

## Book Review

ethnic groups within army units facilitated such claims. These chapters unpack conscription as a method of state-making in Bolivia. Elite efforts to contain the claims of popular sectors to the full rights of citizenship, though, came under stress, as conscripts sought to reshape the state from below.

The rich historical narrative also provides insights on a range of other topics, which will make the book appealing across academic disciplines. Shesko's description of barrack's life, for example, provides fascinating detail of the military, masculinity and sexuality, and questions of race and ethnicity. The book outlines the Kafkaesque bureaucratic encounters with the state of prospective conscripts from poor backgrounds as they sought exemption from military service: frequently illiterate and possessing little understanding of the legal process. It discusses the hierarchies and violence that characterised life in the barracks, and efforts by reformers to remake military practices and create a new conception of service to the *Patria* based on duty rather than coercion. Themes of masculinity run through the book, as military conscription became bound to ideas of what is meant to be a man in Bolivia. Alongside displays of virility with women in *cantinas*, there are strong overtones of homoeroticism in some of the punishment beatings meted out in the barracks. Shesko also examines the stereotypes and prejudice indigenous conscripts face, where absorption into the ranks of the military was designed to 'civilise' and assimilate. *Conscript Nation's* account of how these soldiers navigated such tensions resonates strongly in contemporary Bolivia, where plurinationalism now recognises and celebrates indigeneity alongside Bolivian national identity. The book makes a strong contribution to our understanding of these dynamics, highlighting the neglected history of conscription in shaping and reconciling these tensions in Bolivian politics.

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Marcy, William L. (2023) *Narcostates: Civil War, Crime, and the War on Drugs in Mexico and Central America*, Lynne Rienner Publishers (London), viii + 359 pp. \$115.00, hbk.

Leaving no room for debate, the effects of drug trafficking in Latin America have become the biggest problem in the region recently. The prefix 'narco' is now added to define groups and organisations, whether formal or informal, along with cultural goods, including novels, television shows and music. The notation has been so inclusive that many observers and scholars categorise even regimes and states under the label of 'narco'. As a comprehensive enterprise of this survey, in *Narcostates: Civil War, Crime, and the War on Drugs in Mexico and Central America*, William L. Marcy specifies variations and patterns of 'narcostates' in Latin America, namely Mexico, Colombia and other fragile states in Central America, due to their collapsing institutional capacities and fragile economies to combat growing drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) expanding their presence and power over the region. At this juncture, Marcy presents scrupulous research, drawing on official reports, archival documents and significant works of the field, and provides virtually an encyclopedic source to those interested in narco-trafficking and its modern history in Mexico and Central America.

The second and third chapters of the book trace how counterterrorism and anti-narcotics implementations, which have become an almost 70-year *campaña permanente* (p. 23), have been enmeshed both in Mexico and Central American countries struggling with civil wars from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. At this point, the low-intense conflict turned into a dirty war in Mexico while the deteriorating repercussions of prolonged warfare set the stage for this region to undergo a 'narcocorridor' for Colombian cocaine to flow to the north within the following decades (p. 56). The fourth and fifth chapters vividly document how the Mexican DTOs emerged and matured from the late 1980s, dragging Mexico to the verge of becoming a failed state in the 1990s, as the presidential candidates and prominent religious men became the victims of settling of accounts among the second-generation cartels and their concomitant escalating violence (pp. 85–96).

Taking advantage of the lawlessness, corruption and favorable socio-economical instabilities of Mexico and Central America, a 'trafficker's paradise' as Marcy terms (pp. 126–127), Colombian cartels managed to expand their operations to the borders and inside the United States as detailed in the sixth chapter. The following chapter provides a valuable perspective for understanding how the US

policies of deportations of gang members in the mid-1990s back to Central America, where war-torn countries, such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, lacked the necessary resources to restore order and security institutions, added fuel to the proliferation of criminal gangs already becoming subsidiaries of big Colombian and Mexican DTOs. The presence and activities of Central American gangs consequently turned the region into a 'narco-hub', securing the drug-trafficking routes into the United States (p. 157).

In the eighth chapter, Marcy argues that Mexico's war on drugs from the 2000s to 2014 underwent 'another dirty war' (p. 180) as both intra-cartel violence and war against the second and third-generation cartels exposed unprecedented extreme brutality. Against the determined and militarized anti-narcotics practices of the successive *Partido Acción Nacional* presidential eras, Mexican DTOs, now replaced the role of former Colombian 'super cartels', moved their operations to Central America. As the following chapter presents, the polemically successful Plan Colombia was then applied to Mexico under the label of Mérida Initiative. The call-out of the national military against drug cartels resulted in the 'Colombianization of Mexico' (p. 204). This process culminated in the corruption of the institution's higher levels and grave human rights violations (p. 265). The expansion of the Mérida Initiative to Central America broadened the alliances between Mexican cartels and criminal gangs, and the initial success of the cooperation among the states in the region, which materialized within the body of the Central America Regional Security Initiative, remained limited due to corruption, lack of social programmes and vast unemployment (p. 246). As Marcy argues, the Mexican narco-violence now replaced the 'revolutionary insurgency', which forced masses to flee their homes from Central America for the United States (p. 290). However, this time, drug wars triggered a refugee crisis, 'the end of which is nowhere in sight' (p. 306).

All in all, *Narcostates: Civil War, Crime, and the War on Drugs in Mexico and Central America* is a significant contribution to the existing literature concerning narco-trafficking and its effects in Latin America. Even though the approach and arguments in the book might look gradually centred on US-oriented policies at first glance and give the impression of a totalizing of numerous significant revolutionary political movements in Mexico and Central America as mere greedy narco-organizations categorically (pp. 21,66), Marcy expertly provides many accounts to the readers and those interested in Latin American politics to reconsider ongoing war on drugs in many parts of the globe.

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Rivaya-Martínez, Joaquín (ed.) 2023 *Indigenous Borderlands: Native Agency, Resilience and Power in the Americas*, University of Oklahoma Press (Norman), Reviewed by Brenden W. Rensink.

Historiographies of the Americas have long featured Indigenous peoples, but in recent years, scholars have approached, contextualized and interpreted Indigenous histories in profoundly new ways. No longer simply the foe against which Euro-American empires contended or the foil against which colonial ambitions was rhetorised – often in flattened, overgeneralized and monolithic terms – Native peoples and their historical agency have increasingly formed the central perspective of new works. Their success should fundamentally change the methodologies of diverse related historical subfields. Similarly, the growing field of borderlands studies has been exerted powerful correctives to the interpretation of histories in the Americas (and elsewhere). By diverting attention away from the centres of power to the peripheries where those powers were most contested and most violently deployed, scholars have demonstrated how the edges of empire influenced their cores. The influence that Indigenous-centred and the borderlands histories should have on various intersecting subfields cannot be understated, and historian Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez's new anthology, *Indigenous Borderlands: Native Agency, Resilience and Power in the Americas* engages with both. Pushing away from geographically Euro-American-defined "borderlands" and embracing how Indigenous geographies offer different perspectives; Rivaya-Martínez and his authors use "Indigenous borderlands" as a central theme and place them "within and beyond colonial frontiers and state boundaries." While not