

Citizens of Towns, Citizens of Nations

The Knowing of History in Mexico

Trevor Stack

University of Aberdeen, UK

Abstract ■ This article finds a disjuncture between the practices associated with being a citizen of a town and those associated with being a citizen of a nation. The practices on which it focuses are the knowing of a town's history and the knowing of a nation's history. It looks at how townspeople in west Mexico talked about the history of their town, Tapalpa, in relation to how they talked about Mexico's history. In principle, the knowing of Tapalpa's history was linked to the knowing of Mexico's history. In practice, there was a disjuncture such that townspeople could aspire only to a mimetic role in the knowing of Mexico's history. The article concludes by suggesting that this was typical of the relation between being a citizen of Tapalpa and being a citizen of Mexico.

Keywords ■ citizenship ■ history ■ knowledge ■ Mexico ■ nationalism ■ urbanism

Citizens of nations, citizens of towns

This article is about two kinds of place, towns and nations, that are critical to modern society. A vast literature has addressed the importance of nations to modern society (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Bhabha, 1994; Hobsbawm, 1964). Many scholars have also written about the industrial and post-industrial cities of modern society (e.g. García Canclini, 1989; Holston, 1999; Sassen, 1991). However, fewer have addressed the broader urban tradition that is characteristic of modern society. Still fewer have addressed the relationship between this urban tradition and nationalism in modern society.¹ In this article, I use 'towns' to refer to this broader tradition of urbanism, and I focus on the relationship between modern urbanism and nationalism.² We are often led to feel that nations have superseded towns or that towns have been subordinated to nations. When we write of towns as 'local' places, we usually mean that they are 'local' in relation to nations (as well as perhaps the global). This is one way in which our ethnographic subjects also learn to think of their towns.³ But I will argue that it is not the only way in which towns are linked to nations – at least not in west Mexico,

where I conducted my fieldwork. I will suggest that towns and nations are connected in more complex ways – there and perhaps elsewhere too.⁴

First, however, I must explain what I mean by ‘place’. Anthropologists have begun to treat place less as a unit of analysis than as an object of study in its own right.⁵ I still find myself saying that I did my research in a town called Tapalpa in west Mexico, but I have tried to focus on the sets of practices in which particular figures of Tapalpa were embedded. For example, there was an ecclesiastical figure of Tapalpa as home to the faithful that was embedded in practices that include processions around its streets, the organizing of base communities, the ringing of church bells before Mass, and so on. In this article, I focus on another figure of Tapalpa, that of Tapalpa as home to a body of citizens. I look in particular at the relation between that figure of Tapalpa and a similar figure of Mexico as home to a body of citizens. Each figure was embedded in a particular set of practices: the first in a set of practices that were involved in being a citizen of Tapalpa and the second in a set of practices involved in being a citizen of Mexico. The first set included practices such as arguing in public meetings, including less formal but still public get-togethers. The second set included practices such as participating in national parades and learning in school classrooms, as well as the grumbling about national politics that took place in private.⁶

I will discuss the relation between those two sets of practices in terms of authority. In principle, authority in both sets of practices was by simple virtue of co-residence. Residents of both towns and nations were to have an equal voice in the public affairs of their bodies of citizens. One was a citizen of a nation by virtue of being a citizen of a town, since the town was situated within national territory. The authority that derived from being a citizen of a town was therefore linked in principle to the authority of being a citizen of the nation.⁷ However, I will emphasize that in practice there was a disjuncture between the citizenship of towns and of nations.⁸ Being a citizen of a town involved a set of practices in which townspeople could at least aspire to participate. Most could at least aspire to voicing their opinion in public by simple virtue of residence in Tapalpa. I will argue that national citizenship, on the other hand, involved a set of practices in which participation was largely mimetic.

The knowing of history

The mode of practice on which I will focus in this article is the knowing of history. I actually began this project as a historian, in 1992, after completing an undergraduate degree in Modern History at Oxford. I was affiliated in Mexico to a social science institute called El Colegio de Michoacán. The founder of the Colegio, Luis González, had inspired generations of micro-historians and I myself went to Tapalpa with the intention of writing a

microhistory of the town. Tapalpa is a small town of about 6,000 inhabitants, set in the Sierra de Tapalpa, a highland area south of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco. I began by following the advice of Don Carlos, an elderly and respected townsman. Don Carlos suggested that I was unlikely to find many documents and that instead I should consult elderly townspeople and 'go forming my own criterion of truth from among the versions'. In fact, townspeople were frank about the difficulties of reconciling the different 'versions' and I was asked on one occasion whether I had been 'discontrolled by the versions'. In a sense, I did get discontrolled by the versions and gave up writing history myself. I began to ask instead what it meant for people to say that towns had their history in the first place. I tried discussing that question with historians, but I found myself nudged gently in the direction of anthropologists.

