Reseñas/Book Reviews

– *Pistoleros and Popular Movements. The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca,* by Benjamin T. Smith. University of Nebraska Press, 2009.

Oaxaca is a complex overwhelmingly indigenous state in southern Mexico that has played a significant role in Mexico's national history and imagination. The country's two most important caudillos from the second half of the nineteenth century (Juárez and Díaz) were from Oaxaca, and during the past decades the state has seen important popular mobilizations and organizations (from Zapotec radicalism, to union dissidence and the brutally repressed 2006 popular movement APPO), which all reverberated into national politics. Ben Smith's book has many merits, but the overarching one is that its enormous wealth and temporal and topical span provides the reader with insights into the history of Oaxaca from the onset of the Porfiriato (1876) up to today. Although the book's main focus is on the 1930s through early 1950s, the author ventures into several historical processes preceding this core period. While he hardly says anything about the second half of the twentieth century, reading this book increases our understanding of the context and social and cultural roots of developments in present-day Oaxaca. In nine chapters the author takes the reader on a well-written journey from the caudillo politics of the late 1920s, the crucial period of *cardenista* reforms and politics, the war period and, finally, to *alemanista* developmentalism and elite realignment. The analysis connects an understanding of national politics to deep knowledge of Oaxaca's sub-regional political economies and politics. Hence it ramifies into a broad range of related topics such as the political effects of agricultural modernization, camarilla politics, *caciquismo*, inter-ethnic relations and cultural practices, (urban) social movements and their gendered dimensions, and state interventions. This is no small achievement, but the result of many years of extensive archival work, thorough conceptual analysis and imaginative writing. All that deserves praise.

The book should be placed in the context of a growing body of historical work that seeks to understand postrevolutionary state formation beyond a number of established interpretive frameworks, most importantly revisionist and neo-Gramscian theories. While revisionist understandings of state formation point to the ultimate weaknesses of reform and the importance of co-optation and control of popular forces that favour state-led capitalist development, the neo-Gramscians stress negotiations and the construction of hegemony between state actors and projects on the one hand, and local popular forces on the other. The latter enables us to incorporate notions of resistance, appropriation and local mediation and agency. Although the position Ben Smith develops in the book is certainly much closer to the latter approach than the former, he nevertheless argues against both because they are, in his view, too much 'overarching and comprehensive social science models' (pp. 9-10). After all, what he finds in his deep historiographic study of politics, popular movements and ethnic relations in Oaxaca between 1928 and 1952 is a 'broad and extremely divergent chronology and geography of state formation'(p. 19). Smith needs to accommodate paradoxes, dualities and contradic-

tions in state formation, and for that he prefers an 'analysis of distinct, contained moments of interaction between regional elites, popular groups and the state' (p. 9).

Chapter after chapter, Smith produces overwhelming evidence for the argument that the revisionist view of a strong central corporatist state that dominated the country since the cardenista reforms is untenable. Instead, he sees a weak and often ineffective state that is forced to negotiate with local elites, caciques and popular movements. Only for the period after 1950 he is willing to accept the revisionist claims of postrevolutionary state formation as economic conservatism, centralization and authoritarianism, but even then it is uneven and deeply contested. In doing so the author builds on previous work by Rubin, Fallaw and Knight. He also distances himself from the neo-Gramscian school of thought by stressing and amply documenting the use of coercion and (state) violence as political tools during the 1940s and 1950s, which I consider a key contribution of this book. Moreover, hegemony was always incomplete and contested, hence his emphasis on counter or alternative hegemonic discourses.

I cannot avoid to make a minor dissident comment, since at one point Smith flamboyantly argues against my earlier work on political culture, when he writes that 'the state…was not the pyramid of revisionist lore with its clear lines of hierarchy and command' (p. 192), which is a reference to my idea of 'citizens of the pyramid'. Although I will not dispute that I have revised my understandings of Mexican politics and state formation (the issues of state-centeredness and coercion), the point is that the 'pyramid' was never meant to refer to the *state* (or state formation), but to be a metaphor of a particular 'political culture', a culture (or imagination) of the state and politics and power in general, deeply rooted in the value-system and practices of personalism. As such it can and wants to accommodate for the hierarchical and 'coercive' practices so characteristic of *camarilla* politics, clientelism and caciques and 'their pistol-wielding peasant posses', the description of all of which Smith rightfully considers not to conform to revisionist models of state formation (p. 192). The 'pyramid' was not an image used to typify the Mexican state, but a metaphor for a personalist political culture that requires obedience and support to the *jefe*, personal loyalty, clear hierarchy ('el que manda aquí soy yo'), and, if needed, (the threat) of coercion and violence to enforce them.

Ben Smith has written a wonderful and important book that will remain obligatory reading for many years to come for those interested in state formation, and for scholars interested in the fascinating postrevolutionary history of Oaxaca. The combination of methodological rigor, theoretical proficiency, and good writing makes this a book that deserves many readers from history students to political science professors.

Wil Pansters, Utrecht University and University of Groningen

– *Exceptional Violence. Embodied Citizenship in Transnational Jamaica*, by Deborah A. Thomas. Duke University Press, 2011.

Among many Latin American and Caribbean countries with similar problems, Jamaica stands out as a state characterized by extremely high rates of criminality and homicides, as a society characterized by 'exceptional violence'. This is not an entirely new phenomenon. Unlike most of the other former British West Indies, Jamaica was already marked by high levels of criminality in the mid-twentieth century. At the time of the country's transition to independence in 1962, political parties were already aligning themselves with local gangs. This phenomenon was brought to a bloody climax in the 1980 elections, when political gang violence demanded a toll of 800 murders. Since then, levels of violence have gone down again, but there have been several new rounds of bloodshed. Thus statistics for 2007 put Jamaica in the same category of per capita murder rates as Colombia and South Africa. Anthropologist Deborah Thomas describes how it was impossible for her, conducting field work in this period, to escape this tragedy: 'violence surrounded me and everyone else in and around Kingston', imposing a condition of alertness even at night: 'a sort of sleeping with one eye perpetually open' (p. 2).

