

Book Reviews | Reseñas

- *American Crossings: Border Politics in the Western Hemisphere*, edited by Maiah Jaskoski, Arturo C. Sotomayor & Harold A. Trinkunas. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

The front cover of *American Crossings* features a photograph by Tomas Castelazo of the corrugated metal wall running along the U.S.-Mexican border under a hazy blue desert sky. A thin, tall metal tower hovers along the right-hand side of the photo, a grey-steel tube camera at its pinnacle pointing outwards across the line into ostensibly Mexican territory. Adding gravitas to the tableau, an artist has attached brightly coloured coffins to the sides of the wall, each labelled with a year and the associated number of deaths in attempts at crossing that year (2002, 371). The photograph presents an American border as a dead end space, a space of surveillance, obstruction, death. Dead end.

Fortunately for the reader, and as the editors themselves are at pains to solicit, the borders under investigation in *American Crossings* share a ‘complexity’ that belies this all-too moribund and static representation. Despite repeating the by now stale invocation that ‘in a globalized world, borders still matter’, they make a forceful argument that regional differences between the US and Latin America are key for understanding the specific socio-spatial trajectories of borders and borderlands in the area under study. Analysing borders in Latin America, they aver, shifts our attention to dynamics that depart from the canonical borderland elements defining border studies in Europe or North America. For the Southern Americas, such elements include a wide variety in terms of degree of international border disputes, extent of illegal trafficking and smuggling and their influence on international trade and border security, and the ways in which illicit practices impact political and economic stability. Also not to be underestimated, they say, is the scale of ‘limited state capacity’ in shaping the contours of particular borderlines, as well as the effects of the latter on border inhabitants.

According to Jaskoski et al., four relevant ‘domains’ have intersected to shape borderland interactions in the Americas since the end of the nineteenth century: national security, police security, economic development and identity construction. Rather than any evincing linear, cause-and-effect style articulation, they draw attention to ‘surprising interactions’ along and across these

elements as defining features of borders in this part of the world. Cameron G. Thies writes that it is not militarized border conflict but identity-based nationalist sentiments that keep international rivalries stoked in Latin America, the latter domain mobilized in the service of extractive, resource-based economic development. Thies finds this phenomenon exemplified in the long-standing militarized interstate dispute (MID) between Argentina and Chile, extending from 1873-1984. In her analysis of border disputes in the Southern Cone, Kristina Mani argues, on the contrary, that state actors engage more with technocratic issues than nationalist ones, thus enabling the depoliticization and subsequent resolution of border disputes. This process of technocratic depoliticization is revealed by Mani through the creation of a transgovernmental security cooperation network between Argentina and Chile during the 1980s and 1990s, one that succeeded in creating durable mechanisms for confidence-building and the resolution of territorial disputes between the two countries. As revealed in the contribution by Arturo C. Sotomayor, a somewhat startling consequence of the heightened technicalized 'judicialization' of border disputes has been a shift in regulatory authority away from regional governmental bodies (i.e., OAS) to that of more globally-orientated judicial bodies, (i.e., International Court of Justice, The Hague). Whereas disputes such as those over the Cenepa Valley between Ecuador and Peru in the mid-late 1990s were resolved by regional bodies such as the OAS, in the more recent period disputes such as those involving Costa Rica and Nicaragua over navigational rights in the San Juan river (2005), or the delimitation of a Pacific Ocean boundary between Peru-Chile (2008), have all been adjudicated by the ICJ. The broader, geopolitical significance of such a shift 'to Europe' for the resolution of Latin America's border disputes remains to be properly elaborated in a context of historical asymmetry and dependence between both continents.

In his contribution, Harold A. Trinkunas upends an influential doxa that reducing border conflict can lead to an enhanced security situation allowing for improved terms of international trade, thus allowing for greater regional and economic integration. In the instance of the border between Venezuela and Colombia, heightened border tensions are linked to increased economic openness between the two Bolivarian nations. As Arie M. Kacowicz demonstrates for the Tri-Border Area (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay), a consequence of international peace and increased trade may be witnessed in the rise of security issues in borderlands as posed by smugglers and transnational terrorism. Adam Isacson and Peter Andreas are there to remind us, however, that the link between increased trade and crime is not unidirectional; illicit actors operating within a system of open borders may just as well enforce the peace in their respective borderlands. As revealed in the case of Ecuador-Colombia, Maiah Jaskoski effectively reveals how armed guerrillas associated with the FARC reinforce the international borderline as a means to ensure their smooth crossing, for economic as well as for military reasons. Finally, José Carlos G. Aguiar intriguingly showcases how the opening and liberalization of the Tri-

Border Area through neoliberal adjustment reforms has paradoxically led to novel regulatory structures to control cross-border transactions and prevent illegal crossings.

So, ‘surprising interactions’, indeed. Yet equally surprising, and at the same time disappointing, are the editors’ oft-repeated invocation of the neologism ‘weak state capacity’ to account for trade or security deficits within/across borders in the region. But ‘weak’ according to which/whose standard(s)? North American? European? The question merits posing, as it would seem that such a judgment would appear to vitiate one of the core impulses of the book, namely to provide a critical lens on borders in Latin America that is not beholden to a ‘Northern (academic) gaze’. At stake here is a (geo)politics of academic knowledge production, one which consistently portrays non-European (or North Atlantic) regions as ‘backward’ and in need of ‘catching up’ to the purportedly ‘strong’ standards of North-Atlantic state systems. We are no longer in the world of modernization theory à la Walt Rostow. We are now in a multipolar world, inviting us to grasp regional dynamics on their own terms, without recourse to such outdated teleologies. In this respect, *American Crossings* missed an important opportunity to engage with scholarship on borders emerging from a new generation of Latin American scholars working in/on Latin America.

Finally, it is a pity that the fourth border ‘domain’ canvassed by the authors (‘Borders as Imagined Communities’) remains anchored in national cultures located either side of the borderline. Again, a golden opportunity has been lost to explore how myriad imagined communities have developed and continue to thrive alongside, betwixt/between and athwart many borders in the Americas.

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Note

1. At a recent gathering of Latin America’s Dutch diplomatic corps in The Hague, I referred to this issue, mentioning Sotomayor’s contribution to this volume. Many Latin American embassy staff in the audience, including their senior legal counsel working precisely on those disputes cited in Sotomayor’s chapter, took umbrage at the suggestion that The Hague was gradually replacing their regional decision-making bodies. I had obviously touched a geopolitical nerve.

– *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA*, by Sarah Lynn Lopez. University of Chicago Press, 2015.

The body of literature on Latin American migration has been growing steadily over the last decades. Multi-sited research in anthropology and geography has illuminated the cultural, social, political and economic dimensions of migration and remittances. Mexico and the Andean countries are arguably the best covered regions in the debates on ‘globalization-from-below’ and on possible local development through the investment of remittances. Lopez’ study of Mexican

migration from the state of Jalisco to the U.S. (and back) might seem just another ethnographic addition to this list. Yet her excellent book sheds fresh light on several understudied themes and she innovatively connects a spatial and material analysis to a socio-political inquiry.

Lopez' sharp eye for the spatial and physical order reveals her disciplinary background in architectural history, which is blended with stories of the actors involved in the construction of buildings, spaces and symbols. Exploring such social spaces which are created through the act of remitting money, Lopez aims to comprehend migrants' shifting attachments to 'here' and 'there' over time. In six chapters, an introduction and a conclusion, she takes the reader from the individual migrant family's project of building a dream house to collective aspirations of hometown associations of migrants that attempt to bring development to their villages of origin. Lopez scales up to analyse state involvement and power play in the channelling of remittances through the well-known Mexican 3x1 programme, in which the state matches funds invested by hometown associations. The journey continues with analyses of migrants' gendered identity constructions in the famous bull riding events and the ways in which remitting reshapes the public sphere. We follow the return of elderly and deceased Jaliscoños to their hometowns, to end the story in the homes-away-from-home: the U.S. metropolis. All notions of the 'here' and 'there' are addressed and turned around.

There is increasing acknowledgement in the literature on migration, transnationalism and globalization that the material culture produced in a framework defined by the flows of people, goods and ideas offers an excellent yet understudied point of entrance into deeper understandings of socio-cultural transformation. As other scholars have recently attested, the visual expressions in migrant architecture disclose analytically how the producers of form – often the underprivileged – envision the relationship between 'here' and 'there', countryside and city, and between 'now' and an aspired future (Lozanovska, 2016). Lopez spearheads this approach with the introduction of the notion 'remittance landscape'. In her book, she shows how relationships of patronage and inequality between small Mexican villages and larger towns thwart the democratic goals of internationally praised development models such as the 3x1 programme, highlighting the unintended socio-political outcomes of well-intended models. Unravelling the multiple stories embedded in the construction of an old peoples' home, for example, enables her to trace money flows – the economic power of remittances is overwhelming – which in turn point toward the unequal involvement of state actors, local communities and trans-local migrants. The approach of tracing material culture to its inceptions and social effects proves a fruitful one in the book.

While several chapters deal with the political institutions and conflictive domains of national and local politics in a more structuralist way, the book manages to balance out political-economic examinations with lively ethnographic details in every chapter, which bestows on the book a coherence in

style and analytic content. Several chapters are crafted around iconic spatial interventions, such as a rodeo arena or a cultural centre allowing Lopez to postulate her vision on the relation between space, place and social transformations in statements such as: ‘One goal of many migrants is to resurrect and preserve the jaripeo [bull ride] as a form of traditional culture, yet the forum they have created for performing that version of rancho life is the very place that reveals the extent to which that social order no longer exists’ (p. 131). She concludes stating that ‘[r]emittance development is a fundamentally complex social process that begins with individual aspirations but quickly engages institutions at many scales, as well as clashing social worlds’ (p. 259).

The Remittance Landscape offers an excellent read to scholars and students in migration studies, geography, anthropology and Latin American studies. The cross-cutting analyses and detailed observations show what globalization, social fragmentation and development mean in the context of a world that faces an increasing number of people on the move in search for a better future, captured by the observation that for many people ‘[t]he price of improving the domestic dwelling is abandoning it’ (p. 38). The gridlock that follows shows the painful dilemmas of migrants all over the world, because ‘[t]he choice is clear: living in a remittance house year-round would mean losing the ability to maintain it’ (p. 67). This and other paradoxical outcomes of migration fundamentally redefine the nature of ‘home’ in Latin America and elsewhere in the Global South. Lopez’ detailed observations enable the reader to feel the frustration over the traps embedded in the act of migration – an act as old as the world and as unstoppable as the wind.