I found, however, that many anthropologists were also dealing in versions. To study the 'politics of memory' was to link different versions of history to the interests of social groups.⁹ That approach is most useful, I will argue, when careful attention is paid to genre. Hanks has opposed the formalist definition of genre as 'regular groupings of thematic, stylistic, and compositional elements' to a pragmatic definition of genre as 'historically specific conventions and ideals according to which authors compose discourse and audiences receive it' (Hanks, 1987: 670). Generic conventions thus shape both the properties of the discourse itself, such as themes, evidentials and styles, as well as the conditions of its utterance, including speaker and audience roles. In other words, genres are subject to conventions and ideals just like any other mode of practice. I found myself looking for a more subtle 'politics of memory' that focused on the genre of history as a mode of practice. I asked in particular how authority was created through the knowing of history.

The knowing of history was a mode of practice in which place was embedded in important ways.¹⁰ There were two kinds of history in west Mexico: the history of towns and the history of nations. I will show that there were similarities between the knowing of Tapalpa's history and the knowing of Mexico's history, but I will emphasize the disjunctures between the two.

Knowing Tapalpa's history

What counted as Tapalpa's history? Most of what I heard as 'history' was what people considered apt for a young Scottish historian to publish in a 'history of Tapalpa'. If I heard a lot about history while I lived in Tapalpa, it was certainly because I was identified as a historian. But it did seem that people had encountered enough history to hold consistent notions of what it might entail. I felt at first that Tapalpans' sense of what might count as history was wider than my own sense of history. People often defined

history, when I asked, as 'what in fact happened'. In principle, anything could have its history, at least if it was 'from here'. I was told as history of the ways in which women used to wash clothes and of the bus that used to drive up the rough track once a week. However, it became obvious that some things were more immediately history than other things. In fact, most people found little to say in response to the question 'What is the history of Tapalpa?' At first they might deny any knowledge at all. They would point me instead in the direction of someone like Don Carlos. If I insisted, they would usually give a potted history of how Tapalpa was founded. If I continued to insist, then they might recommend an elderly relative who could talk about the 'revolutions'. And so on, until eventually I could persuade them to talk about how women used to wash clothes and how the bus used to drive up the rough track.

Who could know Tapalpa's history? I felt for a long time that anyone could contribute to the knowing of this history, at least anyone that could claim to be 'from here'. This was particularly the case since, on the one hand, the category was so open, and on the other hand, almost everyone told the same potted history. However, I became aware later that some people had more authority than others. This was sometimes for quite specific reasons, such as the fact that a particular elderly person had been present at a particular battle. But there were other more general ways in which some people had more authority than others.

One more general way was that some people were more obviously 'from here' than others. Those people had more authority in the telling of Tapalpa's history than others. Chief among them were the families that lived around the plaza and owned much of the surrounding land. This was not the only way in which they seemed to be more 'from here' than others. If I often found myself getting sent to talk with members of those families, it was also because their grandfathers and great-grandfathers were protagonists in that history. This was part of what made them more obviously 'from here'. Not surprisingly, those families became 'older' in leaps and jumps over the course of the past century. By the 1990s, they told the history of Tapalpa almost as if it were family history. This despite the apparent equality of participation in the knowing of Tapalpa's history.

This was complicated by a second qualification for the knowing of history, that of *cultura* (cultivation or enlightenment). Certain individuals were held to have *cultura* and thus had authority over their less-enlightened fellow townspeople. Don Carlos was perhaps the archetype of an enlightened individual in Tapalpa. He was also considered to be one of the persons who knew the most history of Tapalpa. I gloss *cultura* as the ability to apprehend that which lies beyond the immediate. That included the knowing of history, by definition the ability to apprehend that which lay beyond the present immediate. Again, this despite the apparent equality of participation in the knowing of Tapalpa's history. Not surprisingly, the

history produced by such individuals included a lengthy list of 'enlightened sons of Tapalpa' (e.g. Nava López and Nava Aguilar, 1985).

As a result, most people found themselves deferring to those few who could claim one of those kinds of authority. They could often find something to say. Yet what they had to say was always hedged in certain ways. Despite this, I want to emphasize that people did still interrupt from time to time. Townspeople could at least aspire, in other words, to a significant role in the knowing of Tapalpa's history.

