No. 101 (2016) April, pp. 111-140 www.erlacs.org

Book Reviews | Reseñas

 The Improbable Conquest: Sixteenth Century Letters from the Rio de la Plata, por Pablo García Loaeza y Victoria L. Garrett. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

The Improbable Conquest es una selección de ocho cartas provenientes de archivos españoles, traducidas al inglés, presentadas y comentadas por los compiladores, que se ocupan de la conquista del Río de la Plata desde la fundación de la primera Buenos Aires en 1536 hasta la organización del sistema colonial, dos décadas más tarde. Comprende también un breve estudio introductorio. Se trata del sexto volumen de una colección de nueve títulos sobre la conquista de la América hispana, con énfasis en regiones menos conocidas y en experiencias coloniales menos exitosas.

Solamente una de las cartas recoge el momento inicial de la fundación de Buenos Aires: las instrucciones que un moribundo Pedro de Mendoza dejara a su lugarteniente Juan de Ayolas en 1537. Tres documentos están fechados en 1545 y los restantes cuatro en 1556, cuando puede darse por concluida la etapa de la conquista. Todas las cartas, por otra parte, fueron escritas por miembros de la expedición del primer adelantado del Río de la Plata, don Pedro de Mendoza. Con la excepción del texto del adelantado, y de una justificación de su accionar que Domingo de Irala remite al Rey, puede sostenerse que estas cartas fueron escritas por personajes secundarios, algunos poco conocidos y otros directamente ignotos, de la historia de la conquista rioplatense, elemento que aporta al corpus particular interés. Dejando de lado a Mendoza e Irala, tres de los autores de las cartas escogidas son clérigos y otros tres militares. La carta de Isabel de Salazar, finalmente, representa la participación femenina en la expedición. Por lo tanto, los autores de las cartas – dirigidas en su mayor parte al Rey o al Consejo de Indias – llevaban consigo una experiencia de entre una y dos décadas en esta 'conquista improbable', experiencia que los habilitaba a denunciar, reclamar y justificarse frente a las más altas autoridades.

En rigor, más que la historia de la fundación y el abandono de Buenos Aires, las cartas se detienen en las peripecias asunceñas y del área guaraní. Tres núcleos de interés principales pueden detectarse en los documentos: el conflicto político entre los miembros de la hueste, la relación con las sociedades indígenas y, como información residual pero no menos valiosa, la que permite imaginar la peculiar sociedad colonial que se conforma en el Paraguay.

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El primer núcleo apunta a las rivalidades que dejan como herencia la partida de don Pedro de Mendoza y la infructuosa espera del regreso de Juan de Ayolas. El ascenso de Irala y la prisión y retorno a la península de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca son los temas prioritarios de por lo menos cinco de las cartas seleccionadas. La mayor parte de los testimonios pertenece al bando de los leales a Cabeza de Vaca, y son por ende críticos del proceder de Irala. No sólo sus supuestos desmanes y decisiones estratégicas son puestos en tela de juicio: es ante todo la naturaleza de su poder político lo que se cuestiona. Don Pedro de Mendoza había ungido a Juan de Ayolas como lugarteniente suyo. El ascenso de Irala, lugarteniente de aquel, se debía más a las relaciones que la conquista fue creando en un contexto de vacío de autoridad y de formación de nuevos consensos entre los miembros de la hueste que al respeto de la cadena de mandos. En este sentido, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca podía ser el enviado del Rev pero ello no opacaba los nuevos poderes locales surgidos de la experiencia de conquista. Una experiencia, como es sabido, de particular dureza y escasas compensaciones: el hambre, la traición y la provisoriedad confluyen como signo distintivo en las fundaciones de las frágiles Buenos Aires, Sancti Spiritu, Asunción, La Candelaria... Las trifulcas entre conquistadores iluminan, entonces, las relaciones clientelares, las lealtades antiguas y las que surgen en los insólitos escenarios nuevos y las concepciones rivales sobre el origen del poder político.

El segundo núcleo es aportado a partir de dos tipos diversos de información. De un lado, las cartas permiten seguir el oscilante despliegue de las alianzas hispano indígenas. La mayor parte de los autores ha participado de 'entradas' y ensaya su propia interpretación acerca de lo estratégico o erróneo de estos iniciales contactos. Por otro lado, en particular las misivas de los clérigos Francisco de Andrada y Domingo Martínez, contribuyen con alguna información etnográfica, bien que remanida y estereotipada. Nos referimos a la pintura de los guaraníes como caníbales, a la condena de la poligamia y el incesto, a la comprensión de las religiones indígenas como 'idolatrías no intrincadas', etc. En todo caso, los textos dejan ver a las claras la dependencia extrema que los nuevos señores tienen de los grupos nativos en materia de abasto de las fundaciones, de ayuda militar y de provisión de fuerza de trabajo.

En tercer lugar, las cartas proporcionan un mirador apto para imaginar la sociedad colonial que viene a forjarse en el Paraguay. Una sociedad colonial diferente, más propiamente mestiza, en la que el guaraní es una lengua que también empiezan a hablar los españoles. Una trama particularmente apretada, nacida del profundo involucramiento hispano en el sistema reciprocitario nativo y en el armado político de las 'naciones' indígenas. El acceso masivo de los españoles a las mujeres guaraníes, la acumulación de parientes y de trabajo – que merecieron la condena moral de algunos de los autores de las cartas – son solamente algunos de los elementos que perfilan el futuro escenario de las reducciones franciscanas y jesuíticas.

Dos documentos de la compilación, ambos de 1556, merecen por su originalidad un comentario aparte: la carta de Isabel de Guevara y la de Domingo Martínez. La primera – bien conocida para los especialistas de habla hispana – es uno de los raros testimonios legados por una de las no pocas mujeres que participaron de la empresa de conquista. Como era habitual, Isabel proporciona un recuento de sus méritos personales pero los extiende a todas las mujeres del grupo fundador: ellas han alimentado a sus hombres débiles, constantemente acechados por el hambre y la amenaza indígena, han colaborado en tareas agrarias, terapéuticas y hasta militares. Esta reivindicación del papel de un grupo subordinado es común a la que Domingo Martínez – a punto de ser ordenado clérigo – reclama, bien que de manera oportunista, para los mestizos. Martínez tiene dos hijas naturales y dice que la encomienda que solicita ha de servirles de sustento a estas muchachas. Y que es aconsejable que los mestizos se críen entre españoles y no entre indios y que adopten las costumbres de los primeros. También los méritos que Martínez exhibe en su carta son diversos de los consabidos: el ingenio y el espíritu práctico – que le han servido para inventar desde anzuelos de pesca hasta prensas para moler caña de azúcar – son su fuerte. Sus inventos le han permitido subsistir mercadeando con los indios y haciendo más confortable la vida de los españoles y son estos créditos, amén de los que piensa desplegar en su futura tarea de clérigo, los que, a su juicio le dan derecho a conservar su encomienda incluso asumiendo el estado eclesiástico.

En suma, es ésta una edición cuidada y rigurosa de documentos, muy recomendable para el trabajo docente y para el investigador curioso de esta conquista que, penosamente, fue abriéndose paso entre expectativas y espejismos.

Judith Farberman, CONICET, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes

 Urban Space as Heritage in Late Colonial Cuba: Classicism and Dissonance on the Plaza de Armas of Havana: 1754-1828, by Paul Niell. University of Texas Press, 2015.

It is no easy task attempting to interpret urban space – a single town square to be specific – and then extrapolate its transformation to the elements of classicism over nearly a century. The so-called Bourbon reforms enacted at the end of the Seven Years in 1763 were a strong driver behind the elite of Spain and Havana. The author carefully combs the archives and enlists studies of comparable commemorative sites in Mexico in understanding how narratives of colonial political control are produced.

Among the many requisites Spain imposed on settlements (villas) that wished to be recognized as cities was evidence that portions of the Law of the Indies had been implemented in the platting of the place, the establishment of a reliable freshwater supply, and the commemoration of the site where the first Roman Catholic mass was celebrated, among other features. San Cristobal de

la Habana's Arms Square illustrates the evolution of the south-eastern corner of the plaza, where a commemorative obelisk was first erected, a *ceiba* (silkwood) tree, and ultimately a neoclassical shrine (*El Templete*). The revisionist aesthetics of the memorial hold venerable paintings from around 1828. This kind of architectural typology appears to have been influenced by small shrines, oratories, and other structures in early modern Europe as well as the civic memorials found throughout the Americas in eighteenth and nineteenth century (p. 121). Larger than the smaller, neighbourhood-based devotional chapels (*ermitas*) designed to indoctrinate communities to Catholicism, the typology and embodied space of the Templete can only be seen as an astute mechanism to subjugate colonial Cuba.

