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# El Metro: The History of a Monument in Motion

William Veeder

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**EL METRO: THE HISTORY OF A MONUMENT IN MOTION**

By

**William Veeder**

B.A., Religious Studies, Lewis and Clark College, 2000

M.A., Humanities, University of Chicago, 2002

M.A., Latin American Studies, University of New Mexico, 2004

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
History**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**July, 2015**

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my children, Isabella Guadalupe Peterson Veeder and Liam Tecumseh Peterson Veeder, who have never known a world without it. To my wife, Alicia Peterson, who for years pretended to be interested in this project and for many more pretended not to be frustrated with it. To my parents, for their endless generosity, a great childhood and their editing skills. Finally to my sister for her non dissertation related life- skills advice.

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I would like to thank Rina Lazo and her husband, Arturo Bustos, for sharing their stories with me. Arturo found me wandering around the Coyoacán neighborhood in Mexico City. Recognizing me as a lost graduate student he asked, “Are you looking for us?”

As a Master of Arts in the Humanities student at the University of Chicago I received great advice and attention from Dain Borges and Emilio H. Kourí. Dr. Patrice Olsen was generous in sharing her time and advice. Dr. Eric Zolov also took part in an AHA committee I put together in Chicago and his work was fundamental to getting me thinking in different ways.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines how the Mexico City Metro was promoted as something that was technically advanced. In this narrative Mexico City became more like the great cities of Europe by building a Metro. The Metro was also promoted as Mexican. In this narrative each stage of Mexican civilization had its great projects. The Aztec built the Templo mayor. The Spanish built the Cathedral; The Metro was the project of the modern era.

This dissertation utilized a methodology that was previously used to examine monuments in Mexico. My approach was novel because I applied this system of analysis to the Metro. The Metro is not like a standard monument. Although it used symbols to create narrative through naming and the creation of the Metro map, it is more dynamic. People ride the Metro. The Metro transforms the city through its construction and naming of stations. While this dissertation examines the pro-genetive period of Metro construction, from 1967 until 1970, the Metro continues to transform Mexcio City today.

Like other monuments the Metro used symbols, in this case station names, to paint a picture. The Metro used the names of monuments and streets in Mexico City to make the Metro map. The map included names already in the city above. It also named stations after locations from the Aztec past that were long gone. The station names come from diverse epochs of Mexican history. Together they reshape the civic geography of the city and meld it with a modern Metro system.

Behind the scenes there were narratives not covered in the official promotion of the Metro. I uncover the history of the Metro station names, the political fight within the ruling party over the Metro and the international economic networks that made the Metro possible. I also examine the story of famous Mexican artist Rina Lazo. She participated in the planning of Insurgentes Metro but was never given credit.

The Metro was an essential expression of creative state power during the regime of Díaz Ordaz. This work helps to properly contextualize the events of October 1968 by exploring how the government was promoting itself at the same time that it was using its repressive power and by illustrating the disjointed non-Leviathan like nature of the Mexican government.

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Mexican Modernity .....</b>	<b>3</b>
i: Transportation Worthy of Paris.....	3
ii: Archaeology: Mexican Modernity Departs from the Porfirian Vision of the Ancient.....	6
iii: Mexican Modernity and the Integration of Modernism and Mexican design.....	9
iv: Nationalism and Modernization.....	17
<b>Creative State Power .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Hidden Narratives .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Scholarly Apparatus .....</b>	<b>27</b>
i-Newspapers.....	27
ii-Historiography.....	28
<b>Chapter Summary.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Metro Promotion 1967-1970 .....</b>	<b>47</b>
ICA and the Viability Report of 1966.....	50
Stage One of the Metro Project: April to June 1967.....	59
Stage Two of Metro Project: June 1967 to September 1969 .....	62
Stage Three of the Metro Project: September 1969 to November 1970 .....	74
<b>Chapter 2: Intrastate Struggle and the Fall of Uruchurtu .....</b>	<b>84</b>
Pro-Metro Forces.....	85
Figure 9. Advertisement from <i>Excélsior</i> , October 7, 1970.....	89
Uruchurtu Saves Downtown and the PRI .....	92
The Final Act.....	102
<b>Chapter 3: Metro as Monument .....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Station Names .....</b>	<b>120</b>
Streets.....	123
Monuments.....	125
Lost Locations.....	125
<b>Metro Maps .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Metro Logos .....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>The Vicissitudes of Celebrity .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Cuauhtémoc.....	135
Benito Juárez.....	139
Isabel la Católica .....	143
<b>Chapter 4: The Discovery and Reproduction of the Past.....</b>	<b>148</b>
The Musuem of Anthropology and Bellas Artes Metro Station .....	155
Pino Suárez Station .....	169
The ICA Promise .....	170
Pino Suárez: The past transforms the future .....	174
<b>Chapter 5: Insurgentes Metro.....</b>	<b>185</b>
Insurgentes: The Offical Version .....	185
Insurgentes: The Hidden Story .....	203

<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>226</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Metro Map. Line Two. ....	1
Figure 2. Main Library at UNAM.....	10
Figure 3. Main Plaza at UNAM.....	11
Figure 4. Tlatelolco.....	13
Figure 5. Tlatelolco.....	14
Figure 6. Plaza de Tres Culturas.....	17
Figure 7. San Lázaro Metro Station.....	78
Figure 8. El condominio de Reforma 369 esquina con Río Guadalquivir, poco después de su construcción en 1956. ....	88
Figure 9. Advertisement from <i>Excélsior</i> , October 7, 1970.....	8
Figure 10. Advertisement from <i>Excélsior</i> , January 14, 1966. ....	101
Figure 11. Bulldozing of Santa Ursula.....	108
Figure 12. Cartoon of Regent Uruchurtu published in <i>Excélsior</i> , October 12, 1959. ....	110
Figure 13. Cartoon of Regent Uruchurtu published in <i>Excélsior</i> , September 13, 1966.....	111
Figure 14. Monumento a La Revolución.....	116
Figure 15. Monumento de la Raza.....	117
Figure 16. <i>Totoquihuatzin</i> . Designed to adorn Bellas Artes. Currently on the Monumento a La Raza. ....	119
Figure 17. Monument to Mexican independence constructed in 1910.....	119
Figure 18. Model of Palacio Legislativo from 1910.....	120
Figure 19. Metro Station Names.....	122
Figure 20. Metro Logo for Chabacano Metro Station .....	126



Figure 21. Metro Lobo for Tlatelolco Metro Station.....	127
Figure 22. Metro logo for Zócalo Metro Station designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.....	128
Figure 23. Panorama from Zócalo Metro station.....	129
Figure 24. Metro map from June 1967. ....	130
Figure 25. Metro map from the opening weekend of the system. ....	131
Figure 26. Final version of Metro map of the first three lines.....	132
Figure 27. Metro symbol designed by Lance Wyman.....	134
Figure 28. Cuauhtémoc statue.....	136
Figure 29. Symbol for Cuauhtémoc Metro station .....	138
Figure 30. Juárez Monument.....	140
Figure 31. Symbol for Isabel la Católica Metro station.....	144
Figure 32. Image of the dedication of Isabel la Católica Street August 31, 1910.....	145
Figure 33. Porfirio Diaz and Aztec sunstone in 1910.....	149
Figure 34. Photo from the Olympic flame ceremony in Mexico City 1968.....	151
Figure 35. Photo from Olympic flame ceremony, Teotihuacan 1968. ....	153
Figure 36. Picture of Olympic Flame caldron. Named Caldron of the Aztecs.....	154
Figure 37. Central courtyard pillar at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.....	157
Figure 38. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.....	158
Figure 39. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.....	160
Figure 40. Logo for Montezuma Metro station designed by Lance Wyman.....	160
Figure 41. Photo of the Headdress of Montezuma on display at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. ....	161
Figure 42. Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.....	163

Figure 43. Photo of Bellas Artes Metro platform. ....	164
Figure 44. Display space inside Bellas Artes.....	165
Figure 45. Hector Guimard-style art nouveau Paris Metro entrance to Bellas Artes Metro station. ....	167
Figure 46. Mural “Reproduction of Murals at Bonampak” by Rina Lasso found in Bellas Artes Metro station. ....	168
Figure 47. Mural “Reproduction of Murals at Bon Am Pak” by Rina Lasso found in Bellas Artes Metro station. ....	169
Figure 48. Original symbol for Pino Suárez Metro station.....	175
Figure 49. Map of archaeological finds near Pino Suárez station during 1967 through 1969. .....	176
Figure 50. Photo of excavations near Pino Suárez Metro station from July of 1967. ....	177
Figure 51. Drawing of pyramid found in Pino Suárez station. ....	178
Figure 52. Photo of the building of Pino Suárez station around the newly discovered Pyramid. ....	179
Figure 53. The new plan for Pino Suárez station, dated 1969. ....	180
Figure 54. Objects found during the construction of Pino Suárez station on display in the station. ....	181
Figure 55. Symbol for Pino Suárez Metro designed by Lance Wyman in 1969. ....	182
Figure 56. Pino Suárez Metro at dusk.....	183
Figure 57. Inside Pino Suárez moving from Line One to Line Two. ....	184
Figure 58. Postcard of Insurgentes Metro.....	186

Figure 59. Arial photo of intersection that would become Insurgentes Metro. Photo is from 1965.....	187
Figure 60. Google maps map of Zona Rosa. ....	188
Figure 61. Platform Insurgentes station. ....	188
Figure 62. Torre de Rectoría building at UNAM Designed by Salvador Ortega and built in 1953.....	190
Figure 63. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.....	190
Figure 64. Plaza de Insurgentes Metro Station.....	191
Figure 65. Google world image of Arch de Triomphe in Paris. ....	192
Figure 66. Plaza de Insurgentes.....	193
Figure 67. Plaza de Insurgentes.....	194
Figure 68. Poster for Moon Zero Two, 1969.....	195
Figure 69. Detail of tiles in Insurgentes station. ....	196
Figure 70. Detail of tiles in Insurgentes station. ....	196
Figure 71. Inside Insurgentes Metro station. ....	197
Figure 72. Main entryway to Mexican Museum of Modern Art. ....	198
Figure 73. Dome inside Insurgentes Metro station.....	198
Figure 74. Inside Insurgentes Metro station. ....	200
Figure 75. Advertisement from <i>Excélsior</i> , September 2, 1969.....	200
Figure 76. Advertisement from <i>Excélsior</i> , September 5, 1969.....	201
Figure 77. Díaz Ordaz and regent Alfonso Corona del Rosal take their first ride on the Metro.....	202
Figure 78. Opening ceremony at Insurgentes Metro station.....	204

Figure 79. Photo of Rina Lazo and Diego Rivera from 1953.....	205
Figure 80. Picture of Rina Lazo.....	206
Figure 81. Mayan bowl.....	208
Figure 82. Postcard of Insurgentes. Image dated 1970.....	210
Figure 83. Postcard of Insurgentes. Image dated 1971.....	211

## Introduction

This dissertation studies how successive Mexican governments sought to confirm their legitimacy by identifying themselves as modern while associating themselves with the ancient past—through state building projects, particularly the Metro. Travel in Mexico City is a historian’s dream--if not always a commuter’s. The history of Mexico is inscribed on every street, every monument, and every Metro stop. To go from one’s hotel to the Zócalo is to travel through one vision of Mexican history. The Metro map flows from the Aztecs through the Revolution. For example, when I leave my hotel, I begin at the Cuauhtémoc station, named as much for the Porfirian era statue as for the Aztec king.



**Figure 1: Metro Map. Line Two.**

Photo by author.

This station represents both the valorization of the indigenous past and the post-revolutionary reinterpretation of the heroic Indian of the nineteenth century. Continuing east, I travel through the station named for Isabel la Católica, the queen of Spain who sent Columbus to the New World and is the only woman to be named in the system. Porfirio Díaz knew her as the “Mother of the Americas” during the coronation of her street in 1910. By 1969, however, she was remembered only as a fanatic and was dubbed “the Catholic.” Turning north, I pass

through the station named in memory of a murdered vice president, José María Pino Suárez. Moving between Lines 1 and 2, I pass the temple of the wind goddess, Ehecatl, another reminder of the grandeur of the ancient past and the Metro's presentation of it. Finally, I arrive at the Zócalo, the seat of federal power in Mexico and the center of the Aztec world.

This geographic confluence of present and past in the Zócalo reflects an abiding feature of the Mexican worldview. Today is continuous with yesterday and tomorrow. The people who designed and built the Metro and named its stations in the late 1960s understood this worldview and tailored both the subway system and its promotions accordingly. The Metro was the latest expression of a people who had previously built the Aztec Templo Mayor and the immense Catholic Cathedral. Successive Mexican governments for two centuries also understood the need to join present to past. They based their claims to legitimacy in part on public-works projects. My dissertation focuses on post-Cardinas Mexico by viewing his administration through the lens of its greatest technological achievement, the Metro.

To understand this modern-ancient realm, my dissertation will pose three major questions:

1) What salient features of modernity were expressed through the Metro, and what were their historical precedents?

2) How was the Metro project an expression of creative state power? How does the concept of creative state power help us understand the government that not only built the technological marvel of the Metro but also massacred hundreds of students at the Tlatelolco on October 2, 1968?

3) What narratives were hidden beneath the seemingly unified public presentation of the Metro? What can these narratives tell us about the complex nature of Mexican government—the winners and losers in the process of modernization, state building, and modernity?

We can come to a nuanced sense of Mexico in the 1960s and 1970s by examining these inter-related questions.

### **Mexican Modernity**

This section defines the five main components of the vision of modernity expressed by the Metro.

#### **i: Transportation Worthy of Paris**

The first component was a concept of modernization in which transportation became faster and safer, and, in turn, transformed Mexican citizens from backwards pre-modern people into members of the international community. This was a rhetorical device used in the newspapers in Mexico City and in promotional documents from ICA

The idea that modernization, defined as increased efficiency, could transform Mexico into a nation as powerful and wealthy as those in Europe had deep roots. In the late nineteenth century, the vision of Mexico created for the world's fairs tied modernization to nationalism. In the Porfirian era as well as the 1960s, the idea of technical progress was central to Mexico's presentation of its past and its future. "Within this sense of progress, linear time, all present tense became unmistakably paradise."<sup>1</sup> What made the current era, in this vision, the best era was its use of technology. According to *El Sol de México*, the

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<sup>1</sup> Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 2.

modernization of the transportation infrastructure in Mexico City would “conquer the old foes of lost hours, inefficiency and overcrowding. The era of the Metro ushers in untold benefits through harnessing Mexican ingenuity and advanced technology.”<sup>2</sup>

One half of this narrative promoted the rapidity and safety of the Metro and compared the Mexico City system to those in European cities. The basic logic of this argument was that through increased efficiency in transportation Mexico would become more like London and Paris. A special edition of *El Sol de México*, from September 1969, stated that “Mexico now enters the age of the Metro.”<sup>3</sup> This narrative about the age of the Metro combined the nineteenth century notion that the modernization of the current age made progress possible with another article about the major projects from Mexico’s past. While the “glorious ages of Mexico’s past,”<sup>4</sup> were celebrated in the promotion of the Metro, “technology and progress made it possible to appreciate present time as the best of all feasible worlds.”<sup>5</sup> Throughout the 26-page special report, the authors outlined the modernity of the Metro, its speed and safety, and the ways in which it was “truly integrated into the history and culture of our city.”<sup>6</sup> On Page 3, this article described the many technological breakthroughs used in the Metro: “Now anyone can cross the main sections of the city in minutes.”<sup>7</sup> Rapidity was

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<sup>2</sup> “Nuestra Urbe Entra a la era del Metro,” *El Sol de México*, Sept. 15, 1969. Original Spanish: pueden conquistar los viejos enemigos de horas perdidas, ineficacia y hacinamiento. La era de los ujieres Metro en incontables beneficios a través de ingenio mexicano aprovechar y tecnología avanzada.

<sup>3</sup> “Nuestra Urbe Entra a la era del Metro,” *El Sol de México*, Sept. 15, 1969. Original Spanish: México ahora entra en la era del Metro.

<sup>4</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, Sept. 5, 1969. Original Spanish: las muchas edades gloriosas del pasado de México.

<sup>5</sup> Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World’s Fairs*, 250.

<sup>6</sup> “El Metro y Historia,” *El Sol de México*, Sept. 15, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro se integrarán verdaderamente en la historia y la cultura de nuestra ciudad.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Ahora nadie puede cruzar las secciones principales de la ciudad en minutos.



coupled with a high-tech system of movement and safety: “The technical center controls the trains and oversees the safety of the citizens.”<sup>8</sup>

The design and promotion of the Metro were a balance between ideas and technology from outside the country and the use of names and symbols from within it. As with the world’s fairs’ presentations of the Porfirian era, the Metro provided Mexico “simultaneously with a recognizable and acceptable national uniqueness and an approved cosmopolitanism and modernity.”<sup>9</sup> The Metro was unique because of the naming of the stations and the use of Mexican cultural symbols, but it was also cosmopolitan because its parts, technology and the model for the Metro itself came from France. It was presented to the Mexican people as both international and national.

The promotion of the Metro always moved forward in a two-pronged manner. On the one hand, as discussed in the previous pages, the technology of the Metro was fast and safe, i.e. modern. On the other hand, the Metro continued the development of the city, a development traced back to the Aztecs. The Metro integrated the past into its modern present. In a series of *Excélsior* articles titled “Rutas del Metro,” the author quoted from the 1966 Ingenieros Civiles Asociados viability report to link the Metro to the history of the city:

One can speak of the Mexico of the Templo Mayor of the Aztecs . . . of the Mexico of the Cathedral, of the Mexico of UNAM and the Mexico of the Olympics. One can speak of these references because each of the works gave its name to an era of Mexican planning. One can speak of the Mexico of the Metro because the Metro begins a new era in Mexico.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: El centro técnico controla los trenes y supervisa la seguridad de los ciudadanos.

<sup>9</sup> Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> “Rutas de Metro,” *Excélsior*, July 19, 1967. Original Spanish: Uno puede hablar del México de la Templo Mayor de los aztecas... del México de la Catedral, del México de la UNAM y el México de los Juegos Olímpicos. Uno puede hablar de estas referencias porque cada una de las Obras dio su nombre a una época de planificación mexicana. Uno puede hablar del México del Metro porque el Metro, comienza una nueva era en México.

The Metro was presented as more than just a transportation system. In a 1969 article in *Fortune* magazine, Bernardo Quintana, the founder and president of the company that built the Metro, Ingenieros Civiles Asociados, explained that the Metro stations “look more like a museum than a subway station.”<sup>11</sup> The article also stated that the Metro stations had more in common “with the new Museum of Anthropology than they do with a drab transportation hub in other cities.”<sup>12</sup> The Metro was promoted as a symbol of or monument to a modern Mexico that was as technologically advanced as other nations but still promoted a unique culture.

## **ii: Archaeology: Mexican Modernity Departs from the Porfirian Vision of the Ancient**

The second component of modernity found in the Metro involved the evolution of the relationship between the modern and the ancient. Ancient Mexico had long been a part of government attempts to construct a national consciousness. The discovery and display of the ancient past were critical to the promotion of the Metro. While other eras displayed the past in their attempts to forge Mexican national unity, the Metro *discovered* the past during its construction. So while the Metro integrated older understandings of the importance of the ancient into the culture of Mexico in its modern national identity, it went further through discovery and presentation of the past as a fundamental element of the modernity it presented.

In the 1910 celebration of Mexican independence, for example, parades showed dressed-up Indians marching with officials in European dress. The Indian past was presented as crucial to the national identity but it was presented as something far in the past. In a 1973

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<sup>11</sup> “Mexico’s Subway is for Viewing,” *Fortune*, Sept. 1969, 32.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

publication titled *El Metro: Memoria de Gestión del Periodo*, the Sistema de Transporte Colectivo called digging the Metro stations and tunnels an “odyssey into holy ground.”<sup>13</sup> Explaining their construction in this way made a great deal of sense. Since the Porfiriato, elites looked into the past to recover something uniquely Mexican on which the foundation of modern Mexican nationalism could be built.<sup>14</sup> This process continued after the Revolution. Manuel Gamio, who studied with Franz Boas at Columbia University, was the founder of professional archaeology in Mexico.<sup>15</sup> His 1916 book, *Forjando patria: pro nacionalismo*, sought to use Mexico’s rich indigenous tradition as the foundation for a new nationalism. Gamio wanted to unite what he saw as two artificially separated forces in Mexican thought and history.<sup>16</sup> He asserted that, since colonial times, the indigenous and the European had been separated. The indigenous were seen as uncivilized while the Europeans were elevated. Gamio wanted to unite these two narratives about Mexico to create a new Mexican consciousness. José Vasconcelos also promoted Mexico as a nation of mixed-race people. As Minister of Education, Vasconcelos promoted the study of Mexico’s indigenous past as the primary material for Mexican education.<sup>17</sup>

The ancient past became an avenue through which state builders could develop a Mexican consciousness free from the pollution of European colonialism and capitalist

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<sup>13</sup> Sistema de Transporte Colectivo and Sistema de Transporte Colectivo, *El Metro: Memoria De Gestión Del Metro* (México: Sistema de Transporte Colectivo, 1973), 17. Original Spanish: El Metro es en una odisea en Tierra Santa.

<sup>14</sup> For more examples of this, see Mexico’s presentation of its Aztec past at the World’s Fairs in Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 64-81

<sup>15</sup> Ruiz Martínez, *Nación y género en el México revolucionario: La India Bonita y Manuel Gamio* (Ipswich, MA.: Fuente Académica, 2001), 55-86.

<sup>16</sup> Manuel Gamio, *Forjando Patria*, trans. Fernando Armstrong-Fumero (Boulder, Colo. University Press of Colorado, 2010), 1-49.

<sup>17</sup> José Vasconcelos, *Education in México: Present-day Tendencies* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1923), 27.

degradation.<sup>18</sup> Taking pride in the cultural richness of Mexico was a way to bypass its status as an economically dependent nation and celebrate an ancient culture equal to that of Europe.

In the Metro, by contrast, the indigenous past lived on both in the naming of the stations, itself a continuation of the Porfirian perspective, and also in the discovery of objects from the past. This ability of the Metro project to find the past while building the present is different from the older relationship between the modern and the ancient in which the modern present recreated and displayed the past. The Metro played an active role in the discovery of ancient Mexico.

In a 1970 publication about the Metro titled, “La Gran Obra del Metro,” Ingenieros Civiles Asociados boasted about its ability to both install modern systems of transportation and protect and discover the past:

The grand city which is based on the most modern and audacious works of technology opens pathways to the future, for the welfare of its habitants, respects and preserves what remains of a civilization, centuries old, that shined with splendor in the history of Valley of Mexico.<sup>19</sup>

The ancient past of Mexico was built into the Metro. In excavating for the Pino Suárez station, an intact temple was discovered. The entire design and promotion of the station was altered to accommodate this find, and more pieces were added to a permanent collection of archaeological pieces showcased in the station. The symbol of the station was changed to include the temple found there. The idea that the Metro project could include the

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<sup>18</sup> This is not a uniquely Mexican process. During European state formation of the nineteenth century, nations engaged in a search for their zeitgeist or national character. This often was found in older, or folkloric, traditions. In many countries outside Europe, the process occurred later and often involved anti-colonial or at least some degree of anti-European ideas. In Mexico, debates raged about the influence of Spanish colonialism on Mexican culture. Some rehashed the black legend and exalted the Aztecs. Others saw the Spanish influences as the basis for “civilization” in Mexico. During the postrevolutionary years, the first group largely won.

<sup>19</sup> Ingenieros Civiles Asociados, *La Gran Obra del Metro* (México: ICA Press, 1970), 44. Original Spanish: La Gran Ciudad. Que son base en la mas moderna y audaz de las obras de la tecnologia abre rutas hacia el porvenir, para el bienestar de sus habitants, respeta y conserva lo que son restos de una civilizacion, vieja de siglos, que brilló con splendor cuando de Valle de México era una jornada de la historia.

indigenous past in its design, as well as discover the past through its construction, was a key element to the promotion of the Metro.

The ancient past of Mexico became a set of symbols that the government used to construct its vision of modernity and nationalism in the 1960s. The cultural cache of ancient symbols and names was unquestionably Mexican and was the perfect counterweight to the importation of technology and ideas used in the process of modernization. The Metro perfectly expressed this marriage of ancient and modern. In the process of doing something hypermodern (building a subway), Mexicans discovered their ancient heritage. This ancient tradition was, in turn, memorialized and monumentalized by the state in an attempt to draw a seamless connection between modern endeavors and the proto-modern Aztecs builders of the city.

### **iii: Mexican Modernity and the Integration of Modernism and Mexican design**

The third component of modernity found in the Metro involved the incorporation of modernist design and the mixing of its concepts with the unquestionably ancient Mexican images of the ancient past to produce a national architecture. While the official narrative in the newspapers mixed European technology and Mexican culture in the promotion of the Metro, Mexican architecture mixed foreign design concepts with Mexican names, materials and designs. The technologically sophisticated Metro transported people quickly and safely. In this way, it was compared favorably to systems in European cities such as London and Paris. The Metro was not, however, ever explained in the press as foreign. Even though its technology was from France, the Metro was promoted as something authentically Mexican. This process of mixing the foreign, modern designs and technology with Mexican symbols and names is best explained through the examination of projects prior to the Metro that

followed this philosophy. Ciudad Universitaria, for example, on the south edge of Mexico City, one of the largest construction projects of the 1950s, was an early expression of Mexican modernity.

Shown in Figure 2, the main library at UNAM was a modernist building with a Mexican mural on it. Here Mexican colors and designs translated European modernism into the language of Mexican culture. Moreover, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) represented more than just a physical space to its planners and to the Mexican state. The “university was an expression of the new ‘Grand Mexico.’ In its design, it adapted European forms in a Mexican context.”<sup>20</sup> Using functionalist ideas and a desire to link all of the building together through open space, architect Mario Pani created not just a university but a community. More than just a collection of buildings, UNAM was to be a Mexican community of learning.



Image from <http://www.unam.mx/>

**Figure 2. Main library at UNAM.**

In keeping with his stated idea that “Space in the Mexican imagination is best represented in areas for common use, such as the public plaza and those for private use, such

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<sup>20</sup> Mario Pani, “México: Un Problema, una Solución,” *Revista Arquitectura* 60 (June 1958), 214.

as the garden,”<sup>21</sup> Pani designed the central Plaza at U.N.A.M after the central public space in Mexican life, the Zócalo:

The large central green space brings together the different buildings of the schools and faculties, attracted around the Center with a kind of centripetal force. This functions as a green area that duplicates the Zócalo in the city of Mexico.<sup>22</sup>



Image from <http://www.unam.mx/>

**Figure 3. Main Plaza at UNAM.**

Here, ICA and Pani used an icon of Mexican power, the Zócalo, as their point of reference. The central plaza of UNAM symbolized the unification of all of the separate schools into one university, just as the Zócalo “symbolized the unification of the Indian, Spanish and modern cultures.”<sup>23</sup> As with the Zócalo, the area on which the Ciudad Universitaria was built once was an ancient and holy place for the indigenous peoples of the area. Modern Mexico derived its power from its connection to and commemoration of the ancient past. UNAM achieved modernity through science and technological education but always paid homage to the ancient past. This idea of a modernity that honored instead of destroyed the past, was a recurrent theme in Mexico during this period.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 202. Original Spanish: Espacio en el imaginario mexicano está mejor representado en las áreas de uso común, tales como la plaza pública y aquellos para uso privado, como el jardín.

<sup>22</sup> “Reflexiones en el planeamiento de UNAM de Mario Pani,” 1955, Historia de construcción y los planos de UNAM, Archivo de UNAM, Mexico City, (hereafter HCP), Caja 114. Original Spanish: El gran espacio verde central aglutina a los diferentes edificios de las escuelas y facultades que dan de manera inmediata a él, las atrae a su centro con una especie de fuerza centrípeta. El funcionar así y el hecho de saber que es un área verde que duplica al Zócalo de la ciudad de México.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 24. Original Spanish: simbolizó la unificación de las culturas indias, españolas y modernas.

In 1952, an article in *El Universal* said, “There is no national university if we do not create an authentic life of the university, a space that expresses the unity of ancient and modern and takes them to a higher plane.”<sup>24</sup> UNAM was to be, the newspaper reported, “modern in design but Mexican. We don’t sacrifice anything to achieve this modernity.”<sup>25</sup> Here we see an idea that was also present in the design of the Metro. Functionalism with Aztec names and local materials highlighted both the modernity of Mexico and one vision of its indigenous past. This use of Aztec themes in functionalist architecture can be seen in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, built in 1964, in the Plaza de Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco, and was a major thematic design in the Metro.<sup>26</sup> As was true during the Porfiriato, memorializing the ancient past drew attention away from the thorny problems of the more recent struggle for power.

Another major project that was a forerunner of this strand of modernity found in the Metro was the Tlatelolco housing project in Mexico City (Figure 4). Tlatelolco was “one of the most important projects for urban modernism in Mexico.”<sup>27</sup> This sprawling complex was built to house 70,000 people in 11,916 apartments on 198 acres near the center of Mexico City. *Excélsior* called it “a frontrunner to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>28</sup> The design of the housing in high-rise, high-density buildings and the concentration of services, parks, and medical

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<sup>24</sup> “La Universidad,” *El Universal*, Sept. 10, 1952. Original Spanish: No habrá universidad nacional si no creamos una existencia auténtica de la universidad, un espacio que exprese la unidad de antiguo y de moderno y que promueva las mayores niveles.

<sup>25</sup> “Reflexiones en el planeamiento de UNAM de Mario Pani,” HCP, Caja 114.

<sup>26</sup> Porfirio Diaz performed similar acts of backwards-looking state building in his presentations at the World’s Fairs and in his construction of statues along La Reforma in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> Louise Noelle and Mario Pani, *1911-1993: La visión urbana de la arquitectura de México* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Arquitectura de la UNAM, 2000), 237. Original Spanish: uno de los proyectos más significativos del urbanismo moderno de México.

<sup>28</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, April 15, 1964.



services expressed one vision of urban modernity. Built in 1964 on what was called the “slum horseshoe” around Mexico City, Tlatelolco “made utopia a reality.”<sup>29</sup>



Image by Guillermo Zamora in *Mario Pani y la construcción de la modernidad*, 23.

**Figure 4. Tlatelolco.**

Four main aspects of this project are important for our study of the Metro. The first was the importation and reinterpretation of European ideas of urban planning in a Mexican context. Pani had long been influenced by French planner Le Corbusier and his idea of the Radiant City.<sup>30</sup> This concept used high-rise, high-density buildings surrounded by central areas of green space to house as many people as possible without losing open spaces. Pani integrated this idea with his concept of Mexican planning, “The Plaza and the Garden.” He worked open spaces and Mexican art into the design. From small courtyards to large open plazas, open space takes up 75% of the land in Tlatelolco.<sup>31</sup> Pani said, “I had long been concerned about this problem of residential housing. The origin of all this was Le Corbusier’s Radiant City in which high rise buildings leave space for central free areas. It

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<sup>29</sup> Noelle and Pani, *La visión urbana de la arquitectura de México*, 77.

<sup>30</sup> Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, *The Radiant City; Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism to Be Used As the Basis of Our Machine-Age Civilization* (New York: Orion Press, 1967). While Le Corbusier published this book in 1967, he had advocated this idea in other projects during the 1960s.

<sup>31</sup> “Tlateloco,” Gobierno, Miguel Aleman, Obras Publicas, Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter, AGN), Mexico City, Caja 132.

had never been tried before, of course, on the scale of Mexico City.”<sup>32</sup> Pani adapted the French idea by increasing the population density while opening up the space. Tlatelolco had a population density of 1,000 inhabitants per hectare while before, it had only 500 inhabitants per hectare, had no services, and conditions were crowded.<sup>33</sup> Pani and ICA took these French ideas of Le Corbusier and Mexicanized them through the use of materials, the use of art and the inclusion of the Plaza de Tres Culturas as the central open space. Tlatelolco surrounded the site of the final battle between the Aztecs and the Spanish as well as the site of a seventeenth-century church. In the promotion of Tlatelolco, there was a mix of pictures of the advanced and modern buildings and the Aztec ruins and seventeenth-century church. The combination of these design elements and the promotion of the historical nature of the space was one example of the mixture of modernist design and Mexican culture also found in the Metro.



Image by Guillermo Zamora in *Mario Pani y la construcción de la modernidad*, 24.

**Figure 5. Tlatelolco.**

As seen in the U.N.A.M project, Tlatelolco was a vision of a Mexican modernity that preserved and included ancient Mexican culture. In Europe functionalism and modernity

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 47.

there were potentially destructive forces. They razed the past in order to realize the future.

Critiques of Le Corbusier's modernism emphasized his desire to destroy parts of old Paris in favor of high-rise modern structures:

Le Corbusier was the leading architectural hoodoo-meister of Early High Modernism, whose 1925 Plan Voisin for Paris proposed to knock down the entire Marais district on the Right Bank and replace it with rows of identical towers set between freeways. Luckily for Paris, the city officials laughed at him every time he came back with the scheme over the next 40 years – he was nothing if not a relentless self-promoter. Ironically and tragically, though, the Plan Voisin model later was adopted gleefully by post-World War II American planners and resulted in such urban monstrosities as the infamous housing projects of Chicago and scores of structures similar to it around the country.<sup>34</sup>

In Mexico, Pani sought to glorify the ancient past of Mexico while building its future. In one respect, his philosophy was at odds with Le Corbusier's, who would have simply torn down whatever came before to build modern buildings. A close look at Pani, however, illustrates that only what was designated as something from the ancient past that could be melded into *this* definition of modernity was saved. The slum neighborhood on the site of Tlatelolco was not part of the narrative in which the ancient and modern meld into modernity, and thus it was destroyed. Although Pani's project at Tlatelolco destroyed slum neighborhoods, it also glorified an imagined picture of the past. This idea was best expressed in the Plaza de Tres Culturas. Understanding this space allows us to see the beginnings of a narrative that runs throughout the Metro project. The plaza:

Represents the three cultures of the ancient Aztec city of Tlatelolco, the colonial Cathedral of Santiago, and the building of Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Departamento de Asuntos Exteriores]. These three structures can all be considered together in the same location. Of course, the modern city of Mexico surrounds the whole area.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> James Howard Kunstler, *The City in Mind: Meditations on the Urban Condition* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 99.

<sup>35</sup> "Tlateloco," AGN, Caja 132. Original Spanish: representa las tres culturas son por lo tanto la ciudad azteca antigua de Tlatelolco, la catedral colonial de Santiago, y el edificio de Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores

Pani imported the idea from Europe of open space and high-rise building. He then placed a very Mexican space inside that open-space concept. To commemorate the importance of the space to Mexico, ICA placed a plaque that read:

On the 13th of August 1521 although defended by Cuauhtémoc, Tlatelolco fell into Hernán Cortes power; neither a victory nor a defeat, but the painful moment of birth of the Mexico of today, of a race of mestizos. That day brought the end of the pre-Columbian era in Mexican history.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, unlike French examples of modernity and functionalism, Mexican modernity protected the ancient past. The very concept of the Plaza de Tres Culturas dated from the promotion of Tlatelolco in 1964. An *Excélsior* article from June of that year said, “The plaza is an expression of the future of Mexico. It blends the histories of all our peoples in a glorious future. The modern, the ancient, this is Mexico.”<sup>37</sup> Here we see, as in the promotion of the Metro, the idea that modernity for Mexico did not destroy the past. Modern concepts could be adapted to a Mexican context in which the past is very much still a part of the present and the future. In the building and promotion of the Metro, the past was incorporated into the design of the stations through the presentation of artifacts found during construction and through the naming of the stations.

The construction of both Tlatelolco and the Metro was destructive, but a selective interpretation of what was considered the past allowed them to be promoted as saving the past. For example, the site of the Tlatelolco project was an old neighborhood, a market and a

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(departamento de asuntos exteriores). Estas tres estructuras se pueden todos considerar juntas en la misma localización. Por supuesto, la ciudad moderna de Ciudad de México rodea el área entera.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 82. Original Spanish: El 13<sup>th</sup> de agosto de 1521 aunque defendida por Cuauhtémoc, cayó Tlatelolco en poder de Hernán Cortés; Ni una victoria ni una derrota, pero el momento doloroso de nacimiento del México del hoy, de una raza de Mestizos. Con ese día vino el final de la era precolombina en historia mexicana.

<sup>37</sup> “La plaza de tres culturas,” *Excélsior*, June 14, 1965. Original Spanish: La plaza es una expresión del futuro de México. Mezclan las historias de todos nuestros pueblos en un glorioso futuro. Los modernos, los antiguos, esto es México.

train yard that had stood for almost 100 years. These locations, however, were not considered part of what was the past and thus their destruction was not important. Because Tlatelolco, like the Metro, preserved a part of the past in the Plaza de Tres Culturas, it was promoted as yet another example of a modernism that could meld with and not destroy the rich history of the city.



Image from D.F., *El Gran Ciudad* (México City: UNAM, 1972), 249.

**Figure 6. Plaza de Tres Culturas.**

#### **iv: Nationalism and Modernization**

Nationalism was a fundamental aspect of the promotion of the Metro. The Metro was “the pride of all Mexicans and the greatest expression of our modern Nation.”<sup>38</sup> While the Metro project was the flagship project for a post-revolutionary Mexico of the 1960s, the nationalism expressed through the Metro project looked very similar to many ideas of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In his book about Mexico at the world’s fairs, Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo described nationalism as “a molding power that, rather than giving rise to new and original cultural phenomena reoriented, revitalized and rearranged existing cultural features and tailored a comprehensive ideology that was assumed to be a unique and

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<sup>38</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, Sept. 5, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro es el orgullo de todos los mexicanos y la máxima expresión de nuestra nación moderna.

natural historical production.”<sup>39</sup> The Metro map took names of streets and monuments to construct its vision of Mexico City. In this case, the existing cultural features that were rearranged were the symbols of Mexican nationalism that became Metro station names. The ideology produced was the very modernism outlined in this introduction. The promotion of the Metro as both modern and within the history of large, state projects in Mexico, produced a narrative in which, although the physical parts of the Metro were foreign, the Metro, in the end, was a true expression of the Mexican nation.

For Mexico, “[n]ationalism has been historically linked to modernization.”<sup>40</sup> Because the Metro was a project about the modernization of both transportation and the Mexican people themselves, it also was a project that expressed the 1960s’ version of Mexican nationalism. An ICA promotional document from 1970 stated: “Through transformation of the Metropoli comes transformation of the nation.”<sup>41</sup> Tenorio-Trillo went on to explain that the process of the construction of modern nationalism was one in which ideas and technology were imported from outside the nation and then mixed with symbols and narratives from within the nation to create a picture of a seemingly organic and domestic national identity.

This process of the construction of a modern nationalism for Mexico continued in the Metro. Here, materials for and comparative narratives about the Metro were imported. Europe, especially France, remained the example to follow while Mexican names, designs, and cultural symbols cloaked these foreign ideas and materials in something Mexicans would understand. My dissertation explores the construction of nationalism in the late 1960s through the promotion and naming of the Metro followed well-worn but still active patterns

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<sup>39</sup> Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 241.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>41</sup> Ingenieros Civiles Asociados *La Gran Obra del Metro*, 44.

discussed in Tenorio-Trillo's work on late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Mexico.

Those Mexican symbols and names that were the domestic side of the construction of modern nationalism reflected a trend in state projects beginning in the 1950s. The ancient past and the heroes of the nineteenth century eclipsed the more radical vision of the Mexican revolution that were present in the street naming of the 1920s, the monuments of the 1940s, and the murals of Diego Rivera. The vision of the history of Mexico found in the Metro station names was one that rested on the same twin pillars used during the Porfiriato. The indigenous past and the heroes of nineteenth-century liberalism made up the majority of station names and were most discussed in the press. Figures such as Cuauhtémoc and Benito Juárez survive nearly unchanged from the dedication of their statues in the 1880s through the naming of their Metro names in the 1960s, while symbols of the colonial era, such as Isabel I of Spain, were transformed from symbols of Mexico's European roots to examples of religious extremism.

While the rejection of the colonial past appeared radical, the overall narrative of Mexican history in the Metro was much more Porfirian than revolutionary. Three Metro station names denote places important to the revolution of 1910, but 15 are names from the nineteenth century and 17 are from the indigenous past. The three names on the Metro map from the revolution of 1910 were: the Monument to the Revolution, built in 1938 to house the remains of revolutionary heroes and to promote the government's status as keeper of the revolutionary tradition; Balderas Park, the station that commemorated the counter-revolutionary forces that fought with cannons in the center of the city for the "tragic days,"

with great loss of human life; and Pino Suárez, the station that commemorated Madero's vice president, who was murdered by general Huerta after a coup in 1913.

These stations present the revolution of 1910 as something that, like the glory of the indigenous past, was not the ongoing radical process that PRI rhetoric celebrated. Taken as a whole, these station names present the revolution as a tomb (the Monumento de la Revolución), a pointless battle that caused great loss of human life and led to a coup (Balderas), and the murder of Pino Suárez, again a cautionary tale of the dangers of counterinsurgency. Here there was an interesting turn, however, in that an Aztec pyramid was discovered in the Pino Suárez station during its construction. This station, therefore, was not promoted as a glorification of Pino Suárez himself. A plaque does explain who he was and how he and Madero were murdered by order of the dictator general, Victoriano Huerta, but the station itself was always promoted within the context of the ancient past.

In the Olympics of 1968, a similar picture of modern Mexico emerged. Promotion of the games featured the modernist designs of the buildings, the high-tech nature of TV coverage (it was the first Olympics telecast in color), and the international nature of the games themselves. Mexico promoted something called the cultural Olympics. For one year prior to the Olympics, countries came to Mexico and shared art and culture on stages and galleries throughout the city. What Mexico contributed reflected the government's desire to move away from the radicalism of the revolution of 1910. Modern art and folk culture took center stage. During this entire one-year presentation, there was not one single presentation of Diego Rivera or Frida Kahlo's art work.

One of Rivera's students, Rina Lazo, who worked on two Metro stations herself, explained that "they wanted us out you know. They wanted modern art. Pictures. Colors;



shapes; nothing to think about.”<sup>42</sup> The Metro fit into a cultural context in which the Mexican government projected a more cosmopolitan modernist vision of Mexico for the consumption of the international community.

### **Creative State Power**

My dissertation seeks to uncover the power behind the construction of large state projects. I call this creative state power. Governments exercise different kinds of power. Power is, after all, both repressive and creative. Governments use violence or the establishment of laws to protect their hold on power. They can also, however, use creative power in the construction of physical manifestations of their right to rule. Creative state power was a state building process through which the Mexican government used its economic and political resources to create monuments that promoted the governments right to rule. Creative state power was both a process through which governments created physical manifestations of their right to rule and a product. The methodology of the study of monuments helps to uncover how creative state power works. In the case of the Metro I study the process and the product, the overt and the hidden. The Metro was a monument that had an overt narrative about Mexico’s past as well as one vision of nationalism and modernity. The symbols used to create this vision of Mexico were recycled from other epochs in Mexican history. Below the surface however, was the process of creative state power generated, in part, by the relationship between ICA and the Mexican government. This financial and political relationship was fostered twenty years prior to the Metro. Also hidden from view was the conflict between different levels of the Mexican government. The struggle between the regent of Mexico City, Ernesto Uruchurtu, and the president, Díaz Ordaz, over

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<sup>42</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author Mexico City, July 14, 2012. I don’t think this is correct citation.

the Metro uncovered the fact that the process of modernization of transportation had winners and losers. Modernization implied the destruction or renovation of older systems. In the case of the Metro, part of the process of creative state power was the alignment of ICA and President Díaz Ordaz against the bus companies and the regent Uruchurtu. The process of creative state power helps to illuminate the fact that the Mexican government was not monolithic.

Throughout the history of Mexico different governments have undertaken projects, especially in Mexico City, that sought to promote their vision of Mexico's past, and through these governments connection to that past promote themselves as legitimate. Legitimacy here is the right to rule. This right is produced through proving a connection to something that is an expression of the Mexican nation. During the Porfiriato, for example, there was the construction of monuments to Cuauhtémoc and Benito Juárez and the development of the Paseo de la Reforma as a civic museum of the heroes of the liberal cause. During the post--revolutionary time period governments renamed streets after revolutionary heroes and constructed monuments to the Mexican revolution. The revolution was their connection to the Mexican nation and was what made them legitimate rulers of Mexico.

The presidency of Díaz Ordaz is known by historians for its use of repressive power in October of 1968 when government forces fired on unarmed students. The fact that this incident happened at a time in which the very same government was exercising creative state power through building the Metro and the Olympics provided a powerful study in contrasts. Understanding how the government used creative state power helps to shed more light on their possible reasons for using the repressive side of their power as well.

Both the process and the product of creative state power are studied here. The process involved economic and political relationships and conflicts crucial to understanding the post-Cardenas period. The product was one vision of nationalism and modernity.

### **Hidden Narratives**

Finally, I look for stories hidden in the official narrative of the Metro. Three main stories in particular were missing from the newspaper articles. First was that of the regent of Mexico City, Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, who opposed the Metro. This was a tale of intra-state conflict within the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) party between the national and local levels of government. Government infighting explodes the notion that the Mexican state functioned as a monolithic entity. This narrative also helps to complicate the process of modernization and the promotion of one vision of modernity. This process created winners and losers. ICA and the economic supporters of Mexican president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz gained power and wealth through their support of the Metro. The opponents of the Metro, and of the vision of Mexico's future and economic alliances it created, were vanquished. The story of the fall from power of Regent Uruchurtu is also a study in the ways in which the newspapers in Mexico City could be used as a space to both promote state projects and destroy a project's opponents.

