CULTURE AND POLITICS IN THE "LATIN AMERICAN" CITY

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THE MOBILITY OF WORKERS UNDER ADVANCED CAPITALISM: DOMINI-
CAN MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES. By Ramona Hernández.
(New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. Pp. 227. $49.50 cloth,
$18.95 paper.)

CAPITAL CITY POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA: DEMOCRATIZATION AND
EMPOWERMENT. Edited by David J. Myers and Henry A. Dietz. (Boul-
der: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2002. Pp. 410. $65.00 cloth.)

MIGRATION, MUJERCITAS, AND MEDICINE MEN: LIVING IN URBAN
MEXICO. By Valentina Napolitano. (Berkeley: University of Califor-
nia Press, 2002. Pp. 256. $49.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

LINKING CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE: URBAN POPULAR MOVE-
MENTS, THE LEFT, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PERU, 1980–1992. By
Gerd Schönwälder. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Uni-
versity Press, 2002. Pp. 244. $50.00 cloth.)

LATINO METROPOLIS. By Victor M. Valle and Rodolfo D. Torres. (Minne-
apolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Pp. 248. $18.95 paper.)

The contemporary human condition is urban. The majority of Latin
Americans reside in urban areas; cities make a disproportionate contri-
bution to economic well-being and are increasingly understood as the
incubators of innovation, as well as the strategic arenas for citizenship
and the principal influences on consumption. More than physical loca-
tions, cities are windows into every aspect of the human condition such
that, as Ed Soja has claimed, "to an increasing degree we are all urban-
ists" (2003, 269). Embracing the positive possibilities of such a claim,
however, is constrained by the narrow field of vision offered by schol-
ars of the Latin American city. The dominant optic is to write about
cities through representations of "familiar" urban spaces, a reliance on
established categorizations of human agency (the informal sector be-
ing perhaps the most pervasive), and on framing narratives through
concerns for reform and planning. Few attempts consider how the meanings

and representations of spaces are contested by different social and political groups, and fewer still consider everyday spatial practices.

Yet the opportunity for accounts of the urban condition in Latin America to hold explanatory value to social, political and cultural change is immense. Latin American cities may be perceived as fractal or fragmented spaces, physically and metaphorically divided by "walls" and gates, organized into corridors and micro-zones, run by city managers and private security companies. To García Canclini (1995, 3), urban designs aspire to a mimicry of those bits of the "non" or "disintegrated" U.S. city, the malls, ex-urbs and pastiche downtowns, or to follow what Marc Augé (2000) detects as a shift for cities to resemble airports and other "supermodern" non-places. Littered with unfinished or never-started projects, buildings that no longer serve their primary purpose, cities in Latin America reflect the lost aura of modernity that, according to Rem Koolhaas, failed to deliver on its promise to transform quantity into quality. We are left, following Koolhaas again, with a condition in which urbanity is not recognized as a cultural concept since it would appear that people can be "miserable in anything and ecstatic in anything" (Koolhaas 1995, 961). But is the recourse to embrace postmodernist nihilism, reject urbanism and consider only architecture, or adopt the autarky that is suggested by some notions of the sustainable city?

A possible direction for thinking about the Latin American city is to afford less attention to those agents who think that their decisions are capable of bearing influence, despite, of course, the ever-growing evidence of the informal, illegal or vernacular city. Considering everyday life warns against dismissing places as superficial and generic, and the fault of developers, architects and politicians, conducive only to diminished face-to-face encounters, anomie and depleted collective memory. As Koolhaas (1995) notes, the urban spaces that academics decry as superficial urbanism are invested with complex meanings and identities by those who work, shop and live in them. As a raft of interesting studies have shown, it is vital that we understand how people "make do" in spaces no longer serving their original purpose but whose imagination has reanimated everyday urbanism (Simone 2004; Stoller 2002). With globalization, of course, morphology no longer defines the city and the impact of everyday practices on the city is similarly de-placed. In Jackson Heights, New York, a taco stand serves as a clearinghouse for land sales in the city of Puebla, Mexico, as a temporary bank for migrants without immigration papers, and as a source of information about jobs, health care benefits and housing opportunities. The deals cut in this one location in Jackson Heights may have a more direct bearing upon the social geographies of cities in Mexico than decisions taken by powerful actors in Mexico City.

Latino Metropolis offers a fascinating tour of Los Angeles as a battle-ground for a war of cultural and political representation. The book is predicated on the observation that Latinos are almost the demographic majority in both the county and city of Los Angeles, will become the largest ethnic group in the state by 2040 and there will be more Latinos nationwide than all other ethnic groupings combined by 2050. More-over, Latinos are the largest group in the Los Angeles industrial workforce and have therefore suffered more than most from the vicious deindustrialization of the past two decades, making up jobs instead in a post-Fordist environment as cleaners, construction workers and back-of-house food preparation rather than as IT or media executives. Latinos therefore have been denied a significant middle class in a city in which the middle class has been squeezed. Beyond demography and employ-ment trends, however, Valle and Torres seek to explore the dialectics of place, how Latinos are implicated and actively involved in the repre-sentation of spaces, within constraints set out by economic geographies and power relations.

