

Summary

After achieving independence from the Spanish colonial dominion, a process of political development began in Mexico, tending towards setting up the Nation-State while creating and consolidating its own institutions following the liberal political model. All this was to lead to the start of the parliamentarization of Mexican political life and the changing of the ruling classes – with certain filtering – opening up the way to a new political/parliamentary elite linked to diverse liberal options. This article sets out to propose some first thoughts and debate around one of the most overlooked aspects of the first liberalism in Mexico: the political actors of the Mexican parliamentary stages that saw the consolidation process of the liberal State model that was representative in the country. To do so, as one of the main research methodologies in terms of the parliamentary actors, basic biographical profiles and prosopographical analysis are set out in this article. In this case, partial results are presented of a specific case study, from which partial conclusions and comparative guidelines are presented. This case focuses on parliamentary representation of the State of Puebla in the national Mexican congresses, during the period 1833-1856.

Key words: Mexico. Parliamentarianism, parliamentarian elites, State of Puebla.

Introduction. Mexico between independence and consolidation of the Representative State.

The process of implementing and consolidating a liberal State model in Mexico, during the first two thirds of the 19th century, as occurred in other areas of Latin America or in Spain itself, was punctuated by countless developmental irregularities. Accompanying the generic trajectories of the gradual transition from the Old to the New Regime was the itinerary of change, which involved a switch from institutional absolutism to a liberal, mesocratic State model, with a certain wish for representativeness, albeit limited. Added to this is the by no means insignificant variable of the recently acquired national independence, in 1821. So therefore, the process of consolidating the Nation-State was to go hand in hand with and was to interact with the implementing of a political regime and a model of State in line with liberal ideas and approaches.

The first steps taken by liberalism in Mexico are characterized by an eternal situation of instability, particularly in the political arena. This became manifest in a complex succession of developments, involutions, revolutions, counterrevolutions, military uprisings/pronouncements, conflicts of all kinds, persecution and intolerance of political rivals, failed governmental projects and a plethora of legal and legislative production, apart from being unstable, as well as initiatory and experimental exercises, involving a learning process, marked by the lack of maturity of the new political system. Strictly speaking, producing and searching for a base text on which to consolidate the

¹ This article is part of the R&D+i research project “The historical construction of political inclusion and exclusion: Spain between Europe and Latin America (1780-1910)” [HAR2012-32637] with funding from the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. This project is, in turn, included in the network “History of political cultures and contemporary identities” [HAR2010-12369-E]. An initial approximation to this line of research in V. M. Núñez García, “Los orígenes del liberalismo mexicano. Élités y grupos de poder en Puebla (1833-1857)”. *Secuencia. Revista de Historia y Ciencias Sociales* 78. (2010), pp. 43-87.

Mexican nation was to manifest this constant instability in a visible manner². Since the effective emancipation from Spanish colonial dominion in 1821, up until the Constituent Congress of 1856-1857, the Spanish Constitution of 1812, the Mexican federal Constitution of 1824, the centralist inspired text of The Seven Laws of 1836, the equally centralist Organic Bases of 1843, the Reform Act of 1847 once again with federal approaches and the constitutional text of 1857, were drafted and implemented.

Within this irregular developmental process, two factors came into play that were also related to and formed an integral part of its definition. On the one hand, there was the gradual appearance of groups/factions associated with liberal ideas, with visible, differentiated ideological and discursive lines that led to the forming of political parties. Although this explanation somewhat simplifies a historical landscape that was more complex, it can be commonly agreed that, during this period, a political arena was activated, defined by a duality and bipolarity, in terms of pure liberals – old masonic Yorkians – versus conservative liberals³ - old Scots. This duality also appeared, in a certain way, in the political physiognomy of the national congresses of the day. Furthermore, the country dealt with building a new model of State, with the need for a switch in its ruling classes, once the elites linked to the previous colonial era were forced to cede their privileged positions. The new elite that took on the role of being the visible head of its community in the new political institutions in the making and at the consolidation stage, present clearly different characteristics from those of the previous elite, although there are certain filtrations and continuities in the defining features of their sociological models and in the qualities of this ruling group.

In this case, the political stakeholders on the Mexican parliamentary landscape took on a necessary leading role in this study as the protagonist group in these possible guidelines for renewal, both from the viewpoint of the elitism that underpins the *status* of leadership and representation of the community, and from the ability to transcend this leadership to manage to form groups with economic, social, cultural and political power able to monopolize their uses and abuses for generations to come.

² One of the questions that was systematically dealt with during these initial political and institutional exercises of the independent Mexican Republic was the institutionalization of the national State, both through the executive and the legislative body. As far as both were concerned, but especially for the legislative body, i.e., the parliamentary scenario, the problem of establishing the country was one of the fundamental matters to be dealt with at this stage. Regarding this issue, see R. Sordo, *El Congreso y la formación del Estado-Nación en México, 1821-1855*, en J. Zoraida (coord.), *La fundación del Estado mexicano* (México D. F., 1994), pp. 135-178.

³ As an aside to this comment, intermediary options arose that managed to enrich the political landscape, while following the general tonic marking this duality, in reference to the moderate Mexican option. Mexico's bibliographic production has not focussed excessively on looking into the political groupings. Indeed, traditionally, studies have largely put the accent on parliamentary activity: C. Noriega, *El Constituyente de 1842* (México D. F., 1986); C. Noriega, "Los grupos parlamentarios en los congresos mexicanos, 1810-1857. Notas para su estudio", in B. Rojas (coord.), *El poder y el dinero. Grupos y regiones mexicanos en el siglo XIX* (México D. F., 1994), pp. 120-158; H. Labastida, *Guía bibliográfica, cronológica y temática de los debates del Senado en las sesiones públicas y secretas, 1824-1853* (México D. F., 1997); J. Mateos, *Historia parlamentaria de los Congresos mexicanos*, Vols. 8-25, (México D. F., 1884-1912); F. Zarco, *Historia del Congreso Constituyente de 1857* (México D. F., 1987); *Actas oficiales y minutario de decretos del Congreso Extraordinario Constituyente de 1856-1857* (México D. F., 1957).

Conversely, if this process is analysed from the specific case of Puebla, crystallization of the institutionalization process of the State of Puebla was to be the conditioning factor in terms of accessing parliamentary representation. In this regard, the parliamentary experience of Puebla had been sparked off prior to it being considered as a state within the Mexican federation. At the first constituent congress following the country's independence (22-02-1822/30-10-1822), it contributed 13 members of parliament as a province, which set it alongside Michoacán, in second place in terms of a quantitative contribution after Mexico Federal District⁴. These early political stages where the intention was to consolidate a liberal model or the diverse political systems that were eventually put to test⁵ (Table 1) are characterized, as previously noted, by an irregular development.

Table 1. Political systems/constitutions in Mexico (1821-1857)

Political systems	Legal/Constitutional texts
Regency (1821-1822)	Spanish Constitution of 1812
First Empire (1822-1823)	
Supreme Executive Power (1823-1824)	Mexican Federal Constitution of 1824
First Federal Republic (1824-1835)	
First Centralist Republic (1835-1841)	Seven Laws of 1836 Organizational Foundations of 1843
Provisional Executive with full powers and the First Dictatorship of Antonio López de Santa Anna (1841-1843)	
Second Centralist Republic (1844-1846)	
Second Federal Republic (1846-1853)	Reforms Act of 1847
Second Dictatorship of Antonio López de Santa Anna (1853-1856)	
Constituent Assembly (1856-1857)	Constitution of 1857

Elaborated by the author

During these transition years, from an imperial system headed by Iturbide, up to the Federal Republic, the province of Puebla developed towards a federated state. On 21st December 1823, it was declared as such⁶, opening up the way to the legislative task of a state congress that was intense, original and prolonged in nature, since apart from giving the new institutional structure a constitution, the state congress members were responsible for enacting legislation and regulations to be applied as a matter of urgency⁷. For this reason, after one year and eight months of sessions, the presentation of a constitutional

⁴ R. Sordo, "El Congreso Nacional: de la autonomía de las provincias al compromiso federal", in J. Zoraida (Coord.), *El establecimiento del federalismo en México (1821-1827)*, (Mexico D. F., 2003), pp. 115-153.

