

Example of research paper on the historical influences of mexican architect luis ...

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



The revolution of Mexican Architecture led to the emergence of many architects who sought to bring about modernism in Mexico. However, most of the architects focused on developing modern aspects or rather styles with little or no consideration of the traditional designs. Luis Barragan sought to link traditional architectural designs with his rather modern outlook of his works. He used his art to express the poetic richness of Mexico's past. He also used his works to address the aesthetic trends of the modern world. The two aspects that inspired Luis were the physical beauty of nature as well as the spiritual richness of the Mexicans. Another source of inspiration was the lessons that he learnt about the traditional architectural designs of the Mexican villages and provincial towns. His cultural and historical background as well as his creativity, as portrayed by the evolution of architectural works, bridged the gap between traditional and modern architecture in Mexico. Barragan's career in architecture began in 1926 when he teamed up with other architects in Mexico who were interested in the provincial architecture of the state of Jalisco. During that time At the time when he started his career in architecture, the Mexican revolutionaries were not in agreement as to what kind of architecture was best fit to achieve their social economic goals. The other influential architects included Pedro Castellanos, Rafael Unzua and Ignacio Diaz Morales. The goal of his fellow architects was to revive the Hispanic Moorish styles and the architectural designs of the local haciendas and convents. On the other hand, Barragan went a step further by carefully defining a regional ideology as well as formal vocabulary that was based on the climate, culture and the architectural designs that were employed in the traditional buildings in Jalisco. This made his works

outstanding since they linked the traditional architectural designs with the newly developing ideas on modern architecture during that time. Most of the buildings that he designed during the period between 1927 and 1936 reflected his unique approach to architecture. Some of the common features of the building were traditional white courtyards, arched openings as well as the lattice covered verandas. This portrayed his initial attempts to construct a regional modern architecture. However, the traditional Spanish haciendas and the Hispanic-Moorish architectural designs that were outstanding during that period also influenced him.

His relentless efforts to bring about new styles in Mexican architecture began in the 1930s. Unlike the other architects, he did not draw his ideas from the universally accepted or rather recognized styles. He focused on other aspects of the Mexican culture such as those expressed by Corbusier's. Some of the distinguishing architectural designs that he developed during that time include the incorporation of interlocking sequential spaces as well as the use of characteristic white planes for the walls. These designs were evident in his early works among which was the Casa Pizarro Suarez. Other designs that he developed during the 1930s were the use of features that brought about a sequence of rather unfolding spaces in the buildings. These techniques replaced the traditional designs. The traditional styles that were replaced by Barragan's new designs include the use of white surfaces for the walls. Additionally, most of the sculptures that were a major decorative aspect of the traditional Mexican houses was abandoned to pave way for the new styles.

In 1940, most of the architects incorporated foreign or rather international

styles in their designs as well as buildings. Barragan chose not to rely on such styles an aspect that helped him boost his creativity. He sought to develop new designs that would define Modern architectural designs in the Mexican community. However, his engineering as well as construction styles employed some concepts that he obtained from Greece and Roman during his previous tour to the countries. Additionally, he incorporated the popular elegance of popular Mexican architecture and Arab traditions of mystery, sensuality as well as intimacy to his works. He also featured architectural designs from Morocco, and New Mexico. Due to his new architectural designs, he had to come up with a set of vocabulary that would assist would-be architects in borrowing some of his concepts. He also gave a detailed account of the process through which one would incorporate his newly developed elements in solving some architectural problems. His works during the 1940s acted as a reference point for most of his later pieces. Barragan's work pioneered the incorporation of nature as well as ones immediate environment in buildings. Additionally, he sought to include the political aspect so the Mexican community during the 1940 and 1950s. This was evident in Jardines del Pedregal de San Angel. In this particular piece of work, Barragan incorporated the element of environmental conservation since most of the political leaders during that time urged people to stop the destruction of forests and other natural resources. His work in the 865-acre piece of land, he included the rugged terrain of that was created through volcanic action not only as a source of enthusiasm but also as a source of elegance. Due to the size of the land, he also featured other aspects such as the inclusion of picturesque pools and gardens as far as the landscaping

aspect of the land is concerned. He colored all the walls of the buildings an aspect that was not common in the Mexican architecture.

