

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

La gran dama: Science Patronage, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican Social Sciences in the 1940s

Álvaro Morcillo Laiz*

Research Fellow, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB)

*Corresponding author. Email: alvaro.morcillo@wzb.eu

(First published online 23 May 2019)

Abstract

If Latin America's public universities are considered part of the state, then it seems plausible to characterise them as similar to the state, i.e. as clientelistic. However, this plausible hypothesis has never been examined by the literature on twentieth-century Mexican social sciences. Just like clientelism, science patrons such as US philanthropic foundations have similarly been neglected. In this article I argue that, as an alternative to what the Rockefeller Foundation perceived as clientelism and amateurism at Latin American universities, it claimed to patronise liberal scholarship, practised according to formal rational criteria. While foundations have been 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. In Mexico in the 1940s, the Rockefeller Foundation boosted the humanities, but missed the opportunity to support a local take on social science teaching and research.

Keywords: intellectual history; history of sociology; clientelism; cultural diplomacy; US–Latin American relations; Mexico

When the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) first started to fund Mexican higher education in 1940, it aimed to promote professional, full-time scholarship at rational, meritocratic organisations. Considered only from a financial perspective, the decision proved consequential for the humanities and social sciences in Latin America. Over the following 30 years, RF, the Ford Foundation and other American donors financed almost every major Latin American university.¹ However, the broader significance of philanthropic foundations for Latin American social science is either disputed or neglected. Rather than examining the changing motivations of donors, which ranged from the ambition to stem fascism and later the red tide to a sincere interest in raising the standards of Latin American liberal scholarship, much of the relevant literature oscillates between pillorying the military-sponsored Camelot

¹For an overview, see Daniel C. Levy, *To Export Progress: The Golden Age of University Assistance in the Americas* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

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Project, whose brief was to foresee and forestall revolutions, and shirking the question of external influence on universities.² More nuanced analyses do exist, but they focus on writers funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) rather than on universities paid by philanthropic foundations.³ In the case of Mexico, the literature on universities neglects foreign donors. Instead, scholars have adopted a domestic perspective but they nonetheless fail to consider that universities were part of the Mexican state and staffed by the clients of political incumbents.⁴ The only apparent alternative to political patronage was support from external donors such as RF, but this could arguably lead to foreign domination. Indeed, foundations have been pilloried for advancing US cultural hegemony and imperialism, both at home and in Latin America.⁵ However, such sweeping claims regarding the ability of donors to control or even influence the disciplines they funded remain controversial.⁶

My argument is that whereas universities and research centres were exposed to political patronage – a form of traditional domination – the science patronage granted by foreign donors subjected them to a purportedly rational domination. This is not the same as cultural hegemony. Even after recipients accepted the donors' policies, science patronage had unintended consequences, either because donors based their decision on prejudice rather than on evidence and rational knowledge or because recipients eventually got around donors' policies. Yet despite these and other shortcomings, foreign donors' attempts to 'rationalise' research and

²Mark 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; 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), chap. 7.

³Patrick Iber, 'The Cold War Politics of Literature and the Centro Mexicano de Escritores', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 48: 2 (2015), pp. 1–26; Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), chap. 5. See also Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2000), chaps. 14 and 21.

⁴José Luis Reyna, 'An Overview of the Institutionalization Process of Social Sciences in Mexico', *Social Science Information*, 44 (2005), pp. 411–72; Ledda Arguedas *et al.*, *Sociología y ciencia política en México* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1979); Juan Felipe Leal y Fernández, Alfredo Andrade Carreño and Lidia Girola Molina (eds.), *Estudios de teoría e historia de la sociología en México* (Mexico City: UNAM and UAM-A, 1995).

⁵Robert F. Arnove (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism. The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980); Donald Fisher, *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the United States Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983); Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*.

⁶Stephen P. Turner, 'Did Funding Matter to the Development of Research Methods in Sociology?', *Minerva*, 36: 1 (1998), pp. 69–79; Martin Bulmer, 'Philanthropic Foundations and the Development of the Social Sciences in the Early Twentieth Century: A Reply to Donald Fisher', *Sociology*, 18: 4 (1984), pp. 572–79; Donald Fisher, 'Philanthropic Foundations and The Social Sciences: A Response to Martin Bulmer', *Sociology*, 18: 4 (1984), pp. 580–7; Jennifer Platt, *A History of Sociological Research Methods in America: 1920–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer. How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 249.

teaching at selected universities, which the donors hoped would set standards for others, did fundamentally alter the history of Latin American social sciences.

To be more precise, my argument is that in the 1940s, as the Mexican state and its political patronage failed to sustain the Colegio de México, this fledgling research centre survived only thanks to RF science patronage. However, before RF stepped into the breach, the leaders of the Colegio were compelled to reformulate and partially relinquish the original project, which encompassed the natural sciences and stressed research rather than the training of graduate students. RF support for the Colegio, an 'enterprise [...] essentially liberal with regard to personnel and tendencies', was channelled through its still-existing Centro de Estudios Históricos (Centre of Historical Studies, CEH).⁷ Through these grants, RF sought to support the advanced training of students and liberal scholarship, practised according to formal rational principles such as autonomy, meritocracy, specialisation and full-time dedication. However, while RF endorsed CEH, it also declined to grant support for the Colegio's innovative Centro de Estudios Sociales (Centre of Social Studies, CES), which 'closed' in 1946 'for lack of funds'.⁸

To understand the different trajectories of CEH and CES, it is necessary to look more closely at the workings of the donor, its internal organisation and its office holders. Officers within RF's Division of Humanities believed that Latin American politicians misused universities to reward loyal political clients with income and status, but they were nonetheless eager to grant some of them support of various kinds, as a means to fight these practices, which they perceived as problematic. By contrast, the officers of RF's Division of Social Sciences (DSS) and their US advisors nurtured insurmountable prejudices, which largely deprived Mexican and Latin American social sciences of RF support during the 1940s and 1950s. While the archival record showed that until the late 1950s RF generally refused to support Latin American social sciences, here I disclose how contested the DSS decision not to fund projects like CES was within RF and the invidious arguments raised by some RF officers.

This article focuses on the Colegio's CEH and CES. In the Latin American context, the Colegio stands out due to its early concentration on full-time research and advanced training. Its faculty and graduates subsequently occupied positions in other important organisations in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Most conspicuously, the director of the failed CES, José Medina Echavarría (1907–77), whose *Sociología: Teoría y técnica* ushered in a new era in Latin American sociology,⁹ was crucial in both the birth of a new subfield, the sociology of development, and for Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto's dependency theory.¹⁰ 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

⁷William Berrien to David Stevens, 5 Oct. 1942, p. 1, in Rockefeller Archive Center, Rockefeller Foundation, Record Group (hereafter RAC/RF/RG) 1.1/323R/Box 22/Folder 178 (hereafter F178).

⁸Enrique Krauze, *Daniel Cosío Villegas: Una biografía intelectual* (Mexico City: Tusquets, 2001), p. 128.

⁹José Medina Echavarría, *Sociología: Teoría y técnica* (Mexico City: FCE, 1941); Gino Germani, *La sociología científica: Apuntes para su fundamentación* (Mexico City: IIS, UNAM, 1956), p. 6.

¹⁰Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina: Ensayo de interpretación sociológica* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1969); José Medina Echavarría, *Consideraciones sociológicas sobre el desarrollo económico en América Latina*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Solar/Hachette, 1964).

Económica (FCE), the single Spanish-language publisher of continental reach. In sum, the claims I make here – the result of my research in collections at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) and in other archives – have implications not only for Mexico but for the whole region.

The first section connects the preceding arguments to several bodies of scholarship, while the second reconstructs RF's Latin America agenda for the social sciences in the early 1940s. The following section summarises the political and intellectual circumstances influencing the Colegio's establishment. The fourth zooms in on RF's decision to support CEH at the Colegio, which in the fifth section is compared to an unofficial, preliminary inquiry sent to DSS about a possible RF grant to CES. In the conclusion, I describe the main implications of my findings.

US Philanthropic Foundations and Latin American Social Sciences

My argument engages with scholarship in several disciplines. Most immediately, it contributes not only to the growing literature on Medina's CES¹¹ but also to the history of social sciences and the humanities in Mexico.¹² By emphasising foreign science patronage, I aim at counterbalancing this mainly Spanish-language literature, which entirely overlooks the significance of funding for the social sciences. By contrast, several influential books have examined the abundant funding that medical research and health policy received from foundations.¹³ There is no scholarship on foreign patronage of Mexican social sciences in the 1940s and thereafter that compares to the literature on foreign support for Latin American intellectuals and literary writers,¹⁴ on the 'Chicago Boys' in Chile¹⁵ or on the Ford Foundation in Brazil.¹⁶ A number of articles have studied foreign-funded projects, such as Camelot, the Ford Foundation's Marginality Project of the 1960s, and the 1950s UNESCO project on race.¹⁷ A recent book emphasises the centrality of knowledge for the earlier, imperial aspirations of the United States towards South America, but

¹¹Laura Angélica Moya López, *José Medina Echavarría y la sociología como ciencia social concreta (1939–1980)* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2013), p. 126; Juan Jesús Morales Martín, *José Medina Echavarría. Vida y sociología* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2017); Andrés Lira, 'José Gaos y José Medina Echavarría, la vocación intelectual', *Estudios Sociológicos*, 4: 10 (1986), pp. 11–27.

