

## Reseñas/Book Reviews

– *Global Maya: Work and Ideology in Rural Guatemala*, by Liliana R. Goldín.  
Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.

An easy critique of any ethnography is that it oversimplifies a complex reality. We always simplify – it is the nature of our endeavour – but everything rests on the degree. In this work, Liliana Goldín resists the trap of oversimplification while providing a broad sweep of varied economic and cultural strategies in Guatemala. This impressive work, based on over three decades of fieldwork, looks at four economic strategies based in several communities in Guatemala's western highlands. Such a multi-sited approach, along with the depth of engagement in each of the communities, provides an unusually rich ethnography.

Goldín examines the complicated relationship between economics and ideology – and the ways that ideologies and identities change with changing productive strategies. She makes some surprising findings. For example, religion is not closely correlated with class, although we often assume Protestants to be more entrepreneurial and successful. Indeed, she finds a surprising absence of class consciousness across productive strategies, save an emergent sense in factory settings. Finally, in several contexts she finds a close association of gender and economic ideology, with women more sceptical and even hostile to capital accumulation and class differentiation.

Goldín first takes us to San Francisco El Alto, where the local economy is dominated by petty commodity production and, to a lesser extent, agriculture. The piecework of textile manufacture and assembly is done in individual homes and a few workshops. Here, the discourse of what Goldín terms economic ideology has a very neoliberal tenor, even if it emerges from different roots. Specifically, there is a high value placed on hard work and individual effort – workshop owners even think that their workers work harder than the workers themselves do. In San Francisco, there is enough mobility within the system and a sufficient distribution of profits that folks by and large do not have a confrontational class ideology or even clear class consciousness.

In San Pedro Almolonga, another predominately K'iche' Maya community, we find a very different economic basis: the production of vegetables (primarily onions and cabbage) for regional, national, and Central American markets. Here ideologies associated with traditional agriculture interact in complex ways with new capitalist opportunities. Goldín finds that, amid much individual variation, subsistence farmers tend to hold more conservative views in terms of their economic ideology. In contrast, those who grow for the market tend to have a greater appetite for risk and change as well as a higher tolerance for capital accumulation. Here 'intelligence' used as a code word for market savvy – those intelligent individuals are able to work the market to their economic benefit. This plays into a tension in the local economic ideologies between individual effort and community social support.

Goldín then turns to three small Kaqchikel Maya communities near the Pan-American highway producing non-traditional agricultural exports (such as broc-

coli, snow peas, and cauliflower that are destined for the US market). As I also found in my studies of this area, there is growing internal economic differentiation within communities based on export agriculture success. This is viewed with scepticism by many, and discursive weapons of the weak are deployed to ameliorate the effects. Nonetheless, there is a discourse around work being rewarded that accepts a degree of income differentiation, and folks largely see this new export trade as a positive development.

Finally, in Santa María Cauqué, Goldin turns her sights to the infamous maquiladora assembly plants, largely engaged in clothing assembly and mostly owned by South Korean companies under contract for international brands. In what is the most surprising revelation in a book full of such gems, is that here factory jobs are largely seen as better than farm jobs, even while workers lament the boredom and harsh management style. Perhaps this is a false consciousness at work, but still we must take seriously the expressed views and desires of the young folks working in the factories, who are largely hopeful about the future. Also surprising is how muted ethnic identity is in the maquiladoras – this overriding social fact in most of Guatemalan daily life is here subsumed to a division between Guatemalan (Maya and ladino) workers and the Korean managers, the feared objects of opprobrium – which gives rise to an emergent sense of class identity.

This is a remarkable volume, and one that should be read widely, not only by students of Guatemala but scholars of development more broadly. Goldin documents the complicated interrelationship of changes and continuities in economic ideologies and material conditions that emerge through practice. We see the wide range of local engagements, changing conceptions of competition and cooperation as well as ethnic and gender relations. Goldin notes that ‘identification with community [social networks of support] may be weakened by the new structure of emerging economic units, but the identification with “Mayaness” may be strengthened by the pride and (possibly limited) economic achievements’ (p. 172). Such are the nuanced contradictions of changing engagements with the global economy, and the sort of insights that make this volume an important contribution to the field.

Edward F. Fischer, Vanderbilt University

– *Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959*, by Gillian McGillivray. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.

*Blazing Cane* is in the finest tradition of Cuban rural history, while at the same time clearing a new interpretative path. Gillian McGillivray analyses evolving class struggles in the countryside through the prism of sugar cane burning, primarily from the late colonial era up to the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and in doing so, challenges aspects of the revolutionary government’s interpretation of history. Her work fits nicely into an emerging body of scholarship, published in the last decade, that focuses attention on the pre-revolutionary period and seeks to add nuance and complexity to an era that has often been overlooked or fallen prey to simple stereotypes. McGillivray’s scholarly challenge arises from her perspective on the ‘authoritarian populism’ of Fulgencio Batista and other leaders of the 1930s and 1940s, as well as her treatment of the Cuban middle classes or ‘middle sectors’, as

she refers to them, and the political role they play in framing national issues in the twentieth century.

The author divides relations in the Cuban countryside as they pertain to the sugar industry into three periods: Colonial Compact (1500-1895), Patrons' Compact (1899-1933), and Populist Compact (1934-59). She describes these compacts as 'unstated agreements on how to keep the peace day to day...' (p. 5). She focuses on local relations by centring her work on two sugar mills, Chaparra, in Puerto Padre in eastern Cuba, and Tuinucú, in Sancti Spiritus in the centre of the island. The author maintains throughout that sugar cane burning, sometimes as social protest and sometimes for economic advantage (to collect insurance or ensure a quick harvest), are a 'text' that those in power needed to read and respond to in order to survive (p. 4).

