Reviews


This is a provocative book. It will stimulate debate and change the research agenda. It will also antagonise many. The volume marks the moment when scholarship drawing on modern, neoclassical theory and quantitative methods reached a critical mass. Coatsworth and Taylor signpost future developments in the study of Latin American economic history by highlighting novel approaches, identifying often neglected sources of data, pressing the case for comparative analyses and stressing the contributions of empiricism to the formulation of theory. Above all, *Latin America and the World Economy* demonstrates the effectiveness of a subtle use of counterfactual techniques. Testable hypotheses combined with diligent archival work and a rigorous use of data can yield high-quality scholarship. Supporting Stephen H. Haber (ed.), *How Latin America Fell Behind* (Stanford, 1997), who also contributes a chapter to this volume, the editors issue a challenge to historians. Namely, to test the mass of old and new theories drawn from economics and history that inform (or confuse) the study of Latin America by exploiting sources of information ‘…waiting to be exposed to the penetrating light of analysis’ (pp. 4–5).

The collection opens with a set of comparative essays that charts divergences within Latin America against external comparators. Contributors speculate about why the continent ‘fell behind’ and whether Latin America (or some countries) are ‘catching up’ with other players in the global economy. Coatsworth provides a set of intra-Americas benchmark indicators that show how arcane institutions constrained economic growth. Alston, Libecap and Mueller contrast the securing of property rights on the frontier in the USA and Brazil. Hofman and Mulder look at growth and productivity in the twentieth century, marking the performance of Latin American countries against that of OECD economies. Part II seeks to fill a major lacuna in the literature by considering the relationship between investment and growth. There is high-quality new data on the functioning of the São Paulo stock market around the turn of the century (Hanley), the Argentinian banking system during the inter-war period (della Paolera and Taylor) and patterns of foreign investment in Latin America during the twentieth century (Twomey). Part III examines the formation of markets – regional, national and international, exploring the extent to which price convergence occurred across time and space. This is a difficult task, given that the history of prices is itself under-studied. In a methodologically provocative essay, Newland uses demographic data as a proxy to chart ‘national convergence’ in the Argentine. Deploying interest rate approximations, Triner argues convincingly that institutional changes facilitated concentration rather than seamless capital
market homogenisation in Brazil. For Nakamura and Zarazaga, stock return data for the early part of the twentieth century confirm the level of integration of Argentinian and international financial markets. While there is a focus on institutions throughout, chapters in Part IV explicitly employ quantitative tests to appraise the impact of specific institutional settings on productivity and welfare: namely, government regulation and financial market efficiency in Brazil (Haber); pragmatic interventionism and the performance of the sugar sector in Cuba around the turn of the century (Dye); the impact of the Mexican Revolution on worker and peasant standards of living (Gómez-Galvarriato). The final section, Part V, assess the efficacy of government policy in three crucial areas—‘managing’ foreign capital flows, tariff strategy and money supply. Summerhill shows how a regime of state-guaranteed profits gave an unambiguous, developmental boost to railway investment in nineteenth-century Brazil; Márquez measures Mexican tariff rates for the period 1892–1909, exploring the extent to which tariff policy driven by a fiscal imperative served to protect and promote domestic manufacturing; Díaz Fuentes, charting changes in monetary policy in the three largest Latin American economies during the 1920s and 1930s, emphasises the orthodoxy of the 1920s, when countries struggled to re-establish the gold standard (though not necessarily at pre-war parities), and the limits to monetary heterodoxy in the 1930s.

As with any edited volume, there are problems of balance—amongst themes, periods and countries—and of quality. However, the editors are to be commended for tolerating disagreement amongst contributors. Thus, for Coatsworth, the persistence of slavery in Brazil means that labour was cheap while, for Summerhill, slavery signalled a labour-scarce economy. Della Paolera and Taylor on the one hand, and Díaz Fuentes on the other, disagree about the extent to which substitutes for central banks emerged before the 1930s. Díaz Fuentes and Gómez have different views about the course of Mexican monetary policy. Triner and Hanley differ over Brazilian banking/monetary history. Nakamura and Zarazaga and Della Paolera and Taylor offer distinct assessments of the Argentinian ‘slowdown’. This is refreshing and contributes to reader interest.

Focusing on under-researched, domestic dimensions of Latin American growth—including the formation of credit and capital markets, wage and price movements, lobby groups and policy evolution, the emergence of modern business and financial enterprises, Latin America and the World Economy makes a signal contribution to the literature. It demonstrates how, with a shared methodological approach, analytical coherence can be imposed on a collection of chapters covering diverse periods, distinct national and sub-national themes and analyses that range from the case-study specific to the globally comparative. Several contributions are highly original, offering new data: others present results from on-going research: most are revisionist, challenging existing orthodoxies. An enduring legacy of the collection will be that it confirms the value of systematic archival work while arguing for an intelligent use of theory. Too often, historians of Latin America have used theory as a prop or straitjacket, rarely as a device to facilitate the search for evidence. Scholars attracted by a new ‘big’ research methodology will be stimulated by this book. Those sceptical of the utility of quantitative techniques will, no doubt, remain so.

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The history of the disintegration of the European empires in the Americas during the half century after 1776 has spawned a vast literature, much of it dedicated to detailed examination of the creation of independent states in each of the states which replaced the fallen empires. However, while histories of the American Revolution and of independence in the Latin American republics abound, historians have paid little attention to the possible linkages between movements for independence north and south, or their similarities and differences in origin, development and outcome. A book which addresses these issues is, then, a promising prospect, particularly since, unlike the European-American perspective taken by R. R. Palmer and Jacques Godechot in their works on revolutions in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world, it focuses entirely on the Western Hemisphere and proposes a comparative history of revolutionary age that started with the American Revolution, continued with rebellion in Haiti, and concluded with Spanish American independence.

This is an ambitious and complex project. The rebellions which brought independence to British North America, St Domingue and the continental Spanish colonies took place in societies with very different histories, structures and cultures. Comparing and generalising about them is consequently problematic. There were, indeed, considerable differences between the rebellions which occurred in Spanish America, even before we come to the question of comparisons between movements towards independence in Spanish America and those that sundered British, French and Portuguese America. Nonetheless, comparative questions are worth asking. Should we presume that the American ‘revolutions’ were elements of a larger movement of political and cultural change in Europe and its American dominions, a movement towards modernity which, as Palmer and Godechot have argued, spread throughout the Atlantic world? If so, how was this shift affected by differences in socio-economic structures and political traditions, and how and why did outcomes vary? Why, after independence, did the United States follow such a different historical trajectory from those of the other American states which emerged from collapsed empires, and to what extent can we relate such difference to the manner in which independence was achieved? And, if we can find a unified explanation which allows generalisation beyond unique cases, does this contribute to theorising about revolution? Or does close analysis of regional cases demonstrate that hopes of generalisation are fundamentally quixotic?

An immediate criticism of this book is that such comparative questions are not clearly posed, and consequently not systematically addressed or answered. Langley sets out his analysis in chronological succession, with summary accounts of the American, Haitian and Latin American revolutions or Wars of Independence (the terms are used interchangeably, begging the important question of the distinction between them). Comparisons are therefore cumulative, with his first case, the American Revolution, becoming the template for occasional comparisons in subsequent sections on Haiti and Spanish America. He then proceeds to survey the considerable differences in their outcomes, and concludes that their
character is best explained, not by any of the prevailing theories of revolution, but by the ‘chaos of the times’.

The method is successful in one important respect: it provides a sound, historically-grounded approach that allows the reader to follow political events and processes in each of the regions. And, given that Langley aims to emphasise the ‘particularity’ of each revolution, this method suits his purpose. However, unlike other comparative studies of revolution, such as those of Barrington Moore, Eric Wolf or Theda Skocpol (none of whom is mentioned despite their methodological relevance), this book does not go beyond the narration of unique cases to examine general explanations. It thus remains a juxtaposition of brief syntheses of the various regional revolutions rather than a coherent comparison of their social, political and cultural dimensions.

It is, of course, perfectly reasonable to conclude that American ‘revolutions’ and ‘independences’ are best understood in their particularity; anyone who appreciates the social and cultural disparities which distinguished the colonies of the pan-American colonial world would readily agree. But is it enough simply to stress the unique? Surely the point of a comparative study is to reach beyond the particular in search of the general, exploring possible linkages and patterns of resemblance, acknowledging similarities as well as stressing differences. This does not mean that the phenomena compared have to be fitted into some Procrustean theoretical bed. However, such a comparison would certainly show that these revolutions had related contexts and common features which, though sometimes mentioned in this book, are not given the prominence they deserve. The context of inter-imperialist rivalry in which the revolutions occurred is a prime example of a factor which deserves closer attention. All the revolutions were powerfully influenced by events and policies that stemmed from the struggle of France, Spain and Britain to sustain their empires, and the impact of wars between these powers runs like a red thread between them. This was not only because wars were increasingly fought for and within the colonial world, but also because competition between the powers forced changes in metropolitan policies which provoked colonial discontent and, most important in the case of Haiti and Spanish America, collapsed old regimes completely. Another linkage is ideological: challenges to the old regime began with demands from colonial elites for greater representation and autonomy. These demands took distinctive forms, depending on political circumstance and custom, but throughout the Americas they acted as platforms for more radical change. Not only did they shape political debate, they also brought political instability and redefined political relationships, opening a way for the popular mobilisations which, by widening the interaction of multiple social actors pursuing different goals, had the unintended consequence of challenging the power of social elites and altering the arena of politics.

Observation of such general patterns not only enables us to see what the revolutions had in common, but also allows to appreciate why their outcomes varied. All took place within different cultural and political worlds, shaped by distinctive institutions and ideological traditions. British institutions and ideas gave meaning to the concept of ‘liberty’ that was the touchstone of the American Revolution; the Haitian revolution arose from the crucible of conflict in France between monarchy and republicanism; Spanish American independence was part of a wider Hispanic revolution in which colonial demands for autonomy were inseparable from the liberal revolution in Spain. Indeed, Langley might have
strengthened his argument for the particularity of the revolution had he been aware of recent reappraisals of Spanish American independence which portray it as a unified movement within the Spanish monarchy rather than as part of a general anti-colonial movement throughout the Americas.

Another important area of analysis missing from this book concerns the formation of American identities and the role of the press in shaping the concepts of ‘nation’ which underpinned the new states. Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* is an essential point of reference here. Its provocative argument—that nationalism originated in the Americas rather than Europe—and its cultural interpretation of the formation of the new American states surely should not be ignored in any comparative study of the Americas in the age of revolution. Yet there is no reference to this issue, beyond conventional wisdoms about the Creole proto-nationalism supposedly revealed in late colonial rebellions and in the ideas of ‘precursors’ like Miranda.

There is, then, much to debate and contest concerning the approach taken in this book, aside from specific points of interpretation in each of its separate sections. It has some notable strengths. It succeeds in imparting a sense of a larger historical process than that normally conveyed by historians who examine independence from national or regional perspectives; it gets away from a purely Eurocentric interpretation; it includes Haiti, so often neglected by historians who focus on British and Spanish America; it manages to convey an appreciation of the rich diversity of each of the revolutions. It also makes some sharp and salient comparative points, particularly when explaining the differential impact of war, military mobilisation and the militarisation of politics. However, although it opens up the intriguing issue of comparison, the book remains essentially a *tour d’horizon* of the Americas in revolution, a collation of brief surveys rather than a convincing general interpretation. Despite these caveats, Professor Langley has written a book which should appeal to Latin Americanists who wish to escape the narrow confines of their specialisms and to ponder the influences which have shaped the diverging historical experiences of the modern American republics.

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Written between 1988 and 1998, their monumental study is Slicher’s first book on Latin America not to focus on agrarian or economic history. The *Bezinning*, is about nascent historiography in Latin America, and many a student of historiography will be surprised to find 244 tables. Slicher does not offer a literary or historiographical critique of the authors under scrutiny, but groups them together according to an array of different criteria, collecting data, classifying them, ordering them in maps, tables and graphs. It is a method he had developed forty to fifty years earlier and it still proves fruitful. The resulting ‘narrative’ is in danger of becoming an abstract, impersonal history, but in the *Bezinning* the people ‘behind’ the figures come to life easily. In fact, the tables can be viewed like magnifying glasses focused on a city of ‘historians’.

This city – I shall refer to it as Ciudad Clio – is inhabited by 1,836 writers (1,830 men, 6 women). Of them, 1,369 wrote a ‘source’, 331 a narrative without
research, 136 a narrative based on research. Most of them, 1,428, were Latin Americans, 31 Indians or mestizos. Of the men, 670 were in the service of the Church, 473 were employed by the colonial state, 72 by a university, and 44 earned their money from their own businesses. Because of Slicher's classification, each of the 1,836 historians has a contextualised identity that is used at every mention of particular name. For example, José Pérez García-Gv-18a-III-Front-Chili was a Latin American who wrote narratives without research (Gv, or Geschiedverhalen) in the early eighteenth century (18a, or 1700–1720), in a field described as frontier history (III), in Chile. The Peruvian Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala-Gv-16a-II was a Latin American writing narratives in the early sixteenth century on the indigenous past (II), in general.

Like any unknown city, at first acquaintance the Ciudad Clio is something of a mystery. I needed to work my way through it to get a good impression. The first parts offer a presentation of the writers; where they came from, what they did and what they wrote. I had expected to visit some friends: Francisco de Ajofrin, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, Francisco Javier Clavigero, Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Diego Durán, Alexander von Humboldt, Diego Munoz Camargo and all those others I met in Ciudad Clio during my own Mexican research. I went through the book looking for them while trying to meet their thematic peers. I met them with their Peruvian colleagues and I realised that a few of them formed a small but distinct group of Indian and mestizo writers identifiable as a historical current of the time.

But soon I was distracted by what seemed to be the largest ‘ward’ of historians in this Ciudad Clio: the writers on the war in Southern Chile. My first new friend was Alonso de Ercilla y Zuniga-Gv-15d-III-Chil (narrative without research, on the Chilean frontier, in the late sixteenth century). Frontier writers inhabited at least one quarter of Ciudad Clio. Frontier history was without any doubt the most popular topic during the colonial period; followed by Church history. Within this neighborhood of frontier writers the Chileans occupied a core position. The war in Araucania gives me the impression of a Vietnam kind of conflict. Time after time, Spanish generals tried to conquer the Araucanians, but always without success. Ercilla’s epic history on this, La Araucanı́a, is exceptional in Ciudad Clio in that only 14 per cent of its writers were younger than 36—his age at its publication. Like Ercilla, Geronimo de Vivar-Br-15c-VI (late sixteenth century, VI is state government), wrote a book that was based on a ‘true story’, because he had seen the war with his own eyes (hence: writer of sources Br).

No city escapes misconduct by at least a few of its inhabitants. In some areas of this Ciudad Clio, historians are discussing with energy the origins of the Indians and other topics. In other neighborhoods real villains operate. In the Chilean part, for instance, the Jesuit Bartolome Escobar (mid-seventeenth century) copied a manuscript written by Pedro Mariaño de Lovera (late sixteenth century) adding large parts without any attribution. He invented speeches made by indigenous leaders, added comparisons with the European classics and added quotes from the Bible. Slicher did not regard this work as historical, but literary. Also the Jesuit Diego de Rosales (late seventeenth century) copied large chunks, above all from Escobar, but also included, with references, an extensive text from Domingo Sotelo de Romai (early seventeenth century) that is lost today. This kind of practice had been standard during the Middle Ages, of course, and a respectful act of reproduction. But in the new age of printing it came to be
regarded as plagiarism. In all, Slicher counted 29 such pirates, of whom 19 were clerics.

My stay in the ‘Chilean neighbourhood’ was contingent, but, because of its size, not without meaning. There are other such neighbourhoods in this Ciudad Clio, a Mexican, Peruvian (including Bolivia and Ecuador), Guatemalan (Central America) and Argentinian. A reader could also go through the Bezinning thematically. I looked at Chilean frontier history, but could easily have concentrated myself on Church history, on the state and government, on the pre-Hispanic past or more general Indian questions, on economic history or encyclopedic information. Modern authors like Jorge Klor de Alva, Rolena Adorno, Walter Mignolo and Serge Gruzinski try to interpret early colonial writers. They concentrate on their writings, the meaning of their texts, and their relation to the colonial society. Slicher offers an alternative approach, including time and space within the colonial setting in general. For me, these 1,836 writers have found a home in time and space via Slicher’s contextualisation in the Bezinning.

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Lobato’s book is a useful addition to the growing body of work on Argentine social history. It deals with a range of themes broadly associated with the history of Argentine medicine between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. The introduction, written by Lobato, identifies several issues which run through the book, including the increasing role of the state in the nation’s health, and the influence of different strands of social thinking, particularly positivism. It identifies a tension between the tendency to view disease in terms of decadence and deviance, or instead placing disease in the context of collective responsibility and the emerging ‘social questions’. Given the complexity and heterogeneity of the issues dealt with in the later chapters, a rather fuller treatment of these issues would have been very helpful.