Why this violence? Of course, as any study on crime in Latin America and the Caribbean will state, poverty and highly skewed income distribution matter. So do the mechanisms that go with narcotrafficking and drug use. While acknowledging these factors, Thomas delves deeper, making the case that a long history of colonialism and particularly slavery continues to make a lasting imprint on Jamaican society. At the same time, she strongly opposes culturalist explanations for the high levels of violence. In her view, such explanations have little explanatory value and reflect colonial prejudice if not outright racism. Thus she also presents her study as a contribution to 'the liberation of American anthropology from those aspects of its history that privileged a focus on diffusion, traits, and personality' (p. 4). Instead, she argues throughout the book 'that violence is not a cultural phenomenon but an effect of class formation, a process that is immanently racialized and gendered' (p. 4).

In five chapters and a coda, Thomas leads us through the times of slavery and colonialism, decolonization and the agonies of independence, including the massive emigration and hence the formation of a transnational community. Violence indeed is a central element in all of this history, 'predatory, violent, and illegal forms of rule' (p. 13). Thanks to colonialism, Thomas argues, 'democracy in the Americas [sic, at large – GO] has been founded on a house of cards' (p. 13). This analysis then leads up to the coda of this densely written and erudite book, a passionate argument in favour of reparations for Atlantic slavery in general and more specifically for the long-standing tradition of suppressing the 'African' element in Jamaican identity. Here reparations are presented as the requisite 'framework for thinking' (pp. 231, 238).

Exceptional Violence is a complicated study. The book has limited but very engaging parts on fieldwork, but the author's reflections on anthropological work and the ways this discipline functions politically seem to be more central to the book. In her analysis of the way anthropology deals with violence, slavery, inequity, crime, and so on, Thomas demonstrates broad reading and a highly critical mind. Small wonder then, both John Comaroff (University of Chicago) and David Scott (Columbia University) provided abundant praise for the blurb.

This praise and my admiration for Thomas' erudition and critical engagement notwithstanding, I could not help but wonder about a couple of questions while reading the book to its end. First, if the legacy of slavery and British colonialism indeed conditioned the omnipresence of violence in Jamaica, then why is it that other former British West Indian states are not characterized by the same levels of violence? Second, while it obviously makes sense to criticize a sort of primordial approach that blames 'diffusion, traits, and personality' (p. 4) for exceptional violence or whatever other problem in any given society, I fail to understand why violence, even if it is, as Thomas writes, the effect of an immanently racialized and gendered class formation, may not become deeply engrained in a society as a rather stable cultural phenomenon. And finally, we may either sympathize or not with Thomas' closing statement that 'Reparations is *the* framework through which we must view contemporary inequalities', as anything else is 'a capitulation to the more conservative aspects of multiracial nationalist discourse and to the demands of a so-called post-racial cosmopolitan vision of citizenship that threatens to become intractable in the neoliberal era' (p. 238). But surely this approach to the 'liberation of American anthropology' (p. 4) will not be shared by all practitioners of the discipline, and it will be impossible to find a scholarly argument to say that this is *the* exclusive framework for future analysis.

Gert Oostindie,
KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

– *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics (The Latin America Readers)*, compilado por Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, Elizabeth Oglesby. Duke University Press, 2011.

Cuando se realiza una reseña de un libro uno espera encontrarle algún resquicio que permita el lucimiento del comentarista. Para *The Guatemala Reader* esta pretensión sería mezquindad. Los constructores de esta Babel guatemalteca, dan cuenta de la complejidad del país y logran hacerlo traducible en un comprehensivo y generoso trabajo. Para quienes hemos vivido y padecido Guatemala es un guiño que nos provoca reacciones y reflexiones y que se hace extensivo a los lectores. Todos los sucesos, procesos, dimensiones que se cruzan en la historia de América hacen sentido en Guatemala en algún momento, en algún lugar, y no es fácil recoger el cúmulo de experiencias que destila este pequeño laboratorio del continente.

Greg Grandin, historiador, Deborah Levenson, historiadora antropóloga, y Elizabeth Oglesby, geógrafa; combinan sus competencias como alquimistas sociales, su profesionalidad va más allá de su erudición y su pasión no se estanca en la anécdota. Esta triada editora académica, han hecho de Guatemala un motivo de lucha política y de vidas ligadas a redes de la iglesia católica, de derechos humanos, de colaboración campesinas, y vinculados a la academia desde el compromiso de investigación. Desde estas plataformas nos escogen significativas etnografías y análisis de otros investigadores guatemaltecos y extranjeros de alto nivel.

Por este compromiso la posición de esta compilación se mueve en el plano político, criterio sobre el que gira el ordenamiento de la información en nueve partes, donde desde el tercer acápite van a concentrarse en el último siglo y la actuali-

dad. En buena parte recogen la sucesión de denuncias de la historia siniestra de Guatemala: el racismo y la segregación desde la colonia, la intransigencia histórica de las elites, la sistemática intervención político militar de los Estados Unidos, el narco-estado, los despojos actuales de naturaleza, cultura y dignidad, la política migratoria 'gringa' de deportaciones al estilo Poncio Pilatos y la rabia por las gratuitas muertes de migrantes en el desierto-frontera norte … sumándose una minuciosa selección en este enorme catálogo de informaciones de todo corte: imágenes, chistes, poemas, papeles de prensa, documentos clasificados, entrevistas, traducciones, … que introducen con tino y sutileza.

Los editores intermedian hacia un público abierto, pero van a ser políticamente incorrectos hacia el público norteamericano y políticamente correctos hacia el guatemalteco. En la introducción señalan cómo la representación de Guatemala en Estados Unidos se ha movido en la ambigua promoción oficial entre el turismo-folklore que exótica la cultura maya y la cruda intervención terrorista y represiva. Es clara la decisión de denunciar su histórica responsabilidad en la política interna guatemalteca a lo largo del siglo XX y de despejar la desinformación de sus conciudadanos. Hacia ellos despliegan la creatividad guatemalteca con traducciones insólitas allí.