¹²Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 439, 437; Arguedas *et al.* (eds.), *Sociología y ciencia política*; Leal y Fernández *et al.* (eds.), *Estudios de teoría*; Clara E. Lida, José Antonio Matesanz and Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, *La Casa de España y El Colegio de México. Memoria 1938–2000* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2000), pp. 241–2.

¹³Steven Palmer, *Launching Global Health: The Caribbean Odyssey of the Rockefeller Foundation* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers. Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955–1975* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

¹⁴Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*.

¹⁵Juan Gabriel Valdés, *Pinochet's Economists. The Chicago School in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁶Sérgio Miceli and Bradford Smith (eds.), *A Fundação Ford no Brasil* (São Paulo: FAPESP, Editora Sumaré, 1993).

¹⁷See, among many others, Solovey, 'Project Camelot'; Navarro, 'Cold War'; Marcos Chor Maio, 'Florestan Fernandes, Oracy Nogueira, and the UNESCO Project on Race Relations in São Paulo', *Latin American Perspectives*, 38: 3 (2011), pp. 136–49; 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.

it leaves aside philanthropic foundations and Mexico as a whole.¹⁸ In brief, Mexico is a lacuna in the historiography of US philanthropy and the social sciences.

The reverse side of foreign support for academia is the political patronage of Mexican and Latin American universities; it is not well researched either. Political patronage within academia, i.e. 'clientelism', consists of awarding research and teaching jobs to political allies and denying them to disloyal individuals. This practice is characteristic of some forms of traditional domination.¹⁹ In post-revolutionary Mexico, differences among intellectuals were due not just to ideological discrepancies but also to 'the competition among clans and factions [dividing] those in power, and to the diversity of patronages and clientele', as François-Xavier Guerra has pointed out.²⁰ He noted this in his preface to Annick Lempérière's book on Mexican intellectuals, in which she concluded that political patronage was crucial in the literary milieu, in publishing and in the university sector.²¹ In the words of a scholar of clientelism, what Lempérière's book did was to explore how intellectuals formed 'alliances ... fundamentally oriented toward the goal of career advancement', as did many other professional groups.²² Similarly, a book-length study of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) notes that for 'ambitious politicians', 'patronage' was among the 'payoffs' for controlling UNAM.²³ These hints from the scholarship on clientelism, intellectuals and the UNAM strongly suggest that Mexican politicians used academic positions to reward their followers. Despite appearances, there is nothing 'culturalistic' about this hypothesis. Until the late nineteenth century, research and universities were equally parts of the spoils system in the United States.²⁴ Nowadays, political patronage still affects university appointments in many European countries.

Part of the scholarship I intend to contribute to concerns not only Latin America but also the history of the social sciences. More specifically, I examine the claim that foundation money affected neither the development of sociology nor the methodological preferences of its US practitioners.²⁵ While I think it did, I am nonetheless sceptical about Gramscian claims that the foundations furthered the Western cultural hegemony of US elites during the Cold War.²⁶ My scepticism

¹⁸Ricardo Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest: US Scholars in South America, 1900–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

¹⁹L. Roniger, 'Patron–Client Relationships, Anthropology of', in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), pp. 11118–20.

²⁰François-Xavier Guerra, 'Préface', in Annick Lempérière, *Intellectuels, État et société au Mexique, XIXe siècle: Les clercs de la nation (1910–1968)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), p. 15.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 13–14, 102, 104, 105–6, 117, 119, 143, 154.

²²Merilee S. Grindle, 'Patrons and Clients in the Bureaucracy: Career Networks in Mexico', *Latin American Research Review*, 12: 1 (1977), p. 38.

²³Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910–1971* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), p. 92.

²⁴Stephen P. Turner, 'The Survey in Nineteenth-Century American Geology: The Evolution of a Form of Patronage', *Minerva*, 25: 3 (1987), pp. 282–330.

²⁵Platt, *History of Sociological Research Methods*, chap. 5; she mainly targets Fisher's *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences*.

²⁶Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*; Peter Seybold, 'The Ford Foundation and the Triumph of Behavioralism in American Political Science', in Arnove (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism*, pp. 269–303; Berman, *Influence*; Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest*, pp. 6, 15, 246–9.

vis-à-vis these radical claims does not mean that I agree, as world culture theorists claim, that altruism and persuasion boost the diffusion of norms defining the proper way to practise science.²⁷ Quite the contrary, I do stress interest, policies, domination, resistance and unintended consequences as intrinsic to science patronage.²⁸

The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin American Social Sciences

RF was established in 1913, but the social sciences became a significant part of its purview only decades later. RF expanded its remit as it took over the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial foundation, which had moved from social work to supporting the social sciences.²⁹ To administer the large Memorial assets, the trustees restructured RF and established the DSS in 1929. By the late 1930s, RF was an efficient and formally rational organisation in terms of personnel selection and internal procedures and, to a lesser extent, in its goals.³⁰ Indeed, RF was about to achieve its resounding successes in public health and agriculture. However, it was far from being perfectly rational, as I will show later, not even from the perspective of formal rationality.

From 1939 to 1954, the DSS's director was Joseph H. Willits. Before coming to RF, Willits had created the Industrial Research Department within the Wharton Business School, part of the University of Pennsylvania.³¹ He was 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.'³²

Until the late 1950s, DSS favoured empiricism and economics, the discipline of Willits and his two predecessors. When allocating awards, practically relevant problems, or what we would call today 'applied science', were preferred. Examples include Simon Kuznets's pioneering attempt to measure national income, and other problems such as social security, the study of population, sampling for public

²⁷John 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 Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy', *International Organization*, 47: 4 (1993), pp. 565–97.

²⁸Robert Kohler, *Partners in Science: Foundations 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, IN: 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).

²⁹Julia Carson, 'The Social Sciences before World War II, 1922–1939', in RAC/RF/RG 3.1/910/Box 3/ Folder 20 (hereafter F20).

³⁰John M. Jordan, *Machine-Age Ideology: Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911–1939* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), chap. 6; Warren Weaver, *US Philanthropic Foundations. Their History, Structure, Management, and Record* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), chap. 10.

³¹Darwin 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* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 275–82.

³²Joseph Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944. Analysis of Program' (20 Oct. 1943), p. 1, in RAC/RF/RG 3.1/910/Box 3/Folder 17 (hereafter F17).

opinion research, mass communication and race relations. Regarding organisations, Willits maintained and sometimes increased the DSS's massive support for economic research centres, allocating half of the DSS budget in 1943 to the Brookings Institution, the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Industrial Research Department at the University of Pennsylvania, despite RF President Raymond Fosdick's misgivings.³³

For all the DSS's strong presence in Europe and the Far East, its programme focused on the United States and Canada. These emphases became extremely contentious towards the end of the 1930s. The US State Department orchestrated an effort to move philanthropic foundations to promote US culture in the rest of the continent.³⁴ In fact, during the last major programme review before WWII, 'the possible extension of the social science programme to Latin America' had been seriously considered.³⁵ On the surface, this appeared sensible, since 'Latin America seem[ed] the logical place to extend our interest in promoting satisfactory international relations', as one of its members acknowledged, but DSS eventually decided against it a year later.³⁶ Instead, it preferred to ostensibly rely on the 'competent advice' provided by colleagues from the International Health Division (IHD) to identify possible opportunities for the DSS in Latin America.³⁷ Besides this purported openness to IHD advice, DSS promised to cooperate with the Latin American governments on 'social security' but only via the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. Simultaneously, DSS excluded 'major projects in a single country'. Instead, a few DSS measures in the United States and Europe were projected as though they constituted a Latin American programme. Among them were to pay for the training of Latin American civil servants either at the International Labour Office in Geneva or at American University in Washington.³⁸ Not by chance, when a request arrived years later for training funds from an IHD officer in Chile, DSS declined.³⁹ Generally, DSS was unwilling to extend its programme south of the United States.

If WWII had not begun a few months later, the demands placed on the DSS to expand its programme to Latin America by the president and other RF divisions might have ceased. With Europe and the Far East involved in fighting, the US government had to increase security on its southern flank.⁴⁰ For DSS, the war

³³Julia 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, p. 8. The DSS budget for 1943 was US\$993,000, currently worth more than US\$14 million. All amounts in current US\$ (Jan. 2018) according to the CPI Inflation Calculator of the Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.

³⁴Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas. U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations 1938–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 24–34.

³⁵'Development of the Social Science Program' (30 Jan. 1939), p. 10, in RAC/RF/RG 3.1/Series 910/Box 3/Folder 16.

