

The Global Perspective of Urban Labor in Mexico City, 1910–1929

The Global Perspective of Urban Labor in Mexico City, 1910–1929 examines the global entanglement of the Mexican labor movement during the Mexican Revolution. It describes how global influences made their entry into labor culture through the cinema, theater, and labor festivals as well as into the development of consumption patterns and advertisement. It further shows how the young labor movement constituted its discourse and invented its tradition at meetings and in the columns of newspapers.

The local conditions constitute the framework for the examination of Mexican labor's perspectives on and engagement with contemporary events of global significance. Thereby, this book demonstrates how workers turned to the global context in search of guidance and role models, embracing global developments and narratives. It also reveals the differentiations from this context in order to create a unique local identity.

This approach allows new perspectives on the role of a neglected revolutionary actor and on the influence of global developments in a revolution that has been predominantly interpreted from a national point of view. It shows the way global ideas were brought to life in the framework of revolutionary Mexico City—providing new insights into the grand-narratives of Globalization and Revolution.

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El Mundo al Revés

Stephan Fender

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El Mundo al Revés

Stephan Fender

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For Sabine, Michael, Siegrid, and Manfred

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Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación
AHDF	Archivo Histórico del Distrito Federal
CGT	Confederación General de Trabajadores
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
COA	Confederación Obrera Argentina
CPC	Communist Party of China
CROM	Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana
CTM	Confederación de Trabajadores de México
DT	Departamento del Trabajo
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
FORA	Federación Obrera Regional Argentina
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IWA	International Workers' Association
IWPA	International Working People's Association
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KMT	Kuomintang
Pan-AFL	Pan-American Federation of Labor
PCM	Partido Comunista Mexicano
PLM	Partido Liberal Mexicano
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista
PNR	Partido Nacional Revolucionario
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
RoC	Republic of China
SME	Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores
USA	Unión Sindical Argentina
USI	Unione Sindacale Italiana

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1 Introduction

“¡Viva la Revolución Mundial!”¹

By May Day 1913, only two years had passed since the resignation of long-standing dictator Porfirio Díaz and the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. More than 20,000 workers took to the streets of Mexico City to commemorate the labor holiday for the very first time in the country's history. Behind red and black flags and a banner demanding the eight-hour work day, they marched through the streets and attended speeches held by members of the newly founded Casa del Obrero Mundial, who invoked the spirit of the French Revolution, attacked the ruling elites, and connected the martyrs of the 1886 Chicago general strike with those of Mexican labor struggles. In a short span of time, the Mexican labor movement had developed from embryonic mutualist societies into the globally conscious actor with a clear political agenda that it represented that day.

Despite their relatively limited involvement in the violent military power struggles of the 1910s and 1920s, the urban poor were able to use the political space opened up by the revolution to start an unprecedented cycle of mobilization—one which eventually left them as one of the victors of the revolutionary turmoil. This cycle was characterized by the strong influence of global elements and the discursive figure of the global labor movement—its protagonists, ideologies, and history. The rise of the Mexican labor movement therefore allows for a fast-motion perspective on the integration of a national movement into the long-standing global labor movement's discourse. Vice versa, this development sheds some light on the influence of an increasingly globalized world on a revolution—which has long been considered an almost exclusively national event.

The Mexican Revolution, as the “defining event of Mexican history” throughout the last century,² has been the subject of extensive and ever-growing historiographical research. Thereby, its nature and duration have been heavily contested; until today, there is no consensus about the

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temporal limits of the Revolution. The time frame covered here encompasses the phase of violent power struggles in the 1910s and 1920s up until the definitive ending of revolutionary mass violence and the Guerra Cristera. Furthermore, the establishment of the PNR in 1929 marked the onset of the incorporating state of the PRI and the invention of the myth of the “revolutionary family,” while the Great Depression marked a worldwide watershed in economic growth and trade relations.

The events following the 1910 uprising of Francisco I. Madero not only caused a political, cultural, social, and economic rupture in the national fabric, but its protagonists, programs, and iconic images also constituted the revolutionary myth—which would then be used to legitimize power relations in the revolutionary state for decades to come.³ This led to frequently revised and heavily contested interpretations of “The Revolution,” as put forward by historians and politicians alike. Thereby, the revolutionary process has long been described as a popular uprising with agrarian and nationalist characteristics with the aim to further the project of “nation-building” (*forjando patria*) in Mexico. Although new approaches and interpretations would repeatedly challenge this hegemonic narrative over the years, this notion ultimately prevailed.⁴ Recently, the rise of Global History has raised questions about and broadened perspectives on entanglement beyond the borders of the nation-state. However, the place of Latin America and the role of non-elite actors in the often-postulated first wave of globalization⁵ remain neglected topics in the field. In order to rectify this development and to once again update the national myth, this time by applying a global perspective, *El Mundo al Revés* examines how the workers of revolutionary Mexico City engaged with the global context: What mechanisms shaped this process and what were the repercussions within the national and global frameworks?

