú, 1991). The answer is obvious. What stands out in the insistence is the lack of *public spirit* and the need to bring it back to life.[4] Also worth noting is the fact that the aspect of homeland was interpreted as the "kingdom of disorder and immorality", which according to Juárez had been consolidated, but that in addition was imputed to his regime when the conservative group sent for Maximilian (quoted by Escalante, 1992). And, of course, the most interesting thing is that the restoration of the public spirit was seen as the condition to go from "anarchy" and "chaos" to the true state of rights that supported a free and civilized life.

II. Civil morale and modernity

As I already said, the central hypothesis of this work is that in Mexico, *modernity* manages to root through its anchorage in the ideas of *homeland* or *nation* that were built during the XVIII century (Jodelet, 1984). With this, I do not deny that there have been important bets from the fields that do not reduce modernity to its link with the public sphere and, particularly, with political life. Nevertheless, my interest is that a focus on the political sphere, the very construction of a civil morale that settled the foundation for modernity.

4 As expected, not all of the political class agreed widely with the statement about the extinction of the public spirit. Some must have stood with Martí, believing that "who says that economic union, means political union", and must have convinced themselves, even if only at moments, that "the freedom of trade has granted occupation, dignity, and *nationalism* to many of those whom previously lacked all of them" (Martí, quoted by García Cantú, 1991). Even Zarco did not have the impression that national unity was completely eroded. Or at least not at the moments of war: "Among Mexicans –he wrote during 1847- the first feeling is that of nationality, that of independence and as adverse as fortune might be, they will never throw themselves to foreign arms, or call upon stranger's help. Whenever we have been attacked by foreign forces, by armies stronger that us, among the healthy and diligent of the population has awoken the enthusiasm of independence, and if there was the wish to join the United States, that wish would have arisen during the last war" (quoted by García Cantú, 1991). Nevertheless, the common pitch does not deviate from the search for values and the "national soul" and, above all, the dismay at not seeing it fulfilled.

The fact that in Mexico took place the extinction of the public spirit can be easily understood if you consider how close the independence war was at that time, and if it is noticed that this was not the substitution of one power by another, but the rupture of the bonds of association with a central power on the side of a colony or kingdom, such as the New Spain may be considered to have been, which much earlier than the emancipation movements had claimed the right to think of as a nation in the strictest sense.[5] There is no need to talk about the consequences this had, not only in the political sphere, but in every other aspect; clearly in the public, but also in the private. In our case, what is of interest is the tight bond that always existed between the modern and enlightened ideas, and that of the nation concept; firstly, concerning the processes that lead to the independence war, and then, concerning the immorality of the XIXth century elite inflicted on the public spirit. However, appealing as it might be, this is exactly the *symbolic insertion* of modernity through such a politically stressed way – so much so that modernity and nationalism seem, at times, as being synonymous. This way, it can be understood that the "common thing", the *res*-public, appeared at the center of the concerns of the XIXth century. However, besides this, the dismay of the political class can be understood, together with its evaluation of the state of the homeland as an immoral state, and the influence it seems to have had on the construction of a civic, public morale, and therefore a civilized one.

It is true that the relationship between modernity and nation is not a strange one. In fact, nationalism has always been a consequence of the projects of modernization, another way to promote or produce cohesion among those fields where modernity on its own had broken the preexisting bonds, substituting the social bonds and a good part of the collective meanings from previous epochs (particularly religious and familiar) with those that go along better with modern thought.

In Mexico, as in any other nation that has made a step further towards modernity, nationalism also meant that the steps towards a civic morale, which replaced, for example, the religious (at least in the public sphere), were small and paused. Besides, most of the political cusp remained Catholic, and the roots of Catholicism were profound enough as to penetrate the secularization of thought and morality. Accordingly, the Guadalupe Virgin received devotion and

5 As Alexander von Humboldt once noticed, "The criollos prefer to be called Americans: and since the peace of Versailles and, particularly after 1789 they can be heard many times saying with pride 'I am not Spanish, I am American'" (compiled in de Gortari and Hernández, 1988, our emphasis).

respect from all the rulers of Mexico, including Maximilian, and an exception was granted to the Tepeyac sanctuary when it came to the Reforma laws.

