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Translator's Introduction

Manuel Gamio and *Forjando Patria:* Anthropology in Times of Revolution

In 1909 and 1926, Manuel Gamio made two crucial trips from Mexico to the United States. In the first, he arrived as a student at Franz Boas's Department of Anthropology at Columbia, making him the first Mexican to obtain an advanced professional degree in anthropology from a foreign university. In 1926, he returned to the United States as an exile, fearing for his life in a tense climate of internal struggles that marked the years after the 1910 Mexican Revolution that ended the long dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. The period between these two trips across the Rio Bravo was crucial for Gamio and for the history of modern Mexico. In that stretch of time, Gamio completed first a master's degree and later a doctorate at Columbia University and collaborated with foreign scholars in conducting research in his home country. He also aligned himself with the military faction that was currently consolidating its power through a series of new political institutions and a vibrant nationalist ideology, creating a strong new state that would be governed by over seventy years of single-party rule. With this combination of academic credentials earned abroad and commitments to revolutionary projects at home, Gamio helped to found the precursors of anthropological and archaeological institutions that would play a crucial role in Mexican cultural and development policies throughout the twentieth century. His relationship to North American academics, revolutionary state formation, and the study of ancient and contemporary societies makes his life and work a useful point of entry for understanding the particular valence that anthropology would take in twentieth-century Mexico.

Published in 1916, *Forjando Patria* marks the midpoint of the crucial period in Gamio's career that was bounded by his studies at Columbia and his eventual exile. In this text, he outlined a professionalized anthropology that would serve as a "science of good governance" for the emergent revolutionary state. It is a broad-reaching manifesto in which the author seeks to reconcile the anthropology that he had learned at Columbia University with nineteenth-century narratives about modernization and even older anxieties about the nature of postcolonial national identity. Many of the recurrent themes of this text had appeared in the works of Mexican scholars since the nineteenth century (see Molina Enriquez 1909; Sierra Mendez 1969 [1902]; Hale 1989; Shadle 1994; Saez Pueyo 2001). But what makes *Forjando Patria* exceptional is the fact that it was written and read amidst the emergence of revolutionary institutions that would define political life for three quarters of a century, and that can still be perceived amidst more recent reconfigurations of Mexican democracy and nationalism.

A. GAMIO, BOAS, AND ANTHROPOLOGY BETWEEN THE PORFIRIATO AND REVOLUTION

Gamio's own youth and early intellectual formation bridge the distinct realities of Porfirian and revolutionary Mexico, something that is quite evident in the major themes explored in *Forjando Patria*. Born in 1883, he grew to adulthood in the period of peace and relative economic progress often referred to as the *pax porfiriana*. This was a time when the strong, centralized dictatorship consolidated by Díaz brought a three-decade respite from the instability that had governed during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century. Born into a reasonably prosperous family, Gamio completed his preparatory studies at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (National Preparatory School), an intellectual bastion of the positivism that was the official philosophy of Porfirian Mexico. A cocktail of Comte and Spencer, Mexican positivism was a moderate, or even conservative, inflection on a tradition of liberal thought with roots in the early nineteenth century. Stressing a positive knowledge of national realities over the blind application of European democratic principles on an insufficiently "civilized" populace, the positivist doctrine of "evolution over revolution" was perfectly suited for a period marked by a strengthening of technocratic rule and strict limitations on traditional democratic institutions (see Zea 1953; Hale 1989; Saez Pueyo 2001).

Gamio's biographers have seen other incidents in his early life as signs of an emergent "revolutionary" consciousness. After completing his preparatory

studies, he briefly studied engineering before leaving school to take over the management of a failing family farm. There, observing the conditions of the local workers, he developed the admiration for Mexico's indigenous peoples and the desire to improve their living conditions that were to influence his later career (see Gonzalez Gamio 1987). This particular anecdote resonates with the genre of narratives that was at the core of post-revolutionary nationalism in Mexico. In popular histories and grade-school texts, the biography of the "revolutionary" tends to hinge on a pivotal encounter with the suffering of the poor and downtrodden and the subsequent development of a social consciousness attuned to cross-class sympathies. Such solidarity between members of the mestizo middle class and the indigenous population is also a recurring theme in *Forjando Patria*.

It was in the last year of the Porfirian dictatorship that Gamio had his first encounters with anthropology, through courses taught at Mexico's National Museum of Anthropology. During this time, it is evident that he had relatively little influence in the Mexican intellectual scene. His earliest attempts to conduct independent archaeological investigations were frustrated by Leopoldo Batres, the irascible National Inspector of Monuments. Batres was a favorite court intellectual of President Díaz and notoriously jealous of other researchers.

As doors closed to him at home, Gamio turned to members of an expatriate community with important academic connections in the United States. On the recommendation of the Anglo-American antiquarian Zelia Nuttal, who had had her own nasty conflicts with Batres,[1] he was admitted into Franz Boas's anthropology department at Columbia University. Gamio was completing his master's degree in New York when the first shots of the revolution were fired, and he returned home in 1911 to what would be more than a decade of almost continuous warfare (Gonzalez Gamio 1987; de la Peña 1996: 44–46).