The lead-off illustration indicates an intellectual debt to Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* and Soja's *Thirdspace* as the Greater East Side is uncov-ered as a constellation of manufacturing and consumer spaces created and recreated in its relations to the rest of the city economy. Although this relation has resulted in the predominantly Latino East Side being a space of poverty, Valle and Torres are at pains to indicate how this con-dition is functional rather than dysfunctional to the political economy of the city. The East Side is embedded within a system of political su-pervision and planning that affords resources according to largesse and electoral back-scratching, a particular problem for the Latinos who un-til recently held low levels of enfranchisement. The Los Angeles space economy is dominated by what Valle and Torres term a "stealth gov-ernment" of technocrats and clientelistic political leaders who have es-tablished clusters of single-purpose cities that gerrymander out the working population such that in the example of City of Industry, over 70,000 employees commute in daily to an area with only about 200 reg-istered voters, giving the former no say over the services and condi-tions of work, fragmenting their labor power, and allowing City to suck in redevelopment funds with little oversight.

Valle and Torres argue that class more than race (other than where it is racism) should be reintroduced as the organizing principle of urban political economy and should be accompanied by the demystification of the culture industry's attempts to construct and reinforce discourses of race. This task, the authors point out, "requires an understanding of the new linkages between culture industries and the new urban politi-cal economy, an understanding of the changing social relations within and between cultural sectors, and a deeper appreciation of the vitality

of lived popular culture in the Latino metropolis" (187). A close look at the 1992 Los Angeles riots demonstrates how the media's "discursive reflexes" forwarded a narrative melodrama of "race relations" through repeated plays of the police brutality against Rodney King and the beatings of white truck driver Reginald Denny. A script framed by race relations allowed neat parallels to 1965 Watts and contemporary images of South Side gangs even when African American gang members made up only about 10 percent of arrests. Other groups, notably Koreans, were introduced as hardworking victims, but the media had difficulty incorporating Latinos who (despite constituting 49 percent of the riot area population) were not perceived as "insiders" by a media that preferred African Americans as community representatives. Instead, the narrative introduced Latinos by conflating illegal actions (over half of those arrested were Latino) with the ascription of illegal alien status, and which in turn fuelled notions of dangerous outsiders that would underpin Proposition 187 two years later. Scripting Latinos as aliens, however, avoided discussion of how less than one percent of damage took place in the Latino East Side or how in the riot zone approximately 40 percent of damaged businesses were Latino owned. Offering what they call a post-Fordist analysis of the riot, the authors suggest that the riot was motivated by chronic poverty, rapid economic change, police oppression and opportunism.

The culture industries are also shown to have been hard at work constructing "Spanish-American cookery" as the acceptable taste of Mexican food. Valle and Torres attempt to deconstruct the representation of Mexican cuisine to reveal a "gastronomic culture war" that serves as a gauge to Latino cultural power (71). What emerges is that in a city in which public intercourse is increasingly dependent upon the consumption of cultural products, the Latino community has few representatives of what Sharon Zukin calls a "critical infrastructure," the knowledge workers such as art collectors and restaurant reviewers who define the meaning of taste. Without this infrastructure elites can appropriate the images and symbols of multiculturalism and inscribe them into the built environment in ways that communicate their values and marketing drives. Thus in the early twentieth century, Mexican cooking served as a marketable image of Los Angeles that, with the backing of the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, was used to promote efforts to save the Spanish missions and remove food traders from the downtown plazas. Elite nostalgia for an imagined space, however, confronted the everyday practices of growing cohorts of arriving Latinos immigrants who sought out restaurants, theaters and clubs that reminded them of home. Valle and Torres trace a contest over who defines the urban foodscape for the following fifty years, with Mexican restaurants being co-opted into revitalization projects, "Spanish" monikers being dropped for

Mexican during the emergent Chicano identification of the 1940s and the application of generic "Hispanic" nomenclature in the 1970s. By the 1980s a small group of non-Latino chefs took it upon themselves to reinterpret ingredients well known to the back-of-house Latino washer-uppers. Emphasizing freshness and piquancy, and thereby repeat-ing long-standing representations of Mexican foods as erotic, the new label of Southwestern cuisine blasted the nouvelle tamale into poststructuralist orbit. Identifying the Latino middle class's equation of culture with Europe as complicit in detaching cultural history from the food on the restaurant plate, Valle and Torres claim that we need look to the Latino working class and new immigrants driven by a nos-talgia for "home cooking" and a growing Spanish-language media less constrained by corporate influence to reconstruct the cultural mean-ings of food.

The final chapters analyze the possibilities for "Latino power" to build a more genuine multicultural metropolis. A detailed investiga-tion is presented of moves to anchor downtown redevelopment with a new sports arena (eventually the Staples Center) that involved a de-cades-long contest between an alliance of councilors, developers, blue-blood families and the *Los Angeles Times* versus representatives of the Los Angeles suburbs. Discursively the struggle pitched the continued depiction of downtown as a business and leisure space, cast as both strategic and natural in the tough, new global economy and therefore a legitimate call on vast public subsidies, against suburban taxpayers denied proportional voice on decision-making bodies, anxious about the city's debt and doubtful about the claims of new jobs. As Valle and Torres skillfully reveal, between these extremes, service sector unions guided by an emerging Latino leadership sponsored a range of grassroots organizations, principally the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), to ensure that any deals guaranteed living wage proposals, union access and the hire of local area workers. The move-ments provided a test-bed for ethnic-sensitive, class-driven politics that delivered upon immediate goals, exhibited a greater awareness of the zero-sum outcomes of competition between Latino and African Ameri-can communities, and marked Latinos generally as a growing force in city politics. However, political representation is shown not to have translated into cultural influence; contesting the Staples Center was not used to re-imagine the representation of working-class Latinos in down-town redevelopment. By contrast, the analysis of Whittier Narrows, a large area of green space in East Los Angeles used for floodwater con-trol and once a playground for an Angelino upper-middle class, reveals how Latinos have appropriated a public space that is now used for soc-cer, piñata parties, low-rider cruising and barbecues, sports arenas dedi-cated to *charros* and *rock en español*. Appropriation has also contested

the Narrows' historical significance and its contemporary popular representation as symbolized by the vernacular naming of one foreshore as "Marrano Beach."

