

of Manuel Ávila Camacho in the late 1930s and early '40s. Before that time, adoption proved much more complicated. As Blum points out, efforts of the revolutionaries to wrest the family from the domain of the conservative church led only belatedly to such reforms after the Cristero Rebellion of 1926-29.

This led to another complication in the perceived usefulness of women to the revolution. Like men, women visibly participated both for and against the revolution, but the revolutionaries chose to remember the latter, rather than the former. Cristina Boylan's essay on conservative women has been linked to Jocelyn Olcott's work on women in the Mexican Popular Front to show how women on both the left and the right of the political perspective lost out to their male counterparts. Neither group was destined to direct or control the revolution, and women's divisions often played a role in this process.

The fact that women had little control over the revolution also played an important role in the fate of working-class women. Three essays by María Teresa Fernández-Aceves, Heather Fowler-Salamini, and Susan M. Gauss analyze women workers in both rural and urban areas where the masculine desire for power and authority, as well as the belief that women inherently belonged in the home, or at least, under control within the workplace, served to limit the accomplishments, but never the spirit of working-class women.

What does all this say about the Mexican revolution? First of all, it affirms that women of all ethnicities, both for and against the revolution, demanded change and made their presence known during this turbulent era. But, as theorists in women's studies have often shown, revolution for men has not always implied radical change for women. Or, it might have been that the women of the Mexican revolution proved to be too revolutionary for their male counterparts, as evidenced by the greater success of Zapatista women in political events of recent years. But what this volume makes abundantly clear is that Mexico has never suffered a shortage of women who insisted on more control over their lives and families, and their legacy forms as central a part of modern Mexican history as that of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary men.

DONNA J. GUY

The Ohio State University

MARK OVERMYER-VELÁZQUEZ: *Visions of the Emerald City: Modernity, Tradition, and the Formation of Porfirian Oaxaca, Mexico.* Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006.

This elegant book addresses a multitude of thorny issues related to Mexican urban history, visual culture, and modernity. The title is particularly apt: from

the mental anticipations of Oaxaca's ruling class, through their physical efforts to recreate urban spaces as both legible and aesthetic sites, to the photographic registries of sex workers, the book uses "vision" as an aperture through which to analyze the making (and to a lesser degree the experience) of modernity in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Oaxaca City.

In creating a rich and rounded portrait of Oaxaca City from roughly 1870 to 1911, Overmyer-Velázquez blends an array of research strategies and evidence, drawing on newspapers, photographic registries, notarial records, church documents, and maps from both Oaxaca City and Mexico City. As much as its content, the very existence of such a vast corpus of material is a testament to the Porfirian urge to modernize. It is also testament to the state's relative success in this effort, given that much of the author's material comes from the last decade or so of the Porfiriato. Composed of five chapters, the book begins with a succinct study of the formation of Oaxaca City's Porfirian ruling class in which the author explores how Oaxaca's "ruling elites" drew on both older and newer political and cultural practices (such as tourism and sports) to maintain their power during a period of substantial change. Indeed, they were themselves the initiators of such change, as the author shows in the second chapter. Here he analyzes the *vallistocracia's* attempts on multiple fronts to reshape physical spaces in ways that would simultaneously facilitate control and foster a perceived modern aesthetic. Overmyer-Velázquez gives the reader a vivid sense of a place that is simultaneously undergoing change while it is under increasing surveillance by looking at a welter of projects: the construction of new parks and buildings; the creation of new subdivisions; the intensive mapping of the city; and efforts to rationally order public spaces. In chapter 3 the author provides an important analysis of the roles the Catholic Church leadership played in the creation of a modern Oaxaca City, focusing in particular on how it mediated worker-government relations. The final two chapters focus on the commercial sex trade and what it can tell us about how "the modern" impacted ideas and norms of gender, race, and sexuality. Thus, in chapter 4 the author looks at government efforts to regulate sex work, highlighting the government's own ambivalence regarding prostitution; and in chapter 5 he analyzes the ways in which perceptions of what it meant to be "modern" are made visible in photographs and photographic registries of female sex workers. The images are fascinating: beginning in 1890, sex workers were required to submit photographs of themselves to a government registry. These were hardly mug shots. Sex workers, particularly those from "first class" brothels, sought out commercial photography studios in Oaxaca City where they would pose (or be posed) for their portrait, often in full Victorian-era regalia and surrounded by a variety of European high-society items made fashionable by a growing entourage of European elites settling in

Oaxaca. How much control over their own representation sex workers had is obviously difficult to determine, but Overmyer-Velázquez is a careful reader of the images. In noting, for example, the wide variation in “backdrops and props, dresses, poses, gestures, and glances” among sex workers in the later Porfiriato, he makes a plausible argument that in fact sex workers had at least some active role in their own representation (p. 146).