[1] Batres is well-known for conflicts with foreign and Mexican archaeologists. Zelia Nuttal, whose *tertulias* in Coayacán were frequented by Gamio and other archaeologists (see Tozzer 1933), had a conflict with Batres regarding the discovery of a ruin on Isla de Sacrificios, Vera Cruz. In her discussion of this incident, she lists additional conflicts of "the Batres-Sierra coalition" with foreigners the Duc de Lobat and Alfred Maudslay and Mexicans "Señor del Paso y Troncoso and Señor Francisco Rodriguez (both quondam directors of the National Museum), Dr. Nicolas Leon, Señores Manuel Gamio and Ramón Mena and many others deserving of every consideration and encouragement" (1910: 280).

Research by foreign scholars continued in Mexico despite the reigning climate of instability, and Gamio was integrated into the Escuela Internacional de Arqueología y Etnología Americana (International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology). The International School was maintained through support from the national governments of the United States, France, Mexico, and Prussia and from the private universities of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and Harvard. It opened its doors in 1911 and closed just four years later under political pressure from warring revolutionary factions (see de la Peña 1996: 58–62). During the brief period of its operation, the International School hosted European and Anglo-American archaeologists and ethnologists, including Boas, Alfred Tozzer, George Engerrand, and Eduard Seler. In a time when Mexican philosophers and artists were seeking alternatives to the hegemonic positivism of the Porfiriato, the instructors at this institution offered novel theoretical currents that would influence some of the most important post-revolutionary scholars (Gonzalez Gamio 1987; de la Peña 1996; Matos Moctezuma 1998: 79–80).

Gamio's primary research as a fellow of the International School was in archaeology. Much of this consisted of ceramic surface collections and test pits that would later be recognized as the first systematic applications of stratigraphic excavation methods anywhere in the world (see de la Peña 1996; Bernal 1980). This work also led to Gamio's designation as Mexico's Inspector General of Monuments, a post that had been dutifully abandoned by his old nemesis, Leopoldo Batres, when Díaz was ousted from the presidency (Matos Moctezuma 1998: 62). This represented a general changing of the guard in the Mexican academy, as Porfirian intellectuals found themselves marginalized after the loss of their old political patrons. In the chapter of *Forjando Patria* titled "Our Intellectual Culture," Gamio makes a triumphant reference to the fall of these "sackcloth pontiffs" (see Chapter 21).

If the development of anthropology in Europe and the United States is associated with Indian agents, explorers, and university professors (see Patterson 2001), the "creation stories" of Mexican anthropology and cultural policy often focus on how revolutionary intellectuals like Gamio consolidated new political and educational institutions amidst this climate of instability and political transition. Popular historical and literary treatments have represented the politically engaged man of letters as a member of the petit bourgeoisie who sought the sponsorship of a military or political leader after the collapse of traditional academic institutions (see Krauz 1999; Lomnitz 2001; Rama 1996; Zea 1945). As the foreign members of the International School fled Mexico,

Gamio's political and professional survival became even more contingent on his ability to cement patronage from one of the political factions currently vying for power.

It was in this context that *Forjando Patria*, a broad manifesto for a nationalist cultural project, served as a crucial work of political positioning and intellectual diffusion (de la Peña 1996: 61). Many of the essays published in 1916 as *Forjando Patria* had originally appeared in Mexico City newspapers, and most of them are written in a clearly middlebrow register that appealed to educated laypersons. In them, Gamio moved beyond his earlier focus on archaeology to comment on the importance of socio-cultural anthropology and other contemporary themes ranging from art and literature to national industry and gender relations. Throughout the text, anthropology is presented as a science that should be sponsored by the state and that constituted an essential body of knowledge for the success of revolutionary reforms. As he noted:

> It is a given that anthropology, in its true and amplest conception, should be the basic form of knowledge for good government. Through anthropology, one gains awareness of the population that is the source of both rulers and those who are ruled over. Through anthropology, one can characterize the abstract and physical nature of men and peoples and deduce the appropriate methods to facilitate their normal evolutionary development. (p. 32)

Gamio's incorporation into the revolutionary state took place a year after the publication of *Forjando Patria*, through an office created for him in Venustiano Carranza's administration as head of a newly created Departamento de Antropología (Department of Anthropology). He remained in this post after Carranza was overthrown in 1920 by the members of the Sonoran Dynasty (Álvaro Obregón, Plutarco Elias Calles, and Adolfo de la Huerta). Gamio's political survival after the Sonoran coup may have been because of the high regard that new president Álvaro Obregón had for his work. Obregón is known to have read *Forjando Patria*, a book that he referred to as a "profoundly scientific study of the true origins of our national ills" (in Gonzalez Gamio 1987: 47).