The second hidden transcript I uncover involved the role that an artist named Rina Lazo played in the design of the Insurgentes Metro station. While Lazo had a hand in its development, she never was given credit because she was jailed for her part in the student movement during 1968. Lazo collaborated with Diego Rivera from 1947 until 1957. She taught at the College of Fine Arts in Mexico City. She worked on the Insurgentes Metro station from 1967 until her incarceration in 1968. Despite this experience, she continued to

work for STC Metro and painted a mural in the Bellas Artes Metro station. She was able to return to work on this project because of her close relationship with the founder of ICA Bernardo Quintana. Her story reflected how different levels of government work separately and sometimes at cross purposes on projects such as the Metro. It also provided an alternative reading of the Insurgentes Metro station's physical space.

The third, mostly hidden narrative involves the economic relationship between Ingenieros Civiles Asociados, the Mexican company that built the Metro, and the Mexican government. This relationship developed over more than 20 years before the Metro and remained strong until the 1980s. Such close relationships between business and government were one aspect of post-Cardenas Mexico.

The capital and experience needed to build a complex project such as the Metro lay with the Mexican company named Ingenieros Civiles Asociados. During this era the Mexican government grew closer with big business. Beginning in the 1950s international investment returned to Mexico. This influx of foreign capital boosted the Mexican economy, leading to nearly 8% growth per year that came to be known as the Mexican miracle. Building projects, such as the Olympics and the Metro, were major engines that powered the Mexican economy.

A young civil engineer named Bernardo Quintana Arrioja founded Ingenieros Civiles Asociados in 1947 with 17 classmates and \$20,000 in start-up capital. Quintana's idea was to launch an engineering company that could supply the designs and manpower for Mexico to generate its own development. Through his work with ICA, Quintana became the largest figure in the Mexican construction industry. Every Mexican president since Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), has known him personally. In 1976, Quintana wrote, "during the era of Alemán

the Mexican construction industry was still developing.”<sup>43</sup> Alemán was the first president after Cardenas and he tried to move the Mexican economy forward but ran into trouble because he could not convince international companies that the era of nationalization was over. During Cardenas the oil industry was nationalized. At that time in Mexico, French and American firms carried out the majority of the large building projects. As Mexico continued to industrialize and Mexico City began to expand rapidly, the government of President Alemán wanted to nationalize construction. However, it lacked leadership and often had little access to credit. Quintana and his associates realized that the government’s new desire to have Mexicans building in Mexico City provided an opportunity. Between 1947 and 1980, the ICA took full advantage.

For almost 40 years, ICA never participated in an open bidding process. It received all of its largest commissions directly from the state. ICA became a proxy for the government’s use of creative power,<sup>44</sup> providing the means through which the Mexican government could build large project that expressed their vision of modernity and their right to rule. Both before and after President Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), ICA and the Mexican government were linked in a mutually beneficial relationship. ICA gained great wealth, while the state finished large projects that put into physical form its vision of modernity and its right to rule.

ICA solved the two main problems that hampered previous proposals for subway construction: financing and the watery subsoil in Mexico City. These solutions were the result of years of work. ICA’s close links to Banco de Mexico through Banco Atlántico and

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<sup>43</sup> Grupo ICA, *Bernardo Quintana Arrijoja: Constructor Mexicano, 1919-1984* (México: Grupo ICA, 1994), 55. Original Spanish: En la época de Alemán la industria mexicana de la construcción apenas estaba gestando.

<sup>44</sup> One clear example of their influence came in 1973 when then President Luis Echeverría personally asked ICA to redesign the Mexico City drainage system.

its connection to Banco de Paris were developed working on projects such as Ciudad Universitaria and Tlatelolco. ICA also developed the only lab in Mexico to study the subsoil, allowing its proposal for the Metro to include data and scientific authority that no one else could match. Finally, ICA's close relationship with the president of Mexico from 1964 to 1970, Díaz Ordaz (the first lady was the sister of a founding member), and the presence of former I.C.A employees in positions of power within the government, added great weight to any ICA proposal.<sup>45</sup> All of these advantages were the result of ICA's work in the years before the construction of the Metro.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, ICA took on some of the largest projects in Mexico.<sup>46</sup> The strength of its relationship with French banks was demonstrated in the Infernillo dam project, ICA's first large-scale construction project. It was "the first time in Mexican history a foreign nation lent an equal amount of capital for local Mexican expenditures in exchange for each dollar spent abroad on equipment and parts."<sup>47</sup> ICA's links to French money and technology went back to the entity's origins in 1947. ICA evolved from another Mexican company, Compañía Mexicana de Comercio Exterior (C.M.C.E.). During the 1940s, ICA, allied with French and Mexican banks, imported French technology into Mexico and sent oil out to France. Both the National Bank of France and ICA's own bank, Banco Atlántico, were involved in funding of these early projects through C.M.C.E. During World War II, the company was forced to retool its operations while markets in Europe were inaccessible. By the 1950s, C.M.C.E., by then a subsidiary of ICA, was importing French

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<sup>45</sup> Since its inception in 1947, employees of ICA commonly went back and forth from jobs at the company to jobs within the Mexican government.

<sup>46</sup> For a full list, see Ingenieros Civiles Asociados, *Hacemos realidad grandes ideas* (México: ICA, 1994.), xxi.

<sup>47</sup> Diane E. Davis, "The Rise and Fall of Mexico City's Subway (METRO) Policy, 1964-1976: Pro- and Anti-Urban Growth Coalitions, National Development Strategies, and the State" (Ph.D. Diss., UCLA, 1994), 97.

technology for heavy building, thus “facilitating the importation of the intermediate goods necessary to the development of the newly emerging import-substitution industry in Mexico.”<sup>48</sup> During this period, ICA was “able to use some of France’s most sophisticated technology and equipment to create and maintain a competitive advantage.”<sup>49</sup> The Metro would be another example of this relationship.

## **Scholarly Apparatus**

### **i-Newspapers**

The major newspapers from this period were *Excelsior*, *El Sol*, *Universal* and *El Día*. These newspapers were not places to find dissent against government projects. During this time period, 1964, to 1970, the press in Mexico worked very closely with the government. Mexico during the 1960s was, in reality, a one-party government. The PRI controlled both the bureaucracy and the presidency. While the PAN held some power at the local level, it was a faithful second party and never challenged the PRI’s control of national politics. The government bought the majority of the advertising in all newspapers and controlled the price of newsprint. While there was not official censorship, there was not a great deal of criticism of the government either. These newspapers became a public space for the promotion of government projects. Readership in Mexico City was high. Other media, such as television and radio, were present in Mexico City but the newspapers had the largest access to the most people. Very often multiple newspapers printed the same article about the Metro, the vast majority of the articles cited here had no byline, indicating a government source for these pieces. I use these sources to illustrate the salient features of the narrative used to promote

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 66.

the Metro. I link different elements of this narrative together and compare how each developed over time. What appeared in the papers was just as constructed and designed as the Metro stations.

## **ii-Historiography**

My dissertation contributes to four ongoing conversations about post- Cárdenas Mexico. The first centers on the issue of modernity and its relationship to nationalism in Mexican history. While this work covers a broad sweep of time, from the nineteenth century through the twentieth, it provides an important conceptual foundation for understanding the context within which the Metro emerged. The second conversation centers on the pivotal decade of the 1960s. This is a heavily-studied period in Mexican history, and much scholarly attention revolves around the student massacre in 1968. I join a group of scholars who step back from this focus, asking how we might better understand the ways the Mexican state of this period exercised power. A third set of conversations focus on the urban development of Mexico City, as a center of state power and a physical expression of state legitimacy going back to the nineteenth century. Scholars in this group uncover the cultural and political developments related to urban planning as well as how promotional narratives about different state projects evolved over time. And, finally, I engage a smaller, fourth conversation on the Metro itself. These books explore who rode the Metro and the impact the Metro had on the development of the city over time.

I contribute to these conversations by focusing on a major feature of modern Mexico that has been largely neglected by historians, Mexico City's Metro. Built between 1967 and 1970, the system was both a masterpiece of design and a battleground of political and



economic interests. Through the lens of the Metro we can understand better the emergence of the Mexican state in the post- Cárdenas era.

## **1. Modernity and Nationalism**

Since Mexico gained its independence in the early nineteenth century, various narratives have been used in the promotion of the government's right to rule. These narratives combined visions of the past with the incorporation of European ideas and technology. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* discussed one vision of Mexican modernity in which an idealized version of its ancient past was melded with a presentation of a modern-day Mexico that promoted advancements in technology and science.<sup>50</sup> During the Porfiriato and early post-revolutionary period, nationalism was constructed through a process in which images about what a modern nation should look like were imported from Europe, particularly from France. These ideas were then mixed with Mexican symbols and names largely from the ancient indigenous past, creating a Mexicanized version of these imported European ideas. Tied to this process was an equation between modernization, the technical improvement of infrastructure and use of technology to solve problems, and nationalism. In this way the importation of foreign technology and the use of Europe as a model for Mexican society was promoted as a nationalist act.

Tenorio-Trillo showed how the post-revolutionary generation used selective images of the past to promote its vision of Mexico's future. He told, for example, the story of the "Aztec Palace" used in the 1889 Paris World's Fair. The palace was built to express the indigenous past of Mexico. It was in the Neo-Grecian style popular in Europe during that

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<sup>50</sup> Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*.

period. It had a great bronze eagle on top and statues of Aztec kings Cuauhtémoc, Itzcoatl, Netzahualcoyotl, and Totoquihuatzin. It was meant to convey, in a European form, the strength of the Mexican military tradition. After the World's Fair, the palace was disassembled and shipped back to Mexico. Plans for its reconstruction were never carried out. It sat in storage, rusting for 30 years. In 1940, its statues were stripped off and added to the Monumento de La Raza. The monument was a "post-revolutionary pyramid to honor Mexico's Indian origins," using "both the symbolism and the actual material created by the Porfirian years of experimenting in modernity and nationalism."<sup>51</sup> Tenorio-Trillo's work illustrated the strong connection in Mexico between modernization, the importation of foreign ideas and technology, and the use of the ancient past in the construction of ideas of modernity and nationalism. He also established the durability of this process across the revolution of 1910.

In *La Revolución: The Great Revolution as Myth and Memory*, Thomas Benjamin followed Tenorio-Trillo in tracing the roots of a Mexican master-narrative to the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> The building of the myth of "La Revolución," revolution with a capital R, eventually condensed Mexico's struggles into a single narrative, unified its heroes, and then promoted this narrative of national history through monuments and holidays. This narrative Benjamin argued "is collective memory, national mythology, official and unofficial, formal and folk history all rolled into one, promoting national fraternity and solidarity among

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: The Great Revolution as Myth and Memory* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 44. For a similar argument in terms of the development of state history, see Ilene V. O'Malley, *The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940*; Contributions to the study of world history, No. 1 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

citizens.”<sup>53</sup> Like their nineteenth-century predecessors, the post-revolutionary historians and officials emphasized the Mexican nation-state’s connection to the indigenous past, Independence (1810-1824), and La Reforma (1854-1876).<sup>54</sup> Benjamin used Stephen Asband and William McNeil to define myth, not as untruth but merely as “idealized truth.”<sup>55</sup> “Mythmaking in Mexico involved the reconstruction of the past in light of the present and particularly the political needs of the present.”<sup>56</sup> Most importantly for the Mexican state, history had the power to unite, and thus to pacify. Benjamin contended that this process began in the 1920s, but not until the 1940s did the state-centered history become dominant. “La Revolución,” the state’s version of the revolution and its connection to other epochs of Mexican history, was promoted through state projects and in education. The “Revolutionary tradition was intended first and foremost to reinforce elite and thus national political unity, to establish a solid historical foundation upon which to unify all revolutionary factions, past and present.”<sup>57</sup> Here again we see the durability of and continuity between pre- and post-revolution Mexico in government attempts to codify a national narrative that legitimated their right to rule.

Like Benjamin, Enrique Florescano explored the development of a state history of the Revolution of 1910-1920 as a method for tracing political consolidation. *National Histories of Mexico: A History* traced narratives about Mexico from the creation myths of the Aztecs up to the stories of the post-revolutionary period.<sup>58</sup> During La Reforma (1855-1876), “liberals supported the myth of continuous revolutionary process whose tremors revealed

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>54</sup> La Reforma was a period between 1854 and 1876 in which liberal reforms, such as separation of church and state, were promoted in Mexico.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin, *La Revolución*, 20.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>58</sup> Enrique Florescano, *National Histories of Mexico: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

successive steps in national development.”<sup>59</sup> But it was not until the reign of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) that this myth became part of the state’s arsenal. Díaz used history to bring old enemies together under the banner of liberalism. For example, although he and Benito Juárez had been enemies in life, Díaz elevated Juárez to the status of a national hero in order to pacify and unite his supporters. The use of history to reconcile enemies and to forge a past that could function to unite Mexico reappeared in the post-revolutionary state. This story “expressed unity and continuity despite the vicissitudes of history.”<sup>60</sup> The “Revolutionary family” was made up of the heroes of the revolution of 1910 as remade through state promotion. One symbolic way of promoting this concept was the writing in gold letters of the names of famous revolutionaries on the wall of the Mexican senate. By 1930, heroes of the Revolution of 1910-1920, such as Francisco I. Madero, Venustiano Carranza, Álvaro Obregón, and Emiliano Zapata, took their place on the wall. In this “act of posthumous reconciliation, the revolution brought together on the altar of the homeland those who in life had been the bitterest of enemies.”<sup>61</sup> (It is worthy of note that it took Francisco “Pancho” Villa until 1965 to make it onto the wall!) In 1930, a national calendar was released. This calendar took the great dates from the periods of Independence and La Reforma and combined them with those from the revolution. It inscribed state history onto the very passing of the days.

Raymond Craib’s *Cartographic Mexico* was one of the main inspirations for my study of how the state history of Mexico took physical form.<sup>62</sup> Craib examined the attempts

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>62</sup> Raymond Craib *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

by both nineteenth- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Mexican states to define and map their land. He correctly identified space and the production of space as essential in the expression of power. For Craib, “the history of modern Mexico was inextricably entwined with the space it not only occupied but actively produced. He argued that, “all times have their spaces through which ideology is inscribed, codes embodied, histories redefined and social relations reconfigured. For post-revolutionary Mexico, that space was the *ejido*.”<sup>63</sup> Essential in Craib’s study was the idea that, although the state undertook mapping projects--with clear ideas about increasing the efficiency of land use or organizing *ejido* land --the people who already occupied these spaces played a part in the outcomes of these projects. Through explanation of the struggle that individual cartographers and employees of the state had, it became clear that whatever the state’s intentions, local people always forced the state to deal with their demands and their ideas of how space should be reorganized. Craib’s work makes the connection between state narratives and physical space, providing insight into the exercise of state power and the ways in which people and state interaction over the arrangement of space.

Definitions of what modernity, modernization and nationalism changed over time. Governments eager to promote themselves and their connection to the Mexican past continually refashioned these concepts. The dynamic and fluid nature of these concepts makes them productive avenues through which to study continuity and change in how different Mexican regimes produced narrative to legitimate their hold on power.

## **2. The 1960s**

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 220.

Study of Mexico in the 1960s, and particularly the presidency of Díaz Ordaz, has been dominated by the Tlatelolco massacre of October 2, 1968. One of the earliest and most popular accounts was Elena Poniatowska's *Massacre in Mexico* which featured firsthand accounts of both the student movement and the October 2<sup>nd</sup> massacre itself.<sup>64</sup> (The author's own brother was killed in the violence that night.) While Poniatowska's book provided some wonderful if painful accounts of the massacre and illustrated effectively the movement's difficulty in gaining popular support, her focus was narrow. Rarely do we get enough explanation from the government itself or even much detail from people who did not agree with the students. There also was too little connection made between the massacre and the overarching economic and political climate. Poniatowski's narrow focus became the standard approach to the study of 1968 Mexico for many years.

Both *Plaza of Sacrifices*, by Elaine Carey, and "Defining the Space of Mexico '68: Heroic Masculinity in the Prison and 'Women' in the Street," by Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, opened out the conversation somewhat, by insisting upon a gender component to the Tlatelolco violence.<sup>65</sup> Carey asserted that the student movement, through its open and direct questioning of the Mexican president, Díaz Ordaz, broke with cultural gender norms. The image of the president as father was deeply ingrained in Mexican political thought. Because the students challenged the male-dominated Mexican state and because the movement involved women in large numbers in public spaces, they were brutally repressed. Frazier and Cohen's article departed from previous work by asserting that scholars had focused too much on the male leadership of the movement. They argued that prison became a

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<sup>64</sup> Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1975).

<sup>65</sup> Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005). Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, "Defining the Space of Mexico '68: Heroic Masculinity in the Prison and 'Women' in the Street," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 83:4 (2003), 617-660.

male space in which men were transformed into the leadership of the student movement. Women were “in the streets” and represented the masses, who were led by their male counterparts. This situation developed over time, and as men wrote memoirs, their voice became the movement. While women were also in prison, it was male prisoners who spoke for the group. While women challenged the all-male leadership of the PRI through their protest, the protest movement itself struggled to overcome deeply ingrained relationships between gender and power.

José Revueltas and Elena Poniatowska were two important nonacademic writers central to the canonization of the leaders’ position within the movement. Poniatowska’s *La noche de Tlatelolco: Testimonios de historia oral* (Mexico City: Era, 1971), written shortly after the massacre, positioned those in jail as “the movement leadership.” Her continued visits during that time reminded this leadership of their connection to el pueblo.<sup>66</sup>

Both Carey’s book and Frasier and Cohen’s article were limited, however, by their reliance upon older views of the student movement. Casey, for example, continued to see the students as a unified group that enjoyed popular support from other sectors of Mexican society. She also presupposed a monolithic Mexican state that was of one mind about and in total control of all facets of Mexican life. Like Poniatowska, she employed interviews with students as her main source pool, and thus her focus remained restricted. While she did connect her work to others outside Mexico, she did not consider the events of October 1968 in light of contemporaneous state projects and actions. She also claimed what seems unlikely--that the student movement was a threat to the very stability of Mexico, and for this reason, the government used violence against it. In turn, Frasier and Cohen continued to employ a methodology that largely excluded the government and thereby simplified resistance to the students. Putting the student movement in context remained difficult

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<sup>66</sup> Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, “Defining the Space of Mexico ‘68,” 617.

because the authors' methodology restricted them to a narrow focus on the students themselves. Only through a wider lens can historians understand the interactions between a complex entity such as the Mexican government and a diverse and disjointed movement such as the student protests in 1968.<sup>67</sup>

Two pioneers who expanded the historical focus beyond the student massacre were Eric Zolov and Luis Castañeda. Zolov, in his article, "Showcasing the Land of Tomorrow: Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," stated that "the historiography of this crucial period has been distorted by a near single-minded focus on the student movement itself and the massacre of unarmed protesters at the Plaza de Tres Culturas . . . the tendency toward a testimonial approach, moreover, has often meant that there is much memory but little objective historical analysis of this period."<sup>68</sup> Zolov proceeded to give a brilliant analysis of another major event of 1968—the Olympic Games.

Castañeda in his articles, "Beyond Tlatelolco: Design, Media, and Politics at Mexico'68," and "Choreographing the Metropolis: Networks of Circulation and Power in Olympic Mexico," added intricacy to the discussion of creative state power.<sup>69</sup> He properly connected the Olympic (and Metro) projects to the student movement and vice versa, warning readers--"a simplistic ideological reading could tempt us to interpret these works as nothing but visual and spatial expressions of a regime of social repression."<sup>70</sup> He also insisted

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<sup>67</sup> Further examples of Mexican sources include: Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *1968: Los archivos de la violencia* (Mexico: Editorial Grijalbo/Reforma, 1998). Raúl Alvarez Garín, *La estrella de Tlatelolco: Una reconstrucción histórica del movimiento estudiantil del 68*, (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1998). Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis, *Parte de Guerra: Tlatelolco 1968* (México: Nuevo Siglo/Aguilar, 1999).

<sup>68</sup> Eric Zolov, "Showcasing the Land of Tomorrow: Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," *The Americas* 61:2 (October 2004): 159-188, 161.

<sup>69</sup> Luis Castañeda, "Choreographing the Metropolis: Networks of Circulation and Power in Olympic Mexico," *Journal of Design History*, 25:3 (September 2012): 285-303. "Beyond Tlatelolco: Design, Media and Politics at Mexico'68," *Grey Room*, 40 (summer 2010): 100-126.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.



that “the Olympics and Metro” hardly present us with a monolithic ideological picture.”<sup>71</sup>

They presented no such picture because they were not projects of a monolithic government. So many different people and groups contributed to the design, promotion and construction of state projects that they reflected a substantial diversity in both intentions and designs.

### **3. Mexico City and Urbanism**

Useful books on Mexico City are of two types—those focusing on the city itself, and those studying sister metropolises in Europe. Among Mexico City books, Diane Davis’ *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the twentieth century* and Patrice Olsen’s *Artifacts of Revolution* emphasized *conflict*. Davis argued that disputes over development projects and public transportation marked the beginning of the fracture of the PRI and its loss of political control in Mexico City. The party was split between those who did and did not benefit financially from urban renewal.<sup>72</sup> She also showed that these conflicts were exacerbated by tensions between local and national levels of organization. Mexico City was the economic and political capital of the nation. Because of this national actors controlled decisions about local development. Because the residents did not have local political outlets for their concerns, fights about the development of Mexico City inevitably took on a national character. “Policy conflicts . . . about the growth, nature, spatial or sectional character of Mexico City,” Davis argues, “had direct repercussions on the national economy and on the balance of power in national politics.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>72</sup> Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). I also must credit Davis for introducing me to Castells’ work. I used Castells a little differently from Davis, but I admired and respected her use of him. Her book also was one of the only if not the only work on Mexico City that spanned such a large time window (1920s through 1980s) in such great detail. I am greatly indebted to her.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 5.

For Olsen, conflict was chiefly ideological. “Important facets of the Mexican Revolution can be made intelligible through an understanding of what was built in Mexico City between 1920-1940.”<sup>74</sup> Olsen saw physical expressions of power as important, even crucial, in interpreting how the Mexican Revolution was co-opted by capital and consolidated by the Mexican state. Architecture for Olsen was a social act, “social meaning in physical form,” that “possesses a communication function. Architecture communicates the direction of the Revolution.”<sup>75</sup> Mexico City became the center of the institutionalization of the revolution. The hopes and dreams of those who held power after the revolution were expressed in the physical structures of the city. Conflicts between different schools of design symbolized the conflict between different wings of the Mexican Revolution and the post-revolutionary government.

Structures also expressed the failures and conflicts inherent in revolutionary objectives, while encouraging foreign investment, industrialization, and capitalist development.

Nestor García Canclini’s *La Ciudad de los viajeros: travesías e imaginarios urbanos: Mexico, 1940-2000*, examined Mexico City’s urban space in relation to those who commuted through it each day. “People’s trips through the city,” García Canclini argued, “reproduce their social class.”<sup>76</sup> Here, the ideas of Manuel Castells were clearly in evidence.

<sup>77</sup> Public transportation helped to reproduce the current relationships between those in

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<sup>74</sup> Patrice Olsen, *Artifacts of Revolution: Architecture, Society, and Politics in Mexico City, 1920-1940* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), xi.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>76</sup> Nestor García Canclini, Alejandro Castellanos, and Ana Rosas Mantecon, *La Ciudad de los Viajeros: Travesías e Imaginarios Urbanos* (México: UNAM, 1989), 13. Original Spanish: Los viajes metropolitanos son una forma de reproducción de la fuerza de trabajo.

<sup>77</sup> Here we also saw the influence of Castells’ concept of the space of flows in which the city was defined by movement. In previous attempts to conceive of cities as whole units, thinkers used static definitions. Castells remedied this by thinking about cities as hubs of information and people. As they traveled through the physical environment, they defined different relationships. Castells claimed there were three main levels to the space of

control of the means of production and those who must trade labor for pay. It made sense that García Canclini would start with this idea because he had studied in Paris during the time when Structuralism and the ideas of Castells were influential in the study of urban landscapes. He went beyond these ideas, however. For Canclini, the city was “not only a reproduction of the social structure.”<sup>78</sup> He explored how commuters through Mexico City constantly created the city in their passage. They were always confronted by an imagined city in both advertising and print media. We must “understand trips through the city as a living experience, relationship between groups and people, and this is to understand and to live the City.”<sup>79</sup> At the core of Canclini’s work was the idea that the urban environment was a dynamically constructed space that conveyed meaning.

Both the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the Colegio de México have published books on the Metro. One was *El geografía del transporte en area metropolitana de la Ciudad de México*.<sup>80</sup> Here Boris Graizbord outlined the development of the Metro and the number of people who rode it. He explained how the Metro fundamentally changed the geography of Mexico City by allowing easy access to the central part of the city from the outlying areas, thus accelerating the development of those areas.

Books on urbanization, state building and resistance in Europe also provide perspective on Mexico City. Peter Fritzsche’s *Reading Berlin 1900*, for example, traced the

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flows. First was the infrastructural level. This was the “wired world” of telecommunications that connects to software that made the world run. Second is the operational. These were hub cities, such as Paris, London, and Tokyo. Here information, wealth, and power were centered and participated in exchange. Finally was the managerial level. These were the people who made the system work. Where levels intersected, we had what he terms “great” cities, such as London or Tokyo.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 16. Original Spanish: Los viajes no son unicamente una forma de reproducción de la estructura social.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 15. Original Spanish: entender los viajes por la ciudad *como* experiencias vividas, conjunto de interacciones entre personas y grupos, modo habitar, recorrer e imaginar la metropoli

<sup>80</sup> Boris Graizbord, *La geografía del transporte en área metropolitana de la Ciudad de México* (México: Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Demográficos, Urbanos y Ambientales, 2008).

development of the capital city that “enforces regimentation and discipline in the name of imperial mastery and economic efficiency.”<sup>81</sup> Fritzsche’s key term is the “word city.” This word city was the symbolic order or narrative form that created one idea or representation of urban space. This space both tried to impose order on the city and, because multiple variations were always present, failed to produce such order. On one level, the “word city” represented the monuments, street names, and signs that allowed one to navigate the city. The word city was thus one avenue through which rulers sought to legitimize themselves and to project their control. The word city, however, had another layer. As literacy increased, more texts about the city evolved. Within these texts, different visions of the city were born and developed. The control of the state could not be absolute within these spaces. New visions of the city affected the physical and vice- versa. Newspapers, novels, advertisements, and other print media shaped the way people saw and used the city. For Fritzsche, “the industrial city reworked and proliferated versions of the word city. The word city, in turn, reviewed and refashioned the industrial city.”<sup>82</sup>

In *Lost Words and Lost Worlds: Modernity and the Language of Everyday Life in nineteenth Century Stockholm*, Allan Pred outlined connections among language, power, and place in the metropole. He examined the “place-bound reproduction or transformation of modes of production, social life, and cultural traditions that occur in and through geographically limited forms of language.”<sup>83</sup> Pred traced how naming and language formed and transformed lived spaces. The renaming of streets in Stockholm in 1885, for example,

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Allan Pred, *Lost Words, Lost Worlds: Modernity and the Everyday Language of Everyday Life in Nineteenth-Century Stockholm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

was “based on elements from older as well as emergent forms of dominant ideology.”<sup>84</sup>

Popular names and understanding of the layout of a city came from and often conflicted with official street names or desired urban planning outcomes. Pred also studied the promotion of a “backward-turning, status-quo legitimating, nationalism-promoting, anxiety-reducing and threat-dampening mythology.”<sup>85</sup> This mythology was promoted in schools as well as on city streets. It fostered a shared cultural heritage, a common vision of the idyllic rural past, and celebrated upper-class leaders who exemplified everything good about being Swedish.

#### 4. The Metro

There are very few books specifically on the Metro. The work of Bernardo Navarro provides one of the only histories of the development of the subway within the context of the urban development of Mexico City. “The history of Mexico City in the twentieth century is the history of transportation.”<sup>86</sup> In *Metro, Metrópoli, México*, Navarro explained the formation of the Metro project, the structure of the government agencies that built and ran the subway, and the system’s impact on the development of the city. His *El Metro y sus Usuarios* focused on studies of *colonias populares*, such as *Isidro Fabela*, *Primera Victoria*, *San Miguel Teotongo*, and *Granjas Valle de Guadalupe*.<sup>87</sup> The Metro connected these communities to other parts of the city, allowing poorer workers to live there and work elsewhere. Navarro examined who rode the Metro and the effect that access to low-cost public transportation had on the poor in Mexico City. His tight focus on the economic and

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 25. I have yet to find a better quotation to describe the naming of Metro stations and the uses these names for the state.

<sup>86</sup> Bernardo Navarro, *Metro, Metrópoli, México* (México: UNAM, Unidad Xochimilco, 1989), 89. Original Spanish: La historia de la Ciudad de México del siglo XX es la historia del transporte.

<sup>87</sup> Bernardo Navarro, *Isidro Fabela, Primera Victoria, San Miguel Teotongo, and Granjas Valle de Guadalupe* (México: UNAM, Unidad Xochimilco, 1992).

technical aspects of the Metro, however, left untouched the whole question of design and promotion.<sup>88</sup>

### **My Engagement with the Historiography**

In developing my argument that the Metro is an important lens through which to view post-Cardinas Mexico, I build on these scholarly conversations in three major ways. My argument for the Metro as one expression of Mexico's concern with modernity and nationalism carries forward Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's discussion of the durability of Porfirian concepts that equated modernization with modernity and promoted the connection between technological advancement and promotion of the ancient past of Mexico. I also draw upon Fritzsche and Pred, since the metropolises of Europe provided models of modernity that Mexico self-consciously aspired to match and surpass. In the promotion of the Metro we see a contrast to the narrative about Mexico put forward in Benjamin and Florescano work. Mexican nationalism of the 1960 replaced the narrative of the revolution with a narrative about modernization. The story of the promotion of the Metro as a nationalist effort is the as of yet untold chapter in the evolution of Mexican nationalism after the revolution of 1910.

One of the major contributions of my work is to broaden our understanding of the presidency of Díaz Ordaz. I step back from the narrow focus on the student movement that has marked the work of Poliakowski and many others, and seek to join Zolov, Casteñada, and a growing number of scholars who felt that an examination of the state projects of this period, such as the Olympics and the Metro, was needed to contextualize the struggle between students and the Mexican government. Through examining the Metro I seek to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 1-49.

uncover the vision of Mexico projected and promoted by Diaz Ordaz. Florescano and Benjamin both studied the ways in which national narratives are developed and coopted as states consolidate power. Castenada tied the Olympics and the Metro to the socio-political conflicts in Mexico in the late 1960s, as did Olsen in his exploration of the way architecture evinced the fights within the PRI. Davis established that the Metro was central to the financial problems that eventually would cause the Mexican economy to crash in 1982.

The promotion of the Metro project was a major part of the development of Mexico City in the 1960s. Exploring how the Metro narrative used physical space in the promotion of ideas of modernity and nationalism connects works on the physical history of Mexico City with those on the development of government narratives in the post-revolutionary time period. More recent scholarship also introduces other ways of examining Mexico City. Castañeda was useful for my work because of his focus on the idea of movement in the late 1960s in Mexico City. He explored how “circulation systems” were used to keep visitors to the Olympics away from the poorer neighborhoods in Mexico City. He asserted that funneling spectators through events and art presentations strongly influenced how the Metro was laid out in 1969. Both projects shared architects and planners, many of whom worked for ICA; and both projects promoted a view of a modern Mexico that was still attached to its ancient, cultural roots. Olsen’s notion that buildings were “social meaning in physical form”<sup>89</sup> enriched my analysis of how the names of Metro stations made political points and promoted the Diaz Ordaz’s administration, as did Fritzsche’s discussion of Stockholm street names. Looking backward to find national heroes occurred in Mexico ways that were strikingly similar to what Fritzsche discusses in the case of Sweden. The mythology of recent

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., *x*l.

heroes and the ancient past was similar in both cases, as was the influence of ideas about normalization, order, and progress. The Metro map worked to establish not only how the get around on the Metro system but who is and who is not included in one version of Mexican history. My work in this way builds on Craib's vision of a state that used maps as a form of state power.

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter One examines each strand of the vision of modernity expressed in the promotion of the Metro. Using articles from the newspapers *Excelsior*, *El Sol de Mexico*, *El Día*, and *El Nacional*, I unpack the narrative used to sell the Metro to the Mexican public. In addition, I examine how the original ICA viability report from 1966 promoted the Metro as both modern and ancient, thus as authentically Mexican.

Chapter Two explores the conflict produced when the federal government tried to modernize and transform public transportation in Mexico City leading to the political fight over the Metro between the regent of Mexico City, Ernesto Uruchurtu, and the president of Mexico, Díaz Ordaz, in 1967. This chapter illustrates the complex nature of the Mexican government. Different levels of the administration and different groups of nonstate actors pushed for or fought against the Metro based on their own interests. While Chapter One discusses the press as a public space for promotion of the Metro, Chapter Two shows that this space also could be used to attack and destroy the main public opponent of the Metro.

Chapter Three follows the promotion of the Metro—through station names (taken from streets, monuments, and lost locales near each stop), Metro maps, and station logos. In the second section of this chapter, I focus how three stations, Cuauhtemoc, and Juárez, and



Isabel la Católica illustrate the vicissitudes of celebrity. Changes in political ideology and regime needs affect how the historical past is present to the present day.

Chapter Four explores the key role that archaeology played in the promotional narrative about the Metro. In both the Museum of Anthropology (1964) and the Metro (1967), modern spaces and designs were used to showcase ancient artifacts. The Metro, however, went beyond the Museum of Anthropology in that it not only presented the past in stations such as Bellas Artes but also discovered the past--when a major Aztec pyramid was uncovered during the construction of the Pino Suárez station. I unpack the design and promotion of the Pino Suárez station as the best example of a narrative about the Metro. One station joins the ancient history of the city, a revolutionary hero, and a modern subway station.

Chapter Five focuses on the promotion of the Insurgentes subway. Insurgentes was the flagship of new Metro. Its design was hailed as both modern and yet fully integrated into the history and culture of the city. There was a hidden story to the design of this station, however. Rina Lazo, a famous artist in Mexico who worked with Diego Rivera, was brought in as part of the design team. She reproduced murals from Bonampak in the Museo Nacional de Antropología and did the murals in the Mayan archaeological areas and the downstairs Mayan room at the museum. While working for STC Metro on this project, Lazo was imprisoned in 1968 on charges of aiding the student protests. She claims many of the main aspects of the current station were, in fact, her ideas, though which she was never given credit despite the fact that she has documents that back up her claims. In 1970, she did complete another version of her Reproductions of Bonampak Murals in the Bellas Artes station. This chapter seeks to complicate the promotional narrative about the Metro and to

expose the complex and often conflicted process through which government projects are completed.

This dissertation explores the Mexico City Metro as a monument to one expression of Mexican modernity. I uncover how the process of creative state power works through economic and political relationships to create a physical manifestation of the government right to rule. Through examining the overt and hidden narratives of the Metro I connect it to the political context of the 1960s, illustrate that the Mexican government of this time was a complex entity and in no way monolithic, and analyze the presentation of nationalism and modernity expressed in the promotion of the Metro.

## Chapter 1: Metro Promotion 1967-1970

From 1967 through the opening of all three Metro lines in 1970, articles about the subway appeared in the three major newspapers of Mexico City. In addition to these articles, in 1966 Ingenieros Civiles Asociados released its initial viability report that was for government eyes only. In all of these documents, we see the Metro promoted in a similar way. On the one hand, newspaper articles discussed the technical aspects of the Metro and compared it to the subways of European cities, linking public transportation to nations' rise to wealth and power. Mexico City could be like London if it built a Tube. On the other hand, the Metro was also promoted as a domestic Mexican achievement that continued the tradition of grand projects through Mexico's history. Just as the Aztecs built the Templo Mayor and the Spanish built the Cathedral, the current government would produce a subway built, designed, and used by Mexicans.

Modernization equals nationalism. The print media was the main forum for the government to express what the Metro was and to promote it to the Mexican people. Articles were released in three main periods. The first group comes from the time before the Metro was built and explained why the Metro should be built. These articles examined the Metro systems of other cities and presented the problems that would be solved by the Metro. *El Sol*, for example, on June 27 1967, asked, "Why the Metro?" This article argued that the "grand problems of Mexico cannot wait. The Metro will transform the city as Metros have done in Paris, London and Tokyo."<sup>1</sup> This first period of Metro promotion began in April of 1967, when the new Regent of Mexico City publicly stated the city would "consider with all

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<sup>1</sup> "¿Por qué el Metro?" *El Sol*, June 27, 1967. Original Spanish: los grandes problemas de México no pueden esperar. El Metro va a transformar la ciudad como otros Metros han hecho en París, Londres y Tokio.

seriousness the construction of a public transportation system”<sup>2</sup> and ended in June of 1967, when construction began.

The second group of promotional articles appeared during Metro construction between June 1967 and the opening of the first line in September 1969. The articles followed the construction process, promoting its rapidity and modernity, and announced the archaeological discoveries along the way. On July 29, 1967, for example, “The Fascinating Progress of Metro Construction” in *El Sol* showed how some of the tunnels were dug and, once again, insisted that building the Metro would be rapid. Speed equaled modernity, and the Metro was fast.<sup>3</sup> During this time, *Excélsior* ran a series titled “Rutas del Metro” in which early Metro maps and construction plans were discussed. The first station names and logos appeared as early as January 1968. Subsequent articles closely followed the archaeological discoveries at both the Zócalo and Pino Suárez Metro stations. During the Olympics of 1968, the Metro was promoted as an example of “Mexico on the rise. A country meeting the challenges of the modern age and moving forward.”<sup>4</sup>

The final group of articles came out between September 1969, when Line One opened, and August 1970, when the final station on Line Three, Pino Suárez, opened. These articles again promoted the Metro as modern as well as ancient. They celebrated the rapidity with which the Metro was built and introduced the populace to fundamental aspects of riding a Metro. These articles can be seen as a victory lap. They promote how well and how fast the Metro was constructed and show the massive numbers of people already riding the subway in

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<sup>2</sup> “Transportes,” *Excélsior*, April 29, 1967. Original Spanish: Vamos a considerar con toda seriedad la construcción de un sistema de transporte público.

<sup>3</sup> “El fascinante avance de construcción de Metro,” *El Sol*, July 14, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> “Desafíos de la época moderna,” *Excélsior*, October 1, 1968. Original Spanish: México en aumento. Un país frente a los retos de la era moderna y salir adelante.

its first few weeks. *El Sol*'s special edition, "Nuestra urbe entra a la era del Metro," retraced Metro construction, boasting that 50 kilometers a day had been built. It also introduced the riders to "the proper location to stand and wait for the train and the proper way to enter a Metro train."<sup>5</sup> An article the following day in *El Día* claimed that 10,000 Mexican rode the subway on its first day.<sup>6</sup>

This promotional narrative celebrated both technical and cultural aspects of the Metro. During the first period of Metro promotion, between April 1967 and June 1969 when construction began, the traffic problems in the city were focused on. A high speed subway would make technologically sophisticated city like Paris and London. Culturally, articles during the first period proclaimed the Metro as authentically Mexican because each era in Mexican history, from the Aztecs through the Revolution of 1910, had its own form of transportation and its own great public works projects: from the canoes of the Aztecs, to the horse and motorcar; from the Templo Mayor to the Cathedral.

During the second period of Metro promotion, from the beginning of construction in June 1967 to the opening of the first line in September 1969, the technical aspects and rapidity of digging the tunnels and building the system were the main focus. Culturally, major archaeological finds were celebrated as integrating the modern Metro with ancient achievements. During the final period of promotion, after all of three lines opened in 1970, newspaper articles focused on the technological elegance of the finished system: its rapidity and safety compared favorably with subways around the world. The corresponding cultural

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<sup>5</sup> "Nuesrta urbe entra a la era del Metro," *El Sol*, September 2, 1969. Original Spanish: El lugar apropiado para esperar el tren y la forma correcta de entrar en un tren de Metro.

<sup>6</sup> "El Metro," *El Día*, September 3, 1969.

focus told stories of Mexicans using the Metro as well as the ways in which the Metro presented the ancient past within its modern stations.

### **ICA and the Viability Report of 1966**

Before any of these public promotional documents were released, ICA made a report for the Mexican government. This report, titled *Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la ciudad de Mexico*, lays out both the technical reasons for building the Metro and many of the cultural arguments later used to promote the Metro as a system fully integrated into the city's and the nation's history.

Given I.C.A's connections with President Díaz Ordaz and the victory of pro-Metro forces with both the PRI and Mexico City politics,<sup>7</sup> the report is not about whether to build a Metro but about why Mexico needed a Metro and why ICA should do the job. This report never was released to the public. Its audience was the Mexican government, and specifically the Regent of Mexico City. Since 1952, all projects of this magnitude had to come directly through the mayor's office. If there would be a Metro, ICA first had to convince the Regent it was a good idea. In 1966, a new Regent took over. His name was Alfonso Corona del Rosal. The previous Regent of twelve years, Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, was a staunch opponent of the subway. By the time Corona del Rosal took office in October 1966, I.C.A already had everything in place to make its push for the Metro project. Rosal, in a 1980 article titled "Montreal and Mexico City: The Future in Transportation," expressed his surprise at the readiness of I.C.A to build the Metro in 1967:

Imagine my surprise when one day after I publicly announced that the city would consider all options to solve the transportation problems, Bernardo Quintana invited me to his home for dinner. After a good meal and conversation, he took me into another room and there was an entire presentation about the Metro. He had diagrams,

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 2 for a full account of the demise of the anti-Metro coalition.

model trains and a three hundred-page viability report; the next day I got a call from the president. He asked if I liked the report ... again I was surprised that he clearly had already read it.<sup>8</sup>

This anecdote shows that the ICA report was not really about the question of viability. ICA knew it could build the Metro, and it knew that it had the political backing to do so. ICA had unprecedented access to the highest echelons of power. By 1966, the official bodies that made transportation policy--both in Mexico City and at a national level--were dominated by current and former ICA employees. The Secretary of Public Works from 1964-1967 was Javier Barros Sierra, a current employee of ICA; he later became the rector of the National University. Another ICA employee, Carlos Lazo, who worked on the Ciudad Universitaria project, replaced Barros Sierra as secretary of Public Works in 1968. The Sub-Secretary of Public Works also was an ICA employee, Fernando Espinoza. Within the Sistema de Transporte Colectivo--the institution charged with overseeing public transportation prior to the Metro and preparing the reports for the government of Mexico City on transportation needs and passenger information--every director from the creation of this body in 1958 until its merger into STC-Metro in 1970 was a former or current ICA employee. From 1966 on, ICA and the pro-Metro coalition had an ally in the rency who would follow direction from their biggest political ally, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.

The influence of ICA was not just political. On a personal level, the first lady of Mexico, Guadalupe Borja de Díaz Ordaz, was related to founders of ICA, Angel Borja Navarette and Gilberto Borja de Navarette. When Angel was married in June 1965, five former presidents of Mexico (Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, Manuel Ávila Camacho, Miguel Alemán Valdés, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, and Adolfo López Mateos), the current president

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<sup>8</sup> "Montreal and Mexico City: The Future of Public Transportation," *New York Times*, August 14, 1980.

(Díaz Ordaz), and two future presidents (Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo) attended his wedding and reception. Perhaps one of the greatest assets ICA had was that its founder, Bernardo Quintana Arriola, was “a common guest at Los Pinos (the presidential residence) since the days of Alemán.”<sup>9</sup> These personal relationships helped propel ICA into prominence in the construction industry in Mexico.<sup>10</sup>

The ICA report begins by celebrating the Metro as both an expression of Mexican greatness and the fulfillment of a European-inspired idea of modernity. The idea of a Mexicanized modernity, developed both rhetorically and physically in other ICA projects, blossomed in this document.

One can speak of the Mexico of the Templo Mayor of the Aztecs ... of the Mexico of the Cathedral, of the Mexico of UNAM and the Mexico of the Olympics. One can speak of these references because each of the works gave its name to an era of Mexican planning. One can speak of the Mexico of the Metro because the Metro begins a new era in Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

The argument that public works defined entire eras is important because it came back again and again in reference to the Metro. The Aztecs had the Templo Mayor, the Spanish had their Cathedral, and Mexico of the 1950s and 1960 had La Ciudad Universitaria and the Olympics. These last two spaces were centers of technical progress and international recognition. The Metro (as the next logical step in this narrative) also is such a project. Drawing parallels

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<sup>9</sup> “Bernardo Quintana: Mexican Builder,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1977. Los Pinos is the presidential residence.

<sup>10</sup> This personal relationship was displayed in 1972 when Luis Echeverría personally asked ICA to finish a drainage project begun by another company. It also is evident in an article in which Alfonso Corona del Rosal, new Regent of Mexico City, is invited to Bernardo Quintana’s house for dinner and finds a scale model of the Metro in his living room. While their children play and their wives talk, they do business about the Metro. The very fact that ICA had this kind of access, the major figures, illustrates their power inside the Mexican state.

<sup>11</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la Ciudad de México,” 1966, Documentos, Documento 21, Archivo de ICA, Mexico City (Hereafter, AICA), Caja 7. Original Spanish: Se puede hablar de un México de Templo Mayor de los Aztecas...de un México de la Catedral, de un México de la Ciudad Universitaria, de un México de la Olimpia. Se puede hablar de con estas referencias porque cada obra de las que dan nombre a estos Méxicos entran a una actitud de planificación; porque no podemos hablar de un México del Metro, porque con el Metro se inaugura una nueva etapa de la modernidad y la planificación.



between the current government and other famous eras in Mexican history was an attempt to legitimize the current regime by placing it within Mexican history. States are builders.