The book is structured with an introduction, five substantive chapters, and an epilogue. Nearly 100 figures and plates (many in colour), just fewer than 500 each of primary and secondary sources, and an equal number of chapter endnotes, both grace the book and provide rich support for scholars wishing to delve deeper into many topics. Copious entries from archives in Madrid, Seville, and Havana complete the data sources. Although the book title would seem to ground itself only in western art history and architecture literatures, it also tells the story of how Afro-Cuban and syncretic religious meanings (from santería) have been grafted on to ceremonies held at the Templete. The author examines the symbolism behind the ceremonial ceiba tree, particularly on the November anniversary of the city's founding in 1519. We get glimpses into a secondary, perhaps unintended observation about how the decades-long City Historian, Eusebio Leal Spengler, enlists the legends surrounding the Templete from the past and re-enacts and reinterprets their meanings today. While the original monument (obelisk) erected on the Plaza de Armas in 1754 actually portrays an oak tree from Guernica in Spain, Niell argues that was really a ploy to symbolically stamp Spanish rule on 'ever faithful' (fidelisima) Havana. When the Greco-Roman-neoclassical design and construction of the Templete was finally completed in 1828, a ceiba tree (Ceiba pentandra or Kapok tree) was planted. The species is imbued with spiritual powers among both the island's indigenous population (who were quickly eradicated) as well as West African slaves from where the exotic species was likely brought, and was strategically placed next to the 1754 obelisk. The author argues:

This symbolic ceiba is the transcultural product of the pre-Hispanic and early modern Caribbean. Because of the tree's multivocality and wide appeal, it became an ideal heritage resource for patrons on the plaza in the 1820s (p. 102).

The circling of the tree several times is ripe with parallels to *santeria* practices; Niell suggests that the Haitian slave revolt from 1791 prompted concern about similar acts of rebelliousness in Cuba, and these Spanish representations and heritage elements may have been a symbolic way to quell such revolts in Cuba. The Plaza de Armas thus becomes 'a space used by officials to reinforce royal

and ecclesiastical authority through architecture, imagery, and ritualized performance' (p. 6). Pre-dating the eighteenth and nineteenth century meanings of the ceiba are beliefs that the native Tainos interpreted the Passion of Christ as part of the tree's trunk spines, as well as its pinkish-white wood. As a result, they formed 'convenient parallels that can be used to facilitate the conversion of the dominated group to Christianity or the acceptance of Spanish rule' (p. 105). Although the current period is not a focus of the book, the vignette opening the book is telling: the City Historian re-enacts this ceremony in ways that parallel his powerful office's (and its commercial branch, Habaguanex) control over Habana Vieja, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where the Plaza de Armas is located.

Contemporary visitors to the Plaza de Armas will lament how little of the Templete is actually shown (owing to inclement weather, inconsistent personnel hours among those who staff the monument) to the public. Niell remedies that by a careful analysis of the oil on canvas works within the Templete and painted by Jean-Batiste Vermay. These works depict the settlement of the first cabildo, the first mass, the inauguration of the Templete, and other seminal events. Contemporary buildings that carry the names of Counts (condes) who attended the inauguration of the Templete in 1828 are evident in contemporary street names, urban history, and revitalized buildings: Fernandina, Villanueva, Bayona, O'Reilly, Arango y Parreño, Jaruco, among others.

An interesting sub-story in the book is the role of Bishop Espada (arriving in Havana in 1802) who aimed to convey his Basque roots, constitutional advocacy, and new ideas on the Plaza de Armas by borrowing the Guernica tree symbol. We are reminded throughout the book that Spain was losing its stature as a world player in the late nineteenth century as it increasingly fell behind western and northern Europe in industrialization and manufacturing. Instead, Spain opted to rely on its colonial holdings in the New World. For these reasons, the careful attention to detail in Havana's Plaza de Armas marks a way to control colonial subjects.

Other embedded stories delighted this reviewer and are worthy of further exploration. These include the use of Swedish botanist and zoologist Carl Linnaeus's binomial nomenclature, which the Spanish eagerly used to classify the natural landscape elements as a sort of database for economic and medicinal commerce (Chapter Two). Another theme is the role of race, power, and status which, as noted earlier, is not only challenged by the Haitian revolt, but shows slave labour as essential to the Spanish Crown to maintain control in the changing world affairs. The works, too, of Cuban anthropologists Lydia Cabrera and Fernando Ortiz provide a useful medium between Niell's focus on classicism and dissonance in the nineteenth century, with themes of race, power, and class that are relevant in the New Millennium as well.

At times, the argument in art historian Paul Niell's treatise strains the datato-inference ratio about the meanings and motivations behind the elements on the Plaza de Armas and the Templete. While the author's literature review of heritage, patronage, and spatial control draws on the requisite works of twentieth century writers such as Jürgen Habermas and David Harvey, it conspicuously lacks any references to the urban morphology models outlined by urban geographers (Larry Ford, Ernest Griffin, Gary Elbow, K. Mathéy, Peter Ward, among others) who have long studied the role of land use, imperial buildings (cabildo and cathedral), and colonial elite architecture (piano nobile, zaguán, portal, casa-almacen) as anchoring landscape elements of the Spanish empire. The architectural research of contemporary Cuban architects of Eliana Cárdenas and Mario Coyula, who have studied the meaning of Cuban architecture, do not appear in an otherwise rich bibliography.

Nonetheless, this book offers a sweeping and carefully researched volume that will appeal to scholars in art history, Latin American Studies, cultural studies, urban studies, and related fields. It reflects the efforts of a determined scholar who aims to link the local, plaza, city, colony, and ultimately (Spanish) empire scales of analysis. The work will force veteran scholars to rethink their assessments of Spanish colonial spaces, and will guide younger scholars too.

Joseph L. Scarpaci, Center for the Study of Cuban Culture + Economy

 El Jefe Político. Un dominio negociando en el mundo rural del Estado de México. 1856-1911, por Romana Falcón. El Colegio de México, El Colegio de Michoacán, CIESAS, 2015.

La edición de este estudio, acometida por los tres institutos arriba mencionados, era un acontecimiento natural, ya que el estudio de Romana Falcón formaba parte de un proyecto apoyado por el CONACYT para estudiar la desamortización civil en México y las consecuencias de esta para los ayuntamientos y los pueblos indígenas entre 1856 y 1936. El estudio de Falcón tiene la apariencia de una dialéctica entre antropología e historia: combinación ideal para analizar la sociedad rural de un Estado habitado mayoritariamente por población indígena. Su bagaje teórico está bien definido y argumentado, y llega a la formulación de su hilo conductor; es decir, en palabras de William Roseberry: 'cómo las formas de dominación moldean a la sociedad y estas, a su vez, son moldeadas por un haz de representaciones y acciones de las diversas poblaciones subalternas' (p. 12). Por eso, la autora enfoca su trabajo en el intento de entender el carácter - como ella misma lo formula - harto enrevesado de la historia. Hay que buscar lo que hay detrás de todo este haz de muy variadas formas de resistencia cotidiana y simbólica en acciones y discursos. Los historiadores que estudian el México del siglo XIX están familiarizados con el reto de exhibir y analizar dicho carácter enrevesado y comprenden por qué la autora hubo de trabajar muchos años sobre el tema; primero en el estado norteño de Coahuila y después en el estado de México.

La razón del estudio del tema es muy clara. La jefatura política era una institución clave para la organización y el control de los numerosos territorios de un México eminentemente rural, con cientos de sociedades locales de diverso tipo, donde dominaban tanto los valores culturales indígenas como los novohispanos. El encuentro entre prefectos y jefes políticos y el muy diversificado mundo rural indígena tuvo el carácter de un proceso de moldeamiento mutuo entre 'el señor Gobierno' y las clases populares del mundo rural. Los jefes políticos, a menudo, no tenían más remedio que negociar el dominio; en otras palabras, debían concertar la mayor parte de sus decisiones y actuaciones con respecto a los moradores del campo, elites locales y gente del común. El hilo conductor y el fondo de la cuestión arriba mencionados se reflejan muy bien en la estructura del libro. La obra se inicia con una radiografía de los pobladores y su territorio que sufrió cambios profundos a lo largo del siglo. El estudio demuestra muy bien que el famoso dicho porfiriano: 'fuera de México todo es Cuautitlán' estaba basado en un prejuicio burgués urbano que los jefes políticos conocían muy bien, ya que ellos eran los representantes del aparato gubernamental para pueblos, caciques y hacendados que defendían sus intereses. encontrados con los de los jefes políticos. El poder de los jefes políticos de los distritos era más bien relativo, puesto que, a lo largo del siglo, no solo sufren los cambios – a veces caprichosos – de la ley, de sus poderes y de sus facultades, sino también porque, paralelamente a los vaivenes de la capacidad coactiva del Estado, su poder relativo para hacer cumplir los objetivos gubernamentales los obligaba a pactar y a echar mano de mecanismos informales de poder. Sus distritos eran, por así decirlo, más bien sus laboratorios para negociar el poder y, por lo tanto, para gobernar. Sin embargo, su espacio de maniobra y autonomía dependía en gran medida de un complejo de factores; a saber: sus facultades estaban definidas por la ley y sus límites de poder dependían en mucho de su capacidad de negociar, de su red clientelista y de la voluntad del poder (personalista) de todos los actores involucrados: presidente, emperador [Maximiliano] jefatura militar, gobernador del estado, pero también hacendados, presidentes municipales y caciques de los pueblos, en su mayoría, sociedades indígenas. Explorar el desarrollo de las prefecturas y de los distritos desde la perspectiva de los subalternos es un reto enorme, porque exige no solo un esbozo de los vaivenes institucionales a lo largo del siglo XIX, sino también la disección de la enorme categoría de los subalternos que solían interpretar el nuevo sistema liberal y sus leves desde las perspectivas del anterior; es decir, desde el sistema colonial indígena, y que estaban, unos más que otros, conectados con redes clientelistas de jefes políticos.

