



Chapter 256

Cultural landscapes: Contributions in the field of Mexican Microhistory and environmental management

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ABSTRACT

This work is part of the preliminary advances made within the framework of the doctoral research project called "Legal-administrative and socio-ecological analysis of the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve: the case of the Balzapote ejido". The object of this essay is to enunciate how the cultural landscape is analyzed and described from various Mexican perspectives

committed to recovering the socio-historical-environmental processes that reconfigured part of the Mexican rural territory. For this, first, as an introduction, the theoretical approaches of Mexican microhistory and environmental management proposed by the authors Luis González and González & Raúl Brañes Ballesteros are disrupted; subsequently, based on these statements, some contributions made in cultural landscapes of the Mexican territory are exposed; from the Tuxtla region; and, from the common Balzapote. Finally, the text concludes with some reflections on the disciplinary approaches, the dimensions of analysis, and the techniques that prevailed for data collection in the works examined.

Keywords: Cultural landscape, Mexican microhistory, Environmental management, Territory.

1 INTRODUCTION

The prelude of the doctoral research conducted by this essay¹ were based on two resolutions issued by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, which had the purpose of developing sustainable projects of high impact "economic, social and environmental" in protected natural areas circumscribed within the polygon administered by the Regional Directorate Coastal Plain and Gulf of Mexico (National Commission of Natural Protected Areas):

I. Official Gazette of the Federation (2012). Decree that modifies the diverse by which it is declared a Natural Protected Area with the character of a National Marine Park, the zone known as Veracruz Reef System, located off the coasts of the municipalities of Veracruz, Boca del Río, and Alvarado of the State of Veracruz Llave, with an area of 52,238-91-50 hectares, published on August 24 and 25, 1992.

¹ It refers to the Research project doctoral suggested by the author to the admission committee of the Tropical Research Center of the Universidad Veracruzana, which is entitled "Legal-administrative and socio-ecological analysis of the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve: the case of the Balzapote ejido".

II. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (2014). Resolution corresponding to the Environmental Impact Statement, particular modality (MIA-P), of the project called: "Change of land use of forest lands for the use and extraction of basaltic rock from the bank located in the Balzapote ejido, municipality of San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz" (Official Letter No. SGPARN.02.IRA.2912/14).

From these resolutions began a series of pronouncements and legal demands by inhabitants of the region, academics and²³ non-governmental organizations, mainly. Among the allegations, it was established⁴ that the resolutions referred to the ineffective application of environmental and ecological public policy instruments in Mexico since they were subject to activities that degraded protected natural ecosystems, as well as to political and economic rather than ecological decisions.

In addition to the above, through various media, it was emphasized that the approval of both projects would result in the weakening and disarticulation of protected natural areas and their corresponding decrees of creation and management programs. On the other hand, in light of Environmental Law, the opinions issued in the resolutions described above represent an extremely negative precedent for the legal protection of Mexican-protected natural areas.

The legal-administrative and socio-environmental problems described above inspired us to ask ourselves: how did the social subjects conceive and practice environmental and ecological norms over time in the cultural landscapes of the Balzapote ejido? how were these subjects harmed or benefited by the environmental and ecological policies implemented by the public administration in the territory? what effect did it have on how the norms were conceived and observed? environmental and ecological on an ejido or communal scale —that is, a subject of agrarian law? and what was the social perception of social subjects around the environmental and ecological administrations and public policies established in the territory?

From the aforementioned questions, it was proposed to develop a description —from the unification of the theoretical approaches of Mexican *microhistory* and environmental *management*— of the historical process followed in the transformation of the cultural landscape present in the *Mexican* terroirs over time, in the light of the analysis of the application of environmental standards that since the beginning of the decade of the 60's They began to apply in the country in response to social dynamics generated within the localities, as well as from these towards the institutions in charge of their operation and supervision. On the other hand, it sought to reconstruct the power relations and the benefits arising between the socio-political structures involved in the processes of environmental management over time; and, finally, to describe the

² Cf. Mexican Center for Environmental Law (2017). Online: <https://www.cemda.org.mx/admiten-amparo-contr-a-ampliacion-del-puerto-de-veracruz-por-violar-derecho-al-medio-ambiente-sano/>

³ Cf. Mexican Center for Environmental Law (2016). Online: <https://www.cemda.org.mx/llama-sociedad-civil-a-gobierno-a-proteger-los-arrecifes-del-golfo-de-mexico/>

⁴ Cf. Center Mexican Environmental Law (2016). News: Organizations disapprove of authorization granted by Semarnat a project to store rock from Los Tuxtlas. Online: <http://www.cemda.org.mx/organizaciones-de-la-sociedad-civil-desaprueban-la-autorizacion-otorgada-por-semarnat-a-proyecto-para-almacenar-roca-de-los-tuxtlas/>

perceptions and valuations of these structures on the reconfiguration suffered in the landscape and the socioeconomic dynamics due to the environmental administration implemented in the territory.

