

Mexico DF /
NAFTA

7 Editorial

17 The Mexican Neoliberal Conversion: Differentiated, Homogenous Lives

35 From the Series Two Million Homes for Mexico (2006–present)

43 Mexico City Modern: A Review Essay

49 Habitability: Cooperación Comunitaria

59 The Apparatus of Ownership

71 The Populist City

83 Furniture for Public Use

Daniela Gil Esteve, translated by Irmgard Emmelhainz

87 Geo-Subjective Visions

Layla Emmelhainz

97 Kids in Puddles: Luis Barragan's Egerstrom Stables

Pilar Calveiro, translated by Irmgard Emmelhainz

99 Private and State Violence Under Neoliberalism

Will Straw

111 Pulling Back From Apocalypse

Lara Nielsen

123 The Time After NAFTA: DF's Border Time (and the Other) in Post Tenebras Lux

Sayak Valencia, translated by Irmgard Emmelhainz

131 NAFTA: Capitalismo Gore and the Femicide Machine

Miguel Ventura

137 Something About Coatlicue

Eduardo Abaroa

147 Notes to a Project: Total Destruction of the Anthropology Museum

Silvia Gruner

153 I Want it to Stay / I Want it to Go

Diane E. Davis

155 Competing Globalizations in Mexico City's Historic Centre

Yutsil Cruz Hernández and Alfonso Hernandez,
translated by Irmgard Emmelhainz

167 The Obstinacy of Tepito

Sergey Pigach

175 An Urban Mutagen

Gustavo Lipkau and Fabiola Torres Pacheco

185 Mexico City 1994-2014: Political Economy and Infrastructure

Silvia Ribeiro, translated by Irmgard Emmelhainz

195 The Agroindustrial Food Chain: Global Warming, Food Crisis and Transgenic Corn

Carolyn Deuschle and Lauren Elachi

199 Landrace: Zea Mays and the NAFTA Landscape

Paola Aguirre

203 Water Infrastructure Beyond Borders: The Rio Grande-Bravo

Carla Herrera-Prats

211 Remesas: Sending Money Back

Sarah Cowles and Alan Smart

221 Borderland: A Line Constructs the Landscape

Dawn Hoogeveen

237 Intimate Geographies of NAFTA and Canadian Mining in Mexico

243 Contributors

251 Colophon

Irmgard Emmelhainz, Jane Hutton, Marcin Kedzior

Editorial

The first day of 2014 marked twenty years since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect. Continuing and deepening the neoliberal agenda begun in the 1970s, NAFTA is now physically manifest at multiple scales, from soil composition to building types and patterns of urbanization. NAFTA has realigned capital flows, intensified and re-directed channels of migration from Latin America into the United States and Canada, unified and homogenized consumer markets, instigated the construction of new cities and tax-free zones in the border region, and radically transformed both rural and urban land-use. Each of these processes has reconfigured (or dissolved) the abstract relations between governments, corporations, social movements, organized crime, and the civil population. Institutional transformations have similarly led to the dismantling of the welfare state, the subcontracting of government services, and the privatization of material and immaterial resource exploitation. Furthermore, NAFTA has helped to form the context in which North American architects and landscape architects practice, and is also the document enabling or hindering their movement among partnering countries. In this broad context, Scapegoat is focusing its seventh issue on the Federal District of Mexico City (Mexico D.F.) as one of many specific loci through which to read such a major political and economic realignment of the Northern Hemisphere.

The capital city of Mexico—where industrial, corporate, and State power has been historically concentrated—has benefited, by some measures, from NAFTA’s policies. Increased private and public investment in infrastructure and creative capital has produced apparent improvements in privileged areas of the urban milieu. These processes are the same as those seen in affluent Canadian and

American cities, producing the celebrated urban public spaces and parks on which many designers work. But this lies in stark contrast to the implosion of vast areas of Mexico where graded State sovereignty has given way to the illegal economy and lawlessness.¹ The most violent and recognizable impacts of NAFTA’s policies are registered at the capital city’s periphery, along the border between Mexico and the United States, and in south-eastern States like Michoacán, Guerrero, and Chiapas. Since 1994, national industry and agriculture in these areas have been severely weakened in favour of an unequal “insertion” of international capital. Agriculture has been hardest hit: between 1994 and 2004, the US flooded the Mexican market with strongly subsidized agricultural products, pressuring local producers to lower their prices. From being autonomous in terms of food production, by 2005, Mexico was importing about 42 percent of the food it consumes. As grain production was increasingly incapacitated (along with poultry, pork, milk, corn, and bean production), nearly two million campesinos were forced to leave their land.²

