

Book Reviews | Reseñas

– *Forests and Climate Change. The Social Dimensions of REDD in Latin America*, por Anthony Hall, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2012.

Escribir un libro acerca de la iniciativa ‘Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation – REDD’ (Reducción de las emisiones de carbono derivadas de la deforestación y degradación forestal) en América Latina es una tarea complicada. REDD es un proyecto en construcción; un blanco en movimiento, rodeado de incertidumbres. América Latina tiene una larga historia de prácticas locales relacionadas al mantenimiento de los bosques, rica en diversidad y contradicciones. Gracias a la contribución de análisis empíricos, la literatura sobre REDD está creciendo a un ritmo explosivo. El reto que Anthony Hall ha asumido al escribir este libro radica en el balance entre la atención que se le presta a los detalles, y a aquello que puede servir para sacar lecciones generales sobre el proceso de preparación para REDD en la región.

Una valiosa contribución del libro es resaltar que la reconciliación entre conservación de bosques y actividades productivas no es una idea nueva en América Latina. Es posible aprender del pasado. Como Anthony Hall señala, la legitimidad de los proyectos relacionados con REDD debería construirse a partir del reconocimiento de la diversidad de actores involucrados en las dinámicas de deforestación y mantenimiento de bosques en América Latina. Sobre todo, a partir del reconocimiento de que los mismos son también actores políticos, y no solamente ‘agentes económicos’. La deforestación en América Latina no es un problema que se pueda resolver solamente con dinero, ni a través de transacciones de mercado. De ahí que en el libro sea presentada una pertinente discusión sobre las opciones para financiar REDD combinada con una crítica bien fundamentada, desde una perspectiva económica, a las debilidades de la mercantilización para hacer frente a la deforestación.

El libro repasa brevemente la historia de las ideas modernas sobre la conservación de bosques dentro de las narrativas de ‘desarrollo sustentable’

y ‘cambio climático’. También se ofrece una descripción de los principios económicos básicos que respaldan REDD en tanto éste se entiende como un sistema de ‘Pagos por Servicios Ambientales’. Finalmente, se pone atención a la discusión sobre aspectos técnicos necesarios para la implementación de REDD. Por tanto, aunque se enfatice en América Latina, los primeros capítulos pueden ser igualmente interesantes para aquellos que buscan una introducción a aspectos generales sobre REDD.

Anthony Hall sugiere que el escenario más realista para la implementación de REDD en el futuro será una mezcla de mecanismos de mercado y de fondos de donantes. Varios gobiernos en la región comparten esta visión. Sin embargo, en las negociaciones internacionales sobre cambio climático, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba y Venezuela están argumentados en contra de los mecanismos de mercado para financiar la deforestación evitada. Quizás ésta sea también una de las razones por las cuales el proceso de preparación para REDD en estos países no parece avanzar con el mismo entusiasmo que en otros. Aunque el libro apenas hace referencia al encuentro, la cumbre de Cochabamba en 2010 (Conferencia Mundial de los Pueblos sobre el Cambio Climático y los derechos de la Madre Tierra) donde REDD fue rechazado, es importante para entender la posición de estos cinco países. Solamente el tiempo dirá cómo se resuelve, el dilema del financiamiento para REDD. La crisis económica que afecta EEUU y Europa, indica que el establecimiento de un fondo de países donantes no ocurrirá en el futuro cercano. Además de la experiencia previa de cada país con programas de pagos por servicios ambientales, la forma en que REDD se desarrolle también dependerá de su relación con actores multilaterales, el contexto político general de cada país y la larga historia de actividades extractivas en la región.

Hall sugiere que la debilidad o ausencia de inventarios forestales (excepto en Brasil, México y Costa Rica) es un obstáculo técnico a considerar. En mi experiencia, la mera noción de qué es un bosque está en disputa en varios contextos. Esto refleja más que un estorbo técnico el resultado de prácticas de resistencia de varios actores a lo largo de los años. El libro nos sugiere, desde una perspectiva de gobernanza ambiental, que los retos más urgentes radican en asuntos relacionados a los reclamos de los pueblos indígenas sobre sus territorios; a la inseguridad y falta de claridad sobre la tenencia de la tierra; la debilidad de los gobiernos en asegurar la genuina participación de la sociedad civil en la gobernanza de los bosques y; los mecanismos para asegurar el consentimiento previo e informado de las poblaciones locales. Finalmente el libro también señala los dilemas asociados a los llamados ‘drivers’ de la deforestación: la ganadería y los agro-

negocios comerciales de gran escala, la tala ilegal y las industrias extractivas. Sin embargo en el libro no se discute uno de los asuntos centrales a este respecto, ¿es posible implementar REDD en América Latina en tanto muchos de los países en la región eligen el camino del neo-extractivismo para generar crecimiento económico? ¿Es posible implementar REDD en Guayana por ejemplo, cuando éste país usa en megaproyectos de infraestructura el dinero que Noruega le ha donado para conservar bosques?

Finalmente, a pesar del sesgo hacia Brasil en mucho del análisis, Anthony Hall ha logrado escribir un libro que ‘mira el bosque y no sólo los árboles’. El libro aquí reseñado es un recurso para estudiantes de varias disciplinas interesados en la problemática asociada a REDD y América Latina. Esperamos ver pronto una edición en castellano del libro.

Mariel Aguilar Støen, Universitetet i Oslo

– *Environment and Citizenship in Latin America. Natures Subjects and Struggles*, editado por Alex Latta y Hannah Wittman, Berghahn Books (CEDLA Latin America Studies), 2012.

El libro editado por Alex Latta y Hannah Wittman plantea una mirada crítica sobre las líneas dominantes de investigación en ciudadanía ambiental que conceden un espacio marginal a las miradas del sur global e imponen una mirada apolítica y en muchos casos normativa como respuesta a la crisis ambiental. El libro cuestiona que un enfoque sobre la ciudadanía centrado en las obligaciones individuales o la preocupación por cultivar comportamientos ‘verdes’ entre los consumidores del Norte global, pierde de vista las interfases entre ambiente y ciudadanía desde la perspectiva de los sujetos políticos cuyas relaciones con el medio ambiente están definidas por las dimensiones ecológicas de la marginación socio-económica.

La propuesta de ampliar y re-politizar el debate de ciudadanía y medio ambiente a partir de experiencias Latinoamericanas resulta en este sentido relevante y pertinente. Con la recuperación de las agendas ambientales de la mano de los procesos de democratización de fines del siglo veinte, las luchas territoriales promovidas por movimientos indígenas, campesinos y socio-ambientales por el reconocimiento y la inclusión en la gestión del territorio, así como la reciente promulgación de derechos innovadores sobre la naturaleza o el buen vivir, la región ha quedado inmersa en fuertes debates que demandan una perspectiva política y crítica sobre las definiciones y relaciones entre medio ambiente y democracia.

El libro se plantea como objetivo construir las bases de una nueva agen-

da de investigación que responda a la necesidad de superar las limitaciones teóricas y geográficas del debate actual proponiendo América Latina como espacio de exploración empírica. El libro organiza doce casos de estudio en torno de tres ejes temáticos.

El primer eje temático ‘Assembling Nature’s Citizens’, discute a través de cuatro casos de estudio – en Perú, Brasil (p. 2) y México – la idea de que la ciudadanía necesita incorporar dimensiones ambientales, cuestionando la idea de que existe una separación ontológica entre naturaleza y sociedad. El estudio de caso de Analiese Richards sobre soberanía alimentaria en México pone de manifiesto el rol de los movimientos populares en este país en la co-construcción de los ambientes y las subjetividades políticas. Indudablemente el slogan ‘sin maíz no hay país’ es un buen ejemplo de la forma en que las subjetividades y las relaciones agroecológicas se ligan en las complejas luchas en torno de la tenencia de tierra, la tecnología agrícola y las políticas comerciales. Por su parte, el trabajo de Fabio de Castro analiza como poblaciones locales del Amazonas Brasileiro enmarcan sus discursos y prácticas con el fin de lograr un involucramiento activo en la creación de áreas protegidas para la diversidad biológica y cultural. El autor discute como las políticas nacionales median en la construcción de la ciudadanía ambiental entre poblaciones locales desde una perspectiva de justicia ambiental.