The recommended methodology was qualitative and quantitative, with the help of the sampling technique called *exponential non-discriminatory snowball*. To this end, qualitative interviews were proposed with key informants both from the localities themselves and governmental, academic, and non-governmental institutions involved in the environmental management processes of the territory under study. Personal observation; consultation with bibliographic and historical archive sources; ancient and contemporary photography; and, collegiate dialogue meetings, were some of the techniques that were selected for the collection of information in the field.

As a frame of reference for the doctoral work described above, this essay, it is stated how the cultural landscape is analyzed and described from various Mexican perspectives committed to recovering socio-historical-environmental processes that reconfigured part of the Mexican rural territory. To do this, then, the theoretical approaches of Mexican microhistory and environmental management proposed by the authors Luis González and González & Raúl Brañes Ballesteros; subsequently, from these approaches, some contributions made in cultural landscapes of the Mexican territory are put into view; of the region of the Tuxtlas; and, of the ejido Balzapote. Finally, the text concludes with some reflections on the disciplinary approaches, the dimensions of analysis, and the techniques that prevailed in the works examined.

1.1 OF THE THEORETICAL APPROACHES OF MEXICAN MICROHISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE STUDY OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE IN THE MEXICAN RURAL TERRITORY⁵

Before referring to how the cultural landscape is analyzed and described in various Mexican perspectives committed to recovering socio-historical-environmental processes that reconfigured some local spaces of the Mexican rural territory; first, we will disrupt the theoretical approaches of Mexican microhistory and environmental management that we unify for the reading of the cultural landscape of the Balzapote ejido.

For this, it is important to mention that historically the study of landscapes has not been shaped only by a theoretical concept but by a set of concepts arising from various schools and epistemological approaches (Bollo, 2017).

Thus, for Barrasa (2017) the landscape is studied and classified from the German and Russian schools —based mainly on the physical aspect of the landscape—, French and North American —from a slope of the natural environment—, and in other schools focused on its study from a sociocultural vision.

⁵ The section presented here is a summary of the first and second chapters of the work entitled "Law, policy and environmental administration: a theoretical-methodological Proposal for the Study Microhistorical del territorio mexicano", by Pérez, J. F. & López J. C. (2021). Article published in the vOl. 2., no. 4., South Florida Journal of Development, Miami, pp. 5700-5718, ISSN 2675-5459. Online: <https://lnkd.in/eWxzHUIJ5>

For their part, Zubeldu and Allende [(2015): in Franch-Pardo & Cancer-Pomar, 2017], distinguish three approaches to specify the different classifications towards the study of landscapes: the first, for those who work exclusively through their physical reality, attending only to the territorial component; the second, for those who integrate physical reality and the perception of it in hierarchical equality; and, the third, for those who pose it as a subordination of perception over physical reality.

Thiébaud (2017) refers to two classifications for the study of landscapes; the first is based on the analysis of the natural elements of the territory; and, the second is in its sociocultural analysis. According to this author, the importance of sociocultural analysis lies in the fact that the users of landscapes – men – live them, perceive them, value them, and give them meaning; therefore, these landscapes are also a social and cultural construction. In our opinion, the contributions of these two classifications are complementary, since it is difficult to proceed to a socio-historical study of the landscape without a physical classification that guides comparisons between natural elements and sociocultural processes. Similarly, it is difficult to make a physical classification of the landscape – or use it for the management of biocultural elements – if there is no information about the sociocultural context.

Therefore, over time several classifications have emerged based on various schools and epistemological approaches for the study and classification of the physical-natural and socio-cultural reality that occurs in the landscape. From the sociocultural point of view, the constructivist theoretical approach of Checa-Artasu (2017), refers that the landscape is a social construction subject to a certain representation fined in the senses, in the perception, which can be individual or collective, accepted by a group of people, made on a specific geographical space made up of territories that may be subject to a certain regime of ownership and management.⁶⁷

For his part, Buxó (2006) points out that landscapes are essentially multidimensional constructions, the result of the interaction of historically determined structures and contingent processes. As a framework of human activity and scenario of its social life, for this author, the cultural landscape and human landscapes, in general, are a socio-historical construction resulting from the human phenomenon of interaction with the natural environment; For this reason, it proposes that they be considered as a consequence of long-term socio-natural coevolution.

According to Jiménez (2008), the construction of these landscapes is carried out by economic, political, and social processes that define their topographical, hydrographic, and geomorphological features; Hence, cultural landscapes are considered complex, since they are the most significant tangible testimony left by societies in their passage through certain environments.

To understand and explain the processes that define the features of the cultural landscapes of the Mexican territory, an integrative reconstruction is necessary, in the long term, in which the dynamics of the socio-historical processes that have triggered the structural transformations of the terroirs are studied and

⁶ From the objectivity of Metaphysics.

⁷ From the subjectivity of Logic.

analyzed. This reconstruction can be read and analyzed from the intersection between the theoretical approaches of *microhistory* and *environmental management* proposed by the authors Luis González and González & Raúl Brañes Ballesteros. This unification of propositions allows a historical understanding of the problem that arises: a disruption to the order of the analysis of law, politics, and environmental administration.

