

# Introduction

This is the story of how Mexico's "Revolutionary Family"<sup>1</sup>—in its political, cultural, and social manifestations—became irrevocably frayed. Because my focus is largely urban centered, and on Mexico City especially, the story is necessarily biased. By focusing on the social and cultural transformations wrought by rapid modernization during the 1950s and 1960s, it largely ignores the still overwhelming (though no longer majority) rural population in favor of an analysis of the new middle classes. Mexico's peasantry appears, but mostly in the guise of urban migrants, the new lumpenproletariat struggling to assert a voice from the margins. Still, the 1968 student movement, which forms the basic point of reference for this story, was in itself an event centered in the nation's capital and drew its ranks from the middle classes.<sup>2</sup> Mexico City is by no means an encapsulation of Mexico as a whole, nor can "middle-class values" adequately encompass the question of ideology, but the student movement—despite its geographical circumscription—had a profound effect on the nation at large. The challenges to one-party rule that the students raised were indeed national challenges, affecting Mexicans well beyond the center of the country.

The crisis of authority that the Mexican regime faced in 1968 had its parallel in the middle-class family, which also experienced the conflicts of youth dissent. As such, 1968 was a social and cultural event as much as a political one. From this perspective, the student movement's challenge to the dominant political structure reflected less a spontaneous organizational response to repression and the wastefulness associated with the staging of the Olympics than a cumulative crisis of patriarchal values. The student movement of 1968 was not the start of a new historical consciousness but its pivotal event, a fulcrum that articulated the restlessness and rage for much of the youth of a middle class which had come of age during Mexico's ac-

claimed modernizing “miracle” and which afterward opened the floodgates of cynicism and everyday resistance to a political system bent on maintaining control.

But, as the title of the book suggests, this is also a story about rock and the countercultural revolts that exploded around the world during the latter half of the 1960s. We do not normally associate Mexico with rock music. And yet for Mexican middle- and upper-class youth who came of age in the 1960s Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones were household names, as were Emiliano Zapata (whose name was later borrowed by a Mexican rock band), Francisco Madero, and Benito Juárez. In this study rock music functions as a keyhole into modern Mexican society, allowing us to view and discuss the crisis of revolutionary nationalism that coincided with the rise of rock ‘n’ roll itself. By following what may be called the commodity thread of rock music—identifying how producers, consumers, and state gatekeepers wrestled with the definition of rock’s production and reception—we discover an important vehicle for exploring a critical moment of late-twentieth-century capitalism. In the process we encounter the myriad ways in which global patterns of commodity exchanges are reconfigured locally and in turn projected back into a “global ecumene.”<sup>3</sup>

The concept of the Revolutionary Family is a convenient and fitting metaphor for the overarching framework of the new political and ideological machine that arose from the ashes of revolutionary war and caudillo infighting in Mexico during the 1920s. Baptized by President Plutarco Calles in 1929 in the name of “revolutionary unity,” the notion of such a political family coincided with Calles’s founding of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario, precursor of the modern-day Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). As a leader of the so-called Sonoran Dynasty that came to power after 1920, Calles’s understanding of Mexico’s postrevolutionary situation was astute. Without some political means for incorporating the disparate and often conflictual social forces and leadership that vied for political access and power, Mexico risked returning to a situation akin to that of the mid-nineteenth century, when regional bosses (only now mobilized by the events of revolution) directly challenged a central political authority. The political party that Calles founded thus built on the logic of a centralizing polity (ably accomplished, but with disastrous consequences, by one-man dictatorship under Porfirio Díaz from 1876 to 1910), while providing ample opportunity for political mobility. It was a system in which all principal roads led back to the party: deviations from the corporatist pathway were costly, if not deadly. When Lázaro Cárdenas came to power in 1934 and accelerated many of the revolutionary goals, such as land reform, workers’

rights, and nationalization of resources, which had stalled by the late 1920s, he nonetheless was indebted to the corporatist political system put in place by his predecessor. Cárdenas's calculated mobilization of peasants, workers, and the middle classes not only depended on this nascent party structure but, moreover, deepened that structure by leaving a legacy of loyalist incorporation by these social groups. By the time Cárdenas stepped down from power in 1940 the groundwork had been laid for a development path of mixed capitalist growth in which domestic and foreign (mainly U.S.) investment could readily count on the organizing and repressive arm of the official party to provide a "stable" economic climate.<sup>4</sup>

