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LA GRAN DAMA:

**Science Patronage, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the
Mexican Social Sciences in the 1940s**

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Abstract

La gran dama:

Science Patronage, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Mexican Social Sciences in the 1940s

by Álvaro Morcillo Laiz

The literature on the development of Mexican social sciences during the twentieth century has rarely considered universities as part of the state. If we do, then universities are characterized by traits similar to those of the state, such as clientelism. This plausible hypothesis has never been fully unexamined. Another trait of the literature that impairs our knowledge of the Mexican social sciences is the neglect of external actors, in particular by US philanthropies. In this manuscript I argue that the Rockefeller Foundation patronised liberal scholarship, practiced according to formal rational criteria, as an alternative to what foundation officers perceived as clientelism and amateurism at universities. While in the long run foundations were extremely consequential for Latin American social sciences, and therefore frequently considered part of a US imperialistic drive towards cultural hegemony in Latin America, they were not unitary actors and frequently failed to predict the actual impact of their grants.

Keywords: Intellectual history; sociology of science; history of sociology; international political sociology; cultural diplomacy; U.S.–Latin American relations; Mexico; Rockefeller Foundation; José Medina Echavarría; Daniel Cosío Villegas; El Colegio de México; Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales (UNAM).

Zusammenfassung

Wissenschaftsförderung, die Rockefeller Stiftung und Mexikos

Sozialwissenschaften in den 1940ern

von Álvaro Morcillo Laiz

Die Literatur die sich mit der Entstehung der Sozialwissenschaften Mexikos im 20. Jahrhundert befasst, hat selten unter der Annahme operiert, dass Universitäten selbst als Strukturen des Staats zu sehen sind. Wenn wir diese Annahme jedoch teilen, dann stellen wir schnell fest, dass Universitäten dem Staat höchst ähnlich sind, d.h. das sie vielerlei Charaktereigenschaften mit diesem teilen wie z.B. der Klientelismus. Diese plausible Hypothese wurde noch nie überprüft. Ein weiteres Defizit dieser Literatur ist die Nichtberücksichtigung von externen Akteuren, insbesondere amerikanischer philanthropischer Stiftungen. In diesem Papier argumentiere ich, dass die Rockefeller Stiftung eine freigeistige Forschung, ausgeübt nach formal-rationalen Kriterien, die sie als eine Alternative zu dem herkömmliche Unibetrieb, den die Angestellten der Stiftung als klientelistisch und dilettantisch wahrnahmen, förderte. Auf lange Sicht gesehen waren philanthropische Stiftungen prägend für die Entwicklung der Sozialwissenschaften in Lateinamerika und werden daher auch häufig als Bestandteil einer amerikanischen kulturellen Hegemonie verurteilt. Sie waren jedoch keine einheitlichen Akteure und ferner oftmals nicht im Stande den tatsächlichen Effekt ihrer Fördermaßnahmen einzuschätzen.

Schlüsselwörter: Wissenschaftssoziologie, Soziologiegeschichte, Internationale politische Soziologie, Kulturdiplomatie, Wissenschaftsförderung, US-lateinamerikanische Beziehungen, Mexiko, Rockefeller Stiftung.

I. Introduction

Around 1940 the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) decided to engage in Mexican higher education.¹ The decision was made after several extensive field trips by RF officers, which led them to think that clients of political incumbents staffed most Mexican – and Latin American – public universities. Despite the sincere interest of some RF officers in Latin America, the RF involvement therein was part of a much broader US endeavour to establish a ‘good neighbour policy’, and to prevent first fascist and then Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere. In the 1940s RF became an increasingly important source of funding for Mexico’s humanities, in particular at El Colegio de México. Such a foreign patronage of universities can lead to *domination* – and resistance, but it has also been frequently criticised for advancing US cultural hegemony. However, such a broad claim is controversial. The same is true with regard to the part played by the foundation’s money and its other means of domination in the history of sociology and political science in Latin America, or elsewhere.

In this article, I argue that in the 1940s the RF and a fledging research centre, El Colegio de México, engaged in a relation of science patronage, a form of domination through which RF pursued its policy of supporting *liberal* scholarship, practiced according to *formal* rational principles such as autonomy, meritocracy, specialisation and full-time dedication, as well as the advanced training of students. Conversely, RF science patronage of the Colegio’s Centro de Estudios Históricos (CEH) allowed the Colegio to survive despite a severe reduction in political patronage. In view of this cut in public funding, RF sustained the Colegio so that it could at least fulfil some of its original goals, even if to do so, its leaders had to reformulate some of them and relinquish others.

My second point is that these RF decisions, such as the one to decline support for the Colegio’s Centro de Estudios Sociales (CES), which ‘closed’ in 1946 ‘for lack of funds’,² were in the long run extremely consequential for Latin American sociology and political science as

¹ In its different incarnations, in Spanish and English, this paper was presented at the Ann Arbor Sociology Workshop, Northwestern Sociology Workshop, Columbia University Latin American History Workshop, Seminario de Historia Intelectual (UAM-Cuajimalpa), Institut für International und Interkulturelle Studien in Bremen, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut in Berlin, NYU-CNRS Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Seminario de Investigación en Ciencia Política (ITAM), Seminario Permanente México-España at El Colegio de México, and at International Studies Division at CIDE in Mexico City. I am thankful for the valuable comments of the participants and, in particular, to Carlos Bravo, Ezequiel González, and George Steinmetz. I also received most valuable feedback from Gerardo Maldonado, Tom Rosenbaum, Aurelia Valero, Eduardo Weisz, and Nuria Valverde. Last but not least, the useful criticisms of three JLAS reviewers and the editor are also gratefully acknowledged.

academic disciplines. The clout of foundations, however, should not be taken as an excuse to speak of the US cultural hegemony. In reality, foundations failed to operate as unitary actors and to fully perceive the immediate, let alone middle-term impact of their decisions on specific grants. Even if at certain points in time, foundation policies dovetailed with the US governmental agenda, sweeping characterisations of foundations as ‘hegemonic’ or ‘imperialist’ are more misleading than useful.

Nonetheless, and this is the third argument, it is still true that foundations are capable of altering the course of disciplinary history, and of its methods. In Latin America in the 1940s, impacts occurred, but they were less a consequence of RF policy than of some officers’ lack of interest (and foresight). While in the RF Division of Humanities officers sincerely believed that Latin American politicians misused universities to reward the loyalty of political clients with some income and status, they were eager to counteract what they perceived as a problem – the prejudices of other officers and their US advisors explain why the Mexican and Latin American social sciences received almost no RF support. While scholars of philanthropy already know of this inattention, I explain here how it happened and who made the decisions.

The article focuses on the Colegio’s CEH, which RF has financed since the 1940s, and CES, as well as on its counterpart the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales (IIS) at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The claims I raise here are of a much broader significance though. In the Latin American context, the Colegio stands out for its early concentration on research and advanced training. Its faculty and graduates subsequently occupied positions in other important organisations in both Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Most conspicuously the director of the failed CES, José Medina Echavarría (1907–1977), whose *Sociología: teoría y técnica* ushered in a new era in Latin American sociology,³ was crucial both to the birth of a new subfield, the sociology of development, and to Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto’s dependence theory.⁴ IIS is the second-oldest sociological research centre in Latin America, which since 1940 has published the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. In the 1940s, Mexico City was already a centre of intellectual and political influence, a publishing hub in Latin America and the seat of the Fondo de Cultura

² Enrique Krauze, *Daniel Cosío Villegas: una biografía intelectual* (México: Tusquets, 2001), p. 128.

³ Gino Germani, *La sociología científica: apuntes para su fundamentación* (México D.F.: IIS, UNAM, 1956), p. 6.

Económica (FCE). The sources on which I rely here stem mainly from the RF records preserved at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), but I supplement them occasionally with documents from the Colegio and FCE, among other archives.

After connecting the arguments I advance here to several bodies of scholarship in the first section, the second reconstructs the Latin America agenda of the RF for the social sciences in the early 1940s. The next summarises the political and intellectual circumstances under which the Colegio was founded, while the fourth section zooms in on the RF decision to support the CEH. The fifth dwells on an inquiry sent by the Colegio to RF about a possible grant to the CES. In the conclusion, I elicit the main implications from my findings.

II. US Philanthropic Foundations and Latin American Social Sciences

My argument adds to or engages with a range of scholarship in several disciplines. Most immediately it impinges on the growing bibliography on Medina and his CES but also on the history of social sciences and the humanities in Mexico.⁵ By emphasising foreign science patronage, I aim at counterbalancing a Spanish-language literature that has shown no concern for the significance of money and other means of production necessary for academic work. While the links between the philanthropic foundations' medical research and health policy are studied in several influential books,⁶ and a book-length study on Mexican intellectuals and literary writers outside universities during the Cold War exists,⁷ scholarship on foreign science patronage in Mexico in the 1940s and during the Cold War

⁴ *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina: ensayo de interpretación sociológica* (México D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1969); José Medina Echavarría, *Consideraciones sociológicas sobre el desarrollo económico en América Latina*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Solar/Hachette, 1964).

⁵ See, among other, José Luis Reyna, 'An Overview of the Institutionalization Process of Social Sciences in Mexico', *Social Science Information*, 44 (2005), pp. 439, 437. Laura Angélica Moya López, *José Medina Echavarría y la sociología como ciencia social concreta (1939–1980)* (México: El Colegio de México, 2013), p. 126; Juan Jesús Morales Martín, *José Medina Echavarría. Vida y sociología* (México: El Colegio de México, 2017); Andrés Lira, 'José Gaos y José Medina Echavarría, la vocación intelectual,' *Estudios Sociológicos* 4: 10 (1986), p. 21; Clara E. Lida, José Antonio Matesanz and Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, *La Casa de España y El Colegio de México. Memoria 1938–2000* (México: El Colegio de México, 2000), pp. 241–2.

⁶ Marcos Cueto, ed., *Missionaries of Science: The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), chaps. 3–5; Steven Palmer, *Launching Global Health: The Caribbean Odyssey of the Rockefeller Foundation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers. Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955–1975* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

⁷ Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Patrick Iber, 'The Cold War Politics of Literature and the Centro Mexicano de Escritores', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 48: 2 (2015), pp. 1–26.

does not exist, at least not one comparable to the literature on the Chicago Boys in Chile⁸ or on the Ford Foundation (FF) in Brazil.⁹ For South American countries, a number of articles have studied projects such as Camelot and Marginality and the UNESCO project on race.¹⁰ Most recently a new book emphasises the centrality of knowledge for the earlier, imperial aspirations of the US towards South America, but it neglects philanthropic foundations and Mexico as a whole.¹¹ In brief the 1940s and the Mexican case are a lacuna in the historiography of philanthropy and the social sciences.