   Latino Metropolis is an excellent collection of interesting narratives that uncovers the multiple roles of class and ethnicity in the economic and cultural construction of Los Angeles. The authors avoid resorting to lazy notions of cultural mosaics or depictions of Latinos bringing vitality and honest hard work to claim a space in the symbolic economy girded by religion or blessed by some existential association with community life centered around the barrio as *the* "Latino" urban space. Thus we are saved from the cringing stereotypes of Latinos "tropicalizing cold urban space" through an "aesthetic war" that pits a "glorious sorbet palette of Mexican and Caribbean house paint—verde limon, rosa mexicano, azul anil, morado" against the psychosexual anxieties of white residential culture (Davis 2001, 64). Nevertheless, I felt uneasy that *Latino Metropolis* does not problematize ethnicity and especially the signifier *Latino*. Perhaps the weakest section of the book is the call for *mestizaje* to be reconsidered as both a cultural and political metaphor that can confront the U.S. preference for one language, genome or cultural heritage, and that is instead inclusive, resistant to trite commodification and challenges simple representations by reference to ambiguous hybridities. Yet there is no mention of how identities for example are made regional and ethnic, and how these rely upon racial epithets that associate indigenousness with inferiority, dirt, sloth, mysticism, or how the culture industries cast indigenous peoples and many Latinos as out of place in the chic boutiques and "regional cuisine" restaurants of Latin America just as in Los Angeles. "Race relations" is not the preserve of the *Los Angeles Times* as indicated by the support for various anti-immigration and anti–affirmative action propositions in some sections of the Latino community. We might call it false consciousness, but unless the implications are discussed the authors could be accused of a Latino triumphalism: a new politics for Los Angeles rests on Latinos becoming numerically dominant, an ability to perceive interests obscured to others and supported by journalists with a "more developed sense of social responsibility [that] stems from pragmatic acknowledgement that their immigrant audiences rely upon their news reports to survive in the new society" (182). Perhaps a concluding chapter to engage with wider arguments of class, ethnicity and urban space might have provided some temper.

   Also concerned with the importance of class to the political space economy, *The Mobility of Workers under Advanced Capitalism: Dominican Migration to the United States* offers a deeply pessimistic account of migration to New York. Ramona Hernández tackles one of the oldest chestnuts in the social sciences, namely, whether people are pushed out of

their place of residence because of poverty in the sending community or are pulled toward the attractions of the host community. But what, Hernández asks, if the host community has no use for these migrants? The central claim of *The Mobility of Workers* is that the economic rationality of pushes and pulls is not sufficient to explain the movements of Dominicans or their subsequent achievements. Rather, migration needs to be understood within more complex political and social changes that in the case of Dominicans moving to New York questions their conventional labeling as "successful."

From approximately 1960 to the mid 1990s, Dominicans left their country in large numbers, arriving to Inwood and Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan. Hernández provides a succinct and interesting overview of how the geopolitics of the Dominican Republic encouraged emigration. The assassination of Rafael Trujillo in 1961 and the subsequent coup and U.S. intervention that lead to the administration of Joaquin Belaguer created an institutional framework for industrialization, family planning and the deliberate promotion of emigration. The United States played its part by accepting large numbers of Dominicans whose political affiliations made them a threat to Belaguer. Hernández, however, regards most departures as economically motivated because, despite high levels of economic growth, the unemployment rate in the Republic remained high. Once in New York, and contrary to influential studies that identify a prominent middle class among the migrants that helps them become successful small entrepreneurs, Hernández presents data to argue that most Dominicans' lower income background and few skills meant they were poorly positioned to enter a labor market undergoing rapid de-industrialization. Consequently, Dominicans display higher-than-host levels of unemployment and non-permanent employment, lower remuneration for same jobs, as well as worse performance against other migrant groups in New York.

Yet Hernández's emphasis on blue-collar labor markets begs why Dominicans persisted in tying their well-being to segments of a labor market in obvious decline for over thirty years and why they have not been more successful entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, the reliance of *The Mobility of Workers* on official data in an economy undergoing informalization is a significant limitation. In contrast, Bourgois's ethnography of Puerto Ricans in East Harlem finds that as many as 36 percent of men may be "missing" from the census (2003, 6). Bourgois also reveals that the poverty, ill health and drug use of young Puerto Ricans is conditioned by relations to a labor market that they perceive as regarding them as "idiotic buffoons" (Bourgois 2003, 53). Differently, Stoller's study shows how the Senegalese, also largely unwanted by the formal labor market and immigration services, and faced with significant racial discrimination and language barriers, have become prominent players

in highly competitive and largely informal sectors of the labor market without having the political and social networks available to Dominicans (Stoller 2002). Migrant flows from conditions of poverty and condoned by an unofficial policy of exodus to locations that erect institutional barriers to employment are not unique to Dominicans.