According to González and González (1973: 13), the German philosopher Friederich Nietzsche states that there are three types of stories, namely: the *critical*, the *monumental*, and the *antiquarian*. The first moves in the universal scope. Monumental history is usually confined to the national level. The third, the antique dealer, is the story that tells us the past of our existence, our family, our terroir, of the small community; for González and González (1995), its most spontaneous manifestation is *microhistory*. The recognition of the three histories (the critical, the monumental, and the antiquarian) allows us to better locate the theoretical proposition to which this chapter is circumscribed: microhistory. However, it should also be noted that there are two types of microstories. On the one hand, there is the Italian microhistory, which emerged in the seventies, whose best-known exponents are Dr. Giovanni Levi and Dr. Carlo Ginzburg; and, on the other hand, the *Mexican microhistory* initiated by its greatest exponent, Dr. Luis González y González, at the end of the seventies. This limitation allows us to clarify in a certain way the theoretical approaches cited in the contributions described in the second section of this section; that is, regardless of the existence of these two currents of microhistory, in this essay only some contributions to the reconstruction of cultural landscapes will be enunciated under the theoretical approach proposed by Luis González y González.

According to González and González, *Mexican microhistory* is science in the collecting, purifying and comprehensive stage of the actions of the human past, and it is art in the stage of the reconstruction or resurrection of a piece of humanity that was. Microhistory is the individualized story of the humble, of the neighbors who rarely appear in the social section of the newspapers and perhaps never in the political section and the economic section. Microhistory is interested in the tradition or habit of the family, what resists temporary deterioration, the modest, the small-town; that is, a man in all his roundness and his culture in all its facets (1973: 41; 28; 32).

From microhistory, the idea of the study of local history from the principles of general history is rejected, since the principles of local history are autonomous and opposed to those of general history. The research methods and techniques of local history (*microhistory*) are very different from those of general history (*macrohistory*). In macrohistory, the methodological path is perfectly traced, while in microhistory there are no specific strokes since the microhistorian in his walk makes the selection of the strokes that allow him to reconstruct social history (González and González, 1973: 57).

With the microhistorical perspective, it is possible to approach the study of the *small homeland or the material*, the *small world*, the *terroir*, defined differently according to the views of the definition. However, some small homelands cannot be covered at a glance. The terroir is the culturally autonomous

and economically self-sufficient tribal unit, it is the grouping of the people understood as a set of families linked to the soil, it is the small city in which the neighbors still recognize each other, it is the small world of personal relationships and without an intermediary (González and González, 1973: 27).

In terms of discord, in the terroirs, the class struggle is usually minimal and that of families maximum. Relations with the territory tend to be loving and with neighboring communities, conflictive. Ten, twelve, or fifteen communities of these mini-communities generally converge with a market, the capital of a region. Culturally, each terroir handles a bundle of prejudices that govern from the table to the altar, passing through a code of honor, a worldview, a little path, and a way of making art (García, 2007: 45).

According to González and González (1973), with microhistory, one can recognize a space, a time, a society, and a set of actions that belong to it. For her, the important thing is not the size of the venue where a story takes place, but the smallness and cohesion of the group being studied and the minuscule of the things that are told about it. Its analysis starts from a specific event, document, or character.

For its part, the concept of *environmental management* refers to the "set of human actions that aim to regulate the environment" (Branes, 2000: 117). It is primarily a public function or state function, however, its transformation into a function shared by the state and civil society is sought. In legal-administrative terms, environmental management is structured from three interrelated components: environmental *policy*, environmental *law or legislation*, and *environmental administration*. Does the environmental policy aim at what can be done to achieve environmental management? and we can find it in the State Legal System, which establishes the purposes of the state and the scope of the public function (Brañes, 2000: 118).

In the State Legal System it is instituted: who or who should formulate environmental policy? How will the environmental and ecological policy be formulated? And what will be the scope of this policy? Likewise, article 15 of the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection establishes the "principles" that govern the aforementioned policy, while chapters IV and V refer to the instruments intended for its development:

"Environmental planning, ecological land management, economic instruments, environmental regulation of human settlements, environmental impact assessment, official Mexican standards on environmental matters, self-regulation and environmental audit, ecological research, and education, information, and surveillance, and protected natural areas..."⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹¹²

⁸Environmental planning is not a specific instrument of environmental policy, but rather, it is a mechanism of economic and development policy, which is embodied in the National Development Plan.

⁹General, regional, local, and marine.

¹⁰Fiscal, financial, and market type.

¹¹In its regional and particular modality.

¹²In the category of Reserves of the Biosfera, National Parks, Natural Monuments, Natural Resources Protection Areas, Flora, and Fauna Protection Areas, Sanctuaries, and Areas Voluntarily Destined for Conservation.