When NAFTA went into effect on 1 January 1994, the Zapatista National Liberation Army declared War on the Mexican government, occupying five main cities in Chiapas, stating that the free-trade agreement meant death for Mexico’s indigenous peoples. 20 years later, in an effort to protect themselves, their communities, their forms of life, and livelihoods, communities in Michoacán, like the Zapatistas, have decided to take up arms against the government policies that have negatively impacted their communities—governing as graded sovereignty, and letting organized crime slowly take over and extort, rape, steal, kill, and kidnap with impunity. Some 200 armed men and women entered Parácuaro, a city in the state of Michoacán, on 14 January to take over the municipality. This is the tenth municipality in Michoacán—a major drug production region in Mexico—that “self-defence groups” had taken over; two weeks later, they took five more villages.³ Such actions are a clear response to NAFTA, which has contributed to

the establishment and expansion of the drug trafficking industry by creating power vacuums in vast rural zones of the country, and by structurally dismantling the Mexican economy.

As the loss of food sovereignty made it impossible for rural people to be self-sustainable, organized crime took advantage, transforming drug trafficking into a widespread supplementary and then primary economic activity.⁴ The Michoacán self-defence group rose up in arms against the narco cartels that control the region and the official authorities' complicity with them. After advancing for 11 months, armed units are positioned to take control of Apatzingán, a city with great political and economic weight in the region. Community self-defence group take-overs—also on the rise in the states of Guerrero, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, and more recently, in Puebla—expel mayors, imprison corrupt policemen, and patrol the streets. The self-defending village of Cherán in Michoacán is an example of a popular response to the national security problem posed by cartels and government officials: the establishment of neighbourhood assemblies, the substitution of police bodies by community assemblies, armed community patrols, and the institution of political forms enabling social transformation. Members of the Apatzingán Cámara Nacional de Comercio (CANACO or National Chamber of Commerce) have decided to suspend federal tax payment to protest the inefficacy of the government's strategy to defeat violence and crime.⁵ These civilian measures could be read as the political, economic, and juridical equivalent of a putsch.⁶

Fighting the subjection and exploitation of US, Canadian, and Mexican neoliberal interests, self-defence groups are proposing functional alternative forms of autonomous organization. Guerrero and Michoacán's armed groups are comparable to the Zapatistas in their efforts to become autonomous and defend themselves. Over the past 20 years, the Zapatistas' program has expanded to become a way of life. In their autonomous zone in south-eastern Mexico, one-fifth of the state of Chiapas, the Zapatistas have created a society with a "collective and

rotating self-government, their own education and healthcare system, production cooperatives and societies, the recovery of the local economy, their own system of administration of justice, and their own legal system."⁷ Across the country, other indigenous populations are leading struggles against governmental or transnational companies' infrastructure and resource extraction megaprojects. The State's solution has been to militarize areas of the country in which violence prevails, although militarization is not directed against drug cartels, but is rather a vague and widespread counterinsurgency project. NAFTA's Chapter 11, which permits foreign investors to challenge and demand compensation for domestic policies that undermine their profits, further exacerbates the difficulties of resistance.⁸ This has left local populations in a legal vacuum, subject to narco-cartel extortion as well as to military repression—hence the rise of self-defence groups.

