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RESEARCH IN MEXICAN HISTORY:

Topics, Methodology, and a Practical Guide to Field Research

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B. Alternative Views in History: Historical Statistics and Oral History by James W. Wilkie

Although this section is intended to provide a pragmatic guide to new research techniques developed for the study of Mexico rather than to offer a discussion of theoretical issues, it is important to take the latter into account in order to suggest the nature of inquiry. In several senses, we are dealing with what may be termed alternative views of history. Quantitative analysis (expressed in terms of descriptive time-series data) may differ from oral history's qualitative views as well as provide hypotheses for discussion in interviews. (Oral history here is defined as the scholar's tape recording of his interviews with persons who can shed light on past events, and discussion is developed below at some length because relatively little has been written about methods and intellectual rights in oral history materials.) Further, both techniques treat matters of probability and reliability as well as independent analysis in which scholarly definition influences the outcome of field research.

A basic supposition in the study is that while there is no "truth" to be found, the scholar attempts (as with traditional methods) to approach and to reconstruct historical events by comparing divergence and convergence of his research materials, whether he examines historical statistics and oral history separately or in relation to each other. In any case, perhaps investigators should be as concerned with presenting alternative views as they are with developing consistent themes.[1]

HISTORICAL STATISTICS

Discussion of historical statistics here is limited to the development of time-series data for use as threads which permit historical interpretation or reinterpretation.[2] Essentially this is a descriptive process in which raw data (for example, statistics on personnel employed in industry) are compiled, reorganized, and adjusted to arrive at comparability and/or to explain limitations for yearly or benchmark time periods.[3] Once the series has been completed, it can be related to other historical events or time series in order to confirm or revise standard views of events, especially as they may influence politics. Even if the data do not lead to a new interpretation or raise new

questions, they may help to confirm what scholars have suspected but have been unable to prove in their interpretive essays. In this manner time-series data may be of great value in providing themes for the understanding of forces at work over long periods of time.

In the use of historical statistics, one advantage, is that if full statistics are published (as is desirable), other scholars may rework the same data for their own interests and interpretations.[4] The use of historical statistics, however, can lead historians into the problems of social science wherein debates over methodology may well overshadow discussion of content and message unrelated to the data per se. Unfortunately, such debates often center on the question of which method is "right" or "wrong" rather than how alternative views may be developed. In short, as Professor Clark W. Reynolds has noted, debates over the appropriateness of the data and relevant weights can "provide hours of activity for insomniac social scientists."[5]

Much of the latter problem can be overcome, however, by using descriptive rather than inductive statistics which involve analysis of variance, covariance, correlation, regression, and factor analysis.[6] Given the limitations and meaning of the data, the use of such inductive techniques frequently reflects "overkill" with regard to the making and interpretation of hypotheses. Nevertheless, depending upon the particular case, such methods may be very useful; and the interested scholar can keep abreast of general methodological developments, projects, and bibliography throughout the world by subscribing to the *Historical Methods Newsletter: Quantitative Analysis of Social, Economic, and Political Development*, a periodical published by the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh since 1967.[7] In Mexico, investigators may wish to consult with the Dirección General de Muestreo (Artículo 123 #88, México 1, D.F.) about its research based upon sampling techniques.[8]

Since raw data are generated by almost every Mexican agency, there are nearly limitless opportunities for scholarly development of historical statistics. Usually this can be undertaken by visiting the library of any of the country's numerous centralized and decentralized agencies in order to ascertain the kind of statistics reported in published and unpublished reports. Since in many of these agencies few people use the library, the librarian may be grateful for the attention which is finally given to his long efforts in building a small collection.[9]

Access to unpublished materials may be difficult, since a bureaucrat who does not have a confidential report locked in his desk lacks status and impor-

tance. Fortunately, however, the researcher will find most Mexican agencies to be much more open and ready to provide information than any national or international agency in the United States. The main problem may lie in making contacts directly with the agency director or his deputy in order to bypass lower-level functionaries. Once top functionaries agree to help, doors may remain open for many years because, regardless of changes in management, lower-echelon bureaucrats tend to remain in office, continuing routinely to carry out orders to be of assistance.