On the other hand, *environmental law or legislation* is understood as a sector of the legal system in formation or construction: a synthesis discipline that collects knowledge from other disciplines and combines them to unify a new and unified body of propositions.

Brañes (2000: 18-19; 29) points out three approaches to the aforementioned concept:

First approach: is a "set of rules and norms that legally protect the conditions that make life possible in all its forms"; the second approach: is a "set of rules dealing with the legal protection of ecological balance"; and, the third approach: is "norms that regulate human behaviors that can influence in a relevant way the interaction processes that take place between the systems of living organisms and their environmental systems, through the generation of effects from which a significant modification of the conditions of existence of said organisms is expected".

In this case suggest the use of the *third approximation of the concept of environmental law or legislation*, since it is assumed that the regulation of human behaviors can influence in a relevant way the processes of interaction between the systems of living organisms and their environmental systems, the conditions that make life possible on the planet must be legally safeguarded.¹³

Finally, *environmental administration* falls mainly on the Executive Power, which is organized through centralized, deconcentrated, decentralized, and parastatal bodies; however, the active participation of civil society in its development and implementation is also sought. Therefore, the environmental administration determines the need to establish a type of special legal-administrative structure, different from the traditional legal-administrative structures established for the whole of state administrative management (Brañes, 2000: 120; 144-145).

Currently, environmental administration finds its legal basis in the Organic Law of Public Administration. Its system of distribution of competencies is located in the legal instruments in environmental matters of federal, state, and municipal competence (Brañes, 2000: 145). In perspective, with the unification of the theoretical approaches of *microhistory and environmental management* that are proposed here, it is possible to study "space, time, society and the set of normative and material actions that have reconfigured the cultural landscapes of Mexican terroirs".

2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND MEXICAN MICROHISTORY

Before starting this section, it is important to clarify that Mexican microhistory and environmental management have historically been developed from different disciplines; the first, in the light of History, and the second, under the protection of Law (Pérez & Acosta, 2021). Therefore, on the one hand, we have several written works of historical order that seek to reconstruct and analyze the dynamics of the social processes that occur in Mexican cultural landscapes; and, on the other hand, we have various specialized

¹³ It refers to the Lithosphere (soil), Hydrosphere (water), Atmosphere (air-oxygen), and Technosphere (man-made artificial infrastructure).

works in environmental management that seek to analyze the application and effectiveness of the law. environmental policy and management, as we will see below.

In the field ¹⁴of Law (from the components proposed by Raúl Brañes Ballesteros), *Environmental Management* has been formed based on a specialized literature that is not more than 50 years old, but that has already experienced important developments. According to Brañes (2000), chronologically speaking, the first works of environmental law appeared in industrialized countries (pp. 51-53). According to this author, an important work on environmental law has been available in France since 1973, the treatise written on the subject by Jean Lamarque, which is followed by other works, including extremely important monographs. Among these works that should be mentioned, one of the most interesting is the book by Michel Prieur. In that country, there is also a Journal of environmental law. In Spain, Ramón Martín Mateo delivered 1977 an important book on environmental law, which was preceded by the work of José Juste Ruiz in 1998. In Italy, Massimo Severo Giannini, 1973, made the first contributions to environmental law with some essays that are now classics, opening the way to many other works. In the impossibility of citing here even what is most significant for the development of environmental law in each of the industrialized countries, we conclude this brief epitome by indicating the importance of the American legal literature on the subject, as well as monographs and specialized journals. ¹⁵161718192021222324

On the other hand, in Latin America, there is also an important development of environmental law, which is why we refer the reader to consult the essay by Brañes (2000) entitled "The development of environmental law *as a legal discipline*", ²⁵which offers us an interesting state-of-the-art of the contributions that have been made on the subject in this region of the American continent.

In Mexico, the first thing that was published on environmental management is the essay by Fernando Vázquez (1974), which contains an analysis of the Mexican legal system of environmental pollution. To this and other works, in ²⁶1987, the book "*Mexican Environmental Law*", by Raúl Brañes Ballesteros, was

¹⁴ It refers to Environmental Policy, Law, and Management.

¹⁵ Cf. *Droit of the protection of the Nature et of L'environnement*, LGDJ, Paris, 1973.

¹⁶ Cf. Among them we cannot fail to mention the works of G. Martin, *Him Droit à L'environnement. From the responsabilité Civile pour Faits of pollution*, PPS, Lyon, 1978, and by F. Caballero, *Essa South the notion Juridique of nuisance*, LGDJ, Paris, 1981.

¹⁷ It refers to its *Droit of L'environnement*, Dalloz, Paris, 1984.

¹⁸ Cf. *Revue Juridique of L'environnement*, PPS, Lyon (since 1976).

¹⁹ Cf. *Environmental Law*, cit. *Supra* in note 48. Today there is an *Environmental Law Treaty* by the same author, published in three volumes (Trivium, Madrid, 1991, 1992, 1997).

²⁰ Cf. Juste, Joseph (1998). *International Environmental Law*. Spain: McGraw-Hill Interamericana (1st Edition).

