

insightful in pointing out how the incorporation of these migrants into the ideal of liberal citizens and consumers has required these low-skilled workers to acquire massive amounts of debt, what has transformed them into the most likely next “casualties of our current global fiscal crisis” (179).

*A Return to Servitude* is fully engaging from the very first pages. It is ethnographically rewarding and should be of interest to students, researchers, and specialists in Latin America, migration, tourism, development, and indigenous studies, as well as a must read for experts on Yucatec Maya communities. A translation into Spanish is needed and it would make this important book’s arguments available to a larger audience.

**Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice, and Mexico’s National Parks, 1910–1940.** *Emily Wakild*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. 234 pp.

**Elizabeth Emma Ferry**  
Brandeis University

Mexico’s Cardenista presidential administration (1934–40) is well-known for several things: the formation of a corporatist state, national patrimony as ideology, the expropriation of the oil industry from U.S. ownership and, perhaps most of all, the distribution of over 18 million hectares of land as part of the ejido collective land program stipulated in the Constitution of 1917. Yet, it has not been especially known for its enlightened environmental policies, forest stewardship, or national park programs.

Emily Wakild’s *Revolutionary Parks* tells this little-known story of forestry and park policy in early 20th century Mexico,

culminating in the formation of dozens of national parks in the Cardenista period. As a result of these efforts, Mexico had more national parks in 1940 than any other country in the world (1). This fact, and the history that goes along with it, makes Wakild’s study a significant contribution not only to Mexican history, but also to research on environmentalism, environmental justice, and science.

The specific trajectory of Mexican national parks did not follow the U.S. model of parks as pristine spaces to be kept safe from economic exploitation use other than leisurely contemplation. Drawing on detailed descriptions of four different parks, Wakild shows how federal managers operated (because they had to, often) with a more pragmatic and socially embedded understanding of how humans interact with their environment. Since Mexican park planning occurred within a populist revolutionary context, planners could not assume that parks should be kept free of all forms of exploitation. Because of this, argues Wakild, their understanding of parks and people had more in common with recent movements for sustainable environment politics than with earlier notions of parks as wildernesses for the middle class.

Furthermore, Wakild shows the often messy interactions of those living in or near the parks created in the 1930s. The diversity of responses in each case demonstrates that rural people and communities were not and are not essentially nature-loving, nor do they always act as responsible stewards of the forests on which they rely. Rural residents inhabit the same complex political and social universe as park planners, and respond in similarly complex ways to it.

These three insights: the role of the Cárdenas administration in forming

national parks; the fact that Mexican forestry and park policy did not follow the wilderness model of the U.S. national park movement; and the diversity of responses of those living in the parks to their formation and management, make Wakild's book a significant intervention into Mexican and environmental history.

After an introductory chapter laying out the book's stakes, chapter 2 traces the rise of scientific forestry in Mexico from the Porfiriato to the postrevolutionary period. The chapter lays particular emphasis on the central figure of Miguel Ángel de Quevedo (an elite, Porfirian scientist appointed by the populist President Cárdenas to head the Forestry Department) and of the landmark Forestry Law of 1926, which "created the extensive framework that made it possible regulating the forests nationwide" (30). We then move into the heart of the book, with four chapters each focusing on a different theme and a different national park.

The Lagunas de Zempoala lakeside park, 65 kilometers from Mexico City and subject of chapter 3, "Education," resembles most closely the U.S. model. It emphasized scouting, camps, and weekend tourism for middle- and working-class urbanites. At the same time, the formation of the camp involved the integration of residents to patrol and clean the park and to provide concessions that only partially replaced traditional foresting activities. The park thus took form as a site for the sometimes uneasy integration of nature and social activity.

Chapter 4, "Productivity" discusses what is perhaps the most famous of Mexico's national parks, that surrounding the twin volcanoes of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl. Wakild describes this as the site of "a type of environmentalism mediated

by revolutionary goals" (72). She argues that the ideological significance of the volcanoes as gendered symbols of the nation and the revolutionary populism and the political leverage of rural people—particularly those organized in ejidos—meant that forestry officials had to incorporate extractive industry (paper, lumber, resin) into their planning.