Those sources of authority – being 'from here' and having *cultura* – were not just qualifications for the 'knowing of history'. I will suggest at the end of the article that they were related to other practices in which people acted as citizens of Tapalpa. First, however, we will look at another set of practices: those associated with the knowing of Mexico's history. I will suggest in the rest of the article that people could aspire to participate in the knowing of Tapalpa's history in ways that they could not aspire to participate in the knowing of Mexico's history. As we will see, even Don Carlos could not expect to know Mexico's history in the way that he knew Tapalpa's history. At the end of the article, I will suggest that this was also true of being a citizen of Mexico.

Knowing Mexico's history

There was much talk in Tapalpa about how the town was founded and about the golden age of industry in the 19th century. Another common topic was the revolutions that had taken place around Tapalpa when the old people were in their youth. But Tapalpa's history was not the only kind of history that was talked about. On other occasions, townspeople would talk about Mexico's history, mentioning events such as the Wars of Independence and the Mexican Revolution, together with protagonists such as Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Miguel Hidalgo and Hernán Cortés.

What was the relation between how townspeople talked about Tapalpa's history and how they talked about Mexico's history? I will focus on the relation between their talk of Tapalpa's revolutions and their talk of the Mexican Revolution. In 1992, I visited the Museum of the Mexican Revolution in the neighboring state of Michoacán. The director of the Museum talked about the Mexican Revolution as he showed me around. When I observed that Tapalpans gave a quite different history of the period, the director made a curious comment: 'Tapalpa must be a pretty town.' I replied that it was a pretty town. He explained: 'In my experience, all reactionary towns are pretty.' That was also *my* reading of how Tapalpans talked about history: they were challenging the official history of the Mexican Revolution.

However, I came to realize that Tapalpans simply did not connect the revolutions in Tapalpa's history and the revolution of Mexico's history. I

could push people into making connections, but it was no easy task. On a few occasions I interrupted a conversation about Tapalpa's revolutions with the question 'What about the Mexican Revolution?' The response was typically hesitant and stumbling. Sometimes a date was mentioned in relation to the revolution, usually either 1810 or 1910. Two or three names – Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Miguel Hidalgo – were invoked. An incident such as the betrayal of Emiliano Zapata was sometimes mentioned. But the conversation would find its way quickly back to the revolutions of Tapalpa. Tapalpans found it harder to talk about Mexico's revolution than about Tapalpa's revolutions. Hardest of all was to connect the one to the other.

Why did townspeople find it difficult to connect Tapalpa's revolutions with Mexico's revolution? Because, I suggest, their knowledge of Mexico's revolution was hard to reconcile with their knowledge of Tapalpa's revolutions. The events of Mexico's revolution were spatially removed from the events of Tapalpa's revolutions. But they were also temporally removed from Tapalpa's revolutions. An academic historian such as Luis González could, no doubt, connect the chronology of Tapalpa's revolutions with the chronology of Mexico's revolution. That was not so easy for Tapalpans. They listed a series of revolutions that had occurred during the youth of the town's elderly people. They had learned, on the other hand, that the Mexican Revolution was not one in a series of revolutions but a unique revolution. It was a different kind of event, then, one that was alien to the series of Tapalpa's revolutions. Moreover, Tapalpa's revolutions were usually located by reference to other events such as births, marriages and deaths, while the Mexican Revolution was located by dates that had been learned for school exams or that were sometimes displayed on banners in parades. In fact, the Mexican Revolution was associated less with the years of chronology and more with the days of the calendar: particularly 20 November, the annual commemoration of the Mexican Revolution. As a result, it was easier to link to other calendrical dates such as 16 September, day of Mexican Independence, than to Tapalpa's revolutions in the childhood of the elderly people. Small wonder that Tapalpans listed protagonists such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata together with others such as Miguel Hidalgo, better known by historians as the father of Mexican independence.

It was not just that what was known of Mexico's revolution sat uncomfortably with what was known of Tapalpa's revolutions. The *knowing* of Mexico's history was itself different from the knowing of Tapalpa's history. Most had heard arguments about Tapalpa's revolutions but not usually about Mexico's revolution. Not everyone had the same authority to talk about Tapalpa's revolutions but everyone at least knew someone that did. By contrast, they had learned about Mexico's revolution in school classrooms and in civic parades in which there was no answering back. Their role in the knowing of Mexico's history was a mimetic one: it was that of

the schoolchild or the parader. Small wonder, again, that they would hesitate before offering any account of Mexico's revolution.