De la mano de los capítulos tercero y cuarto entramos en el tratamiento de temas claves para los pueblos y para quienes estaban interesados en hacerse de sus terrenos comunales; se habla de las leyes y de las políticas agrarias, como así también sobre impuestos y catastro. Dichos capítulos constituyen un manual que nos presenta el entramado de instituciones y leyes, lo que llama la autora «la embrollada evolución de los derechos colectivos y privados sobre

tierras y bosques, con el fin de conocer la perspectiva de los campesinos». La 'embrollada evolución' se debía en gran medida a la legislación liberal de privatización y a su complicada y, a menudo, deficiente o fraudulenta ejecución. Dicha legislación estaba definida en términos homogéneos para todo el país, lo que provocó gran desconcierto en un mundo muy variado en lo que concernía a sus formas de tenencia colectiva, en sus inquietudes y movimientos. Los jefes políticos tuvieron, sobre todo durante el Porfiriato, que mantener el orden, es decir evitar «las vías de hecho»; por tanto, intentar conciliar intereses opuestos en contextos a veces muy complicados. Procurar conciliar intereses opuestos era muy dificil y, por ello, el título del quinto capítulo se refiere a 'la ciencia y arte de la contención'. Las negociaciones entre el jefe político y los pueblos eran largas, complicadas y, a veces, riesgosas para el orden público en el campo. Las negociaciones obligaron a los jefes políticos a entrar en una dialéctica prudente con todos los interesados: los pueblos, los hacendados y los hombres fuertes locales. Sin embargo, en algunas oportunidades; sobre todo, en períodos de guerra civil, se llegó a la violencia. La autora se centró, fiel a su hilo conductor, en el estudio del destino de las clases populares, analizando sus discursos y sus actos, y aun lo que no dijeron y dejaron de hacer cuando entraron en lo que se denominó, durante el Porfiriato, la vía de hecho. Los campesinos, y no solamente en los pueblos, sino también los peones de las haciendas, sabían perfectamente lo riesgoso de la violencia, pero tenían que defender sus derechos ancestrales, sus costumbres, su cultura.

Los largos procesos de privatización nunca fueron concluidos, ya que las comunidades implicadas soslayaron hábilmente algunas leyes o se aprovecharon de otras; así, muchos pueblos del estado de México mantuvieron la propiedad de sus tierras hasta entrada la revolución. El estudio llega hasta 1914, año de la revolución que puso fin a la odiada institución del jefe político; sin embargo, nos muestra de manera clara la sorprendente continuidad en las actitudes de los pueblos y la prosecución de sus instrumentos de defensa a lo largo de los turbulentos años de la reforma agraria hasta Cárdenas. Por dicho motivo, este estudio, además de fungir como sumario para dar a conocer cómo percibieron la carga recibida los campesinos del estado de México, también debería ser lectura obligada para los investigadores de la revolución en el México rural.

Raymond Buve, Universidad de Leiden

Miedo negro, poder blanco en la Cuba colonial, por Jorge Camacho. Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2015.

La revolución haitiana afectó de distintas formas a la isla de Cuba a lo largo de todo el siglo XIX. La población, la economía, la política y la cultura se vieron signadas por la llegada de miles de esclavos que reconfiguraron e impulsaron grandes transformaciones en la sociedad cubana. El libro que Jorge Camacho

nos presenta es un completo análisis de cómo los intelectuales cubanos de este periodo, criticaron al negro y su cultura como una forma de auto-preservación. Cuba hereda tanto los mercados que dejó abierta la independencia haitiana así como los miedos ante una 'revuelta de negros'. En el libro se demuestra como los intelectuales buscaban preservar la estabilidad de la isla llegando a incluso en algunos casos a justificar la esclavitud. El trabajo está organizado a través de una concisa introducción, ocho capítulos y una síntesis conclusiva.

En un primer capítulo Camacho analiza la posición de los letrados que veían en el negro elementos negativos que podía afectar al resto de la sociedad. Para ello se basa en la visión de figuras como José Antonio Saco, Francisco Arango y Parreño, José Victoriano Betancourt, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, José Martí ente otros. Bajo esta óptica el autor explora el papel que tienen las nodrizas africanas en algunos textos literarios, personajes a los que se les daba cierta importancia por proveer de leche materna a los hijos de los hacendados blancos. Camacho devela la discusión y prejuicios que mantenían los intelectuales sobre el uso de mujeres negras y mulatas para este fin. En un siguiente capítulo el autor examina el sentimiento de caridad expresado en la producción cultural de Gómez de Avellaneda, Anselmo Suárez y Antonio Zambrana, en el cual se exalta la virtud de la sociedad blanca que buscaba el abolicionismo, pero sin querer renunciar a su estatus en la escala socio-racial. Tomando en cuenta la preocupación que existía en torno a la sociedad mixta a partir del miedo que siente la sociedad cubana por uniones y matrimonios interraciales.

Seguidamente el autor se enfoca en la crónica de 1886 que Martí escribió sobre el devastador terremoto de Charleston, específicamente, en cómo los negros de la ciudad reaccionaron para sobrellevar la tragedia. Allí toma en cuenta cómo Martí acude al tema de la herencia racial para darle un sentido místico y 'natural' a los negros. Para Martí, en este texto, los negros eran herederos de fantasma premodernos, arcaicos y salvajes que surgían en momentos trágicos como estos. Apunta Camacho que Martí establece un elemento de distinción entre los negros y los blancos, enmarcado así su crónica como una visión científica. En el siguiente capítulo el autor examina el trabajo de Francisco Calcagno, Los crimenes de Concha en el que se enarbola un retrato psicológico de los ñañingos, miembros de una asociación secreta de hombres que surge en las primeras décadas del siglo XIX y que a lo largo de ese siglo se conformó sólo por descendientes de africanos. Camacho revela como desde un discurso criminal se reafirma una tipología antropológica al margen del prototipo de hombre que visualizaba la sociedad criolla elitista. Así mismo, cuestiona a Calcagno ya que al mismo tiempo que critica la sociedad esclavista, reacciona al igual que los intelectuales blancos tratando de preservar su cultura.

En la siguiente sección el autor aborda la crítica que hacen los intelectuales ya en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX al baile y a la música creada por los negros. Se entiende que la cultura negra en el periodo, tiene una gran influencia en la sociedad, de allí que expresiones populares como estas fuesen vista con

sospecha ya que podía contaminar la cultura dominante. A través de la estigmatización como amorales y 'pornográficas' de expresiones populares como el baile y la música se neutralizaba los aportes del negro en la cultura cubana. Seguidamente para culminar Camacho retoma a Martí desde el tema de la cuestión racial, con especial referencia a la situación del negro. Así aborda los cambios que pueden notarse en el discurso racial del autor entre 1880 y 1890. La reflexión también se enfoca en las lecturas que se han hecho de la obra de Martí, centradas sólo en las ideas desarrolladas en el marco de la preparación de la Guerra Necesaria, y en la que se ha obviado la discusión del tema hereditario que Martí presenta en parte importante de su obra. Miedo al negro es un libro hilado para comprender como los intelectuales que abogaban por un mejor trato y libertad de los esclavos, también influían en los prejuicios que se acentuaron y nutrieron el miedo que los blancos desarrollaron hacia la población de color en la isla. Si por un lado lo sucedido en Haití contribuyó a la fobia hacia los negros, también como deja entrever Camacho, favoreció en gran medida la permanencia del poder blanco en Cuba. De allí que el autor nos hace entender que el miedo al negro se transformó en un miedo a las masas marginadas, donde la única salida, era la asimilación a través de una educación formulada desde la cultura blanca letrada.

Oleski Miranda Navarro, University of Edinburgh

 Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice, and Mexico's National Parks, 1910-1940, by Emily Wakild. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011.

How do you reconcile the economic needs of your populace with the environmental imperatives of protecting nature? In the early twentieth century, Mexico lost roughly 15 to 20 per cent of its population in one of the greatest social upheavals in this hemisphere, the Mexican Revolution. For most observers, 1934-1940 represented the zenith of revolutionary achievement, when Lázaro Cárdenas, a man selected to be a pliant president, became the greatest Mexican leader of the century. Academics have already detailed the nationalizations of oil and railroads, labour incorporation, agrarian reform, and the significant political institutionalization including the six-year, one-term mandate (sexenio) that occurred during his presidency. Wakild develops another thoroughly ignored contribution from the cardenista era, Mexico's initial foray into environmental conservation. In six years, Cárdenas declared 40 national parks. By 1940, Mexico boasted more national parks than any country in the world. Although smaller, these parks preserved forests, historic landscapes, and promoted a conservation ethos. What inspired this dramatic surge in park creation and how did the conservation philosophy of Mexico differ from the wildernesscentred, 'Yosemite' model found in the United States?

Since pre-Columbian times, land represented a vital source of wealth and empowerment and the revolutionary period witnessed a reassertion of federal control over Mexico's vast resources. Interestingly, scientific holdovers from the Porfirian dictatorship emerged as crucial advocates for conservation within the revolutionary government. Although the cientificos earlier encouraged intense resource usage for development purposes, foresters in particular feared excessive deforestation was threatening the integrity of national forests. Foresters like Miguel Ángel Quevedo advocated for national parks as a means to fostering sustainable harvesting and forest preservation, yet revolutionary times meant scientists dialogued with ordinary citizens and could not unilaterally impose their will.