⁵ R. Sordo, "El Congreso y la formación", p. 139.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁷ A. Tecuanhuey, "Los miembros del clero en el diseño de las normas republicanas, Puebla, 1824-1825", A. in Tecuanhuey (coord.), *Clérigos, políticos y política. Las relaciones Iglesia y Estado en Puebla, siglos XIX y XX* (Puebla, 2002), pp. 43-67. "Miembros", 2002, p. 59.

project by the *ad hoc* commission extended to 22nd July 1825⁸. From that time onwards, the state of Puebla was to have a considerable number of representatives on the national congresses of Mexico City, from 1833 to 1857 – a chronological range selected in this study – with 130 individuals representing the state both in the Congress and in the Senate of the Mexican Republic, since the diverse electoral regulations put in place during that period granted Puebla a considerable number of representatives⁹. This fact turns out to be symptomatic of the specific weight of the State of Puebla during the consolidation of the Mexican state in particular, during those initial years following the independence, and of the leading role played by Puebla in essential milestones in the history of 19th century Mexico in general, e.g., the siege and surrender during the North American invasion in the War of Texas (1846-1848)¹⁰, the uprising and subsequent siege on the town during the “religion and privileges”, or the victory at the Battle of Puebla, on 5th May 1862, against the imperialist French army.

Liberal political stakeholders: methodological assessments

The historiographical present of epistemic and methodological categories such as the return of the historic subject/stakeholder to the forefront of the priority objectives of scientific history, the return of individual and collective historic biography, the uses and prosopographic method or the new political history has kept up and still maintains a good state of health over the last few decades. In this case, the study of political elites has found an extraordinarily fertile field for development, also joined by Mexican historiography¹¹. On the other hand, despite the fact that for the liberal period in Mexico and in Puebla in particular there is a certain bibliographic corpus with biographic objectives as regards the political elites, these works, on many occasions with contents focusing on viewpoints akin to an excessively condescending discourse and even “hagiographic” in nature, perhaps need to carry out an exercise in biographic updating, for instance, by proposing a massive biographic dictionary of Mexican parliamentary nationals. Such

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹ On the electoral legislation in the period, in Mexico: A. García, *Legislación electoral mexicana 1812-1977* (Mexico F.D., 1978); G. E. Emmerich, “Las elecciones en México, 1808-1911: ¿sufragio electivo?, ¿no reelección?”, in P. González (coord.), *Las elecciones en México: evolución y perspectivas* (México D. F., 1985), pp. 41-67; G. J. Valenzuela, *Legislación electoral mexicana. Cambios y continuidades* (México, 1992).

¹⁰ Regarding events in Puebla during the War of Texas, see A. Tecuanhuey, “Puebla durante la invasión norteamericana”, en J. Zoraida (coord.), *México al tiempo de su guerra con Estados Unidos (1846-1848)* (México D. F., 1997), pp. 381-416.

¹¹ On this matter, see G. Altamirano et Al., *Grupos de poder económico y elites políticas en México. Una bibliografía comentada 1770-1940* (México D. F., 1997); G. Altamirano, (coord.), *En la cima del poder. Elites mexicanas 1830-1930* (México D. F., 1999); B. Rojas (coord.), *El poder y el dinero. Grupos y regiones mexicanos en el siglo XIX* (México D. F., 1994).

research projects, some now veteran or more recent, are bearing excellent results in countries such as England, France, Portugal or Spain¹²

in the historical subjects from an individual and/or collective biographic viewpoint, with the use of prosopographic analysis as a collective use of the same or even as a collective biography. This has opened up new interpretational fields, especially in the spectrum of power elites, being a way of solving issues of a social and political nature. Studies on elites are catching up in terms of the wishes of historians, and knowledge of the origins and development of elitist theories in the fields of sociology and political science are necessary, and even the exercise of explaining our theoretical position in this regard¹³.

In methodological terms, there is a need for some brief comments. The selection made covers a sample analysing 34 individuals from the parliamentary elite representing the state of Puebla¹⁴, from a broader male universe. From 1833 to 1857, 130 individuals represented the state, both in the congress and in the senate of the Mexican Republic, who since the diverse electoral regulations put in place during that period granted Puebla a considerable number of representatives. The following heading methodologically activates prosopographic analysis, broadly speaking, as one of the collective uses of the biography or, alternatively, as a group biography, so that by means of a series of analysis variables susceptible to processing (in the case in point: ages, geographical origins, socio-professional composition, economic-equity quality and investment profiles, stability/continuity, political tendency, *cursus honorum* ...), it is possible to reconstruct the characteristic features of the sociological profiles of the selected group.

¹² The most veteran projects correspond to the *Dictionnaire des Parlementaires Français* and the *History of Parliament*, French and British, respectively. A massive biographic dictionary has been published recently in Portugal, M. F. Mónica (dir.), *Dicionário Biográfico Parlamentar: 1834-1910*, 3 vols. (Lisbon, 2004-2006). As far as the Spanish case is concerned, there is the DPBE project (Diccionario Biográfico de los Parlamentarios Españoles), under the executive leadership of Mikel Urquijo Goitia, the first phase of which has been published, covering the initial stages of parliamentary history in Spain. The first publications by M. (dir.), *Diccionario Biográfico de los Parlamentarios Españoles. Cortes de Cádiz. 1810-1814*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 2010); M. Urquijo (dir.), *Diccionario Biográfico de los Parlamentarios Españoles. 1820-1854* (Madrid, 2012). For further details of this project, see M. Urquijo, "La costruzione di una rete di ricerca: il Dizionario biográfico dei parlamentari spagnoli nella cornice della storia parlamentare europea", *Le Carte e la Historia* 1, (2008), pp. 5-14; M. Urquijo, "The Biographical Dictionary of the Spanish Parliaments: sources and methodological approach", *Parliaments, Estates & Representations* 28, (2008), pp. 7-25.

¹³ P. Carasa, "De la burguesía a las elites, entre la ambigüedad y la renovación conceptual", *Ayer* 42, (2001), pp. 213-239.

¹⁴ The sample selected is as follows: José Pascual Almazán, Diego Aranda y Carpintero, Ponciano Arriaga, Miguel María Arriola, José Miguel Arroyo, José Luciano Becerra y Jiménez, José Rafael Berruecos, Félix Beístegui y Azcué, Joaquín Cardoso, Martín Carrera, Atenógenes Mariano Castellero, José María Cora, Ignacio Comonfort, Rafael Espinosa, Antonio Fernández de Monjardín, Cosme Furlong y Malpica y Salazar, Carlos García Arrieta, Juan González Cabofranco, José María González de Mendoza, Joaquín de Haro y Tamariz, Antonio de Haro y Tamariz, Domingo Ibarra, Rafael Isunza Bernal, José María Lafragua, Juan Múgica y Osorio, José Antonio Marín, Teófilo Marín, Francisco Javier Miranda, José María Oller, Manuel Payno y Bustamante, Guillermo Prieto, Juan Rodríguez de San Miguel, José María Troncoso and Miguel Valentín y Tamayo.