No lasting political project, of course, is viable without a strategy for inculcating a common identification with the nation-state, and in this regard Mexico's ruling political party established important trademarks for other revolutionary and populist regimes. If in political terms the Revolutionary Family meant a relinquishing of individual claims to power in exchange for political access and resources meted out by a centralizing party, the project of constructing a consensual *vision* of postrevolutionary Mexico was equally far-reaching. Out of the chaos of revolution—and a history of caudillo uprisings throughout the nineteenth century—Mexico proved to be the stablest among Latin American nations. While Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, for instance, all passed into the twentieth century without major revolutionary upheaval, each experienced dramatic divisions in its national polity that ultimately resulted in prolonged military dictatorships. A multitude of factors account for this, of course, but the unifying strength of Mexico's revolutionary nationalism was unquestionably a defining feature of the nation's political stability and economic growth into the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> What kind, if any, cultural hegemony the official party achieved has been a matter of recent scholarly debate: where and when did legitimization "succeed" or "fail"? That such answers are by no means self-evident attests to the sophistication of state efforts as well as to the richness of Mexican cultural life.<sup>6</sup> But what does seem clear is that out of the chaos of revolution a stable political order reemerged, one that rested on more than violence and coercion to undergird its legitimacy.

The ideological state-building project was remarkable not only for its boldness but also in the complexity of the negotiated responses it in turn inspired. Beyond a heralding of folkloric culture (*lo mexicano*) and the racial valorization of a mestizo-driven "Cosmic Race," the postrevolutionary regime faced the task of rewriting the historical memory of the revolutionary experience itself. As Ilene O'Malley has written, "[t]he Mexican regime's use of the revolution as a symbol to unify the nation contradicted

one of the most obvious characteristics of the revolution—its disunity.”<sup>7</sup> By eliding the fact that the most significant leaders of the revolutionary struggle—Madero, Zapata, Villa, and Carranza—often fought different, contradictory battles against common enemies as well as one another, the new ideology propagated during the 1920s and 1930s meant to mystify the revolutionary process itself and thus to obscure the meaning of its outcome. This involved a re-presentation of that historical event as a depoliticized and yet gendered narrative, in which virile leaders joined forces to lead a glorified peasantry and working class to victory against a common enemy (that is, the old regime and imperialism). Hence the peasant leader Emiliano Zapata, defeated on the battlefield and later assassinated by the victorious Carrancista faction, acquired a “Christ-like, martyred image,” whereas his arch enemy, Venustiano Carranza, became known as “the Father of the 1917 Constitution” and “a symbol of law” in the official discourse.<sup>8</sup> Victors and vanquished thus shared the stage as national heroes, their images and (perhaps less successfully) memories sanitized and re-presented as official history: the unified Revolution.

As the *official* party of the Revolution (capitalized to enhance its mythic status), the PRI became the “family home” in which postrevolutionary “squabbles” were resolved through rewards and punishment. At the head of this home stood, of course, the presidential father figure, to whom all disputes were directly or ultimately submitted. Octavio Paz has written about this metaphorical father and its implications for patriarchal authoritarianism in Mexico: “Behind the respect for Señor Presidente there is the traditional image of the Father. . . . In the center of the family: the father. The father figure is two-pronged, the duality of patriarch and *macho*. The patriarch protects, is good, powerful, wise. The *macho* is the terrible man, the *chingón*, the father who has left, who has abandoned a wife and children. The image of Mexican authority is inspired by these two extremes: Señor Presidente and Caudillo.”<sup>9</sup> This notion of the president-cum-father of the nation was by no means unique. The dictator Porfirio Díaz himself had certainly accomplished as much, and the image of the benevolent caudillo is legend in Latin American politics. What the Mexican case achieved, however, was the *institutionalization* of the president as patriarch (passed along from one personality to the next via an electoral process, however flawed) and the official party as domestic council.