While Bourgois and Stoller weave together accounts about class and race, Hernández is solely concerned with class, and both provide vivid mental pictures of the city while *The Mobility of Workers* presents New York as a backdrop that does not lend explanatory bite to how the everyday lives of Dominicans are worked out. Other than de-industrialization, how has the Dominican story been conditioned by wider urban processes such as the city's bankruptcy in the 1970s or the emergence of a Revanchist governance in the 1980s and 1990s? How have the Dominicans become associated with Washington Heights, and how do they contest the meanings of place and engage in a process of ethnic spatial contest? Finally, while Hernández is surely right to observe that Dominicans are poor both at home and abroad, what determines migration is not poverty but relative and imputed poverty, and her own data seem to suggest that Dominicans are poorer in the Dominican Republic. Yet if we are to understand how decisions to move or to stay are taken, then we need to understand "success" as a subjective construct. Unfortunately, *The Mobility of Workers* only introduces us to one person, Doña Juana, a house cleaner for a friend of the author, whose views of her situation we are left to judge but whose voice we do not hear.

Valentina Napolitano's fabulous book *Migration, Mujercitas and Medicine Men* offers acutely observed insights into the daily lives and social imaginations of urban Mexico beyond the established *colonia* issues of poverty, patron-clientelism and social networks. Napolitano is concerned by the tension in social science between saying something general about the novel or striving to say something novel about the general and mundane. Navigating this tension, *Migration, Mujercitas and Medicine Men* seeks to understand how particularity emerges from the everyday and ordinary life of a place like many others. In so doing, Napolitano is aware that social science has tended to privilege specified identities such as ethnicity or gender and ground these identities in defined spaces with little concern for people who cannot claim such neat identities or may possess multiple and contradictory subject positions. In redux, Napolitano problematizes three key relationships. First, the relationship between self and experience adopts the view that subjects are formed by their experiences and are not therefore (pre) defined but always in the process of becoming. Second, Napolitano confronts the neat equivalence between places and cultures from which can be derived a culture "of" the barrio in preference to an anthropology "through" the barrio. Third, Napolitano challenges a clean linearity of

change encompassing predictable transfers and uses of knowledge, and separations between everyday and more strategic social practices, and proposes instead that modernity serves as a focal point for a series of negotiations around identity that produces alternative or vernacular modernities.

The key device to the endeavor is what Napolitano calls "prisms of belonging," the "interface of cognition, history and memory, and are expressed in the ways people talk about and experience spaces such as the home, the neighbourhood, the city, and places of origin, as well as in the ways these places are 'revisited'" (9). The prism illustrates the variety of feelings, desires, memories, contradictions and images that shape experiences of time and space. Taking the colonia of Polanco as a case study, Napolitano explores the personal and family perceptions and feelings of urban and rural spaces, showing how the immediate locality is relational to the rural spaces of *rancho* and *pueblo*. While people invest heavily in both financial and emotional terms in the Polanco house, Napolitano claims that particular spaces in the home are "ruralized," decorating front rooms with saints, trinkets and pots (what is intrinsically rural about this representation is not entirely clear), keeping a well-swept threshold that advertizes the household's moral standing and collecting the *tortilla maza,* giving the colonia a daytime rancho feel. At night, however, feelings change with the outdoors considered unsafe, the terrain of drunks and addicts represented by some as folk devils. Napolitano outlines the many tensions of image and feeling that people attach to the colonia, pride in the home and concern about the lack of consolidation of the settlement, pride that the settlement is an improvement over the rural rancho and sadness that the calmer life of the countryside gives way to selfishness and immorality in the urban. Locating their "self" in places of origin through expressions such as "*soy ranchero*" or "*soy de pueblo*" indicates difficulties of accounting for the present condition but might also be reflective of a desire to be associated with a more popular, honorable, religious social space.

The symbolic representation of the pueblo is contested among supporters of the traditional Catholic church and liberation theology in Polanco, revealing different notions of personhood related to ideas of entitlement or sensory experience. To the former, the pueblo represents the simple, innocent and vulnerable people of all villages that speak to a father/child relation with the church, whereas to the latter pueblo speaks to a structural condition set against elite power in which the realization of subjectivity motivates action. Similarly, *comunidad* possesses both a potentially radical and conservative dimension that supports a division of liberation and traditional church of us/them or self/other, but which, through the view of interpretive agents, reveals numerous tensions. On one hand, liberation leaders profess to raise

consciousness with a view to community empowerment but are accused of holding knowledge from members and of undermining alternative voices of liberation not legitimated by religious training. On the other hand, traditional Catholicism based on mysticism, a clear-cut hierarchy and supposedly devoid of everyday reality is revealed as syncretic and given sensory orientation.

Similar issues relate to the analysis of medical pluralism in the context of modernity's failure to deliver health for all. Comparing the representations of *medicina popular* through the example of the liberation-oriented Vidasana, homeopaths and *curanderos*, Napolitano reflects on the state of modernity. Vidasana's medicina popular relates sickness to society's failure to allocate resources to the poor, thus placing illness within an ideological frame that also attributes illness to the sins of the wealthy. Dealing with this situation requires a reappraisal of the values of tradition, including herbal remedies and holistic lifestyle approaches that locate wellness in strong class and community structures. Yet tying healing to the discovery of links between self and society overlays explanations of illness with laziness, guilt, sin and respect, and health with physical, emotional and spiritual redemption. While medicina popular regards sickness as a chance to gain awareness rather than as a punishment, curanderos associate illness with an invasion of spirits brought on by a distance from God making the soul unable to resist evil. The syncretism of the curanderos, however, undermines traditional priests by positioning a layperson as mediator between the human and divine. Finally, homeopaths adopt allopathic approaches that draw links with "scientific medicine" although their patients again mix healing with faith and trust.