This is an important contribution to Mexican historiography. As a study of a provincial capital, it has crucial things to tell us about nineteenth-century urban history while resisting the gravitational pull of Mexico City. Of particular note are Overmyer-Velázquez’s successful efforts to portray Oaxaca City as a place dramatically shaped by international forces. This was hardly some provincial backwater. Indeed, even “provincial” seems something of a misnomer, a point Overmyer-Velázquez draws out across the breadth of the book. Politically the city was intimately linked to Mexico City by virtue of being the hometown of both Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. During Díaz’s brief hiatus from the presidency (1880-1884), he returned to Oaxaca as its governor. Moreover, in 1892 the arrival of the Mexican Southern Railway linked the city ever more closely to the international market. By then Oaxaca City seemed to be teeming with foreigners: European investors, attracted by favorable mining regulations, forged new relations between nature and industry; North American Methodist ministers probed potential fissures in the Catholic bulwark; and recently arrived immigrant women worked in the burgeoning sex trade. Upper-class Oaxacans were no less cosmopolitan, a fact nowhere better demonstrated than in Overmyer-Velázquez’s portrait of Oaxaca’s Archbishop Eulogio Gillow, a key figure in the rapprochement between church and state under Díaz. Gillow traveled extensively throughout Europe as a nomadic student (he studied in Oxford, Paris, Bonn, Rome, and Salamanca!) and represented Mexico’s Catholic Church at congresses in Belgium. His various sojourns made him as well-traveled as the international investor class with whom he rubbed shoulders in Oaxaca City and additionally gave him ample opportunity to link Oaxaca’s faithful “with their international brethren” (p. 80). One suspects Gillow was not exceptional among Oaxaca’s well-heeled. Overmyer-Velázquez’s attention to such life histories and to Oaxaca’s broader political and economic location situates the state capital in an international setting without sacrificing its local or national specificity.

The book is also valuable as a study of the making of Porfirian modernity. Modern, modernity, modernization—all are notoriously slippery terms. Overmyer-Velázquez does not purport to fix their meanings. He admits in his introduction that the term “modernity” in his study “serves as an incomplete yet unavoidable all-inclusive shorthand” (p. 9) for the processes of change examined in the book: “unavoidable” because as he shows, the concept itself appeared,

took on meaning, and circulated as part of a powerful but malleable discourse among Oaxaca's varied social classes, including the business and clerical elite as well as prostitutes, artisans, and laborers. It is an effective approach: while recognizing and at times ceding to the elusiveness of the word, he avoids the extremes of either analytical paralysis or excess. Instead he is able to highlight the very paradoxes and contradictions that inhere in such concepts in the first place. For example, in a carefully crafted chapter, Overmyer-Velázquez shows how progress could have very tangible, contradictory effects. Local officials expressed concern over a booming commercial sex trade—an activity on the one hand deemed unwholesome and antithetical to ideas of progress yet booming as a consequence of such progress. He also emphasizes the particular ways in which modernity seemed to take shape in a place like Oaxaca City, neither imperial nor national metropole. For example, here modernization did not march in stride with secularization. In fact, at least in Oaxaca City, it would appear that modernity was birthed in part by the Church itself which, forgiven by Porfirio Díaz for past sins, arose as the mediating institution between labor and the state and helped smooth the jagged edges created by changing social relations, spatial orderings, and economic circumstances.

This is an empirically rich and methodologically suggestive work. As well as contributing importantly to Mexican urban historiography, Overmyer-Velázquez shows how the idea of modernity itself is unsettled by attentive readings of the historical record in a place like Oaxaca City. In clear prose he demonstrates nicely how the very notions of progress and modernity were tightly entwined with a kind of emerging visual field, of which the burgeoning bureaucratic state as well as its purported subjects made very effective use. It is, in sum, an excellent and original contribution to Mexican historiography and should provoke further research on the intersection of visual studies and history.

Raymond B. Craib

Cornell University

JUDITH BOKSER LIWERANT, ELIEZER BEN-RAFAEL, YOSHI GORNY, and RAANAN REIN (eds.): *Identities in an Era of Globalization and Multiculturalism: Latin America in the Jewish World*. Leiden: Brill 2008.

How do you fit (or misfit) “Latin American” with “Jewish”? Lately, a debate has been smoldering between adherents of the time-honored formula “Latin American Jewish” and the upstart proponents of the appellation “Jewish Latin American.” The difference isn't merely dancing on grammatical pinheads but a shift in thinking about nation, identity, minority, and belonging. Are *los judíos*