systems', drawing from Mexican examples. The rest of the book is divided into two sections, which include respectively six chapters on a 'history of water administration', examining examples from colonial Spanish America, mainly Mexico, and four final chapters on 'self management [of water systems] in the early twentieth century' written by Mexican irrigation officers between 1930 and 1942.

The book is a useful addition to the literature on the links between irrigation agriculture and social organisation in Mexico, which places the Mexican experience in the wider international context. Unfortunately the book lacks a conclusion, which would have been very useful to bring together the widely different experiences and lessons introduced in the chapters and, more importantly, to elaborate in greater depth the connections between the theoretical frameworks addressed in the first part of the book and the more historical and empirical materials presented in the two final sections. Also, the collection would have benefited from a more interdisciplinary discussion, as it revolves mainly around relatively well-known debates in social anthropology and misses the opportunity to establish a dialogue with the wealth of academic literature on Wittfogel's 'hydraulic hypothesis' that has been produced since the 1970s in disciplines such as geography and in the field of political ecology more broadly.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X11000988

Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938–1954* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2010), pp. xiv + 301, $64.95, hb.

The 1940s undoubtedly represent some sort of watershed in Mexican political history. It has become a commonplace that *civilismo* was instituted during this period; that the ruling PRI developed a sophisticated and institutionalised mode of rule; that presidential transitions were made in an increasingly smooth and orderly fashion; and that a development model was forged which could avoid the brutal violence of other republics further south. And, as with so many received truths, these claims do not fully withstand scrutiny.

Aaron Navarro's volume adds considerable detail to these contested narratives. He states that the book is 'an analysis of opposition politics in Mexico', yet this is not quite right. Navarro actually provides both a history of the establishment and regularisation of the Mexican intelligence services and an account of changes in the ways government intelligence officers viewed the political opposition. While there is a good deal on the major non-PRI presidential candidates, at heart the book is an almanac of intelligence reports, expertly linked and analysed, which allow the reader insights into both specific events (the 1940, 1946 and 1952 elections) and broader themes. What emerges with particular clarity is the triangular relationship between the military, the ruling party and the intelligence services; over time, the shifting balance of power (and personnel) within this tripolar structure has been a major determinant of Mexican political development.

Navarro offers welcome evidence for a revisionist view of the PRI's early years. The collated sources show that the military did not simply vanish from the political scene in 1946; that there were competing factions within the post-revolutionary elite; that such factions could exit and re-enter the dominant group at various points; and that the violence of the pre-institutionalised period remained, albeit in the background and less frequently deployed. He sees the rebellion of Saturnino Cedillo in 1938 as marking the end of an era characterised by physical violence as the final arbiter of political power, and its replacement by 'more modern forms of political speech'. The new model was one of 'elections and parties', yet as the intelligence reports reveal, there were layers within layers, and the true 'electorate' in Mexico was not that which turned out to vote on polling day.

The only substantive criticism is of a recurrent inconsistency in the treatment of sources. While the author is robustly realist in his view of the PRI and its machinations, the three election-centred chapters set up a significant degree of drama, as if there were several possible (and not just remotely plausible) outcomes. Hence throughout the chapter dealing with the 1946 election a Padilla victory is treated as a genuine possibility, as it seems in the relevant intelligence reports; yet when the wheels of power turned to ensure Alemán's triumph, Navarro concedes that 'election day presented few surprises'. Similarly, in 1940, Almazán's candidacy is 'dangerous to the PRM', but then, come polling day, 'Mexican elections have generally been the site of vote fraud … and 1940 was no exception'. This is absolutely right, which only prompts the question: why treat these sham elections and quixotic campaigns so reverently in the first place?

This tendency is most apparent in the treatment of the Federación de Partidos del Pueblo Mexicano (Federation of Parties of the Mexican People, FPPM), the opposition front led by Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, which, having failed to make a significant impression in 1952, subsequently lost its registration. Navarro is surely right to interpret the withdrawal of the *registro* simply as 'a figleaf for the bald suppression of opposition movements': it was just one of many procedural forms of political authoritarianism perfected by the PRI. Yet if the FPPM posed any sort of genuine threat, a pretext for this withdrawal could have been manufactured before the 1952 election. It served the PRI, and, one suspects, the keen observers to the north, to nurture what appeared to be a democratic opposition. Unfortunately, the PRI was, *más o menos*, correct to note of the opposition alliance that 'zero plus zero equals zero'. The leftist element had been eviscerated in the early part of the Alemán *sexenio*, Navarro curiously implying the *charrazo* took place 'by the late 1950s' when in fact radical labour and its allied leftist parties had been routed comprehensively by 1950. *Henriquismo* itself was a personalist, ephemeral grouping, albeit one with a substantial social base. The idea that Henríquez Guzmán would have found himself president is far beyond the realms of imagination, and there is no real need for the speculation that he would have 'found himself a victim of CIA intervention'.

Navarro identifies *cardenismo*, military influence and electoral opposition as features of Mexican politics which ended with the *henriquista* defeat, yet these changes had begun six years before with the victory of Miguel Alemán, and arguably even earlier. While this may reflect my own research prejudices, the idea that Alemán somehow personified the 'need for new thinking' is altogether too kind; instead he stretched institutionalised corruption and electoral exclusion to their limits. Furthermore, the post-1952 model was far from the unchanging monolith often implied, though in this Navarro is by no means the most egregious offender. I would, however, take issue with the following: 'There was no *lopezmateismo* or *diazordazismo*. After 1952 there was only *priismo*.' A case has recently been made for the existence of a meaningful *echeverrismo*; and in the dying days of PRI hegemony, *salinismo* surely left a deep and lasting impression.

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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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X1100099X

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