Reviews


For about two decades David Henige has submitted to textual scrutiny the studies of scholars who have ventured into the field of estimating aboriginal populations. Often his criticism has been highly personalised and at times offensive. Anyone familiar with Henige’s work will know what to expect.

The broad aim of this book is to demonstrate the difficulties of using numerical data in history. In *Numbers from Nowhere* Henige attempts to demonstrate the misuse of numbers by focusing on the debate over the size of the Native American population in 1492. He starts from the premise that making any meaningful estimates is impossible. The volume comprises twenty-one short essays and is divided into two parts. The first deals with concepts, procedures and the results of research by those he calls ‘High Counters’. The second is a collection of essays each of which takes up a particular issue, such as the use of rhetoric, the interpretation of archaeological evidence, the possibility of epidemic disease arriving ahead of Europeans, the translation of individual words, the effect of flight and migration and the dangers of extrapolation. Rather than discuss each of these very real issues in a constructive way, his approach is to select one or two scholars whose work exemplifies the issue and detail what he perceives to be their ‘sins’. Woodrow Borah, Sherburne F. Cook, N. David Cook, Henry Dobyns, Ann Ramenofsky, Pierre Clastres and myself come in for particular comment, but few scholars escape Henige’s vitriolic pen.

Central to his argument is the concept of High Counters. These are defined as people who have ‘consistently and insistently arrived at numbers that are higher, sometimes by orders of magnitude, than those that appeared in earlier works on the subject’ (p. 7). What is meant by earlier? Some early estimates are considerably higher than more recent ones, for example, those of Sapper, Spinden and Rivet earlier this century, to say nothing of Bartolome de las Casas. Labelled as a High Counter myself, my estimates for Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador and Amazonia are not consistently higher or lower than earlier ones. In essence the concept of High Counters is not very helpful because, as Henige admits, it includes most of those who have ‘put numbers’ to the inhabitants of the Americas in 1492. In the end the High Counters become little more than a group of scholars with whom he wishes to take issue.

According to Henige, numbers and arithmetical procedures have ‘become icons, indeed almost idols’ for the High Counters, who are imbued among other things with ‘class solidarity’ and ‘a militant sense of mission’ (pp. 3–4). This is a gross misrepresentation of what is an extremely diverse field. Very few scholars have worked exclusively on estimating aboriginal populations and even fewer are interested in numbers per se. Rather, most have been drawn into the field because
population size is an integral part of social and economic change and a barometer by which the impact of colonial rule can be measured. What scholars have attempted to do is derive broad orders of magnitude that are continually evaluated and refined through further research. I know of no one in the field who believes that it is possible to estimate aboriginal populations precisely; it would appear that Henige is the one who is obsessed by numbers, not the High Counters.

Henige’s view is that all High Counters are driven by some unspecified ulterior motive and ride rough-shod over the evidence. I would not dispute that on occasions researchers have been insufficiently rigorous in their evaluation and contextualisation of the evidence and that they have sometimes made untenable assumptions. However, to attribute such ‘sins’ to most scholars in the field, makes him guilty of the same ‘fetish for extrapolation’ with which he charges the High Counters. Moreover it does a great injustice to the labours of many dedicated scholars, who in their diligent search for ‘the truth’, have often combined exhaustive archival research with the judicious use of other sources including archaeological, ecological and medical evidence, sources to which Henige pays relatively little attention. The numbers certainly do not, as the title of the book implies, come from ‘nowhere’.

Henige’s testimony of the ‘sins’ committed by the High Counters is also highly selective and in some cases has little or no foundation. He quotes sentences and even single words that illustrate his point while conveniently ignoring or consigning to a footnote qualifying statements in the same texts. His comment that High Counters, ‘insist that the Indians always paid tribute and taxes in the amount assessed’ (p. 305) is manifestly absurd. Meanwhile Henige eschews the need to scrutinise the Low Counters, because although he admits that there is no a priori reason why lower estimates should be correct, he finds these more acceptable since they make fewer assumptions or require explanations beyond the sources. This is surely an untenable position for someone so critical of the methods used by High Counters.

No scholarly work should be exempt from scrutiny and Henige has some serious points to make. However, his selective reading of the literature and his negative criticism, often unjustified, contributes little towards an understanding of the major changes that were associated with the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. Perhaps this is why, as he complains, his work has not stemmed the tide of research into the size of contact populations and is unlikely to do so in the future.

King’s College London

Linda A. Newson

Steven C. Topik, Trade and Gunboats: The United States and Brazil in the Age of Empire (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. viii + 301, £37.50.

Stephen Topik marshals an impressive array of sources in Brazil, France, Great Britain, Mexico and the United States to provide the best analysis to date on Brazil–US relations in the late-nineteenth century. Topik argues that the drive for
Pan-Americanism, debates over the McKinley Tariff, and the Blaine–Mendonça Accord were pushed by public and private individuals who feared Europe’s imperial advance and who hoped for personal gain. He makes clear, however, that in neither Brazil nor the United States was there universal acclaim for closer ties. National and international economics and politics influenced supporters and opponents of an entente between the two countries.

US proponents of a Brazil–US accord feared that Europe’s economic and territorial expansion at the end of the nineteenth century threatened the nation’s self-view of uniqueness as the “city on a hill” to which all nations could and should aspire. Moreover, the country’s commercial future was in danger if European imperialism shut markets for US agricultural and industrial production. US expansion in South America offered a means of disposing surplus production, and dampening labour militancy, both of which weakened profits. An economy strengthened by expansion into foreign markets would also subdue the growing political power of organised labour and the anarchists, which could lead to class warfare and upset the established social order. British–US rivalry in South America added an extra, though not predominant, dimension to the argument for closer ties.

Opponents of closer trade relations with Brazil felt protectionism through high tariffs would reverse the economic malaise affecting the United States. High tariffs, it was argued, not only ensured the survival of US agriculture and industry but helped increase wages for labour. The argument was not new, but in the 1890s the protectionist McKinley Tariff and reciprocal trade structured debate over US economic expansion. Topik shows that US expansionism was about trade and not territory, and that it grew out of domestic political considerations more than international rivalries.

The same situation in Brazil conditioned debate on closer ties with the United States. Internal political conflict and, to a lesser degree, external problems drove considerations of such a relationship, particularly for the supporters of an accord. Protected access to the US market, especially for sugar, could help stabilise the national economy and, therefore, help consolidate the republic in a critical period, as became clear when the 1893 naval revolt against President Floriano Peixoto threatened to topple the government. US support had the added benefits of aiding Brazil in international boundary disputes and of acting as a counterweight to British influence. For supporters, these were powerful incentives for alignment, and a reciprocal trade agreement seemed to offer the best means of achieving their goals.

Closer relations with the United States were not championed by all in Brazil. Some agricultural and industrial interests objected because a trade deal seemed to hurt their economic interests. Others opposed any arrangement that weakened the relationship between Brazil and England and that might strengthen the current government.

In detailing the roles played by James G. Blaine, Charles Flint, and Salvador de Mendonça in securing the Blaine–Mendonça Accord, Topik shows how the line between political and private gain often blurred. Blaine received his due in fostering Pan-Americanism and reciprocity but most of the credit for the accord goes to Mendonça, Brazil’s Minister to the United States, and Flint, an enigmatic entrepreneur and sometime diplomat with ties in Latin America and Washington. Both were instrumental in organising, with US connivance, a mercenary naval
fleet officered by members of the US navy that insured the survival of the Peixoto government.

According to Topik, despite the trade agreement and closer relations, there is no evidence of Brazilian deference to the United States. Pragmatic Brazilian nationalism muted any imperialistic urges of the United States. Nor did the accord benefit either country to the degree expected. Overall trade grew, but the percentage of market shares remained stable. The rewards the principal actors expected also failed to materialise; Blaine did not ride the deal to the White House, Flint failed to create his Brazilian empire, and Mendonça did not achieve crowning recognition for his efforts.

In this volume Stephen Topik answers critics who complain that studies of international affairs suffer from unilinear national perspectives. Approaching his examination of Brazil–US relations through the lens of comparative political economy, Topik sheds light on greater inter-American relations during the nineteenth century and offers insight applicable to other areas of the world in the age of imperialism. Topik sets a higher standard of research and analysis to which subsequent works on US–Latin American relations will be measured.

Texas A&M University–Kingsville

Sonny B. Davis


Although the time-span of Stanfield’s work is 83 years, it is the period of the rubber boom that is its main focus. It may be asked whether there is anything much new to be said about this period of ruthless exploitation in Amazonia. It is to Stanfield’s credit that he has tried to find a new slant to reaching an understanding of it. What he sets out to do is show how the whole experience must be understood as the result of interaction between many different levels; the local, the national and the international.

The examination of the local level consists not simply of looking at the relationships between, say, the citizens of Iquitos, but between these and the indigenous peoples, and even among the latter. This last is perhaps the least satisfactory part of the book since the author does not seem to have understood the nature of Amerindian political organisation, let alone the way they understand their world. On the other hand, he is good on the nature of rubber collecting, its labour intensive nature, and the problem of labour in Amazonia which was not simply in short supply but very difficult to control. Furthermore, as so often, relationships between Amerindians and non-Amerindians started out amicably but soon, as a result of fundamentally different values and expectations, deteriorated into violence and oppression.

At the national level, the Northwest Amazon is divided between Brazil,
Reviews 269

Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Little attention is paid to Brazil, but Stanfield shows well how, during the period, the three Andean countries responded to their eastern lowlands. In the Ecuadorean case they were effectively ignored and ended the period almost as undeveloped as at the start. Colombia, which certainly appreciated the value of its Amazonian territory, was too constantly distracted by civil wars ever to pay it the attention it deserved. Peru, on the other hand, did encourage development, and sufficient momentum was built up so that when attention was diverted by other events, such as the War of the Pacific, its Amazonian territories, were able to flourish and contribute in a valuable way to the Peruvian economy.

