

The result is a book with an important place in two historical literatures, those of Mexican liberalism and the public sphere, and the sort of good read that hopefully keeps our trade's own presses turning.

Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois
gillinghamp@gmail.com

PAUL GILLINGHAM

ENERGY IN MEXICO

Fueling Mexico: Energy and Environment, 1850–1950. By Germán Vergara. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xii, 322. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$99.99 cloth.
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Germán Vergara's well-researched book—based on materials from 18 archives and libraries—makes the compelling argument that the discovery, extraction, use, and impact of various forms of energy, including solar, water, wood, coal, natural gas, and oil, were the primary forces that drove Mexican history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to the author, Mexico's long march toward today's fossil-fuel economy was a slow, messy, nonlinear process shaped by broader political, economic, and technological changes.

Before addressing how Mexico became dependent on non-renewable fossil fuels, Vergara first examines the renewable energies that existed in the colonial and early national periods. These derived from the sun, rivers, and forests, as well as human and animal muscle. Vergara then addresses Porfirian Mexico and shows how the widespread concern over the limited capacity of renewable energy—which stemmed from the country's unfavorable hydroelectric conditions and its increasing deforestation—led the political and economic elite, along with their foreign benefactors, to develop more powerful energy sources. These sources would help Mexico to build an efficient and far-reaching commercial infrastructure that could foster the nation's industrialization and modernization. Following the path of England and the United States, coal was initially identified and mined as the solution to Mexico's "fuel problem" (that is, its "lack of cheap, abundant energy"). However, due to the difficulty in extracting and transporting it, coal never became the base of Mexican industry, nor a household fuel. Instead, coal functioned as an "energy bridge" between nineteenth-century wood and water and twentieth-century oil. According to the author, coal also shaped the country's initial "views and expectations about fossil fuels," and, between 1890 and 1910, it sustained "key emerging industrial sectors like steel, smelting, railroads, and electricity generation" (95).

Not surprisingly, petroleum is the energy source that receives the greatest part of Vergara's attention. In the late nineteenth century, kerosene became an important illuminant and

industrial lubricant. In the twentieth century, oil's abundance, high energy density, and liquid nature—which meant it was easily and cheaply extracted, transported, and consumed—led to its replacing coal and transforming the country. Within decades, oil would power Mexican factories, light homes, pave roads, and fuel cars, trucks, tractors, ships, and airplanes. It would also power the fertilization of agricultural fields, and electrify much of the nation.

After its 1938 nationalization, most oil production fed domestic consumption. According to Vergara, oil transformed Mexico from an agrarian nation into an industrial one by fostering Import Substitution Industrialization, the “Mexican Miracle,” the Green Revolution, rapid urbanization, a demographic explosion, and suburban sprawl. Such far-reaching changes led to broad social and cultural transformations and increased disparities of wealth, especially between urban and rural Mexico. Meanwhile, the federal government tied itself closely to oil in a corporatist manner and facilitated its dominant role in the economy by investing millions of pesos into building an oil infrastructure of pipelines, roads, and refineries.

Although Vergara covers some well-travelled ground, his energy-centric narrative offers new insights that will force scholars to reconceptualize modern Mexico. Although some of the energy transitions that he presents are familiar because they reflect earlier realignments toward fossil fuels in both the United States and Europe, his study's value is evident when he demonstrates how and why Mexico pursued an energy path different from that of the world's first industrial nations—especially regarding water, coal, and oil.

The monograph's orientation is primarily economic (that is, industrial) and institutional (both state and corporate), and its nod toward environmental history stems mostly from the fact that the industries under review are all natural resources. Except for deforestation, ecosystem degradation and recovery receive limited attention, as does the negative impact of fossil fuels on human health. These latter points aside, Vergara's important study will impel scholars of Mexican and Latin American industrialization to include energy as a central component of their analysis; it also may serve as a model for how the energy history of the Americas below the Rio Grande gets written.

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
dwyer@duq.edu

JOHN J. DWYER

MEXICO'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Mexican Revolution's Wake: The Making of a Political System, 1920–1929. By Sarah Osten. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 285. \$99.99 cloth; \$29.99 paper; \$24.00 e-book.
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The decade of the 1920s receives far less attention in the larger historiography of the Mexican Revolution than does the military phase from 1910 to 1920. Although several