A book on feminist agendas and democracy in Latin America would be remiss if it did not include a section on international organizing. While interesting, this is the weakest of the three sections. Perhaps this reflects Jaquette’s own position. She concludes that while international feminist organizing is important for exchanging ideas, resources and expanding networks, ultimately it is “accountable institutions that can deliver public goods, including personal security, social services, and legal fairness – and address issues of redistribution as well as growth” (p. 216).

Some of the chapters in this final section are stronger than others. The first chapter addresses Latin American women’s involvement in the World Social Forum. Written more from an activist perspective than an academic standpoint, the author expresses confidence in the benefits of these forums; however, the chapter does not adequately address the many critiques of these forums nor does it review the academic literature on them. In contrast, the following chapter analyzes a very specific cross-national initiative to establish a quantitative index to track states’ compliance with international agreements on women’s rights. The index is interesting, but it is not clear why this initiative, and not others, was chosen. Finally, the last chapter assesses the challenges and possibilities for cross-border feminist activism using the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso border as the case study. The chapter provides a new look at the violence in this area and encourages us to think more about why accounts of violence in the area have not adequately examined the significant issue of domestic violence.

As with her previous two edited books on women in Latin America, Jaquette has again provided a wonderful overview of feminism and women’s organizing in the region and explored women’s contribution to democracy. I would highly recommend this book for use in a course on women in Latin America, Latin American politics, women and globalization, or women and politics. The chapters provide narratives of concrete experiences that could provoke discussion among students, scholars, and activists on issues of gender and the state of democracy.

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The Peruvian elite, during the first several decades of the twentieth century, viewed industrialization as a panacea for the country’s perceived shortcomings, according to historian Paulo Drinot. They believed in industry’s talismanic power as a civilizing and modernizing force. While industrialization might have its dark
side—the spread of subversive, leftist ideologies and social instability—it was a risk that modernizing elites were willing to take. They especially saw industrial work as a solution to what they judged to be Peru’s most bedeviling impediment: the country’s indigenous population. Elite intellectuals and government planners hoped industrialization would transform Indians into civilized and disciplined white or mestizo workers. To the elite, industrial transformation was a project of racial improvement.

Drinot’s book examines the evolution of government labor policy from the first decade of the twentieth century through the 1940s—the creation of what he terms the “labor state.” He suggests that Peruvian labor history has been neglected over the last couple of decades, and he focuses on four major government programs aimed at improving conditions for Peru’s working class: the establishment of the Labor Section of the Ministry of Development in 1919, the construction of government-engineered “workers’ neighborhoods” in the 1930s and 1940s, the creation of “popular restaurants”—again government-funded—during the same period, and the adoption of Worker Social Security in 1936. Historians who have previously examined these policies have mirrored the criticism of Peru’s leftist parties at the time: that the programs represent nothing more than a government attempt to co-opt workers or undercut the popularity of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) and the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP). While Drinot does not refute the argument, he asserts that these quasi-populist policies mirrored populism elsewhere in Latin America in that they involved significant give and take from both above and below.

The placement of Peru’s experience into a broad international, comparative context is one of the book’s substantial strengths. Drinot compares events and historical studies in Europe and North America, as well as developments in Asia, Africa, and South America. He notes that recent histories of labor in Latin America have shifted away from modernizing or Marxist paradigms toward studies that employ either gender analysis or culturalist approaches inspired by Michel Foucault. Drinot acknowledges the value of the recent historiography that reports evidence of the patriarchal and paternalist character of state building in Latin America in the early twentieth century—he sees many elements of this in Peru—but he asserts that many recent studies pay little attention to race and racialization. Drinot sees his own approach as lying within the culturalist realm, very much inspired by Foucault: that government views workers as a valuable resource who need protection and enhancement. Peruvian political planners employed both the rationalities and technologies of government in an attempt to improve conditions for workers in order to beget civilization and progress.