Hacia los chapines, que tienden a verse limitados en su mundo de conocimientos, les ofrecen nuevos documentos y caminos de interpretación. Pero no se atreven a cuestionar ciertos mitos que siguen reproduciendo y entorpeciendo una explicativa más abierta y liberadora de Guatemala y de los guatemaltecos. Así, les ocurre con la dicotomía étnica antagónica de indígena ladino y el escaso abordaje de la complejidad del mestizo, y el eterno olvido del Caribe pero, sobre todo, del oriente guatemalteco. Se explayan con la lucha popular pero las élites criollas no se retratan en su poder omnímodo. También refuerzan la idealización de la Primavera Democrática y la revolución de octubre (1944-1954), que ha sido uno de los pocos referentes positivos de la identidad política guatemalteca para ciertos sectores. Lo mismo aplica con los intocables modelos revolucionarios que no tardaron en degenerar en liderazgos autoritarios y patriarcales, y después en una izquierda faccionalista, retórica, gerontocrática, misógina, urbana, poco comprensiva hacia el sufrimiento social y escasamente creativa de estrategias más incluyentes en su obsesión por el acceso al Estado. No enfrentan el comportamiento errático de Rigoberta Menchú en la política interna o el declinar del elitizado movimiento pan maya – que recién emerge con otro tipo de movilizaciones y actitudes.

Finalmente me gustaría resaltar cómo a través de un producto que podía ser más formal, filtran esa querencia y ese toque que marca Guatemala a quienes se acercan a ella, un sentimiento ['feeling'] de ternura, humor negro, vómito, surrealismo que no es fácil transmitir. Los editores muestran un conocimiento sutil de los códigos simbólicos y de identidad y lo recogen con cariño y apelando a nuestra imaginación. Su esfuerzo por captar la vida cotidiana y la ambigüedad chapina es magistral: la sensibilidad maya en la poesía, los sabores barrocos de la cocina chapina, el modernismo mágico, la celebración de la irreverente Huelga de Dolores o del valiente día del orgullo gay, el neopentecostalismo y su espectacularidad, el 'pollo' en diversas dimensiones y simbologías, el esfuerzo de los migrantes en 'los Estados', la precaria y épica vida cotidiana....

Comentar el libro *The Guatemala Reader* ha sido un honor por las sorpresas documentales, sus lúcidos comentarios y esa emoción que también los libros académicos pueden despertar.

Manuela Camus, Universidad de Guadalajara

– *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*, edited by Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Amid the growing English language literature on the 'new left' in Latin America, this co-edited volume combines comprehensive coverage of cases in South America with an examination of an important range of issues raised by the emergence of left-led governments that makes it both impressive and authoritative. Part I contains eight chapters on thematic issues while Part II contains a similar number on country case analyses. The volume opens and closes with an introduction and conclusion by the editors.

In their introductory chapter, Levitsky and Roberts offer a very useful framework for analysing the resurgence of the left in the region. They outline the purpose of the volume as being to examine three main sets of questions: to explain the sudden revival of left-wing alternatives; to map and attempt to explain variation among them; and to evaluate what the 'left turn' means for development and democracy in the region. While some of the explanations are now quite commonplace (inequality, the crisis of neoliberalism, the commodities boom), their typology of left parties and their outline of the historical roots of left-wing diversity is a very valuable contribution and is referred back to by a number of contributors throughout the volume. They establish a four-part grid distinguishing parties along the horizontal axis of established party organization or new political movement and the vertical axis of dispersed or concentrated authority. Thus the Chilean Socialist Party and the PT in Brazil fall within the top left-hand grid as electoral professional left while the FA in Uruguay falls within the same grid but as a mass organic left, all three with dispersed authority. Peronism under Kirchner and the FSLN under Ortega are bedfellows in the bottom left grid as populist machines with concentrated authority. On the right grid under new political movements, the Bolivian MAS is alone in the grid of dispersed authority while Chavez and Correa fill the grid of new political movements with concentrated authority.

Part I then covers a range of themes. Among the most insightful are Benjamin Goldfrank's examination of the left and participatory democracy in Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela, Jennifer Pribble and Evelyne Huber's careful comparison of Chile and Uruguay in terms of social policy and redistribution, and Deborah J. Yashar's analysis of how the left struggled to adopt responses to high levels of crime and to multi-ethnic citizenship. Samuel Handlin and Ruth Berins Collier's chapter on the diversity of left party linkages and competitive advantages reports very revealing empirical evidence on the many differences between Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela. One major benefit of these chapters is to bring the Uruguayan case into focus as there is a tendency to overlook it. Kurt Weyland's examination of whether the left is the destroyer or saviour of the market model, and Robert R. Kaufman's chapter on the various mixes of orthodoxy and heterodoxy

among the new left in dealing with the commodity boom are careful and insightful though confirming by now familiar themes in the literature. The one disappointing chapter is that of María Victoria Murillo, Virginia Oliveros and Milan Vaishnav on economic constraints and presidential agency which purports to explain the left turn by the global commodity boom which reduced the need for countries to resort to external financing. Unfortunately, the correlation of a very limited number of variables is seen by these authors as explaining causation. It is the one weak chapter in an otherwise excellent set of thematic chapters.

The chapters in Part II cover both the usual suspects of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile, Argentina and Brazil but they add chapters on Uruguay and Peru also. A central focus is on the reasons for variation between these many cases (and in the case of Peru the reasons for Humala's defeat by Garcia in 2006 and the reasons the latter chose not to govern on the left). Many devote attention to historical trajectories of the left in each country that greatly enriches understanding. On Venezuela, Margarita López Maya's analysis of the different phases of *chavismo* overcomes the usual pitfalls among English-language analysis too keen to dismiss Chavez – this is a balanced and very helpful analysis. Again, the attention given to Uruguay helps rescue a case that has been much neglected in the English language literature while the emphasis on the refoundation of the Chilean Socialist Party after the Pinochet coup draws attention to features that help explain its caution but also help highlight its achievements.

The editors' excellent conclusion returns to the key questions raised at the outset, explaining the diversity of the left and drawing conclusions about development models and quality of democracy before ending with the challenges for the left and its political legacy for the region. As with much of the rest of the book, this is comprehensive, authoritative and nuanced; what is particularly welcome is its refusal to fall into the dichotomy of embracing the 'good' left of Chile, Uruguay and Brazil and critically dismissing the 'bad' left of Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. Conclusions here are far more nuanced and the criticism of Chile and Brazil for perhaps being too cautious and anxious to placate elites is a point far too rarely made. All in all, this is a very fine volume that looks set to become a major text.

Peadar Kirby, University of Limerick

– *Latin America in the 21st Century: Nations, Regions, Globalization*, by Gian Luca Gardini. Zed Books, 2012.