The reverse side of the foreign support to academia, namely the state patronage of Mexican and Latin American universities, is not well known either. A question particularly relevant for this article is the practice of political patronage aka 'clientelism' within academia: awarding research and teaching jobs to political allies and denying them to those who failed to show loyalty, a trait characteristic of some forms of traditional domination, at least according to Max Weber's ideal-types.¹² Nobody less than François-Xavier Guerra pointed out that in Mexico differences among intellectuals could be considered as a consequence not only of ideological discrepancies but also of 'the competition among clans and factions [dividing] those in power, in the diversity of patronages and clientele'.¹³ Guerra did so in the preface to Annick Lempérière's book, the latter concluding that political patronage was crucially important in the literary milieu, in publishing and in the university.¹⁴ Put in the words of another scholar, what Lempérière's book did was to explore how intellectuals

⁸ Juan Gabriel Valdés, *Pinochet's Economists. The Chicago School in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁹ Sergio Miceli and Bradford Smith, eds., *A Fundação Ford no Brasil* (São Paulo, SP: FAPESP, Editora Sumaré, 1993).

¹⁰ See, among many others, Mark Solovey, 'Project Camelot and the 1960s Epistemological Revolution Rethinking the Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus', *Social Studies of Science* 31: 2 (2001), pp. 171–206; Juan José Navarro, 'Cold War in Latin America: The Camelot Project (1964–1965) and the Political and Academic Reactions of the Chilean Left', *Comparative Sociology* 10: 5 (2011), pp. 807–25; Marcos Chor Maio, 'O racismo no microscópio Oracy Nogueira e o projeto UNESCO', *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 19: 1 (2008), pp. 35–52; Mariano Ben Plotkin, 'US Foundations, Cultural Imperialism and Transnational Misunderstandings: The Case of the Marginality Project', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47: 1 (2015), pp. 65–92.

¹¹ Ricardo Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest: US Scholars in South America, 1900–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

¹² For a more complex discussion of clientelism by a Latin Americanist, see L. Roniger, 'Patron-Client Relationships, Anthropology of', in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), 11118–20.

¹³ François-Xavier Guerra, 'Preface', in Annick Lempérière, *Intellectuels, états et société au Mexique: les clercs de la nation (1910–1968)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), p. 15.

¹⁴ Lempérière, *Intellectuels*, pp. 13–14, 102, 104, 105–6, 117, 119, 143, 154.

formed 'alliances ... fundamentally oriented toward the goal of career advancement', as many other professional groups did.¹⁵ In a similar vein, a book-length study of the UNAM notes that in the 1930s for 'ambitious politicians' among the 'payoffs' of controlling UNAM was 'patronage'.¹⁶ In sum, the scholarship on clientelism, intellectuals and the UNAM offers a number of clues that sustain the possibility of clientelism. According to this hypothesis, Mexican politicians used academic positions to reward their followers. In any case, there is nothing 'culturalistic' in the political patronage of science. Until the late nineteenth century, research and universities had equally been part of the spoils system in the United States.¹⁷ Nowadays party sympathies still affect university appointments in many European countries.

Part of the scholarship I intend to contribute to is not mainly preoccupied with Latin America, but with the history of the social sciences. More specifically, I examine the claim that foundation money did not bear upon either the development of sociology or the methodological preferences of its US practitioners.¹⁸ While I will try to show that it did, I am nonetheless sceptical about Gramscian claims according to which the foundations furthered the Western cultural hegemony achieved by US elites during the Cold War.¹⁹ This scepticism vis-à-vis radical claims does not mean that I am ready to admit that the diffusion of norms about the proper way to practice science is driven by altruism and persuasion.²⁰ Quite the

¹⁵ Merilee S. Grindle, 'Patrons and Clients in the Bureaucracy: Career Networks in Mexico', *Latin American Research Review* 12: 1 (1977), p. 38.

¹⁶ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910–1971* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), p. 92.

¹⁷ Stephen P. Turner, 'The Survey in Nineteenth-Century American Geology: The Evolution of a Form of Patronage', *Minerva* 25: 3 (1987), pp. 282–330.

¹⁸ Jennifer Platt, *A History of Sociological Research Methods in America: 1920–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chap. 5. Platt mainly retorts Donald Fisher's *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the United States Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); for a summary of the debate, see Stephen Turner, 'Does Funding Product Its Effects? The Rockefeller Case', in Theresa Richardson and Donald Fisher (eds.), *The Development of the Social Sciences in the United States and Canada: The Role of Philanthropy* (Stamford, CT: Ablex, 1999), pp. 213–26.

¹⁹ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Peter Seybold, 'The Ford Foundation and the Triumph of Behaviorism in American Political Science', in Robert Arnove (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism. The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 269–303; Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983). Supposedly, hegemony and influence are behind the earlier US interests in Latin America; Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest*, pp. 6, 15, 246–9.

²⁰ John Meyer, 'World Society, Institutional Theories, and the Actor', *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010), pp. 1–20; Martha Finnemore, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United

contrary, I do stress the conflictive aspects of science patronage, such as domination, and the unintended consequences thereof, as well as resistance.²¹

III. The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin American Social Sciences

The RF was established in 1913, but the social sciences would not become a significant part of its purview until decades later. This expansion resulted from the RF assuming the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, which had moved 'bodily from the social agencies field to the social sciences'.²² To administer the large Memorial assets, the trustees rearranged RF and established the Social Sciences Division (SSD) in 1929. From then until the late 1950s SSD favoured empiricism and the predominance of economics, the discipline in which its first three directors were trained. Problems of practical relevance, or what we would call today 'applied science', were preferred.

The rearrangement that established SSD was one of the regular attempts to 'rationalise' Rockefeller philanthropies, and in particular RF; the goal made sure that they were doing best what the trustees thought they should do. As a matter of fact, in the late 1930s RF was a strikingly efficient and rational organisation in terms of goals and personnel selection as well as of internal procedures;²³ RF was about to achieve major successes in public health and agriculture, building upon its pre-war achievements. RF was, however, far from being a perfectly rational organisation, as shown later.

From 1939 to 1954, the SSD director was Joseph H. Willits. Before coming to RF, Willits had created the Industrial Research Department within the Wharton Business School, part of the

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy', *International Organization* 47: 4 (1993), pp. 565–97.

²¹ Robert Kohler, *Partners in Science: Foundations Managers and Natural Scientists, 1900–1945* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Stephen Turner, 'Forms of Patronage', in Susan Cozzens and Thomas Gieryn (eds.), *Theories of Science in Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 185–211; Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations. The Politics–Patronage–Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

²² Julia Carson, 'The Social Sciences before World War II, 1922–1939', in RAC/RF/RG3.1/Series 910 – Program and Policy/Box 3/Folder 20, hereafter F20.

²³ On rationality and efficiency in the 'scientific' foundations, see John M. Jordan, *Machine–Age Ideology: Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), chap. 6. For an insider's account, see Warren Weaver, *US Philanthropic Foundations. Their History, Structure, Management, and Record* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), chap. 10; Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York: Harper, 1952) offers a partisan, but useful overview until 1950.

University of Pennsylvania.²⁴ He was strongly committed to the training of young scholars and to excellence; he famously wrote 'I would break any rule in the book for a chance to gamble on talent.'²⁵ During the 1940s, he strengthened a variety of important research fields such as Simon Kuznets's measurement of national income, social security and population as well as sampling for public opinion research, mass communication and race relations. In terms of organisations, Willits maintained and in some cases enhanced the SSD's massive support of economic research organisations, allocating in 1943 half of the SSD budget to the Brookings Institution, the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Industrial Research Department at the University of Pennsylvania, even in the face of the misgivings expressed by the RF president, Raymond Fosdick.²⁶

The SSD programme had clear geographic emphases in the United States and Canada, despite a strong presence in Europe and the Far East, but they were not uncontested. In the late 1930s, during the last major programme review before World War II (WWII), 'the possible extension of the social science programme to Latin America' had been under consideration, but the SSD officers eventually decided against this possibility one year later.²⁷ The position of the SSD betrays the unwillingness of its personnel to extend its programme south of the United States. On the surface such a policy would have been sensible for the SSD, since 'Latin America seem[ed] the logical place to extend our interest in promoting satisfactory international relations', as one of its member acknowledged.²⁸ Unlike SSD, the RF Division of Humanities had hired a scholar of Hispanic America as early as 1937. Irving A. Leonard was sent on extended survey trips to obtain first-hand knowledge of Latin American scholars and organisations. Before WWII, the RF officers had spotted a few opportunities south of the

²⁴ Darwin Stapleton, 'Joseph Willits and the Rockefeller's European Programme in the Social Sciences', *Minerva* 41: 2 (2003), pp. 101–14. Malcolm Rutherford, *The Institutional Movement in American Economics, 1918–1947. Science and Social Control* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 275–82.

²⁵ Joseph Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944. Analysis of Program', 20 Oct. 1943. In RAC/RF/RG 3.1/Series 910/Box 3/Folder 17, hereafter F17. Quote is from p. 1.

²⁶ Julia M.H. Carson, 'The Social Sciences through the War and the Post-War Period, 1939–1948', F20, pp. 11–13. Fosdick to Willits, 12 Nov. 1943, F17. The SSD budget for 1943 was US\$993,000, worth more than US\$14 million in 2017, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

²⁷ 'Development of the Social Science Program', 30 Jan. 1939, prepared by Janet M. Payne, Willits's personal assistant. RAC/RF/RG 3.1/Series 910/Box 3/Folder 16.

²⁸ Sydnor H. Walker, 'Latin-American Program in the Social Sciences' (7 Oct. 1938), RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300S/Box 15/Folder 120, hereafter F120.

border.²⁹

Instead of imitating Humanities, SSD ostensibly relied on the 'competent advice' provided by colleagues from the International Health Division (IHD) to identify possible opportunities for the SSD in Latin America.³⁰ Years later, when a request from an IHD officer in Chile came, SSD declined.³¹ Besides this purported openness to IHD advice, SSD promised to cooperate with the Latin American governments on 'social security' but only by means of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. Simultaneously, SSD excluded 'major projects in a single country'. In short, SSD publicised a few measures taking place in the United States and Europe as if they constituted a Latin American programme.

The demands placed on the SSD might have ceased if WWII had not begun a few months later. With Europe and the Far East involved in the fighting, the US government deemed it vital to increase security in its southern flank.³² For SSD, and RF generally, the war meant that their activities in Europe and the Far East were jeopardised, as noted by Fosdick. In February 1941 he called a staff conference 'to consider [the] possibility of extended program in Mexico', after Henry A. Wallace, the US vice-president and a former secretary of agriculture, had approached Willits on the subject.³³ According to Fosdick, Wallace contemplated 'work primarily in fields of health, broader than that now under way, and in agriculture'.³⁴ In fact, his comments are credited with having sparked Mexico's 'Green Revolution'.³⁵ The decision to increase RF presence in Latin American humanities and social sciences was so firm that Fosdick alluded to it in his 'President's Review'.³⁶

As Wallace suggested that RF should become more active in Mexico, he implicitly raised demands on the SSD's budget because several RF divisions would regularly become active in

²⁹ RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300/Box 2/Folder 9 'Rockefeller Foundation Appropriations to Latin America', 1 July 1913–30 June 1949, heretofore F9.

