

## Reviews

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Gilbert M. Joseph (ed.), *Reclaiming the Political in Latin American History: Essays from the North* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. viii + 379, £15.50, pb.

This book is a collection of essays originally generated for a conference organised by Gilbert Joseph at Yale University in the spring of 1998 to honour Emilia Viotti da Costa's tenure there since 1973. Viotti da Costa, a Brazilian historian trained in France, was exiled to the USA in 1970. She came to Yale after brief terms at Tulane University, the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and Smith College. The 1998 conference hosted 30 of Viotti da Costa's graduate students, including Joseph. He finished his dissertation in 1978, and is now the Director of Latin American and Iberian Studies at Yale, and has recently served as an editor of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*.

Besides an introductory essay by Joseph, the book consists of essays by ten of Viotti da Costa's students, a contribution with which Viotti da Costa opened the 1998 conference, and a brief afterword by Daniel James, a specialist on working-class history, especially Argentina, and who earned his PhD at the University of London in 1979. He also taught briefly at Yale and is currently at Indiana University.

Of the ten main contributors, two finished at Yale in the late 1970s (besides Joseph, Steve J. Stern in 1979); three completed work in the 1980s (Barbara Weinstein and Florencia Mallon in 1980, and Jeff Gould in 1988). The others, Thomas Miller Klubock, Mary Ann Mahony, Heidi Tinsman, Diana Paton and Greg Grandin, all completed their work at Yale in the 1990s. Besides generational differences, the contributors represent regional, chronological and thematic specialities, and their post-graduate publications, including the younger scholars represented here, often navigate the intersections of these concerns.

These range broadly: from Weinstein's and Mahony's focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Brazil, to important monographs on Mexican and Andean regional history by Joseph, Mallon, and Stern; to critical books on debates over ethnicity, nationalism, and identity in Central America and Chile by Gould, Grandin, and Miller Klubock. The central role of gender to critical social processes, whether in the post-emancipation context of Jamaica or in the agrarian reform in Chile in the 1960s and early 1970s, is best represented here in the essays by Paton and Tinsman, respectively. While one finds some concern with the relevance of gender in certain of the arguments in some of the other essays, very briefly in the articles by Gould, Miller Klubock and Mallon, for Patton and Tinsman gender is the organising category of analysis.

Given this variability, there are of course many and very different ways to take advantage of this kind of book. One approach is by juxtaposing the organisational tension growing out of the fact that four of the essays – those by Joseph, Stern, Weinstein and Mallon – are historiographical essays and/or historiographical reflections, and the fact that the other essays all focus on very specific problems

in certain countries and regions and in certain periods. Besides the unique thematic, chronological and regional differences in the essays by Tinsman and Paton, Gould's essay offers an analysis of the politics of ethnic identity and memory after *La Matanza* in western El Salvador in 1932; Miller Klubock's puts the focus on the contours of worker ethnic nationalism, *chilenidad*, in the context of strikes in the Copper Mines in northern Chile in the mid-1940s; and finally, Grandin examines elite Guatemalan's construction of ethnicity in the aftermath of the Cholera epidemic of 1837 in Quetzaltenango, a region in the highlands of western Guatemala.

Each of these essays is well-written, well researched and engages with specific historiographical problems that stand alone from the specific and major concerns addressed by Joseph, Stern, Weinstein and Mallon. The non-historiographical essays merit their own individual evaluation, but space does not allow for this here. As a whole, though, they all in some way connect to issues and problematic emphasised by the historiographical essays. Paton's concerns interact with Weinstein's critique of the emphasis on slave agency in the most recent historical writing about the aftermath of abolition in Brazil, to the detriment of some of the advantages of more structuralist approaches found in the Marxist historiography associated with Viotti da Costa herself, and similar approaches in the Caribbean historiography.

Finally, Joseph emphasises the extent to which politics beyond the academy influences the political in history. This issue connects with a major theme in Mallon's contribution, namely, the role of the historian and ethnographer in de-constructing and re-constructing local memories complicated by competing claims emerging from ethnic, generational, and gender identities, her own and those of her 'informants'. (Mallon has been researching these issues among the Mapuche in Chile since the mid-1990s.) These issues are briefly addressed in the essays by Gould, Gradin and Mahony because each concretely reflects on how the politics of the 1980s and 1990s, including their politics as academics, in each of the regions is relevant for understanding the particular issues they write about. In the longest essay in the book, and located after Joseph's more limited characterisation of its concerns and scope, Stern's contribution conceptualises all the essays when trying to characterise the sources and implications of the political sensibilities, mostly on the left, of each of the contributors, from the eldest, that is Viotti da Costa, to the youngest, presumably Paton and Grandin.

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Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt (eds.), *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. xvi + 329, £45.95, £15.50 pb.

'This brilliant collection', Fernando Coronil's blurb informs us, 'conclusively demonstrates the intimate interplay of nation, race and gender in Latin America'. Such overblown statements might help to sell multi-authored 'big theme' volumes like the present text, but they do this fine collection of essays a disservice. The 'interplay of nation, race and gender in Latin America' hardly needs to be demonstrated. What this valuable collection contains is (i) a useful introductory chapter that provides a discussion of the literature *produced in the United States* (I will return to this point) on race and nation in Latin America that skilfully weaves in the issues

examined in the subsequent chapters and helps set an agenda for future research and (ii) nine short but very rewarding essays that either draw on already published research or anticipate forthcoming monographs that illustrate the themes of the volume from a number of locations (Arequipa and Quito, southwestern Colombia, Panama, Belize, Cuba, Rio de Janeiro, Sonora and Sao Paulo), periods (spanning the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries) and approaches. The volume is flanked by a foreword by Thomas C. Holt (who provides the non-Latinamericanist's perspective) and an afterword by anthropologist Peter Wade (who provides the non-historian's perspective).

The introductory chapter by Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, the volume's editors, provides a useful introduction to the literature on race, nation and a number of other themes discussed in the volume. Despite its short length, the chapter covers a very broad range of issues in a clear and accessible style. In addition to offering a persuasive periodisation of changing elite racial thought from the independence wars to the late twentieth century, the authors draw on the existing literature and on the individual contributions to the volume to discuss how notions of space (specifically, regionalism) have influenced racial ideas; how criteria for racial classification have shifted over time and, crucially, how the scientific racism of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century built on earlier racist ideas (thus contributing to the much needed effort to dispel the myth that racism was invented in the late nineteenth century); how nationalist discourses (always multiple and contested) had to grapple with race leading to the inclusion in the nation of some groups (Arab-Brazilians) and the exclusion of others (Chinese-Mexicans); how concepts of race and nation were gendered in various ways and how this gendering contributed to the assertion of racial, class, and sexual roles; and finally how discourses on race and nation were also produced by subaltern actors, forcing in many cases negotiations regarding the racialised character of citizenship and nationhood. Throughout, the authors attempt to incorporate a transnational dimension to their analysis, and place special emphasis on how 'the interplay between popular and elite conceptions of race and nation was shaped by US imperialism' (p. 20).

The introductory chapter should be required reading for all students interested in the themes of race and nation (and space, and gender, and class, and imperialism) in Latin America. However, I was surprised by its US-centredness, and indeed, by the US-centredness of the whole volume. With the exception of Peter Wade (at the University of Manchester), all the contributors (some of whom are, admittedly, Latin American) are based in US universities. Similarly, almost all the references in the notes to the introduction are to articles or books published in the USA by US-based scholars. As a Peruvianist, I was not surprised to find a reference to Marisol de la Cadena's excellent *Indigenous Mestizos*, but perplexed by the absence of any reference to the works of Gonzalo Portocarrero or Nelson Manrique, among others, whose many insights on the 'interplay' of race and nation in Peru would have informed the authors' analysis. Perhaps the editors decided to omit (the bulk of) the literature on race and nation in Latin America produced in Latin America (and Europe) for valid reasons (lack of space; an editorial decision to focus on texts available to students in US universities). If so, by making these reasons explicit, they would have strengthened further an already impressive essay. As it stands, one could get the impression that the only literature on race and nation in Latin America produced of late comes exclusively from the United States.

Lack of space prevents a detailed discussion of the nine other chapters in the volume. They are all very readable and will whet anyone's appetite for more. However, whereas the introductory chapter succeeds admirably in weaving the themes explored in the individual chapters into its broader analysis of race and nation in Latin America, on the whole the individual chapters fail to remit back to the programme of the introduction. The introductory chapter begins with a proposal to establish a difference between race 'as a contingent historical phenomenon', for which the authors reserve the term 'race' and race 'as an analytical category' for which the authors reserve the term 'racialisation'; the former ('the meaning of race over time and space in postcolonial Latin America') being the 'subject of our historical analysis' while the latter becomes 'our conceptual tool' (p. 2). This differentiation, the authors claim (revealing again the US-centredness of their approach): 'allows us to move beyond still prevalent debates about whether or not racial discrimination exists in Latin America and beyond mechanistic contrasts of US and Latin American racial systems' (p. 3). This differentiation between what we could categorise as the emic and etic understandings of race seems salutary and potentially useful (if, perhaps, not fully explored). Unfortunately, the reading of the individual chapters (and a rapid perusal of the index) reveals that with the exception of Alexandra Minna Stern, the contributors to the volume have not fully embraced the term 'racialisation'. Arguably, the differentiation between race and racialisation is evident in the other chapters. But the editors' campaign to introduce this differentiation – and, particularly, the neologism that accompanies it – to ongoing debates on race and nation in Latin America would have been considerably enhanced if the contributors to their volume had incorporated it in their analyses.

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Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo: Caudillo and Gaucho Insurgency during the Argentine State-Formation Process (La Rioja, 1853–1870)* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. xiii + 249, £14.50, pb.

The study of *caudillismo* has always attracted scholars of Latin America, who have produced a vast body of academic works touching on various aspects of that topic. Caudillos have also found their way into literature, art and political discourse, so that every new attempt to explore their world runs the risk of reiterating old arguments, thus becoming trivial. Ariel de la Fuente has faced the challenge successfully: he has produced an original, well-researched interpretation of *caudillismo* in Argentina during the central decades of state formation.

In *Children of Facundo* the point of departure is the assertion that 'caudillismo should be seen through the followers' eyes as well as those of the leaders, and to accomplish this, historians must focus on the followers' social conditions and political culture' (p. 4). This is precisely what de la Fuente sets about doing. In tune with other recent works that seek to write the history of nation-building 'without leaving the people out',<sup>1</sup> he puts the followers of the caudillos centre stage. And he chooses a specific location for his enterprise: the Argentine province of La Rioja

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, NC, 1994) p. 12.

between 1853 and 1870, the site of important rebellions against the national government led by some of the most renowned caudillos of the times. The history he tells, however, transcends these limits. It goes back to the 1820s and '30s, to the heyday of Facundo Quiroga, the emblematic figure of Argentine *caudillismo*; it goes beyond La Rioja, and connects the local struggles with the more general political conflicts of the period.

The book is organised into nine chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. After a first chapter that sets the stage, the subsequent ones gradually introduce the reader into the world of the caudillos' followers. To look for their traces, de la Fuente resorts to a wide variety of sources, which he explores thoroughly. He proves particularly innovative when analysing a collection of songs and stories that allow him to delve into the oral culture of the period.

The picture he portrays both challenges some of the conventional wisdom on his topic, and offers new insights and some strong interpretations on caudillos and caudillismo. De la Fuente starts his book by mapping the political forces of La Rioja, and establishes a clear-cut social division between the two main groups. The party of the 'unitarios' was basically formed by the richest families of the agricultural valleys of the Andes, and had the support of the liberal national government, while the 'federales' included the largest landowners of the cattle-raising poorer area of the Llanos, plus minor ranchers, peasants and labourers of both areas. He claims, therefore, that the majority of the people of La Rioja belonged to the opposition Federalist Party, the party of the caudillos and their followers, and it is to this last group that he devotes the rest of the book.

In the years of the Organización Nacional, these federalist caudillos of La Rioja, in connection with other similar forces originating in neighbouring provinces, launched a series of rebellions against the local and the national authorities. They succeeded in recruiting thousands of men, who participated as part of the *montoneras*, and followed their caudillos in their political and military endeavours. In the most convincing part of the book, de la Fuente explores the relationships between the leaders and their men, as well as the reasons and motivations of the latter. He depicts the *montonera* as a hierarchical, military organisation, integrated by civilians of rural origins who joined the groups on specific occasions, but who otherwise led a regular life as peasants, labourers, minor hacendados and rancheros. These were neither professional military nor spontaneous rioters. The men followed the caudillos on account of a combination of factors which ranged from economic rewards and social protection, to cultural, ethnical, and political identification. De la Fuente's rich portrayal of the gauchos' customs, beliefs and ideological convictions is persuasive. By the end of the book, the federal popular identity has acquired definite contours and specific meaning.

