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After Moctezuma: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government in Mexico City, 1524-1730. By William F. Connell. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. xviii + 316 pp. Illustrations, map, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.)

After Moctezuma primarily focuses on the indigenous *parcialidad* (municipal sector) of Mexico Tenochtitlan in Mexico City, though Mexico Tlatelolca is not entirely neglected. Its inhabitants, the Nahuas, spoke a Utc-Aztec language, Nahuatl. William Connell argues that the Nahuas created their own distinct political culture over the centuries that included their autochthonous ideas about governance that came to be imbedded in Spanish-imposed structures, such as the *cabildo* (municipal council) and governorships. Voters in these offices were usually a privileged lot, though commoners had the right to petition and used it to their advantage in shaping a populist-style politics, but that did not happen overnight.

The author divides the book chronologically in order to show change from an exclusive political system to one more open by the early eighteenth century. In the first period, 1536-1572, the governorships were only filled by those of noble lineage. Coalition building to support a successor resembled pre-Hispanic practices, and the best candidate came from a noble lineage from which the pre-Hispanic *tlatoque* (indigenous rulers) were chosen. The governor often manipulated the *cabildo* elections, but both governorships and *cabildo* offices were subject to charges of authority abuse or of corruption. As in pre-Hispanic times, rival noblemen often disputed succession.

The transition period—1573-1610—witnessed the declining influence of the royal line and the increasing participation of nondynastic individuals that included *mestizos* and outsiders. Elected governors became the norm and resembled other elected officials, though their terms were life-long. In the next period after the flood of 1629, annual elections were mandated and the *audiencia* played an active role in supervising and certifying elections, as well as seeing that the governors had the financial backing to collect tribute. Any shortfall could land the governors in jail. *Fiadores* were mainly Spaniards and *mestizos* who had the financial wherewithal to guarantee the debt of the governor. Their motive was preferential access to Indian markets.

From 1650 to 1680, the sociodemographic changes in Mexico Tenochtitlan were underway with more non-Nahua Indians, Spaniards, and *mestizos*. Governorships became politicized and viceregal governments intervened if called upon to resolve conflicts. Petitioner complaints became louder and effective in stopping candidates who were disqualified for being non-Indians, and the petitioners would remind the viceroy or *oidor* to enforce such ordinances that prohibited non-Indians from holding native offices.

By the end of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, the political system had matured to the extent that native coalitions formed to elect a particular candidate. While being a former or current officeholder was required to be an elector, their numbers increased and so did vote totals, which

consequently integrated a greater portion of the community into the political process. Getting the support of the nonvoting commoners was important because they could refuse to pay tribute if an unpopular official was elected. Complaints regarding the candidates' eligibility and *fiador* backing usually preceded an election by several weeks and thus became part of active campaigning, despite its prohibition. Overall, the indigenous government maintained a great deal of autonomy and resisted any attempt to undermine it, which enabled the natives to engage in a type of politicking and selection process that resembled pre-Hispanic practices.

Connell draws on a variety of sources: Spanish and indigenous chroniclers, published primary documents, and documents from Mexican and Spanish archives and libraries in the United States. Many of the documents that undergird his argument are litigation/petition cases pertaining to political succession and office.

Although well organized and soundly argued, the study could have been placed in the broader context of Spanish colonialism. It raises the question: What did the Indians' petitioning reveal about colonialism? The Nahuas' successful resistance could be partially due to the indirect rule preferred by the Spanish rather than the costlier version of imperialism. Also, knowing the changing size and ethnic/racial composition of Mexico Tenochtitlan would have been helpful to show plainly the dilution of Nahuas identity.

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The Very Nature of God: Baroque Catholicism and Religious Reform in Bourbon Mexico City. By Brian R. Larkin. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010. xiii + 312 pp. Illustrations, appendix, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95 paper.)

In this well-researched and well-written book, Brian Larkin explores religious change in eighteenth-century Mexico City by focusing on Catholicism as it was practiced and experienced. He argues that distinct understandings of the nature of God and the sacred were at the root of the differences between baroque Catholicism, which emphasized outward gesture and ritual observance, and the interiorized, simplified Catholicism of reforming bishops active in the second half of the century. For baroque Catholics, sign and signified were united in God; thus, "the sacred could inhere within the physical world and thus was proximate and palpable" (p. 4). For this reason, devotional practices centered upon objects and actions that united the sacred and profane spheres and that made visible in outward gesture the