La segunda sección sobre ‘Environmental Marginality and the Struggle for Justice’ analiza las modalidades según las cuales la ciudadanía puede ser un medio para la inclusión/exclusión a discursos y prácticas específicas como la distribución de tierras, la extracción de recursos o la gestión del ambiente. A través de cuatro casos de estudio – en Guatemala, Perú, Bolivia y Chile – se presentan diferentes ejemplos de marginalidad ambiental y de movimientos de contestación. El artículo de Juanita Sundberg muestra como los discursos y prácticas ambientales se articulan en los procesos de democratización y en especial en la formación de ciudadanía en Guatemala. A través del análisis de las racionalidades y las prácticas de conservación de la Reserva de la Biosfera Maya de Guatemala, la autora analiza como individuos y colectivos situados en diferentes espacios sociales, políticos y geográficos, conceptualizan y negocian los patrones de exclusión histórica en Guatemala. En este marco, la experiencia de una iniciativa de mujeres en torno de su conocimiento sobre plantas medicinales, da cuenta, además, de que aún en contextos de exclusión y marginalización se pueden presentar oportunidades de expresión y acción, sugiriendo que la conformación de ciudadanía es un proceso dinámico y en disputa.

La tercera sección, ‘Citizens, Environmental Governance and the State’, elabora a través de cuatro casos de estudio – en Chile, Argentina (p. 2) y

Ecuador – una reflexión sobre el rol de los diferentes actores institucionales en el establecimiento de las estructuras legales, económicas y administrativas que vuelven las relaciones socio-ambientales objetos de gestión. El caso desarrollado por María Gabriela Merlinsky y Alex Latta analiza el rol que juegan las instituciones judiciales argentinas como canal de expresión de las demandas ciudadanas en relación con decisiones políticas ambientales. Por su parte, el capítulo final de Juliet Pinto, examina la innovadora experiencia de Ecuador de incluir en su nueva constitución los derechos de la naturaleza y la propuesta de un modelo de desarrollo basado en el concepto del Buen Vivir. El análisis de la autora sobre los debates reflejados en la prensa en torno del Buen Vivir y los derechos de la naturaleza señala la dificultad de superar el dualismo humano/naturaleza enraizado en la sociedad. El proceso analizado abre relevantes reflexiones sobre el desafío de articular y dar sentido a estos nuevos derechos ante las crecientes tensiones socio-ambientales que se despliegan en Ecuador. El proceso de avance de la minería metálica, actividades petroleras, así como proyectos hidroeléctricos de gran escala, se presentan como un rico escenario de análisis para los próximos años.

El libro contribuye a ampliar los debates contemporáneos sobre la relación entre ciudadanía y medio ambiente proponiendo las bases para una nueva agenda de investigación. En efecto, América Latina se presenta como un espacio de exploración privilegiado que requiere de miradas diferentes y superadoras que permitan capturar las complejas relaciones socio-ambientales, culturales e históricas y su rol en la construcción de las relaciones entre democracia, ciudadanía y medio ambiente. La principal fortaleza del documento no solo reside en la provocadora y elaborada propuesta de ampliación de una agenda de investigación sobre ciudadanía ambiental, sino también en la riqueza y diversidad de los estudios de caso que presenta. La multiplicidad de enfoques y la amplitud de miradas desde los que se discute y reformula el debate de ciudadanía ambiental invita al diálogo a un amplio espectro de disciplinas y campos de estudio, incluyendo la gobernanza ambiental, la justicia ambiental, la ecología política, la sociología ambiental, la economía ecológica entre otros. Finalmente, esta propuesta se presenta como una oportunidad singular de articulación con los recientes esfuerzos de construcción de una agenda latinoamericana en torno del debate de Justicia Ambiental, los puntos de encuentro son destacables e ineludibles.

Mariana Walter, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

– *Patients of the State. The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*, by Javier Auyero, Duke University Press, 2012.

If Habermas's ambiguous dictum on democracy still holds for assessing present democracies in Latin America, the recent contribution by Javier Auyero is a slap in the face for all enthusiasts of recent democratic consolidation and the success of conditional cash transfer programmes. Habermas¹ told us that democracy will only be realized if self-determination of the people is finally achieved. In reality, as Auyero shows in his comprehensive ethnographic account of microrelations between the urban poor and the state in contemporary Argentina, self-determination and thus real democracy is far out of sight. Today economically the urban poor may be a little bit better off but in their relation to the state they are just as marginalized as in the past. In fact the poor's relationship with the state is marked by countless and frustrating hours of waiting, whether in the passport office (chapter 3), the welfare agency in Buenos Aires (chapter 4), or a contaminated shantytown south of the capital (chapter 5). Auyero argues that in these daily encounters with politicians, bureaucrats or officials the urban poor learn to be 'patients of the state' (p. 9), that is, people who silently accept their destiny. Moreover it is precisely via the process of waiting that the state teaches them daily lessons of political subordination and reduces them to heteronomous supplicants.

But why do the urban poor tolerate their subordination and not rebel against the mistreatment? Auyero finds the answer in the eternal character of poor people's waiting which is in the daily labour of normalizing waiting (p. 19). Waiting, he argues, re-creates subordination because a constant production of uncertainty and arbitrariness is inherent in the waiting process. While they are waiting the poor never know how long they will have to wait nor about the outcome. All they know is, if they want to get what they want, they have to comply. Moreover, although the waiting never takes place in isolation, people are unable to socialize further than casual encounters and their insurgent potential is tranquilized by the lack of information, uncertainty, arbitrariness and their material dependence (p. 44). Certainly, Auyero is aware that the specific encounters of waiting aren't the only forms of the state's relations with marginalized groups. In fact he classifies waiting as only one of the more subtle, mostly non-violent forms of the poor's subordination. With current statistical figures he highlights two additional forms of public misery regulation: direct state violence and illegal exercises of violence, carried out by non-state actors in the name of the state (chapter 2). The use of both forms is on constant rise in contemporary Argentina.

The interdependence between these forms of poverty regulation may be crucial to explain the passiveness and patience the poor seem to exhibit while waiting, although Auyero finally has to admit that more empirical and conceptual work has to be done to clarify their combined effects (p. 158). This seems to be the main weakness in Auyero's argument. Although the empirical cases are well structured and very rich with individual accounts, interviews and descriptions, explaining the lack of resistance with the eternal character of the waiting seems to be under-theorized. It may be worthwhile to expand the argument and the theoretical chapter (chapter 1) to embed the concrete practices of waiting in an overall theorizing of state-society relations, including symbolic, material and other political forms of exclusion and inclusion.

Nevertheless Auyero's contribution deserves attention and might grant useful insights for scholars and policymakers less familiar with Argentina. Policymakers may benefit from the book as a comprehensive warning on how well-intended policies, such as targeted welfare programmes, may work 'on the ground'. Social scientists may be more interested in the methodological approach, which breaks with the common trend in social research to concentrate on observable events. Non-events like the people's waiting are difficult to observe and less studied. Auyero's solution – in-depth ethnographic research – is well exercised and enables him to depict the mosaic of domination patterns during the waiting process. Another solution would be to engage in counterfactual analysis. Here we could ask, what would happen if the poor don't have to wait anymore? Would their relation to the state change? Would they finally become emancipated or even self-determined? Certainly, this is disputable as the poor's waiting is only one form of political subordination and exclusion. More useful however might be to frame the question differently, focusing on a less studied social group: the famous top one per cent. There are few studies as comprehensive as the one presented by Auyero that have focused on this latter group and their relation to the state in concrete situations. Yet such a study would help us to better understand the relational character of poverty and citizenship and why real democracy is so far out of sight in contemporary Argentina.

Constantin Groll, Freie Universität Berlin

Note

1. Habermas, Jürgen (1961) 'Reflexionen über den Begriff der politischen Beteiligung'. In: Habermas, v. Friedeburg, Oehler, Weltz (Hrsg.) *Student und Politik*, Neuwied, S. 13-55.

– *Long Live Atahualpa: Indigenous Politics, Justice, and Democracy in the Northern Andes*, by Emma Cervone, Duke University Press, 2012.