President Cárdenas was committed to social justice and enacted the most ambitious land reform in Mexican history. To redistribute property among poor peasants, the government created collective land holdings (ejidos) and reinforced the tradition of communal property. Wakild expands the focus of traditional scholarship by placing national park creation squarely within the revolutionary mission to nationalize land for the collective benefit. However, parks were not hierarchical diktats. A contested dialogue interwove federal government goals with local public concerns and Wakild demonstrates how campesino voices moulded park design in four case studies. For starters, campesinos living on parkland were not forcibly removed and while their activities were regulated, small extraction was generally permissible. In Popocatépetl and Iztaccihuatl, instead of banning all tree extraction, foresters taught residents scientific harvesting methods and tried to universalize conservation practices. At the same time, local feedback on taxes, fees, harvesting limits, and park boundaries meant policies became negotiated settlements, not permanent impositions.

In essence, Mexican national parks encouraged 'the intermingling of nature and society, not their separation (p. 11)'. On one hand this created an inclusionary model of environmental protection, incorporating local actors as agents in park creation. Through case studies, Wakild demonstrates how individual parks reflected a mixture of ideals including scientific advancement, education, solidarity, tourism, recreation, rationalized forestry conservation, land reform, and national identity. Park management flexibly catered to local needs to meet these ideals. In Zempoala, the government banned corn planting on fertile lake banks to preserve their scenic qualities. After community leaders protested, the park was re-designed to permit small-scale tree extraction and locals were given exclusive vending rights, much to the chagrin of external developers. Wakild notes initial objectors became enthusiastic supporters. Throughout the text, examples abound where government officials entertain and accommodate local concerns while preserving the long-term objectives.

At the same time, the absence of a U.S.-inspired wilderness ideal meant little wilderness was preserved. In Wakild's own words, the early parks have become 'animal-less, quiet woods that are hollow approximations of nature (p.

14)'. Flexibility portended a less vigorous defence of nature. Weak funding limited ministerial capacity. Unlike the U.S. example, Cárdenas never utilized military patrols to enforce codes and regulations. While community engagement encouraged a collective environmental ethic, actual conservation efforts varied by community. After Cárdenas left office, Mexico would wait another 40 years before environmental protection returned to the political agenda. For decades, economic development invariably trumped conservation. Cárdenas once again appears to be the crucial explanatory variable and the reader is left wondering why Cárdenas committed to environmental protection. A brief paragraph on his personal history leaves this crucial actor underdeveloped.

Environmental awareness has grown and developing countries are increasingly protecting biodiverse areas. Nevertheless, heated debates about economic development, social justice, and the rights of nature remain. Wakild recognizes and outlines the practical and theoretical issues of environmental protection and situates her case study of revolutionary Mexico as a concrete precedent worthy of consideration. Analysing an early example of park creation in a post-colonial context, Wakild's work warns academics and transnational environmental actors to remember the potential positive and negative aspects of the inclusionary park paradigm currently *en vogue* in policy circles. While inclusiveness integrates human needs with nature, this may not be a panacea and can open the door to degradation and destruction. Clearly, a middle ground is desirable. Wakild's thought-provoking work does well in capturing the achievements and limits of 'revolutionary' national parks and provides compelling reading for anyone interested in simultaneously protecting nature and people.

Grant Burrier, Curry College

 Sandino's Nation: Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez Writing Nicaragua, 1940-2012, by Stephen Henighan. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014

In this excellent book, Professor Stephen Henighan of the University of Guelph presents a masterful academic analysis of the complex lives, literary works and times of the noted Nicaraguan writers and revolutionaries, Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez, during the period of 1940 to 2012. In addition to being influential writers, both Cardenal and Ramírez were active participants in the revolutionary political movement in Nicaragua that resulted in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. Cardenal has authored more than 35 books of poetry, including *Hora 0 (Zero Hour)* and *Vuelos de victoria (Flights of Victory)*, and is considered to be a poet of the post-modernist period that includes such luminaries as Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral. Ramírez, a prolific writer of short stories and novels such as *To Bury Our Fathers* and *Margarita*, *How Beautiful the Sea*, is the 'emblematic novelist of the [Nicaraguan] revolu-

tion' (p. 629). Henighan provides an insightful and thorough literary and biographic analysis of these two important and creative individuals against the backdrop of the dramatic Nicaraguan political scene.

Henighan describes two ambitious goals of this book of 776 pages: to trace the evolution of the depiction of Nicaragua (politically, culturally and metaphysically) in the complete literary works of Cardenal and Ramírez, and to analyse the works of these two authors in chronological order in relationship to 'the times and the circumstances that created them' (p. 20). In large measure, he has achieved these goals. The book is organized in a chronological sequence, focusing on three critical periods of Nicaraguan history: before the revolutionary government began in 1979, the first 11 years of revolutionary government (1979-1990), and from 1990 to 2012. For each of these time periods, Henighan provides a chapter containing a skilful description of Nicaraguan history. Each historical chapter is followed by individual chapters focusing on the lives and literary works of Cardenal or Ramírez during that particular historical period. The strength of Henighan's approach of interspersing historical information with literary analysis is that it allows the reader to more easily appreciate the complex interplay between the literary works of these two authors and the political milieu.

An enlivening aspect of this book is the fascinating life history of the two acclaimed writers who are the protagonists. Cardenal, born in 1925 into a conservative upper-class family, became a Catholic priest who joined the Sandinista revolutionaries and later was the Minister of Culture after the revolution was successful. Ramírez, born into a liberal middle-class family in 1942, attended law school and was a student activist. He later became a supporter of the Sandinista party and was vice-president of Nicaragua from 1985 to 1990. In 1990, the Sandinista National Liberation Front party suffered an electoral defeat which had a profound effect on the lives and literary output of Cardenal and Ramírez. The defeat 'not only destroyed Cardenal's political ideals, it also demolished his sense of himself as a man' (p. 564), but this led eventually to a new phase in his creative evolution. Henighan argues that Ramírez's writing by 2006 had faded into 'self-absorption and disillusionment' (p 562). Interestingly, both Cardenal and Ramírez became disaffected with the Sandinista National Liberation Front party in the mid-1990s, and they left the party because of concerns that it was moving in an authoritarian direction under Daniel Ortega. Ramírez and his supporters created the Sandinista Renovation Movement party in 1995, but it did not garner significant political influence, and Ramírez has subsequently left politics. Henighan successfully conveys the personal life stories of these two famous authors, and demonstrates how their literary talent and personalities enriched their political beliefs and empowered their political influence.

A major strength of this book is that Henighan has critically analysed the entire literary oeuvre of both Cardenal and Ramírez, including essays and speeches, whereas previous studies have focused primarily on their works that were written during the revolution. For example, Henighan provides analysis of Cardenal's *Cantico cosmico* (1989, *Cosmic Canticle*) and Ramírez's *Castigo Divino* (1988, *Divine Punishment*) that were published just before the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990. In addition, he gives critical attention to Ramírez's later novels, *Sombras nada mas* (2002, *Only Shadows Remain*) and *Mil y una muertes* (2004, *A Thousand Deaths Plus One*), and Cardenal's memoirs. While the comprehensive approach taken by Henighan in studying these two prolific authors results in a lengthy volume, its organizational structure allows the reader to easily focus on any area of particular interest. While this book will not appeal to a general audience, its scholarly analysis is presented in a clear and engaging fashion.

After providing many novel insights into the literary oeuvre and political influence of Cardenal and Ramírez, Henighan concludes persuasively that 'one of the best ways to understand a nation's deep historical evolution is through close readings of engaged literary texts' (p. 686). This enlightening and comprehensive book is an important addition to the field and will be well received by those in the academic community who have an interest in the lives and literary works of Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez, and in Nicaraguan history and literature. It would also serve well as a core book for graduate courses in Hispanic or literary studies. Henighan's powerful approach of interweaving historical and literary analysis is an excellent model to emulate for future academic studies examining the interplay between literature and history.

Grace A. Gomashie, Western University, Canada

 La cancha peronista. Fútbol y política (1946-1955), edited by Raanan Rein. UNSAM EDITA Press, 2015.

Football is an activity where diverse interests and players of all kinds converge. As a mass social phenomenon, especially in Latin America, it is sometimes seen as a mirror of society's problems reflected on the playing field, or problems on the playing field as the consequences of the difficulties in society. In this sense, *La cancha peronista*. *Fútbol y política* is an essential contribution to what happened in the Argentinean football clubs during the years of the Peronist decade (1946-1955). The Peronist decade is characterized by the new and active role of the state in sport that provided grants and permits, built infrastructure, and organized or supported events.

Published by UNSAM edita and compiled by the Israeli historian Raanan Rein, *La cancha peronista* includes fourteen research projects from different fields of the social sciences such as sociology, history and political science; among its authors we can find Daniel Sazbón Rodrigo Daskal, Mariano Gruschetsky, Julio Frydenberg, Jorge Bernetti, Claudio Panella, Alex Galarza, Lucie Hémeury, Franco Damián Reyna and Jorge Troisi Melean. The book is

divided into two main sections. The first one analyses the context of what happened during the period called *el primer peronismo*; and the second section is dedicated to establishing the link between Peronism and six clubs of Buenos Aires and its surroundings. One of its contributions is the understanding of Peronism and its influence both on clubs and on sports policy. It invites us to rethink the Peronist era and its impact on sport, everyday life and popular culture, as well as the functioning of civil society and its relationship with the state. The book unravels the political and social history in Argentina and sheds new light on the political pressure put on the various clubs as well as infighting between Peronists and anti-Peronists.