At the international level, what happened in the forests of the northwest Amazon was fuelled by the rapidly growing demand for rubber during the last part of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. Here, of course, the main demands came from the industrially most advanced nations which also tended to be the most horrified (and hypocritical?), when the local methods of rubber collecting were brought to light. The usual cast of characters, Arana, Hardenburg, Casement et al., passes across the stage, and Stanfield shows well how they had their own axes to grind and used the treatment of the Amerindian to hone them.

The blurb describes this book as a ‘vivid ethnohistory’; the adjective is not one that comes to mind to describe the clear and plain account contained here. Ethnohistory, on the other hand, has become a bit of a ‘buzz word’ and all history now threatens to become ethnohistory. In Stanfield’s case it consists of little more than a bolt-on extra; he recognises that the Amerindians are important in the story but makes no real attempt to engage with them. For a genuine ethnohistory, we need to turn to the other work reviewed here, Robin Wright’s *Cosmos, Self, and History in Baniwa Religion*. For Wright, ethnohistory is the conception of history used by the native peoples concerned, and this may not fit easily with a western historiography that is premised on chronology. For example, the Baniwa conceptualise the past in spatial as much as temporal terms.

The Baniwa are one of the Arawakan groups that inhabit the Northwest Amazon about which we now have much rich information. In particular, Wright, together with Jonathan Hill, has done much to reveal these peoples’ own understanding of the past, and he has shown them to be active agents rather than passive pawns accepting a history imposed from outside. ‘When, for example, Portuguese colonisers made Baniwa phratry descend from their territories to the lower Rio Negro, the impact of this action – different from that the colonisers thought – was totally filtered by Baniwa war patterns. … Hence, … the Baniwa, even though “reacting” to outside forces, are agents of their history (103).’

There is much to be learnt from this perspective. For example, although contact between the Baniwa and non-indigenous people can be traced back to the first half of the eighteenth century, and the Amerindians have experienced the imported sickness and exploitation that was the consequence, the Baniwa have incorporated the white man into their cosmogony. He has become identified with a culture hero whose power, like all power in Amazonia, is potentially both creative and destructive. In other words the white man, with all the ambiguity that surrounds him, is how part of Baniwa understanding of how their society reproduces itself. He plays the part of the ‘other’, in the creation of ‘self’.

The work is divided into four parts. The first is entitled ‘Cosmogony,
cosmology, and shamanism’ and the main argument in this part is that the Baniwa live in an entropic world expressed in a millenarian consciousness where potential catastrophe is balanced by creative knowledge. This theme is taken further in the second and third parts, ‘Creation of self and other in myth and history’ and ‘Death and eschatology’ respectively. The fourth part, ‘When the missions came’, brings the story up to the time of Wright’s field research in the 1970s, and shows that much the same ideas continue to order Baniwa society today.

This is a good and serious book. If I have one complaint about it, it is that the author relies very heavily for the construction of his argument on Lawrence Sullivan’s Icanchu’s drum (1988). While I have no criticisms to make of that work, which is a remarkable attempt to synthesise South American religions, it is very general and built on the type of ethnography of which the book under review is an example. Therefore, to use it as a source of theoretical inspiration seems methodologically questionable.

Oxford University, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology


As Patricio Valdivieso states, books about the ‘social question’ in Chile – as the widespread poverty of the popular classes and the disturbing symptoms of social unrest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are called – could fill an entire library. Following contemporary observers, the historiography generally underlines the indifference and passivity of the governments of the Parliamentary period, which began with José Manuel Balmaceda’s fall in 1891 and ended with Arturo Alessandri’s victory in the presidential election of 1920. These administrators were depicted as mainly interested in securing the privileged position of Chile’s traditional elite, the backbone of the political and socio-economic order, and they are shown not to have harboured much concern for the plight of the vast majority of the population. In this book, originally submitted as his PhD. dissertation at the Catholic University of Eichstätt (Bavaria, Germany), Valdivieso attempts to revise this predominant view. According to him, the Chilean elite, and particularly the Catholic Church and the Conservative Party, both inspired by European Social Catholicism, were in fact worried about these developments. During the period under discussion, they initiated programmes which found ‘general social acceptance’ and assumed ‘institutional forms’ (p. 389). The Chilean parliament, under the leadership of Conservative deputies, according to Valdivieso, indeed adopted ‘sweeping measures’, giving rise to a ‘Chilean model of social reform’ (p. 594).

Valdivieso opens his revisionist account with a lengthy discussion of the triumphal march of economic liberalism in nineteenth-century Chile, and the impact this process had on the lives of urban and rural workers and their dependants. Backed up by an impressive amount of statistical data, he concludes that the lower sectors, essentially without basic legal protection to shield them from dismissal, unemployment or illness, became increasingly vulnerable to the volatility of the market forces; abject poverty characterised their daily existences.
Impressive as Valdivieso’s tables are, accounts of contemporary observers are notably absent in this chapter. We can only deduce the suffering of the common people on the basis of these figures. Unfortunately, he does not demonstrate the misery of the ‘uneducated souls’, whose ‘material life is pitiful, for they dress and eat badly and live in abominable dwellings’, as Armando Quezada Acharán wrote in his *La cuestión social en Chile*, published in 1908.

The discussion becomes more fluent once the author turns to the adoption of European Social Catholicism by Chilean Catholics. In the second chapter Valdivieso consistently backs up his contentions with useful quotes by leading personalities. One the basis of declarations made by Archbishops Mariano Casanova and José Ignacio González, as well as Martin Rücker, then dean of the Universidad Católica, he demonstrates how the interpretation of the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, changed over time. While Casanova interpreted this influential document mainly as an appeal to industrialists and workers to fulfil their social obligations, both González and Rücker emphasised its message of ‘social justice’ and ‘social obligations’. By the turn of the century, we are told, the Church as an institution had assumed a more critical position towards liberal concepts of society and state as well as the relationship between the social classes. Breaking with traditional attitudes, Catholics identified poverty as an issue that affected the whole of Chilean society, and not only those directly concerned. Initiatives by both the Church and lay organisations attempted to give meaning to these recently developed convictions.

Just as Catholics paid more attention to the situation of the working classes after the 1880s, so the Chilean elite in general, worried about the growing signs of unrest (and the agitation of socialist and anarchist militants), displayed a new interest in their faith. In accordance with the underlying aim of his book, Valdivieso stresses the role of Catholic parliamentarians in the debates about, and the approval of, social legislation during the early twentieth century. Based on the evaluation of a number of laws which addressed social issues from different angles, e.g. the *Ley de Habitaciones para Obreros* and the *Ley de Protección a la Infancia Desvalida*, adopted in February 1906 and in September 1912, respectively, Valdivieso concludes that the critical view of both contemporary observers and the secondary literature cannot be upheld. Noteworthy as these laws may have been, Valdivieso does not even raise the question of whether they actually had an impact on the livelihoods of the population. Broad and unspecified assertions that time demonstrated their effectiveness do not cover the failure to provide any evidential support. Valdivieso simply skips this issue and fails to show that the ‘sweeping measures’ approved at the time were really as meaningful as he states that they were. Since large social strata continued to live in abysmal conditions, doubts certainly seem justified. It is equally problematic that he does not pay sufficient attention to dissenting voices within Chilean Catholicism, but portrays it instead as a homogenous institution. A less ideologically driven approach would have been beneficial for the work.

*Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London*

This book offers a detailed account of the political economy of Chile from the onset of the depression to 1948 – the end of the period of coalition politics dominated by the Radical party. As the author points out, the Popular Front lasted a relatively brief period, and there was little that was progressive – let alone united – in the squabbling politics that followed the death of Aguirre Cerda in 1941.

The author is inclined from time to time to dress up his argument by references to authorities like Amartya Sen, and to adopt a rather grand tone appropriate to high-level theorising. If these aspects do not always work, it does not matter a great deal because the book has many merits as a solid, highly informative and intelligent account of the development – or underdevelopment – of Chile in the period covered. The major argument is that the ‘Great Depression stimulated the growth of industry, a larger political public, and a more active government but that Chile remained underdeveloped and dependent’ (p. 3).

Monteón is particularly strong on the relationship between the American-owned companies and the Chilean government, and not just the copper companies. There are some very revealing accounts of the power of the oil companies and of the powerlessness of Chilean governments to affect the price of copper. Time after time, the attempts of Chilean politicians to deal with the companies expose the weakness of the Chilean government and the relatively greater bargaining strength of the American companies. The author is right to claim here that the arguments of the dependency theorists, if over-stated, did contain genuine insights. What Professor Monteón does very well indeed, is to convey the limits of freedom of action of the Chilean politicians.

However, even within those limits, the conclusion of this account is that the politicians did not make the best use of the opportunities that they had. The text is enlivened with sometimes acerbic comments on individuals and governments – the Dávila government that followed the brief Socialist Republic is engagingly described as ‘a collection of military officers, lawyers and log-rollers in search of popular policies’ (p. 88).

There are interesting re-assessments of the dominant figures. Professor Monteón is highly critical of the supposed economic nationalism of Ibáñez, and, if not sympathetic, at least aware of some merits of the policies of the much-maligned finance minister Ross. The book ranges widely across classes and movements, and generally good on social conditions in Chile, it is excellent on the pivotal role of the middle class in the Popular Front Period. The growth of the left and of the unions features prominently in his account of the period.

The Conclusions are ambitious. The author ranges widely over different theories, and traces continuities with contemporary Chile. While some of the arguments are interesting, others look less appropriate for this kind of book. Summary judgements of the merits and defects of the democratic governments since 1990 do not add much to the overall analysis. A more fruitful comparison would have been with other Latin American countries in the period treated. How did the form and conditions of dependency differ? Were there better policy responses from local politicians? The answers to questions like these would have
provided a comparative context for a study which has so many merits that it would be inappropriate to end other than by stressing its virtues. It has a sustained and convincing main argument, and documents it in exemplary fashion.