²¹ Cf. "Atmosphere: saggio Sui Suoi Aspetti giuridici" in *Rivista quarterly di diritto public*, No. 1, 1973, pp. 15 ff., as well as "Primi Rilievi Sulle Nozioni di gestione del ambiente del territorio", in the same *Rivista*, No. 2, 1975, pp. 479 ff.

²² Cf. Among others, Amadeo Postiglione, *Il diritto all'ambiente*, Young, Naples, 1992.

²³ Cf. The American literature on the subject is extremely extensive. Apart from Peter's precursor work Sand cit. in footnote 42, we recommend reading some of the various environmental law texts that exist, such as that of William H. Rodgers, Jr., as well as his *Environmental Law Treaty*. cit. in footnote 44, and that of Roger W. Findley and Daniel A. Farber, *Environmental Law*, West Publishing Co., St. Paul Minn., 1983.

²⁴ Among the journals, mention should be made of *Ecology Law Quarterly* (Berkely, since 1971), which is the oldest on the subject.

²⁵ Cf. Brañes, Raul (2000). *Manual of Mexican Environmental Law*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 51-54 pp.

²⁶ Cf. Sus "Notes for the Study of the Mexican legal system on environmental pollution" in the journal *Legal*, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico, 1974, no., 6.

added. In that same year, Mexico began a process of improvement of legislation and creation of government institutions in environmental matters, which forced Brañes to initiate a revision of its text, concluding in 1994 the first edition of the *"Manual of Mexican environmental law"*. Finally, in 2000, he published the second edition of the work, after an exhaustive revision of more than 60% of the text of the first edition and, also, further development of its content.

In addition to the works of Raúl Brañes Ballesteros, there are those of Juan José Gonzales and Ivett Montelongo Buenavista (1999); María Colín (2011); Vicente Ugalde Saldaña (2014); Carmen Carmona Lara (2015); Tania García López and Ana Cecilia Travieso Bello (2015); María Fernanda Barrientos and Luigi Lacobi Pontones Brito (2016); Raúl Arriaga Becerra (2017); among other authors, whom we have followed in our academic and professional work since they have contributed to the evolutionary analysis of each of the components that make up Mexican environmental management.²⁷²⁸²⁹³⁰³¹³²³³

Some significant contributions come from professional theses in various universities in the country, whose number and quality are increasing. For his part, Gustavo Alanís Ortega, founder, and director of³⁴ the Mexican Center for Environmental Law has written several articles on the subject. Currently, Salvador E. Muñúzuri Hernández directs the Center for Legal and Environmental Studies, A. C., where the journal "Environmental Law and Ecology" is published bimonthly.³⁵

In the regional context, in the region of Los Tuxtlas, from an ethnographic approach, Luisa Paré and Tajín Fuentes, in 2007, published one of the most important works on the environmental management processes carried out in the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, under the name *"Environmental governance and public policies in protected natural areas: lessons from the Tuxtlas"*. This text collects and analyzes the information and experiences resulting from the application of some environmental public policies in the context of a territory where a federal institution intervenes to promote the conservation and protection of natural resources. In addition to the above, a reconstruction of the process of formation of the Biosphere Reserve and the social implications derived according to the modalities that accompanied its creation is

²⁷Cf. Gonzales, Juan and Montelongo, Ivett (1999). *Introduction to Mexican Environmental Law*. Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco (2nd edition).

²⁸Cf. Colín, María (2011). "Bad practices in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Mexico", *Environmental Law and Ecology*, 44 (8), pp. 49-51.

²⁹Cf. Ugalde, Vicente (2014). *Environmental law in action. Deployment, enforcement, and compliance issues*. México: El Colegio de México, A. C., 348 pp.

³⁰Cf. Carmona, María del Carmen (2015). *Environmental rights: our rights*. Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de las revoluciones de México / Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas (3rd edition).

³¹Cf. García, Tania and Travieso, Ana (2015). *Water law and management*. Mexico: Ubykhs.

³²Cf. Barrientos, María and Pontones, Luigi (2016). "Perspectives of Environmental Management in Mexico", *Environmental Law and Ecology*, 71 (13), pp. 29-31.

³³Cf. Arriaga, Raúl (2017). "Historical Panoramas of Environmental Impact Assessment in Mexico", *Environmental Law and Ecology*, 73 (13), pp. 23-25.

³⁴Among them, we must mention the one made by Luis Reynaldo Vera Morales with his "Principle of collaborative integration of knowledge in the legal system for decision-making on access and/or use of natural resources", 2010.

³⁵Among his most outstanding essays, we cite the work "The Judiciary and the Protection of the Environment" (published in *The Universal*, on July 22, 2017).

presented. On the other hand, it offers an analysis of the relationships between the different sectoral policies exercised in eight communities of that region.

