dynamic aspect of the constitutions (p. 159). Yet, empirical studies cannot be rebutted solely on the basis of constitutional theory.

The second problem of the book is its ideological bias. The book provides a rigid and doctrinal reading of constitutionalism, and it thus obscures rather than enlightens the phenomenon. Gargarella's neat ideological scheme might work in the realm of analytical ideas but it fails in explaining the messy history of constitution making, and unmaking, in the region. The historical record is made to fit a clean-cut ideological scheme, and in order to do so, Gargarella magnifies and minimises authors and trends. The failures of interpretation of this understanding of constitutionalism are significant. For instance, Gargarella does not see that the problem with Venezuela during the Chávez era was not that it had a 'hyperpresidential' constitution, but that the regime had become authoritarian. It is very telling that Gargarella omits from his account one of the most remarkable traits of early constitutionalism in Latin America: the naive belief that constitutions by themselves would change reality, almost as an act of magic. Alas, even the 'engine room' of the constitution can be imagined as a magical box.

CIDE, Mexico JOSÉ ANTONIO AGUILAR RIVERA

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **47** (2014). doi:10.1017/S0022216X14001588

Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. x + 252, £61.00, £16.99 pb.

To tell the story of the Mexican Revolution in one volume represents quite a challenge. The revolution was sprawling and chaotic, worked differently in different places, and lacked a clear ideology. It started neatly enough in 1910, but when it unravelled is harder to say. It also spawned one of the largest and most sophisticated historiographies in Latin America. The authors of *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution* are certainly well placed to attempt a synthesis. Buchenau has published useful monographs on Mexico's relations with Central America and Mexico City's German immigrants, edited a collection of new studies of provincial governors and written scholarly biographies of two key Sonoran characters in the revolutionary drama: Plutarco Elías Calles and Alvaro Obregón. Joseph has published foundational works on revolutionary Yucatán, trained a generation of doctoral students in Mexican history and edited thematic collections that populate the footnotes of countless studies and have helped define the field. Drawing on this previous work and a lot more besides, the authors have produced an accessible, wide-ranging and historiographically engaged survey of the revolution's causes, process and very long aftermath.

The chapters strike a good balance between generality and detail. Chapter 1 briskly introduces key questions and debates, and discusses how waves of regional, gender and transnational history have contributed to the field. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Porfiriato, discussing the regime's debt to earlier liberal (and French) projects of modernisation, and the long- and short-term causes of its demise. Chapters 3 to 6 represent the core of the story, covering the period from 1910 to 1940, and here the style becomes more detailed and narrative. Combining biographical sketches of key figures with the socio-political and military context, the chapters describe the emergence of Maderismo and its well-documented weaknesses; the struggles of different

revolutionary factions against Victoriano Huerta and then among themselves; Sonoran attempts at state- and nation-building; and Cardenista social reform, oil expropriation and party corporatism, along with the conservative resistance they elicited. Subsequent chapters return to broader brush strokes. Chapter 7 covers the dominant party's drift rightwards and apparent peak of control and stability from 1940 to 1968. Chapter 8 brings the story up to 2000, and emphasises the lingering presence of revolutionary ideals – not least among the neo-Zapatistas of Chiapas – even as successive administrations dismantled land reform, labour protections and economic nationalism. A brief conclusion describes continuing struggles over the meaning of the revolution during the centennial commemorations of 2010, and between political parties, social movements and migrants.

The book's main strength is the way in which it combines a narrative of the essential episodes with clear analysis and discussion of different approaches and interpretations. The introduction identifies the organising theme running through the book: the interplay and mutual influence between grassroots politics and the nation-state. The authors frequently pause to consider different perspectives on a range of topics. Chapters on revolutionary warfare juxtapose the 'high politics' of generals and factions with the popular experience of death, destruction and disease; Michael Meyer's revisionist arguments about the revolutionary credentials of Victoriano Huerta are briefly discussed (and largely discarded); new scholarship on women and gender provides an illuminating angle on familiar themes of nation-building; and the book also engages with recent debates about the precise blend of cultural prestige, economic growth, cooptation and coercion that underpinned the 'democratic façade' of the postrevolutionary state (p. 4). Mexico is placed in a global context throughout, and there are some useful comparisons to revolutions elsewhere. All of this will be most welcome for students seeking to navigate the historiography, and a bibliographical essay points to further readings. However, as they explain in their introduction, the authors leave one very big question for readers to decide: was this really a revolution? (Likewise, readers will also have to work out for themselves what any future revolution may look like.) Some may find this approach unduly inconclusive, but it seems unlikely to inhibit classroom discussion.