The colonial compact was based on the desire of Cuban planters to maintain slavery through Spanish force of arms even if that meant sacrificing independence. When the economic and political foundations of slavery eroded at the end of the nineteenth century so did the colonial compact, which was followed by the patrons' compact. McGillivray describes this second compact as capitalist welfare in which United States companies partnered with Cuban middlemen, often heroes of the independence wars, to establish large sugar mill operations and build neighbouring towns economically subservient to the mill. In this section (chapter 4) she provides important historical details about one of the grandest of Cuban patrons, Major-General Mario García Menocal, Cuba's third president and proprietor of Chaparra. The author does a great deal to bring this important, and neglected, historical figure to life, although a scholarly biography of Menocal is still very much needed.

The Chaparra Sugar Company, and similar corporate entities across Cuba, bought the cooperation of local politicians, cane farmers and workers by building health facilities, schools, and modern rail and port facilities that they framed in the language of 'progress.' But she reminds us that there was a dark side to this progress. 'It likely took very little time for workers and the community to perceive the underbelly of these benefits – the extreme level of control the company had over residents' lives' (p. 101). Corporate dissidents faced the loss of job and home through expulsion from the mill town.

The world-wide economic depression of the late 1920s led to a weakening of this compact and ushered in the populist compact, the author argues. As part of this compact, populists like Batista, in the aftermath of the revolution of 1933, granted concessions to the workers and other political opponents in return for control. It is in this section that she throws down a scholarly challenge. McGillivray paints a complex and nuanced portrait of the 'authoritarian populism' that emerged in Cuba in the 1930s. The Cuban governments of the period were not puppet regimes of the United States, although the US exerted enormous influence on them, but rather they were also a reflection of efforts by the low-income and middling sectors of Cuban society to exert pressure and gain concessions. The results of the populist movement in rural Cuba were mixed, with cane workers suffering setbacks in terms of access to education and health care, while at the same time achieving impressive gains in wages and other work-related issues. Overall, McGillivray calls for a balanced analysis of the period. She cautions against idealizing the populist

era in Cuba and throughout Latin America but it should be recognized as a time 'when more people had a stake in their nations'. She adds: 'Working and middle-class groups or parties could claim more as "citizens", and many at least fleetingly gained more dignity, rights and economic power' (p. 8).

The author also challenges the notion that Cuba in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was made up 'only of rich landowners and poor, landless workers' (p. xiii). McGillivray devotes much effort to revealing the relationships that emerge over time between *colonos*, cane growers of great wealth or modest means, and cane workers, paid primarily for their labour. It is this alliance that eventually shapes national and international politics and ushers in an era of greater Cuban government regulation, often at the expense of the Cuban elite and US corporate interests. McGillivray argues that additional scholarly research on the 'middle sectors' of Cuban society would enhance our understanding of the period. Absent that research, we should not 'accept the dominant version of the 1959 revolution that attributes its success to guerrilla leaders in the mountains and radical students and professionals in the cities, acting in the context of Cuba's supposed lack of a middle class' (p. 10). If there is a criticism of McGillivray's work it might be that she argues very broadly based on research focusing primarily on two sugar mills.

On a closing note, *Blazing Cane* is well suited for a general audience. The section on the Chaparra sugar mill includes 14 photographs from the mill archives, which are of such high quality that one can almost taste the sugar being processed. Finally, there is a glossary of terms for those unfamiliar with the language of the Cuban sugar industry.

Frank Argote-Freyre, Kean University

– *The Political Economy of Latin America: Reflections on Neoliberalism and Development*, by Peter Kingstone. London: Routledge, 2011.

Kingstone begins this book by stating his growing questions that 'after roughly two decades of democratic governance and economic policy reforms, something wasn't working' and he goes on to conclude that 'unfortunately, there seems to be an abundance of perfectly plausible causes of the limits to Latin American development, but no definitive answer on how to overcome them'. For Kingstone the answer lies in 'effective, appropriate institutions' and he sets himself the task of surveying the performance of neoliberalism and 'the leftist alternatives' that have more recently arisen. He is quick to add, however: 'The record suggests that the problem is not really about the benefits of market-led or state-led approaches to development. Neither approach has lived up to its promises. Instead, it is a problem of institutional development. Institutions that support a state that is restrained in its behaviour, supports innovation and creativity, and yet works for equity and justice seem enormously important and incredibly elusive' (p. xi).

While this may seem to signal to readers that the book offers little by way of solid answers to the questions about Latin America's rather mediocre developmental record, it does offer a succinct overview to the routes to development followed since independence. Chapter 1 on the respective roles of states and markets in the context of the region's developmental challenges and Chapter 2 on the move from

a dependence on commodity exports to import substitution industrialization are authoritative overviews that will serve students well. Among the strengths is the author's ability to weave the political with the economic in telling the story of the trajectory of each of these developmental strategies and in systematically summarizing their strengths and weaknesses in a balanced way.

Chapter 3 on neoliberalism and its discontents presents accurately what he calls 'the leftist critique', then outlines the positive case before seeking to resolve the debate through presenting in some detail various assessments of neoliberalism's developmental record. The chapter ends with a comparison of the record of neoliberalism in Chile and in Bolivia. He concludes that 'ultimately, neoliberalism's democratic failings reflect weaknesses in the institutions of representation and deliberation that make possible meaningful participation in decision making and negotiation over policy' (p. 67). It 'was not the scourge of the region', since it helped restore growth, tame budget deficits and inflation, and renew investment but neither 'has it been its saviour' (p. 83) since its record on employment creation, poverty reduction and levels of growth has been mediocre.

Chapter 4 similarly surveys the turn to the left in the region. Here his survey is somewhat more selective, opting in essence for the much disputed thesis of two lefts, what he calls 'the contestatory left' of Chávez, Morales, Correa and the Kirchners, and the more moderate left of Lula, Bachelet and Vásquez. Examining the record of each under the headings of democracy, market orientation, economic performance, social policy and the role of the state, he finds the former reversed neoliberal reforms more aggressively, 'weakened democratic governance', and 'loosened the neoliberal constraint on macroeconomic concerns' while the latter followed 'a balanced programme that combined restrained state involvement with macroeconomic stability and innovative, human capital-building social policies' (p. 119). As a result, he argues that the gains of the latter, particularly in social terms, are more solid and sustainable. The chapter ends with a comparison of Venezuela and Brazil.