Its conceptualization places *El Mundo al Revés* within two differentiated historiographical frameworks: On the one hand, there is the treatment of the Mexican Revolution—the most extensively researched topic in Mexican historiography—and one of the largest fields of study in Latin American History. On the other, there is the context of Global History, and especially its subdiscipline, Global Labor History. Due to their vast nature and the rapid growth of literature in these fields, this chapter can hardly encompass them in their entirety. Instead, it outlines important developments and research directions—and provides examples of groundbreaking and innovative works therein.

The historiography of the Mexican Revolution is extensive and differentiated—characterized by major revisions to the official narrative,⁶ great syntheses,⁷ and myriad regional and microhistories.⁸ The ever-changing perspectives on and utilizations of the national founding myth have produced a broad variety of research approaches. Despite the general assumption that urban workers only played a marginal role in

the national power struggle, they have still attracted the attention of historians over the years, resulting in a solid output of mostly political, economic, and organizational research.⁹

The decline of academic Marxism and the rise of New Cultural History in the 1990s especially promised novel perspectives for the research of the “subaltern.” With a new methodology that leaned toward anthropological approaches and unorthodox sources (such as oral history), this school hoped to shed some light on actors who typically did not produce written testimonies. However, since the approach leaves ample room for interpretation and reading between the lines, it has been subject to severe criticism from the very outset. As controversial as they may be, these new methods still had a notable impact on the scholarly landscape as new actors and areas came into focus—among them, the urban poor in Mexico City¹⁰ and the dynamics of gender relations.¹¹

Global History, the second historiographical context of this book, emerged more recently, although universalistic approaches are far from new. Unifying characteristics of the field are the desire to analyze processes of entanglement and to conceptualize—but not neglect—the nation-state, but without losing sight of larger power relations like colonialism and imperialism. However, beyond this consensus, there is little agreement among historians about appropriate methodologies, time frames, or spatial dimensions.¹² General tendencies point toward grand narratives,¹³ while—until now—few studies have taken a global perspective on connections and networks focused within a small region—or even a single location.¹⁴

A growing subdiscipline of the field is the research of labor relations and conditions, and the worldwide diffusion of people, goods, and ideas—an approach that aspires to deepen the insights on social inequality, labor migration, and economic relations: Namely, Global Labor History. Of course, the examination of global flows of people, products, and ideas has also previously been an integral part of labor history,¹⁵ but this new global approach—influenced by intellectual currents like subaltern studies and New Labor History—aims to overcome Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism. These twin forces have been predominant in the field; where possible, Global Labor History attempts to establish a perspective that encompasses views from the Global South.

Most of the work done in the field focuses on the traditional core areas of Labor History in the economic realm and on migratory movements,¹⁶ or addresses the thorny task of theoretical conceptualization.¹⁷ Global approaches that follow the perspectives of New Labor History on the cultural and social frameworks within which workers operated¹⁸ are still rare. However, some comparative works on the emergence of labor movements do exist,¹⁹ as do two recent—and intriguing—studies of the possibilities that the examination of the anarchist movement offers to the field of transnational studies²⁰ and regarding the role of radical

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immigrants in the United States.²¹ *El Mundo al Revés* connects to these recent historiographical developments by using the analysis of informal solidarity networks to establish assumptions transferable to the fields of Transnational History and Global History.

In the researching of the Mexican Revolution, global reference points, connections, and comparisons have been of relevance for quite some time now. Important issues have been: economic topics and the question of foreign exploitation;²² transnational interconnections, with a special focus on the US-Mexican borderlands;²³ and the influence of foreign nations and nationals.²⁴ However, despite the manifold recognition of global influences during the revolutionary phase, Global History as a field and approach has not received much recognition in the scholarly landscape of the Revolution.

Despite the predominance of the national perspective, the events of 1910 and of the two decades that followed were neither singular nor isolated from the global developments of the time. In a world that had experienced a massive increase in global interconnectedness, revolutionary upheavals shook empires, states, and the global public at the beginning of the twentieth century: the Ottoman Empire (1908), Russia (1905, 1917), China (1911), and Iran (1905–1911) were all scenes of regime change that Maier boils down to national rebellions against global pressure,²⁵ an assessment quite similar to the early nationalist interpretations of revolutionary historiography. In a different approach, this work examines the influence of global developments on the revolutionary process in Mexico based on the example of urban labor. It seems plausible that outside pressure and exploitation by foreign capital sparked nationalist resentment and rebellion, but the interconnections between the global and local contexts shaped the form and content of this movement at the same time too.

In the cultural and scientific realms, the inventions of the nineteenth century brought on the Age of Electricity,²⁶ when telegraph, radio, cinema, mass publication, and faster travel knitted the world closer together—but also created new differentiations. Cultural developments and news could now find a global audience through unprecedented media and publication channels, World Exhibitions, Hollywood movies, and communication by letter and telegram. Traveling technology experts and adventurers created, along with many other networks, new forms of social and cultural entanglement whose specific manifestations always depended on local circumstances. Mexico City was no exception to this development as international theater stars and plays, the cinema, and globalized consumption patterns and brands entered the capital city already, prior to the Revolution.²⁷