³⁰ Stacy May, 'Report on Latin American Interests on Social Sciences and Humanities', F120.

³¹ Evans to Willits and Elderton, 16 June 1948, F120.

³² Stephen R. Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938–1954* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1995), pp. 52, 63.

³³ RAC/RF/RG 3.1/Series 904/Box 5/Folder 33, 18 Feb. 1941, hereafter F33.

³⁴ Staff conference, 18 Feb. 1941, F33.

³⁵ Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier (eds.), 'Green Revolution', in *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 470; John H. Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution. Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 107.

³⁶ RF, Annual Report 1940, pp. 56–8; 1942, p. 5; 1943, pp. 35–9.

one country simultaneously. Trying to avert these demands during the staff conference, Willits spelled out the string of arguments that he would repeatedly use in the following years. Among them were the convenience of asking his admired Carl O. Sauer (see later) and other US experts for advice; doing something 'in a very small scale', if anything should be done at all in Latin America; taking into account the large demands for support that would come from Europe in the future; and considering the 'gulf' between the 'patterns of economics' on both sides of the border, which did 'not have much application' in Mexico. Research in 'history, geography, anthropology', Willits claimed, had 'more pertinence'.³⁷ Although phrased differently, Willits was telling RF's president and staff what he had earlier explained to the president of Johns Hopkins University: 'We didn't feel it was our function to try to offset German propoganda in South America.'³⁸

As war raged, the pressure on the SSD to engage in Latin America grew, reaching its peak in 1943, but Willits continued to resist. In 1941 he had presented a *fait accompli* by hiring Roger Evans, a former businessman with extensive experience in China.³⁹ Willits further armoured the pre-existing SSD decision, supposedly confirmed by the limited opportunities identified by four US travelling scholars whom the SSD had sent to Latin America in 1941–1942.⁴⁰ When considering 'the suggestions that have come to us, primarily from the scholars who have made trips to Latin America on RF grants', Willits insisted in a note to Fosdick, 'we [SSD] shall proceed of course on the exception principle'.⁴¹ In reality, instead of reading attentively the reports by the travelling scholars, consultants and officers, Willits had instructed one collaborator, Dr Marion Elderton, to prepare a *digest* of the suggestions they made. Elderton, a labour relations expert from Wharton free of any previous contact with Latin America, summarised the reports, depriving the SSD readers of the context, and leaving ample space for prejudices.⁴²

In late 1943 and 1944, SSD came again under scrutiny by an Interdivisional Committee on Latin America. An 'SS LA Policy' was drawn from Willits's 'Analysis of Program'. Willits made explicit that he 'would give work in that region lower priority than work in Europe or Asia',

³⁷ Staff conference, 18 Feb. 1941, p. 6, F33.

³⁸ Willits, RAC/RF/RG 12, 8 Aug. 1940.

³⁹ Roger F. Evans, in RAC/RF, biographical files.

⁴⁰ In addition to the aforementioned Sauer, they were Earl J. Hamilton (economics), Melvin Herskovits (anthropology) and Robert Hall (geography).

⁴¹ 3 May 1943, F120.

something already known, but he made clear a new reason. He argued that there were 'so many agencies, governmental and private, interested', mainly referring to Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Willits also instructed one of his collaborators 'to follow up general developments and upon the variety of sources for checking. An occasional visit may be in order'.⁴³ The Interdivisional Committee on Latin America met twice in 1943 and sent its report to Fosdick in early 1944. It stated that 'the majority of its members regrets the absence of a more vigorous Social Sciences program'.⁴⁴

In an RF internal report, an observation such as this made an appeasement reaction from SSD unavoidable. Willits's letter to Fosdick opened with the admission that 'The SS[D] policy of low priority for Latin America is being questioned by so many thoughtful persons that the subject calls for re-analysis.' These persons were within and also without RF: 'Men such as [Henry A.] Moe, a prospective Trustee, Sauer, a great scholar on Latin American culture, [Robert] Redfield, [Lewis] Hanke [believed] that SS[D] should give Latin America higher priority than we do.' Nonetheless, Willits's persuasion never changed and can be summarised in his dictum: 'The level of development of the Social Sciences in Latin America is low and the milieu is not favorable for sound growth.'⁴⁵ In sum, Willits adhered to *his* restrictive policy towards Latin America, despite pressures to the contrary from the RF's president and even the US vice-president.

IV. Mexican Politics and Academia around 1940

The last two years of President Lázaro Cárdenas's term (1934–1940) produced a conservative backlash in Mexico. Previously Cárdenas had managed to push through a number of leftist reforms in the economy, most prominently the allocation of land to peasants and farmers and the expropriation of US and British oil companies in March 1938. In foreign policy Cárdenas had turned Mexico into the staunchest ally of the fledging Spanish Republic. After its defeat, Cárdenas admitted about 20,000 Spanish refugees, among them numerous intellectuals; many had links to the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), but a few were com-

⁴² Willits to Lewis Hanke, 21 Feb. 1944, F120. Marion Elderton, 'Digest of Observations and Suggestions Submitted by Scholars Visiting Latin America', 28 April 1943, RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folder 4637.

⁴³ Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944 – Analysis of Program', 20 Oct. 1943, F17.

⁴⁴ Report of the Inter-Divisional Committee on Latin America to Fosdick, 31 Jan. 1944, RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300/Box 2/Folder 13, PRO INT 1.

⁴⁵ Willits to Fosdick, 21 Feb. 1944, F120.

munists.⁴⁶ As Mexican Catholics, the middle classes and the far right opposed Cárdenas's decisions, a mounting challenge to his authority became clearly perceptible, outside and within the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM), the predecessor of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). As Cárdenas's term was about to end, he picked a conservative successor, Manuel Ávila Camacho, who won the election after a campaign burdened by violence and accusations of electoral fraud.⁴⁷ The differences within the party itself were so bitter that soon thereafter some members of Ávila's government attempted to revert to Cárdenas's policies.

Political radicalisation also troubled UNAM, which had barely recovered from the three decades of conflict between the university and the government. Established during the colonial period, the university was closed by the liberals in the 1860s and reopened as a project of the positivists in 1910. During the Revolution and beyond, the university was involved in politics, for different reasons: politicians tried to use the university for their own purposes – 'the UNAM was worth having' – or students participated in politics, engulfing the university in the conflict or the parties fighting each other within the UNAM asked the government to arbitrate. Among the issues regularly under dispute were that not only that 'professors' were 'being appointed through political patronage' rather than competition but also that scholarships were given under similar criteria.⁴⁸

In view of all this, it is unsurprising that money happened to be at the centre of the largest crisis (1933–1935) between the state and the university. Until then, the state had contributed most of the budget of the university, but in 1933 it granted the UNAM an endowment, which would yield only about one-third of its expenses, and refused to grant more patronage than that. Such was the consequence of Vicente Lombardo Toledano's attempt to seize control of the university and impose a Marxist education at the UNAM, which was at the time thoroughly conservative, with a significant presence of Catholics and right-wingers. On the edge of demise, the UNAM was rescued by the appointment of a new rector, Luis Chico Goerne (1935–1938), a moderate Catholic whom the new president Cárdenas admired. The following

⁴⁶ Vicente Lloréns, 'La Emigración Republicana de 1939', in José Luis Abellán (ed.), *La Emigración Republicana de 1939*, vol. 1: *El Exilio español de 1939* (Madrid: Taurus, 1976), pp. 95–200.

⁴⁷ Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938–1954* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), chap. 1.

⁴⁸ Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State*, pp. 97, 119, 121, 135, 158, 165; citations are from p. 92 and p. 75.

years, the important ones for this article, were of rapprochement between the UNAM and the government, which had understood the political value of the university.⁴⁹

In 1940 one of the places where social research was conducted was the UNAM's IIS, under the aegis of Lucio Mendieta Núñez. The IIS director was a protégé of Manuel Gamio, the most important Mexican anthropologist of the post-revolutionary period and a client of President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1928).⁵⁰ After a conflict with Calles, Gamio left Mexico for the United States, but during Cárdenas's term, he returned and occupied various governmental offices.⁵¹ Before and after going to the United States, Gamio remained the crucial person to understand Mendieta's trajectory.⁵² Gamio granted him a job within his Teotihuacán Valley Project, at a moment when Mendieta was about to drop out of law school because of his father's financial difficulties.⁵³ This was the first of the four positions Gamio provided Mendieta, according to the latter's testimony.⁵⁴ His posthumous homage to Gamio reveals the devotion with which clients typically reward patrons' goodwill; unpaid work is another form, which Mendieta also practised.⁵⁵ After almost fifteen years at the population unit within the anthropology division established by Gamio, he moved to the Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales, the think tank of the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana,⁵⁶ and from there to the IIS in 1939. On the whole, Mendieta can be characterised as 'an intellectual close to the regime'⁵⁷ whose career relied on alliances 'based upon informal norms of reciprocity and loyalty'.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State*, p. 154, and chap. 6.

⁵⁰ Beatriz Urías Horcasitas, 'Las ciencias sociales en la encrucijada del poder: Manuel Gamio (1920–1940)', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 64: 3 (2002), pp. 93–121.

⁵¹ Miguel León-Portilla, 'Manuel Gamio, 1883–1960', *American Anthropologist* 64: 2 (1962), 356–66.

⁵² Ledda Arguedas and Aurora Loyo, 'La institucionalización de la sociología en México', in Ledda Arguedas et al. (eds.), *Sociología y ciencia política en México* (Mexico: UNAM, 1979), p. 7.

⁵³ Natanael Teodocio Reséndiz Saucedo, 'Los Sabihondos impotentes. Estado, burocracia e intelectuales vistos desde la trayectoria formativa de Lucio Mendieta y Núñez (1911–1939)', unpubl. Master diss., Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco, 2016.

⁵⁴ Mendieta y Núñez, 'El Doctor Manuel Gamio y su magisterio excepcional', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, no. 1 (1961), pp. 10, 21, 22, 27.

⁵⁵ Ángeles González Gamio, *Manuel Gamio: una lucha sin final* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1987), p. 62.

⁵⁶ Margarita Olvera Serrano, *Lucio Mendieta y Núñez y la institucionalización de la sociología en México, 1939–1965* (México: UAM-Azcapotzalco, 2004), pp. 45, 89.

⁵⁷ Olvera Serrano, *Lucio Mendieta y Núñez*, p. 146.