Some agencies are very careful about the data which they make available; for example, figures on the actual expenditures of the decentralized agencies are available only for the period since 1965. It is notable that in the meantime, detailed data on agricultural credit have become difficult to obtain and reports of the Ejido Bank have not been published since 1962.[10] Because presidents since Adolfo López Mateos have pledged support to poor communal landholders who have received plots under the aegis of the official party, a dearth of recent disaggregated information may mean that the government does not want to reveal how little funding has been made available (or how much has been loaned in the richer and more productive states), the Ejido Bank has been mismanaged, and/or repayment of loans to the bank has not been of the expected magnitude.

One may speculate also about problematic statistics which are available. Time-series figures for questionable data are important in that they offer inherently interesting hypotheses precisely because of their apparent manipulation or inadequacy (as with election and unemployment statistics, respectively). Such data may be analyzed to suggest questions concerning state policy and national development.[11]

Basic historical time-series remain to be constructed for almost all types of government and private activities. Figures may be reorganized for independent analysis from data conveniently provided by Mexico's Dirección General de Estadística (Balderas 71, México 1, D.F.). The best statistical collections are located at the aforementioned agency as well as the libraries of the Banco de México (Calle Condesa 6); Nacional Financiera (Isabel la Católica 51); Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (El Salvador 47); and Dirección General de Economía Agrícola (Aquiles Serdán 28). In addition, these downtown (postal zone 1) agencies publish innumerable reports and statistical yearbooks.[12]

To keep up with the published data, one should not only receive the yearly *Memorias* of the above agencies but also obtain subscriptions (free) to Na-

cional Financiera's weekly *El Mercado de Valores* as well as to the Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior's monthly *Comercio Exterior* (two major publications which have broad social and economic interests not revealed in their titles). Important general and specific guides to available data include the Dirección General de Estadística's *Catálogo General de las Estadísticas Nacionales* (1960), with a separate *Indice* (1960); *Inventario de Estadísticas Nacionales* (1966); and *Anuario Estadístico*, published in alternate years with the *Compendio Estadístico*. Other major guides include the Banco de México's *Informe Anual* and the Inter-American Statistical Institute's *Monthly List of Publications Received*, available (free) from its office in the Pan American Union (Library, IASA, 1725 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006).[13]

For personal contacts with the Mexican scholarly world, visiting investigators may wish to work through El Colegio de México (Guanajuato 125, Mexico 7, D.F.), which is involved in a broad spectrum of statistical research. El Colegio's *Demografía y Economía*, for example, is a periodical which deals with some statistical materials for recent Mexican history.[14]

Among the above listing of publications which deal with historical statistics, the reader will find Mexican printed documents which deal with the entire range of public and private activity. Though these documents often provide the rationale for change in policy and justify the use of new kinds of data, generally they do not explicitly relate time-series to the historical process. Oral history provides one method for making such a linkage.

ORAL HISTORY

With regard to theoretical aspects of presenting alternative views in Mexico's twentieth-century development, I have attempted at times to link historical statistics to oral history. This has been done by questioning Mexican leaders about patterns in data for periods of their responsibility in public positions. Often these alternative views have not been accepted in my own statistical interpretations, but they stand as participant counterpoint or counterbalance to scholarly investigation; and some tape-recorded interviews have been published in James W. Wilkie and Edna Monzón de Wilkie's *México Visto en el Siglo XX; Entrevistas de Historia Oral: Ramón Beteta, Marte R. Gómez, Manuel Gómez Morín, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Emilio Portes Gil, Jesús Silva Herzog* (Mexico: Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Económicas, 1969).[15]

Quite apart from historical statistics, because Latin American elites (let alone nonelites) with few exceptions do not have a tradition of writing autobiography or scholarly biography, investigators have found it helpful to interview leaders in order to discuss motivations as well as to establish basic chronologies. In interviewing Mexican public figures of this century, we have found that often they are reluctant to discuss issues which are inextricably involved with their personal history. Thus, where possible our investigation attempts to construct personal history by use of a chronological approach which provides a framework for flashback, flash forward, and spontaneous digression needed to make a point or carry out an idea.