This book provides us with a detailed and fascinating ethnography of the politicization of ethnic identity and the process of political organizing in Ecuador (p. 3). Cervone analyses how in the years that followed the massive, national indigenous uprising in the early 1990s, the grassroots organization called Inca Atahualpa and the local community of the Tixán parish in the Chimborazo province dealt with and reacted to that turmoil. *Long Live Atahualpa* makes an in-depth study of the differences, albeit profoundly intertwined, between macro level and micro level indigenous politics, from the perspective of the latter. This book falls within the genre of Latin American indigenous movements and contributes to debates on the ambiguity of the recent multicultural shift in many countries of the region. For example, is state-recognized multiculturalism good or bad for indigenous people? Cervone's conclusions on this matter are well-taken.

Based on eight years of experience in Ecuador, starting in 1991, and including two years of work with the Inca Atahualpa organization, Cervone's book contains numerous and interesting ethnographical details. The first two chapters are historical in nature, and provide a background regarding the coming into being of contemporary local power structures, which for example had been influenced by the agrarian reforms in 1964 and 1973. Chapter three introduces the reader to issues and places of ordinary, daily interethnic conflicts, in which Inca Atahualpa gradually managed to leave its mark. Cervone analyses in chapters four, five, and six how this organization succeeded more and more in reshaping ethnic identity in political, social and cultural terms in order to consolidate local indigenous power (p. 27). These case-study like chapters form the ethnographical core of the book.

Chapter four shows how, based on struggles over land, Inca Atahualpa intervened as a mediator in a way to maintain its political legitimacy vis-à-vis its supporters and the state. Chapter five provides an interesting analysis of how the organization steadily became engaged in the administration of justice, claiming a position between *cabildos* (mainly using customary law) and the *teniente político* (as a state representative more or less bound to state law). Albeit in a more formal and codified structure, contrary to the way *cabildos* settle conflicts, Inca Atahualpa makes use of several elements which unmistakably point in the direction of customary law. The use of customary law in this sense illustrates how local people are capable of affirming their identity while producing change at the same time; effects that have been ascribed to (the use of) customary law in earlier legal anthropo-

logical literature. I found the sections on legal pluralism in this chapter in which Cervone only seems to echo Mark Goodale's embracement of de Sousa Santos' notion of interlegality (i.e., legal pluralism should not be seen as a dichotomy, but rather as mixture of different legalities) a bit disappointing. With 'Justice' in this book's title, especially when related to indigenous politics and democratization, one would expect a more profound account of the extensive literature on (the use of) customary law and (the challenges of) legal pluralism in the Latin American context. However chapter five is interesting in that Cervone convincingly manages to make use of the concept of interlegality to shed light on the complexity of ethnic politicization in a multicultural society. The harvest festival in chapter six – in the good tradition of anthropological studies on fiestas in the Andes – is basically about changing power relations. In contrast to the former chapters, which are more locally based, chapter seven and the conclusion dig into recent national level political developments.

A general critique that could be made of *Long Live Atahualpa* might be its limitation to the 1990s primarily. This feels like a missed opportunity since the political landscape changed profoundly during the decade that followed. Leaving a period in which neoliberalism was embraced, the political picture in the 2000s has become more like that of a left wing current in which a special role has been awarded to President Rafael Correa's plebiscitary style of politics. This has had significant effects on the contemporary position and (political) power of indigenous organizations in their relation to the state. It would have been refreshing to reflect on the events described in this book with today's knowledge.

Still, for those interested in, or acquainted with ethnographies on daily life in the Ecuadorian highlands, and/or in micro level Indian resistance or local indigenous organizations, this well-written book provides a highly valuable contribution.

Marc Simon Thomas, CEDLA, Amsterdam

– *Sexual Revolutions in Cuba: Passion, Politics, and Memory*, by Carrie Hamilton, University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Carrie Hamilton has written perhaps the most ground-breaking study of sexuality in Revolutionary Cuba. Many of its chapters should be required reading for anyone studying not just Cuba, but also the politics of sexuality in developing countries. Drawing from extensive interviews of 40 ordinary Cubans from all walks of life and skin colours, Hamilton paints a rich por-

trait of life for heterosexuals, gay men, and lesbians since the rise to power of the Castro brothers in 1959.

Perhaps the first insight to emerge from the book is the realization that doing socio-anthropological research in Cuba on issues of sexuality is both complicated and simple. It is complicated because getting official permission to do research seems nearly impossible. In the case of Hamilton, who was part of a team of Cuban and British researchers trying to do oral histories in Cuba in the 2000s, the effort took many failed official requests until final approval was granted by none other than Mariela Castro, who went on to become Cuba's first daughter. On the other hand, I would argue that research on sexuality and gender relations in Cuba is simpler than in other non-poor societies because the analysts can rule out a sleuth of variables that tend to affect these relations, such as labour demands from the private sector, income stratification, varieties of organized religion, varieties of schooling, exposure to different media, opportunities to study abroad or conduct round-trip international travel, exposure to competing social movements and political parties vying for influence, etc. In Revolutionary Cuba, these variables either do not exist or have been stripped of influence by the state. Thus, gender relationships in Cuba are far more dominated by the influence of state forces and tradition than is the case in other contemporary societies, which creates, to my mind, a sort of methodological paradise as the analyst can focus on those two variables and their variations over time. And this is precisely what Hamilton does, to marvellous results.

Regarding the state, Hamilton's main point is that Cuba's revolutionary state exhibits a dichotomous property in its approach to sexuality – it is both liberating but ultimately too controlling. In the 1960s, for instance, state-led liberation entailed relaxing reproduction restrictions, as well as enhancing marriage and divorce rights. But the state was too controlling in its dogmatic quest to make Cuban women into 'mothers and militants', as if balancing these two roles were easy, and worse, leaving room for very few alternative options. In addition, the state was committed to rendering homosexuals into an extinct or inoperative species, leading to some of the worse forms of state-led homophobia ever seen in the Americas, at least until the 1980s.

In the 1990s, the state, of course, changes to adapt to new times, but its central dichotomy endures. On the one hand, the state became more liberating by allowing more contacts with foreigners and expatriates; on the other hand, the restrictions imposed on property rights kept Cubans barely surviving. In a superb chapter on the Special Period, for instance, Hamilton adopts a novel approach to this oft-studied subject: she examines how Cu-

ba's housing shortage shaped sexuality. Despite slow population growth and massive migration, Cuba faces a housing shortage of 700,000 dwellings (if one believes official estimates), which is an obvious sign of how the state restricts privacy (incidentally, Hamilton offers an insightful observation that inattention to housing deficits is a sign of the persistence of patriarchy within the Cuban state). Yet, the state began to look the other way on a number of issues, especially black markets, and this was somewhat liberating. Hamilton shows how Cubans suffered and profited from this dichotomous state. Housing shortages made partnering and escapes from traditional households hard. Incidentally, this urban housing shortage (and other state controls) is one reason, according to Hamilton, that gay life in cities can actually be harder than in the country side, which is the opposite of what tends to happen elsewhere. And yet, despite lingering restrictions, the new openings since the 1990s have given Cubans a chance to 'play the system to get by' through, for example, informal rental markets, especially for *jineteras* (sex workers, straight or gay) and their clients.

Hamilton's book could be criticized for a few issues. Methodologically, it would have been useful to share more on the interview selection criteria, and why expatriates were excluded, especially considering that freedom of expression within Cuba remains a gamble rather than a given. Theoretically, the book sometimes offers some unremarkable conclusions, as when Hamilton ends an otherwise terrific chapter on lesbianism with the point that local traditions are influenced by 'outside models' (p. 188). Other times, her conclusions actually contradict her own evidence, as when she says that changes in sexuality 'came less as a result of official policy' than social upheaval (p. 233). This becomes hard to believe after so many wonderful chapters discussing how state policies shaped sexual life in Cuba.

Despite these shortcomings, this is a path-breaking book. It offers wonderful tips on how to combine oral histories with archival knowledge. It uses socio-anthropological evidence to document sexual and gender behaviours that both conform and defy existing theories. It demonstrates that it is possible to study romance without being hopelessly romantic, and this alone is a major scholarly lesson for Latin Americanists of all stripes.

Javier Corrales, Amherst College

– *Shaping the Immigration Debate: Contending Civil Societies on the US-Mexico Border*, by Cari Lee Skogberg Eastman, First Forum Press, 2012.

In *Shaping the Immigration Debate: Contending Civil Societies on the US-Mexico Border*, Cari Lee Skogberg Eastman analyses the politics of immigration at the Arizona border with Mexico. While her study is in some regards a local story of the heated discussions in Arizona, it goes much further in placing the debate within the national and international contexts and also in illustrating the complicated interactions between U.S. citizens and unauthorized immigrants.