⁵⁸ Grindle, 'Patrons and Clients in the Bureaucracy', p. 38.

Mendieta's upbringing in post-revolutionary Mexican anthropology always hovered around his ideas about sociology. Just like Gamio, he insisted that Mexico's most significant problem was the indigenous population. Accordingly Mendieta wanted the IIS, where he carried out 'a complete reorganisation',⁵⁹ 'to find the courses of action appropriate to solve the most important social problems of the country'.⁶⁰ More specifically, he wanted the IIS to collect knowledge useful for Cárdenas's *obra indigenista*, which caused the long-lasting emphasis of the IIS on the problems of indigenous populations and the rural environment. That problems could be straightened out and that the future would be free of them are integral parts of Mendieta's evolutionism.⁶¹ Apart from solving problems, sociology benefitted 'culture', which is characterised by 'higher aims and the absence of selfishness'.⁶² Even more naïve was Mendieta's frank confession that his scholarship was based solely on 'observation and frequently personal intuition'.⁶³ Unsurprisingly, Mendieta's distinctive sociological ideas are difficult to identify.⁶⁴

His activities as an editor are almost equally telling about his ideas and contributions. Mendieta was receptive to a wide range of influences and ways of doing sociology and invited to Mexico scholars as different as Robert Lynd and Pitirim Sorokin, 'the eminent Russian sociologist'.⁶⁵ He also published Lynd and Sorokin in Spanish, since Mendieta did not only control the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* but also edited a sociological book series, the *Biblioteca de Ensayos Sociológicos*. In his journal, Mendieta regularly included lavish illustrations, just like in the proceedings of Mexican sociological congresses. These expensive details, completely unusual in a specialised, sociology journal, were possibly part of Mendieta's attempt to reach a wider public of lawyers, social workers and anthropologists and to impress

⁵⁹ Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'Memoria del Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Nacional', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 9: 3 (1947), p. 427.

⁶⁰ Mendieta y Núñez, 'Memoria del Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Nacional', p. 427; in the same tenor, see Mendieta's speech in Francisco Rojas Gonzalez, 'El Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 13: 2 (1951), p. 263; see also Lucio Mendieta y Núñez and José Gómez Robleda, *Problemas de La Universidad* (México: IIS, UNAM, 1948), p. 17.

⁶¹ Olvera Serrano, *Lucio Mendieta y Núñez*, p. 108.

⁶² Cited in Gonzalez, 'El Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología', p. 263.

⁶³ Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'Ensayo sociológico sobre la burocracia mexicana', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 3: 3 (1941), p. 63.

⁶⁴ For an appraisal, see David A. Brading, 'Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 7: 1 (1988), pp. 80–81, 89.

⁶⁵ Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'La sociología y la investigación social', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 32: 5 (1970), p. 1109.

potential donors within the government; they aimed at publicity and status rather than reaching a specialised public.⁶⁶

By and large Mendieta and his environment are reminiscent of an RF officer's notes on Latin American professors. According to him, they had

slight interest in research, and no conception of the seminar method. A perfunctory lecture is droned by an uninterested and poorly paid professor. There are no contacts between the student and the professor. Latin America scarcely conceives of the full-time professor. A small retainer is given to some prominent man, or friend of a governmental official, for which he delivers a few lectures.

Instead RF wanted to support scholarship based on formal rational principles such as autonomy from political patronage, meritocracy, specialisation and full-time dedication.⁶⁷

A few years later the same topics arose in a description of a visit to the IIS by Earl J. Hamilton, a Duke University economics historian of the Iberian colonies. Hamilton had been commissioned to identify organisations conducting social research in Mexico that might deserve US support. In the section on the IIS, Hamilton wrote:

*He [Mendieta] wrote on agriculture in the monumental work of Gamio on Teotihuacán and some of the glory of this study was shed on him. He has written a schematic and unscholarly agrarian history of Mexico. [...] Aside from the Revista Mexicana de Sociología the Institute has accomplished very little. Mexican Indian tribes have been studied superficially and a few photographs of Indians collected. No real research has even been attempted. The staff, which seems to have been selected through favoritism, is weak and incompetent ... many ... have strong political and business connections.*⁶⁸

Some of Hamilton's comments contradict the customary accounts of the early IIS. What he perceives as favouritism has often been presented as a consequence of the absence of sociologists in Mexico, which compelled Mendieta to hire 'professionals from other disciplines [law, criminology, medicine, anthropology], oriented towards the study of social problems,

⁶⁶ Turner, 'The Survey in Nineteenth-Century American Geology', p. 9.

⁶⁷ Irving A. Leonard, 'The Betterment of International Relations on a Cultural Level', Informal Discussion, 1 April 1939, p. 6. RAC/RF/RG 2/1939.300.

⁶⁸ 'The National University of Mexico and the Research Institutes Affiliated With It', RAC/Social Science Research Council/RG 1 Accession 1/Series 1/Subseries 14/Box 101/Folder 538, p. 8. Hamilton sent a copy to Willits, 27 Nov. 1942, RAC/RF/RG 1/1.1/200/Box 329/Folder 3920, hereafter F3920.

who were ready to dedicate *part of their time* to research'.⁶⁹ (Full-time professorships were unknown at the UNAM until 1946; in the early 1950s only about twenty existed.⁷⁰) In any case most of those personnel remained at the IIS for decades; Mendieta's own tenure lasted until 1964, which explains why Lempérière considered that he and others who obtained their positions during Cárdenas's term 'jeopardized the renewal of the research'.⁷¹ Lastly Mendieta shaped the IIS and other Mexican organisations, among which the current Facultad Nacional de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (FCPyS) at UNAM stands out. To sum up, after almost twenty years working for the Mexican government, Mendieta moved from the party directly to the IIS, where he strove to produce knowledge useful for the state.

V. Rockefeller Foundation and El Colegio de México

The predecessor of Colegio, La Casa de España, was established in 1938 to do for the Spanish refugee scholars what the New School for Social Research and some universities in the United States had done for German and Austrian émigrés. The idea of providing the exiles a place to resume their intellectual work was Daniel Cosío Villegas's, the liberal maverick and cultural entrepreneur who had founded an economic journal, *Trimestre Económico*, and FCE, the state-owned publishing company. He studied law at the UNAM and economics in the United States, thanks to a fellowship from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial in 1926, the only Latin American social scientist to do so, and then began a career as a diplomat and civil servant. Eventually, thanks to continued RF grants, he became a scholar and the editor of a multivolume *Historia moderna de México*.⁷² Beginning in 1937 Cosío encouraged Cárdenas to establish the Casa de España and to allocate what at the time was a generous subsidy. Cosío finally succeeded because he was friendly with his fellow economists at the Finance Ministry and the central bank, and with progressive members of Cárdenas's cabinet, most prominently Francisco J. Mújica.⁷³

A second step in the consolidation of the Casa de España was Alfonso Reyes's appointment as

⁶⁹ My emphasis. Arguedas and Loyo, 'La institucionalización de la sociología en México', p. 9; Margarita Olvera Serrano, *Economía y sociología en México: revistas especializadas, liderazgos y procesos de institucionalización, 1928–1959* (México: UAM-A, 2013), p. 77.

⁷⁰ Departamento de Estadística, *Anuario estadístico* (México: UNAM, 1964), p. 364.

⁷¹ Lempérière, *Intellectuals, états et société*, p. 212.

⁷² Servando Ortoll and Pablo Piccato, 'A Brief History of the *Historia Moderna de México*', in William H. Beezley (ed.), *A Companion to Mexican History and Culture* (Chichester: Wiley, 2011), pp. 339–60.

⁷³ Cosío to Mújica, 30 Sep. 1936, cited in Lida et al., *La Casa de España*, p. 33.

its president.⁷⁴ Cosío's well-respected ally was a former diplomat and a Nobel Prize in Literature manqué. Cárdenas's decision to designate Reyes *presidente* of the Colegio, which included a subsidy for the Colegio, constituted, in Cosío's words, the payment for the 'services rendered' (*servicios prestados*) by Reyes in his last, widely successful diplomatic mission.⁷⁵ In Rio de Janeiro he had convinced the Brazilian government to buy Mexican oil despite the embargo on its exportation in the aftermath of the 1938 expropriation.

In a 'major reversal' for Reyes, Cosío, and the Spanish exiles, Ávila Camacho named Octavio Véjar Vázquez as secretary of education in 1941.⁷⁶ He was 'reputed to be ultraconservative', according to Director of the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH) Alfonso Caso, and even to hedge some far-right sympathies.⁷⁷ Caso added that the new secretary was not exactly enthusiastic about 'professors ... from the Spanish Republic'.⁷⁸ In fact, he cut the Colegio subsidy for 1942 to Mex\$200,000 down from Cárdenas's 350,000.⁷⁹ Although the Mexican central bank and the UNAM occasionally subsidized the Colegio, the reality was that one year after the end of Cárdenas's term, Reyes and Cosío were experiencing the downside of state patronage: its reduction when the patron was out of office. Teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, the Colegio sought the support of the RF.

In 1940 the RF officers within the Humanities Division had already added the ENAH to its Mexican portfolio.⁸⁰ This precedence would be crucial for the Colegio. First, the RF programme of scholarships for anthropologists was a precedent and a model for the students at CEH, at least in the eyes of RF officers.⁸¹ To delegate to the grant recipients the ability to

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁷⁵ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Memorias* (México: Mortiz, 1977), p. 174. In the past, diplomatic posts had been used to pay 'political debts'. However, on this occasion, Reyes serves as a diplomat, rewarded by facilitating his settling down in Mexico. See Friedrich E. Schuler, *Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lázaro Cárdenas, 1934–1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), p. 10.

⁷⁶ Stephen R. Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, and Corruption* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001), pp. 95–6.

⁷⁷ Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development*, pp. 82, 172, 179.

⁷⁸ Memorandum from Berrien to Stevens, Aug. 1942. RAC/RF/RG 1.1/323R/Box 22/Folder 178 – Colegio de México, hereafter F178.

⁷⁹ Lida et al., *La Casa de España*, p. 154. The subsidy was a comparatively generous one; the 1942 budget of the school of economics at the UNAM, much larger than the Colegio, was MX\$117,734; see Manuel Pallares Ramírez, *La Escuela Nacional de Economía: Esbozo Histórico: 1929–1952* (México: Escuela Nacional de Economía, 1952), p. 119.

⁸⁰ See F9.

⁸¹ Grant actions, 16 Oct. 1942 and 12 June 1944, F178.

assign fellowships was unusual. Had the trustees not approved this delegation to the ENAH earlier, the CEH would not have obtained the prerogative to select its grantees. Second, 'The security of the Institute [ENAH] from political interference and the eminence of its director are warrants for the proposal.'