It may be that people elsewhere in Mexico were quicker to connect the history of their town with Mexico's history. Perhaps the peasants of Morelos, homeland of Emiliano Zapata, could identify more readily with the protagonists of the Mexican Revolution. I suspect that the disjuncture was quite general, however. Indeed, Luis González argued in the 1980s that the majority of Mexicans found it hard to reconcile their town's revolutions with Mexico's revolution (González y González, 1986). It was not that Tapalpa was unusually peripheral, in other words. Mexico's history always seemed to happen elsewhere – and to be known by those from elsewhere.

Bridging the gap?

This was, it might seem, a pedagogical failing. In 1969, the anthropologist Judith Friedlander attended a school commemoration of Zapata's death in the state of Morelos. She observed that the town's own revolutionaries were not mentioned during the ceremony (Friedlander, 1975: 154–9). Even in the heartland of the Mexican Revolution, then, pedagogues had failed to bridge the gap between Mexico's history and the history of towns.¹¹ From the 1960s, historians and pedagogues sought to bridge that gap. Historians such as González complained that Mexico's history had little resonance among the majority of the population. Historians must draw on the history of towns in order to write a more compelling national history (e.g. González y González, 1986). Pedagogues argued that pupils should be encouraged to relate Mexico's history to what is known of their town's history. Mexico's history had failed pedagogically, it was argued, because it was tangential to local history. Regional history was introduced as a school subject and local history projects were set for countless schoolchildren, including in Tapalpa (e.g. Becerra et al., 1997; Muriá, 1995).¹²

I suggest here, with some hesitation of my own, that Mexico's history was easier to disseminate precisely *because* it was tangential.¹³ The young Mexican Revolution, disseminated from the late 1920s, was a particularly fragile specimen.¹⁴ Indeed, Mexico itself was arguably still a fragile notion in the early 20th century. Why propagate Mexico's history in a way that would invite challenges? Why invoke events and protagonists in ways that might sit uncomfortably with the history of towns? Instead, schoolchildren would learn that there was a Mexican Revolution about which others were in the know. Their role was dutifully to learn events, places and protagonists that were taught diligently to them. We have seen that the events, places and protagonists were aligned with other events, places and protagonists of Mexico's history. Theirs was not to answer back, as Tapalpans might challenge each other about Tapalpa's history. What could

they find to say about such events? Instead, they would identify the protagonists with other god-like figures engaged in the cosmic struggle that was Mexico's history. Mexico's history became an act of faith in its heroic protagonists. It was also an act of faith in those – from historians to school-teachers – responsible for knowing that history. This was the advantage of keeping Mexico's history apart from the history of towns. Townspeople would not draw on their town's history in their knowing of Mexico's history. Instead, they would think back to their school notebook or recall the scenes on the floats in the annual parade.

But why all the fuss about 'bridging the gap' between the history of towns and Mexico's history? Would that not undo the good work of building a pantheon of revolutionaries – and of their historians? I am not sure of the answer to that question but I have three suggestions. The first is that there was less danger of challenge than there had been earlier in the century. The Mexican nation had become hegemonic – including the idea that Mexico had its history. Specifically, the idea that there was a Mexican Revolution had become canonical. There were still endless debates among national historians about the course of the Revolution, but far fewer about whether or not 'it' happened in the first place.¹⁵

This links to my second explanation. 'Bridging the gap' was simply an artful technique of rewriting Mexico's history. Historians like Luis González, for example, could use micro-history to challenge certain aspects of Mexico's history. They could use micro-history to question the sanctity of protagonists such as Emiliano Zapata and, by extension, the favoured status of Mexico's peasants as sons of the revolution.¹⁶ In so doing, González did not undermine the idea that there was a Mexican Revolution. He simply used micro-history to rewrite the history of that revolution.

Crucially, neither did González undermine the idea that he, as a national historian, had the authority to rewrite Mexico's history. That is my third explanation. On the one hand, González argued that historians should pay attention to the writings of town chroniclers in particular. On the other hand, he observed that town chroniclers lacked the 'global vision' necessary to write national history (González y González, 1986: 11–13). Mere townspeople could have little to say about what has happened in Mexico's history.¹⁷ Indeed, I did not find that schoolchildren connected Tapalpa's history and Mexico's history any more than anyone else. This despite the introduction in schools of regional history and of local history projects.

It was, as a result, difficult to challenge Mexico's history. In particular, it was difficult to use what was known of a town's history to challenge Mexico's history. This helped, first, to shield the authority of those who identified with its protagonists: those who governed in the name of the Mexican Revolution. Tapalpans were dissuaded from arguing that the revolution was not like that because the revolutions in Tapalpa were not like that. Second, it helped to shield the authority of national historians.