The book begins by outlining the geographical space of citizen/unauthorized immigrant interactions at the border and traces the history of broader U.S. border politics. Skogberg Eastman explains the most recent movement of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico into the U.S. through the Sonoran Desert in South-western Arizona as the result of global economic and national political changes. She rightly points to NAFTA as a catalyst for increased migration after 1994. Due to NAFTA, Mexican small farmers could not compete with the entrance of subsidized U.S. corn into Mexican markets and as the tariffs on an ever-expanding list of agricultural products were dropped, Mexican farmers found it no longer profitable to cultivate their lands. Not surprisingly, the existence of low paying jobs in the U.S. pulled an ever-increasing number of migrants across the border.

Skogberg Eastman also points to a series of changes in U.S. immigration laws and border control that have altered the migratory routes and patterns of unauthorized immigrants since 1990. Border fencing and increased patrols in certain well-travelled crossing areas pushed unauthorized immigrants towards crossings in the environmentally harsh Sonoran desert leading both to increased exploitation of migrants from human smugglers but also to rising deaths of crossers. In addition, more difficult border crossings have inadvertently encouraged unauthorized immigrants to stay in the U.S. once arrived rather than risk travelling back and forth in a more seasonal migratory pattern as many had previously done.

While much of this historical background can be found in previously published texts, Skogberg Eastman presents the information in a way that nicely encapsulates the larger economic and political struggles of which migration is only one part. Skogberg Eastman's more original contribution to the existing immigration literature is her analysis of the activities of three civil society organizations operating along the border – Humane Borders, No More Deaths, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC). All three groups have been engaged in the debate around unauthorized immigration, albeit from different ideological stances. The Minuteman Civil De-

fense Corps organized border watches to report unauthorized crossings and pressured policy makers to close the borders. Humane Borders set up water stations in the dessert and lobbies for more humane border policies. Likewise, No More Deaths offers humanitarian assistance to unauthorized crossers and provides food, water, and medical assistance. As Skogberg Eastman illustrates, all three groups became quite adept at using media to inform and convince policy makers and the general public from their particular political perspectives.

Skogberg Eastman takes great care to stay out of the political fray as she details the goals and actions of each organization. She spent time with members of each; she went on border patrols with MCDC groups and accompanied No More Death and Humane Borders members on their humanitarian missions. Rather than try to convince her reader that one group is correct and another wrong-headed, Skogberg Eastman takes the reader step-by-step into the thinking of members (both group leaders and volunteer participants) and explains why the groups have evolved in the ways that they have. She also seeks to explain the varied motivations of citizens in volunteering and participating in the groups. She argues that humanitarian groups like Humane Borders and No More Death lean more 'on notions of social justice and moral or faith-based obligations' while activists in the MCDC were motivated by principles of security and legality (p. 187).

While Skogberg Eastman maintains that the purpose of her study is not to find a solution to the divide over immigration in the U.S., one comes away from her study wondering if there is any common ground upon which to build. The author appears to see understanding of the origins of the problem as a starting point, but she also notes that 'the best hope for the creation of a just and equitable approach to immigration' may be found in the 'ideas originating in the civil society organizations active along the border' (p. 213). She helps her reader understand the concerns of citizen actors in Arizona as a first step. Nevertheless, a lasting imprint of the study remains that the immigrant civil society (both authorized and unauthorized) deserves serious consideration and a place at the table in hashing through any eventual solution.

Susan Berger, Fordham University

– *The Making of Law: The Supreme Court and Labor Legislation in Mexico, 1875-1931*, by William J. Suarez-Potts, Stanford University Press, 2012.

This book is another fine example of the continuity between the Porfiriato and the Mexican Revolution, but now from the much less studied perspective of law and its implementations. Ever since Mexico's profound social change in the period of the Porfiriato, lawmakers and the judicial system have been forced to pay attention to the conditions of labour and of labour movements. William Suarez-Potts focusses on the development of labour law from the Porfiriato to 1931, the year of the passage of the federal labour law. He analyses the doctrinal context of labour law, the legal, political and social reasons for its evolution and some of the political and legal implications.

The first two chapters give an overview of the liberal principles professed and applied during the Porfiriato. They present the dilemma of the Liberal state, also in Supreme Court decision-making, between the pursuit of constitutional rights, and leaving employment contracts and solving problems to the individual industrial parties involved. Increasing social restiveness in the later Porfiriato clearly influenced the Supreme Court decisions.

With chapter three we enter the last decade of the Díaz regime in which his paternalism and strategy of *divide et impera*, persecuting independent leaders and promoting more obedient ones, proved increasingly ineffective, and repression increased. The author gives in detail the strikes of the miners, textile workers and railwayman in the last decade of the Porfiriato, but he presents them from the perspective of the attitudes of strikers and authorities towards the liberal constitution and corresponding civil codes. The ambivalent and ad-hoc labour policy of the Díaz government became, under pressure from workers and entrepreneurial organizations, *volens volens* dragged into mediation, although legal and institutional bases were still lacking.

Chapter four belies once again the traditional construction of a watershed between the late Porfiriato and the Revolution. Low status intellectuals such as teachers, journalists and lawyers represented the emergence of social liberalism. They were under the influence of the PLM and union leaders and also influenced by European reformist legislation and the debate among Catholics imbued with *Rerum Novarum* (1891). The late Porfiriato presents us with, as the author phrased it, 'the early manifestations of a new social orientation in legal discourse' (p. 93) and he discusses a number of late Porfirian Mexican law professors and lawyers who tackled the problem of a liberal civil code clearly inadequate to take on the social

question, along with attempts at timid reformist legislation that in fact became a basis for developments under Madero.

In chapter five Suarez-Potts shows that legislation finally but slowly materialized under presidents Madero, Huerta, Carranza and Obregón. But the role of federal and state governments as actors or mediators in labour relations was still not fully resolved and legalized at the end of Obregón's term (1924). Madero made a significant step with the establishment of the Labour Department and mediation in labour disputes. Under Huerta the legislative experiments continued and the same happened under several revolutionary generals in, for instance, Veracruz and Yucatán. They joined rivalling civil advisors of Carranza in the stormy debates in the 1916 Constituent Assembly. The analysis of the debates on labour legislation, especially Article 123 of the revolutionary Constitution, reflects new ideas but also late nineteenth-century views on the social question. Article 123, a product of compromising between rivalling revolutionary factions, civil and military, was hardly influenced by the voices of labour. In terms of implementation, it left – of course, I would say – responsibility in the hands of the states largely controlled by revolutionary caudillos, who implemented it as they saw fit and controlled up to the late 1920s the state level Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration established by article 123. Zapatista and related local movements that also attempted to legislate should, in my view, also have been included, since they also controlled several of the boards just mentioned.

Chapter six through eight reviews how the Supreme Court re-established in 1917 became directly involved in industrial relations and gradually changed from liberal to social legal norms. New cohorts of justices became more progressive, and the author's analysis makes clear how the Court's case law gradually developed in response to labour disputes linked to rights established in the 1917 constitution. The absence of federal labour legislation confronted the Supreme Court with major legal issues not resolved, among them the status of state level mediation boards and their awards, and the delicate question of the authority of the federal executive in its attempts to establish an industrial relations system. It took until 1931 before labour and employers groups as well as politicians, after much infighting and compromising, agreed on the need for a federal labour law to implement article 123 uniformly and nationwide. In the 1930s the federal labour law became one of the instruments to consolidate PNR hegemony and president Cárdenas subordinated the Supreme Court with constitutional amendments to the presidency and solved the dilemma in favour of executive control.

This book thus contributes to our understanding of two closely inter-linked developments. First, it analyses the adaptation of law-making and its application to the increasing force of late Porfirian and revolutionary movements. Second, it shows how the age-old liberal dilemma of state-level autonomy versus the urge of federalization of law-making and its application was expressed and transformed during the process of Mexico's post-1917 state formation.

Raymond Buve, Universiteit Leiden

– *Madres, obreras, amantes... Protagonismo femenino en la historia de América Latina*, por Barbara Potthast, Vervuert, 2010.

Con la traducción de Jorge Luis Acanda y un nuevo título (a mi parecer menos feliz del original alemán del 2003: *Von Müttern und Machos. Eine Geschichte der Frauen Lateinamerikas*) aparece en español la importante obra de Barbara Potthast, catedrática de la Universidad de Colonia.