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Reference

Lozanovska, M. (2016) *Ethno-architecture and the politics of migration*. New York: Routledge.

– *Latin America’s Emerging Middle Classes; Economic Perspectives*, editado por Jeff Dayton-Johnson. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Durante la década pasada América Latina experimentó un notable crecimiento económico a la vez que un cierto ‘consenso posneoliberal’, una reacción en gran parte de la opinión pública y en las élites políticas contra el ‘consenso de Washington’ de la década anterior. Como consecuencia de esos cambios, las clases medias, consideradas casi en extinción desde la crisis de la deuda, cobraron de nuevo protagonismo, y en especial se han convertido en foco de atención para los estudiosos de la región, en especial los economistas y sociólogos que trabajan para los centros multilaterales: la CEPAL, el Banco Mundial, el FMI y la OCDE.

Precisamente en un debate dentro del Centro de Desarrollo de la OCDE sitúa Jeff Dayton-Johnson el origen del presente libro, subrayando la simultá-

nea explosión de interés sobre estas nuevas clases medias patente en los trabajos de CEPAL (Franco et al., *Las clases medias en América Latina*, México, 2010) y en los informes de la OCDE (*Latin American Economic Outlook 2011*) y del Banco Mundial (Ferreira et al., *Economic Mobility and the Rise of the Latin American Middle Class*, Washington, 2013).

Tras una presentación por Dayton-Johnson de los problemas generales, Azevedo, López-Calva, Lustig y Ortiz-Juárez analizan la relación entre la disminución de la desigualdad y la emergencia de las nuevas clases medias; después hay tres estudios centrados en casos nacionales: Cárdenas, Kharas y Henao discuten las resistencias a las políticas de redistribución en Perú; Neri analiza el espectacular caso de Brasil; y Castellani, Parent y Zenteno González exponen cómo en Colombia la superación de la pobreza en términos de ingreso puede ir acompañada de la persistencia de carencias que impiden hablar de clase media.

Dado que un 60-70 por ciento de quienes han salido de la pobreza no cuentan con un trabajo formal (los llamados vulnerables) Daude, De la Iglesia y Melguizo plantean el problema de las pensiones y la fragmentación de la política social para estos grupos emergentes. Casanova y Renk analizan después la respuesta de las empresas ante la nueva realidad social. Lora y Fajardo-González muestran y discuten la disparidad entre la autopercepción y la realidad estadística que revelan los encuestados al ser preguntados por su estatus de clase. Y, por último, Daude, Gutiérrez y Melguizo discuten las actitudes políticas de los nuevos grupos medios a partir del problema de las resistencias a una política fiscal más activa.

Saber de qué hablamos cuando hablamos de clase media no es una cuestión trivial. Fijar un criterio absoluto – más de 10 US\$ PPP, por ejemplo, de ingreso diario per cápita – nos informa de la potencialidad de las nuevas clases medias como mercado potencial de consumo interno, pero no nos da información sobre los posibles cambios en la desigualdad, cuya reducción puede ser clave para valorar la importancia del grupo como factor capaz de impulsar el desarrollo sostenido de un país.

Los economistas del Banco Mundial, en particular, han tratado mediante encuestas-panel de fijar los niveles absolutos de ingreso a partir de los cuales es casi nula – inferior al 10 por ciento – la probabilidad de recaer por debajo de la línea de pobreza. A partir de ese nivel se estaría en la nueva clase media, y por debajo de él estaríamos entre los vulnerables que corren riesgo de volver a ser pobres. Las cifras más comunes a este respecto hablan de un 70 por ciento de vulnerables frente a un 30 por ciento de clase media en sentido estricto entre quienes han escapado en años pasados de la pobreza.

Ahora bien, la principal limitación – que no debilidad – del libro estriba en que no incluye los cambios económicos que se han producido a nivel global desde 2014. Una vez que se considera que el crecimiento económico ha sido el factor de mayor peso en el nacimiento y expansión de las nuevas clases medias, se presenta el problema de que la baja tasa de crecimiento económico

global, la desaceleración de China y la caída de los precios de las materias primas, catastrófica en el caso del petróleo, auguran unos años difíciles para la región y para sus clases medias vulnerables.

El problema se agudiza por la dependencia de las clases vulnerables respecto a las políticas públicas cuando el ciclo económico se torna desfavorable. Las políticas sociales enfocadas en los estratos más pobres ya no les benefician al haber salido de la pobreza, y las políticas sociales en general son fragmentarias y segmentadas, y por otro lado los servicios públicos son a menudo insuficientes y de baja calidad. Así, no es extraño que en Brasil, con 40-45 millones de personas salidas de la pobreza, ya en 2013-2014 se produjeran protestas masivas reclamando la mejora de los servicios públicos.

Este es un libro escrito en su mayor parte por economistas, pero apunta problemas políticos que pueden ser centrales en los próximos años. En el último capítulo los autores (C. Daude, H. Gutiérrez y Á. Melguizo) apuntan una de estas cuestiones: las distintas prioridades de los grupos medios en relación con la política fiscal. Los nuevos gobiernos deberán buscar consenso entre las clases medias, nuevas, antiguas o vulnerables, para definir prioridades fiscales comunes. Curiosamente, puede que la inseguridad ciudadana, antes que la sanidad o la educación, sea el principal objetivo sobre el que todos estos grupos sociales puedan ponerse de acuerdo, en el actual clima de desconfianza y malestar hacia los gobiernos.

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– *Cities, Business and the Politics of Urban Violence in Latin America*, by Eduardo Moncada. Stanford University Press, 2016.

In *Cities, Business, and the Politics of Urban Violence in Latin America*, Eduardo Moncada – assistant professor at Barnard College, and co-author of the UNDP Regional Development Report on Citizen Security in Latin America (2012) – sets out to improve our understanding of the factors that shape how city administrations respond to violence. After rolling out an ambitious analytical framework (chapter 1), Moncada uses case study methodology to validate his assumptions in Medellin, Cali, and Bogota (chapters 3-5). In each city, he zooms in on two periods of ‘participatory’ or ‘inclusionary’ reforms, all within the 1992-2007 period. In the concluding chapter, Moncada adds a short case study about Ciudad Juarez, and declares his explanatory model valid for all cities in the region. In truth, this is a book about Colombian cities, and the author dedicates a whole chapter to the history of violence in Colombia alone (chapter 2).

Moncada is less interested in the nuts and bolts of municipal violence reduction and prevention programmes than in how the outcome of such efforts is in essence a function of two factors: business and violent territorial control. His

central premise is that the specifics of the private sector (segmented or cohesive, engaged or disengaged) influence the substance; and those of territorial control (atomized or monopolistic) influence the path of implementation of reforms. The better aligned with business and the less atomized and violently confrontational the illegal armed groups, the more relevant the reforms' substance and the more effective their implementation.

Moncada argues that the case studies fully confirm his premise. For the successful reforms of mayor Fajardo (2004-2007) in Medellín, he finds that the principle local business conglomerate (Grupo Suramericana – GSA) engaged strongly with the reforms, and that a monopolistic crime lord (a. don Berna) reached a secret agreement with city hall to keep violence under control. An earlier inclusive reform effort in Medellín, led by president Gaviria (1990-1994), was less successful, argues Moncada, due to relative disengagement of the GSA business conglomerate, the intensely violent and atomized character of illegal territorial control, as well as conflicts and infighting among levels of government. When city hall tried to overcome this by engaging in informal truces with gangs and urban guerrilla (*milicias*), the reforms lost further track.

In Cali, he finds that a well-organized segment of economic elites involved with the sugar cane industry refused to support mayor Guerrero's (1992-1994) security reforms, considered as soft. Simultaneously, the fragmented nature of drug lords, gangs and *milicias* hindered the implementation of his reforms. Later, independent mayor Rodriguez' (2001-2003) was unable to win the trust of the police and other national security agencies, and turf wars among gangs, guerrilla and paramilitary hindered access to poor neighbourhoods designated for intervention.

In Bogotá, participatory reforms under Mockus (1995-1997) profited from constructive cooperation with (international) business, and from scattered but low violent criminal territorial control, says Moncada. Garzon (2004-2007), an explicit left wing mayor, encountered difficulties in rallying the private sector, especially for his efforts to allow the informal sector to re-occupy public space his predecessors had reclaimed for the public good. Yet, as Moncada argues, illegal territorial control had further receded and helped make Garzon's reforms moderately successful.

Throughout this study, Moncada reminds us of the importance to engage in comparative studies with an urban regime theory inspired approach and to analyse urban regimes in a dynamic manner, whereby public order is created thru the constant re-production, transformation or adaptation of alliances with other power players, be they public, private, informal, illegal or criminal.

Some shortcomings: in general, a multi-faceted and fluid social phenomenon as urban violence doesn't lend itself for a rigid explanatory framework, contrary to a narrower topic (as municipal anti-gang policies or policing). Additionally, Bogotá, Cali and Medellín are outliers, and don't qualify as a sufficiently representative sample to validate a general theory. Even for Colombia alone, such a sample should include deviant cases, e.g. cities without a strong

business sector, or without powerful criminal organizations. Further, the narrow focus on just two explanatory variables leaves other critical factors unexplored, e.g. the influence of civil society organizations and the impact of national security sector reforms. Also, the author doesn't explain why he considers local economic elites the best proxy for 'business' (how about the gray sectors of the economy?), and 'illegal territorial control' the best proxy for criminal impact on reforms (how about criminal intimidation and infiltration of government institutions, political parties, electoral campaigns, public contracting and community organizations?). Finally, Moncada tempers with evidence to make data more conform to his findings than they actually are. E.g. he presents homicide reductions in Medellín from 2004 onwards as proof that a secret pact between Fajardo (2004-2007) and don Berna was a key factor in the reforms' success. In reality, murders in Medellín had already dramatically decreased during 2003, the year prior to Fajardo entering office, as a consequence of national security reforms, in *casu* a cease fire obtained in December 2002 by president Uribe (2002-2010).