Even more, in face of the "extinction of public spirit", the strength of the spiritual domain that enjoyed Catholicism gave the conservatives a very good argument in favor of the church privileges: "[We want] to keep the Catholic religion –Alamán writes-, because we believe in it, and because even if we didn't hold it as holy, we consider it the *only common bond that unites all the Mexicans*, when every other has been broken, and as the only able to keep the novo-Hispanic race, and the one that can keep it from the great dangers it is exposed to" (quoted by Escalante, 1992, emphasis added).

If the argument in favor of Catholicism had come only by conservatives, then there would not be much to say. What stands out is that someone like Altamirano, the Marat of the liberals, supported a similar thesis. At the outset, Altamirano seems to show the "national spirit" that surrounded the cult of the Tepeyac Virgin since the XVIII century. In this, of course, he was right.[6] But what is of interest is that Altamirano,

> not having enough with the value of the historical meaning of the cult, confessed openly that only when the Mexicans gathered around the worship of Our Lady of Guadalupe, they felt equal and united independently of their race or their class: it was such the living reality, that everything was a matter of theory and law. 'It is the equality in front of the Virgin; the national idolatry […] and in the last stance, in the helpless cases, the cult of the Mexican Virgin is the only bond that unites them (Brading, in Noriega ed. , 1992).[7]

Very likely, in each Mexican there always exists, as Altamirano said, a more or less big dosage of Juan Diego. And from that point onward, religion worked, and worked well, to call for national unity. Although obviously, neither the conservatives, and much less the liberals relied on Catholicism as their bet to build a nationalist spirit; contrarily, they tried to build a new creed around the homeland.

6 Even if briefly mentioned, the Guadalupe Virgin was always (i.e., since the XVIII century) the "symbol of nationality", with a primordial political influence. Of course, examples are abundant. But it suffices to say that "beginning with the independence period, a change in the Guadalupe's image can be observed; from protector against epidemics, she becomes the 'goddess of victory' and freedom" (Lafaye, 1976). This way, it is not coincidental that in a very short time she was promoted to "captain general" of the Hidalgo troops, or that she received in 1828 from the hands of Guerrero the captured Spanish flags. Even more, the strength of the image was such that, at some point, the Virgin even changed the name of our first president: from Félix Fernández to Guadalupe Victoria.

7 Altamirano's invocation will be better understood when if it is not overseen his liberal cleric in *Chistmas in the Mountains*. Consider only as an example the way in which the cleric explains his own mission and, of course, Altamirano's answer: "[...] I must invoke Jesus's religion as a cause –used to say the prelate- in order to keep civilization and virtue as the precise result [...] You –Altamirano answers- are a real democrat" (Altamirano, 1871/1989).

Among the first liberals, like Lorenzo de Zavala and José María Luis Mora, the attempts to build up a nationalist spirit were not so strong, because neither were the foundations on which it could be built. By then, the image of the independence war was not clear at all. Definitely, it had been useful to consolidate the separation, although this did not avoid the strong critiques to the insurgency for its excessive popularity and their lack of a doctrinal scope. Neither did the indigenous past seem worth of praise, since according to Mora, their "[…] social habits were for many years in complete divergence and avoidance of the civilized world". It is for this reason that they assumed Cortes as the founder of Mexico, but they also admitted that "[…] it is still too recent the existence of Mexico as a nation for the traits that shall determine it to reach the necessary stability, to be known and marked as such […]" (Mora, quoted by de Gortari, 1988).

