The Long Sixties in Mexico

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Introduction

The sixties saw the rise of the “student problem” in Mexico. Student protest and unrest in the sixties finally came to an end in 1968 with the killings and arrest of many of student protestors in the plaza of Tlatelolco which was an order from the then president Diaz Ordaz[[1]](#footnote-1). In the 1960s, there was a rise in the levels of student unrest that could not be ignored which later led to a big movement in 1968. The massacre of the students happened a few days before the beginning of Mexico City Summer Olympics which led to political unrest, economic crisis and media manipulation. The “student problem” began in 1956 with a strike that was started by students from National Polytechnic Institute (IPN).

The period discussed as long sixties is from 1956 to 1971 and was characterized with a new culture of public protests. Jaime M. Pensado who was a historian describes the growth, rise and the effects of “Mexico Student problem.”[[2]](#footnote-2) In addition, Jaime’s book analyzes and describes youth culture and student unrest in the long sixties. Significant social, cultural. Political and economic developments followed after the end of the unrest in the long sixties.

Economic conditions

Revolutionary nationalism from 1938 to 1958 was under the leadership of Miguel Aleman and Manuel Avila who led to the creation of import substitution industrialization model which further caused a rise in the growth of Mexican industries and economy[[3]](#footnote-3). The Mexican leadership that was led by Institutional Revolutionary Party (IRP) mainly composed of new generation of civilian politicians prioritized rapid industrialization for the country. The country was able to make quick transformations from a rural society to an urbanized one. The middle class were able to expand their business after the end of long sixties’ protest and unrest. By the 1960,s, Mexico was regarded as a third world development country. An economic miracle occurred as a result of increased foreign investment, aggressive capitalist development and state protectionism.

The long sixties describe a situation of youthful militancy which was in form of student thuggery, provocation, state formation and resistance. In addition, the period was characterized by youth shifting their notions on Mexico’s cold war and the effects of Cuban revolution in Mexico’s universities.

Political and cultural conditions

Authoritarian bent of leaders, fights over power brokers, conservative dissent reactions and control of schools in Mexico was some of the profound characteristics of the time periods in the long sixties[[4]](#footnote-4). Students would protest in public and the government would treat them as thugs who had the intention of damaging public property and peace in the country. Due to the great importance and acknowledgement of civil rights, the country made progress in the fight against racism, societal classes and family relationships thus promoting unity of the country. The long sixties were characterized by a cultural revolution based on discipline, authority and morality. Several cultural milestones were achieved during the long sixties such as helping the homeless, formation of environmental protection groups, child poverty and civil rights. In addition, individualism and entrepreneurialism was encouraged which made the Mexican people to become more productive. Student unrest and protest in Mexico led Cultural diversification which in the end increased international culture exchange such as fashion, music, film, television and theatrical innovation from other countries such as France, Italy and Britain

Social conditions

The New Left in Mexico came to life in the long sixties with inventions of new radio programs, literary contests, political magazines and film festivals that attracted academicians and activists from outside and within the universities in Mexico. Mexico’s New Left was characterized by desmadre, international language of dissent, satire, violence and humor. The New Left political movement in Mexico advocated for many political and social issues such as, feminism, abortion, gender roles and civil rights. In addition, the New Left Movement fought bureaucracy and racism. Students from National Autonomous University of Mexico and other colleges were supported and sponsored by civil workers from Mexico such as merchants, artists and doctors to fight authoritarianism and for the release of Mexican political prisoners[[5]](#footnote-5).

Conclusion

The long sixties years are easily distinguished from other previous and later historical periods due to the unique economic miracle that happened in Mexico unlike other historical periods where the country was faced with inequality and discrimination. The popular sectors that included; workers, women, rural, indigenous and youth reacted with vigor to ensure that the country became liberal; civil rights were respected, as well as equal treatment of men and women. The unrest student unrest and protests in Mexico in the sixties were caused by economic, cultural and social factors where students were unhappy with the manner in which the country was governed. At the end, the students were able to achieve much for their country and ending the authoritarian bent that was practiced by the government.

Bibliography

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2. Pensado, Jaime M. *Rebel Mexico: Student unrest and authoritarian political culture during the long sixties* (P. 6) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Pensado, Jaime M. *Rebel Mexico: Student unrest and authoritarian political culture during the long sixties*. Stanford University Press, 2013. (P. 18) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pensado, Jaime M. *Rebel Mexico: Student unrest and authoritarian political culture during the long sixties*. (P. 23) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Pensado, Jaime M. *Rebel Mexico: Student unrest and authoritarian political culture during the long sixties*. Stanford University Press, 2013. (P. 13) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)