In this book of interpretative essays, Gian Luca Gardini surveys broad tendencies in Latin American politics and international affairs, arriving at the conclusion that Latin America seems to have reached an important historical conjuncture – though something less than a critical turning point. This conjuncture will be defined, he says, by the three tensions facing all of the countries in the region. The first tension is between ideology (especially in the rhetoric of the left) and pragmatism and results from Latin America's widespread rejection of neoliberalism even as it cannot escape integration with the world market, i.e. liberal globalization. The second tension, between unity and diversity, arises simultaneously from the surge of previously subordinated groups, especially indigenous peoples, and the emergence of regional inte-

gration projects. That these projects are not entirely compatible with one another exacerbates the tension. The third tension – between changes in continuity – arises from the 'symbiosis of highly ambitious political and social experimentation' that nonetheless faces 'structural limitations.' The implementation of neoliberal reforms in the late twentieth century cannot simply be rolled back; yet the partial realization of liberal democratization and economic policies does leave room for considerable experimentation. Hence, Gardini prefers 'conjuncture' over 'crisis'.

One might perceive that such tensions are evident in all world regions, but their salience is felt most acutely in Latin America where global economic and political shifts have loosened the hegemonic grip of the United States on hemispheric affairs. During the Cold War, especially in the era of harsh dictatorships, the bipolar global conflict left little room for political innovation, and for the first decade after the collapse of Eastern European communism, liberal triumphalism prevailed. The failure of neoliberal policies to deliver growth and their exacerbation of social injustice, the shift in U.S. attention to other global regions and concerns post 9/11, and the diversification of trade and investment partners in Latin America have created spaces for political alternatives and for greater collective assertiveness on the world stage.

Of necessity, such broad and far-reaching theses in a relatively brief volume are argued at a high level of generalization, making assumptions subject to debate. Gardini, however, reminds us throughout of exceptions and counter-tendencies. Still, just about every reader will find some problematic interpretations. In my view, recent social protests in Chile, already somewhat visible in the Bachelet presidency, should temper Gardini's optimism about that country's trajectory and the record of the *Concertación* governments ('an undoubted success'). Other readers, I'm sure, will take umbrage with Gardini's perception of the pragmatist tendencies behind Hugo Chávez's sometimes harsh rhetoric. Of necessity, again, not all countries are given attention. Still, given the attention to the regional movements toward innovation, autonomy and social integration, one might have also expected some consideration of the Cuban case and the prospects for salvaging its social accomplishments – what the Third World considered most impressive about the revolution.

Though one may disagree with many of Gardini's generalizations or arguments, one can nonetheless credit him for summarizing in a mere 142 pages the key issues we need to be addressing. Have Brazil's recent advances in economic development and poverty reduction positioned it to lead Latin America forward, or are its global interests now too much tied to Washington on issues such as commercial policy, security, drug trafficking? Can the Bolivarian 'ALBA' plan, with its laudable goals for social integration, somehow be reconciled with Mercosur's more limited economic objectives? Perhaps none of the conjunctural issues discussed by Gardini is more provocative that the paradoxical tendency toward sub-regionalization and what seems to be a more confident Pan American identity. Gardini sees a more confident, less culturally dependent bourgeoisie in the forefront of realigning and diversifying Latin America's place in the global economy. Its confidence would seem to be justified by the relatively light impact that the recent global recession has had compared even to the Asian financial crisis of twenty years ago. This time, the United States has caught a very bad cold, but Latin America has not caught pneumonia.

It is a great virtue of Gardini's slim book that while keeping the discussion at a high level of generalization (and mostly jargon-free), he avoids the oversimplified vision of the 'good left' versus the 'bad left' associated with similarly sweeping visions put forth most famously by Jorge Casteñeda and others eager to praise social democracy and condemn more radical regimes. Gardini himself is unmistakably a social democrat, and on the left there will be those who think he has conceded too much to foes of more revolutionary change. However, he avoids any notion that the more radical Pink Tide leaders constitute a throw-back to populism or, even worse, an 'axis of evil'. Gardini asserts, 'The consensus on eliminating inequality to pursue a more prosperous, stable, and harmonious society seems to transcend the left-right boundaries and debates'.

We are unlikely to all agree on which aspects of the contemporary conjuncture in Latin America he gets right, which he gets wrong, but I think most of us will conclude that he's done very well overall. Where the reader thinks Gardini is wrong, at least one will pause to reflect, and the reader of this succinct text will be rewarded with many such pauses.

Daniel Hellinger, Webster University

– *The New Politics of Protest*, by Roberta Rice. University of Arizona Press, 2012.

This book counts 127 pages of text and it aims at comparing the indigenous movements and their relation with the state in four different countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile. In addition, it tries to connect a variety of debates on social movements to make a case for a new focus on class in the analysis of indigenous movements. This is a Herculean task that has produced a book with its merits and short-comings.

There is no doubt that the emergence of indigenous movements in the Andean countries has been one of the most spectacular social and political events of the past two decades. Rice's point of departure is that there has been not much explicit engagement between the different literatures, especially the ones analysing political mobilization, on the one hand, and anti-neoliberal resistance efforts, on the other. The purpose of her study is, therefore, to explore the intersection between what she calls 'austerity protests' and identity politics. She contends that this intersection is conditioned by two basic factors: 1) the character of domestic political institutions, and 2) the historic patterns of popular political incorporation. Ultimately, the success or failure of these movements depends on the ways the popular sectors were historically incorporated into the political system.

Rice starts her book with a short overview of the different perspectives on popular protest in the social sciences over the past decades. She distinguishes four subsequent tendencies: the classical model which was based on a socio-psychological approach; the resource mobilization model; the historical model that looks at political opportunity structures (which she calls the 'political process' model); and the so-called 'new social movement' school of thought. This overview is rich on bibliography and will be useful for teaching purposes. In general, there is not much to object to, but it is somewhat schematic. I personally would not agree, for instance, that the idea of 'framing', which is so important to understand social movements,

was the result of the NSM theories. It was already implicitly present in the work of, for instance, Barrington Moore (which is surprisingly absent in this overview) and was essential for the second, historical model.