Prosopographic analysis of a case study. The representative parliamentary elite of the State of Puebla (1833-1857)

Generational profiles. Geographic origin and socio-professional profiles

The prosopographic approach is implemented by means of a series of analysis variables, the aim being to profile the homogenizing features and, needless to say, the heterogenization factors in the sociological model of the Puebla political elite. In the first place, we focus our attention on the dates of birth, in order to obtain assumed biases between ages and their possible commitments in diverse political generations. As shown in Table 2, where elements of the group are included in the extreme ten-year chronological periods, an accentuated diversity and variety are noted in terms of ages and framing in the different generations of Mexican liberalism.

Table 2

Births by ten-year periods	
State of Puebla (Mexico)	1775-1785: 4 (11.7%)
	1785-1795: 1 (2.9%)
	1795-1805: 7 (20.5%)
	1805-1815: 12 (35.2%)
	1815-1825: 4 (11.7%)
	No data: 6 (17.6%)

Sources: L. Moreno, *Catálogo de la Colección Lafragua. 1821-1853* (México D. F., 1975); J. Mateos, *Diccionario Porrúa de historia, biografía y geografía de México* (México D. F., 1964); E. Cordero, *Diccionario biográfico de Puebla* (Puebla, 1986); M. A. Peral, *Diccionario de historia, biografía y geografía del Estado de Puebla* (México D. F., 1971); M. A. Peral, *Gobernantes de Puebla* (México D. F., 1975).

Elaborated by the author

Although there will be characters who, in 1833, were by then out and out veterans hardened in hundreds of political battles, as in the cases of Diego Aranda y Carpinteiro or José Luciano Becerra, while others started out in their career in this period without having been involved in the process of implementing the liberal regime in the country. One example of extreme precocity is that of Teófilo Marín who first became a parliamentary representative in 1844 at the age of 27. This generational diversity marked one of the characteristic features of the group, logical on the one hand, in view of the broad nature of the chronological watershed analysed. In any case, the average age for accessing parliamentary positions is 37.03, this being set at a vital stage of maturity of around 40 years of age. It should also be noted that access

to national representation, as a general norm, was the culmination of a career prior to politics, in the military field or in state administration. These elites would accrue merits in building up their *Cursus Honorum* prior to their arrival at the Chambers in Mexico City, so that, as a general rule, this did not occur at an early age. Passage through the departmental congress of Puebla¹⁵, its state government, town council, industry assembly and even following a professional career in the field of the judiciary or the army, would often be the ideal springboard for shifting into a possible political career in the legislative body.

As far as the geographic origin of these parliamentary elites is concerned, 23 members in the sample – 67.6% - were born in the State of Puebla, whereas 6 (17.6%) were born in other Mexican states¹⁶. When recruited and elected, the fact that they were individuals born in the state with a direct link to it was taken very much into account, i.e., their date of birth, residence, economic interests, etc., as well as the area that they were to represent, which entailed a certain relationship between territoriality and the concept of representation. In this regard, values such as prestige, respect and closeness to the community entailed a symbolic capital with an enormous potential in terms of the collective of citizens with political rights, i.e., the electorate. The fields of sociability and domain – economic, social and cultural, clearly apart from the political – activated by these elites are as a matter of preference found in Puebla, in the most immediate environment. Thus the visible projection of these characters when it comes to presenting themselves as subjects of power in their native state. Puebla representation, therefore, is by people who are completely native to the department (67.6%), while the data from other states is merely residual and, furthermore, refers to characters who generally used to have a link with the state. So that phenomena of a political and electoral practice, common in Spain, such as carpetbagging and pigeonholing¹⁷, can be inferred as alien to the political and electoral dynamics of Puebla at the time. The fact that foreign candidates were not “pigeonholed” from the central government in the parliamentary seats allocated to Puebla does not mean that there was no tension between the centre and the periphery or that there was a possible conflict between

¹⁵ Specifically, 8 of the components in the sample had occupied a seat in the departmental congress of Puebla. The number of political state governors stands at eleven, but also, although to a lesser extent, there were military commanders, top civil servants in justice, mayors and counsellors; the positions, in most cases, were taken up before the national political projection of the group.

¹⁶ It has not been possible to locate data on the date of birth of 5 members of the Puebla analysis sample.

¹⁷ Referring to a Spanish case model, where such practices began to be developed on parallel timelines. V. M. Núñez, *Huelva en las Cortes. Elites y poder político durante la década Moderada (1843-1854)*, (Huelva, 2007), pp. 59-112; N. Araque, *Las elecciones en el reinado de Isabel II. La Cámara Baja* (Madrid, 2010).

the appearance of the “professional politician” and the power groups in the territories which, in any case, are complex questions calling for a more in-depth study.

The study of socio-professional profiles, analysed from the categorization of the main activities of each personage, although taking into account the fact that they may be combined and be diverse in nature¹⁸, shows us a marked predominance of the link between forming laws and practicing law with liberal policy (Table 13). The great cornerstone – at least numerically speaking – from which the parliamentary and ministerial political elite of the period was to feed of is that of jurisprudence, and more particularly, attorneyship professionals and the judiciary. The liberal politics of the period was generically characterized by its legislating nature, where a new model of State was being constructed that demanded a legal basis¹⁹. Apart from what had been caused by the political instability itself of Mexican liberalism in its initial stages, all this gave rise to the enormous amount of constitutional texts, electoral laws and laws of various kinds that 19th century politics produced. Despite this, numerically speaking, this profile, albeit majority in nature, failed to exceed 50% due to the more than testimonial presence of other socio-professional fields as well as due to the diversity showed by them.

Table 3 Socio-professional profiles	
State of Puebla (Mexico)	Lawyers: 16 (47.0%)
	Ecclesiastics: 6 (17.6%)
	Military: 6 (17.6%)
	Industrial/Traders: 2 (5.8%)
	Writers/Journalists: 2 (5.8%)
	No data: 2 (5.8%)

Sources: those referred to in Table 2
 Elaborated by the author

The trend towards recruiting a portion of these elites from the military arena and the acceptance of groups or, even, power groups in a broader sense, from a hierarchical order based on military and political leadership, both in the parliamentary dynamic and in the “high politics” of State, are irrefutable. As regards

¹⁸ Many of these categories present the problem of being excessively rigid as they allude to enormously flexible

¹⁹ If we carry out a comparative exercise as regards the Spanish case, one of the characteristics of the elite and of the politics during the reign of Isabel II is that it was the lawyers who took control of the state apparatus, in a succession of constitutional regimes with a clear

the concept of leadership or the appearance of leaders²⁰, there were some striking cases both of leadership of political factions – albeit short-term – as well as of more long-standing, stable executive governments in this period marked by instability. Examples such as those of Guadalupe Victoria, Vicente Guerrero, Anastasio Bustamante, Ignacio Comonfort and, especially, Antonio López de Santa-Anna²¹, are sufficiently recognizable in the initial stage of Mexican liberalism. The limits between the military and the political field became invisible during this period. Furthermore, it would be appropriate, within the civil conservation and pure liberal ranks, to seek support in a certain sector of the army through these military leaderships. We are looking at the initial stages of the consolidating of the Mexican independent Republic and of the liberal State model which, in common with any initial stage, is likely to be hesitant, immature and irregular. One of the symptoms of this irregularity is the impossibility of accepting the switch of government via legal, peaceful channels to political rivals, since changes were always put in place by infringing the legality in force, leading to an eternal state of conflict. It was in this permanent state of conflict that the army and its interventionism in policy proved to be a decisive factor. This is the reason why it was so interesting, in certain circumstances, to resort to the leadership of Santa-Anna, even to the extent of sacrificing the preponderant role of civil political leaders. We can add to this, on the one hand, a generalized atmosphere marked by violence and insecurity, which pointed to the need for resorting to what Lynch has termed a “necessary gendarme”, while on the other hand, we can add the ambitions of power of this type of character. All this has certain similitudes and parallelisms with the case of Spain, where progressive liberalism turned for support to the military leadership of Espartero and, later, to Prim, the moderates looking to General Narváez and the Unión Liberal to Leopoldo O’Donnell²².

