

explore and develop a multitude of new directions as they rethink the historiographical positions of the last several decades.

*Temple University*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

ARTHUR SCHMIDT

*Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond.* By Mario Blaser. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010. Pp. xi, 292. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$24.95 paper.

This is a clever and interesting book, but it is dense and overly complicated to read. Blaser conceives his ethnography as storytelling, which associates the author, the Yshiro communities of Paraguayan Chaco, and the world in a stream of concepts and metaphors to support the idea of globality as a pluriverse.

Blaser generates a powerful and sophisticated narrative oriented toward critical engagement with the notion of modernity as he understands it: the dominant trajectory that has divided and ordered the world. He holds this to have created a tapestry composed of objects and subjects, which the author argues we should not take as the “reality out there” or a single “regime of truth.” This is a much-visited theoretical position advanced by advocates of postcolonial and poststructural theoretical orientations; what is stimulating and innovative here is the attempt by Blaser to move beyond existing notions of multiple modernities. Critical reflexivity is the tone and mood of this storytelling ethnography. With a sensitivity to the political nature of the politics of representation, the author passionately argues for a dialogue of knowledge in order to make visible the “anomalies” experienced by Yshiro-Ebitoso communities in Paraguay since 1986, and the political consequences from development interventions beyond the Chaco.

One gains the impression that the introduction of the book oversimplifies the contemporary debate about the limits of epistemology and the potentials for an ontology of the social. After navigating through an impressive 37-page pantheon of authors and their work, the reader is left wondering about connections that are not clearly developed in the text to support the sophisticated theoretical argument: namely, the argument that there is a “new” storytelling of globalization without modernity. If the author had probed the continuity-discontinuity debate rehearsed in Central African ethnography of the 1950s, his notion of anomalies and rupture might have been challenged. Is there a conceptual shortcut for generating a new myth of globalization outside modernity?

From an anthropology-of-development perspective, the more ethnographically interesting sections of the book deal with the post-Stroessner years of the 1980s, which created anxiety among the leaders of indigenous organizations about the disappearance of Paraguayan state assistance programs and the potential for transformation of clientelistic relationships. The concerns include the communities’ rights to lands and contro-

versies around conservation and development; they propelled a debate over whether or not the authentic and natural identity of indigenous Chaco people was one of hunter-gatherers or not—the implications being that the resolution would define or negate their rights to citizenship.

The book argues that the imagination of different actors was changed through complex processes that included the introduction of neoliberal policies, conflicts of interests within the nation-state, decreases in the resources of international development projects, and a multitude of voices demanding democratization. This new context is presented to justify the significance of Latin American indigenous movements and a critical view of multiculturalism, participation, and autonomy.

There is no doubt that anthropologists and development practitioners will rally in support of Blaser's argument that the issue for ethnographers working today is not a choice between theory and applied knowledge, but instead relates to how anthropologists perform their "rituals or social dramas" in different locales and the extent to which these sites are affected by forces that can be characterized as global or modern. The reader should be warned, however, that the book is complex and may leave one with the sense that complex theoretical abstractions have been created at the expense of some gaps in ethnography. In my view, the main contribution of the book is to the debate on whether indigenous groups should seek autonomy within the nation-state or self-determination beyond the state and its modernization project.

*Wageningen University  
The Netherlands*

ALBERTO ARCE

*The Tourism Encounter: Fashioning Latin American Nations and Histories.* By Florence E. Babb. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp. xvii, 264. Illustrations. Notes. Index. References. \$20.19 paper.

In the past decade there has been a growing awareness of the role of culture-based development throughout Latin America region and beyond. Anthropologists have been at the forefront of these discussions, documenting how this turn to 'culture' as economic development engine is affecting people across the region as it launches new industries, such as new forms of tourism, and reconfigures old ones, like craft production and the arts. One of the newest and most contradictory of these new developments is the rise of tourism in post-socialist, postrevolutionary and post-conflict areas such as Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, and it is the subject of Florence Babb's new book.

The author draws from her sustained scholarly engagement in these four different societies, where she has conducted research throughout her career around issues of gender and development, and these issues come through in her current investigation. Yet, neither gender nor development per se is the author's central concern. Instead, it is the role that tourism plays in societies that once were ambivalent toward—or openly