Se trata de algo más de una historia de la mujeres en América Latina: sobre todo los primeros tres capítulos ('Las mujeres indígenas y la conquista de América', 'La sociedad colonial', 'El papel de las mujeres en la economía') ofrecen al lector, desde la perspectiva de género, un panorama de la economía y de la sociedad americana muy articulado y profundo.

El ensayo bibliográfico final, reelaborado y puesto al día con respecto a la edición original, indica claramente porque la Autora, a través de ejemplos regionales y biografías de mujeres de diferentes sectores sociales, logró releer con eficacia la historia colonial a la luz de la participación femenina. La producción académica sobre la época colonial ofrece en realidad una gran riqueza de informaciones: fuentes como crónicas, leyes y documentos legales permiten conocer la vida cotidiana de simples vendedoras de pulque, de monjas, de condesas. La microhistoria permite reconstruir una sociedad compleja donde la falta de influencia y poder de las mujeres en la familia y la sociedad a veces se combina con un importante poder financiero (sobre todo si eran solteras o viudas).

Muy interesante es el párrafo sobre las esclavas en las sociedades de plantación de las Islas del Caribe, pero falta un análisis del caso del Brasil, que la Autora trata solamente en relación a la esclavitud urbana.

Importante es la discusión sobre los medios que las clases subalternas (indígenas o afroamericanas) y las mujeres utilizaron para lograr sobrevivir y mejorar sus condiciones manipulando las instituciones y la cultura patriarcal dominante. Relaciones extramatrimoniales con hombres de estatus

o ‘raza superior’ permitieron, por ejemplo, a las mujeres de ganar la libertad o un ascenso social para sus hijos ilegítimos, integrados en la familia extendida.

Basándose en las más recientes investigaciones sobre la historia de la familia y de la vida privada en el siglo XIX, la Autora describe los cambios en el pasaje de Colonia a Repúblicas, entrelazando la historia política a la historia social. Las nuevas Repúblicas no reconocieron derechos políticos a las mujeres y tampoco realizaron cambios significativos en su estatus jurídico. Potthast argumenta que, a partir del debate sobre la prostitución y el trabajo asalariado femenino, como amenazas a la salud y al porvenir de las nuevas generaciones, el Estado empezó a tutelar la maternidad a través de leyes y reglamentaciones: ‘Esto les imponía a las mujeres una serie de cargas y de nuevas responsabilidades, pero a la vez les ofrecía la posibilidad de poder exigir mayores derechos’ (p. 198).

Las reformas de la educación permitieron a las mujeres (de los sectores alto e intermedio) un más fácil acceso a la instrucción y fueron precisamente las primeras universitarias y profesionales que dieron nacimiento al movimiento feminista. La Autora, en el capítulo ‘Ciudadanas y revolucionarias’, sintetiza la historia política de las mujeres en el siglo XX combinando la historia del feminismo latino con la historia del rol de las mujeres en las revoluciones (México, Cuba), en las guerrillas de los años setenta (Nicaragua, Chiapas) y en el populismo (con particular énfasis en la historia de Evita Perón). La prevalencia de la dimensión política refleja el actual estatus de los estudios, pero un análisis más profundo de la condición actual de las mujeres en el trabajo, la familia, la cultura, la vida cotidiana en países como México y Cuba podía haber enriquecido el libro.

Potthast reserva los últimos capítulos al nuevo movimiento femenino y a una discusión sobre las representaciones de feminidad y hombría en América latina. Como en la época del primer feminismo las mujeres supieron utilizar la solidaridad internacional y los valores tradicionales de la familia como argumentos para justificar la presencia femenina en el espacio público. Contribuyeron a la derrota de las dictaduras militares y a la vuelta de la democracia en los años ochenta. La dimensión individual de esta lucha puede ser evaluada a través de la llamada ‘literatura de testimonio’. Las historias de vida y las entrevistas contemporáneas permiten escribir una historia de las mujeres más rica y atractiva para el lector pero a pacto de ser combinada con otras fuentes y de no confundir la memoria con la historia.

Barbara Potthast ha logrado escribir una síntesis eficaz de la historia de las mujeres latinoamericanas, muy equilibrada en los juicios (la primera historiografía sobre mujeres se caracterizaba a veces por un enfoque mili-

tante y polémico). El libro es una lectura fascinante para el lector común y un útil instrumento para docentes y estudiantes en historia latinoamericana y en historia de las mujeres.

Eugenia Scarzanella, Università di Bologna

– *El imperio de las circunstancias. Las independencias hispanoamericanas y la revolución liberal española*, por Roberto Breña, El Colegio de México / Marcial Pons Historia, 2012.

Los virreinos y capitanías generales hispanoamericanas a fines del siglo XVIII eran más bien archipiélagos de pequeñas sociedades rurales o mineras, muy diferenciadas entre ellas en cuanto a la composición étnica de la población, la economía, la estructuración social y en muchos casos con sólo una minoría hispanohablante. Esto era el teatro muy diferenciado y localista en que se desarrollaron los procesos emancipadores americanos. Para comprenderlo el autor nos presenta un hilo conductor: fueron las circunstancias, en gran parte locales, que se impusieron sobre los proyectos políticos de los líderes de los movimientos de emancipación. Ni la perspectiva nacionalista del siglo XIX, ni la perspectiva de una revolución atlántica convencen al autor quien presenta una perspectiva que privilegia la dimensión hispánica, sobre todo un espacio explicativo a la multitud de factores de origen local y metropolitano, desde luego intrínsecamente ligados, que afectaron profundamente, con muchos altibajos, al liderazgo emancipador en sus ideas y en los resultados de sus esfuerzos.

Este libro está destinado no tanto a los académicos, sino sobre todo al público educado, interesado en el muy complejo ciclo revolucionario hispánico. En los prolegómenos presentados de manera clara para un público interesado, sale a la luz el clima psicológico que se desarrolló en las Américas y que Breña define como una desazón general entre las elites criollas, generada por las crecientes derrotas del Imperio y los caóticos acontecimientos peninsulares que desembocaron en la crisis de la Monarquía y reacciones como las juntas, la Regencia y las Cortes de Cádiz.

Los cuatro capítulos siguientes nos presentan unos actores políticos de primer nivel que intentaban, al mismo tiempo en que se llevaban a cabo las Cortes de Cádiz, tomar las riendas rumbo a la separación de España y la independencia. La presentación de Miranda, Bolívar y otros líderes del Sur y de la Nueva España tiene un hilo conductor claro y expresivo: el hecho de que casi todos fracasaron no tanto en sus objetivos militares, pues algunos sí lo lograron finalmente, sino que fracasaron en sus proyectos políticos.

¿Qué pasa en la realidad localista americana con sus ideas? La respuesta dependía de un complicado triángulo de factores procedentes de la metrópoli, el ideario de los precursores y las circunstancias locales. Breña sigue sus trayectorias a base de sus escritos políticos y cartas que presentan sus idearios y sus anhelos, en gran parte basados en modelos liberales exógenos, que a menudo no sabían reconciliar con la muy variada realidad política y social local. De ahí surgen desencantos, el eterno debate y dilema liberal de la primera mitad del siglo diecinueve sobre un ejecutivo fuerte o más libertades, la disyuntiva centralismo o federalismo. Fray Servando, en su *DISCURSO de las profecías* en la constituyente mexicana de 1823, reflejaba, de cierta manera, el desencanto de Bolívar al final de su vida.

Es cierto, las Cortes de Cádiz estaban divididas, no solamente entre conservadores y liberales, sino también entre liberales americanos y peninsulares que lograron bloquear el proyecto político americano, una frustración que contribuyó a la separación. La Constitución de Cádiz se cayó sobre todo porque era fruto de una minoría en contra de la opinión pública, la España rural y la Iglesia. Su destino en las Américas dependía en gran parte de circunstancias locales pero aquí también desempeñaban su papel la Iglesia y la opinión popular. Por su aparición tardía (1812) ya no pudo ser un antídoto a los movimientos insurgentes, aunque creo que en el caso novohispano era diferente por el entusiasmo criollo en pro de la constitución.