St Antony’s College, Oxford

ALAN ANGELL


This is a solid book and a lot of work has gone into it. It has four sections. The first deals with the interrelationship between Argentina and the global economy and includes chapters on theories about globalisation and regional development and another on the historical development of the country from 1536 to the present day. The second section is concerned with recent shifts in economy and society and contains chapters on the country’s demography and uneven development, on shifting patterns of production, trade and labour, and on transport and communications. The third section deals with spatial diversity and includes chapters on Buenos Aires, the Pampas, two transition areas (Patagonia and Cuyo) and the depressed areas of the northeast and northwest. The final section consists of a single chapter discussing the future of Argentina.

The book satisfies its main title insofar as it is primarily interested in Argentina since 1980. Whether it actually provides a ‘geographical perspective’ is more questionable. The problem is that geographical enquiry now stretches over so wide a terrain, and is so unclear about its purpose that few geographers would agree about what a geographical perspective actually constitutes. As such, the meaning given to a ‘geographical perspective’ depends entirely on the individual author. This book is certainly not an old-fashioned regional geography, because there is very little about Argentina’s physical landscape and little discussion of regional identity. Nor is it a new-fangled cultural or post-modern geography. It is primarily a geography of the 1970s and 1980s. It is concerned principally with regional disparities; how they arose, why they worrying and how they might be treated.

The significance of the regional issue is stated very early on: ‘In many Latin American countries, the failure to address the problem of uneven regional development historically has proved to be the Achilles heel of national and regional socioeconomic policies’ (p. 5). Keeling is right that regional development has been a failing of most governments although to claim it is the Achilles’ heel of national policies is being perhaps too ‘geographical’. His exaggerated concern shows itself not only in his preoccupation with the decline of the northwestern provinces and with the ‘excessive’ concentration of economic activity in Buenos Aires but also in his worry that most provinces are dominated by primate cities. Perhaps he should have a look at the United States where a similar phenomenon is apparent.

Globalisation is the second theme that appears and reappears throughout the book and incorporates a more recent intellectual thrust. Regional futures depend upon the way that different localities integrate or fail to integrate into the world economy. To my taste, the book does not contain enough detail on the process, and discussion of the impact of globalisation is too narrowly focused. The impact of Menem’s trade liberalisation is discussed with respect to employment but we
Reviews

do not get nearly enough on how policies, social protest and the nature of the state have developed in response to the global challenge. I also find it strange that authors on the effect of globalisation on Europe and the USA are quoted whereas dependency writers and other commentators from Latin America are not. Were not Latin Americans, even Argentines like Raúl Prebisch, among the first to discover globalisation?

Perhaps the book’s main problem, however, is that it does not bring Argentina sufficiently alive. In part this is because it is mainly a review of other writers’ opinions and it contains too little new material. There is some originality in the discussion of transportation, the subject of the author’s doctoral dissertation, but otherwise new material is confined to the presentation of a series of tables mainly based on census material. The problem with tables is that they often fail to excite the reader, and particularly the undergraduate reader. Other forms of reporting would have helped make the account more vibrant: some interviews, a biography or two, some detailed descriptions. What is it like to live in a villa miseria in Buenos Aires, to have been laid off from an industrial job in Rosario or to work on a large estate in the impoverished northwest? A travel writer would no doubt have provided a distorted view of the country but at the same time would have made Argentina sound more interesting. Keeling has perhaps tried too hard to be objective and in the process has omitted the football, Evita, the gaucho and the tango.

The author’s affection for the country is clearly apparent but so is his irritation with its management. Argentina is failing to face up squarely to the future and few can be optimistic about the country’s future. Keeling is clearly no admirer of the New Development Model and believes that future governments should give more emphasis to building better transport and communications facilities, encouraging political decentralisation, giving more attention to the agricultural sector of the interior, providing more and better social infrastructure, and in offering greater protection for the physical environment. I have no doubt that most of these items are desirable but will they be sufficient to transform Argentina’s future? More critically are they likely to figure on the political agenda in the near future? To my mind, and I suspect David Keeling’s, the key problem is that most of these items are simply not on the neo-classical economic agenda.

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ALAN GILBERT


It appears that, over the last few decades, the art of the well-written regional geography has all but disappeared. Carlos Reboratti revives this genre in this short book on one of the most neglected regions in all of Argentina, the high rivershed of the Bermejo River (or ACRB for ‘Alta Cuenca del Río Bermejo’) in the far northern corner of the country. In the process, he provides important information on historical, economic, and social processes that will be an obligatory point of reference for all others working on the region.

Although the author spends much effort on delineating the geological and biological characteristics of the region – it distinguishes itself by being one of the biologically most diverse areas of the country, ranging from high Andean plateau to subtropical jungle – his major emphasis is on the interaction between
Reviews 275

ground and the humans who inhabit and use this space. This is not to say that
ground geography is slighted. According to Reboratti, the Bermejo contributes
a large part of the water for the Río de la Plata fluvial system and 75 per cent of
all sediments found in this river system. The author expends much effort to
describe the physical characteristics of the ACRB and how these characteristics
make possible the types of human settlement found there. In particular, he shows
how the inhabitants, while living mainly in the highlands, have a complex
relationship to the warmer lowlands and utilize that region as well. He thus
confirms traditional Andean patterns found further to the north, in Bolivia, Peru
and Ecuador, but also analyses the differences with patterns to the north.

Three of the 12 chapters are historical, showing how large estates dominated
the region during the colonial period and how this continued into the twentieth
century. In the colonial period, the region was part of the Marquesado de Tojo,
one of the largest latifundia of Spanish America. After independence, the estates
broke up into smaller units and some corporations purchased some of them. Only
in the last few decades has the province begun to expropriate land in favor of
the resident peasantry. In contrast to much of the rest of Argentina, thus, the
ACRB contained until very recently large estates with a dependent peasantry.
Reboratti confirms Ian Rutledge’s research of a few decades ago, that the sugar
plantations of the eastern lowlands purchased the estates of the ACRB highlands
to gain access to the properties’ labor force for the sugar cane harvest.

The middle chapters elaborate on the present-day peasant population, which
has only precarious title to the land despite efforts to expropriate the large estates.
As is typical of present-day peasant societies, demographic growth is faster than
the national average, but the ACRB expels many of its inhabitants. The old
systems of land use, with a strong component of transhumance, are not capable
of providing for greater population growth. As the sugar plantations need fewer
workers in the second half of this century, the peasants have been unable to
supplement their income by migrating to the lowlands. In addition, social and
political structures have not been conducive to economic or social development.
Similar to marginal areas of Argentina, merchants (often of Syrian–Lebanese
extraction) and large landlords have dominated political and economic structures
through clientelistic relationships with the peasants.

Two chapters deal with the present-day land tenure situation. Many of the land
holdings are in legal limbo as a result of incomplete expropriations by Salta
province. Instead of actively managing the properties, owners have permitted
forestry companies to harvest valuable subtropical tree species, leading to a
degeneration of biodiversity. Over the past few years, some peasants have begun
to define themselves as Indians to gain greater political leverage in their struggles
for property rights to land. Reboratti sees this as a case of ‘invention of
tradition’, in which ‘indigenous leaders’ use demagogic methods to create
organizations that have not existed in the region for over a century.

In the last chapter, the author lists a number of policies that should be put in
place for the ACRB to provide a dignified livelihood to its inhabitants. He is in
favor of the development of ecotourism, given the wide diversity of the ACRB
habitat and the ‘traditional’ nature of the region’s society.

This book is a useful addition to the literature in a number of respects. It
provides detailed information about one of the most marginal and neglected
regions in Argentina. Its discussions of the history of land tenure arrangements,
demography and land conflicts, as well as its careful eye for physical geography and its interaction with social and economic factors, are models that others might do well to follow.

*Georgetown University*


In 1837, the military caudillo Rafael Carrera, a mestizo and former swineherd from eastern Guatemala, headed a successful insurrection against the liberal Central American Federation, which led to the new republic of Guatemala. Except for a brief interval in the 1840s, Carrera ruled the country until his death in 1865.

According to the author, the restoration and protection of the Catholic Church was crucial in the caudillo’s rise to power. He used religion to bring together the governing ladinos of mestizos of the central and eastern highlands with the indigenous people of the western mountains, who comprised two thirds of the country’s population, one of the largest concentrations of Indians in Latin America. Popular religiosity increased with the renewal of the Catholic Church catalysing an emerging nationalist spirit, strengthened by the attacks of Central American liberals.

Much of the literature about the Carrera period portrays a negative view of the caudillo and his links with the Church. However, recent studies stress the popular character of his regime and, instead of conventional association of the emergence of the nation with the liberal governments of Mariano Gálvez in the 1830s or of Justo Rufino Barrios in the 1870s, suggest the process had begun under Carrera, with active involvement of the clergy. The lack of access to the Church archives impeded further analysis of the latter topic.

These questions and the opening of the Archivo Histórico Arquidiocesano in Guatemala city motivated Sullivan-González’s research. Inspired by the work of Marx, Durkheim and Weber on the social and cultural influence of religion, by Roger Chartier, Clifford Geertz, Paul Ricouer and Victor Turner’s approach to cultural history, he explores the extent to which the religious discourse of the governing classes reached the lower echelons of society.

The opening chapter provides the economic, political and demographic background of Guatemala. In 1829 the Honduran Francisco Morazán as head of the Central American Federation allied with Mariano Gálvez in Guatemala to introduce modern and secular liberal reforms. Morazán exiled the archbishop to Havana, closed most religious orders, suspended the collection of tithes, expropriated clerical property, legalised divorce and offered public land to foreigners, including Protestants.