Both Carranza and the Sonorans formed part of what later Marxist historians characterized as the bourgeois wing of the Mexican Revolution (see Córdova 1979a, 1979b; Semo 1979). Natives of northern states of the republic from social backgrounds roughly comparable to Gamio's, these leaders shared interests and political programs quite distinct from those espoused by the peasant armies of Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata. This political

orientation is clearly reflected in *Forjando Patria*, particularly in Gamio's discussion of Zapata's peasant movement, which was engaged in all-out war with the Carranza faction by 1916 (see Chapter 34, "Three Nationalist Problems"; see also Womack 1969). As a promoter of the rights of Mexico's indigenous people, Gamio argued that there was a kernel of legitimate "indigenism" at the core of Zapatismo. However, he also argued that it was necessary to isolate this from two of the movement's other signature aspects: "banditry" and the manipulation of ignorant masses by "reactionary" holdovers from the old regime (see pp. 158–159). Gamio further noted that "Zapatismo is a localist and temporary denomination that is bound to disappear, whereas Indianism has persisted vigorously in Mexico since Cortés placed his standard on the sands of Villa Rica" (p. 158). In effect, this statement implies that the only salvageable elements of the Morelos peasant movement were those that could be co-opted into paternalist state institutions. After the final defeat of Zapata and Villa, this means of incorporating dissent and transforming subaltern groups into corporate constituencies of the state became a signature feature of post-revolutionary Mexican politics (see esp. Córdova 1979b).

The presidency of Álvaro Obregón marked the height of Gamio's direct influence on state-sponsored institutions. In the second year of Obregón's presidency, he and a team of researchers published the monumental *La Población del Valle de Teotihuacán* (1922). This multivolume study combined a general census of a regional population from central Mexico with a discussion of the local archaeological record, physical types, folkloric traditions, and economy. This was intended to be the first of a series of studies (each to be executed over the course of one or two years) focusing on populations exemplifying each of the republic's "regional cultures" and its various "urban cultures" (Gamio 1922: xi). This ambitious project had received official support from the president, and an English translation of the report was accepted with high honors as Gamio's doctoral dissertation at Columbia University (de la Peña 1996: 62).

Gamio's political fortunes took a marked turn for the worse during the presidency of Obregón's successor, Plutarco Elias Calles (1924), when his role in exposing a series of misappropriations within the Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education or SEP) greatly compromised his political position.[2] Threats on his life sent him into exile in the United States in 1925 (see Gonzalez Gamio 1987), where he researched and wrote two well-

[2] The Department of Anthropology was transferred to the SEP, and Gamio was promoted to Undersecretary of Education in 1924 (de la Peña 1996: 62).

known studies of Mexican migration (1930, 1931). Although these texts fall somewhat beyond the scope of this introduction, I should note that they are broadly consistent with Gamio's assumptions about the transmission of "modern" forms of culture and are currently being reexamined by historians as an important document of the politics of emigration and especially *return* migration in early twentieth-century Mexico (Walsh 2004).

Gamio himself returned to Mexico after several years, when the former president Calles was cast into political disgrace. Although he served in a number of additional government posts, he played a more prominent role in international organizations and research than in the centralized archaeological and indigenist institutions—most notably the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (National Institute for Anthropology and History or INAH) and the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute or INI)—that were founded in the 1940s (Gonzalez Gamio 1987; Bernal 1980). Headed by later figures such as Alfonso Caso Andrade and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, these centralized federal institutions defined policy toward indigenous ethnic groups and archaeological heritage for the half century to come. The INAH and INI were staffed primarily by alumni of Mexican universities, where anthropology curricula generally revolved around a model of applied research and national cultural policy similar to that proposed in *Forjando Patria*.

Although these institutions enjoyed a great deal of continuity over the decades that followed, the fate of this nationalist anthropology was closely tied to the legitimacy of the revolutionary state. A series of challenges to heritage and indigenist institutions and the assimilationist model of applied anthropology became one of the defining experiences of Mexican scholars trained since the late 1960s. I will return to these critiques in the last section of this introduction.

If we read *Forjando Patria* retrospectively we can see a series of themes that largely defined the disciplinary identity, institutional framework, and internal debates of Mexican anthropology and that conditioned its divergence from a neighboring tradition in the United States. In this sense, the most significant aspect of the text is Gamio's characterization of the discipline as an applied social science that would help the revolutionary state to create a unified, healthy, and progressive national society. This emphasis marks an early point of divergence from the Anglo-American tradition in which Gamio received his early training (see Tenorio Trillo 1999). Although Franz Boas and many of his North American students also wrote at length regarding the relevance of anthropology for governmental institutions (see Patterson 2001), the political

and social contexts that figured in Gamio's early career made the state an almost inevitable source of sponsorship.

