

differences within the Socialist Party, and within the UP, about the path that the socialist revolution should take. It is noticeable that the responsibility for the consequences of the failure to resolve this conflict are squarely, and without sufficient argumentation, laid at the door of other actors. Allende's own possible responsibilities or failings in this regard are not analysed. A book which, quite rightly, identifies this issue as a significant problem, occurring moreover in a presidential regime, really ought to explore the hand that all major players, particularly Allende, may have had in it. Since this is not done, we are left with the impression of Allende as exercising weak leadership, if nothing was, or could have been, done by him as coalition leader and the country's maximum political authority to resolve the problem. This is not to say that Allende, or the UP, should be considered solely or principally to blame for the crisis of 1973. This is self-evidently not the case. It is simply to say that a book of this kind ought not to omit discussion of such an obviously central question, particularly if it also sets out to argue for the continued relevance of Allende and his ideals.

Second, the analysis of Allende's legacy and its relevance for current Chilean politics contains a large quota of voluntarism. Irrespective of one's sympathy with the central argument being pursued, if it is to be argued, for example, that 'the post-coup institutionality is creaking under pressure from the masses and there are signs that "Allendismo" is once more inspiring Chile's youth' (p. 137), we must be offered evidence. Instead, this appears simply as the author's assertion. The same thing happens when we are told that Chileans are turning to Ecuador or Bolivia for inspiration or for models: no evidence is provided. In short, the chapters that deal with these issues (Chapters 7 and 8) appear more as a 'wish list' regarding the direction that the author hopes Chilean politics may take in the immediate future, than a meticulous study of the continued relevance of Allende as a political figure. In so doing, the author weakens rather than strengthens his own central argument as to the ongoing importance of Allende's legacy.

Overall, this is a good work which has much to offer the reader interested in Allende's political history and trajectory and in the evolution of Chilean politics. At the same time, however, the text loses some force and solidity in omitting a more complete analysis in regard to its own major objective: discussion of the effectiveness and currency of Allende's political thought and ideals.

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Kirsten Sehnbruch and Peter M. Siavelis (eds.), *Democratic Chile: The Politics and Policies of a Historical Coalition, 1990–2010* (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014), pp. xvi + 373, £54.50, hb.

Since democratic restoration in 1990 Chile has been generally considered to represent a success story within Latin America. The country has been characterised ever since by relatively high levels of political stability, solid economic growth, impressive reduction of poverty and fast overall modernisation. A crucial actor in conducting this process of democratic transition and consolidation has been the centre-left-wing coalition Concertación that ruled the country from 1990 to 2010. It has been indeed one of the longest and most successful coalitions in Latin American political history. The Concertación era, however, came suddenly to an end with the victory of the right-wing candidate Sebastián Piñera in the presidential election in January 2010.

The editors of this book have managed to gather a group of prominent scholars who for many years have closely followed several aspects of the Chilean democratisation process. This edited volume constitutes the most complete evaluation of the main achievements as well as the shortcomings characterising the 20 years of Concertación rule in Chile. The study explores the overall political performance of the coalition and its results in a number of specific economic and social fields. It is divided in two parts. The first part deals with political developments during the Concertación years. It includes six chapters which cover areas such as coalition-building, government-opposition relations, constitutional reforms, and human rights. The second part of the volume analyses economic and social developments during the Concertación era. It also contains six chapters on fields such as economic policies, social programmes and education.

The book opens with a long and thoughtful foreword written by Alan Angell. He makes clear that the successful road followed by the Concertación coalition was far from easy. The democratic coalition had to operate in a very difficult institutional and political context as the 1980 Constitution introduced by Pinochet was still in force. In addition, the Right had a strong representation in Parliament, which enabled it to oppose the Concertación governments and to block progressive reforms. These and many other factors severely limited the Concertación governments' capacity to carry out a series of socio-economic, political and constitutional changes. Despite all these constraints, the Concertación governments managed to gradually introduce significant changes in most policy areas by creating a consensus model of politics vis-à-vis the right-wing opposition forces.