The following chapters deal with a variety of themes, and are also variable in quality. Ricardo González Leandri discusses in some detail the emergence of physicians as a recognised professional group in Buenos Aires between 1850 and 1872, making a solid contribution to the historiography of early Argentine state-building. Augustina Prieto provides a harrowing and highly readable account of efforts to contain outbreaks of yellow fever, cholera and bubonic plague in the city of Rosario in the second half of the nineteenth century. The authoritarian style of interventions by the municipality, particularly in the poorest neighbourhoods, has much in common with the more recent efforts of military governments to ‘sanitise’ the country’s shanty towns. Diego Armus provides a fascinating account of anarchist discourse relating to tuberculosis between 1890 and 1940. The lack of medical or epidemiological understanding of the disease fuelled general paranoia (perceived risk factors included frequent masturbation and overtight corsets) and freed different political factions to interpret TB according to
their own particular creeds. Armus’ chapter is complemented by Dora Barrancos’
study of socialist thinking on health and ‘social hygiene’ over the same period,
including accounts of campaigns against alcoholism and syphilis.

Among the most interesting contributions is Marcela Nari’s account of
contraception, abortion and the abandonment of children, along with general
attitudes towards motherhood and the role of women in Argentine society. Nari
observes the opposition of the majority of physicians to the use of contraception
or abortion, on ‘moral’ grounds (both Catholicism and an obligation to populate
the nation) and ‘biological’ ones (a belief that motherhood was the natural
biological destiny for women). The only exceptions to this general principle were
of a eugenic nature. Yet both contraception and abortion were widely practiced
and tacitly sanctioned by society, the latter a virtual monopoly for midwives and
traditional curanderas.

The chapter by Susana Belmartino observes that the established of obra social
health funds in the 1940s did not, as is usually claimed, mark a complete rupture
with the former system of provision through mutual aid societies. Several papers
relating to mutual aid societies have been published in this journal and elsewhere,
but none has placed them within the context of the development of health care
institutions. Given that financing health services was arguably the societies’ most
important activity, this is a serious omission, which Belmartino’s chapter goes
some way towards rectifying.

The weaker contributions to the book include a profile of the role played by
José Mari Ramos Mejía, a leading social reformer at the end of the nineteenth
century (by Adriana Alvarez), and the chapter by Beatriz Ruibal, which gives a
brief and at times rather opaque discussion of the legal role of physicians in
assessing the mental capacities of accused parties to assume culpability.

Lobato has succeeded in compiling a book which has much to offer academics
from a wide range of disciplines. While health and disease have to be perceived
and interpreted within specific social, cultural and historical contexts, many of the
issues raised in this volume have considerable resonance in the present-day.
Argentina has been far from immune to the global re-emergence of infectious
diseases, such as TB, and the appearance of new ones, such as HIV/AIDS. The
former is popularly associated with poverty and living conditions, the latter
(incorrectly) with social decadence. The ‘social questions’ are just as urgent as
they were 80 years ago, even if none of the main political factions is asking them.

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PETER LLOYD-SHERLOCK

Samuel L. Baily, Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and
xxvii + 308, £33.50 hb.

Historians and political economists have been variously puzzled by the Argentine
riddle, enigma or paradox. Why would one of the world’s richest nations,
enjoying until the 1940s prospects of growth similar to those of Canada and
Australia, descend to the status of a ‘Third World’ country in the latter half of
this century?

Baily’s important study concerns the first part of that story, when Argentina
was second only to the United States in attracting European immigrants. This
fact is well-known to specialists of the Southern Cone, but not to the public at large, where the American dream is perceived as being synonymous with the US, whereas ‘making it in America’ once meant primarily to seek one’s luck in Argentina. For what clearly emerges from the *summa* of Baily’s long-standing research, is that Italians (and by implication also other southern European immigrants, such as Spaniards, for which see José Moya’s recent *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998), integrated better in the Argentine capital than in New York City.

A number of factors were responsible for higher social and economic mobility. First, prosaically termed by Baily as what ‘they brought with them’, or what could be called in Bourdieu’s terms the immigrants’ initial social and cultural capital. In this respect, Baily’s research clearly demonstrates that Italians who went to Buenos Aires were comparatively better skilled and educated than their counterparts who went to New York. They also found the adjustment process easier. While we know from Roberto Conde’s and Ezequiel Gallo’s classic studies that European immigrants were largely excluded from becoming owner-entrepreneurs in the Pampas, because most of the land had been taken up before mass immigration, in the port city of Buenos Aires there was plenty of opportunity for employment and commerce. Italians, accounting for about half of the immigrants, soon grasped those chances, and were strongly represented in most manufacturing and service sectors.

Based on archival research on both sides of the Atlantic, and analysing particular chains of migration from specific Italian towns, as well as larger statistical samples of census data, this study shows how the two overseas communities evolved differently. Whereas the Buenos Aires Italians came with higher skills, and integrated more comprehensively into the new society and culture, New York Italians were more segregated from mainstream Anglo-Saxon society, and because of their relatively smaller number only constituted one among many immigrant groups, never a majority. Return rates were high for both countries, but Italian immigrants in Argentina saw the host country more as an opportunity for long-term investment while a comparatively larger number of their North American counterparts sent more money back as remittances rather than investing it in the new country. Politically, however, New York Italians integrated faster, soon making use of and being used by the political machine (mainly the Democratic Party), whereas in Buenos Aires the dominance of elite politics and slow naturalisation meant exclusion from the political process for the first generation.

One of the great advantages of this thorough and well-grounded study is the use of individualised sources of letters, mutual aid society records and municipal archives, in combination with a larger corpus of statistical data. This approach allows Baily to draw general conclusions and yet pay attention to a wealth of individual detail (which is presented in the chapters on economic activity, residence patterns, household and family structures and the important ethnic associations).

Yet when concepts such as ethnicity, culture and even ‘adjustments’ (social, economic, cultural) are employed they are insufficiently theorised, and remain somewhat functionalist in flavour. This is less the case when Baily goes into great empirical detail to arrive at the concept of the ‘malleable household’; a household
basically changing its composition according to the changing functional requirements of host society and family (pp. 153–157): could such an approach not have been followed up or transferred to ethnicity, for example, which is equally malleable and has undergone major revisions both in anthropology and cultural studies? That Baily’s material allows for more flexible interpretations, is clear from his own evidence, such as when he reports on the ‘multiple identities’ (p. 170) of La Boca residents, where Ligurian was spoken even by non-Genoese, as well as Spanish (in its creolised cocoliche and lunfardo variants), and a number of overlapping cultural practices were employed.

The author, together with scholars such as Devoto and Szuchman, has been pathbreaking in clarifying the stock picture of the melting pot à la Argentine, establishing an extremely fruitful area of research on ethnicity and the migration process.

The present study succeeds as an essay in comparative history and ties together in a coherent structural framework previous research findings with new insights and data, and as such will be of great interest to historians and social scientists assessing the past and present impact of migrations and changing identities in the Argentine.


Peronism has been the most (though not necessarily the best) studied phenomenon of Argentine history. Since the fall of Perón in 1955 more or less partisan and more or less ‘scientific’ studies on different aspects of his rule have proliferated in Argentina and elsewhere. However, whereas traditional works on Peronism concentrated on topics such as the relationship between the leader and the working class, the Catholic Church or the military, a new wave of studies has emerged with a focus on the ‘symbolic’ aspects of Peronism. By focusing on the political uses that the Perón regime (and its immediate successors) made of the educational system, this book by Mónica Esti Rein fits into this new tendency within ‘Peronist studies’.

The volume is divided into two parts. The first (chapters 1–4) concentrates on the educational policies of the Peronist regime, particularly on its attempts at using primary schools as a tool for the ‘indoctrination’ of children. After a discussion of the basic elements of Perón’s ideology which, as Rein reminds us, was based more on an eclectic pragmatism than on solid philosophical foundations, chapter 2 focuses on the institutional changes Peronism introduced in the educational system. Perón broadened the access to all levels of education, and increased the share of the educational budget which grew (at least according to official and not always reliable figures) from 6.3% of the national budget in 1946, to 14.8% in 1953–54 (p. 36). At the same time Perón restructured and centralised the educational system. The core of the section on Peronism, however, is chapter 3, where Rein discusses the politicization of the elementary school system, particularly textbooks, during the last years of the Perón regime. She shows how Perón shamelessly turned textbooks and schools in general into instruments of political propaganda. Although many things have been
written during the last years on the political uses of elementary school textbooks by the Peronist regime, so far this is the first – and to my knowledge the only – work on the subject available in English. Chapter 4 concentrates on Perón’s increasing control of the university and on the opposition that such policies generated among the politically active student movement.

The second part of the book (chapters 5–8) focuses on the educational policies of the two regimes that followed Perón’s: the so-called ‘Revolución Libertadora’, which overthrew him in 1955, and the elected government headed by Arturo Frondizi between 1958 and 1962. Chapter 5 provides general political and ideological background for the two post-Peronist regimes. Chapter 6 discusses educational policies carried out by the ‘Revolución Libertadora’ and by the Frondizi government. Although Rein argues that these two regimes also tried to use education for political purposes, it is clear that their attempts at politicising the educational system were of a different nature to Perón’s. Their goal was essentially to de-Peronise education as opposed to use the school system to convey a new ideology. Things were more conflictive, however, at university level (discussed in chapters 7 and 8), where the post-Peronist government tried (and eventually managed) to allow the creation of mostly Catholic, private universities in spite of the opposition of large portions of the university community.

Rein gives a fair treatment to both the Peronist and the post-Peronist regimes, showing their internal tensions and ideological contradictions, particularly in question related to education. Although its central theses and empirical material are not particularly original, the book provides a coherent and well articulated overview of the educational policies of the period. However, the general reader will miss a discussion of the historical evolution of the Argentine educational system before Peronism, as well as of the nature of the long-term debates around the role of the Catholic Church in education. Another problem is the lack of consistency in the citation of sources, particularly for the tables. Moreover, many important claims go unsupported by appropriate citation of sources (see, for instance, p. 167).

In spite of these problems, Rein’s book is a welcome contribution to the growing field of the history of education in Argentina, as well as to the history of Peronism. Its plain language and straightforward narrative will facilitate its adoption as a classroom text.


As Brazil commemorates its fifth centenary in 2000, the Centro de Pesquisas em História Social na Cultura of the Universidade Estadual de Campinas launches a new series, Várias Histórias, an exploration of the diversity of Brazil’s cultural formation. This publication, based on painstaking archival research, focuses on the trajectory in imperial São Paulo of Luiz Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (1830–1882), an outstanding Afro-Brazilian social and political satirist and activist.

Luiz Gama was born in the northeastern port city of Salvador to Luiza Mahin, a freed African street vendor who fled the province as suspicions of her
collaboration in slave rebellions intensified in the 1830s. Gama’s father, a Portuguese nobleman, sold him into slavery to pay off gambling debts and, as a small boy of ten, he departed Salvador on board a slaveship destined for the southeastern ports of the coffee-producing region. There he might have suffered the brutalisation and oppression of hundreds of thousands of slaves whose destinies were shaped by the ‘peculiar’ institution. His birthplace, however, proved a partial salvation from the arduous and debilitating routine of plantation labour in the coffee fields. Bahian slaves had a reputation for rebelliousness and, failing to sell Gama and another Bahian slave, the slave trader took them to the city of São Paulo where they became his household servants. Gama not only learned the craft of shoemaking but was taught to read and write by a boarder in the household.

Mysterious circumstances surrounded his escape and freedom but in 1848 he was a free recruit in the São Paulo police force, engaged as a copyboy in his spare time. He served as a scribe in the São Paulo Secretaria de Polícia until he was dismissed following his public criticism of a local judge over an escaped African slave (pp. 110–119).

Azevedo initiates her sojourn into his professional life at Luiz Gama’s funeral in 1882 where eulogies by prominent political and cultural figures like Raul Pompeia attested to Gama’s multiple talents as a poet, writer, satirist, solicitor, militant abolitionist and ardent advocate of a Republic. Through Gama’s book of poetry, Primeiras trovais burlescas de Getulino, first published in São Paulo in 1859, Azevedo advances insights into Gama’s character from his poem, ‘Quem Sou Eu?’ (Who am I?), a confession of humility and love for the poor, an oath of ‘obedience to virtue and intelligence’ that is unequivocal in its repugnance for ‘folly, hypocrisy, and nobility’ (pp. 45–46).

Azevedo examines Gama’s growing political trajectory in São Paulo during the late 1860s to 1870s, highlighting his articles, political satires, and his eventual editorship of the satiristic journal O Polichinello in 1876. Gama was also gaining recognition as a prominent debater, familiar with laws and legal statutes involving slavery. For Azevedo, Gama’s compassion towards aggrieved slaves who sought his advice was forged by his personal experience with slavery. But his commitment was not limited to individual slaves. A ‘son of the people’, Gama was all-encompassing in his embrace of freedom and solidarity, advocating a common African identity that served to unite slaves around their common roots and origins.

In 1869, he advertised in the local papers his willingness to ‘take on any criminal cause in the city, defense before a jury in any town in the province, and administrative matters in the capital’. A self-proclaimed solicitor, Gama proved formidable in his exposure of ambiguous legal clauses and original interpretations of the law, always relying on legal bases to undermine court denials of emancipation to freedom-seeking slaves. Sometimes singularly, often in the company of prominent lawyers, he took on cases that involved the great and the prominent. One involved a local bishop who had freed seven slaves only to offer them for sale years later (p. 198). Gama also targeted local, often police, authorities for irregularities such as illegal imprisonment, arbitrary actions, civil actions and causes that offended what for him were the ‘rights of the wretched’.

Gama’s interpretation of the meaning of conditional freedom for slaves centred on the case of Narciso, a slave whose mistress in her will stipulated that ‘after her
death Narciso was to serve her heiress for ten years after which time he would be free’. (p. 207) The heiress’s legal spokesman, her husband, rejected outside offers to pay for Narciso’s freedom and soundly beat the slave to ‘cure him of his aspirations for freedom’. Gama publicised the incident, arguing that in terms of his conditional freedom, Narciso was no longer the property of another. In addition, Gama took issue with the husband’s defence of his liberal right as a slaveowner, attacking the liberalism of arbitrary violence. Gama’s final offensive was to offer Narciso a place of refuge to assure him ‘protection from further punishment’. (pp. 206–214).

Gama’s views on republicanism also made him a controversial political figure. Seven years after his silent response to the First Congress of the Paulista Republican Party in 1873, he was marginalised by party stalwarts for associating republicanism withabolitionism. In his letter to the Gazeta do Povo, he stated: Let the evangelists of Positivism recall that we do not ATTACK RIGHTS; WE PERSECUTE CRIME, for love of the salvation of the unfortunate; and let them remember in the sweet tranquility of their peaceful chambers that the felicity of the slave is likened to a dark cloud that rises to its pinnacle only to be transformed into tears. (p. 187)

Gama’s recognition by lettered men gained him acceptance into the São Paulo Academy of Letters and support by prominent local figures and institutions such as the Masonic Loja América who provided funding for the emancipation causes he undertook. Whereas political adversaries and critics saw him as a dangerous opportunist who was given to turning slaves against their masters, supporters acknowledged his legal acumen and unwavering dedication to the causes of freedom and republicanism.

Few details emerge of Gama’s private life in this study. He lived modestly with his wife, Claudina Fortunato Sampaio, and their son, who were kept away or socially ostracised from the elitist circles of lettered men and politicians. These took priority over Gama and in his 42 years as one of Brazil’s foremost orators, abolitionists, militant satirists and republicans, his trajectory in the courtrooms and presses of São Paulo proved vital to the abolition of slavery in 1888 and to the transition from monarchy to Republic a year later. To date, this is arguably the most comprehensive approach to Luiz Gama and a welcome advance to the historiography of slavery, abolition, political and social satire and politics in Brazil and in the Americas.

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In this graceful translation the author attempts to unravel the mystery of how samba became Brazil’s ‘authentic’ musical genre by linking its origins to those of Gilberto Freyre’s œuvre. He argues (pp. 12–13) that the seemingly sudden celebration of samba and Afro-Brazilian influence and miscegenation in the 1930s derive from a common cultural process begun in the 1920s.

Unhappily, the evidence for this provocative analysis is scarce. Despite available collections in Recife and Rio de Janeiro, the author eschews archival
research, and relies upon published, later primary sources, a narrow range of secondary sources and recent theory, and a very few citations from contemporary published sources. Many important claims are made without any supporting evidence at all. Worse, the author often quotes or cites only material that supports his points, at times ignoring neighbouring data from the same source which undercuts those same points. Errors are common, questionable conclusions inevitable.