De la Fuente is less convincing when he attempts an overall picture of the conflict between unitarios and federales, both at the provincial and at the national level. The very name of 'unitarios' to designate the political 'other' of the federales is problematic. It may be useful to convey the view of the caudillos and their followers, but it reduces the complex world of the liberal groups to a label coined forty years earlier and already under heavy criticism. This choice of words points to de la Fuente's emphasis on continuity. He reads the world of the '60s and '70s as a continuation of the previous forty – a persuasive reading when his subject is the popular culture, but certainly a problematic one when he looks at the conflicts in the political realm. In that sense, the whole picture is skewed towards the past,

and it is symptomatic that he pays very little attention to the *montoneras* led by Felipe Varela, the last of the powerful *riojano* caudillos and a less traditional figure than his predecessors. These were decades of rapid political and institutional changes, but the last chapter's attempts to account for these changes feature more as an addition to the previous elaborate findings than as an ingrained part of the whole argument. These are, however, minor weaknesses for a ground-breaking book that has succeeded in illuminating a major aspect of *caudillismo* in Latin America.

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Pablo Lacoste, *La imagen del otro en las relaciones de la Argentina y Chile 1534–2000* (Buenos Aires/Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica/Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2003), pp. 443, pb.

The Argentine historian Pablo Lacoste has, in recent years, developed a notable corpus of work on Argentina–Chile relations. His studies have been as likely to focus on the development of trans-Andean railway links or motor racing as on the more traditional ‘high’ politics of foreign policies or international relations. Underpinning all his work, though, has been a concern with rebalancing a historiography of relations between the two republics which has long been predominantly concerned with ‘high’ politics, traditionally characterising Argentina–Chile relations as conflictive and dominated by territorial concerns. In *La imagen del otro* Lacoste turns his attention to the ways in which territorial competition has been placed at the centre of Argentine–Chilean mutual perceptions since the late nineteenth century. Lacoste sets out from the premise that despite good relations between the two countries from the late 1980’s onwards, chauvinistic visions of Argentines towards Chileans – and vice versa – are still clearly present, and influential, in both countries.

The roots of these chauvinistic perceptions are to be found in the territorial history of the two countries, specifically with regard to their mutual border. From a starting point in 1534, Lacoste analyses Argentine and Chilean attitudes towards the border, examining the constant reshaping of the border in the realm of the judicial, the real, and the imaginary. In this long-run history, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are highlighted as the key period in which the shaping of conflictive views of opposing territorial ambitions were first coherently developed. From this period emerged the theses of a ‘bi-oceanic Argentina’, and of a Chile which laid claim to all of Patagonia, drawn from erroneous or wilfully misleading readings of colonial territorial history. As Lacoste details, these views did not emerge spontaneously, but were constructed from nationalist bases on both sides of the cordillera, and became part of the ‘national foundational theses’ in both countries. It is with these perceptions that Lacoste engages most extensively, examining the fallacious perceptions of their national borders forwarded by both Argentine and Chilean historians throughout the twentieth century. Lacoste highlights the insertion of such views into both national educational content and the broader public domain as key to the development of xenophobia between the two countries from the late nineteenth century onward. The author’s position with regard to such erroneous history is concisely expressed in his observation that ‘someone lied in the historians union’ (p. 15). Whilst doubtless generations of Argentine and Chilean historians would reject such allegations, Lacoste amply supports his contention, leaving little doubt that the ‘fantastic’ projections of the borders of the two countries proposed



by such histories has resulted both in xenophobic attitudes and has during some periods – often but not always during times of excessive military influence over government – corraled interstate relations within a highly sensitised territorial discourse.

As Lacoste points out, the production of such histories diminished notably in the post-1984 period, as the majority of academic and diplomatic institutions adapted themselves to the reinvigorated bilateral integration initiated by the 1984 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries. However, it is also true that the early and mid 1990s saw an upsurge of nationalist territorial works, often commissioned by nationalist bodies such as the Argentine *Círculo Militar*. Lacoste correctly identifies Mosquera's *La conciencia territorial argentina y el Tratado con Chile 1881–93: una censurable custodia del patrimonio territorial argentino*, as the most notable of these works. Mosquera's study, though, is only one of a stream of misleading territorial histories on both sides of the border in the 1990s, produced in direct response to both governments attempts at resolving the border in the Laguna del Desierto and Hielos Continentales zones of the far southern Andes. Although these issues were eventually resolved successfully, the continuing appearance of nationalist readings of territorial history was a contributory factor to the longevity of the Hielos Continentales controversy in Argentina, complicating the ratification attempts of the Argentine government from 1991 until the very end of Menem's mandate in 1999. The example of that particular political controversy substantiates Lacoste's premise that the manipulation of territorial history has tended to sharpen chauvinistic nationalism on both sides of the border. Fortunately, in the case of the territorial debates of the 1990's, that chauvinism was neither as widespread nor as influential as proponents of that decades territorial accords – such as Argentine Foreign Minister Guido di Tella – feared.

Lacoste's work is a welcome addition to studies of Argentine–Chilean relations, part of a growing revisionist view of that history to which a diverse range of scholars including Romero, Escudé and others have contributed. Whilst not the first work to shed fresh light on that history, it is the first extensively to analyse the linkages between historically engendered territorial 'myths', and the development of xenophobic currents between Argentina and Chile. It is, then, a valuable counterweight to the plethora of nationalist works on Argentine–Chilean relations produced throughout the twentieth century, and a timely reminder that despite the generally harmonious condition of Argentine–Chilean relations in recent years, analysts and students should not overlook the long-term effects of nationalist historiography on those relations. It is to be hoped that *La imagen del otro* will be taken up as a key text by those who read and teach Argentina–Chile relations, and more broadly by analysts with an interest in the interaction of territory, history and nationalism in Latin America.

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Javier Corrales, *Presidents Without Parties: The Politics of Economic Reform in Argentina and Venezuela in the 1990s* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002), pp. xvi + 364, \$55.00, \$25.00 pb.

Latin America's economic crises of the 1980s and government attempts to respond dominated the literature during the 1990s. Only recently have more sophisticated

attempts to explain the adoption of market-oriented economic policies been forthcoming. Corrales looks specifically at the ability of governments to sustain market-oriented reforms, while setting his argument within the larger historical-institutional literature regarding the importance of state strength in the policy process. Bringing to bear an impressive historical knowledge of Argentina's Menem administration and Venezuela's Pérez administration, he argues that the key difference in these similar cases is intraparty cooperation between copartisans in the executive and the legislature. Menem was generally able to contain dissent within his party, leading to the adoption and consolidation of an impressive list of market-oriented policies, while Pérez's copartisans abandoned his reform programme, eventually leading to his premature departure from office. In short, Corrales argues that successful intraparty relations are the key to governing, particularly in the context of severe economic crisis.

The book is divided into four sections. The first outlines Corrales' theory regarding the importance of state strength. He argues that other potential explanations for reform such as economic crisis, public opposition, interest group opposition, and the success of the programme do not explain Menem's success and Pérez's failure. Instead, cooperation between the executive and his copartisans in the legislature neutralise society's resistance to reforms. However, when the president's copartisans abandon him he is left with little choice but to roll back reforms or engage in an 'autogolpe'.

The second section details the cases selected and the data used in the analysis. Argentina and Venezuela represent the 'populist-corporatist' tradition in Latin America of a large, though incompetent state, yet they are somewhat distinct (wealthy, strong, ideologically vague parties, outsider candidates). He makes a 'necessary, but insufficient' argument regarding the importance of strong political parties, copartisan control of the legislature, and populist traditions that undermine the generalisability of the theory, although he attempts that in the final section. This is a most-similar-systems approach, with Corrales drawing upon elite interviews and detailed case studies to test his hypotheses concerning the importance of intraparty relations.

The third section forms the bulk of the analysis. Corrales demonstrates that copartisans in both nations initially provided qualified support for reform efforts, but that congressional consultation was nearly non-existent and that over time co-partisans in both countries began to resist executive initiatives. However, the Pérez administration continued its non-consultative approach leading his party (AD) to turn against its president for the first time in history. AD's infighting created a power vacuum, leading to two attempted coups, declining approval ratings, fiscally irresponsible attempts to regain support, and eventually to Pérez's removal from office and the reversal of many reforms. Conversely, as congressional resistance grew in Menem's Peronist Party (PJ) the president reshuffled his cabinet, sent key economic advisers to consult with congress, gave PJ governors greater autonomy, and let congress modify or halt some reform efforts. This harmonious process sustained reform efforts and eventually to a constitutional amendment that enabled Menem to win re-election. Only when Menem sought a third term in office did this consultative relationship break-down.

Why did AD abandon its president, while the PJ did not? Corrales argues that party polarisation actually facilitated the process. Members of the PJ could not



credibly side with the hated UCR, while AD dissidents could side with the Christian-Democratic COPEI – given the long history of cooperation between the parties. Furthermore, Corrales claims that AD's moribund elite, the lack of internal democracy, and its electoral dominance made leaders extremely reluctant to abandon a four-decade old economic strategy that had produced electoral success in the past. Conversely, the PJ's more fluid party elite, internal competition for office, and most importantly electoral defeats in 1983 and 1985 led the party faithful to be more willing to compromise. Consequently, when Pérez signalled willingness to compromise his fate was already sealed, while members of the PJ were more willing to work to defend their president once he sent similar signals.

The final section attempts to test the theory regarding the role of intraparty cooperation in a variety of Latin American states using short case studies and provides a useful summary of the theory and findings. The region-wide test is based on brief case studies of various governments, with all cases supporting the theory. Corrales' conclusion is novel. Unlike previous work claiming that executive autonomy explains the extent of reform he instead finds that the key to sustainable reform is a moderately powerful president. Presidents must have sufficient power to promote reform efforts, but not so much that the concerns of co-partisans in the legislature are ignored.

Corrales' conclusions are undermined somewhat by his approach. First, he argues that polarised parties with elite turnover and both internal and external competition for office are essential in securing intraparty cooperation, yet his model is over-determined given the number of observations. Secondly, early on he argues that the worst possible outcome for a party is a failed administration, yet he clearly demonstrates that AD '... led the firing squad'. Why would they do this if it produced the worst possible outcome? Thirdly, he uses an elite survey to show members of the PJ felt consulted and members of AD did not, yet this was conducted in 1994. Menem's success and Pérez's humiliating exit may be less a function of consultation and more a function of political and economic outcomes. Finally, the number of factors apparently necessary to elicit co-partisan support in the pursuit of market-oriented reforms in Latin America is prohibitive and his definition of co-partisan support in his region-wide analysis is so malleable to make further testing difficult. Still, this is a first-rate application of historical-institutionalism and provides an excellent history of the reform process in Argentina and Venezuela during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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Laura M. Rival, *Trekking Through History: The Huaorani of Amazonian Ecuador* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. xxiii + 246, \$60.00, \$30.00 pb; £46.00, £21.00 pb.

In her monograph on the Huaorani Laura Rival assumes a double task. First she describes ethnographically the trekking way of life of these Amazonian hunter-gatherers incorporating into the analysis their own social and symbolic structuring of the world. Secondly, she contributes to the theoretical development of historical ecology as a research approach. Both aims are concomitant and both go against what has been the norm in the treatment of Amazonian trekker societies. All too

often the scholarship devoted to these societies has echoed popular representations of Amazonian foragers as relentless murderers and savages lacking the cultural elaboration ascribed to cultivators. Adaptive approaches that saw hunting-gathering as imposed by a limiting environment, and their cultural ecological substitutes in which foraging is seen as the result of post-contact cultural regression, reproduce and reinforce these views. Furthermore, the Huaorani were supposed to share with other Amazonian groups who experience endemic warfare, a social reproduction strategy in which alterity and predation are the driving mechanisms symbolically to incorporate life into an essentially infertile inside. Rival, by convincingly bringing together history, political and economic analysis of social relations (both inter- and intra-ethnic), and interpretation of cosmological themes, takes these arguments to task.

The bulk of the monograph is devoted to show how autonomy and isolationism, instead of being imposed by external forces, constitute an ethos central to what it means to be huaorani (i.e. human). Social relations within the *nanicabo* (the Huaorani longhouse) are reproduced through the continuous sharing of the forest's natural abundance. 'Demand sharing', or sharing on demand rather than obliged by reciprocity, does not create creditors nor debtors; Rival sees this as related to the radical egalitarianism that characterises some trekking societies. Likewise, this sharing stance articulates history, since natural abundance is regarded as the consequence of past human activity. Of particular interest for Amazonian anthropology is Rival's reversion of the 'predation hypothesis'. Although the Huaorani, like other forest peoples, symbolically structure the world around a predator-prey duality, they do so by assuming a fixed subject position of prey. Isolationism, flight and killing 'others', then, are different ways of dealing with an ever threatening predatory outside without resorting to its logic.