The RF was looking for distinguished scholars who could fence out politics from academic organisations, both in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America.⁸² Berrien thought Reyes and Cosío to be among 'the very best', a 'feeling' allegedly shared with Henry A. Moe, the officer for Latin America at the Guggenheim Foundation.⁸³ Their prestige, like Caso's, could be used for a new attempt to restrain political patronage of science.

Political patronage and scholarly eminence remained the central topics in the series of contacts between the RF and the Colegio, and in the internal debates within the RF that would lead to the first grant to the Colegio.⁸⁴ In his first meeting with Leonard, Reyes apparently argued: 'Though some financial support is received from the Mexican government the institution is autonomous and more removed from political influence than other institutions such as the National University of Mexico, which ... is only nominally autonomous.' Although Leonard reacted to Reyes's plans of transforming La Casa de España into a centre of study 'above university level and more completely divorced from political influence' by indicating 'that he saw no present possibility of RF interest', in his diary he noted that his 'feeling' was that Reyes's plans 'might well deserve study by the RF'.⁸⁵ However, in September 1940 Leonard resigned but was succeeded only in January 1942 by William Berrien, an expert in Spanish literature who in 1944 became a professor at Harvard.⁸⁶ In May 1942 Berrien encountered Reyes and Cosío, who after some meetings had convinced him of the seriousness of their intentions.

But Berrien still had to match those intentions to RF policy. What Reyes and Cosío really wanted was an endowment for the Colegio.⁸⁷ Since the RF rarely gave money for endowments, Berrien then asked Reyes and Cosío in a letter what else could help secure the survival of their institution, but he felt the need to spell out that he was not offering

⁸² Stevens, 30 Aug. 1940, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 276/Folder 3287.

⁸³ Berrien to Stevens, 13 July 1942, F178.

⁸⁴ Reyes to Leonard, 24 Jan. 1940, Colmex y Casa de España/Rockefeller Foundation.

⁸⁵ Interview with Alfonso Reyes, 13 Feb. 1940, Mexico City. RF/RG 1.1/323R/Box 22/Folder 177. I have corrected typos and spelling mistakes contained in this and other sources.

⁸⁶ See RAC/RF, biographical files.

'assistance toward the realization of a project or a piece of research, the nature of which is determined beforehand outside Mexico'. However, the record shows that Berrien did suggest all the aspects that the formal Colegio application finally included. The first is the most prominent: 'It occurs to me [Berrien] ... that we might be of assistance in maintaining for a period of two or three years your fellowship program for study under Sr. Zavala and his associates,' that is, for the CEH. This is not a casual statement: the training of academic researchers had long been an RF goal 'greater' than research itself.⁸⁸

Berrien's letter also addressed a second aspect that still describes the Colegio – its continental ambitions and character: 'Would you be interested in extending this training on the basis of fellowships to certain Central American countries or even the countries of the northwestern section of South America?' Thus he slipped into the Colegio ideas that the RF had already implemented at the ENAH: to introduce foreign research and teaching methods in Mexico, which should become a pole of attraction for Central and even Latin American students. Berrien also hinted at further suitable items, including 'library development', for which the RF indeed spent large sums of money in the following decades. In brief, as Berrien labelled this or that as feasible, he told Reyes and Cosío what and what not to request from the RF.

Upon receiving the letter, Cosío grudgingly accepted its content. Rightly so, because before writing to the Colegio, Berrien had carefully discussed its contents with David H. Stevens, the Humanities director, as to its compatibility with RF policy.⁸⁹ Cosío forsook the ambition of getting an endowment from the RF. He then most crucially conceded in his reply to Berrien: 'There is little doubt that the best thing we have to show in order to obtain support would actually be our Centre for Historical Research [CEH].'⁹⁰ Although he endorsed these other suggestions advanced by Berrien, Cosío also discarded one – that the RF pay for visiting professors, which nonetheless RF eventually and repeatedly did through other subsequent grants – and even dared to add one that Berrien had not included – political science courses – which is discussed in the next section. By and large, Cosío made his own almost all of Berrien's suggestions.

It seems worth noting that, in general, the restrictions that Berrien announced corresponded

⁸⁷ Berrien to Reyes, 22 July 1942 and memorandum on Colegio letterhead, both in F178.

⁸⁸ Kohler, *Partners in Science*, p. 81.

⁸⁹ Berrien's memorandum on Colegio for Stevens, 13 July 1942, F178. On the Colegio request for endowment, see Berrien to Stevens, 19 May 1942, F178.

to RF policy. It was actually the case that officers could elicit support from the trustees for an existing activity or its expansion rather than for a new one. However, a few additional constraints resulted from doubts about the ability of Reyes, Cosío and their friends to lobby the government so successfully as to prevent future cuts to the Colegio budget.⁹¹

For a variety of reasons, Berrien decidedly – and decisively – backed the Colegio. One was that he perceived similarities between the CEH and pre-war Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid.⁹² Berrien referred to its successes in front of Stevens and the RF officers and trustees. This Spanish centre, to which Reyes (1914–1921) and Zavala (1931–1936) had been affiliated, had brought together pundits such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal, the person most nominated (151 times!) for the Nobel Prize in Literature; Américo Castro, who worked at Princeton at the time; and Claudio Sánchez-Albórniz, one of the very few Spanish refugee scholars who got RF support. In pre-war Madrid these men had trained scholars such as Amado Alonso, who in 1946 became a professor at Harvard. According to Berrien, CEH offered the refugees an opportunity ‘to contribute towards the development of techniques and methods and attitudes in the country which has received them’ as well as to introduce ‘modern methods of instruction’ in Mexico.⁹³ However, ‘Though the Center in the Colegio de Mexico is no servile copy of the Centro in Madrid, the idea back of both is very much the same,’ Berrien later reflected.⁹⁴

A further reason was the harsh circumstances of the moment. According to Berrien the Colegio needed ‘help and encouragement at the present time to enable it to continue ... that part of the ... program of greatest interest to the humanities (i.e. the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas [CEH]’); Berrien’s impression was that the CEH ‘offers the best all-around training in history and related subjects.’⁹⁵ More precisely Berrien pleaded for significant and rapid help ‘through a bad year or two’, because he would ‘regret the good

⁹⁰ Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, F178. Next day Reyes wrote a letter validating Cosío’s, F178.

⁹¹ George C. Payne, who was broadly supportive of the Colegio, was an RF IHD officer in Mexico City, to Stevens, 13 Oct. 1942, and 5 Sep. 1942, F178.

⁹² José María López Sánchez, *Heterodoxos Españoles. El Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1910–1936* (Madrid: Marcial Pons-CSIC, 2006). James Willis Robb, ‘Reyes, Alfonso (1889–1959)’, in Carlos A. Solé (ed.), *Latin American Writers*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), pp. 693–703. Andrés Lira, ‘El “tiempo español” de Silvio Zavala: la vocación. Notas sobre un diálogo epistolar (1934)’, in Aurelia Valero (ed.), *Los empeños de una casa – Actores y redes en los inicios de El Colegio de México* (México D.F.: El Colegio de México, 2015), pp. 77–94.

⁹³ Memorandum from Berrien to Stevens, undated, possibly 5 Oct. 1942, p. 3, F178.

⁹⁴ Berrien to Stevens, 7 Dec. 1944, F178.

work and possibilities of the Colegio to have to go into eclipse'. He believed that 'the Colegio should grow most logically for humanities, with social sciences later'. The final goal was to strengthen the Colegio so that it could set 'standards' and become influential across Central and South America.⁹⁶

Eventually, Berrien managed to convince the RF to grant substantial and prompt aid. Five months after he first met Reyes and Cosío, on 16 October 1942, the RF trustees approved the first of many grants to the Colegio: US\$29,340 (almost US\$430,000 in 2017 US\$), which covered half of the CEH's costs for two years, according to Reyes and Cosío.⁹⁷ It included salaries for the scholars, stipends for graduate students and books, plus a research fund for Reyes. In the following years additional grants to CEH were made. Before WWII ended the RF had sustained the Colegio, the ENAH, and the Centro de Estudios Filosóficos at UNAM.⁹⁸ Although the RF continued financing the Colegio for two decades, nothing accrued to the social sciences, as the next section explains.

VI. The Centro de Estudios Sociales and the Rockefeller Foundation

As mentioned earlier, the literature on the social sciences in Mexico and Latin America before and during the Cold War emphasises local aspects and neglects *foreign* science patronage. Nowhere is this more evident than in the contrast between an author's praise for CES – where 'a sort of "revolutionary" curriculum which is still as valid for the present generations as it used to be 50 years back' was taught – and his lack of knowledge about why 'this new part of the institution [CES] was the shortest lasting of the Colegio'⁹⁹. Sublime plans and outstanding scholars also need money, but why CEH obtained RF support while CES did not?

Inaugurated in 1943 the CES offered a graduate degree, combining the best contemporary European and US social sciences. Its director was José Medina Echavarría, a Spanish exile who in the early 1940s co-translated and published Max Weber's *Economía y sociedad*. Weber's volume was part of the sociological series that Medina edited for FCE, which became

⁹⁵ Memorandum from Berrien to Stevens, undated, possibly 5 Oct. 1942, p. 1, F178. See also Berrien to Stevens, 5 Oct. 1942, RAC/RF/RG 2/1942.305/Box 236/Folder 1638.

⁹⁶ Berrien to Stevens, 13 July 1942, p. 2, F178.

⁹⁷ Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942; Reyes to Stevens, 4 Nov. 1942, F178.

⁹⁸ RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300/Box 2/Folder 9 'Rockefeller Foundation Appropriations to Latin America', 1 July 1913–30 June 1949.

⁹⁹ Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 437, 439.

a resounding success across the Americas. Later on, in the 1950s, Medina carved out a place for a historical sociology of development within the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), in Santiago de Chile, and in the 1960s he instilled the Weberian traits of Cardoso and Faletto's dependency theory.¹⁰⁰ Despite Medina's promise, the CES closed in 1946, deprived of any RF support, while the CEH recently reached its 75th anniversary.