Two examples may suffice. In a key chapter (ch. 1, ‘The Encounter’), the author makes his central claim: Freyre’s attendance at a certain performance in 1926 was a seminal experience of samba. The sources cited demonstrate, in fact, that there were at least two shows, and that the music heard may well have been the *choro*, the *maxixe*, or anything else Pixinginha and Donga liked – samba is nowhere specified.

In another example, the author argues that Freyre’s pioneering *Casa grande e senzala* (1933) derived directly from, and embraced, a *gestalt* common among younger, nationalist intellectuals before and during the 1920s, incorporating Afro–Brazilian culture, modernism, the common people and miscegenation, in a fashion congenial to the nationalist and populist political trends associated with the Revolution of 1930 (pp. 12–13, 41, 53–60). Archival correspondence and a close reading of Freyre’s publications contradict nearly every point. They indicate that he changed intellectual direction in the 1910s, in the 1920s, and, dramatically, after 1930. In his mid-1920s essays and in works of 1933 and 1936, while he celebrated Afro–Brazilian influence and the adaptive qualities he associated with miscegenation, he was clearly aristocratic, racist, authoritarian, culturally and politically reactionary and a champion of provincial tradition and authenticity. Finally, *Casa grande* was written in reaction against the events of 1930 and Vargas’ triumph, which he opposed.

The author also sometimes neglects subtleties of culture and class. For example, in arguing against the accepted idea that the elites repressed and despised popular culture in the early twentieth century (pp. 23–31, 81ff.), he assumes an all-or-nothing logic perilous in cultural history. He cites the occasional act of elite patronage and the ephemeral fashion for rustic exoticism after 1910 to state that elite taste was not as Europhile as assumed. However, his very sources, quoted or not, make it (unsurprisingly) clear that such individual or brief musical excursions derived much of their charm and excitement precisely because of the dominant prejudices favouring European high culture. The author mistakes occasional cultural ‘slumming’ for emerging elite celebration.

The author’s contribution is to turn our attention to a transitional era of compelling contradictions. It is a great pity that his writing skill and intellectual verve are not always matched by the precision and understanding associated with careful research. One learns more of the samba’s origins in José Ramos Tinhorão and Roberto Moura and more of Freyre in his works, far too little cited here. Indeed, here is a study in which the author’s understanding of the past is far too often second-hand (and not always the best second hand). Here is a study of Brazilian racial thought (pp. 46ff.) which barely (and badly) alludes to Oliveira Viana and does not cite Thomas E. Skidmore’s magisterial survey. Here is a discussion of Brazilian culture and the State in the 1930s which dismisses Carlos Guilherme Mota’s analysis and neglects that of Sérgio Micelli (pp. 41). Here is a discussion of the State and nationalism in the nineteenth century (pp. 38–39) that
neglects the established analyses of Antônio Cândido and Roderick Barman. Small wonder that the author’s observations so often fail to withstand informed scrutiny.

It is disappointing to note that even the book’s central conceit is dubious. The author claims that the mystery is how samba, once repressed, became the celebrated national musical form. The author contends that this triumph had less to do with a self-evident authenticity than with elite ideas about Afro-Brazilian culture and miscegenation that reached back to the early 1920s at least. Yet, between the lines of his own analysis (pp. 90–92), an alternative (and unsurprising) explanation emerges (anticipated in, say, Michael Conniff and Alison Raphael): the early Vargas regime promoted the increasingly popular samba, in an obvious political ploy to garner urban popular support. Subsequently, the regime used the music as part of a state-sponsored populist nationalism supporting the dictatorship one that developed throughout the 1930s.

There is a useful and well-researched book to be written about the important issues the author has glimpsed. One hopes that the author, or another similarly endowed with talent and taste, returns to the archives and the library to write it.

University of Florida

JEFFREY D. NEEDELL


The author uses two hypotheses to analyse the Brazilian armaments export industry. Both are within the ideological realm, but are nevertheless competitive: (1) the role of the Doctrine of National Security (DNS); (2) the role of the military’s corporate ideology. The author’s correct conclusion is that these two factors are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. While recognising that neither of the two hypotheses is sufficient to explain the rise of the Brazilian armaments industry, the author is satisfied with this finding when he could have sought other factors that better explain the object of study. As a result the reader is left wanting more.

Concentrating the study of the armaments industry on the role of ideology is somewhat risky for any country, and Brazil is no different. Why were other South American countries, as the author reminds us, adept at DNS and with similar corporate military interest, unable to create a competitive armaments industry? How to explain that the Brazilian army – the principal armed force, leader of the 1964 coup and source of all presidents between 1964 and 1985 – has been, in technological terms, the most conservative military force? Why was the navy the only force that opted to train its highly qualified engineers and technicians in civil universities? How to explain that the Air Force did not limit its research and development (R & D) programme to strictly military issues? Why did the navy and air force adopt distinct technologies for uranium enrichment? Should not organisational differences be considered? If ideology explains the rise of the Brazilian armaments industry, should its decline be explained by the same ideological factors?

Or should the explanation be linked to endogenous factors such as: rivalry between military branches (traditional in the existence of the armed forces);
corruption (the case of the nuclear submarine built by the navy); incompetence (the plan to create a tank-killer, the EE-17 Sucuri, capable of moving its 18 tonnes at 110 kilometres per hour on any type of terrain); political factors (loss of military influence during the political decision-making process in spite of the continuing existence of its corporate interests)? Perhaps an answer is to be found in the influence of exogenous factors such as: conditions of the global arms market (by the 1970s there was an increase in the number of suppliers and rise of a global armaments economy, Brazil opting to compete in its global market instead of emphasising its technological self-sufficiency); global geopolitics (the peak and decline of the communist menace; the thawing of the Cold War; the fact that no neighbour was capable of maintaining a constant threat to Brazil’s territorial integrity, the opposite of the cases of India, Israel and South Korea)?

Another problem of concentrating analysis on ideological aspects is the lack of consideration given to the past. However powerful DNS may be, a military armaments structure is not created overnight. Since the 1950s the armed forces, especially the navy, had been planting the seeds of modern R & D; the foundation of the Naval Research Institute (Instituto de Pesquisa de Marinha), which produced trucks, mines, control and simulation systems, dates from 1959.

An armaments industry needs infrastructure suited to produce inputs. At the beginning of the 1960s, the production of steel, petrochemicals and automobiles and a qualified labour force were growing. This is important, but we should not forget the need of military personnel to make alliances in the civil realm. The role of the state as protagonist in this process was crucial. Thus the military alliance with civil groups is not due only to ideological factors. It is logical that the fact that the military was running the country’s political affairs was influential. But there was the interest of civil industries in participating in the increasingly global arms market as a way to increase its profits.

To conclude, a few precise observations are necessary. Contrary to the claim on p. 67, the 1988 Constitution did not stipulate that the Armed Forces should obey the president ‘within the limits of law’. On p. 81 the author writes that ‘yet when finally forced to move against Goulart, they were ready and equipped to establish a long-term military government’. However, there is a substantial literature showing that the military did not have a conceived plan on what to do with the country; the deposing of Goulart was more a reactive decision resulting from the breaking of military hierarchy than the result of a previously elaborated plan. As the author writes p. 93 ‘when the Brazilian military expelled the Goulart government in 1964 it was not clear that the military would remain in power for so long’. Even among the leading officers there had been no clear-cut decision concerning how long it would be before the government would return to civilian hands’.

Universidade Federal de
Pernambuco


This important and passionate study focuses on Modern Mexico, using historical, economic and political analysis to explain the desperate conditions that confront Mexicans today. The author begins with the devastating conditions
created by the Spanish Conquest and colonialism and the Mexicans, responses to
those challenges in order to place the problems and strengths of the twentieth
century and contemporary nation in an historical context. In sum, imperialism
imposed an oligarchic system on the peasants and emergent working classes
which their self-help and revolutionary efforts of the early twentieth century only
partially altered.

James Cockcroft, the author of many books on Mexican history and
conditions, has written this book in order to explain the origins and nature
of the nation’s underdevelopment and immiseration. His integration of data
obtained from some of the leading historians of the colonial regime and
nineteenth century, and theory from scholars in other areas of study provides a
special level of understanding for the modern era. In doing this he goes beyond
documenting the evolution of the exploitative and racially divisive regime
instituted by the Spaniards and the repeated failures of nineteenth-century
Liberals to institute a more participatory economy and polity. He implements
theory that adds meaning to these events in a readable, unpretentious way that
will satisfy a wide range of readers.

Among the more important themes examined are the ‘middle class’, which he
convincingly redefines as ‘intermediate classes’, gender and patriarchy, which in
some cases within the working class resulted in a segment of the population
becoming ‘slaves of the slaves’, social control through co-optation and
repression, one-party state-building strategies, the pervasive nature of elite
corruption, a carefully defined assessment of the defeats suffered by nationalists,
and the growth of transnational and US imperial influences.

Cockcroft provides a gendered class analysis of workers’ and peasants’ history,
connecting issues such as relatively low salaries in the workplace with the absence
of wages for women in the home as they raised children and provided essential
social support for their male partners. In this manner he goes beyond the ‘owner-
worker’ version of class conflict by showing how women experienced ‘super
exploitation’ while inexpensively reproducing future workers available for
employment by the rural and industrial elites. In explaining the course of the
interminable working class and peasant struggles against injustice with specific
instances, the author provides a step by step analysis of Mexico’s one-party state-
building process and how modern mechanisms of social control came into being.
The growth of the drug industry and the evolution toward what some call a
narco-state is trenchantly described, as are the sales of paraestatales (state-owned
enterprises) to insiders.

The author uses the abuses practiced in the notorious Bracero programme, the
‘Green Revolution’, the maquila industry, in NAFTA, and against the Zapatistas
in Chiapas, to demonstrate the continuing corruption of state programmes at
the service of special interests. In the case of NAFTA, the many carefully crafted
studies of environmental degradations and labor abuses prepared by scholars
assigned to commissions to investigate these problems are routinely ignored by
the Mexican government. He also documents the growth and pervasive influence
of transnational corporations, international financial institutions, and private US
banks. He even quotes Augustín Legoretta, a director of the Banco Nacional de
Mexico, which President Carlos Salinas de Gortari sold to his personal friends in
1991, to the effect that, ‘The state and private enterprise are, at bottom, the same
thing’.
Cockcroft provides at least four important breakthroughs in this work. First, he integrates high-level theory into the flow of events providing new levels of understanding. Secondly, he provides an array of facts regarding contemporary Mexico that are unavailable elsewhere. Thirdly, he challenges the many thinly-veiled apologies for colonialism and neo-liberalism that characterise much of the contemporary literature. And, fourthly, despite its complexity, he has written a book that, for the most part, is readable for undergraduates.

The author concludes that control of the national economy and polity is the paramount challenge facing contemporary Mexicans. The hope of modern Mexico is pluralistic democracy in which legitimate parties can earn the support of the working classes and peasantry by devising programs that defend the interests of the majority against the economic and political forces that have held the country back for centuries.

This study of modern Mexico is the best I have seen. It is essential reading for graduate students and will provide an effective basis for discussion in seminars.

University of Houston

John Mason Hart


This monograph portrays the multidimensional character of the transition to a mestizo society in post-conquest central Mexico. The author welcomes the growing number of scholars who have taken critical distance from traditional Spanish source materials and have incorporated Nahuatl-language documents to provide a more accurate picture of this process. She joins these efforts, but also warns that there is a need to re-establish a balance between the image of complete domination and assimilation by the Spaniards, as depicted in much of the traditional historiography, and that of an isolated Nahua community that managed to remain largely independent of Spanish influence, which informs many recent attempts to rewrite the history of this period. Horn shows that the interactions between Nahua and Spaniards, initially limited to official concerns, evolved over time into an intricate and mutually bonding web of relations stretching to almost all spheres of activity, both formal and informal. In this book, Nahua and Spaniards are presented in their mutual interaction in a wide array of settings, ranging from the realm of local government to rural workspaces in the setting provided by Coyoacán, in the Valley of Mexico.

The book is organised in eight chapters covering the organisation of territorial jurisdictions, local forms of government – both indigenous and Spanish – tributes and labour, households and landholding, and the processes involving Nahua land ‘transfers’, the formation of Spanish estates, and the transition to a market economy.

One concept that runs through the work, although it is never stated explicitly, is that of syncretism. On the one hand, it is shown that the interactions between Spaniards and Nahuas were punctuated by temporal irregularities, which allowed the survival of many idiosyncratic elements of the indigenous community, like
their language, forms of local government, domestic practices etc., at least until the early seventeenth century. On the other hand, Nahua incorporated many elements of the Spanish culture into their own cultural context, for instance by describing new items and concepts in the vocabulary and framework of their own language. Examples of syncretistic processes abound in the text, including colonial Nahua municipal authorities, in the figures of the *tlatoani*, which maintained many of the prerogatives of indigenous rule and had authority and prestige among both Nahua and Spaniards, or the *fiscal*, the highest-ranking indigenous church officer, which followed pre-conquest traditions where civil and religious duties were not entirely divorced. Another example is the post of notary, adopted rapidly throughout central Mexico. Notaries had also an important pre-Hispanic precedent, as record keeping had been a prestigious position in pre-conquest central Mexico. In this connection, the author found that, to her own benefit, during the early colonial period notaries produced a notable amount of documents in the indigenous language. Another area of cultural interweaving was the system of tributes, which was organised both according to Spanish and Nahua temporal intervals: while tributes paid in grains were delivered on an annual basis, manufactured goods were handed over 'once every eighty days' following the indigenous vigesimal system. Similar processes can be traced in almost all other spheres of activity addressed in this study, from the colonial territorial organisation that was largely based on pre-Hispanic arrangements to the basic structures of market interactions, whether regarding exchanges of land, agricultural products or manufactures.

Another underlying concept is that of socio-structural change. The author conveys the message that, integral to the interwoven features of mutual assimilation and accommodation between Spaniards and Nahua, the process had a clear directionality: an increasing rupture with the pre-Hispanic organisation and the gradual emergence of a mestizo socio-political configuration where the Spanish component became dominant. The dynamic of this process would accelerate rapidly with the abolition of the *repartimiento* in the 1630s, after which Nahua local authorities lost much of their importance, in particular in the economic sphere.

Although Horn gives many examples of outright expropriation of indigenous properties, particularly water resources, when it comes to land transfers the book gives the impression of a somehow smoother process, which had been marked by a high concern with legal compliance, both by Spaniards and Nahua. The reader is also left with the idea that there was a rapid adoption of Spanish legal formalities, and that embryonic forms of individual property rights had already existed in the preconquest period. It well may be that the Coyoacán evidence analysed by Horn casts new light on this topic, but then a reference to the status of pre-conquest property rights and early colonial law, particularly regarding landholdings, would have been helpful.

The book will provide excellent material for students and scholars in history and anthropology dealing with early New Spain. The detailed account of everyday interactions between Nahua and Spaniards during a crucial historical period provided by Horn, may also attract a wider audience among historical sociologists and others working within a transdisciplinary framework.

*St Antony’s College, Oxford*

José Esteban Castro

This volume takes the reader on a most rewarding voyage of rediscovery of Indian womanhood in colonial Mexico. Covering the ground from pre-conquest times to the late eighteenth century, the editors succeed in reopening the question of the impact of colonialism on indigenous women and their families. The twelve essays penned by distinguished historians and ethnohistorians do an excellent job of contextualising and assessing the meaning of Indian womanhood.

Studies on the meaning of home, marriage and ‘naming’ patterns (Burkhart, Anderson, Carrasco and Horn) introduce the theme of domesticity prior to and throughout the initial stages of the conquest. They impress upon us the ways in which old patterns of gender relations, ancient meanings of the domestic world and marriage practices stood before and throughout the ensuing period of rapid change of social and sexual mores. The degree of readjustment and preservation of ancient socio-cultural norms cannot be assessed without this introduction.

The rest of the essays address some of those changes in different areas of New Spain, including Yucatán and the far North. Perhaps the most important thread running through all these essays is that of the need to reassess native women’s status in society. These essays strongly suggest that it depended on a variety of circumstances such as what period one is dealing with, the wealth of the woman, her contact with Spanish culture, and support from her own community. Spores, for example, reveals how some native women (Mixtec *cacicas*) could amass and control significant amounts of property in the sixteenth century under the terms of European property laws. Spores’ findings are ratified – although not as mere duplication – by Hunt and Restall, working collaboratively, for Maya society. There it was the able inter-knitting of both systems that worked in favor of the women who learned how to handle their situation under the new system.