Drinot sees his own major contribution to this body of scholarship in his emphasis on race. He argues that Peruvian labor policies were conceived as a
project of racial improvement. While other critics have noted that the government-mentalization of labor failed because it was racialized, Drinot argues that the exclusion of indigenous people was not an accident, but was rather a result of the government’s planned and programmed intent. He asserts that the racism behind government policies in the first half of the twentieth century continues to poison Peruvian politics in today’s twenty-first century. The absence of a strong indigenous movement in Peru, when compared to neighboring Bolivia and Ecuador, is noteworthy. He asserts that it was the idea that indigenous people were an impediment to progress that contributed to the intensity of violence in the country during the 1980s and 1990s—poor and rural people could be eliminated with the flimsiest justifications.

In addition to the book’s core arguments and Drinot’s comparative, international perspective, the author takes some interesting and thought-provoking excursions. For example, in a discussion about the government construction of “workers’ neighborhoods,” he notes the influence of German social modernist architecture and includes photographs that demonstrate the point. Planners hoped to create housing inspired by the most modern trends in Europe—homes radically different from the design and materials associated with the country’s existing impoverished neighborhoods. Drinot also makes a number of interesting observations about the important position of eateries run by Asian immigrants in Lima’s working class neighborhoods. When government planners designed “popular restaurants,” they specifically envisioned them as an antidote to the perceived pernicious, foreign influence of Chinese eateries.

Occasionally, Drinot overextends his central argument. Perhaps the most notable example of this is his discussion of José Carlos Mariátegui. At one point Drinot draws a similarity between Mariátegui’s Marxist ideas and those of a number of pro-capitalist elite thinkers. While Mariátegui’s political thought is an idiosyncratic combination of the Stalinist two-stage revolution and an idealization of the pre-Hispanic Andean past, Mariátegui does not deserve the unflattering analogy. Yes, Marxism possesses a modernizing ethos, but care should be taken when locating those arguments too close to bourgeois thinkers and their racist formulations of industrial progress.

Overall, Drinot has written a well-researched and thought-provoking text. He employs archival material from Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco; he has also conducted research in the United Kingdom. He references 49 different newspaper and journal titles. He successfully employs this wealth of primary-source material to show how housing and food became highly politicized issues in Peru during the first half of the twentieth century. While political leaders in the Peruvian government grappled with these issues in an attempt to create a modern labor
state, they were also consciously crafting a racial state that has had devastating consequences for the country’s indigenous population.

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Este ensayo muestra, desde una perspectiva comparada, distintas formas en que el conflicto armado entre Bolivia, Chile y Perú a fines del siglo XIX marcó los imaginarios y las historiografías nacionales de los tres países. Su objetivo es problematizar las férreas compartimentaciones nacionalistas, desmontando lo que el estudio llama narrativas maestras. Entendidas como el campo discursivo de narrativas que parten o retornan a la Guerra del Pacífico, las narrativas maestras se arman cruzando el espectro político y las linealidades históricas. Se argumenta que la dimensión de retorno resulta clave, puesto que las narrativas maestras consolidan su permanencia precisamente en la invocación presente y en la continuidad de discursos sobre la guerra. El libro consigue, con punzante habilidad, construir su propia estrategia de posicionamiento crítico, postulando un modo de acercamiento y en cierta medida una metodología que llama desclasificación comparada. Se define la desclasificación comparada como la iluminación de zonas anteriormente compartimentadas por las historiografías nacionales y el levantamiento de intersecciones que permiten la visualización cruzada de continuidades y rupturas propias de las narrativas maestras. Armado en un permanente balance entre la delimitación de las narrativas maestras y su consecutiva desclasificación crítica, el ensayo busca contrarrestar tres macroespacios discursivos que hacen las veces de cajas de resonancia en el presente de las narrativas maestras: el nacionalismo historiográfico, el neo-arielismo cultural y literario, y el tono celebratorio de los revisionismos a propósito de los bicentenarios de las independencias. Las tres partes que componen el ensayo contestan a estas narrativas maestras, no imponiendo otras sino justamente desarmándolas.

La primera parte desentraña convincentemente los puntos de contacto entre diversas variaciones políticas del nacionalismo historiográfico y cultural, al tiempo que critica ácidamente las continuidades en los usos de la Guerra del Pacífico a lo largo del siglo XX en Chile. Se analizan tres momentos concatenados por la guerra. El primero, al que se retorna hacia el final de la sección, es el Manifiesto de historiadores publicado a propósito de la detención de Pinochet en Londres en 1998. El segundo momento está marcado por las modalidades en que distintos