ICA opened the next section of the report claiming outright that “The Metro is the most modern and efficient transportation for Mexico City.”<sup>12</sup> The report listed seven main problems with the current transportation system in D.F. and then gave nine “Fundamental Principles of the Metro.”<sup>13</sup> One is “Excessive Demand.”<sup>14</sup> The Metro was needed because many more people required transportation than could currently be accommodated. Second, buses were not the solution because “many bus lines and trolleys’ operate without any coordination.”<sup>15</sup> The report thus demonized the competition. The buses and trolleys that currently serviced Mexico City were woefully inadequate. Buses also caused “serious congestion,” since 74% of them went into the downtown area. Third, no terminals for transportation existed in this area. Transportation needed to be consolidated. Fourth, buses polluted the air. Fifth, buses and trolleys were overcrowded, unsafe, and slow. Sixth: “The speed of buses and trolleys in the Centro is slower than someone can walk.”<sup>16</sup> In all of its rhetoric about its projects, nothing characterized modernity more than velocity. The speed at which something was built evinced modern planning; the speed at which something moved signaled a modern machine. Inefficiency and slowness were out of date. Finally, many work hours were lost due to transportation, and this scenario “must be dealt with before the nation can move forward.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 3. Original Spanish: El Metro es el transporte más moderno y eficiente para la ciudad de México.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5. Original Spanish: Principios fundamentales del Metro.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 4. Original Spanish: Demanda excesiva...

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34. Original Spanish: muchas líneas de autobús y los carros operan sin ninguna coordinación.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 35-40. Original Spanish: La velocidad de autobuses y trolebuses en el centro de la ciudad menor incluso a la de una persona caminando.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 42. Original Spanish: debe ser tratado de antes de que la nación pueda moverse adelante.

Nine answers to the transportation problems were presented at the end of the report. These answers reintroduced the question of congestion, as a way to defend the subway project against a potentially serious critique. Buses went into the centro not because all of their riders were disembarking there but because there was no way to get around the periphery of Mexico City without going through the downtown. The subway would “give service to the most congested zones and therefore eliminate the need for surface transportation.”<sup>18</sup> Buses went into the centro not because all of their riders were going there but because there was no way to get around the periphery of Mexico City without going through the centro and because all other buses went through the centro. If one company went there, then others did as well. Because the bus system was much less expensive to operate than building an entire Metro, it was a prime target for pro-Metro propaganda. Bus companies also were a major supporters of the mayor of Mexico City, who opposed the Metro project.<sup>19</sup>

Another common critique of the Metro was that its construction would destroy older sections of the city. In 1963, a report from city authorities stated: “The excavation of tunnels in the city center will most likely cause the destruction of old buildings and the interruption of archaeological activities.”<sup>20</sup> The 1966 report, however, stated that “the constant and disorganized bus traffic continues to damage the history of the old city.”<sup>21</sup> The Metro will lead “to the discovery of archaeological items and the preservation of old buildings. Now

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 66. Original Spanish: El Metro dará servicio a las zonas más congestionadas y por lo tanto, eliminar la necesidad de transporte de superficie.

<sup>19</sup> For more detail about this issue, please see Chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> Departamento del Distrito Federal, *Protección y desarrollo en el primer cuadrante* (México: DDF, 1963), 75. Original Spanish: La excavación de túneles en el centro de ciudad llevará muy probablemente a la destrucción de edificios antiguos y a la interrupción de actividades arqueológicas.

<sup>21</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la ciudad de México.” AICA, Caja 7. Original Spanish: el tráfico constante y desorganizada bus sigue a dañar la historia de la ciudad vieja.

free from bus traffic, they could be restored.”<sup>22</sup> The ICA report was responding to a major critique of the subway project—that its construction would destroy older sections of the city. In 1963, a report from city authorities stated: “The excavation of tunnels in the city center will most likely cause the destruction of old buildings and the interruption of archaeological activities.”<sup>23</sup> The ICA report in 1966, however, stated that “the constant and disorganized bus traffic continues to damage the history of the old city.”<sup>24</sup> The Metro will lead “to the discovery of archaeological items and the preservation of old buildings. Now free from bus traffic, they could be restored.”<sup>25</sup> The report turned the tables on the idea that the building of the Metro would destroy the history of the city. Instead, the report claimed the Metro would discover and preserve Mexico City’s past. Buses were actually the destroyers of the historic center of the city.

The ICA claim for the Metro as the solution for downtown is suspect for several reasons.

1) If buses traveled through the city center only because they connected there to other buses, then it would have been much cheaper and would have served more people to simply reroute the buses.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 67. Original Spanish: el descubrimiento de elementos arqueológicos y la conservación del antiguo edificio. Ahora libre de tráfico de autobuses, que serán restaurados.

<sup>23</sup> Departamento del Distrito Federal, *Protección y desarrollo en el primer cuadrante*, 75. Original Spanish: La excavación de túneles en el centro de ciudad llevará muy probablemente a la destrucción de edificios antiguos y a la interrupción de actividades arqueológicas.

<sup>24</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la ciudad de México Mexico City,” AICA, Caja 7. Original Spanish: el tráfico de los autobuses constantes y desorganizados sigue dañando la historia de la ciudad vieja.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 67. Original Spanish: el descubrimiento de elementos arqueológicos y la conservación de los edificios antiguos. Ahora libre de tráfico de autobuses, serán restaurados.

2) Past technological experience dictates starting with a central network and expanding as time and money allow.”<sup>26</sup> Here we see ICA adapting a European model. But obviously, central Mexico City was quite different from central London in the late nineteenth century. The centro, by the 1960s, was neither a commercial hub nor a residential one. If conventional logic said that subways should link worker and workplace, starting the Metro in the centro did not make sense. The only way that a central location would link worker and workplace was if, in the future, the centro could develop into a commercial and tourism hub. Because ICA owned property in the centro and was developing commercial properties and condos there, their vision of a central location for the metro looked not to the past but to the future. In the five years before the building of the Metro, ICA was the number one buyer of property along the subway route. It would continue this pattern through the 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

3) The report also claimed that people who lived in the peripheral areas of Mexico City didn’t need a Metro because they were already close to their places of work.

4) The report claimed that congestion was worse in the Centro. Once again, we are provided no proof of this. We have no idea how it was compared to other areas of the city, “Congestion, in the Center, is not congestion in the city but congestion of the city. The Center is the heart of Mexico. The traffic and pollution in the heart kills the body, country, and nation.”<sup>28</sup> This is rhetoric, not argument. Downtown congestion, caused by buses, was killing Mexico. Only the Metro can save the heart and the nation of Mexico.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>27</sup> Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 143.

<sup>28</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la ciudad de México,” AICA, Caja 7. Original Spanish: Original Spanish: La congestión, en el centro, no es congestión en la ciudad sino congestión de la ciudad. El centro es el corazón de México. El tráfico y la contaminación en el corazón mata el cuerpo, el país, la nación.

5) Given that the Metro was a project supported and partially funded by the Mexican state, the importance of the transformation of the downtown area cannot be overstated. The Zócalo and its surrounding urban area were the center of state power in Mexico for a very long time. The Zócalo was the location of the Templo Mayor. Then it was the center of Spanish church and state power. Then it was the plaza of the constitution. The Emperor Maximilian built La Reforma to link Chapultepec Castle, where he and his army lived, to the Zócalo. Porfirio Díaz expanded La Reforma during the 1870s as an expression of the modernization. Then post-revolutionary governments renamed the streets around the Zócalo for heroes of the Revolution of 1910.

The downtown was transformed once again when the Metro became a showcase for Díaz Ordaz and his 1960's-era ideas of modernity. In a 1978 analysis of the city, architect Mario Pani stated, "The central territory represents the origin, the center of the nationality. The importance of the central territory is power. Religious power. Political power and economic power."<sup>29</sup> The historical importance of the central area of Mexico City is the main reason the Metro project began there.

Finally, ICA sealed the deal by putting forward a daring plan, which they claimed would solve the problems of building a subway in an active earthquake zone with watery soil. Mexico City was built on a lake, so the subsoil is high in water content. Different levels of compression create uneven and unstable areas. The city rises and falls as one walks, and currently it is sinking at an alarming rate.<sup>30</sup> In 1962, ICA established the only lab in Mexico for the study of subsoil and the development of technologies for building on it. In "1965 ICA

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<sup>29</sup> Manuel Larrosa, *Mario Pani: Arquitecta de su Epoca* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1985), 45. Original Spanish: Original Spanish: La congestión, en el centro, no es congestión en la ciudad sino congestión de la ciudad. El centro es el corazón de México. El tráfico y la contaminación en el corazón mata el cuerpo, el país, la nación.

<sup>30</sup> Ángel Borja Navarrete, *Treinta años de hacer el Metro: Ciudad de México* (México: Grupo ICA, 1997), 15.

developed a technology based on its other projects.”<sup>31</sup> This technique involved the use of short-crete, a quick-drying concrete, and a metal grid of re-bars. First, trenches were dug out. Then, after the trenches were filled with concrete and rbar, the dirt between them was removed, and the steel beams were placed across the intervening space, forming what ICA termed “el cajón,” the box, or outer shell of the Metro tunnels. These walls were driven deep into the ground. First, first about five meters. Once secured, they would then be driven deeper and deeper. The total depth varied because some areas had different compaction in the soil.

The box “is a rectangular structure of internal templates, horizontal and vertical, that overlap in the straight and curved sections, allowing the movement of rolling stock.”<sup>32</sup> Another cajón, called the interior cajón, is placed inside the outer walls. Numerous stages of construction and excavation ensure that large spaces could be dug out and secured for stations. In locations where the subsoil was particularly bad, special structures were designed, while in areas where compaction of soil was solid, standard boxes were used.<sup>33</sup> While technologies changed somewhat in the later stages of development, this basic structure served well for the first three lines. The outer box could move somewhat within the watery subsoil, while the inner box, through which the trains pass, did not. ICA engineers seemed very sure of the safety of their system. “This system allows us to drive the walls in very

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 83. Original Spanish: 1965 los ingenieros de ICA ya han desarrollado una tecnología basada en el aplicación de diversos aplicaciones y grandes obras.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 144. Original Spanish: Es una estructura rectangular de gálibos internos, horizontal y vertical, suficientes en los tramos en tangente y en curva, que permite la circulación del material rodante.

<sup>33</sup> For an exhaustive explanation of the engineering of the tunnels, see Ángel Borja Navarrete, *Treinta Años de Hacer El Metro*, 1-75.

deeply. This gives us a space in which to work. We remove the dirt and put in the floor. Then the second box is then placed on this floor.”<sup>34</sup>

Another major factor in construction was weight. ICA made sure that the new construction planted in the ground weighed no more than the mud and dirt coming out. In this way, the stations and tunnels would not sink. Weight also was distributed away from the main track into the surrounding structure by connecting the bottom-level floor and the outer cajón. Distribution of the weight ensured the stability of the structure as a whole. Great internal debate ensued among ICA engineers about whether the train tunnel should be round or rectangular. In Paris, for example, the tunnels were round, making them easier to fit through tight spaces. It did not, however, provide good security against earthquakes. ICA decided on a square tunnel. This design, as expressed in the viability report, exemplifies how Mexican engineers adapted foreign technology to a Mexican situation.

The soundness of this decision was tested in 1985, when on the morning of September 19, 1985 a magnitude 8.3 earthquake rocked Mexico City. Estimates of the loss range to up to 10,000 people dead, 415 destroyed buildings and \$2 billion in damages. The entire Metro system survived, unaffected. During the following days, it remained the only way in and out of the central areas of the city that were destroyed by the quake.

### **Stage One of the Metro Project: April to June 1967**

Díaz Ordaz became president in 1964. His first *Informe*, or state of the union address, in September 1965, mentioned public transportation as a major issue. In the *Excelsior*

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 148. Original Spanish: : Este sistema permite que metamos las paredes profundamente. Esto nos da un espacio donde trabajar. Despejamos la suciedad nuestra y ponemos el piso. Entonces la segunda caja se coloca sobre este piso.

outline of the speech, one section is called “Obras grandes.” While not mentioning the Metro by name, Díaz Ordaz states that:

Transportation is one of the largest issues facing the City of Mexico. The Mexican government has a responsibility to face all challenges of the modern era. Can this problem be solved? This is not the question. The question is how should it be solved and how quickly can we solve it.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the Regent of Mexico City, Ernesto P. Uruchurtu was slowing any talk of a new Metro system. Díaz Ordaz’s making transportation a major issue put increased pressure on the Regent. Through 1966, the focus of the media remained on the preparations for the 1968 Olympics. An *El Sol* article on April 14, 1966, said, “Obras Públicas (Public Works) is now completely focused on completion of all Olympic projects. Despite this focus the debate on transportation continues.”<sup>36</sup> As Davis outlines, this was a period of intense struggle between pro-Metro and anti-Metro forces within the PRI. This conflict led to the resignation of Regent Uruchurtu in 1967.<sup>37</sup>

Within weeks after Corona del Rosal took over as Regent of Mexico City, he stated, “Mexico City will now examine many different plans for public transportation.”<sup>38</sup> In April 1967, he officially announced that Mexico City would build a Metro system.

Between this statement in April 1967 and the beginning of construction two months later, all three major newspapers were flooded with Metro-related news. *El Día* ran a full-

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<sup>35</sup> “Obras grandes,” *Excelsior*, September 14, 1965. Original Spanish: El transporte es uno de los problemas más grandes que enfrenta la Ciudad de México. El gobierno mexicano tiene la responsabilidad de enfrentar todos los desafíos de la era moderna. ¿Puede solucionar este problema? Esto no es la cuestión. La pregunta es ¿cómo debe resolverse y cuán rápido podemos solucionarlo.

<sup>36</sup> “Obras,” *El Sol*, April 14, 1966. Original Spanish: Obras Públicas se centró por completo en la terminación de todos los proyectos Olímpicos. A pesar de este enfoque sigue el debate sobre el transporte.

<sup>37</sup> Diane E. Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy, 1964-1976: Pro- and Anti-Urban Growth Coalitions, National Development Strategies, and the State” (Ph.D. Diss., UCLA, 1994), 144-165.

<sup>38</sup> “Nuevas ideas sobre transportes,” *El Día*, October 4, 1966. Original Spanish: La ciudad de México examinará ahora muchos planes diferentes para el transporte público.



page special titled “Metros of the World,” which traced the development of major European cities in relation to the construction of their subway systems. Both Paris and London “developed a life underground as their cities and empires grew.”<sup>39</sup> The “man of Paris, a man of the modern era, glides through the city of lights in a beautiful and functional underground city.”<sup>40</sup> This article seeks to integrate Mexico City into a group including these hyper-modern European cities. Modern cities have Metros. Thus, for Mexico City to join this elite group, it must also have one. Mirroring this article, *El Sol* ran an article a month later called: “London Paris Tokyo and New York...why Not Mexico City?” This article went on: “For Mexico City to take her rightful place among the modern nations of the world she must have the tools. Transportation is key for prosperity.”<sup>41</sup>

The Metro also could solve major issues within Mexico City. On May 19, *Excélsior* published an editorial under the headline, “The grand problems of D.F.,” and argued that “drainage, housing and transportation are the main issues facing the city right now. How will our government move forward on these issues? The people must demand answers. In this modern era there should be no problem that technology and Mexican ingenuity cannot solve.”<sup>42</sup> The Metro was the answer.

Another narrative put forward during this first promotional period was that great projects defined entire eras and even civilizations. In June 1967, *Excélsior* reprinted a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: desarrollaron una vida subterránea en donde sus ciudades y los imperios crecieron.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: el hombre de París, un hombre de la era moderna, se desliza a través de la ciudad de las luces en un bello y función ciudad subterránea.

<sup>41</sup> “London, Paris, Tokyo y New York...por que no D.F.,” *El Día*, May 3, 1967. Original Spanish: Para que la ciudad de México tomar su lugar que le corresponde entre las Naciones del mundo modernas debe tener las herramientas. El transporte es clave para la prosperidad.

<sup>42</sup> “Los Grandes Problemas de D.F.,” *El Día*, May 19, 1967. Original Spanish: Drenaje, vivienda y transporte son el principal problema que enfrenta la ciudad ahora. ¿Cómo avanzará nuestro gobierno sobre estos temas? El pueblo debe exigir respuestas. En esta era moderna no debe haber ningún problema que no pueden resolver la tecnología y el ingenio mexicano.

section of the 1966 Viability Report by ICA. This article, titled “Civilization and Forms of Transportation,” traced Mexican history back to the Aztecs. It assigned each era in Mexican history a form of transportation. The Aztecs had their canoes, the Spaniards their horses, then automobiles, and now was the time for the Metro. While Mexicans of past eras built their temples and palaces, today we build museums. We build universities and now we build the Metro. The creative spirit of our age is one of promotion of Mexican culture for all people and the era of grand works in the service of the people.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Stage Two of Metro Project: June 1967 to September 1969**

Construction began on the Metro on June 17, 1967, at the intersection of Chapultepec Avenue and Bucareli Street. *Excélsior*, *El Sol*, and *El Día* all ran front-page articles, accompanied by a photograph of Regent Rosal, shovel in hand, overseeing the launch of construction.<sup>44</sup> During this time, the technical aspects of digging the tunnels and building the stations were juxtaposed with the archaeological finds and the designs of the stations.

Between June 1967 and September 1969, three main narratives dominated news coverage of the Metro construction. First, the newspapers followed the progress of the digging of the tunnels and construction of the stations. *Excélsior* reprinted sections of the viability report about how the tunnels were built. Many of these articles emphasized the speed of construction. Others praised Mexican workers. *El Sol*, in August 1967, said,

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<sup>43</sup> “Problemas de D.F.,” *Excélsior*, July 1, 1967. Original Spanish: Mientras que construyeron sus templos y palacios, hoy construimos museos. Construimos las universidades y ahora construimos el Metro. El espíritu creativo de nuestra época es uno de promoción de la cultura mexicana para todas las personas y la época de grandes obras en el servicio de la gente.

<sup>44</sup> “Nació el Metro!” *El Día*, June 19, 1967. “El Metro!” *Excélsior*, June 20, 1967, and “Metro a hoy,” *El Sol*, June 20, 1967.

“Thousands of Mexican workers transform the subsoil of our city every day. Through their labors the future takes shape.”<sup>45</sup>

Second, the papers followed the archaeological discoveries made at both the Zócalo and Pino Suárez. Each new find was explored in detail. An *Excélsior* article from December 1967 said, “The discoveries made already constitute a major step in the understanding and preservation of Mexican heritage and culture. What will come in the next years? We can only imagine.”<sup>46</sup>

Finally, the Metro was promoted in the context of the 1968 Olympics. Several *El Sol* articles outlined the tours of unfinished Metro systems that the government gave to officials from other countries. Also, the escalators, video cameras, ticket booths, and other technical aspects of the Metro system were the subject of their own articles. In many cases, several strands of the promotional narrative about the Metro were interwoven. An article in *El Nacional* in March 1968, celebrated the “extreme speed with which the Metro project progresses,” while mentioning the “treasured archaeological objects being unearthed every day,” and ending with the “government’s sworn duty is to construct the Mexico of the future, while saving the Mexico of the past.”<sup>47</sup>

The first month after construction began was filled with articles promoting the speed with which the Metro was being built and the benefits of the finished system. *El Sol* said on

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<sup>45</sup> “Los Trabajadores Mexicanos y el Metro,” *Excélsior*, August 12, 1967. Original Spanish: Miles de trabajadores mexicanos transforman el subsuelo de nuestra ciudad todos los días. A través de sus labores el futuro toma forma.

<sup>46</sup> “Descubrimientos Arqueológicos y el Metro,” *Excélsior*, December 4, 1967. Original Spanish: Los descubrimientos realizados ya constituyen a un importante paso en la comprensión y la preservación de la herencia mexicana y la cultura. ¿Lo que vendrá en los próximos años? Sólo podemos imaginar.

<sup>47</sup> “El Metro,” *El Nacional*, March 14, 1967. Original Spanish: Gobernantes encantados por la extrema velocidad con los avances del proyecto de Metro... Hay objetos arqueológicos atesorados siendo desenterrados cada día... Es el deber del gobierno para construir el México del futuro, mientras que ahorra el México del pasado.

June 14, “As workers break into the earth to build the Metro a new era has begun.”<sup>48</sup>

*Excélsior* agreed. “The Mexican workers, combined with the most modern technology, make the pace of progress so rapid.”<sup>49</sup> In a special Sunday edition of *Excélsior* in October 1967, we see the first glimpse of a Metro station. The article, titled “What’s in San Lázaro?,” details the “advanced system for safety of all riders.” It also promotes the “sleek and efficient design of the ticket booths in order to ensure fast passage of all passengers through the station and on to the trains.”<sup>50</sup> The article ends by promoting the many benefits of fast travel, including “less time lost on the way to work. More time at home with family. As transportation increases efficiency, the Mexican people become more efficient.”<sup>51</sup> Here we see that through faster transportation infrastructure, the Mexican people themselves will be transformed. By the end of 1967, the Metro project “was progressing faster than anyone could imagine. We have succeeded in digging very quickly. This puts us on pace to finish the entire Metro by early 1969.”<sup>52</sup>

On New Year’s Day in 1968, *El Día*’s front page read, “This year will be decisive for the construction of the Metro.”<sup>53</sup> Work on Line One “was coming along exactly as planned.

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<sup>48</sup> “El Metro una Nueva Era,” *El Sol*, June 19, 1967. Original Spanish: Como los trabajadores entrar en la tierra para construir el metro ha comenzado una nueva era.

<sup>49</sup> “El Proyecto de Metro progresa rápidamente,” *Excélsior*, June 24, 1967. Original Spanish: Los trabajadores mexicanos, combinado con la más moderna tecnología, hace tan rápido que el ritmo del progreso.

<sup>50</sup> “¿Qué es San Lázaro?” *Excélsior*, October 24, 1967. Original Spanish: Un sistema avanzado para la seguridad de todos los pasajeros y el diseño elegante y eficiente de las taquillas para asegurar más allá de la aprobación de todos los pasajeros a través de la estación y los trenes.

<sup>51</sup> “El Metro gana tiempo para trabajadores y familias,” *Excélsior*, October 24, 1967. Original Spanish: menos tiempo perdido en el camino al trabajo. Más tiempo en casa con la familia. Como transporte aumenta la eficiencia, el pueblo mexicano se vuelvan más eficiente.

<sup>52</sup> “Construcción de metro van rápido,” *Excélsior*, December 4, 1967. Original Spanish: El proyecto está avanzando más rápido que nadie podría imaginar. Hemos logrado cavar muy rápidamente. Esto nos pone el ritmo para terminar el Metro entero por principios de 1969.

<sup>53</sup> “Metro,” *El Día*, January 1, 1968. Original Spanish: Este año será decisivo para la construcción del Metro.

The rapidity and efficiency is like nothing seen before.”<sup>54</sup> In this same article, the upcoming archaeological work was highlighted. As workers “get closer to the Zócalo and the center of the city we have much work to do. The discoveries made already have been marvelous. This project will greatly expand our knowledge of the history of the city.”<sup>55</sup> The technologically advanced Metro is promoted as both a part of the future of Mexico and the savior of its past.

By January 18, officials with D.F(Federal District of Mexico City) were “promising that by October or November Line One would be completed.”<sup>56</sup> Officials again touted the speed of construction when they said that 5.5 kilometers had been tunneled out. They claimed that “this was the fastest project of its kind in the world.”<sup>57</sup> The next day, articles in *Excélsior* and *El Día* had pictures of the trains from France. Government officials “unveiled the rolling stock that was purchased in France for use by D.F. Metro. They hope that the first line will be ready for rolling stock by the month of June 1969.”<sup>58</sup>

The speed of construction was brought up again on February 7 in an article in *El Día*, “Metro construction advances at 48 meters a day.”<sup>59</sup> By late February 1968, officials at STC Metro claimed, “Everything is ahead of schedule. Working with such advanced technology and the fortitude of the Mexican worker, we have surpassed our expectations.”<sup>60</sup> February and March also brought an increase in the publication of articles about the archaeological

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<sup>54</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, January 1, 1968. Original Spanish: Construcción fue progresando exactamente como planeado. La rapidez y la eficiencia es como nada visto antes.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Cuando nos acerquemos al zócalo y el centro de la ciudad que tenemos mucho trabajo por hacer. Los descubrimientos hechos ya han sido maravillosos. Este proyecto se expandirá mucho conocimiento de la historia de la ciudad.

<sup>56</sup> “Metro listo en octubre,” *El Día*, January 18, 1968. Original Spanish: Ellos fueron prometiendo que en octubre o noviembre línea uno se completaría.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: el Metro era el proyecto más rápido de todo tipo en el mundo.

<sup>58</sup> “Tecnología Francesa y el Metro,” *El Día*, January 19, 1968. Original Spanish: dio a conocer el rodante que fue comprada en Francia para su uso en D.F. Metro. Esperan que la primera línea estará lista para el material rodante para el mes de junio de 1969.

<sup>59</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, February 7, 1968. Original Spanish: La construcción del Metro avanza en 48 metros al día.

<sup>60</sup> “Metro,” *Excélsior*, February 22, 1968. Original Spanish: Todo es antes de lo previsto. Trabajar con tal tecnología avanzada y la fortaleza del trabajador mexicano, hemos superado expectativas.

finds made during Metro construction. During this period, newspapers in Mexico City published articles every week, sometimes twice a week, about the discoveries. On March 4, for example, an *El Día* article titled, “It is our scientific and civic obligation to know the guts of our city,”<sup>61</sup> outlined the ways in which the archaeological discoveries uncovered the ancient past. Ariel Valencia Ramírez, an archaeologist working on the Metro project, said:

Archaeological work is important for all humanity. The rescue of human remains is very important since the entrails of the city where we live are now open; this recovery of remains and of artifacts is both our civic and our scientific obligation for Mexicans and for the people of the world. We have already found 2 million pieces including an Aztec ceremonial cup, a fragment of a 40 cm of height of statue of Ehecatl. In Pino Suárez and Izazaga excavations are on going on the pyramid Toci that was already located in 1962 by professor Francisco Gonzáles. As the construction of the Metro progresses this archaeological work always continues as well.<sup>62</sup>

This passage explains the ways in which finding the history of Mexico City in the earth was essential for Mexicans—as well as a gift for all of humanity. The Metro allowed Mexico to share its culture with the world. While the foreign technology came into Mexico to build the Metro, everyone could share cultural items found. Through building the Metro, Mexico was united with the world’s cultural heritage. Throughout the summer of 1968, promotion of both the Metro and the Olympics picked up speed. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> *El Día* claimed the Metro “will transform the city as never before. The concept of modernism has been

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<sup>61</sup> “El deber de los Ciudadanos,” *El Día*, March 4, 1968. Original Spanish: Es un científico y obligación cívica para saber el valor de nuestra ciudad.

<sup>62</sup> “Los Trabajos Arqueológicos,” *El Día*, March 4, 1968. Original Spanish: Los trabajos arqueológicos es importante para toda la humanidad. El rescate de los restos humanos es muy importante desde las entrañas de una ciudad donde vivimos y ahora abrir: esta recuperación de los restos y artefactos es nuestra cívica y nuestra obligación científica para los mexicanos y para la gente del mundo. Ya hemos encontrado piezas 2 millones, incluyendo una copa ceremonial Azteca, un fragmento de una 40 cm de altura de la estatua de Ehecatl. En Pino Suárez y Izazaga excavaciones están pasando la pirámide Toci que ya se encontraba en 1962 por el profesor Francisco Gonzales. Como la construcción de los progresos de Metro este trabajo arqueológico sigue así.

mixed with Mexican history and ingenuity to produce the modern Metropolis.”<sup>63</sup> Another article, on May 16, overtly linked the Metro with the Olympics as a larger plan to transform the city:

The Metro has accelerated the transformation of the Metropolis. Projects like the Metro, the Olympic works, the plazas remodeled, the new social centers, popular markets, park beautification and regeneration of neighborhoods as well as the modification of the Zona Rosa, all combine so that by 1970 the city will be transformed as it has not been in decades.<sup>64</sup>

Here, once again, we see the Olympics and the Metro linked as transformative projects; these were endeavors that Mexico undertook because in the long term they would transform Mexico into a modern nation.

On May 23 in *El Día*, there is another example of the mixing of technical and cultural narratives about the Metro. An article on the front page said, “Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, says Mexican Metro is being built at wondrous speed.”<sup>65</sup> This article is important because Montreal had just built a Metro in 1966 that at the time was regarded as the most beautiful and modern in the world. In its design, the Montreal system used ideas of modernism and placed public art in almost every station. Montreal also imported its rolling stock from France. Along with Tokyo, which hosted the previous Olympic Games, in 1964, and also had a new Metro, Montreal’s system was considered the newest, fastest, and cheapest in the world. Comparing Mexico’s Metro to his own, “Mr. Drapeau stated that

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<sup>63</sup> “El Metro de la Ciudad Transforma,” *El Día*, May 3, 1968. Original Spanish: El Metro va a transformar la ciudad como nunca antes. El concepto de la modernidad se ha mezclado con la historia mexicana y el ingenio para producir la metrópoli moderna.

<sup>64</sup> “La Ciudad Metrópoli,” *El Día*, May 16, 1968. Original Spanish: El Metro ha acelerado la transformación de la metrópoli. Proyectos como el Metro, las obras olímpicas, las plazas remodeladas, los nuevos centros sociales, mercados populares, embellecimiento del parque y regeneración de los barrios, así como la modificación de la Zona Rosa, todos se combinan para que en 1970 se transformará la ciudad ya que no ha sido en décadas.

<sup>65</sup> “Alcalde de Montreal, visite Metro,” *El Día*, May 23, 1968. Original Spanish: Según el alcalde de Montreal, Jean Drapeau, Metro mexicano está construyendo a velocidad asombrosa.

Mexico was building faster and bigger than Montreal could have imagined.”<sup>66</sup> Publishing this comment, along with others from officials who ran large transportation systems in Europe, placed the new Mexico City Metro system on a par with those of Europe. Over the summer, officials from Tokyo and Paris would tour the Metro site and give similar praises to the project.

On the same page of *El Día* that day was a small article titled “Many interesting finds continue in digging of Metro Line Two.”<sup>67</sup> This article said archaeologists had found artifacts from a diverse range of time periods—which was not what was expected. These findings “add to the diversity of our national holdings and expand the ability of Mexicans to trace their history back through time.”<sup>68</sup>

In early March 1968, *El Sol* highlighted a visit to the Metro sites by French officials. The “French technical advisors had nothing but praise for their Mexican counterparts.”<sup>69</sup> French engineers said, “It is wonderful to see the progress made here in Mexico on this project.”<sup>70</sup> In June 1968, authorities again promoted visits by foreign officials. On June 4 the director of the London Underground, William Johnson, visited Mexico City and commented that Mexico City was the cleanest capital he had ever seen.<sup>71</sup> Planners of the Olympics, state officials and even the ICA were aware of negative perceptions of Mexico as unclean and backwards. The attention given to Johnson’s view of modern-day Mexico City as clean and

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: El Sr. Drapea declaró que México estaba construyendo más rápido y más grande de Montreal podría haber imaginado.

<sup>67</sup> “Muchos hallazgos interesantes siguen en excavación del Metro línea 2,” *El Día*, May 23, 1968. Original Spanish: Muchos hallazgos interesantes continúan en la excavación de la línea 2 del Metro.

<sup>68</sup> “Museo de Antropología complacido con descubrimientos de Metro,” *El Día*, May 23, 1968. Original Spanish: Estos resultados agregue a la diversidad de nuestras existencias nacionales y amplía la capacidad de los mexicanos para trazar su historia a través del tiempo.

<sup>69</sup> “Asesores Técnicos Franceses Impresionado con el Metro,” *El Sol*, March 2, 1968. Original Spanish: Asesor técnico francés no tuvo nada que elogios para sus contrapartes Mexicana.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Es maravilloso ver los progresos realizados aquí en México en este proyecto.

<sup>71</sup> “Director del Metro de París visita la ciudad de México,” *El Día*, June 4, 1968.



efficient reveals insecurity in Mexican officials. Mr. Johnson also had positive comments about the development of the Metro system.”<sup>72</sup> Later in the month, the head of the Paris Metro, Georges Deroux, visited the Metro and said, “it was the most advanced underground construction he had ever seen. Mr. Deroux also looked forward to continue collaboration between Mexico and France on transportation technology.”<sup>73</sup>

As the October 1968 Olympics drew near, authorities in Mexico City began to give full tours of the city. Likewise, according to an *Excélsior* article in September 1968, “the new walking tours have been very popular with citizens of the city. Last night 500 people showed up for the colonial Mexico City tour.”<sup>74</sup> One of these tours touted the Metro as both modern and ancient. This tour was called “The Modern City.” It looked at buildings downtown, including the Torre Latino Americana, one of the first skyscrapers in Mexico City. It also visited an unfinished Metro station. In *Excélsior*, a description of the tour said that “among the modern aspects of this tour we also find the ancient temple of Ehecatl, Goddess of the wind. This section, which examined the temple within the unfinished Pino Suárez station, was the most popular.”<sup>75</sup> By early October, Mexico City was “now running ten tours a day, up from one a day in August.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Comentó que la ciudad de México era la capital más limpia que jamás había visto. El Sr. Johnson también tuvieron comentarios positivos sobre el desarrollo del sistema de Metro.

<sup>73</sup> “Director del Metro de París visita la ciudad de México,” *El Día*, June 24, 1968. Original Spanish: : Dijo que era la construcción subterránea más avanzada que jamás había visto. Sr. Deroux también miró hacia adelante para continuar la colaboración entre México y Francia sobre la tecnología de transporte.

<sup>74</sup> “Toures por la ciudad popular entre los residentes,” *Excélsior*, September 24, 1968. Original Spanish: : entre los aspectos modernos de este recorrido encontramos también el antiguo templo de Eschtle, diosa del viento. En esta sección, que examinó el templo dentro de la estación de Pino Suárez inacabado fue el más popular.

<sup>75</sup> “El tour de la ciudad moderna,” *Excélsior*, September 24, 1968. Original Spanish: entre los aspectos modernos de este recorrido encontramos también el antiguo templo de Eschtle, diosa del viento. En esta sección, que examinó el templo dentro de la estación de Pino Suárez inacabado fue el más popular.

<sup>76</sup> “Más tours por día en agosto,” *Excélsior*, October 3, 1968. Original Spanish: Ahora estamos corriendo diez viajes al día, hasta de uno un día de agosto. Also see “El Pasado es la Futura,” *Excélsior*, October 24, 1967; “Mexicanos se gustan el Metro,” *Excélsior*, November 15, 1968; and “Los ciudadanos toman orgullo en Metro,” *Excélsior*, December 4, 1968.

October 1968 proved to be a critical month in Mexican history. Student protests had escalated over the summer, and by the end of September, police and students clashed in the streets of Mexico City. Then, on October 3 a large demonstration was staged in the Plaza de Tres Culutras at the Tlatelolco housing complex. During the protest, government forces opened fire on the crowd. While accounts still differ, many people were killed in the plaza, and others never returned home. While violence of this kind was not unheard of in post-revolutionary Mexico, state sponsored violence on the scale of the October 3<sup>rd</sup> event was rare. The number of people killed and the fact that this repression happened right out in the open sets the incident apart from others in post-revolutionary Mexico. As shocking as the Tlatelolco massacre was, promotion of the Metro and the Olympics continued during October. There is no evidence that the increase in coverage of the Metro had anything to do with the massacre at Tlatelolco. The coming of the Olympics and the new discoveries themselves account for the uptick in news stories about the Metro. What is important to remember is that both Tlatelolco and the Metro were going on at the same time. The newspapers in Mexico City printed most of what the Mexican government wanted them to. For this reason it is not surprising that newspaper coverage of the Metro and the Olympics outpaced coverage of Tlatelolco. Projects like the Metro and events like the Olympics were examples of the progress and prosperity the nation had achieved. The student movement did not fit into this vision of Mexico's present or its future. The handling of the protest and the use of such violence was a terrible blot on Mexico's reputation abroad.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>"El Pasado es la Futura," *Excélsior*, October 24, 1967; "Mexicanos les gusta el Metro," *Excélsior*, November 15, 1968; and "Los ciudadanos toman orgullo en Metro," *Excélsior*, December 4, 1968.

On October 2 an article in *El Día* outlined the discovery of an Aztec temple at the Pino Suárez station:

The new discovery is from the Aztec period. Work on the stations has stopped as we determine the best way forward. Our goal is to save this wonderful discovery but we must also complete the station. Here at ICA we are working the INAH(National Institute of Anthropology and History). We are confident we can save the ancient pyramid while building the people the most advanced station we can.<sup>78</sup>

Here we see ICA and the Mexican government working together to mix the ancient with the modern. From October 3 through the end of the month, the newspapers in Mexico City were a picture of contrasts. On the one hand, there was reporting about the deaths of students at Tlatelolco. On the other hand, there were both the journey of the Olympic flame from Vera Cruz into University Stadium and new discoveries in the Metro. As a state project, the subway was one way for the government to promote itself and its right to rule. The placement of governmental self-promotion right next to stories about government repression reflects the fundamental conflict of this period in Mexican history and the importance of understanding the promotional narrative about the Metro as expressive of government aspirations to legitimacy.

October 4 was a good example of these conflicts. On the front page of *Excélsior* and *El Sol* was a picture of bodies of young students killed during the October Second massacre lined up in a row. The headline spoke of family members coming to pick up their dead. Right next to this photo was a story about the “continued progress in the digging of Line

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<sup>78</sup> “El templo en Pino Suárez,” *El Día*, October 3, 1968. Original Spanish: El nuevo descubrimiento es de la época Azteca. Ha dejado de trabajar en las estaciones como determinar el mejor camino a seguir. Nuestro objetivo es salvar este maravilloso descubrimiento, pero también debemos completar la estación. Aquí en ICA están trabajando el INAH Nos sentimos confiados que podemos salvar la antigua pirámide mientras la gente del edificio la estación más avanzada que podemos.

Two” and also a “Special Report on Olympic facilities.”<sup>79</sup> On October 6 both *El Día* and *El Sol* ran articles about the escalators in the Metro. They were “of the highest quality, imported from France.”<sup>80</sup> The article outlined how these were the same technology used in the Paris Metro but “had to be adapted to the Mexican Metro through the work of Mexican engineers.”<sup>81</sup> Here we have again the Metro presented as the intersection of foreign technology and Mexican ingenuity.

The 1968 Olympics took place without any large issues for Mexico. While concern lingered about the massacre of October 3, few in the international community knew the details, and the international press gave Mexico high marks for the games. Taking advantage of all of the positive international press, officials designated the last week of October 1968 as the “Week of the Metro.” Throughout Mexico City there were presentations, short films, and open exhibits about the subway. The Mexican Chamber of Commerce held a convention, “The Metro and Mexican Business,” in which the Chamber attempted to persuade retailers to move into the spaces designed for small businesses in Metro stations. A tunnel connected several stations in the centro, all of which led to the Zócalo station. This space was filled with bookstores, a barbershop, and other stores to sell passengers any goods and services they might need on their commute to and from home. The selling of this space was designed to offset the cost of construction. ICA’s Tlatelolco housing complex featured stores on the ground floor level in many of the buildings.

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<sup>79</sup> *El Sol*, October 4, 1968. Original Spanish: El progreso continuo es la excavación de la línea de 2 “y un” informe especial sobre las instalaciones de los Juegos Olímpicos.

<sup>80</sup> “Francés escaleras mecánicas en el Metro,” *El Día*, October 6, 1968. Original Spanish: Eran de la más alta calidad, importada de Francia.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* Original Spanish: Tenían que ser adaptado al Metro mexicano aunque el trabajo de ingenieros mexicanos.

In movie theaters throughout the capital, a short film titled “El Metro: La futura de la transporte” ran as a preview. A pamphlet released in all the major papers briefed Mexicans on how to buy tickets, where to stand, and how to make their way through the station. During this week of presentations, a special exhibit at the Museum of Anthropology displayed many of the finds unearthed during the Metro construction. By the final days of October 1968, “the tunnel for Line Three has now been completed.”<sup>82</sup>

On November 6, 1968, members of the Mexican congress got a tour of the Metro stations. By this time, “several of the stations are near completion. It was with great pride that the members of this congress saw the wonderful designs and exciting technology that is the Metro.”<sup>83</sup> In the final month of 1968, Díaz Ordaz again connected the Metro to the progress of Mexican society and heralded the Metro project as a symbol of the new Mexico. “Mexico is still marching along the path of the construction of a modern and sovereign nation through the transformation of our society into a new Mexican society that is more modern and more democratic. We are not a people who are inert, inactive, conservative, but we are dynamic, vibrant and revolutionary. The transformation of our capital city reflects the best in the Mexican people.”<sup>84</sup>

The final articles about the Metro in 1968 again promoted both its technical advancement and its cultural or national appeal. On December 15, articles in *El Día* and *El*

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<sup>82</sup> “Túnel de la línea tres completo,” *El Sol*, October 31, 1968. Original Spanish: Ahora se ha completado el túnel de la línea tres.

<sup>83</sup> “Congreso visita Metro,” *El Día*, November 6, 1968. Original Spanish: varias de las estaciones están cerca de terminar. Fue con mucho orgullo que los miembros de este Congreso vieron los diseños maravillosos y emocionante tecnología que es el Metro.

<sup>84</sup> “El metro y el México Moderno,” *El Día*, December 1, 1968. Original Spanish: México aún está marchando por el camino de la construcción de una nación moderna y soberana a través de la transformación de nuestra sociedad en una sociedad mexicana más moderno y más democrático. No somos un pueblo que es inertes, inactivos, conservador, pero somos revolucionarios, vibrante y dinámica. La transformación de nuestra ciudad capital refleja lo mejor en el pueblo mexicano.

*Sol* quoted STC Metro authorities, who said, “the plan for line three was modified slightly. A better route was chosen. Despite this the tunnel has been finished and construction of the stations continues. Here the efficiency of Metro design was promoted. Adjustments to the plan did not cause delay. The project has moved at a rapid pace and should be completed by the summer of 1969.”<sup>85</sup> The following day, *El Día* ran an article that said, “due to the great demand and interest in the archaeological discoveries found during Metro construction, the exhibit will now run through the new year at no cost.”<sup>86</sup>

The year 1968 was a tumultuous one for Mexico. While the Olympics had been a success, the Tlateoloco massacre would continue to mar the memory of the games for many Mexicans. Within this context, promotion of the Metro remained constant. As 1969 dawned, the opening of the subway was in sight.

### **Stage Three of the Metro Project: September 1969 to November 1970**

During the final stage of Metro promotion, from January 1969 through the opening of the final station in November 1970, newspapers covered its opening, printed lists of each station, and discussed how many people rode the system in the first few months. In these articles, we see a focus on the speed of travel, the safety of the system, and the fact that it is being used enthusiastically.

The year began with Díaz Ordaz touting the success of the Olympics and connecting that success to the subway system:

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<sup>85</sup> “Línea Tres Cambiado,” *El Sol*, December 16, 1968. Original Spanish: El plan para la línea tres se modificó ligeramente. Fue elegida una derrota más. A pesar de ello los túneles se ha acabado y continúa la construcción de las estaciones. El proyecto se mueve a un ritmo rápido y debe ser completado por el verano de 1969.

<sup>86</sup> “Exhibición de Artefactos Permanezca Abierto,” *El Día*, December 17, 1968. Original Spanish: Debido a la gran demanda e interés en los descubrimientos arqueológicos encontrados durante la construcción del Metro, la exposición se extenderá ahora hasta el año nuevo en ninguna costa.

The Olympics were a success. They showed the world the new Mexico. Tourism is now growing and our capital continues to transform. By September of this year the Metro will be open. This will be another chapter in the march of progress in Mexico.<sup>87</sup>

Later in January, a brief explanation of how the Metro station's locations were chosen, and several articles about the stations themselves, appeared. The "stations were chosen in a logical manner that would serve the surrounding community. Each station was given a name, most well known to Mexicans, along with a color and logo. As the Metro transforms the city, it will be familiar to Mexicans."<sup>88</sup> By February 4, the Metro cars had arrived in Veracruz, and a week later they arrived in Mexico City. The Regent was pictured in the February 12 issue of *El Sol* inspecting the first shipment of orange cars. Just as the newspapers had followed the Olympic torch across the ocean from Greece, the papers followed the two-month journey of the bright orange Metro cars from France to Mexico. The journey included the cars being "baptized as Mexican" upon their arrival in Vera Cruz.<sup>89</sup> Corona del Rosal, the new Regent of Mexico City, who had been installed because of his pro-Metro viewpoints, announced with pride, "citizens of Mexico City, these are now your cars, and your Metro will open soon."<sup>90</sup> On February 20, 1969, STC Metro and ICA both "claimed they could save the Aztec temple in Pino Suárez with a new design for the station."<sup>91</sup> This article expressed an important facet of the promotional narrative about the Metro. Here, the architects worked

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<sup>87</sup> "México y el turismo," *Excélsior*, January 2, 1969. Original Spanish: Los Juegos Olímpicos fueron un éxito. Mostraron al mundo el nuevo México. Turismo ahora está creciendo y nuestra capital continúa transformar. En Septiembre de este año se abrirá el Metro. Este será otro capítulo en la marcha del progreso en México.