Until now, neither urban workers—despite the extensive treatment of their political and organizational history—nor the capital—as the economic and political center of the country—have been regarded as overly

important by historians following the paradigm of an agrarian/nationalist revolution.²⁸ However, due to the processes of industrialization and urbanization during the Porfiriato, Mexico City poses a particularly interesting location for this kind of analysis. Porfirian modernization had led to the development of sharp contrasts in the City of the Centenario, where recent, large-scale constructions came face-to-face with the tenements and slums of the urban poor. Three decades of oppression and paternalism had, meanwhile, impeded the emergence of an autonomous labor movement, which now burst onto the political stage and—in a leap—caught on to the development of the global labor movement and to processes that took decades to evolve in other regions. Furthermore, the capital city—where various revolutionary fractions, including the labor movement, renegotiated the very concept of national identity and the structure of the emerging revolutionary state—promises to offer a unique perspective on the issue of methodological nationalism as problematized in the research of Global Labor.²⁹

Building on the recent work of Lear,³⁰ Barbosa,³¹ Picatto,³² and others, as well as on approaches from New Labor History and New Cultural History, and taking into consideration the social and cultural spheres in which workers operated, *El Mundo al Revés* will shed light on how the idea of a global union of working people manifested at the local level—examining which exact mechanisms shaped this process, and also the interactions with the broader global context. This will provide a deeper understanding of interconnections, transfer mechanisms, and regional differentiations. Furthermore, this approach will demonstrate possible ways of making meaningful global comparisons within the fields of Latin American History and Global Labor History. Instead of assuming generalized developments along the lines of Western labor movements, this book presents voices from the Global South and aims at revealing the extent to which even lower class—or subaltern—actors could be masters of their own fate, should they take advantage of regional structures and global currents.

Obviously, it is not possible to talk about *the* global labor movement as a factual institution, just as it is not possible to talk about *the* Mexican movement either. The global union of working people was first and foremost a discursive notion, an idea brought to life by its adherents and opponents alike. Therefore, the term “global labor movement” does not describe so much a single movement with clear goals, ideologies, tactics, and membership but rather the realm of ideas, experiences, symbolism, and history that individual organizations could choose from so as to create their own identity and to invent traditions.³³ However, because of its discursive power, this idea was highly influential and its interpretation heavily contested. Similarly, on the local level, the Mexican movement was so fragmented and diverse that it cannot be regarded as a monolithic entity, since anarchist, communist, and reformist unions competed for

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mobilization and membership, defining ends and means in their own specific ways. However, the term “Mexican labor movement” will be used frequently in this book as a collective term for the activities and discourses of the country’s workers.

Since this study focuses mainly on discourses and the construction of identity, the terms “workers” and “labor” will be applied here to anyone who earned his/her living through manual labor and self-ascribed themselves such labels as part of these constructions. This follows Thompson’s approach: “Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition.”³⁴ Since the most common self-ascriptions of the actors featured in this study are the generalizing *trabajadores* and *obreros*,³⁵ it makes sense to follow Thompson’s call and honor the self-definitions of those scrutinized. Additionally, a valuable theoretical framework is provided by van der Linden’s detailed analysis of labor relations and their various combinations and gray areas. These cause him to follow Cohen’s definition, and thus to conclude that: “Every carrier of labor power whose labor power is sold (or hired out) to another person under economic (or non-economic) compulsion belongs to the class of subaltern workers.”³⁶ In a city with an enormous proportion of informal and domestic labor, individuals who were by no means excluded from urban economic and political life,³⁷ this is a practical approach that undoubtedly undercuts many sophisticated discussions about the attribution of these terms. Nevertheless, it also allows for an overarching perspective being taken on the activities and discourses of the urban poor.

Labor periodicals were the primary tool via which the discourse of the movement was publicly constituted. The political liberty fomented by the post-revolutionary power vacuum allowed for an explosive growth of such publications—some short-lived, some highly durable. In their columns, individuals and organizations outlined their political agendas and utopian ideals. Unlike much of the research on global entanglement that focuses on elite actors like travelers, diplomats, traders, experts, intellectuals, and students,³⁸ this study takes instead the point of view of a lower-class actor from the Global South for whom, fortunately, a variety of sources are available.

Hereby, the term “global” is not used in the sense of an abstract totality of the world, but rather to create awareness of connections and entanglement—but also differentiation and rejection³⁹—beyond the scope of the nation-state, as proposed by Bright and Geyer.⁴⁰ Global entanglement was not a steadily increasing development, but phases of integration and differentiation alternated and global influences—often perceived as foreign—frequently gave rise to countermovements. Thereby, economic, cultural, and social processes were not synchronized. Bayly and others regard the outbreak of the Great War as the endpoint of an increase in global entanglement, while especially labor historians recognize an upsurge in the global activities of the labor movement following

the October Revolution of 1917.⁴¹ The recognition of the limits of entanglement and transformation processes, which created unique representations of the global at the local level, is a key concern of this study.⁴²

In his criticism of the vagueness and determinism of the metanarratives of globalization and modernity, Frederick Cooper calls for an approach that focuses on concrete actors, connections, and processes so as to avoid generalizations vis-à-vis these terms.⁴³ While this book follows an approach centered on a concrete actor, their networks, and debates, it also tackles a development that was mainly discursive and in which the sole idea of a global context—as in the case of the global labor movement—was highly relevant. In order to address this realm of ideas and ideology and to track the movement of elements and influences, the “currents” approach put forward by Rosenberg seems useful.⁴⁴

Currents represent a dynamic model that avoids the notions of center and periphery as they cross geographical borders in an asymmetrical and complex manner; as such, they are not limited to a single direction, but allow feedback, circles, and interactions. When the global and also the national frameworks are regarded as discursively constructed realms and not as concrete entities from which elements flowed into the local context and back again,⁴⁵ currents represent the flows and connections through which global influences reached and left the local context. For the presentation of the complex, global network of Mexican labor, this model seems appropriate; other than citing Rosenberg’s approach, this book will avoid the notion of transnational interconnections—as most of the labor discourse took place outside of or even in opposition to national frameworks.