Breña nos presenta una mirada crítica al debate historiográfico sobre las vertientes hispánicas del liberalismo y del republicanismismo. No había un liberalismo hispanoamericano homogéneo sino un abanico de variantes que dependían de muchos factores, entre ellos los actores dominantes y circunstancias locales. De ahí las grandes diferencias en las experiencias constitucionales en Hispanoamérica del primer cuarto del siglo XIX. No contribuyeron mucho a la estabilidad política y cuando por fin llegó una cierta estabilidad, esto se debía más a la construcción de sistemas políticos en los que, como lo formulaba Guerra, 'las prácticas extraconstitucionales contaban más que los textos'. En términos de sociedad, creo que el gran reto para el liberalismo era que el Antiguo Régimen no terminó en Hispanoamérica entre 1812 y 1828. Imponerse o adaptarse era el dilema de gobernantes liberales decimonónicos, y no sólo los del primer cuarto de siglo. Al final el autor cuestiona y refuta de manera convincente los intentos historiográficos por separar el liberalismo del republicanismismo e incluso contraponerlos. El autor no comparte el enfoque atlántico, como ya se dijo al inicio de esta reseña. Este enfoque le parece muy útil en cuanto a ciertos temas como el comercio, la migración y la esclavitud, y también para contrarrestar las ópticas nacionalistas, pero para entender las revoluciones hispánicas des-

de la óptica político-intelectual, el autor presenta sus dudas de manera convincente.

Raymond Buve, Universiteit Leiden

– *The Inquisition in New Spain 1536-1820. A Documentary History*, by John Chuchiak IV, John Hopkins Press, 2012.

Most people imagine the Spanish Inquisition torturing and burning people. However, as John Chuchiak IV highlights in *The Inquisition in New Spain 1536-1820*, the Inquisition rarely used torture and it never burned people, rather it sent those considered recidivists to monarchical authorities that were the ones in charge of the executions. John Chuchiak IV clarifies many other misconceptions and stresses the fact that the Inquisition should be considered a policing agency rather than an executioner. With a thorough work of translation from ancient Spanish to English, Chuchiak exposes to a wider audience the intricate mechanisms of New Spain's inquisitorial system, in a work that will become an important reference for scholars studying colonial Latin American history, religion, law, and literature.

The Inquisition in New Spain 1536-1820. A Documentary History is composed by an introductory study and 52 translations of selected inquisitorial texts. In the introduction, Chuchiak streamlines the inquisitorial system, its personnel, its procedures, and highlights some of the differences between the Inquisition in Spain and in New Spain. Then, Chuchiak presents the translations that are divided in three parts. The first two parts are inquisitorial manuals, laws, regulations, and procedures, and the third part reports trials against blasphemous, bigamists, Jews, Protestants, false mystics, superstitious, hallucinogenic substances, and prohibited books. Each trial is introduced with a brief contextual analysis. This book represents a monumental task of palaeographic work (reading and transcribing ancient Spanish) and of translation of legal and ecclesiastical documents. Along with *The Spanish Inquisition 1478-1614: An Anthology of Sources* by Lu Ann Homza – which translates inquisitorial documents from the Spanish Inquisition – Chuchiak's book fills the gap by exploring this key Spanish institution across the Atlantic.

The task of covering more than 1550 volumes of inquisitorial documents spanned over three centuries is daunting. Chuchiak assembles a selection of texts meant to be representative of the inquisitorial priorities across the centuries and devotes most of his work to the prosecution of Protestantism, Judaism, and false mysticism in the sixteenth and seven-

teenth centuries. He provides a few examples of trials against books, mores, and the political dissidence that characterized the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. In consequence, scholars interested in the censorship of books and regulations of mores, such as dances, folk songs, and festivities, should consider the works of Maya Ramos Smith, Antonio García de León, María Águeda Méndez, and the *Catálogo de textos marginados* of El Colegio de México, which are exclusively in Spanish. It is also important to keep in mind, when reading this volume, that there was an eternal discrepancy between the prescriptions issued by the inquisitorial laws and manuals and the actual procedures of the Inquisition, especially in New Spain. Although Chuchiak articulates many of these exceptions, it should be noted, for example, that although defence lawyers were a possibility, they were rarely used, and they never defended the accused, contrarily to what Chuchiak says. Inquisitorial lawyers had the role of facilitating the accused's confession because, being a Christian, the accused was always seen as sinful.

Although the Inquisition was an unfortunate episode in the history of humanity, Chuchiak reveals how its organization was actually a great achievement. Most of our actual bureaucracy and judiciary systems were built on its structures. Moreover, the Inquisition still resonates in our days when democratic governments justify the use of torture (e.g. waterboarding) in order to obtain information or when they regulate mores (e.g. pornography) through censorship. In the Foreword, Asuncion Lavrin remarks how the 'condemnations of such [inquisitorial] practices became part of progressive legal systems' (p. xiv). It is remarkable how many of these very condemned practices found their way back in the same progressive systems.

Elena Deanda, Washington College

– *Identity, Ritual, and Power in Colonial Puebla*, by Frances L. Ramos, University of Arizona Press, 2012.

This book is a systematic study of the ritual culture that developed in the city of Puebla in the colonial period, with a focus on the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century. The author has examined the minutes of the *cabildo* (municipal council) of Puebla for the period under study and also other printed primary sources. She argues that this ritual culture, whose main centre was the *cabildo*, was a crucial aspect of the life of Puebla without which we cannot understand the politics of the city in the

colonial period. Ramos contends that this fundamental role of ritual and ceremony was due to the fact that ritual was not simply a reflection of the city's politics but was essential to the practice of politics as well. It was because of this that the *cabildo* was more than willing to spend enormous amounts of money to stage elaborate public ceremonies. In this regard, the author asserts that in order to fully understand the importance and significance of these rituals and ceremonies, we need to go beyond the interpretation of their meaning and symbolic aspects and examine their material underpinnings as well: the economic benefits that the frequent staging of these ceremonies brought to the city, in general, and to the members of the city council, in particular.

While the study focuses on the local level, the author never loses sight of the larger context and the fact that the city of Puebla was deeply involved in imperial politics. After an introductory chapter describing the history of the city and the place it occupied in the viceroyalty of New Spain, *Identity, Ritual, And Power in Colonial Puebla* explores the imperial connection by examining the ceremonies related to the proclamation of new monarchs and the welcoming of new viceroys. The Spanish Crown developed a rich and dense repertoire of symbols, images, and rituals which were designed to produce obedience and submission without recourse to violence. In this regard, it could be argued that the Spanish colonial system of rule was rather effective, for the Spanish monarchs were able to rule their remote overseas possessions with little disruption and without a standing army or a regular police force for more than two hundred years. Royal proclamations and funerals, vice regal entries, triumphal arches and catafalques, paintings, engravings, buildings, and the constant public exhibition of royal officials in civic and religious ceremonies all contributed to developing a sense of loyalty to the distant and invisible figure of the king, and helped give the system its long-lasting stability.

After investigating the imperial connection, the book focuses on an examination of the religious festivals that dominated the city's life and which contributed so much to giving Puebla its Catholic and imperial identity. One of the most interesting contributions of this study is the chapter entitled 'The Industry of Spectacle' in which the author shows how this very elaborate ritual culture was not only of political significance but also had important repercussions in the economy of the city. In the last part of the study, the author investigates the political implications of the disputes and controversies that very often arose during the celebration of these public rituals. The study concludes by looking at changes that were taking place at the imperial level in the late eighteenth century in regard to the role this

ceremonial culture was supposed to play in the cities of the empire and how Puebla aldermen often resisted many of these changes.

Identity, Ritual, And Power in Colonial Puebla is a significant contribution to an aspect of the history of colonial Spanish America that is in need of further study. A handful of books have recently started to explore this topic, but, as the author points out, they all have focused on Mexico City. In that respect, this study will offer an excellent opportunity to compare and contrast the ritual culture of colonial Puebla with that of the capital and other cities and the extent to which they shared a common ritual grammar. While many historians tend to see the study of these ceremonies and festivals as of secondary importance, the author takes them seriously. She is right to emphasize their significance, as they are an excellent window into a deeper and fuller knowledge of the mechanisms of power in colonial society. However, there is an unresolved tension throughout the book regarding the ways in which political ritual should be conceptualized. At times, the author follows Clifford Geertz and asserts that ‘public ritual constituted real political work’ (p. xix) while other times she follows the opposite view by taking a clear functionalist approach to the study of ritual (ritual serves power, ritual is a tool of domination) (p. 175), a view that quite contradicts the idea that public rituals were real politics and not just the mask of power, that power did not exist before or outside the ritual activities.