³⁶Sydnor H. Walker, 'Latin-American Program in the Social Sciences' (7 Oct. 1938) p. 2, in RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300S/Box 15/Folder 120 (hereafter F120).

³⁷Roger F. Evans, 'IHD and the Administration of SS Projects in South America', 25 Aug. 1943; 'Report on Latin American Interests on Social Sciences and Humanities', p. 1, F120.

³⁸Stacy May, 'Latin America in the Social Science Program', c. June 1938, F120.

³⁹Evans to Willits and Marion Elderton, 16 June 1948, F120.

⁴⁰Stephen R. Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938–1954* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1995), pp. 52, 63.

jeopardised its activities in Europe and the Far East, which several officers within RF thought an additional reason to turn towards Latin America. In February 1941, Fosdick called a staff conference 'to consider [the] possibility of [an] extended program in Mexico', after Henry A. Wallace, the US vice-president and a former secretary of agriculture, had approached Willits on the subject. According to Fosdick, Wallace contemplated 'work primarily in fields of health, broader than that now under way, and in agriculture'.⁴¹ In fact, his comments are credited with having sparked Mexico's 'Green Revolution'.⁴² RF was so determined to get involved in Latin American humanities and social sciences that Fosdick made this public in his 'President's Review'.⁴³

Wallace's suggestion implicitly placed demands on DSS's budget. When RF landed in a country, several divisions became active simultaneously. Consequently, Fosdick and other RF officers expected DSS to provide resources for Mexico. During the staff conference first addressing these demands on Willits's budget, he spelled out the arguments that he would repeatedly use to reject those requests.⁴⁴ Some of Willits's reasons will be discussed later, but the bottom line was: 'We [DSS] didn't feel it was our function to try to offset German propaganda in South America.'⁴⁵

As WWII raged, the pressure on the DSS to engage in Latin America grew, peaking in 1943, but Willits resisted. In 1941, he presented as a *fait accompli* the hiring of Roger F. Evans, a former businessman with extensive experience in China, but none in Latin America.⁴⁶ Willits further armour-plated his pre-existing decision by arguing that the reports of the US scholars sent by DSS to Latin America in 1941–2 had confirmed that opportunities for RF support were scarce.⁴⁷ Accordingly, 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 that 'we [DSS] shall proceed of course on the exception principle'.⁴⁸ By that time, the reports had been distilled into a 'digest' of suggestions by one of Willits's collaborators, Marion Elderton, a labour relations expert from Wharton without previous experience in Latin America or relevant language knowledge. Her 'digest' removed context from the reports, leaving fodder for her readers' prejudices.⁴⁹

⁴¹ 18 Feb. 1941, in RAC/RF/RG 3.1/Series 904/Box 5/Folder 33 (hereafter F33), pp. 4, 15.

⁴² 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), p. 470; John H. Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution. Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 107.

⁴³ RF, Annual Reports 1940, pp. 56–8; 1942, p. 5; 1943, pp. 35–9, available at <https://www.rockefeller-foundation.org/about-us/governance-reports/annual-reports/>.

⁴⁴ 18 Feb. 1941, p. 6, F33.

⁴⁵ Willits to the president of Johns Hopkins University, 8 Aug. 1940, RAC/RF/RG 12.

⁴⁶ Roger F. Evans, RAC/RF, biographical files.

⁴⁷ Apart from Carl O. Sauer, the founder of the Berkeley School of cultural geography, they were Frank Fetter (economics), Earl J. Hamilton (economics), Melvin Herskovits (anthropology) and Robert Hall (geography).

⁴⁸ 3 May 1943, F120.

⁴⁹ 'Digest of Observations and Suggestions Submitted by Scholars Visiting Latin America', 28 April 1943, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folder 4637; Willits to Lewis Hanke, 21 Feb. 1944, F120.

In late 1943 and during 1944, DSS was scrutinised by RF's Interdivisional Committee on Latin America. As a defence, an 'SS LA Policy' was drawn from Willits's 'Analysis of Program', stating that Willits 'would give work in that region lower priority than work in Europe or Asia', something already known, but Willits now justified DSS's inactivity by referring to US agencies active in Latin America.⁵⁰ One was 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.'⁵¹ Not all departments within RF were satisfied.

The Interdivisional Committee on Latin America 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'.⁵² Such a statement made concessions from DSS unavoidable. Accordingly, Willits opened his letter to Fosdick by admitting, 'The [D]SS policy of low priority for Latin America is being questioned by so many thoughtful persons that the subject calls for re-analysis.' These questioners included 'Men such as [Henry A.] Moe, a prospective Trustee, [Carl O.] Sauer, a great scholar on Latin American culture, [Robert] Redfield, [and Lewis] Hanke'; all these leading scholars believed that DSS 'should give Latin America higher priority than we do'. Nonetheless, Willits remained persuaded that 'The level of development of the Social Sciences in Latin America is low.'⁵³ When, following WWII, the demands on DSS to expand its programme south of the US border ceased, Willits successfully implemented his restrictive policy towards Latin America.

Mexican Politics and Academia around 1940

The last two years of President Lázaro Cárdenas's term (1934–40) produced a conservative backlash in Mexico. Previously, Cárdenas had managed to enact a number of leftist economic reforms, most prominently allocating land to peasants and farmers and expropriating 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 intellectuals; some were communists, but many had links to the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE).⁵⁴ These decisions attracted the enmity of Mexican Catholics, the middle classes and the far right. Given the mounting challenge to his authority, Cárdenas picked a conservative successor, Manuel Ávila Camacho, who barely won the election.⁵⁵ The differences within the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (Party of the

⁵⁰Evans, 'SS LA [Division of Social Sciences Latin American] Policy – For Sharing with Interdivisional Committee', 8 Nov. 1943, F120; Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944 – Analysis Program', p. 20, F17.

⁵¹Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944 – Analysis Program', p. 20, F17.

⁵²Report, 31 Jan. 1944, p. 5, in RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300/Box 2/Folder 13.

⁵³Willits to Fosdick, 21 Feb. 1944, p. 2, F120.

⁵⁴Vicente 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.

⁵⁵Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938–1954* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), chap. 1.

Mexican Revolution, PRM) itself were so bitter that some members of Ávila's government soon attempted to revert to Cárdenas's policies.

The UNAM was involved in politics during the Revolution and beyond. Politicians, who funded the university, tried to use it for their own purposes – 'the UNAM was worth having'. Students also participated in politics, engulfing the university in the conflict for governing Mexico. One of the issues raised by the students was that 'professors' were 'being appointed through political patronage' rather than merit and that similar criteria were used to award scholarships.⁵⁶ Since the university was enmeshed in political patronage, it is unsurprising that the deepest crisis between the state and the university (1933–5) centred on money. This crisis followed an attempt by the leftist politician Vicente Lombardo Toledano to impose Marxist education at the UNAM, where Catholics and right-wingers had a strong presence. Only the appointment of a new rector, Luis Chico Goerne, a moderate Catholic admired by Cárdenas, saved the UNAM. Rapprochement followed; the government had understood the political value of the university.⁵⁷

From 1940, social research at the UNAM was conducted at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales (Social Research Institute, IIS). The IIS is the second-oldest sociological research centre in Latin America, and has published the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* since its establishment. Its first director, Lucio Mendieta Núñez, was a protégé of Manuel Gamio, the most important Mexican anthropologist of the post-revolutionary period and a client of President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–8) and of Cárdenas.⁵⁸ Gamio is the crucial person for understanding Mendieta's trajectory.⁵⁹ Gamio granted him a job within his Teotihuacán Valley archaeological research project when Mendieta was about to drop out of law school because of his father's financial difficulties during the Revolution.⁶⁰ According to Mendieta, this was the first of the four positions Gamio awarded him.⁶¹ After almost 15 years, first at the population unit within the anthropology division Gamio established at the agriculture ministry and then at the research unit within the same ministry, Mendieta moved to the Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales (Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies, the PRM's think tank),⁶² and then to the IIS in 1939. Overall, Mendieta can be characterised as 'an intellectual close to the regime'⁶³ whose career relied on alliances

⁵⁶Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State*, pp. 97, 119, 121, 135, 158, 165; citations are from pp. 92 and 75.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 154 and chap. 6.

⁵⁸Beatriz Urías Horcasitas, 'Las ciencias sociales en la encrucijada del poder: Manuel Gamio (1920–1940)', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 64: 3 (2002), pp. 93–121; Miguel León-Portilla, 'Manuel Gamio, 1883–1960', *American Anthropologist*, 64: 2 (1962), pp. 356–66.

⁵⁹Ledda Arguedas and Aurora Loyo, 'La institucionalización de la sociología en México', in Arguedas *et al.* (eds.), *Sociología y ciencia política*, p. 7.

⁶⁰Natanael Teodocio Reséndiz Saucedo, 'Los sabihondos impotentes. Estado, burocracia e intelectuales vistos desde la trayectoria formativa de Lucio Mendieta y Núñez (1911–1939)', unpubl. Master's diss., UAM-A, 2016.