Rice wants to go one step further than just a review of the literature, however, and proposes a perspective that she calls an institutions-and-identity approach. This approach emphasizes the role of history in shaping the context within which collective action occurs. Myself being an historian, I am greatly sympathetic to this approach, but I see one important problem: what is the historical depth one wishes to pursue to find answers? In her case-studies, Rice seems to propose a historical perspective of hardly more than half a century. Some people, like myself, would want to argue that this period is too short for a satisfactory historical perspective that takes into account the *longue durée*.

In a short chapter on collective action in the neoliberal era, Rice tries to solve the riddle as to why neoliberal reforms which were supposed to fragment and disintegrate social movements generated such a storm of protests. She shows how the traditional movements gradually lost their importance, while at the same time new social movements of previously excluded groups became prime forces. In this way, neoliberalism provided a stimulus for the emergence of new social and political actors.

The core of the book consists of the comparative analysis of the four countries. There is an implicit contention here that Bolivia and Ecuador were examples of successful indigenous movements where the 'counter cases' of Peru and Chile present their weaknesses and failures. Apart from the problem of comparing such different cases, again the unanswered question is the concrete time-frame of the comparison.

Ecuador was the first country which produced a strong indigenous movement. Just as would later happen in Bolivia, the movement gained broad public support by framing its struggle in terms of national concerns. In this way, indigenous identity became the prime reference for anti-neoliberal contention. Rice explains this early emergence by suggesting that the earlier form of popular incorporation in Ecuador had generated collective identities and organizational forms that could easily be transformed into ethnic forms of struggle. This could certainly be true, and could also explain the emergence of a strong indigenous movement in Bolivia a few years later. However, later she concludes that 'ethnic identity has become a potent mobilizing framework only in those countries without strong historical class cleavages and left-wing parties'. This, for me, is a problematic proposition in a country like Bolivia which experienced a revolution in 1952 under the direction of a strong, left-wing political party and which in later years experienced strong class-cum-ethnicity conflicts. Apart from this criticism, it shows the problem with Rice's analysis. She could be right, but because of the vagueness of her categories, it is very difficult to really assess her conclusions.

When Rice turns to the counter cases, she calls Peru an anomalous example because in spite of its large indigenous population, its indigenous movement has not been very successful. Of course, she mentions the influence of Sendero Luminoso and the Fujimoro regime, but she largely explains this anomaly by the fact that the political incorporation of the indigenous population impeded a common framework for organizing a concerted and coordinated resistance effort. Finally,

she presents Chile as the case where political parties are clearly institutionalized and where anti-neoliberal resistance has been muted. The majority of the Mapuche population was incorporated in the state. The small group of radical militants that garnered significant attention in the national and international arena did not win many concessions from the state. I would agree with this observation, but it is not impossible that the panorama will change dramatically in a decade or so.

The analysis presented by Roberta Rice is interesting and thought-provoking, but until we have a more solid frame of analysis, it remains difficult to assess and partial. This conclusion may sound overly critical; and in certain ways it is. But on the other hand, a short book like this cannot solve all issues and analytical challenges. In a way, its merit is exactly that it provokes all these objections. Roberta Rice's book presents a very clear, well-written and rich analysis of four very different cases. I disagree on many points and would like to read more on others, but it is a text which will provoke much discussion, and hopefully further comparative studies on an immensely important phenomenon in Latin American political history.

Michiel Baud, CEDLA

– *Mercury, mining and empire. The human and ecological cost of colonial silver mining in the Andes*, por Nicholas Robins. Indiana University Press, 2011.

El libro de Robins parte de un postulado muy fuerte: la mita y su tóxico compañero el mercurio fueron componentes de un proceso mayor de destrucción humana y ambiental que atravesó los Andes en la colonia, y que el autor describe como un verdadero genocidio. En su texto articula la historia de la minería más visible (la de la plata) con otra menos visible pero imprescindible (la del mercurio). La historia discurre, entonces, no solamente entre los dos grandes asientos mineros que fueron el corazón del Virreinato del Perú (Potosí y Huancavelica), sino también por otros temas clásicos de la historiografía andina que no siempre están directamente relacionados con la minería, pero que el autor considera su contexto ineludible. Esta posición, que el autor asume primero en forma implícita y luego muy claramente en las conclusiones, es la que le da el tono a todo el libro y la que va definiendo la selección de temas a tratar. En esta reseña quisiera detenerme en algunas de las virtudes del libro y finalizar con un breve comentario acerca de su postulado.

Este libro sale a la luz después de muchos años de un relativo silencio historiográfico sobre la minería, tema que había sido central hacia mediados del siglo pasado y hasta los años ochentas . La propuesta de Robins, además de aportar nuevos datos históricos, se nutre de diversas disciplinas que la enriquecen. En particular quisiera señalar los estudios relativos a la salud de los mineros tomados de ejemplos actuales, los análisis de contaminación de suelos y cauces de agua que fortalecen sus hipótesis y los modelos que utiliza para evaluar las posibles áreas contaminadas en el pasado.

Presenta al lector un interesante contrapunto entre el contexto global en el que se inscribe la minería y las consecuencias locales. Muestra el recorrido de la plata americana en el mundo, que pasó indirectamente a través de Europa o directamente desde Acapulco a diferentes países de Asia, en particular a China. Describe la contribución de la plata americana a la revolución de precios y al surgimiento del capi-

talismo en Europa. Y luego vuelve el foco a la situación de quienes la extrajeron de América y a las consecuencias de la minería como parte inseparable del proceso colonial. Este último foco es el corazón del libro.

La historia transcurre alternativamente entre Huancavelica (ubicada en el actual Perú) y Potosí (en la actual Bolivia). La comparación de estos dos centros mineros permite realzar, por ejemplo, las diferencias que había entre la minería de mercurio y la de plata, o las semejanzas que encuentra en el proceso de beneficio (refinación). La ubicación de los ingenios en ambos casos le brinda la oportunidad de analizar patrones diferentes de contaminación, ya que en Potosí se encontraban a lo largo de un río que atravesaba la ciudad por el centro y en Huancavelica estaban en los bordes. Una de las principales conclusiones sobre este tema, sin embargo, enfatiza las semejanzas: aunque todos los habitantes respiraban los vapores de mercurio que circulaban por el aire, en los dos asientos los más perjudicados fueron los barrios más humildes habitados casi siempre por indígenas, porque estaban junto a los ingenios, y los menos perjudicados fueron los que vivían en torno a la plaza central. Por cierto los más expuestos eran los trabajadores de los ingenios, que tenían contacto no sólo con los vapores, sino con el mercurio líquido.