Regarding the work on the transformations that the cultural landscapes of the Mexican territory have suffered, there are some significant contributions in the fields of anthropological, sociological, historical, and ecological sciences, under approaches as diverse as ethnography, political cultural ecology, historical geography, ethnohistory, landscape ecology, landscape archaeology, and regional archaeology. among others.³⁶³⁷³⁸³⁹⁴⁰

For example, from ethnography, Lazos and Paré (2000), publish the work *"Indigenous views on a saddened nature. Perceptions of environmental deterioration among Nahuas in southern Veracruz"*. In this research, the authors reconstruct from the vision of various social actors of Pajapan, Tatahuicapan, and Mecayapan (of the Sierra de Santa Marta), the multicolored composition of their views on the transformation that the ecological environment has suffered, as well as the causes that explain it, its consequences and alternatives.

From the political cultural ecology, the work of Hernández López (2013) entitled "Landscape and creation of value: the transformation of the cultural landscapes of *agave and tequila*", allows us to know the *agave cultural landscapes of Jalisco*. With the study of historical sources and anthropological fieldwork, the processes through which certain social groups transformed the nature in which they are established are scrutinized; At the same time, it describes and explains how these societies have organized themselves to cope with the responses of a finite environment, in whose landscape it is also possible to identify the unwanted traces of various human decisions.

In the field of historical sciences (since the approach of Friederich Nietzsche) in Mexico there are still relatively ⁴¹few studies of antiquarian histories or material histories that read the cultural landscapes of the Mexican terroirs, and there are non-existent those that explore these landscapes from the unification of the approaches of "Mexican microhistory and environmental management" in a given place. like the ejido Balzapote.

³⁶Cf. Olay, María de los Ángeles (2008). "The valley of Colima and its cultural landscape". In Virginia Thébaut, Magdalena García and María Jiménez (eds.), *Patrimonio y paisajes culturales*. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, A. C.

³⁷Cf. Good, Catherine (2008). "Ritual uses of the cultural landscape among the Nahuas of Guerrero". In: Virginia Thébaut, Magdalena García and María Jiménez (eds.), *Patrimonio y paisajes culturales*. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, A. C.

³⁸Cf. Palma, Rafael (2008). "Agrarian landscapes of the mountains and the coast. Methodological notes on two Veracruz experiences". In Virginia Thébaut, Magdalena García and María Jiménez (eds.), *Patrimonio y paisajes culturales*. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, A. C.

³⁹Cf. Gándara, Manuel (2008). "The interpretation of landscape in archaeology. new opportunities, new challenges." In Virginia Thébaut, Magdalena García and María Jiménez (eds.), *Patrimonio y paisajes culturales*. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, A. C.

⁴⁰Cf. Fernández-Villanueva, Eugenia (2008). "Elaboration of maps in archaeological research, Mesa de Acuitzio. A technical proposal". In Virginia Thébaut, Magdalena García and María Jiménez (eds.), *Patrimonio y paisajes culturales*. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, A. C.

⁴¹Refers to the *Historia criticism, monumental y antiquarian*.

It is worth mentioning that in Balzapote isolated works have been elaborated that disrupt social, environmental, botanical, ecological, ethnobotanical, and phycological aspects; However, research on landscape transformations is quite scarce. Fortunately, in 2017, two ⁴²⁴³⁴⁴⁴⁵⁴⁶⁴⁷socio-historical-environmental approaches were developed in this terroir: the first, through the work carried out by Lucila Guadalupe Vilchis Salinas, in which she describes and analyzes from historical ecology "the *process of livestock during the period 1950-2017*"; and, the second, through the preliminary work carried out by the author of this essay, in which he describes and analyzes from a microhistorical approach "*the origin, transformation, and permanence of the cultural landscape during the period 1967-2015*".⁴⁸

Luis González y González, the creator of the Mexican microhistorical genre, emphasizes that microhistory is scorned in various academic circles, and is even ignored because of the contempt with which the existence of any minority is seen by the disdain of industrial society towards peasant ways of living. According to this author, local chroniclers are also looked down upon and denied competence in the media of professional historians (1968:12); which makes us think that perhaps these arguments are some of the reasons why only a preliminary microhistorical approach prevails in the Balzapote ejido.

In addition to the above, González and González (1968:12-13) point out that the history of a social particle illustrates the history of an entire nation, in the same way, that the materials extracted from an archaeological site or some perforations allow building the global image of a prehistoric civilization. In addition, he says that a good way to reach a true national historiography is to add the parish historiographies or, at least, those of the most representative parishes of each region.

Finally, with various analogies, this same author clarifies that "microscopic history contains more truth than telescopic history since it reaches a closer approach to human reality seeing how little it is possible to see from one's height than contemplating a great panorama from a high tower or a window of a retro impulse airplane" (1968: 13).

It should be noted that the influence and suggestions of Luis González y González have flourished in Venezuelan, Cuban, and Colombian lands. Suffice it to mention the research achievements of Aristides Medina Rubio and the entire group gathered around *Tierra Firme*, an editorial effort that has more than 68

⁴²Cf. Durand, Marta and Ruiz, Julieta (2009). "Biological stations and social participation. The experience of the Autonomous University of Mexico in Los Tuxtlas, Veracruz, Mexico", *Environment & Society*, V (XII), pp. 325-340.