In the parliamentary arena of Puebla, although not in a mass, majority way, this military presence and its link with parliamentarianism (17.1%) could also be noted. The military subgroup had its own peculiarities and defining characteristics: we refer here to medium-high ranking characters within the military²³. This subgroup took on considerable political importance at national level and, not in vain, both

²⁰ The most complete study on the concept, nature and typologies of leadership in Latin America during the 19th century is by J. Lynch, *Caudillos en Hispanoamérica, 1800-1850* (Madrid, 1993).

²¹ Regarding Santa-Anna’s leadership, who was President on 11 occasions, from 1833 to 1855, see Ibid, pp. 395-451.

²² In the case of Spain, military presence in high politics during the period when the liberal State was being implemented and consolidated, is a striking example. Specifically, in the period of Isabel II, more than 40% of the ministers came from the military scenario. J. Pro, “Formación”, p. 460.

²³ In the group with four generals, we have a brigade general and a division general. For a more in-depth analysis of these issues, see V. M. Núñez, “La presencia militar en la élite parlamentaria mexicana y española durante el primer liberalismo. Estudio

Martín Carrera and Ignacio Comonfort both became presidents of the Mexican republic²⁴, with a political tendency towards conservative stances – although there were outstanding exceptions, such as that of Comonfort – and an economic and patrimonial situation characterized by relaxation.

The presence of ecclesiastics also has its specific weight (17.1%). Contrary to the situation in Spain, where one of the symptoms of breaking away from the Old Regime was that the ecclesiastical hierarchy was cancelled as an active component in politics²⁵, the relationship, presence and protagonism of the clergy in terms of the country's Independence and the first liberal politics in Mexico was clearly different²⁶. The relevance and support of the Mexican clergy in these processes and its alignment in the search for and construction of a liberal regime, albeit generally conservative in nature, more than explains the presence of the ecclesiastical field as the second most predominant along with the military, in the sample analysed. In this regard, several works by Alicia Tecuanhuey Sandoval have focused their attention on the role of the Puebla ecclesiastics in the construction process of pro-independence discourses, in the beginnings, and later, with pro-federalist tendencies²⁷. Ecclesiastics such as Diego Aranda and Carpinteiro, José María Oller or Francisco Javier Miranda, were to play a leading political role in Puebla, and their presence in the legislative body was unsparing at this stage.

Strictly speaking, the three main cornerstones of power in post-independent Mexico were visible: the army and the clergy on the one part, who were to maintain an unbreakable alliance – with some discontinuity along the way – up to 1860, maintaining their privileges. And on the other hand, there were the owners, some such as the agrarian landowners, others such as the industrialists and traders, not to mention one last group whose patrimonial wealth was more modest. The greater part of these individuals chose professions in activities to do with law, apart from the administration of their assets. During this stage in Puebla, these three elements were drawn together, by family ties, which were eventually consolidated into broader based groups of power.

comparado entre Puebla y Huelva (1833-1857)", in *XIII Jornadas Nacionales de Historia Militar: La era isabelina y la revolución (1843-1875)* (Sevilla, 2009), pp. 287-308.

²⁴ E. Gómez, *Poblanos ilustres. Apuntes para un diccionario biográfico* (Puebla, 1910), pp. 20-21; J. Márquez, *Hombres célebres de Puebla* Vol. 1 (México, 1952), pp. 314-7 and pp. 310-3.

²⁵ J. Pro, "Formación", p. 461.

²⁶ The activism of Hidalgo and Morelos, as exponents of the clergy in favour of independence, during the first insurgent movements, are prime examples of this. Regarding their civil and military leadership, see J. Lynch, *Caudillos*, pp. 106-117.

²⁷ Tecuanhuey, "Miembros", pp. 43-67.

The period analysed is defined from the viewpoint of the parliamentary elites in Puebla by a majority domain, apart from exceptions and discontinuities, of political opinions tending towards conservatism and “moderantismo”. The presence of an empire, of various centralist republican systems and of Santanna dictatorships undoubtedly defines the period and political development in Mexico. On the contrary to Spain²⁸, associating federalism or decentralization with a more advanced liberalism or with the group of pure liberals and centralism with a more conservative liberalism or with conservative and moderate parties is erroneous in the Mexican political arena. Most of the political class, including the Puebla parliamentary elites, tended towards federalist positions, even swelling the conservative ranks, albeit with some exceptions.

In the group analysed, 41.1% - 14 individuals – are clearly conservative, while 28.5% - 8 in total, of the parliamentarians swelled the ranks of the pure liberals²⁹. This corroborates a trend towards conservatism, although there was no excessively marked numerical constriction of the other political option³⁰, which was not always relegated, in a monolithic, continued fashion, to the opposition. Since there were also periods in which they enjoyed the action of government and of parliamentary majorities, such as in the case of the 1856-1857 term of office, which was to give rise to the Mexican Constitution of 1857.

In any case, this period of the first liberalism is associated in the Mexican collective memory/imaginary and in the views generated from abroad, occasionally from reductionist positions tending towards a consolidation of certain stereotypes and topics full of folklore, with General Antonio López de Santa-Anna, counterpoising the other “great personage” of the day, Benito Juárez. Santa-Anna, military leader and politician, embodying the hero³¹ in the construction of his myth and the Mexican patriot in certain circumstances, as well as the anti-hero, the dictator and the traitor in others, building up a twofold image. What is for certain is that with the interaction of the concepts outlined above as political leadership

²⁸ Where there was a clear identification by progressive liberalism towards a decentralized model of State and towards empowering the self-rule of local and provincial entities. In the case of moderate liberalism in Spain, however, centralism and control of all the power mechanisms from Madrid was to be a constant in its politics throughout the 19th century.

²⁹ These results should be taken with certain reservations since, in twelve of the components of the collective, no clear political tendency has been noted, which undoubtedly entails a limitation to the analysis. Possibly a study of the activity of publicists, of parliamentarians and of the lines of discourse does not help to complete our view of political tendencies. L. Moreno, *Catálogo*; J. Mateos, *Historia*; *Diccionario Porrúa*; E. Cordero, *Diccionario*; M. A. Peral, *Diccionario*; M. A. Peral, *Gobernantes*.

³⁰ Furthermore, names appear in the ranks of the pure liberals of Puebla that stood out in national politics and that had a prolonged presence and activism, both in the executive and in the legislative power. Cases in point are those of José María Lafragua and Ignacio Comonfort.