People like Don Carlos might know the history of their towns, but they lacked the 'global vision' to say anything authoritative about Mexico's history. We have seen that townspeople could at least aspire to the knowing of Tapalpa's history. They could not aspire to anything more than a mimetic knowing of Mexico's history.

Citizens of towns, citizens of nations

I have focused in this article on the knowing of history as one mode of practice that is linked to both towns and nations. I will argue in this final section that the disjuncture between the knowing of Tapalpa's history and the knowing of Mexico's history cut across other practices too. It divided those practices that were involved in being a citizen of a town from those involved in being a citizen of a nation.

How was the knowing of Tapalpa's history related to other practices associated with being a citizen of a town? I have said that anything and anyone that is 'from here' could figure in what was told of Tapalpa's history. I have also said that anyone who is 'from here' could contribute something to the knowing of that history. However, I said that in practice certain people were considered more obviously 'from here' than others. Certain kinds of people came to the foreground as protagonists of Tapalpa's history. At the same time, those who could identify with those protagonists were considered more obvious knowers of Tapalpa's history. Indeed, this was part of what made them seem more obviously 'from here'. This was complicated by another qualification, that of *cultura*. Certain enlightened individuals were also considered authoritative knowers of Tapalpa's history. As a result, most people chose to defer to other knowers of Tapalpa's history. That said, there was still room for those who were otherwise marginal to 'here' and also lacking in *cultura*. An elderly person, for example, might challenge an account of the revolutions that did not sit with his or her experience.

This was, I suggest, reflected in other practices. Being 'from here' did entitle residents of Tapalpa to express their opinion about public affairs. Conversely, the town mayor from 1998 to 2000 would often dismiss the complaints of those whom he considered 'not from here'. However, the distinction was no more clearcut than in the knowing of history. Some were more obviously 'from here' than others: the land-owning families were an obvious example. Citizenship in general was also complicated by the quality of *cultura*. In fact, the authority of the same town mayor was often dismissed on account of his lack of *cultura*. By contrast, Don Carlos was remembered as the finest mayor that Tapalpa had ever had. But despite all these ways in which the principle of equal citizenship was elided, there was still room for someone to pose a public challenge.

How was the knowing of Mexico's history related to other practices

associated with being a citizen of a nation? I have said that in principle there was a place for everyone in what was known of Mexico's history as well as in the knowing of that history. I have also said that in principle the knowing of Tapalpa's history was integral to the knowing of Mexico's history. I found, however, that in practice this was not the case. In practice, people could not aspire to anything more than a mimetic knowing of Mexico's history. No one was really in a position to pose any kind of a challenge – at least not publicly.

This was also, I suggest, reflected in other practices. Again, there was a principle by which all Mexicans were part of the Mexican nation and by that same token could have a say in its public affairs. There was also a principle whereby one was a citizen of Mexico by virtue of being a citizen of Tapalpa. However, I suggest that in practice there was a disjuncture between the two. They were different kinds of citizenship. As citizens of a town, people might expect their voices to carry at least some authority in matters of public concern. That was not an aspiration for citizens of the nation. They might grumble and moan about getting the government they deserved. But they would not do so in public – less out of fear of reprisals than out of fear of ridicule. Instead, townspeople found themselves participating in rituals together with everyone else. Their mimetic role in the knowing of Mexico's history was reflected in their largely mimetic role in other practices too.¹⁸

I suggested in my introduction that this disjuncture was not unique to Tapalpa. Clearly, what it meant to be a citizen of Mexico – or of a particular town – varied greatly across Mexico. Nevertheless, I suspect that some of my conclusions are indeed resonant across Mexico and possibly beyond. I suggest at least that there is often a disjuncture between the knowing of a town's history and the knowing of a nation's history. This may also often be part of a broader disjuncture between the citizenship of towns and the citizenship of nations.

Notes

This article developed out of a shorter paper that I gave for a workshop at El Colegio de Michoacán, Mexico in 1995. A version of that short paper was later published by El Colegio de Michoacán in the edited volume *Bajo el signo del Estado* (1999). Another version was included as a chapter in my PhD thesis at the University of Pennsylvania. It was developed in its current form as a conference paper that was given at the 2001 American Anthropological Association meetings. I then gave a longer version as a seminar paper in January 2002 at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Aberdeen University. Part of this paper was also included in a seminar paper that I gave in December 2001 at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews. I am grateful for the comments that I received on all those occasions. I have also benefited from comments on intermediate drafts from Kristin Cahn von Seelen, Marco Antonio Calderón, Robey Callahan, Robert

Oppenheim, Marina Navia, Julia Paley, Andrew Roth Seneff, Kimbra Smith, Matt Tomlinson and Greg Urban. The research for this article was conducted in 1997–9 with a Horniman Scholarship from the Royal Anthropological Institute and a Penfield Fellowship from the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania.

