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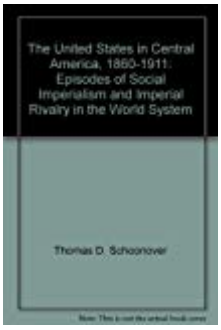
James William Park. *Latin American Underdevelopment: A History of Perspectives in the United States, 1870-1965.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995. xii + 274 pp. $37.50, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8071-1969-3.

Thomas D. Schoonover. *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1991. 296 pp. No price listed, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8223-1160-7.



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Both James William Park's monograph and Thomas Schoonover's book of essays provide well-researched insights into the dynamics of U.S./Latin American relations during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the same time, these two books clearly illustrate the application of two contemporary theoretical frameworks explaining the history and dynamics of American foreign policy. Park's *Latin American Underdevelopment: A History of Perspectives in the United States* surveys how constructed images of Latin America influenced both policy makers and the general public. Schoonover's *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911* applies a world-systems analysis to U.S./Central American diplomacy.

Any reader looking at the side of the Park's book jacket, *Latin American Underdevelopment*, without carefully reading the full title--*Latin American Underdevelopment: A History of Perspectives in the United States 1870-1965*--displayed on the cover, will be perplexed. Rather than a study of the economic, political and social causes of underdevelopment, Park's monograph surveys historical explanations for Latin American economic patterns. Underlying his analysis is the conviction that perception can be as, or more, important than reality and has an influential role in policy formulation. Non-economic factors such as belief in racial hierarchy and environmentalism, moreover, can have important influences on economic analysis. In addition, the economic and cultural milieu within the United States impacts upon the tone and tenor of analysis. The book includes some wonderful cartoons illustrating the visual manifestations of these world views.

Park surveys social, economic, and cultural factors that influenced the "mental map" shaping North American perceptions and attitudes toward Latin America. These ideas, in turn, served to explain economic underdevelopment in the region.

These perceptions, of course, changed over time. For much of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, amateur travelogues, journalism, fiction and later film, played a more important role than scholarly study. These accounts, Park argues, were connected to economic analysis by three main factors: racial prejudice, combined with economic Anglo-Saxionism, led to a conviction of an economically inept Latin American "other"; acceptance of the "Black Legend" which argued that Spanish culture and authoritarian politics remained a defining cultural and political characteristic in Latin America, suppressing free entrepreneurial spirit; and simplistic causal connections between climate and national character which attributed the laziness and sloth to tropical environments. These widely accepted opinions, with little knowledge of differentiation within Latin America, explained for most North Americans the reasons for the economic development of the region. For decades they remained the dominant regional view until slowly supplanted by more sophisticated analysis derived from the works of academic historians, economists and social scientists. Despite impressive scholarship, however, the older views still survive. The relationship between world view and policy making is complex. Park examines the significance of the political and cultural climate within the United States in shaping the tone and intensity of U.S.-Latin American relations and, specifically, underdevelopment. The "missionary zeal" of the progressive era, along with its racial undercurrents, led to attempts to "Americanize" Latin Americans by inculcating values such as efficiency. The disillusionment with progressive ideals in the 1920s resulted in a less intensive engagement with Latin America.

From the late-1940s to 1960 new elements entered into the picture. The rise of Latin American studies in North American universities, the perceived threat of fascist influence in Latin America, and "discovery" of underdevelopment theory, supplemented by modernization theory, laid the groundwork for renewed interest. These new ways of viewing Latin America, combined with the over-optimistic zeal and aggressive Cold War mentality of the Kennedy administration, given immediacy by the Cuban revolution, culminated in the alliance for progress. In his conclusion, however, Parks notes the recent applications of two theories in academic and policy formulations toward the understanding of Latin American underdevelopment: dependency and world systems. While Parks presents a clear survey of different perceptions of Latin American underdevelopment, in the end, the reader wonders if the author has reached his own conclusion on the causes.

A leading historian applying world systems analysis to Latin American/U.S. diplomatic history is Thomas D. Schoonover. ***The United Sates in Latin America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System*** includes a series of essays ranging from confederate civil war diplomacy in Central America to "U.S. Dilemma: Economic Opportunity and Anti-Americanism in El Salvador, 1901-1911." Each carefully researched essay distinctly applies the historian's craft while, at the same time, placing each incident within the context of world systems theory.

In his introduction, Schoonover provides a brisk, clear definition of world systems theory: "The world systems theory describes the relationships of classes and groups from metropole (core), semi-peripheral and peripheral states within the world economy. A metropole state, which the United States had become by the end of the nineteenth century, not only controlled the factors of domestic production and distribution but also acquired the political power and technology to control foreign factors of production and distribution in peripheral and semi-peripheral areas.... A semi-peripheral state functioned both as exploited and exploiter in the world economy. Metropole and semi-peripheral states exploited peripheral areas (such as Central America).... societies that lacked

most factors of production or were unable to control them."

Schoonover adds the important idea that metropole states, such as the United States, utilize their relationship with the semi-peripheral and peripheral states "as a policy that aims to resolve internal social problems through a resort to external programs": in two words, "social imperialism."

In the nine essays which comprise the book, Schoonover illustrates this theme and draws out the complexities of competition between social imperialistic nation/states, in particular the rivalry between the United States and Germany for Central American trade, and the policy conundrum when the dynamics of foreign policy conflict with the ideology of racial hierarchy.

Each essay deftly places an important, often well-known, incident in U.S.-Central American relations into a world systems conflict. From this point of view, confederate diplomacy toward Central America is seen as a new peripheral state exerting the political power of cotton because confederate diplomats misunderstood the relationship of their political economy within the world system of the time. During the Civil War, moreover, they sought bases for privateering and trade but had to overcome the recent legacy of filibustering expansionism. After the Civil War, as Schoonover argues in "George McWillie Williamson and Postbellum Southern Expansionism," the South, now with the full support of the northern industrial elite, continued to seek expansion southward. Since "overproduction," the received wisdom of the time, overseas outlets were considered by many the key to maintaining jobs as a means to social stability.

To bring to life the dynamics of tensions between various metropole states competing for economic advantage in Central America as well as the tensions between the imperatives of social imperialism abroad and aspects of the domestic ideology, Schoonover presents two fascinating case studies. In the Eisenstuck affair of 1878-79, a dispute erupted after the step-daughter of Paul Eisenstuck, who married into a Nicaraguan family and later filed for divorce. This dispute led to alleged violence against the Germans, and the German government sought U.S. support. At this point the United States was caught in a dilemma: if the United States did no support Germany, the principle of rights for foreigners would be compromised. If the United States did support Germany, it risked the enmity of Nicaragua and might compromise that founding document of American dominance--the Monroe Doctrine. Either way, the status of the United States as the primary metropole power in the region was at stake.

At times tensions within the United States' world view, ideology and the demands of social imperialism were played out in Central American diplomacy. In his chapter titled "The World Economic Crisis, Racism, and U.S. Relations with Central America, 1893-1910," Schoonover examines the dilemma American diplomats faced representing North American Negro workers in Guatemala. Within the context of early-twentieth-century racism, does the United States exert its power to protect citizens of color against unjust charges? Race also played an important role, Schoonover argues, in rationalizing Theodore Roosevelt's actions in Panama during the revolution of 1903. In this essay, Schoonover also analyzes the arguments of a Columbia University Law Professor's memo justifying Roosevelt's actions in terms of American exceptionalism: "Exceptionalism places the U.S. government beyond contract and international laws." This idea from the past has been resurrected today.

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