³¹ On the construction of these features associated with heroism, see M. Chust and V. Mínguez (eds.), *La construcción del héroe en España y México (1889-1847)* (Valencia, 2003).

and military “caudillismo”, both pure liberals and conservatives turned to Santa-Anna to form government in certain circumstances, especially when it came to the pinch, as in the case of the North American invasion (1846-1848), despite the fact that the General had always been associated with the more conservative, least flexible options of Mexican liberalism.

On the underlying basis of a period marked by conservatism, the development of Puebla representation in the legislative body was diverse and dependent on the toings and froings and the political situations at any given point in time. This leads us to question the existence of any development since, on many occasions, access to the legislative body was directly linked to the predominant political option or to the system – be it centralist or federal, dictatorial or more open – currently being put in place. In this regard, there were parliamentary stages such as the two-year period 1844-1846 and the 1852-1853 term of office, when political exercises were implemented with a marked conservative majority, a tendency that the Puebla representation was by no means alien to. Standard bearers of the conservative option in Puebla were continually in the limelight during these periods, where personages such as Diego Aranda and Carpinteiro, Luciano Becerra, Antonio de Haro and Tamariz, or Teófilo Marín were to be constants in the chambers. On the other hand, periods such as the Second Federal Republic or the Constituent Congress (1856-1857), were to be more propitious as regards a greater diversity in the political colours of the legislative bodies and in the consolidation of the political presence of the pure liberal group. Representatives of this political line, such as José María Lafragua, Ignacio Comonfort or Ponciano Arriaga, managed to make themselves more heard and with greater ease in Mexican parliamentary life during these periods that were more favourable to their ideological interests.

Continuity, stability and, needless to say, the monopoly held by certain personalities in parliamentary positions, is another interesting factor, especially when taking into account that, in the case of Puebla, this perpetuation in the bodies of legislative power was not associated with any given political colour in particular. Professor Cecilia Noriega has looked into the make up of the Mexican legislative body, taking this permanence and stability in the posts held as a basis, from the Spanish courts of Cadiz – with a representation of the overseas colonies³² - up to the constituent congress of 1856-1857, when presenting a coherent line in this aspect to counter the traditional view of Mexican historiography that defines a fair part

³² For more on this issue, see M. L. Rieu-Millan, *Los diputados americanos en las Cortes de Cádiz* (Madrid, 1990).

of the 19th century as chaotic and anarchical³³. As far as Puebla representation is concerned, certain members maintained this continuity beyond their political tendency. On the one hand, the conservative, José Rafael Berruecos and José Luciano Becerra³⁴ were active at the national congress on six and five occasions, respectively, and the pure liberals, Lafragua and Comonfort, on six and four occasions, between 1833 and 1857³⁵. In any case, there were no prolonged periods of quasi-monolithic predominance in the development of Mexican politics at this stage, in the bodies of power of any given group, even among the pro-conservative tendencies of the day. Apart from exceptional cases, this continuity marked the framework for interaction and behaviour within the legislative arena of the sample selected, where 61.7% of the same repeated parliamentary posts, whereas only 38.2% of the group – comprising of 13 – only appeared once at the Congress or the Senate.

Without going into detail on this situation of continuity and the endogamous relationship with the fields of power, beyond the chronological watershed proposed in this research (1833-1857), we note that, in a subsequent political stage with a different approach and nature, one part of the elite in Mexican politics, bureaucracy and civil servants of Maximiliano's empire (the Second Mexican Empire, 1864-1867), was recruited from among the former representatives of the legislative body³⁶. In the case of the Puebla group, as many as 16 of its components backed and took on leading political positions or posts linked to the administration of the Second Empire³⁷. This meant the by no means inconsiderable percentage of 45.7%, which reaffirms this marked feature of continuity and endogamy in terms of the use of power in Mexican political life.

In any case, the bulk of the Puebla political class in the imperial structure came from the conservative ranks, so that it may be inferred that there was a degree of ideological harmony or, at least, that

³³ C. Noriega, "Los grupos parlamentarios en los congresos mexicanos, 1810-1857. Notas para su estudio", in B. Rojas (coord.), *El poder y el dinero. Grupos y regiones mexicanos en el siglo XIX* (México, 1994), p.120.

³⁴ In fact, by 1833, José Luciano Becerra was a veteran politician, who had started out on his parliamentary career in the Spanish courts of the Constitutional Three Year Period, so that in 1857 he had already been active on ten occasions in the legislative body. José Rafael Berruecos, on the other hand, had been active on the legislative on nine occasions throughout his also long political career. Another outstanding case is that of Antonio Fernández de Monjardín, who took part in eleven national congresses, although outside of the period analysed. *Ibid.*, pp. 132 and 136.

³⁵ L. Moreno, *Catálogo*, pp. 907-947.

³⁶ On the origins, ideological aspects and the political class, during the Second Mexican Empire, see E. Pani, *Para mexicanizar el segundo imperio*, (México, 2001).

³⁷ Within this subgroup, we find important posts and adhesions to the imperial system. Particularly notable is the presence of two ministers, several counsellors of State and magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Empire. José Miguel Arroyo held the position of Minister of Foreign Trade in 1864, as did Teófilo Marín in the Governance from 1866 to 1867. Other personages, such as Antonio de Haro y Tamariz, Juan Rodríguez de San Miguel or Pascual Almazán, were counsellors of State ... *Ibid.*, pp. 367-370.

conservative liberalism “embraced” the empire as a “lesser of two evils”, a consummated fact, or as a curb on excessively audacious approaches, in their view, of the more advanced type of liberalism – the pure liberals. Backing for French foreign intervention as a trigger for the Second Empire and for the figure of Maximilian, by the Mexican conservatives, corroborates this viewpoint. On the one hand, returning to the Puebla representation, an exception occurred with the appointment of the governor of the federal district, of the pure liberal, Ponciano Arriaga, in 1863. In fact, the close relationship of these elites with high politics was of an endogamous, continuist nature, as they managed to remain in power for long periods of time within or in the vicinity of political power, even keeping in this power under regimes of various kinds. This accentuated the ability of these individuals to adapt, in political contexts marked by developmental irregularity. This situation could also be symptomatic of the tendency among these personages towards political chameleonism, opportunism, adaptability to volatile circumstances and, needless to say, as a result of a certain lack of ideological definition, particular to the beginnings of liberalism where partisan groupings were consolidating their lines of ideology and discourse, while laying the foundations for their political culture.

Another of the characteristics of the collective under analysis is the preponderant political weight achieved by several of its components, in the authorities of high national politics. On the one hand, this situation shows a logical consequence of the protagonism of the State of Puebla, as well as of its political elite during the initial steps of independence and of Mexican liberalism. On the other hand, it underlines the fact that the arrival on the legislative body (Congress and Senate), in some cases, was not the culmination of each personage’s *Cursus Honorum*, but rather it was just one more step on the ascending road to the authorities of power. Within the group, we find two presidents of the Republic³⁸, thirteen ministers³⁹ and fifteen diplomatic posts⁴⁰.

³⁸ Martín Carrera as interim president, from 14th August to 12th September 1855, Ignacio Comonfort was interim president and subsequently constitutional president, from 1855 to 1858. Prior to that, Juan Múgica y Osorio was appointed for the same position, on 20th January 1853, but rejected the appointment. L. Moreno, *Catálogo*, pp. 873-892.