In the initial chapter Sehnbruch and Siavelis assess the political consequences of the Concertación administrations' decision to follow a consensus model (*política de acuerdos*) in order to achieve a series of agreements with the opposition. According to the editors, this model of consensus building between political parties is responsible for the high degree of governance achieved during the Concertación era but it also accounts for the coalition's demise. They argue that this model of consensus was undoubtedly successful in managing the many tensions and conflicts that arose during the complex democratic transition. However, this operated in an overly elitist manner as most negotiations were carried out by a small number of political actors who deliberately avoided the involvement in the decision-making process of the rest of the population. The need to reach agreements with the opposition produced a risk-averse behaviour among the Concertación leaders, which limited the scope of political change and socio-economic reforms. Sehnbruch and Siavelis point out that as a result of the existing constraints the Concertación administrations failed to respond to legitimate citizen demands. This in their view led to declining levels of engagement and confidence in the democratic system among the population. In their view the Concertación erred in routinising the transitional political model of consensus. The model was followed for too long a time while the country required a more audacious attitude from their leaders to carry out more substantial reforms.

This interpretative approach stressing the strengths and limitations of the consensus model constitutes the common ground for the following chapters. They provide a comprehensive analysis of the Concertación's accomplishments and failures in several key policy areas. All the contributors recognise the enormous legal and political constraints faced by the Concertación governments as they attempted to implement their reforms. But at the same time, most of them criticise the coalition for not having adopted a more resolute stance vis-à-vis the right-wing opposition, the business community and the armed forces.

In the final chapter, the editors conclude that the overwhelming power concentrated in the political elites and the pattern of consensus politics that bordered on an ideology, prevented the achievement of deeper reforms in the political, economic and social realms during the Concertación years. So in their view, the Concertación was certainly successful, but it was not the unqualified success story that one finds in many studies on contemporary Chile. The editors' contention that the Concertación's inability to implement more profound social and political reforms was crucial to the coalition's demise is however less convincing. This does not match with the fact that the Chilean electorate put an end to the Concertación coalition by choosing Sebastián Piñera, a right-wing neoliberal politician as president. He did not promise more and deeper reforms and more citizen participation. Instead, he promised an elitist 'government of the best' and a strengthening of the market economy.

The return in 2014 of Michelle Bachelet to power constitutes an excellent test case to see if Chilean democracy can indeed function better without consensus politics. Her government has openly renounced the former consensus-seeking model. She is indeed attempting to implement an extremely ambitious agenda without making concessions to the right-wing opposition. So far the governmental coalition has encountered huge obstacles and resistance to carry out the promised reforms. It is not unthinkable that Bachelet will be finally forced to (partially) reintroduce the consensus model to at least make some of these reforms possible.

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William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), pp. xiv + 524, \$35.00, hb.

In late 1988, as détente between Washington and Moscow blossomed, Fidel Castro told Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos:

We don't know how the United States will interpret peace and détente, whether it will be a peace for all, détente for all, coexistence for all, or whether the North Americans will interpret "coexistence" as peace with the USSR – peace among the powerful – and war against the small. This is yet to be seen. We intend to remain firm, but we are ready to improve relations with the United States if there is an opening. (Quoted in Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991*, Chapel Hill, 2013, p. 18)

There was no opening. For the next three years, as the Soviet Union teetered on the brink of collapse, US officials pressed Mikhail Gorbachev to cut off all aid to Cuba. The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 meant that Havana was alone, and in desperate economic straits. Washington tightened the embargo, making it as difficult as possible for third countries to trade with Cuba. US officials hoped that hunger and despair would force the Cuban people to turn against their government. Even after they realised that the Cuban regime would not collapse, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and, until a few months ago, Barack Obama continued the embargo.

Why such hatred? Leicester Coltman, a former British ambassador to Cuba, wrote in 2003 that Fidel Castro was 'still a bone ... stuck in American throats. He had defied and mocked the world's only superpower, and would not be forgiven' (*The Real Fidel*