Already with Ignacio Ramírez or Altamirano, the need for national unity was also useful to ground the birth of the homeland, although this time it was not with Sr. Hernando Cortés, but with the cloaked man from Dolores. Putting aside the load of the war, or presenting it like the unavoidable suffering that go along any birth, the liberal history evoked in the priest the one and only "Father of the Land", "the supreme Mexican of History". Influenced by Michelet, Quinet and Victor Hugo, they sought the creation of a civic religion that celebrated in *la patrie* the immortal god that Michelet saw in her. In a short time, they had already their "[…] saints graveyard, their festivity calendar, and their civic buildings adorned with statues" (Mora, quoted by de Gortari, 1988.). Altamirano presented himself then as a humble apostle of the nation's cult", and greeted Juárez as the "great priest of the Republic […] our immortal president […] the second father of the Mexican independence" (Mora, quoted by de Gortari, 1988). Everything to declare that "the apostles of the nation's cult, on the opposite of the religion's apostles, must die fighting" (Mora, quoted by de Gortari, 1988). That liberal nationalism was the Mexican version of classic republicanism, and although it didn't turn in a sort of Jacobean nationalism, it did guide part of the education and cultural work with the idea of creating a national character.

As Brading has well shown, what is interesting is that this effort of "national edification" from the liberals does not reduce only to the appeal of nationalism, but it also implies a *cardinal change in the meaning of the term "homeland"*. A change that redefines, the "[…] old criolla nation as a federal republic, inherited not from Anahuac or from the New Spain, but from the French Revolution and the 1810 insurgency" (Brading, in Noriega, 1992). These kinds of bonds allow us to think not only on the strength of the association between modernity and homeland (or

nation, if preferred), but also on the multiple and varied modifications that implied one from the other, and vice versa. What is observed is not only a process by which the notion of modernity gets rooted in Mexico from its connection with previous ideas and clearly assimilated (homeland or nation), but a profound change in the meaning of these notions gestated from of its association with a concept (modernity) with which the symbolic link is not, for many reasons, strictly necessary. Needless to say, it is the objectification and anchoring derived from the theory of social representations that allow us to think that this could open a certain way for the understanding of the historical process, whilst remaining aware of certain limitations that this may imply.

II. The social representation of modernity

So far, what we have tried to show is that the preponderance of the political sphere, that of the constitution of a civic morale, implies for modernity a setting which is very obviously out of context, and a very interesting *naturalization* process (Jodelet, 1984). In this context, the concern about the citizen construction is easily understood, since in the eyes of the political class it was needed to implement "[…] mental revolutions that spread through out all of society, and modify not only the opinions of certain people, but that of all the mass of the population" (Mora, quoted by de Gortari, 1988).

> The indigenous know nothing and are only useful as to till the land or as soldiers; those that among them stand out from their class, represent stressed exceptions. Their memories are in contradiction with the present; their ways are humble; their needs scarce; their languages produce isolation. They trip daily with magnificent buildings, but have the habit of living in huts where there is not the least corner for a commodity; they spend through the door of theaters and don't know what shines on stage; the luxury of the showrooms, in the fashion houses and perfumeries, is not for their women; they don't suspect they could walk in the cars that sometimes run them over; the prodigies of art and science are not grasped by them and seem monstrous, they break the telegraphic wire to see the words come out of it; in the newspapers they see nothing but cartoons; the railway and the great ships cause them fear; in the elections they see a kind of cam; they have come to such a prostration, that they would pass as unknown animals to their emperors and caciques if these were to escape the tomb; *to count with them as citizens we must start turning them in men. […] We have republican institution, but we have no citizens, because we don't have men*… (quoted by García Cantú, 1991, emphasis added).

This was written by Ignacio Ramírez, perhaps forgetting that he had also once said that "being indigenous is where my vanity is stalled". But it could have been anyone:

> This proves that since it is began to know the need to divide our interests from those of the indigenous. The indigenous race does not want, cannot mold with any other race. This race must be severely subjugated and even thrown out of the country if possible. There is no room for more

> indulgence with it: their fierce instincts, discovered in an unfortunate moment, must be repressed with a strong hand. Humanity and *civilization* demand it (Careaga, 1990).