³⁹ Members of the executive included Miguel María Arriola, as Minister of Governance (1859), José Luciano Becerra, as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1833), Antonio de Haro y Tamariz, as Minister of Taxation (1844, 1846 and 1853), Domingo Ibarra, as Minister of Foreign Relations (1847), José María Lafragua, as Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs (1846) and of Governance (1857), Teófilo Marín, as Minister of Development (1860) and of Governance (1866), Francisco Javier Miranda, as Minister of Justice (1859), Manuel Payno y Bustamante, as Minister of Taxation (1850-1851 and 1855-1856), Guillermo Prieto, as Minister of Taxation (1852-1853 and 1855), José Miguel Arroyo, as Minister of Foreign Relations (1852-1853, 1855 and 1859-1860) and Ponciano Arriaga, as Minister of Justice, Ecclesiastical Trade and Public Instruction (1852-1853). *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ Miguel María Arriola was plenipotentiary minister for Mexico in Prussia, Saxony and France. Félix Beistegui was Secretary of the Mexican delegation in Rome, Manuel Payno y Bustamante was Consul General for Mexico in Spain and Consul in Santander,

The importance or the direct link of political power with the social and economic elite, or the prolonged endogamy of certain groups, family names, families with this *status* of leadership of larger communities, leads us to ponder the forming of power groups in its broadest sense, because of the diversity of fields in which their components exerted their influence: social, economic, political and even cultural. In this regard, one of the cornerstones on which these power groups were solidly based is the pecuniary aspect. The relationship between the political and economic elite was already clearly typified from the legal framework. Mexico's very electoral laws, following the ideological tradition of European doctrinaire liberalism, established a direct relationship between economic capacity and access to political power, which conditioned the socio-economic profile of the representatives. This type of requirement responded to a basic logic of liberalism, where the need to enjoy a minimum level of income was justified as being a guarantee of the independence of the chambers. This was the basis of the company and property voting system, both for the electorate and for the passive electorate. The Mexican legal landscape on this issue was characterized by its complexity, although it followed the company and property voting system, as exemplified in the centralist constitutional "Seven Laws" of 1836, establishing a minimum income of 100 pesos to access citizenship and from 1,500 to 2,500 pesos to be able to opt for posts as member of parliament or member of the senate⁴¹. It is logical to think, therefore, that one of the features common to the personages analysed is that they had a comfortable, privileged economy.

Although we lack fiscal data on Puebla, within its political elite, we note that numerous owners of realties and real estate are part of the well-to-do bourgeoisie of Puebla high society. Apart from this profile as landowners, which would take us to a bourgeoisie model of an agrarian and landowning nature, other variables occur as regards economic diversification, which enrich this preliminary diagnosis. Personages such as Cosme Furlong y Malpica, Joaquín de Haro y Tamariz, Juan Múgica y Osorio, Gumersindo Saviñón, Ignacio Comonfort or Domingo Ibarra, were promoters of the

José Miguel Arroyo was responsible for trade in Central America while José María Lafragua held diplomatic posts in Spain and France. The appointment of José María Lafragua as plenipotentiary minister in France is recorded on the Senate Archive of the Republic of Mexico (ASM), book 68, dossier 21, ff 612-620.

⁴¹ G. E. Emmerich, "Elecciones", pp. 46-7.

flourishing textile industry in Puebla, following a family tradition or investing in the sector, but in any case, all owned cotton weaving and spinning mills in the period⁴², and even there was some investment in the china ceramics sector.

The investment strategy in the textile industry sector focused on reconverting old flourmills into cotton spinning mills, driven by the hydraulic power produced by the mills. In 1840, Ignacio Comonfort, associated with Cayetano Ramírez and Manuel Fernández de las Cuartas, invested in the sector, along with his partners and established a company to construct cotton-spinning machinery in the Santa Cruz mill, in the Atoyac River⁴³. In this particular case, Comonfort's territorial patrimony provided the raw material for the mill – cotton. Other cases of investments in the sector were those of Cosme Furlong, whose textile mill “Molino de Enmedio”, had 20 looms and employed 95 workers. Gumersindo Saviñón, who employed 100 workers in his El Mayorazgo mill, or Domingo Ibarra who, at his mill on San Agustín Street, had the help of 60 looms and 87 workers⁴⁴. Therefore, the hand of these investors, in a certain manner, diversified the Puebla economy and jobs were directly created that depended on these businesses, apart from consolidating and enlarging their patrimonial fortunes.

The close relationship between political power and certain family names of Puebla high society shows us the appearance and development, in the period, of important lineages/family sagas, whose spheres of power and influence were ramified beyond the exclusively political. A significant exponent of this is the Furlong family: the marriage of James Furlong Downes – native of Belfast – with Ana Malpica, was owner of the mills known as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Enmedio and del Batán. The marriage had eight children⁴⁵. The Furlong and Malpica brothers were distributed among the commercial, ecclesiastical, military and political elite of Puebla. Up to the reconversion to textile production, the family mills used to produce wheat and this had several bakery businesses. José Sebastián Furlong owned one of the establishments, he was a representative of the Puebla bakers in 1810 and of the town traders in 1821. He was linked to local politics as he was Deputy Mayor in 1818

⁴² G. Thomson, *Puebla de los Ángeles. Industria y sociedad de una ciudad mexicana 1700-1850* (Puebla, 2002), pp. 351-2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 351-2.

⁴⁵ *Diccionario Porrúa*, vol. 1, p. 798.

and 1823, and third Mayor of Puebla in 1828. Baltasar Furlong inherited the Guadalupe mill, so that he too became linked to the bakery trade, and later on, to the textile industry. He was first Mayor of Puebla in 1850 and 1855, he was political prefect in 1847-1848 and 1855, interim state governor from March to May 1855, besides being sponsor and protector of the town's Fine Arts Academy⁴⁶.

Tomás, Apolonio and Joaquín Furlong opted for an ecclesiastical career. The first was Principal of the San Cristóbal Orphanage and steward of the convents of Santa Rosa and Santa Inés, although his career was prematurely cut short as he fell victim to an outbreak of cholera in 1833. The second was chaplain and steward of the convent of La Concepción, from 1824 to 1835. Finally, Joaquín held the position of Father Superior of the San Felipe Neri oratory. The three brothers were priests and had parishes under them, although they did not reach the high spheres of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Puebla⁴⁷.

Patricio Furlong was owner of a wheat mill and of bakeries, but his career was mostly centred on the military and political arenas. In the military, he rose to the rank of General and contributed to Mexican independence heading a regiment of national militia. Closely linked to Puebla politics, in 1820, he was a member of parliament representing the Puebla authority. He later took on positions as councillor in the town council, member of parliament in the departmental congress (1824) and in the national congress (1826), and political state governor (1829-1830). Finally, Cosme Furlong had an intense military career in which he rose to the rank of Brigadier General. He became one of the personages with the most specific weight in the Puebla politics of the day, and he had positions, among others, as town hall councillor (1827), Vice-Mayor (1829), State Councillor (1833), Vice-Chairman of the Industry Committee, State Governor (1834 and 1853), military commander of Mexico (1847 and 1852) and State Councillor at national level (1848-1853); apart from his momentary appearance in the national parliament in 1846⁴⁸. In short, they wove a power network that went beyond the world of politics, becoming involved in the intricacies of economic, religious-spiritual, military and even cultural life of Puebla. The social and symbolic capital given by this lineage, by

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ E. Cordero, *Diccionario*, vol. 1, pp. 262-3; M. A. Peral, *Diccionario*, pp. 166-7; M. A. Peral, *Gobernantes*, pp. 46-8; *Diccionario Porrúa*, vol. 1, pp. 798-9.

various forms of power and prestige, consolidated the Furlong family group in the mid 19th century, which made it possible to form an influential political dynasty in Puebla.