The realities of revolutionary Mexico also influenced the theoretical content of Gamio's writing. A century of postcolonial anxieties about national identity and a deep-seated liberal tradition made Boas's strict cultural relativism less viable for Gamio and generated a series of tensions that are at the heart of *Forjando Patria*. In the following sections, I will look at some of the specific ways in which Gamio used this text to adapt what he had learned at Columbia to the heritage of nineteenth-century liberalism and the exigencies of revolutionary politics. As I will argue, some of the tensions and compromises that appear in this text reemerged in the work of later scholars and institutions and contributed to the particular valence of anthropology in modern Mexico.

B. ARCHAEOLOGY: A SCIENTIFIC AND MONUMENTAL PAST

Before 1916, Gamio's primary contributions to anthropology in Mexico had been as an archaeologist. As I mentioned earlier, he is widely credited with the first successful application of the stratigraphic excavation that became a fundamental method for modern archaeology (Gamio 1909, 1917, 1924; see also Bernal 1980). In *Forjando Patria*, he placed these technical innovations at the core of a nationalist archaeology that was distinct from both the amateur antiquarian studies of the nineteenth century and the research-focused tradition that was concurrently emerging in the United States. For Gamio, this new archaeology had a dual purpose: to understand how indigenous societies lived in the past and to promote national unity in the present.

In *Forjando Patria*, Gamio defined archaeology as "the study of the culture or civilization of the human groups that inhabited our country before the Conquest" (p. 71). The deep historical roots that he posits for the essence of Mexican nationhood are evident in his frequent references to diverse indigenous groups as "Mexicans"—and not just "Aztecs" or "Maya." This extension of "national" history into the distant past is consistent with the appropriation of pre-Hispanic civilizations that had been a central feature of Mexican nationalism since the last years of the colonial period (Keen 1971; Brading 1973; García Canclini 1995; Tenorio Trillo 1995; Lomnitz 2001) and that has analogs in many other "national" traditions of archaeology (Zerubavel 1995). State-sponsored archaeology in Mexico historically has placed great emphasis on the didactic use of pre-Hispanic remains, something that is evident in styles of restoration and museum display that stress monumentality and juxta-

positions of modern art and ancient artifact that are rarely seen in the United States (Braun 1993; Florescano 1993; García Canclini 1995; Castañeda 1996; Rodríguez Garcia 1997; Errington 1998). Many foreign scholars, especially those who are fresh from experiencing the tricky terrain of securing permits from state-operated heritage institutions, point to nationalistic interpretations and uses of the pre-Hispanic past as marks of the fundamentally nonscientific criteria that govern Mexican archaeology.

What often appears as a lack of objectivity to foreign scholars is, in fact, a tension that archaeologists trained in Mexico have negotiated or struggled with for decades (see Armillas 1987; Matos Moctezuma 1979; Rodríguez Garcia 1997; Vasquez León 2003). The roots of this ambivalent interplay among science, technical stewardship, and monumentalism are already evident in *Forjando Patria*. However, writing in the 1910s, Gamio seems not to have perceived any disjuncture between rigorous excavation and nationalist celebration. In fact, the essays on archaeology in *Forjando Patria* promote an almost seamless integration of the scientific study of archaeological materials and a deeply subjective means of "experiencing" the pre-Hispanic past.

Even in 1916, *Forjando Patria* was received by a readership that was familiar with a rich body of historical writings on the native cultures of Mexico and with "indigenist" themes in art and literature (Keen 1971; Cifuentes 2002). But for Gamio, these more traditional genres of writing stood in a subservient position to the kinds of incontrovertible artifactual evidence that could be generated by modern archaeology. He argued, for example, that the profusion of names that the colonial authors used to refer to the natives of the Valley of Mexico should be reduced to the three broad cultural horizons that he had identified in his own stratigraphic excavations at several sites: Archaic, Teotihuacan, and Aztec (p. 40; see also Gamio 1909, 1917, 1924). But even as Gamio participated in the formulation of a body of methods that would set standards for technical rigor for archaeologists around the globe, the ultimate goal that he posited in *Forjando Patria* was to transform this objective knowledge into a deeply emotional experience for members of the general public. This objective is particularly evident in his assertion that a rigorous knowledge of the past could help people experience "authentic" aesthetic reactions to pre-Hispanic art (see Chapter 10, "The Concept of Pre-Hispanic Art") and how it might inform the creation of specialized settings in which students could "live with" pre-Hispanic and colonial ancestors (see Chapter 15, "The Values of History").

This vision of a nationalist archaeology was enshrined by heritage organizations such as the INAH. Decades later, Mexican archaeologists who became

interested in different theoretical interpretations of the rise of ancient civilizations found themselves to be marginalized within institutions that held dogmatic views about the nature of pre-Hispanic history and the goals of excavation and restoration (see Armillas 1987). By the 1960s, the divergent political and intellectual project first posited in *Forjando Patria* contributed to a growing gap between what some Mexican anthropologists derisively referred to as the "monumental restoration school" and a "New Archaeology" then popular in the United States. This gap figures into a larger disciplinary crisis that I will discuss in more detail later.