Of course, not everybody agreed that the indigenous, for the simple fact of being, where the heaviest tow the country carried. For example, Zarco removed the despotic tone and noticed that:

> […] as common people is not understood the poor classes, the indigenous just because they are indigenous, the men who live from their work, but the ignorant, the fanatic, the timid and inconsistent. And there is common people with mitraen and canonias, there are with money, there are among the landlords […] (quoted by García Cantú, 1991).

Whether more or less despotic, what matters to us is not what was said about the common people, but the concern with civility and the creation of citizens, since the notion of citizen can be conceived, in the terms marked by the theory of social representation itself, as the *figurative nucleus* of representation:

> We want –again says Alamán in his faith profession- that just as is the case of the representative monarchies of Europe, there is no other aristocracy than the one of merit, capacity, instruction, wealth, military and civil services; don't ask men which parents does he come from, but what has he done, how much is he worth for all the jobs and all the honors" (in Luis González, 1986).

Thus, the central hypothesis of work assumes that in the social representation of modernity in Mexican nineteenth-century, the processes of *objectification* and *anchoring* lead directly from the concept of modernity to the notion of civility, and that with this we intend to explain this central concern of the political class. Stated in another way, if the modernization of the homeland had as preamble the construction of a civic morale, then the notion of a citizen and the building of citizens appears as the last outcome of the setting out of context of the modern elements, the *ontology* process, the formation of a *figurative nucleus* and its *naturalization*. Stated more clearly, it is just the notion of 'citizen' that allows us to understand the assignment of a specific sense to the concept of modernity and, as well, the pragmatic dimension, and even instrumental of representation.

Just like the conquerors, the Novohispanic criollos and the XIX century liberals found out quickly that education pays off better than those frustrated and initial colonial attempts to depreciate, through material extinction, what in first and last stance is image and habit. In 1850, for example, Juárez asked a school to be established in Juchitán, "because only enlightenment can outcast from those towns the vices and immorality that dominate them". Thirty years later, Altamirano argued, in defense of mandatory education, that school is the only guarantee of

democracy "[…] because she is the highest fence against the fallacies of ambition and against the stalking of tyranny" (both quoted by Escalante, 1992).

In this context, it is important to point out that if indeed it was the case that between the XVIII and the XIX centuries there were no noticeable differences in what concerns the evaluation of the indigenous and their civilization level, there were differences in terms of what could be achieved through the education path. In the first moment, it is about a manifested enlightened movement, for example, in the case of Chihuahua. Before the expulsion of the Jesuits,

> the province found itself in its philosophical, scientific and literary apogee and promised to the future of Mexico the most expedient fruits. Good taste authors had overcome the reigning *gongorism* and the *gerundianism*; the philosophical, theological and moral sciences set on a higher scientific and practical path; it wasn't few of its individuals who read in its original text the work of French, Italian, English and even German scientists and philosophers; it had been established in almost all of the schools of the provinces lectures about humanities and literature, and even others about Physics, Mathematics and Natural Sciences (Altamirano, 1988, our emphasis).

As can be seen, the bet for the educational path is that of an attempt to enlighten, to learn arts and sciences, to encourage that people would stop seeing life pass *without law and without king*. Nevertheless, in any moment, it exhibits political connotations. With the turn of the century, a sudden turn in this direction can be seen. In Veracruz, they said they had seen splendor due to the settlement of European troops among their people:

> the taste, the delicacy of feelings and the love to what is useful, to what is big and beautiful was improved at the pace that the beautiful sex was civilized; the Enlightenment began to have a touch of generalization, and the virtues were refined in the fight against the growing corruption of certain habits; and the clash of ignorance that lingered and the knowledge that appeared between the past and the future, between superstition and faith, in Jalapa sprouted the shining light of civilization, the tendency towards tolerance and fraternity, to the freedom of thought (Blázquez, 1988).