This metaphorical family was a reflection of and in turn served to reinforce an image of the stable family unit itself. The idealized family of the postrevolutionary order was one in which the father was stern in his benevolence, the mother saintly in her maternity, and the children loyal in

their obedience. Faith in the father's ultimate commitment to the progress of the family—even when that father had been corrupted by temptation and error—excused his mistakes and pardoned his sins. Undergirding this sense of pardon was the vision of the mother figure as saint and sufferer, whose moral superiority and spiritual strength acted as glue for the ultimate stability of the family—and by extension the nation (as did the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's semiofficial patron saint). It was no coincidence that Mother's Day became an official state holiday just after the revolution.<sup>10</sup> This patriarchal idealization of order permeated virtually every aspect of official nationalism—from muralism, to public monuments, to mass-media imagery—causing any challenges to the gendered order to be viewed as deviant if not subversive. As one author has recently put it, “[f]or better or worse, Mexico came to mean machismo and machismo to mean Mexico.”<sup>11</sup>

This cultural framework, which superimposed a patriarchal ideology on a mythologized (though very real) revolutionary struggle, was nevertheless challenged and contradicted by everyday reality among Mexico's poor. If this was true in the countryside, where campesinos contested the political terms of land redistribution and restrictions on religious worship, it was equally true in the cities—especially the capital—to which rural migrants were lured in search of economic betterment and survival. The very dislocations wrought by modernization destroyed family stability and exposed the empty nature of state paternalism. In the capital the proliferation of an urban underclass not only altered the architecture of the city by introducing the shantytown in the midst of capitalist progress but, furthermore, posed an affront to the very notion of order that lay at the heart of the patriarchal state.<sup>12</sup> The poor were seen as *dis*-orderly by middle-class society, not only in their lack of material wealth but also, and more fundamentally, in their lack of *buenas costumbres*, a class- and gender-laden notion implying “proper upbringing.”

While economic conditions and state policy produced important disjunctures between official ideology and material reality for the majority poor, for a growing middle class the revolutionary promise of a better life was coming true. Mexico's import-substitution industrialization strategy, which offered tariff protections and state subsidies for native industries, also underwrote an expansive consumer culture by keeping down the price of foodstuffs and energy. Sheltered by state protection, Mexican industry produced many of its own substitutes for basic consumer imports, but protective barriers also encouraged the emergence of transnational subsidiary operations ostensibly under majority Mexican ownership (though often on

paper more so than in practice). While the new consumer culture was shaped by Mexican industry, it was thus also deeply engraved with the trademarks and imagery emanating from corporate culture in the United States, whose cars, television and radio sets, film and music personalities, foodstuffs, and fashion styles were being exported around the world. As Jonathan Kandell describes the post–World War II decades in his biography of Mexico City, *La Capital*:

Throughout the capital, fast-food outlets serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza vied with taco stands. Baseball crowds rivaled those at bull-fights and soccer matches. Supermarkets stocked their shelves with Kellogg's Rice Krispies, Campbell's soups, Coca-Cola, Heinz catsup, and Van Camp's Boston baked beans. Neon signs flashed a lexicon of U.S. corporate names: Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Zenith, General Electric. Blue jeans became the uniform of the younger generation, rich and poor. A hit parade of rock 'n' roll competed with Mexican "corridos" on the radio. *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *Mannix*, *Dragnet*, *The Lone Ranger*, and many other American television series had a loyal following. Hollywood relegated Mexican films to the more decrepit movie houses. Even Christmas became Americanized: in department stores, adoring youngsters sat on the lap of a red-coated, white-bearded Santa Claus; at home, stockings were hung over the fireplace, and gifts were piled under fir trees festooned with pulsing lights and cotton snow fluffs.<sup>13</sup>

But it was not simply a question of economics: the middle classes relentlessly pursued these products and the values that accompanied them. Conspicuous consumption became a mark of the middle classes' own modernity and a sign of the nation's advancement not only in material terms but also in the more abstract sense of development itself. As the Mexican novelist José Emiliano Pacheco describes in his short story "Battles in the Desert," about middle-class life in the capital just after the end of World War II:

In the meantime, we modernized and incorporated into our vocabulary terms that had sounded like Chicanoisms when we had first heard them in the Tin Tan movies [Mexico's comic star of the period] and then slowly, imperceptibly, had become Mexicanized: *tenquíu*, *oquéi*, *uasamara*, *sherap*, *sorry*. . . . We began to eat *hamburguesas*, *páys* [pies], *donas*, *jotdogs*. . . . Fresh juice drinks of lemon, jamaica, and sage were buried by Coca-Cola. . . . Our parents soon got used to drinking *jaibol*, even though at first it tasted to them like medicine. Tequila is prohibited in my house, I once heard my Uncle Julian say. I serve only whisky to my guests: We must whitewash the taste of Mexicans.<sup>14</sup>