Gender complementarity is held to be the foundation of indigenous gender relations in pre-colonial Scotties, and most essays in this work do not challenge that assumption. However, all authors agree that complementarity did not equate with equality and that there was an imbalance of power between male and female indigenous that applied to specific areas of the public and private realms. For its part, Spanish culture was double-edged in its benefits and liabilities. Although it was based on the assumption of female vulnerability, weakness and unreliability, the demeaning aspects of those premises were counterbalanced by the assumption of protection and deference, especially when attached to class, status and degree of conformity with Spanish and indigenous rules of honorable behavior. Spanish legislation gave women specific niches in which they could unfold their activities and claim specific rights of inheritance and protection. Thus, as described by Haskett, Gosner, Sousa and Offut, women of humble origin could become forceful protagonists. All the authors in this book underline how crossing lines of cultural exchange between Spanish and indigenous traditions, women served as key links between both, whether to accept or reject hispanisation. They did not have to be exceptional or ‘personalities’, as Wood’s study of ‘common’ women’s wills makes quite clear.

Neither dominant nor hidden – women appear to have maintained a difficult balance of ‘significance’ in their homes and communities and submission to
cultural patterns that placed men’s voices and judgements over their own in those arenas. This situation does not eliminate the possibility – as attested in these essays – of vigorously lived lives and robust assertions of will and personal power. Was women’s role appreciably affected by the passing of time and the effective spread of Hispanic law and institutions? Kellogg contends that it diminished throughout time while Haskett contests that assumption in his essay. Given the information provided in this work by other authors, the concept of ‘decline’ needs to be investigated more thoroughly in a variety of localities.

Not all women get their due in historical records. Ethnic diversity as well as geographical location and different levels of complexity in social organisations affected women’s ability to leave historical tracts. The scarcity of materials on women living in frontier regions makes it harder to retrieve either personal or communal memories. Fortunately, the woman with the greatest name-recognition but among those with the least historical information, Cortés’ mistress (Malinche-Malitzin-Marina), receives a welcome reappraisal here. Frances Kartunnen’s thoughtful essay ably dissects the historical information available to us and delivers with compelling arguments a credible story of a young women pushed by circumstances into a role she fulfilled as a form of survival. Considering the many abuses heaped upon this unique woman, Kartunnen has done much to replace bias with a sensible historical perspective. Malinche the traitor is on her way out.

These essays retrieve a great deal of information about the segment of colonial population with the presumed least-heard voices. They prove not only the feasibility of recovering that history, but also the importance of doing so to recover a fuller and far more interesting view of the past than that populated exclusively by male figures. Without having to argue any brand of historical feminism, or strictly adhering to any Western theoretical conceptualisation, the authors succeed in putting together a compelling array of information that both fascinates and informs. In their closing remarks, Haskett and Wood caution against the use of Western theory models to interpret the lives of these women. Indeed this book is a testimonial to the possibility of finding an autochtonous meaning to history by simply reading it well from the sources.

Arizona State University

ASUNCION LAVRIN


This volume is the paperback version of Taylor’s prize-winning and magisterial 1996 publication. Its appearance in paperback is worth celebrating, because it deserves to be in the library of everyone concerned with the colonial period and with Mexico and the Latin American Church. A brick of a book (in small print!), it deserves all of the superlatives heaped upon it. It can safely be said that it will remain the leading work in the field, for all that some of its approaches and findings may later be challenged. A masterpiece of historical scholarship, it will remain the touchstone of many future debates on the Church, colonialism in the Americas, and the construction of Mexican society generally. All future research on the colonial Church will be written in its shadow.
Taylor’s erudition is formidable, his research monumental, and his powers of synthesis unsurpassed. The notes alone cover 260 pages, yet none of them is superfluous; indeed, some are superb mini-essays in their own right, and the narrative flow is helped by frequent relegation of discussion to the notes. Despite its forbidding size and aspect, it reads well – Taylor has a story to tell. Yet it is probably best sampled by sections, which while locking neatly into one another, to a large degree may stand alone. For all its bulk, it does not cover the whole of Mexico, but concentrates on the archdiocese of Mexico, with its predominantly indigenous communities, and the more extensive diocese of Guadalajara with its larger proportion of non-Indians. A chapter is devoted to the historical geography of the two regions, which with Michoacán and Puebla provided the heartlands of colonial rule. Fortunately, David Brading’s important 1994 study of the Church in Michoacán covers that large and wealthy diocese, the clergy of which were so influential in the wars of Independence. The Taylor and Brading books may fruitfully be read together; their emphases and approaches are broadly similar, such that they complement one another well.

Of the early scene-setting chapters, that on issues of local religion elegantly captures most of the nuances of colonial religious praxis and wider scholarly debates. It seeks to go ‘beyond syncretism’ and to introduce more emphasis on acculturative process rather than the conventional focus on the syncretic end-product, often represented as static and which posits an early completion of religious change, the resultant mix thereonforth seen as rather immutable. Taylor returns to properly religious themes in a perceptive chapter on ‘saints and images’, but for the most part this book is concerned with the encounters of priests with parishioners, of priests with local authorities, and of what has been called the ecclesiastical economy. Taylor then storms home with an analysis of the involvement of clergy in the insurrection of 1810–15, building upon his earlier work on popular revolt and protest, subjects which also receive extended treatment here. He notes that, in contrast to the conventional view, most curas did not join an insurgent movement prior to 1821, and only 9 per cent of curas did so in the crucial period 1810–1811.

Combining religious history with the study of social history of clergy in their interactions with colonial authorities and communities is a difficult challenge, largely because the sources for each are usually so different; one tends to end up with a two-part analysis rather than a convincing synthesis. Taylor has largely overcome this problem, but analysis of religion is absent in large parts of his study. Nonetheless, his treatment of religion is persuasive. He argues that there was a high degree of both social and religious congruence between priests and parishioners at local level, rather than the dual Tridentine and folkloric or quasi-pagan syncretic belief system so often encountered in the literature. He focuses on the religious culture of the laity, a convenient point of departure for the overriding theme of the book, a study of ‘political culture in a time of rapid change’. This is explored by way of an enormous sample of local disputes, which reveal patterned tendencies and local notions of legitimacy, authority and the now familiar ‘moral economy’. Taylor finds that political power under the Bourbons was becoming desacralised, a conscious modernising policy of the crown that contributed to the gradual disintegration of its own authority; interestingly, much the same argument has been advanced elsewhere to explain the loss of Bourbon legitimacy and authority in France in the decades prior to 1789.
Few works of Latin American history can be as authoritative as this study. Taylor’s unrivalled erudition in this area is matched by his sophisticated understanding of theory, thankfully worn lightly and subordinated to the richness of his primary materials. His book is testament to the truism that great research is the prerequisite for great historical writing.

University of New South Wales  
DAVID CAHILL


This book continues the recent ‘revisionist’ historiographical current of the allegedly obsolete perspective that sees nineteenth-century Mexican politics as the struggle between two neatly defined, and mutually antagonist ideologies, namely, liberalism and conservatism. As Fowler demonstrates, Mexican politics from Independence to the War of Reform was much more complex than that scheme indicates. There were many different ideologies in contention, which, moreover, did not remain stable throughout the period in question. Furthermore, their actual practice was not always consistent with their postulated ideologies. These inconsistencies did not imply that they were ‘turncoats’ or even cynical regarding their postulated beliefs; instead, they responded to changing circumstances and, particularly, to the increasingly deep disillusion the successive failure of the different constitutional experiments instilled among the Mexican elite.

Fowler proceeds to define the many different political currents of the period, showing the variety of interpretations applicable to the terms ‘liberalism’ and ‘conservatism’, and how these currents evolved in time. He discovers five basic ‘proposals’ — the traditionalist; that of Carlos M. de Bustamante; the moderate; the radical; and the santanista — tracing the changes they underwent over four different stages into which Fowler periodises the process of decomposition of the Mexican political system underwent: a stage of hope (1821–1828), of disenchantment (1828–1835), of profound disillusion (1836–1847) and of despair (1847–1855).

For Fowler, the term ‘conservatism’, normally associated with the first of the five proposals he discusses (which he prefers to call ‘traditionalist’) is misleading in that it reflects retrospective biases. After the fall of Iturbide, the future leaders of the ‘Conservative Party’ became prominent advocates of federalism. Even in the 1830s, after adopting a ‘centralist’ ideology, they did not abandon their faith in republicanism. As Fowler states, the kind of ‘conservatism’ they endorsed was actually a brand of ‘liberalism’. A truly ‘Conservative Party’ did not exist in Mexico before 1849 and it ultimately resulted from the despair generated by the terminal crisis in which the country was immersed after its defeat in the Mexican-American War.

A highly idiosyncratic blend of ‘traditionalism’ and ‘republicanism’, ‘Catholicism’ and ‘indigenismo’, Bustamante’s ‘traditionalist’ proposal was, for Fowler, an even better representative of the ideas of the Mexican elite. Yet, this mixture of apparently opposite motifs was not necessarily inconsistent. It only shows the very different interpretations given to the terms ‘conservatism’ and ‘liberalism’, and, ultimately, how complex the ideological map of Mexico was at that time.
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The ambiguities in the proposal of the ‘moderate factions’, which allowed
their opponents to accuse them of being *equilibristas*, is another example of the
idiosyncratic ideological formation that the pragmatism of the Mexican political
class and its attempt to adjust ideas to their particular historical situation
originated. For Fowler, the moderate factions, best represented by Mariano
Otero, shared their goals with the radicals (the alleged ‘founding fathers’ of
Mexican liberalism) differing only in the pace of the reforms they wanted to
implement. However, moderatism was doomed to failure as disillusion polarised
political options. Fowler considers the rise and fall of the moderate faction
illustrative of how the space for compromise progressively narrowed in the 1840s
until it completely vanished in the 1850s.

The ‘radical’ faction was also a heterogeneous ideological formation extending
from Lorenzo de Zavala, who was the earliest advocate of a social reform plan
and the closest to the ‘ideal type’ of a radical liberal, to Valentin Gómez Farías,
a very pious man, who consistently attempted a middle course. Between them was
Mora, whose writings combined ‘conservative’ motifs with an inflamed prose
against the Church’s privileges. But even Zavala adopted contradictory views on
different issues, and his populist orientation conflicted with his sense of distrust
of the Mexican people (which eventually led him to endorse the Texan cause). For
Fowler, the point is that the radical faction was not a consistent current, nor was
it perfectly defined in the first years of Mexican independent life, but one highly
responsive to changing circumstances.

The *santanista* faction is, no doubt, the most problematic case. As has been
repeatedly stated, it seems impossible to discover any stable pattern of thought
in their political practice, which was marked by a number of sudden and
unpredictable twists. However, for Fowler a closer attention to chronology
allows us to see some order in the apparent chaos of the *santanista*’s actions. Their
successive reorientations illustrate one of the possible reactions to each one of the
four different stages defined by Fowler. Behind their shifts lies an evolution from
radicalism to despotism, accompanying their deepening sense of despair.

In sum, Fowler’s is not only an attempt to render problematic simplistic views
regarding early nineteenth-century Mexican political and intellectual history, but
also a historiographical proposal. It eloquently argues for the revision of the
modes of pigeonholing ideas in Mexico, as well as of the meaning of the very
categories at stakes, such as ‘liberalism’ and ‘conservatism’, revealing their
ambiguities and limitations as heuristic tools for understanding the dense web of
political options present in a time of experimentation and confusion, one in
which, after repeated failures, nobody was certain of the best political course for
Mexico.

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**ELIAS JOSÉ PALTÍ**

Humberto Morales and William Fowler (eds.), *El conservadurismo mexicano en
el siglo XIX* (1810–1910), (Puebla, Mexico: Benemérita Universidad
Autónoma de Puebla, y Gobierno del Estado de Puebla with St Andrews:
University of St Andrews, 1999), pp. 335, pb.

*El conservadurismo mexicano en el siglo XIX* collects twelve essays dealing, basically,
with two topics: the socio-political basis of the conservative forces in nineteenth-
century Mexico and their ideological foundations.
Taking a regional perspective, Michael Ducey shows the changing patterns of social and political alliance in the times of the Wars of Independence, highlighting, in most of the cases, their incidental nature. As he demonstrates, the military pressure generated by insurgency and counterinsurgency put the local communities under stress, determining their erratic political behavior. However, their political reorientations also reveal divisions within the communities, which reflect the vicissitudes of the struggle among contending parties at the local level. Analysing the debates around the cholera epidemic in 1833, which the religious newspapers identified as divine punishment for the Gómez Farías's reforms, Donald Stevens questions the actual influence of the Catholic propaganda and its control over the reactions and attitudes of the population. On the other hand, as Brian Connaughton shows, the Catholic Church was not internally homogenous, displaying centrifugal dynamics. Far from being a stronghold of social and political stability, as its advocates presented, the Catholic Church did no remain estranged but rather readily became internally split by the same kind of antagonisms tearing apart the rest of Mexican society. Moreover, the alliances of the Conservatives with other political forces introduced further tensions. Brian Hamnett shows how the problematic relationships between the leaders of the conservative party and Maximiliano's administration were determinant for the failure of the monarchical experiment. Paradoxically, the military and political defeat of the conservatives allowed them to recover at least part of their lost influence, which would trigger new controversies. Guy Thomson explores the tensions generated in Puebla by Díaz's politics of reconstitution of the ties with the local Church as a means of liquidating the power of the 'Montañita' leaders from the Sierra, while preserving anticlericalism as one of his central ideological motifs. Finally, Michael Costeloe observes a peculiar aspect determining the instability of the Mexican political system: the lack of integration between the presidential instance (normally occupied by a provincial, military leader) and the well-established elite in Mexico City. A number of personal events cast by President Arista illustrate the problem these outsiders found to be accepted by the Mexican establishment, and show how the clashes this situation generated undermined their authority.

The general picture resulting from these six papers is that conservatism in nineteenth-century Mexico was, from the point of view of its political structure and social constituency, not only a complex but also a weakly articulated phenomenon, lacking a relatively solid basis of support within Mexican society. This becomes even more apparent when approached from the point of view of its ideological foundations, which is the central concern of the other six essays. They reveal that it was loosely defined, in ideological terms, rendering problematic the definition of those features that distinguished it from, and eventually led to its confrontation with, the liberal forces.

Josefina Z. Vázquez most forcefully argues for a revision of the dichotomous perspective that sees liberalism and conservatism in nineteenth-century Mexico as two opposing political formations tout court. During the period under consideration the ideological fault-lines separating (and uniting) the Mexicans were intricate and blurred. As she shows, the views of those who would eventually be identified as 'conservatives', the 'centralists', premised on the basic postulates of liberalism; and many reputed liberals held very 'conservative' postures. Yet, this is not a proof of ideological inconsequence. As William Fowler
shows in connection with the ideas of Carlos M. de Bustamante, highly idiosyncratic combinations of ideological motifs, like indigenism and traditionalism, were not necessarily inconsistent. At any rate, these cases demonstrate that terms such as ‘liberalism’, ‘republicanism’, and ‘conservatism’ were plurivocal in nature. According to Reynaldo Sordo Cedeño, the only single moment in which the ‘conservative’ movement gained some ideological coherence in Mexico was during the constitutional debate in 1835–1836. At that juncture, the centralists systematically organised a body of doctrine (following the basic lines traced by Edmund Burke), which articulated the dominant intellectual climate within the elite.

Two other examples further illustrate the diverging paths of nineteenth-century Mexican conservatism. Humberto Morales calls attention to Estevan de Antuñano’s industrialist utopia. The mixture of Saint-Simonianism and traditionalism that Morales discovers in de Antuñano’s factory model made it a highly original design that deeply influenced the early processes of industrialisation in Mexico. Focusing on the Jalisco region, Elisa Cárdenas Ayala highlights the transformations that the Catholic sectors underwent under the porfiriato when they joined the opposition to Díaz’s regime, thus paving the way to the formation of a social-Christian current. Finally, Anne Staples raises the problem of the continuities between the post-Independence ‘conservative’ tradition and its colonial antecedents. As she shows, in the realm of education, colonial habits and practices remained in use until well into the nineteenth-century. Yet, conservative and liberal governments were both involved in the preservation of those practices, although, as Staples indicates, this seems to be a rather exceptional case. Most of these studies coincide in remarking that, if some continuities between the colonial past and post-Independence political practices and ideologies could be found, these refer back to Bourbon reformist tradition, which the newly emerging ruling elite originally sought to continue. Yet, as Morales and Fowler indicate in the introduction, whatever the original intention, the progressive disintegration of the Mexican political system and an increasingly dominant sense of despair among the ruling elite presented it with new tasks and unforeseen problems, pushing its members to redefine their political views.

In sum, El conservadurismo mexicano en el siglo XIX offers an excellent overview for both specialists and non-specialists. It brings together the most up to date scholarly findings in the field and provides a reasonably comprehensive picture of the fundamental issues and problems currently under discussion.