Uno de los temas complejos de tratar en las historias de larga duración, es el de los cambios a lo largo del tiempo. El autor brinda detalles que le permiten proponer momentos de mayor o menor toxicidad de los procesos, de diferencias en la intensidad de la explotación de la mano de obra y de impacto diferencial según el tamaño de la población involucrada. Sintéticamente momento más tóxico fue el del comienzo del uso de la técnica de la amalgama, tras las reformas toledanas: los hornos de procesamiento del mercurio eran abiertos, los números de la mita los mayores, las ciudades (sobre todo Potosí) mucho más pobladas. La explotación de la mano de obra no sigue el mismo ritmo: el tiempo empeoró la situación de los mitayos sobre quienes fue pesando cada vez mas la ausencia de los muertos o fugados y las cuotas que se les exigía (legalmente prohibidas pero que existieron en la práctica).

Son numerosos los aspectos en los que este libro contribuye a la historia de la minería, aunque se destaca el aporte que realiza sobre el tema específico de la contaminación y los efectos de la toxicidad del mercurio. El lector especializado quizás extrañe algunos debates que no están presentes salvo en forma marginal, creo que principalmente por la fuerza que tiene la posición del autor frente a la conquista y al sistema colonial español. Me refiero a los debates que destacan que aún en la peor situación colonial y de abuso, los indígenas no fueron únicamente víctimas pasivas de la explotación española sino también protagonistas de una difícil historia.

Raquel Gil Montero, CONICET, Tucumán, Argentina

– *Bolivia. Refounding the Nation*, by Kepa Artaraz. Pluto Press, 2012.

Refounding the Nation, by Kepa Artaraz, sets out to undertake a task that is not only academically interesting, but also politically relevant: presenting, as he puts it, a perspective of southern epistemology, namely the Bolivian political process, to a northern audience, and thereby challenging 'existing hierarchies of knowledge in an act of resistance built on the audacity to think differently' (p. 11). It describes the collective spirit of Bolivia's multitudes and captures the complexity and con-

tradictions of Bolivia's political process, in which marginalized peasant and indigenous groups constituted themselves as political actors and proposed nothing less than to reshape the state. Formerly working in the health sector, Kepa Artaraz did his PhD on the role of intellectuals in Cuban Society and now is Senior Lecturer at the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton. His book is written not only for specialized academics, but for a wide audience of politically and academically interested people. It provides a historical background and focuses on the last decade in which the current political project of refounding the nation was developed. It covers historical as well as highly topical socio-political, economic, state-related and international developments in Bolivia's process of change.

Artaraz places the on-going process of change in Bolivia in the context of 'Latin America's turn to the left', and the struggle against colonial and neoliberal forces. Bolivia is a resource-rich country with a history of subordination to world markets from the earliest years of the Spanish colony to the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. This accumulation of historical experiences led to intense social mobilizations beginning in 2000. Liberal democracy has gained little traction in highly diverse societies like Bolivia's, where the state does not necessarily correspond to a single nation. In its place, indigenous organizations proposed a plurinational model that would deepen democracy. In the context of this economic and political crisis, alliances between social movements and the formation of a political instrument (Evo Morales' political party, the Movement to Socialism or MAS) strengthened indigenous unity according to the author. The MAS won the presidential elections of 2005.

According to Artaraz, the participatory process of rewriting the Bolivian constitution implied the rewriting of the basic societal rules. The *Pacto Unidad* or 'Unity Pact' played a fundamental role by consolidating an alliance of social, peasant and indigenous movements. Though the Constitutional Assembly's work was often hindered by internal discrimination, racist violence and the opposition's politics of blockade, the new constitution was approved, with several last-minute changes, by a public referendum in January 2009. It refounded Bolivia as a plurinational state, one that recognizes 36 indigenous nations, protects social rights and promotes economic pluralism. Indigenous organizations, however, demanded not only recognition, but also land and natural resources. Altaraz argues that NGOs working in this context can deepen democracy. According to the government though, resource claims expressed by indigenous movements, NGOs, and critical intellectuals constitute new political threats, and question the coherency of the government itself.

Artaraz goes on to describe *buen vivir* – 'living well' – a concept drawn from indigenous cultures, that describes harmonic relations within society and with nature. The government's deployment of the *buen vivir* discourse abroad, however, conflicts with practices within Bolivia, where the state has taken some steps but not yet done enough to strengthen communitarian economies, curb predatory exploitation of natural resources, redistribute wealth or combat social inequalities. For this purpose, the constitution sets out a path to a plural economy through state control over natural resources, economic diversification and redistribution. The author analyses economic politics mainly based on governmental documents; he highlights that the Morales' government undertook selective nationalization and that some social indicators show positive results, while dependence on food imports, a

flexible work regime, and contradictions between extractivism and *buen vivir* continue.

Artaraz examines not only Bolivia's national, but also its international politics. The expectations of a shift in relations between the US and Latin America was largely due to the growing frustration with US influence on the continent. However, these expectations could not be met by the governments of Morales and Obama. Bolivia now increasingly focuses on regional alliances, characterized by the rise of Brazil as an economic power. The Andean Community (CAN) proposed an Andean parliament, and the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have proven effective in integrating South America economically and politically. Further, integration of social movements and trade organizations (such as ALBA), policy proposals, financial and sectorial aid, and socio-ecological alliances have also strengthened South-South relations. The author concludes that in this new era of transformation, contradictions and new resistances, the Bolivian experience serves as a model for Europe of the urgency to redefine power and democracy in the face of crisis.

The author shows a clear perception of Bolivia's social and political reality. Artaraz emphasizes the plurinational state project and the new territorial order that it implies, outlining the context in which further debates about indigenous autonomies have unfolded. He analyses participatory and deliberative democracy, inscribed in the new constitution as part of the three democratic forms – the representative, participatory and communitarian democracy – though he does not explicitly go into the communitarian democracy. His reflections on plurinationality and extractivism are very enriching, and provide a background for recent theoretical-conceptual debates on both topics in Latin America. The analysis of the new economic model complements broader debates reflected in legal documents such as the constitution and recent, more theoretical publications. This is a highly recommended book that provides a brief but detailed summary of Bolivia's recent history and gives insight into national political debates that are currently contributing to important debates in the global South.