Although oral history interviews can be tape recorded with nonelites, to date historians generally have left the story of the common man within the purview of anthropologists like Oscar Lewis. Given the great need to record the views of national and subnational leaders who can still give us a picture of their role in Mexican history since 1900, perhaps this division of labor is rational. Though the historian asks questions from a different point of view than the anthropologist, in the future investigators may wish to follow the lead of Fernando Horcasitas, who has combined methods from both disciplines.[16]

There are several schools of thought regarding the conduct of oral history interviews with leaders. The original view developed in the United States (principally at Columbia University) seems to stem from the idea that the interviewer should not attempt to guide the discussion since he may introduce bias into the responses. While this view may have varying degrees of validity when the investigator is working with nonelites, oral history allows spontaneous exploration of ideas as well as open-ended questions and answers. As developed for Mexico, the oral history interview is seen as an opportunity to question leaders (who in any case are accustomed to manipulating people for their own ends) in order to cover topics which leaders might not wish to analyze or which they take for granted, discuss public rumors which have never been confirmed or refuted,[17] and provide cues which trigger recall of the past.

Although oral history research presented in *México Visto en el Siglo XX* perhaps offers a convenient guide by providing examples of interviews with seven leaders representing different ideological points of view in the political spectrum, it is important to note here that in creating a synthesis with aspects of both biography and autobiography, the investigator should work with a list of questions which he can check and cancel as they are covered in the course

of the conversation. Since one cannot go simply from one question to another in order (as in the yes-or-no type of polling questionnaires) without limiting spontaneity, and since the conversation can develop in any number of ways at any given moment, a checklist is necessary which may be expanded in the course of the conversation or as questions are generated in interviews with other leaders. In this way, questions which are answered before they are asked may be eliminated, and the investigator will have a record of what has or has not been discussed as the interview progresses. The latter aspect is especially important if short interviews are conducted over a long period of time.

In order to stimulate recall, the scholar may wish to confront a leader with speeches or writings of his earlier years as well as to point out apparent contradictions in his thinking. Although some readers might doubt the validity of oral history because persons interviewed discuss the past from the vantage point of the present (thus justifying or shading past events in order to fit into a rational picture which never existed), it is precisely this historical perspective which allows us to assess long-term meaning in history. In short, the leader himself may not have understood what was going on at any given moment in history, and only with time does his interpretation take on meaning. Further, concerning the recall of specific events, it is the position of some psychologists that nothing is ever completely forgotten, but that recall is related to appropriate retrieval cues.[18] In any case, oral history suffers from the same disadvantages as autobiography, yet has the advantage of permitting the scholar to confront his historical figure. In *México Visto en el Siglo XX*, for example, the reader may determine for himself the convergence and divergence of views in order to assess which persons have the most accurate knowledge of different events or leaders commonly discussed.

Publication of oral history interviews involves the editing of verbatim transcripts. Although the tapes stand as recorded, the transcription of oral history interviews may be compared to translation from one language to another because the spoken word may not necessarily carry the same connotation in written form. In addition to problems of emphasis and intonation, which are hard to translate into writing, the written form may be difficult to understand if false starts and repetitious or unnecessary material are included. Furthermore, because the tenor of the conversation may not show in the published version, and because leaders may not be willing to make public the material which they have recorded for posterity, we encourage additions as well as permit deletions in the edited manuscript. Thus, the manuscript may

be a second statement which can be compared to the original taped version much as one compares drafts of documents.[19]

Aside from theoretical questions of the type just discussed (some of which may not be taken up in the preface to published oral history without offending the leaders who have offered their cooperation), investigators face a number of technical problems concerning how to record and transcribe oral history interviews. In fact, many oral history ventures fail because of the accidental erasure of tapes and the cost of making transcriptions. And some large oral history projects have had to suspend new recording in order to catch up on the backlog of untranscribed materials. (Needless to say, this latter approach is as self-defeating as the projects which erase the tapes after transcripts have been edited because the project directors assert that it is inconsistent to have two versions of the same interview which are not in exact agreement.)

In addition to a number of technical questions involved in making a tape-recorded interview (including the technical development of the interview;[20] information to be included on each tape;[21] the need for a battery-operated tape recorder because of voltage problems;[22] and the selection of a recorder which can also be used for transcription[23]), a major problem concerns retrieval of information. Regardless of whether or not the scholar intends to publish the entire interview, without transcription the location of specific information may be an overwhelming problem simply because one must listen to the tapes instead of skimming through a manuscript. At an average rate of twenty-five pages per hour of recording time, a five-hour interview (which seemed short in the field) will turn out to be a one-hundred page manuscript involving roughly twenty to thirty hours of transcription time. Thus, scholars can hardly spend their own time in transcription of tapes, and without a research grant they may not have even the equipment to transfer original recordings to seven-inch reels of low-print tape which provide storage copies.[24]