In The Worm in the Wheat, Timothy J. Henderson uses the history of one foreign landowner’s struggle against the postrevolutionary Mexican government to present the conflicts that resulted from Mexico’s agrarian reform programme (pp. 1–3). Henderson skilfully contextualises Rosalie Evans’ life (from the purchase of the Hacienda San Pedro Coxtocán in 1905 to her violent death in 1927) into the
narrative of the political and social changes occurring in Revolutionary Mexico at the national, state and local levels. This is the book’s outstanding strength; Henderson leaves no facet of these narratives untouched, from the development of the hacienda system after the conquest (Ch. 2) to Plutarco Elias Calles’ plans to disable the *agraristas*’ campaigns in the interest of increasing production and centralising government authority (p. 181, pp. 196–197).

Henderson explores Evans’ motivations for keeping San Pedro Coxtocacán: her spiritist beliefs prompted her to maintain the enterprise she had shared with her British husband, Harry Evans (d. 1917); the farm was also Evans’ sole inheritance, and they had invested heavily in maintenance and improvements. Furthermore, Evans firmly believed, following racist theories, that Mexican peasants would be incapable of making the land productive, were they to receive it. Thus Evans took on the Mexican establishment, from the local caudillos to their presidents she also confronted the United States and British diplomatic corps (she was born American, but took British citizenship upon her marriage), challenging them to guarantee the lives and property of their citizens. However, the old-style diplomacy embraced by her few ambassadorial allies was being supplanted by capital-led diplomacy, the first priorities of which were oil and import-export arrangements. Foreign nationals’ real estate holdings came only a distant second. Evans’ altercations left a rich documentary history (sources come from Mexican and diplomatic archives, periodicals, interviews, and Evans’ letters and diaries), thoroughly utilised by Henderson to describe both her crusade, and other foreigners’ and Mexicans’ gradual abandonment of similar causes. Unlike Evans, they realised that the Porfirian system of values was gone and adapted to postrevolutionary politics.

Evans also clung to the belief that the entire agrarian conflict had been manufactured by those in power and could be altered at their command. The Texmelucan valley that Henderson describes, however, was a maelstrom of constantly changing alliances among peasants, factory workers, local caudillos, military officers, paramilitaries, and politicians. Evans envisioned herself as a caretaker and ‘guardian of civilisation’, as part of the role of hacienda. Nevertheless, she succeeded in alienating *campesinos*, local bosses, and law enforcement agents with her belligerent tactics, insistence on her rectitude, and consistent appealing to their superiors for documents or legal decisions. Henderson shows that Evans’ ‘fatal flaw’ was not realising that, unlike the situation during the Porfirian regime, such bureaucratic decisions had only a secondary value. Until centralising, machine politics brought Texmelucan into line in the late 1920s, the use of force determined the rule of the region.

Although Evans played on her ‘weak’ position as a widow and a foreigner, she was not resigned to passivity. Far from it, Evans enjoyed her intimidating prowess with horses and firearms, and was willing to use violence as she assumed guardianship of the hacienda. This problematised not only her social interactions but evaluations of her situation before and after her death. The intersection of norms of gender, class, ethnicity and nationality raise difficult questions which Henderson addresses, but only in brief and sparsely documented discussions of expectations that leave the reader as confused about what to make of Evans as her contemporaries apparently were. Both Mexican peasants and politicians were perplexed by the foreign, female, white Evans’ combination of bravado and femininity (one peasant ‘almost reverently’ remembers of Evans, ‘*Tenía huevos*’).
Foreign diplomats were also alienated by Evans’ refusal to take their advice (i.e., accept any offer for the hacienda and leave), yet their interpretations of proper gender roles are not questioned. Henderson only touches upon some tantalising events and quotes which beg further exploration, such as the Catholic World labelling US Ambassador Charles Warren ‘an affront to his gender’ for his neglect of Evans (p. 211).

Henderson’s evaluation of Evans is never quite conclusive, but his final judgement of the agrarian reform programme is, and is quite harsh – one could conclude that the ultimate losers in this game were, and always have been, the local peasantry. His epilogue presents the region’s successive agrarian leadership as irredeemably corrupt (he cites 1971 expropriations of land to construct an ‘industrial corridor’ along the Texmelucan highway, made with even less interaction with the residents than the 1920s grants). The Worm in the Wheat does provide a wealth of historical evidence, and enough links from the personal to the political, for further explorations of these questions.

Henderson writes that Evans’ funeral was attended by an ‘incongruous’ crowd of foreign dignitaries and peasants (p. 189); yet this very juxtaposition is what makes narratives of situations like Evans’ so complex and compelling. Overall, Henderson’s book is a well-written combination of biography and historical context, useful for those interested in the history of the Puebla-Tlaxcala region, the Mexican agrarian reform, and the challenges that the Mexican post-revolutionary regime presented to foreign capital, diplomats and proprietors, alongside its own elite and subaltern citizens.

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K R I S T I N A A. B O Y L A N

María Emilia Paz, Strategy, Security, and Spies: Mexico and the US as Allies in World War II (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1997), pp. xii + 264, £49.00, £17.95 pb; $55.00, $19.95 pb.

As is well known, Mexico and the US were military allies during the Second World War. Quite apart from its crucial role in the supply of strategic minerals to the US war machine, Mexico sent a squadron of aircraft (Escuadron 201) to the Philippines and permitted the enlistment of thousands of its citizens in the US armed forces. Nevertheless, Mexico reverted to its traditional anti-US posture after the war, in dramatic contrast to Canada and Brazil – like Mexico, Allied Western Hemispheric middle powers – both of which built profitable post-war security relationships with the US. The book under review helps explain Mexico’s ambivalence during the war and reticence afterwards.

In this elegantly written diplomatic history of US–Mexican relations during the Second World War, María Emilia Paz demonstrates that Mexico’s politico-military leadership was deeply divided on the issue of forging a military alliance with the US; indeed, one of the main chapters in the book is entitled ‘Mexico, the Reluctant Ally’. While the ‘new army’ was ‘keen to obtain modern weapons, equipment and training’, the old guard ‘were more interested in maintaining their personal power base’. After two Mexican tankers were sunk in quick succession by German U-Boats, President Manuel Avila Camacho was ‘caught
between two conflicting tendencies’, with Foreign Secretary Ezequiel Padilla ‘pushing for a declaration of war’ and former President Lázaro Cárdenas ‘insisting that Mexico did not have the means to fight and should remain neutral’.

The role of Cárdenas during this period was crucial, since it was he who objected most forcefully to the stationing of US troops in Mexico. Systematic attempts were made by the US and Mexican governments to exclude Cárdenas from the decision making process. Thus, the decision to create *Escuadrón 201* was kept out of the Joint US–Mexico Defence Commission ‘for fear that General Cárdenas might delay approval of the initiative’. Since Cárdenas was the embodiment of Mexican sovereignty, Avila Camacho ‘gave to his wartime collaboration with the United States a touch of legitimacy’ by appointing the ex-president as defence secretary.

This comprehensive book, based on research in major US and Mexican archives, also contains an excellent chapter on the role of Mexico’s strategic minerals in the allied war effort and truly fascinating chapters on Axis intelligence and US counterintelligence activities in Mexico. By showing just how difficult it was for Mexicans to collaborate with the US during a period in which both countries were ostensibly military allies, Paz has made a substantial contribution to our collective understanding of US–Mexican relations. As she delicately points out, Mexico is the only country in Latin America that had been invaded, fought a war, and lost territory to the United States. To this day the wound has not healed’.

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**Varun Sahni**


This volume brings together the reflections of an impressive group of private sector analysts, academics and government officials upon Mexican business’ recent history and future prospects. Most of the essays, taken individually, are useful and, at times, illuminating. As a collection, however, the volume lacks internal coherence and adds little in the way of either information or analysis. Intellectually, there is no organising question, thesis or argument. The only visible glue holding the volume together, rather, is a shared pro-free enterprise orientation. On balance, the volume is more useful as a primary source on the values and worldviews of Mexico’s new elite than as a systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the country’s private sector at century’s end.

The book fails, overall, to deliver what its title promises. In its first part – Outcomes of Economic Reform in Mexico – one learns more about policy reform and government failures than about the role and response of business. This first section is also unduly repetitive. The story of Mexico’s shift to a market-centred economy, for instance, is retold in far too many slightly different versions. In the volume as a whole, moreover, prescription tends to outweigh detailed empirical analysis. The general normative stance is clearly pro-business, pro-market and anti-government. Calls for further policy and institutional reform abound. Firms’
roles in generating of reproducing market failures, on the other hand, are almost completely neglected. Empirical analysis, when present, focuses overwhelmingly on internationally-oriented firms, particularly on very large and successful ones. Little is said about domestic-oriented firms, especially medium and small ones. Differences in the liberalisation process of industry and finance are highlighted and their effects examined. Regional variations, in contrast, are neither discussed nor analysed. Except for the essay on business participation in the negotiation of NAFTA, entrepreneurial organisations and the relations between government and private firms are hardly mentioned.

There are additional imbalances. Its units are extremely heterogeneous in terms of basic purpose as well as their ability to add to our understanding of the effects of economic reform on Mexico’s private sector. Some of the essays are very useful and well crafted. In particular, Enrique Cárdenas’ solid historical overview of Mexican private industry and Kristin Johnson’s superbly researched article on the role of business in the NAFTA negotiations. Others provide interesting insights on key aspects of the subject. The piece by Gavito, Silva and Zamarrripa offers valuable information on the many weaknesses of the country’s financial sector. Though its primary emphasis is on the limitations of government policy, their text does manage to open important vistas on the current situation of private banks in the country. Fernández and Tovar also shed light on the issue at hand through their theoretically grounded analysis of firms’ strategies in the face of liberalised product and financial markets. Much of the rest of the volume is made up of testimonial reports of authors’ normative viewpoints, institutional interests, and professional concerns and experiences. These reports are significant as primary material on pro-business elites’ worldviews. Less useful, though, as aids in learning about recent and ongoing transformations in the operation of the private sector. Mexico’s economic transformation has produced huge costs and dislocations. As of yet, gains have been limited and highly concentrated. For business, the shift has entailed enormous challenges. Firms’ capacity to deal effectively with such challenges has varied hugely depending on size, sector and regional location. Most of these dimensions and effects of market-oriented reform are absent from this volume’s unduly and unabashedly rosy portrait of Mexico’s recent economic transformation. Those absences, unfortunately, seriously limit the book’s value in helping us explain and understand the momentous shifts undergone by Mexican business in the face of economic and political liberalisation.


This analysis of the role of environmental affairs in the forging of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) offers an insightful discussion of the political negotiations and competing interests that were finally materialised in the formation of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).
Hogenboom not only carefully reviewed the published and ‘gray’ materials circulating in the region during the negotiations but also interviewed many of the actors who directly shaped the final outcome. This description of political process should become obligatory reading for people concerned about the environmental impact of global integration and the possibilities of ‘civil society’ (as we call the complex set of organisations and communities unaffiliated to ‘official’ social structures) to influence the dynamics of economic expansion.

After going through the obligatory review of the transnationalisation of the Mexican economy, the imposition of the model of neoliberal organisation and the changing political coalitions that made these changes possible, we are introduced to the NAFTA process. The permanent conflict among models for national economies and international integration is respectfully examined. She traces the efforts of the various actors involved to shape the way in which the environment would be included in the final agreement. The original negotiators were profoundly surprised by ‘the intensity and the transnational character of environmental protests’ (p. 243) to the original proposal for a trilateral agreement and unprepared to incorporate their concerns into the discussions.

As might be expected, the involvement of the specialised non-governmental organisations (ENGOs) in the discussion set the stage for conflict among environmental groups. The mainstream groups confronted their more critical counterparts in attempting to define the agenda and the scope of the debate. Interestingly enough, the Mexican negotiators and private sector participants were initially unconcerned with these matters; only after they became a matter of open political conflict within the United States, did Mexican authorities react strongly with institutional innovations and budgetary commitments. The Mexican government began to address environmental problems, concentrating on specific areas that were most visible in the international arena: a respectable regulatory framework; the accelerated deterioration of the border area; and transnational corporate compliance with environmental norms. When ‘push came to shove’, however, ‘moderate’ ENGOs became the standard bearers for a compromise that eventually led to the creation of the CEC, pushing aside the more fundamental issues raised by critical groups.

Hogenboom’s analysis offers us an informative window into a troublesome phenomenon examined in detail by others: the intervention of US ENGOs to create or reshape Mexican organisations that could advance their agendas south of the border. Compounded by the successful efforts to exclude serious questions about the role of grass-roots groups and strategies in regional and local development, the negotiators channelled the discussions to reinforce an agreement in which the environment is continually redefined in the image of international capital.

The book repeatedly imposes reality on the debate. She reminds us of the overarching problem of poverty and wonders about policy makers’ conviction that economic growth will ‘provide some relief for many Mexicans who were impoverished by the sequence of crises and previous restructuring measures’ (p. 243). It was never a secret that for Mexico’s new ‘political elite, entry into NAFTA was not only an economic project, but also an important political project…[that] would function to embed the new development strategy’ (p. 243) regardless of whether domestic politics left these same individuals in the halls of power.
In the political sphere, environmental politics in Mexico are increasingly the subject of external scrutiny. The searing criticisms of governmental policy and regulatory enforcement continue today. Attention has become global, extending the involvement of external actors and increasing the presence of US actors. Similarly, the World Bank offered generous financing to the government and even to local agencies and groups, together with similar contributions from the European Community and other groups; this ‘demonstrated that international integration intensifies external willingness to contribute to solving national problems...[But] the lack of democracy...and options for public participation in decision-making...[are major failings] if the Mexicans are to assume their own responsibility for the environment’ (p. 248).

Hogenboom concludes by describing NAFTA as a ‘lost opportunity’. The wasteful consumption patterns of the North American economic system, consolidated by the process of regional integration, are anathema to the formulation of an effective environmental policy. While the NAFTA debate led to a series of bilateral arrangements, creating privileged spaces for confronting problems in the border region, its impact in the rest of the country remains rather limited. This thoughtful analysis ends by warning us that political responses to social and economic problems are coming ‘at the cost of attention to and resources for the environment’ (p. 250). This reader cannot help but wonder if this dichotomy might be broken, carving out new spaces for those being left behind by international economic integration to attend some of the urgent environment problems that were not addressed by the Agreement.

Luis F. Calero's book on the native societies of the Pasto region of southwestern Colombia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a valuable addition to the growing literature on the effects of Spanish conquest and colonialism in the northern Andes. As he makes clear throughout this study, the native population of the province of Pasto, organised into chiefdoms, experienced the challenges of European colonialism differently to the native peoples of state-centred societies such as those of the Aztecs and Incas. Because the Pastos, Quillacingas and Abads, sedentary and semi-sedentary peoples, lacked long-distance trade and centralised authority, the Spanish found it more difficult to quell initial resistance. And when conquistadores finally secured control of the region by the middle of the sixteenth century, its geographic isolation and economic marginality made it difficult for the Spanish crown to govern. As a result, at least until the end of the seventeenth century, Pasto’s Spanish population enjoyed a degree of autonomy not found in regions more fully integrated into the imperial system. According to Calero, this explains, at least in part, why the institution of encomienda, a royal grant of native tribute and labor to an individual Spaniard, survived in Pasto longer than it did in most other regions of Spanish America.

Calero derives most of the data for this study from a series of visitas generales, or royal inspections, that took place in 1558, 1570, 1606, 1616, 1638, 1668, 1692, 1712 and 1736. While the two sixteenth-century documents were wide-ranging, including demographic, social, economic and even environmental information, the later visitas were almost entirely focused on economic concerns, specifically the taxation of the region’s rapidly dwindling native population, the resettlement of selected native communities and the drafting of native labour for Pasto’s gold-mining industry. The author also makes effective use of cabildo, or town council records, for the city of Pasto, as well as documents located in secular and ecclesiastical archives in Colombia, Ecuador and Spain, concerning encomiendas, land disputes, and native parishes.

Calero uses these documents to examine both the demographic and ecological consequences of the Spanish conquest, the system of labour and tribute that evolved in the area during the sixteenth and seventeen centuries, and finally the gradual demise of the encomienda system at the end of the seventeenth century. As was the case in many regions of Spanish America, the native population of Pasto plummeted during the first fifty years following the arrival of Europeans and their diseases. This was followed by a slow but steady decline until the end of the seventeenth century, at which time the number of natives began to stabilise, a development that occurred in Pasto earlier than it did in other parts of Colombia. Calero concludes that because of the drastic reduction of the native population, declining gold production, stricter enforcement of imperial legislation, increased taxation of encomiendas, and increased competition for native labour, many of Pasto’s encomiendas had simply been abandoned as unprofitable by the early eighteenth century.

This book adds significantly to our understanding of the impact of European colonialism on a hitherto little-studied area of the northern Andes; and because it deals with non-state societies, it reveals much about the experiences of the majority of Spain’s native subjects under colonial rule.