The final chapter is an interesting, if somewhat theoretical and inconclusive, discussion of the importance of institutions for successful development. It is here that the main weaknesses of the book become evident. For, despite his interest in institutions, Kingstone fails to interrogate the institutional underpinnings of the successes and failures he identifies in Latin America's development in any robust way. To this reviewer there are at least three glaring omissions: the first is the failure to examine the historical origins of institutions in the successful cases he identifies – Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile. Much could be learnt from such an examination. The second is the failure to survey more explicitly the literature on the second generation of institutional reforms in the region, identifying the logic underpinning the reforms and why, ultimately, the results were so disappointing. The third and most surprising is the author's failure to examine the major attempts being made by Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador to undertake a root and branch reform of institutions. Overall, Kingstone is far too dismissive of what he calls 'the contestatory left', possibly due to his almost complete reliance on English-language sources (I could only find one Spanish-language source referred to in the whole book).

Overall, then, this is a solid survey of the political economy of Latin America, though the assessments of neoliberalism and the new left would have been stronger if they had focused more centrally on the state-market relationship. However, its promise to yield any new insights into the institutional bases for developmental success is marred by the failure to examine this issue in any depth. Finally, two major mistakes need correction in any second edition: David Harvey is called Paul Harvey and the World Bank's 1997 World Development Report on the importance of the state is referred to as a CEPAL report.

Peadar Kirby, University of Limerick

– *Fractured Politics: Peruvian Democracy Past and Present*, edited by John Crabtree. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2011.

This excellent book explores the challenges to democracy in Peru in the twenty-first century. Almost all the contributors are top Peruvian scholars; indeed, the book emerged from a 2009 conference that highlighted the work of Peru's renowned sociologist Julio Cotler, who is the author of the landmark study *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú* (1978). This classic work emphasized the severe ethnic and class cleavages in Peru that emerged amid the conquest and colonial rule and showed how these cleavages blocked the emergence of a cohesive nation. This theme is reinforced in *Fractured Politics*; John Crabtree writes in his conclusion, 'a profound breach between... a privileged elite and the broad mass... is still in evidence' (p. 240); ultimately, 'history matters' (p. 239).

For *Fractured Politics*, Cotler provides an important chapter that explains how Peru's 'legacy of unequal incorporation' (p. 54) continues to provoke political instability. Even with the high economic growth rates of 2002-2010, Cotler shows that, without greater social inclusion, Peru's disadvantaged majority continued to demand its rights – but Peru's elite appeared determined to resist. A second chapter that stresses the burden of Peru's past on its present is Maxwell Cameron's thoughtful 'Text, Power, and Social Exclusion'. Drawing on the work of anthropologists and historians, Cameron highlights Peru's 'communicative apartheid' (p. 480); whereas indigenous Andean culture was based on face-to-face, verbal interaction, this oral tradition was belittled by the Spaniards, who prized literacy and written text.

As Crabtree points out, 'Peru remained one of the countries of Latin America where the institutions binding state and society were among the weakest' (p. 239), and three chapters probe Peru's political atomization. Aldo Panfichi describes what he calls 'contentious representation' in Peru: demands are made predominantly at the local level, and often violently, even when a community is seeking mediation by authorities at the national level. Contrasting the movements of coca producers in Bolivia and Peru, Ursula Durand shows that Bolivia's movement was able to build both a strong collective identity and broad strategic alliances, whereas Peru's was not. Similarly, Maritza Paredes highlights the vast differences in organizational patterns and cultural values between the peasants of Peru's north and those of its south, and argues that these differences help explain the weakness of Peru's indigenous movement. All three scholars acknowledge the importance for Peru's

political atomization not only of the country's long-standing political exclusion but also the more recent problems of the savage Shining Path insurgency and the authoritarianism of President Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000).

Three very informative chapters focus on initiatives for democratic reform during the governments of Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) and Alan García (2006-2011). By and large, the emphasis is on the failure of these initiatives to fulfil expectations. Analysing Peru's political parties, Rafael Roncagliolo first shows that, throughout the twentieth century, their roots in society were shallow and they were ephemeral. In 2003, the Law of Political Parties sought to institutionalize parties and enhance their legitimacy through greater financial transparency and internal democracy. However, Roncagliolo laments that, despite the sophistication of the new law, oversight was lacking and penalties absent, and democracy was increasingly a 'media-infused...spectator sport' (p. 86). A long-standing objective of many political analysts was to devolve power from Lima to Peru's regions; in 2002, a new decentralization law, which also introduced citizen participation into sub-national policy-making, was approved. Eduardo Ballón provides a rigorous overview of this reform and finds that, although its provision for participatory budgeting has been advantageous for democracy, overall coordination both between Lima and sub-national actors and among sub-national actors has been deficient. By most criteria, the most successful political initiative was the introduction of the human rights ombudsman's office, the Defensoría del Pueblo, in 1996. Thomas Pegram shows that, relatively autonomous from the executive and with offices throughout Peru, the Defensoría has been able to engage with citizens, monitor social conflict, and expose state abuses.

In the only chapter on Peru's political economy, Gustavo Avila, Claudia Vale and Carlos Monge provide a thorough analysis of recent investments by extractive industries and of the worrisome implications of these investments for employment, taxation, resource management, and climate change. The authors are disappointed that the *canon* (a transfer from the companies to the areas of production introduced under Toledo) has not been larger and that often it has not been effectively administered.