Other cases of power groups linked to family sagas are exemplified by names such as Saviñón and Haro Tamariz. The Saviñón family had stood out during the first decades of the 19th century as cotton traders and textile entrepreneurs, and not in vain, as commented earlier. Gumersindo Saviñón owned El Mayorazgo mill⁴⁹. His brother, Estanislao, along with Joaquín de Haro y Tamariz, invested in converting La Teja mill into a textile factory⁵⁰. This privileged economic position made it possible for them to integrate in the spheres of political representation. Estanislao Saviñón was senator in 1842. Gumersindo was a member of parliament in 1846, and Santiago – a third brother – was senator in the 1851-1852 term of office and member of parliament from 1852 to 1853⁵¹. In any case, the Furlong and the Haro families lacked the presence and leadership that they had in the domestic politics of Puebla.

The Haro family distinguished itself for its involvement in local Puebla politics and in projecting its components towards national Mexican politics. Added to this we have the brothers, Luis and Joaquín de Haro y Tamariz, who were a part of the flourishing industrial bourgeoisie in the town, especially the latter who moved into business after inheriting the most important wheat mill in Puebla – the Amatlán mill. He subsequently acquired La Concepción textile factory and invested in the manufacture of fine china tableware, but without too much success⁵². His presence in the political arena of Puebla and in the parliamentary sphere is unquestionable. Among other positions, he was a member of the junta for the province of Puebla (1823), member of parliament and president on its departmental congress (1826-1827 and 1841), political state governor (1828, 1841 and 1845), president of the Puebla industry junta (1846) and senator in the term of office of 1841-1842. In 1843, he was included on the Board of Visitors or legislative national assembly, called by Santa-Anna, and

⁴⁹ G. Thomson. Puebla, p. 351.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 334.

⁵¹ L. Moreno, *Catálogo*, pp. 907-947.

⁵² J. Bazant, *Antonio de Haro y Tamariz y sus aventuras políticas, 1811-1869* (México D. F., 1985), p. 25; G. Thomson, *Puebla*, pp. 365 y 391.

lastly, he attended the congress of the Republic in 1846, after which he retired from active political life, bringing to a close a prolific career⁵³.

Antonio de Haro y Tamariz, the youngest of the brothers, was not successful in business. Although he owned real estate in Puebla, a property in Mexico, investments in mining companies and a marriage of convenience that placed him in the powerful Ovando family of Puebla⁵⁴, he was ruined on several occasions, forcing him to call for economic help from his friends in the Saviñón family⁵⁵. Nevertheless, despite all this instability, he became one of the leaders of the Conservative Party at national level and had a political career full of ups and downs, with a visible presence at several fundamental milestones of the period: swinging from pro to contra Santa-Anna positions, he was involved in the conspiracy intended to bring back the empire, through the son of Iturbide, and he was involved in the conservative revolution that carried the banner of "religion and privileges". At a later date, he backed Maximiliano's empire and, finally, was forced into exile. During this period, he was a national member of parliament in the congress in 1844-1845 and 1852-1853, and in the senate, in 1850-1851, he was president of the Puebla industry junta (1844) and Minister of Taxation on three occasions (1844, 1846 and 1853)⁵⁶. All this corroborates the continuous presence of this family name in different spheres of power.

By way of a conclusion

The results presented so far, albeit with limitations particular to a line of research in the making, allow us to begin to define the sociological profiles of the Puebla political elite, during the early days and consolidation of the liberal State model in Mexico. Can these results be extrapolated to the rest of the Republic? One solid reply to this question calls for an analytical view comparing it with other prosopographic type studies on a regional and local scale or, at least, with limiting and common objectives (elites, economy, family ...). Undoubtedly, studies on political elites in other states of the

⁵³ M. A. Peral, *Diccionario*, p. 194; M. A. Peral, *Gobernantes*, 1975, p. 38; C. Noriega, *El Constituyente de 1842* (México D. F., 1986), p. 217.

⁵⁴ Establishing strategic family ties, in order to consolidate and increase patrimony and spheres of power, was a socially convenient mechanism in most cases in the social relations circuits among the elites, and all the more so for a personage with the biographical background of Antonio de Haro y Tamariz.

⁵⁵ J. Bazant, *Antonio*, pp. 23, 25, 57, 139 and 150.

⁵⁶ E. Cordero, *Diccionario*, vol. 1, pp. 262-3; M. A. Peral, *Diccionario*, pp. 166-7; M. A. Peral, *Gobernantes*, pp. 46-8; *Diccionario Porrúa*, vol. 1, pp. 798-9.

Mexican Federation would contribute to developing and completing our views on the beginnings of parliamentarianism and political representation in Mexico. But certainly, in recent years, the production of such empirical “small-scale” research works has been widely accepted by Mexican researchers⁵⁷. In any case, depending on distances and regional particularities, there is a common nexus from which political personnel were recruited in post-independent Mexico, generally speaking, coming from three large interest groups of cornerstones of power: owners, usually referring to large-scale landowners from the periphery – the army and the clergy⁵⁸. Such regional particularities, as commented earlier, also affected the case of Puebla where, starting from a base of economic wealth and quality in its political elites, the supposed mass presence of agrarian landowners was qualified by trading and industrial activity particular to a state whose economic development framework in the period was characterized by dynamism and a certain tendency towards sector diversity.

The collective analysed was characterized by forming part of an elite and power groups at regional level, mostly in their state of origin, but with intense central-peripheral relations that went beyond a mere parliamentarian representation in the chambers of Mexico City. We see no signs of isolation between the Puebla elite and the centre of power in the federal capital, in the political field, the considerable presence of State counsellors, ministers, diplomats, etc. being indicative, and in other fields, such as in the world of cultural institutions. This situation was certainly conditioned by geographic proximity, there being just 129 kilometres between Puebla and Mexico City, although this figure should be taken on board while taking into account the precarious situation of communications at that time. The elites in other states at a greater distance from the capital, in country as large as Mexico, despite the loss of an important part of its territory in 1848 following the War of Texas, had greater difficulties with transport. Therefore, their presence in the social and decision-making circles

⁵⁷ Among the plethora of publications on this subject, we recommend: G. Altamirano, “Fortuna y redes familiares: una familia de prestigio en Durango, 1850-1920”, in G. Altamirano (coord.), *En la cima del poder. Elites mexicanas 1830-1930* (México D. F., 1999), pp. 102-138; G. Villa, “Elites y revolución en Cuencamé, Durango. El caso de la familia López Negrete”, in G. Altamirano (coord.), *En la cima del poder. Elites mexicanas 1830-1930*, (México D. F., 1999), pp. 139-187; M. Cerutti, *Burguesía, capitales e industria en el norte de México. Monterrey y su ámbito regional (1850-1910)* (México D. F., 1992); J. Olveda, *La oligarquía de Guadalajara. De las reformas borbónicas a la reforma liberal* (México D. F., 1991).

As far as other research works are concerned that deal with the State of Puebla, see: C. Aguirre, *Personificaciones del capital. Siete propiedades en la sociedad e industria textil de Puebla durante el siglo XIX* (Puebla, 1987); L. Gamboa and R. Estrada, *Empresas y empresarios textiles de Puebla: análisis de dos casos* (Puebla, 1896).