⁶¹Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'El Doctor Manuel Gamio y su magisterio excepcional', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 23: 1 (1961), pp. 10, 21, 22, 27.

⁶²Margarita Olvera Serrano, *Lucio Mendieta y Núñez y la institucionalización de la sociología en México, 1939–1965* (Mexico City: UAM-A, 2004), pp. 45, 89.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 146.

'based upon informal norms of reciprocity and loyalty'.⁶⁴ Hence, Mendieta repaid Gamio with devotion and unpaid work.⁶⁵

Mendieta's upbringing in post-revolutionary Mexican anthropology influenced his ideas about sociology. Like Gamio, he insisted that Mexico's most significant problem was that of the *indígenas*. Accordingly Mendieta carried out 'a complete reorganisation'⁶⁶ so that the IIS could 'find the courses of action appropriate to solve the most important social problems of the country'.⁶⁷ More specifically, he wanted the IIS to collect knowledge useful for Cárdenas's *obra indigenista*. This was Cárdenas's attempt to bring the living conditions of the indigenous, mainly rural population – as well as their knowledge of Spanish and access to education – up to the level of other Mexicans.⁶⁸ Mendieta's ambition of being useful prompted IIS's long-lasting emphasis on the problems of indigenous populations and the rural environment. An integral part of Mendieta's evolutionism was that these problems could be resolved.⁶⁹ Sociology, moreover, benefitted 'culture', which was characterised, according to Mendieta, by 'higher aims and the absence of selfishness'.⁷⁰ Even more naïve was Mendieta's confession that his scholarship was based solely on 'observation and frequently personal intuition'.⁷¹ Unsurprisingly, Mendieta's distinctive sociological ideas are difficult to identify.⁷²

His activities as an editor are almost equally telling. Mendieta was receptive to a wide range of influences and ways of doing sociology. He published Robert Lynd and Pitirim Sorokin, 'the eminent Russian sociologist', in his sociology series, the *Biblioteca de Ensayos Sociológicos*.⁷³ In his journal, the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Mendieta regularly included lavish illustrations, as he did in the proceedings of Mexican sociological congresses. These illustrations – expensive and unusual for 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 potential donors; they aimed to boost publicity and status rather than influencing specialists.⁷⁴

⁶⁴Grindle, 'Patrons and Clients', p. 38.

⁶⁵Ángeles González Gamio, *Manuel Gamio: Una lucha sin final* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1987), p. 62; Mendieta, 'El Doctor Manuel Gamio'.

⁶⁶Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'Memoria del Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Nacional', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 9: 3 (1947), p. 427.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*; see also Mendieta's speech in 'El Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 13: 2 (1951), p. 263; Lucio Mendieta y Núñez and José Gómez Robleda, *Problemas de la universidad* (Mexico City: IIS, UNAM, 1948), p. 17.

⁶⁸Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

⁶⁹Olvera Serrano, *Lucio Mendieta y Núñez*, p. 108.

⁷⁰Cited in 'El Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología', p. 263.

⁷¹Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'Ensayo sociológico sobre la burocracia mexicana', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 3: 3 (1941), p. 63.

⁷²David A. Brading, 'Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 7: 1 (1988), pp. 80–1, 89.

⁷³Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, 'La sociología y la investigación social', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 32: 5 (1970), p. 1109.

⁷⁴Turner, 'The Survey in Nineteenth-Century American Geology', p. 289.

Mendieta's IIS was described by Earl J. Hamilton, a Duke University economic 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:

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.⁷⁵

Some of Hamilton's comments contradict customary accounts of the early IIS. What he perceived as favouritism has often been presented as a consequence of the absence of sociologists in Mexico, which reportedly compelled Mendieta to hire 'professionals from other disciplines [law, criminology, medicine, anthropology], oriented towards the study of social problems, who were ready to dedicate *part of their time* to research'.⁷⁶ (Full-time professorships were unknown at the UNAM until 1946; in the early 1950s only about 20 existed.)⁷⁷ Most of those remained at the IIS for decades; Mendieta stayed until 1964, which explains the long-lasting hold on Mexican social sciences of a few individuals who 'jeopardised the renewal of research'.⁷⁸ Mendieta shaped the IIS and other Mexican organisations, including the current Facultad Nacional de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (National Political and Social Sciences Faculty, FCPyS) at UNAM. To sum up, thanks to Gamío and to political patronage, Mendieta controlled the IIS, a journal and a book series for two decades.

The Rockefeller Foundation, the Colegio and the CEH

El Colegio's predecessor, La Casa de España, was established in 1938 to do for Spanish refugee scholars what New York's New School for Social Research had done for German and Austrian émigrés. The idea of providing the refugee scholars a place to resume their intellectual work came from Daniel Cosío Villegas, the liberal maverick and cultural entrepreneur who founded FCE, the state-owned publishing company. He studied law at the UNAM and economics in the United States on a fellowship from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial in 1926, the only Latin American social scientist to do so, and he then began a career as a diplomat and civil servant. Eventually, he became a historian and editor of a multi-volume *Historia moderna de México*, funded by numerous RF grants.⁷⁹

⁷⁵The National University of Mexico and the Research Institutes Affiliated with it', p. 8; 'Mexican Institutions', both in RAC, Social Science Research Council, RG 1/Series 1/Subseries 14/Box 101/Folder 538 (hereafter F538).

⁷⁶Arguedas and Loyo, 'La institucionalización de la sociología en México', p. 9, my emphasis; Margarita Olvera Serrano, *Economía y sociología en México: Revistas especializadas, liderazgos y procesos de institucionalización, 1928–1959* (Mexico City: UAM-A, 2013), p. 77.

⁷⁷Departamento de Estadística, *Anuario estadístico* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1964), p. 364.

⁷⁸Lempérière, *Intellectuels, État et société*, p. 212.

⁷⁹Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 8 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Hermes, 1955–74); 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.

From 1937, Cosío encouraged Cárdenas to establish the Casa de España and to allocate a subsidy that was generous for the time. Cosío 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.⁸⁰ The second step in Casa de España's consolidation came when Alfonso Reyes, a former diplomat and five times nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, was appointed as its president.⁸¹ According to Cosío, Cárdenas designated Reyes to this position and assigned a subsidy for the Colegio to reward Reyes for 'services rendered' during his diplomatic mission to Brazil.⁸²

In a 'major reversal' for Reyes and Cosío, Cárdenas's successor, Ávila Camacho, named Octavio Véjar Vázquez as secretary of education in 1941.⁸³ He was 'reputed to be ultraconservative', and even to harbour some far-right sympathies, according to the director of the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (National School of Anthropology and History, ENAH) Alfonso Caso, who added that the new secretary was not enthusiastic about 'professors ... from the Spanish Republic'.⁸⁴ Indeed, Véjar cut the Colegio's subsidy for 1942 to MX\$200,000 from Cárdenas's MX\$350,000 (c. US\$651,000 and US\$1,139,000 in current dollars, respectively).⁸⁵ Although Mexico's central bank and the UNAM occasionally subsidised the Colegio, a year after Cárdenas's term ended Reyes and Cosío experienced the downside of political patronage: its reduction when the patron was out of office. Teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, the Colegio sought the support of RF.

Unlike DSS, which relied on IHD to identify opportunities in Latin America, RF's Division of Humanities (DH) 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 academic organisations. His diagnosis was not flattering; he perceived

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.⁸⁶

RF aimed instead to support scholarship based on principles such as autonomy from political patronage, meritocracy, specialisation and full-time dedication. RF

⁸⁰Cosío to Francisco J. Mújica, 30 Sept. 1936, cited in Lida *et al.*, *La Casa de España*, p. 33.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁸²Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Memorias* (Mexico City: Mortiz, 1977), p. 174.

⁸³Stephen R. Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, and Corruption* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001), pp. 95–6.

⁸⁴Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development*, pp. 82, 172, 179; Berrien to Stevens, 5 Oct. 1942, p. 1, F178.

⁸⁵Lida *et al.*, *La Casa de España*, p. 154. The subsidy was a comparatively generous one: the 1942 budget of the UNAM school of economics, much larger than the Colegio, was MX\$117,734 (current US\$383,247); see Manuel Pallares Ramírez, *La Escuela Nacional de Economía: Esbozo histórico: 1929–1952* (Mexico City: Escuela Nacional de Economía, 1952), p. 119. The exchange rate, US\$1=MX\$4.85, follows *Estadísticas históricas de México* (Aguascalientes: INEGI, 1999), vol. 2, p. 884.