As the bicycle had during the Porfiriato (the period of late-nineteenth-century growth under the dictator Porfirio Díaz), the automobile now became the sign of the modern times, and Goodyear—as much so as the PRI itself—a benefactor of that modernity.<sup>15</sup>

This growth of the middle classes was the boastful accomplishment of the PRI (renamed for the last time in 1946), and by the late 1950s the official party drew increasing accolades from U.S. businessmen and State Department officials for the “Mexican Miracle” that was under way. The so-called miracle combined low inflation with a stable exchange rate to produce annual growth rates of more than 6 percent for more than twenty years and a per capita growth rate of more than 3 percent for the same period.<sup>16</sup> Such phenomenal growth, generated especially by the expansion of industry, directly affected but was disproportionately borne by labor and the peasantry, whose real incomes declined during this period.<sup>17</sup> Constrained on one side by corrupt union officials beholden to the PRI and on the other by the threat of violence to suppress independent organizing, Mexico’s urban and rural proletariat found themselves squeezed between a rapacious capitalist sector and the lack of democratic recourse. Indeed, the real miracle lay in the fact that the corporatist structure of the PRI had succeeded in stabilizing the cities and countryside through a combination of carrot and stick tactics, while virtually eliminating the possibility of politics outside the official party of the Revolution. This is not to suggest that independent challenges to PRI control did not arise; Mexico’s postrevolutionary narrative is full of such instances. But the PRI proved extremely effective at mobilizing its corporatist clients to rally around it, while not hesitant to use force where necessary. Moreover, through its direct and indirect control over the mass media the PRI manipulated a discourse that combined a revolutionary mythology with the promises of modernity, all aimed at sustaining a middle-class consensus and thus preventing any direct questioning of the PRI’s authoritarian politics.

The ruling party spent countless sums erecting monuments, staging celebrations, and mouthing words in praise of Mexico’s revolutionary heroes and accomplishments. In fact, such was its commitment to upholding Mexico’s revolutionary heritage that the PRI positioned itself to be seen as synonymous not only with the Revolution but—in adopting the national colors as its own and underwriting all celebratory discourse of the nation—with national identity itself. Mexican cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis has identified this as “state control over the signification of [what it means] to be Mexican,”<sup>18</sup> a pronunciation that both is an overstatement and

has the ring of truth to it. While the PRI literally had its fingers in every available cultural, social, and economic activity—Octavio Paz would later label the party a “philanthropic ogre”<sup>19</sup>—there were signs that it was reaching a point of diminishing returns. For by the late 1950s the PRI’s official nationalism had begun to generate a backlash not only among artists and intellectuals—not to mention workers and peasants who fought for more material gains—but also among a new middle-class generation of youth for whom Juárez and Zapata were more ossified heroes of the official party than living emblems of liberation. Mexico’s nationalism, once heralded for its cosmopolitanism and vibrancy, was now being charged by critics as insular, authoritarian, “dead.”<sup>20</sup> The Revolutionary Family continued to serve as the dominant discursive vehicle for rallying nationalist sentiment among the populace, but an incipient cynicism had entered.<sup>21</sup> And with this cynicism came a questioning of the patriarchal values at large: Must the voice of the father-president always be authoritative? It was with this question that Mexico’s middle-class youth began to lay the foundations for a broader attack on the postrevolutionary order itself, not so much to overthrow it but to transform it into something more responsive and less authoritarian.