<sup>88</sup> "Las estaciones de Metro," *El Sol*, January 14, 1969. Original Spanish: las estaciones fueron elegidas de una manera lógica que sirva a la comunidad circundante. Cada estación le dio un nombre, más bien conocido por los mexicanos, junto con un color y un símbolo. Mientras que el Metro transforma la ciudad, será familiar a los mexicanos.

<sup>89</sup> "Coche de metro llegan a Vera Cruz," *Excélsior*, February 10, 1969. Original Spanish: Que fueron bautizados como mexicano a su llegada a Vera Cruz.

<sup>90</sup> "Coche de metro llegan a la Ciudad de México," *El Día*, February 19, 1969. Original Spanish: Los ciudadanos de la ciudad de México son ahora sus coches y su Metro abrirá pronto.

<sup>91</sup> "Los trabajadores pueden ahorrar templo en Pino Suárez," *El Día*, February 20, 1969. Original Spanish: afirmó que podrían salvar el templo azteca en Pino Suárez con un nuevo diseño para la estación.

with archaeologists to incorporate the ancient temple into the design of the modern station. As outlined in Chapter Five, this new design made the Aztec temple found during the construction of the station a centerpiece for an open-air courtyard at the intersection of pathways between Line One and Line Two. On February 25<sup>th</sup> *El Día* gave a full-page explanation of what was found in excavation. The article illustrated that “a different epoch of ceremonial pottery found at one location indicates that this was a sacred places for many generations of people.”<sup>92</sup> The article goes on to state, “these discoveries are even more important than we knew. Had we not dug here, this entire history would have been lost.”<sup>93</sup>

During March 1969, the government went on a campaign to entice young people to ride the Metro. In March, two articles outlined a program that involved making presentations about the Metro in schools and inviting parents to send their children to ride the Metro. STC Metro “wanted to get the younger generation comfortable with the Metro. It will be these children who will introduce their parents to rapid transit technology.”<sup>94</sup>

An April 2<sup>nd</sup> article in *Excélsior* declared, “the summer of 1969 will be the summer of the Metro.”<sup>95</sup> STC Metro held exhibits about the Metro, all open to the public, throughout the spring of 1969. These events introduced the people of Mexico City to everything about their new transit system. Maps and pictures of the stations were given out, along with sample tickets. There were “drawing contests for the kids in which they can imagine the future of the

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<sup>92</sup> “Descubrimientos en Pino Suárez,” *El Día*, February 25, 1969. Original Spanish: una época diferente de la cerámica ceremonial encontrado en un solo lugar indica que fue un lugar sagrado para muchas generaciones de personas.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Estos descubrimientos son aún más importantes que sabíamos. Habíamos no encontramos aquí toda esta historia hubiera perdido.

<sup>94</sup> *El Sol*, March 14, 1969 and *El Día*, March 16, 1969. Original Spanish: Quería que la generación más joven con el Metro. Va a ser estos niños, quien presentará a sus padres a la tecnología rapid transit.

<sup>95</sup> “El Verano del Metro,” *Excélsior*, April 2, 1969. Original Spanish: El verano de 1969 será el verano del Metro.



Metro in their pictures.”<sup>96</sup> By May, STC Metro and ICA were doing tests on the subway lines. On May 17, they released their initial findings about these tests. In an article in *El Día*, all seemed well with the new system. It read:

1. The speed of the work generated considerable savings and was carried out in the shortest time possible.
2. The price of the Metro will be within the reach of our people.
3. The kilometers of the Metro network of Mexico City at the end of the 3 lines will be superior in efficiency than other cities of the world.
4. System solves problems such as traffic and pollution while still being beautiful.
5. System is the ultimate expression of what is best about Mexico and Mexico City and what is gained through international cooperation and national ingenuity.<sup>97</sup>

Here we have many of the main facets of the promotional narrative about the new system.

The Metro was fast and efficient; it solved problems; and was beautiful. This article also mentioned the fast pace of construction and how this translated into cost savings that kept the price of a ticket very low. Price was important because planners wanted everyone to be able to ride the new system so that it would be quickly integrated into the ways in which people maneuvered around the city.

In July, the first full explanation of all the stations with their logos appeared, along with system maps. Each week in July *Excélsior* focused on a different Metro station in detail. The first article in the series explained that “the more modern stations form aesthetic-cultural

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<sup>96</sup> “Los niños y el Metro,” *El Día*, April 6, 1969. Original Spanish: concursos de dibujos para los niños en el cual puede obtener imágenes del futuro del metro en sus imagines.

<sup>97</sup> “STC Metro feliz con prueba de Metro,” *El Día*, May 17, 1969. Original Spanish: S.T.C Metro está satisfecho con la prueba parcial de la Metro1. La velocidad de la obra genera un ahorro considerable y se llevó a cabo en el menor tiempo posible. 2. El precio del Metro estará al alcance de nuestra gente. 3. Los kilómetros de la red de Metro de la Ciudad de México al final de las 3 líneas será superiores en la eficiencia de otras ciudades del mundo, 4. El sistema resuelve problemas como el tráfico y la contaminación sigue siendo Hermosa. 5. El sistema es la máxima expresión de lo mejor de México y la ciudad de México y lo que se obtiene a través de la cooperación internacional y el ingenio nacional.

environments worthy to be taken as models for any advanced country on earth.”<sup>98</sup> The second article in the series, examining San Lázaro station, stated:

Our Metro stations, with their chrome-plated steel, aluminum and plastic, harmonize art with the work of transportation. They place man in his time: they use the best of today's materials; they preserve the past and propel Mexico into the present and into the future.<sup>99</sup>

This article singled out San Lázaro as an expression of the modernity of the Metro, and Insurgentes was an example of the Metro melding past and present. It linked San Lázaro Metro with both an older forms of design, the Church, and a new form of transportation, air travel. Mexico had built a new airport in 1958. Air travel was something very new and modern to Mexicans in 1969. So, in one station we have a modernist design that looks like something from Mexico’s past, a cathedral, and a promotional narrative about new forms of transportation:

San Lázaro station, with its 'wings', announces the passage of aircraft that fly over the station from the new airport through the clouds. Its design resembles a cathedral. It is the cathedral of the Mexican people as they march towards the future.<sup>100</sup>



Image from “Mexico’s metro is for Viewing,” *Fortune* September 1969.

### **Figure 7. San Lázaro Metro Station.**

In his last yearly report, four days before the system opened, Díaz Ordaz stated:

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<sup>98</sup> “El Metro: San Lazaro,” *Excélsior*, July 5, 1969.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Estación de San Lázaro, con sus 'alas', anuncia el paso de aviones sobre la estación, que operan desde el aeropuerto nuevo a través de las nubes. Su diseño se asemeja a una catedral. Es la catedral del pueblo mexicano como marchan hacia el futuro.

While the problems of Mexico are grave so are the triumphs. Soon the Metro will open. This is another public work serving the needs of Mexico. As we move forward into the future the Mexican people again prove their ability to meet the challenges of the modern world.”<sup>101</sup>

For his part, Regent Corona del Rosal again connected the new subway system to the long history of building in the valley of Mexico:

The Metro is yet another project that will define our age. As in previous ages civilizations have built great works, we build the Metro. It expresses our age in that it brings modern technology to Mexico City. It solves the problems of our age and is the ultimate expression of the new Mexico.<sup>102</sup>

On September 3 a full-page ads in *Excélsior* and *El Día* showed all of the Metro stations and explained where they were in the city and whom they were named after.<sup>103</sup>

The following day, the Metro officially opened. In a ceremony at Insurgentes station, Díaz Ordaz proclaimed:

Mexico doesn't just have a Metro; they have one of the best metros in the world, built in one of the hardest conditions of subsoil ever. The Metro is a symbol of the technical advancement of Mexico, the cooperation of nations and the benefits of the modern era.<sup>104</sup>

After Díaz Ordaz opened Insurgentes station and speeches were made, he and the Regent rode to the end of the line at the new Chapultepec station. Pictures of this journey filled the major newspapers. Officials from France were present on this first ride, as well. *Excélsior*

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<sup>101</sup> “Informe de Díaz Ordaz,” *Excélsior*, September 2, 1969. Original Spanish: Mientras que los problemas de México son graves son entonces los triunfos. Pronto se abrirá el Metro. Esta es otra obra pública, atendiendo las necesidades de México. Mientras avanzamos hacia el futuro que el pueblo mexicano otra vez demostrar su capacidad para enfrentar los desafíos del mundo moderno.

<sup>102</sup> “Metro es el Gran Obra de Nuestro Tiempo,” *Excélsior*, September 2, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro es otro proyecto que definirá nuestra edad. Al igual que en años anteriores civilizaciones han construido grandes obras, construir el Metro. Expresa nuestra edad que trae la tecnología moderna de la Ciudad de México. Soluciona los problemas de nuestra época y es la máxima expresión de la nueva México.

<sup>103</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 3, 1969.

<sup>104</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: México no tiene un Metro; tienen uno de los mejores metros del mundo, construido en una de las más duras condiciones del subsuelo que siempre. El Metro es un símbolo del adelanto técnico de México, la cooperación de las Naciones Unidas y los beneficios de la era moderna.

noted, “with the wondrous speed that characterizes our Metro, this famous journey lasted only three minutes.”<sup>105</sup>

Between September 1969 and the opening of Bellas Artes, the last station of the first three line to open in 1970, the major newspapers in Mexico City ran many articles showing how much the Mexican people loved the new means of transportation. These articles, like those from the previous periods of Metro promotion, focused on the system’s technical and cultural aspects. On September 14 *Excélsior* ran an article that said, “Thousands visit Metro for first ride.”<sup>106</sup> *El Día* claimed “Metro ridership higher than expected in first days.

Thousands take their turn.”<sup>107</sup> In *Excélsior*, the speed of the Metro was again promoted:

“Thousands of Mexicans take their first three minute ride... Most couldn’t ride just once.”<sup>108</sup>

These early articles make the subway seem a little like a carnival ride. In early October, articles in both *El Día* and *El Sol* showed how Mexicans “loved their new Metro. The Metro is clean from the trash, crime and graffiti that plagues systems like New York. Mexicans respect their Metro.”<sup>109</sup> New York had long been used as an example of a good subway system but one that had problems with crime and vandalism. These articles show Mexicans embracing the Metro as their own without these drawbacks. While the newspapers presented the Metro’s technical attributes a little like a carnival, a series in *El Sol*, headlined “The

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<sup>105</sup> “Los tres primeros minutos en el Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 4, 1969. Original Spanish: Con la velocidad asombrosa que caracteriza nuestro Metro, este famoso viaje duró sólo tres minutos.

<sup>106</sup> “Visitan miles Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 14, 1969. Original Spanish: Miles visitan Metro para la primera vuelta.

<sup>107</sup> “Más mexicanos usan el Metro de lo esperado,” *El Día*, September 17, 1969. Original Spanish: Número de pasajeros del Metro supera al esperado en los primeros días. Miles toman su turno.

<sup>108</sup> “Miles y el Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 16, 1969. Original Spanish: Miles de mexicanos pasan su primero minué... la mayoría no pudo montar una vez.

<sup>109</sup> “Los mexicanos respetan su Metro,” *Excélsior*, October 4, 1969. Original Spanish: Querían su nuevo Metro. El Metro está limpio de basura, delincuencia y grafiti que azota al sistema de Nueva York. Los mexicanos respetan su Metro.

Metro life,” presented people taking groceries home and their kids to school, promoting the ways that the subway could make everyday travel through the city much more efficient.<sup>110</sup>

This final stage of the early promotion showed Mexicans enjoying the cultural presentations in the Metro. *Excelsior* wrote “Mexicans marvel at Pino Suárez station.”<sup>111</sup> In this article “Mexicans stand and wonder at the cultural and archaeological treasures unearthed during construction and now on display.”<sup>112</sup> *El Sol* claimed, “cultural and archaeological presentations are popular with Metro riders.”<sup>113</sup> “Citizens told us how much they enjoyed the displays of archaeological materials.” Mexicans “love and respect their Metro. It is theirs and they treasure it.”<sup>114</sup> These articles promote the value added to the Metro by the inclusion of the display of the past. They also assert that Mexican use the Metro—which constitutes the final step in making the foreign technology of system wholly Mexican.

On November 15, 1970, the Bellas Artes station opened. Present at the official ceremony were President Díaz Ordaz, the outgoing Regent, Alfonso Corona del Rosal; and, among others, a famous Mexican artist named Rina Lazo. As Chapter 5 illustrates, Lazo had been part of the design team for Insurgentes Metro but never received credit because she was jailed during the student protests of 1968. Lazo had worked with Diego Rivera as a young woman from 1947 until Rivera’s death in 1957. She was at the opening of Bellas Artes because her mural, “Replication of Bon Am Bak,” was placed along one of the walls of the

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<sup>110</sup> “La Vida Metro,” *El Sol*, November 12, 1969.

<sup>111</sup> “Se maravillan mexicanos en Pino Suárez,” *El Sol*, October 12, 1969. Original Spanish: Se maravillan mexicanos en Pino Suárez.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: los mexicanos se maravillan a los tesoros culturales desenterrados y la arqueología durante la construcción y ahora exhibidos.

<sup>113</sup> “Metro,” *El Sol*, October 3, 1969. Original Spanish: Presentaciones culturales y arqueológicas son populares con los pasajeros del Metro.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Los ciudadanos nos dijeron cuánto disfrutaron de la exhibición de materiales arqueológicos. Los mexicanos quieren y respetan su Metro. Es suyo y lo atesoran.

station. Díaz Ordaz, the man who had arranged her imprisonment, said, “here the final station of the Metro opens. The technical advancement of Mexico continues and today we can also celebrate our cultural achievements as a people.”<sup>115</sup> While Lazo is not quoted in this newspaper article, she expressed her feelings on the Metro and explained why she went to a ceremony led by someone who had just recently imprisoned her: “of course I went. It was my mural ... and you know I had a lot more to do with Bellas Artes than he did! He was just visiting ... a tourist.”<sup>116</sup> While the media promotion of this opening in the media again touted the technical aspects of the Metro and the cultural aspects of Bellas Artes Metro, such as artifacts from the Metro construction on display and Lazo’s mural, her comments point to the complex nature of both the state and the creation of state projects such as the Metro. In Chapter Five, I outline her involvement in Insurgentes station. The fact that she came back to the Metro project, and indeed continued working with the Metro throughout the 1970s and 1980s, illustrated that different levels of the Mexican government often operated independently of each other. This is critical for understanding the complex nature of state projects. While Chapter 1 has outlined the promotional narrative used to introduce the Metro to the Mexican people, other chapters in this dissertation will complicate both the narrative itself and the process of building the Metro. In this chapter modernization was equated with nationalism and the Metro was promoted as positive progress for Mexico. In Chapter Two, however, we see the dark side of modernization. Bus companies and their political network in Mexico did not want the Metro to infringe on their transportation monopoly. While one strand of modernity represented by the Metro project claimed that it was modernizing

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<sup>115</sup> “La estación de Bellas Artes se inaugura hoy,” *El Sol*, November 18, 1970. Original Spanish: Aquí la última estación del Metro se abre. El adelanto técnico de México continúa y hoy también celebramos nuestros logros culturales como pueblo.

<sup>116</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, July 11, 2012.

Mexico City and would help Mexicans, the idea of modernization implied destruction, or at least transformation, of the current transportation infrastructure. As we will see, not everyone was on board.

## Chapter 2: Intrastate Struggle and the Fall of Uruchurtu

At the groundbreaking ceremony for the Metro, readers of *Excélsior* saw the President of Mexico and the Regent of Mexico City, shovels in hand, smiling together and touting the bright future of the city.<sup>1</sup> Surrounding them were members of Ingenieros Civiles Asociados, the firm that designed and built the Metro. Nothing was strange about this picture, except that the Regent was new. Alfonso Corona de Rosal had been in office for only six months when the Metro project began. The former Regent of fourteen years, Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, had been replaced after a series of clashes with President Díaz Ordaz. While these clashes culminated in an event—the bulldozing of the St. Ursula squatter community--which had no direct relation to the Metro, Uruchurtu's removal was the result of mounting tensions over the subway.

The Metro was promoted in newspapers in Mexico City using a narrative about its modernity. Absent from the media coverage of the Metro during this time were old-guard, anti-Metro positions. The lack of dissent in the press should not, however, be mistaken for an actual lack of opposition to the project. This chapter explores resistance to the Metro and the ways that the media functioned as a space in which the main opponent of the Metro project, Regent Uruchurtu, was attacked and eventually driven from power in 1966.

This chapter illustrates the complex nature of the Mexican government. In addition to the economic aspects of the battle over the Metro--between forces that would benefit from the subway and those, particularly the bus companies, that feared financial loss--there was also an intra-governmental struggle. Not, that is, a conflict between the state and outside

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<sup>1</sup> “Metro a hoy!” *Excélsior*, September 4, 1967, and “El Metro!” *El Día*, September 4, 1967.



forces, like the students during the 60s, the struggle to control public transportation was an intrastate competition between overlapping and sometimes competing levels of government.<sup>2</sup>

### **Pro-Metro Forces**

The Metro was supported by groups that profited from a radical change in the transportation industry in Mexico City. One of these groups was ICA, the best-connected and most powerful construction company in the country. Through its success with Mexico City's urban renewal projects, ICA had gained additional government contracts and was able to push for more such projects. ICA was able to satisfy the government's desire to exercise creative state power, and thereby increased its own wealth and influence.

A second powerful advocate for the Metro was President Díaz Ordaz. When he took power in 1964, the Mexican economy was booming. Growth of nearly 8% per year was powered by industrialization and urbanization. Mexico's official presentation to the international Olympic committee boasted that the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City "would showcase a Mexico of modern industrial strength and a rich ancient culture."<sup>3</sup> During this time, Mexico City underwent an amazing renovation and modernization, including the Olympic venue, the new Metro system, the opening of the Museum of Anthropology, and major improvement in street paving and drainage. Díaz Ordaz's administration sharpened the focus on Mexico City as the center of Mexico's development, a showcase before the world.

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<sup>2</sup> From 1965 until 1970, mass protests by students in Mexico City were common. Violence often occurred, and was initiated by both the students and state forces. This movement culminated in a massacre on October 2, 1968 in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in which hundreds of students and bystanders lost their lives or disappeared. For many years, this event has been at the center of the study of Mexico during 1968. I do not focus on this event because I seek a different narrative about this time period. For more on this topic see, among many others, Gerardo Estrada Rodríguez, *1968, estado y universidad: Orígenes de la transición política en México* (México, D.F.: Plaza Janés, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> "Official Presentation of México to International Olympic Committee," Gobierno, Miguel Aleman, Obras Publicas: Los Olympicos de 1968, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, (Hereafter, AGN), Caja 133, 114. Original Spanish: Se esperaba que podría mostrar un México de fuerza industrial moderna y una rica cultura antigua.

Along with the other improvements to the city, a modern subway like those in Paris and London would complete the city's transformation into a modern metropolis. ICA had close connections to Díaz Ordaz. Angel Borges, a founding member, was the brother of the President's wife. In a 1977 interview, Borges recounted, "I always shared my belief in the importance of the Metro projects with the president. He understood why we needed a Metro quite well."<sup>4</sup> Here we see the ability of employees of ICA to influence the highest levels of the Mexican government.

ICA always promoted the subway as a nationalist project. "The "Metro shows the Mexican people's trust in their own creative talents despite their circumstances. The Metro is the spirit of the people, the spirit of modernity and the spirit of the great city."<sup>5</sup> The merger of the ancient and modern cities occurred through building a Metro, connecting the glory of the ancient past with the limitless possibilities of the modern future. In this narrative, "the Metro helps to structure the Metropolis. The Metropolis is the center of Mexico. Therefore, the Metro helps to transform the country."<sup>6</sup> Here the European model of modernization was melded with the wonders of the ancient city, a major point in the promotion of both the Metro and other state projects, such as the Olympics.

The administration of Díaz Ordaz hoped to use the Metro as a monument to its legitimacy. In a speech at the opening of the subway, Díaz Ordaz integrated its construction with other famous events in Mexican history by calling the day the "Grito del Metro." a

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<sup>4</sup> "Grandes Obras y Grandes Hombres," *Siempre*, March 18, 1977. Original Spanish: Siempre compartí mi creencia en la importancia de los proyectos de Metro con el Presidente. Comprendió por qué necesitábamos un Metro muy bueno..

<sup>5</sup> ICA, *La primera memoria del Metro* (México: ICA Internacional, 1971), 5. Original Spanish: El Metro es la confianza del mexicano en el talento creador de su circunstancia. El metro es el espíritu del pueblo, el espíritu de la modernidad y el espíritu de la gran ciudad.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 23. Original Spanish: El Metro ayuda a estructurar al Metrópoli, El Metrópoli es el centro de México. Así como, el Metro ayuda a transformar el país.

reference to the Grito de Dolores which began the fight for Mexican independence. He also referred to the building of the subway as the “new Mexican Revolution. A revolution in transportation and a huge jump in efficiency.”<sup>7</sup> Given Díaz Ordaz’s public statements about the importance of modernization and technical advancement, ICA was able to take advantage of the Mexican government’s desire for the transformation of the city and the economic boom that made such a transformation possible.

Transforming Mexico City into an expression of creative state power and Mexican modernity was largely undertaken by private business. For ICA, the Metro was not the beginning of its plan for Mexico City, but the capstone. For years prior to the Metro, ICA, along with its Banco Atlántico and French backers, had been investing major funds in property speculation and downtown redevelopment. By 1968, ICA and its many smaller investment companies were the largest owners of private buildings in the Centro.<sup>8</sup> They also owned commercial spaces along the Metro lines. The subway was “part of the plan to develop the center of the city and to transform it from a place of small businesses into a center of tourism and banking activities.”<sup>9</sup> As early as 1956, ICA and Banco Atlántico began to introduce condominiums in Mexico City, and in 1958 they built one at Paseo de la Reforma and Guadalquivir (See Figure 8). These condominiums were advertised as “European technology and refinement in the heart of Mexico City.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “El Grito de Metro,” *El Sol*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro ayuda a estructurar al Metrópoli, El Metrópoli es el centro de México. Así como, el Metro ayuda a transformar el país.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on ICA’s connection to condominiums and land speculation in the downtown area, see Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 147-152.

<sup>9</sup> Bernardo Navarro and Ovidio González. *Metro, Metrópoli, México* (México: UNAM/Unidad Xochimilco, 1989), 44. Original Spanish: parte del plan para desarrollar el centro de la ciudad y para transformarlo de una localización de la pequeña empresa a un centro del turismo y de las actividades bancarias.

<sup>10</sup> “Advertisement,” *Excelsior*, September 3, 1958. Original Spanish: Tecnología europea y refinamiento en el corazón de la ciudad de México.



Image by Guillermo Zamora from *Mario Pani y la construcción de la modernidad*.

**Figure 8. El condominio de Reforma 369 esquina con Río Guadalquivir, poco después de su construcción en 1956.**

Further, as discussed in the introduction, Mario Pani's Tlatelolco apartments, were a major project on which ICA worked and another example of Mexican Modernity before the Metro. In the design of these apartments we see buildings that express European modernism mixed with Mexican names. The entire complex surrounded the Plaza de Tres Culturas which celebrated both the location of the final defeat of the Aztecs and a 17<sup>th</sup> century Church. An advertisement in *Excélsior* in 1970 featured a picture of London in the background—a classic site of comparison discussions in the press about modernity—with pictures of the Tlatelolco apartments in the foreground(See Figure 9). These apartments were designed for middle-class consumers, as opposed to the apartments that were given for free or at cost to families in need. Like other condos in the downtown era built by ICA in the early 1960s, Tlatelolco was advertised in conjunction with the new Metro line. In the *Excélsior* ad the subway is “at the door of your European style modern apartment.”<sup>11</sup> This advertisement represents the ways in which ICA profited from nearly every facet of the modernization of Mexico. It also reminds us that the Metro was part of a long-term plan for the revitalization

<sup>11</sup> “Advertisement,” *Excélsior*, September 7, 1970. Original Spanish: Metro: A La Puerta De Su Departamento Tipo Europeo.

of downtown. While it is the last ICA project studied here, it was only one part of the firm's plan for the modernization of Mexico.



Image from *Excélsior*, October 7, 1970, *Excélsior*, May-December 1970, Biblioteca Nacional de México, México (Hereafter, BNM).

**Figure 9. Advertisement from *Excélsior*, October 7, 1970.**

From its inception in 1943 until 1952, the Mexico City Planning Administration was staffed largely by current or former ICA employees. Javier Barros Sierra was Secretary of Public Works and later rector of the National University. Fernando Espinoza became Secretary of Public Works in Mexico City. In a 1976 article, the founder of ICA, Bernardo Quintana, said that, “besides myself and Angel Borges we had many people in less visible

but very important positions.”<sup>12</sup> A 1977 article about ICA lists seven of its founding members, all of whom had held major positions in the government departments in charge of planning or construction in D.F.<sup>13</sup> All of these projects were arranged directly with the officials involved; ICA did not participate in an open bidding process until 1987. During post-Cárdenas Mexico, the company was synonymous with government building projects in Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

Backed by a strong French network, ICA had access to cheap French loans that enabled the company to actually loan the Mexican government money on good terms for its various projects. ICA co-owned Banco de Mexico with its French partners. The French government and private French investors used this bank both to send funds to the Mexican government and to receive repayment of Mexican debts. These links to France went back to ICA’s origins in 1947. As mentioned in the Introduction, ICA evolved from another Mexican company, Compañía Mexicana de Comercio Exterior (C.M.C.E.). During the 1940s, this firm, allied with both French and Mexican banks, attracted French technology to Mexico and made oil available to France at below market rates. This relationship worked well for both countries. France needed cheap gas in the post war era and Mexico needed construction technology for projects like the Olympics, the Metro and major highways. Both the National Bank of France and ICA’s own Banco Atlántico were involved in funding these early projects through C.M.C.E. By the 1950s, C.M.C.E., by then a subsidiary of ICA, was importing French technology for earth moving, heavy digging and dam building, thus “facilitating the importation of the intermediate goods necessary to the development of the

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<sup>12</sup> “Conversación con los grandes,” *El Día*, October 14, 1976. Original Spanish: Además de Angel Borges y yo teníamos mucha gente en posiciones menos visibles pero muy importantes.

<sup>13</sup> “Un realizador de imposibles,” *Excelsior*, September 29, 1977.

<sup>14</sup> While I focus on their work in Mexico City, ICA did major projects outside of the capital as well.

newly emerging import-substitution industry in Mexico.”<sup>15</sup> ICA was “able to use some of France’s most sophisticated technology and equipment to create and maintain a competitive advantage.”<sup>16</sup> The company also diversified, buying smaller companies in order to have everything required to build the Metro.<sup>17</sup>

The relationship that assured the financing for the Metro was the result of long-standing relationships between ICA and French banks. In 1949, ICA also established its own bank, Banco Atlántico. Originally this institution was wholly owned by Banco Nacional de Paris, but in 1949 it merged with Banco de Valle de Mexico.<sup>18</sup> This dual ownership allowed ICA to maintain the appearance of being a Mexican company and to claim the virtues of “a Mexico built by Mexicans,” while still having access French capital and equipment. French banks lent money to Mexico for the purchase of Metro equipment at generous terms because most of this money, in this first stage, went back to French companies that produced all the rolling stock and other technologies for the Metro.<sup>19</sup>

Because the private consortium of French lenders for the Metro project was from Banque Nationale de Paris, Banco Atlántico’s French partner, the lending of money became circular. Banco Atlántico was named as the official bank for the transfer of money between France and Mexico, so the funds from Banque Nationale de Paris went into a bank it already owned, and paid for technology bought from companies partially owned by Banco Nationale de Paris. The construction of the Metro was then done by a partner with the same group, ICA. Banco de Atlántico received the French money as well as the Mexican government’s

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<sup>15</sup> Diane E. Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy, 1964-1976: Pro- and Anti-Urban Growth Coalitions, National Development Strategies, and the State” (Ph.D. Diss., UCLA, 1994), 259.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 1 for more details. ICA bought up companies that dealt in concrete, heavy machinery, electrical, and plumbing on a grand scale. They also opened the only subsoil laboratories in México.

<sup>18</sup> “Los orígenes de la empresa ICA,” 1954, Documentos de la Fundación del ICA, AICA, Folio 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

payments of fees for this transfer. It also received both the Mexican government's repayments of French loans and all payments to ICA for services rendered.<sup>20</sup> This complex web of financial relationships allowed ICA to receive favorable interest rates--7% from the Banque Nationale de Paris and its partners, 4% from the French government. The only stipulation was that the money had to be used to purchase French technologies. This arrangement had first been used by ICA on the Infernillo Dam project. The Mexican state had a 15-year amortization period. By comparison, on the Infernillo project, the amortization period was five years.

While President Díaz Ordaz was the public face of the Metro project, his connections with ICA and its connections with French banks and technology were the driving force behind the construction of the subway. The project fulfilled Díaz Ordaz's desire to modernize Mexico, but the groundwork for its construction was laid long before he took office.

### **Uruchurtu Saves Downtown and the PRI**

Why would the mayor of a city with vexing transportation problems oppose a subway? The answer lies in two basic facts about Uruchurtu--his longtime alliances with middle-class residents of the downtown and La Reforma neighborhoods, and his personal control of urban development and transportation since 1952.

The term "Centro" in Mexico City is more expansive than a modern-day conception of "downtown." The Uruchurtu family had lived off of the Paseo de la Reforma since the nineteenth century. Uruchurtu himself viewed what he considered the "old" neighborhoods of the city, mainly downtown and La Reforma, as the heart of the city. From 1952 on, he resisted any federal changes to these areas. While ICA wanted to transform various sections

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 255.



of Mexico City into something new and modern, Uruchurtu wanted to keep many of the same areas just the way they were.

Moreover, he had the authority to back up his desires. How Uruchurtu came to have control over urban development goes back to the Mexico City elections of 1952. The PRI received only 49% of the vote, despite its national average of 74.5%.<sup>21</sup> One reason for this disparity was disillusionment among the middle classes in Mexico City. Since the introduction of the federal plan for downtown redevelopment in 1950, which sought to transform the region into a banking and tourism sector at the expense of small business and single-family homes, Centro residents had increasingly pushed back against what they saw as redevelopment without their consent. After the 1952 election, “the PRI was convinced it needed a mayor who could bring these disenfranchised voters back into the fold.”<sup>22</sup> This mayor was, of course, Uruchurtu.

To understand his rise and fall, we must begin with his Office and his Party. The main difference between a Regent of this period and a Mayor in a more traditional sense was that the Regent was appointed by the federal government, not elected by the city’s residents. The Office was sufficiently important to be a cabinet position, but the Regent served at the pleasure of the President. His role was to balance factions within the ruling party.<sup>23</sup> Thus the position was powerful but restricted one. The Regent oversaw the exercise of federal power in Mexico City. The office did not, prior to Uruchurtu, have great influence in policymaking matters. Rising from Regent to President was next to impossible. Because Mexico City was a federal district, Regents prior to Uruchurtu did little but rubber-stamp federal policies. The

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>23</sup> Alejandra Lajous, *El PRI y sus antepasados* (México: Martín Casillas Editores, 1982), 1-49.

regency was largely a figurehead, a symbol of federal power over urban policy in Mexico City.

The regency was thus a thankless position full of everyday problems and little political future. While the Regent had control over the collection of taxes and the allocation of funds for the upkeep of the city, urban reforms as well as large construction projects were out of his hands. Until 1952, a body known as the Development Council, whose members were businessmen and owners of construction companies, proposed all new construction projects in Mexico City. These ideas would then be put forward to the Chamber of Deputies and voted on. The process was not about discussion; it was about party loyalty and mutual enrichment.

By the time he became Regent in 1952 Uruchurtu had had a long political career. At the end of his professional studies in Mexico City in 1929, he returned to his birthplace, the state of Sonora, where, as a rising star, he ran for governor but lost. Despite this disappointment, he was appointed chairman of the Committee of the Party of the Mexican Revolution (P.R.M.) in Sonora, the predecessor of the PRI. By the end of the 1930s, Uruchurtu had returned to Mexico City and worked as a legal adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería). Subsequently, during the tenure of President Manuel Ávila Camacho, 1940-1946, he was appointed legal director of the Banco Cooperativo. In 1946, during the presidency of Miguel Alemán Valdés, Uruchurtu was given the position of Secretary of the Interior (Secretario de Gobernación).<sup>24</sup> This position was a traditional springboard for the Mexican presidency since it supervised political and party matters. Uruchurtu, however, was passed over in 1952 for the PRI presidential

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<sup>24</sup> Alfredo Uruchurtu Suárez, *Del único mexicano en el Titanic: del regente de hierro y otros Uruchurtus* (México: Libros para Todos, 2004), 44.

nomination (in favor of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines) because of his alliances with the old guard in PRI, and apparently, as compensation, he was given the job of Regent.<sup>25</sup> No one had ever held the position for fourteen years, and no one ever did again. The fact that Uruchurtu so transformed the position speaks to his skill both as a politician and as an administrator.<sup>26</sup>

Uruchurtu could escape from the straightjacket that had traditionally restricted Regents and amass considerable power because of his Party's precarious political position in Mexico City in 1952. The PRI had developed in the 1920s as a coalition, "a system of incorporation of non-dominant groups: workers, peasants and unaffiliated 'popular' groups."<sup>27</sup> As this system consolidated during the 1940s and 1950s, middle-class sectors of state workers, small producers, and business people found themselves without a corporatist body to represent their needs. It was this group, who had been traditional PAN voters until the early 1950s, that Uruchurtu targeted as a new base of power for himself and the PRI in Mexico City. Over the previous ten years, as industrialization became more prominent in Mexico City, managers and state employees were drawn to the PRI. Many of them "had strong connections to the oldest families in the Centro."<sup>28</sup>

Uruchurtu knew in 1952 that he could re-strengthen the PRI by courting these middle-class residents in three major ways. First, he engaged in a public campaign to clean

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<sup>25</sup> The reasons for Uruchurtu not becoming the PRI candidate for president are not altogether clear. Some historians have noted that his close association to Alemán made others nervous of making him president. During the 1920s in Mexico, Plutarco Calles managed to effectively stay in power for almost a decade by selecting others who would do his will. There is no presidential re-election in Mexico, and this period, known as the Maximato, gave rise to a desire to always balance the power of the president and to not allow surrogates to follow their political ally. For more on Calles, see Ignacio Solares, *El jefe máximo* (México, D.F.: Alfaguara, 2011), 1-50.

<sup>26</sup> Manuel M. Contreras, *Siete regentes y un reportero* (México: El Nacional, 2007), 34-52.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Nelson Miller, *Red, White, and Green: The Maturing of Mexicanidad, 1940-1946* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, 1998), 49.

<sup>28</sup> Alejandra Moreno Toscano and Seminario de Historia Urbana, *Ciudad De México, Ensayo De Construcción De Una Historia* (México: S.E.P., Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Departamento de Investigaciones Históricas, 1978), 61. Original Spanish: Tenía fuertes conexiones a las familias más antiguas en el Centro.

up Mexico City which was “generally seen as a city in chaos.”<sup>29</sup> Public spaces had become centers of crime and vice. In *Excélsior* in 1952, a letter to the editor lamented: “No decent person can visit the public places of the city.”<sup>30</sup> During the post-revolutionary decades, prostitution and other vices in the city grew. Later administrations tried to confine prostitution to certain parts of the city.<sup>31</sup> By the 1950s, however, the main quadrant of the city was “overrun with drink and vice.”<sup>32</sup> The Centro’s infestation symbolized “the moral and physical decay of the city and the government’s responsibility to provide for its most industrious citizens.”<sup>33</sup>

Since their creation during the Porfiriato, the public spaces in the Centro had been traditional gathering places. Uruchurtu saw these spaces as a symbol of the conservative middle class of the downtown area, and thus their restoration could reinstate this class to its rightful place at the center of Mexican life. The “Regent believes that a beautiful city brightens the lives of all citizens. Parks and open spaces lift up our citizens.”<sup>34</sup> Perhaps because Uruchurtu’s own family had lived in the Centro since the Porfiriato, he identified this area as true Mexico City. In 1953, he said: “The Centro. The heart. This is the area that must be looked after first.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Stephen R Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, and Corruption* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 33.

<sup>30</sup> “El estado lamentable de nuestra ciudad,” *Excélsior*, September 15, 1952. Original Spanish: Ninguna persona decente puede visitar los lugares públicos de la ciudad.

<sup>31</sup> For more on prostitution in Mexico City, see Katherine Elaine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 1-49.

<sup>32</sup> “La tragedia de nuestra ciudad,” *El Nacional*, October, 13, 1952. Original Spanish: Estaba repleta de trago y vicio. “Vice” in this context referred to drinking and prostitution.

<sup>33</sup> “Uruchurtu y la ciudad,” *El Día*, September 13, 1954. Original Spanish: la decadencia moral y física de la ciudad y la responsabilidad del gobierno para proporcionar a sus ciudadanos más industriosas.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: El Regente cree que una hermosa ciudad ilumina las vidas de todos los ciudadanos. Parques y espacios abiertos levantan nuestros ciudadanos.

<sup>35</sup> “El Regente ama su ciudad,” *El Sol*, March 14, 1953. Original Spanish: El centro. El corazón. Este es el área en que deben ser atendidos primero.

Uruchurtu succeeded dramatically. According to *El Día* he “devoted substantial state resources to beautifying the city, mainly developing parks, flower gardens, fountains and picturesque boulevards that appealed to the middle class.”<sup>36</sup> Uruchurtu believed that through “beautifying the city’s appearance, the residents themselves would be transformed, becoming more respectful, courteous, and civilized inhabitants, who would follow the physical example of the city in their own lives.”<sup>37</sup> Only two months after Uruchurtu took office, a headline in *Excelsior* read, “A Clean City Makes Moral Citizens,”<sup>38</sup> Uruchurtu

Restored beautiful parks and gardens and constructing others, filling them with flowers that brightened up the life of the great city with their the fountains and their places of recreation for the children and relaxation for the elders.<sup>39</sup>

A subsequent article reflecting on Uruchurtu’s first six years in office stated, “The Regent has made the city cleaner. Through his own example he has made the city more efficient, and for this we offer our thanks.”<sup>40</sup> From 1952 until 1964, Uruchurtu waged war on what he saw as the physical ugliness which underlay the moral ugliness of the city. Clearly he understood the possibilities of using creative state power to help to repair the city—and thus PRI’s damaged relationship with the middle-class residents of the Centro. He succeeded. In *Universal*, there are gushing letters:

We can say that this is the first time we are pointing out that a public official is exceeding his duties and this is precisely what the inhabitants of this city praise, the

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<sup>36</sup> Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy,” 144.

<sup>37</sup> “Habitantes Civilizados,” *Excelsior*, January 5, 1953. Original Spanish: embellecer la ciudad superficial, los propios vecinos se transformarían, cada vez más respetuosos, corteses, y habitantes civilizados que seguirían el ejemplo físico de la ciudad en sus propias vidas.

<sup>38</sup> “La Ciudad,” *Excelsior*, September 15, 1952. Original Spanish: Una ciudad limpia hace ciudadanos morales.

<sup>39</sup> “Elogia la obra del Lic. Uruchurtu,” *El Universal*, January 3, 1953. Original Spanish: Restauró hermosos parques y jardines, construyó otros, llenándolos de flores que han servido para alegrar la vida de la gran ciudad con sus juegos de agua y sus lugares de esparcimiento para los niños y de descanso para los viejos. Also see *Excelsior* January 5th, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> “Una ciudad limpia hace ciudadanos Morales,” *El Día*, January 4, 1958. Original Spanish: El regente ha convertido la ciudad más limpia. A través de su propio ejemplo ha hecho la ciudad más eficiente, y para ello le ofrecemos nuestro agradecimiento.

work of Ernesto P. Uruchurtu. He is transforming the capital, giving it the appearance of a cultured and progressive city.<sup>41</sup>

Second, Uruchurtu courted the middle class by seeking to control the cost of living. He restricted the cost of meat, capped movie ticket prices, and implemented a system for the pricing of admission to nightclubs. Middle-class residents were the main groups to patronize these places, which meant his actions “reached out to the middle class sectors of the city.”<sup>42</sup>

Along with making the public spaces of the city clean and keeping the price of movies and nightclubs down, Uruchurtu made voters happy through transportation reform. taxis were a lifeline for the middle class, so he instituted a system that regulated their fares. He also addressed the chaotic bus system by restricting the number of buses that could enter the downtown, lessening congestion. These transportation measures pleased not only Uruchurtu’s middle-class supporters but also the *Alianza*, the alliance of bus owners who supported him. He gave them the best routes that made them the most money. They, in turn, through their association with the state labor union, or CTM, prevented strikes and kept fares low. Low fares were popular with the middle class, who now could spend more time and money on other things. Transportation was essential to the coalition of support that Uruchurtu amassed for himself and the PRI.

Transportation would also prove to be Uruchurtu’s Achilles heel, however. Beginning in his first term in 1952, he resisted any federal plans for the transformation of downtown. His fight against urban redevelopment was not only about political capital. As a

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<sup>41</sup> “El Completmento de una obra,” *El Universal*, April 25, 1957, Original Spanish: Podemos decir que es la primera vez en la que hacemos notar que un gobernante se excede en el cumplimiento de su deber y esto es precisamente lo que mueve a enaltecer ante los ojos de los habitantes de esta ciudad, la labor del lic. Ernesto P. Uruchurtu. El está transformando la capital dándole el aspecto de una ciudad culta y progresista.

<sup>42</sup> Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy,” 132.

life-long resident of the Centro, his attachment to the people of this area was social. While his objections to the Metro were deeply rooted in the economic interests of the groups who supported him, his protection of the downtown middle classes was also the result of familial ties to this group.

Because Uruchurtu saw the Centro as a space for the city's middle class to live and prosper, he fought any plans to change it from a residential area into a center for tourism and banking. He "appealed to the more conservative elements within the PRI and the traditional middle classes in Mexico City who were deeply rooted in the older neighborhoods of the Centro."<sup>43</sup> By the 1960s, these elements were feeling the economic pinch. National plans for the redevelopment of the Centro and increasing property speculation raised taxes on the shops that middle class families owned. The city also was changing. In 1920, 60% of the population lived in the neighborhoods surrounding the Zócalo. By 1960, that figure was down to 40%, and today it is only 18%.<sup>44</sup> Many longtime residents of the Centro "could feel their very way of life slipping away."<sup>45</sup>

From 1950 to 1952, federal authorities proposed a massive renovation of the downtown to "resolve the problems of transit in order to revive land values, which recently had depreciated dramatically."<sup>46</sup> The plan called for massive renovation of downtown city streets by "widening several main streets in order to make it possible for increased traffic in

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Ward, *Mexico City: The Production and Reproduction of an Urban Environment* (Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1990), 112.

<sup>44</sup> Alejandra Moreno Toscano and Seminario de Historia Urbana, *Ciudad de México, ensayo de construcción de una historia*, 44.

<sup>45</sup> José Luis Soberanes Reyes, *La reforma urbana. Una visión de la modernización de México* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992.), 77. Original Spanish: Muchos residentes del Zócalo "podían sentir que se escapaba su forma de vivir."

<sup>46</sup> Departamento del Distrito Federal, *Sistema de planificación urbana del Distrito Federal* (México: Departamento del Distrito Federal, 1958), 25. Original Spanish: fue hecho para resolver los problemas de tránsito con el fin de revivir los valores de la tierra, que recientemente habían depreciado drásticamente.

the commercial areas.”<sup>47</sup> The “widening of Tacubaya boulevard and the 20<sup>th</sup> of November streets will aid in the transformation of this area and increase its potential for commercial use.”<sup>48</sup> Families who had lived in the Centro for generations did not want it opened up for more commercial activity and car traffic. Despite this small group of wealthy families who remained downtown, middle-class families were increasingly looking for better housing outside of the city. Suburbs, such as Satellite City (see Figure 10), sprang up beyond the city limits. Uruchurtu fought against middle class flight, in part, because it reduced the tax base essential to providing city services, such as clean streets, parks, and housing for the poor. In the 1930s, 60% of the city’s population lived in the centro. By the 1960s, however, that number was down to 20%. These statistics illustrate why city officials thought the Centro should be transformed. People already were moving out. The development plan of 1952 and the future plans that involved the Metro sought to transform an area of declining population into one for banks, hotels, and tourists.

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<sup>47</sup> Adrian García Cortés, *La reforma urbana de México: Crónicas de la comisión de planificación del Distrito Federal* (México: Bay Gráfica y Ediciones, 1971), 4-10. Original Spanish: Mejorar el centro de la ciudad mediante la ampliación de varias calles principales con el fin de hacer posible el aumento del tráfico en las zonas comerciales.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 5. Original Spanish: La ampliación de las Tacuyaba y el 20 de Noviembre ayudará en la transformación de esta zona y aumentará el potencial para su uso comercial.





Excelsior, January 14, 1966, Excelsior, January-June 1966, BNM.