This book will be attractive to a variety of readers. Although it is a specialized monograph, it is written with clarity and offers a good overview of many aspects of life in a Spanish colonial city. In that regard, it will be accessible not only to undergraduate students, but it could be attractive to a more general public as well.

Alejandro Cañeque, University of Maryland

– *Chocolate and Corn Flour. History, Race, and Place in the Making of ‘Black’ Mexico*, por Laura A. Lewis, Duke University Press, 2012.

Para entender y comprender las identidades contemporáneas de quienes viven en la costa de Guerrero y Oaxaca, en el sur de México, hay que echar mano de la historia. Solo que la historia es polifónica; eso es lo que nos muestra Laura Lewis en este libro que documenta las circunstancias en las que los habitantes de San Nicolás, en la costa guerrerense, mantienen y recrean una identidad particular que es explicada de una manera por los agentes externos y de otra, muy diferente, por los propios San Nicolaitas.

En este libro Laura Lewis analiza el complejo de las relaciones en las cuales, en una posición superordinada, varios agentes externos tratan de imponer sobre los San Nicolaitas ideas y estereotipos que provienen de otras realidades. Así desde académicos, promotores gubernamentales de la cultura, organismos no gubernamentales e integrantes de la iglesia católica interactúan con la gente de esta localidad a la que se acercan con ideas preconcebidas. Contrariamente a lo que explícitamente proponen, con estas perspectivas los agentes externos contribuyen a mantener y reproducir estereotipos sobre las prácticas cotidianas de los afrodescendientes, al mismo tiempo que esencializan, mediante identificaciones como *afromexicano*, *afromestizo*, *negro*, a la gente de San Nicolás quienes manifiestamente rechazan tales calificaciones, porque ellos se consideran simplemente *morenos*.

Laura Lewis ha podido ilustrar y analizar las circunstancias en la que los San Nicolaitas construyen los contenidos que alimentan sus identidades a través de tres narrativas: en una de ellas es relevante la historia oral, pues el medio por el que los morenos mantienen viva la idea de la travesía que hubieron de pasar para llegar al lugar donde ahora están. Es parte de una tradición oral de las comunidades de la costa en la que se refrenda la historia de un barco, tal vez con esclavos, que naufragó en las costas del Pacífico y sus pasajeros escaparon de sus captores y más tarde poblaron estos lugares; sin duda se trata de una versión de la historia que no ha sido corroborada, pero que tiene gran riqueza de significados para entender la manera en la que se conciben los morenos de San Nicolás: como personas libres. La huida, el barco, la historia de cimarrones, es una metáfora de libertad a la que los morenos se asocian. Y lo hacen duplicadamente, libres del barco y más tarde liberados políticamente por los indígenas a quienes, según otra representación que complementa esta historia, se debe la independencia de la que gozan los mexicanos. Por eso el día en que los mexicanos conmemoran su independencia de España, el 16 de septiembre de cada año, los morenos de San Nicolás la celebran la fecha con un desfile en la que la principal figura, La América, es una mujer morena ataviada con indumentaria que representa la patria vestida con símbolos indígenas. A esto se añade el hecho de que San Nicolás, una representación católica que da nombre al pueblo es festejado cada año, pero la imagen del Santo que preside esta celebración no reside en la iglesia del pueblo. La imagen de San Nicolás se encuentra a 300 kilómetros de distancia, en Zitlala, poblado indígena situado en la Sierra donde año con año recurren los San Nicolaitas para solicitar a San Nicolás que visite su pueblo durante las festividades anuales. Son los indígenas quienes acceden a esta petición al tiempo que manifiestan su simpatía y solidaridad con los morenos. Tanto metafóricamente como en la cotidiani-

dad estos eventos muestran la complejidad de las relaciones y las identificaciones a que dan lugar los intereses que entran en juego en San Nicolás.

Una mirada detallada a lo largo del libro nos indica que la comunidad adquiere en este contexto una posición central: la comunidad es la que mantiene la identidad. Así, con quienes la autora dialoga es con los morenos de San Nicolás, que se identifican con una imagen religiosa y de frente a otra comunidad, la de Zitlala, o las comunidades indígenas con las que establece relaciones más frecuentes. Frente al resto de los mexicanos, los de San Nicolás reafirman su mexicanidad y deferencia por los indios a través de la representación de la América, La América representa a los indios que liberaron México de acuerdo a la interpretación que hacen los San Nicolaitas de este acontecimiento. Así como atribuyen a ellos la tierra y el haberles proporcionado su territorio que consideran fue producto de la donación de una cacica indígena. Con estos datos, aunque históricamente imprecisos, los morenos de San Nicolás entienden su presente y reconstruyen su pasado para explicarse a ellos y a los otros su condición de Gente de San Nicolás.

La centralidad que adquiere la comunidad en la identidad de los San Nicolaitas es fundamental, es el vínculo que mantienen aun cuando salen de sus lugar de origen en busca de un mejor sustento. Tal es la fortaleza del lazo comunitario que los que se van a los Estados Unidos lo hacen para ganar dinero para construir mejores casas en su comunidad la que siempre piensan en retornar. También la raza es parte de la comunidad, pues en este caso no alude necesariamente a factores fenotípicos, pues aquí significa lazos familiares, y familia significa comunidad. Provistos de este bagaje ritual y discursivo en el que los morenos son una comunidad y una familia, a pesar de su diferencias internas, los San Nicolaitas enfrentan las representaciones fosilizadas, estereotipadas y esencialistas de quienes los quieren convertir en decreto en 'afromexicanos' o 'negros' y la autora, Laura Lewis, consigue mostrar a través de todo este recorrido los equívocos teóricos que se cometen cuando se quiere entender hechos históricos particulares con perspectivas que pretenden resumir en un sólo cajón la riqueza y complejidad de las relaciones sociales en las que se insertan los humanos, en este caso los habitantes de San Nicolás.

Jorge Hernández Díaz, Universidad Autónoma 'Benito Juárez' de Oaxaca

– *Allegories of Wildness: Three Nambikwara Ethnohistories of Sociocultural and Linguistic Change and Continuity*, by Edwin B. Reesink, Rozenberg Publishers, 2010.

Some peoples around the world are indelibly marked by the works and lives of famous anthropologists. Such is the link between the Nuer of Evans-Pritchard, the Tikopia of Raymond Firth, and the Trobrianders of Malinowski, among others. So, of course, are the Nambikwara of Claude Lévi-Strauss, despite the short period spent by the French anthropologist in the savannahs of western Brazil. So strong was the image of Nambikwara's sociality and politics drawn by Lévi-Strauss that, apparently, some wrong or controversial guesses were continuously reproduced by ethnologists, even in the presence of much ethnographic evidence to the contrary. In this recent book on how Nambikwara languages, sociocultural and political histories balance between continuity and change, Edwin Reesink has accepted the challenge to defy old images (that, as the author constantly remind us, die hard). In a word, Reesink dared to write about the Nambikwara after Lévi-Strauss and against all these people that, in Brazil, in anthropology, and elsewhere, insists on seeing the Nambikwara as a backward people, the wildest and most primitive Indians in Brazil.

The book consists of three parts, each one designed to deal with one of the Nambikwara's local groups/peoples (the linguistic branches of 'the Nambikwara ensemble'): the Name (the Latundê in present day Rondônia state), the Fame (the Sabanê, the most divergent language within the family) and the Fate (the Sararé in the Guaporé Valley). The author achieves an impressive level of detail to address the history of these three Nambikwara collectivities, from north to south (remembering the Nambikwara linguistic family is divided in two language clusters, the Northern and the Southern, plus the most-divergent Sabanê). Each part is divided into two chapters dedicated to different kinds of ethno-histories. The first is an (ethno)history from a bureaucratic and documental point of view about the Indians and the whites, including federal agencies, local powers, ideologies and economic systems. The second is an ethnohistory based on the histories as told by the Nambikwara individuals themselves, those who lived the (almost always terrible) experiences narrated in the official records.