As an epitome of postwar consumerism rock ‘n’ roll introduced a questioning of the social order that reverberated throughout Mexican society in the so-called *rebeldes sin causa*, a catch-all phrase lifted from the James Dean film (shown and later banned) that heralded the new youth culture. Many Mexicans viewed the rise of rock ‘n’ roll as an imperialist import from the United States, a reaction similar to that in other societies around the world.<sup>22</sup> But clearly the issue was more complicated. On one hand, rock ‘n’ roll was associated with challenges to parental authority and wanton individualism. On the other hand, however, the new youth culture also appealed to many adults’ perceptions of what it meant to be modern, to have access to global culture. Alan Knight has proposed that “a tide of cultural Americanization”—in which U.S.-influenced mass media forms redirected the shape and content of revolutionary culture—took place after 1940 and ultimately served the interests of the PRI. Knight’s assumption is that a “dominant Western culture (or anticulture?) of commercialism and consumerism, of mass media and mass recreation”<sup>23</sup> depoliticized Mexico’s populace, rendering a national culture linked more by a shared appreciation of comic books and television than by revolutionary activism. The mass media did indeed create a new series of reference points for the national identity that, on the face of it, were anything but political. But to view this as “the triumph of a bland cultural consumerism”<sup>24</sup> greatly overlooks the



contested nature of mass culture (even when produced through the filter of an authoritarian regime) and its usefulness as a vehicle for counterhegemonic strategies. The 1950s may have witnessed the ascendancy of mass-media culture, but this emergence also marked the beginning of a new ideological questioning of authoritarian practices, not its death knell.

The mythologizing of national heroes within a patriarchal value system that emphasized respect for political authority was a common denominator of the modern nation-state. In a fundamental sense, Mexican reality had much in common with other capitalist and socialist regimes during this period. Built on ideological foundations of heroic nationalism spurred (or reconstructed, as the case may have been) by World War II, numerous political regimes around the world were characterized by similar strategies of nation-state formation and cultural hegemony, despite often broad differences in national character and political economy. Another common denominator was the ubiquitous presence of rock 'n' roll and the related student and countercultural protest movements that shook the foundations of many regimes at the end of the 1960s.<sup>25</sup> Yet while we readily acknowledge the place of rock music in our own countercultural protests in the United States, we have come to assume that rock is *our* cultural heritage rather than part of the global patrimony. In fact, since its initial mass distribution, in the late 1950s, rock 'n' roll culture has been disseminated via capitalist and underground channels throughout the world, embedding itself in local cultures in ways that came to have profound results. In one sense, the spread of rock 'n' roll culture had an effect elsewhere which was similar to that in the United States: intergenerational conflict, repudiation of authoritarian values, liberation of the body, accelerated consumerism. But where rock music entered nationalist, developing nations (including the Eastern bloc countries), it was adopted by youth (as well as some parents) as an agent of modernity, even while it was frequently condemned by government officials and the intelligentsia as an agent of imperialism.

In virtually every urban center around the globe that was large enough to proffer access to a record player and electronic amplification, local rock 'n' roll imitators sprang up. In a kind of universal pattern, musical expression began with "cover" renditions of U.S. pop hits that not only replicated the instrumental arrangements of Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, and others but also, at least initially, mimicked the guttural sounds of English-language lyrics. (By the end of the 1960s most bands were writing their own music in their native language, though Mexico was an exception to this.) In short, the baby boomer, rock 'n' roll generation that in the United States we have come to associate as the precursor of our 1960s cultural explosion was, in

fact, a global phenomenon. Local articulations of this phenomenon were exceedingly diverse yet showed important consistencies across cultural and geographical divides.<sup>26</sup>

Around the world, rock music thus served as both wedge and mirror for societies caught in the throes of rapid modernization. Rock was a wedge in the sense that it challenged traditional boundaries of propriety, gender relations, social hierarchies, and the very meanings of national identity in an era of heightened nationalism. (This is not to say that rock was always “progressive,” as it could also serve to reinforce social hierarchies and gender relations.) Yet rock was also a mirror reflecting the aspirations and anxieties of societies in pursuit of an elusive sense of “first-worldism,” whether in emulation of or competition with its standard bearer, the United States. For instance, in the Soviet Union officials initially banned the twist but then reversed themselves and began to sponsor homegrown alternatives “that were modern and exciting but also rooted in Soviet traditions.”<sup>27</sup> The effort failed: the twist and other Western dance and musical styles prevailed. But the issue that affected the Soviet Union was not dissimilar from that which affected Mexico and other nations; namely, how the state could contain the modernizing effects of the youth culture without losing control over its disruptive, countercultural, wedge element.