During the 1837 cholera epidemic rebels from the eastern mountains, led by Carrera, forced Gálvez to resign. Morazán tried in vain to regain control with support from El Salvador, igniting a civil war which lasted until March 1840. When Carrera became president in 1844 he began to restore the Catholic Church. In 1847 a rebellion exiled him to Mexico, from where he returned two years later. In 1854 he was appointed president for life and signed a concordat with Rome which granted him patronage rights over the Church.
Chapter 2 describes the ups and downs of the regrouping of the Church in the 1840s and 1850s, which never reached the stability of the 1820s. Chapter 3 contrasts the failure of the Liberals with the success Carrera had in dealing with the revolts originated in a decree issued in 1834 ordering town cemeteries to move from local churches to the outskirts of villages for sanitary reasons. In rural areas parishioners rejected the measure, on the basis of their ancient spiritual traditions and that animals dug up the buried bodies. The author also compares the uprisings against the Liberal government during the devastating cholera epidemic of 1837, with the cholera outbreak in 1857 which did not turn the people against Carrera, providing evidence of his popular support.

Chapters 4 and 5 trace the evolution of the nationalist ideas, disseminated by priests and monks. The clergy, at first reluctant to ally with Carrera and later fervent supporters, claimed a divine covenant between God and the people of Guatemala. The Capuchin missionaries were most influential in this respect from 1857 until their expulsion in 1872.

The final chapter deals with the overthrow of Carrera’s conservative successor in 1871 by minority liberal forces armed with modern Remingtons and Winchesters. The Church suffered a new wave of attacks and once again the Liberal government had to deal with religious fanaticism.

The author has consulted memoirs, speeches, sermons, official and ecclesiastic reports and other sources kept in the ecclesiastic archives, the Archivo General de Centro América, and the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas, Austin. The book includes useful figures, maps, tables and a chronology.

Some readers might expect more about the role of parish priests, religious orders, cofradías or other pious, philanthropic and cultural associations in the material and economic well being of parishioners for a better understanding of the public role of religion.

The nineteenth century, generally regarded by scholars as the age of secularisation, witnessed a series of Catholic and Protestant revivals in Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, France and several Latin American countries, each intertwined in a particular way with political struggles. This book shows how Guatemala’s unique blend of religion and politics brewed distinctive alliances across ethnic and class barriers, crucial to the consolidation of nationality.

University of Antioquia, Colombia


Diane Nelson has written a joyful book about national, ethnic and gender identifications in contemporary Guatemala, or the Quincentennial Guatemala, as she dubs it. She presents her book as ‘an ethnography of the state as it emerges from 30 years of civil war and military dictatorship and as it relates to – and thus helps to constitute – an emerging ethnic identity: the Maya’ (pp. 3–4). ‘Quincentennial Guatemala’ is Nelson’s metaphor for the deeply divided nation
where civil war, peace negotiations and an emerging ethnic movement have produced a moment of recognition of the divides, of reflection over the nature of these divides, and renegotiation of (some) power relations. In this context, the Maya movement has been ‘a finger in the wound’, challenging existing binary constructions of gender, sex and race.

Empirically, Nelson draws upon interviews, newscuttings, adverts, public debates, and numerous anecdotes and jokes – including an impressive collection of rich, informative and politically incorrect jokes about Rigoberta Menchú – which have accompanied key events in the development of the Mayan movement: the 1992 Nobel Prize and quincentennial celebrations, the foundation of the ministry for culture and sports, the ratification of the ILO Convention no. 169, and other important signs of change in the politics of ethnic relations in Guatemala.

Theoretically, her take on the state is informed by writings on the ‘governmental’ state, a state which is nurtured by the productive engagement with individual bodies for the formation of a governable, ‘whole’ body politic. In her analysis, Nelson shows how the field of ‘cultural rights’ has developed through the productive engagement of state institutions as well as Mayan activists. The latter – teachers, lay priests, translators, etc. – have been formed through their engagement in assimilatory and developmental programmes, and have developed skills of negotiation through their advocacy vis-à-vis state institutions. Thus, while militants in the 1970s and 1980s sought to destroy it, the state has become a site of struggle and identification for Mayan activists during the 1990s. Today, Nelson argues, the state constitutes an important framework for the articulation of competing attempts to ‘fix’ identities and heal the ‘wounded body politic’.

Nelson, who draws upon and exposes a long personal history in the North American solid-arity movement, applies a ‘fluid-ary’ analysis of her material, thus leaving behind ideas of solid, clearcut identities of foe and friend – el pueblo, the state, la mujer Maya, etc. She draws a parallel between, on the one hand, her own experience as a solidary, ‘magically welcome’ and safe gringa anthropologist who had her matrix of identification shattered by the village mob that beat June Weinstock to near-death because they suspected her of snatching a baby; and on the other hand, the unsettling effect experienced by unmarked Guatemalans when they see a powerful and articulate Maya woman talking before the United Nations, or Mayan men in traje managing computers, lobbying in the corridors of the National Palace, and appropriating national and international laws for their own cause. These ‘Maya-hackers’, who leave their rural, traditional encar cerations, enter the modern machinery of the state, break the binary codes, and write manuals for a future reprogramming of the system while insisting on their difference, are indeed ‘uncanny’. Such uncanny images nurture a wealth of jokes that, for example, depict Ms Menchu as a transvestite. In general, the analysis of the body as a site of signification make up some of the best parts of the book.

Nelson’s book develops around a number of very catchy and to some extent illuminating metaphors, such as Maya-hackers, body-snatchers, splattered bodies, transvestites, sinners, Lizard Queens, camel hair suits and prosthetics. The metaphors come together in an original interpretation of the emergence of Maya identifications and struggles, and the way these relate to changing practices and politics of Guatemalan state formation. However, the seductive power of the
metaphors and the quest for a coherent, overall interpretation tend to take the author beyond the fields in which her study has ethnographic grounding. Therefore, I find her own declaration of the content of the book as ‘an ethnography of the state’ to be only partially correct.

However, in its own right, Diane Nelson’s attempt to conceive a comprehensive, post-solidarity interpretation of contemporary Guatemala which transcends polarising dualisms and conducts a ‘friendly critique’ of, for example, the Maya movement, is laudable and most welcome. The book is a must for scholars working on Guatemala, but I will also recommend it to everybody interested in the analysis of cultural rights movements, and the development of post-structuralist analyses of state, culture and power.

Center for Development Research, Copenhagen


Encuentros Antropológicos is a conference volume marked by its origins. In their introduction, Leyva and Napolitano work to underline common themes and to identify the respects in which the authors are effectively speaking to one another. However, despite the co-editors’ efforts, the book seems less an encuentro than a collection of generally very interesting but distinct and separate contributions that vary in length, approach, focus and, above all, intellectual ambition. While readers may note a common reference point in the work of Claudio Lomnitz-Adler (who was not at the conference), they will find very few instances in which the authors engage the ideas of others who were at the seminar table.

The twelve articles, half of which are written in Spanish and half in English, are intelligently grouped into three sections. The first contains contributions from Rostas, who explores the rebirth of ethnicity and the meaning of indigenous identity, Gledhill on the persistence of caciques and the structures that support them, and Leyva and Ascencio Franco on the history and class structure that provide the social and political setting for neozapatismo in Chiapas. The second section brings together a series of regional studies, including Pepin-Lehlleur on Tamaulipas, Linck’s work on rancheros, Arizpes’s on sustainable development of the Selva Lancandona and the clash between local and international interests that it may precipitate, and Hernández Castillo and Nigh on local organic coffee growers of Chiapas and their links to a global society of consumers in Europe and Japan. The third section on identity, mobility and spatiality highlights three contemporary analyses and one historic study of migration: Lestage’s research on the Mixtecos in Tijuana, Smith’s study of the transnational identities formed by immigrants who move between southern Puebla and New York City, Napolitano on rural–urban migrants in Guadalajara, and Dehouve’s historical piece on the migration of patron saints as a feature of population displacement in eighteenth century Guerrero.

Perhaps the most impressive piece in the collection is the opening article by John Gledhill. This essay is so rich conceptually and provides such fascinating supporting detail (confined, inevitably, to lengthy footnotes) that the reader might well wish that it were a monograph rather than a brief article. The title
alone – ‘Neoliberalism and Ungovernability: Caciquismo, Militarisation and Popular Mobilisation in Zedillo’s Mexico’ – hints at the great range of interesting phenomena examined and the telling links that Gledhill is able to make. In this piece he explores the relationship between institutional changes, like the push to centralise administrative authority in Mexico, and the growing power of regional strongmen. He shows how reinforcement and ‘modernisation’ of cacicazgo has occurred in cases like that of Tabasco where the power of the governor, Carlos Madrazo, ‘is based on a structure of regional cliques with a very long history, but has been fortified by alliances with financial entrepreneurs who rose to wealth and prominence’ through their links with the Salinas brothers and drug traffickers (p. 15). Gledhill also critically examines notions of community, an exercise that is especially important in the light of the growing demand for autonomy for indigenous communities. While he, like other authors in the volume, is interested in the events unfolding in Chiapas, he asserts that, ‘it seems just as important to take a careful look at the reasons for the apparent absence of protest and mobilisation on the part of large sections of the Mexican population as it is to examine the various overt manifestations of protest’ (p. 23).

If Gledhill is willing to swim against the current with a consideration of the absence of protest as well as the better known, well documented cases of social unrest and armed rebellion, Arizpe is similarly bold in analysing some of the contradictory elements in the zapatistas’ demands as well as the contradictions inherent in programmes of sustainable development. In the course of her research in Chiapas, Arizpe critically examines some of the concepts most cherished by outsiders. Where others have celebrated the authenticity and superiority of indigenous culture and practices, she takes note of the ‘negative or oppressive aspects of local cultures, such as male alcoholism that creates a spiral of violence, especially against women,’ and she cautions that ‘focusing exclusively on the development of indigenous communities may create what mestizo, non-Indian informants already perceive as reverse discrimination,’ a situation that may often ‘exacerbate inter-ethnic tension thereby putting at risk politically and socially sustainable development’ (p. 109).