Although *Fractured Politics* is an outstanding volume, I believe its outlook is too pessimistic. There are many countries (including the United States) that could covet Peru's post-2001 achievements. In an exemplary trial, a former president, Fujimori, was convicted of both human-rights crimes and corruption and is serving a twenty-five year sentence. Although the 2006 and 2011 presidential runoff elections were close, with five percentage points or less between the two candidates, the results were legitimate. Voter turnout was in the range of 85 per cent, among the highest in the hemisphere. Although, as *Fractured Politics* emphasizes, Peruvians were very critical of their democracy in hemispheric surveys, the country fared better in Freedom House and World Bank expert assessments. During the 2000s, Peru was steadily, if not dramatically, moving above the Latin American and Caribbean average in the United Nations Human Development Report rankings for income, life expectancy, and education. Poverty fell from 55 per cent of the population in 2001 to 35 per cent in 2008. Peru's new president, Ollanta Humala, appeared to be off to a good start: an agreement was reached with mining companies that would roughly quintuple the payments made under the preceding García gov-

ernment and a law requiring state consultation with communities prior to the initiation of extractive projects was approved. I believe that Peru's cleavages are moderating and its democracy is strengthening – albeit very gradually.

Cynthia McClintock, George Washington University

– *Struggling with the Past. The Human Rights Movement and the Politics of Memory in Post-Dictatorship Argentina (1983-2006)*, por Saskia van Drunen. Amsterdam, Rozenberg Publishers, 2010.

Quienes hayan investigado en alguno de sus aspectos el pasado reciente argentino, en particular en torno a los años de la dictadura militar (1976-1983) y el impresionante y complejo fenómeno de movilizaciones sociales que la precedieron, encontrarán que *Struggling with the Past* es un trabajo de investigación que parece haber agotado las fuentes, trabajos analíticos y testimoniales que se ocupan de las formas en las que diferentes memorias acerca de la experiencia argentina se conformaron desde la década del ochenta del siglo pasado al presente. En efecto, un mérito que desde el comienzo debe destacarse del trabajo de Saskia van Drunen es la prolija y meticulosa revisión de la masa de producciones académicas, periodísticas, literarias y testimoniales sobre el período. Consciente asimismo de la complejidad del tema a abordar, la lista de entrevistas realizadas por la autora revela el cuidado en conocer las experiencias e impresiones de los actores involucrados en las luchas por la memoria en la Argentina, cubriendo registros que tuvieron en cuenta edad, historia de vida, género y lugar institucional en relación con los eventos. Si bien el análisis se centra en la ciudad de Buenos Aires, es importante destacar que como consecuencia del desarrollo histórico argentino, el peso simbólico de lo que sucede en la ciudad capital tiene alcances nacionales, lo que permite que los procesos estudiados iluminen un recorrido histórico que excede largamente lo local.

El resultado es una amplia y profunda mirada de conjunto sobre el recorrido del movimiento de derechos humanos desde los años iniciales de la democracia (1983) hasta la presidencia de Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007). En ese camino, van Drunen orientó sus nudos analíticos a partir de la idea de que las luchas por la memoria, por los sentidos otorgados al pasado, son luchas políticas. En esa clave, la historia de los organismos de derechos humanos en la Argentina es un espacio privilegiado para estudiar las formas mediante las cuales los movimientos sociales impulsan sus demandas.

Para el caso argentino hasta el año 2003 las relaciones entre el movimiento de derechos humanos y los gobiernos democráticos fueron de permanente negociación y confrontación, fundamentalmente debido a la brecha entre los reclamos de justicia de los afectados y las políticas de juzgamiento y cierre institucional desarrolladas durante las presidencias de Raúl Alfonsín y Carlos Menem. Van Drunen muestra los cambios de estrategias en la lucha desplegada por los organismos entre el Juicio a las Juntas (1985) y los indultos presidenciales (1989-1990). La apelación a distintos repertorios de confrontación y extensión de sus demandas permiten explicar, según la autora, el proceso por el cual en la década del noventa, sectores sociales más amplios que los directamente afectados por el terrorismo de Estado se apropiaron de las demandas sectoriales de los organismos. Como muestra la autora,

dicha extensión alimentó un proceso de fuerte revisión histórica del pasado reciente argentino, notoriamente en torno a la identidad política de los desaparecidos. Su ubicación como militantes sociales, sindicales y políticos cuestionaba uno de los pilares conceptuales de la transición a la democracia argentina, la *teoría de los dos demonios*, que construyó una imagen autoexculpatoria de la sociedad en la cual esta había sido víctima pasiva de dos violencias, la de la extrema izquierda y la de la represión ilegal. El retorno de la figura de los militantes políticos, muestra van Drunen, generó importantes discusiones en el seno de los organismos y, como señala es una de las evidencias más importantes de que el paso del tiempo (y tampoco las medidas de cierre institucional) no es garantía de que las disputas por el pasado se aquieten o resuelvan.

Las políticas de derechos humanos sostenidas por Néstor Kirchner desde su asunción en 2003 son una prueba evidentemente al respecto. Tras asumir en una situación de gran debilidad institucional, Kirchner basó su gobierno en la construcción de 'un nuevo pacto moral' en relación con el pasado, encarnado en dos rupturas: con el modelo socioeconómico de país consolidado durante la década neoliberal de los noventa, y con la impunidad en relación con los crímenes de la dictadura militar. La derogación de las leyes de impunidad, el reemplazo de estas por la apropiación, por parte del gobierno, de las consignas y demandas del movimiento de derechos humanos. Ese giro copernicano del Estado, afirma van Drunen, generó intensos debates en el seno de los organismos. Como muestra la autora, no hubo una respuesta unívoca, sino que se trata de un proceso que aun hoy atraviesa al movimiento de derechos humanos. Sucede que una gimnasia de décadas en la cual el Estado era el antagonista (cuando no el perseguidor) no puede cambiarse fácilmente solamente porque este se transforma en vocero y ejecutor de los reclamos de los afectados.

El kirchnerismo también tomó medidas de fuerte impacto simbólico, cuyo análisis concentra van Drunen en la creación del Espacio para la Memoria y para la promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en el predio de la ESMA, el emblemático campo clandestino de concentración y exterminio de la Armada argentina. Las discusiones acerca de los usos que se le darían al predio, los debates en torno al guión del futuro museo a emplazarse allí son una evidencia de la fuerte presencia del pasado en el presente político argentino. La autora dedica también un espacio al análisis de las memorias e iniciativas barriales en torno a la memoria, a partir del caso de El Olimpo, otro antiguo centro clandestino en la ciudad de Buenos Aires.