Mexico played a distinctive role in this process of rock ‘n’ roll’s transnationalism. In other contexts rock ‘n’ roll imitators were often repressed, or perhaps one or two especially talented artists gained the privilege of a record contract. In Mexico, however, the rock ‘n’ rollers were outwardly embraced by local and transnational capitalist interests, found endorsement (at least partially) from the regime, and discovered a level of fame that catapulted them into national and international stardom. By the mid-1960s Mexican rock ‘n’ roll had become an integral element of a modernizing aesthetic, lending credence to the nation and the world at large of the economic “miracle” at hand. Mexico was not alone in cultivating a rock ‘n’ roll youth culture among Latin Americans. Argentina, especially, also produced a vibrant rock ‘n’ roll scene during the 1960s, as did other countries.<sup>28</sup> Yet Mexico established a level of commercialization during the early 1960s that distinguished it from other developing nations and that made its own rock sound widely recognized throughout much of Latin America.

How can we account for this? Certainly Mexico’s proximity to the United States played an important role: access to the new youth culture was greater and role models were closer (Bill Haley and even The Doors performed in Mexico City); and the track to stardom was that much more evident. Culturally speaking, Mexico’s shared border and the prominence of

various rock musicians of Mexican origin (for example, Ritchie Valens and Carlos Santana) also lent an “insider” sense of participation. Another factor was the development of Mexico’s mass-media industry, not only its transnational element but also the dominance by the conglomerate Tele-sistema (now Televisa), which was ably poised to exploit the sudden demand for youth culture. Finally, Mexico’s unique political stability—in contrast with the populist swings, revolutionary insurrections, and military coups that characterized much of the rest of Latin America during the same period—clearly provided breathing room for a consumer-driven youth movement to flourish.

Rock music established itself as a crucial reference point in Mexican society, a signifier of cosmopolitan values and a bearer of disorder and wanton individualism. It was never neutral. By conducting a detailed analysis of rock music’s production, distribution, and reception this study thus offers a unique view of the rising expectations and mounting contradictions of Mexico’s modernizing “miracle.” The first chapter explores the sudden impact of an imported youth culture in the late 1950s and the social conflicts that accompanied it. Editorial commentators decried the collapse of *buenas costumbres* while drawing the connection between disobedience in the home and social challenges to the PRI by dissident workers and other groups. By the end of the decade new legislation aimed at restricting the content and distribution of “offensive” mass culture was in place, but capitalist interests were already exploring ways of profiting from the demand for rock ‘n’ roll.

Chapter 2 describes the containment of rock ‘n’ roll via its Spanish-language domestication, thus rendering a sanitized version of a raucous import. Spanish-language *rocanrol* came to embody the modernizing aspirations of a middle class in ascendancy, but stripped of the offensive gestures of defiance that defined the original. Contained at the level of production, rock ‘n’ roll’s consumption nonetheless had begun to transform the social values of everyday life by challenging the established parameters of an authoritarian society. This was especially the case after 1964, when rock ‘n’ roll dropped its boyhood charm and began to adopt a more explicitly irreverent posture, as heralded by the impact of the Beatles and other groups that followed in their wake.

By the time of the 1968 student movement, the subject of chapter 3, rock music had become an inextricable part of the urban landscape throughout Mexico City. While rock performance played only a minor direct role in the movement itself (unlike in the United States, where rock had acquired an overt political function), every student was nonetheless aware of its pres-

ence. More importantly, many of the values that were grounded in the incipient countercultural movement (called *La Onda*)—and even though these values were partially coopted as “fashion” by the culture industry—permeated the student revolt. This was reflected as much in the long hair of many participants as in their language and expressed contempt for hegemonic values. This countercultural discourse—also influenced by the romanticized image of Che Guevara and his revolutionary calling—directly contributed to the emergence and direction the student movement took. At the height of the student protests, government tanks and troops ended the movement in a massacre at the site known as Tlatelolco. Crushed was a democratic challenge to authoritarian rule on the eve of what was otherwise planned as President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz’s crowning achievement of his administration: the staging of the Olympic games (a first for a developing nation). Though the student demonstrations had taken place almost exclusively in the capital, their voices and the repression that silenced them reverberated throughout the nation. With the repression, the student movement came apart. In effect, the PRI had salvaged an image of stability in the eyes of the world—but at an extremely high domestic cost.