The sudden, and generally unanticipated, uprising of the zapatistas in January 1994 has served to underscore the importance of the work of anthropologists of Mexico, and has given their field a centrality and influence that it has not enjoyed since the immediate post-revolutionary period. Under the circumstances, it is most welcome that we now have a new collection that showcases the work of a number of young as well as established experts, and provides a very useful resource for anyone who wants to explore questions of power, identity and mobility in Mexico.

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JUDITH ADLER HELLMAN


The cultural mixing that has taken place in the Caribbean, through its various cycles of colonialism and migration, has a long and varied history. The Spanish term ‘criollo’, antecedent to the French ‘créole’ and the English ‘creole’, was
first used in the sixteenth century to refer to someone (usually of European origin) born in the Americas, and soon began to refer to the mixture of peoples, languages, religions, music, cuisine etc. that developed in the region. As Wilson Harris states in his essay (‘Creoleness: The Crossroads of a Civilization?):

...not only may the descendants of Europeans in the New World wear the mask of the Creole, but so do Africans, East Indians, Chinese, and others. Indeed, as in my family experience, creoleness signifies mixed race and a cross-cultural nemesis capable of becoming a saving nemesis (p. 26).

By ‘saving nemesis’ Harris is referring to the dynamic and recuperative powers that may be present within the processes of creolisation, despite the violence and exploitation that often initiates this process in the first place. As he explains earlier in the essay:

within the gulfs that divide cultures...there exists, I feel, a storage of creative possibility that, once tapped, may energize the unfinished genesis of the imagination (pp. 25–26).

This ‘unfinished genesis of the imagination’ is very much the subject of the essays collected here by Balutansky and Sourieau, and each of the contributors makes the point that creolisation is about strategies for creating, and coping with, the future, as well as reclaiming the cultural inheritance of the past.

One such strategy is the deliberately comparative, pan-Caribbean approach of the editors who have included essays from the Spanish, French, English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean and raised the question of the different contexts that have produced créolidad, créolité and creolisation. Divided into two parts (‘Part One: Creolization and the Creative Imagination’ and ‘Part Two: Creolization, Literature and the Politics of Language’), the essays are also written in a variety of styles, with some of the more personal reflections (see especially Brodber, pp. 68–75) usefully highlighting areas for future study. Overall, a sense of lively debate is evident and an agreement that there is much that we still do not know about the complex, and often subtle, cultural formations of the past and the ways in which they impact on the process of creolisation today. There are calls for more rigorous documenting and sharing of information regarding creole languages (Merle Collins, Jean Météllus), for a greater awareness of the phenomenon of marooning and other narratives of resistance (Carlos Guillermo Wilson, Yanick Lahens), and for the importance of tracing all the historical conduits before the narrative of creolisation as a counter-cultural discourse can be fully understood and utilized. (See e.g. Brodber, p. 71):

I want to know what the Irish, the Scottish, the Welsh gave to the Creole mix as much as I want to know: ‘Is it Ibo, Fulani, what particular part of Africa is my heritage?’ I have no doubt that with the kind of work being done by Kamau Braithwaite and Maureen Lewis-Warner – to mention those whom I know best – I will solve the African riddle, but who will tell me about the others? Where are the others?

Most of the essays emphasise the resistant, creative and recuperative aspects of creolisation and many interesting and less well-known examples are highlighted, such as the emergence of Afro-Carib-Arawakan Garifuna cultures (Carlos Guillermo Wilson) or the formation of Papiamento language in the Netherlands Antilles (Frank Martinus Arion). But the violent collision of cultures and ideologies that engender creolisation does not always produce such dynamic
Reviews

syncretisms, and the systems of internalised racism that have also been produced are sharply confronted. Contributors from the Hispanic Caribbean, in particular, draw attention to the obsession with ‘whitening’ that continues to erase the African heritage in Caribbean culture and identity and which is often implicitly supported by government institutions. In the francophone Caribbean, discussion centres on the fraught situation in Haiti where successive governments have manipulated the discourse of creolisation as a populist screen, while the local Bossale culture remains disempowered. The pain of incomplete creolisation, at the level of the individual (see Brodber on the case of Miss Manda) or the nation (Lahens on Haiti), has psychiatric proportions, and in this context we can perhaps understand what might be at stake in the disagreements between Maryse Condé (pp. 101–109) and Ernest Pépin and Raphaël Confiant (pp. 96–100) concerning the status and function of créolit. One of the flaws of this book, however, is that the reader unfamiliar with the longer essay ‘Éloge de la créolité’ (‘In Praise of Creoleness’, 1989, co-authored by Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant) may find it difficult to evaluate the diverging positions presented here. A more specific contextualising of the francophone debates on the part of the editors would have enabled the reader better to grasp the tensions that exist between the concerns of the local writers (the Martinican ‘school of créolité’) and the writer in the diaspora (Condé).

It is not only the process of creolisation, but also the attempt to study and define that process that has a long history, and I feel that a fuller introduction outlining the development and historiography of the term (with specific reference to key essays over the years) would have helped students to contextualise the essays that follow. Nevertheless, the focus of this book is on contemporary reflections and it does succeed in convincing us that this is an area of research that will have an important impact on the future of Caribbean and related postcolonial studies. Benitez-Rojo’s challenge to the literary critic (pp. 33–61), for instance, to re-read Caribbean literature in relation to the rhythm and performance of its creolising poetics, is particularly welcome.

University of North London

PATRICIA MURRAY


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 oeuvre. He argues (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, posterior 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 ignoring neighbouring data from the same source which undercut 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 attending a certain performance in 1926 was a seminal experience of samba. The sources cited demonstrate, rather, that it was at least two shows, and 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, one embracing the Afro-Brazilian culture, modernism, the common people and miscegenation, in a fashion congenial to the nationalist, populist political trends associated with the revolution of 1930 (12–13, 41, 53–60). Archival correspondence and close reading of Freyre’s publications contradict nearly every point. They indicate that they changed intellectual direction in the 1910s, in the 1920s and, dramatically, after 1930. In his mid-1920s essays and works of 1933 and 1936, while he celebrated Afro-Brazilian influenced 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 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 (23–31, 81ff.), he assumes an all-or-nothing logic perilous in cultural history. He cites the occasional act of elite patron age 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 favoring European high culture. The author mistakes occasional cultural ‘slumming’ for emergent elite celebration.

The author’s contribution is that of turning our attention to a transitional era of compelling contradictions. It is a great pity that his writerly 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 Jóse Ramos Tinhóroro and Roberto Moura and more of Freyre in his works, cited far too little here.

Indeed, here is a study in which the author’s understanding of the past is too often second-hand (and not always the best second-hand). Here is a study of Brazilian racial thought (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 (41). Here is a discussion of the state and nationalism in the nineteenth century (38–9) that neglects the established analyses of Antônio Cândido and Roderick Barman. Small wonder that the author’s observations so often cannot 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 elite ideas about Afro-Brazilian culture
and miscegenation that reached back to at least the early 1920s. Yet, between the
lines of his own analysis (90–2), an alternative (and surprising) 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
emergent over 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
dowered with talent and taste, returns to the archives and the library to write it.

University of Florida

JEFFREY D. NEEDELL

Andrew Gray, *The Last Shaman: Change in an Amazonian Community*
(Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997), pp. xxiii + 294, £40.00
hb.

*The Last Shaman* is the second of three volumes of ethnography of the Arakmbut
people of the Peruvian Amazon. Together they represent some fifteen years of
 collaboration between Andrew Gray and the Arakmbut, and constitute an
 unusually thorough account not only of the Arakmbut world-view, but also their
efforts to ensure the maintenance of their cultural integrity in the fact of the well-
documented assault on diverse peoples of the Amazonian rainforest. The
relevance of the work lies not only in the detailed description and analysis of
Arakmbut lifeways, but also in the melding of ethnographic research and political
struggle, a task to which Andrew Gray devoted his professional career. It was
while pursuing such work in Melanesia on behalf of IWGIA – the indigenous
rights organisation for which Andrew worked – that he lost his life in the spring
of 1999.

*The Last Shaman* focuses on the significant transformation of the landscape
brought about as a result of increased gold-mining activity in south-eastern Peru
and the responses of the Arakmbut in drawing upon traditional forms of
knowledge (as embodied, for example, in shamans) as tools of resistance and
accommodation. A narrative thread is provided by the history of ‘the last
shaman’ (referred to as ‘Psyche’ in the text), a man (born c. 1920) whose personal
career had paralleled the passage of the Arakmbut from remote forest group to
victims of missionary activity in the 1910s and, finally, marginal Peruvians drawn
into the old trade in recent decades.

The difficulties of contextualising specifically Arakmbut conceptions of the
world in the setting of gross and chaotic external intervention are evident in the
construction of the book. On the one hand, the author is well aware of the need to
project the Arakmbut not as some vestige of the lost world of forest natives, but
as active agents who have been coping with colonial society (in its many versions)
for centuries. On the other hand, however, it is precisely the interior world of the
Arakmbut – a world in which visions, dreams, desires, unnamed/unnameable
notions prevail – that most captures his imagination. As a consequence, it is the
specificity of Arakmbut coping with the new political realities of indigenism in
Peru rather than the general analysis which proves stronger. This is hardly to impugn the material on indigenist politics *grosso modo*, but it is to highlight the fact that Arakmbut responses to contemporary political realities do not represent novelties: they have a long history of intense interaction with a wide range of allies and enemies. As Gray notes, what is different about the current period is that the material resources required for the maintenance of traditional forms of Arakmbut knowledge and power are no longer guaranteed as they once were. Inter-clan conflict prompted by territorial disputes, for example, subverts the coherence of forms of solidarity (through marriage alliance, for example) upon which the visionary expectations of the people depend.

The Arakmbut series is a substantial contribution to Amazonian ethnography as well as representing clearly and evocatively the altered role of anthropologists as mediators between the peoples with whom they study and the encroaching political and economic powers for which indigenous peoples are too often mere obstacles to be overcome. That Andrew’s professional life combined scholarly anthropology and activist anthropology is testimony to future possibilities.