- 1 There is a sizeable literature on Spanish colonial settlements in the Americas (e.g. Farriss, 1984; Hanks, 1987; Kagan, 2000). There have also been a few ethnographies that focus on aspects of modern urbanism (e.g. Herzfeld, 1997; Redfield, 1950). The recent edited volume *Cities and Citizenship* is one of the few to address directly the relation between modern urbanism and nationalism (Holston, 1999).
- 2 In other words, I will not be distinguishing ‘village’ from ‘town’ from ‘city’ in this article. Neither will I discuss the genealogy of the various urban traditions implicated in what makes a town a town in west Mexico. For example, I have omitted discussion of the medieval European figures of place from which the colonial figures descended (Davis and Wallace-Hadrill, 1981); the classical pedigrees that were often an inspiration (Rykwert, 1976); the Islamic figures of place that may also have shaped Spanish colonial figures (Abu-Lughod, 1987); and the indigenous American figures that were no doubt incorporated to some extent (Hanks, 1987).
- 3 Keane makes a similar point in an article on the idea of the ‘local’ in Indonesia. ‘Many people in Anakalang . . . appear to accept the legitimacy of the [Indonesian] nation, at least in part, by imagining their location as meaningfully encompassed and confirmed by it’ (Keane, 1997: 51). Keane focuses on how Anakalangese thought of their own language in relation to how they thought of the Indonesian language. They had come to think of their language as a ‘local’ language by virtue of its opposition to Indonesian as a ‘national’ language (1997: 38). Appadurai has developed a useful critique of anthropological treatments of the ‘local’ (Appadurai, 1996; see also Nadel-Klein, 1991).
- 4 I explain below that my research was conducted mainly in small towns in west Mexico, although I also conducted fieldwork among Mexican labour migrants in the city of Concord, California. However, I have plans to conduct comparative study in other parts of Mexico, as well as drawing on comparative ethnographic material from Mexico and beyond.
- 5 This shift in treatment of place in anthropology was linked to Said’s critique of Orientalism together with the critique of the anthropological concept of ‘culture area’ (Cohn, 1980: 204; Said, 1978). In both cases, cultural difference was simply mapped onto the geography of territory, sometimes with an ecological twist. This kind of critique is also linked to the literature on deterritorialization as a feature of late modernity or postmodernity, affecting the sovereignty of nation-states for example (e.g. Appadurai, 1990). As a result, place has become a problem rather than a given, as is evidenced by the growth of an anthropology of place (e.g. Feld and Basso, 1996; Herzfeld, 1997; Hirsch and O’Hanlon, 1995).
- 6 In focusing on sets of practices, my approach is consonant with that of Hanks and others who apply Bourdieu’s strategy of focusing on the relation between modes of practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Hanks, 1987). Those modes of practice could themselves be said to fall into sets of practices. Thus ‘being a citizen of Tapalpa’ is a set of modes of practice that includes, as we will see, the knowing of Tapalpa’s history. Another concept that I was tempted to use but did not is

that of social 'arenas' as constituted by the roles that cut across the practices in a set of practices. I could have written that I was focusing on the relation between a 'national' arena and an 'urban' arena. However, I feel that this only reifies the context of those practices and takes the emphasis off the practices themselves. It is too easy, in other words, to end up back with the 'town' and the 'nation' from which I was trying to get away.