C. CULTURE, EVOLUTION, AND *MESTIZAJE*

Whereas discussions of archaeology reflect the empirical studies that Gamio had conducted by the time that he wrote *Forjando Patria*, most of the other chapters in the text deal in a more theoretical fashion with the culture of contemporary Mexico. The rigorous scientific definition of culture is a recurrent theme in these chapters, and it is one of the aspects of the book that most clearly reflects the tensions and intersections between revolutionary nation building and foreign strains of social science. Like his mentor Franz Boas, Gamio espoused a broadly relativistic definition of culture, treating cultural particularities as the result of long-term environmental influences on a given society. At the same time, his work involved the markedly non-relativistic assumption that national progress hinged on the assimilation of indigenous people into a homogeneous Hispanic culture. Slippage between non-relativistic and relativistic definitions of culture reflects ambiguities that were common in the work of Boas and many of his North American students until the 1930s and 1940s.[3] In Gamio's case, it was also conditioned by the evolutionist heritage of Mexican

[3] Historian of anthropology George Stocking has pointed out that Boas often slipped into humanist concepts of culture that characterized culture in qualitative terms or as a degree of intellectual attainment, and only formalized a relativistic definition around the 1930s under pressure from his own students (Stocking 1966: esp. 870–871). In this context, some of the hierarchization that Gamio used between "national" and "indigenous" culture is not a misreading of an already relativist social science so much as the product of a generalized ambiguity in the discipline's terminology in the 1910s and 1920s. It is useful, for example, to compare the ambiguous and ambivalent relationships that Gamio establishes among culture, civilization, material progress, and nationality with Edward Sapir's well-known essay "Culture, Genuine and Spurious" (1924).

positivism and by the emphasis on modernization and national unity that was central to revolutionary-era political rhetoric.

The most clearly relativistic discussion of culture in *Forjando Patria* is in Chapter 22, "The Concept of Culture." There, Gamio counters accusations that Mexicans are an "uncultured" people with the argument that

> [m]odern anthropology has established the fact that culture is the conjunction of all of the material and intellectual features that characterize human groups. It does not attempt to establish grades regarding cultural superiority nor to anachronistically characterize peoples as cultured or uncultured. Culture is developed by the collective minds of peoples; it emerges from their historical antecedents and from the environment and circumstances that surround them. That is to say, each people has the culture that is inherent to its ethnico-social nature and the physical and biological conditions of the ground that they inhabit. It is not sensible for any people to think of its *cultura* or *Kultur* or culture as superior to those of others, or try to impose it by force. (pp. 103–104)

In other cases, Gamio uses "culture" more or less interchangeably with "civilization" and seems to establish clear hierarchies between indigenous and European types. In Chapter 21, "Our Intellectual Culture," he noted that

> [n]aturally, however brilliant and surprisingly developed pre-Hispanic civilization was for its time, the traces of it that we see today seem anachronistic, inappropriate, and impractical. There are indigenes who have a surprising knowledge of the course of the sun, the moon, and other celestial bodies. In pre-Columbian times, these individuals would have been respected astrologer-priests. But now, they would seem ridiculous if they were installed in an astronomical observatory. Indian herbalists that possess the secret of a vast medicinal pharmacopeia would have justly been considered medical notables in the past, but our modern doctor disdains them and accuses them of being untrained poisoners. (pp. 97–98)

Differences in the semantic role played by culture in different chapters of *Forjando Patria* might be read as Gamio catering to the "folk" definitions of his nonspecialist readers. However, there is a degree of consistency in the tensions between relativistic and non-relativistic uses of the term. Although Gamio argued for the equal validity of all cultural expressions when considered *as such*, he makes numerous references to a tendency toward "scientific progress" as the characteristic that ultimately marked the superiority of European civilization. Gamio says little about *why* such knowledge was less evident among the pre-Hispanic civilizations of America, but he seems to consider this to be

a qualitative difference between European and indigenous cultures that made the conquest of Mexico into a foregone conclusion (see especially Chapter 30, "Spain and the Spanish").

Even if there appears to be an evolutionary hierarchy between indigenous and "modern" culture in *Forjando Patria*, it is not quite the same hierarchy that was imagined by the Victorian evolutionists and many Porfirian positivists. For Gamio, the pinnacle of Mexican evolution would not be a carbon copy of the most "civilized" nations of Europe but the development of a mixed or intermediate culture that was better suited to its times and its environment than either the European or indigenous. There are numerous uses of the term "evolutionary" in reference to the cultural fusion that accompanied the biological admixture of *mestizaje*. Gamio refers to the "evolutionary incorporation" of European and Indian art in Chapter 11 ("Art and Science in the Period of Independence") and to the "evolutionary cultural fusion" that took place during the colonial period in Chapter 34 ("Three Nationalist Problems"). He characterizes this latter phenomenon as taking place when