Tobias Hecht is an iconoclast, and in *At Home in the Street*, he systematically dismantles almost every piece of received wisdom on the lives and experiences of street children. The result is a profound, compassionate and invaluable reappraisal of the ‘street child phenomenon’. For phenomenon it is. Public perceptions in Britain associate an entire country (Brazil) with street children. Politicians take up the issue; NGOs and missions fund-raise; visitors and tourists are shocked. Yet even the most basic information on the issue is disputed by Hecht.

Take the numbers game. Hecht surveys the many competing statistics on the issue and awards the record to UNICEF which in a 1984 issue of its magazine ‘Ideas Forum’ suggested that ‘more than 30 million children live in the streets of Brazil’. At the time, Brazil had a total of 32.5 million children between the ages of 5 and 17. The most widely cited figure is 7 million, but Hecht was unable to identify an original source, finding instead ‘an endless and circular process of one source citing as fact the reference or estimate of another’.

So he went back to the available research and looked at the real night-time surveys of sleeping children carried out in 1993 in the cities of Recife, Sáo Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza. These were attempts to count the number of children sleeping rough on the streets, making them full-time street children rather than poor children with homes who merely spent part of their day selling, working or hanging out in public.

None of the surveys could find more than a thousand kids sleeping rough. Extrapolating to the national level, and even assuming the census takers only found a third of the sleeping children, Hecht arrives at a national figure of 39,000 and comments, ‘39,000 an enormous and frightening number in itself: 39,000 children sleeping, stealing, falling in love, crying, dancing and dying in the streets. The only consolation about this number is that it would suggest that
more than 99 per cent of UNICEF’s seven million street children were a figment of this institution’s distant imagination’.

For 16 months spread over a three year period, Hecht spent time with the street children of Recife, trying to get inside their lives through a variety of innovative methods such as carrying out ‘radio workshops’ in which children interviewed each other about their lives. By knowing what questions to ask, these interviews revealed much more than Hecht could ever have discovered asking the questions himself. The result is a convincing and complex portrayal of children’s lives and self-perceptions. Hecht found a dual world within the children, symbolised in their rival views of ‘the home’ and ‘the street.’ ‘“Home” is far more than physical proximity to one’s mother: it implies foremost “helping” one’s mother, doing things in the home that she wants done, accepting her advice and discipline and augmenting the family income. Home also frequently implied attending school. In a general sense, home means sticking to what the children refer to as the “vida boa”, the good life, or the right track. The street, on the other hand, is a life style – essa vida – that includes sleeping in the street, stealing, using drugs and doing other things the children consider bad. It was not infrequent for a single child to speak in two quite distinct “voices” in a single interview, one of the repentant child, one of the defiant ruffian.’

Hecht traces, warts and all, the violent and chaotic world of the streets, where death and injury are far more likely to come at the hand of another street child than from the notorious death squads or police torturers (though they exact their own toll on the children). He explores how they survive on the street, and finds that each child assembles a network of ‘customers’ – middle class individuals, stallholders, waiters in restaurants and street children projects doling out free meals or other perks. The are very far from the abandoned, helpless creatures of legend. The book is littered with details which ring true and yet debunk another piece of street child mythology: hardly any child said they sniffed glue because of hunger – most said they did it because they liked it. Some even found sniffing glue increased hunger, especially after the glue wore off.

The strength of this powerful ethnography is that it gives the street children their voice. Rather than the big-eyed, helpless victims of a hundred charity appeals, they become individuals, making choices, some surviving, others floundering in the harsh world of Latin America’s streets. In so doing, Hecht has made an invaluable and honest contribution to our understanding of the issue, and returned some long overdue dignity to his subject.

CAFOD

DUNCAN GREEN


Duke University, which has developed a fine list of publications on Latin American culture, once again strengthens its contribution to this genre with Anne Rubenstein’s well-written exploration of Mexican popular culture. Using the vehicle of comic books, Professor Rubenstein provides fresh insights into the relationship between the state and the publishing world, challenging the myth of strict state authoritarian control over cultural matters. Specifically, she examines
the role of the Comisión Calificadora de Publicaciones y Revistas Ilustradas, an obscure government agency, from 1944 through the 1970s. As she herself suggests, the commission gave ‘the appearance of control over popular culture industries. This illusion strengthens the allegiance of the most socially conservative citizens to the state, without threatening the connection between the government and the highly integrated systems of media that characterize contemporary Mexico’ (p. 2).

Rubenstein makes a strong case for why the comic book industry offers a lucid window for understanding the relationship between the Mexican state and popular culture. She argues that conservative, Catholic culture persisted through this form of popular culture in spite of the government’s anti-Revolutionary rhetoric, and that deeply held values among the Mexican masses moulded the Mexican comic book market.

Following an introductory history of comic books, she analyses four facets of the topic: the audience, the opposition to comic book ‘immorality’, the role of the Comisión Calificadora, and the response of the comic book industry to conservative critics. Among her more important conclusions are the following: powerful linkage exists between comic book creators and the audience in that readers viewed many of these stories as their own personal histories; comic book content thematically reflects a blend of modernity and tradition; religion played a very important role, 58 per cent of the ads identifying the advertiser as Catholic or being directed towards Catholics; the audience, contrary to critics’ suppositions, upheld strong conservative values opposed to traditional modernizing influences; comics provided new symbols for changing gender behaviour among female and male readers; the Comisión protected the domestic industry from North American competition, encouraged Mexican cultural nationalism, and offered a channel for conservative Catholic complaints; and that the Comisión inadvertently protected and therefore encouraged homegrown pornography. Social scientists will be interested in the author’s analysis of the rise and fall of Ruis (Eduardo del Rio), Mexico’s most influential comic book author with a political message, both for what it reveals about censorship and the linkage between audience and author.

Rubenstein correctly reminds readers how, in the history of Latin America from colonial times to the present, organised forms of cultural censorship rarely are all encompassing and successful, just as Irving A. Leonard discovered in his classic works on the censorship activities of the New World Inquisition. In the Mexican case, as is evident from other recent works which explore the relationship between the state and the cultural world, low or high brow, state control is a porous institutional framework performing tasks extending well beyond any agency’s expected responsibilities. The author should make a stronger and broader case for state-cultural arguments by expanding her analysis to include the extant, complimentary literature on the Mexican State’s relationship to other, sophisticated forms of literature and culture. This broader linkage is significant because it illustrates a common pattern in state-cultural relationships regardless of the audience, thus reinforcing her conclusions and expanding their scope. Despite this caveat, readers will enjoy this engaging and thoughtful contribution to Mexican culture.

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RODERIC AI CAMP

As with many of the countries that have undertaken neoliberal structural reforms in the 1990s, Peru seems to have undergone dramatic changes in its economy, society and politics. State-owned enterprises have been privatised, established political parties have withered and old social identities no longer explain patterns of conflict and cooperation among groups. Yet amid the admittedly profound changes occurring, it is important not to lose sight of the historical continuities. *Fujimori’s Peru* is an earnest attempt to flesh out the continuities as well as the changes implicit in the policies followed by the Fujimori government. As the subtitle suggests, much of the analysis focuses on the political economy of Peru during the 1990s.

The chapters on economic performance and distribution are especially useful and represent a significant contribution to an assessment of the Fujimori administration. Together, the chapters offer a mixed picture of Fujimori’s economic policies. As Drago Kisic notes in his contribution, neoliberal reforms took place because there were no clear alternatives. State reform, privatisations and policies to increase investments were all needed if Peru was to catapult itself out of the economic devastation of the 1980s. While the state has been streamlined and investments increased, much of the growth that has occurred is based on traditional primary product exports. The 1990s have thus seen Peru return to a pattern of economic development from the first half of this century. Although Kisic argues this can provide sustainable growth in the medium term, he does not examine the implications of relying on this development. That is a task left to several other authors. Luis Abugattas suggests that structural reforms have resulted in deindustrialisation, although he also notes that this process started in the 1980s. Raúl Hopkins’ analysis of the agricultural sector offers a more mixed picture, with economic recovery apparent, but nonetheless dependent on good climatic conditions and rising growth in other sectors. Fujimori’s poverty and distribution policies are examined by Adolfo Figueroa. The administration has been generous in using discretionary clientelist social spending while cutting or eliminating labour and other economic rights. Not surprisingly, poverty has appeared to increase substantially during the 1990s. Jim Thomas’ chapter focuses on changes in the labour sector, analysing in particular the dramatic growth in the informal sector. Also notable among the economic chapters is that by Francisco Durand and Rosemary Thorp on tax reform.

The chapters on political and social changes are more uneven than those on economic changes, partly because there is no clear framework offered to try to understand them. There is little effort to put the Fujimori experience in comparative perspective or to situate Peru in the 1990s within current theoretical debates. Crabtree focuses on Fujimori’s ‘neopopulist’ politics, arguing that populism ‘infuses Peru’s political culture’, because of the historic weakness of most political institutions. Martin Tanaka’s chapter, tracing the shift from ‘movimientista’ to media politics since the 1970s is especially interesting, while the chapter by Carlos Degregori, José Coronel and Ponciano del Pino focuses on the impact of ‘Fujimorismo’ in Ayacucho.

Overall this is a good first attempt at assessing the policies of the Fujimori
administration. A fuller picture of the impact of this crucial decade will have to await the release of more data on the second half of the 1990s, and a greater willingness of participants in the government to provide more information on the decision-making process. It is likely that only in the post-Fujimori period will we have a clearer understanding of how the Fujimori government changed Peru.

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Metaphors can be dangerous. ‘Fault lines’ is obviously suggested by geology, and, as if to underline the point, the cover bears the illustration of a fault line in Florida. It is a metaphor to which most of the authors make reference. It is an interesting and imaginative one, but does it suggest too much determinism? After all, there is little you can do about a fault line except make sure your houses and roads are built to withstand shocks.