In spite of its rigid and somewhat forced analysis, this book offers an informative read for all those interested in contemporary urban affairs in Colombia, as the case studies make use of 211 interviews and extensive secondary sources.

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– *Who Counts? The Mathematics of Death and Life after Genocide*, by Diane Nelson. Duke University Press, 2015.

This book closes anthropologist Diane Nelson's trilogy on the Guatemalan genocide, which addresses body politics, reckoning, and the 'after-math', as she writes in her as always playful language. The book looks at the multiple uses of mathematics, numbers, calculation, ac/counting, balances and equation in the aftermath of the genocide (of the early 1980s), focussing on the current context of survival economies under neoliberalism. Nelson wants to take seriously what mathematic can do (without fetishizing it) and explore the social and political lives of numbers in postcolonial societies, and how quantities are (always) related to qualities. Hence the double meaning of the title, 'Who counts?', referring to the agency of those who do the counting, as well as to the more implicit questions of whose lives count, and what people do to make their lives count. The latter question relates to Nelson's sustained interest in Mayan organizing, and her attempt to make sense of its emerging forms, what she calls 'Mayan Organizing 2.0'.

Nelson's book is mainly based on her observations, interviews, experiences and reflections from the past 8 to 10 years, including her attempts to learn and understand the Mayan system and philosophy of numbers and day-counts as an

alternative that can give different insights and denaturalize the predominant hindu-arabic system. Through nine chapters (-1, 0, 1, 2, 3 etc.), Nelson straddles and weaves together a number of different themes and issues, such as the reparations after the armed conflict, financial pyramid-schemes, popular resistance to mining, and struggles over electricity rates.

Two chapters analyse the process of *resarcimiento*, the official attempt to balance the injustices of genocide and armed conflict by paying calculated amounts of money to people who can make their lives and losses count. Statistics of genocide are inherently fuzzy, human remains have to be identified to make them count, and arbitrary thresholds and counts characterize the process. For example, only up to two dead per family count (so $>2=0$), and the mere fact of fixing a price and receiving money for a human life has upset many people. While money makes the whole process possible, implying some kind of recognition, and (as an actant) paying for education, food or houses for the next generation, Nelson also describes the many unsettling effects of the *resarcimiento* process, which can never fulfil the many hopes of a different life that it has generated.

The following two chapters seek to understand Mayan ‘pyramids’ that reflect collective hopes of achieving a different life and come to count in contexts where jobs are scarce and health is challenged by ever higher demands on labourers and ever lower yields in subsistence agriculture. One is the franchise ‘Omni-life’, a case of ‘pyramid selling’ of medicine that signals care for other people and promises avenues for increased income and enhanced self-government. The other is the (all-Mayan) pyramid scheme run by El Millionario that contagiously gripped a whole province and left thousands of families ruined. The scheme draws on the same ‘substrata of everyday enchantments’ (p. 170) as the post-conflict boom of funds for development, or the *resarcimiento* process, or even the hopes vested in a revolution in the early 1980s, all of them creating collectivities of faith. Of course, the scheme also lends itself to parallel readings of the Wall-street meltdown, pointing to the fictional qualities of finance, the ‘other side of the coin’, the unsettling, magical one (p. 168).

Finally, a chapter explores the different forms of (ac-)counting that come into play in the struggles against the extensive mining prospects that have characterized Guatemala in this millennium: the counting of people, villages and provinces against mining through *consultas* (in the end making the equation ‘Yes to life=No to mining’ count); the scientific measures of levels of pollution and causal relations with diseases, rashes, water-levels and barrenness; and the attempts to balance and calculate gains and losses, benefits and risks, and life’s worth, and playing the odds.’ (p. 202)

I am generally a big fan of Nelson’s books, her innovative takes on Guatemala’s recent history, and her reflections on a gringa’s ways of relating to the country and its people. But after reading the first three chapters (-1, 0 and 1), I still struggled to figure out where she was going with the book. Thus, I don’t

think it is a coincidence that on pages 50 and 56 she still has to specify for the reader what ‘this book explores’ and wants to tell us. I also missed the usual flow of her writing in the first chapters. Nevertheless, the rest of the book is a pleasure to read for its stories, its insights, and its attempts to open up the world of numbers and counts in the aftermath of genocide.

Finn Stepputat, DIIS, Copenhagen

– *Owners of the Sidewalk: Security and Survival in the Informal City*, by Daniel M. Goldstein. Duke University Press, 2015.

Following his former work on informality, insecurity and survival mechanisms of the urban poor in marginal communities in Cochabamba, Daniel M. Goldstein has again written a vivacious monography on urban dynamics in this Bolivian city. In *Owners of the Sidewalk* he disentangles the everyday life worlds of the vendors of La Cancha, one of the country’s biggest informal markets located in the southern zone of Cochabamba. Goldstein makes a splendid analysis of the way in which the different actors in the Cancha market – permanent stall vendors or *fijos*, itinerant street vendors or *ambulantes* as well as state officials and private security guards – continuously cross the line between the formal and informal, legal and illegal, albeit in completely different ways, and the various forms of insecurity it brings to the fore.

The book is divided into chapters of two to four pages, each focussing on particular themes that are central to his comparative analysis on the security concerns of legal and illegal market vendors. Due to this rather innovative structure, this ethnographic study reads like a novel, systematically carving out the activities and interactions of four male protagonists: Don Silvio (leader of the federation of the *ambulantes*), Don Rafo (leader of the federation of the *comerciantes fijos*), and the author Daniel and his field assistant Nacho. With this narrative approach the book gives an in-depth description of the process of doing fieldwork as well as a more theoretical reflection on issues of urban dis-regulation and the complex relations between insecurity and informality.

With *Owners of the Sidewalk* Goldstein makes an important contribution to the discussions on activist and engaged anthropology. His study shows how such an approach gives access to better and more complex insights in the social realities anthropologists attempt to study. The book also reflects on the responsibilities, expectations and ethical dilemmas such an approach entails. It is actually through Goldstein’s collaborative approach, and his promises to organize a seminar and write an ‘academic book’ for the vendors – documenting the causes, effects and solutions to the problem of insecurity in the market – that the diversity of political perspectives in La Cancha market came to the fore. In fact, the book reaches a kind of anti-climax when Goldstein wants to translate some of his preliminary results into concrete action by donating a loudspeaker

system to the market. This is the moment that social exclusion mechanisms, dissension or lack of unity among the vendors and the power games in the *sindicatos* are revealed to the reader. Hence, the donated loudspeaker system would never be operative as there were endless conflicts, ruptures and political disputes on where and when to install it. Regardless of these disappointing results, Goldstein concludes his book on the rather optimistic note that these kinds of experiences are part and parcel of activist anthropology, and help them to adjust their goals.

In general, I think that Goldstein could have had more of an eye for the heterogeneity of his research population from the very beginning of his study. With his categorization of organized vendors – ambulantes versus fijos – he tends to oversimplify the socio-political dynamics at play in La Cancha megamarket. As we also see in many other studies on street vendors in Latin American cities (Cross, 1998; Lazar, 2008; Little, 2005), it builds on the assumption that virtually all street vendors are organized in sindicatos and federations and that markets in Latin America are by definition organized entities in terms of social structures. Part of this assumption builds on the historical importance of federations and grassroots organizations in Latin America, but another part builds upon a practical methodological choice of the researcher. Many Latin Americanists have started their studies on informal workers by embarking on fieldwork with the leaders of vendors' federations. How else would Goldstein have been able to find an entry point or structural factor in the chaos of informal markets with more than 100,000 vendors? In addition I wondered why Goldstein kept on reducing the economic potential of streets vendors to a merely survival strategy while many authors, including myself (Steel, 2008) have argued that informal street activities can vary from a precarious livelihood strategy to lucrative informal entrepreneurship in which vendors can earn more than average wage labourers? Finally, I really appreciate Goldstein's focus on male worlds in markets that have traditionally been described as 'feminine spaces' in the Latin American literature, but what do the changing dynamics bring to these gender issues in terms of empowerment, economic dynamics and political agency?

These are just a few of the questions with which I think Goldstein's book offers a warm invitation, as well as a solid backbone for future collaborative ethnographic research on the economic as well as political struggles of the many street vendors in the hybrid and complex domains of Latin American urban life. Activist anthropologists will never be able to resolve the many problems these urban dwellers must regularly contend with, but they can at the very least contribute to the further recognition of their daily struggles and as such enforce some slight changes over the long term.

Griet Steel, KU Leuven and Utrecht University

Reference

Steel, G. (2008). *Vulnerable Careers: Tourism and livelihood dynamics among street vendors in Cusco, Peru*. PhD dissertation Utrecht University, published by Rozenberg Publishers.

- *Beyond Tradition, Beyond Invention: Cosmic Technologies and Creativity in Contemporary Afro-Cuban Religions*, edited by Diana Espírito Santo and Anastasios Panagiotopoulos. Sean Kingston Publishing, 2015.

Somewhere beyond observation and participation, misunderstanding and generosity, the public and the private, and scholarship and experience lies Afro-Cuban religiosity. Add to this a menagerie of political motivations and transnational materials, embodied means and gendered methods that are at work in Afro-Cuban religion and the reader begins to sense the heartbeat of *Beyond Tradition, Beyond Invention*, a text that prioritizes the experimental and experiential aspects of Afro-Cuban religions above all else.

The study of Afro-Cuban religion has long been locked in analyses that focus on historical processes of ‘syncretism’, ‘creolization’, and/or ‘hybridity’. While these are not starved of analytical capacity, the editors and authors of this volume contend that they are insufficient to apperceive the creativity and vital technologies of imagination and ritual that encompass the contemporary practice of Afro-Cuban religion. Privileging ground-up approaches to Afro-Cuban religiosity, the essays in this work ‘wish to reintegrate a concern with the quotidian, forward-moving and temporal dimensions of creative improvisation through an ethnographic examination of the multiple ontologies continually forged by practitioners of Afro-Cuban religion.’ (4) From such an ethnographic perspective, the aim of the text is to present multiple vignettes that make known the various ritual, conceptual, social, and phenomenological ‘technologies’ of Afro-Cuban religiosity, which obscure any cocksure hermeneutics that reduce Afro-Cuban religion to tradition and documented history.