Isabella Margerita Radhuber,
International Institute of Social Studies (CoCoon Project NEBE)

– *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, by Tanya Harmer. University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

For those of us who teach inter-American relations at the upper-division and graduate levels, this is a welcome addition to the literature on the Allende years. Tanya Harmer provides not just a history of Chile's foreign relations between 1970 and 1973, but a systematic effort to analyse the rise and fall of the Allende government in an inter-American and wider Cold War context.

In Latin America, the Cold War was neither cold nor was it simply a reflection of the larger struggle between the two superpowers. What Harmer calls the *Inter-American Cold War* followed its own, distinctive course. Thus, if Allende's early foreign policies banked on détente to provide a window of opportunity for his government to pursue radical reforms without incurring serious reprisals by the United

States, he was to be bitterly disappointed. Not only was there no détente in inter-American relations, but the US-Soviet rapprochement seems to have further diminished the Allende government's already limited options and chances for survival: In Washington, the Nixon administration was united in its objective to bring down Allende, although there was disagreement about the most appropriate way to achieve this; in Moscow, the Kremlin was loath to jeopardize détente with the United States and thus unwilling to provide the kind of large-scale material assistance Chile needed to avoid economic collapse.

Indeed, the main foreign power to support Allende was not the USSR but Fidel Castro's Cuba. Harmer provides a detailed account of the Cuban involvement that went well beyond token gestures. Yet Cuba's influence never went so far as to change the direction of the Chilean government. Allende continued to insist on a peaceful and constitutionalist approach to politics, *la via chilena,* instead of following Castro's advice to crack down on the right-wing opposition and prepare for a prolonged armed struggle. Cuba's involvement, however, was blown out of proportion by CIA-sponsored intelligence and oppositional press reports. For Harmer, the very fear of a Cuban-sponsored and well-armed subversion led the Chilean military into an extremely violent form of repression during and after the September 1973 coup.

It was not so much US-Soviet competition that was driving the Inter-American Cold War, Harmer argues, but tensions emanating from within the region itself and from the fault lines that pitted the global South against the North. Chile's *Unidad Popular* promoted its reform policies as part and parcel of a larger struggle against imperialist exploitation and underdevelopment while engaging in a concerted effort to build bridges across the global South. It thereby radicalized contemporary debates on the New International Economic Order. Together with the 'Allende Doctrine' that affirmed Chile's right to expropriate without compensation those foreign firms which had reaped 'excess profits' in the past, the *Unidad Popular's* activism in Third World forums and elsewhere did not fail to increase tensions with Washington while it did little to counterbalance the Chilean economy's traditional dependence on the United States. However, such activism raised *la vía chilena's* international profile and thereby served to restrain the Nixon administration. Aware of the possible international fallout of overt interventions, Harmer argues, Nixon responded with 'tactical caution' (p. 120). Although relations with Chile continued to deteriorate over the compensation issue, he sided against hardliners in his administration who advocated open confrontation.

Of course, 'tactical caution' did not mean passivity. As is well known, Washington continued to covertly lend a helping hand to Chile's oppositional forces and to undermine Chile's economy. It also sought closer relations with right-wing military dictatorships in South America, particularly in Brazil, and it recalibrated its relations with nationalist, but non-Marxist governments, so as to isolate Chile. Allende's defiance and the US response thereby reverberated throughout the inter-American system.

At the same time, Harmer ultimately agrees with Henry Kissinger who suggested that Washington has been given 'too much credit' for the coup that overthrew Allende (p. 253). In line with much of the recent scholarship on inter-American relations she proposes (to use a fashionable, if opaque terminology) *decentering,*

that is, a research agenda that takes stock of a fuller range of actors, their objectives, perceptions, and strategic interactions, in order to explain a given outcome. The governments of Cuba and Brazil, as she shows in some detail, were certainly no pawns of the superpowers: They were pursuing their own interests and acted on their own impulse when intervening in Chilean affairs. And in the months leading up to the Chilean coup, she suggests, it was the Brazilian military rather than the CIA or the Pentagon that provided reassurance and tangible assistance to the plotting officers. More important still, and as various researchers have done in the past, she points to the increasingly bitter divide that split Chilean politics into mutually hostile camps and to the deepening crises that engulfed the Allende government. As a growing number of both military and civilian opponents came to contemplate a coup as a legitimate political option, Allende was unable to rein in his own coalition forces and provide a coherent strategy to address the challenges ahead. This was a downward spiral that was reinforced by, but hardly the product of, foreign interventions. Thus, while not denying the destabilizing impact of the US credit squeeze and other intrusions, Harmer points to a fundamental dilemma that haunted the *Unidad Popular*: The reform processes it set into motion increased, rather than decreased, dependence on large-scale assistance from abroad and in the absence of alternative sources of support, their success ultimately relied on the understanding and cooperation of the United States.

The author's call to move beyond the 'blame game' (p. 256), however, seems somewhat misplaced in a study that in its concluding chapter summons the major political actors in the inter-American Cold War in order to discuss their part in the events that led to the Chilean September 11. By contrast, her call to go beyond US archives and the study of Nixon's every move in the bilateral standoff with Allende in order to construct a more complex and interactive explanatory framework is borne out well in this study. Based on archival research in seven countries and a host of first-hand interviews, this study brings to life the struggle over Chile as waged by the Chilean and other governments alike. Those readers who ascribe more of the 'blame' to the United States, however, will most likely remain unconvinced. While few historians (as opposed to political activists) view the Chilean coup as an event produced by remote control in Washington, many do ascribe more causal relevance to the Colossus of the North and to the sheer weight it commands in the inter-American system. A comprehensive analysis of the destabilizing forces that came down on the Allende government would have to go beyond the political actors and include an assessment of the damage done by private entities, including US multinationals that engaged in a wide variety of activities in order to make life difficult for the *Unidad Popular*. Such an assessment, however, is beyond the scope of Harmer's research agenda. She concentrates on the interactions of governments in the inter-American Cold War and this she does well.