The apogees were not only sufficient but necessary for the grounding of the new American order. "The habits are bounded to the revolutions of the human spirit, and ours improve palpably with our sudden transition from serfdom to sovereignty (Ortega, 1897). The transition from serfdom to sovereignty, that is what matters, because it is

> Vain to prepare the spirit and set the steps towards the delicious cusp of a real republicanism, if you don't take the direct and only road of instruction: because frankly speaking and avoiding chimeras, that usually are nothing but theories, without true instruction there can be no true republicanism (Altamirano, 1988, our emphasis).

Therefore, we end our attempt to clarify the social representation of modernity in the Mexican XIX century. The idea was quite simple: since the end of the XVIII and during all or most of the XIX, modernity as a concept manages to settle in Mexico, through its association

with the ideas of homeland or nation that were built during the XVIII century. Being structured from this relationship, modernity turns into a very interesting process of selective construction that doesn't seem limited to the political realm. In fact, what was most important to show was that the processes of objectivity and anchorage led directly to the concept of civilization and, particularly, the notion of citizen.

III. The **citizen as objectification**

It is needless to say that this representation and, consequently, that desire of the Mexican political class was not shared by all the people. In the *Essay about the true state of social and political state that stirs in the Mexican Republic*, Mariano Otero said that the gravest mistakes had been made by

> […] not recognizing that our society had a physiognomy of its own and that it wasn't anything like the European societies, with whom we are always comparing ourselves, if only because we have borrowed from them the name of their social organization, without having the wise of some of their building parts (Otero, quoted by de Gortari, 1998).

Sometimes, there is the impression that reason should be granted to Mariano Otero and, by transitivity, to Octavio Paz:

> In the second half of the XVIII century the new ideas penetrated, slowly and with shyness, in Spain and its oversees territories. In the Spanish language we have a word that expresses very well the kind of this movement, its original inspiration and its limitations: *europeizar*[8]. The renovation of the Hispanic world, its modernization, could not spout from the own principles, elaborated by ourselves, but from the adoption of foreign ideas, those of the European Enlightenment. From that on, that 'europeizar' has been used as a synonym of modernization; years after another word with the same meaning showed up: *americanizar*. During all of the XIX century, in the Iberian Peninsula as well as Latin America, the educated minorities tried through several ways, many of them violent, to change our countries, to jump into modernity. Our wars of *independence* may and should be seen from this perspective: their goal was not merely the separation from Spain but rather, trough a revolutionary jump, *the transformation of the new countries into truly modern nations* (Paz, 1987, the italics are ours).

Obviously, in what has been said by Paz and Otero there are fundamental truths, above all in what relates to the modernization temper of the independence wars. In this sense, it could hardly be denied that towards the end of the XVIII century, the Novohispanic projects of emancipation manifested a set of traits that without question corresponded to the enlightened European imaginary. These same ideas, along with others, will become during the XIX the guiding ethic of public affairs.

8 impose traits, qualities or customs that are considered typical of Europe.

Even so, it remains rather unfair – out of proportion even – to assume that the modernizing projects were simply alien and incompatible with the practices, habits and ideologies of the majority. That was not the lie that Paz had wanted to see in our historical process; nor was it the faithful praise of an isolated, though powerful, minority. The modern notions, the stances that were taken towards them and towards the different programs with which it was attempted to undertake them, certainly allowed the molding of group identities. Moreover, to the political class, they meant a very particular interpretation about their sociocultural position. But to say that is not the same as saying that modernity and the bet for its consolidation was limited to this particular group. The problem, it seems to me, was not the overt traditionalism of some sectors of society. The problem was that society was not willing to take the banner of those who self-proclaimed "the nation's party", because the republican creed did not present bigger improvements.