Despite the objections of many Latin Americanists,⁴⁶ the adoption of a global perspective on a regional framework does not necessarily lead to generalizing assumptions and grand narratives. Instead, the close connection of the approach to the local framework of Mexico City and to the tradition of an empirical, archive-based methodology rooted in the fields of subaltern, regional, and area studies allows for the examination of the concrete processes and connections appearing in the city—and also their workings and limitations, by using local sources in their original language. In this manner, the usual top-down perspective of Global History is inverted to create a world turned on its head and now seen through the eyes of Mexican workers themselves.

In sum, this book contributes to the scholarship an overview of the influence that global developments had on a seemingly national revolution. Further, it offers a thorough analysis of the discourse of a neglected actor to the historiography of the Mexican Revolution and an examination of a single locality—studied in combination with a focus on a lower-class actor—to the field of Global History. Hereby, it provides a rare case study allowing for insights into the concrete workings and limits of global entanglement—instead of simply heralding another metanarrative.

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On the concrete, local level, it is to be expected that the engagement with the national and global discourses followed the scheme of recognition, interpretation, and utilization. Local actors had to recognize the existence of the global context, its contents, and relevance before they could even begin to interact with it. However, the process of recognition was not one of mere reception since it already included a conscious selection made from among the myriad possible influences with which the actors could occupy themselves.

The recognition of the global context already marked the beginning of the second phase of engagement when perspectives, resulting from local circumstances and history, as well as national discourses shaped the discussion of foreign elements on their way down to the local level. After the introduction of personalities, events, and ideas, the elements were debated and reinterpreted on the grounds of the current local situation and underwent changes to fit the discourses and needs of the actors involved. Since local circumstances in Mexico City and the aspirations of actors were in constant flux, it is to be expected that the discussion and utilization—as well as the content and significance—of global elements will have varied over time as workers adopted them to current needs. Furthermore, different ideological convictions have necessarily influenced the process of engagement while competing interpretations of key elements have struggled for hegemony within the movement's discourse. This was an ongoing process, and very different discussions surrounded the same element at varying points in time. Of course, reinterpretation was not obligatory; rejection or simply ignorance of certain global elements was also a viable choice for these actors.

The stages of entanglement were fluid and cannot be clearly distinguished. Therefore, the interpretation and transformation of an element facilitated its utilization in the local context and the feedback given to other regions or to the global discursive realm. After developing a position on and a concrete local version of an element, actors used it to justify politics, activities, and arguments. When an element was established locally through practice and debate, it sometimes spread through regional networks or publications—developments examined here on the basis of labor newspapers from the oil port Tampico⁴⁷ and the textile center Orizaba⁴⁸—and was fed back to the discourse of the global movement, wherein actors defined their positions, allegiances, and goals. Thereby, the workers created different representations of what they perceived as global—which again shaped their engagement with this context, as well as the image exported of the Mexican movement and of events in the country.

The formation of this global consciousness included the creation of an identity based in being part of a global movement, the appropriation of historical elements from the global narrative, a distinct outward perspective, as well as self-reflection on one's own position, agency, and objectives within the larger framework. Under these premises, this study

examines the engagement of actors with a variety of influences, events, and developments from the global context. For this, it uses publications by workers themselves in order to trace the internal debates and mechanisms of the labor movement as well as to determine the influence of both local circumstances and of the national discourse.

In accordance with these assumptions, *El Mundo al Revés* is organized around a perspective moving from the local framework to the global context, and with it, the threefold engagement of actors with global influences via recognition, interpretation, and utilization. The various chapters dealing with these steps are followed by a concluding discussion of the development of a global consciousness.

In Chapter 1, the primary concern will be the characteristics of the local context. Using surveys from the Departamento de Trabajo, recent literature, and labor periodicals, the actors and their everyday environment will be described. The key questions are: What defines a worker? How was the discourse of the labor movement constituted, and to what extent were global influences relevant to this process? Did the increasing globalization of cultural institutions and consumer goods influence the everyday life of the urban poor?

To fill the discursive constructions of “workers” and “labor” with meaning, basic information on the organizational history and socioeconomic situation of the revolutionary capital will be provided. Migration and population growth, political turmoil and revolutionary violence, as well as the dire living and working conditions of the capital will be illuminated in order to describe the precise circumstances in which the discourse of urban labor was constituted.