Gisela Cramer, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

– *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America. A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights*, compilado por Javier Corrales y Mario Pecheny. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.

La emancipación de las minorías sexuales finalmente se ha constituido como un campo de estudio legítimo luego de una larga gestación en América Latina. Por un lado, la discriminación, homofobia y violencia contra estas minorías que durante siglos constituyó el status quo en una región identificada por su machismo y conservadurismo religioso, lentamente comienzan a romperse para generar nuevos espacios, alianzas y prácticas donde las minorías pueden ser reconocidas como seres humanos dignos y ciudadanos con derechos. Por otro lado, este 'letargo' del objeto de estudio también tiene que ver con las estructuras tácitas dentro del campo universitario dominante en Latinoamérica, que es todavía reticente al estudio de las identidades, derechos y movilización de las minorías sexuales como un objeto legítimo de investigación y discusión académica.

La movilización de las minorías sexuales como actores políticos tiene su comienzo en la década de 1970, cuando los primeros comités y grupos de apoyo comenzaron a aparecer en México y Brazil, durante la segunda ola de los movimientos sociales. Estas primeras iniciativas políticas, que seguían los modelos de activismo de los Estados Unidos y Europa occidental, estaban basadas en el reconocimiento de la individualidad de las minorías. Es hasta la década de 1990, en el contexto de la democratización y reformas neoliberales en buena parte de la región latinoamericana, que se consolida la visibilidad social y política de las minorías. Los colectivos emulan el habitus 'gay' de las grandes ciudades norteamericanas y europeas, con la apertura de bares (muchas veces llamados Soho, Stonewall, Rainbow) y una industria dirigida al consumo. También se genera un debate público sobre los derechos de un grupo que no es grupo, sino un cúmulo de disímiles identidades que incluye lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y transexuales (LGBT). El surgimiento la 'comunidad LGBT' apunta a un doble proceso: las minorías sexuales ganan visibilidad como homo economicus, es decir, como agente de consumo, y como sujeto político, al ser reconocidas como ciudadanos. Este proceso se consolidó en la década de 2000 con las reformas legales y debates sobre los derechos de las minorías visibles hoy en día en toda América Latina.

Los editores Javier Corrales (Amherst College) y Mario Pecheny (Universidad de Buenos Aires) se han dado a la buena tarea de recolectar textos y ensayos sobre la política de las minorías sexuales latinoamericanas en el volumen *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America. A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights*. Este libro representa la primera publicación especializada que indaga la emancipación de minorías sexuales en la región. El foco del volumen se centra en tres aspectos: el surgimiento de los derechos de las minorías sexuales, la formación de organizaciones o colectivos políticos para abogar por el reconocimiento de estos ciudadanos, y las políticas públicas que algunos estados latinoamericanos han desarrollado para proteger o emancipar a este segmento de la población. Aunque el triángulo sociedad-estado-minorías sexuales está presente en todos los capítulos de la colección, el volumen trasciende las fronteras disciplinarias de las ciencias políticas.

El libro consta de seis secciones donde se explora el surgimiento de los estados nación y la heteronormatividad; las batallas políticas sobre la sexualidad; las relaciones entre los movimientos LGBT con los partidos políticos y legisladores; el

estado y las políticas públicas; las relaciones al interior de la sociedad, y la diversidad dentro del movimiento LGBT. En el libro se encuentran textos inéditos pero la mayor parte de la publicación contiene artículos, notas, discursos o crónicas ya publicados con anterioridad, como el discurso del presidente brasileño Ignacio Lula da Silva durante la inauguración de la primer conferencia brasileña de gays, lesbianas, bisexuales, travestis y transexuales en 2008. Algunos de los capítulos son muy breves, quizá demasiado, y aunque pudieran parecer fragmentos sueltos, tienen un valor documental o descriptivo. La colección aborda el total de la región latinoamericana, incluyendo casos de estudio en el centro y sur de la región, aunque buena parte de los textos se centran sobre Brasil y Argentina, y en menor grado México.

La contribución de Rafael de la Dehesa 'Global Communities and Hybrid Cultures: Early Gay and Lesbian Electoral Activism in Brazil and Mexico' logra sin lugar a dudas establecer una discusión teórica y colocar el caso latinoamericano en un contexto más amplio. El capítulo debate sobre la emancipación de las minorías sexuales como una 'idea extranjera' ajena el contexto latinoamericano. La noción de los derechos LGBT como un anexo de la 'colonización cultural' occidental ha sido ampliamente debatida en el contexto de la globalización (por ejemplo en el libro *The Globalization of Sexuality*, 2004, por Jon Binnie). Dehesa concluye de forma convincente que la movilización y emancipación de las minorías sexuales responde a una evolución política, presente desde la década de 1970 en México y luego en Brasil en 1980. La izquierda marxista y los movimientos ciudadanos por el reclamo de sus derechos políticos fueron la base de esta transición. La erosión de la legitimidad del los sistemas políticos dio lugar a un 'proceso paralelo y enraizado' de activismo social, que hizo posible el surgimiento de la política de las minorías sexuales y la expansión de los límites del debate público legítimo (p. 193). Se abrió así un debate sobre la posición de las minorías sexuales en la sociedad en su conjunto.

Al ser una introducción al estudio de la política LGBT, la publicación está dirigida a un lector incipiente sobre América Latina. Es un valioso material que puede ser incluido en cursos de licenciatura en estudios latinoamericanos, ciencia política o sociología. Sin embargo, la publicación es seguro de interés para especialistas en Latinoamérica y estudios LGBT. El volumen debe ser publicado también en español, para tocar así tierra en las universidades de América Latina.

El libro merece sin duda una segunda edición donde se explore también el rol de las ONG internacionales, los procesos alrededor de la formación de la agenda LGBT (despenalización, matrimonio, derecho a la paternidad), y la atención al electorado LGBT en América Latina (programas y campañas). También sería interesante para una segunda edición incorporar un marco teórico que explore la relación entre las reformas neoliberales y el reconocimiento de derechos a estas minorías. De esta forma, se podrán ilustrar las particularidades del caso latinoamericano, y la relevancia de este estudio para la emancipación de las minorías sexuales en un contexto global.

José Carlos G. Aguiar, Universidad de Leiden