⁴³Cf. Nájera, José Gustavo (2014). "Technical justifying study for the use and exploitation of basaltic rock in the ejido Balzapote, municipality of San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz". (Bachelor Thesis in Forest Engineering). Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Agrario Antonio Narro.

⁴⁴Cf. Lyra, Andrew; Guevara, Sergio; Laborde, Javier and Sánchez, Gabriela (2007). "Floristic composition in pastures of the Tuxtlas, Veracruz, Mexico". *Acta Botánica Mexicana*, No. 80, pp. 59-87.

⁴⁵Cf. Laborde, Francisco (1996). "Flight patterns of frugivorous birds concerning standing trees in tropical grasslands" (Bachelor Thesis in Biology). Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

⁴⁶Cf. Lazos, Elena and Álvarez, Rocés (1988). "Ethnobotany in a tropical-wet region: the home gardens of Balzapote, Veracruz, México". *Ethnobiol*, 8 (1), pp. 45-79.

⁴⁷Cf. Sanchez, Elena (1980). "Phycoflora of the rocky substrate within the shores of the Gulf of Mexico." *Boletim do Oceanographic Institute. Scielo*, 29 (2), pp. 347-350.

⁴⁸Cf. Pérez, José Feliciano (2017). "Study of the origin, transformation, and permanence of the cultural landscape of the ejido Balzapote, San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz, Mexico", *Rinderesu*, 2 (1-2), pp. 39-53.

uninterrupted issues. Undoubtedly, the same thing has also been happening in different Brazilian and Argentine university centers, since we have received echoes and important voices from them (García, 2007).

On the other hand, we emphasize that one of the most important contributions to the study of cultural landscapes in the light of Mexican microhistory is the work of Luis González y González himself, who, in 1968, makes a reconstruction of the landscape of the parish or tenure of San José de Gracia (Michoacán) over four centuries. through his work entitled *"Pueblo en vilo"*. This work aims to be a universal history of the aforementioned terroir; Therefore, it addresses demographic, economic, and biological aspects of "actuality" and even some retrospectives. In general, several edges of social life and certain vicissitudes related to land ownership, and political, religious, and military life are touched. Among the techniques used to collect the data are: personal observation; bibliographic and historical archival reviews; and, oral tradition.

For their part, Thiébaud Virginia and Aguirre Anaya Alberto (2008), with the work called *"Microhistory of a landscape in Buenavista Tomatlán"*, describe and explain the landscape and evolution of the town of Buenavista Tomatlán. Based on the presence of architectural remains and historical sources of the San Pablo and El Nacimiento haciendas, they refer to the use of the environment and the associated historical processes. In this way, taking up study methodologies typical of anthropology and history, they reconstruct in a spatial way and with a historical foundation, the cultural landscape, and the organization of the territory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

With the work entitled *"Landscapes and Settlers in the State of Morelos, a microhistorical reading of 1885"*, Antonio Padilla, makes an important contribution to the microhistorical reading of the landscapes of the state of Morelos. The work consists of the rescue of the chronicles of reports that Robelo made, between July and August 1885, which he directed to the director of the Morelense newspaper "El Orden", in whose texts, he drew environments, landscapes, inhabitants, scenarios, natural resources, and multifaceted and multicolored human resources. These descriptions are a rich vein to, at least, intuit and "remember the people and facts of the terroir". Robelo outlines aspects of the daily life, customs, and social practices of its inhabitants, who developed their trades and chores, anxieties and aspirations, needs and desires surrounded by rough, wild, fertile, meager, infectious and hygienic landscapes, located in the middle of ravines, ravines, valleys, plains, haciendas, towns, ranches, and rancherías, or next to rivers, waterfalls, lagoons, and estuaries. In short, Antonio Padilla, recreated and gave the reader, with the ideas of Robelo and his prejudices, an image of the environment that is deprived in the entity, which splashes with observations and notes, sometimes sharp and others wise.

Another interesting work is that of Juana Elizabeth Sales Hernández, who, in 2009, carried out her postgraduate thesis under the title *"Environmental microhistory of Mazapil: the Spanish presence and the transformation of the landscape, 1568-1650"*. His study joins the network of microhistorical studies that analyze the transformation of the landscape caused by the Spanish presence in Nueva Galicia and Nueva

Vizcaya. This thesis reconstructs 1) the processes of environmental changes in the landscape; 2) how Europeans imported and adapted their way of relating to their original environment in the northeast of New Galicia; 3) the impact of the introduction of new animal species – portable biota – on the environment; and, 4) the adaptation of the indigenous people of the region to the way imposed by Europeans to relate to the environment.