The final two chapters consider the contradictions between images, meanings and engendered life experiences. The *quinceañera* is presented as an invented tradition of relatively recent origin that offers multiple interpretations about the construction of female subjectivity. Especially intriguing are the performative aspects of the quinceañera that include a mass at which the girl is represented as a new *mujercita* and a fiesta with its choreography of waltzes, and which together mark the passage into *la ilusión* as a period prior to marriage and the reality of life. Napolitano shows through a series of short narratives how acceptance, excitement or rejection of the quinceañera is highly contested. To some the quinceañera confers a status on the girls within the household, a symbolic control of bodies and awareness of male intentions, and of respecting societal norms. To others it marks the point at which puberty is acknowledged and an opportunity to negotiate autonomy from the family, albeit this may be illusory as control shifts from the familial to male domains. The final chapter takes up this shift, comparing self-perceptions to the stereotypes of women's experience as one of suffering,

endurance and hard work that nonetheless provides some spaces for negotiation and resistance. These forms of resistance can be seen in the actions of social movements, but also in gossip and personal psychological crises. Female subjectivity in Mexico still rests on values of mutual care, but the meanings and boundaries of these values and their embodied experiences indicate changes. Feelings of expansion, consciousness, and exploration of new social relations are pitted against feelings of exclusion, physical pain and the sense of disjunction. My only quibble is that Napolitano does not relate her material back to theoretical debates about being out of place in the city—Durkheim's notion of anomie leapt to mind—or how this sense of disjuncture is represented in the barrio/colonia built environment and beyond.

Gerd Schönwälder provides a valuable case study that can be read against the assertions of *Latino Metropolis* for class-oriented alliances. *Linking Civil Society and the State* is grounded in a critique of autonomy that, instead of associating some inherent value and therefore showering indirect praise upon the notion of autonomy, considers closely the cracks in what might be seen as unified movements with single identities. A degree of autonomy enables movements to define their interests and identities, but a realistic political perspective dictates that movements must engage with others, the nature of the engagement affecting identity formation as well as present opportunities to frame debates. Schönwälder examines the changing relations between urban popular movements, city government agencies and political organizations in Lima to show how movements extended beyond immediate grievances to further the democratization and effectiveness of political institutions, at least in the short term. The movements exerted influence on the political framework through a multitude of local non-institutional forms of action and drew upon a common set of beliefs that went beyond class but emerged from a crisis of living conditions. Movements were poorly served by revolutionary cadres on the Left that regarded them as little more than a vehicle for the colonization of local government. Yet when the Left did control five districts of Lima from 1981–83, the ideological belief that representative democracy could not work legitimated confrontation with national and municipal government that reduced the delivery on electoral promises.

In 1983 the Left changed tack. A coalition called Izquierda Unida (IU) adopted a more pragmatic position and advocated a radical-democratic stance that opened a political space to popular movements. Alfonso Barrantes, IU's mayoral candidate, campaigned with the slogan "*Lima: una ciudad para todos*" and once elected became a "benevolent ally" of the popular sector. Barrantes's strategy was to use local government as a means to demonstrate "good governance" indicated by the appointment of bureaucrats on the basis of ability rather than

allegiance, the institution of an emergency welfare program and moves toward direct popular control of policy. Barrantes indicated that his administration would move away from the conventional measurement of activity through public works to the enabling of conditions for improved governance that would eventually make enhancing public works possible (120). Barrantes's approach benefited from reforms that secured the autonomy and remit of local government but had to contend with central government decisions for a sudden transfer of new responsibilities without resources and an inherited municipal debt servicing equivalent to 30 percent of the budget. The lack of resources, however, prevented the administration from initiating overly ambitious programs, padding the bureaucracy and resorting to patron-clientelism. Barrantes skillfully made a virtue of necessity by placing an emphasis on role-sharing, recognizing multiple organizations in neighborhoods and promoting broad rather than resource-intensive programs. This strategy delivered the administration's big success, the Vaso de Leche program that involved 100,000 women in 7,500 committees to provide milk for one million people each day. The municipality provided the milk and logistical support and delegated delivery to districts that, in cooperation with neighborhoods, decided on beneficiaries and block committees responsible for distribution. Milk was made available regardless of political affiliation; rather, the spin-offs were more subtle motivations to the committees to agitate for more resources from central government and trained-up leaders' organizing skills. The Achilles' heel, however, was an inability to construct institutional sustainability so that when, in 1986, Alan García's APRA won the national elections the programs were dismantled and patron-client systems were reintroduced, sapping support for neighborhood organizations.