The part on the Name, explores the tense relations between the Tubarão/Aikaná (a non-Nambikwara indigenous people in southern Rondônia) and a recently contacted Nambikwara group, the Latundê. Here the author opens his massive report on inter-ethnic violence in the region and on the inefficiency of Brazilian authorities regarding newly contacted peoples. Throughout the book Reesink reconstructs many bureaucratic histories and

micropolitical events that teach us a lot about different segments of Brazil's national society. In fact, this book is not just about the Nambikwara, but also brings us many acute insights about Brazilian society.

Departing from the history of the Sabanê, the part on the Fame explores the reasons for a certain construction of the Nambikwara people's fame: their primitiveness and their simplicity. Reesink points to the role of ideas of explorers like Rondon and ethnographers like Roquette-Pinto and Lévi-Strauss in the diffusion of this Nambikwara image, arguing against misconceptions put forward by these authors, but acknowledging considerable hurdles to defy such great works – two Brazilian national heroes and one of the world's most famous anthropologists. This section also steps back in the history of the west Brazilian frontier (eighteenth century) to portray the interesting relations between the Nambikwara with colonial villages and runaway slaves, and to put forward some hypotheses about the identity of some obscure indigenous colonial subjects, like the Cabixi: a label fluctuating, during the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, between the Nambikwara and their neighbours, the Paresí, and which, as an ethnic entity, still remains elusive, and may possibly be a mixed group of both – an appealing suggestion.

The part on the Fate is the largest and most thoroughly elaborated section of the book. The author discusses at length one of the most tenacious ideas about the Nambikwara: their poor hunter-gatherer economy and their nomadic lifestyle, which are read by anthropologists, politicians and laymen alike as indexes of a loose bond to the territory. Reesink argues convincingly, based on factual evidence, for agricultural communities with very strong bonds with their territories strengthened by the relationships between dead kin and the sand where they are buried. In this third part the author tightly stresses the tragedy of the Nambikwara during the second half of twentieth century, addressing the amazing incompetency and neglect of the Brazilian authorities in the face of the dire suffering of many post-contact villages, literally being bulldozed by epidemics, greedy landowners and corrupt officials, in a process that brought virtually all the Nambikwara peoples and languages to the brink of extinction.

What has been done to the Nambikwara truly might be depicted as genocide, says Reesink. But, even amid the grief, prejudice, and violence that characterizes Nambikwara (ethno)histories, the final mood in the conclusion of this book is not only one of sorrow. The various Nambikwara peoples are recreating their social and political lives in similar ways as in the past; their populations are increasing steadfastly; they recovered some relevant parts of their territories formerly taken and are becoming more con-

scious of the complex Brazilian political framework. To paraphrase Marshall Sahlins, the Nambikwara were one of those societies that knew how to create, by resilient agency in dreadful circumstances, their present conditions of existence.

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– *Writing Across Cultures. Narrative Transculturation in Latin America*, by Angel Rama, translated by David Frye, Duke University Press, 2012.

In this posthumously published book, the famed literary critic Angel Rama develops extensively his theory of transculturation as the central, most revealing and sustained phenomenon in the formation of Latin America's cultural heterogeneity. The book's thesis and specific essays on the work of the now classical narratives by Juan Rulfo, Guimarães Rosa and José María Arguedas had a large impact in the last decade of the twentieth century in the field of Latin American literature and culture for scholars who read Spanish. This excellent translation is welcome. Rama's thesis will now have a chance to be known by scholars of cultural studies at large and thus his seminal ideas will circulate and be disseminated widely as the reach of global English grows. The book's dedication to anthropologists Darcy Ribeiro and John Murra underscores the close, fruitful and decisive turn towards the creative power of the local in Rama's historical thinking under the light of ethnography. It is Rama's encounter with anthropology that enables him to cross the artificially erected barrier between 'high' lettered cultures and 'low' oral cultures and to begin to map regions rather than post-colonial nations, cultural systems rather than authors, original colonial aesthetic usages of Spanish rather than distortions of an original than never existed as the powerful engines of Latin America's originality. In this regard there is no need to elaborate further the crucial relationship of Rama's concept of transculturation to Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (1940/1995) or to José María Arguedas' ethnographic texts. The book's first two chapters provide an extensive and well organized discussion of the evolution of a cultural conceptualization that gave rise to many monographic studies as it seemed to resonate in almost all corners of cultural phenomena in Latin America.

The English translation profits from an intelligent and well informed 'Introduction' by David Frye. The short bio-graphical sketch situates Rama and his evolution from a literary critic into a cultural critic from his beginnings in Uruguay to his mature years in exile in Venezuela, the United

States and France. Rama's exile provided his own encounter with a Latin America other than the tightly woven urban settings of the River Plate. Inhabiting different geo-political spaces that seemed to stem from histories yet unknown to his literary frame works Rama keen's intelligence, voracious reading and comprehensive intellectual background enabled him to re-conceptualize radically the received understanding of the cultural unfolding of post-colonial Latin America and to weigh in the consequences of the long years of coloniality. Joining the radical search for deep and comprehensive understanding of Latin America already underway in the hands of literary historians such as Antonio Cándido in Brazil, Antonio Cornejo Polar in Peru, Rama worked with critically developed concepts of region and cultural non-dialectical heterogeneity. Rama's transnational considerations enabled him to place in dialogue not only the work of great anthropologists who had not been aware of each other's quest – Ortiz and Arguedas – but also the radical originality of fiction writers whose aesthetic inquiries – Arguedas and Rulfo – had been carried out in the absence of each other's presence. Both anthropologists and fiction writers had been puzzling over similar questions: the multiple destructions, recoveries, resistances, assimilations, negotiations, refashioning, survivals and creations entailed by the moments, events and movements in the cultural formations born out of the colonial clash of peoples and cultures. This multiplicity and simultaneity of processes is what Rama conceptualizes under the name of transculturation and in doing so he not only relocates the work of each national intellectual and artists into a zone of global history but also endows the concept with the historical might and theoretical wings to fly across disciplines and language specific cultural contours. A good example of this kind of interdisciplinary cross pollination can be found in Rama's study of Arguedas' *Los Ríos Profundos* (1958) and his rendition of the novel's text as an extensive musical score(pp. 146, 150, 167-180).

A fundamental assumption in Rama's empirically based theory of transculturation is the rejection of the often assumed asymmetrical dynamics of acculturation or colonization by which the colonizers impose a 'superior' culture and the colonized accept, benefit and borrow extensively in order to join the temporal order of 'civilization' or 'modernity' with either good or risible imitations. In this sense Rama avoids the pits falls of Homi Bhabha's psychoanalytical concept of mimicry. With Rama's theorization, the long contention of Latin American intellectuals regarding their intertextual but local and insurgent cultural creativity achieves an unassailable position, one which is witnessed by the seminal power and originality of the very concept of transculturation. The tight succession of chapters sustains success-

fully his central thesis: ‘Almost from the beginning Latin American writers avoided any hint of direct connection with Spain and preferred to give themselves different cultural lineages’, such as Italian, and classical literature in colonial times, and French and British after Independence. Latin American writers were moved ‘by their desire to break free of their roots and be independent’ (p. 3). Perhaps the most important of Rama’s achievements is his own discovery – via ethnography – of the past and present potency of the Amerindian cultural component in Latin America. It is this emphasis on the multiplicity of the openness of Latin America’s coloniality that allows Rama’s theory of transculturation to bear fruit for his analysis of both contemporary renditions of myths of origin among the Desãna (*Antes o mundo não existia*) in Brazil (p. 51) and the tightly crafted and singular world of Rulfo’s fiction done in the key of Jalisco’s Spanish and Scandinavian novelists such as Halldor Laxness and Kanut Hansun (p. 71).

Despite the appearance of new theoretical debates on globalization and neo-cosmopolitanisms, Rama’s theory of cultural region remains not only vibrant, well informed but and full of explanatory thrust. His original analysis and sophisticated appreciation of linguistic problematics as well as creative aesthetic solutions at the heart of the work of Latin America’s classics have the capacity to lay bare the aesthetic event taking place at the heart of each text. For first time readers of Rama this book offers a clearly articulated version of transculturation theory, a good view of his important Latin American sources – José Carlos Mariátegui, Jorge Luis Borges, Pagú, Oswaldo de Andrade – and the events upon which this concept is developed. *Writing across Cultures* should be necessary reading for scholars working in cultural studies, global literature, diaspora studies, and post-colonial problematics and of course, Latin America’s vast cultural history.

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