De la lectura de *Struggling with the Past* emerge una rica y profunda mirada sobre el proceso político de la post dictadura argentina, analizado desde la perspectiva de las luchas por la memoria. Aparecen con fuerza, también, los límites que a los regímenes democráticos emergentes de pasados dictatoriales les marcan aquellos pasados caracterizados por la vulneración sistemática de derechos y su impunidad. Es en este punto donde el peso del pasado en el presente, encarnado tanto en la memoria insatisfecha debido a la impunidad como en las ausencias irreparables, prácticamente nos obliga a la lectura política del dilema, como una forma de que la memoria no contribuya a una prolongación no buscada de los efectos disciplinarios que la dictadura militar argentina imaginó como irreversibles.

Federico Lorenz, IDES/CONICET, Argentina

– *Nicaragua y el FSLN (1979-2009): ¿Qué queda de la revolución?* edited by Salvador Martí i Puig and David Close. Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2009.

The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and its aftermath remain a source of inspiration for analysts and academics. The influence of the revolutionary party *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) has been substantial in the late twentieth century, within Nicaragua as well as in the whole Latin American region. The party was established exactly fifty years ago and after it led the popular insurgency against General Somoza in the late 1970s, it was in power for over a decade (1979-90). During these historical years of the Sandinista revolution, the FSLN turned into a classical Cuban-style party bureaucracy. The enormous hope it had raised world-wide was shattered in February 1990, with the electoral defeat of the presidential candidate Daniel Ortega and vice-president Sergio Ramírez against the opposition coalition of Violeta Chamorro which had firm US backing.

For the subsequent sixteen years (1990-2006) the party remained a relevant player in Nicaraguan politics, but only survived thanks to negotiated agreements (the so-called *pactos*) with its fiercest right-wing opponents, including the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In fact, all three presidents of the 1990s (Chamorro, Alemán, and Bolaños) ended up negotiating as *caudillos* with Daniel Ortega to prevent a political stalemate. During each of these three governments, Ortega miraculously managed to maintain his political position, also thanks to a Sandinista majority in the National Assembly. Many traditional followers were fed up with this political pragmatism and gradually abandoned the rigid political party line. By the time Ortega stood up for presidential re-election for the fourth consecutive time, only few of his old comrades of the 1980s were still with him. Thanks to electoral reform, 38 per cent of the votes turned out to be enough for Ortega to win the 2006 presidential elections, providing a second FSLN-led administration in three decades. However, the party had changed substantially and was converted from a genuine grassroots movement into an electoral machine.

The second Ortega administration is almost completed, and it is therefore relevant to wonder what is left of the ideals of the Sandinista revolution, given the widespread controversy Ortega's policies have generated within his own ranks. This is the central aim of a recent Spanish volume by Martí et al., which makes a critical balance of the legacy of the Sandinista revolution. A dozen authors, mostly academics and long-term observers of the Nicaraguan political process, gathered in 2005 to make a balance of how the FSLN has evolved as a movement and as a set of ideas. The contributions, also largely published elsewhere, not only focus on the period of the Somoza dictatorship or the revolution, but also make an effort to explore the continuity of the Sandinista presence in Nicaraguan politics and society over a period of three decades. This perspective is not novel, but the systematic way in which key issues are treated makes this volume into the first thorough analysis of *Sandinismo* currently available in Spanish.

The authors explore the history of the Sandinista ideas and practices from a variety of perspectives: politics, feminism, international solidarity, constitutional changes, electoral system, culture, agrarian and poverty reduction policies. This might sound like a broad focus, but the location of the FSLN in a changing political party system gets primary attention. The party went through a whole range of internal divisions and unexpected coalitions, generating opposition from its own

ranks which at times was violently repressed. The authors show how deeply the idea of single party dominance is embedded in Nicaragua's political system, probably illustrating how difficult it is to fundamentally change a country's political culture. Pérez Baltodano points at one of the essential characteristics of Nicaraguan politics: playing with the right mix of demagogy, manipulation, blackmail, cynicism, corruption, and nepotism. The right-wing parties accused the FSLN of learning how to play this game, most likely because they wanted to keep a monopoly on this way of 'doing politics'. But Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo realized that a correct application of all these tricks was the only way to return to power in a country in which the Sandinista electoral support never exceeded 40 per cent of popular support.

Therefore, the experience of the FSLN is in many ways a typical lesson in modern Machiavellianism. The editors underline this by pointing at the electoral fraud in the 2008 municipal elections, which gave rise to undemocratic and vertical tendencies in the party, combined with acts of political repression against opponents. Eventually, the defeat of more moderate and reform-oriented tendencies within the recent history of the party gave rise to the dominance of less tolerant views, reinforcing Ortega's position as a caudillo typical of Nicaragua's historical tradition. This can be partly explained by the demise of the Washington Consensus and the rising critique of neo-liberal policies. But the authors of the volume do not manage to really give a proper explanation why the Sandinistas failed to avoid what they call a process of 'Nicaraguanization'. The book does however offer a balanced analysis of the Sandinista legacy and will hopefully circulate widely in Nicaragua.

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– *Electing Chávez: The Business of Anti-Neoliberal Politics in Venezuela*, by Leslie C. Gates. Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2010.

This book offers the most compelling analysis that I have seen of the pivotal 1998 Venezuelan presidential election which brought Hugo Chávez to power. While Gates wants to understand how Venezuelans made up their mind about Chávez the candidate, this book is more than just a study of an election. It delves into the origins of preferences for an anti-establishment outsider, contributes to the debate about the leftward shift in Latin American politics, and refines important theories about state-business relations.