**Figure 10. Advertisement from *Excelsior*, January 14, 1966.**

One of Uruchurtu's first acts as Regent in 1952 was to abolish this development plan. Eventually he did away with the Planning Commission altogether. The Commission had been in place since 1933. In this year the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PNR), a predecessor to the PRI, introduced the Ley de Planificación y Zonificación del Distrito Federal. This Mexico City commission "comprised delegates representing large industry, large commerce, property owners, bankers and federal civil engineers."<sup>49</sup> What the commission lacked was any input from those people who opposed the economic transformation of downtown, such as "renters, small industry and a traditional middle class that still called the downtown home."<sup>50</sup> It was these groups that had drifted away from the PRI. To regain their trust in both the new mayor and the Party, Uruchurtu demanded that all

<sup>49</sup> Davis, "The Rise and Fall of Mexico City's Subway (METRO) Policy," 79.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 81.

plans for urban development come through his office alone. This move was immediately popular with Centro residents. A 1953 article in *Excélsior* stated, “the Regent now holds in his hands the reins to change the city.”<sup>51</sup> It also explains how he was able to fight off the Metro plan for so long. The Commission had been influenced by many factors pushing for urban change. With Uruchurtu now able to defeat any such plan, only those who enjoyed his confidence, such as the downtown residents and the bus companies, could participate in changing the city.

In his first three years as Regent, 1952-1955, Uruchurtu cemented his alliances and made many powerful enemies. He supported projects such as the Tlatelolco housing development because it demolished impoverished parts of the city and promised to bring in and/or retain middle-class elements, strengthening the tax base Uruchurtu needed to keep the city budget balanced. He opposed not only developments that took wealthy or middle-class residents outside of the city, but also the national development policy that drew masses of unemployed people from the countryside into Mexico City, without giving him any more resources to offset the cost of these new arrivals. Uruchurtu agreed with urban development so long as it either replaced a poor section of the city with more orderly buildings, such as in Tlatelolco, or replaced older buildings with new condominiums designed to keep wealthy residents downtown. These projects solved problems—without leading to the creation of any new organization outside of Uruchurtu’s control, such as the Metro.

### **The Final Act**

When Díaz Ordaz took office in 1964, the future looked bright for Mexico. The economy was growing and the upcoming Olympics would showcase modern Mexico and its

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<sup>51</sup> “El regente en control,” *Excélsior*, September 5, 1953. Original Spanish: El Regente ahora tiene en sus manos las riendas a afectar cambio en la ciudad.

capital. Millions of pesos were being invested by the government in infrastructure and urban renewal, concentrating money and political power in the hands of large companies and the banking sector. Small producers and shopkeepers who were favored under Alemán began to see their influence within the PRI disappear. This victory of large corporations over small producers was played out in the battle over the development of downtown and the Metro project.

For ICA and many other developers and planners in Mexico City, this period was a golden era in which government money flowed into large infrastructure projects such as dams, sewers, and sports arenas. Urban renewal meant that property speculation rose and new building in Mexico City boomed. By 1967, ICA construction projects accounted for 1% of the gross national product of Mexico. The coming Olympics provided ICA with another opportunity to promote and prosper from the government's desire both to confirm its legitimacy in the eyes of Mexicans and to showcase Mexico's modernity to the world. ICA consistently asserted that a new Metro system "would elevate Mexico's international prestige, and showcase the capital as a tourist destination."<sup>52</sup> The Metro project promised to propel Mexico into the elite group of modern European nations, while providing a proving ground for Mexicans to demonstrate their abilities.

Despite pressure from the President, Uruchurtu remained dead set against the Metro. Having eliminated the Mexico City Planning Commission in 1952, he could decide whether a project even made it to the floor of the Chamber of Deputies for consideration. Díaz Ordaz clearly wished to take back this authority. Uruchurtu's most common public objection of the Metro was that it would unbalance the Mexico City budget. Many historians say this

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<sup>52</sup> "Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la Ciudad de México," AICA, Caja 7.

objection to the subway's cost was simply a shield behind which hid Uruchurtu's desire to maintain his own power and to defend the economic interests he represented in the city.<sup>53</sup> This argument is, in part, correct. But Uruchurtu's ability to balance the books of a city the size of Mexico City in the 1950s and 1960s cannot be disregarded. He worked hard to diminish graft while increasing efficiency. The Metro, however, was out of his control. It would introduce a large bureaucracy into the city and would fundamentally change the character of life forever.

Uruchurtu correctly saw that none of the viability studies done by ICA took into account either the operating costs of the Metro over time or the expansion of the city. He understood that Mexico would have to borrow not only money to build the Metro (which was readily available in large part through ICA's connections to international banks and the French government) but also money to *run* the Metro. We now know that Uruchurtu was correct on both counts. The massive amount of money required to operate the Metro--thereby unbalancing the budget of Mexico City--would contribute to fiscal crises throughout Mexico.<sup>54</sup>

Because of Díaz Ordaz's close connections to ICA and the upcoming Olympics, the Metro issue heated up. The first signs of open conflict between the Regent and the President appeared just months after Díaz Ordaz took office. In January 1965, he began to make statements about the necessity of the Metro for the Olympics; he also pointed to what he saw as Uruchurtu's mismanagement of transportation in the city. He told the French Magazine *Le*

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<sup>53</sup> See Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 102-138.

<sup>54</sup> By 1982, debt incurred for Metro projects became a heavy burden on the Mexican economy. In the early days, 1967-1970, this was not the case. In a bad stroke of luck, 1982 was the year that these Metro debts came due. So, Uruchurtu was right in that the increase of the debt for México did, eventually, have terrible consequences.

*Nouvelles Sportives* that “some projects are desperately needed and are not yet begun,”<sup>55</sup> a not so subtle barb at Uruchurtu’s reluctance to commit resources to the Metro project. “Uruchurtu would be responsible for the role Mexico will play in the Olympic games.”<sup>56</sup> A month later, he added, “there are those who through their inaction will bring this city to ruin during the Olympics.”<sup>57</sup> According to *Politico*, Díaz Ordaz also promoted “an unjustly aggressive campaign against Uruchurtu carried out by others in the banks and in the halls of the Chamber of Deputies and the writings of journalists.”<sup>58</sup> By mid-1965, Díaz Ordaz was openly blaming Uruchurtu for nearly every problem in Mexico City, from the rising cost of meat, to chaotic public transportation, and even downtown flooding, unfair since Mexico City had flooded every year since the time of the Aztecs. To blame one Regent for this is like blaming the weatherman for winter. These attacks by Díaz Ordaz were the result of the growing realization that if the Metro project was not started soon, it would not be completed by the opening of the Olympics in October of 1968.

In June 1965, despite increasing pressure from all sides, Uruchurtu repeated his 1963 claim that the Metro project was “madness” and that it would create a “Metropolitan Monster.”<sup>59</sup> He also reiterated his opposition to the “unimaginable costs of running a Metro.”<sup>60</sup> Yet a seemingly innocent article in *Excelsior* illustrated how powerful forces were

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<sup>55</sup> *Nouvelles Sportives*, April 1965. Original French : Il y a encore quelques projets sont absolument nécessaires et ne sont pas encore commencées.

<sup>56</sup> “Transportes y los Olímpicos,” *El Día*, May 15, 1965. Original Spanish: Uruchurtu sería responsable por el papel que desempeña México en los Juegos Olímpicos.

<sup>57</sup> “México se prepara para los Juegos Olímpicos,” *El Nacional*, May 6, 1965. Original Spanish: Hay unos que a través de su inacción arruinarán a esta ciudad durante los Juegos Olímpicos.

<sup>58</sup> Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy,” 165.

<sup>59</sup> “Transporte y Política,” *Politico*, September 15, 1963, 17. Original Spanish: El proyecto de Metro es una locura. Se creará una ciudad monstruo. No podemos pagar por ello.

<sup>60</sup> “Política,” *Politico*, June 1965, 22. Original Spanish: Los costos inimaginables del funcionamiento de una estación de Metro.

aligning against Uruchurtu. “French interests have a financial plan for Mexico City.”<sup>61</sup> The article outlined comments repeated by the French ambassador that French banks had financing for infrastructure in Mexico City. While foreign capital had been part of the Metro plans since their inception, making this knowledge public put increasingly strong pressure on Uruchurtu and his anti-Metro allies because it undercut his objections based on cost. If French banks were willing to give Mexico money on good terms for the Metro, then any argument based on Mexico’s inability to pay for the system was now less credible.

During the rest of 1965, the winds of change that would blow Uruchurtu out of power were gaining strength. Early in the year, *Excélsior* had run a full-page article on the front page delineating all of the Regent’s accomplishments. He “has given nearly fifteen years of his life in service. The city is clean, its people are strong and our future is bright. Thank you, Regent Uruchurtu.”<sup>62</sup> *El Día* and *El Nacional* followed suit with glowing reviews and letters to the editor about how Uruchurtu had improved the city and how his commanding style of leadership had brought order out of chaos.<sup>63</sup>

By the summer of 1965, however, members of the private sector were beginning to openly criticize the Regent. These attacks, along with the fact that many of these individuals had close ties to land development, ICA, and Díaz Ordaz, were a signal that Uruchurtu had lost the support of the President. In June 1965, an engineer from ICA stated, in clear reference to Uruchurtu, “there are still some who believe that the current status quo is all

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<sup>61</sup> “Franceses tienen dinero para prestar para proyectos de transporte en México,” *Excélsior*, November 9, 1965. Original Spanish: los intereses franceses tienen un plan financiero para la ciudad de México.

<sup>62</sup> “El Regente de hierro y flores,” *Excélsior*, February 12, 1965. Original Spanish: Uruchurtu ha dado casi quince años de su vida en servicio. La ciudad está limpia, su gente es fuerte y nuestro futuro es brillante. Gracias, Regente Uruchurtu.

<sup>63</sup> “El Regente está al mando,” *El Día*, February 15, 1965, and *El Nacional*, “El Regente trajo orden,” February 13<sup>th</sup> 1965.

there is for Mexico.”<sup>64</sup> In *Siempre*, a small article titled, “Uruchurtu has lunch with the deputies,”<sup>65</sup> showed clearly the signs of approaching political trouble. “It has been rumored that there is some distance between the deputies and the Regent.”<sup>66</sup> As Davis notes, this was the first public notice that something was wrong between the Regent and the President.<sup>67</sup> In August 1966, an event occurred that, although never released to the public, foreshadowed the conflict between Uruchurtu and Díaz Ordaz. At a meeting in commemoration of the Ninos Heroes monument, the President is reported to have told Uruchurtu, “Don Ernesto, Gustavo, my son, is complaining that you only give him modest works and non-profits.”<sup>68</sup> This is in reference to the expansion projects on the outskirts of the city. Uruchurtu responded, “I’m surprised, nobody has complained about this, but let me check. ... I’m going to try to have more work for him.”<sup>69</sup> Gustavo was not trained as an engineer. In a 1997 article in *Siempre!* Manuel Gonzales recounted that people close to Díaz Ordaz had pressured Uruchurtu to give more responsibility to the president’s son. The Regent had resisted. When Díaz Ordaz himself again asked the Regent about the issue, Uruchurtu responded, “This cannot be. The work is too technical and it is already given to other men.”<sup>70</sup> Refusing to provide a job for the president’s son a job in the city bureaucracy was, at this time in Mexico, unheard of. This incident also speaks to the fact that Uruchurtu believed he was within his rights to refuse the President of Mexico. The Regent had been given this power, at the local level, by the PRI

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<sup>64</sup> The engineer is Juan Angel dela Vargas. Quote is from *El Día*, June 2, 1965.

<sup>65</sup> “Uruchurtu almuerza con los diputados,” *Siempre*, July 28, 1965. Original Spanish: Uruchurtu almuerza con los diputados.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Se ha rumoreado que hay cierta distancia entre los diputados y el Regente

<sup>67</sup> Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 107-159.

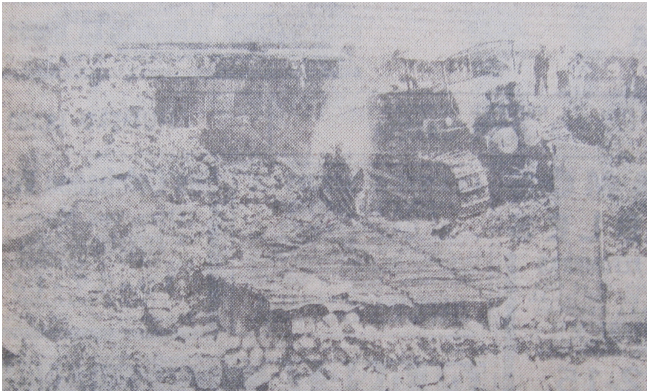
<sup>68</sup> Manuel Gonzales, “Trabajo y recuerdos,” *Siempre!* October 16, 1997, 24. Original Spanish: Don Ernesto, Gustavo, hijo mío, que se queja dar trabajo sólo modesto y sin fines de lucro.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 24. Original Spanish: Me sorprende - contestó Uruchurtu, nadie se quejó acerca de esto, pero déjame ver...Voy a tratar de tener más trabajo para él.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 25. Original Spanish: Esto no puede ser. El trabajo es demasiado técnico y ya se lo ha dado a otros hombres.

and he clearly felt no need to give it back. This was one in a long list of small conflicts between the Regent and the President that illustrate deeper conflict between the two.

The end finally came on September 12, 1966, with the bulldozing of a squatter community known as Santa Ursula on the southern rim of the city. The destruction of the site was part of the federal government's determination to expand Mexico City. Since 1964, ICA had been planning high-rise housing for the southern rim of Mexico City. Pressure was growing to finish these buildings before the Olympics. Accounts differ about who ordered the bulldozing of St. Ursula.



*Excélsior* , September 15, 1966, *Excélsior* August-January 1966, BNM.

**Figure 11. Bulldozing of Santa Ursula.**

Early in the morning, officials and police informed families that they had one hour to clear out of the shantytown. Bulldozers cleared the site. The next day, every major newspaper ran stories about the women and children expelled from their shanties. The tide in the media then fully turned on Uruchurtu. *Excélsior* reported:

Around 300 families that had been homeless before lived there at the moment, when without prior warning, city crews supported by the battalion of grenadiers and the



police forces, toppled homes using bulldozers. This created alarm and anger among the residents.<sup>71</sup>

Uruchurtu had always opposed squatter communities, and he sought to take money allotted for the Metro and instead use it “... to prevent the mass migration that currently attack our city.”<sup>72</sup> While he had always been clear in his objection to squatter communities, in *Excélsior* he stated that the removal of St. Ursula was “part of the president’s plan for the southern expansion of the city.”<sup>73</sup> His comments sent the Chamber of Deputies into a frenzy. They claimed it was Uruchurtu who was behind the bulldozing, “How dare this dictator of flowers blame the President for his own destruction and injustice.”<sup>74</sup>

The change in the perception of Regent Uruchurtu in the press can be illustrated in two cartoons from *Excélsior*, the first in 1959 and the second after the Santa Ursula incident in 1966(See Figures 12 and 13). In 1959, we see Uruchurtu cleaning up the city. He is an example for the children, and he cleans in the name of the law. Six years later the same newspaper depicts Uruchurtu as uncaring and brutish, even though he is engaged in something he saw as fundamental to cleaning up the city and something he had done many times before. In 1952 and 1953, he had moved entire communities out of the Centro. The government claimed that “communities without proper services are a danger to themselves

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<sup>71</sup> “Política de la Excavadora,” *Excélsior*, September 13, 1966. Original Spanish: Alrededor de 300 familias habían quedado sin hogar momentos antes, cuando sin aviso previo, cuadrillas de demolición del departamentos del DF , apoyadas por fuerzas del batallón de granaderos y de la policía, derribaron las casas usando bulldozers que hacían caer muros de tabiques y pasaban sobre los enseres hogareños, entre la alarma y la indignación de los vecinos. El departamento del DF explicó que era necesario trasladar a los colonos a otros sitios.

<sup>72</sup> “Los problemas del DF,” *El Día*, April 5, 1964. Original Spanish: Este dinero puede usarse para prevenir la migración masiva que actualmente atacan nuestra ciudad.

<sup>73</sup> “St. Ursula,” *Excélsior*, September 12, 1966. Original Spanish: Este plan fue parte del plan del Presidente para la expansión del sur de la ciudad.

<sup>74</sup> “El dolor de St. Ursula,” *Excélsior*, September 13, 1967. Original Spanish: ¿Cómo se atreve a este dictador de flor culpar al Presidente para su destrucción y la injusticia.

and the city.”<sup>75</sup> The same Chamber of Deputies that turned on Uruchurtu in 1966 had said in 1953, in reference to the demolishing of substandard house along Tacuyaba Boulevard, “we salute the Regent in all his efforts to beautify our city.”<sup>76</sup> In that case, many of the poorer residents were told simply to leave. Some were offered housing in other areas, but many had to move without aid. The Tacuba relocation plan got little attention in the press.



Image from *Excélsior*, October 12, 1959, *Excélsior* July to December 1959, BNM.

**Figure 12. Cartoon of Regent Uruchurtu published in *Excélsior*, October 12, 1959.**

<sup>75</sup>“La Ciudad,” *Excélsior*, September 13, 1965. Original Spanish: las comunidades con servicios adecuados son un peligro para ellos mismos y la ciudad.

<sup>76</sup> “El Regente,” *El Día*, May 14, 1953. Original Spanish: Saludamos al Regente en todos sus esfuerzos para embellecer nuestra ciudad.



Image from *Excelsior*, September 13, 1966, *Excelsior July-December 1966*, BNM.

**Figure 13. Cartoon of Regent Uruchurtu published in *Excelsior* , September 13, 1966.**

On the morning of September 14<sup>th</sup> 1965 the headlines called Uruchurtu's actions "Bulldozer Politics" and cast him as a dictator. *Excelsior* stated, "Mexico is for all Mexicans. The Regent must understand that the poor of the city cannot be disrespected in this manner."<sup>77</sup> For years, Uruchurtu had made public his idea that poor migrants were ruining the city. He had long been the ally of the middle class and had worked hard to restore the physical beauty of the downtown area. This same kind of leadership that these same newspapers applauded when Uruchurtu had taken over urban planning and transportation now condemned him as undemocratic. He was caricatured as one who favors the rich over the poor:

There was an especially aggressive oration against Uruchurtu, who was solely responsible for the suffering of this colonia. This action was in contrast to the benevolent treatment received by the wealthier neighborhoods of the city.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> "Uruchurtu del Tirano," *Excelsior*, September 14, 1966. Original Spanish: México es para todos los mexicanos. El Regente debe entender que los pobres de la ciudad no pueden ser ignorados en esta manera.

<sup>78</sup> "México es para todos los Mexicanos," *Excelsior*, September 15, 1966. Original Spanish: Particularmente se manifestó la agresividad oratoria de varios diputados contra el licenciado Ernesto Uruchurtu, a quien llegó a

The deputies in the chamber who had worked with Uruchurtu for more than a decade fell into line against him. While no one mentioned the Metro, it was the Regent's conflicts with Díaz Ordaz over the subway that led to the deputies abandoning him. "Deputies from every party condemn this act and place blame on the Regent."<sup>79</sup> While none of them had defended the squatters over the years, deputies from the PRI now came to their defense:

In the name of the majority of the PRI and especially those delegates from D.F., we express our feeling of solidarity with the families of St. Ursula. Uruchurtu must go!<sup>80</sup>

In a circuslike atmosphere, many St. Ursula residents were carted into the chamber. After hours of speeches, the deputies voted to find Uruchurtu responsible and to censure him. The chamber released this statement to the press: "We find Uruchurtu to be fully responsible and we trust in the leadership of President Díaz Ordaz."<sup>81</sup> This was the death knell for Uruchurtu. It gave Díaz Ordaz the power to remove the Regent, and, because the statement was made public, Uruchurtu's demise was now inevitable. He resigned the next day. In his letter of resignation, he thanked the people of Mexico City and President Díaz Ordaz. The era of Uruchurtu was over.<sup>82</sup>

While newspapers of this time never questioned Uruchurtu's statement that federal authorities had ordered him to bulldoze these communities, a 1997 article in *Siempre!* That recounted the event claimed:

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atribuirse la responsabilidad exclusiva del atropello sufrido por los colonos, en contraste con le benevolente actitud que suele asumir frente a los residentes en zonas privilegiadas de la ciudad de México.

<sup>79</sup> "Uruchurtu and St. Ursula." *Política*, September 30, 1966, 22. Original Spanish: Los diputados de cada partido condenan este acto y culpar a la regente.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 22. Original Spanish: En el nombre de esta mayoría del PRI y muy particularmente de los debutantes del DF expresemos nuestros sentimientos de fraternal solidaridad a las familias de Santa Úrsula. ¡Qué se vaya Uruchurtu!

<sup>81</sup> "El regente de hierro," *Política*, September 24, 1966, 24. Original Spanish: Encontramos Uruchurtu ser totalmente responsable y confiamos en el liderazgo del presidente Díaz Ordaz.

<sup>82</sup> This document is one of the only direct references to this controversy in the presidential papers of Díaz Ordaz at the Archivo General de la Nación.

Some who survived from that era recounted what nobody knows: general Luis Gutiérrez Oropeza, head of state for the President Díaz Ordaz, spoke by phone to the DDF with a relative of Uruchurtu, named José Codurier, who was the auxiliary Regent. He was ordered: “Send a few tractors to pull down the houses that clog the new work on the development plan of the Periférico.” The order was then carried out.<sup>83</sup>

The order came from a member of Díaz Ordaz’s inner circle! This means that Uruchurtu was only doing what he was told. It also speaks to the fact that the entire incident was, in fact, part of the federal plan to remove squatter communities. Uruchurtu had, under orders from the federal government, removed other squatter communities as late as November 1965, without negative press coverage. That the Santa Ursula incident was a setup to remove Uruchurtu is confirmed by the fact that members of the Chambers of Deputies and press photographers showed up at the bulldozing, which was staged just after dawn. Also unusual was that every member of the Chamber was in attendance that day. Davis asserted, “the bulldozing was no more than a proximate cause for the removal of Uruchurtu.”<sup>84</sup> One of the few articles to clearly identify the incident as a setup appeared in *Siempre*; it stated that while the news coverage against Uruchurtu “was a frontal attack on the legality of his actions, in its origins it was a game of dirty pool.”<sup>85</sup>

While most in the Mexican media did not connect Uruchurtu’s resignation to infighting within the Mexican government, an article in the *New York Times* from September 29, 1967, said, “Díaz Ordaz is slowly replacing anyone who is not in line with his plans for

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<sup>83</sup> Manuel Gonzales, “Trabajo y recuerdos,” *Siempre!* October 16, 1997, 26. Original Spanish: Algunos de los amigos que le sobreviven narran lo que nadie sabe: el general Luis Gutiérrez Oropeza, jefe del Estado Mayor del presidente Díaz Ordaz, habló por teléfono al DDF y pidió que le comunicaran con un pariente de Uruchurtu, de apellido Codurier, quien hacía en la regencia las veces de auxiliar. A éste le ordeno: “Mande unos tractores a tirar las casas que estorban las obras del Periférico. La orden se ejecutó.

<sup>84</sup> Davis, “The Rise and Fall of Mexico City’s Subway (METRO) Policy,” 178.

<sup>85</sup> “La sucia campana contra Uruchurtu,” *Política*, October 20, 1966. Original Spanish: Allí fue un ataque frontal sobre la legalidad de sus acciones, en sus orígenes fue un juego de truco sucio.

the future of Mexico.”<sup>86</sup> Another article, this one in the *Los Angeles Times*, drew a closer connection between the Metro and Uruchurtu’s dismissal: “The removal of the mayor of Mexico City points to the widening gap between Mr. Uruchurtu and president Díaz Ordaz.”<sup>87</sup>

The era of the Metro had begun. One week later, the new mayor, Alfonso Corona de Rosal, announced that Mexico City would study all solutions to its transportation issues, including the Metro. Less than a year later, work on the subway began. In his autobiography, the founder of ICA, Bernardo Quintana, remembered, “Corona de Rosal was surprised when I showed up in his office with the viability reports the day after he publicly stated that the Mexico City Government would undertake them.”<sup>88</sup> Clearly, ICA was ready now that Uruchurtu was gone.

*Siempre*’s special issue on Uruchurtu and his political demise reported that “some factors, such as the disagreement between Díaz Ordaz and the Regent over issues of infrastructure, may have played some role in the speed with which events took place.”<sup>89</sup>

Uruchurtu built a solid foundation of power for himself through his control of urban renewal and public transportation. The Metro issue undermined both of these bases and eventually toppled the Regent.

In *Seven Regents and One Reporter*, Manuel M. Contreras, who worked for *El Nacional* for nearly thirty years, asserted in a section titled “Political Cannibalism,” that, “the PRI turned on Uruchurtu, not only because he resisted the desires of the president but

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<sup>86</sup> “Mexico’s President Consolidates,” *New York Times*, September 29, 1966.

<sup>87</sup> “Big Changes in the Big City,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 30, 1966.

<sup>88</sup> ICA, *Bernardo Quintana: La vida es la obra* (Mexico City: ICA International Press, 2001), 66. Original Spanish: Corona de Rosal se sorprendió cuando me presenté en su oficina con los informes de viabilidad al día siguiente declaró públicamente que el gobierno de la ciudad de México realizara los.

<sup>89</sup> Manuel Gonzales, “Trabajo y recuerdos,” *Siempre!* October 16, 1997, 31. Original Spanish: Igunos factores, como el desacuerdo entre Díaz Ordaz y el Regente sobre cuestiones de infraestructura, puedan haber desempeñado algún papel en la velocidad con la cual ocurrieron hechos.

because he represented the past.”<sup>90</sup> Uruchurtu lost the struggle between different generations of PRI politicians and their different visions for Mexico’s future. From 1966 until 1970, Díaz Ordaz and his ally ICA reigned supreme.

In 1971, the Mexican government released a coffee-table book about the regime of Díaz Ordaz. From the 1950s on, such commemorative volumes had been a common practice. This book, titled *La Gran Ciudad*, detailed many of the large expressions of creative state power from 1964 until 1970. Along with extensive essays and pictures about the Olympics and the Metro was a section about Mexico City itself. One picture had a hidden transcript that revealed the total victory of Díaz Ordaz over the former Regent. It was a simple photo of a row of flowers in Chapultepec Park. The caption reads, “The D.D.F.(The Federal District of Mexico City) worked tirelessly with the administration of Díaz Ordaz to beautify the City.”<sup>91</sup> While this statement is not altogether false, the flowerbeds pictured were some of the first installed by Regent Uruchurtu in his 1954 campaign to refurbish and restore Chapultepec Park some ten years before Díaz Ordaz took office.<sup>92</sup> Uruchurtu repaired all of the fountains pictured in the following section. Statements such as, “The city planted 40,000 trees and flowers for the Olympics” hide the fact that Uruchurtu was the one who started this process of tree planting long before the Olympics. Even in its remembrance of its regime, the administration of Díaz Ordaz cut Uruchurtu out and cannibalized some of his greatest work.

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<sup>90</sup> Manuel M. Contreras, *Siete regentes y un reportero*, 44. Original Spanish: El PRI encendió Uruchurtu, no sólo porque se resistió a los deseos del Presidente, sino porque representaba el pasado.

<sup>91</sup> Departamento del Distrito Federal, *La grand ciudad* (México: DDF, 1971), 244. Original Spanish: El DDF trabajó incansablemente con la administración de Díaz Ordaz para embellecer la ciudad.

<sup>92</sup> “Uruchurtu mejora al D.F.,” *El Universal*, May 5, 1954.

### Chapter 3: Metro as Monument

This chapter examines the process by which street names and monuments already present above ground in Mexico City are joined to below-ground stations to make up the Metro map. This process integrated the subway's modernity with the nation's history, tying the Metro into a longer narrative of naming and commemoration in the capital. At stake was a new vision of Mexico's past and future. Scholars have recognized that successive Mexican governments since the nineteenth century have used "the capital city ... as an element of national unification and as a manifestation of the new revolutionary national identity."<sup>1</sup> The Metro, however, is a new kind of monument. It is used and not simply looked at. Citizens of Mexico come into contact with state narratives every day through their use of this state space.

The Metro is a monument in a city and a country known for monuments. This chapter begins by looking back at two of the most important post-revolutionary memorials in order to emphasize how the study of monuments offers unique insight into the process of state building in Mexico. The Monumento a la Revolución (Figure 14) and the Monumento a La Raza (Figure 15) told stories crucial to Mexican nationalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Olga Nájera-Ramírez, "Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro," *Anthropological Quarterly* 67:1 (January 1994): 7.





Image by author.

**Figure 14. Monumento a La Revolución.**



**Figure 15. Monumento de la Raza.**

Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 249.

The Monumento a la Revolución entombed the hallowed remains of the heroes of the Revolution of 1910; the Monumento de la Raza gave grandiose expression to a post-revolutionary vision of the indigenous past. Both were constructed by Mexican governments

seeking to create a national consciousness that could unite a people torn apart by revolution. The symbols and overt narrative of both monuments are well documented.<sup>2</sup> What makes them worth further study is that they were literally built out of pieces of other memorial projects from the Porfirian era (1876-1910). The Monument a la Revolución (Figure 14) was begun in the late Porfiriato and originally was designed to be the legislative palace (Figure 18). The revolution interrupted its construction, and it sat unfinished for almost thirty years. In 1938, it was redesigned as a monument to entomb the remains of the heroes of the revolution.<sup>3</sup> As Mauricio Tenorio Trillo tells us, two of the statues that now adorn the Monumento de La Raza were constructed for the Palace of the Aztecs, used in the 1906 World's Fair in Paris. The giant eagle adorned a monument to Mexican independence constructed in 1910 (Figure 17).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Gonzales, "Imagining México in 1910: Visions of the Patria in the Centennial Celebration in Mexico City," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39 (2007): 495-533; Frédéric Saumade, and Mireia Bofill, "La domesticación del mestizaje en México: del toro al guajolote (pavo)," *Historia, antropología y fuentes orales*, 28 (January 2002): 73-95.

<sup>3</sup> Martha de Alba, "Mapas mentales de la Ciudad de México: una aproximación psicosocial al estudio de las representaciones espaciales," *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos* 55 (January-April 2004): 115-143.

<sup>4</sup> Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *México at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 249.



Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 244.

**Figure 16. Totoquihuatzin. Designed to adorn Bellas Artes. Currently on the Monumento a La Raza.**

**Figure 17. Monument to Mexican independence constructed in 1910.**



Image from *Documentos históricos mexicanos; obra conmemorativa del primer centenario de la Independencia de México*, (México: Museo nacional de arqueología, historia y etnología, 1910), 45

ASPECTO DEL CATAPALCO LEVANTADO EN HONOR DE LOS HEROES DE LA INDEPENDENCIA, DURANTE LA AIPOTEOSIS DE ESTOS.



Image from *Documentos históricos mexicanos; obra conmemorativa del primer centenario de la Independencia de México*, (México: Museo nacional de arqueología, historia y etnología, 1910), 27.

**Figure 18. Model of Palacio Legislativo from 1910.**

Both of these monuments illustrate how the study of memorials unveils a hidden process of the adaptation of the symbols (and in this case, literally the pieces) of the ancient regime in post-revolutionary Mexico.<sup>5</sup> The Metro, as a monument to Mexico's past and future, can be studied using a similar methodology. While all of its construction materials were new, the names of the subway stations reflect a city in which the streets were named and renamed during both the Porfiriato and the post-revolutionary period. Studying the history of these names, therefore, gives us a picture of how the Metro reused the heroes of the Porfiriato to express a post-revolutionary understanding of the history of Mexico in a series of sites that millions of Mexicans move through every day.

### **Station Names**

The Metro station names are drawn from three periods of Mexican history. In this case, the word “epochs” refers not to when the street name was given but what period of Mexican history the name refers to. First, there are station names derived from the indigenous history of Mexico, mainly the Aztecs. Next a few stops celebrated figures from

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<sup>5</sup> See Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 1: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). I use this text here to refer to the Porfiriato (1877-1910) and their uses of creative state power.

the colonial era. The nineteenth century, which encompasses the heroes of Independence and La Reforma, earned twelve stations names. Finally, the Revolution contributed only three. So, as Figure 22 establishes, the main foci, in terms of historical periods, are the Aztecs and the nineteenth century. While two figures—Isabel la Católica and Juárez —had streets and monuments dedicated to them in the Porfiriato, there are no heroes or names from that period. In the 1971 publication, *El Metro: la primera memoria*,<sup>6</sup> STC Metro planners expressed the hope that “the Metro can be fully integrated into the city. It does not impose itself, but blends the new technology with the ancient city.”<sup>6</sup> Naming gave the Metro legitimacy. This goal of integration is insisted upon in the nearly countless chronicles published by STC Metro about transportation in Mexico City. The idea of “The Age of the Metro”<sup>7</sup> sought to imbue the present with the same power as other, more well-known periods, such as The Age of the Aztecs or The Age of New Spain. In *Excélsior*, in an editorial headlined “Nació el Metro,” José Alvarado promoted the transformative nature of the subway. “Before the Metro there was the old Tenochtitlan, the Porfirian city and the city of today. And very different from now, will be the capital of the future. The Metro will change not only transit in the city but also the psychology of its inhabitants.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sistema de Transporte Colectivo, *El Metro De México: Primera Memoria* (México: Sistema Transporte Colectivo, 1972), 27.

<sup>7</sup> “Reporte Especial: la historia y el Metro,” *El Día*, September 4, 1969. Original Spanish: Los aztecas, con sus canoas. Los españoles con sus caballos. La edad de los automóviles y ahora el Metro. Todos estos han cambiado nuestra ciudad y nuestra nación.

<sup>8</sup> “La ciudad de hoy,” *Excélsior*, June 16, 1968. Original Spanish: antes del Metro había la antigua Tenochtitlán, la ciudad porfiriana y la ciudad de hoy. Y muy diferente de la de ahora, será la capital del futuro. El Metro cambiará no sólo el tránsito en la ciudad sino también la psicología de sus habitantes.



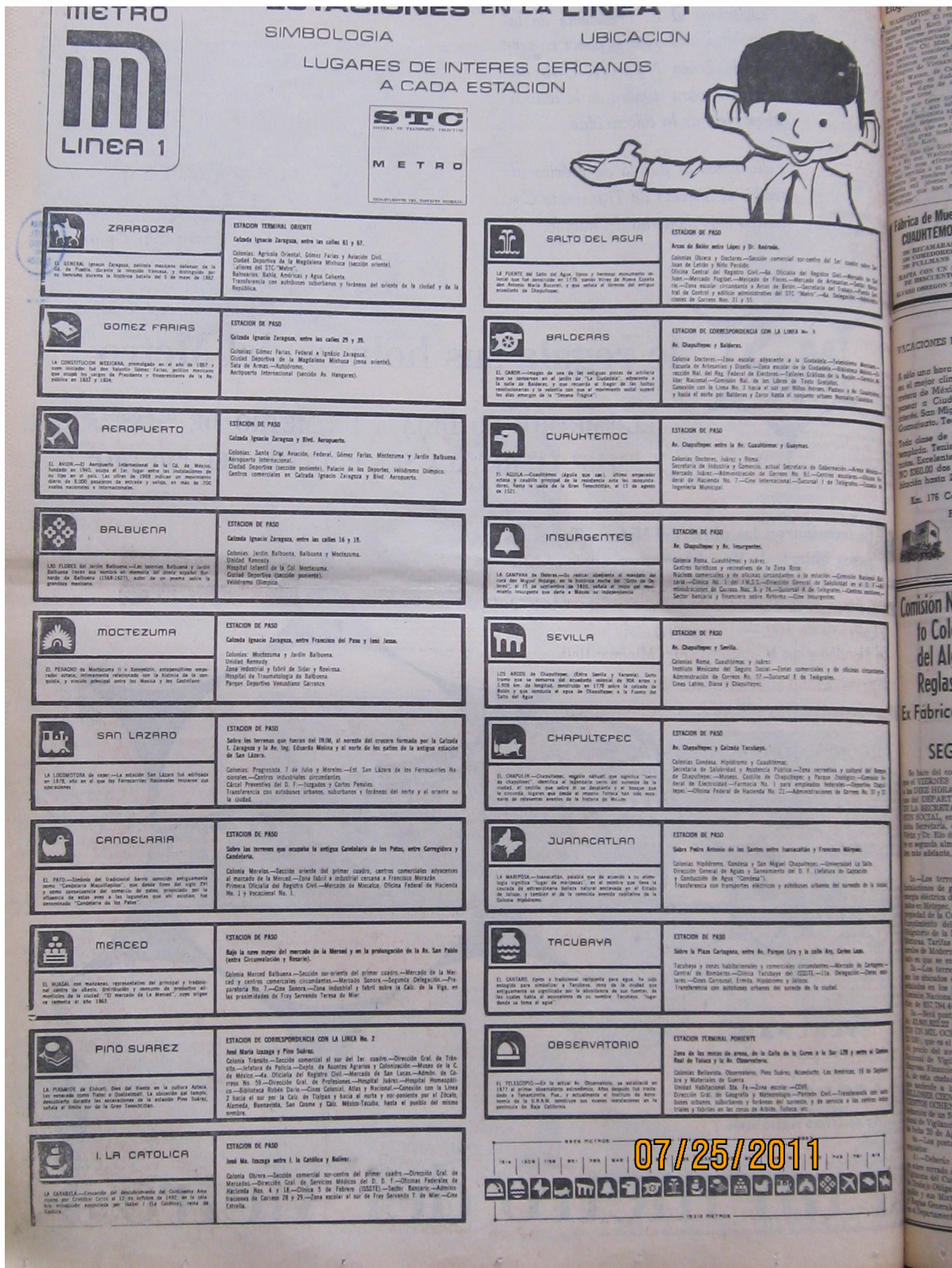


Figure 19. Metro Station Names.

Image from *Excelsior*, September 5 1969, *Excelsior* September-December 1969, Hemeroteca Nacional de México, México City (Hereafter BNM).

The subway stations are named after three locales--nearby streets, monuments, and other memorable locations. The Metro thus reflects the city above, integrating the subway with daily life as its being lived. This reflection, however, is not an exact replication of Mexico City in 1967. The inclusion of locations from the Aztec past means that the Metro map is also a narrative of the city's evolution since ancient times. The subway is being integrated into Mexico's storied past.

### *Streets*

Many Metro stations were named for the streets above. This system makes sense, as the trains ran below the intersection of major thoroughfares that commuters were already familiar with. The stations were thus easy to find. The city's street grid had a story of its own, moreover. As Chart II illustrates, the grid underwent several major periods of transformation before the Metro. The first dealt with here is during the Porfiriato, roughly 1877-1910. In 1878, 1886, and 1910, when Díaz's planners sought to brand streets in the Centro with the names of heroes of the liberal cause.

The original plan for the Paseo de la Reforma, for example, envisioned a long boulevard connecting Chapultepec Park and the Zócalo and featuring statues of liberal heroes from every state in Mexico. While this plan for La Reforma was never fully implemented, it exemplified Porfirio Díaz's desire to use the nomenclature of Mexico City to confirm his right to rule by fitting his administration into the grand narrative of Mexican history.<sup>9</sup> During his reign, the statue of Cuauhtémoc, the final Aztec emperor, was dedicated, as well as the monument to Juárez who authored reform laws and defeated the French invaders. Porfirio

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<sup>9</sup> Mathew Esposito, "From Cuauhtemoc to Juárez: Monuments, Myth and Culutre in Porfirian México, 1876-1900" (master's thesis, Arizona State University, 1994), 1-49.

Díaz also had the bones of Padre Hidalgo, who led the initial call for Mexican independence in 1810, returned to Mexico City and placed under the pillar of victory, along La Reforma, in 1888. All of these heroes are incorporated into the Metro.

Although a revolution toppled Díaz in 1910, governments and city planners continued to hail the heroes he had celebrated in Mexico City, as well as adding figures from the revolution of 1910. During the 1920s, for example, post-revolutionary governments again transformed the central quadrant:

In 1921, during the celebration of the centennial of Mexican Independence, several streets in the oldest part of the city were recast in the image of the Revolution. Calle de Capuchinas changed into Avenida Venustiano Carranza, Calles de Plateros and San Francisco were changed into Avenida Francisco I. Madero, and the Calle del Parque del Conde into Avenida Jose Maria Pino Suárez.<sup>10</sup>

Long before the Metro, the central quadrant of the city was an important space for governments wishing to mold public memory and build national identity. Presidents still struggling to assert their power found that changing street names was a cost-effective way to exercise creative state power. In “Revolution in the Streets,” Patricia Olsen writes: “The luminaries of the Revolution joined illustrious nineteenth-century figures such as Benito Juárez, Miguel Hidalgo, Juan Álvarez and Lucas Balderas in a seamless web of history united in the urban grid.”<sup>11</sup> This post-revolutionary geography thus co-opted the heroes placed on the city streets by Porfirio Díaz, while excluding Díaz himself. These post-Díaz governments did not tear down the monuments to Mexican heroes dedicated during the Porfiriato. They continued to celebrate these same figures. It was only the ending of the narrative about the heroes of La Reforma that changed after 1910. Instead of promoting the

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<sup>10</sup> Patricia Olsen, “Revolution in the City Streets: Nomenclature, Changing Form and Revision of Public Memory,” in *The Eagle and the Virgin*, ed., Mary K. Vaughn and Stephen Lewis (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 121.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.



Porfiriato as the true expression of Mexican Liberalism, La Reforma was now seen as a precursor to the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920.

### ***Monuments***

A second group of Metro stops was named after monuments. Since the 1880s, Mexico City had sprouted major memorials at a fever pitch. The Monumento a la Revolución rose from the ashes of an unfinished Porfirian project. Major stations such as Juárez, Cuauhtemoc, Revolución, and Niños Heroes were named after physical structures. The Juárez Metro stop is not on Juárez Street, however. The original plan for that line ran right past the statute, but the route was changed. Metro planners kept Juárez on the map, even though his station is not by his monument. The inclusion of major memorials in the subway system places the Metro within the long history of monument building in Mexico City. Two of these monuments, Juárez (1910) and Cuauhtemoc (1886), were from the Porfirian era, while El Monumento a la Revolución (1938) and the Niños Heroes (1952) memorial are post-revolutionary. The Metro map is a reflection of the monumental geography of the city. It incorporates these monuments, both from before and after the revolution, into its narrative in which the past and the modern present are united.

### **Lost Locations**

A third set of Metro names does not reflect the city above the subway. Names such as *Popotla* and *Chabacano*, for example, commemorate locations from the pre-Spanish era that no longer exist. Popotla was said to be the tree at which Cortés stopped to weep after losing so many men in the battle of the Noche Triste. On that night the Aztecs rose up and

defeated the Spanish, forcing them out of the city. The Metro explanation tells us that this tree survived into the twentieth before being destroyed by a fire. Popotla Metro is today located near the Jardín Cañitas in the northwest quadrant of Mexico City(See Figure 23).



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 20. Metro Logo for Popotla Metro Station. Designed by Lance Wyman.**

The Chabacano station (See Figure 24) takes the name of the fruit that grew along a river passing through this neighborhood. By the time of the Metro, however, the river had been diverted underground, and the fruit were gone. By naming a station Chabacano, Metro planners insisted that the past bore fruit in the present. From the underground subway, life from the past flowers into the future.



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 20. Metro Logo for Chabacano Metro Station designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

Homage is also paid by four other Metro stops. The names Portales, Xola, Tlatelolco, and Zócalo, speak of the lost past but draw subway riders into more recent times. For example, Portales was a major hacienda in the nineteenth century. Zapata chopped it into smaller plots during the revolution. Finally, it became a center for the making of bricks and

the building of brick archways. Xola station commemorates a location that during the nineteenth century was composed of many ranches and small farms. One of the families who ranched here was the Solas. Over the years, the name came to be spelled Sochla. Then, for reasons the Metro doesn't share with us, it became Xola. One owner of a house where the station is now located had a giant palm tree in his front yard. The tree enabled travelers to find their way. The house and palm tree are now gone, but the Metro puts them back on the map.

Tlatelolco and Zócalo stations bridged different epochs by joining an icon from one era with an explanation that spoke of another. The logo for the Tlatelolco station, for example, is the hypermodern tower built in 1964 at the massive Tlatelolco housing complex discussed in Chapter One(See Figure 25) The explanation for the station, however, speaks of the ancient importance of the sight, of the final battle between Cortés and the Aztecs here, and later of the founding of the Santiago de Tlatelolco Catholic Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, there is the modernist Tlatelolco housing project designed by Mario Pani in 1964. Metro names thus carry riders from the Aztecs all the way up to the present.



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 21. Metro Lobo for Tlatelolco Metro Station. Designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

The Zócalo station sat in the very center of both the Aztec and modern city(See Figure 26). Its construction and archaeological excavations were some of the most

complicated work in the entire project. The Metro's official explanation of the name "Zócalo," however, takes us only back to the days of Santa Anna. He wanted to build a giant monument in the square celebrating Mexican independence. Construction began but never was finished. All that was left was the base, or "Zócalo." This flat, circular structure remained in the plaza for many years and led people to call this place "the Zócalo." An article in *Excélsior* in 1968, however, established the ancient roots of the name. "The Zócalo, the heart of this city and of the ancient one. Here the treasures of the soil show us the richness of the past. Here the Metro connects the city and brings the past back for all to see."<sup>12</sup> The Zócalo's connection with the ancient past is also manifest in two other ways. The station features a number of dioramas of the Zócalo at different eras of Mexican history. Moreover, the Zócalo construction site was one of the richest for archaeological finds. While the temple and other items found at the Pino Suárez were more of a surprise, at the Zócalo "we found the richest collection, much of which now sits in the Museum of Anthropology."<sup>13</sup>



Image from "Logos y nombres de la estación de metro," *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 22. Metro logo for Zócalo Metro Station designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

<sup>12</sup> "El corazón," *Excélsior*, June 6, 1968. Original Spanish: El Zócalo, el corazón de esta ciudad y de la antigua. Aquí los tesoros de la tierra nos muestran la riqueza del pasado. Aquí la parada de metro de la ciudad y traer el pasado de vuelta para que todos lo vean.

