traditional sense of the term, but with guaranteeing the stability necessary for a stronger international action such as participation in important global fora. Segments of structural power were achieved through the force of ideas.

The book captures well a crucial question. From the governments of Fernando Collor de Mello and Itamar Franco onwards, a new idea started to be constructed, an idea consolidated during the Cardoso and Lula administrations: the idea of South America. The idea was strengthened over time, including as a consequence of the creation of NAFTA, with Mexico's full participation. This notion and perception of South America did not exist before; it is a fact that belongs to the 1990s. Until then, the powerful ideas in the region were those of America and of Latin America. This is a construct that Burges picks up, and it demonstrates an important sort of hegemonic success. The countries have incorporated it in consensual fashion; they were taken to it by the capacity to exert a certain strong structural power in the realm of ideas. The countries of the region, at least most of them, have made this concept their own, have incorporated it and, in some cases, have developed it autonomously.

This book brings forth innovative elements for analysing Brazil's regional politics. It is polemical and is, in itself, proof of the interest elicited by Brazilian foreign policy, with its limits and contradictions. Maybe Burges exaggerates some aspects, but he does raise new questions that must be studied.

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Fernando Ignacio Leiva, *Latin American Neostructuralism: The Contradictions of Post-Neoliberal Development* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. xxxvi + 315, $25.00, pb.

As the global economy ground to a halt in 2008, there could have been no more timely a book than Fernando Ignacio Leiva's *Latin American Neostructuralism: The Contradictions of Post-Neoliberal Development*. In the author's words, the book is 'an effort to formulate an effective antidote' (p. xix) to the pragmatic turn of progressive economic thought in Latin America. The book relays a fascinating account of Latin American neostructuralism in the 1980s and 1990s, its relation with classic Latin American structuralism from the 1950s and 1960s, as developed by the United Nation's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLA/CEPAL hereafter CEPAL), and the latest developments in Venezuelan 'twenty-first century socialism' and Bolivian 'Andean-Amazonian capitalism'.

More than providing an 'antidote', however, Leiva develops a full-blown political, economic and symbolic critique of both neostructuralist economic thought as embodied by CEPAL, and its specific applications in selected countries in the region. His arguments deserve close attention, not only because of the method of their exposition but also because of their boldness: 'the genuine followers of Raul Prebisch and Celso Furtado, the true heirs of structuralism and CEPAL's original transformative zeal are not to be found at the Santiago headquarters … [but in] Venezuela and Bolivia's efforts to relaunch a reform-oriented and anti-imperialist development project' (p. 232).

Leiva's critique zooms in on power relations and the sanitised vision of 'systemic competitiveness' espoused by CEPAL since the 1990 publication of *Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity Change*. The new structuralist paradigm, as

described in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, was anchored on five key tenets: (1) systemic competitiveness, (2) technical progress, (3) labour flexibility, (4) concerted action, and (5) virtuous circles between economy, society and politics. Addressing Fernando Fajnzylber, the author notes that CEPAL's emphasis on competitiveness transcended trade and investment. 'They asserted that what competed in the world market were not *commodities* per se but *entire social systems*' (p. 4). Thus the intellectual and policy response to hegemonic neoliberalism was, from the start, attuned to the need for comprehensive institutional, political and social reform.

However, what emerges from two decades of reform, argues Leiva, is a 'domesticated politics' that does not reflect the more radical views of old structuralists such as Raúl Prebisch, Anibal Pinto, José Medina Echevarria and Osvaldo Sunkel. In Leiva's account, the new structuralists, led by Fernando Fajnzylber, José Antonio Ocampo and José Luis Machinea, seem too busy adapting to neoliberal hegemony rather than changing the power relations between labour and capital, and centre and periphery. While there is much truth in the book's assertions about the penchant for 'adaptation' in Latin American public policy in the 1980s and 1990s, the old versus new contrast feels stretched. Prebisch was, after all, 'a reformist Keynesian', in contrast to Andre Gunder Frank's *dependentismo*, Paul Baran's political economy or Fernando Henrique Cardoso's own radical take on centre–periphery relations.