⁸⁶Irving A. Leonard, 'The Betterment of International Relations on a Cultural Level', 1 April 1939, p. 6, in RAC/RF/RG 2/1939.300.

strategy was to look for distinguished scholars who could exclude politics from academic organisations, both in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. Through this strategy, RF officers had spotted opportunities south of the border before the war and added ENAH to its Mexican portfolio,⁸⁷ since ‘the eminence of its director [Caso]’ and ‘[t]he security of the Institute [ENAH] from political interference’ were ‘warrants for the proposal’. For this and for its fellowship programme, ENAH became a crucial precedent for the Colegio.⁸⁸

Political patronage and scholarly eminence remained central topics in the interactions between RF and the Colegio, and in the internal debates within RF that led to the first grant to the Colegio.⁸⁹ 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 for transforming La Casa de España into a centre of study ‘above university level and more completely divorced from political influence’ by telling Reyes ‘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’.⁹⁰ However, in September 1940 Leonard resigned; he was succeeded in January 1942 by William Berrien, an expert in Spanish literature, who in 1944 became a professor at Harvard.⁹¹ In May 1942, Berrien encountered Reyes and Cosío, who won him over to the cause of the Colegio: it seemed possible to support the Colegio based on principles favoured by RF. Berrien was convinced that Reyes’s and Cosío’s prestige, like Caso’s, could be used in a new attempt to restrain political patronage of science in Mexico. He thought Reyes and Cosío were among ‘the very best’, a ‘feeling’ allegedly shared with Henry A. Moe, the officer for Latin America at the Guggenheim Foundation and, later, as mentioned above, a ‘prospective trustee’ of the DSS.⁹²

Berrien was soon convinced of Reyes’s and Cosío’s seriousness, but he still had to match their intentions to RF policy. Reyes and Cosío wanted an endowment for the Colegio.⁹³ Since RF rarely gave money for endowments, Berrien asked Reyes and Cosío in a letter what else could help secure the survival of their Colegio. At the same time, Berrien felt the need to state that he was not offering ‘assistance toward the realisation of a project or a piece of research, the nature of which is determined beforehand outside Mexico’. The record shows that Berrien did, however, suggest every major plank in the final application. The first is the most

⁸⁷RAC/RF/RG 1.2/300/Box 2/Folder 9, ‘Rockefeller Foundation Appropriations to Latin America’, 1 July 1913–30 June 1949.

⁸⁸David H. Stevens (director of DH), 30 Aug. 1940, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 276/Folder 3287.

⁸⁹Reyes to Leonard, 24 Jan. 1940, in Archivo Histórico del Colegio de México (AHCM)/Colmex/RF.

⁹⁰13 Feb. 1940, in RAC/RF/RG 12; I have silently corrected typos and misspelled names in this and other sources.

⁹¹RAC/RF/RG 15.

⁹²Berrien to Stevens, 13 July 1942; Moe to Stevens, June 11 1942, F178; Willits to Fosdick, 21 Feb. 1944, p. 2, F120.

⁹³Berrien to Stevens, 19 May 1942; Berrien to Reyes, 22 July 1942 and undated memorandum on Colegio letterhead, all in F178; Hamilton to Willits, 24 Nov. 1942, pp. 2, 12–15, in RAC/RF/RG 1/1.1/200/Box 329/Folder 3920 (hereafter F3920).

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. [Silvio] Zavala and his associates', that is, for CEH. This is not a casual statement: training academic researchers had long been an RF goal 'greater' than research itself.⁹⁴ The model Berrien used to justify his proposal for CEH was RF's programme of scholarships for ENAH anthropologists. Delegating the ability to assign fellowships to the grant recipients like ENAH was unusual.⁹⁵ Had the trustees not approved this delegation to ENAH earlier,⁹⁶ CEH would not have obtained the prerogative to select its grantees.

In his letter, Berrien also addressed a second element that still characterises 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?'⁹⁷ He thus brought into the Colegio ideas that RF had already implemented at ENAH: introducing foreign research and teaching methods in Mexico, which would attract Central and even South American students. Berrien also hinted at further items, including 'library development', on which RF spent large sums of money in the subsequent decades. In brief, by labelling this or that as feasible, Berrien told Reyes and Cosío what and what not to request from RF.

Upon receiving the letter, Cosío grudgingly accepted its content.⁹⁸ Rightly so, because before writing to the Colegio, Berrien had carefully discussed its compatibility with RF policy with the DH director, David H. Stevens.⁹⁹ Their take on the Colegio was not to imitate the Collège de France or the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, two models that Cosío and Reyes had actually dreamt of, but to turn it into a US-style liberal arts college, as stated in the grant action in favour of the Colegio.¹⁰⁰ Stevens's and Berrien's take also clarifies Reyes's and Cosío's decision to get rid of the natural sciences laboratories and staff. By accepting Berrien's letter, Cosío abandoned the ambition of getting an endowment from RF, admitted that they could focus 'only' on 'a share of our programme', and then most crucially conceded, '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]'.¹⁰¹ Although Cosío implemented most of Berrien's 'suggestions', he also discarded one – paid visiting professors – and even dared to add one – political science courses. By and large, Cosío made Berrien's plan his own.

For a variety of reasons, Berrien decisively backed the Colegio. One was that he perceived similarities between CEH and the pre-war Centro de Estudios Históricos (Centre of Historical Studies) in Madrid.¹⁰² Berrien referred to its successes in

⁹⁴Kohler, *Partners in Science*, p. 81.

⁹⁵Grant actions, 16 Oct. 1942 and 12 June 1944, F178.

⁹⁶Grant action, 4 Dec. 1940, RAC/RF/RG 1/1.1/323R/Box 23/Folder 194.

⁹⁷Berrien to Reyes, 22 July 1942, F178.

⁹⁸*Ibid.* and Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, F178.

⁹⁹Berrien to Stevens, 13 July 1942, F178.

¹⁰⁰16 Oct. 1942, F178.

¹⁰¹Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, F178.

¹⁰²José 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

front of Stevens and RF officers and trustees. This Spanish centre, to which Reyes (1914–21) and the Mexican historian Silvio Zavala had been affiliated (1931–6), had brought together luminaries such as Nobel Prize for Literature nominee Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Américo Castro from Princeton and Claudio Sánchez-Albórniz, one of the rare Spaniards to obtain support from the RF programme for refugee scholars. These were the men with whom wunderkinder such as Amado Alonso, soon to be at Harvard, had learned the ropes in pre-war Madrid. 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’ and to introduce ‘modern methods of instruction’ in Mexico.¹⁰³ However, ‘Though the Center in the Colegio de México is no servile copy of the Centro in Madrid, the idea back of both [*sic*] is very much the same’, Berrien later reflected.¹⁰⁴

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 believed that CEH ‘offers the best all-around training in history and related subjects’.¹⁰⁵ More precisely Berrien pleaded for significant and rapid help ‘through a bad year or two’, because he would ‘regret’ it if ‘the good work and possibilities of the Colegio [had] 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.¹⁰⁶

Eventually, Berrien convinced RF to grant substantial aid. Five months after he first met Reyes and Cosío, RF trustees approved the first of many grants to the Colegio: US\$29,340 (current US\$430,000), which covered half of CEH’s costs for two years.¹⁰⁷ It included salaries for scholars, stipends for graduate students and books, plus a research fund for Reyes. The award included the restrictions in Berrien’s letter, which in general corresponded to RF policy, but a few additional restrictions resulted from doubts about the ability of Reyes, Cosío and their friends to attract steady political patronage in the future.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, additional grants to CEH, ENAH and the Centro de Estudios Filosóficos (Centre for Philosophical Studies) at UNAM were made. RF ultimately financed the humanities at the Colegio for two decades, but the next section shows why RF’s flow of funds was closed to the social sciences until 1960.

(ed.), *Latin American Writers* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), vol. 2, 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* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2015), pp. 77–94.

¹⁰³Berrien to Stevens, 5 Oct. 1942, p. 3, F178.

¹⁰⁴Berrien to Stevens, 7 Dec. 1944, RAC/RF/RG 1.1/323R/Box 22/Folder 179.

¹⁰⁵Berrien to Stevens, 5 Oct. 1942, pp. 1, 3, F178.

¹⁰⁶Berrien to Stevens, 13 July 1942, p. 2; 5 Oct. 1942, p. 1, F178.

¹⁰⁷Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942; Reyes to Stevens, 4 Nov. 1942, F178.

¹⁰⁸George C. Payne, RF IHD officer in Mexico City, to Stevens, 5 Sept. and 13 Oct. 1942, F178.

The Centro de Estudios Sociales and the Rockefeller Foundation

As mentioned earlier, the existing accounts of the social sciences during the Cold War emphasise local explanatory factors and neglect foreign science patronage. This lacuna has led to bewilderment among otherwise well-informed observers. One instance is José Reyna'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. But praise is followed by ignorance as to why 'this new part of the institution [CES] was the shortest lasting of the Colegio'.¹⁰⁹ In other words, why did RF regularly approve generous grants to CEH but refrain from supporting the ideas and people at CES?

Inaugurated in 1943, CES offered a graduate degree, combining the best contemporary European and US social sciences. As noted above, its director was José Medina Echavarría, the Spanish exile who, apart from authoring *Sociología: Teoría y técnica*, co-translated and published Max Weber's *Economía y sociedad*.¹¹⁰ Weber's volume was part of the sociological series that Medina edited for FCE, which became a resounding success across the Americas. In the 1950s, Medina carved out a place for a historical sociology of development within the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America in Santiago de Chile; in the 1960s, he inspired the Weberian traits of Cardoso and Faletto's dependency theory.¹¹¹ Despite Medina's promise as scholar, editor and administrator, CES closed in 1946, deprived of RF support.