The sports policy of the first years of Peronism illustrates on the one hand the democratic impulse of Argentinian populism, with a strong personality and authoritarian character in charge. This policy resulted in an increase in sport (not only football), but on the other hand also brought in the political instrumentalization of sport by the national authorities. Indeed, Perón is one of Argentina's presidents that has been highly associated with sport, with one of his nicknames being *el primer hincha* (the No. 1 supporter). At the same time, clubs are civil associations and social spaces that help to construct identities, cultural and social integration. Peronism took advantage of these conditions and emotions. Clubs needed political support to acquire land, playing fields, stadiums, authorizations and resources, and politicians required clubs to get supporters and votes. Throughout the book it is understood that the influence of Peronism was always present in the clubs, from the Peronist takeover of several clubs to the severe punishment suffered by those entities who resisted state pressure. In fact, this book reveals that no club became a full Peronist entity but at the same time, none managed to maintain complete autonomy. All the clubs were influenced by the Peronist regime in one way or another. Among the clubs analysed in this compilation, the book explained for instance that the River Plate Club was the most widely influenced by Peronism while the Estudiantes Club was the one who offered greater resistance to pressure from the state.

In considering how large football looms in their cultural space, La cancha peronista illustrates the development of the national sport in Argentina from the beginning of the first presidency of Juan Domingo Perón until his overthrow. Perón saw the promotion of sport as tool for developing national integration, patriotism and solidarity, and many sports entities took this as an opportunity to improve their circumstances through the financial support that the government provided. The book also simultaneously describes another aspect of this historical process in relation to how many Peronist leaders were sanctioned or absolved after the overthrow of the Peronist government in September 1955.

La cancha peronista is relevant for two reasons: first it demonstrates the link between football and politics in a very important period of Argentinian history (but also points out that the link had existed before the arrival of Peronism). Secondly, it provides a compilation that illustrates the importance of the academic study of sport and its significance and impact on society from multiple perspectives. With this book the Latin American passion, and particularly the Argentinian passion, for football offers an opportunity to rethink football and its impact on everyday life, history, popular culture, the functioning of civil society and its relationship with politics.

Alexis Sossa Rojas, University of Amsterdam

Chile y la Guerra Fría global, edited by Tanya Harmer and Alfredo Riquelme Segovia. Instituto de Historia, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and RIL Editores, 2014.

The volume edited by Tanya Harmer and Alfredo Riquelme is a timely contribution to recent debates about the Cold War and transnational history. Through a series of case studies, the authors explore how Chile's political, social and non-state actors 'internalize' the conflicts, discourses and ideology of the Cold War. They illustrate the complex flow of ideas, influences and people across national borders, demonstrating how Chileans not only interacted with but also influenced debates taking place in other parts of the world. By examining the history of the Cold War from the perspective of the periphery, the authors challenge traditional historiographical currents that have exclusively focused on the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, prioritized diplomatic relations and, as Joaquín Fermandois explains in his chapter, relegated countries such as Chile to the role of mere satellites.

The book includes a brief presentation by the editors and 11 articles. Chronologically organized, the chapters span from the early 1950s until the overthrow of Chile's military dictatorship and the end of the Cold War in 1990. In the first chapter, Alfredo Riquelme offers a long-term overview of the impact of the global Cold War on local political parties, demonstrating the complex interaction between the Chilean Left and diverse international currents and events that gave birth to the Chilean Way to Socialism. In the next chapter, Uruguayan historians Fernando Aparicio and Roberto García Ferreira reconstruct the tourist trip of communist militant and future Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda to Uruguay in 1952. Neruda, Aparicio and García Ferreria show, was subject to intense police surveillance, a shill antecedent of the future work of secret police in the southern cone. Building on recent debates about the importance of social and cultural approaches to the history of the Cold War, Fernando Purcell reconstructs the story of the many U.S. volunteers who joined the Peace Corps and lived in Chile throughout the 1960s. The daily life experiences of the volunteers provide a much more personal, intimate and bottom-up perspective of an otherwise abstract global conflict, showing also the centrality of social development to understand the Cold War in the Third World.

Most of the articles focus on the years between 1964 and the military coup of 1973, a time, according to Marcelo Casals, that represents a sort of 'stellar moment in the internationalization of Chilean politics' (p. 92). In his own chapter, Casals examines how anti-communist ideas shaped the presidential election of 1964, giving rise to a campaign that manipulated fear and anxiety. The next two chapters turn to Italy, exposing the significance of Western Europe in the history of the global Cold War. Raffaele Nocera analyses the relationship between Chilean and Italian Christian democrats, explaining the motivations leading the Italian Democratic Party to support its South American comrades in the 1960s. Also focusing on Italy, Alessandro Santoni argues that Chile's political experience, especially the Chilean Way to Socialism, had a strong influence on the internal debates that took place within the Italian Communist Party. Turning to Latin America, Eugenia Palieraki questions the omnipresent influence of the Cuban Revolution on the foundation of Chile's Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR - Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria), placing it as one more force that explains the birth of a radical political party in 1960s Chile. Tanya Harmer, then, places the history of the period within a larger Inter-American framework, arguing the need to look at how Chilean political developments between 1970-73 influenced (and were influenced by) regional political processes. By looking at the relation between Chile and Cuba as well as the triangle Chile-United States-Brazil, Harmer shows a much more complex diplomatic scenario.

The last three chapters examine the period of Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship (1973-1990). Joaquín Fermandois turns to West Germany and its questionable relationship with Chile's military regime, explaining that Germany's own Cold War divisions informed changes in diplomatic relations toward Chile. Similarly, Fernando Camacho looks at the emergence and development of the Chile solidarity movement in Sweden during the 1980s, providing an interesting analysis of the development of Swedish international politics and growing commitment to human rights and democracy abroad. Olga Ulianova closes the book with an interesting chapter on the international campaign of Chile's Communist Party under dictatorship. In what she calls a new phase in the internationalization of Chilean communism, she focuses on the struggle of communist militants in exile to rebuild the party and resist dictatorship.

Overall, this is an outstanding book, carefully crafted, researched and organized. Each chapter helps to expand our understanding of the Cold War, shedding light on a different actor and region. By turning away from exclusively focusing on U.S. foreign policy, the authors provide a more complex view of this period, highlighting the importance of Chile's relations with Western European and other Latin American nations. In addition, many of the chapters place these relations within the different countries' history, describing, for example, how the particular history of Sweden, Italy or Germany influenced each country's interaction with Chile. Some of the chapters also bring up the importance of looking at political culture and practice from the bottom up, thus

contributing to understand how the Cold War was actually lived and experienced by people. From a larger perspective, the edited volume demonstrates the need for more intellectual and academic collaboration across borders as the basis for a successful transnational history project. In many ways, this is a truly transnational effort that brought together sources, archives and historiographies in multiple languages and from different parts of the world.

Ángela Vergara, California State University at Los Angeles

 Challenging Social Inequality: The Landless Rural Workers Movement and Agrarian Reform in Brazil, edited by M. Carter. Duke University Press, 2015.

I first read *Challenging Social Inequality* in 2010, when the book came out in Portuguese and Miguel Carter was doing a book tour in Brazil. I was in Rio Grande do Sul in the middle of doing 15 months of field research on the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement (MST – Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra). After our first meeting, I remember seeing Miguel again at a state-wide MST gathering. He was fuming at the fact that a prestigious local university had not let an MST representative take part in his book launch, which was Miguel's common practice. Miguel had publically critiqued this decision and went out of his way to point out the MST leader in the front row. I was impressed with the deep relationships Miguel had cultivated with MST leaders, and his dedication to scholarly activism. This book should be read exactly as that, a rigorous form of scholarly activism, or in Miguel's words, a 'sympathetic yet nuanced assessment' of the MST's development, growth, and transformation over the past three decades, 'grounded on extensive research and field experience' (p. 391).

This volume includes an editorial introduction, conclusion, and 14 chapters divided into four parts. In contrast to other books about the MST, Carter couches the debate about agrarian reform within a broader discussion of the negative effects of inequality on Brazilian democracy. Carter provides ample evidence that, rather than representing an isolated, anti-democratic, or 'Leninist' organization, the MST has had a positive effect on democracy by challenging social inequities, strengthening civil society, facilitating the extension of basic citizenship rights, and engendering a sense of utopia (p. 28). The major concept Carter introduces is 'public activism', 'a form of social conflict grounded on pressure politics and bargaining with state authorities' (p. 28), which he argues that the MST has enacted since its inception.

The first part of the book puts the MST and the agrarian question in context, offering a comprehensive overview of the historical debates about agrarian development in Brazil, how the global political economy has constrained Brazil's development trajectories (Delgado), the range of rural social move-

ments active over the past century (Medeiros), and the role of the Catholic Church in these mobilizations (Poletto). The second part of the book analyses the MST's early formation and consolidation (Fernandes), providing three regional case studies: Rio Grande do Sul, where the MST emerged and sustained its struggle during difficult years (Carter); Pernambuco, which has had a huge expansion of land occupations (Sigaud); and, Pará, where the massacre of 19 MST leaders in 1996 became a national turning point for the movement (Ondetti, et al.). The third part of the book analyses the daily life of MST settlements, the organizational structure of the movement, and the different MST sectors that have formed in response to settlers' demands (Carter & Carvalho). This part of the book also illustrates the difficulties local leaders face maintaining a 'community spirit among members', (Calvo-González, p. 296) and how regional differences in cultural understandings of land affect the success of alternative agricultural projects (Wolford). Finally, the last part of the book analyses the continuity of conservative agrarian reform policies during the Cardoso and Lula governments (Branford), the ambiguity and malleability of laws concerning agrarian reform (Mészáros), and the MST's influence on other Brazilian social movements (Rosa).