Of course, in a decidedly Catholic country like ours, the religious corpus maintained an enormous social influence. The capacity for communion that the Church had – and has – with the people, caused among the liberals a certain fear of the religion's psychological power, able to set the course or conceive violent reactions among the fanatic "commoners" that, with all assurance, would escort the church.

As pointed out by Lizardi in 1827, "Our populace […] believes more a cleric in the pulpit, though he might say heresies, than the most eloquent patriot". Nine years later, Mora held that the masses "[…] are not able to distinguish the opinions from the clergy from the religious duties, confuse the latter with the first, they believe to be obliged to do blindly what priests or confessors prescribe them to"; and concluded that "[…] the strength of the laws depend on the opinions that the clergy makes of them" (both quoted by Escalante, 1992).

This supposition, as much as the conclusion, turn out to be unjust and exaggerated, since the popular religiosity was not so obtuse. Certainly, the spiritual preponderance of the Church kept almost intact and at moments that credulity could be stirred with political ends. In 1833, for example, the priests preached on some occasions that the cholera epidemic, the earthquakes and the reddening of the sky were a sign of the holy rage provoked by the Gómez Farías's laws. Nevertheless, examples like this were not the common pitch of the XIX century, since the popular echo was not at all numbing. The Church, indeed, took advantage of the mutinies and

showed, through such mutinies, the rupture between the government and the governed. Yet, it also showed its incapacity to stand in the front line as a political force.

Even so, what is to be rescued here is that the liberals lived like this, as a contraposition to the clergy's power, and not so much that the fanatic "populace" had more reason to believe in the religious group than in the political. Perhaps, because

> […] the evolution of the Republic towards the complete rule of herself, towards the fulfillment of a truly laic State, had an insurmountable obstacle: the Church built as a territorial and spiritual power at the same time: *regarding the spiritual the State could do nothing*, regarding the material yes; it disarmed its great adversary from its territorial power and it went through (Sierra, 1948, emphasis added).

If it may be seen in this way, what there was in Mexico was a "political hybridization", since on the one hand, the majority of groups and institutions kept a good part of their traditional structures, but on the other, the imaginary that gave them sense was no longer the same. To most of the conservative groups, some of the consequences of the emancipation project meant meaningful advantages. It meant their filiation was not definitively tied to any of the political groups. In the meantime, among people, not only did this ideological ambiguity remain, but in addition, some frankly modern conceptions showed up which show the terrain that the enlightened ideas had won. Everywhere, including among the indigenous, there was ongoing talk of independence, citizen rights, and freedom.

Of course, the national issues did not concern the campesina class much, since with the exception of a small minority, they interested nobody. Nevertheless, this does not imply its complete marginalization from political life, since they cared a lot about defending the community order in front of the State, as much as against the rights that capitalism began to take away. Evidently, an autonomy like this was lived by the liberals as an obstacle to rationality: but we already know that to make up laws and institutions is one thing, but to transform the public spirit is a very different, and much more difficult, one. Even so, it is interesting that the campesinos came to defend their own rights with the same words that the elites used to defend theirs.

In the fact of the grocery shops and pulquerias, there was always someone educated that fulfilled the lust for news, caused by the wait of the diligence with which the newspaper arrived. Evidently, these readings cannot be compared with the "public cult". That is, neither Descartes nor Rousseau were read; but the

> […] striking [is] that in the political plans, in the complaints and quarrels of the peoples it can be noticed, not only a serious knowledge of judiciary apparatus, but even phrases, mottos and reasoning common of the political writers. They talk about their rights as citizens, about the nation's sovereignty, about the electoral frauds and similar things (Escalante, 1992).

In Juchitán, for example, people vindicated their rights to use the salt marshes claiming that

> he who takes and enjoys what is his does not steal: *we are Mexican, we are the nation, and we are owners and we have the same rights to make take advantage of this fruit, and from the this that we work we have to pay taxes to the nation and other precise council tolls*" (Escalante, 1992 emphasis added).