Gates makes two central points. First, the most important factor that motivated ordinary Venezuelans to vote for Chávez in 1998 was his anti-business discourse, more so than other parts of his message. Second, despite Chávez's anti-business discourse, a non-trivial portion of prominent business leaders supported Chávez's campaign. Gates's explanation for the preferences of ordinary chavistas is partly intuitive and partly not. Gates provides evidence of what scholars, working with other sources or speculating intuitively, had already established: the poor voted for Chávez in greater number than any other income groups, and more poor voted in this election than ever. Thus, the proposition that Chávez mobilized low-income folks is confirmed. But Gates's main point is that knowing this much is not

enough. After all, the other candidates offered redistributionist, pro-poor platforms. So what was so special about Chávez? It was not his newcomer status (there were other newcomers). It was not his military background (that does not appear in the polls). And it wasn't his anti-neoliberal discourse: how voters felt about the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s does not help predict the vote for Chávez. The key was Chávez's intense anti-business discourse.

This distinction between anti-business and anti-neoliberal sentiments is one of Gates's most counter-intuitive and impressive theoretical contributions. Many analysts often conflate the two. Gates shows that these sentiments are not the same. It was not neoliberal policies toward the private sector that chavistas disliked necessarily, but rather, the political behaviour of business leaders, specifically, their penchant for collusion with the state. This collusion was corrupt and anti-developmental. It led to the rise of 'businocrats', Gates's term for business leaders with disproportionate influence in cabinets. And most important, this collusion predated the neoliberal era, and thus, is not the product of market reforms. Chavistas in 1998 were thus those Venezuelans who not only longed for urgent economic relief and drastic change, but also, and more important, wanted a president willing to shun business leaders. This helps explain why, as overall business opposition to Chávez grew until 2004, Chávez's support among his constituents actually solidified. In another country with a more reputable business class, business rejection of Chávez would have debilitated the administration politically. In Venezuela, in contrast, it confirmed to Chávez's constituents that the government was actually delivering on a promise.

Gates uncovers a second characteristic of the Chavista vote: this was not your typical vote for the 'least bad' candidate. Most of Chávez's supporters were fairly excited about Chávez. They exhibited 'optimism' about the future and saw in Chávez hope for the better, rather than a mere block against worse choices. This point is important because it could explain why Chávez has been able to consolidate a resilient electoral coalition, despite lackluster deliverables. When voters exhibit this level of alignment with their leader's vision, one could hypothesize based on Gates's work, they are likely to make for a more 'forgiving' electoral coalition.

Whereas the first puzzle – why so many ordinary voters' supported Chávez in 1998 – is solved with statistical analysis, the second puzzle – why some 'elite outliers' also supported Chávez – is solved with interviews. She found her evidence by interviewing three of Chávez's 'campaign insiders' and business donors as well. What Gates finds is that business firm support for the populist/protectionist candidate Chávez defies conventional theory (that predicts business preferences based on the type of assets owned by firms and their competitiveness). Instead the pro-Chávez firms simply wanted 'access to the state' or at least, to bet on the candidate that was least sympathetic to their rivals. This finding means that firms are thus more positional than economic when it comes to electoral choices. It also means that the behaviour of firms depends less on the type of business than on the type of state. If there is a state that is prone to favouritism, and a candidate promising to expand statism, we should expect some firms to support that candidate even if the promised policies would suggest otherwise.

If I had to select an aspect of the book requiring further thought, I would pick only two issues. First, in explaining anti-business sentiment, Gates might be stress-

ing the rise of corruption too much. Gates' analysis of business scandals, especially surrounding the 1994-96 bank bailout is unrivalled. But what is unclear is whether corruption was increasing, or rather, the reporting of it or the policy responses to it. To Gates's credit, she recognizes that the important issue is that the perception of corruption was increasing. And on this count, she is absolutely right. Never in the history of corruption in Venezuela was there more public disclosure than in the late 1990s. But again, this is not necessarily a proof of more corruption, and therefore, of an irremediably failing political system. Another problem with the corruption thesis is trickier to solve. As Gates says, corruption by definition involves the state. Why would corruption-obsessed voters focus on only one of the partners in this tango and exonerate the other, which is what Chávez sort of promised with his anti-business/pro-statist discourse? Second, there is a risk of exaggerating the anti-business sentiment of chavistas. Gates' metric for anti-business sentiment is voter's attitude toward Fedecámaras – the largest business chamber in Venezuela. But to claim that chavistas repudiated businesses because they hated one of the country's leading business lobbies could be a similar stretch as saying that folks hated religion because they hated a section of the prelature. A few more words on Fedecámaras's representativeness would have strengthened the argument.

These are, however, minor points. Methodologically and theoretically, Gates' book is enormously rewarding. No social scientist studying Latin America in the neoliberal and post-neoliberal eras can afford to remain ignorant of Gates's points.

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– *Dragon in the Tropics. Hugo Chávez and the Political Economy of Revolution in Venezuela*, by Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2011.

Although Hugo Chávez has been ruling Venezuela for more than a decade now, many scholars remain fascinated about the nature of his presidential power and the changes it has caused in Venezuelan politics, economy and society since 1999. There are at least two good reasons for the ongoing debate and growing pile of studies on Venezuela under Chávez. Next to radical, his presidency has been far from static, and assessments of the objectives and results continue to differ widely. *Dragon in the Tropics* (written by two experts, Corrales and Penfold, who have worked on Venezuela for a long time) is a clear and concise contribution to this debate, bringing a systematic political economy analysis to a wider audience.

Contrary to scholars who stress the *Misiones* and the new participatory opportunities under Chávez, the authors are rather sceptical of what has been achieved by the social programmes, considering the volume of public resources involved. Instead, they stress the negative implications of his presidency for the economy, state oil company PDVSA and Venezuela's international relations. Moreover, they view *chavismo* as a highly problematic political project 'that seeks to undermine traditional checks and balances by building an electoral majority based on radical social discourse of inclusion, glued together by property redistribution plus vast social handouts extracted from the oil industry...a politically "illiberal" project because it uses electoral majorities to erode horizontal and vertical accountability'

(p. 8). Clearly they do not agree with those approaching the Bolivarian revolution as a good idea that went wrong. To Corrales and Penfold, *chavismo* is and has always been about acquiring, maintaining and expanding power.