> Indians gradually adopt new manifestations of culture by appropriating them to their own nature and necessities, or when they transform those of their own civilization by emptying them into new molds. In this case, fusion takes place with the wise intuition that comes with spontaneous evolution. (p. 159)

This idea of evolutionary fusion figured prominently in Gamio's assertion that native crafts and aesthetics that developed over three centuries of colonial rule were better suited to national realities than more prestigious forms imported from Europe by the independent republic (Chapter 21, "Our Intellectual Culture"; Chapter 11, "Art and Science in the Period of Independence"). This favorable contrast of colonial to "exotic" arts is also extended to industry and political systems. Gamio argues, for example, that artisan traditions that emerged between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries could be developed into a national industry that was better suited to the aptitudes and consumption patterns of most Mexicans than were many imported foreign technologies (see Chapter 28, "Our National Industry"). Likewise, he suggested that laws implemented by the colonial viceroys were more sensitive to the necessities of the indigenous population than republican laws that were modeled on European societies (see Chapter 16, "Revision of the Latin American Constitutions").

Some aspects of this argument are consistent with the older positivist tradition, which argued that Mexican society needed to modernize through

a gradual evolutionary process rather than through "metaphysical" political principles transplanted blindly from Europe (see Zea 1953; Hale 1989). Still, there is a marked contrast between Gamio's praise of colonial legislation and the positivist tendency to characterize that period of national history as being dominated by irrational "theological" thought. Furthermore, Gamio extended his critique of "exotic" legislation to the Reform Constitution of 1857, an almost sacred document for most positivists (see Hale 1989).

This critique of some of the most cherished liberal traditions of the nineteenth century implies a relativistic analysis of law and government. It is an acknowledgment that legal principles that persons of "European civilization" would consider to be universal are, in fact, conditioned by the culture and historical experience of parts of the world that are very different from Mexico. Besides the influence of Boas's relativism, this argument reflects critiques of the nineteenth-century liberalization of land tenure and other key economic sectors that became more permissible within the populist ideology of the revolution. Carranza and the Sonorans, for example, cultivated a new kind of mass politics through which the bourgeois state generated consent among the largely indigenous peasantry by reinventing forms of collective land tenure that had been undermined after a century of liberal development. In this sense, Gamio's anthropological critique of classic liberal institutions was in the ideological vanguard of a movement that brought about forms of populism and corporate citizenship that had an immense impact on the course of politics in the twentieth century.

D. RACE AND *MESTIZAJE*

The mass politics that accompanied the rise of the revolutionary state was charged with a "mestizophilia" that has been cited by many scholars as a signature element of Latin American nationalism at the turn of the nineteenth century (Miller 2004). As was the case with culture, Gamio's discussions of race involve a tension between relativistic approaches borrowed from Boas and the political exigencies of a project that demanded national unity and homogeneity. In *Forjando Patria,* Gamio applied concepts from physical and cultural anthropology to proclaim the general biological and intellectual equality of the Indian population—but also to assert a need to promote race mixing. His emphasis on what sometimes looks like racial engineering has led some scholars to look for intellectual influences linking Gamio to representatives of the eugenics movement (see Castañeda 2003; Walsh 2004). Still, the particular

uses of the idea of race in *Forjando Patria* and Gamio's other early writings tell a somewhat more complicated story. Although Gamio's commitments to biological anthropology varied over the course of his career, instances of race science in *Forjando Patria* involve a very fuzzy concept of heredity and somatology that hint at the ambivalent relationship between mestizophilic intellectuals and mainstream eugenics in the early twentieth century.

Gamio was clearly aware of eugenics research and seems to have perceived parallels between this and his own promotion of mestizaje. As Alexandra Stern has noted, he was elected vice-president of the Second International Eugenics Congress in 1920 (in Lomnitz 2001: 312) and was one of several Mexicans to receive subscriptions to U.S. eugenics journals. It is likely, however, that Gamio would have found much of the content of these texts and conferences to be difficult to reconcile with his own anthropological project. A heterogeneous movement, North American eugenics included both scholars that espoused racial relativism and others that fundamentally disapproved of race mixing or roundly dismissed the "racial potential" of Mexicans (see Lomnitz 2001: 139–140). Thus, although Gamio is known to have written assertions that "eugenics has as its objective the pursuing of racial improvement of human groups . . . [and] the heterogeneity of the Mexican population [makes imperative] the application of this science to Mexico" (in Tenorio Trillo 1999: 1176), it is unclear how his own understanding of this concept related to contemporaneous research being conducted in the United States. For example, nothing could be further from Gamio's promotion of race mixing than the work of prominent eugenicists Charles Davenport and Morris Steggerda, who published a widely read and cited work on Jamaica that ascribed a panoply of disharmonious physical and mental traits to Jamaican mulattoes (1929; see Comas 1961).