⁵⁸ In the socio-professional profiles analysed in the Puebla parliamentary elite, the military and ecclesiastical presence is visible, although without taking up a central space of lawyers/jurists in said elite. One hypothesis that could be plausible is that this majority group formed part of the families of large or medium scale owners. Furthermore, in this period, the fact of being able to have access to higher education in itself established a feature of economic quality.

of the Federal District were less important. Following this general line of argument, it would be interesting to delve deeper, sources permitting, into a series of questions: how many times did the Puebla representatives travel to the capital in the year? How long were their visits? Did they have their own accommodation in Mexico City? And lastly, did the people most involved in the fields of national power eventually have their own residence in the capital?

Apart from the geographical factor, which did not have to be a determining factor in all cases, the previously mentioned political weight of Puebla during the decades in the middle of the 19th century, also played its role. Although we refer to the political weight of Puebla, this situation can also be extended to its elites. One of the characteristics when it came to these people interacting with power, was their wish to go beyond their local environment to the national. It becomes plain to see in some of the components of the group that there was a clear motivation to have an active presence and influence in the leading political matters occurring in this period. Such as the cases of Antonio de Haro y Tamariz, José María Lafragua or Ignacio Comonfort, each with different means, but with an outstanding presence in national politics: the former combining an insurrectional tendency with activity in the Ministry of Taxation, Lafragua from an intense legal, political and cultural career, whereas Comonfort, who became president of the country combining a military with a political career. In any case, not all the components in the sample have such an intense political curriculum. But the fact is that for some, access to parliamentary posts in their *Cursus Honorum* triggered off subsequent qualitative steps forward in their political career, while for others it did not. On this point, it would be advisable to conduct a detailed analysis of the parliamentary activities of these characters: lines of discourse, initiatives in law, projects, parliamentary debates ... with a view to determining the extent of their activism in the legislative body, the rank of their contributions on a quantitative and qualitative scale, their ideological positions on political issues (Church-State relations, representation, citizenship, ecclesiastical and military privileges, ways of state-nation consolidation). On the other extreme, quantifying the presence of “practically voiceless members of parliament”. Such is the case in terms of public and formal politics, since it would also be of considerable interest to look into the informal manifestations of power. We refer here to relations with clients, contacts, sociability among elites, reciprocal relations, sponsorship relations ...

In short, although this group is characterized by its tendency to have a visible, active presence in the bodies of national power, their link with their state of origin continues to be vital, and the cornerstone of their being included in the elite is found in a collective eminently originating in Puebla. The basis of the position of power, in the broad sense of these individuals, of their prestige and influence, continues to lie in their state of origin. Furthermore, if there were no promotion and a presence in the surrounding areas of power in Puebla, the possibilities of success in Mexico F.D. were fairly scarce. This is illustrated by the fact that most of the parliamentary elite were born in the State of Puebla.

Economic quality is another of the defining characteristics of the group, and is one of the underlying bases for their access to the power arena. Not only through the filters that the legal basis itself required at the time in terms of political representation, but also because of the cost that promoting activities and a certain patronage could involve, which would be necessary for a solid political career. Therefore, the socio-economic profile of the elite covered by this analysis sets the group among the well-to-do classes, in the heart of families with no economic hardships, although the biographic trajectory of a given person indicates that, either in the first years of life or when mature, after certain disasters of management, cases of precariousness did occur. The most outstanding data is the economic diversification noted in the production activities of the elite, basically, in their industrial and commercial aspects within the urban economic circuit of Puebla, which distances the group from the topical image of the rural landowner/ranch owner whose incomes came exclusively from real estate, in any case, both the ownership of lands and of real estate would be another defining feature of these individuals. The next question would be, to what extent do we find signs of breaking away in the group under analysis? The particular nature of Mexican history, where there is an interaction of the crisis of the Old Regime, national independence and the beginnings of liberalism, favours an optimum juncture for a new generation of elite leaders to emerge from the new independent state structure in terms of the colonial, i.e., there are breaking away elements apart from the biological factor itself, but there were also continuities that decide it. Many of the elites present in the institutions of Mexican power, in the first half of the 19th century who spearheaded the self-rule and independence claiming processes against Spanish dominion now occupied authorities of power

in the colonial structure. One quite clear example of this is the transfer of royalist military commands to insurgent ranks during the independence process, an outstanding exponent of this being Santa-Anna⁵⁹. As regards the Puebla group, both Diego Aranda and José Luciano Becerra were chosen as alternate members of parliament in the Spanish courts of Cadiz and in the Constitutional Three-Year courts, so that their position of power was evident in the previous period⁶⁰. Furthermore, influential family groups from Puebla, such as the Furlongs, Haros, Ovandos, Osorios and Múgicas, had already formed part of the colonial oligarchic group, keeping their privileged positions at regional level after independence⁶¹.

What does seem to unfold is a certain capitalist mentality when it comes to looking for new production solutions, such as the strategy adopted by some of the family groups when reconverting the old flourmills to cotton spinning. This gave rise to a flourishing textile sector in Puebla, in a context of widespread economic depression throughout the country, where economic contraction and hardships to articulate a national market were evident⁶². In view of these data, excessively rigid explanatory models should be avoided. There is a clear commitment to development and economic diversification, although not so much towards the free market as marked by classic capitalism. The institutions, where there was a flourishing representation of the elite dealt with in this analysis, such as the Puebla industry junta, were to be constants in the reports addressed to the political authorities for them to take protectionist measures, which would make greater competitiveness possible for the Puebla products in terms of textiles coming from the United States⁶³. For these reasons, an amalgam of new and old elements arose in the sociological profile of the group, giving rise to a complex, polyhedral reality, in this case conceptualized from the common profile of elitism.

⁵⁹ J. Lynch. *Caudillos*, p. 167.

⁶⁰ Series of electoral documentation in the Parliament Congress Archive of Spain (ACD), document case 5, Dossier No. 26 document case 7, Dossier No. 23.

⁶¹ M. L. Morales, *La familia Furlong en el siglo XIX* (Puebla, 1992).

⁶² E. Cárdenas, *Cuando se originó el atraso económico de México. La economía mexicana a lo largo del siglo XIX, 1780-1920* (Madrid, 2003), pp. 59-91.

⁶³ This call for protectionism was articulated by the industry junta of Puebla, and it was considered that establishing the free trade of textiles would spell ruin for the sector in Puebla. The step was even taken to not only call for a customs policy but to ban outright imports of yarn and cotton materials from abroad. In the parliamentary arena too, this concern was evident among the Puebla representatives, as in the case of Antonio Fernández de Monjardín who, in 1841, called on the government for explanations in the senate regarding the importation into the country of 62,000 pounds of foreign yarn. L. Moreno, *Catálogo*, pp. 411 and 541; Intervention by Antonio Fernández de Monjardín in ASM, book 43, Dossier 2, f. 297.

As far as the other characters defining the elite are concerned, the permanence and continuity in institutionalized power, especially in parliamentary posts, and the appearance of political dynasties, marked a certain endogamous link in these individuals with power. The dialectic relationship which, in terms of the model presented, arises between concepts such as elite, leadership and minority, indicate that the uses, abuses or disuses of power by this governing minorities, representatives of the masses, could be directed towards the perpetuation of the person, lineage or power group in outlying areas of the same. Finally, a duality occurs that may lead to a somewhat stereotyped image of 19th century politicians, imbued with romanticism, in the midst of passions, conflicts and the political exaltations of the day, on the one party, the scarcely prosaic capacity for opportunism and political adaptability shown by some members of the group in their perpetuation of power and, for this very reason, the convulsive personal trajectories of many of these people standing up both for high ideals as well as for personal interests, where such unedifying experiences as persecution and political exile were also present.

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