As the primary communication channel for the nascent movement, the labor press will receive particular attention in this work. The abrupt increase in publication activity after the fall of Díaz was undoubtedly an important driving force behind the politicization and mobilization of the urban poor. Alongside that were long-standing grievances and the opening up of political spaces through the revolutionary power struggle, whose increased mobilization in turn resulted in the publication of even more periodicals. The role of labor periodicals as mouthpieces of organizations will be taken into account, as will the significance of independent papers or those close to the government. Thereby the activities of outstanding editors and writers will be traced, since these personalities were sometimes capable of setting an agenda simply through their personal reputation, and they brought their own distinct perspectives to these sources—ones that did not necessarily represent the general discourse of rank-and-file workers. Furthermore, the significance of the labor press as a communication channel with the outside world and its global networks will be a key focus.

Apart from its ideological, cultural, and educational projects, the labor press also contributed to another development of relevance to this study:

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Through adverts in newspapers, global consumer goods and brands were introduced to Mexican labor. The necessity of advertisement, the ideological reservations about it, as well as the influence that nationalism and global fame exercised on the concrete practice of marketing will be discussed in detail. Particularly, the examination of the national consumption campaign of *Revista CROM* from 1926 onward promises to offer insight into the interplay of national and global elements in the field of consumption.

Another area where global influences made their mark on the lives of workers were the places of sociability of the urban poor. The triumphal arrival of the cinema as well as an increasingly globalized theater scene changed the cultural life of the capital. On the basis of the cinema and theater sections, which were an integral part of almost every labor newspaper, the introduction and discussion of Hollywood movies, international theater stars, and foreign plays will be another key topic in this first chapter. Especially the interpretation of these global influences will be of interest: Did workers reinterpret the content of foreign movies and appropriate plays for their own theater companies? What about foreign literature, poetry, and music? The latter influences are most likely to be found at labor festivals, another important gathering point for the movement that will be analyzed using published programs and reports.

After actors' characteristics, the mechanisms that they used to constitute their discourse, and global influences on their everyday lives have all been outlined, Chapter 2 will then examine the perspective workers took on global developments from within this local framework. To this end, events and developments from the global context will be examined regarding their recognition and interpretation by Mexican labor. Since the era was characterized by a number of developments with strong global implications, a handful will be selected according to their relevance to local actors.

As another major revolution of the twentieth century, the 1917 October Revolution in Russia represents an obvious standout. The different course of events in Russia as compared with the Mexican Revolution raised questions and sparked discussions among Mexican workers about how and why occurrences in their country went in a different direction. The emergence of the worker's state created a global reference point for the labor movement, which had to be assessed and interpreted by the different political currents at the local level—leading to lively debates among workers, in which opinions spanned every position from idolization to rejection. Mexican labor organizations, in the majority anarchist syndicates or later reformist unions, tried to come to terms with the rise of the communist movement and the attraction that the bolsheviks now exercised over the global labor movement, while a small but vocal communist movement tried to spread its ideology to Mexico. Particularly, the

debates about the applicability of the Russian example to Mexico and the interplay of embracement and rejection, as well as the respective arguments underlying it, will be of concern here.

As a second revolutionary event, the 1911 overthrow of the Chinese emperor and the decades of civil war that ensued will also be taken into account. Although the events in China did not hold the same significance for the global labor movement as the October Revolution—since, in the given time frame, the initial role of communist ideology was not as decisive—Mexican workers still partook in the experience of living in a country riddled with fractional power struggles and enduring civil unrest. Here, as in the case of Russia, perceptions of sameness and difference in the respective revolutionary processes and the creation of global reference points as well as examples will be of primary concern.

Considering the integration of Mexican labor into the post-revolutionary state,⁴⁹ in which it became an important cornerstone of the perfect dictatorship of the PRI, the rise of authoritarian regimes in Italy and Spain during the 1920s poses another interesting subject matter. While fascist and militarist ideology was commonly rejected by labor organizations of all leftist persuasions (anarchist, communist, and social democratic), CROM especially—due to its strong integration into the state—had to find a way to deal with developments in Europe without compromising its own strategy and exposing the organization to attacks from the Left.

As an alternative, or maybe in addition, to nationalist tendencies, the promotion of pan-Americanism and continental networks constitutes the final example of the outward perspective of Mexican labor—with a particular focus on the peer movements in Argentina and the United States. The northern neighbor was, despite the strong anti-American sentiments prevailing among the Mexican population and the permanent threat of intervention hanging overhead, still the closest point of reference for Mexican labor. The events of the 1918 Saltillo Conference, which revolved around the question of cooperation with the AFL leading to a potential split within the Mexican movement and the utilization of labor allies in the United States to further political goals within the national framework, will be issues especially scrutinized here. As a counterpoint arising from the South American context, relations to the Argentinian labor movement—which showed strong similarities to the Mexican case in terms of its organizational and ideological history—will be presented. In both cases, awareness about the image of the Mexican labor movement abroad will be of relevance.

The active engagement of actors with global elements and the mechanisms of interpretation and utilization will be the topic of Chapter 3. From the manifold possible elements that circulated in the context of Mexico City, the category of “labor martyrs” will be examined in detail since these personalities held a special place in the movement’s discourse, and their legacy carried high potential for the politicization and mobilization

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of workers. Furthermore, the celebration of a martyr centered on certain dates—usually the anniversary of the execution/assassination of the activist in question—which opened up room for collective action, commemoration, and the development of common political practice will be examined.