Medina's aim at CES was to combine Keynesianism in economics with the Weimar Republic's social democratic state theory and Max Weber's historical sociology. Although he commanded no practical experience with surveys and statistics, he had long understood their importance for the empirical research that should be practiced in social research centres, as the US scholars had been doing for some time.¹⁰¹ The CES faculty included Mexican pundits from the older generation, as well as young Mexicans and Spanish refugees with graduate studies in politics or economics either at the London School of Economics or at German universities. I will not dwell longer on the programme and its faculty because, as I will try to show, the RF decided on CES without a fair exam of its merits and shortcomings.¹⁰²

Initially the Colegio had contemplated offering political science courses rather than creating a fully fledged centre for social research such as CES. The original idea was included in the aforementioned letter from 29 July 1942, in which Cosío asked Berrien whether financial support would be available for 'a project, which although limited is of great interest to us ... a series of courses on political science, a discipline that has never been dealt with in any form at the University [UNAM]'.¹⁰³ According to Cosío's scheme, the project would extend for at least three years and cost around US\$12,000, half of which would be provided by the RF. As noted the RF reaction was positive regarding the CEH, but silent about the political science courses.¹⁰⁴ However, Cosío persevered. Right after CES initiated activities in early 1943, he

¹⁰⁰ Author; Richard M. Morse, 'The Multiverse of Latin American Identity, C. 1920 C. 1970', in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *Ideas and Ideologies in Twentieth Century Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 113. For an autobiographic testimony by Cardoso, see his *Charting a New Course: The Politics of Globalization and Social Transformation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), p. 234. See also Raúl Prebisch, 'El Desarrollo En El Capitalismo Periferico', in *Medina Echavarría y la sociología latinoamericana* Fernando Henrique Cardoso et al. (eds.), (Madrid: ICI, 1982), pp. 105–11.

¹⁰¹ Medina had tried to go to the United States to study at Columbia and Chicago. Fellowship applications from 5 Feb. 1935 and 5 Feb. 1936, Medina Echavarría file, Archivo de la Junta de Ampliación Estudios, Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

¹⁰² For descriptions, see Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 436–41; Moya, *José Medina Echavarría*, pp. 112–31.

¹⁰³ AHCM/Colmex/Rockefeller Foundation, Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942.

¹⁰⁴ The bottom of the letter, where Cosío describes the project, has been cut. Someone, probably Berrien, brought that section of the letter back to Colegio, where it is preserved. The English translation

announced to Berrien that 'Alfonso Reyes and I have decided to resort to the support of the Foundation for this new undertaking.'¹⁰⁵ As he did so, Cosío asked Berrien to forward a leaflet describing the CES to the SSD; Berrien turned it over to his colleagues in April.¹⁰⁶

In September 1943 Cosío again took up the CES matter with the RF. He explained the reasons for and purposes of the CES in a memorandum that emphasised the absence of teaching in the social sciences in all of Latin America, with the exception of Brazil, where since 1941 RF sustained the Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo.¹⁰⁷ The absence of this teaching contrasted with the great many social problems plaguing Mexico. They deserved to be studied by 'scientifically equipped research workers' who could offer 'guidance', not only for Mexico but also for the rest of Latin America. To fulfil these aims, US\$40,428 were necessary over three years, US\$9,476 for fellowships and US\$4,000 for 'incidental expenses (especially books and periodicals)'.¹⁰⁸ The letter accompanying the memorandum boasted about an agreement recently made among three Mexican institutions to fund an institute for economic research at the Colegio: 'all that is lacking is the drawing up of the legal contract.' It is possible but unlikely that such plans were about to be approved at the time. What is sure is that they came to nothing. Cosío possibly mentioned them because he surmised that this 'act of confidence' by the Mexican institutions, as he put it, would dissipate the doubts of the RF on the quality of the work being done at the Colegio.¹⁰⁹ In reality, he confused allies and sceptics within the RF as well as the external reviewer.

In late October Berrien forwarded to his colleagues Cosío's 'personal and informal letter' together with other documents on the CES and an explanatory note. As he did so, Berrien, who wished the Colegio could move into the social sciences, inadvertently set off a debate that would doom the CES.¹¹⁰ Precisely two days before Berrien passed on Cosío's letter, Willits had finished a report in which he insisted on a policy of favouring Europe and Asia and of non-involvement in Latin America or, to be more precise, a policy restricted to supporting

made at RF leaves out this section. See Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942; Norma S. Thompson to Reyes, 20 Oct. 1942; Stevens to Reyes, 21 Oct. 1942, F178; AHCM/Colmex/Rockefeller Foundation.

¹⁰⁵ Cosío to Berrien, 18 March 1943, F178.

¹⁰⁶ Berrien to Willits and other SSD officers, early April 1943, F1749.

¹⁰⁷ RAC/RF/RG 1.1/305S/Box 54/Folder 288.

¹⁰⁸ 'Memorandum on the Center of Social Studies of the Colegio de Mexico', 25 Sep. 1943, F1749.

¹⁰⁹ Cosío to Berrien, 25 Sep. 1943, F1749.

¹¹⁰ Berrien to Willits and other SSD officers, 22 Oct. 1943, F1749.

individual scholars and US students of Latin America.¹¹¹ If CES ever had a chance of being fairly treated by the RF, it was not that October.

In his explanatory note, Berrien drew their attention to the alleged novelty of an *economic* research institute at the Colegio, which further disoriented the SSD's deeply sceptical readers. Wondering whether CES would conduct economic or sociological research, Willits carefully scrutinised Cosío's inquiry and the reports on Latin American social sciences written by US scholars. Willits also asked Carl Sauer for an external review of CES, which turned out to be critical of the Colegio. In early December Cosío and Reyes got word that 'to have a formal request come forward at this time would not be indicated'.¹¹²

Precisely because SSD declined, an analysis of this 'negative case' of foreign science patronage is particularly illuminating. The handwritten remarks left by Willits and other SSD members on Cosío's letter to Berrien contain comments on the academic and political background of both the émigré and the Mexican scholars involved in CES. They also signal that Cosío's rushed remarks on an economic research centre made it more difficult for SSD officers to understand the CES and its well-rounded curriculum, if they had wanted to. In any case, the remarks gave reasons to criticise the project. However, I will not further elaborate on these comments, which seem peripheral to a decision taken in advance, but on the mean-spirited part played by one of the travelling scholars whom the SSD had sent to Latin America, Carl Sauer. An influential geographer and head of the department at Berkeley, Sauer was the US founder of 'culture geography',¹¹³ a historicist approach to the discipline¹¹⁴ and allegedly 'one of the towering intellectual figures of the twentieth century'.¹¹⁵ Be that as it may,

¹¹¹ 'The Social Sciences in 1944. Analysis of Program', p. 20, in F17.

¹¹² Berrien to Cosío of 27 Oct. and 7 Dec., and Cosío to Berrien of 5th Nov., all from 1943. AHCM/Colegio de México/William Berrien. At the Escola was Donald Pierson, who received strong endorsement from his Chicago teachers, such as Herbert Blumer. On this, see RAC/RF/RG 1.1/305S/Box 53/Folders 281–4.

¹¹³ The literature on Sauer is ample. A recent addition is Michael Williams, David Lowenthal and William M. Denevan, *To Pass On a Good Earth. The Life and Work of Carl O. Sauer* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

¹¹⁴ William W. Speth, 'Historicism: The Disciplinary Worldview of Carl O. Sauer', in *How It Came to Be. Carl O. Sauer, Franz Boas and the Meanings of Anthropogeography* (Ellensburg, WA: Ephemera Press, 1999), n. 2; this is the argument of Part One of the book.

¹¹⁵ M. Williams, 'Sauer, Carl Ortwin (1889–1975)', in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Amsterdam and New York: Elsevier, 2001), pp. 13490–92.

no doubt exists about the ‘uncommon warmth and mutual respect’ between Sauer and Willits.¹¹⁶

The letter in which Willits asks Sauer for his opinion on Cosío’s ‘personal and informal letter’ reveals the scepticism of the SSD director. Some of the reasons made explicit there appear to be sound, such as the large amount of money that Cosío’s proposal assigned to the library and ‘incidental expenses’, the independent administration of fellowships by CES, the scarcity of adequate personnel (and students) and the probability of intromissions from the state into economic research.¹¹⁷

However, the mention of refugees was innocent, since there had been a lot of discussion after the beginning of the civil war on whether Spanish deposed scholars were good enough to deserve RF support as Germans had in 1933. While the answer was negative in most cases, exceptions had been made, but the state of pre-war Spanish economics, political science, and sociology was considered particularly deficient.¹¹⁸

In any case, Willits did not need to make explicit this and other reservations. Two years earlier, when Sauer was to depart for South America on an RF grant, Willits had already explained to him the SSD policy on Latin America: ‘If Britain wins the war, we will receive huge demands from the impoverished scholars of an impoverished Europe, – demands that cannot be ignored.’ Had SSD committed its resources to Latin America in the meantime, support for Europe would have to be subtracted from the US operations, something Willits wanted to avoid, obviously: ‘Hence, from our point of view, the interest in finding the real needs, the modest needs, rather than the “grand schemes.”’¹¹⁹

In his famous ‘Andean Letters’ Sauer recommended modest grants in aid for numerous Latin American scholars, including amateurs in provincial cities, towards whom he displays grand generosity. Such an attitude contrasts with the views expressed in his unpublished missive on the Colegio and CES.¹²⁰ Sauer’s review deserves to be quoted extensively:

¹¹⁶ James J. Parsons, ‘Carl Sauer’s Vision of an Institute for Latin American Studies’, *Geographical Review* 86: 3 (1996), p. 378.

¹¹⁷ 29 Oct. 1943, F1749.

¹¹⁸ RAC/RF/RG 1.1 /200/Box 46/Folder 529. Only two social scientists received scholarships, both from the New School.

¹¹⁹ 22 Sep. 1941, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folder 4630, hereafter F4630.

¹²⁰ Carl Sauer, *Andean Reflections: Letters from Carl O. Sauer While on a South American Trip under a Grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, 1942*, ed. Robert C. West (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982).

I seem to lack the background material. I do not have the descriptive pamphlet, and I have never talked with Cosío Villegas. Also I know nothing of the background from observation or hearsay when in Mexico. I don't even know how the Colegio de México has developed. When I knew something about it it was only as to its Center of Historical Studies, which then was a group of Spanish refugees constituting a Notgemeinschaft [emergency self-support group].

Berrien's note indicates that the new Center also is mainly composed of refugees, plus some people trained in the London School of Economics, whoever they may be. I know almost nothing about the quality of social science in Spain, my slight impression being that philosophy, jurists, and history would be the preoccupation of Spaniards, rather than what we should call economics, political science, and sociology. I am not arguing that the Spanish mind should be recast into another mold; I should like to see some people lectured by Unamuno direct themselves to the study of economics or society. I just don't know anything as to who is in this picture. That is the all-important question. I don't even know whether Cosío Villegas is an academic builder like Enrique Molina or Alfonso Caso, or whether he is a promoter of main chances. I am not acquainted with any Mexican outside the Caso orbit who is seriously, objectively, and competently engaged in social studies. [...] The Hispanic mind, moreover, has never been preoccupied with statistics. [...] They have said this thing about themselves many times.¹²¹

Even if preceded by disclaimers, Sauer delivered what he knew Willits needed. Even the allusion to statistics was useful, since the prowess therein was supposedly non-existent among Latin American scholars: 'Statisticians will never start anything in the Universities. Sociology is speculative metaphysics ... there is going to be a national census in Argentina next year, but nobody knows how to go about it.'¹²²

Both Willits and Sauer must have been conscious of the latter's inadequacy as a reviewer. He had previously been to Mexico City, but these previous visits were not substantial enough to be discussed in a book on the subject.¹²³ At the end of his 1942 trip to South America, it is true, he had taken 'a brief look at Mexico City'. There he had met anthropologists and art historians affiliated with the ENAH and the UNAM's Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, but

¹²¹ 15 Nov. 1943, RAC/RF/RG 2/1943.200/Box 254/Folder 1749.

