

## Book Reviews

*Power and Politics in University Governance: Organization and Change at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* by Imanol Ordorika. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003. 275 pp. \$135.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-4159-3515-6.

Imanol Ordorika provides a political history of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) during the heyday of the nation-state, from its foundation in 1910 through contemporary globalization in the 1980s. He also explores theoretical conundrums such as the wellsprings of institutional change, relations between university and state, hegemony and autonomy. *Power and Politics in University Governance*, which developed from his doctoral dissertation under Martin Carnoy at Stanford, combines theoretical acumen with close empirical engagement and vivid detail and is a model of fluent, accessible writing. This combination of qualities is uncommon in comparative and international higher education studies, and it draws us deeply into the subject matter.

Ordorika is interested in universities as political institutions. He uses theories of the state to build a bridge between the university and its social setting (6), enabling him to trace lines of causality from outside as well as inside the university, and the shifting interactions between the two dimensions. For Ordorika, “conflict constitutes the most salient explanation for university transformations” (221). He distinguishes this approach from theorizations of the university as responding to growth, or social differentiation, or market requirements, or resource dependency. He brings these elements into play, but as part of a larger picture. For example, UNAM was always state funded, but it was not until the early 1980s that government began to use its budgetary power to shape the internal life of the university. Prior to that time, autonomy was suborned by more directly political means, such as controlling the rector via appointment.

The university is fundamental to state and national identity in Mexico, “simultaneously an arena and an object of political dispute” (157), where the state is “both challenged and reproduced” (192). “The relationship between the University and the state has been extremely dynamic” (192) because much is at stake. The university conducts more than a quarter of the academic research in Mexico. It enrolls over 300,000 students. It remains dominant as a professional training institution and as an elite finishing school. It is normally responsible for administration and national political leadership. Professors and rectors serve as ministers, and many of their critics are also housed by UNAM. It is always under suspicion and is always—in a Gramscian sense—home to more than one hegemonic reform project (32). The university is more important in its national context than Harvard or Stanford in theirs; UNAM is less globally effective because its nation is not an imperial power, but as a model of a university it affects much of Latin America.

After introducing the study, the author takes us through the history in three phases. Chapter 3 moves between UNAM and the emergence of authoritarian rule in Mexico to the 1944 Organic Law that systematized UNAM’s governance. The

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early conservative university often played the autonomy card to evade commitment to populist educational projects. Chapter 4 begins with the governing board, which with the rectorship came to dominate formal power in UNAM. It describes the consolidation of authoritarian rule in Mexico and its uneasy relationship with the university, ending with the student movement of 1968 and the bloody beach of autonomy by the state. Chapter 5 describes the transformation that followed the 1968 movement. For a time, the rector and students shared the imagining of UNAM in terms of broad national scope, social responsibility, and commitment to change. Soon thereafter, however, the democratization of the university was gradually eroded. In chapter 6 the government reasserts control via the rector's consolidation of "bureaucratic authoritarianism" and the ideology of traditional academic values (returning to autonomy as disengagement). The counterpoint was a protracted struggle for faculty and staff unionization. The larger legacy of 1968 and its suppression existed, in fact, at the national level, for it triggered the long-term decline of authoritarian rule.

In his masterly conclusion Ordorika shows that university autonomy is always relative but can be substantial and generative under specific historical conditions. At times the main conflict exists within the university between the agents of different reform projects, and at other times it plays out between the university and the state. On the whole, autonomy has been weakened. It is greater in areas of lesser interest to government. There is little interference in teaching and programs, though research is subject to outcomes monitoring and competitive differentiation of faculty. In the last 3 decades, state demands on finance and efficiency have been implemented though tuition in an ongoing struggle. Autonomy has been compromised more notably in the political realm. The internal political organization of UNAM and the relationship between its social actors shape the nature and extent of university autonomy (219). Here a symbiosis has developed between the political cultures and structures of state and the university elite. The rectors and the board have mimicked the presidential state in its authoritarian mode: there is a similar reluctance to tolerate alternative centers of power and broad-based participation in policy and a parallel reliance on cultural tradition as an "active, shaping force" (30). There has also been a striking growth in the administrative apparatus. While this is typical of higher education the world over and is mostly explained as a function of size, modernization, and accountability requirements, at UNAM the bureaucracy has also been used to consolidate executive power and circumvent a unionizing faculty, and there is a close organic relationship between the administrative career structures of UNAM and those of national government.

We select our tools of theory and method according to the nature of the empirical terrain, or we miss much of what we could know. Ordorika has designed a set of tools very appropriate to his subject/object of study. As he himself notes, the question is whether these tools are appropriate to less overtly political universities. Such analysis cannot explain everything—for example, the motivations that drive scientists or writers to create their productive works. But Ordorika supplements these tools with historical sociology, giving him a broad political vision of the university. Ordorika can use these other social sciences while at the same time explaining more of practical human activity. My own view is that Ordorika's tools are in fact widely applicable, provided they are refashioned for the task at hand

and handled with similar thoughtfulness and dexterity. That is a lot to ask. *Power and Politics in University Governance* is just about as good as it gets—a wonderful, glittering work of social science. It elevates our field. It is worth reading more than once. It teaches us very much about Mexico, national universities, and what we can do, and it can be recommended without reservation.

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*The Economics of Elementary Education in India: The Challenge of Public Finance, Private Provision and Household Costs* edited by Santosh Mehrotra. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006. 328 pp. \$56.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-7619-3419-7.

*The Economics of Elementary Education in India* is one of the most recent detailed reports on education from India. In light of the limited availability of reliable, large-scale education data from India and from developing countries in general, this study is a welcome addition to the literature. The book relies heavily on a 1999–2000 UNICEF survey of eight states that together account for three-fourths of out-of-school children in India. The survey covers 120,000 households and 1,000 schools from 91 districts. The data were collected from rural and urban samples of households with children ages 5–14 and from schools and teachers. Compared with other recent studies of elementary education from India this book is also unique in terms of its extensive focus on micro and macro education expenditure data. *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), an initiative of the Indian government, aims to achieve universal primary education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. The main findings from the book emphasize that challenges facing India's attainment of the SSA goals are vast and numerous. The analyses presented in the book also provide a useful guideline to understand the struggles faced by several resource-strapped developing countries in their pursuit of Education for All (EFA).

The book focuses on seven of the eight states originally surveyed: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, the pre-2003 undivided state of Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu. The first four states, often called the “Bimaru” (roughly translated to mean “sickly” in Hindi) states, have traditionally performed especially poorly on various development indicators. The average levels of education in the states of Assam and West Bengal are also below the national average. The state of Tamil Nadu is chosen to provide a contrast and to focus on the state's “remarkable progress compared to the northern states” (14). The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter provides the background to the book, a summary of the findings from the seven states, and details on the UNICEF survey, including the survey methodology and the sampling technique. The remaining seven chapters, written by an expert panel of researchers and academics, are devoted to individual discussion of each of the seven states. With varying degrees of emphasis, the chapters cover the following broad areas: enrollment, cost and quality of public and private school systems, state expenditures on education, household expendi-