Again, following the perspective moving from the local to the global context, the treatment of national labor heroes will be the first issue of this third chapter—undertaken so as to establish a comparable reference. The victims of the bloody repression of the 1907 textile strike in Rio Blanco, one of the key events of the national movement's history, and Jesus Garcia—the “Hero of Nacozari,” who steered a burning train loaded with explosives out of the Sonoran town—will provide two examples for the discourses and practices surrounding commemoration within the national framework.

The description of local mechanisms will be followed by analysis of the introduction and recurrent celebration of May Day in Mexico City from 1913 onward, when, as noted earlier, the holiday was commemorated for the first time in the capital. The events of Chicago Haymarket in 1886 were closely connected with the arrest and execution of four anarchist activists in their aftermath, the so-called Chicago Martyrs. Commemoration included two dates: May 1 and November 11, the latter the anniversary of the execution of the defendants in 1887. While the historical narrative would remain relatively stable after more than 20 years of commemoration by the global movement, the local circumstances of the celebration were in constant flux due to the revolutionary upheaval. Therefore, the different utilization of the martyr cult in varying political environments will be the main issue examined here.

Another globally influential labor martyr who made his entry into the local context was the Catalan pedagogue Francisco Ferrer Guardia, the founder of the rationalist Modern School. Ferrer's execution in the aftermath of the 1909 general strike in Barcelona had sparked a global movement aiming to spread his libertarian educational theory and to found schools after his model, an impetus especially strong in the United States. Assuming that the spread of his ideas and the practices developed around October 13 (the day of his execution) were also important issues for the anarchist movement in Mexico City, the primary question will be whether the symbol of Ferrer and his very distinct anarchist teachings and practices left enough room for interpretation by other currents within the Mexican labor movement.

The final example will be a more contemporaneous case that would come to attract worldwide attention: The circumstances surrounding and eventual execution of the Italian-American anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, events stretching from 1921 to 1927. In contrary to the previous examples, this process was not a historical event; it unfolded live and involved two vocal protagonists, ones still able to shape and

interpret developments themselves. It will be interesting to see how the actors engaged with a process in real time, what mechanisms were set in motion for the creation of myths and martyrs, and how they changed after the execution of the defendants.

Lastly, the concluding Chapter 4 will debate whether and how a global consciousness was developed by the involved actors. The treatment of global influences will be contextualized to the process of nation-building and the often-proclaimed nationalism of the Mexican labor movement. Thus, the seemingly contradictory poles of nationalist ideology and global aspirations will be regarded as complementary elements in the construction of identities, distinct local histories, and representations of the global discourse.

The discussion of the awareness and self-reflection of workers regarding their roles, positions, and agency in the global context, and the ends that they hoped to achieve through their activities, will constitute the final point of debate of this study. Thereby, the role of the global context in the creation of a strong national labor movement in Mexico and of a common identity as workers will be examined—as will be the image that labor in the country wanted to transport back into the global discourse, and also the position it intended to carve out for itself in this discursive realm. A general outlook and the identification of open questions alongside possible further research topics will conclude this work.

Notes

1. *El Obrero Comunista*, December 10, 1921, 4.
2. Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1.
3. For the relevance of the revolution in this matter, see: Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Alan Knight, "The Myth of the Mexican Revolution," *Past and Present* 209 (November 2010), 223–273.
4. For a recent study on the role of nationalism in the Revolution, see: Lorenzo Meyer, *México para los Mexicanos: La Revolución y sus Adversarios* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010).
5. Periodizations vary, but the majority of scholars describe an increasing global entanglement from the mid-nineteenth century onward. See: Peter N. Stearns, *Globalization in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 90–123; C. A. Bayly, "Archaische und Moderne Globalisierung in Eurasien und Afrika, ca. 1750–1850," in *Globalgeschichte*, eds. Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert, and Ulrike Freitag (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2007), 86; Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Peterson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung* (München: C. H. Beck, 2003), 24–27.
6. See for example: Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); David C. Bailey, "Revisionism and the Recent Historiography of the Mexican Revolution," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, No. 1 (February 1978), 62–79; Adolfo Gilly, *La*

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- Revolución Interrumpida: México, 1910–1920* (Mexico City: El Caballito, 1971).
7. See for example: Joseph and Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*; William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan, *Mexicans in Revolution, 1910–1946: An Introduction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); John M. Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
 8. See for example: Benjamin Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements: The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Eric van Young, ed., *Mexico's Regions: Comparative History and Development* (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1992); Thomas Benjamin and Mark Wasserman, eds., *Provinces of the Revolution: Essays on Regional Mexican History, 1910–1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Heather Fowler Salamini, *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920–1938* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978); Luis González y González, *Invitación a la Microhistoria* (Mexico City: SepSetentas, 1973).
 9. See for example: Kevin J. Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995); Alan Knight, "The Working Class and the Mexican Revolution, c. 1900–1920," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16, No. 1 (May 1984), 51–79; John M. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860–1931* (Austin: University of Texas, 1978); Barry Carr, *El Movimiento Obrero y la Política en México, 1910–1929*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1976); Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *La Revolución Mexicana y el Movimiento Obrero, 1911–1923* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1976).
 10. See for example: Marie Eileen François, *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); John Lear, "Mexico City: Popular Classes and Revolutionary Politics," in *Cities of Hope: People, Protests, and Progress in Urbanizing Latin America, 1870–1930*, eds. Ronn Pineo and James A. Baer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 53–87; Maria Elena Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press for Workers in Mexico, 1900–1910: A Case Study in the Politicization of Popular Culture," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, No. 3 (October 1990), 497–526.
 11. See for example: Patience A. Schell and Stephanie Mitchell, eds., *The Women's Revolution: Mexico, 1900–1953* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano, eds., *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879–1931* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003); Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2002); Katherine Bliss, "The Science of Redemption: Syphilis, Sexual Promiscuity, and Reformism in Revolutionary Mexico City," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, No. 1 (February 1999), 1–40.
 12. For a general overview of the variety of research topics and methodologies, see: Dominic Sachsenmaier, "Global History, Version: 1.0," *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte* (11 February 2010).