Carter's 2015 volume is the most comprehensive and extensive treatment of the MST to date, bringing together prominent scholars that have been working with and conducting research on the MST over the past three decades. Although the book is clearly 'sympathetic' to the MST, Carter also directly addresses the movement's main critics and includes several chapters that openly describe the contradictions, discontents, and splits within the movement. I found the new empirical data in two of the chapters particularly useful: Branford's chapter on agrarian reform policies during Lula's administration and Carter & Carvalho's chapter on the numbers of MST occupations and the timelines of the MST's thematic sectors. Another contribution of the book is the data it provides beyond the MST, such as its comprehensive account of Brazilian agrarian development during the twentieth century and its description of a diversity of rural social movements. Overall, the take-home point of the book is two-fold and contradictory: 1) The MST represents the biggest and most influential agrarian social moment in recent Brazilian history; and, 2) These MST mobilizations, while slowing down land concentration and producing a utopian ethos in Brazil, have not succeeded in stopping the continuity of policies to 'modernize agriculture and integrate the national economy into the new global order' (Delgado, p. 57).

One topic that is not as well developed in this book – and a topic I am asked about most frequently in the U.S. - is leadership development. While some chapters discuss the complex base-leadership relations on settlements, there is not much information about how the MST cultivates its leadership, for example, the ways youth have been integrated into the movement, why people take on leadership roles, and how the MST has been able to sustain its expansive leadership over three decades. Second, although there are discussions of MST-

state relations throughout the book (especially Branford's chapter), the tensions that these movement-state relations have caused within the movement is not directly addressed. I would also argue that Carter's concept of 'public activism' does not fully highlight what I find to be the most unique component of the MST's struggle: the movement's demand not only for state *concessions*, but also communities' right to the participatory, democratic governance of these state concessions. This is especially evident in the movement's attempt to participate in public education. Finally, apart from Carter's brief epilogue, the majority of the data in this book are from the mid-2000s and before – an issue with publishing timelines rather than the book itself. Given the current Brazilian 'political conjuncture', (i.e., massive mobilizations of 2013, impeachment protests of 2015, economic crisis) readers will be at the edge of their seats for the next chapter in this story. Carter's 2015 volume, which illustrates that 'land reform remains part of an intricate and contentious conversation over the future of Brazil – its promises, needs, fears, and dreams' (p. 30), is a solid jumping off point for these future inquires.

Rebecca Tarlau, Stanford University

Brazil: Reversal of Fortune, by Alfred P. Montero. Wiley Press, 2014.

In spite of being the sixth largest economy, Brazil is a country of sharp socioeconomic contrasts that still has a long way to go towards its world-class ambitions. However, since the return of democracy thirty years ago, the country has raised hopes that vital social, political, and economic changes needed to achieve those ambitions are on the way. Building on such perception, Montero gives us an elegant description and an insightful analysis of that country's struggles to eradicate poverty, improve its wealth and income distribution, and develop the potential of its industrial economy since the end of the dictatorship in the 1980s. Skilfully focusing on three multilevel dimensions (governability, good policy, and the quality of democracy) in order to explain Brazil's turnaround, he argues that since the return of democracy the direction of change of those three dependent variables has been towards improvement. Nevertheless, Montero is cautious to point out that those processes have non-linear relationships – what is good for one of them might not be so for the remaining ones or might even limit them. In his longitudinal and multilevel analysis - an approach he believes to be an important corrective to much of the current scholarship on Brazilian politics – Montero adopts a holistic methodology that takes into account the multidimensional and multi-arena aspects of Brazil's politicaleconomic system throughout the democratic years and renders his work highly innovative. A focused analysis on any specific area such as congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, or civil society, as he points out, does not provide sufficient explanation for the turnaround on the three multilevel dimensions mentioned above.

The first part of the book thoroughly looks into Brazil's adjustments and reforms during three distinct phases. During the democratic transition - the first of those phases – a new constitution was drafted and implemented. In that phase, Brazil's major challenges were the establishment of the policy-making process, which included a better relationship between the presidency and the congress, the enhancement of the federal and subnational bureaucracy to implement policy, and politicians' competence to organize themselves into coherent parties to contest elections and compromise on legislation. Most of these goals were not accomplished. Yet, much of the foundation for later improving governability was laid during this phase.

The second phase is marked by Cardoso's two terms in office. Because of his success in controlling hyperinflation, Cardoso was able to implement a more ambitious reform agenda. Eventually, improved conditions helped Cardoso overcome problems of governability that disturbed Brazilian institutions. In the last phase, Lula's two terms in office witnessed an enlargement of the policy agenda. As a result of the improved state of the economy throughout his tenure. Lula was able to enhance the government's capacity for dealing with growing public debt. One assumes that better times for the economy also enhanced his ability to improve governability. At this point in the book, Montero attempts to explain the effects of the corruption scandals that plagued Lula's administration and continued through Dilma's. One of the sources of Lula's enhanced ability to improve governability came exactly out of the vote-buying scheme implemented in Congress during his administration (the Mensalão scandal), which consequently puts into check the improvement of the quality of Brazilian democracy – one of the multilevel dimensions he investigates in order to explain Brazil's turnaround. In his words, 'the vulnerabilities of the web of accountability in Brazil represent one aspect of the dimension of the turnaround that is least developed: the quality of democracy' (p. 46). Although recognizing its low development, Montero seems to minimize the likely negative effects of the quality of democracy on the remaining dimensions, not to mention on the country's social and economic performance as a whole. As I argue below, Montero might have spoken too soon and the reversal of Brazil's fortune throughout its democratic years may not have happened yet. For example, further in the book Montero evaluates Brazil's achievements in the economic and social spheres giving special emphasis to what he calls 'the renewed developmental state'. He argues that 'the economic and social changes engineered in recent years through the advent of good policy (some rather innovative) hold out some hope of shifting the foundations of the political system so that they generate a higher quality of democracy in the future' (p. 100). In fact, in that section, he stresses Brazil's success in reducing poverty and inequality. As he points out, 'a combination of target anti-poverty transfers, continued stable prices if not relatively low inflation, an expanding formal labour market,

and greater educational access reduced the Gini coefficient after 2001 an average of 1.2 per cent per year' (p. 134).

In the end, given declining G.D.P. growth rates (a projected -3.3 per cent in 2015, and a projected -3 per cent in 2016 according to Instituto Brasileiro de Economia), rising unemployment rates (8.9 per cent in 2015 according to IBGE), rising inflation rates (close to 10 per cent in 2015 according to Brazil's Central Bank) - not to mention Dilma's government current struggle to get congress to approve its budget proposal and be able to maintain all the social policies that were implemented in the past years without affecting Brazil's macro-economic stability - the reader instantly thinks that perhaps Montero spoke too soon. The poor quality of Brazilian democracy, mainly because of the magnitude of countless corruption scandals throughout the Lula-Dilma years, is seriously afflicting the other two dimensions of his study, and one important question persists: has Brazil indeed reversed its fortune? Is Brazil indeed better off on all those three dimensions in comparison to democracy's first decade as Montero argues? Perhaps Brazil is still spreading the seeds for an eventual turnaround. Saying that 'the turnaround is ongoing and incomplete' is not much different than saying that the country holds the promise of a turnaround (p. 179). If all three dimensions he examines are being seriously stricken, showing an apparent fragility, maybe the turnaround did not happen. Nevertheless, main actors involved in corruption scandals are being punished, which shows that institutions are indeed working. Perhaps after this negative stage in its democratic history Brazil will eventually work out the vital socialpolitical-economic reforms it needs to finally make its turnaround. In the end, even if Montero did speak too soon, his use of a balanced longitudinal analysis will certainly entertain optimistic and pessimistic branches of the literature. His detailed and thoughtful social-political-economic account of Brazil's last three decades is certainly an enjoyable and important reading to anyone interested in that country's fortune, for better or for worse.

Edgar J. Marcolin, Purdue University

Latin American Documentary Filmmaking – Major works, by David William Foster. The University of Arizona Press, 2013.

As David William Foster states in the preface, the book *Latin American Documentary Filmmaking* provides a series of detailed examinations of major texts on Latin American filmmaking, offering the reader a set of analyses that examine how these documentaries are structured and what the processes of meaning are that account for their effectiveness. The book is an addition to Foster's important work on Latin American narrative filmmaking, acknowledging this specific genre of documentary filmmaking as a legacy portraying a specific period (roughly 1950-2000) and a group of directors strongly committed to

socio-political change. The book is compiled of twelve chapters, divided into four main sections, based on the discursive principles examined in the texts. (1) Filming the Socially Absent includes films that concern themselves with social subjects who cannot speak for themselves and for whose voice the film is something like a supplement. (2) Gender Trouble examines films dealing with gender issues, especially where prevailing concepts are problematized. (3) Working Clandestinely looks at two films that had to be made in a clandestine fashion. And (4) Historical Present centres on films in which important links are established between major historical conflicts and current national life. Each chapter deals with one film, except for one chapter (six) that discusses a group of Cuban texts. Although most documentary films in this volume are considered important major texts, such as Fernando Birri's Tire dié (1960), La hora de los hornos, by Fernando Solana (1968) and La batalla de Chile, by Patricio Guzman (1975), the author has opted to also include some very recent examples of documentary work. These films are not yet considered to be major texts, but give the book more actual currency, for example Señorita extraviada, by Lourdes Portillo (2001) and Suite Habana by Fernando Pérez (2003).