- 7 Of course, authority across *both* sets of practices was elusive. Not everyone had an equal voice in Tapalpa's public assemblies either. This is a point that has, of course, been made over and over again in the literature. Scholars have focused on all sorts of criteria – such as gender and ethnicity – that make one person more of a 'citizen' than other persons (e.g. Bossenga, 1997; Kymlicka and Norman, 2000; Tilly, 1995). The difference between the citizenship of towns and of nations was, I am suggesting, one of kinds and degrees of exclusion.
- 8 Holston and Appadurai wrote in their introduction that 'Although one of the essential projects of nation building has been to dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and to replace it with the national, cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship' (Holston and Appadurai, 1999: 2). They appear to assume, however, that modern citizenship, although still developed in the city, is necessarily national citizenship.
- 9 Scholars have often lumped genres together into an amorphous 'collective memory' or 'selective tradition' (e.g. Halbwachs, 1980; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). They have usually identified specific 'versions' within that collective memory. Those versions are then linked to the interests of particular social groups (e.g. Gershoni and Jankowski, 1986; Zerubavel, 1995). I suggest, however, that we use 'memory' to designate a family of knowledge that includes diverse genres. There may, of course, be several genres of memory in each society (e.g. Bloch, 1996; Briggs, 1988; Malinowski, 1971; Slyomovics, 1994; Vansina, 1985). Thus genres are linked to social order in more complex ways than 'versions' to social groups.
- 10 The literature on the genre of history has also focused on the emergence of the modern nation and has generally ignored the town as an object of history. It has also usually taken the form of essays rather than ethnographies (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Chakrabarty, 1992; de Certeau, 1993; Dirks, 1990). I have written elsewhere about the knowledge of place, arguing that places are objects both of which and in which something can be known.
- 11 Nuitjen found that members of a state agrarian collective in another region of the state of Jalisco did talk about the agrarian struggle of the Mexican Revolution. But she argued that their accounts of agrarian struggle were derived from school texts and agrarian propaganda, as well as from Mexican cinema, rather than from their tales of personal and family experience (Nuitjen, 1998).
- 12 On the writing and teaching of Mexican history, see the fascinating volume edited by Pérez Siller and Radkau García (Pérez Siller and Radkau García, 1998).
- 13 I use the word 'disseminate' in a similar way to Urban, who observes for example that Amazonian myths circulated best when they did not refer to the immediate, because then they could not easily be challenged (Urban, 1996).
- 14 Palacios has written on the making of the imaginary of the Revolution, focusing on the 1930s (Palacios, 1999). Several authors in the same volume deal with similar issues (Zárate Hernández, 1999). Stephen also addresses representations of the Mexican Revolution, although in a slightly different way (Stephen, 1997).

- 15 This resonates with Verdery's account of historical debates in Ceaucescu's Romania and with Herzfeld's account of debates about national identity in early 19th-century Greece. Both Verdery and Herzfeld emphasize that debates *about* the identity of the nation ultimately have the effect of reinforcing the idea that there is a nation about which one can have a debate (Herzfeld, 1982; Verdery, 1993).
- 16 Bartra linked González to a 'rustic fringe' of small-holding cattle-ranchers and agriculturalists, who were supposed to have suffered the revolution without benefiting from it (Bartra, 1989: 66–9).
- 17 I have argued elsewhere that micro-history could be better termed micro-national history (Stack, 1999). Revel has written at length on the politics of micro-history (Revel, 1996).
- 18 This relates to Lomnitz-Adler's discussion of the levels of Mexican polity in several recent essays. He has argued that 'Mexican political geography has recognized three to four main levels of political communities. Of these, the city, town, or village is the only political unit with an uninterrupted history of having matched government with the representation of a people and of a popular will' (1995: 25). He also discusses the position of local elites in articulating the relations between the civic and national arenas, arguing that local elites were responsible for disseminating nationalist ideology in exchange not for a voice in the national arena but for the possibility of appropriating a portion of state funds ('corruption'). He gives the example of how state schools were introduced throughout Mexico; the introduction of patriotic rituals was closely linked to the introduction of state schools (1995: 38–40, 33–5).