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After the revival of Latin American economies (somewhat) during the 1990s following the lost decade of the 1980s, there has been a growing interest in analysing the characteristics of Latin America’s most dynamic economy since the debt crisis – Chile. Since 1983, the Chilean economy has recorded an average economic growth rate of over 6 per cent per annum, much higher than any other Latin American country. Does the Chilean economy present a new model for Latin American economies in general and the smaller ones in particular? Can it be called a Latin American tiger, rivalling the rapidly-growing industrial economies of East Asia? One principal area for comparative analysis is that of technology and Pietrobelli’s book provides an interesting and detailed introduction to the debate.
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The book has evolved from the author’s research work of the 1980s in which he compared two Latin American economies (Chile and Colombia) with two Asian cases (Thailand and South Korea). Chapter 4 is a summary of his comparative work in these four countries on national technological capabilities and manufactured export performance. Before that Pietrobelli analyses the concept of comparative advantage from a neo-classical economist’s viewpoint (chapter 2), culminating in four working hypotheses, and examines the macroeconomic policy framework in Chile between 1974 and 1988 (chapter 3).

The most telling part of Pietrobelli’s analysis is in the comparative framework. His evidence lends further support to the argument that in Chile the lack of intervention by the state in directing the economic process (or governing the market in Wade’s terminology) only allowed Chile to diversify into nontraditional exports based on natural resource endowments. ‘Manufactures requiring longer learning efforts, and riskier investments to acquire the necessary deeper and more varied technological capabilities, were at a disadvantage, and could gain international competitiveness to a smaller extent than elsewhere’ (p. 117). By contrast, in South Korea, government policies provided the incentives for firms to compete through ‘continuous monitoring of performance and compelling inducements to export under the threat of withdrawal of government support’ (p. 118). Compared to East Asian ‘tigers’, Chile has been characterised by a poor record in creating technological capabilities in industry. The present democratic regime in Chile is aware of this problem and has initiated some policies to improve the standard of human skills in the workforce, but this is not dealt with in Pietrobelli’s analysis.

There are two other problems with the Pietrobelli analysis. First, there is no real political economy debate on the role of technology in industrial development. The analysis is very much lodged within the tradition of neo-classical economics, the economist’s term of comparative advantage (CA) being used to cover all national technological advantages of a country in the world economy. A distinction is only made between static CA (natural resource-led) and dynamic CA (technology-led). The analysis does not incorporate the institutional economist’s term of competitive advantage (as a created advantage by state or firm as opposed to a ‘given’ comparative advantage) and does not try to address the difficult conceptual distinction between comparative and competitive advantage in developing countries.

This, of course, is necessary as a basis for the elaborate econometric analysis of the determinants of comparative advantage in manufactured goods in Chile which is recorded in chapter 5. However, the results of these complex econometric analyses confirm other work – that Chile has specialised in industrial products requiring low human technical skills and that its export success has been mainly in the more resource-intensive and physical-capital intensive sectors.

A second problem of the Pietrobelli analysis is its cursory treatment of sectoral studies on technology generation in Chile, particularly given the above conclusion from chapter 5. Thus, chapter 6 goes on to provide a firm-level approach to comparative advantage rather than one based on the key resource-intensive sectors that have been the basis for Chile’s export success in non-traditional exports – agroindustry, forestry and fish. Pietrobelli does not examine the sectors in which the state (despite rhetoric to the contrary) actively intervened in the economic process (as in the forestry sector), and in which more substantial
achievements have been recorded in industrial growth and even technological capability.

However, the Pietrobelli book should be welcomed as a thorough analysis by an economist of the role of technology in developing countries in general and Chile in particular. The analysis manages to introduce significant complexity into the often simplified representation of technological change by economists. The comparative analysis between East Asia and Latin America is particularly useful and adds further fuel to the debate on the role of government in the process of economic change and the national generation of technological capability.


*Costume and Identity* is a book with seven main contributors (including the editor) and the contributions of six Earthwatch teams who worked with a few local assistants. The project undertaken by this large number of researchers was ‘to describe the contemporary daily and fiesta or ceremonial costumes of the indigenous peoples of highland Ecuador, as they relate to ethnic identity’ (p. ix) and also to collect textiles for the Textile Museum, Washington DC.

Chapter 1 consists of a series of brief introductions to the geography and history of highland Ecuador. The following chapter offers a succinct explanation of the natural and synthetic fibres used in Ecuadorian clothing, dyes, spinning and weaving technologies. Next is a chapter on ‘Indigenous Ecuadorian costume’ which provides some historical contextualisation. Chapters 4 to 14 focus on costume, as observed by the many contributors to the project, on a geographical basis. Starting with Otavalo, Imbabura Province, and ending with Cañaro in Loja Province, there follow descriptions of local costume. Typically, women’s dress is considered first, followed by men’s and children’s. Sometimes there is a final section on textile production. Some areas are covered in greater detail than others, e.g. Otavalo, Salasaca in Tungurahua Province, and Pulucate in Central Chimborazo Province, reflecting the research interests of the individual contributors. Other areas are given more superficial treatment and the coverage consists of little more than what seems to have been gained from brief visits to market places where the researchers described the outer garments worn by local people. Hence Salamala or Macas women’s belts were not visible beneath their many shawls nor were the garments of the upper body visible (p. 124–125). Equally, the hairstyle of Llangahua women was not completely visible under their fedora hats (p. 157), and the description is cursory compared with, say, the series of photographs showing four different ways of wearing Otavalo women’s headdress (p. 63), taken by L. Meisch. Moreover, she was able to obtain corroborations for three of these styles from another Otavalo woman (p. 61). This confirmation from other sources is lacking in the descriptions that are based on single sightings.

The book’s title promises to deal with ‘identity’, but the various contributors make it clear that it is ‘indigenous identity’ with which they are interested for the purposes of the publication (pp. 11–12, 41–42, 172). According to M. Schmidt
Nason, ‘costume is the most overt symbol of ethnicity indicating group affiliation’ (p. 104). However, as I read, I became aware that ‘community identity’ is also an issue in at least parts of highland Ecuador; A. P. Rowe informs us (p. 159) that people in Tungurahua Province and in Central Cotopaxi ‘identify primarily by community and not by ethnic group’. I also became aware that many of the black and white photographs and colour plates convey different impressions from those delivered by the written text. The term ‘identity’ can be used in an ambiguous fashion. It has to do with the sense of uniqueness and individuality that make a person different from others, but it also has been extended to refer to group categories, where qualities of sameness are emphasised, as in ‘ethnic identity’. The contributors to Costume and Identity treat ‘indigenous identity’ as a classificatory term that refers either to ethnic or community identity. In contrast, some of the images (plates I, IV, VII, XVI, figures 140, 147 and 231) express the uniqueness and individuality of the persons photographed, as well as their group identity (gender and ethnic or community). With these images, the photographer has managed to capture a sense of both self-identity and of group identity as expressed by the wearer of the costume. Given the host of social factors involved (gender, age, status, religious beliefs, occupation, etc.), it is disappointing that less than one and a half pages were devoted to the concept of ‘indigenous identity’ in chapter 1, and one and half pages in chapter 3. Meisch rightly stresses that Quichua speakers in Ecuador have asserted that the right to wear their own dress is an important aspect of human rights (p. 42), but her assertions that highland Ecuadorian ‘indigenous cultures are relatively egalitarian (among themselves)’ and that costumes reflect ‘the relative equality of men’s and women’s status and work’ (p. 40) requires more contextualisation, particularly given that so many of the contributors insist that women’s dress is more ‘conservative’ than men’s in highland Ecuador.

While some of the photographs are of individual persons whose name is recorded in the caption, other images are of people photographed unawares from behind, and it seems that their permission was not sought by the photographer (plates XI, XIV, figures 154 and 216). These anonymous images are in keeping with the predominant textual style used in the book. One of the main conclusions is that Ecuadorians are using factory-made cloth to express indigenous identity and that there has been a great deal of change in their dress (p. 281). However, most of the text is written in the ethnographic present and people who supplied the information are typically referred to anonymously in the form, ‘one man we talked to...’ (pp. 97–98). There is a disjunction between image and text where individuals are identified in picture captions; María Dolores Ilis is named in figures 75 and 86, but she is ‘the oldest woman [in the family]’ in the text (p. 99).

Weismantel’s comment that ‘only the poorest and least savvy of campesinos wear handwoven clothing in the streets’ (p. 110) is a particularly unhelpful stereotype.

One of the garments to receive considerable attention is the anakan, descended from Inca women’s costume. This consists of a cloth wrapped round the body. There are indications that the colonial Spanish did not consider it to be sufficiently modest, contra a suggestion made by Meisch and Rowe on p. 44 that they did. Throughout the book, contributors comment on differences in the length of this garment, which are said to be due to generation in Cotopaxi (p. 122) and for practical reasons in Mariano Acosta (p. 106). Elsewhere in the Andes, there is historical and ethnographic evidence that the length of women’s
dress is an expression of differing prestige between communities. It is hoped that such factors will be explored in greater depth in a subsequent volume, this book being the first in a planned series of three.

The book is beautifully presented and contains a richly descriptive account of a survey of costume dating mostly from the mid to late 1980s. Its factual content will provide an important reference for future studies on the theme in highland Ecuador.

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Penny Dransart


Although primarily concerned with the rise and fall of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), this is not a chronicle of that movement’s history. Rather it is an attempt to analyse the social configurations in different parts of Peru that help explain how such an apparently dogmatic, authoritarian and bloodthirsty organisation took hold and came seriously to threaten the very existence of the Peruvian state. Although some of this story has been related before, this volume – a set of essays by an impressive array of Peruvian and US scholars – is the first serious attempt to provide a comprehensive interpretation, and as such is a major contribution to both the literature on peasant politics and on contemporary Peru.

Such was the violence perpetrated by Shining Path and the natural revulsion to it, that it has sometimes been difficult for writers – particularly those in Peru – to stand back and take stock of this singular organisation and its effects. Sometimes, it seems, to explain is to understand, and to understand is to begin to empathise. The trauma left by Sendero has made it difficult to see it objectively. Yet, it is inadequate simply to accept that Sendero was a terrorist organisation pure and simple, for were this true it would be difficult to explain how it managed to win control over a large swathe of the country during much of the twelve years (1980–1992) it waged war against the Peruvian state. At the same time, it is also clearly the case that Sendero was not an outgrowth of popular culture; its leaders at least were drawn from a provincial elite and its methods were violent and uncompromising towards those it sought to mobilise.

This book aims to examine the relationship between Sendero and the peoples it sought to control, to understand the nature of the sea as well as the fishes swimming in it. ‘Why’, Stern asks in his introduction ‘did a historically archaic Maoist sect, so at odds with the direction of change among most of the Latin American and Peruvian lefts, prove so able to wage a war, organise a social support base and read the flow of history?’. In order to dispel explanations that tend to highlight enigmas and exoticism, it is necessary to understand the nature of a highly complex and heterogeneous society and its response to a movement such as Sendero. This volume helps us greatly here, covering the various different parts of the country in which Sendero came to exert influence: Ayacucho, Junín, Apurímac, Puno and Lima. It is an odd omission that it leaves out the Alto Huallaga, the main coca and cocaine producing area, and the one area of Peru where Sendero retains a strong residual presence. Sendero’s presence in the Alto
Huallaga gave it access to cash and arms, and its ability to persist there provides an important clue to its success elsewhere: for all its dogmatism and Maoist rhetoric, Sendero's praxis proved remarkably pragmatic in adapting itself to different circumstances.

The book therefore focuses less on Sendero as an organisation – this has already been covered by various authors – and more on the changing nature of Peruvian society, both rural and urban. As the title suggests, it is also about ‘paths’ other than Sendero. It seeks to explain how it was that Sendero helped to snuff out an active left-wing movement (with which Sendero shares a common origin) with its roots in different types of popular organisation. In doing so, this text possibly overstates Sendero’s role in the demise of the ‘legal’ left. As with Peru’s other parties, there were many other reasons for their virtual disappearance from the political scene during the 1990s.

Although divided into five sections, the volume really comprises two parts: the first examines the context in which Sendero developed, both historically and in terms of its main theatres of operations; the second seeks to suggest some of the principle ways in which the war of the 1980s changed the country both socially and politically. As regards the first, the insistence on placing Sendero within a precise historical context provides us with the specificity we need to understand the conditions in Peru that gave rise to such an unusual movement. This historical focus and the multidisciplinary approach to the subject matter are particularly important qualities. In analysing in the second half the wider political effects on such matters as gender politics, the military, the quality of Peruvian democracy, the book is less convincing, entering a wider area of debate and analysis, and straying somewhat from the specificity of the first part.

The book is not only consistently well written (and translated), but organised in such a way as to provide a coherence of interpretation that is relatively rare in a collected edition. Although some chapters are inevitably stronger than others, Stern has gone to great lengths to elicit high minimum standards throughout.

Oxford

John Crabtree


This work by McClintock is a comprehensive and precise examination that combines a fine selection of cases with an excellent analysis of the causal factors of the Salvadorean and Peruvian revolutionary movements. The latter includes the democratic antecedents of both countries and the influence of poverty, education and the United States. The investigation, moreover, relativises the role traditionally assigned to ideological factors.

In the common view, Sendero Luminoso did not constitute an important part of the Latin American insurgency movement. However, its development was such that it became a decisive factor in the development of a new form of authoritarian government with Fujimori. The FMLN of El Salvador was considered by the United States to be the main threat in the expansion of
communism but, in fact, it was to be the guerrilla army that brought about the most important democratic reforms. In some ways then, the FMLN and Sendero Luminoso constituted opposite poles within contemporary Latin American insurgency.

It is loosely possible to divide Latin American revolutionaries into three tendencies: communists, fundamentalists and nationalists. The communist parties were those theoretically very close to Marxism and linked to Soviet politics. For this reason they were the least danger to the system that prevailed in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. Their development largely took place in South America, where there were no triumphant revolutions. Almost all the Communist Parties opposed armed struggle, whilst some actually collaborated with dictators, for example in Argentina and Nicaragua.

The fundamentalists transformed war into an end in itself and utilised a combination of Marxism, religion and campesino culture. This brought about prolonged conflicts involving the use of conservative strategies. Perhaps Colombia, Guatemala and Peru are the most notable examples of this type of revolutionary movement. The guerrillas of Peru and Guatemala were defeated and provoked the strengthening of the military in society. In Colombia they have been able to survive and grow through their links with drug trafficking.

Despite their inevitably ideological nature, nationalist revolutionaries can be characterised by broad political programmes and alliances and aggressive politico-military strategies. These movements provoked the most important revolutions and changes. The most representative of this tendency may be El Movimiento 26 de Julio of Cuba, the Sandinista Front of Nicaragua, the FMLN of El Salvador and the M19 of Colombia. The political discourse and practice of these groups was less ideologically oriented, so that they could adapt and be innovative.

It has been traditional to identify poverty as the cause of revolutionary movements. However, no strong revolutionary movement emerged in Haiti, which is very poor, was a military dictatorship and close to Cuba. In El Salvador, the major development of the FMLN in its initial stage did not take place in the most poor regions, but in the small campesino zones with subsistence economies and populated by conservative, Catholic families. The stable conditions within campesino families and the conflict between the state and the Church, favored revolutionary development much more than in the regions where extreme poverty and the latifundio system prevailed. In these regions, the population was less religious and families more unstable due to the migrations that took place during harvest season.

In El Salvador, the conflict was basically generated by the struggle between agroindustrialists and landowners. This brought about the division of the Catholic Church, the army and the intellectual class, the emergence of the Christian Democratic Party, the realisation of an educational reform at the end of the sixties, and electoral frauds and coups d’etat that included military battles for power, all taking place before the development of the guerrilla. In 1980, as a consequence of this struggle, the army forcefully implemented an agrarian reform. Peace was finally signed in 1992 under the government of Alfredo Cristiani, a representative of the agroindustrial bourgeoisie. The agreement essentially demonstrated the acceptance of the irreversibility of agrarian reform and the end of a military authoritarian agrarian model.
The conflict between these two groups in El Salvador was made more acute by the contradictory changes in United States policy toward Latin America. Under Kennedy, the Alliance for Progress promoted agroindustrialists and reform. Nixon’s National Security Doctrine supported landowners and held back reforms. Under Carter, the doctrine of human rights again prompted changes, supporting a coup d’etat in October 1979 and an agrarian reform in 1980. Finally Reagan’s policy of Low Intensity Warfare, aggravated and extended the conflict.