By choosing this approach, Foster offers insight into a very wide variety of films on different topics, with room for lively descriptions and analyses of the films and the contexts in which they were recorded. The author's skilful and accessible sketches of the historical and socio-political backdrop of each text converts each chapter into a window for the reader to some central issues of production of gender, political persecution, historical conflicts, and exclusion from the mainstream in Latin American history. Besides the topic and context of the film, in each chapter the author discusses in detail the structure and particularities of each documentary film, such as for example the metafilmic dimensions in Eduardo Coutinho's Boca de lixo (1993), showing how choice of high-definition colour film, interviewing techniques, the use of still photographs and stakeholder involvement provides a depth of meaning to the people living and working on a garbage dump in a suburb of Rio de Janeiro. Or the ideological problems regarding the representation of the Latin American continent presented in *The Double Day* (1976), directed by the U.S.-based Brazilian Helena Solberg, providing a survey of the working conditions of women from countries as widely divergent as Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela. Other works presented in this book are: Arturo Ripstein's El palacio negro (1976), Raymundo Gleyzer's México, la revolución congelada (1973), Miguel Littin's Acta general de Chile (1986) and Carmen Toscano's Memorias de un mexicano (1950), all 'prominent texts [that] have a socio-political point to make and are firmly committed to specific notions of historical process and the commitment of filmic art to change that process' (p. X) as stated by the author.

The book is not conceived as a history, periodization or particular interpretation of Latin American documentary filmmaking, but rather a series of detailed examinations of the complex documentary structures chosen for this volume. This choice originated from one of Foster's university courses and shows a mix of older more renowned, and more recent but less known texts. Argentina and Mexico are best represented, but by also including works from Chile, Brazil, Cuba and Helena Solberg's *The Double Day* with interviews with women from (Argentina, Mexico, and) Bolivia, Foster manages to sketch a panorama that justifies talking about Latin American Documentary filmmaking in general. Besides the twelve chapters, there is only a short introductory preface by the author and no introduction is given for each of the four main sections. This, in combination with the fact that there is no concluding chapter either, confines the chapters to be rather isolated works of analysis. Despite this fact, it is a highly enjoyable read, and a valuable contribution to those non-Spanish speakers interested in Latin American documentary film. It could besides well be used as a resource for classroom purposes, also in combination with the films themselves since the majority of the documentary films treated in this book can be viewed in its entirety online.

Leontien Cremers, CEDLA/University of Amsterdam

 Telling and Being told: Storytelling and Cultural Control in Contemporary Yucatec Maya Literatures, por Paul Worley. University of Arizona Press, 2013.

Manuel Uc Can, un joven maya yucateco, se asegura de tomar la ruta más larga de regreso a casa para relatarle una nueva versión de la historia 'El enano de Uxmal' a Paul Worley. Esta anécdota personal, situada al inicio del primer capítulo, introduce la reivindicación nuclear que articula la obra, esto es, la inclusión de la literatura oral en los análisis contemporáneos de producción artística indígena. *Telling and Being Told* plantea la necesidad de examinar estas otras formas literarias evitando su reducción a patrones y reglas occidentales, y en el contexto de una tradición específica de transmisión y (re)presentación de los relatos desde la que el narrador ejerce su potestad de acción discursiva (*discursive agency*).

El ensayo de Worley rompe con la violencia epistemológica que históricamente ha caracterizado a la investigación occidental del Otro, y desarma en el proceso las dicotomías sujeto observador y objeto observado, producción letrada y folclore. Así, *Telling and Being Told* propone formas alternativas de mediación intercultural visibilizando el contorno narrativo desde el que se comunica un particular relato. Es por ello que el autor también provee los detalles que enmarcan su propia historia, indispensables para la génesis del libro aquí reseñado: con la colaboración del maya yucateco Mariano Bonilla Caamal, Worley desarrolla desde hace años el proyecto interactivo 'U tsikbalil Yucatán/Cuentos de Yucatán/Stories from Yucatán' (http://tsikbalichmaya.org), donde se recogen diversos relatos de la literatura oral yucateca.

Después de la sección inicial en la que se presentan los principales ángulos de estudio así como la aproximación a algunos conceptos clave – quiénes son mayas, qué es literatura maya – el segundo capítulo se centra en las complejidades inherentes a la mediación y a la toma de control cultural en el contexto de la explotación arqueológica y antropológica de la península de Yucatán por parte de estudiosos y coleccionistas extranjeros cuyas actividades han resultado en la pérdida de numerosos objetos artísticos mayas así como de libros y anales de las diferentes comunidades. La cuidadosa y afinada lectura de las diversas versiones de la leyenda 'El enano de Uxmal' revela una narrativa contrahegemónica no exenta de procesos intertextuales – el autor establece lazos con el Popol Vuh y los libros del Chilan Balam – que a su vez evidencia una preocupación de mayor recorrido en torno a cuestiones de herencia y legitimidad cultural del pueblo maya. Por su parte, el tercer capítulo estudia el trabajo de folcloristas renombrados en el contexto del indigenismo mexicano, entre ellos Antonio Mediz Bolio, Luis Rosado Vega o Emilio Abreu Gómez. Telling and Being Told acusa en la labor de estos recopiladores una concepción de la literatura oral maya como mera repetición de la tradición –v ellos como repetidores de la misma – que resulta en la representación de un indio silenciado desde el discurso del mestizaje.

Pensar a los cuentacuentos mayas en tanto que intelectuales orgánicos en el sentido gramsciano, es decir, proporcionando a la comunidad homogeneidad y concienciación de la función que ella desempeña en las esferas económica, social y política, constituye una de las propuestas más sugerentes de este magnífico estudio. El autor argumenta que, en tanto que tradición colectiva, la oralidad maya transmite el núcleo de conceptos y principios que guían una reproducción dinámica de su cultura desde la que se concibe el pasado en relación dialéctica con el presente. En otras palabras, el acto de narrar cuentos se constituye como una forma de conocimiento, un episteme, y siempre en clave dialógica. Atendiendo a estas cuestiones, las dos secciones finales del libro presentan el empoderamiento narrativo maya y proponen la reconciliación de tradición y modernidad. Es en este sentido que el popular cuento 'Juan T'u'ul' (El conejo Juan) contiene las fórmulas y estructuras narrativas para articular historias nuevas como 'The Waiter and the Gringo', también recogida en el trabajo de Worley (133).

El quinto y último capítulo examina la producción literaria de tres mujeres que adoptan la perspectiva del cuentacuentos o subrayan la importancia de esta figura en sus novelas, relatos o poesía, poniendo las letras latinas al servicio de la tradición oral maya yucateca. Worley percibe justamente algunos de estos textos como alegorías ambivalentes de la modernidad maya: la mujer representada en su potencial ilimitado para lograr el empoderamiento económico y epistemológico es a la vez víctima de limitaciones sociales de las que ella misma participa, así como de la ausencia de solidaridad en la comunidad femenina. Sin embargo, puesto que solamente dos de las tres escritoras abordan el tema de género en sus relatos y poemas, parece que en este caso Worley apunta hacia horizontes teóricos que obstaculizan la coherencia interna de la sección. Asimismo, la cuestión de género tal y como está planteada en estos textos y en su intersección con lo que el autor denomina modernidad maya revela complejidades que el capítulo resuelve un tanto insatisfactoriamente: ¿En qué difiere la mujer maya como intelectual orgánica del hombre y cuál es su posicionamiento discursivo – y las especificidades de su potestad de acción – con respecto al mismo? ¿Hay alguna relación entre potestad de acción discursiva y solidaridad? ¿Puede darse la primera sin la segunda? ¿Cómo se compara la ausencia o presencia de solidaridad entre subalternos narrada por las voces masculinas con lo descrito por las mujeres? A la luz de lo expuesto en las secciones precedentes del estudio, la exploración de estas preguntas hubiera contribuido a un cierre más sólido. A pesar de ello, la incorporación de estas otras voces subalternas proporciona perspectivas sumamente enriquecedoras al conjunto de la obra.

Valiéndose de un estilo ágil y ameno sin por ello sacrificar la densidad de las reflexiones, Worley demuestra que el contar es necesariamente un interpretar, y éste a su vez un nuevo contar de previas interpretaciones que inevitablemente responden, tal y como el propio autor señala, a posiciones y opciones éticas (28). *Telling and Being Told* es en este y en otros muchos sentidos un libro necesario tanto para la academia estadounidense y europea como para la latinoamericana, que interesará a una gran variedad de disciplinas, incluyendo la literatura y la teoría literaria, la historia o la antropología.

Ana Ugarte, Duke University

 Bachata and Dominican Identity/La bachata y la identidad dominicana, by Julie Sellers. McFarland Press, 2014.