The book deals with the four main elements of Chávez's revolution: political regime, economic policy, control of PDVSA and foreign policy. They are studied primarily from an institutional angle, which includes references to the importance of pre-existing arrangements and an analysis of the effects of radical reconfigurations. The institutional changes by Chávez represent both a deinstitutionalization of existing intermediary institutions and the creation of new political and state agencies, and reflect a mix of traditional and modern populism. In the overview of Hugo Chávez's political regime, hybridity is a keyword, concerning the mix of democratic and autocratic mechanisms and practices.

The rise and development of the hybrid *chavista* regime from 1999 to 2009 is presented as a theatrical play that consists of seven acts, starting with the creation of a hyperpresidential constitution, a polarize-and-punish attitude towards the opposition and massive spending on *misiones*, followed by government radicalization and various steps to secure electoral victories and abolish the ban on presidential re-election. The institutions that are supposed to check and balance the presidential power have been gradually weakened while social funding has not necessarily been directed to the poorest groups but opportunistically spent in ways and places where it would result in more votes. As the main source of this funding has evidently been oil, Chávez started taking control of the state oil company PDVSA. Yet this socialization and politicization of the company, which eventually turned it into a parallel state, has damaged its financial and operational capacities as well as its productivity. Much of this damage, however, could be hidden and neglected as long as there was an oil boom that greatly increased Venezuela's per capita oil income. Simultaneously, the expanded state revenues helped to hide corruption, misallocation and inefficient use of funding, which seem to have been widespread yet hard to quantify due to a lack of transparency.

The concluding chapter returns to the puzzle of how Chávez's hybrid regime has continued to win democratic elections, and other paradoxes of his revolution. They state that Chávez's consolidated power results from the combination of both popular support and popular betrayal. Although he was not able to maintain all of the initially broad support from urban groups and middle classes, he has continued to be popular among very different groups: on the one hand, the counter-elites of newly emerging urban workers and peasants, and, on the other hand, the elites consisting of the military and industrialists (banks and companies that received contracts and deals with the state). This bipolarity is one of the fascinating and paradoxical points of Venezuela's contemporary politics that this book brings to our attention.

Indeed, as Corrales and Penfold state in their conclusions, in some cultures dragons are considered benign rather than frightening creatures. According to the authors, however, President Hugo Chávez is not such a friendly creature. Unfortunately, while they present a range of good reasons to look beyond Chávez's social face and critically study Venezuela's economic and political realities, the book tends to neglect some important social perspectives. What about the many Venezuelans who not only are pleased with their president, but also proud to be *chav-*

*ista?* In my view, this is a disadvantage of the book's institutional approach, which entails a rather top-down analysis. In the end, it leaves the reader still puzzled about the enormous popularity of Chávez among Venezuelan citizens who genuinely seem to love their 'dragon'.

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– *Strange Enemies. Indigenous Agency and Scenes of Encounters in Amazonia*, by Aparecida Vilaça. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

Innumerable times the western expansion of the last 500 years encountered a vast array of different peoples throughout the world and in one way or another conquered them. That post-Columbian conquest of the Americas is a famous example and illustrative of how little is known about the 'other point of view': what did all these people think of 'first contact' and conquest, how did they conceive of the invaders, react to them, change their conceptions and exercise their own agency in this interethnic relation in which so many suffered dominance (although most only discovered this after 'first contact'). The problem is that only little is known about such first encounters from the Indian (or other native) point of view. Hence, the few studies about these encounters are like revisiting Captain Cook in Hawaii with the possibility of improving very much the quantity and quality of our knowledge of similar events, their consequences and subsequent sociocultural and classificatory developments. This reference is no coincidence as Vilaça read the work of Sahlins while in the field and drew much inspiration from his approach (he also is thanked for his specific comments and highly recommends the work). Hence this is a monograph, according to the author probably the only one of this length, about a 'first encounter' from the other's point of view: what it meant and entailed for the Wari' of current day Rondônia. The Wari' have been the object of study of Vilaça since her master's thesis (also published in Brazil) and such familiarity is easily noted and evidently a great advantage for this kind of comprehension of worldview put in practice within its historical contingencies.

After the introduction that explains her interest, trajectory and facts such as the opportunity and luck of having been able to interview direct participants, the first and second parts of the book elaborate upon the categories of otherness in Wari' thought and mythology. The Wari' as an ethnic unit is actually being welded by this history, for the 'subgroups' recognize themselves as being different and are used to behold others as what is translated as 'foreigners'. That is, 'Oro-x', where 'Oro' indicates a collectivity; Wari' means people, human beings and is not really an ethnic category. Other Oro are viewed as 'foreigners' and beyond them are the real enemies. The latter used to be indispensable because the killing of an enemy made real men out of the men, differentiating them from the women. However in myths, the enemy is shown to be Wari' who split off, transformed into foreigners and further differentiated into enemies. The reverse is also possible; enemies may turn into foreigners and foreigners may be encapsulated into kin by cohabitation and acquiring consubstantiality. The analysis of myths and rituals and the notions of humanity, conceptions of difference and its origins, alliance and affinity, conceptions of the dead and their relationship to the living, predation and ingestion as a

fundamental relation in many aspects, and perspectivism implicit and explicit in these provide the background of the 'cultural schemata' involved in the history of the first encounters of different subgroups.

It must be noted that the author painstakingly attempts to document and comprehend the particular histories of the different Oro units in their relations between themselves and the evolving relation to the white enemy. At some point in their history the intrusion and conquest of the whites in the larger region probably left the Wari' without enemies to kill, and later they would be the only ones available for this objective. The first kind of contacts probably date from the beginning of the twentieth century, and Vilaça attempts to document the course of these 'events of encounters' in a time-line and register the actions and notions of the white agents involved. She also recounts the Indian's accounts of the massacres perpetrated by regional society. This merits the application of the notion of genocide, something the author does not mention. With her correct emphasis on the Wari' agency, the white's agency and larger Brazilian socioeconomic dynamics remain somewhat limited to the local or regional context.