Another cause for the vulnerability of the Mexican population and economy is the fact that 85 percent of exports are manufactured products and oil—that is to say, cheap labour and natural resources. In spite of such alarming numbers, champions of Mexico's neoliberal economic development insist that 20 years after NAFTA, Mexico is a democracy with a growing middle class and a competitive export economy. From this point of view, people are better off than before: the prices of consumer goods have gone down due to the "Walmart effect," as citizens now have access to cheap but higher-quality commodities. This, along with access to housing mortgages and credit, has allegedly enabled "millions" of Mexicans to join the (indebted) middle class.⁹ But this token of Mexico's entry to the First World is greatly undermined by the fact that salaries and employment rates have remained stagnant, and the proportion of Mexicans living below the poverty line is higher than it was two decades ago: 53.3 of every 100 people.¹⁰

The free-trade agreement has accelerated the neoliberal policies implemented in North America between the 1970s and 1990s, and

according to La Jornada columnist Alejandro Nadal, NAFTA was conceived with the purpose of making the imposition of neoliberalism in Mexico irreversible. The economic relations with the US and Canada brought about by the treaty have created a juridical frame of subordination that effectively makes the institutions of neoliberalism untouchable.¹¹ In this regard, both NAFTA and neoliberalism have affected real estate markets, new forms of architectural production, landscape practices, industrial urbanism, the urbanization of the countryside, agricultural planning, gentrification, and cultural policies associated with the rise of the creative and knowledge economies.

The new forms of socio-spatial organization and forms of life and livelihood are sometimes misleadingly presented as instances of "development," "modernization," or even progressive politics. In this issue, a series of essays and projects examines the material and discursive forms these new practices of socio-spatial organization have brought about, as well as the political and economic discourses sustaining them. Irmgard Emmelhainz analyzes how NAFTA has deepened socio-economic differences while homogenizing populations, which has rapidly given rise to new spatial, territorial, and socio-economic arrangements in Mexico City and the rest of the country, rarely benefiting the majority of the population. Photographs from Livia Corona Benjamin's *Two Million Houses* series document the vast landscapes of new housing at Mexico City's perimeter, as well as tactics of adaptation and appropriation. Ivonne Santoyo Orozco examines the apparatus of what she calls the "desire for property": established under Carlos Salinas de Gortari's presidency, a policy of cheap mortgages has led to "subcontracted mass social housing" in which people live in dire conditions. Javier Toscano and Carolina de Alba discuss the urban consequences of the political logic of populism, while Isadora Hastings and Gerson Huerta's project of Cooperación Comunitaria presents an attempt to reinvigorate the lost practices of rural architecture and communal building.

A range of texts and projects examines the impacts of political change within the context of NAFTA as it has manifested in everyday life in Mexico City. Gustavo Lipkau and Fabiola Torres visualize 20 years of political change and infrastructural development, and Sergey Pigach traces the forces and spaces of the development of Mexico City's subway system. Diane E. Davis contrasts the development of Tepito Market and Alameda Central within the context of globalization, while Yutsil Cruz and Alfonso Hernández chronicle the history of resistance of the market over several centuries. In a proposal for public furniture, Rodrigo Escandón Cesarman, José Esparza Chong Cuy, Guillermo González Ceballos, and Tania Osorio Harp question the proprietary occupation of the sidewalk. Daniela Gil Esteva produces a digital transection of the city by means of virtual *dérives*, examining the prejudices, naming, and desirability of different delegations or boroughs of the city.

An issue that has determined the reception of Mexico globally in the past decade has been violence, and not necessarily posited as one of the many outcomes of NAFTA and neoliberal policies. The logic of both, objective and subjective violence, however, obeys global economic forces. In this regard, Sayak Valencia's and Pilar Calveiro's features address issues of violence and control in relationship to the economy by focusing on their discourses and representations. Will Straw positions violent imagery from Mexico City between the ongoing tradition of photojournalism and the brutal exceptionalism of present-day politics. Prominent Mexican artists, incidentally of the same generation—Eduardo Abaroa, Silvia Gruner, and Miguel Ventura—question the long-term relations of violence through colonial history, the architectural past, and narratives of modernity and development entrenched in neoliberal doctrine.

Agricultural and other land-use transformations have legislated the very species and genetic material of the landscape. Silvia Ribeiro's feature looks at struggles against the biological engineering of crops and impacts

this has had on land and livelihoods, while Carolyn Deuschle and Lauren Elachi look at the impact of changing legislation on the species of corn grown and consumed in the country. Sara Cowles and Alan Smart document the landscape of the US-Mexico border, while Paula Aguirre examines the border as a contested site of international water flows. Dawn Hoogveen looks at the relationship between the transnational and the individual through a study of a Canadian mining company’s role in the murder of Mexican activists. Carla Herrera-Prats documents the transaction sites where money is sent from the United States to family members in Mexico. These essays and projects all examine the dispersed and transnational flows of labour, capital, water, and power among the NAFTA partner countries.