Chapter 4 follows the countercultural trajectory of these student energies in the wake of the massacre. One of the most salient manifestations of the counterculture was the proliferation of a native hippie movement, the *jipitecas*. Where a government-pliant press had once seen the student protesters as a threat to social stability, now a new alarm was raised by the prospect of youth dropping out of society altogether. Even more alarming was their apparent imitation of foreigners, who began to arrive in ever-greater numbers as a result of their own escapism. At the same time society condemned this twin countercultural explosion-invasion, however, the culture industry was gearing up to make a profit from the rising demand for rock music and its accompanying paraphernalia.

Chapter 5 thus explores the commercial, musical, and ideological implications of a new wave of Mexican rock musicians, dubbed *La Onda Chicana*. Anxious to align themselves with a global rock movement, on one hand, and to disassociate themselves with Mexico’s earlier “contained” rock successes, on the other, these youth sought to invent a musical and stylistic expression they could call their own. In dramatic fashion, a rock culture that had been as much associated with elitism as it had with antiauthoritarianism before Tlatelolco was transformed into a vibrant outlet for defiance, disillusionment, and discovery. But there was one problem: this new wave of bands sang almost exclusively in English, even while writing its own lyrics.

The subject of chapter 6 is a massive rock festival in the fall of 1971 that drew an estimated 150,000–200,000 people and reflected the culminating moment of Mexico's rock counterculture. Popularly known as Avándaro, the festival generated an immense backlash against a generation that the left viewed as "mentally colonized" and the right saw as socially degenerate. The new political regime under President Luis Echeverría (1970–1976) took advantage of this backlash to further its own agenda of cultural nationalism, part of a broader strategy of "democratic opening" aimed at re-incorporating leftist critics. Thus, despite moderate amounts of capital invested in promoting Mexican rock, the state demanded the mass media's withdrawal, while underwriting support for a Latin American folk-protest musical revival. At the same time, live rock performance was pushed into the barrios, where it was nurtured by the lower classes that reclaimed it as a movement for their own social rage.

Chapter 7 explores one of the hidden ideological forces at work in the transformation of cultural values: the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Accused by many radicals and intellectuals of fostering an agenda of Americanization throughout the world, this chapter suggests ways in which the USIA was both an active participant and an ignorant bystander in the cultural revolts that were linked, directly and indirectly, to U.S. protest values.

In a brief concluding chapter we continue to follow the trajectory of native rock music as it reemerges from barrio culture to present itself as a frontal challenge to the status quo. If rock went from being a metaphor for modernity in the early 1960s, to a symbol of its excesses at the end of the decade, in the 1980s *los chavos banda*—lumpenproletariat punk rockers in the capital—embodied the utter collapse of Revolutionary promise altogether. A stark sociological emblem of *la crisis* (Mexico's "Lost Decade" of the 1980s), these punk rockers were now embraced by intellectuals as an authentic representation of popular culture. Viewed as an expression of cultural imperialism in the early 1970s, rock culture had come full circle as the redeemer of democratic practice and urban social protest.

As some of the language already employed in this introduction may suggest, this is a book about not only Mexico but also the larger questions of transnationalism and identity-formation strategies under late capitalism. A transnationalist perspective searches for cultural meaning amid the seeming rubble and chaos of late-twentieth-century modernity. Whereas earlier theories of cultural imperialism emphasized a monolithic conversion of cultural identity to the benefit of multinational capital, a transnationalist

perspective offers a more nuanced reading of identity as social process. As Arjun Appadurai writes, the question is one not of cultural homogenization *versus* cultural heterogenization but of how the two are interactive: "What these arguments [that is, homogenization versus heterogenization] fail to consider is that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way: this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and terrorism, spectacles and constitutions."<sup>29</sup> A fundamental contribution of transnationalism as a theoretical concept is that it allows us to widen our discussion of the nation-state to take into consideration what Appadurai labels "global cultural flow": the ongoing, patterned dispersion of people, media images, technology, finance capital, and ideology that interrupts the delineated coherency supposedly fixed by national boundaries. This flow dramatically accelerated during the 1960s as global economic conditions favored multinational capital and the mass media, on one hand, and the rise of middle-class consumerism and travel, on the other. The global circulation of goods, people, capital, and ideas was scarcely even: as the dominant economic and military power, the United States disproportionately influenced the tone and content of such flow. It was no surprise, therefore, that an ensuing backlash occurred in the 1970s in the form of a debate over cultural imperialism, which by then had become synonymous with Americanization. While ample evidence suggested that the media were indeed overwhelmingly American, in a more fundamental sense this debate reflected the loss of control by ruling regimes as well as intellectuals to arbitrate a discourse of national identity. The nation-state could no longer be addressed as a self-contained cultural entity holding nationalist guard against the outside world. There was increasingly a "global cultural economy"<sup>30</sup> in which local and global actors had a potential role to play, but the rules were no longer familiar.