With regard to legal rights in recorded interviews, in Mexican procedure intellectual authorship is held by the interviewer.[25] While this appears to hold true throughout Latin America, such a common-sense position recently has been made explicit in the United States.[26] In the only legal precedent to date, New York State's highest court decided in the case of Mary Hemingway versus Random House, Inc. (publishers in 1966 of A. E. Hotchner's *Papa Hemingway: A Personal Memoir*) that Ernest Hemingway impliedly licensed his rights under common-law copyright when he knowingly permitted Hotchner to interview him. Thus, Mrs. Hemingway lost her contention that her deceased husband's tape-recorded interviews should be considered—as in the

case of letters—to be the intellectual property of her husband's estate, even if owned materially by Hotchner.[27] On December 12, 1968, the New York State Court of Appeals (in upholding the decisions of two lower courts) not only denied Mrs. Hemingway's attempt to stop the sale of Hotchner's book, but denied her claims that Hotchner had wrongfully used material imparted in confidence and that the resulting work constituted an invasion of her privacy. In this manner, Mrs. Hemingway's lawsuit for injunctive relief and damages came to naught.[28]

Because the Hemingway decision may not be considered a binding precedent in other states, however, upon conclusion of the oral history interview it is highly desirable to obtain a release permitting publication of the materials or spelling out any limitations on the use of the oral history documents. Sometimes leaders will consent to be interviewed (or will speak freely) only if the scholar agrees not to publish the work for a specified number of years, and they may request that the tapes and transcript must remain completely closed to other investigators for a certain number of years (usually five to ten) or until their death.[29]

Persons recorded in Mexico by the Wilkies include Salvador Abascal, Aurelio R. Acevedo, Juan Andreu Almazán, Silvano Barba González, Clementina Batalla de Bassols, Ramón Beteta, Juan de Dios Borjórquez, Alfonso Caso, Luis Chávez Orozco, Daniel Cosío Villegas, Carlos Fuentes, Francisco Javier Gaxiola, Jr., Marte R. Gómez, Manuel Gómez Morín, Martín Luis Guzmán, Luis L. León, Germán List Arzubide, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Aurelio Manrique, José Muñoz Cota, Melchor Ortega, Ezequiel Padilla, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Emilio Portes Gil, Manuel J. Sierra, Jesús Silva Herzog, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jacinto B. Treviño.[30]

Recordings have also been made recently by other investigators. Thus, John Hart has recorded Celestino Gasca and Rosendo Salazar, and Alan M. Kirshner has recorded Rodulfo Brito Foucher. These interviews and a recent publication of Píndaro Urióstegui Miranda appear to be more topically interested than personally oriented. Professor Urióstegui has recorded Amador Acevedo, Juan Barragán, Nicolás T. Bernal, Nicolás Fernández Carrillo, Luis L. León, Eduardo Neri, Jesús Romero Flores, Aarón Sáenz, and Rosendo Salazar.[31]

With regard to topically oriented oral histories, perhaps the most ambitious Mexican effort dates from 1959, when the Archivo Sonoro de la Revolución Mexicana del Departmento de Investigaciones Históricas del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia began tape recording survivors of the

1910 revolutionary era.[32] Since that time over seventy persons have been tape recorded. Most of these persons played minor roles, but some major figures include Adrián Aguirre Benavides, Gustavo Baz, Federico Cervantes, Roque Estrada, Isidro Fabela Alfaro, Roque González Garza, Martín Luis Guzmán, Raúl Madero, Roberto V. Pesqueira, Alma Reed, Luis Sánchez Pontón, and Luz Corral de Villa. In 1970 the Archivo Sonoro began a publication program, and Professors Alicia Olivera de Bonfil and Eugenia Meyer have published their interviews with Ernest Gruening, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, and Jesús Soto Inclán.

Although journalists have also entered the field of oral history (see Elena Poniatowska, *La Noche de Tlatelolco: Testimonios de Historia Oral*[33]), the above listings show that most of Mexico's leaders of the twentieth century remain unrecorded. Clearly, oral history has only barely gotten underway in Mexico.[34]

CONCLUSION

This chapter has touched on only a few of the questions involved in oral history and historical statistics.[35] Various uses of oral history (such as in the development of computer coding to facilitate content analysis and/or investigation in patterns of response, and in personality assessment of aggregate psychological traits found in open-ended interviews) have been excluded as beyond the scope of this study.