¹²² RAC/RF/RG 12/Hackett, 11 Sep. 1944. Lewis Hackett (IHD) quotes Jonas I. Christensen, a professor for agriculture at the University of Minnesota.

¹²³ Robert C. West, *Carl Sauer's Fieldwork in Latin America* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1979).

nobody from the Colegio's orbit.¹²⁴ In brief, although Sauer knew neither the organisation nor its members, he expressed a categorical opinion on the Colegio and the CES proposal.

In reality, the person from whom to get a balanced appraisal of the CES inquiry was Hamilton, the economic historian specialising in the Iberian colonies. For one, he had prepared the report on research and training opportunities in Mexico quoted earlier.¹²⁵ While preparing it, Hamilton systematically visited all social science centres in Mexico City, including IIS and the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas (both at the UNAM), the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, the ENAH and Gamio's Instituto Indigenista Interamericano. In contrast to Hamilton's overview, Sauer had a much narrower Mexican experience, which is exposed in his portrayal of anthropology as if it encompassed all social science in the country. An additional reason why Willits should not have asked Sauer was the latter's adversarial attitude towards Hamilton on a coetaneous polemic around the convenience of establishing 'regional' study centres for Latin America, Asia and so on in the United States.¹²⁶ Unlike Hamilton, Sauer was fiercely against them, having previously failed to get a grant for one from the foundations for his University of California.¹²⁷ Instead, Sauer had speculated with Caso about the possibility of turning the ENAH into such a centre.¹²⁸ In sum, Hamilton was the person to consult, but Willits – and Sauer – already knew his opinion on the issue at stake.¹²⁹

The Colegio de Mexico is one of the most promising institutions for higher education and research in Latin America. For example, I am in a position to say from personal observation that the Colegio is far more active, serious, and efficient than the National University of Mexico, the National University of Colombia (at Bogota), the Catholic University of Peru, or the famous University of San Marcos. Without an exception, its staff is able, earnest, and distinguished. Apparently politics

¹²⁴ The quote is from 3 Aug. 1942, RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folders 4633, hereafter F4633. See also the letter from 24 Nov. 1942 in the folder 4634.

¹²⁵ Report on 'Research Opportunities in Mexico', 24 Nov. 1942, F3920.

¹²⁶ See Willits's aforementioned note from 28 April 1943, and the letters from Sauer to Hamilton, 8, 16, 18 March 1943, all in RAC/RF/RG 2/1943.200/Box 250/Folder 1723. For Hamilton's report, see RAC/SSRC/RG 1 Accession 1/Series 1/Subseries 19/Folder 1386.

¹²⁷ Parsons, 'Carl Sauer's Vision of an Institute for Latin American Studies'.

¹²⁸ Sauer to Willits, 16 May 1941, F4630.

¹²⁹ Sauer to Willits, 25 Feb. 1943, RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 329/Folder 3919.

*and wealth have had nothing to do with the selection of professors. Only efficiency has counted.*¹³⁰

Not Hamilton's but Sauer's opinion became the base for Willits's decision. As they scrutinised the different aspects of Cosío's inquiry, Willits and Evans pencilled first Hamilton's and Berrien's assessments, which they then debunked with Sauer's guesses,¹³¹ to whom Willits wrote: 'I am grateful for your comments on the Colegio project. I felt pretty sure of the answer; but it had apparently rolled up enough momentum so that I felt I should check with you before declining. We are declining it.'¹³²

As he made his decision, Willits relied on someone who had not only admitted his ignorance about the Colegio but was also being inconsistent and lacked full access to the documents. In his review, Sauer belittled the Casa de España as 'a group of Spanish refugees constituting a *Notgemeinschaft*' while previously having written in a letter to Willits that the 'fine lot of Spanish refugees' in Bogotá were 'a grand lot of fellows, competent, and, in the local setting at least, balls of fire'.¹³³ Willits failed to realise this contradiction and was not bothered by Sauer not having gotten all the documents on CES, negligence for which Willits was responsible. Actually he admitted as much when, having already responded negatively to the CES inquiry, Willits sent Sauer 'the list of courses offered in the Center of Social Studies'. As he forwarded the background material, Willits reiterated that they had 'of course, rejected the application'.¹³⁴ Later Willits let know Sauer that the inquiry was 'quite informal and not formal'.¹³⁵

At the end of the day, Cosío's 'personal and informal letter' had been treated as a formal application. After Berrien found out, he left on file a note, which is unusual both for its tone and for openly questioning steps taken in another division: 'In spite of JHW's [Willits's] error in putting the query on a formal basis, I wish to have steps taken to prevent a record of a formal declination ... Sauer's letter of November 15 discloses a lack of knowledge of recent developments and contains irresponsible references to the Colegio and its personnel.'¹³⁶

¹³⁰ 'Research Opportunities in Mexico', F3920.

¹³¹ Support for Dr. Cosío's Center for Social Studies, Colegio de Mexico, F1749.

¹³² 26 Nov. 1943, F1749.

¹³³ Sauer to Willits, 15 June 1942, F4633. Sauer, *Andean Reflections*, p. 116.

¹³⁴ 3 Dec. 1943, F1749.

¹³⁵ 21 Dec. 1943, RAC/Joseph H Willits Papers/Series I/Box 3/Folder 35.

¹³⁶ 17 Dec. 1943, F178.

From the vagaries of the discussion, Reyes and Cosío learned nothing. The latter admitted that the rejection had caused 'desolation' at the Colegio; prescient, Cosío understood that the vague explanation implied that future grants would not be forthcoming for CES.¹³⁷ Its faculty, full of Spanish sociologists, political scientists, and economists, could not evoke a distinguished predecessor comparable to Madrid's Centro de Estudios Históricos; they also lacked the pre-war record of achievement of their fellow historians and philologists. Thus Spanish refugees, who were an asset for CEH, turned into a serious drawback for CES. In a remarkable instance of intellectual friendly fire, Sauer, the spearhead of historicism in US geography,¹³⁸ presaged the fall of Medina, a historical sociologist, and simultaneously denigrated Cosío, whose FCE translated the best of German historicism. Two years later, when Cosío explored the chances for RF support, if not for CES, then at least for Medina, the latter did not apply, possibly because Cosío had offended him.¹³⁹ Other exiles had been dismissed overnight.¹⁴⁰ At any rate, in summer 1946 the CES closed and Medina left Mexico City. With him, sociology, political science, and economics disappeared from the Colegio for fifteen years.

VII. Conclusion

Bringing foreign science patronage into the analysis produces a rich, shadier picture of El Colegio de México and of Mexican social science, as well as of RF policy towards Latin America. This new image shows not only why the CES failed (lack of funding) but also why RF support was not forthcoming.¹⁴¹ Unlike the CES, the CEH and, for that matter, the Colegio as a whole thrived in the 1940s. As Berrien had envisaged, CEH became a centre of advanced training; Mexicans and other Latin Americans benefitted from foreign, 'modern methods of instruction' such as the research seminar. Even for the period previous to the Cuban Revolution, RF patronage is central to understanding the history of the Colegio and, as I argue later, of Latin American social sciences and humanities.

¹³⁷ 27 Dec. 1943, AHCM/Colegio de México/William Berrien file.

¹³⁸ William W. Speth, 'Historicism: The Disciplinary Worldview of Carl O. Sauer', in *How It Came to Be. Carl O. Sauer, Franz Boas and the Meanings of Anthropogeography* (Ellensburg, WA: Ephemera, 1999), n. 2 and Part One.

¹³⁹ Cosío to Berrien, 31 Jan. 1946. Colegio de México – Expedientes/Medina Echavarría José Colmex. Carta a Julián Calvo del 14 de mayo de 1951, expediente José Medina Echavarría, Archivo Histórico del FCE. Krauze, *Daniel Cosío Villegas*, p. 126.

¹⁴⁰ Juan Roura Parella to Cosío, 20 Jan. 1946, AHCM/Colmex/Roura.

¹⁴¹ For some alternative explanations, see Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 439, 437. Moya, *José Medina Echavarría*, p. 126; Lida et al., *La Casa de España*, pp. 241–2; Morales, *José Medina Echavarría*, p. 155–161;

This conclusion becomes even more compelling if we briefly consider the finances of the CEH and the Centro de Estudios Lingüístico y Literarios (CELL), founded in 1947. The first CEH grant brought the Colegio US\$14,670 or MX\$71,149 annually for two years (1942), but by 1949 the CEH and CELL were receiving US\$19,500 or MX\$168,675 annually, while the subsidy paid by the Mexican government apparently remained stable at MX\$200,000 until 1954.¹⁴² Actually, Cosío openly admitted later on that the RF, which he dubbed *la gran dama*, ‘the grand dame’, had always financed the Colegio centres ‘on the usual fifty-fifty basis’.¹⁴³ In other words, during two decades the Colegio received between one-third and almost one-half of its money from RF. In addition, the Colegio benefitted from Rockefeller Fellowships for its future faculty to study in Europe and the United States, library funds, visiting professorships and other forms of support. And this was before a lavish round of RF and FF Cold War money gave the Colegio a new lease on life as it expanded to include international studies, sociology, economics and demography in the early 1960s.¹⁴⁴ Bluntly put, the Colegio was established by an act of state patronage, but without the RF it would not exist at its present scale.¹⁴⁵

Like it or not, science patronage is a relation of domination. Even authors determined to describe it in terms of partnership admit that control and the means to wield influence are part of the relation.¹⁴⁶ The question of ‘dependence’ is intrinsic to ‘external funding’. At the Colegio, RF domination is revealed in the letter in which Cosío admits that he could do nothing but apply for funding for an aspect of the Colegio, the hands-on training of historians at CEH.¹⁴⁷ In Berrien’s kind tone and good intentions reverberate the crisp RF policies – the statutes of rational organisations. Cosío could either accept RF preferences or let the Colegio go under. Hence he acted as a scientific entrepreneur: he pursued interests shared by the

Andrés Lira, ‘José Gaos y José Medina Echavarría, la vocación intelectual,’ *Estudios Sociológicos* 4: 10 (1986), p. 21.

¹⁴² Lida et al., *La Casa de España*, p. 156. The grant actions in favour of the Colegio are distributed in RAC/RF/1.1/323R and 1.2/323R. Individual grants to Zavala and Cosío adding up US\$14,450 are not included in the tally.