In her bilingual text, Dr Julie Sellers argues that *bachata* (a musical genre born in the Dominican Republic during the late 1950s and early 1960s) and Dominican identity go hand in hand. The book analyses how the anti-*bachata* sentiments held by Santo Domingo's ruling elite in the 1950s and 1960s slowly diminished over time as international support grew. Sellers presents an analysis of the intersections between social class and race among *bachata* producers and their listeners as a backdrop for the study of the music as an identifying symbol, both for individual and collective identity. The author urges readers to consider where *bachata* fits into the notion of *dominicanidad* (Dominicanness) through her many interviews with influential *bachateros*.

There are two main differences that separate *Bachata and Dominican Identity* from other research on the genre, such as Deborah Pacini Hernández's *Bachata: A Social History of a Dominican Popular Music* or Darío Tejada's *Bachata: su origen, su historia y sus leyendas*. First, Sellers focuses on the cultural implications that the musical category has had on a national culture

instead of solely on the historical development over the years. Second, the author incorporates her personal interviews with various performers into a cultural analysis of Dominicanness. In the first four chapters of the book, Sellers looks at various aspects of culture from Puerto Plata to Santo Domingo that contributed to the rise of the 'knick-knack' music: migration from rural areas to the shanty towns of the city, poverty, limited access to formal education, and racial discrimination. She shows her readers the repercussions of these factors through the eyes of her interviewees. Chapter one contextualizes the text within the framework of negativity among the ruling oligarchy in the Dominican Republic toward bachata, in the early years, particularly during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. In other words, the upper classes had rejected the style as representative of the lower classes and therefore not worth much (hence the derogatory name). In chapter two, dominicanidad comes to the forefront. Through the voice of her informers, Sellers looks at how the essence of the Dominican Republic was influenced heavily by a class strata that associated 'upper class' with 'white' and 'working' class with 'black'. Trujillo then solidified those class and ethnic markers during his thirty-year regime. In fact, in the third chapter readers see how the regime of Trujillo made it so that merengue took the stage as the national genre and how he kept other musical genres out of the limelight. After the death of Trujillo in 1961, bachata's popularity began to grow; chapter four centres on the dawn of this underground music as corner stores played the music and maids listened to it while they worked in the houses of the elite. In chapter five, the author introduces readers to the different developments within bachata over the years that range from the bachata romántica of the 1960s to the techno-bachata of the 2000s. Romantic bachata is the premise of chapter six; the interviews with romantic bachateros such as José Manuel Calderón (el pionero de la bachata) show how the musicians were generally self-taught and they generally believed (and still believe) that bachateros were born not made. The growth of bachata off of the island and the influences of that growth at home is the focus of chapter seven; the Dominican Transnational Community truly contributed to a growing interest abroad before bachata obtained large scale success on the island. Bachata's expansion in the United States, particularly in New York, is the emphasis chapter eight. To finalize the text, in chapter nine, Sellers recognizes the women bachata singers over the years.

Sellers' approach to create dialogue between her readers and the producers of the music attracts readers at first; the interviews offer some insiders' views of the genre and the relationship that bachata has with cultural identity on the island of Hispaniola. However, a criticism of the text is that chapters five through nine give the impression of encyclopaedic entries about the musicians who played bachata instead of an analysis of the interrelated connectivity between the music and the overall idea of dominicanidad. Some readers might suggest that she incorporate more of her interviews into her book. Others might recommend that chapters five through nine open up more of a dialogue within the reader and avoid the heavy reliance on the footnotes in the text. Either way, both of the suggestions will have to wait until the next edition. Sellers shows how *bachata* reflects social, economic, political, class, and racial tensions over the course of the past fifty years; not only through her own observations but more importantly through the words of the *bachateros* themselves. One underlying idea that stems from the author's meetings with the musicians is clear: their contributions to the Dominican music scene have been a key influence in Caribbean cultures. Sellers' work will contribute to the study of *bachata* because of her extended conversations with eyewitnesses who experienced first-hand the interconnectedness of their music and their identity.

Grant D. Moss, Pittsburg State University

 Entrepreneurial Selves: Neoliberal Respectability and the Making of a Caribbean Middle Class, by Carla Freeman. Duke University Press, 2014.

Although the anthropology of entrepreneurship, i.e. the use of sociocultural theories and ethnographic methods in the study of entrepreneurship, has steadily risen since the 1990s, there still exists a lack of interaction between anthropological and entrepreneurial research. Carla Freeman's *Entrepreneurial Selves* aims to fill at least part of this gap by turning the spotlight on the work practices and lifestyles of entrepreneurs on the Caribbean island of Barbados. The result is a very valuable addition to our understanding of the workings and meanings of neoliberalism in postcolonial settings.

In the opening sentence of the book, Freeman introduces her study as 'an ethnography of economy, labour, and affect in a time and place of neoliberalism' (p. 1). Expanding the focus 'beyond the *business* of economic independence and self-sufficiency', she sets out to address the context of identity formation and to explore 'the self as entrepreneurial project inextricable from the enterprise and market sphere' (pp. 2-3). In other words, how do entrepreneurs work, live and feel about their work/life in the current age of global capitalism and neoliberal flexibility? To answer this question, Freeman draws on extensive fieldwork spanning more than a decade in Barbados, including archival research, participant observation and numerous interviews with entrepreneurs, all 'owners of registered, midsized businesses (with at least one employee)' (p. 13) active in a variety of industries ranging from food and retail to construction, financial services, health care, fashion and technology.

Freeman considers Barbados, and the Caribbean more generally, as a good case study for examining neoliberalism and its 'project of flexible self-making' (p. 6) due to its constant negotiation between global integration and local responsiveness. She reminds us that the Caribbean region is historically formed in and shaped by forces of globalization and colonialism and therefore 'in a process of dynamic change' (p. 11) ever since Columbus sailed into the Carib-

bean in the late fifteenth century. The enduring tension between the global and the local, and the colonial and the anti-colonial, has provided many of the key concepts to understanding the region and the process of globalization more generally. In her book Freeman takes up and develops two of these concepts, i.e. (colonial) respectability and (anti-colonial) reputation, to demonstrate the changing nature of work/life dynamics in Barbados under neoliberalism.

Following the introduction, *Entrepreneurial Selves* consists of five chapters in which the 'entrepreneurial drama of neoliberal Barbados' (p. 9) is unfolded. In the first chapter, 'Barbadian Neoliberalism and the Rise of New Middle-Class Entrepreneurialism', Freeman discusses the specific contours of neoliberalism on the island, including her proposal to recast Wilson's (1969) influential reputation-respectability model, and argues that the emergent entrepreneurial middle class brings in new articulations of class, gender and race into contemporary Barbadian society, not only in the work sphere, but also, and significantly, in many other dimensions of life. In the following three chapters, 'Entrepreneurial Affects', 'The Upward Mobility of Matrifocality' and 'Neoliberal Work and Life' respectively, the author turns the focus on these dimensions, illustrating how the neoliberal spirit creates new visions of marriage, kinship and family within the entrepreneurial middle class in Barbados. Finally, in the fifth chapter, 'The Therapeutic Ethic and the Spirit of Neoliberalism', Freeman addresses the growing appeal of new forms of personal and spiritual care among Barbadian entrepreneurs (p. 169), which she sees as intimately connected to the neoliberal ethic and the practice of 'affective labour as a form of life' in particular (p. 181).

Altogether, Entrepreneurial Selves provides a historically nuanced, theoretically sophisticated and empirically detailed account of the emergence of neoliberalism and the rise of the entrepreneurial middle class in Barbados over the past ten to fifteen years. Freeman's anthropological approach to the study of entrepreneurship is refreshing and innovative (including her self-reflexive ruminations), and vividly demonstrates the importance of moving beyond the familiar economic frameworks into the realm of identity practices and the construction of entrepreneurial subjects along the lines of gender, class and race. Moreover, Freeman's consideration of the cultural specificities of entrepreneurialism within the Caribbean, notably through the changing discourses of reputation and respectability, shows that neoliberalism is always being 'remade' in local contexts.

However, here some of the less effective parts of the book come to the surface as well. First of all, it seems Freeman tries to explain all social structures and cultural patterns through the reputation-respectability model, which at times feels somewhat artificial or at least arbitrary, as other explanations could be (more) relevant as well. At the same time, many of the characteristics of entrepreneurial work/life that are assigned to the specific Caribbean context sound quite familiar from other local contexts around the globe. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the chapters become quite repetitive, though this is also

due to the structure of the book (with many references to previous and coming chapters).

Last but not least, there remains the question of whether the rise of the entrepreneurial spirit in the Caribbean should largely be seen as a positive or negative development. In the conclusion Freeman argues that it represents both 'pleasures and burdens' and can 'unleash new desires and also become sources of alienation' (p. 212). However insightful this may be, it would have been productive to further substantiate the critical assessment of the neoliberal agenda – especially since entrepreneurship is, both in the Caribbean and elsewhere, increasingly and often problematically being touted as the mantra of development. However, in spite of these concerns, *Entrepreneurial Selves* offers a significant contribution to the literature, one that strikingly confirms that contemporary entrepreneurialism 'is not about business per se', but has, indeed, 'become a mode of labour and a way of life' (p. 16).

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Note

Wilson, P. (1969), Reputation and respectability: A suggestion for Caribbean ethnology. *Man 4*(1): 70-84. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2799265