With such an emphasis on the embodied performance and sensual, creative effects of Afro-Cuban religion, the chapters do not present a cohesive whole, but rather a fluid mosaic of ritual and practice, tradition and invention. That said, they are generally organized around four interpretive themes: problematizing the category of ‘syncretism;’ a focus on the experiential aspect of these religions; sociologically, historically, and politically informed analysis; and a look at the transnational diffusion of Afro-Cuban religion.

Among these chapters there are a few standouts that highlight the thematic emphases of the text as a whole. Alessandra Basso Ortiz’s chapter on non-initiatory versions of Afro-Cuban religions (the Gangá Longobá, the Iyesá of Jovellanos, and Tomasa Zuasnabar’s Saints) ‘reveals the coexistence of multiple ways in which one can be an active Afro-Cuban religioso’ (p. 121) and demands the reader to appreciate the multi-valence of Afro-Cuban religious pathways. In terms of embodied, and gendered, ritual performance and creativity, Geraldine Morel’s chapter, ‘Embodying the Sacred in Abakuá performance: places of power and gender construction,’ (pp. 175-197) throws the spotlight on a little-explored modality of Afro-Cuban religion: the Abakuá secret society. The Abakuá secret-society is an all-male urban religious phenomenon that Morel argues provides male members with concrete responses to se-

rious, and impending, social problems. Her exploration of the material and performative aspects of this society uncover the power of sacred masculinity at work in tattoos and dances, struts and YouTube videos. Multiple chapters (Morrell, Routon, Amores) focus on the political, social, and historical impact of the ‘Special Period’ in Afro-Cuban religious practice. Essentially, their argument is that the proliferation of Afro-Cuban religiosity and the onset of the Special Period – the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union that led to a prolonged economic crisis in Cuba, starting in 1989 – are mutually constitutive events and that the political and the popular cannot be so easily untangled. Routon’s chapter makes particular use of this line of reasoning to analyse the private and public aspects of surveillance and scrutiny both in the machinations of post-Soviet politics and magic charms (pp. 157-174). Although one of the principle accents of this work is how Afro-Cuban religiosity changes over time, the authors also make a marked contribution to understanding how Afro-Cuban religiosity travels over space and place. The aforementioned piece by Morel makes a pass at investigating the transnational elements of the Abakuá, but the main chapter that takes up a transnational lens is that of Amores, who considers ‘the universe of Afro-Cuban religions in the Canary Islands,’ (p. 201) with its own particularities given its local context and the vast constellation of New Age spirituality within which it is ensconced. Together, these contributions create a complex collage of Afro-Cuban religion in all its stunning diversity and sundry manifestations.

This facet of the book features as both its greatest strength and weakness. While this book is successful in problematizing simplistic surveys of Afro-Cuban religion according to fixed historical syncretisms, singular localities, or seemingly straightforward social, political, or economic explanations it also fails in providing a cohesive path forward. The beauty in this is that in dissolving the boundaries by which Afro-Cuban religion was previously studied, the authors open up myriad pathways for future research by budding young scholars. The danger is the perennial problem of potentially losing the unifying force of a particular subfield in such assorted analyses that the object of study is more obscured than revealed. In the end, this compendium would do well as a complimentary companion to more introductory texts such as David Brown’s *Santeria Enthroned* or even Joseph M. Murphy’s *Santeria: African Spirits in America*. What this combination would provide is at once a comprehensive perspective (from Brown and Murphy) with a supplementary volume that pushes the envelope of analysis to consider the diffuse nature of creative technologies at work in Afro-Cuban religiosity today.

Ken Chitwood, University of Florida

- *Cuba and the U.S. Empire. A Chronological History*, by Jane Franklin. Monthly Review Press, 2016.

The differences and certain hostilities between the United States of America and Cuba have more or less been overcome. That at least appears to be the image the general public, main-stream mass media as well as some scholars have developed after the historic speeches on 17 December 2014 by U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro. Several specific steps would seem to substantiate this impression. Nevertheless, some historical memory and consciousness, a willingness to not fall into the trap of wishful thinking, and a book by Washington-based writer and historian Jane Franklin is needed to sense and understand the overall complexities as well as the structural factors and the ‘path dependencies’ of that very special relationship in the Western Hemisphere.

The principle sources of the book are documents from the U.S. State Department, Congress, the Cuban Mission to the United Nations, other official government publications, and numerous journalistic accounts from relevant newspapers. *Cuba and the U.S. Empire* is structured into three sections and supports the insight that like any other foreign political arena in the U.S., the policy toward Cuba is especially dominated by relatively few intensively interested and involved individuals, collective actors and their ideological frameworks as well as political and strategic concepts.

In the first section Franklin chronicles Cuba-U.S. relations from the time both countries were colonies, through each country’s changes and revolutions (1492-1958). She describes the specific shaping of the U.S. approach towards Cuba in the first half of the nineteenth century. Some of the stereotypes created then are still used and reproduced today.

The second section is large and contains a year-by-year chronicle with extremely interesting details and little-known but very relevant facts. With this approach Franklin is able to offer the readers a sense of ‘the interconnectedness of lesser known occurrences with major developments. Widely discussed episodes such as the Bay of Pigs invasion or the Missile Crisis of 1962 are too often seen in isolation rather than as part of a continuum of events, most of which are less dramatic and more obscure.’ (p. xi) One example of the chronological part of the book is the following little sequence, articulating the violent character of some exile Cuban groups: ‘Omega 7 leader Ernesto Arocena is charged with the 1980 assassination of Cuban UN diplomat Félix García Rodríguez.’ (13 March 1984) (p. 200).

The third section digs into the rapidly changing relations of the twenty-first century and the geostrategic and geopolitical context. Franklin is describing a multitude of factors and trends which are producing a new landscape for the changes in the bilateral relation of the U.S. and Cuba. Among them are the anti-Cuban laws (Torricelli Act of 1992 and Helms-Burton Act of 1996), the changes within the Cuban community in exile in Florida (i.e. CANF), the

strong foreign policy influence of the neoconservative group PNAC (Project for the New American Century), the terrorist attacks of '9/11' in the United States, the problematic elections in the State of Florida which lead to the victory of presidential candidate George W. Bush in 2000 (electoral vote against popular vote). In addition, the political changes in several Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, changed the landscape in the Western Hemisphere, and brought the Obama administration – supported by national and international personalities and institutions – to start negotiating with the Cuban government. Furthermore, international mood was increasingly articulated against the U.S. blockade vis-à-vis Cuba: In 2015 as many as 191 countries voted yes, and only two voted no: 'Aiming to isolate Havana, Washington isolated itself' (p. 399). And Cuba reported about the manifold negative consequences on the population of the island. All this leads Franklin to underline a quote by Simón Bolívar, who had written in 1829, that the U.S. 'appears destined by Providence to plague America with miseries in the name of Freedom.' (p. 383) Nevertheless, the book acknowledges that U.S. President Obama has taken considerable steps towards improving the bilateral relations, having overcome major obstacles on the side of the U.S.

Since its first edition in 1992, *Cuba and the United States Empire* has been an essential resource for all those seeking to understand Cuba-U.S. relations. The revised edition includes a new chapter and puts the changing relations of the last years into perspective and a broader context. For the growing numbers of scientists visiting Cuba, this book can serve as an invaluable source and guide for exploring and understanding the island, its history and its people. As Noam Chomsky writes in the Foreword, visitors should be made 'aware of the history of Cuba's determination to maintain its independence and sovereignty despite Washington's imperial efforts to destroy the Cuban Revolution.' (p. ix).

The great number of facts and events enables the reader to at least get a glimpse of the many different players in the foreign policy arena of the United States, which is so intensely intertwined with foreign and national interests, traditional patterns, ideological habits, and new strategic considerations. Its chronology, cross-referenced index, and its ability to place in historical context all aspects of U.S.-Cuban relations make this book an important source book and a classic.

Edgar Göll, IZT, Berlin

- *Haydée Santamaría, Cuban Revolutionary: She Led by Transgression*, by Margaret Randall. Duke University Press, 2015.
- *Vilma Espín Guillois: el fuego de la libertad*, by Yolanda Ferrer Gómez and Carolina Aguilar Ayerra. Editorial de la Mujer, 2015.

In the official historiography of the Cuban Revolution there are four outstanding male heroes: Fidel and Raúl Castro, Che Guevara and Camilo Torres. There is an abundant number of biographical studies on Che Guevara who himself was a prolific writer; personally I prefer the biography by Jon Lee Anderson. Fidel Castro had the custom of letting himself be interviewed periodically by biographers as well; the last interview book was published by Ignacio Ramonet, and in 2010 Castro published his two-volume memoirs about his guerrilla campaign against dictator Batista. There are also biographies of Raúl Castro; the most recent is that of Hal Klepak. Camilo Cienfuegos found a fine biographer in his second-in-command, William Gálvez, one of the 28 *comandantes de la revolución*.

There are also four celebrated female guerrilla heroes: Celia Sánchez, Vilma Espín, Melba Hernández and Haydée Santamaría; the latter two were the only women who also participated in the assault of the Moncada barracks in 1953 at the very beginning of the armed resistance. Celia was a member of the general staff of the Rebel Army and was the permanent secretary of the Council of Ministers from 1961 until her death in 1980. Vilma Espín was the president of the Federation of Cuban Woman from 1959 until her death in 2007. Melba Hernández was the secretary general of the OSPAAAL, the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Haydée Santamaría was the founding director of Casa de las Américas and headed this influential cultural organization until her death. Celia had an affective relationship with Fidel, Vilma with Raúl, and Haydée with Armando Hart, Cuba's minister of Education and afterwards of Culture. Aleida March, the widow of Che Guevara, was a guerrilla member of significance; she also published an autobiography but is above all regarded as the Widow of the Heroic Guerrillero.

In the official historiography of Cuba's insurgency, the role of men was over-emphasized and the significance of revolutionary women in the guerrilla and the urban underground gradually disappeared. It is assumed that the overall rate of men and women who directly participated in the armed resistance against Batista was 70 – 30 per cent. The 'disappearance' of revolutionary women also affected my own research. As a member of a Cuban research team that interviewed the old revolutionaries, we had to procure through snowball sampling in order to obtain a sufficient quantity of women in our sample.