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 himself lacked practical experience with surveys and statistics,¹¹² he had long understood their importance and promoted courses taught by an eminent Mexican statistician, Miguel Gleason Álvarez. The CES faculty included senior Mexican scholars and experts, as well as young Mexicans and Spanish refugees with graduate studies in politics or economics from either the London School of Economics or German universities. I will not dwell any longer on the CES curriculum and its faculty because, as I will try to show, RF – without carrying out a fair assessment of its merits and shortcomings – decided not to fund CES.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 437, 439.

¹¹⁰Max Weber, *Economía y sociedad*, ed. and trans. José Medina Echavarría *et al.* (Mexico City: FCE, 1944).

¹¹¹See note 10 above. Álvaro Morcillo Laiz, 'El forastero que se queda. José Medina Echavarría y la sociología latinoamericana', in Adolfo Castañón and Álvaro Morcillo Laiz (eds.), *José Medina Echavarría. Correspondencia* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2010), pp. 359–61; 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 periférico', in Fernando Henrique Cardoso *et al.* (eds.), *Medina Echavarría y la sociología latinoamericana* (Madrid: ICI, 1982), pp. 105–11.

¹¹²Medina had tried to obtain a fellowship to study at Columbia and Chicago: applications dated 5 Feb. 1935 and 5 Feb. 1936, Medina Echavarría file, Archivo de la Junta para Ampliación de Estudios, Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

¹¹³For descriptions of CES, see Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 436–41; Moya López, *José Medina Echavarría*, pp. 112–31.

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 mentioned in the letter dated 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]’.¹¹⁴ Cosío’s project would last for at least three years and cost around US\$12,000 (current US\$181,366), half of which would be provided by RF. As explained in the previous section, RF welcomed Cosío’s inquiry as far as CEH was concerned but remained silent about the political science courses.¹¹⁵ However, Cosío persevered. Right after CES initiated activities in early 1943, he announced to Berrien that ‘Alfonso Reyes and I intend to appeal for the support of the Foundation for this new undertaking.’¹¹⁶ At the same time, Cosío asked Berrien to forward a leaflet describing CES to the DSS; Berrien gave it to his colleagues in April.¹¹⁷

In September 1943, Cosío again discussed CES with RF. He explained the reasons for and purposes of CES in a memorandum emphasising that social sciences in Latin America were taught only in Brazil. This was despite 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 (current US\$575,906) were necessary over three years: US\$9,476 yearly for fellowships and US\$4,000 for ‘incidental expenses (especially books and periodicals)’.¹¹⁸ 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: ‘[A]ll 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 naught. Cosío possibly mentioned them because he surmised that this ‘act of confidence’ by the Mexican institutions, as he put it, would dissipate RF’s doubts about the quality of the work being done at the Colegio.¹¹⁹ In reality, he confused both allies and sceptics within RF as well as the external reviewer, Carl Sauer.

In late October, Berrien forwarded Cosío’s ‘personal and informal letter’ to his colleagues with other documents on CES and an explanatory note. By doing so, Berrien, who wanted the Colegio to move into the social sciences, inadvertently prompted a debate that would doom CES.¹²⁰ Berrien’s explanatory note pointed to the alleged novelty of an *economic* research institute, which further disoriented

¹¹⁴Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, F178.

¹¹⁵Probably because the translation of Cosío’s inquiry made at RF at Berrien’s request left out this paragraph; this part of the letter found its way back to the Colegio and was filed with the carbon copy; Cosío to Berrien, 29 July 1942, in AHCM/Colmex/RF. For RF’s replies, see Norma S. Thompson to Reyes, 20 Oct. 1942; Stevens to Reyes, 21 Oct. 1942, F178.

¹¹⁶Cosío to Berrien, 18 March 1943, F178.

¹¹⁷Berrien to DSS, early April 1943, in RAC/RF/RG 2/1943.200/Box 254/Folder 1749 (hereafter F1749).

¹¹⁸‘Memorandum on the Center of Social Studies of the Colegio de Mexico’, 25 Sept. 1943, F1749.

¹¹⁹Cosío to Berrien, 25 Sept. 1943, F1749.

¹²⁰The documents comprised a leaflet on the CES, describing its curriculum, a brochure for a seminar about the war that Medina had organised, and a catalogue of the FCE, to which Medina and other CES members contributed as authors, editors or translators. Berrien to Willits, Elderton and Evans, 22 Oct. 1943, F1749.

the DSS's deeply sceptical officers. Wondering whether CES would conduct economic or sociological research, Willits carefully scrutinised Cosío's documents and juxtaposed them with the reports that RF-funded US scholars had written on Latin American social sciences. If Medina's CES ever had a chance of being fairly treated by RF, it was not that October. Just two days before Berrien's note circulated, Willits had finished a report insisting 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 individual scholars and US students of Latin America.¹²¹ Willits also asked Carl Sauer to write a review of CES, which happened 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'.¹²²

Precisely because DSS declined to fund CES, this 'negative case' of foreign science patronage warrants careful scrutiny, as per Pierre Bourdieu's remark that 'cutting off research funds [is] the most brutal censorship'.¹²³ Thanks to a complete archival record, we can reconstruct the reasoning of the officers and of the reviewers they chose. On a summary of Cosío's communications with Berrien, Willits and other DSS members left handwritten remarks commenting on the academic and political background of both the émigré and the Mexican scholars involved in CES.¹²⁴ This summary also confirms that Cosío's rushed remarks on an economic research centre made it more difficult for DSS officers to understand CES's well-rounded curriculum and gave them ammunition to criticise the project.

A crucial and revealing part was played by one of the scholars who had travelled to Latin America on RF grants, Carl Sauer. An influential geographer and head of the department at Berkeley, Sauer was the US founder of 'cultural geography',¹²⁵ a historicist approach to the discipline¹²⁶ and purportedly 'one of the towering intellectual figures of the twentieth century'.¹²⁷ Be that as it may, 'uncommon warmth and mutual respect' bound Sauer and Willits.¹²⁸ His note asking Sauer for his opinion on Cosío's 'informal and personal letter' betrays the DSS director's scepticism about CES.¹²⁹ Some of Willits's reasons appear to be sound, such as the large

¹²¹Willits, 'The Social Sciences in 1944', p. 20, F17.

¹²²Berrien to Cosío, 27 Oct. 1943 and 7 Dec. 1943; Cosío to Berrien, 5 Nov. 1943, in AHCM/Colmex/Berrien.

¹²³Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 190.

¹²⁴'Information contained in Cosío Villegas' letter to WB [William Berrien]'; see also Willits to Evans, 'Re: Support for Dr. Cosío's Center for Social Studies, Colegio de Mexico', both in F1749.

¹²⁵The most recent book on Sauer is Michael Williams, David Lowenthal and William M. Denevan, *To Pass On a Good Earth. The Life and Work of Carl O. Sauer* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

¹²⁶William 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 and Part I.

¹²⁷M. Williams, 'Sauer, Carl Ortwin (1889–1975)', in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Amsterdam and New York: Elsevier, 2001), pp. 13490–2.

¹²⁸James J. Parsons, 'Carl Sauer's Vision of an Institute for Latin American Studies', *Geographical Review*, 86: 3 (1996), p. 378.

¹²⁹Willits to Sauer, 29 Oct. 1943, both in F1749.

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 state interference into economic research.¹³⁰ However, Willits also mentioned the refugees, a remark that was far from innocent. RF officers had extensively discussed whether the Spanish refugee scholars were as deserving of RF support as were the Germans; the answer was negative in almost all cases because 'they are not, comparatively speaking, first-rate men'.¹³¹ In brief, Willits's request was full of hints about what he expected from Sauer.

Willits's letter did not need to make explicit his scepticism to the recipient. Two years earlier, when Sauer was departing for South America on an RF grant, Willits had explained to him the DSS 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 DSS committed its resources to Latin America in the meantime, support for Europe would have to be taken from the US operations, something Willits wanted to avoid: 'Hence, from our point of view, the interest in finding the real needs, the modest needs, rather than the "grand schemes".'¹³²

Accordingly, in his 'Andean Letters', which were widely read within the RF, Sauer recommended modest grants to aid numerous Latin American scholars, including amateurs in provincial cities, towards whom he displays generosity.¹³³ This attitude contrasts with the views expressed in his unpublished missive on the Colegio and CES. It deserves to be quoted extensively:

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 Mexico [*sic*] 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 just don't know anything as to who is in this picture. That is the all-important question. I don't even know ... Cosío Villegas ... The Hispanic mind, moreover, has never been preoccupied with statistics ... They have said this thing about themselves many times.¹³⁴

¹³⁰Re: Support for Dr. Cosío's Center for Social Studies, Colegio de Mexico', F1749.

¹³¹Robert Lambert, 2 March 1939, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 46/Folder 529.