He created spaces that evoked intimacy besides connecting the Mexican architectural designs that surrounded the volcanic landscape. He introduced the use of more advanced designs especially on the walls of buildings. For instance, the walls of most of the buildings in El Pedregal were monumentally scaled. Additionally, the walls of the buildings were colored in such way that they had characteristic soft shadows. Another feature that was evident on the walls was the use of brilliant shades of light. Moreover, the house brought out a new feature of architecture through its “ linked series of identifiable figural spaces, split floor levels as well as the fragmented wall planes with varying scale, texture and color.” These features portrayed a new trend in architecture through its family of spaces modulated by light. During the 1950s, Barragan continued to introduce new features in buildings. He focused more on the development of new designs in abstraction, tactile materials and use of bright colors to develop and unique expression of the Mexican culture. He also played a major role in the adoption of new architectural terms or rather vocabulary among which were plazas, simple walls and fountains. He used light as a sculptured medium and had a great choice of color. Additionally, he used few but tactile materials that enhanced the simplicity as well as the utter serenity of the chapel. In the following decade, he built the San Cristobal horse ranch (1967-1968) in Los Clubes. These two buildings reflected his quest to merge the spirit of modernism with traditionalism via the subtle juxtapositions of landscape and architecture.

He also expressed the emotional aspects as well as the rituals of the Mexican culture in his works. This was triggered by the works of several metaphysical painters e. g. Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà through their ability express their dreams as well as some of their emotions in their pieces of work.

Through studying their works, he noted that they achieved such features through skillful use of contrasts. Consequently, he adopted this new style by using vast empty spaces together with some intimate brightly colored spaces on the walls. He captured all these elements in his ranch-the San Cristobal horse ranch. Their influence caused Barragan to “ transform the equestrian complex of stables, paddock, dressage fields and owner’s house into an animated spatial ensemble.” Other features that he introduced in the Mexican architecture include the incorporation of colored walls of different colors. The colors that he used most were pink, as well as violet. Such colors gave a different outlook of his buildings especially by bringing about a sense of tranquility. This can be attributed to the popular colors of the traditional Mexican community.

Barragan also introduced architectural designs that sought to celebrate the Mexican spirit. The designs involved the use of aspects such as light, space, color and characteristic materials that were common in the Mexican traditional culture. In the last house that he designed and built, the Casa Gilardi (1976-1980), he clearly used these aspects to express the passion of the Mexican community. The house was designed and built around a central courtyard to maintain a central tree. The focal point of the house was not the interior courtyard but an indoor pool located off a dining room. It was connected to the main house by a light-filled corridor. This was a new style

since in his earlier works he used muted earth tones in the interiors of residential spaces. He created an approach to the pool through a corridor of glowing yellow light that terminated in a vivid blue field, exaggerating the depth of the corridor. Generally, he used a sequence of spaces that were defined by the richly colored horizontal and vertical planes animated by careful modulation of light, reflection and shadow. This is an aspect that was adopted by other architects and has been in use up to date.

Barragan viewed color as the essence of the Mexican spirit-the only luxury in the provincial home. The important aspect that linked Mexico through its iconographic references was color. He spelled out the functions of color in any given architectural piece of work especially in the Mexican context. According to him, color has the power to set the mood of a house e. g. peaceful, joyous or erotic. He also acknowledged that color is useful in enlarging or shrinking a space besides adding the touch of magic that a house or rather a building might require. He also gave useful information on how to use color to bring out an architect's skills as far as transferring their imaginations to buildings is concerned. His works had a greatly impacted other architects such as Ricardo Legorreata. Most of his works incorporate all the elements of the modern Mexican culture pioneered by his mentor- Barragan.

He advocated for the use of relatively small windows in buildings that allow minimal light into the building. He believed that such lighting enhanced a sense of tranquility not only in the living rooms but also in the bedrooms. His own house is a good example of the use of such designs in buildings.

Additionally, he believed that such lighting helps to alleviate anxiety. The

buildings that show all the features of Barragan's skills are:

- Jardines del Pedregal de San Angel (1945-1952),
- the Casa Prieto Lopez (1943-1949)
- Casa Luis Barragan (1947).
- the Chapel of Capuchinas Sacramentarias del Purisimo Corazon de Maria (1952-1955)

Barragan's cultural and historical background as well as his creativity, as portrayed by the evolution of architectural works, bridged the gap between traditional and modern architecture in Mexico. He played a pivotal role in not only the development but also in the reformulation of Mexican architecture in his search for a contemporary expression of the Mexican culture. This is evident in his works that include Casa Pizarro Suarez of 1937, Plaza Melchor Ocampo Apartments of 1936-1940, Jardines del Pedregal de San Angel and Chapel of Capuchinas Sacramentarias del Purisimo Corazon de Maria (1952-1955) among others. Just to mention but a few, some of the architectural aspects that he introduced include the use of light, incorporation of nature in buildings as well as color. He sought to express the Mexican culture through his architectural prowess. Unlike other architects, he did not include any decorative elements. He used his works to show that architecture is about creating an ambience-an atmosphere. He greatly influenced the adoption of new techniques and designs in Mexican architecture that not only portrayed the historical background of the Mexican community but also brought about modernity. Barragan's work has stood the test of time. It has proved to be not only enduring but also portrays a great architectural technique as far as

culture and geographical containment is concerned. He also made good choices of the sites of his buildings that enabled his works to be outstanding.

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