The editors seem aware of this problem when they write in the conclusion that perhaps they do protest too much (p. 380). Certainly the tone of most, if not all, of the chapters is highly critical of the quality of democracy in Latin America. Relatively few offer specific suggestions about how to improve that quality apart from an extremely thoughtful and suggestive chapter by Fernando Bustamante on ways of integrating the military into civilian political systems. The tone of one or two chapters – by Atilio Borón for example – suggests not simply the existence of fault lines, but that the earthquake has already begun.

It would have been possible to point to some areas where the outlook is not quite so gloomy. For example, the social reforms in Bolivia, problematic as they might be, are a genuinely imaginative attempt to deal with problems of poverty. The process of political change in Mexico promises to promote competitiveness and maybe even accountability and participation in that formerly authoritarian country. There are institutional changes – among them decentralisation – which for all their drawbacks are a starting point for improvement in governance. There are some states in Brazil that have transformed the delivery of social services. We can learn much about the quality of democracy by looking at achievements as well as at deficiencies.

Nonetheless, it must be said that overall this is an excellent volume. Felipe Agüero in the opening chapter makes a strong case for the approach he and his co-editor adopt in the volume. The three major fault lines identified are those related to representation and accountability; to the rule of law and the judiciary; and to problems of civil–military relations. The subsequent chapters broadly fall into those different areas.

Part One looks at general issues. Norbert Lechner writes about the transformation of politics in a subtle and thoughtful essay. Borón points to real problems with the new economic model, and Jeffrey Stark to the impact of globalisation. The other three parts are divided along the three major fault lines identified by Felipe Agüero. There are too many chapters to comment on all of them, but Hagopian’s chapter on Democracy and Representation and Varas on
democratisation do represent a real advance on conventional thinking in these areas. The chapter by Holston and Caldeira on the absence for many citizens of a rule of law in Brazil points to perhaps the greatest deficiency of democratic citizenship, not just in Brazil but elsewhere. The other chapters are more predictable but none is weak.

This book calls for a rethinking of the character of democracy in Latin America. Most of the issues it raises are relatively well-known, but they rarely receive the kind of systematic, detailed and thoughtful treatment that they do here. It is warmly recommended.

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ALAN ANGELL

After Franco’s death in 1975, Spain embarked on an ambitious campaign to end its international isolation. Crucial to this effort was the attempt to improve economic relations with Spanish America. The programme has been largely successful, so much so that, for example, by mid-1999 Spanish firms had acquired majority ownership of the three largest companies in the Chilean stock market: utility holding Enersis, energy generator Endesa-Chile, and telecommunications leader CTC. The book under review may or may not be a reliable guide as to how much, and what exactly, Spanish economists know about the Spanish American economies. If it is, it would be ironic that this overseas expansion by Spanish business has taken place in spite (or maybe precisely because) of some severe gaps in information and understanding.

Hidalgo Capitán sets himself to study the historical development of development economics, with special emphasis on Latin America. Following Hirschman, development economics is defined as different, in questions and methods, from the economic theory which applies to advanced industrial or post-industrial countries. Hirschman assumes that there is no contradiction between economic progress in the latter nations, and Third World development. The book explores modernisation theory, structuralism, neo-Marxism, neoliberalism and alternative theories (including environmental and ecological economics and the UNDP human development approach). The conclusions are not new or controversial: the roots of development economics are in conventional mainstream economic thought; development economics rejects ‘mono-economics’ (the assumption that the advanced industrial or post-industrial societies are anything more than just a ‘special case’); theoretical homogeneity was lost as structuralism and neo-Marxism gained ground; the triumph of neoliberal orthodoxy put heterogeneous development economics in crisis; the debate between neoliberalism, neostructuralism and alternative theories has been reawakened in the 1990s; and a degree of convergence towards moderation and homogeneity has recently emerged.

There are some problems with this book. The author shows little feel for the way economic theory evolves as a result of social pressures and social change. There is no attempt to explore historical continuity between theories and models.
appearing in different periods, and the author does not seem to be able to make up his mind as to whether the book is addressed to experts or to first year undergraduates. For example, the reader is never told about the link between classical economics and the Industrial Revolution, or the link between rent in Ricardo and rent-seeking among neoliberals. No effort has gone into adapting theories originally put forward to explain something else. A single, simple classical model should have been presented, instead of confusing the reader with very similar accounts for Smith, Ricardo, Malthus and Mill (pp. 27–33). If the Harrod–Domar model is to be used at all, it cannot be in a context of full employment (p. 71), which renders the model useless for the Third World case. Had economists remained faithful to the constraining type of production function that Hidalgo Capitán attributes to the neoclassicals (p. 44), neoliberalism would never have taken off.

The method of exposition, namely first summarising what a particular author wrote, which is then followed by a very brief (often only about ten to fifteen lines) ‘critical evaluation’ does not help. These ‘critical evaluations’ are patronising and simplistic, mimicking a catechism of elementary questions and answers. Much of the discussion is not original, but based on old textbooks translated into Spanish (the most frequent footnote is: ‘From now on we shall follow author X’). There is little use of the lessons from East Asia or of recent econometric research, which is particularly unhelpful when looking at Prebisch’s ‘export pessimism’ (p. 100) or World Bank policy recommendations (pp. 170–1). There is no index.

The book is not entirely without merit. For instance, the chapter on new, alternative theories is a welcome innovation. But even here less space could have been devoted to world congresses and resolutions of international organisations, and more should have been done in terms of explaining how new theories respond to changes in the real world. There are many examples. Increasingly, international companies have to take the environment, and public opinion on the environment, into account, as witness Rio Tinto Zinc on Centromin in Peru, Endesa-Spain on the Biobio hydroelectric projects in Chile, or Australia’s Broken Hill on the Ok Tedi copper mine in Papua New Guinea. Globalisation means that possibly no Third World country can develop without foreign capital, at the same time as hot money, fly-by-night golondrina capitals inevitably make foreign investment a mixed blessing. Anyone attempting to write a book on this subject should benefit from the insight by Paul Krugman, in the sense that, if development economists today say less than before, it is precisely because they know now a lot more than before: it has become embarrassing to say the same things that they used to say in the past.

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DAVID E. HOJMAN


The editors, who are recognised experts in their respective fields, point out in their introduction that despite the huge literature on democratisation there has been little attention paid to the roles of women in the political transformations
that have occurred in the two regions. And there is even less work that does this comparatively. This volume attempts that ambitious task. In the introduction, explicit comparison is made between the two regions, stressing the similarities as well as the differences. The much wider nature of the transformation being undergone in Central and Eastern Europe, the very different role played by the military and the contrasting experiences of women's movements in the two regions are all highlighted. The introduction also situates this collection within current debates in the democratisation literature as well as within feminist debates around difference and identity. The editors believe that this volume will be useful not only to those interested in comparative politics and to the much needed integration of gender into comparative politics but also to those involved in the development of feminist and democratic theory.

This is also the first collection on these themes that takes a longer historical sweep, examining women's roles not only under authoritarianism and state socialism, but in the breakdown of authoritarianism and state socialism as well as in the transition to and the consolidation of democracy. Much of the work done so far has concentrated on just one or two of these phases. An important starting point for the collection was a conference on women and political transitions in South America and East and Central Europe organised by the editors in 1992. All the chapter writers in the volume participated in that conference as either paper givers or commentators. But the vast majority of the papers have also been substantially updated, extended and revised to take account of unfolding events and the developing frameworks used to analyse them.

There are four case studies from each region in the volume. Almost all are written by prominent academics from those countries, many of whom are also actively involved in politics and feminist movements themselves. The countries covered are Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Peru in Latin America and Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria in Central and Eastern Europe. Peru and Bulgaria, as indicated by the editors, are less clearly part of a ‘semi-periphery’ in the same way as the other case studies. Some country specificity also remains because while examining broad issues of transition and consolidation, the chapters also take a particular focus relevant to that country. For example María Elena Valenzuela looks at the institutionalisation of women’s participation through SERNAM, the government women's bureau in Chile. Teresa Caldeira highlights issues around citizenship and rights in Brazil, and Maruja Barrig considers the impact that the violence triggered by Sendero Luminoso has had particularly on popular women’s movements. Since a great deal of attention has already been focused on the introduction of quotas in Argentina, it is to be commended that María del Carmen Feijoo does not make this the centrepiece of her chapter. It is not surprising that the chapters on Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia and Bulgaria spend more time considering the impact of the economic changes on women, given the more sweeping nature of the transformations which are being undergone in Central and Eastern Europe. Renata Siemienska’s piece on Poland however, concentrates on electoral politics and the activities of the women’s parliamentary group.

The collection concludes with a chapter by Philippe Schmitter in which, using his knowledge of both regions, he reflects on ways that women’s involvement in formal politics could be increased, both through changes within liberal democracy and going beyond liberal democracy, advocating some semi-corporatist measures.
Somewhat controversially he argues that strong party systems combined with decentralisation help to facilitate women’s participation in conventional political activity.

Overall this book is a very welcome addition to the growing literature on gender and democracy and certainly fulfils the hopes of its editors. I certainly agree with their contention that more expressly comparative work on these themes is needed. Very little comparison currently takes place within regions let alone across regions. Therefore it would have been very useful, particularly given the expertise of the editors, if the comparative introduction had been more extensive and the case studies had been followed by another more analytical and comparative chapter in addition to Schmitter’s more speculative one. This would have allowed the editors to use the empirical material to take up issues such as impact of strong and weak party systems. However, as it stands, this collection forms a very good beginning to this comparative enterprise and will be useful to a large number of people.

University of Sheffield

GEORGINA WAYLEN


Robert Busby examines the Iran–Contra affair as a case study of what he calls ‘scandal politics’. Scandals have become a more or less routine feature of American politics, Busby argues, and all share certain common features: abuse of power, aggressive media pursuit of wrong-doing, conflict between Congress and the executive branch, scapegoats, and a deeply sceptical public that had been conditioned over time to disbelieve the official story. Although he provides a reasonably full account of the Iran–Contra scandal, Busby is most interested in the Reagan administration’s damage control strategy for surviving the scandal and restoring the president’s political authority.