An excellent example of how democracy, the changing nature of city governance and economic crisis set the Left and popular movements in a constant state of flux is presented for El Agustino, a low-income district of Lima that was controlled by the Left from 1980 to 1993. Established in the 1940s and with less than 5 percent of the workforce in full-time formal employment, El Agustino was active in demonstrations against the military in the 1970s, was one of the first areas to establish communal soup kitchens and by the early 1980s hosted a number of important popular movements. An innovative approach to urban management known as the Micro-Areas de Desarrollo (MIADES) originated in El Agustino and would exist as quasi peoples' parliaments and organize into a pan-Lima federation that would institute representative democracy citywide. From 1987 *promotores* held meetings in the MIADES zones to diagnose local issues. Newly created workshops would continue to discuss these issues, draft a list of works and elect a council. By the end of 1988, eight MIADES had been formed which were increased

with the incorporation of dedicated MIADES for women's groups and Vaso de Leche committees, and assistance from NGOs to provide some strategic coordination across proposals. While the central government remained dominant in the overall public sector budget by the late 1980s, local government was responsible for over one-half of investment in Lima. Nevertheless, municipal financial support for the MIADES was limited and caused many projects to stall or be downsized, creating frustrations as raised expectations became unfulfilled and the municipality received the wrath of many MIADES that some on the Left had hoped would be directed to the APRA government.

The Left's propensity for political self-destruction appeared to be confirmed when in 1989 El Agustino was won by the Partido Unificado Mariateguista (PUM), a group within the IU coalition. Schönwälder shows how the PUM attempted to control the MIADES by installing party activist *promotores* and cutting off funds to non-compliant groups, in so doing prompting many movements either to withdraw or become half-hearted backers. Watching these fissures and noting the difficulties of the Left and civil society organizations in delivering services or even articulating a political agenda in everyday language was aspiring presidential candidate Alberto Fujimori. From 1990, now President Fujimori set up another stakeholder organization, the Comités de Gestión Distrital that included the MIADES, along with church organizations, representatives of street traders, the community kitchens, youth groups, and central government agencies. The district mayor refused to support the Comités, creating a bipolar political climate with the neighborhoods strongly represented in the MIADES, once more strengthened by the return of district support, and popular movements and organizations of traders backing the Comités. The Comités in turn lacked the funds promised by Fujimori but movements nevertheless regarded the possibility for alliance building as more beneficial than support for the MIADES.

Linking Civil Society and the State offers a refreshingly circumspect assessment of urban popular movement achievements, certainly when compared to some of the headier 1980s claims that movements could support ever-deeper social and political change. The collective identities of popular urban movements did provide a democratic potential that, in association with moves toward institutional decentralization, served to make local government more open and in the sense that politicians picked up on ideas formulated by movements then government did become more democratic. Through the organization and co-management of projects, movements helped to make local government more effective, although Schönwälder's contention that democratization was also extended by placing certain municipal roles in the hands of movements seems odd without an assurance that the movements

themselves were democratically run and capable of respecting views in society that they might not normally support. Unfortunately *Linking Civil Society and the State* provides few voices (leaders apart) of movement participants and consequently little is said about everyday debates and, in particular, how urban space forms a vital component to the construction of movement identities. Thus, Barrantes's attempt to create six municipal agencies to serve the 400,000 inhabitants of the downtown Cercado district is analyzed only in terms of the difficulties of motivating participation and from resistance by bureaucrats partly responsible for despoiling the city center. It would have been fascinating to learn how the "place" of the center might have influenced the appearance of movements and their tactics for mobilization.

David Myers and Henry Dietz's *Capital City Politics* is premised on the observation that democracy deprives national executives of the need to control local government. Adopting Samuel Huntington's well-known waves of democracy as a framework, the editors suggest that the emergence of elected capital city mayors created opportunities for greater local autonomy, and brought in officials from opposition political parties. Awarding of significant new powers to manage services and to raise local taxation let some administrations initiate policies in counterpoint to presidents and provincial governors. Nevertheless, the editors suggest in their opening chapter that national executives have resisted the empowerment of local government over policing, and indeed few elected mayors seem keen to wrest command of the police from national government. The editors, however, propose that mayors have had to meet the demands of capital residents who regard themselves as entitled to particular benefits, and in delivering upon those entitlements mayors need to cut deals with national executives as well as keep countervailing pressures from councilors and interest lobbies in check. Finally, Myers and Dietz suggest that elected mayors will be less interested in charging the built environment with national or what they term "high level" meaning.

These themes are explored in nine case study chapters. The analysis of Bogotá by Gilbert and Dávila shows immediately the frailty of Huntington's framework as Colombia did not experience authoritarianism and is a poor fit to the third wave of democratization while the economy did better than most of the region for much of the late twentieth century. Moreover, unlike many other capital cities, Bogotá became a separate administrative entity from the province (Department of Cundinamarca) as early as 1945, despite opposition from the governor, who appointed the mayor to that point and who backed down after pressure from the military government of Rojas Pinilla in 1954. For a time the physical space of Bogotá fell within one political jurisdiction, although this limit had been exceeded by the 1990s by which point

about 600,000 people resided outside the administrative city creating a number of "rough edges" in terms of planning regulations and fiscal transfers. The creation of Bogotá as a capital district in 1991 improved the city's autonomy with direct representation in the national congress and more control over its budget, but the elected mayor often has to deal with an antagonistic city council and there is no obligation on the department and city to cooperate. Nevertheless mayors Antanas Mockus (twice) and Enrique Peñalosa have shown themselves to be astute urban managers unafraid to confront politically powerful groups such as public sector workers, street traders, and car drivers, and with a keen eye to public works and civism.