Haydée Santamaría founded and presided over the Casa de las Américas, one of the most prestigious institutes of culture and arts in the region, venerated by writers and artists of the left, and influential during the decades of military dictatorship for publishing manuscripts that were forbidden or censored in other countries.

Randall was a personal friend of Haydée, and her book is, according to the blurb by Duke's editorial team, an 'impressionistic portrait of her friend ...' that 'shows how one woman can help change the course of history'. It is not a biography in the strict sense. It is more a portrait made up by means of a collage of large quotes of interviews of family members, former colleagues and friends. The chapters refer to her childhood; to her role in the erupting insurgency against Batista's dictatorship; to the death following the torture of both her brother Abel, Fidel's second-in-command during the assault, and her fiancé Boris Santa Coloma; to her time in prison; to her marriage with Armando Hart and their divorce; and to her two children killed in a car accident and the other members of her extended family.

By putting the emphasis on Haydée's personal life, Randall leaves less room for Santamaría's significance as the director of the Casa de las Americas. When Randall describes her position at the Casa, she accentuates her role as a protector of censored artists, curtailed writers and silenced poets during the 'grey period' of the seventies, the depressing years of ideological hardliners who hunted dissidents, gays and lesbians within the unions of writers and artists. Randall presents a great deal of testimonial interview fragments to underscore Santamaría's resistance to this persecution. The same image of Haydée (or Yeyé as she was called by her friends) emerged in my own interviews with old revolutionaries.

The theme of Santamaría's suicide is explicitly dealt with in chapters two and nine. In Randall's description her suicide in 1980 appears to be morally condemned by the Cuban leadership. But suicides were not unusual in Cuba, particularly during the 'special period' of economic hardship and Spartan endurance in the nineties: Osvaldo Dorticós, Cuba's president between 1959 and 1976, shot and killed himself in 1983, and other Cuban generals committed suicide when they became terminally ill. Although this is not the definitive bibliography, Randall's fine book is a lovely portrait of one of the most famous of Cuban revolutionaries.

Ferrer and Aguilar's *Vilma Espín Guillois* of 700 pages is a collection of unprocessed documentary material for a future biography of Vilma Espín. She and her sister Nida were early participants in revolutionary movements in Santiago de Cuba even before M 26-7 was created. The daughter of a regional elite family (but also, through her maternal grandmother, a distant relative of Paul Lafargue, the son-in-law of Karl Marx), she graduated in chemical engineering followed by a post graduate stay at the MIT. At the same time she was a student leader who quickly rose in the ranks of M 26-7. She and Raúl Castro fell in love during the guerrilla campaign, and they married in January 1959, four weeks after the victory (the authors published a photo, with Vilma as the striking Cuban belle and Raúl as the happy groom in his Rebel Army's uniform).

Her subsequent career is not the result of being the wife of the Minister of Defence and the future President of Cuba. She already had a position of leadership and eventually became a member of the Political Bureau of the Party and

the State Council. But her power position was rooted in her lifelong presidency of the *Federación de Mujeres Cubanas*, a massive organization with a membership of four million members. Vilma, a feminist, used her influence to advocate strongly for policies and laws enforcing the emancipation of women, especially rural women. She died of cancer.

Although the book comprises a variety of data: fragments of autobiographic interviews, formal discourses and less formal conversations, it is not a biography. The last paragraph is called *Apuntes para una Biografía*. As a whole, it is a rich source of documentation of one of the most powerful woman in Cuba over the past sixty years.

Dirk Kruijt, Utrecht University

- *Revolutionary Ideology and Political Destiny in Mexico, 1928-1934: Lázaro Cárdenas and Adalberto Tejeda*, by Eitan Ginzberg. Sussex Academic Press, 2015.

Eitan Ginzberg's comparative political study of two key post-revolutionary politicians who came to power following the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 clarifies more than ever before the major differences in their political ambitions, ideologies, strategies, and policies. His exhaustive research in the Veracruz and Michoacán state archives, personal papers, periodicals, national archives, and oral history provides him with new information to reinforce the revisionist explanation for why Lázaro Cárdenas's bourgeois, corporatist, centralist approach to social revolution leads to his political success while Adalberto Tejeda's class-based, populist, federalist one leads to his political demise.

This carefully crafted monograph grapples with their differing visions on how to bring about rapid socioeconomic change after a political revolution on the one hand and the structural factors that contributed and/or hindered these two revolutionary leaders' ability to accomplish it on the other. Both of these military leaders were elected governor of their respective states between 1928 and 1932, a period in which the national political elite was attempting to consolidate power as well as to construct a new central state. In Veracruz, where Tejeda served as governor, Ginzberg builds upon the earlier revisionist studies of Romana Falcón, Soledad García Morales, David Skerritt, Olivia Domínguez Pérez, and Heather Fowler-Salamini to present a more orthodox class-based analysis. For example, the author painstakingly traces Governor Tejeda's ideological evolution from an anti-imperialist reformer working within the political system to a militant socialist determined to build a popular, democratic, worker-led popular base capable of waging a class struggle against the bourgeois central government. By way of contrast, in Michoacán Governor Cárdenas's revolutionary ideology, which has not been so extensively studied, was only minimally radical. His moderate policies sought to restore order and to imple-

ment top-down socioeconomic reforms. The author adds further weight to his argument by showing how Cárdenas altered his policies to gain the political support of the bourgeois, corporatist, national elite dominated by Plutarco E. Calles and go on to win the 1934 presidential election against Tejeda.

The author demonstrates that the two statesmen displayed very different leadership styles in Chapter 2 due to contrasting personalities and views towards the use of power. Tejeda discovered during his first gubernatorial administration in the early twenties that he was politically too weak to confront the powerful landowning and commercial elites. By his second administration, he became increasingly impatient with the rate of agrarian reform, the increasing stridence of the Catholic Church, and the continuing economic power of the commercial and industrial elites. As a consequence he launched an overly ambitious and unrealistic socialist programme, seeking to mould Veracruz into a revolutionary model for the nation. During his final two years in office he imposed sweeping socioeconomic and anticlerical reforms through the replacement of municipal authorities, the use of a state militia and the Peasant League to implement agrarian reform, the manipulation of local and state elections, and his ability to push his extensive legislation through the state congress. Why did Tejeda not create a united proletarian front by allying the League with organized labour, the author asks? Although Ginzberg agrees with most authors that it was primarily due to political expediency, he mentions another reason that is more open to debate. Tejeda's idealist belief that grassroots organizations should be autonomous, sectarian, and endowed with the potential to have unlimited power influenced him not to intervene directly in either the League's or organized labour's internal affairs.

In regards to Cárdenas, Ginzberg contends, as Veronica Oikión Solano and others have done, that his presidential ambitions rather than his ideological beliefs steered him towards the restoration of internal peace rather than class warfare. Therefore, he adopted a more pragmatic leadership style based on personalist and charismatic strategies to win the hearts and minds of the campesinos as governor. His regional power base, the *Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo* (CRMDT), never became an autonomous, class-based organization like Tejeda's Peasant League, but rather it remained a multiclass top-down state party under his complete control. Cárdenas subsequently brought it into the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), when it was created.

This study breaks new ground in its pioneering analysis of Cárdenas's and Tejeda's educational and agrarian reforms in chapters 3, 4, and 5. While they both launched bold educational programmes to increase literacy rates, their strategies for shaping a new social consciousness were strikingly different. Cárdenas worked successfully to forge strong alliances between the state, university teachers, students, the CRMDT, and parent-teacher committees to imbue Cardenista supporters with the ideals of 'social' education. Meanwhile, Tejeda attempted to impose a 'socialist' educational system, even before it had been instituted on the national level, and to foil efforts to create an elitist state

university system. These confrontational strategies simply hardened the opposition against him.

Ginzberg devotes approximately one third of his book to agrarian reform, or what he terms agrarianism, which includes not only land expropriation and distribution but also credit, cooperativism, and the creation of small private properties. While both statesmen were committed to the expansion of the *ejido* as the most important agrarian institution to end unequal landownership, they diverged in the vigour of their policy implementation. Cárdenas actively encouraged the formation of new ejidos during his first two years in office, but once he had assumed the presidency of the official party, the amount of land distributed to them noticeably declined. New statistical data on land distribution confirm that the opposite was the case under Governor Tejeda. The author also presents evidence to demonstrate that the League was able to dictate to Tejeda on agrarian issues because he had simply alienated all other political groups. As a consequence it came to play a critical role in Tejeda's final shift to what Ginzberg terms 'total agrarianism', where the concept of 'public utility' was broadened to 'social utility' to include the specific needs of peasant and worker organizations.

Although this study presents a rather idealistic Marxist approach to populist organization, it provides innovative insights and perspectives on how ideology and opportunism shaped two statesman's views of radical change in a post-revolutionary developing society undergoing new state formation. The final chapter rightly concludes that overarching structural continuities, in particular an entrenched national bourgeois elite, ultimately blocked or co-opted their revolutionary programmes. What would round out this kind of comparative regional study would be an exploration into how they dealt with commercial and industrial elites during the World Depression. This book would be particularly appropriate for advanced students interested in modern Mexican history, agrarian reform, education, populism, and politics.

Heather Fowler-Salamini, Alameda, CA

– *Political Landscapes: Forest, Conservation and Community in Mexico*, by Christopher R. Boyer. Duke University Press, 2015.

This book is an extraordinary piece of scholarship in environmental history. In the introduction Boyer offers a definition of political landscapes that guide the argument of the book. Political landscapes are 'geographies made meaningful through the interaction of private interests, collective action, and the often discriminatory application of state power in ways that one social group or more interprets as illegitimate' (p. 10). The main argument of the book is that the politicization of forest landscapes represents a threat to their very survival. This is so, because the fate of forests depends on negotiations among a wide

array of actors with unequal power relations and the state on the one hand, and, on the other, negotiations among such actors without always involving the state. Mexican forests have been shaped by political negotiation among actors with asymmetrical power acting in shifting institutional and policy contexts, market forces and demographic dynamics. Although ideas of social justice, forest conservation, national interests and of the role of knowledge were present throughout history, the results of negotiations did not benefit all stakeholders alike.