In contrast to the term "culture," which Gamio made obvious efforts to define, the term "race" appears in *Forjando Patria* as a common-sense and often ambiguous concept. This is one case in which it seems that Gamio's writing was more consistent with the folk definitions and genre expectations of his middlebrow readers. Race is probably the most common category used to contrast indigenous and European peoples by Latin American essayists and historians since the first half of the nineteenth century, a tradition that formed a significant part of the intellectual substrate of *Forjando Patria*. In contrast to the genetic definition used in twentieth-century eugenics, this essayistic tradition constituted different races as a concatenation of language, blood, and spirit (Stocking 1968: 65; Sierra O'Rielly 2002 [1861]; Chuchiak 1997). This romantic notion of race was at the heart of more humanistic discussions of

mestizaje such as José Vasconcelos's *La Raza Cósmica* (1926) and is almost certainly how many nonspecialist readers in Mexico would have initially understood mentions of race in *Forjando Patria*. Gamio seems to have consciously used this more romantic register in some of the essays, such as in his references to a "poor and pained race" in Chapter 4 ("The Redemption of the Indigenous Class"). Other moments in the text show a blurring of boundaries between language, culture, and biology that is consistent with this romantic race concept, such as the discussion of the physical features and dialectical particularities of white Yucatecans in Chapter 23 ("Language and Our Country").

Other uses of the word "race" in *Forjando Patria* seem more consistent with the racial relativism of Boas and his students. This is evident when Gamio makes the assertion that "the Indian has intellectual qualities comparable to those of any race" (p. 36) or makes a nurture-over-nature argument regarding different cultural aptitudes:

> [A]ll human groups possess equal intellectual aptitudes in equal conditions of education and environment. To impose a certain culture or civilization on an individual or group, one must give them the necessary education and place them in the appropriate environment. (p. 39)

It is not clear, however, if Gamio's notion of race as biological makeup necessarily had the same implications of genetic inheritance that were at the core eugenics and early twentieth-century forms of physical anthropology. In some cases, Gamio refers to phenomena that seem to be cultural or environmental as defining the biological features of the "Indian race." For example, he notes that the patterns of muscular development that can physically distinguish persons of "Indian race" from those of "white race" were the result of diet and environmental factors (p. 132). This seems to imply that the somatic features that define the two "races" were derived from non-hereditary factors. This fuzzy concept of race often contributes to what seem like circular arguments. For example, an article that Gamio published in 1929 in the Santa Fe magazine *Palacio* opens with the assertion that race mixing was a means of avoiding a "race war" by eliminating the perceived bases for racism (see Gamio 1929). This implies that biological admixture was simply a means of checking prejudices that had a fundamentally cultural or social origin.

In the end, we can read the discussion of explicitly racial admixture in *Forjando Patria* as a largely metaphorical and analytically minor aspect of an intellectual manifesto that placed more emphasis on researching the cultural and linguistic dimensions of *mestizaje*. To some extent, we can see Gamio's

discussions of race as answering to distinct genre expectations among his readers. Many who were familiar with social and biological sciences associated the term "anthropology" with nineteenth-century anthropometry and the study of physical characteristics. And for the vast majority of Gamio's Mexican readers, any discussion of *mestizaje* was likely to evoke a much longer national tradition of writing about mixtures of race or blood. It is also easy to imagine that this fuzzy definition of race reflects the anxieties of a Mexican scholar trying to engage a body of literature that enjoyed considerable international prestige but whose authors had often claimed to provide incontrovertible scientific proof of the constitutional inferiority of his countrymen.

E. THE FATE OF NATIONALIST ANTHROPOLOGY

The role of anthropology as an applied social science, an emphasis on the assimilation of indigenous people into a homogeneous national culture, and the use of archaeology as a collective representation of national identity all were signature features of the theory and practice of Mexican anthropology through the 1960s. All of these topics also became points of contention within a series of crises in Mexican anthropology and nationalism that marked the last third of the twentieth century. As an integral part of the state that emerged from the revolution, the vision of a nationalist anthropology proposed by Gamio was strongly implicated in the cultural legitimization of seventy years of single-party authoritarianism that developed in the decades that followed. Whereas the crisis that developed in Anglo-American anthropology in the 1980s is broadly attributed to doubts about the nature of representation, a somewhat earlier period of irony and introspection for Mexican anthropologists is intimately tied to the slow and painful decline of single-party rule.

Roger Bartra, an anthropologist who has written a series of particularly poignant analyses of the emergence and decay of the revolutionary cultural project, cites the violent repression of student protests in 1968 as a blow to the legitimacy of the Mexican state that ushered in a new period of popular discontent (Bartra 2002a: esp. 78–132; 2002b). The generation of radicalized students who saw many of their members shot down in the Tlatelolco massacre also produced a series of biting critiques of Mexico's "official" anthropology and cultural project. Texts like the volume *Eso que llaman la antropología mexicana* ("That which they call Mexican Anthropology" [Warman 1970]) took aim at the complicity of applied social science with the modernizing schemes of the authoritarian state and the ultimate failure of policies meant to improve

the lives of Mexico's indigenous people. Gamio and his immediate successors were seen not as revolutionaries but as the inheritors of an ethnocentric modernizing ethos that denied political and cultural self-determination to indigenous groups. Likewise, archaeologists took aim at the dogmatism, theoretical stagnation, and general "officialism" of the "monumental restoration school" (Matos Moctezuma 1979; Rodríguez Garcia 1997).

