

Navarro concludes with this neat schematic progression, summarising opposition in Mexico between the 1930s and 1970s:

Physical violence gave way to parties and elections. Parties and elections gave way to union activism. Union activism gave way to student movements. Finally, student movements gave way to the short-lived underground movements of the Mexican *guerra sucia* ... In all, the refusal of the PRI-dominated government to countenance public dissent forced the voices of opposition ever further underground.

This is a very useful book with much to recommend it to all with an interest in the post-Cárdenas period. It gives an admirable account of the development of the PRI model and reiterates the exceptionalism of the Mexican case, but due to the dual structure (two broad-sweep thematic chapters interspersed with three election case studies) it does demand a little judicious mining to find the rich seams of information.

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Claire Brewster and Keith Brewster, *Representing the Nation: Sport and Spectacle in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 177, £80.00, hb.

When Mexico City hosted the Olympics in 1968, it was the first time that a developing nation or a Spanish-speaking country had held the games. Latin America would have to wait nearly 50 years to be awarded this opportunity again, in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Claire and Keith Brewster's carefully researched and highly insightful book recounts the story of the 1968 Summer Games, from Mexican elites' struggle to win the bid from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to foreign and domestic doubts regarding the country's ability to host the games successfully, to the games themselves and their legacy in Mexico and beyond. However, this clearly argued account is not just about the Olympics. Rather, it treats the games as a window on to Mexicans' struggle to represent themselves as a nation during the 1960s and the social contradictions that made this such a difficult task.

The authors set the stage for their analysis of the Olympic bid with a description of the revolutionary state's efforts to bring the rural and urban masses into the fold and create a unified and modern Mexican nation, principally through education but also through sport. They convincingly argue that, regardless of the actual results of these efforts, the urban elite's scorn for and mistrust of their compatriots were too deeply rooted to allow them to embrace national unity. The persistence of their view of the Mexican majority as inferior in racial, cultural and developmental terms helps to explain the form that Mexico City's bid took and why even its proponents harboured doubts about the nation's ability to host the games.

These doubts, nevertheless, stood alongside the elite's desire to gain international recognition for Mexico as a modern and culturally sophisticated nation and to do away with its reputation as disorganised and corrupt. This contradiction led the Mexican Olympic Committee to present a bid that denied the reality of the vast majority of Mexicans, emphasising a modern, first-world present and a glorious pre-Columbian past comparable to the civilisations of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The authors argue that while this portrayal and Mexico's accelerated economic growth

may have swayed some IOC members, the decision to award the games to Mexico City likely had more to do with a lack of viable options. Other contenders like Detroit and Lyons would have fuelled Cold War tensions, while Argentina's political unrest made Buenos Aires an untenable choice. The continued reserve expressed by the international press, national Olympic committees in the first world and even members of the IOC demonstrates the limits of this supposed vote of confidence.

The city's preparation for the games was closely scrutinised and unfairly criticised by international observers. Evidence of progress was unable to overcome stereotypes of Mexico as the 'land of *mañana*'. Furthermore, the sporting world decried Mexico City's altitude as a serious threat to athletes' health, an idea which the organisers were unable to dispel through scientific studies and which proved in the end to be unfounded. In response, the organisers took refuge in an image of Mexico as defender and leader of the third world. They outraged members of the IOC by supporting African nations' attempt to bar South Africa from participating in the games, and claimed Mexico to be a peaceful, culturally rich oasis in a world of conflict, a portrayal that would later prove sadly ironic.

In what is perhaps the book's most revealing chapter, Brewster and Brewster show how the organisers responded to their own misgivings regarding Mexico's potential to demonstrate its modernity through the games and, specifically, regarding their countrymen's ability to shed their rural backwardness. They 'cleaned up' tourist areas and the neighbourhoods surrounding the Olympic village by removing 'unsightly' street vendors and beggars. They also attempted to 'civilise' the city's residents through newspaper articles, television commercials and flyers that instructed them to avoid the same stereotypical Mexican behaviour – drunkenness, untidiness and corruption – that elites were denying to international audiences. These preparations revealed the governing class's awareness of the sizeable gap between official portrayals of progress and Mexican realities, as well as their continued evaluation of progress in European terms.