The book starts with a critical review of different approaches to explain trekking in Amazonia. On the one hand, those emphasising either post-contact cultural regression or functional adaptation according to cost/benefit criteria, and on the other hand, ethno-historical accounts that focus on relations between neighbouring groups with different subsistence strategies. Historical ecology is presented as bridging these approaches and overcoming some of their limitations. Rival adopts this framework, refining it by accounting for internal sociocultural processes and adopting a subjective perspective. Consistent with the model proposed, the work continues with a summary of the ethnohistory of the Upper Napo Region, which is then contrasted with Huaorani's own understanding of history and inter-ethnic relations. Rival argues that extensive human abduction and endemic warfare in the region created the conditions for 'isolation [to become] an essential component of identity and ethnicity' (p. 44). In my view, the argument that Huaorani isolationism has persisted unchanged from pre-Columbian times until a present in which tourism, oil industry and the state are palpable realities, only holds if we ascribe to the author's idealisation of mobility and autonomy. The latter is also evident in passages on how 'economic development forced [the Kayapó] to give up their transhumant way of life' (p. 16), or why some Huaorani groups 'have been pushed to accept ... a sedentary existence' (p. 175), denying thus the political choice that these processes – like isolationism and trekking – involve. However, the relationship established between the history of inter-ethnic relations, the self-identification as prey in face of a predatory context, and an isolationist ethos and mobility, is original and compelling. As strong is the ethnographic treatment of sociopolitical

and symbolic relationships between and within independent *nanicabos*, and between *nanicabos*, the forest and past generations through which the notions of natural abundance and demand sharing are developed. Particularly enjoyable is the description of the drinking-festivals where marriage alliances are established. During these festivals, which require hard work and cooperation between related but distant *nanicabos*, the host couple is ritually transformed into a fruiting, naturally giving tree. Such naturalisation that allows participants to recover their autonomy after the festival – and this is other of the book's central tenets – is also how the Huaorani conceptualise oil companies and state schools, incorporating them into their economy and social world while remaining independent: as natural fountains of wealth. This representation of 'marginality with a difference', as the author calls it elsewhere, as well as the adoption of a theoretical model which acknowledges agency and choice in people's trajectories, appear all the more important if we examine the reasons that have legitimised imperial enterprises, christianising missions, internal colonialism and messianic development schemes in the Amazon.

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James Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest: Power, Politics, and the History of Early Colonial Michoacán, Mexico, 1521–1565* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2001), pp. viii + 222, \$35.00, hb.

The corpus of regional studies on colonial and independent Mexico has been expanding significantly. Krippner-Martínez's is a recent addition, which tackles some common aspects of the history of early colonial Michoacán with a refreshing perspective.

Reflections on the evangelisation and early politics of Michoacán are presented in a series of essays divided into two parts. In the first, 'The Politics of Conquest', consisting of three chapters, some well-known primary sources are analysed and reinterpreted. The author starts with a discussion of the lawsuit that ended in the execution of the Cazonci, the indigenous ruler, by Nuño de Guzmán in 1530. The *Proceso* is followed by the *Relación de Michoacán* of 1541, an account by elite indigenous males transcribed and translated by a Franciscan, through which the interactions of the Franciscans and the indigenous people are analysed. This part ends with a discussion of the writings left by bishop Vasco de Quiroga. The second part, 'Reflections', investigates some effects that those events and writings provoked in later times. A chapter is dedicated to the *Crónica de Michoacán* of friar Pablo Beaumont, a late eighteenth-century account of the first stage of conquest and evangelisation. The last chapter deals with the emergence of Vasco de Quiroga as a prominent figure from the late eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. The author's general aim is to give a fresh interpretation of some important sources and demonstrate the role of power and politics in the history of early colonial Michoacán.

Many aspects of the book stimulate reflection and analysis; here I have chosen to concentrate on two figures that could symbolise, in my view, the early history of Michoacán itself. The Cazonci Tzintzincha Tangaxoan was executed by Nuño de Guzmán and Spanish soldiers and settlers, after a trial that generated an extremely interesting judicial record. Despite the recognised limitations of the source, such as

the exclusive representation of the Spanish point of view, and the fact that Spaniards could hardly translate Tarascan at that time (they used Nahuatl as a *lingua franca*), the lawsuit is crucial in revealing the dynamics of colonisation. Challenging traditional representations of the conquest of the region that underscore indigenous passivity and rapid acceptance of the Spanish presence, the author gives a multifaceted interpretation of the lawsuit. First, the Cazonci did not surrender to colonial rule, but attempted to exploit Spanish factionalism and at last fell victim to contention between Cortés and Guzmán. Moreover, Spanish settlers were frustrated by the authority of the Cazonci and determined to eliminate him to establish themselves freely. In this light, the execution becomes more understandable, but there is a further step in the process. The Spanish needed a justification, as with the general enterprise of conquest, and that necessity was met by the construction of the Cazonci as a ‘perverse and murderous other’ (p. 21). Through the humiliation and public execution of the Cazonci, the Spanish settlers affirmed their authority under the logic of dominance and control, a brutal but sadly unexceptional rationale. This complex portrait of power and politics is a definite achievement of the author.

The second figure I choose is the famous Vasco de Quiroga, first bishop of Michoacan (1538–65). Quite a lot has been written on him, yet Krippner-Martínez manages to provide some original ideas by stressing the ambiguities and nuances of Quiroga’s conceptions, rather than his now traditional role as protector of the indigenous people. For instance, while giving shelter to the natives in his *hospitales*, he imposed a social order based on dominant male authority and the power of rank. After all, he was more traditional than is normally acknowledged, and his conceptions of social hierarchy and cultural superiority were not exceptional for the time. Moreover, the author suggests that the image of Vasco de Quiroga as a father beloved by the natives was born after the fact out of the necessity first of the colonial state and later of Mexican nationalism. Indeed, there is no evidence to show the attachment of sixteenth-century natives to the bishop, and some doubt is legitimate if we remember that Quiroga never learnt the indigenous language in order to communicate with them.

Through these five essays the author places some well-known written records in a better understood historical context, a most worthy undertaking. Moreover, he leaves us needing to rethink on the one hand the image of Quiroga as a successful missionary beloved by the natives, and on the other the image of the natives as limited to being passive recipients or active opponents. Stimulating debate over too-easily-accepted paradigms is one of the achievements of a good book.

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Claudia Agostoni, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876–1910* (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press; Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado; México, DF: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003), pp. xvii + 228, pb.

In this concise and imaginative monograph Claudia Agostoni weaves together the story of two heretofore separately-studied projects of the Porfirian State in Mexico City, the construction of monuments and the improvement of public health. It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that this book, which grew from a King’s

College London dissertation, has been published first in English by a Mexican researcher at the country's premier university (UNAM), perhaps a new phenomenon in Mexican historiography.

For the elite of the Díaz era, the modern metropolis that was to be a symbol of 'order and progress' must have monuments celebrating the liberal heroes of the nineteenth century, as well as the heroes of the ancient Aztec world. It must also be a sanitary and disease-free city, displaying the accomplishments of modern science. The focus of the monumental project was the grand boulevard constructed by Emperor Maximilian to connect the city with Chapultepec Palace, and reborn as the Paseo de la Reforma, lined with numerous statues, the monument to Independence ('El Angel'), and culminating in the monument to Benito Juárez (purposely placed beyond the Paseo so he would not compete with his former nemesis, Porfirio Díaz). Agostoni devotes some particularly interesting pages to the creation of the monuments to Cuauhtémoc (1877) and to Kings Ahuitzotl and Itzcóatl. These latter two colossal statues of green oxidised bronze, known popularly as the 'Indios Verdes', were much-reviled and ridiculed, and ultimately moved from the 'modern' Paseo to a poor and non-sanitised section of the city in 1907.

The major public health and sanitation project was the culmination of the centuries-long effort to drain Lake Texcoco, which flooded periodically, polluting much of the city and making it one of the most disease-ridden in the world. The final plan, consisting of canals and tunnels directing water north and ultimately to the Gulf of Mexico, was begun in 1885, based on a plan of 1856, and finally inaugurated in 1900. The project also included a system of sewers. This project to 'control water' always involved a parallel campaign of citizen improvement, that is, to create a 'hygienic instinct' among the lower classes.

Agostoni's study is based on a wide range of contemporary published materials (including novelistic descriptions of the diseased city by Emilio Rabasa and Fernando Gamboa), newspapers, the Ayuntamiento and Ministry of Health archives, as well as on an intelligent use of secondary literature.

One of the strengths of the study is Agostoni's emphasis on continuity, since the Porfirian projects drew inspiration from the late colonial urbanism of the Viceroy Revillagigedo, and on efforts to control flooding dating from the seventeenth century. After 1910, despite the new concern for removing social inequalities, Agostoni suggests that the revolutionary governments maintained the basic urban policies of the *Porfiriato*. The motto merely shifted from 'order and progress' to 'reconstruction.' However, she does call attention to the need for more work on twentieth-century continuities along other suggestions for future research.

Agostoni points out that the Díaz regime, despite its focus on public health, essentially divided the city between the modern section of the west and south, with its boulevards, monuments, and new *colonias*, and the poor eastern section adjacent to Lake Texcoco. One Porfirian goal was to display the modern metropolis to foreign visitors, dignitaries, and investors at the 1910 Centennial celebration, which meant that 'monumental space had to be clean.' For example, there was the effort to 'camouflage' the indigenous poor by insisting that all those attending the inauguration of the monument to Independence wear shoes and be properly dressed. Moreover, the Cuauhtémoc statue was not conceived, Agostoni tells us, to show ethnic pride, but rather to honour a mythical ancient past and imperial order. While amply noting the social limitations of the elite Porfirian mentality, Agostoni's study does add to the revisionist literature on the *Porfiriato*. In a sense, the metropolis

of today owes much of its character to the ambitious Porfirian projects. The book also uncovers the brilliant work of often-forgotten planners, engineers, hygienists and scientists of the era, as well as the highly organised bureaucracy of the Consejo Superior de Salubridad. In short, Claudia Agostoni has given us a balanced and nuanced view of an important aspect of Mexico in the era of Porfirio Díaz.

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Victoria E. Rodríguez, *Women in Contemporary Mexican Politics* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), pp. xxi + 332, \$50.00, \$22.95 pb.

Victoria Rodríguez's book helps fill a significant gap in the literature. Despite the growth of women's studies and gender studies with a Latin American perspective, there has not been a monograph on women's role in Mexican politics. In attempting to fill this gap, Rodríguez has focused on the lives of women in the institutional political sphere, specifically those in parties, NGOs, first ladies and bureaucracies. The book begins by explaining the methodological approach and then offers some context on the Mexican political system and women's insertion into political life in the twentieth century. It moves on to assessing the development of the women's movement in Mexico, women's role in public office, their participation in the electoral process, and concludes with an assessment of Mexican democracy in the light of women's increased and more visible participation. The chapters are on the long side, but the good use of subheads does allow the reader to hone in on particular sections should s/he wish. Rodríguez paints a picture of women's gradual inclusion into political life and underscores how political institutions themselves, particularly parties, have often served to limit women both as actors and in promoting women's gender interests. She further notes that, although there are encouraging signs with women making cross-party alliances and increasing linkages between state and civil society, it remains difficult for women to be openly feminist in their approach if they wish to develop a high profile political life, particularly in electoral politics. The book is a mixture of positive and more pessimistic assessment. Rodríguez is keen to highlight the genuine advances that women have made, but there is a frequently unspoken frustration at how slow progress can be. This slowness is sometimes a result of the institutional obstacles mentioned above, but is also due to personal antipathy and rifts, lack of political savvy and personal ambition which has led to some not being as 'sisterly' as they might. The more sober analysis of the concluding chapter has greater impact coming after the more upbeat tenor of the preceding chapters.

The key strength of this book is the extraordinary access Rodríguez had with her interviewees. She was fortunate to be able to establish teams to work with women throughout the country and to be able to interview people on several occasions. Indeed, many of the women allowed themselves to be shadowed and opened up their homes to Rodríguez and her team. Consequently, the empirical material is extremely rich as the interviewees exposed and reflected upon their experiences. As such, we get many insights usually missing from academic analyses and Rodríguez has also been assiduous in including material from secondary sources to give a holistic picture of attitudes towards women in contemporary Mexican politics. This level of access, however, brings with it its own problems. Rodríguez



has not only established an excellent rapport with the interviewees, many have become her friends. There are times when the reader senses that these friendships have inhibited her from making some criticisms or to side-step uncomfortable details: this is particularly noticeable when referring to the difficult relationship between Dulce María Sauri and Ana Rosa Payan and more so when alluding to the strains that became apparent in the association between Rosario Robles and Amalia García. It is difficult to see how this problem can be avoided altogether and is a useful illustration of the challenges of ethnographic methodology.