The struggle between industrialists and landowners and the changes in United States policy provoked the development of the opposition and later the revolutionary movement. The educational reform of the sixties is perhaps the most significant factor in the generation of rebellion amongst the young Christian Democrats that founded the guerrilla in the 1970s. That reform created a conflict between education, opportunities and liberties. McClintock argues that the profound military development of the Salvadorean guerrilla would have been impossible without the high quantity of young campesinos with primary and middle education incorporated into the FMLN. This permitted the use of topographic maps, geometric calculus for artillery, radio communication and cryptography, and raised the level of basic knowledge to allow nursing and the utilisation of portable anti-aircraft missiles. The campesinos of Guatemala and Peru did not have this opportunity.

Only one detail in the text is erroneous. This is the reference to the case of Roque Dalton. In 1975, the leader of the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP) was Sebastián Urquilla, whose legal name was Alejandro Rivas Mira. Urquilla was the founder of the ERP and has not died but now lives outside El Salvador. The author of this review assumed the leadership of the ERP in 1977 and was not responsible for, materially or intellectually, nor linked to this case. However, he has publicly reiterated that the event was a grave error, resulting from ideological fundamentalism, immaturity and verticalism, which were characteristics of revolutionary organisations at that time.


The first objective of Wilson’s book is to overview the political economy of a developing country famous for its welfare state. The second and more important objective is to show how such rules shaped the incentives of parties to adopt neoliberal reforms since the 1982 foreign debt crisis. Wilson’s central contention is that the nature of economic policy, both before and after the early 1980s, and the pace of market-oriented reform cannot be understood without paying attention to electoral laws, executive-legislative relations, the internal organisations of congress and, since 1989, the rulings of the country’s constitutional court.

The emphasis on institutions has a salutary effect. Gone are the claims that ‘Costa Rica is different’ and that its colonial history is responsible for largely pacific resolutions to most conflicts. By looking at the way institutions constrain the behaviour of parties and interest groups, Wilson is able to explain how power
operates in what is a highly institutionalised democracy. Perhaps his most controversial argument is that USAID and multilateral institutions like the World Bank did not foist neoliberal reform on Costa Rica. Sure, Wilson claims, they demanded that state officials roll back three decades of ISI policies. But such arguments cannot account for the ferocity with which neoliberal sectors, even within the social democratic National Liberation Party (PLN), pushed to devalue the currency, to cut subsidies for producers of basic grains, to rid the state of unprofitable companies and to eliminate the nationalised banking monopoly on financial transactions. The author convincingly argues that PLN neoliberals figured out how to take advantage of party splits to build legislative coalitions with like-minded members of the opposition to enact market-friendly reforms.

A few quibbles: there is no roll-call evidence to support the claim that party discipline is weak although, to be fair, there is none to uphold the opposite. Most assembly votes are not recorded in this way because, I suspect, parties and individual legislators do not share an equal interest in accountability. I am also puzzled why Wilson did not rely upon opinion surveys to make sense of electoral behaviour. That voters have preferences and that parties respond to them is a central part of Wilson’s story. Indeed, he argues that winning the support of voters in highly competitive elections has been responsible for the slow pace of neoliberal reform. I suspect that analysis of electoral behaviour would strengthen Wilson’s claim that the social democratic model, while suffering important reversals, will persist because there is a sizable constituency in favour of poverty alleviation. Indeed, by building upon this insight, Wilson could extend his analysis to show whether reelection incentives are the reasons why politicians have postponed taking fiscal measures to reduce interest payments on a public debt that is consuming approximately a third of central state expenditures.

Thanks to Wilson’s research, the English language reader now has a pithy volume on the political economy of modern Costa Rica. This is an indispensable book for all those interested in policy reform in a Third World country unusually committed to progressive social and economic reform.

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Non-fiction books about countries fall roughly into two categories: travel guides and monographs for specialists. While the former are inherently impressionistic and prone to reproduce stereotypes, the latter, by focusing on a specific subject, frequently fail to provide a well-rounded understanding of the country and assume a previous, often extensive, knowledge about it. In between these two extremes there is a glaring gap where the reader would hope to find a comprehensive, informed and sufficiently rigorous introduction to a country, which nevertheless does not aim at proving/disproving a hypothesis and advancing scientific knowledge in any meaningful way. This would be an especially valuable undertaking in the case of Costa Rica, a country largely overlooked by foreign social scientists, despite its widely acknowledged
peculiarity in Latin America. Combining a range of methods, and often crossing the border between the journalistic and the scientific, the Biesanzes have produced a very fine example of such an introductory text. This is not their first attempt on this front. In fact, the roots of this project are to be found in the account of Costa Rican life published by one of the authors back in 1944! Such a long-term association with Costa Rica shows itself in every page and is at the heart of the book’s numerous merits. This connection and a keen anthropological eye have yielded a remarkably subtle and sharp report on Costa Rican culture. Throughout the book’s twelve chapters – ranging from a historical overview to profiles of the economy, political institutions and attitudes towards class, ethnicity, religion, family, leisure, education and community life – the authors provide the reader not only with a quite thorough picture of Costa Rica but also with cultural insights that take years for a foreigner to grasp. The deeply entrenched individualism of Costa Ricans, as well as their overpowering inclination towards social conformity, rejection of conflict at any price, and ambivalent attitudes towards authority, religion, class – and ethnic-based differences, to name but a few traits, are skillfully conveyed in different contexts. Though the authors do not purport to defy any conventional scientific knowledge about Costa Rica, they nevertheless challenge, in a forceful yet non-judgmental manner, some strongly held myths that have shaped the country’s self-perception. They dispel effectively the widespread legend that Costa Rica is a white, classless and deeply cultivated society – notions that stem from a questionable reading of the country’s history and its tendency to compare itself with its less-than-fortunate Central American neighbors. Thus, chapters 5, on class and ethnicity, and 9, on education, are particularly good.

There are a few shortcomings in the book. Besides the occasional factual mistake (for instance, that Supreme Court magistrates are appointed for six years rather than eight [p. 67]) and the rather baroque description of houses and everyday routines among different social classes in chapter 7, my main criticism of the book is its inadequate treatment of economic matters, often conveying too simple a picture of the country’s recent economic evolution. The authors seem to place a heavy responsibility on the ongoing Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) for changing the face of Costa Rica. This interpretation is, however, more stated than demonstrated. They repeatedly assert that poverty and income distribution have significantly worsened as a result of SAP during the 1980s and 1990s. The most recent figures, released as part of the long-term UNDP-sponsored project State of the Nation in Sustainable Human Development (from which the book would have greatly benefited), point towards a more complex reality in which social figures have improved in the last few years, in some cases completing a long recovery from the crisis of the early 1980s. Thus, contrary to what the book states, the proportion of families living below the poverty line decreased in 1992–1996, from 29.4 per cent to 21.6 per cent; public social expenditure per capita rose 22% in real terms in 1987–1997, including a 42 per cent hike in education outlays; and the ratio of the income of the richest and the poorest deciles of the population moved from 34:1 in 1987 to 25:1 ten years later. The suspect treatment of SAPs and their consequences is, however, relatively unimportant, for the text is still successful in transmitting the image of a country undergoing fast and wide-ranging changes, the causes of which pre-date and go well beyond SAPs. The clearest impression left by the book is, indeed, of a
country amidst an unsettling modernisation process, ceasing to be a pastoral society and at pains to preserve an identity in a globalised world, from which it has been relatively secluded in the past. Modernisation – as seen in the uncontrolled growth of San José, the erosion of the traditional family, the fast inclusion of women in the workforce – is modifying the country’s self-image, deepening in the process many of the social and geographical cleavages that the book so deftly uncovers.

The above-mentioned weaknesses take little away from this excellent work. In the book’s final pages the authors state that foreign investment ‘can also contribute greatly to development if these investors understand the country’s history and culture and if Ticos strengthen their own traditional allegiance to such values as equality, education, and democracy’ (p. 285). Being the Costa Rican son of an immigrant I can confidently say that this book is a valuable resource that will shed light on Costa Rica’s national traits and facilitate precisely the kind of cultural understanding the authors encourage.

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KEVIN CASAS-ZAMORA


These three edited volumes on Central America (limited to the five northern countries, to the exclusion of Belize and Panama) appear at an opportune moment. After the violent and economically destructive decade of the 1980s, Central America is now at peace. This is, therefore, a particularly good time to take stock of the major efforts that have and are being made to restructure the economies and polities of the region. The effort was developed by the Social Science Research Council under the leadership of Victor Bulmer-Thomas and funded by the Ford Foundation. The research generated four conferences/workshops, held in Central America and Mexico, apparently all in 1997, and these three volumes, all published in the first half of 1998. Researchers looking for a comprehensive and high quality summary of the state of the art of our knowledge on Central America up through the early to mid 1990s need look no further than these volumes.

The first two volumes concentrate on economic issues, while the third on social/political. As such, the first two volumes are far more empirically based, and contain the most extensive use of statistics and econometrics. While all three volumes are well-focused, the Funkhouser and Pérez Sáinz volume on the labor market and poverty in Central America has the advantage of using a common database for all articles, the multi-purpose household surveys conducted in each country in the region. Each chapter focuses on a different country, but each uses these same surveys as their basis. These surveys provide a wealth of social, demographic and economic information that is woefully underexploited. These studies cover similar ground and provide similar tables, allowing for comparison
across the five countries. It would be ideal if the SSRC project could go one more step and make the raw data sets available to the scholarly community. The growing data archive of the Central American Population Program (PCP) at the University of Costa Rica would make an ideal depository for this material.

One example of the use to which this comparative data can be put is to examine the impact of structural adjustment policy at the level of the individual. Funkhouser and Pérez Sáinz begin their very enlightening introduction to their volume with the statement that poverty has been a central feature of the modernisation process in Central America. Yet, an examination of the tables in the individual country chapters shows that the non-poverty sector in Guatemala increased from 21 per cent to 27 per cent, in Honduras from 23 per cent to 29 per cent, and in Costa Rica from 64 per cent to 78 per cent. Only in Nicaragua did poverty increase; the non-poverty proportion of the population fell from 54 per cent to 38 per cent, while in El Salvador it remained unchanged at 57 per cent.

The increase in poverty in Nicaragua was to be expected, given the first measurement occurred in 1985 and the second in 1993, a time during which the ‘Contra War’ was severely affecting the economy. These findings suggest that economic restructuring seems to have accompanied a diminution of poverty in most cases. The abundance of data presented in these chapters, along with the extensive statistical appendix to the volume, allows readers to draw their own conclusions. One can only hope that more of this kind of analysis will be conducted in the future as more recent household surveys are already available for most countries in the region.

The volume on Central American regional economic integration, edited by Bulmer-Thomas, is also data-rich. Those new to the Central American area might be surprised to learn just how successful the Central American Common Market once was, and how much progress has been made in reactivating it now that peace has returned to the region. Bulmer-Thomas’ summary introductory chapter not only reviews the institutional history of the regional integration scheme, it also presents data showing that intra-regional trade more than doubled in the period 1990–1996. These same data also show, however, that the contribution of Honduras and Nicaragua to the Market is minimal compared to the other countries, suggesting that once again the integration effort might flounder because of its widely differing benefits. A fascinating analysis by Fernando Rueda-Junquera of the costs and benefits of regional trade in the agricultural area shows that even though Honduras and Nicaragua are the poorest countries and should have the highest comparative advantage in the production and export of basic grains, they do not, and that small farmers in general in the region can be expected to pay a high cost for the integration effort. Moreover, intra-regional trade as a proportion of all trade had levelled off by 1992 and showed no increase by 1996. Costa Rica, never fully committed to a Central America ‘solution’, has been seeking to gain admission to NAFTA, which would seriously weaken the effort to establish a common external tariff in the region. Further challenges noted by Bulmer-Thomas include the failure to develop a deep commitment to Central American institutions, such as the Central American Parliament, from which Costa Rica has remained aloof. The individual chapters expand upon these themes, including an entire section (consisting of three chapters) of the volume dedicated to regional institutions. The overall summary provided by Rodolfo Cerdas is especially worth reading.
The final volume of the series, *Citizenship and Social Policy*, is less useful than the other two, largely because a good chunk of the volume is dedicated to essays unrelated to Central America. Of the four parts into which the volume is divided, only the last contains papers that are exclusively focused on Central America. Two other essays, one on social investment funds and another on decentralisation, found in other sections of the book, also look directly at Central America. A paper by Juan Pablo Pérez Sáenz, while looking at Central America, seems misplaced, as it focuses on the labour market, the theme of volume one. Further weakness of this volume is that, unlike the first two, the approach here is largely descriptive. A common database could and should have been used, as it was in the labour market and poverty volume. For example, considerable survey data now exist for the region (Latinbarometer and other surveys) that could have examined the impact of social policy at the level of the individual. This is especially ironic in light of the well developed introductory essay by Fernando Filgueira, which begins with a firm exhortation to Latin Americans to focus more on the empirical US model of social research than the French ‘essayist’ tradition so popular in much of Latin America. Perhaps the fact that, alone among the three volumes, the organising conference was held in Mexico rather than Central America, is responsible for this lack of exclusive focus on the region.

Taken together, these three volumes are essential for anyone interested in Central America. Much of the economic scholarship presented here is first rate, and should serve as a model for future work in the field.

*University of Pittsburgh*

**Mitchell A. Seligson**


In this new book about Central American economic integration, Bulmer-Thomas continues an analysis that began with his doctoral thesis, addressing the economic history of the region. Since then, his work has included a number of investigations and publications of great value. This book, a collection of six articles published between 1984 and 1997, includes one unpublished article and a case study of the impact of the Generalized System of Preferences on Central American exports written together with Fernando Rueda Junquera in 1994. The study seeks to understand the peripheral experience of economic integration in the Central American region by locating this experience within the new process of economic development, characterised by the strengthening of capitalist relations on an international scale.

In the first chapter the author briefly summarises the history of Central American integration, emphasising the recent process by which the external debt, the expansion of internal conflicts within the Central American nations, and the strategy of economic growth based on exportation to third countries led to a crisis for regional integration. The relative political and economic stability that grew out of the signing of the Esquipulas II Peace Treaty proposed by the Arias Sánchez administration of Costa Rica, has allowed for the re-emergence of conditions that might promote a new process of integration. Nevertheless, this new project must take into consideration the fact that it is now the expansion of
exports and the increase in external trade that must drive economic growth and capital accumulation. The previous framework of regional integration, which was defined through a developmentalist project or import substitution, must then be readjusted in such a way as to contribute to the opening of national economies.

In the following three chapters, the author investigates the principal economic and institutional conditions in the countries of the Isthmus, as well as those that have developed during or out of the process of integration, with the objective of proposing a series of recommendations directed toward the reconstruction of Central American economic integration.

In first place, the author concludes that the model must redirect its productive structure toward the satisfaction of internal demand through the application of economic policy instruments that set favourable conditions for the development of a productive base for export-oriented goods. But unlike the conditions set by International Financial Organisations that have promoted such projects through structural adjustment loans, the author suggests a trade liberalisation that is differentiated according to sectors. This would imply the recognition of social and political costs that governments will have to know how to confront. The liberalisation must also be gradual, in order that the costs of its application can be adjusted to and dealt with by degree. The opening, therefore, must be ‘complementary’ to the strengthening of intra-regional trade set within the framework of a customs union, so that each process can, in turn, promote and stimulate the other.

In second place, one of the salient features of the investigation is a severe criticism of the entities and institutions of integration, particularly regarding those instituted by the recent ‘Summit of Presidents’. This is due to the fact that the accords reached at the summit cannot be carried out by subordinate institutions. Among the causes of this lack of coordination are ‘the failure of the Presidents not to consult widely their own countries before taking decisions at the summit, the lack of clarity or consistency in the decisions taken, the absence of mechanisms to transform the presidential decisions into operational rules at the national level’ (p. 222). The author clearly reveals the inadequate regional institutional framework for ensuring that the agreements reached by the numerous political entities within the accords are carried out. He proposes a trimming down of these entities and the application of internationally recognised procedures, such as obligatory arbitration and the judicial resolution of disputes as a way of ensuring compliance with the signed accords and increasing credibility in the integration process.

Finally, the book proposes a strategy of international trade for the region, based on compliance with and defence of existing commercial treaties in the framework of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, the improvement of existing relations with the European Union and the vigorous development of trade treaties with the rest of the world, particularly Mexico and the South American Caribbean region.

The book is a useful instrument through which to understand and analyse the state of Central American integration after the armed conflicts and economic crisis of the 1980s and within the framework of the process of world-wide capitalist integration.

*Universidad de Costa Rica*

*Sergio Reuben Soto*

After the publication in 1974 of *The Urban Poor of Puerto Rico*, I was invited to give a talk on the book at the University of Puerto Rico. Though generally appreciative, Puerto Rican intellectuals were indignant at my suggestion that the urban poor maintained a stronger sense of Puerto Rican national identity than the elite, chiefly because the poor had fewer resources to buy the latest fashions, or sample North American food or music, which in the Puerto Rico of the 1950s (when the data were collected) were not as pervasive as they are now.