The administration’s response to the scandal followed a familiar pattern. First, before the evidence of what they had done became too overwhelming to deny, administration officials simply lied. When word of the arms-for-hostages deal was initially reported in November 1986, officials from the president down denied it. When one of White House aide Oliver North’s resupply planes for the Contras was shot down over Nicaragua, the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department all denied any U.S. involvement. Behind the scenes, North and National Security Adviser John Poindexter began shredding documents to cover-up the truth. But cover-ups, as the conventional wisdom holds, seldom succeed and often exacerbate the political and legal snarl. Richard Nixon, after all, was impeached for the Watergate cover-up, not the burglary.

The second stage of damage control is acknowledgement of the truth and the offering up of scapegoats. The hope, of course, is to convince the press and public that the scandal was perpetrated by rogue operators acting outside their authority. The Iran–Contra scandal had several scapegoats outfitted for different roles. The most prominent were North and Poindexter, who were fired the day Reagan announced that proceeds from the arms sales to Iran had been diverted to fund the Nicaraguan Contras. Chief of Staff Don Regan was sacrificed a few
months later for allegedly bungling the political management of the scandal, though his real offence was his indiscreet acknowledgement that the president’s inability to get the story straight was the real cause of the administration’s credibility gap. But the most convenient scapegoat was CIA Director Bill Casey, who died of a brain tumour just after the scandal broke.

The third stage of the administration’s damage control strategy was to rebuild the president’s political credibility and support. A key step in this phase was Reagan’s admission in early 1987 that he had in fact sold arms for hostages, and that it had been a mistake. He then replaced Don Regan with Howard Baker, former Republican leader of the Senate, who brought to the White House a substantial base of political support of his own, especially in the Congress, which was about to launch its public inquiry into the scandal.

The political culmination of the Iran–Contra scandal was the public hearings held by congressional investigators, during which North and Poindexter finally gave their version of events. On the whole, Busby’s account of the hearings is a good one, but he is wrong when he claims that they began in an atmosphere of bipartisanship and only later deteriorated into partisan wrangling. Even the opening statements by the Republican conservatives make clear that their strategy from the outset was to defame the investigation and use the hearings as a forum for justifying Reagan’s policies. They coordinated this strategy with the witnesses, allowing them long soliloquies on the virtues of the Contras. The message from the Republican side of the dais was unequivocal: even if laws had ‘technically’ been broken, it was done in the service of a higher moral calling—the defeat of Communism in Nicaragua—and therefore it was laudable. Congressional Republicans were even more aggressive than the White House in portraying the scandal as nothing but a partisan attack on the president.

Busby tracks the effectiveness of the Reagan administration’s damage control strategies by reviewing opinion poll data, and finds that few of the administration’s gambits had much impact. After the initial collapse of Reagan’s approval at the outbreak of the scandal, it stabilised below 50 per cent and stayed there until the scandal had played itself out. Few people believed Reagan’s claims that he was unaware of what North and Poindexter had been up to, and even those that did saw such ignorance as malfeasance. This was a constant dilemma faced by the White House—whether it was politically safer to cast the president as a liar or a fool.

In the end, of course, Reagan survived the scandal and his approval ratings recovered somewhat during his last year in office. Busby, despite the polling data he has assembled, wants to attribute the recovery to the administration’s damage control strategy. In fact, Reagan’s recovery was due more to luck than skill. With only a year left in Reagan’s presidency, congressional Democrats were unwilling to impeach him. Even before the congressional investigation began, its leaders agreed that they would not seek impeachment unless an evidentiary ‘smoking gun’ left them no choice. In Reagan’s last year, the end of the Cold War replaced the scandal with more momentous issues.

How applicable is Busby’s schema to the latest Washington scandal—Bill Clinton’s dalliance with Monica Lewinsky? Clinton’s scandal did not begin with an abuse of power (which is one reason the public continued to give Clinton high job approval ratings), but it certainly ran the gamut of cover-up, revelation, apology and partisan investigation. And the Clinton scandal reinforces Busby’s
final warning: as scandal politics become increasingly routine, the public’s disillusionment with their leaders and their political institutions is bound to grow.

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As its title suggests this collection of original essays explores the contemporary agenda of US relations with Latin America, with the interesting twist that most of the contributors are Latin Americans or Europeans. The collection covers all the major issues: trade, drugs, immigration, the promotion of democracy, and – of course – Cuba.

The first essay, by James Dunkerley, is a sweeping survey of US–Latin American relations from 1800 to the beginning of the Cold War – a story of the gradual extension of US economic and military dominance. But, as Dunkerley demonstrates, Europe remained a significant rival in the hemisphere, especially on the economic front, well into the twentieth century.

Laurence Whitehead picks up on this point in his essay on Latin America and the European Union, noting that historically Latin America looked to Europe to serve as a counterweight to Washington. Europe’s involvement in the hemisphere increased dramatically in the 1980s as it sought negotiated solutions to Central America’s revolutionary wars. After the Cold War, Europe’s interest turned from conflict resolution to economics. With progress toward a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) stalled in Washington, Europe has sought to offer an alternative, particularly to the southern cone countries of the MERCOSUR. But Whitehead rightly cautions against the notion that Europe might seriously challenge US regional hegemony. First, Europe’s Common Agricultural Policy is an obstacle to expanding trade with Latin America since most Latin exports to Europe are still agricultural. Second, Europeans have far more at stake in their bilateral relations with the United States than in their relations with Latin America.

Two other essays focus on trade: Victor Bulmer-Thomas and Sheila Page provide an overview, well-supported with data, which demonstrates that hemispheric integration has proceeded regionally, through NAFTA in the north and MERCOSUR in the south. They argue persuasively that creation of the FTAA would be very much in the interests of the United States, serving as a ‘21st century version of the Monroe Doctrine’, by limiting European and Asian economic influence. E. V. K. Fitzgerald’s assessment of the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) reinforces the argument that economic integration has been in Washington’s best interests. Indeed, NAFTA has been so successful that no serious political party in any of the three member countries now opposes it. Yet US domestic politics makes it highly uncertain whether the FTAA will ever be realised because, as Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley note in their conclusion, the losers from free trade are ‘more vocal’ and ‘more electorally concentrated’ than the gainers.
Next to trade, the war on drugs tops Washington’s agenda in Latin America. Roberto Steiner and Eduardo Gamara contribute histories of the drug war in Colombia and Bolivia respectively, and Elizabeth Joyce focuses on the pros and cons of drug certification as an instrument of US policy. Steiner’s article is especially timely, given Washington’s recent push to increase military aid to Colombia. His data demonstrate convincingly that the drug war there has been a failure. The flow of drugs has increased rather than decreased and the flow of capital into Colombia from the drug trade has been steady for two decades. However, the collateral damage of the war has been substantial. The military has gained strength at the expense of Colombia’s civilian institutions, respect for human rights has deteriorated, and thousands of people have died. In an otherwise optimistic essay on US efforts to promote democracy in Latin America, Rodolfo Cerdas Cruz worries that drugs will become the new security issue to which democracy and human rights are subordinated.

Cuba is the issue that time forgot in US–Latin America relations. Ten years after the end of the Cold War, Washington’s hostility to Castro’s Cuba is undiminished. In his overview of US policy toward Latin America during the Cold War, Jorge Domínguez argues that Washington was ideologically driven by anti-Communism to an ‘irrational’ degree, such that ideology took precedence over economic and strategic interests. This led Washington to use force, overt and covert, against countries that did not pose any serious threat to US interests (e.g. Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Grenada). Cuba, by virtue of its alliance with the Soviet Union, did pose a real threat to the United States, so US hostility was rational – until the Soviet Union collapsed. Since 1991, however, US policy toward Cuba has been the irrational remnant of Washington’s Cold War ideological obsession. Cuban economist Juan Triana Cordovi has a slightly different explanation for the persistence of US hostility. After reviewing the history of Washington’s economic embargo against Cuba with special attention to the effects of the Helms–Burton law, he concludes that the real source of Washington’s animus is the desire ‘to eliminate not Cuban socialism, but Cuban national independence’.

For Jorge Pérez-Lopez, the blame for Cuba’s economic problems (and therefore the opportunity to solve them) is more in its own hands. He presents an account of the external sector since 1989, supported by an impressive collection of data pieced together from a wide variety of sources. He concludes that while remittances, tourism and foreign investment have increased in recent years, they are not enough to solve the imbalances caused by the Soviet Union’s collapse. The implicit conclusion is that Cuba’s economic problems cannot be solved by a change in Cuba’s relations with the United States (or anyone else); they require internal economic reforms of a sort that Fidel Castro has thus far resisted.

In the final article on Cuba, Maxine Molyneux describes the influence of the Cuban–American community on US policy. She gives a good account of the successive waves of immigration, the growth of the community’s political power in the 1980s led by the Cuban American National Foundation, and the emergence of greater political diversity within the community in the 1990s. Conservatives hostile to any rapprochement between the United States and Cuba remain the loudest voice in the Cuban–American community, but they are no longer the only voice.
A concluding chapter by Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley notes that the United States, as the sole remaining superpower, will continue to enjoy hegemony in the Western Hemisphere for the foreseeable future – an hegemony that the European Union is not in a position to contest. At the same time, there is some hope for a less conflictual relationship between Latin America and the Colossus of the North. The end of the Cold War has reduced Washington’s ideological mania (except, of course, toward Cuba), allowing issues of democracy and human rights to move higher on the policy agenda (except where drugs are involved). The global triumph of neoliberal models of economic development is moving the hemisphere toward ever greater economic integration, despite the slow progress toward the FTAA. In short, both politically and economically, Latin America is moving of its own accord in a direction that Washington finds congenial.

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