

en que está organizado el libro hace que la lectura fluya aunque, por momentos, es difícil identificar a qué testimonio se está haciendo referencia.

Para quienes vivimos y estudiamos comunidades judías latinoamericanas pequeñas, llama la atención el número de judíos identificados entre los perseguidos, desaparecidos y ejecutados; también es llamativo el número de judíos entre los funcionarios del gobierno de Salvador Allende y entre los miembros de los cuadros de la izquierda política chilena de la segunda mitad del siglo XX. No obstante, la postura mayoritaria se oponía a Allende: más del 15% de la población judía contabilizada en Chile se va del país con la elección del socialista y, una vez que el gobierno democráticamente elegido es derrocado, la organización comunitaria expresa su apoyo al gobierno dictatorial, ya sea a través de saludos por Rosh Hashaná o cuestionando la necesidad de ayudar a judíos de izquierda, que salvo excepciones, estaban desvinculados de dicha organización.

Es importante señalar que la edición en inglés aparece en un momento de cambios significativos en la política chilena: la reciente elección de Gabriel Boric, joven representante del progresismo, que emerge como un desenlace a las manifestaciones populares de 2019, motivadas por el descontento generalizado y el cuestionamiento al modelo neoliberal que, paradójicamente, hizo que Chile destacara como un “milagro” económico, en comparación con el resto de las economías sudamericanas.

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LUIS RONIGER, *Transnational Perspectives on Latin America: The Entwined Histories of a Multi-State Region*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

In *Transnational Perspectives on Latin America*, Luis Roniger invites the reader on a fascinating and variegated journey through selected episodes in the two centuries of Latin American post-colonial history. In this journey, Roniger explains, Latin American societies appear as part of a multi-state and polyglot, multiethnic and multicultural region which, nevertheless, shares historical legacies, institutional frameworks, and political and socioeconomic challenges.

The reader soon discovers that this journey does not resemble other incursions in Latin American political history. To begin with, *Transnational Perspectives* does not follow a strictly chronological order. While the book begins by exploring events related to the formation of Latin American states and nations and concludes with the challenges and dilemmas of the twenty-first century, in between, it moves backwards and forwards with plenty of flashbacks. Through-

out the chapters, the characters—national heroes, politicians, diplomats, and ordinary citizens—appear, disappear, and re-appear, intertwining their personal stories with historical events, and crossing blurred national boundaries. Certainly, underneath these narratives there is a thread defined by the interplay between nation-states' development and transnational processes; nonetheless, the reader has the feeling that her journey advances in spirals that go deeper and deeper into history instead of following a linear progression. Even readers who are familiar with Latin American history and the comparative politics of Latin American states will discover something new or something that looks new because Roniger has put it in a completely different context.

This sense of non-linearity, novelty, and freshness derives from Roniger's well-crafted transnational perspective. In the book, transnationalism does not play the role of a theory, not even an approach. It is rather a hermeneutic method aimed at looking at and interpreting historical and political facts; a method that shapes not only the way in which Roniger observes Latin American history but also his writing style, the composition of each chapter, and the general composition of the book. Drawing on a broad literature in transnational history and social theory, Roniger's transnational perspective addresses the interconnectivity between individuals, groups, and nations that is often triggered by social processes, political movements, and cultural ideas and networks extending beyond the national boundaries and state borders that have in turn conditioned such dynamics (p. 15).

Roniger's book is, in a way, an impressive test of any such transnational perspective. It tests how far a transnational perspective can take us in describing and understanding historical developments. In doing so, it inevitably measures itself against its main rival, the comparative perspective. At the end of every chapter, I posed two questions: would this narrative have looked different from a comparative perspective? Is the transnational perspective more persuasive, convincing, or explanatory than the comparative perspective? I believe most readers will answer the first question in affirmative. Roniger's book succeeds in showing how the transnational perspective sheds light on events and processes that comparativists overlook, and how a transnational perspective can change the parameters of evaluation to which comparativists have accustomed us. To the second question about which perspective is more convincing, I will come back later in this note. More broadly, Roniger posits the relationship between the transnational and comparative perspectives as a complementary rather than a belligerent one: "in addition to approaching this multi-state region with a comparative lens, one should also address it from a transnational perspective. Only then can analysis fully account for the articulation of local and national dynamics with international and global dynamics."