<sup>13</sup> Jordi Gussinyer, "Hallazgo de estructuras prehispánicas en el Metro," *Boletín del INAH* 34 (December, 1969), 5.



Image by author.

**Figure 23. Panorama from Zócalo Metro station.**

### **Metro Maps**

Maps of the Metro are of two types. While later versions focused on how the parts of the subway system were interconnected, the earliest versions stressed the Metro's connections to the city above ground. For example, a map from *Excélsior* in 1967 incorporated Porfirian additions to the names and monuments of the city while mixing these with both post-revolutionary names and no-longer existing Aztec spaces.

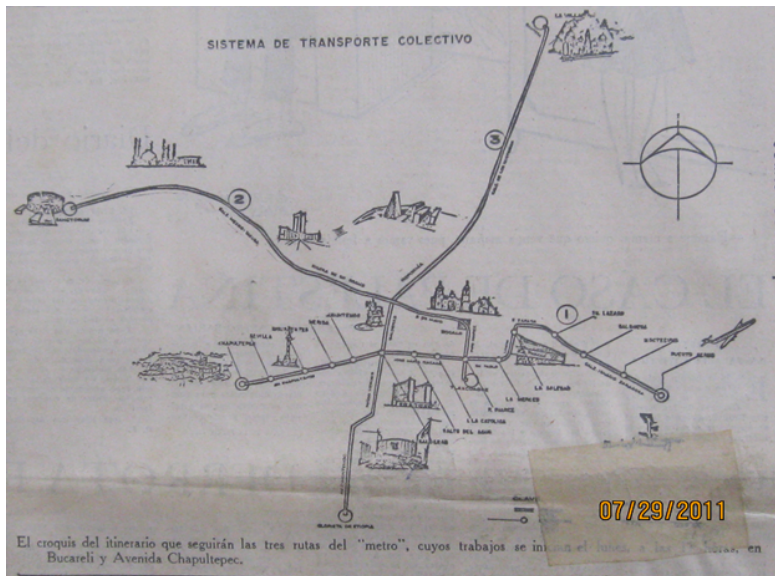


Image from *Excélsior* June 21, 1967, *Excélsior* June-December 1967. HNM.

**Figure 24. Metro map from June 1967.**

The map thus suggests the development of the city from the Aztecs through the Revolution.

In Figure 29 a Metro Map from *Universal* in May of 1968 shows the subway going down La Reforma. This plan was later changed. Also Line 3 would not reach La Villa de Guadalupe until the late 1980's. What this map established was that the Metro connected the old parts of the city, such as the Zócalo, with the new parts such as the airport, Centro Médico and Tlateoloco. Another version of this early map, in *Siempre*, again showed the subway connecting major aboveground monuments in the city. This version, however, also featured the new Regent Alfonso Corona de Rosal in the upper right hand corner, establishing the victory of Diaz Ordaz over the old Regent Uruchurtu and thus the certainty that the Metro would indeed become a reality



Image from *Siempre*, September 15, 1969. HNM.

**Figure 25. Metro map from the opening weekend of the system.**

The final version of the Metro map appeared in all the major newspapers in August of 1969. This map still connected the old and new, still did the work of mixing older symbols and monuments with newer ones, but now the chief emphasis was on below- ground navigation of the system. As a reality, the Metro was coherent within itself as well as continuous with the ancient and recent city above.



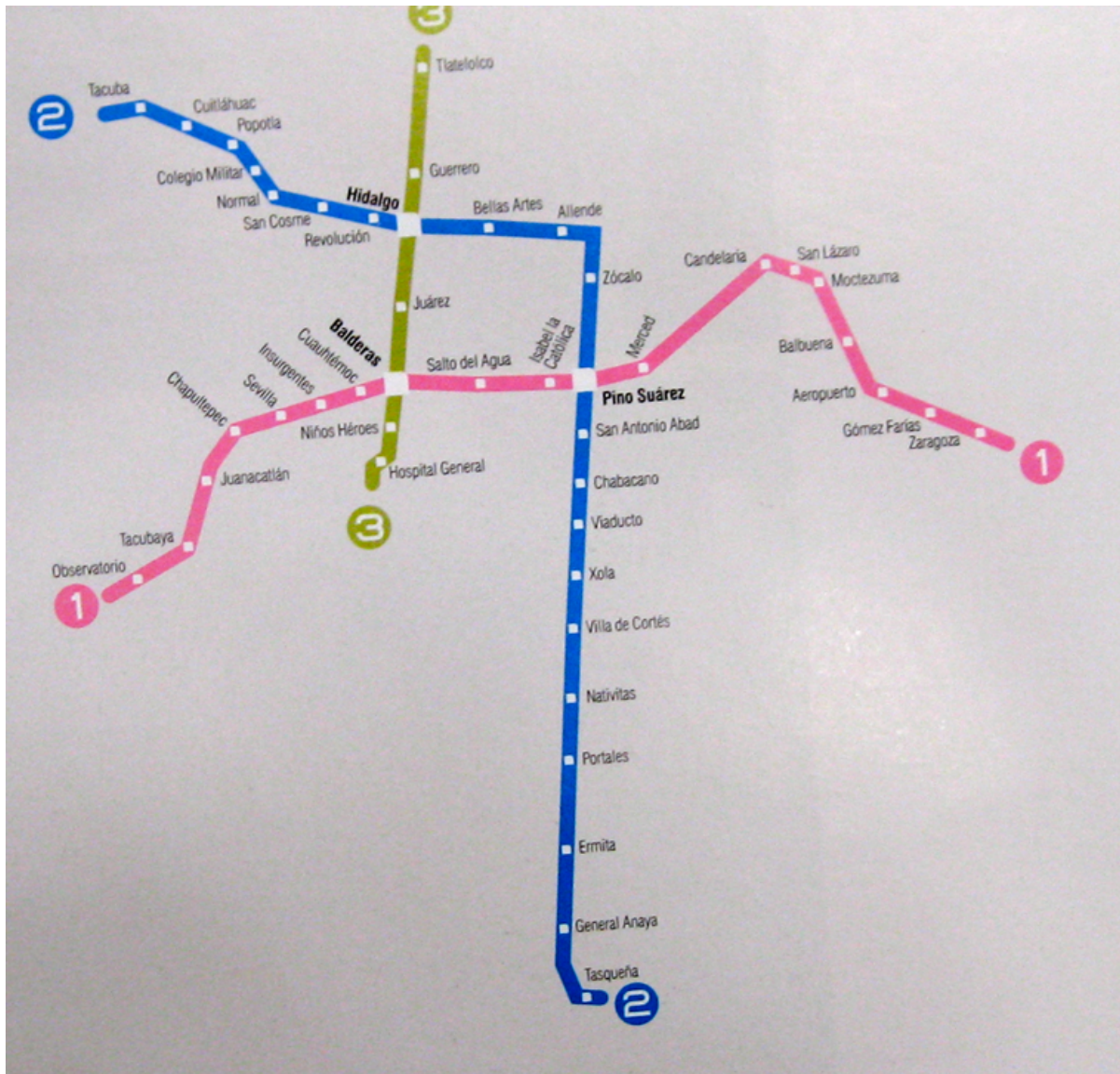


Image from STC, *El Metro* (Mexico City: S.T.C, 1972). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Mexico City (Hereafter BLT).

**Figure 26. Final version of Metro map of the first three lines.**

This map still connects the old and new, it still does the work on mixing older symbols and monuments with newer ones. But now the chief emphasis is on the below ground navigation of the system.



## Metro Logos

In 1968, I.C.A and STC Metro hired American graphic designer Lance Wyman to provide logos for the subway (See Figure 31). Wyman was already famous for his work on the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. As for Wyman's role in the rest of the design process, "Lance Wyman was the director of design along with two Mexicans, Arturo Quiñónez and Francisco Gallardo. They worked together with the engineers in Metropolitan Transportation Systems, which was responsible for the architecture, the design of the trains and stations, under the coordination of the architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez."<sup>14</sup> Wyman's "goal was to provide a system that was accessible to all people. I used symbols, not words, to make the system easy to navigate."<sup>15</sup>

The key word in Wyman's account was "all." The Metro had to be intelligible to two very different clienteles. One was tourists. Wyman himself spoke for this group when he admitted "honestly, the symbols were more about being easy to find than communicating meaning. Maybe for Mexicans, they understood more, but for me the system was supposed to be international, universal. Arturo worked more with the Metro and city people to pick the location."<sup>16</sup> If the Mexico City of the future was to be a truly international capital, its transportation system had to foster tourism. On the other hand, "Mexicans" were not a homogeneous group so far as needing directions for the Metro was concerned. Not all

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<sup>14</sup> "El Metro," *El Día*, September 15, 1970. Original Spanish: Lance Wyman era director de diseño junto con dos mexicanos, Arturo Quiñónez y Francisco Gallardo. Trabajaron los tres en el ISTME, Ingenieros en Sistemas de Transporte Metropolitano, el cual tenía responsabilidades en cuanto a la arquitectura, el diseño de los trenes y las estaciones, bajo la coordinación del arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez.

<sup>15</sup> Lance Wyman, telephone interview with author, June 24, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

residents of the city could read. The subway logos had to be intelligible to these riders as well as the tourists.

The logos for each Metro stop, along with the three different colors for each line, were designed to make navigating the Metro easier for both groups. In its first presentation of the Metro map in 1967, Metro spokesman Guillermo Marzo Gonzales explained: “The name and logo of the station should have reference to a historic place, a neighborhood or surrounding identity, illustrious person, etc. The name should be a single word in accordance with the logo (itself a pictogram) but independent of its name for people who did not know to read or foreigners themselves.”<sup>17</sup> So a symbol of Juárez signifies Juárez the man, for people who can understand who he was, as well serving as sign to help people find their way.

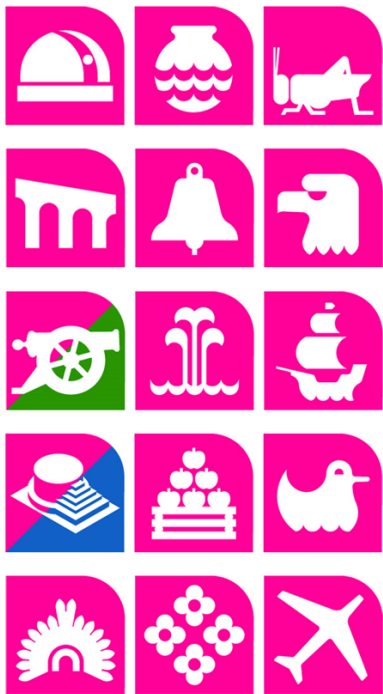


Image from “Metro Images,” *Lancewyman Images*,  
Accessed Januar 16, 2015. [www.LanceWymanimages.com](http://www.LanceWymanimages.com).

**Figure 27. Metro symbol designed by Lance Wyman.**

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

The “symbols help to make the system easy to navigate for anyone. They can be an historical guide to the city but they can also be understood by anyone. Even if they don’t speak Spanish or if they can’t read.”<sup>18</sup> The Metro logos allow for a narrative about Mexican history to be communicated to more people in more places than would, say, a monument on La Reforma. “The rich iconographic variety of our city contributed and facilitated the creation of logos which refer to the pre-Hispanic, colonial, independence and the Revolution. It also created the distinctive institutional system of collective transport.”<sup>19</sup> For everyone.

### **The Vicissitudes of Celebrity**

A final feature of Mexico’s history—the rise and fall (and rise again) of iconic figures—is also reflected in the naming of Metro stations. I will trace continuity and change from the Porfiriato through post-revolutionary Mexico by focusing on three Metro station names. “Cuauhtémoc,” “Juárez,” and “Isabel la Católica.”

### **Cuauhtémoc**

There is considerable continuity between the vision of Cuauhtémoc found in the Metro and the one presented during the Porfiriato. As a leader, Cuauhtémoc fought foreign invasion. As a man, he sacrificed himself to protect his people. The Metro stop named Cuauhtémoc lies beneath the Avenue Cuauhtémoc, which received its name in 1922 and referred to the Cuauhtémoc statue erected in 1893.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> “Iconográfica,” *El Día*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: La rica variedad iconográfica de nuestra ciudad contribuyó y facilitó la creación de logotipos que se refieren a la prehispánica, colonial, la independencia y la revolución. También creó el distinto sistema institucional de transporte colectivo.

The statue portrays Cuauhtémoc in the defiant act of hurling a spear at his Spanish enemies. In his other hand he is crushing a piece of paper that symbolically represents Cortés's order to relinquish the city or suffer the consequences.<sup>20</sup>

Here we see the archetype of Mexican bravery and manliness in the doomed hero. "His facial expression displays his bravery and fearlessness but also suggests the premonition of his impending doom."<sup>21</sup> A Porfirian statue, on a post-revolutionary street, with a post-Cárdenas Metro stop: here is the continuity in the nation's veneration of Cuauhtémoc. The statue now stands on Paseo de La Reforma (see Figure 32) which was envisioned, as we saw in Chapter 2, as "a long avenue along which the heroes of the liberal cause from every state in the nation had plaques or statues. In this manner, the people of the city could stroll along the finest of avenues and learn of the heroes of our age."<sup>22</sup>



Image by author.

**Figure 28. Cuauhtémoc statue.**

<sup>20</sup> Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos: Obra conmemorativa del primer centenario de la Independencia de México*, (México: Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, 1910), 62. Original Spanish: Señor Presidente, hace ya más de tres años y medio desde que la gran Cuauhtémoc cayó en esta ciudad por las manos de Hernando Cortés, capitán del emperador austríaco Carlos V; y hace veinte años desde que México había luchado con los descendientes de esa misma Carlos V, cuando recapturaron la ciudad de México para las patrias, y soldados austríacos entregó el Palacio a usted. Había dado la venganza a Cuauhtémoc; en la justicia estamos eufóricos a revelar su estatua.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 61. Original Spanish: Su expresión facial muestra su valentía y arrojo, pero también sugiere la premonición de su muerte inminente

<sup>22</sup> Mathew Esposito, "From Cuauhtemec to Juárez: Monuments, Myth and Culutre in Porfirian México," 44.

This ideal of strolling through a civic museum finds its counterpart in the Metro's employment of motion. Subway passengers moving around the city interact with the government's vision of Mexican history through the station names. At the unveiling of the Cuauhtémoc statue, Alfredo Chavero, president of the Congress, gave a speech in which he compared the bravery of Cuauhtémoc to Porfirio Díaz himself in 1910:

Mr. President, it has been more than three and a half centuries since the great Cuauhtémoc fell in this city at the hands of Hernando Cortés, captain of the Austrian emperor Charles the V; and it has been twenty years since Mexico had struggled with the descendants of that same Charles V, when you recaptured Mexico City for the fatherlands, and Austrian soldiers surrendered the palace to you. You had given revenge to Cuauhtémoc; in justice we are elated to unveil his statue.<sup>23</sup>

Here the glorification of the expulsion of the French by Liberal forces is tied to Cuauhtémoc's battle against the Spanish. This is a classic example of using the past to legitimize the present. The current government is basing its own right to rule on an earlier defense of Mexico against foreign invasion. It then likens this act to Cuauhtémoc's heroism in battling against Cortés. In the Metro version, Don Porfirio falls away, and all that is left are the Liberal heroes and Cuauhtémoc, now united by Díaz Ordaz's vision of post-revolutionary Mexico.

Cuauhtémoc was, in turn, more than a symbol of state power. Every year, on August 21, Indians gather around his monument in full traditional dress. Speeches are still spoken in Nahuatl, and Cuauhtémoc inspires indigenous as well as Mexican national pride.

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<sup>23</sup> Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, 62. Original Spanish: Señor Presidente, hace ya más de tres años y medio siglos la gran Cuauhtémoc cayó en esta ciudad en manos de Hernando Cortés, capitán del emperador austriaco Carlos la V; y hace veinte años desde que México había luchado con los descendientes de esa misma Charles V, cuando recapturaron la ciudad de México para las patrias, y soldados austriacos entregó el Palacio a usted. Había dado la venganza a Cuauhtémoc; en la justicia estamos eufóricos a desvelar su estatua.



Image from "Logos y nombres de la estación de metro," *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 29. Symbol for Cuauhtémoc Metro station designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

In 1968, the Olympic flame stopped at the statue while the Mexican president and military saluted Cuauhtémoc. Chairman of the Mexican Olympic committee, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, stated: "To you, oh last king of the Aztec race, we salute."<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of Cuauhtémoc both in the Olympic flame procession and on the Metro map marked his inclusion in the vision of modernity presented by the post-Cardinas Mexican state. In 1969 *Excelsior* expressed a vision of Cuauhtémoc similar to the one from the Porfiriato: "The Eagle, (the Eagle that falls) last Aztec Emperor, main leader of the resistance against the conquistadores to the city of great Tenochtitlan on August 13 of 1521."<sup>25</sup> Here we have the falling eagle that defends his people from foreign invasion. Back in 1968 *El Día* ran the same picture and provided a little more detail:

The symbol of the station is an eagle, Cuauhtemoc means Eagle falling. Cuauhtémoc, last Aztec Emperor, assumed the throne when he was 25 years old. In that year the Aztecs were commemorating the month of Texcatl during which they met in the shrine of the Templo Mayor, for a solemn Festival. Hernán Cortés was present and he ordered his men to open fire. Cuauhtemoc with a tremendous hatred and a grudge against those who had dared defile his homeland fought against the Spanish and in

<sup>24</sup> "La procesión de la llama olímpica en DF," *El Día*, October 17, 1968.

<sup>25</sup> "Símbolos," *Excelsior*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: El Aguila, (el aguila que cae) último emperador azteca, Caudillo principal de la Resistencia ante los conquistadores hasta la ciudad de gran Tenochtitlan, en el 13<sup>th</sup> de Augusto de 1521.

one week he cast them from the Kingdom in the midst of gruesome carnage, that was the memorable Noche Triste.<sup>26</sup>

Cuauhtémoc is everything a man and a leader should be. He fights back against Cortés to defend his people. Here we see how the Metro adapted a popular symbol without changing it very much. The Metro did not need to alter the Porfirian vision of Cuauhtémoc because he fit nicely into the narrative of masculinity and power; he also fit nicely in the past.

### **Benito Juárez**

The reputation of Benito Juárez has proven more vulnerable to changes in ideology than Cuauhtémoc's. To understand these vicissitudes, we must begin with the Porfiriato. The Edict of 1877 identified the Liberal heroes as the basis for a national pantheon. Vicente Riva Palacio, Minister of Development, defined the role of public spaces and art--to "awaken in some and strengthen in others a love for the legitimate glories of the heroes of our nation and a love for art."<sup>27</sup> That Juárez would be celebrated on the Paseo de la Reforma might seem unlikely, since he and Díaz were fierce enemies. But Díaz, envisioning the Paseo as the "Champs d'Elysee of Mexico City," was determined that the Boulevard would feature "monuments that remind us of the heroism with which the nation fought against the conquest of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and for the independence and reform in current times."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: La figura de la estación es un águila, ya que Cuauhtémoc significa águila que cae. Cuauhtémoc, último emperador azteca, asume el trono cuando tenía 25 años de edad. En ese año los aztecas conmemoraban el mes Texcatl; se reunían en el adoratorio del Templo Mayor, y en lo más solemne de la fiesta, se presenta Hernán Cortés quien ordena a sus hombres que abrieran fuego. Cuauhtémoc con un tremendo odio y rencor contra quienes habían osado mancillar a su patria, los combate y en una semana los echa del reino en medio de espantosa carnicería, aquella fue la memorable Noche Triste.

<sup>27</sup> "Inauguración Del Paseo De la Reforma, 1892-1910," Vol, 176, Gobierno del Distrito Federal, Obras Públicas, Archivo Historico de la Ciudad de México (Here after, ACM), 25. Original Spanish: despertar en algunos y fortalecer en otros un amor por las glorias legítimas de los héroes de nuestra nación y un amor por el arte.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 40. Original Spanish: Monumentos que nos recuerdan el heroísmo con que la nación luchó contra la conquista del siglo the16th y para la independencia y la reforma en los últimos tiempos.

During the Díaz presidency, Benito Juárez was celebrated—despite the two men’s antagonism—as the foundation of the Mexican nation’s consciousness. Juárez was president from 1857 until his death in 1872. It was Juárez who instilled a true constitution in Mexico in 1857 and wrote the *Laws of Reform* that separated church and state. Moreover he established Mexico as a nation by expelling the French in 1867 after his conservative foes had invited Maximilian, the cousin of Napoleon Bonaparte, into the country. Díaz’s goal in valorizing a former enemy was to “invent a tradition of reforms, democracy, independence and self-determination.”<sup>29</sup> In 1910, Díaz unveiled the gigantic statue of Juárez that now stands in Alameda Park. Here we see how Juárez was envisioned by the late Porfirian state. The monument, which weighed 1,625 tons and cost 390,065 pesos, displayed Juárez as a

Roman proconsul administering justice. Juárez the law-giver is seated, and surrounding him are two female allegories. One is victory and glory who places a gold garland of victory of Juárez’s head; the other is justice who stands with her sword after victory in a long struggle.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Natividad Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myth and Ethnic Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 99.

<sup>30</sup> Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, 138. Original Spanish: Proconsul romano administradora de justicia. Juárez el dador de la ley está sentado, y que lo rodean es dos alegorías femeninas. Uno es la victoria y la gloria que pone una guirnalda de oro de la victoria de cabeza de Juárez; la otra es la justicia quien está parado con su espada después de la victoria en una larga lucha.





**Figure 30. Juárez Monument.**

Image by author.

Juárez here is stripped of his Indianness. At the unveiling of the statue, Carlos Robles made the whitening explicit: “Juárez, we have raised to you a statue modeled not with blood and human ashes, like the Aztec semi-gods, but with marbles and bronze as indestructible as your own work.”<sup>31</sup> The statue is entirely European in form and features figures taken from European art, such as the female allegories and the lions set on either side of Juárez. He had, with the law of reform, “saved democracy and placed Mexico on par with the European nations.”<sup>32</sup> This vision of Juárez as the lawgiver sought to justify Díaz’s control over the country by making his regime the heir of Juárez.

With the Juárez monument and the festivities for the Centenario de Independencia de Mexico completed, the Díaz regime promptly fell apart. The worship of Juárez fell out of favor. He did not fit the ideology of post-revolutionary intellectuals. Although he was an

<sup>31</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myth and Ethnic Identity*, 144. Original Spanish: Juárez, nos hemos planteado a su estatua modelada no con sangre y cenizas humanas, como los Azteca semi-dioses, sino con mármoles y bronce como tan indestructible como su propia obra.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 144. Original Spanish: guardó la democracia y se colocó México en par con las naciones europeas.

Indian by blood, the policies of Juárez did little for Indians in Mexico. To many, such as Manuel Gamio, Juárez “deceived the Indians and himself by adopting a westernized way of life.”<sup>33</sup> While post-revolutionary thinkers continued to worship figures such as Cuauhtémoc, official celebrations of Juárez became less and less frequent and finally were stopped all together in the 1930s.<sup>34</sup>

After the expropriation of the oil industry in 1938 by Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas, Juárez began to make a comeback. This time, he was remembered as a symbol of domestic sovereignty--of Mexico’s resistance to foreign incursion. Although Cárdenas made no reference to him, newspapers at the time regularly compared his campaign against the French to Cárdenas’ own fight against foreign oil companies in Mexico.<sup>35</sup> This Porfirian tradition, in which a president allies himself strongly with Juárez, sprang up again in earnest in the 1950s. President M. Avila Camacho celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of oil expropriation (March 18) and the birthday of Juárez (March 21) with a lavish celebration at the Juárez monument, the first in nearly twenty-five years.<sup>36</sup> The next two presidents continued this tradition. Juárez became a symbol of Mexico’s rights as a sovereign nation. When Mexico refused to break off relations with Cuba in 1959, then-President Adolfo López Mateos invoked the rights of Mexico to make its own decisions and referred to Juárez’s determination to be free of foreign intervention and influence.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>34</sup> Natividad Gutiérrez argues that the move away from Juárez was also geo-political. During the late nineteenth century, both Juárez and Díaz came from Oxaca. This area was seen as the place of leaders. The first several presidents after the Mexican revolution came from the north. After 1910, the north of Mexico was the maker of presidents.

<sup>35</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myth and Ethnic Identity*, 144-175.

<sup>36</sup> “Gran celebración,” *El Herald de México*, March 20, 1938.

<sup>37</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myth and Ethnic Identity*, 188.

Perhaps the strongest indication that Juárez was back in favor came in 1967 when Díaz Ordaz erected a huge monument at the spot where Maximilian, the French emperor of Mexico, was executed. In a solemn ceremony, four former presidents of Mexico stood in a circle.<sup>38</sup> The ceremony was “a demonstration that the symbol of the president was once again in use to show the existence of solidarity and unity within PRI politics.”<sup>39</sup> This was a time of growing civil unrest. Like Don Porfirio, Díaz Ordaz used the symbol of Juárez to bolster his own legitimacy. A more ominous message is clear from the commemoration of the execution of Maximilian. There is a difference between remembering a president as a symbol of constitutional democracy and remembering the execution of someone considered to be a traitor. Clearly, the PRI was willing to use force to maintain its power. Only a year later it murdered hundreds of unarmed students in the Plaza de Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco.

### **Isabel la Católica**

A reputation that has sunk and not revived is Isabel I of Castile. In 1910, the Díaz administration renamed several streets in the downtown area to commemorate Queen Isabel I of Spain and her role in the discovery of the Americas. *La Crónica oficiale de las Fiestas del Centenario de Independencia de México*, one of a collection of documents released under the title *Documentos Históricos Mexicanos; Obra Conmemorativa Del Primer Centenario De La Independencia De México* in 1910, states that the money for the renovation was given

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<sup>38</sup> Present that day were E. Portes Gil, L. Cárdenas, M. Aleman, and Ruiz Cortés. Also in attendance was the current president Díaz Ordaz and future president Luis Echeverría.

<sup>39</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myth and Ethnic Identity*, 174.

by illustrious citizens of Mexico City. Moreover, the purpose of naming a street after Isabel of Spain was to pay “expressive homage to the Spanish nation in the person of the sovereign under whose protection Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas.”<sup>40</sup>



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 31. Symbol for Isabel la Católica Metro station designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

The government of Porfirio Díaz was naming a street after a queen of Spain in order both to pay homage to Spain for “discovering” the Americas and to reassert that the fundamental beginning of the modern Mexican nation was European.<sup>41</sup> Isabel was the model of a good ruler. She offered her paternalist protection to the Indians by making “decisions in favor of the Indians and this won her not only the love of Mexico, but of all the Latin American countries.”<sup>42</sup> Isabel, the first queen of Spain, was also the progenitor of the Mexican people:

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<sup>40</sup> Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, 77. Original Spanish: un expresivo homenaje a la nación española en la persona de la inolvidables Soberana bajo cuya protección emprendido Cristóbal Colón el descubrimiento de Las Américas.

<sup>41</sup> This desire for Mexico to appear the equal of European nations also can be seen in many of the other presentations at the 1910 centennial and their participation in the world’s fairs in Chicago and Paris.

<sup>42</sup> Museo Nacional de Aqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos*, 33. Original Spanish: Decisiones a favor de los indios la hacen querida no sólo como el amor de México, sino a todos los países de América Latina.

The patron of the discoverer of new worlds and the first woman to have the glorious name, Queen of Spain, it is our duty to recognize the light that created the fruit, people of the American continent, the children of both Mexico and Spain.<sup>43</sup>

Isabel was commemorated for bringing the holy faith to the Americas, and, in a more abstract manner, she was seen as the mother of all of the Americas. It was her decision to send Columbus and to bring European “civilization” to America that created the Mexican nation. In this version of her story, she was without blame, a glorious example of power and royalty. She fit into several standard roles for women in nineteenth-century Mexico. She was the queen, she was the mother, and she was the upholder of the holy faith.



Image from Museo Nacional de Aqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos Históricos Mexicanos; Obra Conmemorativa Del Primer Centenario De La Independencia De México*, 77.

**Figure 32. Image of the dedication of Isabel la Católica Street August 31, 1910.**

Some fifty-nine years later, however, we see a very different explanation of who Isabel was and what she did:

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 34. Original Spanish: El patrón del descubridor de nuevos mundos y la primera mujer que tiene el nombre glorioso, Reina de España, es nuestro deber de reconocer la luz que crea el fruto, la gente del continente americano, los hijos de México y España.

The image of the station represents one of the ships of Cristóbal Colón. Isabel was born in 1451 and died in 1504, having been Queen of Castile from 1474 until her death. In 1469, she married Fernando. In 1479 Fernando was proclaimed King of Aragon, thus beginning the reign of the Catholic monarchs, which was a decisive event in the unification of Spain and one of the most important events in the history of Spain.<sup>44</sup>

This part of the explanation is similar to the description recorded in the days of Díaz. Isabel performed acts of violence, with much more success than other leaders, oversaw a golden age of cultural and economic power, and ushered in the growth of Spain into a unified empire. The next section of the 1969 explanation, however, began the renovation of her legacy.

Isabel made large errors, one of the most notable being the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain, as well as the expulsion of all Jews. For these reasons the people baptize her with the name of “the Catholic.”<sup>45</sup>

Here we have a political figure who did important things but also made serious mistakes.

Gone was the image of Isabel as the mother of the Americas. Gone was Mexico’s familial attachment to Spain. Isabel was thus stripped of her femininity. Her logo now was Columbus’ ship. She was credited as a participant in the discovery of America, yet she was singled out as the sole architect of the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. At the end of the 1969 passage, we are told that “the people baptize her with the nickname of the Catholic.”<sup>46</sup>

During the Porfirian celebration, Isabel was “La Reina,” or “La madre de las Americas.” In a post-revolutionary world, while she still was included in the lexicon of legitimate power in the Metro map, she was dubbed “La Católica.” Gone were her positive aspects, her

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<sup>44</sup> J. Antonio Beltrán González, *Historia De Los Nombres De Las Estaciones Del Metro* (México: STC Metro, 1973), 24. Original Spanish: La imagen de la estación representa uno de los barcos de Cristóbal Colón. Isabel nació en 1451 y murió en 1504 después de haber sido reina de Castilla desde 1474. En 1469, se casó con Fernando. En 1479 se proclama a Fernando como rey de Aragón que comienza el reino de los Reyes Católicos, que fue la unificación de un acontecimiento decisivo de España y uno de los eventos más importantes en la historia de España.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 24. Also published in *Excélsior*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: Isabel cometió grandes errores, uno del más notable es el establecimiento de la Inquisición en España, así como la expulsión de los judíos. Por estas razones la gente le bautiza con el nombre de “la Católica.”

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 24. Original Spanish: el pueblo la bautiza con el apelativo de la Católica.

leadership as a queen, and her pro-genitive act of discovery. In the Metro, she became a symbol of extremism.

The Metro's stations thus reflected the vicissitudes of these figures' reputations. Cuauhtémoc stood forth unsullied, Juárez was rehabilitated, and Isabel was stigmatized as la Católica. Despite the fact of the Revolution, twelve of the forty names for the stations came from the Porfiriato. At the opening of the Metro, Díaz Ordaz stated that "the founding fathers of Mexico are present with us today ... to launch a new era in this nation. As we move forward into the future, may they always be our guide."<sup>47</sup> This chapter has illustrated how the Metro—through its names, maps, and logos--functioned as monument that both reflected the sacred geography of the city and remembered places long gone. The subway stations' names were in fact often created by different regimes for different purposes. A consideration of these differences and similarities reveals the roles of heroes of Mexican history and unveils how the meaning of particular icons shifts from one generation to another. It also explodes any notion that meaning within the national narrative is static. The Metro itself has become a monument. While its form is new, it, like all other monuments, uses older symbols to express one moment's vision of the country.

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<sup>47</sup> "Metro," *Excelsior*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: Los padres fundadores de México están presentes con nosotros hoy para inaugurar una nueva era en esta nación. Mientras avanzamos hacia el futuro, que siempre sean nuestra guía.

## Chapter 4: The Discovery and Reproduction of the Past

We have seen that, in Mexico, the modernization of infrastructure and the display of the indigenous past were often connected. The Aztecs in particular were used as an anchor to ground modernist design and foreign technologies in something unquestionably Mexican.<sup>1</sup> During the 1910 celebration of Mexico's independence, for example, Díaz, dressed in European finery, stood in front of the "Aztec Sun Stone." (See Figure 37). He also unveiled the statue to Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec king, while at the same time promoting advances in science and engineering throughout Mexico. The only thing missing from Díaz's Mexico were Indians themselves!<sup>2</sup> In modernist projects of the 1950s and 60s, the Aztec presence remained strong—in the façade of U.N.A.M, the Plaza de Tres Culturas commemorating the Aztec defeat by the Spanish, and The Museum of Anthropology. Close in time to the construction of the Metro were the festivities designed for the Olympic Games of 1968. The Olympic flame was transferred to Mexico in an "Aztec Fire Ceremony."<sup>3</sup>

In the Olympic promotions, the Aztecs were associated with other epochs of Mexican history. For example, the Olympic flame reached Mexico on ships that recreated the path of Columbus's voyage:

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<sup>1</sup> I used "Aztec" here because the overwhelming majority of examples of state promotion of this kind come from the Aztec tradition. Mayas can be found in some aspects of this presentation of the past but only in a few examples. These are noted through this work.

<sup>2</sup> Díaz promoted European technologies such as railroads, dams, and sewage treatment. He encouraged foreign investment and foreign models for education. This same vision of the indigenous past remained important after the revolution of 1910. Major state projects were rare from 1910 until the early 1950s because of lack of funds and political instability.

<sup>3</sup> "Ceremonia del fuego Azteca," *Excélsior*, October 12, 1968. For more on the Aztec fire ceremony see Bernál Díaz del Castillo and B. G. Hérzog, *Cortés & the Conquest of México by the Spaniards in 1521: Being the Eye-Witness Narrative of Bernal Diaz Del Castillo, Soldier of Fortune & Conquistador with Cortés in México* (Hamden, Conn: Linnet Books, 1988), 1-25. Also see Mary Ellen Miller and Karl A. Taube, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient México and the Maya: An Illustrated Dictionary of Mesoamerican Religion* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 12-44.



Every detail of the Route of the Torch was carefully planned by the Organizing Committee. It was decided that the Torch should follow the course of Columbus's first voyage to the New World, thus symbolizing the union of the classic cultures of the Mediterranean with those of America and recalling the places and events associated with this discovery.<sup>4</sup>



Image from Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, *Documentos históricos mexicanos: Obra conmemorativa del primer centenario de la Independencia de México*, (México: Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, 1910),14.

**Figure 33. Porfirio Díaz and Aztec sunstone in 1910.**

Here, Mexico was participating in a European tradition that claimed to be ancient but in fact dated from only the 1930s. The Germans invented the Olympic flame ceremony in 1936 for the Berlin Games. The Mexican Olympic committee overlaid this pseudo-history with the actual journey of Columbus and the discovery of America.

On August 27 the Flame arrived in Genoa, where the Greek Olympic Committee delivered it to their Italian counterparts. A ceremony was held in honor of Christopher Columbus before the house in which the great navigator was born, after which twenty-two runners relayed the Flame to the central bridge of Porta della Soprano. The next day the Flame was taken to the Ponte dei Mille naval base and carried aboard the *Palinuro*, a training vessel of the Italian Navy.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Comité Organizador de los Juegos Olímpicos, *México 68*, vol. 4 (México: Asociación Olímpica Nacional Mexicana, 1969), 244.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

The Italian and Spanish navies saw the flame across the ocean. It landed in the new world just as Columbus did:

The Flame was received in Las Palmas, capital of the Canary Islands, and at San Sebastián on nearby Gomera. Fifteen days later, the Princesa arrived off San Salvador, on September 14, at the exact site of Columbus's first landing in the new world.<sup>6</sup>

From here on, the flame's motion was back toward the Aztecs.

On the morning of October 10, the Torchbearers set out toward Tlaxcala, passing through the villages of San Martín Texmelucan, Apizaco and Huamantla. In Huamantla, a magnificent carpet of flowers and white sand—more than three kilometers in length—was created by 2,500 local artisans for the reception of the Flame.<sup>7</sup>

After passing through communities that celebrated their local customs, the flame reached Teotihuacan at dusk.

While twenty thousand spectators watched in awe, three thousand dancers directed by choreographer Guillermo Arriaga revived the ceremony of the "New Fire"—a ritual performed by ancient Mexicans every 52 years. They believed that humanity would come to an end at the conclusion of the 52-year cycle, and for them the rising of the New Sun symbolized a renewal of the world, assuring its existence for another 52 years.<sup>8</sup>

At this pre-Aztec site, the Olympic flame is welcomed by an Aztec fire ceremony (see Figure 38):

Under the symbol of the Flame, the mythologies of the Old and New Worlds met at Teotihuacan, "where men became gods." Coordinated by Julio Prieto, the spectacle took place in a remarkable setting—the Great Plaza of the Moon. On this sacred site the pyramid dedicated to the night was erected for the benefit of gods and men, who would eventually become skillful initiators capable of founding the capital, of descending to infernal regions and rising to the heavens, of creating a new age in which the religion of agriculture was replaced by that of war, and of supplanting the grave with an underwater paradise ruled by Tláloc, god of rain and fertility. Teotihuacan was a perfect setting to blend different myths, which, in the end, came to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 249.

the same: the consecration of spring, the assurance that the sun would rise again after the reign of the moon, and the resurgence of Fire—life and light— the final word.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 258.



Image from Comité organizador de los Juegos Olímpicos, *Mexico 68*, 53.

**Figure 34. Photo from the Olympic flame ceremony in Mexico City 1968.**

In Aztec times, all the fire in the kingdom was extinguished. Then a procession was held. People lined the streets and cut themselves to fling their blood onto the participants. During this night, it was believed that if babies fell asleep they would turn into mice. Pregnant women were imprisoned for fear that on this night they would become monsters. The procession reached the center of the sacred world, the Plaza Mayor, and, just as the stars correctly aligned, a sacrificial victim had his heart cut out and a fire was made in his chest cavity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> David Carrasco, *The Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth* (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 2008), 128.



Image from Comité organizador de los Juegos Olímpicos, *Mexico 68*, 54.

**Figure 35. Photo from Olympic flame ceremony, Teotihuacan 1968.**

By 1968, the Aztec ceremony was, of course, stripped of its human sacrifice and other bloodletting rituals. Instead, it was combined with the discovery of America by Columbus and the history of the Olympic flame in order to promote the unity of all mankind.<sup>11</sup> The location, a recreation of Teotihuacan, was bathed in lights and filled with Mexicans dressed as Indians. Here, we get a glimpse of the ways in which the indigenous past of Mexico, albeit a sanitized version, was melded with a modern European recreation of an ancient Greek ceremony.(See Figure 40) After all, the present-day Olympics were a re-invention by Frenchman Pierre de Fredi in 1896. The modern Games copy something ancient

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<sup>11</sup> The “discovery” of the new world by Europeans is presented as a positive occurrence.

but are always displays of the host country's technology, modernity, and power. *Excélsior*'s summary of the event stated, "now the blood of the ancient Greeks and the mighty Aztecs have mixed in this celebration of our common humanity."<sup>12</sup>



Image from Comité organizador de los Juegos Olímpicos. *Mexico 68*. 55.

**Figure 36. Picture of Olympic Flame caldron. Named Caldron of the Aztecs.**

In the next paragraph, *Excélsior* promoted the modernity of the "Olympics in which, for the first time ever, people from around the world will watch the games in color, games in which

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<sup>12</sup> "Los Aztecas," *Excélsior*, October 12, 1968. Original Spanish: Ahora la sangre de los antiguos griegos y los aztecas poderosos han mezclado en esta celebración de nuestra cultura común de la humanidad y ricos.

the most modern and technologically advanced structures will house the competition of all humanity as one.”<sup>13</sup>

To indicate how the promotion of the Metro partook of the spirit and intention of the Olympic festivities, I will focus on two subway stations. Bellas Artes Metro, especially considered in conjunction with the Museum of Anthropology, embodied the ICA’s core narrative about the relationship between the modern present and the indigenous past. The Pino Suárez station, in turn, departed from this narrative and gave form to its own story. In this new narrative, the active discovery of the past that occurred in building the Pino Suárez station actually transformed the station’s final design. Here, the past shaped the future and was not simply displayed or used as a name for modern technology.

### **The Museum of Anthropology and Bellas Artes Metro Station**

At the International Conference of Americanists, held in Mexico City in 1910 to commemorate the 100th year of Mexican independence, Justo Sierra voiced his belief that, one day, Mexico would build a national museum to “hold the testimonies and vestiges of the Pre-Columbian cultures of Mexico.”<sup>14</sup> In 1960, at the same Conference, and again in Mexico (this time for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mexican Independence), Jaime Torres Bodet announced that Mexico City would indeed build such a museum. Four years later, on September 4, 1964, the National Museum of Anthropology opened its doors to the public. This museum and the Metro share important characteristics. The planning processes for both

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<sup>13</sup> “Los Juegos Olímpicos,” *Excélsior*, October 12, 1968. Original Spanish: Original Spanish: Los Juegos Olímpicos en los cuales, por primera vez, la gente de todo el mundo va a ver los juegos en color, unos juegos que se toman sitio en las estructuras más modernas y tecnológicamente avanzadas.

<sup>14</sup> Ramirez Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: Mexico City* (New York: Helvetios Press, 1968), 14.

ICA projects included team visits to countries throughout the world.<sup>15</sup> Both sought to be modern in their design, using the newest international ideas of modernism and functionalism, yet were determined to maintain a deep congruency with the past.<sup>16</sup> Project supervisors Jaime Torres Bodet and Pedro Ramírez Vázquez sought “total harmony between the building and its contents.”<sup>17</sup>

The Museum was designed to “illuminate the commonalities between the pre-Columbian past and our modern present.”<sup>18</sup> ICA’s core belief was that “architecture reflects the geographical, technological, economic and social conditions of the time in which it is built.”<sup>19</sup> Ramírez Vázquez made it clear that “the design was not some fad to be forced on the content of the museum. Function, to display, to respect, was its primary goal.”<sup>20</sup>

In the design of the museum, the main courtyard and its giant pillar holding up the umbrella are modern marvels of engineering. (See Figure 41) They provide as much open space as possible because the giant umbrella is held up by only that single pillar. The lines of the umbrella and the courtyard are straight, in accordance with a modern aesthetic. The design is also highly functional. It provides cooling shade in the scorching climate. In addition, the massive pillar and its umbrella channel rainwater down to nurture the plants in the courtyard. In turn, to balance this modernist functionalism, the designs on the walls of the courtyard seek to replicate indigenous images from ruins in southern Mexico. The

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<sup>15</sup> ICA president Bernardo Quintana visited Toyoko, site of the 1964 Olympics and a new Metro system. He and other engineers also traveled to New York, Chicago, Paris, London, and Moscow. Pedro Ramirez Vasquez also traveled to Chicago to see the Field Museum, the New York Museum of Natural History, and the Moscow Museum of Natural History.

<sup>16</sup> Functionalist buildings were characterized by efficient simplicity, the use of unfinished materials, exposed structural elements, and low-cost materials, gave buildings a pared-down, ultra-modern look. This appealed to a new generation of architects seeking to create new peoples architecture.

<sup>17</sup> Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> INAH, *The National Museum of Anthropology* (New York: Abrams Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



decorative features, based on Mayan designs, tie all of the new technology and design back into what the museum is supposed to do, display the past. The courtyard is an incredibly peaceful place in the center of one of the world's largest cities.



Image from Ramirez Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: México City* (New York: Helvetius Press, 1968), 13.

**Figure 37. Central courtyard pillar at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.**

The courtyard functions as the meeting place for all epochs of history displayed at the museum. It is the public plaza of Mexican archaeology. The garden in back of the museum also holds larger pieces discovered after construction. As in the plaza, the garden draws together different epochs of Mexican history and makes accessible to all visitors a variety of large pieces from different indigenous civilizations.



Image from Ramirez Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 14.

**Figure 38. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.**

The museum has many days on which admission is free for all Mexicans.<sup>21</sup> It provides free admission to students and allows for students to study the collections housed in the museum at low or no cost. The museum is in Chapultepec Park, easily accessible by public transportation.

Along with the public spaces for display, the museum also houses the laboratories of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH). Architect Ramírez Vázquez explained it that “the modern aesthetic of the museum displays and connects with the past. In a similar way, the museum also houses the science of discovery and preservation.”<sup>22</sup> Both the modern architecture and the scientific methods of preservation and discovery contribute to

<sup>21</sup> While these days are called “free days,” tourists must pay full admission.

<sup>22</sup> Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 17.

the preservation and display of the past. Far from being in conflict, the modern and the ancient find harmony.



Image from Ramirez Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*: México City, 17.

**Figure 39. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.**

In the design of the Metro, we see a similar idea. A modern space can house ancient artifacts and present them in a way that bridges the gap between ancient and modern. In the Montezuma Metro station, for example, is a re-creation of the “Headdress of Montezuma” (another re-creation of which is found in the National Museum of Anthropology). Placing this artifact in a Metro stop anchors the subway within pathways that connect antiquity, modernity, and Mexico’s national identity(See Figure 44). According to legend, this headdress goes back to the first interaction between Cortés and Montezuma. Some people believe this was a gift given to Cortés by the Aztec king. Although there is little historical support of this tale, the item has been labeled the “Headdress of Montezuma” in both the Austrian Museum of Natural History and the Mexican Museum of Anthropology(See Figure

45). What concerns us here begins shortly after the Mexican Revolution. Mexican governments (1920-1952) were in search of artifacts that could unify a divided nation. The headdress of Montezuma had, by that time, turned up in the private collection of Archduke Ferdinand and then had made its way into the National Museum of Anthropology in Vienna. In 1923, Mexico asked for the return of the headdress, but Vienna refused. Until quite recently, every Mexican president has demanded the return of the headdress once during his presidential term. In what amounted to political theater, each of the presidents since Álvaro Obregón (1920-1924) drafted a letter, delivered a speech, and claimed that the headdress was part of Mexico's cultural heritage. Each time Austria refused his request.<sup>23</sup>



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>.

