

[Tanya Harmer](#)

**Book review: beyond the eagle's shadow: new histories of Latin America's cold war - edited by Garrard-Burnett, Virginia, Attwood Lawrence, Mark and Moreno, Julio E.**

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**Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Attwood Lawrence, and Julio E. Moreno, eds., (2014) *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), viii + 341 pp.**

This is an impressive edited volume that showcases some of the most innovative new research on Latin American history during the Cold War. As its editors acknowledge, it is not designed to offer an 'exhaustive overview' but rather to promote a 'fuller picture of the Cold War' in the region and 'inspire future research' (p.6). It does this well, particularly when it comes to new conceptual, disciplinary and methodological approaches. Its eleven chapters, introduction and afterword encourage us to consider the Cold War's intersection with environmental concerns, business interests, religion, migration, exile, indigenous rights and public health programmes.

The volume's contributors – the majority are graduate students or professors at the University of Texas, Austin – also want us to pay closer attention to Latin American agency when we think about the Cold War. As the title suggests, they rightly argue that US-centred perspectives can only tell us so much about Latin America's experience. To learn more we need to examine Latin American governments, actors and populations more closely. The volume's contributors are particularly inspired by Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph's call to examine the 'politicization and internationalization of everyday life'.<sup>1</sup> They mostly want to write history 'from below' and to challenge bipolar, East-West binaries in traditional Cold War scholarship.

Many of the chapters in the volume do this well. K. Cheasty Anderson draws on over one hundred oral history interviews to offer a nuanced local history of Cuban medical internationalism in Nicaragua. Bonar L. Hernández's chapter on Social Catholicism in Guatemala examines how religious groups sought space for their activism outside the confines of the Cold War but increasingly became drawn into an ideological conflict. Jennifer T. Hoyt's examination of urban planning and environmental concerns during the Argentine dictatorship is another view of everyday life in Latin America and the limitations of the state.

Elsewhere, the claim to be recovering Latin American perspectives and agency is a little more problematic. We hear about military factionalism in Guatemala, Cuban exiles' counterrevolutionary actions in the Caribbean and the Peruvian government's conceptualisation of 'narcoterrorism'. Yet, when we do, the information comes almost exclusively from US documents, rather than Guatemalan, Miami Cuban or Peruvian archives. This matters because US diplomats, intelligence analysts and journalists filtered information through their own lenses. They therefore offer a US perspective on Latin Americans' agency, not direct evidence of what Latin Americans believed in private or thought about the world around them. Undoubtedly, US observations were often accurate and can be incredibly useful. But historians who use US sources in this way need to acknowledge their limitations. Telling the history of Latin Americans using US documents alone hardly seems to be escaping the 'Eagle's Shadow'. It perpetuates that shadow. Similarly, if we want to move significantly *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow* engaging with scholarship published beyond the English speaking world is essential.

When it comes to the Cold War in Latin America, this volume is to be commended for bringing so many historians together collaboratively to explore a

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Joseph (2008) "What We Now Know and Should Know: Bringing Latin America More Meaningfully into Cold War Studies" in *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Duke University Press), p.4.

'fuller picture'. Multi-disciplinary, methodologically diverse, transnational and regional histories require this kind of teamwork. As the editors note, 'no single scholar could hope even to come close to mastering everything' (p.vii). Bringing case-studies together and examining them together helps move history and debates forward. This may not necessarily yet be joined-up history. One of the volume's greatest strengths is the questions it raises. In a very useful 'Afterword' to the book, for example, Alan McPherson suggests that by de-centring the Cold War and exploring politics and society at different grassroots levels 'the Cold War itself fades to the background' and is sometimes a 'misnomer' for explaining the determining factors of a given case (pp.307, 314).

Perhaps the most important point going forward is not to 'force' all aspects of everyday life into a Cold War framework (p.318), but rather to determine when it mattered, how, why and with what consequences (and also when it did not). By exploring the different stories contained in this volume we are invited to do just that. In this sense, the volume is not only about recovering Latin American perspectives of the Cold War and moving *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow*, but suggesting alternative narratives may be possible in the future.

Tanya Harmer, *LSE*