¹³²Willits to Sauer, 22 Sept. 1941, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folder 4630.

¹³³Sauer's 'Andean Letters' are filed in RAC/RF/RG 1/1.1/200/Box 391/Folders 4631–3; 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).

¹³⁴15 Nov. 1943, F1749. 'Berrien's note' is the one to Willits, Elderton and Evans, 22 Oct. 1943, F1749.

In this note, a subservient Sauer delivered what he knew Willits needed, even if he prefaced it with disclaimers. The allusion to statistics was useful, since it confirmed the prejudice among RF officers and their coterie of consultants that statistical prowess was non-existent in Latin America: '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.'¹³⁵ This prejudice endured for decades and later benefitted scholars with 'positivist inclinations', like Gino Germani, the dominant figure in Argentine sociology.¹³⁶

Both Willits and Sauer must have been conscious that the latter lacked the necessary acquaintance with Mexican social sciences. Sauer had previously been to Mexico City but apparently just for hurried visits.¹³⁷ At the end of his 1942 trip to South America, he had admittedly taken 'a brief look at Mexico City', where he had met anthropologists and art historians affiliated with ENAH and UNAM's Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (Institute of Aesthetic Research), but nobody from the Colegio.¹³⁸ In brief, Sauer knew almost nothing about CES but expressed the categorical negative judgement that Willits needed. Willits acknowledged all this:

I am grateful for your comments on the Colegio de Mexico 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.¹³⁹

In reality, the right person to fairly appraise CES was Hamilton, the economic historian specialising in the Iberian colonies. He had prepared the reports on research and training opportunities in Mexico quoted earlier.¹⁴⁰ While preparing them, Hamilton systematically visited all social science centres in Mexico City, including UNAM's IIS and the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas (Institute of Economic Research), the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, ENAH and Gamio's Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (Inter-American Indigenist Institute), in addition to the Colegio, on which Hamilton had prepared an additional report.¹⁴¹ Compared to Hamilton, Sauer had a much narrower vision of Mexican academia, which is visible in his portrayal of anthropology as if it encompassed all social sciences. An additional reason why Willits should not

¹³⁵Lewis Hackett, 11 Sept. 1944, in RAC/RF/RG 12. Hackett (IHD) quotes Jonas I. Christensen, a professor of agriculture at the University of Minnesota, who consulted for RF in Argentina.

¹³⁶Erskine McKinley, 20 Nov. 1959, RAC/RF/RG 12. On Germani, see Ana Alejandra Germani, *Antifascism and Sociology: Gino Germani: 1911-1979* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008); Alejandro Blanco, *Razón y modernidad: Gino Germani y la sociología en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2006).

¹³⁷They go unmentioned in Robert C. West, *Carl Sauer's Fieldwork in Latin America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1979).

¹³⁸Sauer to Willits, 3 Aug. 1942, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 391/Folder 4633 (hereafter F4633). See also the letter from 24 Nov. 1942, Folder 4634.

¹³⁹Willits to Sauer, 26 Nov. 1943, F1749; emphasis added.

¹⁴⁰F538.

¹⁴¹'The Colegio de Mexico', in RAC, Social Science Research Council, RG 1/Series 1/Subseries 14/Box 101/Folder 538.

have asked Sauer was the latter's adversarial attitude towards Hamilton regarding an on-going discussion about the convenience of establishing 'regional' study centres in the United States.¹⁴² In sum, Hamilton was the person to consult, but Willits – and Sauer – already knew Hamilton's opinion:¹⁴³

The Colegio de Mexico is one of the most promising institutions for higher education and research in Latin America ... Without an exception, its staff is able, earnest, and distinguished. Apparently politics and wealth have had nothing to do with the selection of professors. Only efficiency has counted.¹⁴⁴

Hamilton's greater familiarity with the Colegio did not prevent Sauer's indictment from shaping Willits's decision. As Willits and Evans summarised the different aspects of Cosío's inquiry, they included first Hamilton's and Berrien's assessments only to then overrule them with Sauer's conjectures.¹⁴⁵

For his decision, Willits relied on someone who not only lacked first-hand experience of CES and full access to the written record, but someone who exhibited inconsistencies. In his review, Sauer belittled the Casa de España as 'a group of Spanish refugees' despite having previously written 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'.¹⁴⁶ Willits failed to appreciate this contradiction and was not bothered by Sauer not having received all the documents on CES,¹⁴⁷ for which Willits was responsible. He admitted as much when he sent Sauer 'the list of courses offered in the Center of Social Studies'. When forwarding this background material to the reviewer, Willits added that they had 'of course, rejected the application'.¹⁴⁸ Later Willits let Sauer know that the inquiry was 'quite informal and not formal'.¹⁴⁹

At the end of the day, Cosío's 'personal and informal letter' had been treated as a formal application. After Berrien, who had been kept out of the loop, found out about Willits's letters to Sauer, he left a note on the file that 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'.¹⁵⁰ In a remarkable instance of intellectual friendly fire, Sauer, the spearhead of historicism in US geography,¹⁵¹ denigrated Cosío and delivered the pretext that would lead to the fall of Medina's CES. Cosío as FCE editor and Medina as translator and teacher played major parts in introducing historicism to Latin Americans.

¹⁴²Sauer to Hamilton, 8, 16, 18 March 1943, in RAC/RF/RG 2/1943.200/Box 250/Folder 1723.

¹⁴³Sauer to Willits, 25 Feb. 1943, in RAC/RF/RG 1.1/200/Box 329/Folder 3919.

¹⁴⁴Hamilton to Willits, 24 Nov. 1942, p. 14, F3920.

¹⁴⁵'Support for Dr. Cosío's Center for Social Studies', Colegio de Mexico, F1749.

¹⁴⁶15 June 1942, F4633; Sauer, *Andean Reflections*, p. 116.

¹⁴⁷I.e. the documents referred to in [note 120](#).

¹⁴⁸3 Dec. 1943, F1749.

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

¹⁵⁰17 Dec. 1943, F178.

¹⁵¹Speth, 'Historicism'.

Of the vagaries of RF's decision, 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 CES could not expect future grants.¹⁵² Its faculty, full of Spanish sociologists, political scientists and economists, could not invoke a distinguished predecessor like Madrid's Centro de Estudios Históricos; they also lacked a pre-war record of achievement comparable to that of their fellow historians and philologists. Thus, the Spanish refugee scholars, who were an asset for CEH, turned into a serious drawback for CES. Two years later, Cosío explored the chances for RF support, if not for CES, then at least for Medina, but the latter did not apply, possibly because Cosío had offended him.¹⁵³ Other exiles had been dismissed from CES overnight.¹⁵⁴ In summer 1946, CES closed and Medina left Mexico City. With him, sociology, political science and economics disappeared from the Colegio for 15 years.

Conclusion

The Colegio was established by an act of political patronage, but without RF science patronage it would hardly have survived, let alone thrived.¹⁵⁵ In current dollars, RF contributed between US\$203,000 and US\$233,000 annually from 1942 to 1949; in the same period, the value of the government's subsidy (MX\$200,000) declined in real terms from current US\$655,000 to US\$260,000.¹⁵⁶ This subsidy would have barely sufficed to pay for a few salaries; certainly not to carry out a research and teaching programme. In 1959, Cosío admitted that RF, which he dubbed *la gran dama*, 'the grande dame', had always financed Colegio centres like CES 'on the usual fifty-fifty basis'.¹⁵⁷ All the evidence indicates that, during its first two decades, the Colegio received between one-third and almost one-half of its income from RF.

Unlike CEH, CES closed for lack of funds.¹⁵⁸ Among the wide-ranging consequences was that Medina's historical, Keynesian and social democratic take on social sciences disappeared from Mexico, an episode reminiscent of the demise of Weberian historical sociology in the United States.¹⁵⁹ How consequential Willits's decision was seems to be confirmed by comparing CES and the Escola de Sociologia e Política (School of Sociology and Politics) in São Paulo, which received a series of RF grants, because of, among other reasons, the presence

¹⁵²27 Dec. 1943, AHCM/Colmex/Berrien.

¹⁵³Cosío to Berrien, 31 Jan. 1946, AHCM/Colmex/Medina; Medina to Julián Calvo, 14 May 1951, Archivo Histórico FCE/Medina Echavarría; Krauze, *Daniel Cosío Villegas*, p. 126.

¹⁵⁴Juan Roura Parella to Cosío, 20 Jan. 1946, AHCM/Colmex/Roura.

¹⁵⁵In a similar vein, see Lempérière, *Intellectuels, État et société*, p. 195.

¹⁵⁶Lida *et al.*, *La Casa de España*, p. 156; RF grant actions in RAC, RF/RG 1.1/323R and 1.2/323R. The Mexican currency was devalued in 1949, so that US\$1=MX\$8.01: *Estadísticas históricas de México*, p. 884. Individual grants to Zavala and Cosío are not included.

¹⁵⁷Cosío to Kenneth W. Thompson, 23 Nov. 1959, in RAC/RF/RG 1.2/323S/Box 62/Folder 485.

