

***Interviews with Mexican Women: We Don't Talk About Feminism Here.* Carlos Coria-Sánchez. New York: Routledge, 2019.**

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Carlos Coria-Sánchez's book on feminism in Mexico takes a more direct approach than most and includes interviews with nineteen Mexican women from a range of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds (Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Puebla). The central tenet of *Interviews with Mexican Women* is that the feminist movement in Mexico in the 1970s and 1980s was primarily sustained by middle and upper-class academic women and was removed from the daily experiences and needs of working class and indigenous women in the country. Through this series of interviews, Coria-Sánchez reveals how the interviewees, "common" women according to the author, discuss feminism and the feminist movement from such perspectives as: whether they consider themselves to be a feminist; what they know of the feminist movement in Mexico in the 1970s and 80s; if they believe the feminist movement benefits women today; gender conditions in the workplace; women's access to education; whether women have sexual freedom in Mexico; knowledge of any feminist writers or thinkers; traditional versus progressive upbringing; the way they educate their own daughters about sex and sexuality; whether Mexico is a patriarchal society; and what should be done for future generations of women. The women interviewed are housewives, business owners, college instructors, teachers, house cleaners, managers, architects, graphic designers, consultants, and engineers and range in age from twenty-four to seventy-four years old. Coria-Sánchez prefaces the interviews with an introduction to feminist theoretical approaches, including liberal, Marxist, radical, and postmodern feminisms along with intersectionality. Also included is a section on feminist movements of the 1970s and 80s in a Mexican national context. The author concludes the book with a summative analysis of the interviews' findings.

In "Feminist Perspectives," Coria-Sánchez explains that gender is a central component of liberal feminist theory, which arose from the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill and was influenced by the French Revolution. Marxist feminism bases its precepts on class differences in capitalist societies rather than solely on gender, and views marriage and motherhood as modes of oppression that convert women into reproductive rather than productive members of society (5). Postmodern feminism, also known as French feminism, is rooted in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second*

*Sex* and the idea of “otherness” and includes thinkers such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. Finally, intersectionality analyzes the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and other identity factors and originated in Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theories of intersectionality and the law.

In “The Mexican Context,” Coria-Sánchez describes how the feminist movements of the 70s and 80s were a direct result of the economic crises the country suffered and effected women in the workplace inordinately. According to the author, women were at the head of many of the national strikes at the time. Alternatively, indigenous women, such as those in the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional; Zapatist Army of National Liberation), promoted an alternative women’s rights movement unique to their social, political, cultural, and historical context. In this section, Coria-Sánchez highlights the intention of the book: “It is justified to ask if the feminist movement really had an impact on more ‘common’ Mexican women who didn’t belong to academia or didn’t have access to feminist literature” (12).

The first interviewee, Olivia, is perhaps the most aware of the feminism particular to Mexico and regards herself as “more of an inclusive person than a feminist” (14). She contends that “to position myself as a feminist reduces my field of action, because I’d like to consider other issues such as diversity and inclusiveness” (14). Olivia explains that the Mexican women’s movement has had to appeal to international human rights organizations, such as was the case with the staggering number of deaths of young women in Ciudad Juárez. She also references the influence of the Virgin of Guadalupe on Mexican religious beliefs and the effects of this on gender roles in the family.

Other interviews underline contrasts between similarly situated women; for example, age and profession do not necessarily determine whether the women consider themselves feminists, believe in the positive effects of the women’s movements, or believe in sexual freedom and progressive sexual education. Those interviewed who seem to be from more precarious social or economic backgrounds tend to not have a formal knowledge of feminism; however, likely because of their own experiences as women in the family and work settings, many of these women see the importance of fighting for women’s rights. One aspect that becomes apparent in the interviews, an idea prevalent in other countries in Latin America as well, is that feminism and feminists are radical man-haters. Perhaps, this is an explanation for why many Mexican women, including prominent writers and creators, have eschewed the term feminist. Other highlights include an interviewee who was surprised to see that a Mexican company was more concerned with equal pay for women and men than a French company,

and multiple interviewees who discuss women's second shifts as professionals who also take care of children and households.

In the "Final Analysis," Coria-Sánchez lists others who have addressed Mexican women's perceptions of feminism and the history of Mexican women's movements, such as Cecilia Olivares, Gabriela Cano, María Camarena Adame, María Luisa Saavedra García, and Marta Lamas. The author recognizes that many women in Latin America outside of academe who do not refer to themselves as feminists, nevertheless fight for women's rights. He concludes that, while they do not always call themselves feminists, Mexican women want equal rights and responsibilities for themselves and future generations of women. *Interviews with Mexican Women* will prove valuable for researchers as well as educators in the fields of Mexican history, sociology, and culture.