There is much to engage with here; whether one is interested in Mexican politics, processes of democratisation, or gender studies, this book has a great deal to offer. There are some useful comparisons with the USA to give the broader picture, although the inclusion of other Latin American countries is less evident and this could have proved helpful as well. It is inevitable, perhaps, that when a book is plugging such a large gap that readers would wish for things to be included that are not there. The perspective is generally elite-oriented: there is some discussion of social movements, but on the whole this is about institutional politics and explorations about what 'ordinary' women might want from their representatives are largely absent – indeed this is an area for future research. There were also missed opportunities to theorise more on the rich empirical data. There is a useful discussion of democratic theory at the outset, but it is not then used as a theoretical framework for the book. Similarly I would have welcomed greater interrogation of gender interests and the public-private implications of increase female participation. Notwithstanding these points, this is a very enjoyable book that is an important contribution to our understanding of both Mexican politics and women's political participation.

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Carlos Fuentes et al., *Juan Rulfo's Mexico* (Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), pp. 223, £52.00, hb.

The photography of Juan Rulfo (1917–1986) has posthumously received the same critical acclaim bestowed at the time of publication on his masterpieces of fiction, *El llano en llamas* (1953) and *Pedro Páramo* (1955). The collection *Homenaje Nacional* (1980, reissued in 1982 as *Inframundo*) was the product of the first exhibition of his photographs, which have now travelled the world. *Juan Rulfo's Mexico*, which is the English version of *México: Juan Rulfo fotógrafo* (2001), is a varied compilation of Rulfo's work. The six essays at the beginning, by Fuentes and others, are good introductions as well as essential reading for anybody with an interest in Rulfo's photography and fiction.

The photographs offer the range of Rulfo's repertoire in impressively large print: imposing skylines and barren landscapes; heroically extant colonial and pre-colonial architecture; the play of chiaroscuro in woods, lakes and waterfalls; glacial portraits of apparently detached indigenous people; significant pauses and captured movement in indigenous festivals, dances and music; actors and actresses on (rural) location, framed abruptly by Rulfo's enquiring lens; the raw solemnity of crosses, pilgrimages and churches; desolate villages abandoned by both God and the State; and, after such a manifest absence of modernity, the rumbling of Mexico City's

railway platforms. The most memorable of the photographs are perhaps ‘Barda tirada en un campo verde’ (p. 61), of an undulating colonial wall, clinging to the land like a serpent; ‘Actriz de La Escondida’ (p. 121), an unsettlingly voyeuristic portrait of an apparently sleeping actress in indigenous clothing; ‘Encuentro Musical’ (p. 119), in which instruments left to stand by indigenous musicians form majestic shadows and silhouettes against the hazy sunlight at the top of a hill; and ‘Muro en ruinas’ (p. 174), of a section of a ruined colonial building which resembles an Aztec mask in Rulfo’s choice of light and angle.

The arrangement by theme allows the viewer to dwell on aspects of each and their relationships with each other, observing Rulfo’s freeze-dried images with increasing inquisitiveness, and perhaps taking on the challenge that Carlos Fuentes sets out for us in the superb opening essay, ‘Forms that defy oblivion’: ‘With Rulfo one must always be alert and ask, Why such calm, such beauty, such light? We must question the shadows of that light, the restlessness behind such serenity’ (p. 14). In ‘Juan Rulfo: Vocation of Silence’, Jorge Alberto Lozoya agrees, suggesting that Rulfo’s photographs are representations of a deceptive silence in which ‘he discourages the unwary’ (p. 24). Drawing parallels between Mexico and Japan, Alberto Lozoya argues eloquently for the eloquence of silence in art while Fuentes eulogises Rulfo’s portraits of indigenous people, which transcend the limitations of space and time by silently displaying a defiant ‘dignity’: ‘... a love that has decided not to be buried – just the opposite of Pedro Páramo – in order to demonstrate the persistence of dignity through time’ (p. 15). A dignity that is borne out, perhaps, by images such as *Campesina de Oaxaca y Niño* (p. 90), in which a woman struggles to work in a field while carrying a crying child.

On the other hand, for Eduardo Rivera, in his excellent piece ‘Juan Rulfo: Writing Light and Photographing Word’, this image would more simply represent a ‘denunciation of a “justice” that vents its cruelty upon the weak’ (p. 30). Apart from reaffirming the socio-political significance of Rulfo’s photography, Rivera also makes a convincing case for the relationship between fiction and photography, expounding on the ‘photographic poetics’ of Rulfo’s use of recurring signs such as ruined houses, broken windows, scorched fields, empty landscapes, exploited women and mournful gazes. Margo Glantz’s piece on photographic imagery in *Pedro Páramo* strengthens the case for the link with examples of photographic imagery in the novel and, interestingly, the suggestion that Rulfo’s written and visual images work in the same way as the darkness of the human pupil, absorbing light but not releasing it, like a ‘negative sun’ (p. 18). Against such determined efforts to reconcile Rulfo’s photography with his writing, Víctor Jiménez sounds an important note of caution in his essay ‘Juan Rulfo’s Mexico’, urging us not to ignore ‘the specific rules that pertain to each [art form]’ (p. 34). Pleasingly, the last of the essays, ‘Juan Rulfo: Images of Memory’ by Erika Billeter, seems to heed this caution, expertly placing Rulfo in the context of his contemporary photographers while re-asserting, after Jiménez, the undeniable influence of an obsession with history and architecture on Rulfo’s photography.

The calibre of Rulfo’s photographs is now undisputed but the thought-provoking and perceptive essays here complement and contextualise them admirably. This book is highly recommended for aficionados of Rulfo’s work in both literature and photography, and also for those interested in photography in general.

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Maria Victoria Murillo, *Labor Unions, Partisan Coalitions, and Market Reforms in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. xvii + 250, \$59.95, \$21.95 pb.

The tilt toward market-oriented economic development strategies created multiple challenges for workers throughout Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s. This shift posed especially complex dilemmas where radical policy changes were implemented by governments led by political parties with historically close ties to organised labour, such as the Partido Justicialista (PJ) in Argentina, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico, and Acción Democrática (AD) in Venezuela. Yet organised labour's response to these changes varied not only across countries but within them as well. In this book, Maria Victoria Murillo seeks to explain why unions generally acquiesced to economic liberalisation in Argentina and Mexico (thereby smoothing the implementation of far-reaching reforms) but mounted strong opposition to such policies in Venezuela (thereby slowing the reform process and weakening the government in power).

Murillo's principal variables for assessing union–government interactions are partisan loyalty between organised labour and the governing party, competition between incumbent and rival union leaders, and competition among labour organisations for members and resources. Her main propositions are derived from the following (rational-expectation) assumptions:

Unions do not probe allied governments nor do they bluff. Labor unions trust their allies, and union competition or monopoly provides signals of their strength and make probing and bluffing unnecessary. Militancy results from the internal dynamics of the union and the leadership's search for political survival, whereas the organizational structure of unions affects their ability to obtain concessions (p. 13).

Of course, it is not difficult to recall real-world situations that substantially depart from most or all of these assumptions; the relevant question is how well Murillo's independent variables explain patterns of union–government interaction in the cases she chooses for close examination.

Murillo's study usefully highlights the macro and micro political contexts in which Argentine, Mexican and Venezuelan workers confronted the challenges of market-oriented economic reform. The claim that her propositions constitute a new 'theory' of government–union interactions is too ambitious, but her hypothesised causal relationships constitute a clear basis for cross-national and cross-sectoral comparison. The book draws upon both the extensive secondary literature on labour politics and economic reform in Latin America and, particularly in its assessment of the Argentine experience, a considerable body of primary field research materials.

In her analysis of labour's response to economic liberalisation during the 1980s and 1990s, Murillo shows that in Venezuela the competitive pressures produced within unions by the rapid expansion of Causa R contributed to AD-affiliated union leaders' growing militancy (although, in the absence of more specific information concerning the scale of this partisan competition, it is difficult to judge the relative significance of this factor in shaping labour behavior). In the case of Argentina, Murillo highlights both the costs that workers paid because of internal divisions within the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and the extensive concessions that a reunited CGT and its affiliates wrested from the government of Carlos Menem after 1992.

It is, however, the Mexican case that poses the greatest difficulties for Murillo's analytical framework. Although her approach emphasises the importance of political competition (and includes such assumptions as 'The identity of the party in government changes with elections', p. 19), Murillo is compelled to recognise that it was principally the 'nondemocratic character of the Mexican regime' that permitted government officials to implement policies that harmed workers' economic and social interests. Leadership challenges within the National Education Workers' Union may well have contributed to the union's comparatively militant policy stance, but Murillo does not produce any substantial evidence that growing electoral competition at the national or state level led to heightened partisan rivalries within unions. Government officials did indeed seek to undercut union opposition by playing upon organisational rivalries within the labour movement. Yet this was only one of several reasons why the PRI-allied Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) generally acquiesced to market-oriented economic reforms – and evidence from other sources suggests that, despite government hostility and some membership defections, the CTM actually increased its share of the unionised workforce during the 1990s.

In assessing government-labour interactions in Mexico, Murillo underestimates the importance of the CTM's successful defence of existing federal labour law, while she overestimates the significance of contacts between more politically independent labour groups and the centre-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). And given that the CTM strongly opposed Carlos Salinas de Gortari's presidential nomination, and that major segments of the organised labour movement were systematically marginalised in key policy debates during Salinas's years in power (1988–1994), how meaningful is it to characterise Salinas's technocratic government as a 'labor-based administration' (p. 8) or to view this case as an instance in which labour faced the dilemma of responding to unfavourable economic measures introduced by a partisan ally in government (p. 197)?

In addition to these specific difficulties, the book is flawed in two more general ways. Perhaps the most problematic element is the author's handling of case materials. In seeking to avoid the alleged methodological weakness of many comparative political studies (that is, the small number of cases examined), Murillo strives to expand the size of her 'sample' across different countries, economic sectors, and types of labour organisation. In the book's summary table (p. 194), for example, she reports that the expected outcome occurred in 32 of the 36 'observations' fitting her main explanatory conditions.

Methodological rigour is certainly a worthy goal, and there is no doubt about the potential value of combining national-level analysis with attention to developments at the sectoral and union levels. However, the result in this instance is a series of cameo case studies (averaging just 4–5 paragraphs each) that are insufficiently detailed either to illuminate the key relationships being examined or to provide the reader with the empirical basis for judging whether the author's preferred explanation is in fact superior to various alternatives. Labour leaders are often the only actors appearing in these accounts; only rarely is there any discussion of how government policies or negotiations, or the specific actions of state-firm managers or private employers, shaped union behaviour at different junctures.

Indeed, most of the case studies are so brief and schematic that Murillo in essence asks the reader to accept her summary judgment that her interpretation best fits the circumstances described. In the end, the presentation of stylised facts with

limited evidentiary value leaves the reader uncomfortably suspended over the gap that lies between the insight that can be derived from close analysis of a few carefully developed cases and the statistical confidence that can be achieved by testing falsifiable propositions in larger quantitative studies. In this instance, then, the methodological pursuit of a larger N actually hinders understanding.

The second difficulty is that Murillo does not give sufficiently nuanced attention to alternative hypotheses (including, for example, the impact of state repression and administrative controls on labour militancy, organisational constraints on labour's mobilisational capacity, and the possibility that major labour organisations in Argentina and Mexico responded to market-oriented reforms as they did in part because these policies were accompanied by effective government measures to control inflation). Both the conclusions of the country-specific chapters and chapter 7 briefly consider (and reject) several alternative explanations, including the likely impact of economic opening on a union based upon its location in either the tradable or nontradable goods sectors, the impact of employment conditions upon labour militancy, and the organisational characteristics of unions. However, the case studies too often provide a one-dimensional account of developments in a given sector that focuses only upon the presence (or absence) of leadership or union competition. The author's presentation is also weakened by frequent stylistic problems, and the book would have benefited from a more detailed index.

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Ilja A. Luciak, *After the Revolution: Gender and Democracy in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 2001), pp. xi + 297, \$27.95, pb.

The underlying argument presented in this book is succinctly stated in the slogan, 'Si la mujer no está, la democracia no va' (Without women, democracy doesn't function) (p. 227). This issue is one that ideally would be central to democratisation research in general. Sadly, this is not the case. And so Ilja Luciak's book makes all the more important of a contribution to our understanding of transition to and consolidation of democracy in Central America.

Backed by over 15 years of research experience in Central America, Luciak's analysis relies most heavily on over 100 interviews, plus a survey of 200 ex-combatants in El Salvador. As Luciak notes, the depth of analysis is unequal across the three case studies examined. The most thorough data collection was conducted in El Salvador, but he also has impressive fieldwork experience in Nicaragua. The Guatemala case involves less fieldwork and data collection and is used mainly to give greater leverage for comparison.