I would argue that Leiva's most powerful critique is not to be found as much in the *differences* between the old and new CEPAL as in the *challenge* of creating viable alternatives to neoliberal thought. I agree with the author that for far too long policymakers and researchers in the region accommodated to the prevailing conventional wisdom. Policy elites prepared long 'to do' lists for their own governments and societies, without demanding reciprocal 'to do' lists for G8 economies and their multilateral institutions. This penchant for accommodating, flexibilising and creating more favourable conditions for open trade and open capital accounts conspired against more common-sense progress on job creation, poverty reduction and long-seated changes in inequality. Leiva's challenge is particularly relevant for the poorest economies with the worst global leverage and the weakest political power.

This brings us to the obvious counterfactual example. What about Chile? Much of Leiva's rich critique is leveraged on the Chilean empirical record over the past 15 years. Policies that reduced poverty by 20 percentage points and brought two million people out of poverty could not be all *that* insensitive to power relations – or could they? In the Chilean case, Leiva argues that the 'high road' to globalisation chosen by *Concertación* policies was, in neostructuralist jargon, ultimately based on 'spurious' rather than 'genuine' social and economic transformation. Deep-seated income and wealth inequality, in particular, suggest that dynamic value chains, successful exports and rich mineral deposits have not been able to unravel the most persistent asymmetries in Chilean society today.

Leiva's discussion of Venezuela and Bolivia is the closest he comes to sketching alternatives to CEPAL thinking. However, as he also notes, both 'twenty-first century socialism' and 'Andean Amazonian capitalism' are mostly performative accounts of policy rather than operational alternatives to genuinely existing neostructuralism. Although they both promise to deliver change, in both policy design and implementation, they do not seem all that different from either the state-developmentalist policies of the 1950s and 1960s or the neoliberal social-transfer policies of the 1980s and 1990s. I would argue that this is not because of a lack of

radical zeal, but because the political economy of policymaking – making decisions with limited information, under shifting political coalitions, with limited global leverage and weak state institutions – makes even hard-nosed radicals adapt to the contingencies of existing power politics.

Thus, Leiva's critical reading of neostructuralism is missing, I believe, a more explicit account of what 'bringing power back in' might mean in practice. One consequence of this omission is that the neostructuralist paradigm seems to be doing all of the explanatory work. Precarious employment, global volatility, redistributive regression, even cyclical recessions, are traced back to the 'paradigm', when, perhaps, there is more than CEPAL policymaking at work. A truncated demographic transition, a penchant for copying northern modernisation paths, but also a global economy dominated by neoliberal practice and discourse, are missing from the account. Neostructuralism, as described on p. xix, turns out to be not all that bad when contrasted to the prevailing policy and development consensus.

The second consequence of this omission is a sense that 'bringing power back in' is all that can and should be done to redress structural imbalances. Anibal Pinto's famous account of 'structural heterogeneity' is perhaps most relevant here. The asymmetries of social and economic power in Latin American societies today suggest not only that 'multiple modernities' will coexist for some while, but also that there might be something more than concentrating all hopes on state-led hegemony. What about the popular economies, street peddlers, family-owned micro-enterprises and day labourers that make up over half the continent's workforce? Is there a way to construct progressive alternatives that are neither as passive as the neostructuralist positions might suggest, nor as instrumental to other hegemonic political causes as twentieth-century socialism so often seems to be today?

Leiva's book is without doubt a passionate and polemical but nuanced contribution to progressive economic thought on the region. While many orthodox economists and political scientists might shudder at the thought of reading a book that 'combines political economy with elements of literary theory' (p. xxiv), I believe Leiva's volume is all the better for its methodological eclecticism and historical depth. I only hope the author is right about the long-run prospects of constructing a viable alternative-to-the-alternative in the region. I'm certain that Latin American progressive thought is much improved by the challenge.

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Peter Burke and Maria Lúcia G. Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre: Social Theory in the Tropics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 261, $23.00; £19.99, pb.

Gilberto Freyre (1900–87) needs no introduction here. The most influential intellectual of twentieth-century Brazil, he pioneered any number of approaches to the country, particularly the relationship of the past to modern Brazilian society. For most Brazilianists, he is an inevitable intellectual precursor; we debate him, we attack him, we dismiss him, but only the foolish ignore him. The authors' intent here is both a full-scale intellectual study of Freyre for the more scholarly world and an introduction to Freyre for the Anglophone intellectual laity. It is a very successful endeavour. Well written, well paced and well prepared, it reminds one of a cultivated