Chapter 5, "Property," focuses on the La Malinche National Park in Tlaxcala, whose formation was the most controversial of Cárdenas' parks. In La Malinche, foresters confronted a thicket of existing claims over land by campesino communities in conflict with one another and with private landowners. The Trojan Horse of the invasive species mistletoe became a way for foresters to take control of the forests without directly challenging campesinos, a privileged constituency. This chapter brings into focus the incompatible visions of farmers and foresters over land use.

The analysis of El Tepozteco National Park in Tepotzlán, Morelos (chapter 6, "Tradition") brings the Pre-Columbian past as national patrimony to the fore, exemplified in Tepotzlán's pyramid. Wakild illustrates how park planners combined natural and cultural patrimony in ways that do not fit a U.S. park model or ethic of the pristine. Her inclusion of the famous 1990s debate over the attempt to build a luxury golf course in Tepotzlán shows how residents drew on the revolutionary environmentalist tradition of the park to confront new challenges.

Invested in her revisionist argument, Wakild at times overemphasizes the benevolence and farsightedness of the Cardenista park planners, particularly in early chapters. However, as some of the less-successful dimensions of the parks are

brought into view, this problem rights itself. I learned much from *Revolutionary Parks* and found it to be an intriguing, well-documented, and well-designed text. It should appeal to scholars, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates in environmental history, Mexican history, and postcolonial science studies.

**Maya Ethnolinguistic Identity: Violence, Cultural Rights, and Modernity in Highland Guatemala.** *Brigitte M. French*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010. 162 pp.

**Judith M. Maxwell**  
Tulane University

In this brief but important book, Brigitte French unites essays on the politics of Mayan linguistic activism and a research report on her survey on indigenous people's language use in the urban center of Chimaltenango. The result is a critique of previous scholarship, particularly that of anthropologists/linguists who have become advocates of the Pan-Maya Movement and its leaders. French seeks to herald what she describes as the dangers inherent in homogenizing social projects, even indigenous ones, noting that differences important to culture bearers may be erased and the voices of local traditions silenced in the push for a common goal which, while associated with tradition, is validated by and at times based upon metropolitan forms of knowledge. She observes pointedly that women's roles and desires have been subordinated to a "nationalistic" Pan-Maya goal, and she notes also that scholarship has concentrated on the traditional, on conservative language communities, or the opposite the intellectual innovators, and this

drives the quest for neologisms and the expansion of Mayan languages into domains until recently ceded to Spanish. The Maya in Guatemala are increasingly urban and the realities of this urban existence, its language patterns, and the organization of ethnic, gender, community, occupational, and personal identities require study through a nonessentializing lens. However, according to French, the Maya Movement leadership deploys a "strategic essentialism" that girds and positions their political platform (xiv).

*Maya Ethnolinguistic Identity's* Introduction makes clear French's general theses: that both the Guatemalan state and the Maya activists have essentialized the Mayan people, albeit with opposing political aims; and that urban Maya, both K'iche' and Kaqchikel, disarticulate Mayan language and Maya identity. Chapter One, "The Paradox of Ethnolinguistic Identity: Essentialisms, State-sponsored Violence, and Cultural Rights," then outlines the ways Maya activists have emphasized an idealized pre-contact linguistic and political unity in struggling for recognition and respect for their collective rights. Mayan cosmovision or worldview, a core of shared spiritual beliefs, is linked to language and identity. Against this backdrop, linguistic standardization proceeds by wedding archaism (resurrecting vocabulary from colonial dictionaries) to neologism (creating new words for new domains using autochthonous phonological and morphological resources). This linguistic purism creates a new language native to none and potentially alienating to some.

Chapter Two, "Political Linguistics: Expert Linguists and Modernist Epistemologies in the Guatemalan Nation," identifies three "moments" in the modern linguistic study of Guatemalan Mayan