Early in the book, Luciak revisits a long-running debate amongst scholars regarding the percentage of women in guerrilla movements. Women have been estimated to have comprised up to 30 per cent of the fighting force in both the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) and FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front). Luciak has tapped into original data from the demobilisation process with which to examine the issue anew. He finds that women were 29 per cent of FMLN combatants and 36.6 per cent of demobilised FLMN political cadres (p. 5). Although these findings are consistent with earlier estimates, Luciak points

to potential complications with the age distributions. Although roughly 90 per cent of all female combatants were between the ages of 14 and 40, a number were over 60. These women, it seems, were processed as combatants in recognition of their years feeding the guerrillas and tending camp (p. 9). Luciak rightly argues that the guerrillas' understanding of 'combatant' often included men and women in support roles, and the common academic distinction made between armed combatants and those in support roles is an artificial one that 'tends to obscure and denigrate the important role played by women and men who provided logistical support' (p. 10).

There is no comparable data for Nicaragua, but Luciak brings in much new and intriguing material on gender relations in the guerrilla forces. In addition to fascinating anecdotes in this section, Luciak makes the important argument that although by 1974 the FSLN had accepted women's participation as integral to the struggle, that acceptance was based upon a recognition of the useful role that women could play rather than an appreciation for women's rights (p. 20). Although the data on demobilised guerrillas in Guatemala are not as reliable as in El Salvador, Luciak is able to conclude that women comprised a significantly lower percentage of guerrilla combatants than in the other two cases – roughly 15 per cent (p. 26). The lower level of participation in the Guatemalan guerrilla groups is an intriguing finding. A next step for future research will be to explain this difference.

Next, Luciak turns to a less examined aspect of guerrilla warfare – the peace process and reintegration phase. For El Salvador, Luciak aptly demonstrates how women's issues received little attention in the peace process, even despite the participation of several high-ranking female commanders (p. 39). His analysis for Nicaragua focuses on reintegration efforts for the Contras and does not delve much into the gendered aspects, perhaps due to paucity of information. In the case of Guatemala, interestingly, there did seem to be a relatively significant emphasis on issues of gender in the peace negotiations, yet Luciak is concerned that many of the relevant provisions are unenforceable (p. 57). Here again, his findings provide a strong foundation from which future research can develop theories as to how to successfully include women in peace processes.

Later chapters deal with women, party politics, and elections in the post-war era. He notes that with the wars over, female militants were freer to challenge their respective parties regarding gender issues. Women in the FMLN and FSLN had clearly played significant roles in their guerrilla movements, allowing them to make strong arguments favouring women's participation within the post-war party structure (p. 189). Ultimately, the FMLN women were most effective in pursuing strategies that strengthened their formal equality within their party.

His final substantive chapter focuses on elections. Here he discusses the successes and shortcomings in women's efforts to gain greater representation in elected office (p. 194). In the 1997 elections FMLN women did well, increasing the number of women representatives, who then went on to introduce gender equity legislation. Internal disputes decreased their effectiveness in the 2000 elections. Nicaragua's women's movement, by contrast, has remained effective and Luciak sees them as growing stronger (p. 224). Drawing lessons from his comparative analysis, Luciak sees the need to broaden the struggle for women's rights beyond the Left, incorporating it into pluralist alliances to achieve a significant impact (p. 225).

Much of the book is filled with interesting narrative culled from the hundreds of hours of interviews, supplementing the statistics and providing a forum for these



women's own perspectives and analyses. This is a book not to be missed by anyone with an interest in transitions from revolution to democratic consolidation.

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Annelies Zoomers (ed.), *Estrategias campesinas en el Surandino de Bolivia: Intervenciones y desarrollo rural en el norte de Chuquisaca y Potosí* (Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, Royal Tropical Institute, 1998), pp. ix + 619, hb.

This collection of papers and appendices reports the results of the work of a team of Dutch and Bolivian scholars funded by the International Co-operation Division of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The research was based on the study of a series of communities in provinces of Oropeza, Zudañez, Yamparáez (Chuquisaca) and Chayanta (Potosí). The major part of the analytical data was derived from a year-long study of 17 communities during 1995–96 collecting data from eight households in each.

Such a collection of essays and reports can serve a useful purpose in informing a wide range of readers about something more than just about life in the communities in the areas visited. It can present lessons that might be learned from such work in order to develop policies for agencies charged with development to collaborate more positively with rural communities for their ultimate benefit. This can best occur when the work is set firmly in the context of existing knowledge about rural issues in such areas. The present publication makes no such effort. This knowledge is freely available in existing books, reports in government and non-government agency offices, and academic journals dedicated to diffusing such information. An introductory chapter by Zoomers does set aspects of the work in the context of a part of the relevant social science literature, and Vargas has a sound literature review in her discussion of migration. But once the detailed results of field work are presented, no effort is made to discuss the extent to which this knowledge is new or suggests the need to recognise changes in rural livelihood strategies. At no point in the volume is there any review of previous and relevant social science research in southern Bolivia. Since there is ample evidence that the quality of the research reported is high, this is unfortunate.

There is well-grounded and detailed criticism of the way in which most NGOs and GOs (non-government and government organisations) conduct their rural development actions. What is needed to make these criticisms more trenchant is to identify the reasons for misguided, low-impact or unsustainable actions on the part of so many local, regional, national and international agencies. There is some mention here of the limited benefits accruing to households and individuals with fewest resources, but the various chapters do not analyse the reasons for such deficiencies. The pressures, to which all agencies are subject, to apply policies that are not necessarily relevant for regions or communities are not discussed in any detail. The limited life of most actions that make sustainability difficult to ensure and the limited sensitivity to the perceptions of rural people themselves – well analysed by Vargas and alluded to in Boer's presentation of the volume – also need more detailed examination in order for necessary policy changes to be made clear.

A third component of such thorough and relatively sensitive field work and group reflection that is only scantily incorporated in this volume is the answer to the

question – where now? How should agencies listen more attentively to rural people, and especially the poor? What are the best ways of judging whether actions have been developed in a truly participatory way? Do community views and priorities adequately represent the views of those with least resources? Given the need for local professionals to seek employment with NGOs and the few surviving government agencies carrying out field work following the abandonment of local and regional state rural development provision, can the old practitioners be trained in the more participative ways of working with communities that are now fashionable? How should the younger professionals be taught to work alongside communities, helping them to satisfy their needs rather than some high-level notion of post-harvest security or a national wheat programme?

Although the book does not carry the research towards a logical conclusion with respect to its stated aim of contributing ‘to the implementation of appropriate policies for rural development’ (p. 3), it does offer a wealth of information about a range of aspects of community issues with relation to attempts to promote positive social and economic change. Migration is recognised as being a major factor in household livelihoods but the different impacts of migration to the Bolivian lowlands and to Argentina are not examined. Similarly, the issues surrounding the contamination of some of the river systems by mining are only mentioned in passing. The importance of the formation of nucleated settlements following the 1953 agrarian reform is well explored although without reference to previous research on this in the northern Altiplano. In the concluding essays, that by Le Grande reviews strategic errors in development work with communities, gives little attention to the lack of impact on those with least resources but makes a strong and well-argued case for the development of accountability as a key notion that should be used in the design of future programmes.

There is, nevertheless, a great deal of value in this volume. It is based on a series of sound field studies and useful information about communities in parts of Chuquisaca and Potosí is presented. It could have formed the basis for a serious consideration of not only why much development action has been of limited impact but also how future work with needy communities and people can be more cost-effective and have more long-lasting results.

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DAVID PRESTON

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John Renshaw, *The Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco: Identity and Economy* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. xv + 305, £22.95, pb.

In an era when globalisation trends are having a deep impact on the economics and culture of remote communities and societies, it is important to have books such as *The Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco*. It claims to: (1) provide an ethnographic description of peoples ‘who are situated on the periphery of the global economy’ (p. 180); (2) develop a methodological approach to describe such societies; and (3) assess whether any programme of social and economic development can lead to the reduction of poverty while respecting and strengthening the peoples’ sense of identity.

Renshaw’s book has emerged from his PhD thesis presented in 1986, the research for which was undertaken from 1975 to 1983. The introduction contains a vivid description of the vicissitudes of anthropological research within the peculiar

political economy of Paraguay. The author comments on his sense of personal failure at never having spent a long period of time in any one community nor having mastered any of the Chaco languages, and this has influenced his research approach. He takes the thirteen ethnic groups comprising the forty-five thousand Chaco Indians as a single population that, although not homogeneous, experience shared cultural features, and a shared geographical and politico-administrative context – the Paraguayan Chaco. The assertion is reasonably persuasive, but axiomatic also. The variety of situations of the Chaco peoples suggests that analysis of the differences between communities would be equally or even more enlightening. On method, Renshaw states that the account is essentially ‘impressionistic’ (p. 13). This is supported by a quantitative background derived from the 1981 Indian census. These data are presented alongside others from the 1992 national census, and projections for 1998 based on an estimated 3.1 per cent annual increase since 1981.

The first chapter describes the natural and human environment of the Paraguayan Chaco. The other six principal chapters discuss the economy of the Chaco Indians and the rural production systems, the peoples’ economic concepts, and the social and political organisation of the peoples at household and community levels. The subsistence or foraging economy is described with a precise and experienced insight. The importance of wage labour is emphasised, and the cultural significance of labour market practices – of both employee and employer – has the same high quality empirical observations. The concepts of equality and sharing are shown to explain many of the phenomena of the Indian economy, but seem also to contradict the emphasis on what Renshaw describes as the Indians’ conception of ‘personal autonomy’ and ‘a refusal to accept any form of coercion as legitimate’ (p. 247). There is an unresolved tension between ‘personal autonomy’ and the evidence of reciprocal economic, social and political obligations. The significance for the traditional economy of the loss of the land is probably understated, as is the loss of territory in defining the hunter-gathers’ social identity. The phenomenon of land as a psychological ‘space’ is not considered. A final word reiterates an earlier point that sustainable development is most likely to occur through local capacity building.

The impressionistic nature of the work is, perhaps, not a rigorous analytical approach. Too often the author writes that he *believes* that a given phenomenon is illustrative or typical of the Chaco Indians. There are questions about facts and interpretation, and an undue reliance on the census of 1981, which was a good guess at the time ... Of more significance is that in the preface Renshaw states that some of the material has been updated since the completion of the PhD. Unfortunately, some – or much of it – has not. And it is difficult and frustrating to interpret statements that are temporal: by the use of the present tense does he mean the time of the research (1975–83), or when the thesis was submitted (1986), or the time of his last visit to Paraguay (1995) – or the year of publication (2002)? Criticisms of the indigenist organisations, both secular and Christian, are at least partly true. But for all their weaknesses, they recognised the significance of restoring land to the Indian communities, not only or even primarily for economic reasons, but for the sake of identity. And the support programmes have moved from economic prescriptions towards capacity building.

Of the book’s objectives, the descriptive account, though time-bound, is a valuable record of the lives of the Chaco Indians. The claim to present a methodological approach is over-stated, even if the conceptualisation of the economic, social and political life of the peoples is instructive. The third aim of the book concerns

the programmes of social and economic development. One change that is new to Renshaw is that the European Union is currently one of the biggest indigenous 'players'.<sup>1</sup> If this research were conducted today, it might suggest that indeed there is a process of capacity building by indigenous leaders who serve the communities without dominating them – but we can't tell.

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Eul-Soo Pang, *The International Political Economy of Transformation in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile since 1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. xxiii + 251, £50.00, hb.

Eul-Soo Pang sets out in this book to address the interesting question of the responses to globalisation that have manifested themselves in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Some might argue that the theme has by now become a little dated, but the fact remains that serious work on individual countries within the broader debate about globalisation is still thin on the ground, particularly on Latin American countries, and to this extent solid comparative studies are to be welcomed. The problem in the present case appears to be that the book does not in fact address the questions it sets for itself, limiting its purview instead to a descriptive and narrative account of what has happened in Argentina, Brazil and Chile over the post-war period. It seemed difficult to know what exactly the book was about: it dotted between all sorts of concepts and issues, and although the reader knows that the 'peg' is intended to be 'globalisation', it remains rather difficult to see where the notion of globalisation directly informs the analysis of the three countries which comprises the bulk of the book. One is perplexed, for instance, to come across quite detailed comments on Carlos Menem's divorce, and on the scandal of two government officials' extra-marital affairs in Brazil, and this gives an impression that the book offers a chronological account of events rather than an analysis of globalisation and responses to it in the Southern Cone of Latin America. The reader is also struck by curious discrepancies in the scope of the analysis: the Real Plan, for example, received only one paragraph's worth of discussion when this would be of key concern in a study of responses to globalising trends in the world economy, and one would be hard pressed to make a clear case that ISI (which dominates a third of the book and is brought up again in the conclusion) is directly germane to the question of responses to globalisation in a manner which would warrant such a detailed commentary.