**Figure 40. Logo for Montezuma Metro station designed by Lance Wyman.**

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<sup>23</sup> Silva Spitta, *Misplaced Objects* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 35.

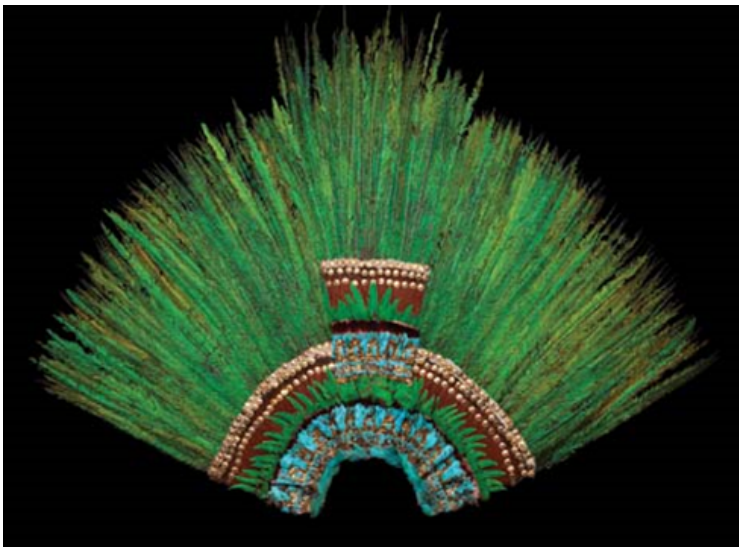


Image from Silva Spitta, *Misplaced Objects* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 35.

**Figure 41. Photo of the Headdress of Montezuma on display at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.**

In 2010, Mexico offered to trade Maximilian's golden coach to Vienna for the headdress. This offer required Mexican authorities to agree to make an exception to their long-held policy that all Aztec artifacts are the property of the Mexican people.<sup>24</sup> (Since the 1940s, Mexican administrations have argued for the return of all Aztec artifacts currently in other countries.) This exception was required because the Austrian government feared that Mexico would simply keep the headdress once it was in Mexico. The two items will soon be swapped. The fact that the headdress was included in the Metro speaks to the way in which the presentation of the past there followed traditional paths that grew out of Mexico's search for an identity after the Revolution of 1910. As a state project, and as a monument to one vision of history, the Metro continued to reinforce the importance of artifacts, such as the headdress, by including them in its presentation of the past. The actual historical authenticity of the headdress may be in question (even the display in the National Museum of Anthropology states that "the origins of the feathered headdress remain unclear")<sup>25</sup>, but the symbolic significance of the artifact is considerable. The inclusion of the headdress, and by

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 37.

implication the controversy surrounding it, signal its importance to one narrative about Mexican identity. Like other monuments included in the Metro map, the headdress connected the current government (the builders of the Metro) with both the indigenous past and previous Mexican governments. They respect the past and advocate for the return of Mexico's artifacts.

The Bellas Artes Metro station is similar to the Museum of Anthropology in its presentation of the past and its mixing of modern and ancient elements. The logo for the station represents the main façade of the Palacio de Bellas Artes (See Figures 46 and 47). As with the Revolución Metro station, here we have a Porfirian project that was not completed until after the revolution:

The construction of this building was initially dedicated to the National Theatre, and the work undertaken in 1904, to be finished in September 1910 and opened to commemorate the centenary of the independence. The theater was unfinished for many years until 1932 when by presidential orders, work resumed. It was entrusted to the Mexican architect Federico Mariscal. Reconstruction lasted two years, and on September 29, 1934, the Palace of Fine Arts was inaugurated.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> J. Antonio Beltrán González, *Historia De Los Nombres De Las Estaciones Del Metro*, 34. Original Spanish: Inicialmente, la construcción de este edificio se dedica al teatro nacional y las obras fueron realizadas en 1904, en septiembre de 1910 y se abre para conmemorar el centenario de la independencia. El teatro estaba terminado durante muchos años y fue hasta 1932 cuando por órdenes presidenciales, trabajo reasumido. Se encomendó al arquitecto mexicano Federico Mariscal. Reconstrucción duró dos años, y el 29 de septiembre de 1934, fue inaugurado el Palacio de Bellas Artes.





Image by author.

**Figure 42. Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.**



Image from “Bellas Artes,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 43. Photo of Bellas Artes Metro platform.**

Bellas Artes Metro was the last station of the first three lines to be completed. It opened on November 17, 1970. Like other Metro stations, it was thoroughly modern. “In Bellas Artes we have the most modern appointments, structures and technological systems.”<sup>27</sup> The station itself was designed to be a “public museum so that the people could see and understand the richness of their past.”<sup>28</sup> The modern and the ancient are at peace with each other. “All this modern technology exists under the watchful eyes of the past.”<sup>29</sup> The station was designed so that the major passageways between the two intersecting lines were filled with statues and displays about Mexico’s indigenous past(See Figure 48). The items were of several kinds—objects recovered from the excavations of the Metro; objects from other parts of Mexico; finally, artistic representations of the past, such as the murals of Rina Lazo. There also was space for a rotating exhibit from the National Museum of

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Original Spanish: en Bellas Artes tenemos los lugares, las estructuras y los sistemas más modernos y tecnológicos.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 34. Original Spanish: un museo público para que la gente podría ver y comprender la riqueza de su pasado

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 35. Original Spanish: toda esta tecnología moderna existe bajo la atenta mirada del pasado



Anthropology. Along the train platforms were several headstones from Iztapa near Chiapas. Each re-created a piece now located in the Museum of Anthropology. In this way, the Metro re-creates the past, joining objects discovered in the area around the station with those that came from other parts of Mexico.



**Figure 44. Display space inside Bellas Artes.**

Image by author.

In its introduction of the Metro in *El Día*, STC Metro declared of the Bellas Artes Metro:

with its statues of various places in ancient Mexico, it is a real museum. It certainly evokes the station of the Louvre, in Paris. But the truth is that the Bellas Artes station is more grandiose and beautiful. Its “museumology” is more attractive and exciting. Its didactic function and aesthetics is, in this case, optimum.<sup>30</sup>

Bellas Artes subway thus unifies the narratives of both the Museum of Anthropology (a modern space that displays the past) and the Museum de Bellas Artes (a pre-revolutionary

<sup>30</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, November 11, 1970. Original Spanish: con sus estatuas de varios lugares en el México antiguo, es un verdadero museo. Sin duda evoca la estación del Louvre, en París. Pero la verdad es que la estación de Bellas Artes es más grandioso y hermoso. Su, “museumología” es más atractivo y emocionante. Su función didáctica y estética es en este caso óptimo.

building that displays both European and post-revolutionary Mexican art). What links them all is that most Mexican of things, the indigenous past.

Two more artifacts connect the Bellas Artes subway stop to the history of Mexican art. One connection is through France. The relationship between Mexico and Paris is well studied, here and elsewhere, but in 1998 this relationship took an unexpected physical form. Paris gave Mexico a Hector Guimard-style art nouveau Paris Metro entrance that was placed at the Bellas Artes Metro(See Figure 49). In exchange, Mexico sent a Huich mural that is now on display in the Louvre Metro station. The Bellas Artes Metro station also has murals that represent the Mexican artist's views of France and the French artist's view of Mexico. These were added in 1989.

A second tie is through one of Mexico's premier artists, Rina Lazo. One of her finest murals decorates the Bellas Artes subway station(See Figures 50 and 51).



Image by author.

**Figure 45. Hector Guimard-style art nouveau Paris Metro entrance to Bellas Artes Metro station.**

She recreated murals found in the archaeological zone in Bonampak. That site, just over the Mexican border, is known for impressive murals first rediscovered in 1934. Lazo explained her work and its location in Bellas Artes Metro like this: “these murals are part of the tradition that forms the foundation for all painting and art in Mexico . . . these forms are what makes modern art. In time you know everything here [Bellas Artes Metro] can be seen above too. It all draws from the same forms.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, murals played an important role in Mexican art long before being made famous by Diego Rivera. “Mural painting was not new to Mexico. Diego took an old form and gave it new life through his choice of subject matter. But nothing is older or more Mexican than the mural.”<sup>32</sup> STC Metro explains:

The technique was acrylic on canvas. This extraordinary artistic work carried out by Rina Lazo was based on careful study of the originals. Tracing the lines in the drawing of the figures and the use of a wide pallet of colors was made with great care

<sup>31</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, June 24, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

and respect to the original, thus bearing witness to the extraordinary technique developed by Maya artists. Lazo used modern materials but recreated the technique of the original.<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 46. Mural “Reproduction of Murals at Bonampak” by Rina Lasso found in Bellas Artes Metro station.**

Image from “Obra de arte en el Metro,”  
*STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015,  
<http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>.

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<sup>33</sup> “Metro Bellas Artes Tiene Algo para Todos,” *El Sol*, November 14, 1970. Original Spanish: La técnica es acrílico sobre lienzo. Este extraordinario trabajo artístico realizado por Rina Lazo se basó en el estudio cuidadoso de los originales. Trazar las líneas en el dibujo de las figuras y el uso de una amplia paleta de colores fue hecha con gran cuidado y respeto a la original, por lo tanto testigo de la extraordinaria técnica desarrollada por artistas mayas. Lazo utiliza materiales modernos pero recreado la técnica del original.



**Figure 47. Mural “Reproduction of Murals at Bon Am Pak” by Rina Lasso found in Bellas Artes Metro station.**

Image from “Obra de arte en el Metro,”  
*STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015,  
<http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

The Belles Artes Metro thus connects ancient forms of art with their more contemporary expressions both through the art of Lazo and in the musuem above.

### **Pino Suárez Station**

Between 1967 and 1970, millions of artifacts, large and small, were discovered during the digging of the Metro tunnels. This period was “the most productive time in Mexican archaeology since it became a profession.”<sup>34</sup> While Bellas Artes Metro has on display artifacts from the Museum of Anthropology, the Museum owes many of its artifacts to the building of the Metro.

<sup>34</sup> Jordi Gussinyer, “Hallazgo de estructuras prehispánicas en el Metro,” *Boletín del INAH* 34 (December 1968), 49. Original Spanish: el tiempo más productivo en la arqueología mexicana desde que se convirtió en una profesión.



Producing, not merely displaying, artifacts makes the Metro one of the most interesting and complicated expressions of Mexican modernity. The second section of this chapter is broken into two subsections. First I explore the promises that ICA made regarding archaeology, and how the corporation used archaeological preservation as a major reason for building the Metro. Second I focus on Pino Suárez station, and on how the many artifacts discovered during the building of the station transformed its design. This process, in which the past actively shaped the modern form designed to display it, is unique to the Metro.

### **The ICA Promise**

In its initial viability report on the Metro project, dated 1966, and in newspaper articles in 1968, ICA claimed that the Metro “is for the benefit of all Mexicans and advances the progress of all peoples.”<sup>35</sup> In addition to arguments about how the Metro would improve traffic flow, increase productivity, and lessen pollution in Mexico City,<sup>36</sup> ICA made archaeology a central reason for building the Metro. Great discoveries would occur because ICA was “working with the finest minds and the latest technology ...” Therefore the “great advances in the understanding of our city are assured.”<sup>37</sup> Indeed the “history of the Mexican people is the responsibility of all Mexicans. To preserve is to respect.”<sup>38</sup> If it is the responsibility of all Mexicans to preserve the past and the Metro will do this, then it is the responsibility of Mexicans to build the Metro. This narrative is yet another way in which ICA

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<sup>35</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la Ciudad de México,” 1966, Documentos, Archivo de ICA, Mexico City (hereafter, AICA), Caja 7. Original Spanish: El Metro es para el beneficio de todos los mexicanos y los avances del progreso de todos los pueblos.

<sup>36</sup> For more on this report, see Chapter 1 as well as Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), Chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> “Informe sobre la viabilidad de un sistema de Metro en la Ciudad de México,” AICA, Caja 7. Original Spanish: Trabajamos con las mejores mentes y la última tecnología, grandes avances en la comprensión de nuestra ciudad están asegurados.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. Original Spanish: La historia del pueblo mexicano es responsabilidad de todos los mexicanos. Para conservar debe respetar.

presented a highly profitable construction project as a nationalist endeavor for the betterment of Mexico. Moreover, ICA emphasized archaeological discovery without acknowledging that Metro tunnels through the city would inevitably destroy many artifacts.

One section of the ICA report, entitled “The Science of the Past meets the Metro of today,”<sup>39</sup> explained “today the archaeologist uses science to find and to preserve for all Mexicans the rich cultures of the past.”<sup>40</sup> Promoting the Metro as a project that protected, not destroyed, the past had two main functions for ICA. First, defining “the past” as the ancient past allowed ICA and city planners to enact radical changes to the city, while still claiming to respect the past below the surface. An earlier example of this mindset was the Tlatelolco project. Here, the Plaza de Tres Culturas was designated as “the past” and was integrated into the design of the complex. What was not called as “the past” was the neighborhood that was leveled in order to build the high-rise complex. The narrative of integration of past and present in modernist projects in Mexico required a constructed image of the past. As seen in Chapter 1, the Metro was only part of a plan to redefine the Centro and to open it up for increased investment and tourism. The more recent past of this area had no place in the new plan for downtown.

In the ICA report, the Metro became a link between the present and the past. Not only did it serve functions in transportation, which improved the present and the future, but “the Metro is converted into a time tunnel.”<sup>41</sup> Both the process of building and the process of riding the Metro are served by this metaphor. In the building of the subway, Mexicans find clues to their own identity. This conversion, from Metro train into time tunnel, occurs as

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 44. Original Spanish: La ciencia del pasado cumple con el Metro de hoy.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 46. Original Spanish: Hoy el arqueólogo utiliza la ciencia para encontrar y conservar para todos los mexicanos las ricas culturas del pasado.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 43. Original Spanish: el Metro se convierte en un túnel del tiempo.

“archaeology, science of the past, has begun to interweave with the present.”<sup>42</sup> The language of the report implies that by building the Metro, humans are able to save the past for those in the future. Also, when people ride the Metro, they see the past every day.<sup>43</sup> They can learn and experience their culture on their daily commute. An *Excélsior* article in 1967 stated “the Metro is like the situation of man in his own time: he uses the materials of today to place the past in the present and the future.”<sup>44</sup>

Archaeology was what allowed the Metro to be a time tunnel. The Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) was an early advocate for the subway project. Clearly its interest lay in the possibility of new discoveries in areas that previously had been thought impossible to excavate.

There are treasures buried under our city. They represent clues about the past. The past of the Aztecs, the past of Mexico. The Metro is a project for the future of Mexico City through which we may better understand the past.<sup>45</sup>

For many archaeologists, especially older ones, the thought of digging in densely populated areas in the Centro was a Godsend. Raul Arana, who worked on the Metro project, stated, “as archaeologists, the news impressed and moved us, since excavating in front of the National Palace, in the back of the Cathedral, was a dream for many of us, and at the time seemed impossible.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 44. Original Spanish: Arqueología, ciencia del pasado, ha empezado a entrelazar con el presente.

<sup>43</sup> This is what was hoped for by planners. I have little doubt that not every commuter who takes the Metro everyday thinks this. Just because a space is readable doesn't mean that meaning always comes through.

<sup>44</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, September 4, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro es como la situación del hombre en su tiempo: utiliza los materiales de hoy para poner el pasado en el presente y el futuro.

<sup>45</sup> “La Ciudad,” *Excélsior*, June 24, 1967. Original Spanish: Hay tesoros enterrados debajo de nuestra ciudad. Dan pistas del pasado. El pasado de los aztecas, el pasado de México. El Metro es un proyecto para el futuro de la Ciudad de México a través del cual podemos comprender mejor el pasado.

<sup>46</sup> “Metro,” *El Día*, June 22, 1987. Original Spanish: Como arqueólogos, las noticias nos impresionaron y nos emocionaron, porque excavar en frente del Palacio Nacional y detrás de la Catedral era un sueño para muchos de nosotros y en ese momento parecían imposibles.



The dream quickly became reality. By June 1967, Metro construction had already yielded archaeological discoveries. *El Día* established that “within even the first days of construction the archaeologists from INAH are already busy.”<sup>47</sup> For the next three years, the Metro construction would yield thousands of important discoveries. In an article under the headline, “Great excitement for archaeological discoveries in the Metro,” the famous historian Salvador Novo celebrated the fact that “the glorious testimonies of what Mexico is today are being taken out of the bowels of our great metropolis not only to enrich the museums but also to reveal the truths of history.”<sup>48</sup>

Large and small items were recovered and taken for study at the Museum de Anthropology. “Hundreds of ceremonial items have already been recovered. Bowls, pots and other everyday utensils have been recovered.”<sup>49</sup> Mexicans were constantly reminded of the diligence of their national archaeological authority. “The National Institute of Anthropology and History is taking the necessary steps to participate in the work of archaeological rescue during construction of the Metropolitan railway.”<sup>50</sup> The process of building the Metro allowed archaeologists to “observe the transformations that the city has suffered since Mexicans dwelled in it; colonial times, the independent age up to middle twentieth century. We found the material history of the city.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: en incluso los primeros días de la construcción, los arqueólogos del INAH ya están ocupados

<sup>48</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, June 22. Original Spanish: El testimonio glorioso de lo que hoy es México se saca las entrañas de nuestra gran metrópoli no sólo para enriquecer los museos pero también para revelar la verdad de la historia.

<sup>49</sup> “A Hoy,” *El Día*, June 14, 1967. Original Spanish: Cientos de objetos ceremoniales ya han sido recuperados. Cuencos, ollas y otras herramientas se han recuperado todos los días.

<sup>50</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, June 4, 1967. Original Spanish: El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia toma las medidas necesarias para participar en la labor del rescate arqueológico durante la construcción del tren Metropolitano.

<sup>51</sup> “La ciudad y el Metro,” *El Día*, July 10, 1967. Original Spanish: observar las transformaciones de la ciudad que han sufrido los mexicanos que la habitan; la época colonial, la época de la independencia hasta los mediados del siglo XX. Encontramos la historia material de la ciudad.

## **Pino Suárez: The past transforms the future**

Pino Suárez is a major hub of the Metro system. Lines 1 and 2 cross here. It is consistently one of the busiest transfer stations. Stations of this type, labeled by ICA as *estación de correspondencia*, are complex to build because they are twice as deep as other stations, with one line running under the other. In March 1968, ICA released in *El Día* a summary of Line One. In this original conception, Pino Suárez had nothing to do with the as-yet undiscovered archaeological wonders. Instead, “Pino Suárez and the rest of line one has the main attraction in its solutions to urban problems through the creation of several urban centers that will no doubt come to relieve the problem of habitation in several of the areas that are the most populated in the city.”<sup>52</sup>

The original design for the station sought to integrate it into the urban landscape in order to create extra space for commercial buildings. Above the station was to be “a large square which was formed over the affected land and in which is envisaged in the future, the construction of an urban complex formed by large buildings. The Northern access will also be located on the ground floor in a commercial building.”<sup>53</sup> Thus prior to the discovery of the temple, Pino Suárez was promoted exclusively as something modern, something that could solve contemporary problems. It had nothing to do with the past. The station was named for the first vice president after the Revolution of 1910, José María Pino Suárez. The ICA description begins by explaining who Pino Suárez was:

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<sup>52</sup> “Estaciones de metro,” *El Día*, March 16, 1968. Original Spanish: Pino Suárez y el resto de la línea una tienen la atracción principal en sus soluciones a los problemas urbanos a través de la creación de varios centros urbanos que sin duda vendrán a aliviar el problema de vivienda en varias de las áreas que se consideran de las más pobladas de la ciudad.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Una gran plaza que se formó sobre las tierras afectadas y en la que se prevé en el futuro, la construcción de un complejo urbano formado por grandes edificios. El acceso norteño también se ubicará en la planta baja de un edificio comercial.

José María Pino Suárez, revolutionary, Vice-President of the Republic, lawyer, journalist, poet and writer for the daily the peninsula, where he wrote against the tyranny suffered by the peasants, striving for their improvement. Member of the antirreleccionist party he participated in the political campaign of Francisco. I. Madero; at the outbreak of the revolution, he was appointed Governor of Yucatan. He was murdered along with President Madero.<sup>54</sup>

This original explanation came out in 1967, before the archaeological discoveries.

The original symbol for the station was an illustration of the two lines intersecting each other (See Figure 52). Even in the original design, before the temple, the station mixed a modernist symbol that expressed the efficacy of the station with a revolutionary name.



*Excélsior*, September 21, 1967,  
*Excélsior* June-September 1967,  
Biblioteca Nacional de México,  
Mexico City (Hereafter, BNM).

**Figure 48. Original symbol for Pino Suárez Metro station.**

The character and design of the station would be changed forever when “one of the workers injured himself with one of the machines. Upon looking, we noticed we had hit something big.”<sup>55</sup> Both *El Día* and *Excélsior* ran front-page articles about the

<sup>54</sup> J. Antonio Beltrán González, *Historia De Los Nombres De Las Estaciones Del Metro*, 48. Original Spanish: José María Pino Suárez, revolucionario, vicepresidente de la República, abogado, periodista, poeta y escritor, funda El Diario El Peninsular, en donde escribe en contra de la tiranía que sufrían los campesinos, pugnando por su mejoría. Afiliado al partido antirreleccionista, participó en la campaña política de Francisco I. Madero; al estallar la revolución, se le nombra gobernador de Yucatán. Muere asesinado junto con el presidente Madero. A

<sup>55</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, April 14, 1969. *Original Spanish*: uno de los trabajadores se había herido con una de las máquinas. Al buscar, nos dimos cuenta de que habíamos golpeado algo grande

“archaeological mysteries in the Metro.”<sup>56</sup> Over the next three days workers “found a large ceremonial center on the calle de José Izazaga”<sup>57</sup> INAH had planned to do major excavations on Jose Izaga. This was one of their “special zones.” The Zócalo and the areas around the Isabel la Católica station had long been known for rich archaeological finds(See Figure 53). Researchers at the National Museum of Archaeology pored over source material that could shed light on parts of the city that had been important ceremonial or religious centers in previous eras. Because of the limited time and resources for archaeological rescue, these areas were given priority. To more efficiently perform “the supervision and rescue work, archaeologists used historical sources from the pre-Hispanic era, which allowed them to set up the sites where they would find the greatest amount of data and materials.”<sup>58</sup>

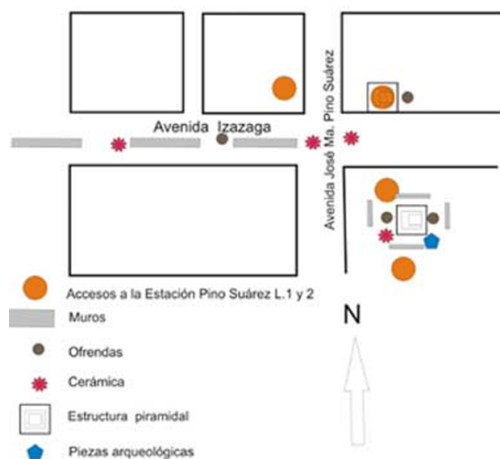


Image from Jordi Gussinyer, “Hallazgo de estructuras prehispánicas en el Metro,” *Boletín del INAH* 43 (December 1969), 15.

**Figure 49. Map of archaeological finds near Pino Suárez station during 1967 through 1969.**

Major finds in this area included the excavation of the Montserrat Convent. The INAH reported that “the findings are striking in front the ex-convent of Montserrat, today the

<sup>56</sup> “Hallazgos,” *El Día*, June 14, 1969.

<sup>57</sup> Jordi Gussinyer, “Hallazgo de estructuras prehispánicas en el Metro,” 15-18.

<sup>58</sup> Raúl Martín Arana, “Rescate Arqueológico en la Ciudad de México,” *Boletín del INAH* 30 (December 1967), 24.

Museum of Charrería, on the corner of Izazaga and Isabel la Católica, where skeletons, remains of walls, stairs and foundations of the convent are located.<sup>59</sup> It had been thought that the area to the east of this site would reveal the most discoveries, but the surprise came when the findings at the station were located to the west on Pino Suárez avenue(See Figure 54). In a special edition of *El Día*, an INAH spokesman stated

This is a great chance to preserve this amazing find that is important for the history of the city and for the Mexican people. Everything depends on what we find as we dig deeper and the ways this can be preserved and incorporated into the station itself. We (INAH) are working very hard with STC and Obras Públicas to figure out a solution.<sup>60</sup>



Image from Raúl Martín Arana, “Rescate Arqueológico en la Ciudad de México” *Boletín del INAH* 30 (December 1967), 24.

**Figure 50. Photo of excavations near Pino Suárez Metro station from July of 1967.**

In the INAH bulletin from December 1968, the site is described as “a patio, of good proportions, that had stairs on three sides (North, South and East), several shrines placed at

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<sup>59</sup> Gussinyer, “Hallazgo de estructuras prehispánicas en el Metro,” 22. Original Spanish: Son notables los hallazgos frente al ex convento de Montserrat, hoy Museo de la Charrería, en la esquina de Izazaga e Isabel la Católica, donde se localizaron ornamentos, restos de muros, escaleras y cimientos del convent.

<sup>60</sup> “Hallazgos,” *El Día*, June 24, 1969. Original Spanish: Esto es una gran oportunidad para preservar este increíble hallazgo que es importante para la historia de la ciudad y para el pueblo mexicano, todo depende de lo que encontramos al excavar más profundo y cómo puede ser preservada e incorporada en la estación que construimos. Nosotros (el INAH-Conaculta) estamos trabajando mucho con STC y obras públicas para determinar una solución.

the center, housing cells intercommunicating via exterior steps, walls and, to the North, a platform which gave architectural unity to the pyramid”<sup>61</sup> (See Figure 55). What remains today is a part of the main pyramid (See Figure 55). This structure is “a low platform on three earlier structures, each with stairs and ridges. The offerings contained bones of parrot, goose, turkey, remains of braziers and ceramic Aztec art from different epochs.”<sup>62</sup>

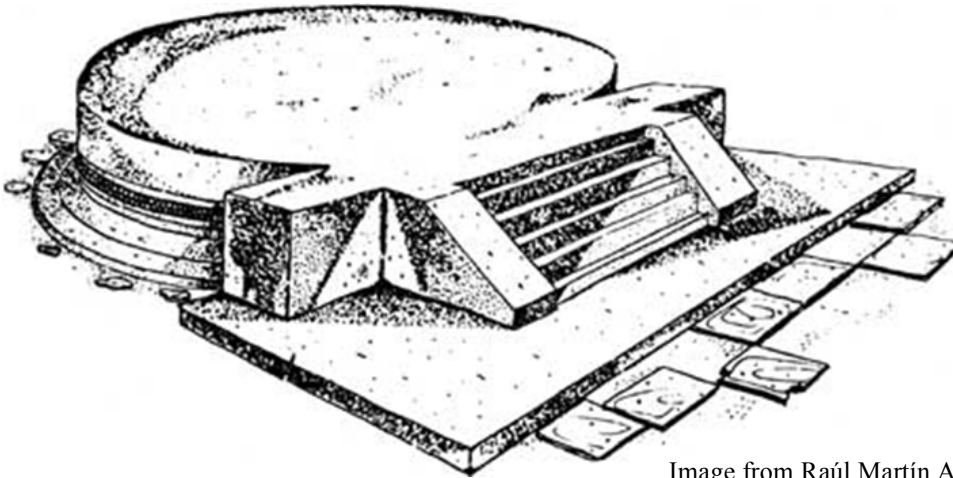


Image from Raúl Martín Arana, “Hallazgo de Estructuras Prehispánicas en el Metro” *Boletín del INAH* 44 (January 1971), 45.

**Figure 51. Drawing of pyramid found in Pino Suárez station.**

Along with the larger items, hundreds of smaller sculptures and pottery also were discovered. As each day passed, more of the pyramid was exposed. The newspapers in Mexico City ran daily updates. Work on the station itself came to a standstill. In July, ICA President Bernardo Quintana told *Excélsior* “in this case archaeological rescue has become more important than

<sup>61</sup> Raúl Martín Arana, “Hallazgo de Estructuras Prehispánicas en el Metro” *Boletín del INAH* 44 (January 1971), 44. Original Spanish: Un patio, de buenas proporciones, que tenían escaleras en tres lados (norte, sur y este), varios santuarios colocados en el centro, las células vivienda intercomunica mediante medidas exteriores, paredes y, hacia el norte, una plataforma que dio unidad arquitectónica a la pirámide.

<sup>62</sup> Doris Heyden, “Un adoratorio a Omácatl” *Boletín del INAH* 42 (December 1970), 34. Original Spanish: ...una plataforma baja en tres estructuras anteriores, cada una con escaleras y crestas. La oferta contiene huesos de loro, de ganso, de pavo, de restos de cerámica Azteca arte de diversas épocas.

efficiency. We will continue to explore what is here until we can adjust our design for this station.”<sup>63</sup> (See Figure 56).



Image from *Excélsior* , July 12, 1969, *Excélsior* June-December 1969, HNM .

**Figure 52. Photo of the building of Pino Suárez station around the newly discovered Pyramid.**

After it became apparent that the station would have to be altered, an emergency meeting was convened. At the gathering were the main architects and design teams from ICA, members of the archaeological team from INAH, ICA President Bernardo Quintana and the Regent of Mexico City, Alfonso Corona de Rosal. The result was a new plan for the Pino Suárez Metro(See Figure 57). By the end of July 1969, there was increasing pressure on ICA to finish this important station. In a 1970 publication, ICA recounted that

Pino Suárez station project had to be modified on the fly, when in April 1969, the excavations for the construction of the vestibule between Lines 1 and 2 uncovered an

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<sup>63</sup> “El Metro,” *Excélsior*, July 12, 1969. Original Spanish: En este caso el rescate arqueológico es más importante que la eficiencia. Seguiremos a explorar lo que está aquí hasta que podemos ajustar nuestro diseño para esta estación.

Aztec monument formed of five overlapping structures. For the interest of this pyramid, its size and state of conservation, we decided to integrate it into the modern architecture of Pino Suárez station.<sup>64</sup>

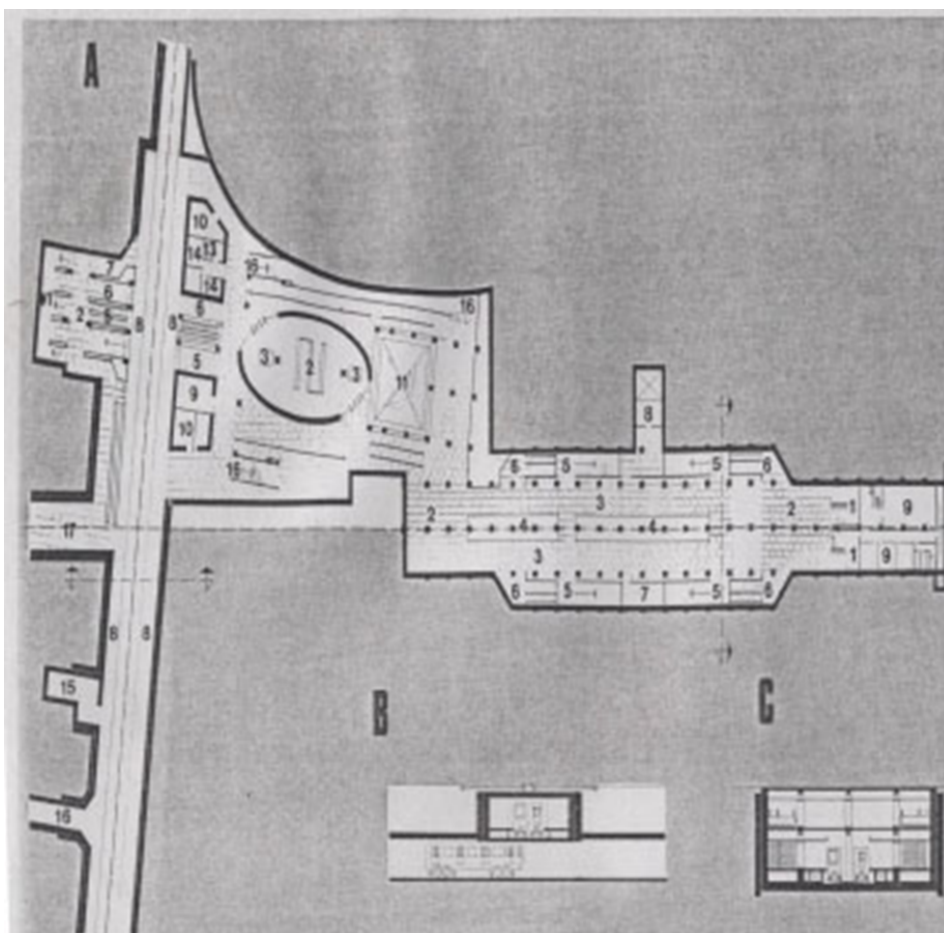


Image from ICA, *Los Proyectos espaciales de Metro* (México: ICA, 1970.), 244.

**Figure 53. The new plan for Pino Suárez station, dated 1969.**

Changes to the station were of two types. The first were physical. In the original design, the entrance to the station had been precisely where the pyramid was found (marked 11 on this rendering). In the new design, the entrances were placed across from their original position,

<sup>64</sup> ICA, *Los Proyectos de Metro* (México: ICA, 1970.), 244. Original Spanish: el proyecto de Pino Suárez tuvo que ser modificado de volada, cuando en abril de 1969, las excavaciones para la construcción del portal entre las líneas 1 y 2 al descubrir un monumento Azteca formado por cinco estructuras sobrepuestas. Por el interés de esta pirámide, su tamaño y su estado de conservación, hemos decidido integrarlo en la arquitectura moderna de la estación Pino Suárez.



and the location of the temple was made an open-air courtyard, bringing more light and fresh air to the venue. Unlike other stations, this vestibule unifies the city above and the Metro system below. Moreover, display spaces, which previously had no particular subject matter, were redesigned to showcase the artifacts unearthed during the digging(See Figure 58).

The second change involved promotion. ICA and Sistema de Transporte Colectivo de la Ciudad de Mexico (STC) now celebrated the station not only as a modern wonder named after a hero of the revolution but also as a showcase for both the Aztec history of Mexico (essential to nearly every vision of state-sponsored nationalism) and the Metro's role in preserving the past. The temple, not a feature in the original plan, had become its shaping force.



Image by author.

**Figure 54. Objects found during the construction of Pino Suárez station on display in the station.**

After the archaeological discovery, Lance Wyman changed his original design for and made the temple prominent(See Figure 59). It is the only logo in the first three lines to commemorate an underground structure. Other stations are named after above-ground structures, such as Bellas Artes. The ICA explanation of Pino Suárez now added a paragraph about the discovery of the temple .

The station icon represents the pyramid of Ehécatl (God of wind). In the Aztec culture, Ehecatl was as revered as Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc.

The pyramid was discovered during the excavations for the construction of the Pino Suárez station and marks the southern limit of the Grand city of Tenochtitlan.<sup>65</sup>



Image from “Logos y nombres de la estación de metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx>

**Figure 55. Symbol for Pino Suárez Metro designed by Lance Wyman in 1969.**

Many large structures were found throughout the area, but only one was chosen to remain and to become the central piece of the station. While not discussed in any of the articles about the new design, a choice had clearly been made. It was the Aztec past that was to form the connection between a revolutionary hero and a modern Metro. Other artifacts from the other eras were quietly packed up and shipped to the Museum of Anthropology.

In this new design, we see possibly the best example of the Mexican modernity discussed throughout this work. Here an Aztec temple, discovered in the digging of a modern subway line, functions as a unifying factor between the city above and the Metro system below(See Figure 60). Moreover,

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<sup>65</sup>J. Antonio Beltrán González, *Historia De Los Nombres De Las Estaciones Del Metro*, 47. Original Spanish: El ícono de la estación representa la pirámide de Ehecatl (dios del viento). En la cultura azteca Ehecatl era tan venerado como Tláloc o Quetzalcóatl. La pirámide se descubrió durante las excavaciones para la construcción de la estación Pino Suárez y señala el límite al sur de la gran Tenochtitlán.



Image from “David Hiser/National Geographic Creative Photos,”  
*National Geographic*, Accessed March 17, 2008.  
<http://www.natgeocreative.com/photography/1348535>.

**Figure 56. Pino Suárez Metro at dusk.**

the two hallways that come from Line One and Line Two meet and cross in front of the pyramid(See Figure 61). While the Museum of Anthropology and Bellas Artes station presented the ancient past inside a modern space, Pino Suárez is different because, here, the presence of the past literally changed the modern space inside the station. Pino Suárez “is something unique in the world: an Aztec pyramid (although restored, original and authentic) inside a subway station, reflecting the cultural circumstances of our day<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> “Pino Suárez,” *El Día*, November 2, 1968. Original Spanish: La estación de Pino Suárez es algo única en el mundo: es una pirámide mexicana (aunque restaurada, original y auténtica) dentro de una estación de Metro, en la circunstancia cultural de hoy en día.



Image by author.

**Figure 57. Inside Pino Suárez moving from Line One to Line Two.**

Here we see several key facets of the narrative about the Pino Suárez station. First, it is unique, and it is Mexican. A station in a subway designed by Mexicans (even if all of the technology was foreign), it was named for a hero of the revolution, in which an Aztec temple transforms the design and unites what is below with the city above. The Metro unifies the past and the present.

In this chapter, I explored the relationship between modernization, the building of new infrastructure, and the presentation of the ancient past in Mexico. We began with the Museum of Anthropology, built in 1964, as an example of a modernist space that presented the past and sought to meld modernism and the indigenous roots of Mexico. Bellas Artes Mexico continued this tradition in its presentation of the indigenous past within a modern Metro station. Finally, the Pino Suárez station expresses how the Metro moved beyond the presentation of the ancient past into a modern space through its discovery of the past during its construction.

## Chapter 5: Insurgentes Metro

My final chapter focuses on the Insurgentes Metro station. Insurgentes was rightly promoted as the flagship of the subway system, “the height of urban integration and an homage to the beauty of our shared heritage.”<sup>1</sup> ICA designers called it the “second most important plaza in Mexico, next to the Zócalo.”<sup>2</sup> Beneath this glittering surface, however, is a hidden narrative about the workings of state power. The narrator and heroine of this tale is Rina Lazo. At stake is how both creative and repressive forces in government can play themselves out through public works projects such as the Metro

### Insurgentes: The Official Version

An article in *El Sol* declared on September 5, 1969, that the Metro “begins a new era for Mexico. The era of the Metro, the era of progress, the era of Mexico.”<sup>3</sup> Within the context of the modernization of city, the Olympics and even the student unrest of 1968, Insurgentes Metro station was an example of Mexico’s future and a guide to its past(See Figure 62). The promotion of Insurgentes linked the modernity and technology of the future with both the independence of Mexico and the indigenous past of the Mexican people.

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<sup>1</sup> “El Metro,” *El Sol*, August 2, 1969. Original Spanish: La altura de integración urbana y un homenaje a la belleza de nuestro patrimonio común.

<sup>2</sup> “Insurgentes,” *El Sol*, September 6, 1969. Original Spanish: Insurgentes Metro es la plaza más importante de México, al lado del Zócalo.

<sup>3</sup> “Las Rutas del Metro” *EL Sol*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro comienza una nueva era para México. La era del Metro, la era del progreso, la época de México.





Image from postcard,  
Mexican Images  
international dated 1971.  
Purchased on ebay March  
2006.

**Figure 58. Postcard of Insurgentes Metro.**

Insurgentes Metro sits at the intersection of Chapultepec Avenue and Insurgentes del Sur Boulevard (See Figure 63). This Boulevard is a major roadway in Mexico City, running from the far southern end of the city to La Reforma. There, it changes into Insurgentes Centro, and continues until it is again renamed north of Puente de Alvarado near the Revolución Metro station. Insurgentes is the largest avenue in Latin America and the longest street in Mexico City. It was first named during the 1910 celebration of Mexican independence, when it was given the name Via del Centenario. In the presidency of Miguel Alemán, it was improved, widened, and named Insurgentes in commemoration of the armies that fought for Mexican independence.

Metro Insurgentes is located on Line One. It serves the neighborhoods of Roma Norte, Condesa, and the Zona Rosa. Construction began on Line One in 1967 and was finished in 1969. Key to the design was the concept of urban integration, “The great challenge and the greatest victory of the Metro system is to integrate a fully modern transport system into an ancient city.”<sup>4</sup> The design of Insurgentes Metro “allowed the traffic of the city

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<sup>4</sup>“Rutas de Metro,” *El Día*, July 21, 1968. Original Spanish: El reto y la victoria más grande del sistema del Metro es integrar un sistema de transporte totalmente modernizado en una ciudad antigua.

to flow around the fully functional Metro station. The station does not interrupt the flow of the city. It is integrated into urban life.”<sup>5</sup>



Image from “Fotos de la ciudad de México, photo #211, Colección de Aéreo Photo México, Archivo de ICA, Mexico City (Hereafter AICA,) Box 115.

**Figure 59. Aerial photo of intersection that would become Insurgentes Metro. Photo is from 1965.**

The station was promoted as part of a renovation of the Zona Rosa (see Figure 64) that had been ongoing since 1966. ICA had built several new condos in this area of trendy shopping and nightlife. An earlier article for *El Sol*, titled “Modern living in the Zona Rosa,” details new high-rises, 1960’s-era mod styles, and shops that “cater to the young and their desire for the newest fashions.”<sup>6</sup> The Zona Rosa also had one of the

<sup>5</sup> “El Metro,” *El Sol*, January 16, 1969. Original: El Metro permitió que el tráfico de la ciudad fluyera alrededor de la estación de Metro. La estación no interrumpa al flujo de la ciudad. Está integrada en la vida urbana.

<sup>6</sup> “Vida moderna en la Zona Rosa,” *El Sol*, July 12, 1966. Original Spanish: La Zona Rosa abastece a los jóvenes y su deseo para la nueva moda.



**Figure 60. Google maps map of Zona Rosa.**

Image from “Maps,” Google, Accessed March 18, 2014.

largest movie theaters in Mexico City, as well as several major live-music venues.

While the Zona’s buildings, shops, clothes, and music were becoming more modern in the late 1960s, the area’s infrastructure lagged behind. Another article, this one in *Excélsior*, complained in January 1965 that “to travel in the Zona Rosa is to go back in time. Movement is slow by any means. Walking is often faster than a bus or a car.”<sup>7</sup> Clearly the area needed the Metro. Subways were fast, other forms of transportation, especially buses, were slow. Thus they are the past and the Metro is the future(See Figure 65).



**Figure 61. Platform Insurgentes station.**

Image from “Mexico’s Metro is for Viewing,” *Fortune*, December 1969, 35.

<sup>7</sup>“Las Problemas de DF” *Excélsior*, January 14, 1965. Original Spanish: Viajar en la Zona Rosa retrasar el reloj. El movimiento es lento. Caminar es aun más rápido que un autobús o un coche.



Neither ICA nor the Mexican government promoted the fact that famous Mexican architects designed some stations. The system was “meant to be seen as a whole. The design was supposed to function on a basis.”<sup>8</sup> For the system to be easy to navigate, the stations needed to look similar—same overall layouts, same stone floors for the train platforms, the same signs directing passengers through each station. A few stations, however, stand out in their design. Insurgentes is one of these. ICA President Bernardo Quintana said, “we got hundreds of design ideas for Insurgentes. The area, you know, the Zona Rosa, was so popular. Many people wanted to design a station for this area.”<sup>9</sup> The lead architect of the ICA design team was Salvador Ortega. In 1952, Ortega worked with Mario Pani on the UNAM project. He helped to design the Building of Science, the National Architecture School, and the UNAM Rectoria Building in 1953 (Figure 67). In Ortega’s work at UNAM, we see a familiar combination of modernist and Mexican art and materials. In the Torre de Rectoría building, for example, Ortega designed a very modernist building using stretch lines, glass, and steel. He then placed a bright mural by David Alfaro Siqueiros on the building, thus integrating modernism with Mexican art. Ortega’s design for Insurgentes Metro station

Engaged the language of historical appropriation that characterized other works by Ramírez Vázquez and Milares. The station resembles nothing so much as the recent spaces of official cultural institutions such as the Olympics buildings and the new Museum of Anthropology completed in 1964.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> STC-Metro, *La Primera memoria del Metro* (México: STC, 1970), xxi. Original Spanish: el sistema estaba “destinado a ser visto como un todo. El diseño debía para funcionar sobre una base.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., xxii. Original Spanish: Tenemos cientos de ideas de diseño para Insurgentes. La zona, ya sabes, la Zona Rosa, fue tan popular. Mucha gente quería diseñar una estación para esta área.

<sup>10</sup> Luis Castañeda, “Choreographing the Metropolis: Networks of Circulation and Power in Olympic México” *Journal of Design History* 25, no. 3 (2012): 296.



Image by author.