In sum, this book approaches the history of contact mainly from the point of view of the Indian people involved. It is based upon an intimate and extensive knowledge of their culture and fundamental notions and proposes an explanation of how and why these contingent events unfolded in the last hundred years the way they did. As is evident from this enumeration, the depth of the ethnography is combined with an analysis firmly based upon the current state of Amazonian ethnology. The book is a well-written, highly readable, profound and original ethnographic and analytic contribution to Amazonian ethnology and 'first encounter' literature, such that any divergence in interpretation will also need an extended argument: it should be read by everyone interested in the subject.

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– *Holiday in Mexico. Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourists Encounters*, edited by Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood. Duke University Press, May 2010.

*Holiday in Mexico* is an interesting book about a highly important theme. It is an edited volume and contains 14 articles that describe and analyse Mexico's tourism development from a historical perspective. The articles are organized in three time periods: ca. 1846-1911; 1920-60; 1960-present. The article of Boardman (pp. 21-53) is about the beginnings of American tourism to Mexico and describes how American soldiers of the US-Mexican War (1846-1848) went on sightseeing trips in their spare time. They climbed the volcano Popocatepetl, admired Puebla's cathedral, visited Tenochtitlán and gazed at collections in museums. They wrote long letters home expressing their amazement about this strange country. War correspondents observed their fights and travels and published articles and map in newspapers, introducing Mexico to American readers. After the war the soldiers' itineraries and adventures paved the way for American tourists to further explore Mexico. The article of Bueno deals with the excavation of Teotihuacán and the birth of this archaeological site as a tourist event. The Porfirio Díaz regime (1877-

1910) rebuilt the Aztec city for the centennial celebration of Mexico's independence in 1910 with the aim of presenting Mexico to the world as a unified and modern nation with ancient roots. The Egyptian pyramids were a source of inspiration in this endeavour. The archaeologist Leopoldo Batres took the task of excavation upon himself, but in his haste to have the site ready in time for the centennial he made a shambles out of it. Instead of the usual archaeological tool of the little brush, he allegedly used dynamite. Important archaeological information was lost and parts of the largest pyramid were destroyed. But the site was ready on time and the glorification of the Aztec past was one of the highlights of the celebration. Important in this article is the analysis of how the celebration of the Aztec past creates a disconnection between the Indian history and the present, as if the ancient and contemporary Indians have nothing to do with each other. Contemporary racism is based on this disconnection and the belief that the merits of these ancient civilizations have nothing to do with the degraded Indian present (p. 56).

The second part of the book (ca. 1920-1960) contains meticulously written historic accounts of the carnival of Veracruz (Grant Wood, pp. 77-106); of how Mexico-US relations are historically influenced by American tourism to Mexico (Berger, pp. 107-29); the influence of tourism on the creation of an underground economy of prostitution, gambling and alcohol abuse in the border city of Tijuana (Schantz, pp. 130-60) and the transformation of San Miguel, Guanajuato, into a bohemian artistic town attractive to foreign tourists. The article of Sackets entitled 'Fun in Acapulco' deals with the state's gradual expropriation of *ejido* land and the conflicts that were created in this way between project developers and local peasants.

So far, all these articles deal with important themes, contribute to our historical knowledge and are an interesting and pleasant read. The third part of book (ca. 1960-present) however leaves the reader slightly puzzled. Anyone who follows the news on Mexico is aware of the fact that drug-related violence has increasingly overtaken the country and does not spare tourist places. There were reports of violent incidents in Baja California, Cancun<sup>1</sup> and Acapulco. In a weekend in March 2010 a total of 17 dead bodies were found lying around the streets of Acapulco as the brutal drugs cartel La Familia fought its war for domination.<sup>2</sup> In November of the same year 18 national tourists were killed in Acapulco and dumped in a mass grave.<sup>3</sup> Although these horrifically violent acts took place in the months after the publication of the book, they are indicative of a tendency that was noticeable much earlier. In light of increasing drug-related criminality in Mexico, it is astonishing that the book makes hardly any mention of contemporary violence, not in the introduction, not in the conclusions and not in any but one of the articles of the third part of the book (ca. 1960-present). The only exception is Castellanos' work on an indigenous community near Cancun that is based on a decade of fieldwork which ended in 2002. She explicitly mentions gang violence and drugs criminality in the very last part of her piece (p. 256). The other articles in this part of the book deal with Mexican food (Pilcher, pp. 221-40), the rise of golf course tourism in Baja California (Saragoza, pp. 295-319) and an Mexican art exhibition in the US (Coffee, pp. 265-94). The last article is written by travel writer Barbara Kastelein. Her eloquent and journalistic writing style would have been especially appropriate for integrating contemporary violence in the book. She and many other do mention the dark sides of tourism such as social injustice, environmental damage, power abuse

and corruption, but most articles stop their analysis and research around 2005.

An academic book in which the contents are both important and outdated by contemporary developments makes one painfully aware of the slow pace with which data are gathered, analysed and written down. Composing a volume based on a collection of case-studies is a very time-consuming process, not to mention that publishing houses themselves need months or even years to bring a book to the market. Poor us, as academics we are working in a system that prevents us from being up to date. Taking this long process of scientific knowledge production into account, I think the editors and the publishing house have nevertheless missed an opportunity. The article of Castellanos would have paved the way for integrating contemporary violence in the book as she explicitly mentions how tourism contributed to rising gang activity and drugs trafficking (p. 256).

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#### Notes

1. *The Seattle Times*, March 9, 2009, and a message of January 14, 2010, at [www.Tijuana.us.consulate.gov](http://www.Tijuana.us.consulate.gov), accessed 13 September 2011.
2. *The Times*, 15 March 2010, published on their website.
3. BBC 7, November 2010, published on their website.