To develop the argument the book is divided in two parts that represent two broad periods in Mexican forestry history. The first part entitled 'The making of revolutionary forests' examines the period of time from the 1890s to the 1940s. In this period Mexican forests witnessed a dramatic growth of commercial logging, which was interrupted briefly during the Mexican revolution only to reappear during the era of Cárdenas populism. After the revolution, and as part of land reform, the state began to hand forests over to ejidos and indigenous communities, resulting in the emergence of a model that Boyer calls 'revolutionary forestry'. The second part is entitled 'The development imperative'. It examines the period between the mid-1940s and 1992. During this time two new regimes emerged. The first one was quasi-centralized and shaped by the imperatives of development that had been ignited by the post-war context and the demands for raw materials. The model was later substituted by one of centralized state forestry. These developments help to understand the seemingly paradoxical strengthening of decentralized community forestry since the 1990s. Boyer examines various events in two rural societies in the states of Michoacán and Chihuahua, demonstrating that shifts in national and international policies have varying effects in different contexts.

In explaining the successive replacement of forestry regimes, the book analyses issues related to ethnic and racial relations, the position of public and private actors, the relations between scientific knowledge and other forms of knowledge, the tension between legal and illegal activities, and the emergence and disappearance of various knowledge centres. The book shows how ideas about the role of local people in forest conservation and management in scientific forestry have changed through time. From an initial position that viewed deforestation as the result of indigenous people and campesino ignorance and backwardness, it moved to one that privileged the effects of poverty in explaining campesino and indigenous practices, and then to one that positioned local knowledge and local institutions as holding a prominent role in successful forest management. These changes in ideas about indigenous peoples and campesinos are central to the establishment of alliances between forestry scientists and local people. The narrative also contributes to an understanding of how forestry practices and rural relations elsewhere in Mexico were conducive to opening up tropical forests and establishing harmful environmental practices, such as cattle ranching in the tropical lowlands.

To build his analysis, Boyer uses an impressive range of sources including archives, newspapers and periodicals, and published primary and secondary sources, as well as oral history. The book attests to Boyer's intimate knowledge of Mexico's history and of his long-term work in the country.

Mexican environmental history has received some attention lately (see for example the review of the book *Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice and Mexico's National Parks, 1910-1940* in ERLACS 101 (2016) April, p. 120). *Political Landscapes: Forest, Conservation and Community in Mexico* makes further contributions to Mexico's environmental history, environmental geography and conservation. Among the most important is perhaps that the book successfully challenges the established idea that the origins of community forestry in Mexico are to be found at the end of the twentieth century. The book shows that efforts to promote local management started in the 1930s and continued during most of the twentieth century. It demonstrates that indigenous and campesino struggles to control their land have a long and complex history. I liked in particular that the analysis pays attention to the role of bureaucrats and bureaucracy in shaping both policy and rural practices. Bureaucratic practices are, as Boyer and others have started to document and analyse, central to understanding the State's everyday practices that are not always monolithic, or even ideologically homogeneous. I enjoyed the conversation with Hardin's ideas that the book takes up. The narrative shows that, instead of being the result of local ignorance and common property regimes, deforestation and forest destruction are closely linked to official rules with little consideration for local realities, corruption, and misguided interpretations of what development might mean for local people. Further, the narrative shows that local resistance to external efforts to impose forestry regimes is not the result of ignorance or cultural backwardness of indigenous and campesinos but an informed response to their disadvantaged position.

I would recommend the book to anyone interested in Mexican forestry and conservation history and I am certainly going to use it in my teaching. I sincerely hope to see a Spanish version of this fascinating book.

Mariel Aguilar-Støen, University of Oslo

– *A Sentimental Education for the Working Man. The Mexico City Penny Press, 1900-1910*, por Robert M. Buffington. Duke University Press, 2015.

Tal como lo indica su subtítulo, el reciente libro de Robert Buffington está estructurado en torno a una fuente: los periódicos populares satíricos que se vendían a solo un centavo en la ciudad de México de comienzos del siglo XX. Se trata de un material valioso, en tanto contaba con una difusión masiva entre los trabajadores urbanos, para reconstruir el proceso de construcción de una identidad obrera. La investigación está centrada en tres de estos periódicos, El Dia-

blito Bromista, El Diablito Rojo y La Guacamaya, y se concentra en la primera década del siglo XX. El autor muestra solvencia para analizar una fuente que presenta numerosos desafíos, entre ellos un lenguaje plagado de regionalismos y expresiones coloquiales, de gran dificultad incluso para un hispanohablante nativo. El análisis explora el conjunto de las secciones de los periódicos: no solo artículos escritos por los editores sino también cartas y poesías enviadas por lectores, diálogos de ficción bajo la forma de ‘charlas callejeras’ y numerosas ilustraciones y carteles.

El libro es fácilmente divisible en dos partes. Los primeros tres capítulos exploran el modo en el cual estos periódicos construyeron y promovieron una determinada subjetividad patriótica y de clase entre los varones de clase obrera de la ciudad de México. Los capítulos 1 y 2 examinan los intentos de esta prensa por construir un relato del pasado nacional alternativo al de la ‘historia oficial’ del Porfiriato. Buffington muestra aquí el proceso a través del cual estos periódicos disputaron el significado de figuras fundantes del México contemporáneo, como Miguel Hidalgo y Benito Juárez, y buscaron presentarlos como ‘héroes de la clase trabajadora’, con una visión de un país igualitario y democrático que de algún modo había sido distorsionada por la clase dominante. El tercer capítulo explora la búsqueda de los editores por incluir a los propios trabajadores en este relato, con el objetivo de colocarlos en un papel protagónico del pasado del país. Según Buffington, estas operaciones de resignificación revelan la intención de ‘rehacer la subjetividad de los trabajadores con el objetivo de convertirlos en sujetos políticos legítimos, con todos los derechos (y las obligaciones) de una ciudadanía plena’ (p. 25).

Tal como plantea el autor hacia el final del segundo capítulo, la cuestión de fondo que está en juego es la importancia del nacionalismo en la conciencia de los trabajadores mexicanos. Según Buffington, ‘para la mayoría de los mexicanos varones de clase trabajadora durante la primera década del siglo XX, la pertenencia a una nación y a una clase social estaban siendo lenta pero firmemente tejidos en un mismo tapiz’. Si, para los trabajadores de la época, ‘trabajador y patriota eran sinónimos encerrados en una tautología’, el eje del aporte de Buffington es señalar el papel que jugaron los periódicos de la prensa satírica popular en este proceso (p. 97). Según el autor, si bien una primera mirada podría limitarse a advertir una mera extensión a la clase obrera del liberalismo fundante del moderno estado nación mexicano, un análisis más profundo muestra que esta apropiación obrera del liberalismo y el patriotismo dio lugar a un fenómeno cualitativamente distinto. Es al final del tercer capítulo cuando el autor articula estas ideas con las tesis de Ernesto Laclau para argumentar que, en lugar de un ‘liberalismo popular’ resulta más útil entender la peculiar configuración discursiva de estos periódicos como un ‘populismo liberal’ de fuerte raigambre en la clase trabajadora. Buffington considera que, vista desde la perspectiva de Laclau, la formulación populista de la ‘penny press’ puede considerarse como ‘un incipiente acto político revolucionario’ (p. 134). Este ‘populismo liberal’, concluye, ‘actuó como precedente y como modelo para las

cambiantes lógicas políticas que caracterizarían a la revolución de 1910' (p. 135).

En la segunda parte del libro, constituida por los capítulos 4 y 5, Buffington modifica el ángulo de su pesquisa y se ocupa de la construcción de los 'varones de clase trabajadora como sujetos generizados' (p. 139), reconstruyendo los esfuerzos de los periódicos populares 'por constituir a los hombres de clase trabajadora como hombres en la interacción dialéctica entre trabajo y ocio y en la tensa naturaleza de sus relaciones íntimas con las mujeres' (p. 139). Las historias ficcionales que reconstruye le permiten concluir que la prensa popular cuestionaba las nociones tradicionales que predicaban la dominación del hombre sobre la mujer y trazaba la posibilidad de un nuevo tipo de relación, basada en el compañerismo entre ambos sexos. Era esta otra forma a través de la cual este tipo de periódicos construían una peculiar y moderna sociabilidad masculina para los trabajadores mexicanos, una elaboración que según Buffington es fundamental para comprender a la clase trabajadora mexicana, en el país y en el extranjero, aún en la actualidad.

En conjunto, los cinco capítulos que componen el libro intentan, según su propia definición, 'desentrañar las estrategias de la 'penny press' que exaltaban, se burlaban e intentaban producir las virtudes de los hombres de clase trabajadora: patriotismo, trabajo duro, resistencia, humor, lealtad y un respeto duramente ganado por sus compañeras mujeres' (p. 26). Buffington logra cumplir estos objetivos a partir de un examen minucioso de estas fuentes primarias: su libro constituye así un aporte a la historiografía de la clase trabajadora mexicana pero también una valiosa contribución para todos aquellos lectores interesados en la historia mexicana y latinoamericana en general, así como los estudios culturales y de género.

Lucas Poy, Universidad de Buenos Aires / CONICET

– *Pesos and Politics: Business, Elites, Foreigners and Government in Mexico, 1854-1940*, by Mark Wasserman. Stanford University Press, 2015.

For someone studying business elites and their relations to states in Latin America, receiving a book like *Pesos and Politics* on my desk gives rise to great expectations. And this one did not disappoint me. This is an exceptionally well researched book that provides a wealth of empirical information at the same time as it conveys clear, and sometimes provocative, arguments. The study of government-business elite relations in Latin America has been dominated by two main narratives. The dependency theory has created a narrative of elite unity and foreign domination. A second narrative, particularly dominant in Mexico, has pictured the state as omnipotent, but fundamentally different. Wasserman takes issue with these narratives and studies in detail the interaction between local business elites, foreign companies and the government over

a period of 86 years. He argues that Mexican elites were in constant conflict with each other – local elite fought state-level oligarchies; rival elite factions at the state level clashed; and state elite battled with successive national governments to maintain regional autonomy. Over time what Wasserman calls an ‘elite-foreign enterprise system’ emerged in which the state was an active participant and intermediary between local business elites and foreign companies, but where the national government nevertheless was never able to guarantee the favourable treatment at the state and local level of any enterprise. It provided a set of checks and balances, but was also based on the selective enforcement of property rights to favour specific groups. The Revolutionary government did not bring business people into politics as did Díaz, but rather pushed government into business, but the system did not fundamentally change.

