

Montgomery, L. M. 1989. The transformation of the political economy of the Mexicali Valley of northwest Mexico: Ejidatarios, the state, and ecological crisis. (Volumes I and II). Ph.D. dissertation. Michigan State University. East Lansing, Michigan. 427 pp.

Since the development of agriculture in the Mexicali Valley in the late nineteenth century, the political economy has shifted from foreign-owned, export-oriented production to state-controlled capitalism producing for both domestic and foreign markets. This study explores the relationship between structure and agency in this process of transformation. Specifically, the goals of this work are twofold: (1) to apply Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration to an analysis of the development of the political economy, and (2) to describe those factors which have given the development of capitalism in the valley its unique character distinguishing it from other regions in Mexico. Ejido Tiburon, one of many agricultural communities in the valley, is the lens through which the processes and consequences of change are viewed.

The analysis is based upon data from Ejido Tiburon. The Multi-Purpose Household Questionnaire: Basic Economic and Demographic Modules prepared for the World Bank was modified to be appropriate to the ejido and used to collect information regarding household composition; migration patterns; household income, assets, and labor utilization; and agricultural practices. Life histories, participant observation, and archival materials were also used. In addition, information was obtained about the valley's agricultural sector through interviews with politicians, government officials and bureaucrats, journalists, and extensive use of government archives.

In regard to the major goals of this study, this work draws two major conclusions. One, structure and agency are inseparable in the analysis of the development and transformation of the political economy. Both the state and ejidatarios have played an important role in shaping the region's agriculture. Two, the development of capitalism cannot be separated from the time-space context in which it occurs. The valley's political economy has been indelibly molded by these contextual factors: its location on an international border, the lack of a domestic agricultural elite, its desert environment, and the need to share water with the United States. Furthermore, irrigation practices in the Mexicali Valley and the United States have created serious problems of soil salinity have been the catalyst for extensive changes in the agricultural sector.