References

- Abu-Lughod, Janet (1987) 'The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19: 155–76.
- Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1990) 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Public Culture* 2: 1–23.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bartra, Roger (1989) 'Changes in Political Culture: The Crisis of Nationalism', in Wayne A. Cornelius, Judith Gentleman and Peter H. Smith (eds) *Mexico's Alternative Political Futures*. San Diego, CA: Center for US–Mexican Studies, University of California.
- Becerra, Celina Guadalupe, María Alicia Leo Loreto, María Guadalupe Jiménez and Alejandro Solís Matías (1997) *Jalisco Historia y Geografía*. Mexico City: Editorial Limusa.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bloch, Maurice (1996) 'Internal and External Memory: Different Ways of Being in History', in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, pp. 215–33. New York: Routledge.
- Bossenga, Gail (1997) 'Rights and Citizens in the Old Regime', *French Historical Studies* 20: 217–43.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Briggs, Charles L. (1988) *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cohn, Bernard (1980) 'History and Anthropology: The State of Play', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22: 198–221.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (1992) 'The Death of History? Historical Consciousness and the Culture of Late Capitalism', *Public Culture* 4: 47–65.
- Davis, R.H.C. and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, eds (1981) *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- de Certeau, Michel (1993) *La escritura de la historia*, trans. Jorge López Moctezuma. Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana.
- Dirks, Nicholas B. (1990) 'History as a Sign of the Modern', *Public Culture* 2: 25–32.
- Farriss, Nancy (1984) *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Feld, Steven and Keith Basso, eds (1996) *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Friedlander, Judith (1975) *Being Indian in Hueyapan: A Study of Forced Identity in Mexico*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- García Canclini, Néstor (1989) *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. México, DF: Editorial Grijalbo.
- Gershoni, Israel and James P. Jankowski (1986) *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- González y González, Luis (1986) 'La Revolución Mexicana y los Revolucionados', *Nexos* 9: 9–13.
- Halbwachs, Maurice (1980) *The Collective Memory*. New York: Harper.
- Hanks, William (1987) 'Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice', *American Ethnologist* 14: 668–92.
- Herzfeld, Michael (1982) *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Herzfeld, Michael (1997) *A Place in History: Social and Monumental Time in a Cretan Town*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hirsch, E. and M. O'Hanlon, eds (1995) *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric (1964) *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*. New York: Mentor.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holston, James, ed. (1999) *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Holston, James and Arjun Appadurai (1999) 'Cities and Citizenship', in James Holston (ed.) *Cities and Citizenship*, pp. 1–18. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Kagan, Richard L. (2000) *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.
- Keane, Webb (1997) 'National Language and the Idea of the Local in Eastern Indonesia', *Cultural Anthropology* 12: 37–63.
- Kymlicka, Will and Wayne Norman, eds (2000) *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Loznitz-Adler, Claudio (1995) 'Ritual, Rumor, and Corruption in the Constitution of Polity in Mexico', *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 1: 20–47.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw (1971) *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press.

- Muriá, José María (1995) *Historia y Geografía de Jalisco: Tercer Grado*. Mexico, DF: Editorial Trillas.
- Nadel-Klein, Jane (1991) 'Reweaving the Fringe: Localism, Tradition, and Representation in British Ethnography', *American Ethnologist* 18: 500–17.
- Nava López, J. Guadalupe and Ma. Patricia Nava Aguilar (1985) *Monografía de Tapalpa, Jal.* Tapalpa, Jal., Mexico: Biblioteca Pública Municipal de Tapalpa, Jalisco.
- Nuitjen, Monique (1998) *In the Name of the Land: Organization, Transnationalism, and the Culture of the State in Mexican Ejido*. Wageningen: Ponson en Looijen bv.
- Palacios, Guillermo (1999) 'Política cultural del estado posrevolucionario e identidad campesino-indígena', in José Eduardo Zárate Hernández (ed.) *Bajo el signo del Estado*, pp. 35–54. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán.
- Pérez Siller, Javier and Verena Radkau García, eds (1998) *Identidad en el imaginario nacional: reescritura y enseñanza de la historia*. Puebla: Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, El Colegio de San Luis, Georg-Eckert-Institut.
- Redfield, Robert (1950) *A Village that Chose Progress: Chan Kom Revisited*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Revel, Jacques (1996) *Jeux d'échelles: la micro-analyse à l'expérience*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Rykwert, Joseph (1976) *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.
- Sassen, Saskia (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Slyomovics, Susan (1994) 'The Memory of Place: Rebuilding the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village', *Diaspora* 3: 157–68.
- Stack, Trevor (1999) 'Revoluciones y la revolución en el México reaccionario', in José Eduardo Zárate Hernández (ed.) *Bajo el signo del Estado*, pp. 95–100. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán.
- Stephen, Lynn (1997) 'Pro-Zapatista and Pro-PRI: Resolving the Contradictions of Zapatismo in Rural Oaxaca', *Latin American Research Review* 32: 41–70.
- Tilly, Charles, ed. (1995) *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam.
- Urban, Greg (1996) *Metaphysical Community: The Interplay of the Senses and the Intellect*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Vansina, Jan (1985) *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Verdery, Katherine (1993) *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Zárate Hernández, José Eduardo, ed. (1999) *Bajo el signo del Estado*. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán.
- Zerubavel, Yael (1995) *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

■ **Trevor Stack** is a Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Aberdeen. His doctoral research focused on the knowing of history in a group of west Mexican towns. While conducting his doctoral research, he worked as an activist with civic groups in west Mexico. It was during that work as an activist that he became interested in the question of citizenship and began developing a second project that

focused on citizenship. This article is an attempt to bridge his projects on the knowing of history and on citizenship. *Address:* Department of Hispanic Studies, Taylor Building, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 3UB, UK. [email: t.stack@abdn.ac.uk]