This argument is sustained through the case studies of two main family based regional business groups – the Terraza-Creels and the Maderos – and then through case studies of sectors and specific companies. We learn about the efforts of Porfirio Díaz and his henchman José Yves Limantour to stave off U.S. dominance in the Railway sector; the hardship of foreign landowners, and the contrasts between the welcome by the Díaz regime and frequent local hostility and conflicts; we learn about the Corralitos Company, operating an enormous ranch and mines in northwestern Chihuahua that failed in spite of its capital, competent management, workforce and good relations to local government; we learn about the foreign mining companies that struggled due to inconsistencies in law enforcement and local conflicts, but also about the American Smelting and Refining Company, that operated with high profits, due to its vast resources spent on investments in technology as well as the purchase of governmental support. In sum, Wasserman argues that foreign companies were neither generally favoured nor all highly profitable. This conclusion is used to sustain the perhaps most provocative argument of the book: that foreign business people did not exploit Mexico and that, thus, foreign corporations are not to blame for Mexico’s underdevelopment.

I am not a historian, much less a specialist in Mexican history. I thus cannot judge the book’s contributions to Mexican historiography. However, I would argue that the book has, perhaps without pretending to do so, made significant contributions to our understanding of political economy and business-state relations, with importance, I believe, far beyond Mexico and the period that it treats. First, it shows the necessity to understand political and economic developments not only through the lens of political movements, state institutions, and official state policy, but through a detailed study of the interaction between political and economic elites. Second, it shows how foreign influence is mediated by local actors, conflicts and cooperation between them. And third, it shows how the emergence of what North, Wallis & Weingast (2009) call limited access orders, or the extractive economic institutions of Acemoglu & Robinson (2013) result not from simple elite ‘choices’ or lack of development, but rather from attempts to establish ‘order and progress’ in the context of weak

institutions by ‘eschewing the protection of property rights globally and instead protecting the property rights of a select group of asset holders and using the rents generated from this selective protection to either buy off or coerce political opponents’ (p. 22). These dynamics, I believe, are characteristic of state-business relations in Latin America way beyond the Porfiriato that is described in the passage.

Should I venture into a few critical comments, it would be the following. First, the wealth of empirical detail is a major strength of the book, but can at times also be a weakness. Although Wasserman frequently attempts to make explicit lessons from the myriad of agreements, events, company and individual names and relations, at times the book is somewhat hard to follow due to its sheer empirical complexity. Second, although Wasserman convinces me of the need to rethink the role of foreign companies in Mexico’s development, he is sometimes overly bold in rejecting that they have exploited Mexico or contributed to its underdevelopment. Even if they often operated at a loss, paid their workers better than local companies, and were used by the authorities to suit their own strategies, they may still have contributed to upholding a system that has trapped Mexico in institutions dysfunctional to development. This, however, does not take away from the major contribution this book is to our understanding of Mexican history as well as business-state relations generally.

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- *State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule*, edited by Christopher Krupa and David Nugent. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

This volume provides us with a very important contribution to the ethnographic and historical literature on state formation in the Andes. Andean states are a part of Latin America – one might even say of the world – known for its major restructuring of the organization, leadership, and the reach of their governments. In *State Theory and Andean Politics*, thirteen essays are pieced together on these, often radical, developments. The overall questions that guide the consequent chapters are: What is a state? Why do so many people have such high expectations of it? And who or what makes it up, and where does it reside? A discussion (as promised on p. 6 of the introduction by the editors) is opened on four main areas of investigation: a critical phenomenology of rule, morphologies of statecraft, the role of fantasy, imagination, and delusion in processes of

state formation, and on cross-border processes of statecraft in regional and international context. It is exactly these four themes that constitute the four thematic parts of the book and form the core of it.

Following the introduction written by the editors, section one contains three chapters written through a chiefly ethnographical lens. María Clemencia Ramírez (chapter 2 on Colombia) and Nicole Fabricant (chapter 3 on Bolivia) are engaged with phenomenologies of the national-territorial state. They analyse the ways official geographies based on centre-periphery relations within the region hide what are in reality quite arbitrary and interested projects of rule. Lesley Gill (chapter 4 on Colombia) analyses the ways official state projects are represented in various territorial based forms of sovereign power, identifying also a series of non-state forms of territorial control. Section two is completely dedicated to Ecuador. In chapter 5 on cadastral politics, Christopher Krupa examines the ways rural property regulation agendas were deployed to build state capacity in remote areas. In a more historical chapter 6, A. Kim Clark analyses two projects carried out by the Public Health Service in the highlands in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Chapter 7 is also historical in nature. Here, in the shortest essay of the volume, Mercedes Prieto analyses government-sponsored social welfare and development projects in the highlands during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Sections three and four contain two chapters each. Irene Silverblatt (chapter 8) takes us back to the ‘great conspiracy’ and the Spanish Inquisition of 1639 in Peru. Providing an account of fear and fantasy, or delusion and suspicion, she illustrates that not only the racial categories of the colonial order were imaginary, but also the idea of the colonial state itself. In chapter 9 (in twentieth century Peru), David Nugent explores the role of fantasy and delusion in informing the institutional structures and everyday activities of the state. In chapter 10 (again on Peru), Karen Spalding examines the origins of the colonial state in the Andes and, in particular, the ideology that justified its existence. Chapter 11, by Winifred Tate, takes us to contemporary times and examines state effects in the Putumayo region of Colombia. She provides an exploration of cross-border processes of statecraft through an analysis of international, transnational, national and subnational forces that compete for supremacy in that region.

Finally, in two theoretical reflections, Gyanendra Pandey and Akhil Gupta link together the different contributions and provide these with claims about the nature of states and state-making that deepens understanding not only of the Andean region and Latin-America but of the world at large. Both (non-Andeanist) commentators highlight an important incongruity that can be seen in more state formation processes: the gap between what a state wants to be and how it wants to be seen on the one hand and what it actually does and achieves and how it is experienced in daily practice on the other hand. This contradiction of state in theory and state in ethnographic practice can be considered a strength (the promise of a strong state) as well as a weakness (its vul-

nerability). Following earlier work on the state and state formation, combined with the renewed attention to the notion of sovereignty in anthropology and, more widely, in social sciences, this book provides the reader with a fine and well-organized collection of essays based on examples from Andean countries. This volume offers a welcome contribution for students as well as postgrads in their study of anthropology and the state and/or sovereignty in Latin America and beyond. It therefore is an important addition to the existing literature and will undoubtedly prove a boon to further research.

Marc Simon Thomas, Utrecht University

– *Brazilian Propaganda: Legitimizing an Authoritarian Regime*, by Nina Schneider. University Press of Florida, 2014.

In 1973, during the heyday of Brazilian military regime (1964-1985), the author of this review undertook a trip from São Paulo to the heart of the Amazon. By train and by aeroplane, he arrived in Cuiaba, the capital city of Mato Grosso. He then travelled to Porto Velho (Rondônia) on a dirt road, completing a 3,000 km journey that would continue on to Manaus by boat. In the final stretch of the Cuiabá-Porto Velho road, crossing one of the areas of agricultural colonization newly created by the dictatorship, the interstate bus became a local transportation. Poor settlers would get on and off the bus, and, standing in the central aisle, would tell passengers about their experience as pioneers in that border area.

In her book *Brazilian Propaganda*, an analysis of the legitimation mechanisms of the dictatorial regime, Nina Schneider says that ‘economic development, a strong work ethic and social mobility’ were the recurring themes in the advertising material produced by the AERP and the ARP, the two government public relation agencies she analyses. Those three themes were present in the settlers’ narratives: the journey from Rio Grande do Sul to the North in search of land for farming, the hard work in an unknown and hostile ecology, and, finally, the action of the military State to occupy and ‘vivify’ the Amazon region, as part of its ‘security and development’ policies. Schneider recalls that ‘the most exaggerated short film promoting social mobility for the poor and uneducated tells the story of an old man who received a grant for land in the Amazon and who made his fortune through hard work’ (p. 51). The scene of the movie is the Trans-Amazonian Highway in Southern Pará. This is a very different story from what I had heard back in 1973: after receiving the land, the settlers were abandoned, did not receive inputs for planting, were affected by malaria and, after much work, hardly survived.

Schneider paints a comprehensive picture of how propaganda was produced under the military regime: its ideological roots, narrative elements, official and private agents that produced it, the discourse of AERP’s management men and

the question of reception. The author's hypothesis is that such themes can lead us to the complex feature of the Brazilian dictatorial regime. Thus, she finds three types of pro-regime propaganda – subliminal, blunt and aggressive propaganda – that 'vary in the degree of their negative connotations'. The first is 'the least negatively connoted form', defined as 'an attempt to win general support for the military regime', drawing a veil over the regime's main feature: the violent repression (p. 11). The second 'directly praises the regime', hailing government programmes and actions (pp. 11-12). Finally, aggressive propaganda 'is the most negatively connoted and repressive form of propaganda', with its glorification of the regime by promoting violence (p. 12). The book argues that films made by the two agencies were well produced, mentioning topics that were far from the reality of the repression, such as hygiene habits, behaviour in traffic, life in the new housing villages and the benefits of individual effort.

The most interesting chapter examines the testimonies of four men who directed AERP. Schneider shows that they did not see their project as propagandist, but as social communication (significantly, the public relations office in the Army is called today Centre for Social Communications of the Army, CCOMSEx) and civic education. In contrast to other literature, she finds the testimonies of AERP's managers convincing when they claim they did not agree with torture. She concludes that the hard liners of the regime never fully accepted colonel Costa's AERP soft propaganda.

Overall, *Brazilian Propaganda* provides an important contribution to the study of 'propaganda in its many shapes and forms, whether produced under democratic or authoritarian rule, by state or by private agents' (p. x). However, in spite of Schneider's promise to clarify the specific question of the regime's character, the problem of how it can be qualified remains open. Although the author mentions at the beginning and in the conclusion her predilection for the idea of a civilian-military regime, she defines AERP as a predominantly military organ, and shows that the ideology behind the analysed agencies was also military.