Perhaps the more pressing problem in this respect is that there is little or no explicit or sustained discussion in the book of the questions that must be central to the 'core' of the book's concerns as they are outlined in the introduction: namely, the questions of *why* certain strategies were adopted in the three countries under consideration, and moreover why, given what is here presented to be an encompassing structural process, these strategies should be so contingent and diverse. One struggles to see, in this sense, what the core significance of the book is, given that it seems to offer frustratingly little reflection on globalisation itself, the way

<sup>1</sup> The PRODECHACO project of 'sustainable development founded on the active participation of the Indian population' that was launched in 1995. <http://www.prodechaco.org.py/>

we approach its study, or the contours of the contemporary political economies of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Issues relating to the spate of financial and economic crisis at the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s were also relegated to the last couple of pages and again, for issues of such key importance to the ‘core’ of the book were dealt with in a rather perfunctory and superficial way.

Nevertheless, if one looks beyond the apparent discrepancy between one’s expectations of the book and what one subsequently finds – and indeed overlooks the tendency towards rather overblown and misleading assertions (that the Plaza Accord was the Reagan administration’s ‘mistake of the century’ or that ‘financial globalisation was complete’ by the early 1990s) – the book does offer some interesting detail on each of the three countries which will provide a useful resource to those seeking background information and an up to date account of recent events.

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NICOLA PHILLIPS

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 36 (2004). DOI: 10.1017/S0022216X04367726

Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Chica da Silva e o contratador dos diamantes: o outro lado do mito* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003), pp. 403, pb.

Seductive, calculating, domineering, lascivious, glamorous, flamboyant, sinner, witch, mulata, protector of slaves and patron of the arts – these images fly to mind at the name of Chica da Silva, the ex-slave in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. This Chica was created – a kind of collage of personalities pasted together over a century and a half beginning with an attorney-cum-amateur-historian in the 1850s, an 1890s bishop, followed by tourism promoters, novelists, playwright, film maker, and most recently a *telenovela* producer. These Chicas, distorted, exaggerated, romanticised, sometimes pure fantasy or in extreme bad taste, led historian Júnia Ferreria Furtado to ask: who *was* Chica da Silva? Furtado wants to find the woman who lived on the ‘other side of the myth’.

She searched for Chica in all the piles of musty, faded old paper in which good social and cultural historians know to look: parish records listing births, marriages, deaths; sales and purchases of houses, land, slaves meticulously registered by notaries in their big books; wills and inventories; a 1774 house-by-house census and the tax rolls for Tejuco, now Diamantina, where Chica lived most of her free life; a ledger at the recolhimento Macaúbas of the gifts and visits Chica made to her daughters who studied there. She swept through archives small and large, local and national, not only in Brazil, but also in Portugal.

Because, of course, it was not enough to pursue only Chica. Furtado had to find those who played important roles in Chica’s life, especially João Fernandes de Oliveira, the diamond contractor, her companion, her quasi-husband. And like that of other important white men João Fernandes’ paper trail is easier to follow and leads to the provincial governor and even higher to the powerful friend of the king, José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal, who doled out colonial authority to those he trusted – and he trusted João Fernandes just as he trusted his father. If Furtado is treated to a full accounting of João Fernandes’ vast and diverse property through his post-mortem inventory, she must swallow the bitter disappointment that Chica’s inventory, once carefully transcribed and notarised, is now missing from the archive where it should reside. The setback barely slows her. She painstakingly pieces together Chica’s ownership, for example, of at least 104 slaves over the course of her lifetime from fragmented sources scattered throughout northern Minas.

The Chica she finds is not the fictional exotic mulata, but a woman more down-to-earth, convincing, and typical of other former slave women of this time and place than we expect. But from the intersection between biography and history, she also wants to retrieve what was uniquely Chica. Born to an African slave mother and a white father a few years after the discovery of diamonds – sometime between 1731 and 1735, the date remains uncertain – by 1749 Chica had been bought by Manuel Pires Sardinha, probably as his concubine, and two years later gave birth to their child. Accused by a Pastoral Visit of illicit relations with his two slave women, Sardinha sold her (and their child Simão) in January 1753 to João Fernandes de Oliviera, probably to be his concubine. In December of the same year (here Furtado slips in a delicious bit of historical reconstruction to explain the significance of the date), João Fernandes freed her. Unusually, it was not remarkable for eighteenth-century slave women to be either concubines or freed, but typically they waited for their freedom, often seeing their children freed at baptism, until their owners grew old and, fearing death, released them. Not so Chica and João Fernandes who stayed together eighteen years, and raised their own thirteen children as well as Simão, living respectably as property owners and generous Catholics. All the children were baptised and recognised as their father's heirs; all were educated – the girls at the most prestigious convent then available in Minas, the boys in Portugal. If this is not the typical life-story of an ex-slave, neither is it the story of a lascivious woman said to devour men. After all, as Furtado suggests, thirteen children born in sixteen years is enough to dull any woman's lustre.

If others invented the mythical Chica, Chica invented herself. Stephen Greenblatt, referring to sixteenth-century English society, called the process 'self-fashioning',<sup>1</sup> the shaping of personal identity that involves not only aspiration and a vision of who one might become, but possession of personal resources – ambition, talent, beauty – combined with the possibility of social mobility and, at the same time, a sensible recognition of the boundaries that constrain individual initiative. Throughout, Furtado's theme is Chica's effort to insert herself into free, white society, observing its rules for wife, mother, *dona da casa*, patron of church and sodalities – to imitate the *senhora* she wanted to be. Chica became Francisca da Silva de Oliveira, a return both to her baptismal name and the addition of João Fernandes' surname as her own. It was common practice among freed slaves to take their former master's name as their own, but here the borrowing becomes ambiguous, more a wife assuming her married name. Allied with a man whose wealth and prestige she informally shared, she gained a social position she could never have achieved alone.

Despite the glory and promise – Chica's house in town and their estate with its lavish gardens where they staged theatre and music, the *fazendas*, horses and cattle, the sponsoring of chapels – despite all that, in the end things did not turn out quite as they wished. Furtado's exhaustive research extends not only to the children, but to the grandchildren as well and, while some made good marriages, others ended up with failed marriages or no marriage at all, natural children, or wealth dispersed. But most arresting is João Fernandes' hurried departure from Chica provoked by news of his father's death in Lisboa in 1770 and his stepmother's grab for half the estate rather than contenting herself with the dowry she had agreed to. Whether

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 1–9.



Chica and João Fernandes understood they would never meet again is not known. Furtado mentions no letters, no messages between them, but surely they corresponded about the children and property if nothing else? João Fernandes spent the next years in Lisbon embroiled in legal battles to save his fortune. The sons followed him to Europe to complete their educations, while Chica remained in Tejuco in charge of their nine daughters. By 1775 João Fernandes was himself ill and dying and, with the king's death in 1777 and Pombal out of favour at court, his fortunes went from bad to worse. He died without returning to Brazil or to Chica. Until her own death almost twenty years later, Chica remained a wealthy woman with land and slaves of her own. Her burial inside the church near the main altar and the many masses offered for her soul confirmed her earthly prominence.

As both prologue and epilogue to Chica's history, Furtado pauses to reflect on the writing of the story and, by extension, on doing history. Her position is clear in this post post-modern era: history is not fiction; it is not invention. Unlike the myth-makers, historians may not fill in the gaps. Rather, historians are bound to a rigorous examination of all retrievable evidence located within its equally rigorously constructed context. For E. P. Thompson, 'the discipline of history is, above all, the discipline of context'.<sup>2</sup> Contextual reconstruction and interpretation is also Furtado's method, so that in the end she succeeds not only in illuminating Chica da Silva, but also life in the mining districts of eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. She cautions that historical reconstruction has its boundaries. There is much about motive and emotion that remains frustratingly elusive, the sources stubbornly silent, and Furtado refrains from speculating. Nonetheless, this wonderfully researched and written book triumphs in reminding us that history is more compelling than fiction. The *true* 'Chica que manda'.

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Rebecca Neaera Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy: Grassroots Politics in Brazil* (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), pp. xii + 267, £44.95, hb.

Rebecca Abers' important book about the surprising success of participatory politics in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre should interest anyone concerned with the development of democratic institutions and practices in Latin America. After two decades of mixed experiences with democratic governance throughout the region, we can feel heartened by the example of Porto Alegre where even the poor exercise active voice in local government.

In this impressively researched, theoretically sophisticated and cogently written account Abers examines the 'participatory budget' process initiated by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) government that came to power in Porto Alegre in 1989. Like PT governments elected in other Brazilian cities, the municipal authorities in Porto Alegre saw the participatory budget as a means of wresting control over revenues from traditional elites and targeting greater spending toward the poor. By mobilizing poor and working-class neighbourhoods to set their own budget

<sup>2</sup> E. P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and The Discipline of Historical Context,' [review of Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971)], *Midland History* 1:3 (Spring, 1972): 45.

priorities and guide actual project implementation, the *petistas* sought to transform politics as usual and distribute revenues more equitably. Abers explains why, despite some failures, the PT in Porto Alegre succeeded in eliminating clientelism and implementing policies that genuinely served those most in need.

Abers draws from the rich literature on participation and the politics of social movements to explain how PT governments overcame three common problems that usually defeat attempts to empower the disadvantaged. The implementation of participatory policies is often stymied by the limits of time and money, bureaucratic infighting and external pressures from powerful elite groups. Participatory forums also reveal sources of political and economic inequality that undermine efforts to grant the unorganised poor genuine decision-making power. Existing elites or newly privileged groups thus gain control and exclude the less powerful. Finally, more often than not, governing elites use participatory programmes to co-opt and demobilise civic leaders who might challenge their control.

In a careful analysis based on extensive interviews, participant observation, survey research and case studies, Abers shows how government actors successfully mobilised and empowered Porto Alegre's most disadvantaged citizens in the choice of investment projects throughout the city. Instead of focusing on improvements in well-to-do neighbourhoods or enriching powerful construction firms, the government carried out capital projects in working-class and poorer areas of the city. Even more remarkably, funding for these projects reflected priorities set by budgetary councils attended by thousands of ordinary citizens.

The success of participatory politics in Porto Alegre turns several prevailing views of social mobilisation and state action on their heads. Abers credits the actions of PT officials in the municipal government with actively mobilising many citizens who had no prior experience with politics or policymaking. Such a 'top down' process challenges the widely held view that genuine participation requires mobilisation from below. Contrary to expectations and much prior experience, the PT in Porto Alegre did not use the participatory budget to co-opt the working poor. Indeed, as Abers skilfully argues, once they recognised the authenticity of the participatory budget, the citizens of the city readily assumed ownership of it. She provides substantial evidence countering those who see participatory politics as an opportunity for the resurgence (or continuation) of elite control through clientelism. The successful inclusion of the working poor and the elimination of longstanding elite control in Porto Alegre confirm that grassroots democracy can thrive in Brazil and should not be abandoned as a goal of progressive politics.

No doubt some will find this account implausibly optimistic and perhaps overly sympathetic to the local PT government. While Abers' sympathies clearly lie with grassroots democracy, she grounds her analysis in sound social scientific methods and empirical observation. She does not portray the PT leaders as altruists but as rational actors interested in their own political survival. Their commitment to participatory budgeting remained high because it led to their electoral success.

The only disappointment in this otherwise highly satisfying book is the author's failure to explain why the participatory budget succeeded in Porto Alegre and not in other local governments under PT control. The answer does not appear to lie in the city's past history that closely resembled the traditional form of rule seen elsewhere in Brazil. Nor can it be found in the ideological or political differences within the PT. Abers' analysis does suggest that individual leaders made the critical difference though structural factors might also have played a role. A more systematic

response to this puzzling question would have further enhanced the book's contribution to the literature.

Rich in detail and nuance, Abers' book will renew a sense of optimism among many who have become discouraged with the failure of democracy to fulfil its promise in Latin America. Though restricted to a single aspect of municipal governance, the success of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre shows that promise is still alive.

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ELIZA WILLIS

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Hugh Raffles, *In Amazonia: A Natural History* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. xiii + 302, £37.95, £12.95 pb.

It is a sad irony that the brutal modernisation engineered across Brazilian Amazonia over the past thirty years has resulted in such a rich literature of documentation, critique and analysis, and Raffles' *In Amazonia* is an important addition. It is noteworthy, amongst many reasons, for its fluency in the idioms of ecology and social science as well as more recondite post-structuralism. It is a combination provides a unique flavour as well as drawing upon a range of literature not typical of an Amazonian studies. Specialists and general readers will appreciate the scope.

