

dificultades para acceder a una actualización adecuada. Es valioso por el análisis de experiencias concretas que muestran que otro tipo de trabajo es posible, sobre todo porque valorizan lo que el docente de escuela puede decir y puede hacer. Si bien las producciones están acotadas a un espacio regional, proporcionan herramientas conceptuales y metodológicas válidas para su aplicación a otras situaciones de enseñanza. Se puede concluir que la “convergencia de miradas” está bien lograda y que aporta a la comparación con otras realidades latinoamericanas.

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JOSÉ MAURÍCIO DOMINGUES: *Latin America and Contemporary Modernity*. Routledge, 2007.

Latin America has passed through huge transformations since the early 1980s. Before that, the region had been run under an industrialization and import substitution program that was successful in many countries. Then in the early eighties, a series of changes began to take place: in most Latin American countries the developmental state collapsed and the foreign debt crisis led the International Money Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to enact stabilization programs that deeply de-regulated the labor markets and the internal markets. In addition, many states changed the ways they implemented public policies. By the end of the 1990s Latin America had become a different region, with a different form of state and market organization. These transformations in the Latin American political economy have been described from an empirical perspective by many analysts (see, for instance, the works of Carlos Acuña, Ben Ross Schneider, and Kurt Weyland). Only recently have the social sciences approached these Latin American transformations in the context of Western modernity. José Mauricio Domingues' book *Latin America and Contemporary Modernity* is one such study. It views the relationship between Latin America and Western modernity since the late nineteenth century and shows how this relationship has changed. It offers those who are interested in Latin America a new and fresh perspective on social change in the region during the last 30 years.

The book begins with a debate on politics and human rights in the region and in Western modernity. The author divides modernity into three phases – early, mid-twentieth century, and contemporary – and compares Western and Latin American modernity during these three phases. The point of departure is a debate on the formation of liberalism and a system of human rights in Latin America after independence. Domingues acknowledges the weak dimension of human

rights in Western modernity; however, he shows how the persistent tradition of non-egalitarianism after independence, together with the establishment of very fragile states, made implementing human rights in Latin America very difficult. “If the restrictive character of modernity during its first phase in the West meant that citizenship did not wholly embrace the population of those countries, the even more limited character of modernity in Latin America implied an even weaker power for citizenship” (p. 14). This is how Latin America entered the second phase of modernity, a phase that in the West led to universal social services and equal freedom. Drawing on the early literature of Latin America, the author claims that during the second phase of modernity there was selective targeting of groups who may have been given special access to rights and social services. Thus, the point of departure for understanding the changes in Latin America during the last 30 years is the establishment of an incomplete system of rights through a gradual expansion of the developmental state after the 1930s. It is vis-à-vis this process and its relationship to transformations in Western modernity that Domingues analyzes the changes in the structure of the economy, the state, and the system of rights.

In a chapter called “Development, Globalization and the Search for Alternatives,” José Maurício Domingues analyzes recent changes in the economy in Latin America from the perspective of the debate on regulation. The author approaches the transformation in the core aspects of economic modernity by looking at the change in the pattern of accumulation. He explains that with “the division of labor, pluralism at large (in production and consumption) and shifting patterns of accumulation at a very fast and uneven pace ... innovation became in the new regime of accumulation an even more important element in the competition between firms” (p. 49). Thus, Domingues shows that the changes that have taken place in Latin America reflect the new needs in labor markets and firms. He argues that deregulation has to be seen not only through the lens of the new equilibrium between market and states but also through the way that deregulation encourages or thwarts innovation. Domingues knows that after the economic changes of the 1990s, Latin America will never be the same. However, he establishes a different criterion for analyzing the success of the reforms: he asks how these reforms have prepared the region to deal with technological innovation. The author gives a mixed response to that question. For him, Latin America has developed a more flexible economy but it has not developed the mechanisms for innovation that would allow Latin America to compete with its Asian counterparts (p. 71). He is concerned that Latin America still lacks alternative thinking that would help it to develop flexible firms and fulfill the needs of the labor market in the third phase of modernity without going back to the old Cepal doctrine.

The final chapter is the most interesting. It attempts to combine the debate on economic and political change with the debate on pluralism and new identities in the region. José Maurício Domingues discusses modernity and flexibility of the institutions of the state and the market. He points out that reforms in Latin America have to be made compatible with the third phase of modernity. The new reforms will require a new way of understanding citizenship that goes beyond re-embedding social solidarity by the state. What is necessary are new forms of understanding the private and the public sectors, the new role of religion in the public sphere, and a new understanding of how identity is formed. Thus, subjectivities based on race, gender, and ethnicity need to be made compatible with the new role of the private sphere and the market in the region. Domingues argues that the key issue for Latin America in this third phase of modernity is to understand the new role of collective actors in furthering democracy and citizenship in the region. Furthering both democracy and citizenship means transforming identities that have been disempowering the state and the market and replacing them with new collective identities formed in the region. No proposal on how to integrate the two has so far emerged but the author is confident that “new complex forms of solidarity” may result from the promising experiences of some of the governments left in the region. Overall, Domingues’ book places the reader interested in Latin America on new ground. The region has overcome neo-liberal reforms and has left governments in place. However, no new feasible understanding of where the region is right now has emerged in the social sciences. Domingues’ book may likely be a candidate to fill this vacuum. This process may require much greater empirical work. However, the task of how to bring together economics, politics, and the social sciences is accomplished in a very original way in this work and it should be of great interest to readers.

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