In the same way, Schneider also alludes to the criticisms aimed at the dualistic academic conceptualizations of the dynamic of the military regime, synthesized in the conflict between moderates and hard-liners. For her, Colonel Octávio Costa, creator of AERP, would be a moderate person, in constant conflict with the hardliners of the regime. Although Schneider knows the literature well, what is lacking in the book is a more nuanced view of the military groups; it is a view that could help to better situate colonel Costa as an exception vis-à-vis hardliners and liberals. In this sense, Medici's government (1969-1974), the third military government after the 1964 coup when torture and disappearances of political prisoners became systematic, was a rare period of unison among the various military currents due to the threat of urban guerrilla warfare. This period is the centre of Schneider's analysis. With the ascension of General Geisel, the patron of the slow and gradual opening of the regime,

AERP changed its name to ARP and general Costa returned to his military career.

This scenario would allow Schneider to understand the place of Colonel Octávio Costa vis-à-vis the main military groups: Costa was an outsider, an intellectual military who was against the use of torture by the military repression apparatus. Although Schneider does not explain how the Colonel managed to survive throughout those ‘years of lead’, the explanation is nevertheless in the book itself. As a highly prepared intellectual, Costa created an agency that was useful to the regime, but the probable reason of his ability to survive would lie with his heroic past in the FEB, the expeditionary force Brazil sent to Italy during the Second World War.

Schneider’s book has as its subtitle *Legitimizing an Authoritarian Regime*. In the first paragraphs she argues that ‘the most important distinguishing characteristic’ of the Brazilian post-1964 regime ‘was its fundamentally ambiguous character, which fluctuated between authoritarian principles and democratic pretense’ (p. 1). That made the Brazilian case very different from the Chilean post-1973 or the Argentinian post-1976 dictatorships. The book is very successful in showing this.

João Roberto Martins Filho, Universidade Federal de São Carlos
Review translated from the Portuguese by Maria Isabel de Castro Lima

– *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, by Durval Muniz de Albuquerque. Duke University Press, 2014.

Durval Muniz de Albuquerque’s book seeks to build a history of the recent emergence of the Brazilian Northeast – which covers nine states, extending from Bahia to Piauí – understood as an object of knowledge and power. With a strong Foucauldian influence, the author denaturalizes the idea of the region, in order to reveal the ways and mechanisms by which it can be and is invented, defending the historicity of the concept and trying to understand the practices and discourses that have made the Northeast feasible. The continuous repetition of selected statements that would define the true attributes of the region would constitute, according to Albuquerque, a circular concept, self-reported and self-reflected.

Ranging from the 1920s to the 1960s, the author uses a combination of images and texts from various disciplines: sociological, literary, plastic arts, music, and cinema. These are used to propose a genealogy and archaeology of the Northeast invention. Such images and regional texts intertwine with economic, political and social practices, producing a network of discursive and non-discursive practices – which in the reading, proposed by Albuquerque, configure relations of power and of meanings. The unpremeditated and apparently unintentional conjunction of previously scattered works of artists and writers,

with different political orientations, enabled the emergence and consolidation of a concept (the Northeast), which is made in different spaces and moments of national life and begins to operate as if it had always existed.

The book is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, 'Geography in Ruins', the author reconstructs the historical origins of the idea of the Northeast (from the regionalism of the second half of the nineteenth century to the new regionalism and regionalist literature). He uses the nation 'device', which precedes, coexists and competes with, but is the indispensable condition to deal with the concept of region. Albuquerque then suggests that many different social changes which have occurred since the end of XIX century will affect the perception of space. All such changes, both in terms of practices and perceptions, would be conditional to the invention of the Northeast.

In the second and focal chapter, 'Spaces of Nostalgia', the author directs his attention to the spatial organization of Brazil. The old North-South divisions start to be contested by the emergence of the Northeast, at a time when the traditional society is experiencing a crisis. A new language is shaped, based on the problems of the region that is inventing itself and is being invented. From banditry to *coronelismo*, from the messianic movements to the drought, these are marked imaginary and non-imaginary boundaries with real practical outcomes, whose privileged counterpoint is the south of the country. If we follow the author's own argument, the most attractive discursive elaboration of the Northeast would take its shape in the cultural field – with academics and artists from regional elites evoking a past of glories and achievements that would configure a Northeast archaic and kind. It is noteworthy that, for the author, the concept of the resulting culture is not timeless, and is obviously the result of a historical construction.

The third chapter, 'Territories of Revolt', shows the imaginary construction of the Northeast as an area of poverty and domination. There is an inversion of the Northeast through a revolutionary aesthetic and the Marxist thought. Against the conservative myth, writers, painters, and filmmakers produce another narrative that wants to break with conservatism. However, it remains dependent on popular mythologies as tools of resistance to the exploitation from the southeast of the country. Albuquerque seeks to show that, within the progressive discourse around the idea of the Northeast, the perception persists that the region is made up of victims who have always been abandoned by the powerful.

A few questions can be raised against some of the arguments proposed by the author. The denial of modernity allegedly present in both the old as well as the new regionalisms is scarcely discussed. Ultimately, what modernity do we mean when we talk about Brazil? And couldn't there be a possibility of thinking in different and alternative modernities to address the national – and regional – question in the contemporary world? Another point is concerned with the link between discursive practices, widely documented by the author, and non-discursive practices, especially the political and economic, as indicated by

Albuquerque. The relations of complementarity proposed between the two types of practices, which would result in the invention of the idea of the Northeast, present themselves as intrinsically necessary, constituting a speculative exercise that would require a more thorough analysis.

In any case, Albuquerque's book, first published in Portuguese in 1999 and still relevant, is one of the most important analyses of cultural and political history of the regions of Brazil. This important reflection on the construction of 'sub-nationalities' – allowing for mutual comparisons between the Brazilian Northeast and similar socio-historical phenomena in Latin America and around the world – has now been made accessible by its translation into English.

José Luiz Ratton, Federal University of Pernambuco

- *A Right to Health; Medicine, Marginality, and Health Care Reform in Northeastern Brazil*, by Jessica Scott Jerome. University of Texas Press, 2015.

New forms of citizenship, democracy and civic participation were encouraged by the Brazilian constitution adopted in 1988, which established a broad range of social rights, including rights to education, health care, labour, housing, and social security. In the case of health care, the public system evolved from a situation of access restricted to certain groups in society (tied to the pension system) to a system of universal access. Directives of the new system included decentralization of management to local governments, provision of full service with priority given to preventive activities, and community participation. Since its creation, the Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS), as the public health care system in Brazil is known, was able to expand health care facilities and human resources, while regional disparities in access to health services have been reduced; access to primary health care has also been significantly expanded and health outcomes, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, have improved significantly. However, health care reform, based on the idea of human rights, did not abolish the existence of private health care in the country, which now serves about 25 per cent of the population.

In the context of this two-tiered health care system, what are the meanings and possibilities of new ideologies and practices concerning health care in a peripheral community? This is the question that guides the work of Jessica Scott Jerome, a medical anthropologist, in her book *A Right to Health*, published by the University of Texas Press. The book is an ethnography of the Brazilian health care reform in one low-income neighbourhood named Pirambu, located in Fortaleza, the largest city and the capital of the state of Ceará, which is a midsize state in Northeastern Brazil. With approximately forty-three thousand inhabitants, Pirambu is the largest 'favela' in Ceará and the seventh largest in Brazil. The author lived in this community at different times in the

period 1998-2009 to conduct fieldwork, which included participant observation and extended interviews with residents, public health agents and government officials. Illness narratives, medical case studies, and life histories formed the bulk of ethnographic data used to compose the book, which is organized into two parts and six chapters.

The first part of the book includes the first two chapters. In chapter 1, the author describes the history of political and social engagement of Pirambu's residents in order to demand social services from the city authorities and to transform their community 'from an impoverished fishing village into an urbanized, legal district with a full complement of social and commercial services' (p. 16). It also provides examples to illustrate how the younger generation is reformulating the practice of citizenship in the favela. In chapter 2 the historical emergence of the two-tiered health care system in the state of Ceará is described, with a focus on the broad relationship between welfare and the poorest residents of the state.

The second part of the book includes chapters 3 through 6 and provides 'examples of health care reform, medical decision making, and community activism in the context of intergenerational tension of Pirambu' (p. 11). In chapter 3 the author explores the relationship between health care and community participation from the perspective of residents of Pirambu, including formal arenas of the SUS (health councils) and more informal structures (at the family and community levels). The subject of rationalization of traditional medicine is discussed in chapter 4 by examining the origins and the component parts of a locally developed therapeutic programme (*Farmácia Viva*) to teach low-income residents of Fortaleza about the correct and scientific use of medicinal plants, that is, correct, according to scholars and health professionals. Finally, chapters 5 and 6 focus on the experiences with medical care of the older generation of Pirambu and on the way they negotiate medical decisions in the public health clinics for themselves and their family members (chapter 5), and of a new generation of young favela residents and their aspiration for private medical care (chapter 6).

A major strength of the book is that the author uses both ethnographic and historical approaches to critically analyse how health care is understood and experienced in a low-income community. For instance, she provides clear evidence that the emergence of rights-based language among favela dwellers in Brazil is not an event of the 1970s, as prior research suggested, but instead dates its origins back many decades ago, when residents of such communities fought for health services. Another important finding of the book is that responses to the health care reform depend on generational and socioeconomic positions. While the members of the older generation of the favela and the poorest basically rely on the services provided by the public health resources, younger residents and those who are economically and socially ascending have a growing desire for private health care. As a result, the emergence of a 'consumer-oriented activism' aimed at expanding individual freedom to exercise

choice is replacing traditional forms of social movements in peripheral communities (collective action and community organizations directed at demanding public services and achieving social equity). For this new generation of young residents, expanding civil rights means ‘the right to choose among the available tiers of health care services’ (p. 152). As the author correctly states in the conclusions, when favela residents choose between public and private forms of medical care, they are also ‘reproducing the two-tiered health care system as reified fact’ (p. 156).

Overall, this is an excellent book, carefully researched, written and organized. It is a solid contribution to understand the complex relationship between health and citizenship in developing countries, particularly in Latin America, where socioeconomic inequalities, generational tensions and neoliberal policies threaten the implementation of citizenship projects, like universal health care systems.

Hudson P. Silva, University of Montreal