13. See for example: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München: C. H. Beck, 2009); Bernard Porter, *Empire and Superempire: Britain, America and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).
14. For a recent example, see: Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
15. For an extensive historiographical survey, covering the entire globe, see: Jan Lucassen, ed., *Global Labour History: A State of the Art* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 39–454.
16. See for example the various contributions to: Jan Lucassen, *Global Labor History*, 455–648. Marcel van der Linden provides an extensive bibliography of contributions to (Global) Labor History: Marcel van der Linden, *Workers of the World: Essays towards a Global Labor History* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 379–454.
17. For a general introduction, see: Andreas Eckert, “What is Global Labour History Good For?” in *Work in a Modern Society: The German Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Oxford: Berghahn, 2010), 169–181. For a comparative work on the development of Labor History and its historiography in different regions, see: Joan Allen, Alan Campbell, and John McIlroy, eds., *Histories of Labour: National and International Perspectives* (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2010).
18. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963). See also: David Brody, “Reconciling the Old Labor History and the New,” *Pacific Historical Review* 62, No. 1 (February 1993), 1–18.
19. For a comparative history of labor movements in more than 20 countries, see: Marcel van der Linden, ed., *The Formation of Labour Movements, 1870–1914: An International Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 1990). On the development of Syndicalism in Europe and Russia, see: Wayne Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves: Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913–1923* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989). For a study with a similar approach, but including a perspective on the Americas, see: Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe, eds., *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990). A Study from the field of Global Labor History that analyzes the development of radical ideology in different regions provide: Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
20. Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, eds., *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
21. Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
22. See for example: Linda B. Hall, *Oil, Banks, and Politics: The United States and Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1917–1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Jules Davis, *American Political and Economic Penetration of Mexico, 1877–1920* (New York: Arno Press, 1976); Lorenzo Meyer, *Los Grupos de Presión Extranjeros en el México Revolucionario, 1910–1940* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1973).
23. See: Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Secret War in El Paso: Mexican Revolutionary Intrigue, 1906–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009); Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank Samporano, *Border Fury: A*

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- Picture Postcard History of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910–1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); Linda B. Hall and Don M. Coerver, *Revolution on the Border: The United States and Mexico, 1910–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).
24. Dan La Botz, “American Slackers in the Mexican Revolution: International Proletarian Politics in the Midst of a National Revolution,” *The Americas* 62, No. 4 (April 2006), 563–590; Daniela Spenser, *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Taylor Hansen and Lawrence Douglas, *La Gran Aventura en México: El Papel de los Voluntarios Extranjeros en los Ejercitos Revolucionarios Mexicanos, 1910–1915*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1993); Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
 25. Charles S. Maier, “Leviathan 2.0.: Inventing Modern Statehood,” in *A World Connecting, 1870–1945*, ed. Emily S. Rosenberg (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 212.
 26. Emily S. Rosenberg, “Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World,” in *A World Connecting*, 849.
 27. Jessica Bönsch, *Die Mexikanische Arbeiterschaft und die kulturelle Globalisierung: Die Rolle der Städtischen Arbeiterinnen und Arbeiter im Porfiriato; Mexiko 1876–1911* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2016), 79–87, 107–116.
 28. See for example Knight’s short recourse on labor in the revolution, in which he also cites economic precariousness as a reason for the relative passiveness of the labor movement: Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2, 424–435.
 29. See: Anna Amelina, Thomas Faist, Nina Glick Schiller, and Devrimsel D. Nergiz, “Methodological Predicaments of Cross-Border Studies,” in *Beyond Methodological Nationalism: Research Methodologies for Cross-Border Studies*, eds. Anna Amelina, Thomas Faist, Nina Glick Schiller, and Devrimsel D. Nergiz (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2; Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences,” *Global Networks* 2, No. 4 (2002), 301.
 30. John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).
 31. Mario Barbosa Cruz, *El Trabajo en las Calles: Subsistencia y Negociación Política en la Ciudad de México a Comienzos del Siglo XX* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2008).
 32. Pablo Picatto, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900–1931* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).
 33. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.
 34. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 11.
 35. In some cases, especially in the newspapers of single labor organizations, more specific self-ascriptions like *carpinteros* or *ferrocarrileros* can also be found. While these terms addressed a specific group of workers and were intended to create a sense of identity among certain professions, actors who wanted to speak to the labor movement as a whole would address workers in more general terms.
 36. Van der Linden, *Workers of the World*, 33–34.
 37. Barbosa Cruz states that these actors (street vendors, prostitutes, and service providers), who have long been associated with disorder and filthiness by ruling elites and historians alike, were not necessarily marginalized or cut out of the urban economy. Instead, he explicitly includes them in the popular sector: “Considero a esta población como parte de los grupos populares, por

