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Barrera, Siqueiros y Torres Landa is a prominent law firm with two offices in Mexico, one in Mexico City and one in Monterrey. I was an international summer associate at the Mexico City office. The firm consists of about sixteen equity partners and approximately eighty associates and non-equity partners. In addition to the attorneys, the firm employs an army of “pasantes.” Pasantes are essentially paid interns; however, these interns range from current law students to law school graduates of two or more years hoping to be hired as an associate at the firm based on their performance.

I had the opportunity to work with a wide variety of attorneys from associates to equity partners. However, I spent most of my time working with just a few of the equity partners. My duties when I first arrived in Mexico City were heavily focused on the editing of chapters of books or contracts. This was most likely a result of the being the only native English speaker at the firm combined with the assigning attorneys being unsure of my capabilities.

After the initial flurry of editing that I am sure they had backed up for sometime, I started to get more substantive assignments. The first substantive assignment that I received was a simple research assignment dealing with the New York Convention and the enforcement of arbitration awards in Mexico. The major conflict in the case was the difference in the importance of a notary public in a civil law country like Mexico and a common law country.

I then slowly started to receive more and more responsibility from the partners that I was working with. The area where I focused most of my work after the first assignment was the changing landscape of Mexican anti-trust law. It was an incredibly interesting time to be working in the legal field in Mexico. The newly elected Mexican President was shaking up the formerly monopolistic landscape of Mexico’s economy. I was able to research this issue and write an article that the partner I was working for ended up sending to a publisher for review. In addition to the article submission, I answered questions posed to the partners from outside sources asking about the potential effects of the new law without much oversight.

I learned an incredible amount about not only the Mexican legal system but also its international interactions. This is what I expected from this experience. What I did not expect was the immersion in the Mexican culture and the warm invitations I received from everyone I met to join them in their everyday life. On multiple occasions I visited partners' homes and met their families. My fellow pasantes openly accepted me and brought me along wherever they were going – even going out of their way to make sure I enjoyed my time in Mexico. It is the people and relationships formed while at Barrera that I will hold as the greatest take away of my time in Mexico.