The book reaches its climax with the authors' analysis of government forces' massacre of 500 student protesters in Tlatelolco plaza just ten days before the opening ceremony. The authors avoid further speculation as to what exactly happened on the night of the massacre. Instead they place it within the broader context of organisers' attempts to use the games to represent Mexico in a positive light. The students were not protesting about the games. Rather, they were continuing a tradition of demanding that the government should fulfil the Revolution's promises of economic redistribution and democracy. The regime's brutal overreaction should, however, be interpreted as an attempt to remove all traces of conflict from the international Olympic gaze. In an effort to shield the games' image, the US president of the IOC, Avery Brundage, helped to downplay the news of the massacre to the rest of the world.

From the standpoint of Mexican history, the games themselves were uneventful and generally successful. The shattering of track records, due in part to altitude, and the civil rights protest of two African-American athletes on the medal podium and their subsequent expulsion stole the show. One aspect of the closing ceremony does, however, stand out: an African athlete's expression of appreciation to his hosts provoked a spontaneous and joyous celebration by the Mexican crowd. I found particularly insightful Brewster and Brewster's suggestion that this celebration was evidence that the organisers should have had faith in their countrymen's character, rather than trying to hide or transform it.

After providing an example of how contemporary Mexicans continue to combine an awareness of the country's social contradictions with a patriotic desire to shield the nation from international criticism, the authors conclude that while the games may not constitute a significant benefit to the host, they do offer a window into the construction of national image under acute pressure when tensions and insecurity are laid bare in the very attempt to cover them up.

I highly recommend this book to readers interested in the Olympic Games and other international sporting events, in this period of Mexican history, and in the post-colonial dilemma of representing the nation in a manner that balances pride in cultural particularity with the need to compete on terms imposed by the first world.

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Gavin O'Toole, *The Reinvention of Mexico: National Ideology in a Neoliberal Era* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), pp. 302, £65.00, hb.

The Carlos Salinas years (1988–94) were an eminently polarising period in Mexico, and this book is a marvellous attempt at outlining one major ideological fault line, namely the meaning and content of Mexican nationalism. By 'the reinvention of Mexico' Gavin O'Toole means principally the reinvention of nationalism and its concrete use as a political tool by the PRI regime. O'Toole's key claim is that nationalism remained of functional value as a legitimising discourse to elites pursuing radical reform of the state. As Salinas deepened an essentially neoliberal economic programme, the regime launched a concerted attempt to use nationalism to support these very policies.

Given the nature of Mexico's drastic transformation from a heavily state-led to a market-oriented economy under a party that claimed continuity with the Mexican Revolution, it is hardly surprising that the ruling PRI sought to justify its conversion. This book, a richly detailed scholarly endeavour that is, moreover, highly readable, excels in depicting the great strides the party took to distance itself from statism while maintaining its revolutionary credentials.

O'Toole deems the years 'key junctures of modernity' (p. 4), with renewed interest in ideology and 'contestation of the national idea' (p. 16) across the political spectrum. The PRI's key challenge was to separate nationalism from its heritage of 'revolutionary nationalism', a term Salinas even had removed from the party's official discourse. In its stead, Salinas presented 'social liberalism', a reinvented nationalism permeated by anti-statism. Advisers such as Jesús Reyes Heróles and Juan Rebolledo outlined and disseminated the new ideas chiefly through the PRI's *Fundación Mexicana* and the party organ, *Examen*.

O'Toole does not give Salinas short shrift, but takes his discourse and ideas seriously. Social liberalism is analysed as an 'assertive democratic discourse' (p. 60) in favour of a stronger civil society autonomous from the tutelage of a state that had appropriated its rights. The tie between economic reform and 'sovereignty' is here crucial: 'Salinas argued that inequality threatened the country's unity and thus its power of self-determination; sovereignty, as a function of unity, could be strengthened by the pursuit of social justice' (p. 61), from economic growth rather than the old social pacts.

The reform of Article 27 of the Constitution was a key battleground, where Salinas directly confronted the 'nationalist mythology' (p. 84) of the *ejido*. With the