By contrast, Buenos Aires is depicted by de Luca, Jones and Tula as highly fragmented with the "city" claiming a population of three million, the province eight million, and the metropolitan area eleven million, all contributing to administrative overlaps and what appear to be already weak institutions of urban governance. Compared to most other chapters, authoritarianism and politicization of public office run stronger through the narrative of Buenos Aires, from Perón's control of the appointment of lame duck mayors, the conferment of the mayoralty to the air force during military rule, and the importance of patronage over performance of democratization mayors in the 1980s and 1990s. The authors note that the role of the mayor has increased, notably with the institution of popular elections in 1993 and the formation of new agencies for government oversight, but with Peronists holding little sway in the city but dominant in the province, neither (the governor) Duhalde nor (then president) Menem wished to confer greater autonomy on the city. Decentralization of federal functions such as policing, judiciary and utility services to city control and revenue sharing has been strongly resisted.

Mayor-council relations are strained in Caracas, occasionally approaching a point of ungovernability that has prompted President Hugo Chavez to adopt a number of strategies for direct democracy. Chavez's desire to control Caracas is similar to pre-1980s presidents who regarded stamping their authority on the city as instrumental to the process of nation building. But whereas they did so with the aid of appointed governors of the federal district who held cabinet-level status, Chavez's brand of populist nationalism is a response to the post-1984 reforms that brought the decentralization and democratization of local government with elected governors and mayors provided with enhanced budgetary control, but which also motivated the fragmentation of government into less efficient and highly inequitable units. As Ellner and Myers put it, by end of the 1990s "caraqueños found themselves enveloped by a crazy quilt of geopolitical entities" (119) in which coordination through interpersonal relations was undermined by mayors and governors being from

different political parties. To some credit, then, Chavez has attempted to reassemble a metropolitan district, although when political ally Alfred Peña was elected, only to become a competitor, Chavez's response was to backtrack on his fiscal generosity.

Guatemala City illustrates an alternative to competitive local democracy. Jickling and García Iragorri claim a distinction from the editorial template as centralized authoritarianism in Guatemala provided more influence to municipal government and adopted popular elections sooner than most other Latin American countries. The mayor of Guatemala City is assured of an automatic simple majority on council, making political life a little easier relative to counterparts in Bogotá and Caracas, although such political decadence is set within a wider divisive politics that has meant most city residents have witnessed few benefits. A similar situation is presented by Lima where the mayor of the metropolitan area automatically is provided with a simple majority but although s/he is also mayor of the central district, the task of governance is complicated by having to work with 39 other district mayors. Dietz and Tanaka provide a more contemporary account of the city than Schönwälder and are especially good at explaining the relation between Fujimori and the metropolitan mayor whom the president always considered a threat. Despite having won every district of Lima with more than 60 percent of the popular vote, Fujimori's attempts to install a placeman as mayor resulted in resounding defeats. Nevertheless, Lima demonstrates the ability of democratic presidents to use the purse strings as means to attain some control over their capital cities. Decree 776 (1993) recalibrated the way that funding was disbursed from national to provincial and district governments in favor of the latter, winning the plaudits of the pro-decentralization lobby for a move that was designed to deprive the mayor of funds. In 1994 the Lima council declared the president persona non grata in the city, to which the president replied by delaying budget payments, prompting the mayor to file a lawsuit against the president, and motivating Fujimori to close a radio station owned by the mayor. If the mayor lost that battle Fujimori would never be able to run Lima.

One of the best chapters in *Capital City Politics* is Scarpaci's account of Havana. For many reasons Havana is unique among the region's capitals. In the early decades of the Castro government, the president was anti-Havana, which was governed through a battery of centralized committees and commissions rather than an elected council. The chapter stands out, however, for two other reasons. First, Scarpaci is virtually alone in seeing urban change through the lens of financial flows rather than political maneuvers, an approach that also resonates with the symbolic construction of the built environment. As Scarpaci observes, for example, President Fulgencio Batista's decision to remove

electric streetcars from a city of automobile grid-lock was motivated both by the financial interests and his equation of "good governance with good roads" (174). Second, Scarpaci relates the details of government and party institutions to local communities. The opening of the economy from 1994 with the creation of old Havana as an economic free zone generated a new building boom supported by tourist dollars as well as a regulated private service sector (*cuentapropistas*) and unregulated competition (*jineteros*). The only other chapter that describes how the debates about decentralization, fiscal cross-subsidy, and waves of democratization affects social exclusion or the lives of the poor is Siavilis, van Treek and Martelli on Santiago. In a general sense, not unlike Castro's Havana, reform in Santiago was pursued by the military as an antidote to party-dominated politics. Decentralization created a fragmentation that allowed national ministries to hold effective power through major infrastructure projects. Except for a few wealthy municipalities capable of some autonomy from the national executive, decentralization was closer to what Siavilis et al. term *mayorization*, in which mayors loyally followed national instructions. Whilst democracy has brought some downsizing of central control, enthusiasm for the creation of an *alcalde* has been limited.

Elected local officials came late to São Paulo and were only briefly entertained from 1898 until Getúlio Vargas imposed prefeitos on the city. In 1953 São Paulo had an elected mayor (seven years later than the rest of Brazil) but by the 1960s mayors were once more either appointed or elected in highly controlled procedures. Under both the limited democracy permitted by the military and the opening of the 1980s, São Paulo politics was marked by the tension between patron-clientelism and pressure from the grassroots for greater civil society participation and innovation in governance. The administration of Paulo Maluf (1993–96) left the budget in such crisis that even his protégé who succeeded him, and the previous finance secretary, had to make a virtue out of fiscal restraint. By contrast to the municipalities of the metropolitan region, São Paulo resisted the adoption of participatory budgeting even though in places like Mauá these innovations assisted with the budgetary control that São Paulo needed so badly. Greater São Paulo did introduce a degree of inter-municipal co-operation through the Citizenship Forum and Intermunicipal Consortium that have included a plurality of civic and business organizations and representatives of state government. Although Graham and Jacobi stop short of providing a detailed audit of these innovations the sense is of some successes.