In retrospect it seems reasonable to suggest that U.S.-influenced popular culture did in fact contribute to the processes of democratization that culminated in the fall of authoritarian as well as communist regimes throughout the world. When the Soviet Union accused North Atlantic Treaty Organization strategists of using Elvis Presley as a weapon in the cold war they were not being entirely paranoid.<sup>31</sup> Yet this raises the very difficult question of determining the line between cultural imperialism and cultural reappropriation. In the case of Mexico, where local bands performed in English for their audiences (who demanded as much) and were supported by national and transnational capitalism, this question is particularly relevant. The point of this study at one level, therefore, is to discern how global mar-

keting strategies intersected with state apparatuses and audiences to shape and contest the terrain of mass popular culture. At the same time, this is also a study of Mexico during a period of rapid modernization that culminates in political crisis for the ruling party. Rock music becomes our pretext, our window into viewing this crisis of the Revolutionary Family. Some might argue that rock was mere coloring or perhaps background noise for the “more important” events of that period.<sup>32</sup> But rock mattered. It mattered both as an instigator of modern values and as a reflection of the modernization process itself.

The book is organized chronologically, taking the reader from the mid-1950s, when rock 'n' roll was first introduced into Mexican society, through to the early 1970s, in the aftermath of Avándaro and the collapse of the rock counterculture as a commercialized activity. Each chapter uses the thread of rock music as the basis for exploring rock's cultural ramifications on society at large, ranging from its initial association with *desmadre* (the collapse of social order) in the 1950s, to its reappropriation as “high culture” by the middle classes in the early 1960s, to the influence of countercultural values on the 1968 student movement and the emergence of *jipitecas* who refashioned an image of rebellion introduced by foreign hippies, to La Onda Chicana's culmination at Avándaro and the backlash that followed. Throughout each chapter, therefore, there is an effort to show how rock music and its countercultural spin-offs were shaped and contested at the levels of production and reception by capitalist interests, the state, and consumers. Where the narrative wanders into a discussion of transnational and local marketing strategies, it is meant to remind the reader that rock was a cultural commodity subject to the logic of capitalism, even while that logic was also shaped by local restraints and demands.<sup>33</sup>

One cannot separate Mexico's 1968 from the global context, which included not only the student revolts in Czechoslovakia, France, the United States, and elsewhere but also an emergent, globally shared repertoire of imagery, slogans, fashion statements, and music that now linked youth, psychically if not materially, to each other's struggles.<sup>34</sup> If Mexico's countercultural undertone does not come to mind when conjuring up an image of the 1968 student movement, this is due more to a lack of emphasis in the historiography than to the corresponding reality at the time. Today, the rock festival at Avándaro remains a mark of cultural shame unmentioned next to the martyred victims of Tlatelolco. But this historical amnesia is also due to the more material circumstances related to the movement's repression and cooptation in the years following Avándaro. In the wake of the festival, the commercialization of Mexico's counterculture was abruptly

halted. Today there is scant commercialized evidence of the counterculture's very existence; little remains for nostalgic recycling. It is as if Woodstock existed for U.S. youth only in popular memory rather than a widely distributed double album and feature-length documentary film.<sup>35</sup>

But Mexico indeed had its "Avándaro generation": those marked by the defeatism of the 1968 movement; who experienced a cultural rebellion tied to rock music, Latin American protest song, and a rediscovery of indigenous roots; who challenged the values of their parents and in turn challenged the legitimacy of the PRI itself. Through *La Onda* and *La Onda Chicana* (its native rock counterpart) a critical discursive space was opened, producing an outlet for alternative articulations of self- and national identity among urban youth, male and female, from all classes whose impact is still felt today. This work is an attempt to begin the recovery of that story.