Raymond Craib navigates a set of recent books on Mexico City, and Lara Neilson’s review essay of Carlos Reygadas’ *Post Tenebras Lux* (2012) discusses the way the film examines how NAFTA has insinuated itself into the everyday relationships of Mexican family life. And as part of our *Kids on Buildings* (here, *Kids in Puddles*) series, Layla G. Emmelhainz visits Luis Barragán’s Egerstrom stables north of Mexico City to engage with the multiple forms of animal life inhabiting the site.

All of the above engagements, explorations, and contestations come at a time when an expansion of NAFTA is currently under discussion. The nearly ratified Trans-Pacific Partnership between the US and 11 other countries from North America, Latin America, and Asia would certainly reproduce the dire inequalities already observed in Mexico. This issue of *Scapegoat* aims to recognize the vast transformations of social, agricultural, and built realities of the last two decades as the living legacy of NAFTA—a legacy of neoliberal values and violence that demands to be reckoned with.

Notes	
1 According to Aihwa Ong, “graded sovereignty” best describes the neoliberal state’s way of governing, as it is shrunk or strengthened in certain strategic areas and regions. In the Mexican case, the State has withdrawnâ from some regions allowing organized crime to flourish. See: Aihwa Ong, <i>Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty</i> (Duke University Press, 2006)	January 2014, http:// internacional.elpais. com/
2 Laura Carlsen, “TLCAN: Inequidad e migración,” <i>Rebelión</i> , 24 November 2007, http://www. rebelion.org/noticia. php?id=59485 .	7 See Peter Rosset, “Zapatista Uprising 20 Years Later,” <i>Democracy Now!</i> , 4 January 2014, http:// www.democracynow. org/2014/1/3/za- patista_uprising_20_ years_later_how# .
3 Ernesto Martínez Elorriaga, “Autodefensas to- man otros 5 poblados de Michoacán” <i>La Jornada</i> , January 26, 2014, http:// www.jornada.unam. mx/2014/01/26/ politica/002n1pol	8 Ben Beachy, “Nafta at 20” <i>Public Citizen, Global Trade Watch</i> (January 2014), http://www.citizen. org/documents/ NAFTA-at-20.pdf .
4 Juan Carlos Miranda, “TLCAN, dos déca- das,” <i>La Jornada</i> , 2 January 2014, http:// www.jornada.unam. mx/2014/01/02/ politica/005n1pol .	9 Jorge G. Castañeda, “NAFTA’s Mixed Record: The View from Mexico,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , 17 December 2013, http://jorgecas- taneda.org/print. php?id=3A8780E4- 32B5-D377-32A 3-01461C51 D344&cat Id=85027A7F- 112E-A95C-7C58- E8DDB41DE6CE .
5 José Gil Olmos, “Se rebelan comerciantes de Apatzingán: No pagarán impues- tos,” <i>Proceso</i> , 22 January 2014, http:// www.proceso.com. mx/?p=363049 .	10 This percentage of people living under the poverty line in Mexico is based on a study by the CONEVAL (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, or National Council for Evaluating National Social Development Politics) from 2012. According to the same Council, the number of people liv- ing under the poverty line in 2010 was 52.8. http://www.coneval. gob.mx/Medicion/ Paginas/Medición/ Pobreza%202012/ Pobreza-2012.aspx
6 See Verónica Calderón, “Las au- todefensas avanzan en México” <i>El País</i> , 5	11 Alejandro Nadal, “20 años del TLCAN: El protectorado mexi- cano,” <i>La Jornada</i> , 8

Preamble to the NAFTA Agreement

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States, and the Government of the United States of America, resolved to:

- STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations;
- CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation;
- CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their territories;
- REDUCE distortions to trade;
- ESTABLISH clear and mutually advantageous rules governing their trade;
- ENSURE a predictable commercial framework for business planning and investment;
- BUILD on their respective rights and obligations under the general agreement on tariffs and trade and other multilateral and bilateral instruments of cooperation;
- ENHANCE the competitiveness of their firms in global markets;
- FOSTER creativity and innovation, and promote trade in goods and services that are the subject of intellectual property rights;
- CREATE new employment opportunities and improve working conditions and living standards in their respective territories;
- UNDERTAKE each of the preceding in a manner consistent with environmental protection and conservation;
- PRESERVE their flexibility to safeguard the public welfare;
- PROMOTE sustainable development;

STRENGTHEN the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; and

PROTECT, enhance and enforce basic workers' rights

[...]