¹⁵⁸For some alternative explanations, see Reyna, 'An Overview', pp. 439, 437; Moya López, *José Medina Echavarría*, p. 126; Lida *et al.*, *La Casa de España*, pp. 241–2; Morales, *José Medina Echavarría*, pp. 155–61; Lira, 'José Gaos y José Medina Echavarría', p. 21.

¹⁵⁹George 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.

there of Donald Pierson, a Chicago PhD endorsed by Robert Redfield and Herbert Blumer.¹⁶⁰ Not only did the Escola survive WWII, unlike CES, but it also became the training ground for Brazilian sociologists such as Florestan Fernandes, planting the seeds for the flourishing of sociology at the Universidade de São Paulo. After Fernandes's student Cardoso returned to São Paulo in 1968, he began conducting research at the Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (Brazilian Analysis and Planning Centre, CEBRAP). CEBRAP received funding from the Ford Foundation, just like Guillermo O'Donnell's Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (Centre for the Study of State and Society, CEDES) in Buenos Aires.¹⁶¹ The social sciences in Mexico and Latin America would have looked different if Medina's CES had received RF support as long as did the Escola, or if CEBRAP and CEDES had not obtained funding from Ford. Perhaps the most consequential decisions taken by the patrons of science are the rejections.

Like it or not, science patronage is a relation of domination. Even authors who emphasise partnership must admit that control and 'dependence' are intrinsic to external funding.¹⁶² Echoes of RF's clear-cut policies – the statutes of rational organisations – can be heard beneath Berrien's kindly tone and good intentions. Cosío could either accept RF preferences or let the Colegio go under. As a rational scientific entrepreneur, he chose to pursue the interests that the Colegio and RF shared, placing CEH and full-time work at the Colegio's core. However, in addition to shared interests, science patronage may also entail resistance. In fact, resistance to RF may have been facilitated by how the foundation operated at the time. Once grants were made, RF only expected a few receipts, biannual accounts and reports. This attenuated domination, but there is no denying that, in addition to Cosío's, the Colegio had Berrien's fingerprints all over it.

Even in a relation of domination, recipients may enjoy some leeway, which raises the question of whether RF actually achieved the 'rationalisation' of Mexican higher education that it sought. Perhaps the prerogative of grantee selection conceded to the Colegio, as previously to ENAH, is what permitted Reyes and Cosío to practise sub-patronage, turning employees and grantees into their own clients. This suspicion is supported by events within the Colegio, including personal affronts by Cosío and the arbitrary dismissals he had decreed, as well as the numerous internal hires in the following decades. Personalism characterises clientelism as a specific form of traditional domination.

The demise of CES contains two final lessons for both sociology and the history of social sciences. First, not only foundation policies but also foundation officers shaped the history of the social sciences, and of its methods: for example, Willits eschewed Latin America despite demands by RF's president and trustees as well as the US vice-president that DSS should get involved in Mexico. The explanation may be that Willits was more loyal to US fellow economists than to RF and the US government. This ability to override RF policies defies accounts in which 'altruistic' scientific

¹⁶⁰RAC/RF/RG 1.1/305S/Box 53/Folders 281–4, 288.

¹⁶¹Jeremy 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 (2016), pp. 3–22.

¹⁶²Levy, *To Export Progress*, pp. 46, 226; Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin Americanist Scholarship in the United States, 1850–1975* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2008), p. 185.

organisations, sometimes known as ‘rationalised others’, advance similarities among schools, universities, governments etc. These ‘isomorphisms’ supposedly reveal a ‘world culture’.¹⁶³ In reality, rather than a ‘world culture’, they exude the winners’ agenda. This ability of RF officers to advance their personal agenda is firmly established for the natural sciences;¹⁶⁴ it furthermore casts doubt on Platt’s claim that foundation money never shaped the history of sociological methods because no foundation pursued a change towards more quantification as a policy; such aspiration to promote quantitative methods would have been only officers’ ‘intellectual tastes’.¹⁶⁵ Willits’s scuttling of CES shows that officers’ ‘tastes’ do matter. As early as the 1930s RF officers routinely favoured statistical prowess and an allegiance to positivism as criteria to distinguish deserving from undeserving projects.

Second, different RF divisions followed mutually inconsistent agendas, making accounts of the foundations as instruments of US hegemony unconvincing.¹⁶⁶ As the negative decision on CES shows, RF failed to combine specialisation across divisions with the principle of unity of action, two basic traits of a rational organisation. In fact, Willits flouted not only both these traits, but also standard hierarchy principles and RF’s procedures; he furthermore ignored both experts’ reviews and the factual knowledge preserved on file. Put differently, Willits replaced Hamilton’s factual knowledge with Sauer’s bias, fragmenting RF policy as a result. Discarding knowledge and resorting to prejudice characterises traditional domination. But if foundations do not decide as rational organisations, one can hardly consider them fool-proof instruments of US cultural hegemony and imperialism. In this respect, I agree with Hugh Wilford and Patrick Iber, who emphasise that donors do not always achieve everything they want and sometimes obtain the opposite.¹⁶⁷ At the Colegio, RF officers fostered liberal scholarship, but little is known about whether they raised standards elsewhere in Mexico, let alone Latin America. Possibly, as RF officers delegated to Cosío the assignment of fellowships and other resources, they also fostered, as sorcerers’ apprentices, the clientelism they aspired to counteract. But if we conclude, as do Wilford and Iber for their respective cases, that donors failed to achieve cultural hegemony, then the crucial question is what the concepts are that can help us to identify under which circumstances donors dominate recipients and when scholars resist and pursue their own agendas.

Acknowledgements. 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 Interkulturelle und Internationale 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 the International Studies Division – 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

¹⁶³Meyer, ‘World Society’.

¹⁶⁴Kohler, *Partners in Science*, Part III. On the clout of the officers who convene the interdisciplinary grant committees, see Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁵Platt, *A History of Sociological Research Methods*, pp. 186, 197.

¹⁶⁶Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*; Seybold, ‘The Ford Foundation’; Berman, *Influence*.

¹⁶⁷Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, p. 249; Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*, pp. 239, 242.

Valverde. While doing the research for this article I was a visiting scholar at the Institute of Latin American Studies at Columbia University. The final revisions were made when I was a Wolfensohn Family Member at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Last but not least, I also acknowledge the useful criticisms of three JLAS reviewers and the editor.

Spanish abstract

Si las universidades públicas latinoamericanas son consideradas parte del Estado, resulta lógico caracterizarlas como similares al Estado, es decir, como clientelistas. Sin embargo, esta plausible hipótesis nunca ha sido examinada por la literatura sobre las ciencias sociales mexicanas en el siglo XX. Tampoco han sido bien estudiados otros patrocinadores de la ciencia como las fundaciones filantrópicas norteamericanas. En este artículo argumento que, como una alternativa a lo que la Fundación Rockefeller percibió como clientelismo y amateurismo en las universidades latinoamericanas, esta pretendió patrocinar una investigación liberal, practicada de acuerdo a un criterio racional formal. Mientras que las fundaciones han sido con frecuencia consideradas como parte de una ambición imperialista de ejercer una hegemonía cultural en Latinoamérica, estas no fueron actores unitarios y con frecuencia fracasaron en predecir el impacto real de sus subvenciones. En México de los 1940s, la Fundación Rockefeller reforzó las humanidades, pero perdió la oportunidad de apoyar una visión local de la enseñanza e investigación en ciencias sociales.

Spanish keywords: historia intelectual; historia de la sociología; clientelismo; diplomacia cultural; relaciones EEUU–Latinoamérica; México

Portuguese abstract

Se as universidades públicas da América Latina são consideradas parte do Estado, parece-se então plausível caracterizá-las como semelhantes ao Estado, ou seja clientelista. No entanto, esta hipótese plausível nunca foi examinada em literatura sobre as ciências sociais do México do século vinte. Também não são bem estudados outros patronos da ciência como as fundações filantrópicas dos Estados Unidos. Neste artigo, argumento que como alternativa ao que a Fundação Rockefeller via como clientelismo e amatorismo em universidades da América Latina, a mesma afirmou patrocinar uma investigação liberal, exercidas de acordo com um critério racional formal. Enquanto tais fundações foram frequentemente consideradas peças de um plano imperialista dos Estados Unidos que visava promover sua hegemonia cultural na América Latina, muitas não agiam de maneira unificada e frequentemente falharam em antever o verdadeiro impacto de seus subsídios. No México dos anos quarenta a Fundação Rockefeller impulsionou as ciências humanas mas perdeu a oportunidade de apoiar uma visão local em como ensinar e conduzir pesquisas de ciências sociais.

Portuguese keywords: história intelectual; história da sociologia; clientelismo; diplomacia cultural; relações entre Estados Unidos e América Latina; México

Cite this article: Morcillo Laiz Á (2019). *La gran dama: Science Patronage, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican Social Sciences in the 1940s*. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 51, 829–854. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X19000336>