In a similar way, some years earlier a set of conditions were established in Terecuato, for its adherence to the Veracruz plan:

> 1. These towns are free of ruler, and they are sovereign, and nor a *rejio* patrimony, nor English, nor Santana's. We live as God dictates […]
>
> 4. We raised a civic military service for all commoners, and only we rule in her, but we don't protect Mexico or any other state; and if a State wishes to come to Terecuato we will give land and water and wood and stubble and straw, but he shall pay to us straw and corn.
>
> 5. This council will not allow foreign commerce in Terecuato or Tangamandapio […]
>
> 7. The same religion: C. A. R.; but the poor will be allowed to marry, and that is the best […]
>
> 8. We will raise a preparation meeting in order to protect the maguey fields […]
>
> 11. The governments will join and set at Terecuato's Council disposition to save our Mexico: and leather to the English and Santana and those who make us evil by intrigues in order to win (quoted by Escalante, 1992).

It is much to say that what was needed was individuals and not communities. But, the campesinos were not, and nor did they want to be, citizens; yet, this reason didn't keep them from participating in the national politics. Of course, in their own way: "without civic attitudes, without partisan enthusiasm and, above all, obedient only to their traditional leaders and authorities" (Escalante, 1992).

Naturally, we will not fall in the simplistic view of endorsing the failures of the political project to its failure in the ideological field. During most of the XIX, there was an attempt, through all possible ways, to consolidate a more or less healthy economy, strengthen the tax collection system and, in the end, modernize the State as well as the productive forces. The paralyzing sequels caused by the independence war had to be overcome, together with the burdens that were lagging from the Spanish crown's commercial politics and the "industrial barbarism" where the country found itself. The technological and commercial modernization advanced little during the Restored Republic and much less during the years before. Barely half a dozen fabrics dedicated at producing what the peninsula never allowed were established

(breeding of silk worms, fabrics of yarns and knitted cotton, paper, bait candles, tobacco, etc.). In mining, little was produced, and almost nothing in agriculture, because this kept being for self-consumption. Finally, as was to be expected, the foreign capitals were kept at bay from investing in a country that was known for the political conditions that pervaded for more than fifty years.

This way, probably it would be needed to give reason to Cosío Villegas regarding the observation that the failure of the project was due to the fact that "Never did a liberal Constitution, a democratic life, public and individual unlimited liberty, a passionate interest in the public affairs, a political life in sum, healthy, robust and free, correspond to a vigorous economy" (Cossio, 1959). Nevertheless, none of this denies the importance of the ideological processes to which reference has been made.

V. Conclusion

On some days, I even think that the associations between modernity and nation have been so strong in these lands, that not only does this explain the XIX, but also the hope of some generational contemporaries, today faded by reality, that this country would begin to recover on the day our institutions and our public life become a bit more democratic than previously. But beyond the strength that the representation of modernity and its association with the nation could preserve, what seems interesting in this brief case study is the possibility of shedding light on the historical phenomenon through the use of certain concepts and mechanisms defined for the theory of social representation. Of course, it is not only the limitations of extension that prevent showing in all its magnitude the wealth and the possible limitations of this use. Along with this, it would be necessary to analyze the historicity that the theory presupposes, the way in which it assimilates the intrinsically historical character of psychosocial objects (Ibañez, 1992; Fernández, 2006), starting, for example, from the idea that social representation is at the same time constituent and constituted thought (Jodelet, 1984; Ibañez, 1994). The foregoing, however, should not be read as a criticism of the theory. In fact, there is always the possibility of differences in style and epistemic interests where history and the social sciences are divided. As Ronald Dore well has pointed out: "you cannot make sociological *omelettes* without breaking some historical eggs" (quoted by Burke, 1997).

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