In discussing oral and statistical history as used separately or in relation to each other, it is important to note that each is circumscribed by the parameters of definition developed in analysis. In oral history, care must be taken to find a balance between under- and overdirection of the interview. If an oral history is to be successful (and many interviews will not be as successful as one hopes), analysis by the scholar will complement and bring out the leader's views. The result is at once the creation of a document as well as a new type of analytical study.

With historical statistics, as with oral history, it is significant to note that changes in definition (or points of view) will provide alternative views of historical problems. Certainly the problem of definition is no less the case with nonstatistical threads generally used by historians. In sum, perhaps in the future, we need to develop alternative views of historical problems (regardless of the methods used) in order to suggest probabilities as to which method helps us understand different aspects of complex problems. Such an approach

would stand in contrast to narrative history, in which we provide neither alternative methods nor alternative interpretations for understanding historical problems. In such a reconstruction of history, the phrase "telling it like it is" becomes less important than attempting to understand complex problems for which we have not worked out appropriate questions, let alone begun to derive a single set of satisfactory "answers."

NOTES

1. Problems of definition in historical statistics and oral history are no less than those encountered in other approaches to historical problems, be they phrased, for example, in the terms of archival studies by the historian or field studies by the anthropologist. Thus, one may note the disparity of methods used for the study of agrarian revolt in Mexico. Whereas John Womack, Jr., wrote a political narrative description of Morelos during the decade 1910-20, Paul Friedrich turned to the study of such items as kinship and diet patterns to explain the course of events in Michoacán during the 1920s. Because the definition of inquiry differs so radically in these two works, the resulting alternative views of the problem of agrarian revolt provide stimulating discussion as pieces are added to work out the puzzle of Mexico's rural history. Compare Womack's *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1969) and Friedrich's *Agrarian Revolt in a Mexican Village* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

2. Recent examples of works which reorganize official statistics and make new interpretations of Mexican history include Leopoldo Solís, *La Realidad Económica Mexicana: Retrovisión y Perspectivas* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1970); and Clark W. Reynolds, *The Mexican Economy: Twentieth-Century Structure and Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

3. For an example of problems and limitations in adjusting time-series data given in Mexico's industrial censuses, see James W. Wilkie, "La Ciudad de México como Imán de la Población Económicamente Activa, 1930-1965," in *Historia y Sociedad en el Mundo de Habla Española: Homenaje a Jose Miranada*, edited by Bernardo García Martínez et al. (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1970), pp. 379-95.

4. Thus, for example, in order to develop correlations concerning voter turnout for the official party between 1952 and 1967, Barry Ames ("Bases of Support for Mexico's Dominant Party," *American Political Science Review* 54 [1970]: 153-67), has used historical statistics on urbanization and poverty supplied in James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change since 1910*, 2d ed., rev. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). For use of data on poverty from the same book, see Rodrigo Medellín, "La Dinámica de Distanciamiento Económico Social de Mexico," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 31 (1969): 513-46; and for use of data on federal expenditures, see James A. Hanson, "Federal Expenditures and the Political Economy of the Mexican Revolution," *Yale University Economic Growth Center Discussion Paper* 120 (September 1971).

5. Reynolds, *The Mexican Economy*, p. 46.

6. For methodology, see Hubert M. Blalock, *Social Statistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960). Professor Blalock discusses descriptive statistics (Part II) as compared to inductive statistics (Part III).

7. For example, see Colin B. Burke, "A Note on Self-Teaching, Reference Tools, and New Approaches in Quantitative History," *Historical Methods Newsletter*, March 1971, pp. 35-42. See also Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, *Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

8. The Departamento de Muestreo is an agency of the Secretaría de Industría y Comercio (Cuauhtémoc 80, México 7, D.F.), which sells many statistical publications. The Departamento de Muestreo has published, for example, *La Población Económicamente Activa de México en Junio de 1964*, which is now not only a historical document but contains historical questions on the popularity of such figures as Hernán Cortés and Benito Juárez.

9. For a partial list of agencies, see Secretaría de la Presidencia, *Manuel de Organización del Gobierno Federal, 1969-1970* (Mexico: Comisión de Administración Pública, 1969).

10. Philip Boucher, "Agricultural Credit in Mexico: A Review Article," Department of History, UCLA, 1971.

11. See James W. Wilkie, "New Hypotheses for Statistical Research in Recent Mexican History," *Latin American Research Review* 6, no. 2 (1971): 3-17.