¹⁴³ Cosío to Kenneth W. Thompson, 23 Nov. 1959, RAC/RF/RG 1.2/323S/Box 62/Folder 485.

¹⁴⁴ Author.

¹⁴⁵ In a similar vein, see Lempérière, *Intellectuals, états et société au Mexique*, p. 195.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel C. Levy, *To Export Progress: The Golden Age of University Assistance in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 46, 226. Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin Americanist Scholarship in the United States, 1850–1975* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), p. 185.

¹⁴⁷ Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, which replies to Berrien’s letter to Reyes from 22 July 1942, both in F178.

Colegio and the RF, even if they required relinquishing the dream of an RF-funded endowment and placing CEH squarely at the Colegio's core. As a result, the Colegio became a centre for full-time, advanced training in the humanities rather than as a College de France or the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, two models envisioned by Cosío and Reyes. Last but not least RF decisively contributed to create a bulwark of *liberal* historical research.¹⁴⁸

Science patronage includes a certain measure of domination, but this does not imply that clients are consistently subservient and that donors always triumph. Before Reyes, Cosío and the RF began to negotiate, some areas of agreement existed, such as the indispensability of full-time dedication to scholarship. RF domination was further tempered by the way in which the foundation operated at the time. RF officers carefully scrutinised countries, organisations and even individuals before giving support, but once grants were made, the RF only expected a few receipts, accounts and reports. The specificities of this relation may justify calling it a *philanthropic* domination.

The leeway recipients enjoyed raises the question of whether donors actually got what they wanted. A central moot point is whether the Colegio developed into the rational, meritocratic research centre that RF officers and trustees sought or whether they may have ended up sustaining another clientelistic organisation. Since there is no arguing that political patronage accounts for the appointments of Reyes and Mendieta, clientelism was most probably widespread among the lower echelons of academia too. It is hence unlikely that the Colegio could completely isolate itself from its environment. Instead Cosío may have used RF scholarships at the CEH and the Colegio generally to practice sub-patronage (i.e. to turn the holders of scholarships into his own clients). The personal character of the relations within the Colegio, including Cosío's offenses and arbitrary dismissals, hint at the personalism characteristic of clientelism and of traditional domination.

Science patronage may be most consequential when it is denied. The RF decision to decline support for the Colegio's CES suppressed a *possible* future for social sciences in Mexico and Latin American. Medina's historical, Keynesian, and social democratic take on social sciences, which gave its due part to survey and statistical methods, disappeared from Mexico. In this respect, the demise of CES parallels that of historical sociology, and of a certain Weberian interpretation therein, in the United States. A comparison of CES and CEH confirms the thesis that the lack of institutionalisation at home, in this case, in Madrid, seriously hampers

¹⁴⁸ Ortoll and Piccato, 'A Brief History'.

the international diffusion of valuable ideas.¹⁴⁹

As Medina left, Mendieta, who incarnated the political patronage RF rejected, became the unrivalled master of Mexican sociology. After decades working for the government and even the governing party, he directed IIS until 1964. His attempt to produce knowledge instrumental for the state, and to draw a non-specialised public towards sociology, never had the echo of Medina's oeuvre. By contrast, the IIS and the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* still exist. Mendieta's achievements in institution building ultimately accrued to Pablo González Casanova and other young sociologists seasoned in Parisian Marxism.¹⁵⁰ During those years, the RF fought vigorously to introduce non-Marxist, US-style social sciences in the Colegio, the UNAM, Mexico in general and the rest of Latin America.¹⁵¹

The significance of the activities conducted by the RF, the FF and other foundations between 1940 and the end of the Cold War is as difficult to gauge precisely as it is impossible to obviate. If the CES exemplifies the impact of grant declination, the Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo, which survived the war thanks to RF, illustrates the long-term consequences of support. At the Escola, the doyens of Brazilian sociology such as Florestan Fernandes received their graduate degrees. In the 1950s they turned the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) into a sociological powerhouse, where some of the most influential Latin American thinkers were trained.¹⁵² Most crucially, USP graduates spent part of their exile in Santiago de Chile employed at the CEPAL, where in collaboration with Faletto he fed Medina's Weber into dependency theory.¹⁵³ Much better known is that the combined support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and FF to the Universidad Católica and of RF

¹⁴⁹ George Steinmetz, 'Ideas in Exile: Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Failure to Transplant Historical Sociology into the United States', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 23: 1 (2009), pp. 1–27. Edward Shils, 'Tradition, Ecology, and Institution in the History of Sociology', *Daedalus* 99: 4 (1970), pp. 760–825.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph A. Kahl, *Modernization, Exploitation, and Dependency in Latin America: Germani, González Casanova, and Cardoso* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1976); Luiz Carlos Jackson and Alejandro Blanco, 'O caudilho da sociologia mexicana: Pablo González Casanova e A democracia no México', *Tempo Social* 28: 3 (2016), p. 117.

¹⁵¹ Author.

¹⁵² Fernando Limongi, 'A Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política em São Paulo', in Sergio Miceli (ed.), *História das Ciências Sociais no Brasil*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: Sumaré, 1995), pp. 257–74; Maria Arminda Arruda do Nascimento, 'A Sociologia de Florestan Fernandes', *Tempo Social* 22: 1 (2010): 11.

¹⁵³ Author 2

and the Organization of American States to the Universidad de Chile, which remade Chilean economics.¹⁵⁴

Coming back to sociology, the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) also received foreign patronage, first from the RF and then from the FF, aimed at sustaining Gino Germani's research group.¹⁵⁵ More consequential for the social sciences than RF's massive University Development Program was the FF-financed promotion of economics, the law and development movement, and population and urban studies across Latin America, from the late 1950s to the late 1970s.¹⁵⁶ Smaller in its volume, but most consequential was the support of FF, and other foreign donors, to a plethora of private think tanks in the Southern Cone, in which the scholars expelled from the universities by the military and other dictatorships could research and teach.¹⁵⁷ Among sociologists and political scientists, one of the most renowned institutions is Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES), founded in 1975 by Guillermo O'Donnell thanks to an FF grant. He collaborated closely with Cardoso, who after his Chilean exile worked at the Centro Brasileiro de Planejamento Económico (CEBRAP) in São Paulo, another think tank financed by foreign patronage.¹⁵⁸ Incidentally the strategies adopted by these think tanks to cope with foreign donors dovetail with those described here as Cosío's and Reyes's reactions to Berrien's advice.¹⁵⁹ If we imagine for a moment that support to the Escola, UBA, CEDES, and CEBRAP had not been awarded and a grant had been given to the CES, then the history of social sciences in Latin America would be very different.

The demise of CES contains two final lessons for both the sociology and the history of social sciences. Irrespective of foundation policies, foundation *officers* shape the course of disciplinary history, and of its methods. Willits eschewed Latin America, although the RF president and trustees and even the US vice-president wanted it otherwise, while Sauer, who lacked

¹⁵⁴ Valdés, *Pinochet's Economists*, p. 186.

¹⁵⁵ Author.

¹⁵⁶ Levy, *To Export Progress*, p. 55. Yves Dezalay and Bryant G. Garth, *The Internationalization of Palace Wars: Lawyers, Economists, and the Contest to Transform Latin American States* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002); James A. Gardner, *Legal Imperialism: American Lawyers and Foreign Aid in Latin America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

¹⁵⁷ Daniel C. Levy, *Building the Third Sector: Latin America's Private Research Centers and Nonprofit Development* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

¹⁵⁸ Jeremy Adelman and Margarita Fajardo, 'Between Capitalism and Democracy: A Study in the Political Economy of Ideas in Latin America, 1968–1980', *Latin American Research Review* 51: 3 (Nov. 4, 2016), pp. 3–22.

¹⁵⁹ Alicia Barrios and José Brunner, *Inquisición, mercado y filantropía: ciencias sociales y autoritarismo en Argentina, Brasil, Chile y Uruguay* (Chile: FLACSO, 1987), pp. 236–8.

relevant contact to the Colegio and access to the complete file, simply told Willits what he wanted to hear, rather than responding to his crony's request 'without anger and fondness'. This implies that the RF failed to combine specialisation across divisions with the principle of unity of action within an organisation. Furthermore Willits crisscrossed the principle of hierarchy and ignored experts' reviews and the factual knowledge preserved on file. To replace rational knowledge with prejudice and bias corresponds not to a rational but to a traditional organisation.

Willits, who showed more loyalty to the economics profession than to RF and the US government, could fragment RF policy. This finding goes against the claim that foundation money did not shape the history of sociology in the United States (and the rest of the Americas). This contention is based on the alleged fact that no foundation pursued a change towards more quantification *as a policy*; such aspirations were only officers' 'intellectual tastes'.¹⁶⁰ In reality, an officer could massively support US organisations and skew involvement in neighbouring countries, despite the pleas of his superiors.¹⁶¹ Foundation officers deserve more attention than they have hitherto received.¹⁶²

The existence of Willits's personal agenda and RF policies defy the accounts in which 'altruistic' scientific organisations aka 'rationalised Others' advance isomorphisms supposedly revealing a 'world culture'.¹⁶³ The incongruity of the agendas within RF makes the depictions of the foundations as instruments of a US hegemonic project unconvincing.¹⁶⁴ In the specific case of the Colegio in the 1940s, the foundation was split between the sincere interest of the officers in the humanities in Latin American scholarship and Willits's absolute lack of concern with it. The time was still to come in which knowledge of Latin American countries, as coveted by Project Camelot, possessed geopolitical value. Possibly during the Cold War it was hard to find either the idealism displayed by Berrien or the indifference exhibited by Willits, simply because so many people in the United States thought that national interests were at stake in the Western Hemisphere.

¹⁶⁰ Platt, *A History of Sociological Research Methods in America*, pp. 186, 197.

¹⁶¹ By 1940 officers rather than trustees de facto controlled RF policies; Kohler, *Partners in Science*, Part 3.

¹⁶² *Minerva* special issue published, 41: 2 (2003).

¹⁶³ Meyer, 'World Society, Institutional Theories, and the Actor'.

¹⁶⁴ Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*; Seybold, 'The Ford Foundation'; Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie*.

In conclusion, to historicise, even minimally, the activities of the foundations points to something essential: we should not ask whether they were instrument of a US cultural hegemony and imperialism. These organisations are not unitary actors and their policies and officers change across time, as well as world politics. To these limitations, we should add those imposed by the paradox of unwanted consequences. Therefore, our questions should rather refer to specific countries, periods and grants. In this respect I agree more with Hugh Wilford and Iber than with Parmar and Salvatore,¹⁶⁵ but I nonetheless think that we should aspire to ascertain the ideal-typical circumstances under which patrons successfully steer academic organisations and the interests of scholars. Conversely, we should try to understand when recipients manage to resist.

¹⁶⁵ Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer. How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 249. Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom* pp. 239, 242; Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*; Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest*.

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