Many of the critics who had participated in the protests and polemics of 1968 were initially expelled or otherwise marginalized within state-controlled academic institutions. But, in a gesture that would be repeated again and again when the legitimacy of the Mexican state came into crisis, some of these scholars were eventually incorporated into government posts, ranging from the head of the INAH to the secretariat of agriculture. Against the backdrop of financial collapse and neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, their impact as public intellectuals was mixed (see Lomnitz 2001). Still, the broad critique of Mexican anthropology contributed to an academic culture in which moving forward implied a criticism of the institutional culture that emerged within the revolutionary state. By the 1980s, widely read books such as Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's *México Profundo* (1996) pushed the critique of the assimilationist policies and revolutionary nationalism of the early twentieth century into the mainstream.

By the time that seven decades of single-party rule ended with the 2000 presidential election, other political and cultural crises had further disrupted the vision of anthropology and national culture articulated by Gamio in 1916. The 1994 rebellion of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberacíon Nacional (EZLN, Zapatista Army of National Liberation) in the impoverished state of Chiapas underscored the deep fractures that still existed in national society and represented a new kind of movement that mobilized indigenous identity in opposition to the neoliberal development and authoritarian policies of the Mexican state. "Good government," a term used extensively by Gamio to refer to state policies that were informed by an anthropological knowledge of the populace, now tends to evoke the rhetoric of neo-Zapatismo and the autonomous zones founded and protected by the movement's leadership. Once again, the Mexican state ultimately faced this political crisis by entering into a dialogue and attempting to incorporate the Zapatista agenda into an "official" multiculturalism. Although the results of this dialogue ultimately proved unsatisfactory to the Zapatistas themselves, reforms that were instituted in the national constitution reversed decades of assimilationist policy and declared that Mexican nationhood was based on a multiethnic and multicultural society.

CONCLUSIONS

What does a text like *Forjando Patria*, which embodies a particular moment of nationalism and anthropology for a very specific geographical context, offer to a more general understanding of the history of anthropology? It is almost too obvious to state that the study of anthropological traditions from the global south often lends a new perspective to the universalist assumptions of First World social sciences. A more specific reflection can be derived from the comparison of Mexican and U.S. anthropologists, members of a community of scholars that shared a common set of theoretical assumptions and research projects in the 1910s but that trained subsequent generations of students who experienced radically different social roles and expectations (see Tenorio Trillo 1999; Lomnitz 2001). The divergent trajectories of these two traditions come into sharp relief when we contrast the fin-de-siècle crises that faced each. Gamio's nationalist vision of anthropology fell victim to the slow loss of political legitimacy that ultimately brought an end to single-party authoritarianism. In contrast, the crisis of the "classical norms" (Rosaldo 1989) of North American anthropology hinged on reflections about the discipline's complicity with colonial and neo-colonial institutions that seemed to be at a more comfortable distance from the ivory tower of research universities.

Gamio's references to a broad range of topics and to the specific political concerns of his time are reminders that differences in national traditions are not simply a divergence in ideas but also a difference in the social context of anthropological practice (see Patterson 2001). Gamio's attempt to reconcile the core principles of a university-based tradition from the United States with a different model of public intellectuality and a socially engaged nationalist project set the tone for an institutional logic that defined the experience of future generations of Mexican anthropologists. The compromises that he made between relativism and assimilation are not simply the result of provincial pragmatism or postcolonial anxieties but part of a far more concrete concatenation of bureaucratic practices, political paternalism, scientific expertise, and technical stewardship.

In this sense, *Forjando Patria* is not simply a document of what anthropology became in early twentieth-century Mexico but of what anthropology *can become* when it develops in an institutional context that gives its practitioners a more direct engagement in the formulation of public education and other aspects of cultural policy within a populist state. In contrast, the struggle of many anthropologists in the United States to find new forms of engagement with the public reflects the heritage of a discipline whose traditional study of

"primitives" in exotic parts of the world constituted an object of analysis that was removed from the everyday realities of university life. The legacy of Manuel Gamio exists somewhere between these two traditions, in the experimentation of archaeological methods that contributed to avowedly disinterested research conducted around the world and in the articulation of a nationalist social science tailor-made for revolutionary Mexico. His own life, as student, ideologue and exile, further demonstrates the interplay between different national spaces and the roles ascribed to social scientists as ivory tower scholars or public intellectuals. This makes a better understanding of his life and works an important step in developing a comparative perspective on the diverse histories of anthropology in North and South.