The sub-title 'a natural history' refers in part to a persistent dilemma in social scientific writing about Amazonia and Amazonians, namely the overwhelming naturalism associated with the region and its peoples, overwhelming to the degree that the notion of culture in Amazonia – much less agency – has long and widely been regarded as a second order phenomenon, with native peoples trapped in the awkward vessels of 'noble savage', nomad, primitive, etc. When it comes to studies of non-native Amazonians, nature's power is even greater: lacking the authenticity of native peoples' original condition in harmony – or so one would be led to believe – with nature, the ersatz peasant legatees are depicted as disarticulated, predatory foragers and scroungers. From diverse quarters, however, attention has shifted to an anthropogenic Amazonia, one in which features of the apparently natural landscape are shown to be the result of cultural manipulation of environments as through cultigens (Lathrap), sedentary social forms (Roosevelt), transformed extractive bases (Balée), complex tribal networks (Heckenberg) and, in Raffles' case, modification of fluvial networks at the hands of contemporary non-Indian Amazonians. The main discussion presented by Raffles concerns a community in Amapá (where he did fieldwork) whose members have, over past decades, created waterways to enhance those naturally available in order to advance their interests as petty, interior smallholders and traders. This kind of anthropogenicism lends further weight to a case voiced by an increasing number of Amazonian scholars to the effect that the portrayals (scientific and literary) of the region which have prevailed since conquest, but in heavily codified form since the collecting voyages of nineteenth-century British naturalists, require an extensive reassessment.

Raffles' measured tone mitigates much sense of polemic, but the work has serious implications not only in reminding Amazonianists about what has been so easily (and understandably) overlooked in responding to the extreme transformative effects of a virtually unregulated assault on biological and social systems in Amazonia, but also in terms of providing an account grounded in the lives of actual Amazonians as opposed to the cipher-like characters who populate the pages of official

development reports. The canal-builders of Amapá have antecedents not only in such constructions as the canal system near Igarapé-Miri, southwest of Belém, but also the tidally-driven sugar mills and distilleries of the estuary that supplied rum for upriver trade until driven out of business by cheap alternatives borne on the new highways (in the 1960s–70s).

These ethnographic aspects of the work, however, make up a surprisingly small portion of the text (essentially chapters 3 and 7). Chapter 1 is a sketch of the early ambitions he had for the book. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Lower Amazon floodplain with special attention to the cultural ecological arguments that have dominated anthropological discourse in the region since the time of Steward. Chapter 4 – ‘A country never sacket’, while consistent with the overall themes of haphazard, piecemeal and frustrated venture during the colonial period and the persistence of images of the unconquered tropical frontier, seems slightly out of place. It is concerned with Raleigh’s unsuccessful plea for the plausibility of a tropical New World Empire and suggests an historic sweep not evident in other parts of the book. A chapter (5) devoted to Bates and Victorian Amazonia, one (6) on the labyrinths (and delusions?) of applied ecology, and a return to Igarapé Guariba (7) complete the volume. The notes and bibliography are extensive, the former providing much useful annotation.

In the midst of a number of excellent books on Amazonia, written by academic specialists concerned to reach some way beyond a finite esoteric readership, *In Amazonia* stands out.

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Diego Armus (ed.), *Entre médicos y curanderos: cultura, historia y enfermedad en la América Latina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002), pp. 455, \$19.00, pb.

The historiography of medicine and health-care in Latin America has grown apace since the mid-1980s. This new volume stressing the socio-cultural dimension of the subject is a valuable addition to a literature, which spread outwards from the larger republics to the smaller during the 1990s. Diego Armus opens the book with a useful introduction that summarises the state of the historiography. Each of the eleven essays contained in the book is written by a subject specialist: most are Latin American, some from the United States. Strangely Brazil is omitted from the book, but – desirably – Haiti is included. The book is well produced, apart from the absence of a bibliography and an index.

For this reviewer four essays stand out. One is the timely analysis by Cristina Rivera-Garza of the Manicomio General La Castañeda in Mexico City during the revolutionary period. This essay contains a spirited discussion of how an enlightened experiment in mental health deteriorated, owing principally to lack of funding and sustained leadership, political dislocations and inadequacies of personnel, into little more than an oppressive penal colony. The second is a lively analysis by David Parker of hygiene and housing in the city of Lima during the period 1890–1920. Parker explains persuasively the consequences of contradictions between elite ideologies that urged enlightened hygiene and housing reform from above and those that began from assumptions that the poor were congenitally incapable of both

self-improvement and improvement from outside. Equally penetrating is an essay by David Sowell on Miguel Perdomo Neira, a politically astute Colombian *curandero* of the mid-nineteenth century, whose clients mobilised against the exponents of ‘official medicine’ to the point where crowds in Bogotá stoned the houses of professional physicians, only to be confronted by medical students shouting the slogan ‘Abajo los perdomistas, los fanáticos’. In another eloquent chapter, the editor reflects upon the changing place of poor women as the Buenos Aires evolved between 1900 and 1940 from a small, intimate city into a large, anonymous metropolis. Using novels, tangos and early cinema as evidence, Armus draws out connections between tuberculosis and its victims among seamstresses and *milonguitas*.

The emphasis of this new work upon the socio-cultural raises questions about the direction being taken by the historiography of popular medicine. Historians have still to delineate the contours of Luso-Hispanic, black and indigenous medicine in Latin America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to establish the connections between them and an evolving ‘official medicine’. Various themes of ‘political economy’ require further attention. How did the relationship between the state, local government and popular healers evolve? How far was draconian legislation against popular practitioners enforced, especially in areas, where, for lack of professional resources, the populace had no alternative to resorting to ‘empirical’ practitioners? How far did professional pharmacists and veterinary specialists, as well as medical students, substitute for trained physicians when these were scarce or absent? How intense was competition between different categories of health ‘provider’ for limited markets?

The past two decades have seen new anxieties regarding the quality of medical education, an area where considerable progress had been made between the 1920s and 1970s. In some countries the orthodoxies of de-regulation have meant a barely controlled proliferation of private faculties of medicine, some of them pioneering and innovative; but others of poor quality have lacked in full-time professors, hospitals for clinical teaching, laboratories and libraries. Health ministries and professional leaders have yet to face the question of whether the products of low-quality faculties are better trained than the members of families of popular healers that transmit accumulated knowledge across generations. This set of essays makes a welcome contribution to the literature. But the Latin American historiography awaits the definitive breakthrough represented for Africa by Steven Feierman and John Janzen (eds.), *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa* (University of California Press, 1992).

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Merilee S. Grindle, *Audacious Reforms: Institutional Invention and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. ix + 269, £37.00, £14.50 pb.

Modern studies of politics have sought to explain how power is acquired, maintained or lost. Students of politics generally assume that political actors, regardless of their ultimate goals, will always seek to expand and protect their power. The long history of centralised power throughout Latin America fit well this view of rational political behaviour. How, then, can we account for numerous reforms over the past two decades that have decentralised power in nearly all countries in the region?

In *Audacious Reforms*, Merilee Grindle addresses this puzzling question through an examination of unprecedented institutional reforms designed to decentralise power in Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela. Among other changes, these reforms allowed for the direct election of sub-national officials – the mayor of Buenos Aires, mayors and municipal councillors in Bolivia and governors and mayors in Venezuela – whose selection had previously been controlled by centralised authorities. Grindle calls these reforms audacious because they constitute a dramatic departure from the usual processes of slow incremental change.

Three central questions orient Grindle's case studies of institutional change. Why would presumably rational politicians choose to limit their power? Why did politicians select these particular institutional changes and designs? Finally, how have these new institutions changed political behaviour in these countries?

Grindle uses her central questions and case studies to assess the value of major approaches to explaining political behaviour. Chapter Two provides a wonderfully succinct and coherent overview of these approaches (i.e., rational choice, new institutionalism and comparative institutionalism) as well as stating the hypotheses each would offer to explain the reforms. In the empirical chapters the author evaluates these hypotheses in light of the findings for each case.

The case studies offer rich factual detail drawn from primary documents and original interviews with important figures involved in the reform including presidents, technical experts and political party leaders. The author dedicates two chapters to each country. The first describes the reform process from initiation to implementation while the second explores the initial effects these new institutions have had on post-reform behaviour especially by political parties during elections. Grindle also considers how these changes might have enhanced democratic accountability and responsiveness by recasting traditional conflicts and permitting the introduction of new political voices. To provide context for these changes and to demonstrate their audacious nature, Grindle also provides brief, yet ample, accounts of historic conflicts that have shaped politics in the three countries.

Grindle finds that reform followed a similar process in the three countries. Despite their potential for introducing profound changes in the political system, the reforms did not emerge from public debate nor did they generate much controversy in the wider polity. In addition, specific institutional innovations were the products of design teams of experts appointed by the president. Finally, though the new rules of the game came through a top-down process, their introduction stimulated broader participation as groups and individuals competed for power in a changed institutional environment. For example, political parties in Venezuela and Bolivia that had focused exclusively on national issues and elections now had to reorient their strategies toward the local level.

Grindle's strong claim that these reforms originated in the executive branch and reflected the agendas of specific presidents contradicts those approaches that see reform as a product of the interests of political parties working through national legislatures. The author's access to original documents and to central figures in the reform allows her to make a convincing argument for her more executive-driven view. At the same time, these sources may have led her to downplay the role legislative and party politics played in mobilising bias or shaping the final legislation. It seems unlikely that political party leaders would remain complacent in the face of changes that would limit or completely eliminate their control over key sources of patronage. For example, while it is true that legislators in Venezuela passed reforms



allowing for the direct and open election of mayors and governors, they maintained tight control over fiscal revenues thereby weakening the impact of decentralisation.

The author's obvious optimism about the potential these reforms have for enhancing democratic accountability and curtailing longstanding clientelist politics is cheering though perhaps not fully warranted. As Grindle herself acknowledges, in Venezuela the reforms failed to thrive after Hugo Chávez took power. Though they appear to have taken hold more firmly in Bolivia, continuing political instability and high levels of corruption permit only cautious optimism about the reform's future. These outcomes also raise doubts about the virtues of introducing reforms from the top down. *Audacious Reforms* makes a major contribution to the growing literature on political decentralisation and institutional reform in Latin America. Grindle's perceptive observations, excellent case studies, and sophisticated analysis have moved current debates forward.

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Tim Campbell, *The Quiet Revolution: Decentralization and the Rise of Political Participation in Latin American Cities* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2003), pp. viii + 208, £20.50, pb.

Unlike Duncan Green's *Silent Revolution*, which charted the negative effects of neo-liberalism on Latin America, 'the Quiet Revolution' is praised as a radical and positive force for change. *The Quiet Revolution in Latin America* has two components: the trends towards decentralisation and local democracy. Although the process 'emerged only in the past decade or so' (p. 3), Tim Campbell asserts that it has brought major changes in urban governance. 'Swiftly and radically, yet remarkably peacefully, these two trends of decentralization and democratisation transformed the entire face of governance in the region' (p. 4). The book explains why the revolution came about, the forces that have held it back and what is needed both to accelerate and consolidate it.

What confused me in the book is what, precisely, has the revolution achieved? Admittedly, we get some impression of what leading cities do that the laggards do not: post-revolution mayors consult the poor more frequently, develop more environmental and poverty programmes and are more successful in raising both capital and taxes. Most importantly the newly democratic leadership has introduced 'a flowering of innovative practices', such as participatory budgeting, the election of police inspectors and the initiation of neighbourhood improvement funds. But, if these are the substance of the revolution, what are the achievements in terms of improving people's lives? We are told that elected mayors in Asunción, Mexico City and scores of other cities (pp. 115–16) have consulted the citizenry and discovered that violence and crime are major problems. But has this resulted in programmes that have systematically reduced crime and violence? Has service provision improved in the leading cities as a result of regular consultation with the public and what do voters think about issues like privatisation? On this point, the author rather disarmingly admits that his 'optimistic tone ... should not be misinterpreted as a statement of policy success' (p. 10). And, since he is at pains to point out that the number of people living in urban poverty increased from 80 million in 1975 to 125 million in 1995, it might be difficult to do so.

Some questions also have to be asked of the methodology that underpins this book. Discussion of the methodology is thin although the author admits that it is 'less than scientific', based on 'hundreds of interviews' conducted over a nine-year period, but reliant on 'little systematic data gathering' (p. 11). I am sure many of these interviews were fascinating but it is a pity that we are so rarely provided with quotes or any detailed comment about those meetings. Without more information about who was actually interviewed and the degree of objectivity of the respondents' accounts, it is difficult to know how much can be believed.