Diane Davis is unique among the contributors for illustrating how struggles over urban policy have influenced democratization rather than vice versa. Concentrating on Mexico City's appointed mayor Ernesto Uruchurtu (1952–66), Davis shows how he succeeded in promoting

public bus transport and commerce, but also applied draconian mea-
sures against squatters and street traders. His alliance with an "old-
school" middle class meant he opposed the redevelopment of the
historic center. Uruchurtu's fall was induced by a combination of labor
organizations that opposed his moralist middle-class politics and by
business groups frustrated by the mayor's reluctance to permit real es-
tate development. Successors used public projects, and especially the
subway, to gain support from business and organized echelons of the
poor, but by the time Ramón Aguirre became mayor in 1982 the fiscal
deficit imposed spending restraint just as critics were becoming vocal
of declining service standards and the lack of democratic voice. The
resultant appeasement through the creations of an Asamblea de
Representantes, an elected body with consultative powers, provided
the mayor with a conduit to broker alliances with city interest groups
but also set in train a process of pressure to strengthen the Asamblea
that led eventually to gaining legislative powers and the concession of
an elected mayor. After sixty years of one-party rule and nominated
city executives, expectations of mayor Cuauhtémoc Cardenas were high,
but the city council attempts to respond to civil society demands ex-
posed a mayor who lacked presidential support or a loyal power base.
It is not surprising then that Cardenas's successor López Obrador has
spent time constructing patron-client links as well as publicizing widely
his administration's achievements.

   Capital City Politics provides excellent summaries of individual cit-
ies over an ambitiously "long twentieth century." Locating bottom-line
universal characteristics of democratic change and good governance
across the region, however, seems elusive. If appointed mayors rarely
challenged for the presidency, then democratically elected mayors have
thought of their office as a springboard to higher things. The aspiration
is inconsistent with positive performance in the job. Alvaro Arzu seems
to have been a better mayor of Guatemala City than most of his prede-
cessors, a perception that helped him to the presidency six years later.
From this position Arzu rewarded the city with large sums, but his
achievements as president were otherwise relatively mediocre. More
dramatic, Fernando de la Rúa became president of Argentina in 1999
but fell from grace partly because of his inability to control political
forces in Buenos Aires, where he had been mayor. In Mexico City would-
be president Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas fell victim to new political forces
unleashed by the democratization of local government that strained
pork-barrel politics and cast greater scrutiny on the mayor's dealing
with sensitive issues such as street traders and crime. The summaries
seem to show that success as mayor may assist the transition to presi-
dent but offers no guarantee of success as president while a poor

performance as mayor will usually scupper any chance of higher office. Yet the principal issue is whether capital city residents have benefited from democratic administrations. *Capital City Politics* suggests that residents have done relatively well, although whether because of lobbying or luck is not clear. We lack spatially organized data on government expenditure, direct and indirect taxation and the subsidies hidden within utility charges to know whether the capital cities are contributing more than they get out.

Finally, *Capital City Politics* exposes the difficulties with Ed Soja's observation that we are increasingly "all urbanists." Few authors afford much attention to the relationship between political symbolism and the built environment. Some authors ignore the theme completely or, like Graham and Jacobi, give it short shrift noting that the capacity of urban form to transmit "high-level" national meaning "has no resonance in Brazilian reality" given the construction of Brasília (322). Others flag a limited range of public works associated with presidents or mayors, such as Jickling and García-Iragorri, who observe that Guatemala City mayor Martín Prado is known for having improved the sewers and streets. Ellner and Myers point to the gradual demise of modernist projects in Caracas that were begun by Pérez Jiménez and came to symbolize corruption and incompetence. But these are superficial touches, and decoding the meanings of the built environment requires greater subtlety. The renovation of historic centers is a feature of virtually all capital cities, but does this represent a conservative turn or an extravagance in the face of limited budgets, a response to local identities shaken by globalization or an attempt to re-engage the local with the global through city marketing? Indeed, should we privilege the intentions of politicians at all? Politician and government attempts to invest meaning in the "official city" are a delusion to power when most of the city is the result of informality, being "street smart" and making do through multiple connections across space. The question, then, is how do we write about and interpret everyday meanings in the modern city that, García Canclini notes, is sometimes ceasing to be modern and to be a city (2001, 3). What kind of urbanists do such cities produce and how do "they"—the taxi drivers, police officers, ambulantes, youth gangs, office workers and advertising executives—navigate such a city? A central character in Alejandro González Iniarritu's film *Amores Perros*, the hobo assassin El Chivo, is shown walking through a fragmented Mexico City to reveal everyday urban lives that, as the film's strap line puts it, are about "betrayal, anxiety, death, sin, selfishness, pain, hope . . . love." The "Latin American" city is built by, and its form partly represents, the intersection of capital and political maneuver, but we also need to appreciate the many, less tangible dimensions of everyday urbanism.

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