Transnational Perspectives is composed of nine chapters plus an Introduction that sets out the conceptual underpinnings of the book, and an epilogue that briefly discusses the vagaries of Latin American societies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The two chapters that follow the introduction are broader in scope; they address the relationship between Latin America and modernity (Chapter 2) and the emergence of independent, but transnationally connected, nation-states (Chapter 3). While the rest of the chapters focus on specific events or—as the author prefers—“transnational moments,” each of them covers broad historical periods and entangled narratives: the transnational dynamics unleashed by the state practice of forcing political opponents into exile (Chapter 4); the major inter-state wars and the conspiratorial narratives that have emerged around them (Chapter 5); the transnational political networks woven during revolutionary and autocratic regimes in the Latin American Cold War (Chapter 6); the transnational dissemination of transitional justice approaches in re-democratized South America (Chapter 7); the emergence of *chavismo* and post-liberal regionalism (Chapter 8); and the experiences of Jewish and Muslim diasporas in Latin American countries (Chapter 9).

All these chapters (perhaps less evidently so in the study of the inter-state wars and conspiracy theories) are successful demonstrations of the book’s main thesis: that transnational processes are central to understanding the development of Latin American nation-states and their global connections. One wonders, though, whether Latin America is special at all in terms of the type of transnationalism that has emerged there? After all, Africa, Asia, and Europe are also multi-state, polyglot, multicultural, and multi-ethnic regions, and their history is made of transnational networks, migration, exiles, diasporas, and different kinds of regionalisms. Somewhere, I missed an explanation of *why* the focus on Latin America, beyond the obvious reason that it is the author’s area expertise. One possible specificity of Latin America implicit in the chapters is that transnationalism in this region did not stem from complex interdependence as in the case of Europe and perhaps Asia, but from the weaknesses of the nation- and state-building processes. If this is right, then the book would have had more explanatory leverage if the author had elaborated on this “Latin American specificity” more explicitly.

The chapters also demonstrate that the transnational perspective allows us to see processes and entanglements that are invisible from a comparative perspective. But which of both perspectives is more convincing or explanatory? After reading the book I came to reckon that the transnational perspective has the upper hand when it comes to uncovering the complexity of the political processes and their geographical and historical entanglements. It is this complexity that also renders the reading exciting and provocative, perhaps more so than many

books in comparative politics. However, in this complexity one can lose track of what it is that we want to understand or explain. And perhaps it is here where the advantage of comparativists lies, namely in their ability to distill from the historical complexity a reduced number of variables, conditions, and causal mechanisms that account for a reduced number of outcomes.

To the same extent that the comparativist is a methodological nationalist who packs political phenomena into nation-state boxes, the transnational scholar also risks portraying the political reality as mainly made up of transnational dynamics while at the end of the day for most people political life is still fundamentally shaped by the possibilities and constraints of nation-states structures. These may very well be unavoidable risks and trade-offs for a book that applies that transnational perspective to the *political* rather than the social or cultural history of Latin America. Roniger seems aware of this as he presents his perspective as complementary to a comparative politics account.

All in all, *Transnational Perspectives* is highly recommended reading. Latin Americanist scholars will learn a lot about episodes and events that they thought they knew only too well. They will see familiar passages of Latin American history recounted from a radically different angle. Comparativists and International Relations scholars—not necessarily interested in Latin America—will also learn a lot about how to put the transnational perspective into practice.

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SEBASTIAN EDWARDS. *The Chile Project: The Story of the Chicago Boys and the Downfall of Neoliberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023.

Neoliberalism in Chile has acquired a bad reputation. In *The Chile Project*, Sebastian Edwards seeks to present “a balanced view” of this phenomenon by highlighting its achievements while also delving into the “faults and shortcomings of the whole endeavor” (p. 279). Nobody seems as suited to salvaging the positive aspects of Chile’s neoliberal experiment as Edwards. Born to an upper-class family, he had served under Allende’s government only to become a Chicago University alumnus. Throughout his career, Edwards has proven himself to be a forceful critic of both the Chilean economic leadership in the 1980s and the Latin American populists’ unsustainable policies. Amid Chile’s ongoing constitutional process, Edwards thus returns in this monograph as the voice of reason lest the “Far left” throw the baby out with the bathwater. When protests erupted in Santiago de Chile in 2019—initially due to a hike in