Tim Campbell also admits that most of the evidence is drawn from the so-called 'leading' cities of the region, those that have progressed furthest with the reforms. This suggests that there may be a problem of 'chicken and egg'. Could the leading cities have been the better-managed cities before the revolution? The lack of much discussion of the failures does not help answer that problem. I also find it a little odd that the leading cities are never really identified. Of course, the entries in the index give some indication, since Bogotá, Cali (Colombia), Caracas, Cuiaba (Brazil), La Paz, Mexico City and, above all, Porto Alegre and Tijuana have the most pages devoted, they presumably are among the leading cities. But are cities like Curitiba, Guadalajara and Medellín, which hardly rate a mention, not also leading cities? At a national level, the leading countries are clearly named. They include 'the pioneers', Chile and Mexico, and the 'second wave', Colombia, Brazil and Venezuela.

One danger with a book based on the gathering of successful examples is, as Tim Campbell admits, that it is bound to veer towards the optimistic. All too often, nothing is said about the failures. For example, if decentralisation and democratisation in Colombia have generally improved the quality of government, why was the 'worse crisis of corruption in recent years' revealed in Cartagena in February 2000 (*Semana* 26 February 2000)? If the city of Cali is such a success and Rodrigo Guerrero, the second elected mayor of Cali, Colombia, deserving of such high praise highly for his hard work and professionalism, how is it possible that a seemingly very good successor, Mauricio Guzmán, was jailed during his term of office for links with the Cali drug cartel. Does the quiet revolution ebb and flow even within cities, let alone countries?

The book is also rather let down by a number of small factual errors and some funny Spanish spelling. Certainly the author's geography of Venezuela is questionable for it is reported that Irene Sáez, the former Miss Universe, became mayor of the non-existent Caracas municipality of La Chacra, and the city of Tumeró has seemingly moved from 100 kilometres west of Caracas to the southeast. Such errors are irritating, but they also raise doubts about the quality of the information on which the argument is based.

However, there is still much of value in this book. If it does not probe the success stories rigorously enough, and never discusses the failures, it has identified a number of interesting cases where improvement has taken place. The author's enthusiasm for the 'participation of voice' is also commendable, even if we need to know under what circumstances those who ask actually gain any real benefit. For me, this is the main unanswered question: how precisely does the quiet revolution improve the lives of ordinary people in Latin America? For example, is the undoubted improvement in urban governance in Bogotá over the past fifteen years linked directly to increasing democratisation and decentralisation and if it is why has it allowed living conditions to deteriorate over the last five years? I have little doubt that election of the mayor has been a significant contributor to better governance, but

because a severe economic recession hit the city in 1997, many people's lives have deteriorated badly over the last five years. The Quiet Revolution may be welcome but many other factors determine the quality of life.

This fundamental question of the link between better governance and poverty alleviation demands more detailed exemplification in future work. Future studies of Curitiba, Guadalajara and Medellín would also be helpful in the sense of understanding why they are among the best-run cities in Latin America. Does their success stem mainly from the Quiet Revolution or did the changes that have permitted their success not precede the revolution by some years? To some extent, chapter eight begins to answer those questions. Here some of the barriers to successful urban governance are revealed and a sound argument put forward as to why central governments and the international development banks ought to do more to help the fledgling local democracies. At the same time, the long list of recommendations makes one ask whether a great deal in Latin America has actually changed since the late 1980s. And, if 'the bulk of the 14,000 units of local government in the region' have not been affected and 'some local governments have reverted to old traditions of clientelistic relations' (p. 145), has there really been a revolution at all?

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Jacquelyn Chase (ed.), *The Spaces of Neoliberalism: Land, Place and Family in Latin America* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 2002), pp. ix + 250, £54.50, £21.50 pb.

This edited collection by a geographer sets itself a very ambitious task in trying to relate recent shifts in political economy to space, place and family in Latin America. Such an endeavour needs not only to develop the geographers' interest in scale but also make meaningful interpretations about how analysis at different scales can be linked; for example, how operations in the global economy can impact on places and families at the local level in Latin America. Escobar (p. viii) picks up on the distinctiveness of this fusion of geography, anthropology and political economy in being able to unravel the impacts of globalisation.

Chase has brought together some very interesting chapters by leading academics in the field. Some of these chapters have appeared in similar forms elsewhere and so the book is somewhat a cross between a reader (of texts already published) and the reporting of new work. After a brief introduction of the geographies of neoliberalism in Latin America by Chase, the book is divided into three sets of themes: agrarian and territorial rights; the impact of privatisation and globalisation on individual livelihoods; examining those on the margins of neoliberalism.

The most significant emphasis in the book is on agrarian change. Kay's chapter traces the causes and objectives of agrarian reform before focusing on its economic and social impacts. The chapter shows that territorial reforms have not only provided examples of progressive redistribution of some categories of land but also opened the way for increasingly 'globalised' social movements with the objective of establishing the right to territory. This links clearly with the chapter by Deere and Leon on individual and collective land rights and gender. The prominence of neoliberalism has coincided with the rise of women's and indigenous people's movements in Latin America, and with the globalisation of both of these movements. These movements can be in conflict and the central concern of the authors

is 'when respect for customary law or traditional customs and practices violates the individual rights of indigenous women' (p. 76). In the final chapter in the agrarian section Hvalkof examines the meanings assigned to 'land' and 'territory' in the history of indigenous politics in Peru over the last fifty years and assesses the participation of indigenous movements in civil society.

In terms of globalisation, the creation of spaces of neoliberalism and the impacts on the livelihoods of men, women and children, the second section offers two useful contributions. Chase takes the case of a steel-making company town in Brazil and explores how industrial restructuring and privatisation has impacted upon local livelihoods (and particularly those of women). This provides a valuable study of a place that had benefited under the previous paradigm of import substitution industrialisation. Furthermore, it points to some of the ways that livelihoods have been radically changed under the neoliberal model.

Helen Safa develops her arguments about the links between female labour and globalisation in the Dominican Republic. Her approach is perhaps too ambitious for a small chapter. She tries to link themes of economic globalisation (such as trade and trade relations between the USA and the Dominican Republic and East Asian investment in the apparel industry) with not only political themes (the links between Dominican trade unions in the export processing zones with trade unions in the USA and Central America) but also cultural and social themes. In the latter focus, the growing significance of female-headed households and the importance of extended families based on consanguineal kin for the survival of low-income households are explored.

The focus of the third section is supposed to be that of spaces, places and people on the margins of neoliberalism. Gudeman and Rivera-Gutiérrez develop a largely theoretical chapter (influenced by Polanyi) that resulted from field research among urban, indigenous and peasant groups in Guatemala. The chapter explores the relationship between the market and the community as allocators of local resources in particular places and how that relationship changes. Perhaps this chapter would have been better located at the beginning of the book as two anthropologists argue that people participate in the market economy with the community economy in mind and an array of interesting anecdotes are used to support these arguments.

Escobar Latapí and González de la Rocha switch the emphasis to urban Mexico and to Guadalajara in particular. In a heavily-referenced chapter, the authors explore the changing political economy of Mexico since the 1970s and summarise the extensive research on the survival strategies of poor urban households as these confront the impacts of macroeconomic restructuring. The changing nature of informal labour markets and the role of international migration are two key processes that are addressed. The final chapter, by Pi-Sunyer, continues the Mexican theme but now with reference to tourism in the Yucatan. Unfortunately there is relatively little on the impacts of neoliberalism on tourist spaces as the chapter explores the concepts of geographical imaginations and Mayan ethnoscares.

Chase's edited book provides a number of thoughtful essays around the theme of changing political economy and local spaces. However, in order for these macro and micro phenomena to be linked more fully, it could be argued that there is a need systematically to explore how the livelihoods of individuals and families (within localities) change. Unfortunately, the book provides relatively little on this from a theoretical perspective although there are some useful empirical studies relating

to this central question. It is also a shame that a book dedicated to spaces of neo-liberalism does not include one single map or figure. Nevertheless, the overall aim of the edited collection is ambitious and some useful contributions to the debate of how political economy impacts upon local spaces are made.

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Scott Morgenstern and Benito Nacif (eds.), *Legislative Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. xxi + 503, £50.00, £18.95 pb; \$65.00, \$25.00 pb.

In the presidential systems of Latin America both executives and members of parliament are directly elected, and the two branches check and balance one another's actions to the extent that they have unique and meaningful connections to the electorate. Scholarly work in this area often takes an idealised version of the first presidential system, the United States, and conclusions drawn from decades of studying it as departure points. However, it is the consideration of the ways in which many of the constants that have become implicit in studies of the United States must be explicitly conceptualised and allowed to vary in studies of Latin American systems that has led to both theoretical innovation and accumulation of substantive findings. *Legislative Politics in Latin America*, edited by Morgenstern and Nacif, is a prime example of how such work can lead to a more general model of legislative politics in presidential systems and enrich our understanding of politics across national cases.

In the introductory chapter Morgenstern groups the questions to be addressed in the volume into three broad categories: (1) questions about executive-legislative relations; (2) questions about parliamentary parties and legislative organisation (including procedural coalitions, committee systems, and floor voting coalitions); and (3) questions for policy studies. He convincingly argues that the independent variables of greatest interest – relative constants in the United States – are legislators' career goals, strategies to obtain those goals, the configuration of the party system, and the constitutional balance of power between branches. The book is then divided into three substantive sections based on the categories of questions outlined above, and each of these three sections contains four chapters – one on Argentina, one on Brazil, one on Chile and one on Mexico. These country-specific chapters are authored by some of the top scholars in the field, and at least one chapter on each country is authored by a scholar native to that country.

The richness and the detail of all twelve country-specific chapters cannot be summarised in this brief review, but each stands alone as a thorough analysis of several questions in a single national setting. For example, regarding executive-legislative relations, Amorim Neto analyses how Brazilian presidents used cabinet appointments proportional to parties' weight in the legislature to construct legislative coalitions. In the section on political parties and legislative structures, Carey examines data on re-election rates, committee structures, and voting on the chamber floor in Chile and concludes that despite extensive presidential powers granted by the constitution, the legislature has the capacity and autonomy to serve as an effective counterweight to the executive. On legislatures and the policy process, Eaton shows that because Argentine provincial party leaders played a key role in forming candidate lists in their own districts, legislators were motivated to demand changes in the president's fiscal policy proposals in favour of the states. These few examples

are meant to show that the individual contributions are both very strong on their own and that they work together to offer a comprehensive picture of legislative politics across a wide array of institutional settings.

The structure of the book constitutes a unique and effective ‘research design’. Because institutions are so slow to change in the United States, most of what we have learned about the importance of institutions in presidential systems has come from studies of a certain type: given institutions  $x$  and  $y$ , what is the effect of non-institutional factor  $w$  on political outcome  $z$ .<sup>1</sup> The volume assembled by Morgenstern and Nacif more directly tests the effects of institutions because there is occasional variation in institutional arrangements over time within cases and a great deal of institutional variation across cases. Rather than taking institutional design as a given and testing the causal impact of non-institutional variables, [h]istorical and comparative approaches, in contrast, have the potential to pose questions of the form: “How does institutional arrangement  $x$  affect legislative behavior or output  $y$ ?” (Gamm and Huber 2002, 339).<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of this design is made clear in the two concluding chapters. First, Morgenstern thematically returns to the data on re-election rates, electoral systems, partisan alignments, and constitutional powers across cases. Based on the country-specific chapters and his own comparative analysis, he concludes that legislatures play mainly a reactive role, ‘but within this role there is great variance in the way in which legislatures assert their power and insert themselves in the policy process’ – and a good deal of that variance is a systematic function of institutional design (p. 413). Cox and Morgenstern author the epilogue which provides a typology of executive-legislative relations. They argue that the president’s changing use of constitutional and other powers in response to changes in anticipated assembly support constitutes the ‘central oscillation’ in Latin American politics (p. 450). Thus, likely support in the assembly, largely a function of legislators’ incentives institutionalised in candidate selection procedures and general election laws, defines pairs of legislative and executive types. Recalcitrant assemblies reject the executive’s initiatives and provoke imperial presidents to undertake unilateral action. At the other extreme, subservient legislatures acquiesce to the preferences of dominant presidents. In between those stereotypical polar extremes, politics gets more interesting and complex. Workable assemblies are willing to bargain with presidents who build coalitions with cabinet posts, policy concessions, and use of agenda-setting powers. Venal or parochial congresses too can be persuaded to support executives, but they demand payments which nationally-oriented presidents can meet with pork-barrel pay offs. The typology offered will undoubtedly lead others to generate testable hypotheses and, as a result, further theoretical and empirical advancements. In sum, this is an excellent work that highlights the explanatory power of legislative institutions when they are studied with well-articulated theoretical expectations, carefully collected data, and rigorous methods of analysis. Cambridge University Press wisely chose to make a paperback version available, and I have successfully used the volume in an upper division undergraduate course on Latin American politics and have assigned it to my graduate students in a variety of courses.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Gamm and John Huber, ‘Legislatures as Political Institutions: Beyond the Contemporary Congress,’ in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (eds.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (New York, 2002), p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.