

constituye la fuerza motora de tales reformas se caracterizan por una creciente disparidad de ingresos y la precarización del mercado de trabajo.

El nuevo mapa de la geografía del poder entraña una nueva relación entre estado y sociedad. La ciudadanía económica se refiere más a las empresas y a los mercados, particularmente a los financieros, que a los ciudadanos. La lógica de la operación de los mercados no siempre conduce al logro de las inversiones socio-económicas que la sociedad considera deseables. El rol del Estado se ha transformado. En la actualidad, la gobernabilidad es compartida por ambos – el sector público y el sector privado.

La globalización económica representa nuevas y potentes fuentes de cambio en las economías, sociedades y culturas de las naciones. Tal fenómeno ha puesto de manifiesto que los países que participan del proceso de integración económica mundial se enfrentan a un dilema fundamental. Se trata del equilibrio entre el interés en participar y gozar de los beneficios derivados de la mayor integración con el mundo y el interés en retener la propia identidad. Esta tensión abarca los ámbitos de la cultura, la política y la economía.

El libro de Steven Gregory pone de relieve las dicotomías experimentadas por los actores de Andrés y Boca Chica en la era global. Se trata de las dicotomías entre lo local y lo global, entre la movilidad del capital y la rigidez del trabajo, entre el acceso a más bienes y servicios y la persistencia de la pobreza y la exclusión, así como entre el entusiasmo por los intercambios internacionales y el temor a perder la coherencia nacional.

El desafío para los individuos y para las sociedades de nuestros tiempos –de la República Dominicana así como de los demás países– consiste en encontrar un equilibrio entre la realización de lo necesario para sobrevivir y la preservación del sentido de la identidad, del hogar y de la comunidad.

**Susana Nudelsman**

*Universidad de Buenos Aires*

CAROL ANN DROGUS AND HANNAH STEWART-GAMBINO: *Activist Faith. Grassroots Women in Democratic Brazil and Chile*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005.

With the advent of liberation theology in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Christian base communities began to form throughout Latin America and served as an important means of consciousness-raising and mutual support for the poor. Sheltered under the protective umbrella of the Roman Catholic Church, base communities in Brazil and Chile also played important roles in advocating for the restoration of democracy during the military dictatorships, particularly in the

early 1980s. Since redemocratization (in Brazil in 1985 and in Chile in 1990), the decline of base communities' membership and activities have caused many scholars to declare them failed. In their *Activist Faith. Grassroots Women in Democratic Brazil and Chile*, however, Carol Ann Drogus and Hannah Stewart-Gambino approach the topic from a different point of view, considering these communities and their women activists "in the contexts of social movements and of theories examining movement cycles" (p. 2). They find that despite the decline of visible activism, the social networks and personal empowerment fostered in the base communities and their associated social movements have persevered.

Extensive interviews with 48 Chilean women from 35 parishes in greater Santiago and 25 Brazilian women from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, all of whom played significant roles in base communities during the pro-democracy movements, are at the core of this study. Drogus and Stewart-Gambino acknowledge that their sample size is small, noting that their primary goal is to "explore in detail one group of popular women – those active in the Catholic base Christian communities – whose protagonism during the pro-democracy movements was seen at the time as the proof of far-reaching political, gender, and social change" (p. 15). The interviews included a broad range of questions about the women's activities during the era of the military regimes and the communities' relationships with the institutional Catholic Church at that time; about current base community activism and church support for the communities; about their relationships with other groups such as secular women's organizations or Protestant groups; and about the problems in their neighborhoods today and potential solutions (pp. 14-15).

In the first two chapters of *Activist Faith*, the authors discuss their theoretical perspective and methodological strategies. Examining the base communities' women activists in the context of social movement theory, Drogus and Stewart-Gambino use a broad perspective that allows them to consider the base communities as they were understood by their participants, "at once Catholic, women's, and popular" (p. 7). Theories of movement cycles allow these researchers to realize that the absence of the kinds of activism that dominated at the peak of the movement in the 1980s does not indicate the failure or end of the movement in intervening years, and "suggests that [they] look for specific kinds of changing venues, forms, and networks for activism" (p. 7).

Chapters three through seven examine the base communities under military regimes; the churches' retreat from the public arena and diminished support for the base communities, as well as current levels and types of activism; actual and potential alliances with Protestant groups; and linkages and attitudes towards secular women's organizations. Each of these chapters contains separate sections on the particular conditions in each nation and compares the Brazilian

and Chilean cases to consider the factors that have influenced activism and its contribution to civil society in recent decades. Drogus and Stewart-Gambino provide the historical and political context for readers, but they let their subjects' own words shine through in frequent and lengthy quotations. The authors skillfully weave together the experiences and memories of women who contributed significantly to the restoration of democracy in both nations.

The current social and political contexts in Chile and Brazil make it difficult to maintain popular social and political movements. The withdrawal of the institutional church's support, the rise of neoliberalism in the 1990s, and even the restoration of democracy itself have made popular organizing less effective even though poverty and the marginalization of the poor continue. Despite the decline in Catholic base communities by the late 1980s and the restoration of democracy in both countries, Drogus and Stewart-Gambino find that the majority of women who were leaders in the movement continue to be active in their communities today (p. 189). Some of these women are still involved in church-based groups (often now focused on charitable work and on community-building activities), while others have found new outlets for their activist energies in political organizations, neighborhood groups, women's groups, or charitable organizations. These new ways of networking are important strategies for trying to maintain their movements in the current social and political context. They lead Drogus and Stewart-Gambino to conclude their study on a hopeful note, seeing an "enduring legacy from the movements" of activist women who still "contribute in small ways to building a civil society that is capable of organizing and mobilizing again in the future" (p. 196).

An important strength of *Activist Faith* is the transparency of the authors' theoretical considerations and methodological decisions. This transparency provides students with an excellent model of how theory can inform research and a richer understanding of the research process. It is also useful for scholars, allowing other researchers to compare the Brazilian and Chilean experiences with similar movements in other countries.

While limiting the number of women interviewed did allow for a greater level of detail and analysis in this study, it would have been more informative if the interviews had included at least a few women who were not leaders of the base communities so that we could see whether the legacy of activism in the early 1980s extended beyond the leaders. It is hoped that additional work by Drogus and Stewart-Gambino or other scholars in the field will expand the scope of our knowledge even further by describing the legacy of base communities for civil society in Brazil and Chile.

**Lisa M. Edwards**

*University of Massachusetts, Lowell*