12. Other important libraries with statistical collections include the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization Library (Hamburgo 63, México 6, D.F.) as well as the United States Embassy Commercial [and Economic] Library (Reforma 305, México 5, D.F.).

13. For background, one should consult two publications by Mexico's Dirección General de Estadística: *Bibliografía Mexicana de Estadística*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1942); and *Historia de la Estadística Nacional* (1967), reprinted from Rodolfo Flores Talavera's articles in *Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística* 86, nos. 1-3 (1958).

14. *El Trimestre Económico* (Avenida de la Universidad 975, México 12, D.F.) and the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* (Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México 20, D.F.) are among other important periodicals which often publish historical statistics. Recent data are published in the Dirección General de Estadística's monthly *Revista de Estadística.*

15. For example, Ramón Beteta and Vicente Lombardo Toledano have commented extensively on my analysis of federal expenditure and my Poverty Index.

16. See Fernando Horcasitas, *De Porfirio Díaz a Zapata: Memorias Náhuatl de Milpa Alta* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1968).

17. With regard to discussion of a leader's rumored illegal activities (or of controversial hypotheses about his role), for example, it may be wise to introduce questions with such neutral terms as "it is said" or "they say" in order to avoid pitting the interviewer against the leader, thus encouraging the leader to develop a full account of the matter.

18. See Michael J. A. Howe, *Introduction to Human Memory: A Psychological Approach* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970); and Endel Tulving and Zena Pearlstone, "Availability versus Accessibility of Information in Memory for Words," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 5 (1966): 381-91. Cf. William W. Cutler III, "Accuracy in Oral History Interviewing," *Historical Methods Newsletter*, June 1970, pp. 1-7.

19. This two-version method permits both the retention of the original language and

the sense of the interview as well as revisions. In the editing process, moreover, we discourage changes in sequence of the discussion (so as not to confuse the reader as the interchange of questions and answers develops) or excessive changes which would destroy the informal style inherent in spoken language.

20. The best tape recorder available to date for research purposes is a two-track cassette machine which has automatic volume control so that the investigator is free to concentrate on the interview itself rather than watching to see that the volume is adjusted for distance to the microphone or changes in voice level. Nevertheless, the investigator must glance at his machine now and then to see that the take-up wheel of the cassette is turning and to be sure that he has not run out of tape. It is important not only to listen to the recorded introduction on each side to be sure that the tape is not defective, but to use some sort of timing device as a reminder when the cassette must be changed (see note 23 below). With regard to cassette running time, it is advisable to use the C-60 length (thirty minutes on each side). Although longer-running cassettes are available, they may cause problems because time is gained at the expense of tape thickness.

21. Introductory information recorded (in the presence of the interviewee and as part of the interview) on each side of the cassette should include side sequence, date, city, and names of persons involved in the discussion. Cassettes also should be identified in writing on each side at the moment they are put into the recorder, including such information as name of person interviewed, date, and sequence of each side of the cassette (e.g., 1a, 1b, 2c, 2d, etc.). Once each side is finished, the safety tab at the back of the cassette should be broken to prevent accidental erasure. These precautions are necessary to assure that the interviewee is aware of the fact that he is being recorded, to provide basic interview data for posterity, and to prevent confusion during the interview itself. With regard to the latter point, in the attempt to conduct a spirited discussion while trying to remember where the conversation is headed, some investigators have been known to lose track of which cassette sides are already recorded, thus erasing discussions which are difficult if not impossible to recapture without alienating the leader, who may begin to feel like an actor in rehearsal.

22. Because of voltage (usually 110 or 220) and cycle (50 or 60) variations throughout Latin America, investigators should be prepared to use the kind of battery-operated recorder discussed below (see note 23). The problem is especially serious in Mexico City, Toluca, Pachuca, Cuernavaca, and Taxco as compared to other parts of Mexico. These areas operate on 50-cycle (125-watt) current while the rest of the country uses 60-cycle electric power. Mexico has plans for developing an integrated national system beginning in 1972 *(El Día,* July 23, 1971); but in any case the nominal 110-127-watt system used throughout the country is known to fluctuate widely, thus requiring the use of batteries or a voltage regulator in order to avoid the possibility of recordings with voices which sound like chattering squirrels or mooing cows. For official information (to be used with discretion) on voltage and frequency stability, see the latest issue of *Electric Current Abroad*, published by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of International Commerce.