Source: <http://wits.worldbank.org/gptad/pdf/archive/nafta.pdf>

Excerpt from Ben Beachy's report "NAFTA at 20"

1. Rather than creating the promised 170,000 jobs per year, NAFTA has contributed to an enormous US trade deficit with Mexico and Canada, which had already equated to an estimated net loss of one million US jobs by 2004. [...] Much of the job erosion stems from the decision of US firms to embrace NAFTA's new foreign investor privileges and relocate production to Mexico to take advantage of its lower wages and weaker environmental standards.

2. NAFTA has contributed to downward pressure on US wages and growing income inequality. Two out of every three displaced manufacturing workers who were rehired in 2012 experienced a wage reduction, most of them taking a pay cut of greater than 20 percent. As increasing numbers of workers displaced from manufacturing jobs have joined the glut of workers competing for non-offshorable, low-skill jobs in sectors such as hospitality and food service, real wages have also fallen in these sectors under NAFTA. The resulting downward pressure on middle-class wages has fuelled recent growth in income inequality.

3. Despite a 188 percent rise in food imports from Canada and Mexico under NAFTA, the average

nominal price of food in the US has jumped 65 percent since the deal went into effect.

4. The reductions in consumer goods prices that have materialized are not sufficient to offset the losses to wages under NAFTA. US workers without college degrees (63 percent of the workforce) have likely lost an amount equal to 12.2 percent of their wages under NAFTA-style trade even after accounting for the benefits of cheaper goods.

5. Soon after NAFTA's passage, the small pre-NAFTA US trade surplus with Mexico turned into a massive new trade deficit and the pre-NAFTA US trade deficit with Canada expanded greatly. The inflation-adjusted US trade surplus with Mexico of \$2.5 billion and the \$29.1 billion deficit with Canada in the year before NAFTA have morphed into a combined trade deficit of \$181 billion.

6. Scores of environmental and health laws have been challenged in foreign tribunals through the controversial investor-state system. More than \$360 million in compensation to investors has been extracted from NAFTA state governments via "investor-state" tribunal challenges against toxic bans, land-use rules, water and forestry policies and more. [...]

7. Overall, imports of food to the US have risen more steadily and to a greater degree than US food exports under NAFTA. [...]

8. The export of subsidized US corn has greatly increased under NAFTA, destroying the livelihoods of more than one million Mexican farmers and about 1.4 million additional Mexican workers whose livelihoods depend on agriculture.

9. The desperate migration of those displaced from Mexico's rural economy pushed down wages in Mexico's border maquiladora factory zone and

contributed to a doubling of Mexican immigration to the US following NAFTA's implementation.

10. Though the price paid to Mexican farmers for corn plummeted after NAFTA, the deregulated price of tortillas shot up 279 percent in the pact's first 10 years.

11. Real wages in Mexico have fallen significantly below pre-NAFTA levels, and prices for basic consumer goods have exceeded wage increases. A minimum wage earner in Mexico today can buy 28 percent fewer consumer goods as on the day that NAFTA took effect. Despite promises that NAFTA would benefit Mexican consumers by granting access to cheaper imported products, the cost of basic consumer goods in Mexico has risen to seven times the pre-NAFTA level, while the minimum wage stands at only four times the pre-NAFTA level.

12. Facing displacement, rising prices, and stagnant wages, over half of the Mexican population, and over 60 percent of the rural population, still fall below the poverty line, despite the promises made by NAFTA proponents.

Source: Ben Beachy, "NAFTA at 20" Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (January 2014), available online: <http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA-at-20.pdf>



Photographs by Proceso photographer Marco Antonio Cruz, uploaded to Facebook on January 1st to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Zapatista uprising.
Source: Proceso January 21, 2014.