Lillian Guerra’s book, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico*, helped me to understand the depth of their indignation. Puerto Rican intellectuals assumed that they spoke for all the Puerto Rican people, while Guerra distinguishes clearly between elite and popular class conceptions of national identity. Though the elite transformed the Puerto Rican *jibaro* or peasant into a national image, she argues that they fashioned him to serve their own interests. The white, masculine, Spanish-based *jibaro* image served to counter US hegemony, while his country-bumpkin passivity and illiteracy also made the popular classes seem less threatening to the elites’ own shaky position in a newly established US colonial society. The popular classes shared in the *jibaro* as a symbol of *puertorriqueñidad*, because it helped legitimise their view that the Puerto Rican poor were the nation. However their views of national identity, as Guerra shows, were charged with class consciousness and indignation over elite colonial collaboration. Among the poor, class solidarity overrode race hierarchies that were sharper among the elite, but both shared a very patriarchal view of women.

In the face of US portrayals of Puerto Ricans as poor, dark and infantile, the white, masculine image of the *jibaro*, constructed primarily by the elite, became a nationalistic symbol subscribed to by all. Though coastal land was concentrated into US-owned sugar plantations and even the highland *jibaro* was gradually proletarianised, US colonial authorities promoted the education and welfare of women and the poor, developing schools and public health services, and giving women the vote and jobs in the home needlework industry (later transformed into the garment industry under Operation Bootstrap). I was amused to see the existing threat that gainfully employed women posed to men’s authority already present in the early twentieth century, demonstrating the degree to which male authority has rested on the breadwinner role. From the perspective of the popular classes, US colonialism was preferable to Spanish colonialism, and could be accommodated to their concept of the Puerto Rican nation, while the elite pined for their privileged position in the world they had lost. Now that the *jibaro* has vanished from Puerto Rican society, his image among urban workers has changed from derision to reverence for a simpler, less alienated life style.

The book has its flaws. Guerra’s excellent analysis of discourse among the elite covers much of the early twentieth century, but among the popular classes it is largely confined to Mason’s single extensive rural folklore collection of 1914. It might have been better to present the popular class version first and then show how the elite manipulated it to their own ends, rather than vice versa. Her analysis could have profited from fuller contextual references to forces shaping Puerto Rican history in the early twentieth century, particularly the impact on class
consciousness of the Socialist Party and a burgeoning labour movement among the rural proletariat. Puerto Rican scholars may be slighted not only by her devastating portrait of the intellectual elite, but by comparatively few references to their own publications, especially well-known writers on national identity such as Arcadio Díaz Quiñones, Eduardo Seda Bonilla, Frank Bonilla and Kelvin Santiago. Despite these limitations, Guerra’s book should be read by those interested in the formation of national identity under colonialism, of which Puerto Rico is but one poignant example.

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The author rightly draws attention to a conundrum in Cuban historiography, which is that, in a society which has had a strong working class history and a self-proclaimed worker-peasant revolution, labour history has been under-researched. He also rightly asserts that, with some notable exceptions, much of what we do have is teleological and ideologically bound, though he overstates his case, and repeatedly so. However, regaling us with a nuanced history of a crucial formative period for Cuban labour, which was also one for Cuban nationhood, would be credit enough, were this not an important, interpretative book in more ways than one.

The ‘introduction’ is crafted to set the scene. Casanovas ‘seeks to uncover how working-class Cubans sought to change their lives in the context of the transition from slave to free labour and of the fluctuations of Spanish rule’ (p. 1). His contention is that ‘Nineteenth-century colonial society and the slave system sharply divided Cuba’s inhabitants by race and by origin (primarily a division between Spaniards and creoles). In Cuba these two sources of division were so intense that, until the last decades of the century, they outweighed class or gender’ (p. 1). He sets out to answer three historiographical questions: (i) ‘the relationship between juridically free workers and slaves in Cuban urban centers and the consequences of this relationship for the labour movement’ (p. 5), (ii) ‘what historical circumstances led urban popular classes to adopt particular ideologies and tactics to change social and political conditions’ (p. 6), and (iii) ‘the role of urban labour in the evolution of Spanish colonism in Cuba’ (p. 12). The book as a whole is structured around all three questions, but it is organised chronologically, such that, on the author’s own account, the first two chapters on the pre-1860 period are tailored more to question (i); chapters 3 to 7, taking us through the 1860s, The Ten Years’ War of 1868–1878, and the post-war and post-emancipation 1880s, engage most particularly with question (ii); and chapters 8 and 9 on the 1890s especially address question (iii).

When it comes to question (i) and race and gender, Casanovas’ study is somewhat patchy. He relies more on Cuban archival sources that have, for the most part, been consulted before, in addition to clever use of a wide range of
secondary sources by Cuban scholars, as well as scholars of Cuba, especially from the United States. While establishing some key parameters surrounding the thus-far-documented, primarily white-male, early labour action, organisation and leadership, he fails to unearth major new archival sources or engage with some of the more recent historiographical studies that evidence and lend voice to the history of Afro-Cuban (black and mulatto) thinking and action. We are as yet, it has to be said, even further from a gendered labour history for this, or any other period; and such a history will no doubt be highly interlaced with that of race.

The great strength of Casanovas’ work lies in how he has drawn on a wealth of archival material, especially in Spain, to provide detailed accounts of twists and turns in Spanish colonial policy, and how they related to developments within the urban labouring classes. He succeeds in graphically bringing out the sharp differences between peninsulares and creoles, among elite and subaltern classes, up until the 1880s and 1890s, when his study really comes into its own, and when, he argues, the mobilisation of all urban popular classes became a major force for separatism and social and political change. This, in itself, challenges national elite histories.

While not explicitly setting out to do so, his book also challenges a narrowly national history. One of the most fascinating aspects of this, and other recent studies, is that of the links between colonial, island and emigré labour history, and the extent to which island history, while needing to be studied in its own right, at the same time cannot be studied in isolation. Casanovas argues convincingly against seeing the ideologies that gained foothold in Cuba, especially anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, as solely Spanish imports, and yet the internationalism of labour, just as much as commerce or political power, should not be underestimated. In many respects, the Cuban labour history documented in this book – primarily, though not exclusively, that of Havana and western Cuba – was more integrally related with that of emigré Cuban labour history in Florida than it was with the far less urbanised eastern part of Cuba. It is to be hoped that, in this context and beyond – New York and, it might be added, the surrounding Caribbean and Central American region, as well as Spain, Africa, China, Britain or any other country from which labour, either forced or voluntary, originated – new histories of Cuba will emerge, building on the excellent work in this study.

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Jean Stubbs


In defining the ground to be covered by this book, the author faced immense difficulties. Five hundred years is a long period to deal with within the compass of 213 pages of narrative (over a third of the book is given over to footnotes and three excellent indexes). And the range of territories, from Guiana to the Bahamas, from Belize to Bermuda, is no less formidable. Ten of the book’s eleven chapters once formed the core of the author’s doctoral thesis. In one additional chapter of thirty pages, we are given a very condensed account of developments in what’s called ‘the late colonial period, 1870–1962’. It is all very patchy.
The best parts of this book deal with the earlier period when there was a much greater degree of uniformity across the region. The ‘Spanish Catholic monopoly’ is well treated. Bartolomé de Las Casas, deservedly remembered by history as defender of the indigenous peoples of the New World, may have a less glorious record on the question of the slave trade which brought so many Africans across the Atlantic ocean. Indeed, he believed that they could cope with heavy plantation labour better than the Indians and should, therefore, be expected to do so. Dayfoot shows how the Catholic Church dealt more inclusively with slaves than did the later Anglican Church. It offered them baptism and some catechetical instruction whereas, for the protestants, such ministrations might undermine the very basis of slavery as an institution. Once you start treating slaves as human beings it is harder to continue considering them merely as chattels, as Anglo-Americans discovered when blacks were finally enlisted to fight in the Civil War.

All kinds of people walk on to the Caribbean stage in the course of its kaleidoscopic history. This book offers fascinating vignettes of the Irish, Jews, Puritans, Huguenots, Quakers, Calvinists, buccaneers and privateers. It also tears itself away from the rigid requirements of its narrative to offer occasional colourful descriptions. The way the island of St Christopher was divided between the French and English, for example, and the consequences of this arrangement for the pastoral care of Irish Catholics (living in the English sector) and Protestant Huguenots (working under the French flag), is truly engaging.

Dayfoot is at his splendid best in showing how the Anglican church served the interests of the planters throughout the period while more liberal forces were campaigning for the abolition of the slave trade and, indeed, of slavery itself. The colonial Church, whose oversight lay in the hands of the bishop of London, developed a local autonomy around parish and vestry officials which resulted in a congregational (rather than episcopal) model of church. This allowed a fierce resistance to develop towards the Quakers, Baptists, Moravians and Methodists who eventually arrived. After all, the vast majority of their church members were drawn from the slave populations. Only in the 1820s, with the creation of local bishoprics, did the Anglican Church take its proper place within an increasingly pluralistic scene.

On the whole, this book offers a catalogue of the treaties, formal arrangements, royal decrees and metropolitan struggles which affected the way the Christian Church developed in the Caribbean. There is not nearly enough about the nature or the experience of those who formed the church on the ground. There is little history from below. And it all feels like a history manufactured outside the region and imposed on the emerging societies of the Caribbean basin. When I read (p. 172) a sentence that began ‘The outstanding missionary…’. I groaned. I wanted fewer missionaries and more local voices.

There are some infelicitous details. The maps are a little too general. One, of Barbados, appears within a chapter dealing with the seventeenth century. Yet it shows churches and parishes that could only have come into being much later. The map carries no date to help the reader. There are only two references to Haiti and both are wrong. When we are told (p. 95) that in 1723 the total white population of the West Indies amounted to 36,695, it would have been most enlightening to know that there were 176,966 blacks. This information does appear in a footnote but it screamed out to be included in the text.

The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century brought a large number of
missionary societies to the Caribbean. But that was as nothing compared to the
sects, cults, churches and other religious groupings which have flowed into the
area, mainly from the United States of America, in the course of this century.
Inevitably, it gets harder and harder to hold the narrative together under the
pressure of this diversity and the increasing pressures that were to produce such
a fragmented society when colonialism came to its end. This book makes a brave
attempt to cover what I suspect is far too diverse and demanding a subject.

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Mark T. Gilderhus, The Second Century: US–Latin American Relations since
1889 (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1999), pp. xvi + 282, $55.00, $21.95 pb.

The Second Century, of course, refers to the second century of US foreign policy
starting from the Washington Administration – the period from 1889 to 1989. As
this suggests, the book is not so much a study of US–Latin American relations
as a diplomatic history of US relations with Latin America. As with all other
works of its kind it depends heavily on a literature dominated by the massive
scholarship of the United States, but its analysis of that literature, paradoxically,
shows up how far that scholarship is also dominated by US controversies. US
diplomatic history, itself a product of the twentieth century, was long dominated
by the traditional nationalist perspectives of Samuel Flagg Bemis and Thomas A.
Bailey. Sadly, as with other branches of US scholarship, its critics discovered
Marxism precisely at the moment at which its limitations were becoming all too
obvious and the other major strand of indigenous US thought, Wilsonian
idealism, suffered in consequence. Above all, and unlike political science and
international relations, US diplomatic history remains state-centric. It remains
very much a study of who did what to whom and is surprisingly little influenced
as yet by notions such as hegemony, interdependence, reverse influence, regime
theory, multilateralism or the anarchical society.

Mark T. Gilderhus, a distinguished diplomatic historian who holds the
Lyndon Baines Johnson Chair at Texas Christian University, starts his story in
1889 with the opening of the first Pan American Conference and ends in fact with
the launch of NAFTA in 1994. The book is clear and well-written. It covers all
major controversies between the US and Latin American states during the period
and will certainly serve as a useful introduction to the field for student use.
However, it is very much centred on the United States and has two quirks which
could present problems. On the one hand, its origin as a series of lectures
becomes more and more plain every time the author gives yet another precis of
a key text. On the other, the author himself shows a disconcerting tendency to
duck out of a personal view at the last moment, especially as we get closer to the
present. To take the most obvious example: one of the key issues in recent
US–Latin American relations, US responsibility or otherwise for the fall of
Allende in 1973, is dismissed in one brief paragraph which is a masterpiece of
obscurity. We can certainly agree with its view that the issue tests the capacity of
scholars ‘to tolerate high levels of ambiguity, uncertainty and contradiction’ (p.
201), but it would be nice to know what the author thought had actually
happened.
A more fundamental criticism of the traditional US-centric format is that it becomes all but impossible to make out continuities in Latin American foreign policies or indeed in places what the Latin Americans themselves were thinking or doing. As it happens, classified material relating to the Pinochet coup has recently emerged and is indeed freely available on the Web. But, of course, it still tells the story through US eyes, even if they are a different set of eyes. Though the two great strengths of his book are that Professor Gilderhus has tried hard to be fair and has been assiduous in balancing different US perspectives against one another. Paradoxically, in addressing a primarily US college audience, he has, no doubt unintentionally, relegated the Latin Americans themselves to walk-on parts in the grand drama of America’s rise to world power. Given the often considerable difficulties, it is still not easy to conduct genuine archival research in many Latin American countries – Mexico is an exception, not the rule. In any case a text of this kind must necessarily depend in the main on the primary research of others, and there are now a lot more books and articles by Latin American scholars available than are listed in the footnotes here. To have made them known to a new generation of college students would in itself have been a valuable service to better international relations.

PETER CALVERT


This book compares the origins and consequences of economic development strategies in East Asia and Latin America over the past two decades. The comparison is handled from the theoretical, case study and comparative standpoints. Intellectually, the work is situated in the body of literature inspired by the World Bank’s Asian Miracle Report of 1993 but before the Asian crash of late-1997. After the first part of the book in which the main issues of the state versus market-led growth debate are reiterated, the substantive chapters examine the experiences of Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia. The orientation of the volume is to reinforce the existing arguments about the policy choices and institutional capacities that underlie the superiority of the Asian experience in terms of both growth and equity. As such it belongs to the tradition of comparative political economy literature pioneered in the 1980s by the likes of Haggard, Nelson, Gereffi and Wyman, and others.

For a volume this size, the thematic coverage is very wide. Apart from giving the reader a condensed background into the evolution of current development strategies, the main policy components and social consequences of those strategies are discussed. The beacon of neo-liberal reform, Chile, is given considerable attention in this volume. As the essays by Mizala, Budnevich and Morandé, and Hosono all reveal, the Chilean neo-liberal experiment achieved sustained non-inflationary growth at a very high social cost, and that the credit for improvements in this area is due to the post-1990 democratic administrations and not the military regime. Another very important theme touched on in this volume is the impact of the deepening integration with international finance brought on
by economic liberalisation. The sensitivity of the fledgling liberalised economies to financial shocks (the 1994–5 peso crisis resulting in a severe contraction in Mexico’s GDP) is discussed in the chapter by McCleery. The volume does not discount the compatibility of neo-liberal policies with the attainment of social development goals but emphasises the importance of the political setting in which neo-liberalisation occurs (as seen from the contrasting experiences of Chile and Brazil since democratisation).

The main thrust of the volume is that the East Asian brand of developmentalism has proved more successful than the Latin American in achieving both economic and social objectives, and that there is scope for pro-active state action even within broadly liberal economic confines. With hindsight, it is easy to see that the latent fragilities of rapidly liberalising Asian financial systems were underestimated in this volume. Even without reference to post-1997 events, however, it is possible to discern basic weaknesses in the volume’s treatment of Asia. The title reference to East Asia is rather misleading given the absence of coverage of societies usually associated with this designation, notably Taiwan, Japan (the precursor to the Korean model), coastal China and Hong Kong. The judgements about the successes of Korean industrial policy in fostering a competitive and autonomous industrial base (chapter by Saavedra-Rivano) were already being questioned by Korean and external critics (e.g. Bernard and Ravenhill in World Politics 1995) well before the outbreak of the 1997 crisis but do not appear to have been taken on board in this volume. The economic and social instabilities of the Korean model are discussed in the chapter by Yeom but the empirical evidence stops at 1991, well before the concerted attempts to counteract business power beginning in 1993. The chapters on Malaysia and Indonesia, lean heavily on the side of stability and regime maintenance – a judgement, which in Indonesia’s case, now looks decidedly dated. Given the emphasis on institutions and socio-political factors in economic success, it is surprising that the interaction between the bumiputra state and Chinese economic elites is not explicated more fully (chapter by Arif and Zainal-Abidin).

On balance, the editors have put together a useful collection of papers which provides a solid introduction the comparative political economy of East Asia and Latin America. Although some of the assessments have been called into question by the recent Asian Economic crisis, the comparative orientation of the volume and its diversity of themes and case studies mean that it can still be read with profit as background to the latest debates.

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