23. One of the most convenient machines now on the market, for example, is the Sony TC-110A. The TC-110A is a relatively low-priced machine, yet it offers high voice quality with a built-in microphone which not only has automatic voice control (see note 20 above), but eliminates any tendency to make the interviewee nervous with a standard, visible microphone. In addition, with the use of its accessory foot pedal and earphones, the TC-110A may be used conveniently for transcription because it has an instant replay key. Weighing less than four pounds, it can be operated on four "C" size batteries if

electrical current is unsatisfactory (see note 22 above). This model is equipped with a meter which gauges battery strength and shows the voice level when recording; when used with a Sony cassette, a built-in alarm sounds when the tape is completed. Other automatic volume-control models are listed in the latest *Consumer Reports Buying Guide*; and the reader is advised to check with an electronics dealer with regard to new and more versatile machines which are constantly becoming available.

24. Low-print tape (e.g., Scotch 138-1/4-1200 feet) helps prevent the passing of magnetic signals from one layer of tape to another during long periods of storage. Also, in order to preserve recordings, tapes should be rewound once a year and stored where humidity and heat are not excessive as well as kept away from any magnet or machine with a magnet which could change the pattern of magnetically recorded sound retained by the iron oxide on the tape.

25. Thus, for example, the work cited in note 31 below is copyrighted by Professor Píndaro Urióstegui Miranda.

26. Since most United States oral history programs conduct interviews which are nondirective in nature (in contrast to being a scholarly creation), perhaps this explains their general assignment of legal rights to the program or to the person interviewed rather than to the interviewer, who is only an employee.

27. For a discussion of intellectual rights in authorship of letters, see John C. Hogan and Saul Cohen, *An Author's Guide to Scholarly Publishing and the Law* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 69-70.

28. For the case history, see 296, N.Y.S.2d 771 (New York Supplement, 2d series, vol. 296 [Saint Paul, Minn.: West, 1969], pp. 771-83).

With regard to legal rights of third parties who might claim defamation of character as the result of an interview, according to Latin American custom, apparently such claims are practically impossible. In the United States, recent court decisions with regard to public figures also have reduced this problem to one of small proportions. (See E. Douglas Hamilton, "Oral History and the Law of Libel," Second National Colloquium on Oral History [New York: Oral History Association, 1968], pp. 47-48).

29. Because the Hemingway case cited above in note 28 suggests that "there should be a presumption that the speaker has not reserved any common-law rights unless the contrary strongly appears" (p. 779), if necessary the scholar might be well advised to draw up a simple agreement stipulating, for example, that he will not open or publish the recorded material within a specified number of years or while the interviewee is alive.

Regardless of the fact that the interviewee may participate in the interview without placing any restrictions on the work, as a simple matter of courtesy the scholar who wishes to publish the entire interview may wish to obtain written permission to publish the materials in order to avoid misunderstandings which could jeopardize the successful development of future interviews.

30. Some of these interviews were foreshortened by such circumstances as death (Ramón Beteta), travel (Carlos Fuentes), and lack of time (David Alfaro Siqueiros).

31. *Testimonios del Proceso Revolucionario de México* (Mexico: Argrin, 1970). Unfortunately, this book of over seven hundred pages lacks an introduction on methodology and indexes.

32. For a useful article on the work of the Archivo Sonoro, see Eugenia Meyer and Alicia Olivera de Bonfil, "La Historia Oral: Origen Metodología, Desarrollo, y Perspectivas," *Historia Mexicana* 21 (1971): pp. 372-87.

33. (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1971).

34. The Universidad Nacional Autonóma de México's "Voz Viva de México" series

does not involve oral history but the sale of disc recordings in which, for example, Jesús Silva Herzog delivers a brief monologue on the oil expropriation, or an author reads a chapter of his book, in order to make his voice available to the general public.

35. For an elaboration of many of the points discussed here, see Lyle C. Brown, "New Methods and Approaches in Latin American History" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association, San Antonio, Texas, March 31, 1972). This paper by Professor Brown of Baylor University discusses both oral history and historical statistics.


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Hermosillo
Chihuahua
Guaymas
COAHUILA
Río Bravo (Río Grande)
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo, Texas
Brownsville
Matamoros
DURANGO
Saltillo
Monterrey
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SINALOA
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Durango
Tropic of Cancer
ZACATECAS
Ciudad Victoria
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Mazatlán
Zacatecas
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TAMAULIPAS
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NAYARIT
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