**Figure 62. Torre de Rectoría building at UNAM Designed by Salvador Ortega and built in 1953.**

This connection between Insurgentes Metro and the Museo de Antropología (Figure 68) was recognized by *Fortune* in 1969: “The marble floors, rich carvings, and fine architecture of Mexico City’s new subway bear a closer resemblance to an Aztec temple, or the handsome Nation Museum of Anthropology, than to a rapid transit system.”<sup>11</sup> In this way, the narrative about the Metro is both an international one in which Mexico joined other nations with Metros in the march toward modernity and a nationalist one in which Mexicans were improving their nation.



Image from Ramirez Vasquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: México City* (New York: Helvetius Press, 1968), 14.

**Figure 63. Main courtyard of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.**

<sup>11</sup> “Mexico’s Metro is for viewing,” *Fortune*, December 1969. Also cited in Castañeda, “Choreographing the Metropolis,” 295.

In a 1967 article about the construction of the Metro, under the headline, “Rutas del Metro,” chief ICA engineers Angel Borja and Enrique Warnholtz explained that “the glorieta [roundabout] sits in the central location (Figure 69), like the Triumph Arch in Paris (Arch de Triomphe) (Figure 70) or the Angel of Independence (El Ángel de la Independencia). The circle embodies the origin of the modern city. It is rapid and efficient.”<sup>12</sup> Putting in a Metro station in a roundabout “increases the centrality and efficacy of this space as it adds another form of transportation, while allowing the roundabout to serve its original purpose.”<sup>13</sup> Mixed into this European concept of the roundabout were “the essentially Hispanic design concepts of the Plaza and the Garden.”<sup>14</sup>



Image by author.

**Figure 64. Plaza de Insurgentes Metro Station.**

<sup>12</sup> “Insurgentes,” *El Día*, August 24, 1968. Original Spanish: La glorieta se ubica en la parte central, como el arco del triunfo o El Ángel de la Independencia. El círculo representa la ciudad moderna. Es rápida y eficiente.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> S.T.C-Metro, *La Primera Memoria Del Metro*, 88. Original Spanish: la esencia hispana diseño de conceptos de la Plaza y el jardín.

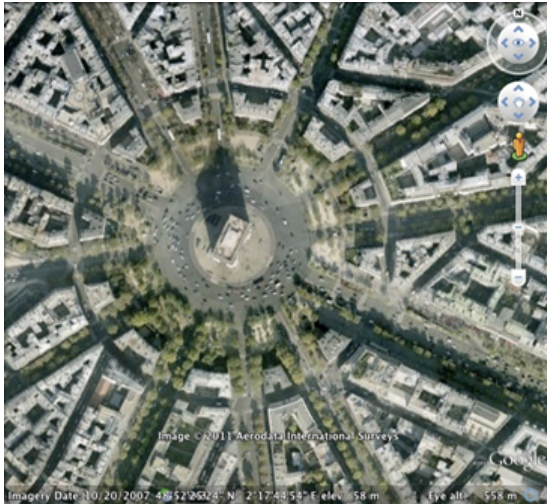


Image from "Maps," Google,  
 Accessed March 18, 2006,  
[www.googleearth.com](http://www.googleearth.com)

**Figure 65. Google world image of Arch de Triomphe in Paris.**

The plaza is the public space of Hispanic cities, while the garden is an open but private space within the home. Insurgentes combines three spaces, essentially putting a plaza in the middle of a roundabout and then a garden (the station itself) inside the plaza. The station is an enclosed space in that it is hidden from the outside, and yet is obviously public as well. In this way, the Metro station combined the European and the Hispanic. The modernity of the Metro does not replace the ancient city; it grows from deep within it. Insurgentes combined the Plaza and the Garden with an indigenous element:

The station is laid out like a pre-Columbian Temple in the form of a *Caracol* or snail. Insurgentes station forms an island of calm in the city's teeming traffic. The tree-lined plaza has shops and even a movie theatre.<sup>15</sup>

The Plaza was a contrast to the surrounding city but was also fully integrated into it. The indigenous form (the snail) mixes with the more Hispanic concept (the Plaza) and includes the movie theater to form a new space in an ancient city (See Figure 71).

Along with paying homage to Paris (and London), the design of Insurgentes also had practical applications:

<sup>15</sup> "México's Metro is For Viewing," *Fortune*, December 1969, 66.

Insurgentes gave the Metro a place where the main design is a plaza. We would have liked more if we could have raised it to the level of the street, but the truth is that the old intersection of the avenues became a plaza that accommodated pedestrians but it retained the circle form for the circulation of traffic. The Insurgentes Metro helped to solve one of the oldest problems in contemporary urbanism: the adaptation of the city in which we live to the new and necessary technologies of our era without sacrificing the older structures of our city.<sup>16</sup>



Image from “Una celebración en Insurgentes Metro,” *Excelsior*, July 14, 2004.

**Figure 66. Plaza de Insurgentes.**

The station design also solved a perennial problem for Mexican planners. Crowded and filthy barrios made people poor and weakened their moral condition. We have seen Regent Uruchurtu insist that by “embellishing the city’s surface, the residents themselves would be transformed, becoming more respectful, courteous, and civilized inhabitants who

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<sup>16</sup> S.T.C-Metro, *La Primera Memoria Del Metro*, 114. Original Spanish: : En Insurgentes dio el Metro motivo a una plaza. Nos hubiera gustado más verla sobre el nivel de las calles, como un gran mirador de la urbe y no apartado de ella; pero lo cierto es que el antiguo cruce de avenidas se convirtió en plaza que garantiza al tranquilidad de los peatones sin excluir la cercanía del coche. El Metro ayudó a resolver, en Insurgentes, un gran problema del urbanismo contemporáneo; el adaptarse la ciudad en la cual vivimos a la tecnología y las necesidades de nuestra época, y no al revés, sacrificar lo vital de nuestro tiempo a viejas estructuras.



would follow the city's physical example in their own lives.”<sup>17</sup> While Uruchurtu was a staunch opponent of the Metro project, the idea that physical spaces can improve citizens is clearly part of the Metro design. Glorieta Insurgentes makes this intersection clean and ordered. It took a chaotic mishmash of major streets and imposed the efficient order of modernity on it.



Image from “Una celebración en Insurgentes Metro,” *Excélsior*, July 14, 2004.

**Figure 67. Plaza de Insurgentes.**

In 1969, the movie theater in Insurgentes opened. *Excélsior* noted: “The theater will be the most modern in Latin America. It features quadraphonic sound and advanced projection systems.”<sup>18</sup> At the opening, the theater played the movie, “Moon Zero Two,” (Figure 73) which was billed as a space western. Promotion of this theater captured the idea

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 116. Original Spanish: embellecer la ciudad superficial, los propios vecinos se transformarían, cada vez más respetuosos, corteses, y habitantes civilizados que seguirían el ejemplo físico de la ciudad en sus propias vidas.

<sup>18</sup> “Insurgentes,” *Excélsior*, October 5, 1969. Original Spanish: El teatro será el más moderno en América Latina. Cuenta con sistemas de proyección avanzados y sonido cuadrafónico.

of a modern Metro station with a modern movie theater playing a space western, all inside a space designed to look indigenous.

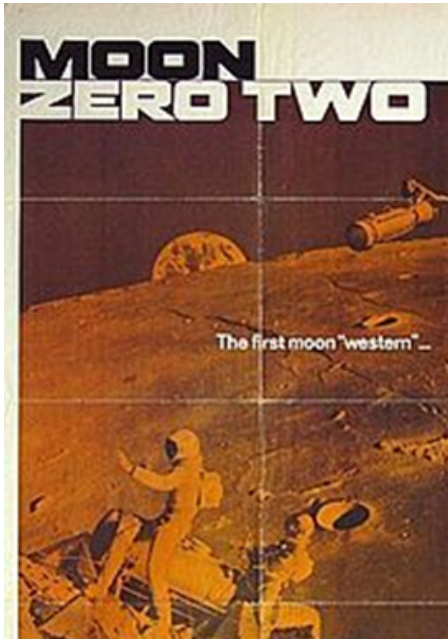


Image from "Vintage Posters: Moon Zero Two," *Gavin Rothery*, Accessed December 2, 2014. [www.gavinrothery.com](http://www.gavinrothery.com)

**Figure 68. Poster for Moon Zero Two, 1969.**

The interior of the station was promoted in the media as a mixture of modern efficiency, nineteenth Century heroes of Independence, and Mayan design elements. As one entered the station, the giant translucent dome allowed ample light to splash over the otherwise closed-off space. On the walls of the stations were small glyph tiles“ in the tradition of the Mayas.”<sup>19</sup> (See Figures 74 and 75). They form an indigenous-looking pattern. Yet examined closely, the tiles show a man with a spear or an angel. They depict “those citizens of the city who defended it from forces loyal to the king.”<sup>20</sup> Here, we have an indigenous art form used to promote nineteenth-century heroes of liberal Mexico inside a modern subway station. These tiles appear first on the exterior of the station and then wraps

<sup>19</sup> “Rutas del Metro,” *El Día*, July 14, 1969. Original Spanish: Los azulejos en las paredes son en la tradición de los Mayas.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: Los ciudadanos de la ciudad que lo defendieron de las fuerzas leales al rey.

around, continuing all the way down to the train platform and sheathing its pillars. This continuity in design helps to streamline the viewer's experience of the station



Image by author.

**Figure 69. Detail of tiles in Insurgentes station.**



Image by author.

**Figure 70. Detail of tiles in Insurgentes station.**

In Insurgentes station, it is the Maya, not the Aztecs, who take center stage. Only in Insurgentes and Bellas Artes do the Maya appear in the public vision of the ancient past. Only Aztec kings, such as Montezuma and Cuauhtémoc, have stations named after them; place names also reflect an Aztec-centered view of pre-contact Mexico, which is likely the result of Mexico City being a former Aztec capital. This has to do with the fact that the Metro is in Mexico City, an Aztec city. I think there is little other importance to this fact.



Also, Rina Lazo was a great supporter of the Mayan tradition--thus, her involvement in these two stations could be the important factor.

The indigenous form is mixed into the hypermodernity of the stations itself. At first glance, the Mayan designs stand in contrast to the modern lines of the escalators and the extensive use of concrete(See Figure 76). The integration of these two traditions is a fundamental goal of the architecture of the Metro.

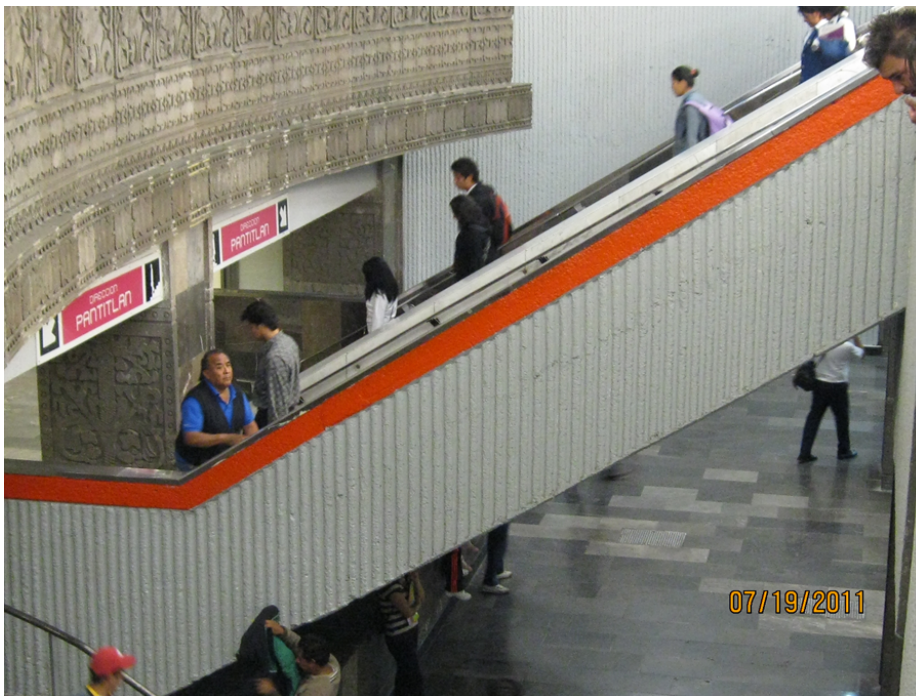


Image by author.

**Figure 71. Inside Insurgentes Metro station.**

The ceiling of the station is raised in a dome that allows light in and “a feeling of being outside . . . a feeling of the fantastic . . . the freedom of the sky in the metropolis.”<sup>21</sup> In his previous works, Ortega also used ceilings that provided light. The Museo de Arte Moderna, for example, featured a dome in the entryway(See Figures 77 and 78).

<sup>21</sup> “Nuestra Urbe: Entrada a la era del Metro,” *El Sol*, November 21, 1970. Original Spanish: la sensación de estar fuera... un sentimiento de lo fantástico... la libertad del cielo en la metrópoli.



Image from "Mexican Musuem of Modern Art, Photos," *Mexican Musuem of Modern Art*, Accessed April 3, 2013. <http://www.nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org/>

**Figure 72. Main entryway to Mexican Museum of Modern Art.**



Image from "Mexico's Metro is for Viewing," *Fortune*, September, 1969, 36.

**Figure 73. Dome inside Insurgentes Metro station.**

The station as a whole was meant to provide “a new form of movement for the Mexican people.”<sup>22</sup> Throughout the promotion of the Metro, the idea of a modern form of movement was a consistent selling point for the Metro. Mexico’s backwardness compared to Europe was the result of a chaotic bus system and the disorganized barrios of the slums. The solution was a high-speed Metro. The Insurgentes station was designed to move people efficiently from the street to the train, while the open space of the *glorieta*, outside the station, was for meeting people or sitting. Once inside, passengers were whisked by escalators down to the train platforms(See Figure 79). This minimized the congestion *inside* the station. Such rapidity and modernity must not be alienating to Mexican riders, however. “The stations were built to accommodate the cultural understandings of Mexicans of the present and the future,” thus creating a particularly Mexican modernity.<sup>23</sup> The Metro was “efficient, clean and quiet,”<sup>24</sup> but it also “will be better looking than the much celebrated systems in Moscow and Montreal.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Original Spanish: una nueva forma de movimiento para el pueblo mexicano

<sup>23</sup> ICA, *Treinta años de hacer el Metro* (México: ICA, 1997), 178. Original Spanish: Las estaciones fueron construidas para acomodar el entendimiento cultural de los mexicanos del presente y el future.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 179. Original Spanish: Era eficiente, limpia y tranquila.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 180. Original Spanish: Lo mejor buscará que los sistemas tanto celebrados en Moscú y Montreal.





Image by author.

**Figure 74. Inside Insurgentes Metro station.**

Insurgentes Metro was a central location for the promotion of the Metro. In several advertisements during the final month before the Metro opened, we see Insurgentes station as the prime example of what the Metro is about. In one ad that appeared in *Excélsior* in early September 1969, we see the modernity of the Metro train, mixed with the re-created vision of the indigenous past in the glyphs that line the platform. The text reads, “Pathways of energy in the great work of the metro.”<sup>26</sup> (See Figure 80).



Image from *Excélsior* , September 2, 1969,  
*Excélsior* June-January 1969, HNM.

**Figure 75. Advertisement from *Excélsior* , September 2, 1969.**

<sup>26</sup> Advertisement, *Excélsior*, September 2, 1969.

Cleverly, this and other large ads for the Metro were paid for by companies that ICA owned or did business with. ICA itself was never mentioned. Instead, each of these smaller companies thanked the Mexican government for letting them participate in building the Metro. The unspoken message was clear: Mexicans are building their own future. Another ad states: “Today the Metro opens. It is our Metro and all Mexicans will enjoy it.”<sup>27</sup> This ad was sponsored by a company that supplied cables for the trains. ICA owned this company too, as well as Cemento Tolteca that sponsored an ad in *Excélsior* on September 5, 1969, promotes the participation of Mexican companies in the work of building the Metro(See Figure 81). We see that modernity in Mexico is, quite literally, built of Mexican concrete. “For the realization of this great work, at an



Image from  
*Excélsior*  
September 5,  
1969,  
*Excélsior*  
June-January  
1969, HNM.

**Figure 76. Advertisement from *Excélsior* , September 5, 1969.**

<sup>27</sup> Advertisement, *Excélsior* September 5, 1969.

accelerated pace, Mexican builders employed the supreme modern material: concrete. Rapidity is once again equated with modernity. It makes the point that Mexican companies could build the Metro as such a fast pace because of their use of modern concrete: “For the realization of this great work, at an accelerated pace, Mexican builders employed the supreme modern material: concrete. ...The Metro is a true technical demonstration of engineers and Mexican architects.”<sup>28</sup> Here, once again, we have an ICA-owned company promoting the fact that the Metro was built by Mexicans. In this case, the very substance that makes modernity possible in Mexico is made of Mexican materials.



Image from *El Día*, “Conferencia sobre transporte marca apertura de Metro,” September 5, 1969, *El Día June-December 1969*, HNM.

**Figure 77. Díaz Ordaz and regent Alfonso Corona del Rosal take their first ride on the Metro.**

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. Original Spanish: Para la realización de esta gran obra, a un ritmo acelerado, mexicanos constructores emplearon el material moderno Supremo: hormigón. ...El Metro es una verdadera demostración técnica de ingenieros y arquitectos mexicanos.



## Insurgentes: The Hidden Story

The original opening of the Metro was planned for the same weekend as a conference on subway-building around the world, a meeting held for the first time in Mexico City. The Conference of City Transportation and Planning brought together both larger cities with transportations systems and other cities that wanted to build such systems. Mexican representatives had attended an earlier session of this Conference in Paris in 1966. There the presidents of the Paris Metro and the ICA had presented plans for the future of transportation in Mexico City.<sup>29</sup> At that meeting, the Mexican representative Leopoldo Gonzales said “despite the great technical-scientific distance that separates our countries, symptoms of our progress include the great improvement in transportation that the Metro represents.”<sup>30</sup> The Metro linked not only the various neighborhoods of Mexico City but also the nation to Europe.

Present on the first train ride of the Metro were the directors of both the Paris and the London subway systems. The director of the Paris Metro, Pierre Giraudet, said after his ride, “Mexico now joins Paris and London as a nation in which technology improves the lives of its people.”<sup>31</sup> To be modern, Mexico had to have a Metro because European centers of modernity such as Paris and London had them. In the media, the Metro was compared regularly to systems in Tokyo, Moscow, and Montreal as well as in New York, London, and Chicago. Among these, however, Paris was queen. The Metro, of course, was built with French cars and French money.

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<sup>29</sup> ICA, *La historia de las grandes ideas: El Metro* (México: ICA, 1975), 77.

<sup>30</sup> “Conferencia sobre transporte marca apertura de Metro,” *El Día*, September 5, 1969. Original Spanish: pesar de la gran distancia científico-técnico que separa a nuestros países, los síntomas de nuestro progreso incluyen la gran mejora en el transporte que representa el Metro.

<sup>31</sup> “Maravilla Extranjera de los Visitantes en el Metro,” *El Día*, September 6, 1969. Original Spanish: México ahora se une a París y Londres como una nación en la cual tecnología mejora la vida de su gente.

At the opening on September 5, 1969 (Figure 83), Díaz Ordaz, the directors of S.T.C-Metro, and others gathered inside the Plaza of Insurgentes. In his speech, Díaz Ordaz declared, “The Metro is not a symbolic monument. The Metro represents ideas and the culture of Mexico. Always in the service of the people and always in movement.”<sup>32</sup> He again emphasized that the importance of the mix of modernity and Mexican culture found in the Metro “is symbol and sign of what Mexico is in the present day; the Metro, however, is yet another huge achievement which has been executed by the regime. The Metro is a synthesis of the culture of the Mexican people and the modern technology of the world. Mexico is now a part of modernity.”<sup>33</sup> Reading the promotional material for the Metro Insurgentes, within the context of the modernization of the 1960s, we see how Insurgentes Metro functioned as a monument to a unified vision of the Mexican past and the modern future.



Image from *Excélsior*, September 5, 1969, *Excélsior* June-December 1969, HNM.

**Figure 78. Opening ceremony at Insurgentes Metro station.**

<sup>32</sup> “Metro a hoy,” *El Día*, September 6, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro no es un monumento simbólico. El Metro representa ideas y la cultura de México. Siempre en los servicios de las personas y siempre en movimiento.

<sup>33</sup> “El Metro,” *El Día*, September 6, 1969. Original Spanish: El Metro no es un monumento simbólico. El Metro representa ideas y la cultura de México. Siempre en los servicios de las personas y siempre en movimiento.” Continuing, Díaz Ordaz states the importance of the mix of modernity and Mexican culture found in the Metro, “Símbolo y signo de lo que México es en la actualidad, el Metro, sin embargo, no es más que otras ingenias realizaciones que han sido ejecutadas por este régimen. El Metro es un síntesis de la cultura del pueblo mexicano y la tecnología del mundo. Ahora México es parte de la modernidad.



There was, however, another story to the design of this station. The narrator and heroine of the tale is the renowned Mexican artist Rina Lazo. From 1960 until 1966, Lazo and her husband, Arturo García Bustos, worked in the Colegio de Bellas Artes. In 1966, she was fired from her post as part of a trend in which more radical artists of her generation were removed from teaching posts in favor of artists who were less political and whose art was thought to be more modern or abstract. Lazo explained “there was, you know, competition, between artists, egos, for for students and support. After 65 it got worse, it was modernism or folk art.”<sup>34</sup> Here Lazo explained the growing trend in Mexico during this time in which modern art and folk art became the approved methods through which the government portrayed the nation. Lazo held up a poster. It had two pieces of modern art on it and it said “One is a maestro and one is a Gorilla...can you tell which?”<sup>35</sup> The wounds from that experience would take years to heal. In 1966 both Lazo and her husband were fired. This event pushed her to seek more commissions. Which, in turn, led her to the Metro project.



Image from “Arte y Literatura de Guatemala,”  
*Literatura y arte de Guatemala*, Accessed  
April 12, 2007.  
[www.literaturaguatemalteca.org](http://www.literaturaguatemalteca.org)

**Figure 79. Photo of Rina Lazo and Diego Rivera from 1953.**

<sup>34</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, July 11, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, July 11, 2011. I failed to come back from Mexico with a picture of this poster. A deep regret.

Lazo's experience, both positive and negative, of working with the Mexican government (on the Metro and on other state projects even after her imprisonment) contextualizes the unrest of 1968 and illuminates the complex nature of the federal government. During 1968, she was imprisoned for her part in the student movement. She was never given credit for her contribution to the design of Insurgentes station. Uncovering this narrative complicates the promotional narrative of Insurgentes examined in the first section of this chapter. While the student movement and the massacre at Tlatelolco made an indelible mark on Mexican political history, the Diaz Ordaz government continued to operate in much the same ways it did before 1968



Image from "Arte y Historia en el Metro," *STC Metro*, Accessed November 5, 2008. <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx/cultura/murreproduccion.html?valorI=1>

**Figure 80. Picture of Rina Lazo.**

Lazo was born in Guatemala. When she was 15, she won a painting contest at the Colegio de Bellas Artes in Guatemala City and was allowed to come to Mexico to study with

Diego Rivera. From 1947 until his death in 1957, Lazo worked closely with Rivera on major murals, including “Sunday Dream in Alameda Park” in 1948 and “Gloriosa Victoria” in 1954. Her husband, Arturo García Bustos, worked with Frida Kahlo and was a member of the Taller de Gráfica Popular.

Lazo’s first major state project was for the Museo de Antropología (Museum of Anthropology) in Mexico City in 1964.<sup>36</sup> She painted a mural for one of the gardens, a replica of which we have seen in the Bellas Artes station. These Mayan murals were re-created using the same techniques as ancient artists and were the result of extensive studies of the originals.<sup>37</sup> In her work at the Anthropology Museum and in the Metro, Lazo believed that, far from being only a façade, the indigenous forms and art were the foundation of Mexican modernism. Because of her work on this project, and because Bernardo Quintana, president of ICA, liked her work, she was included in a small number of artists who were asked to contribute to the Metro project.

For Lazo, the Metro constituted “public space, space everyone sees. These spaces are important, you know. You can teach people a lot. There is a lot to learn from art in public spaces.”<sup>38</sup> STC Metro agreed. In the metro publication from 1970, STC stated that the Metro is “a space for the people of Mexico; a public space, a space for the cultures of the past and people of the future.”<sup>39</sup> Both Lazo and the state planners understood the possibilities of communicating meaning to the people through this space.

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<sup>36</sup> “Rutas de Metro,” *Excelsior*, September 15, 1964.

<sup>37</sup> For more information on this mural, see: “Murales en las estaciones de Metro,” *STC Metro*, Accessed March 4, 2007, <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx/cultura/murreproduccion.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, August 7, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> S.T.C-Metro, *La Primera Memoria Del Metro*, 15.

Unlike the media which related the original design to the roundabouts of Paris and London, Lazo envisioned indigenous and natural forms-a Mayan bowls (See Figure 86).

“Indigenous forms are the starting point for the modern city.”<sup>40</sup> In her design, the modernity and technically advanced nature of the modern city and the Metro grew out of the simplicity and symmetry of basic designs(See Figure 87).



Image from personal collection of Rina Lazo. Photo by author.

**Figure 81. Mayan bowl.**

Here we see Lazo using a Mayan aesthetic to shape a modern space. Instead of a foreign modernity inside a Mexican locale, we have a Mayan design as the foundation for a modern space. While Salvador Ortega saw the Metro as a modern space that used indigenous

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<sup>40</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, August 7, 2011.

elements as a design feature, Lazo saw modern design itself based on indigenous forms. For Lazo, “There is no modern without the ancient.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Image from postcard, Mexican Images international dated 1971. Purchased on ebay March 2006.

**Figure 82. Postcard of Insurgentes. Image dated 1970.**

Lazo also took credit for the idea of using glyphs to line the station: “Yes the glyphs were my idea . . . although I don’t like the ones they have there now. Not very creative; mine would have been very different because I have seen and studied the Mayan glyphs.”<sup>42</sup> For Lazo, the glyphs were supposed to tell a story. Each one should be different, one scene, altogether communicating a narrative. The glyphs in the station do tell a story. They relate heroes of the independence period to one vision of indigenous Mexico and the modernity of the station. They do not, however, function in the traditional way that Mayan glyphs did. For Lazo, the glyphs “Should tell a story . . . not just cover a wall.”<sup>43</sup> Here, we see the difference between the government using indigenous forms to promote themselves and their vision of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



Mexico's future and Lazo's use of a Mayan aesthetic to create a modern space(See Figure 88).



Image from postcard, Mexican Images international dated 1971. Purchased on ebay March 2006.

**Figure 83. Postcard of Insurgentes. Image dated 1971.**

Lazo's concept for the outside of the station revolved around what she called "Day and Night." The circle of the station itself, she said, was like the sun and that all of the other stone facing it would be a light color on one side and then dark on the other.<sup>44</sup> Lazo's concept of day and night expresses balance and rhythm of the natural world. This idea mirrors the efficiency of the modern Metro. While STC-Metro speaks of the efficiency of modernity,

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Lazo found examples of this in the natural world-- again expressing the Mayan worldview within the context of hyper-modernity.

Using a gendered reading, we see that the state's designs are fundamentally male. In the state's vision of the station, modernity orders and permits movement through a chaotic world. Their vision of modernity is transformative; it imposes rapidity, efficiency, and organization on Mexico City. It uses the symbols of ancient Mexico as proto-examples of modern order. Their vision of the indigenous past uses men as examples of public power in Mexico. One does not have to win battles. Sacrifice defines leadership more than victory. Figures such as Cuauhtémoc, José María Pino Suarez, and Montezuma all died in defense of their peoples. Padre Hidalgo follows this line of male leaders who were defeated but gave their lives for the perceived betterment of Mexico.

While many elements in the current station were Lazo's ideas, she was never credited, and the promotion of the station does not incorporate any of her ideas. As compared to the promotional material on Insurgentes, Lazo's design expresses more balance. She does not have kings, battles, or central locations of public power. Instead, she has circles and ideas from nature such as day and night. Her design expresses the balance and harmony of the natural world in a modern setting. For Lazo, the Maya are not simply a well-organized political unit to be emulated or an example of ways in which Mexico is equal to the classical Greek and Roman traditions. Their aesthetics and their worldview form the basis on which modern Mexico should be built. A public space such as the Metro must reflect the influence of the Maya on modern thought. If it does not, then it is not authentically Mexico. It is only a copy, a foreign idea that makes a foreign space.



Since she began working on state projects in 1964, Lazo spoke of people within Obras Públicas who liked her and some who did not. Personalities and political preferences account for these differences, she believes. Both Bernardo Quintana, the head of ICA, and Rodolfo González Guevara, the head of Obras Publicas, liked her work very much. With friends and admirers as powerful as these, it would seem that she had a bright future with public works. There were, however, people within the Mexican government who did not like either her political activism or the fact that she was not an architect. “I don’t remember who they were. They were architects, you know? They didn’t like artists, they didn’t like me.”<sup>45</sup> Politically, Lazo said some of the people she worked with didn’t want the demonstration and chaos they saw in the street to continue. “Oh, those people who worked on the Olympics and such wanted those things to go off with problems. They saw the students as spoiled children who might ruin everything they had worked for.”<sup>46</sup> Lazo admitted helping student organizers and said that of course she was on some negative lists of the government. “Of course I helped them. I learned when studying with Diego that I have to help them. They’re students, you know . . . but they arrested anyone in those days. They thought it would help. . . . It didn’t” (laughs).<sup>47</sup>

From September until December 1968, Lazo was incarcerated in a federal prison for women. She was accused of helping radical elements within the student movement. Many artists would have been put off of state projects after her experience with the Metro -- especially after she was released from prison to see her ideas incorporated into Insurgentes. “It was a surprise. A little shocking really. I never thought any of them liked my ideas . . . but

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

here they were.”<sup>48</sup> Lazo, however, even after spending three months in jail near the end of 1968, returned to working with S.T.C and in 1970 was present at the opening of the Bellas Artes station and her mural of Bonampak.<sup>49</sup> Many years later, her husband, Arturo García Bustos, also received a major commission to paint the large mural in the Universidad station where it can be observed today.<sup>50</sup> For Lazo, “Commissions are essential to do public art. I worked with those people, but I don’t work for them. What happened to me happened because some people wanted it to...but there were still a lot of good people in Obras Públicas and STC Metro.”<sup>51</sup>

Insurgentes Metro station provides an excellent example of how the Metro was promoted. As an example of Mexican modernity, the Metro was modern, international, and cosmopolitan, while at the same time fully integrated into the national and ancient history of Mexico. References to the roundabouts of London, the Arc de Triomphe of Paris, and the Mayan snail design connect the Metro into narratives about modernity, progress, Mexican history and nationalism. The story of Lazo’s involvement in the project illustrates that the creation of the Metro involved many different levels of the Mexican government and many different points of view. ICA and Obras Públicas hired Lazo. She was both liked and disliked by those she worked with at this level. Her involvement with the students in 1968 got her in trouble with higher levels of the Mexican government and the security services. Her return to finish her mural in the Bellas Artes Metro station by 1970 also points to her understanding of the Mexican government as not monolithically bad. Despite one president putting her in jail, she returned to work for other levels of government with which she had better relations.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> “Rutas de Metro,” *Excélsior*, November 20, 1970.

<sup>50</sup> For more information on this mural see: <http://www.metro.df.gob.mx/cultura/murales.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Rina Lazo, interview with author, Mexico City, August 7, 2011.



## Conclusion

The Metro is central to understanding post-Cárdenas Mexico--to the economic, political and cultural history of Mexico from the 1960s right through the presidential victory of Vincente Fox in 2000.

My chief focus has been the presidency of Díaz Ordaz. He used state power both repressively and creatively—in the service of a vision that downplayed the radicalism of the Revolution of 1910 in favor of the ancient past and the heroes of the nineteenth century. Clearly the student movement of 1967-1968 had no place within this vision, nor the modernist art of Rina Lazo at the Cologio de Bellas Artes. Grand creative projects such as the Metro and the Olympic Games, on the other hand, contributed to the stability and affluence that Diaz Ordaz committed his administration to.

My study of Díaz Ordaz moves away from the testimonial approach that has dominated historiography on both the student movement and the Tlatelolco massacre. Following Zolov and Kuri my work takes seriously the idea that a government's promotion of itself to both national and international audiences provides valuable insight into that government.<sup>1</sup> Zolov and Kuri study popular culture--the Olympics Games of 1968. I move on to study the Metro. The subway system too was a major public-works project; but unlike the Olympics, the system continues to have a lasting affect on the lives of 30 million Mexicans every day. Using the Metro as a lens enables us to achieve a balanced view of three aspects of the Diaz Ordaz regime--its exercise of creative state power, its relationship with the

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<sup>1</sup> Ariel Rodriguez Kuri, "El Otro 68: Política y estilo en la organización de los juegos olímpicos de la ciudad de México," *Relaciones* 19 (Fall 1998): 109-29. Eric Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow': México and the 1968 Olympics," *The Americas* 61: 2 (October, 2004): 159-188.

business community in creating the Mexican economic miracle, and its responses to forces that opposed the government.

In turn, the forces at play with Díaz Ordaz persist through subsequent administrations. Particularly tensions between President and Regent over the Metro, and struggles between different economic interests within the PRI and between different levels of government. These conflicts destroy any illusion that the Mexican government was monolithic. By the time Luis Echeverría became president in 1970, for example, the negative impact of the massive spending on public projects under Díaz Ordaz was already becoming apparent. To address inflation and debt, Echeverría attempted to rein in spending—including cutting funds for the Metro. Under Díaz Ordaz, public transportation had become big business. The Metro project made millions of pesos for both ICA and many other contractors and suppliers in Mexico City. Echeverría's attempt to turn off the spigot of money would not go unchallenged.

From 1970 through 1976, President Echeverría radically changed course on the Metro. Whether he wanted to distance himself from his old boss, Díaz Ordaz, or he honestly believed a change was needed, is unclear. What is clear is that he took federal money away from the development of Mexico City. During his presidential campaign, rifts between Echeverría and the pro-growth interests, including ICA, were already apparent. He sought a more nationwide development plan less centered on Mexico City. He pushed for monies to go into the rural areas of the country and for further development of other industrial centers away from Mexico City.

Echeverría also had conflict with the Regent he chose. Alfonso Martínez Domínguez was an ally of the pro-development and pro-Metro forces within the Mexican government

who had been powerful under Díaz Ordaz. He was seen as a balance between different and often conflicting wings of the PRI. As Uruchurtu had been allowed to remain Regent during the Díaz Ordaz presidency—in order to balance older and newer factions within the PRI-- Echeverría believed he could placate economic groups made nervous by his talk of economic justice and ejido reform, by putting a pro-growth Regent in Mexico City.

From the outset, the Metro issue sparked conflict between President and Regent. In May 1971 Martínez Domínguez refused to even meet with a new group created to increase citizens' voices in the urban reform process. In 1972, he announced that Mexico City would expand the Metro, but just a few weeks later he cancelled this expansion because of a lack of funds. "We cannot expand the Metro as I had wanted. There are still some who want to and some who do not."<sup>2</sup> Strong economic forces, such as ICA and other developers, supported the Regent. They did this because they had made money with the Metro project and wanted to continue. By 1973, the conflict between the Regent and the President had become "a major political crisis."<sup>3</sup>

Like Uruchurtu, Martínez Domínguez resigned after a scandal. In this case, he used extreme force to break up a student demonstration "in which security forces in civilian clothes beat and shot at student demonstrators in Mexico City, leaving an estimated 30 protesters dead."<sup>4</sup> The President called for his resignation. This incident typically would not have driven from power a Regent who had the support of the federal administration. But in this case, as with Uruchurtu, it did. Echeverría had campaigned as someone who would help

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<sup>2</sup> "Regente dice que no todo el mundo a bordo para la expansión del Metro," *El Sol*, Sept. 12, 1971. Original Spanish: Original Spanish: Nosotros no podemos ampliar el Metro como hubiera querido. Todavía hay algunos que quieren y quienes no lo hacen.

<sup>3</sup> Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 188.

<sup>4</sup> "Student Protest and Repression," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 8, 2002.

to heal the political process damaged after 1968. As students protested Martínez Domínguez's use of force, the President took advantage of the situation to kill two birds with one stone. First, he removed a rival. While their dispute was more over control of policy at the city versus the federal level, the President could pander to the students by removing the Regent and appearing to heed student concerns. Echeverría then appointed a new Regent. Octavio Senties Gómez had been a lawyer for the bus companies. It was no surprise that Echeverría committed his administration to bus transport in the city and to building more highways. The bus industry had been defeated by Díaz Ordaz and had lost its Regent with the dismissal of Uruchurtu. With the appointment of Octavio Senties Gómez, the bus forces once again had an ally in the regency.

The real issue here, as in the conflict between Uruchurtu and Díaz Ordaz, was disagreement about the expansion of public transportation. This conflict, again like that between Díaz Ordaz and Uruchurtu, was both about control of urban policy in Mexico City and about factional differences within the ruling PRI party. The attempt to compromise by appointing Martínez Domínguez as Regent backfired when Echeverría tried to change policy and Martínez Domínguez would not go along. Once again, public transportation in Mexico City was at the center of the intrastate conflict within the PRI

While Echeverría did not support the Metro, his successor, José López Portillo, did. López Portillo campaigned on the need for more infrastructure in Mexico City. He allied with the pro-development, big business and pro-Metro forces within the PRI. López Portillo radically expanded the subway. During his six-year term, the system developed from three lines to six. The President borrowed huge sums of money to fund the new construction. The terms of these loans were not as favorable as they had been during the 1960s. Moreover,

Metro construction during this era lost much of its efficiency. Delays were common, and cost overages exceeding 10% became the norm. From 1976 until 1982, Metro expenditures contributed heavily to Mexico's ballooning national debt. In 1970, foreign debt had accounted for only 15% of state expenditures. By 1980, it was 44%. While other factors contributed to the faltering of the Mexican economy by the 1980s, Metro construction was one of the large expenditures that led to substantial debt and the eventual collapse of the banking sector by 1982. Despite dire economic warnings, high inflation, and falling oil prices, the Regent of Mexico City, Carlos Hank González, pushed forward with Metro expansion. The system was at 300% capacity by the late 1970s. Several gruesome accidents on crowded platforms increased demands for new lines and more trains. As the Mexican economy began to fall apart in the early 1980s, the President was forced to apply for more loans to finish Metro projects. ICA's relationships with French banks collapsed as foreign investment pulled out of Mexico. López Portillo continued with Metro expansion because it placated pro-Metro forces and remained popular with some of the populace of Mexico City. The debt borrowed for this expansion, however, sunk Mexico further into financial crisis.

Uruchurtu's prophesies of doom had become reality. While his lack of support for the Metro project stemmed mainly from his own political and economic alliances, he also had serious worries about the project's cost. He stated in 1966, "The cost of not only construction but operation is nearly unimaginable. Such financial recklessness will ruin the city and our country over time."<sup>5</sup> Between Uruchurtu's dismissal in 1967 and the financial collapse of 1982, Metro expenses skyrocketed. Moreover, the Mexican government continued to lose money on the system. Revenue shortfall increased from 361,505 pesos in

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<sup>5</sup> "Transportes," *Excelsior*, June 15, 1966. Original Spanish: El costo de no sólo la construcción pero la operación es casi inimaginable. Tal temeridad financiera va a arruinar la ciudad y nuestro país en el tiempo



1973 to 898,385 pesos in 1976.<sup>6</sup> During this time, as Uruchurtu had predicted, the operating cost of the Metro rose 680%, while the net loss ballooned to 469%.<sup>7</sup> In 1977, the government began to subsidize the system because revenues from ridership fell so short that it was having trouble paying its employees. Even though ridership continued to rise and was at 300% capacity by 1977, the government had to put more than 900,000 pesos a year into Metro subsidies. As the years went on, operating costs skyrocketed from 304,953 pesos in 1973 to 2,016,688 pesos by 1980.<sup>8</sup> The government sought to keep the price of a Metro ticket low. Until 1989, the cost of a ticket remained at only one peso. When the fare was raised two pesos in 1989 and then to the current rate of three pesos in 1996, there was great public outcry. Making the Metro so affordable did social good, as everyone could use the system, but the economic issues had become dire. The government could not cover the cost of running the system with such low fares. So, just as Uruchurtu had warned in 1966, the Mexican government had to borrow money to run the system. The economic story of the first era of Metro construction, 1967-1970, is essential to understanding the rise and fall of the Mexican economy during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 2000 a Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) candidate won the presidency of Mexico for the first time. The ruling PRI party had held power for more than sixty years. Despite fierce challenges to its rule, starting in 1988 with the presidential campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas--son of famous Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas-- the PRI had managed to hang on to power. Vicente Fox came into the presidency promising to change the political culture

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<sup>6</sup> Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 288.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 289.

in Mexico. He often claimed “I am an honest man. I look people in the eye and tell them the truth. The Mexican people deserve this.”<sup>9</sup> This election was the most radical change to Mexican politics in generations. Fox promised that his new government would respect human rights in Mexico and the world and would increase the transparency of democracy in Mexico. Unfortunately, however, the Fox administration acted like its predecessors in important ways. It used the public space of the Metro as a platform to express the ideas and promises it made. These events illustrate the centrality of the Metro to the Mexican government.

On March 27, 2005, the Fox administration announced that it would change Etiopía station to Etiopía / Plaza de la Transparencia and Viveros station to the Plaza de Derechos Humanos.<sup>10</sup> Etiopía station was renamed because the Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información Pública (Federal Institute of Public Information Access) was nearby, and so it would be a fit the name for the closest Metrobús station. Here we had the new party linking the Metro into its push to present itself as more open and democratic than the old party. The renaming also tied the Metro into the new system of Metrobus stations in Mexico City. The logo of the station was left the same and the names were always listed together. As of 2015, the station is still named Etiopía / Plaza de la Transparencia. Viveros station was renamed to “express the Mexican government’s profound duty to protect human rights of its citizens and to promote mutual respect and the rule of law.”<sup>11</sup> Again the original name and the new name

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<sup>9</sup> “Vincente Fox,” *Excélsior*, June 24, 1999. Original Spanish: Soy un hombre honesto. Que mirar a la gente a los ojos y decirles la verdad. El pueblo mexicano merece esto.

<sup>10</sup> “Cambian nombre a estaciones del Metro Etiopía y Viveros,” *El Universal*, March 27, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Original Spanish: Expresa el deber de los gobiernos mexicanos profunda para proteger los derechos humanos de sus ciudadanos y promover el respeto mutuo y el imperio de la ley.

together constitute the new name of the station. In this fashion the government imposed its new names while still connecting them to the old location and names in the original design.

While there was little dissent against the original Metro in the Mexico City media, the 2005 renaming project was met with some cynicism. During the Metro promotion of the 1960s, the media in Mexico City had printed whatever it was were told to. Because of the synergy between the ruling party and media outlets, little to no opposition to the Metro project ever came out in the press. By 2006, however, Mexico had changed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more open political debate occurred in the mainstream press.<sup>12</sup> Newspapers such as *Excélsior* remained supporters of the PRI Over Fox's presidential term, 2000-2006, *Excélsior* published many critiques of his policies. It should be no surprise, then, that the paper was also willing to publish critiques of his renaming of Metro stations. During the 2006 presidential election, a Partido de la Revolución Democrática, (PRD) senator Claudia Corichi, stated sarcastically, "Names on Metro stations that already had names is the perfect symbol for this administration's commitment to human rights and democracy."<sup>13</sup> The PRD often criticized the Fox administration for paying lip service to democracy and human rights but never following through on its promises. Corichi is criticizing the administration for not breaking with the past. In this case, the government was following directly in the footsteps of previous Mexican administrations, all of them PRI, in naming a Metro station after something they felt was essential to their own regime. Regardless of how committed the Fox administration actually was to human rights, its choice to name Metro stations as an

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<sup>12</sup> I make this statement in the most general terms. I realize some historians of this period might disagree with me. The introduction of the Internet also has given Mexicans more access to alternative viewpoints not supported or funded by the state. The distinction here is not one of truth versus falsity but only one that highlights the increased number of media sources that creates more dissent in the press compared to the 1960s.

<sup>13</sup> "PRD no está impresionado con Fox," *Excélsior*, April 14, 2005. Original Spanish: Nombres de las estaciones de Metro que ya tenían nombres es el símbolo perfecto para el compromiso de esta administración con los derechos humanos y la democracia.

expression of what it wanted people to remember about it affiliated the PAN with traditions Fox sought to separate himself from.

The limits of creative state power were also evident in the Metro project. Any government can create and name space in an attempt to promote its right to rule and its connection to the nation. What governments cannot control are the ways in which this space will be used. The importance of Metro stations as public space came starkly into review in December of 2014. In September of that year 43 students from Guerrero had disappeared. At first, the government blamed the Narco cartels and the local government. While this crisis unfolds as I write, it is now clear to many in Mexico that both state and federal levels of the Mexican government were involved. These revelations and corruption charges against president Enrique Peña Nieto have inspired Mexicans to protest in large numbers. The 43 students have become a symbol of many of the major issues facing Mexico--corruption, the infiltration of Narco members into state and local police forces, and the lack of justice for those beset by violence. During waves of protest throughout Mexico, several individuals entered the Guerrero Metro station and replaced the subway logo with the number 43 in commemoration of the slain students.

As the Metro expands into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it remains a central part not only of public transportation in a vast city but also of the political and economic life of Mexico. As future scholars will continue to uncover, the Metro is at the very center of the construction of political and economic power in post-Cárdenas Mexico.



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