In any case, there is another central argument which gives the book coherence and might also trigger debate. The authors argue that the most distinctive and important thing about the Mexican Revolution was how it created a shared national discourse for the expression of consent and dissent. Of course, this argument will be familiar to readers of Joseph and Daniel Nugent's landmark 1994 collection *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Duke University Press, 1994), and it finds a great deal of support in twentieth-century history and scholarship. Even the most moderate revolutionaries were forced to respond to popular demands, first in the Constitution of 1917, and then in later bouts of reform. After 1940, many (though not all) opponents of the official party – from Jaramillistas to Juchitecos – invoked aspects of the revolution and condemned its betrayal. At times this argument seems to underestimate how much of a common national framework already existed in 1910; the Zapatistas may have been parochial in some respects, but they saw themselves as patriots and the inheritors of (popular) liberalism. From today's perspective, the argument occasionally seems slightly incongruous and incomplete. At one point, the authors suggest that the Porfiriato's 'relatively strong and stable central state' makes it 'more accessible to our present day sensibilities than the chaotic age of Santa Anna' (p. 16). How did the lingering 'state community'

of the 1990s come to be perforated with the mass graves of migrants, drug traffickers, tourists, journalists and students (p. 202)? The introduction briefly ponders the revolution's relevance amid a 'neoliberal moment of narco-induced political crisis' – the symptom (or cause) of a new 'postnational' condition – but the book does not discuss the issue in depth (p. 5). Presentism can distort and prematurely date a book, but a little more would have been welcome here. After all, the drug wars have induced yet another shift in historical perspective worth knowing about, encouraging research on neglected themes – crime, militarisation, violence, drugs, the press – and a search for clues to understand a bewildering if not traumatic present.

Still, if big, interesting interpretive questions are raised, this is no bad thing for a survey text. The book is an impressive act of synthesis, and an accessible blend of narrative and analysis. It will become a mainstay of introductory courses on Mexican history, and will also attract a general readership eager to learn about Mexico's complicated revolutionary upheaval, the different ways historians have tried to understand it, and its long-lasting reverberations.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **47** (2014). doi:10.1017/S0022216X1400159X

Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Plan de San Diego: Tejano Rebellion, Mexican Intrigue* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska press, 2013), pp. xviii + 339, $45.00, hb.

The latest instalment in Charles Harris and Louis Sadler's investigation of turmoil on the US–Mexican border during the Mexican Revolution (1910–20) focuses on disturbances in south Texas that collectively took on the name of the Plan de San Diego, based on a document produced in January 1915 allegedly in the small south Texas town of San Diego. The signatures of nine individuals appear at the bottom, all Hispanic and at least some of them US citizens. Calling for the liberation from US control of the entire northern border ranging from Texas to Upper California (to distinguish the latter from Baja California, still within Mexican national territory according to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo), its first clause also announced the intention of freeing 'individuals of the black race' and its territory from 'Yankee tyranny'. The document's harsh provisions included immediate execution of all prisoners – unless these might be held for ransom – and the murder of 'every North American over sixteen years of age'. Indigenous peoples, specifically the 'Apaches of Arizona' along with 'INDIANS (Redskins)', would be given 'every guarantee', and their territories returned. African-Americans joining the movement would be given a special banner after victory in the states bordering Mexico, and, apparently, aid in conquering six more states of the US to establish their own republic – strangely, those bordering the states already to have been obtained rather than the ones in which most of them still actually lived in the US deep South. The only 'stranger' who might be admitted to their ranks must belong to either 'the Latin, the Negro, or the Japanese race' (pp. 2–5).

The Plan, a relatively small and almost completely disorganised effort, has attracted a great deal of interest from scholars, and this book is intended, at least in part, to clean up the messiness of the resulting interpretations. Certainly, the Mexican population of the region – US citizens and otherwise – had much to resent about the huge losses of territory almost seven decades earlier after the US–Mexican War, along with the racial