- su misma condición trabajadora, aunque no esté inserta en los grupos de obreros de fábricas ni de talleres industriales o artesanales.” Barbosa Cruz, *Trabajo en las calles*, 21.
38. See for example: Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1759–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
 39. On the question of increasing differentiation as a result of global entanglement, see: Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds. *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1–8.
 40. Charles Bright and Michael Geyer, “Globalgeschichte und die Einheit der Welt im 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Globalgeschichte*, eds. Conrad, Eckert, and Freitag, 64–65.
 41. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*; van der Linden, *Workers of the World*.
 42. On the complementary nature of the interaction between the global and the local, see: Antony G. Hopkins, ed., *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7–28.
 43. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
 44. Rosenberg, “Transnational Currents,” 815–822.
 45. The relationship between the nation-state and the process of increasing global entanglement has been of concern to scholars of Global History since the very beginning. For a brief overview of the associated methodological and terminological problems, see: Philip L. White, “Globalization and the Mythology of the Nation State,” in *Global History*, ed. Hopkins, 257–284.
 46. Regarding the concerns voiced by Latin Americanists about the application of Global History, see: Matthew Brown, “The Global History of Latin America,” *Journal of Global History* 10, No. 3 (November 2015), 365–386; Lauren A. Benton, “No Longer Odd Region Out: Repositioning Latin America in World History,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, No. 3 (August 2004), 423–430; Jeremy Adelman, “Latin American and World Histories: Old and New Approaches to the Pluribus and the Unum,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, No. 3 (August 2004), 409.
 47. Between 1915 and 1921, this city on the Gulf of Mexico was home to the nation’s most radical and cosmopolitan labor movement: the oil workers. A workforce mainly consisting of national and international migrants, influenced by anarcho-syndicalist ideas, clashed with an advanced capitalist industry with global economic ties and a revolutionary leadership. During the propaganda campaigns of 1915, the Casa had established a branch in Tampico, as had the IWW. Related periodicals, used here as reference works, include: *Fuerza y Cerebro*, *Vida Libre*, *Germinal*, and *Tribuna Roja*. For a detailed analysis of the oil worker’s movement, see: Myrna I. Santiago, *The Ecology of Oil—Environment, Labor, and the Mexican Revolution, 1900–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 205–255.
 48. The heart of the textile industry in Central Mexico had been the scene of the iconic Rio Blanco strike and the base of the Red Battalions of the Casa. It remained an important center of labor activity throughout the time frame of this book, and a stronghold of the Veracruz tenant movement as described in: Andrew Grant Wood, *Revolution in the Street: Women, Workers, and Urban Protest in Veracruz, 1870–1927* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

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Pro Paria, the durable *Órgano de la Confederación Sindicalista de Obreros y Campesinos de Orizaba*, and *El Rebelde* will all be used here as reference points.

49. On the actual success of state-building in the post-revolutionary era, including the incorporation of social movements, as well as the problems of measuring it, see: Alan Knight, "The Weight of the State in Modern Mexico," in *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America*, ed. James Dunkerley (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002), 212–253.

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who laid out perspective of urban ecology? Robert Park and Ernest Burgess. social isolation. polarization of urban labor markets. relationship between automobiles and edge cities. the growth of automobile ownership in developing countries has led to a steep increase in the number of edge cities. which of the following best explains the urban ecology approach. different groups of pop move to the areas where they thrive. Why is it common for garment firms in Mexico to hire mostly women? Employers believe women are a more manageable labor force than men. import-substituting industrialization. Government policies that attempt to replace imported goods with similar goods produced by domestic companies. The urban world reports are part of ongoing research into urbanization and the role of cities in the global economy—a core research area for MGI. Our first major report on this global phenomenon was Preparing for China’s urban billion, whose early findings we published in 2008 and full findings in March 2009. We followed this work with India’s urban awakening: Building inclusive cities, sustaining economic growth in April 2010. In August 2011 and April 2012, we published two more regional perspectives—Building globally competitive cities: The key to Latin America and Urban America: US cities i The Global Perspective of Urban Labor in Mexico City 1910-1929; Introduction. examines the global entanglement of the Mexican labor movement during the Mexican Revolution. It describes how global influences made their entry into labor culture through the cinema, theater, and labor festivals as well as into the more. examines the global entanglement of the Mexican labor movement during the Mexican Revolution. It describes how global influences made their entry into labor culture through the cinema, theater, and labor festivals as well as into the development of consumption patterns and adver Global Urban Competitiveness Report (2019-2020). 1. The Annual General Report- The World300 years of transformation into city. The annual general report examines the global 300-year change from the perspective of cities and found that from the micro level, the change of leading cities causes the basic "cell" change of the world. There are three notable changes in this process: First is the evolution of global urban economic system: from global duality to global integration, from commodity trade system to factor trade system, and then from industrial chain system to innovation chain system. The