Finally, Roldán González Basulto, in 2014, presents a postgraduate thesis entitled "*Microhistorical and ecological aspects of fruit trees present in plots and fragments of vegetation in Cuyuxquihui, Papantla, Veracruz*". To understand the transformations that the landscape has suffered, among its objectives, it was proposed to explain the processes of landscape reconfiguration in the community of Cuyuxquihui. To this end, this author set out to develop a microhistorical chronicle that would allow reconstruction of the main socio-environmental processes that reconfigured the landscape of the community, which have shaped the current diversity of fruit trees.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This paper states as an object of study how the cultural landscape has been analyzed and described in various Mexican perspectives committed to recovering the socio-historical-environmental processes that reconfigured some local spaces of the Mexican territory, the region of the Tuxtlas and the ejido Balzapote. In this sense, we refer that this text does not reflect all the wealth of views that revolve around the study of the landscape; however, we want to leave a testimony of the enormous effort that has been made to describe the terroirs mentioned above, overcoming the difficulties faced by Mexican microhistorians. We also intend to leave a testimony of the permanent stimulus that the literature referred to here represents for the author of this text.

However, it is important to reiterate that Mexican microhistory and environmental management have historically been developed from different disciplines; the first, in the light of History, and the second, under the protection of Law (Pérez & Acosta, 2021). Therefore, on the one hand, we have several written works of historical order that seek to reconstruct and analyze the dynamics of the social processes that occur in Mexican cultural landscapes; and, on the other hand, we have several specialized works on environmental management that seek to analyze the application and effectiveness of the law. environmental policy and administration in certain areas of the Mexican territory.

By the above, we refer that the cultural landscape has been described and analyzed in the light of anthropological, sociological, historical, and ecological sciences; under various epistemic approaches, such as ethnography, political cultural ecology, historical geography, ethnohistory, Mexican microhistory, environmental management, landscape ecology, landscape archaeology, and regional archaeology, among others.

From the field of historical sciences (from the approach of Friederich Nietzsche) we observe that in Mexico there are relatively ⁴⁹few studies of antiquarian histories or patria histories that read the cultural landscapes of the national territory. The scarcity of jobs is likely due to the contempt and nonsense with which microhistory continues to be observed in various academic circles and first-world countries, attributed mainly to its relationship with peasant ways of living, as Luis González y González points out.

In the field of social sciences (from the approach of Raúl Brañes Ballesteros) we observe that studies on Mexican environmental management have experienced important epistemic developments in ⁵⁰favor of the legal protection of the environment; however, this discipline still does not have adequate academic space for its development, since universities and research centers are scarce. They have embraced the teaching of "Environmental Law, Policy and Administration" within their curricula —undergraduate or graduate— due to the accumulation of interdisciplinary knowledge that is required to scrutinize the body of theoretical propositions that make up Mexican environmental management.

On the other hand, among the most important processes that we observe in the works analyzed in the light of environmental management and Mexican microhistory, are: the reconstruction of biological, environmental, social, historical, economic, geographical, archaeological, and legal interactions. Among the actions, relationships, and influences that prevailed in the socio-historical-environmental reconstructions exposed in this essay, are various edges of social life; vicissitudes of land ownership and tenure; aspects of political, religious, and military life; environmental reconfigurations in the landscape; social imaginary is the environment; aspects of the daily life, customs and social practices of the inhabitants; and, impacts from the introduction of alien species into the environment.

Of the most important techniques used for data collection in the field, we observe the use of techniques from history, sociology, and anthropology, such as personal observation; oral tradition; bibliographic and historical archival reviews; in-depth individual interview; analysis of ancient and contemporary images; and, the analysis of architectural remains.

We know that the works of the authors that we refer to here are incomplete like any social construction; but, they continue to show us theoretical-methodological paths and offer us alternatives of development to imagine and build possible futures in the place where we will spend the rest of our lives: the cultural landscape.

It is important to remember that landscapes are more than just a union of social, political, economic, and environmental processes; They are, above all, a historical construction and, therefore, have a social history. To understand its dynamics, it is necessary to go through them integrally, that is, over long periods; therefore, they should be conceptualized as a single long-term trajectory (Buxó, 2006: 01). This comprehensive tour of social history can be carried out in the light of the theoretical-methodological work proposed by Pérez & Acosta (2021); which allows us to reconstruct —from the unification of Mexican

⁴⁹ Refers to the *Historia criticism, monumental y antiquarian*.

⁵⁰ Refers to *the Environmental Policy, Law, and Administration*.

microhistory and environmental management⁵¹— the socio-environmental processes that define, structure, and alter the meaning of cultural landscapes.

We trust that, with the promotion and permanent development of this type of socio-historical-environmental research, effective decisions will be made that serve to guide the future of the country, to preserve and recover the original functionality of the cultural landscapes present in the Mexican terroirs.

⁵¹ Cf. Pérez, J. F. & López J. C. (2021). "Law, policy and environmental administration: a theoretical-methodological proposal for the study Microhistorical of Mexican territory." Article published in the vOl. 2., no. 4., South Florida Journal of Development, Miami, pp. 5700-5718, ISSN 2675-5459. In lLine: <https://lnkd.in/eWxzHUI5>

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